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Hospitality and the Societal Impacts (Theological-Ethical Perspective)

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Abstract: *Our present day societies in Nigeria need volunteers who can create positive impacts in the lives of people and in the society at large. The societies are highly characterized by poverty, joblessness, corruption, banditry, indecent dressing, prostitution, selfishness, killing, religious intolerance, election rigging and all sort of political and social vices. A positive change of these scenario calls for volunteers that cut across all facets of life – religion, politics, social, economic and even psychological. Being a Blessing entails subscribing oneself as an agent of positive change or who could bring about a success story in the life of someone, organization, State or Nation. This journal is expected to serve as a resource material for Christians and indeed Nigerians who are convinced that their lives and positions are for sacrificial services and that there is a call to selfless services and not for selfish interest. Every human being, organization, State or Nation has one burden or the other that must be lifted by God through human agent. Unfortunately, our generation and the society at large are gradually losing the room for sacrificial and selfless services to God and humanity. Selfishness has sadly taken the centre stage in the modern day Christianity. However, this journal believes very strongly that the beauty and essence of the Christian life is in the admonition of our Lord that we should let our light shine among men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matt. 5: 16). To this end, Christians must derive great joy and a sense of fulfilment in being a blessing to others. To be a blessing to someone or people is to be an instrument through which God can save a soul. It is to bring relief to the burdened and peace to the troubled hearted. It is to be vessel through which God can restore life to the lifeless, honour to the humiliated, courage to the despondent, healing to the sick, strength to the weak, hope to the hopeless, joy and laughter to the sad, comfort to the mourner and forgiveness to the penitent. The article calls on all to be blessings to others in individual's capacity. Recommendations are proffered for all serious minded Christians and Nigerians who want to live an impactful life at wherever and whatever positions they find themselves.*

Keywords: Blessing; Societal Impacts, Corruption, Parents, Children, Relatives, Colleagues, Neighbours, Friends, Associates, Hopeless, Voiceless, Helpless, Downcast, Downtrodden, Church, Community, Society.

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INTRODUCTION

Actually, it is clear that virtually every society today needs help directly or indirectly from God and men. Surprisingly, God cannot come down as a person to give, assist or help any human; He uses people and blesses them accordingly. As such, the route to God's supernatural open doors and testimonies is being a blessing to people in your divine capacity. One can be a blessing through philanthropic, structural and scholarship provisions to communities/people, assistance to the needy and help to the helpless as are duly led by God.

The hindrances to being a blessing are numerous and can deter and easily discourage someone from making any effort. Irrespective of these, many have threaded the good path and have testified of its importance. However, being a blessing is a choice, and a good choice for that matter. Why not join the cue? It has both temporal and eternal values. The obedient to this call, choosing to be instruments of blessings do testify of the inherent benefit and joy. Be part of the bountiful rewards of being a blessing though secret, veiled and unknown to most people.

The consequences of not being a blessing includes among others stagnation, retrogression, complain and inability to experience divine miracles that attract sweet-melodious testimony. It's unfortunate to be a living being and yet consciously or otherwise worthless, useless and unproductive. By being a blessing to people, organization, group and the community, one in no small measure attracts God's unstoppable blessing.

The journal will go a long way spurring people up to greatness. It will change people's mind-set to giving, helping and volunteering and will definitely place some people on the ladder that will ever lead to the top. God bless you for keying into this vision of relevance in the midst of chaos and hopeless situations.

WHY BEING A BLESSING?

One might not have the intention of being a blessing if he does not know the reasons for being so. The reasons are numerous but few of them are outlined here:

- **Life is for a purpose:** God created you and preserved your life to be a blessing to others. He didn't add each day to your life for nothing,

or because you needed it; He did it because someone out there needs you. God expects you to use it for the betterment of others. If you want God to bless you, you must choose to be a blessing. We are blessed to be a blessing. God gives us different talents and grace for the benefits of others. Use it well.

- **We must follow our Master:** Jesus our Master came to be a blessing (Matt. 1:21-23), as such, we must be like Him. We cannot profess to follow Christ whereas we do not follow His footsteps and possess His likeness. Jesus came to serve others (Matt. 20:28). We must do likewise.
- **We are blessed to be a blessing:** To him much is given much is expected of him (Lk. 12:42-48). There's no doubt that we are blessed in a way no matter how we look at ourselves. We must therefore ensure that proper use is made of our possessions and know-how in order to be a blessing to as many as possible and to the extent that we can.
- **We are commanded to be a blessing:** *"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices, God is pleased"* (Heb. 13:16). We represent God well, when we bless others. As Christians we are obligated to do good. We are also instructed to be a blessing by preaching the word and making out disciples in all nations (Matt. 28:19).
- **You need to be a saviour:** By being a blessing you can save someone from physical and spiritual death and you can cover a multitude of sin (James 3:20). Don't close your eye and see someone dying, get him saved and God the great Rewarder will compensate you. As Jesus came to give life in abundance (John 10:10), learn to give your services abundantly for abundant blessings. One of the times you will enjoy your life is when you save a soul. There's joy in being a blessing.
- **We need to bear one another's burden:** Every human being has one burden or the other that must be lifted by God through a human agent. As you bear another person's burden, be assured that God will definitely lift your own burden (Gal. 6:2). Don't mind about yours, but think about others as God is out there to think about yours. I'm personally always relieved when, by the grace of God I lift someone's burden. Begin today and you will see how blessed you will be.
- **You are instructed to shine:** A step to shining is by being a blessing wherever you find yourself and to whoever God directs to you. *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matt. 5:16).

- **Being a blessing brings more blessings:** Whoever brings blessing will be continually enriched (Prov. 25:26). Your service of blessing can never be in vain. God will make your blessings to overflow such that you will never lack (2 Cor. 9:8). Yes, the person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly (2 Cor. 9:6). But, he who sows bountifully will reap also bountifully.
- **The strong are to support the weak:** God expects that the strong supports and upholds the weak (Rms. 15:1). There are many people you are stronger than physically, spiritually and financially, please raise them up, God will bless you.
- **You will be honourable before God:** Since it is God's heartbeat that you be a blessing to people around you and wherever He takes you to, God will not fail to honour your prayers (John 12:26). Any request which is in accordance to His will must surely be granted. He will not let you down.
- **Being a blessing is pleasing to God:** God is pleased when He sees you be a blessing. The scripture says: *"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns""* (Isaiah 52:7). One of the things you can do to please God is being a blessing in the world. God is not happy seeing you live a worthless life. He wants to see you be a blessing as He is.
- **You are obeying God.** We have to be a blessing by doing what God wants us to do. Really, God will not physically come down to do or say what He wants us to do at each point in time, He uses people. Allow God to use you as His workman and master piece on earth (Eph. 2:10). One of the things He wants you to do is being a blessing. He will accordingly empower you for this. God bless you.

Having known the reasons to being a blessing, the next question is, how can one be a blessing? The answer is simple and will be made clear as you swiftly progresses.

HOW TO BE A BLESSING

There are many ways one can be a blessing. One can be a blessing to his family by sponsoring his family members in school or artisan training. He can be a blessing to his church through his services in singing, preaching, sweeping the floor, dusting the chairs, donation etc. One can also be a blessing to his community by training people, building hospital, school or company and by facilitating employment.

There are many people and places you can be a blessing to; you can be a blessing to members of your family (both nuclear and extended), the church and her members, the village and the dwellers, your community through establishments such as company, clinic, market, school, etc. More so, you can be a blessing to your State or Nation by establishing companies to aid employment, being committed to the service of the State and by maintaining her infrastructure.

God wants you to be a blessing while you are still young (Eccl. 12:1), capable (1 Cor. 4:7) and at all times while alive on earth. There are various ways you can be a blessing, some of such are enunciated and explained below:

Pray for someone

Talking to God on another's behalf can move major mountains. We can be pretty selfish sometimes when it comes to prayer. It is not uncommon for our personal prayers to be quite self-centered. Interceding for others forces us to take our minds off ourselves and turn them to others (cf. Eph. 6:18; James 5:16; 1Tim. 2:11).

Pray always for all saints (Eph. 16:18; 25:26). You can be a blessing by praying for the ministers of God, some of them are in war-fronts, they need your prayers. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality (Rom. 12:13). Pray for all people, ask God to help them. Intercede on their behalf and give thanks for them (1Tim. 2:11). Let's inculcate the attitude of praying for one another (James 5:16). Our country needs prayer. The Boko Haram supporters, banditry promoters and killing masterminds seriously need prayer for God to intervene.

Listen well and respond positively

Sometimes what someone needs is for someone else to listen to. They just need someone to talk to and confide in; someone who will listen without judging. You'd be surprised to know how many people take their own lives each year because they feel so alone, hopeless, or misunderstood. Be a blessing by listening to one's challenge and render possible help. The down-trodden, the jobless and the less-privileged are lamenting seeking for help; needing someone who can be of a blessing.

Offer words of encouragement

Simply encouraging others to keep on can be more of a help than you might think. There is not a day that goes by that we do not benefit from some encouragement; some days more than others. Sometimes we just need to hear someone else say, "It's going to be alright" (cf. Prov. 16:24). So, encourage in order to build each other up (1 Thess. 5:11). In our societies everywhere, there are many voiceless and hopeless people around, offer words of encouragement.

Give

Do you know someone in a financial crisis? Give a financial gift. Of course, prayer works and sure you can sit and listen to their problems all day, but if you are able, do more than that. Give! God's blessings to us are not meant to end with us. His desire is that they filter down to others. This principle applies in all areas of lives, including finances.

Fundraising, donating funds, new or used goods can go a long way. What may be kobo to you may be a meal for someone else. What may be trash to you may be someone else's treasure. Don't let the size of your gift keep you from giving. The most important thing is that you give from your heart. Giving is a source of blessing. The needy and down-trodden are everywhere in our society, give to them.

Volunteer

With budget cuts, now more than ever, volunteers are needed in every area. Orphanages, senior citizen homes, homeless and unsheltered people can all use a helping hand. Volunteers can provide the social amenities needed in an area to make life better. More so, an hour or two of your time you spend meaningfully, can make an impact on someone for a lifetime. It won't cost you a thing.

Just look at His extravagant promise, "*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have in abundance for every good deed*" (2 Cor. 9:8). Now, that's a verse to claim as your own! Sharing our blessings with others will never lead to deprivation. In fact, the Lord promises to increase the harvest of our righteousness and enrich us in everything in response to our generosity. We can never out-give God.

A hoarded blessing is never enjoyed as richly as a shared one. Using your gift to meet someone else's need glorifies God by demonstrating His grace at work in your life. Don't let His generous provisions end with you. Pass them on and discover the joy of a never-ending cycle of blessing.

Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Your word can change one's fortune. At least you have the word. Proverbs 16:24 says, "*Kind words are like honey, sweet to the soul and healthy to the body*". Speak the word.

Correct someone who is going astray

"*Whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins*" (James 5:20). Your good advice can turn a way-ward fellow to a better Christian. Such a person can never easily forget you. The scripture instructs, "*let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works*" (Heb. 10:24). Brother Paul

said: "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness" (Gal.16:1). The Boko-Haram and banditry people have gone astray. This is another way one can be a blessing. Be a blessing in the area of evangelism.

Ways to Be a Blessing to Spouse for a stronger Godly Marriage

Marriages can seem like a lot of work. A strong marriage calls for sacrifices to be made, mistakes to forgive and decisions to trust. It was once said that marriage is the hardest union because man and woman are expected to entrust the most fragile object - the heart - to an imperfect and reckless person.

The danger of destroyed marriage is a real one. Divorce, separation and heartbreak are as real as the sun and moon. However, God promises in His word, His grace and ability to sustain a marriage (Matthew 19:5). In our imperfectness, God has invited us to participate in the work of building a strong and honoured marriage.

Here are five ways to do so.

Serve

Mark 10: 43-44 remind us, "...*But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.*" Husbands are called to love their wives just as Christ loves the church, and wives are called to submit to their husbands as well. Each must serve each other.

Forgive

Forgiveness is the reset button that restores a person's relationships including marriages. Husbands and wives will never be perfect ever. God is calling us to grow marriages through constantly releasing forgiveness to each other.

Pray

The context of the kind of prayer in Matthew 18:20 that states "*For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them*" is a prayer in the context of growing and mending relationships. Just like anything, relationships grow best when they are soaked in prayer. It's a wonderful thing to come together as a couple, and even as a family, to pray for each other.

Trust

Love cannot exist where trust is absent. If we are to base marriages on the ability of opposite parties' faithfulness, then no marriage would ever work. But thanks to God, that we can rely on His grace to mend all hurts and then enable us to stay faithful to each other. If you can't trust your spouse's or your own ability, then trust in God's ability.

Respect

Your spouse is a wonderful person, one that God has gifted and called for a greater calling. Husbands and wives should partner with each other by respecting each other's callings and gifts and by being each other's number one *cheerleader*.

How else can you be a blessing to your spouses, friends, colleagues and partners? Are you maximising your relationship with each other under the wings of a graceful God?

BEING A BLESSING MACHINE

Do you ever wonder whether you can make a difference to the lives of those around you? The words of Jesus are true: '*It is more blessed to give than to receive*' (Acts 20:35).

The church is a '*blessing machine*'. That is exactly what we as Christians are called to be. There's great joy in being a '*blessing machine*'. This is how we can really make a difference to the lives of those around us.

God is the ultimate blessing machine

Let's consider Psalm 115:12-18 it is God's blessing on your life that enables you to make a difference to the lives of others. God is the source of *all* blessing. He loves to bless you. The psalmist repeats this over and over again. Five times in quick succession he talks about how *the Lord will bless us* (vv.13-15).

God is not just a multi-millionaire. He is 'the Maker of heaven and earth; the highest heavens belong to the Lord' (vv.15b-16a). In his extraordinary generosity, 'the earth he has given to [us]' (v.16b). God loves to bless. The appropriate response to blessing is gratitude. Each of the recipients of the generosity of 'the secret millionaire' should show great gratitude. Our appropriate response is that '*we bless God by blessing His image - people*'.

Be a blessing machine to others

How, in practice, can we make a difference to the lives of those around us? Kindly meditate on Philippians 2:12-30.

We are 'children of God' (v.15). We are called to be like our Father in heaven, who loves to bless. We have a responsibility to work out our own salvation (to see God's grace impact every area of our life), but it is God who 'works in [us] to will and to act according to His good purpose (v.13).

Many people are reluctant to trust God with their future because they fear that God will make them do something that they have no desire to be, or will make a mess of their lives. Of course, both of these fears are without foundation.

If you surrender your *will* to him, God will give you the desire to do whatever he is calling you to do. If He calls you to minister to the poor, that is where your hearts will be, if He calls you to teach, He will give you a desire to teach. If you surrender to His will, He will bring about ‘His good purpose’ (v.13).

What He wants for your life is good. It will not necessarily be easy, but you will not be able to improve on His plan. He will also give you the energy you need: *‘That energy is God’s energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give Him the most pleasure’* (v.13, MSG).

Paul knows the joy of being a ‘blessing machine’. He writes, *‘Do everything readily and cheerfully – no bickering, no second-guessing allowed! Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society. Provide people with a glimpse of good things of the living God; carry the light-giving message into the night’* (vv.14-16a, MSG).

We have the immense privilege of being able to give to people – not just money like the secret millionaire, but ‘the word of life’ (v.16a). There is no greater joy than seeing people who are spiritually dead come to life through Jesus.

Paul was willing to give his life with joy for this privilege: *‘But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me’* (vv.17–18).

Paul Then Gives Two Examples of Friends of His Who Both Demonstrated How to Be A ‘Blessing Machine’

Take a Genuine Interest in Others

Timothy was one of Paul’s closest friends, and is often mentioned in his letters. His loyalty and help were so great that Paul described it as been *‘like a son with his father’* (v.22).

- **Paul** paid tribute to his friend, *‘He was loyal and genuinely concerned for him’* (v.20, MSG). Paul compared this to the blight of self-interest, saying, *‘Most people around here are looking out for themselves’* (v.21, MSG).
- **Timothy** was a ‘blessing machine’ because he took ‘genuine interest’ in the welfare of God’s children (v.20). Timothy’s interest was totally authentic: ‘the real thing’ (v.22, MSG). Paul said that he ‘served with him in the work of the gospel’ (v.22).

Show courage on behalf of others

Epaphroditus was also a loyal friend to both Paul and the Philippians. His true character comes across in both the big and little things, and often it is the little things that are most telling. Having become seriously ill, almost to the point of death, he was troubled, not because he was ill and close to death, but

because they might have been upset by it. He was like those who, when ill, are not so much worried by the illness as by the fact that they might be a burden to their family or friends. Paul describes Epaphroditus as a ‘brother, fellow-worker and fellow-soldier’ (v.25). Epaphroditus had been prepared to ‘risk his life’ for the sake of his friend Paul (v.30).

In the early church there were societies of men and women who called themselves ‘*the gamblers*’, who ministered to the sick and those in prison. Epaphroditus *gambled his life* by associating himself with Paul, who was in prison on a capital charge, thereby risking the same charge as Paul. Epaphroditus showed reckless courage on behalf of Paul. He too was a ‘blessing machine’.

Don’t turn away from God’s blessing

(Read: Jeremiah 2:31-4:9) If you are experiencing the blessing of walking in a close relationship with God, those around you ‘will get caught up in the blessing’ (4:2, MSG).

The prophet Jeremiah urges the people to return to the Lord (v.1). God longs to bless you. You must get rid of your stinking sin paraphernalia and not wander away from me anymore. God longs to bless his people and all the nations, but they have turned away from this blessing. Jeremiah warned the people of the dangers of turning from God to false idols. ‘You cut and hurt a lot of people to get where you are’ (v.34, MSG). They have been unfaithful: *‘But you have lived as a prostitute with many lovers – would you now return to me?’ declares the Lord’* (3:1b).

Again and again the Lord urges them to return: ‘Return, faithless Israel ... for I am merciful ... Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and with understanding ... How gladly would I treat you like my children and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation. I thought you would call me “Father” and not turn away from following me’ (vv.12,15 &19).

The Lord is interested in our hearts, not in our outward appearances. We cannot pretend with God. Listen, *‘Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretence’* (v.10). The Lord urges, *‘Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts’* (4:4). Even in the Old Testament God said it was a circumcised *heart* (a heart wholly committed to him) that he desired.

DO EVERYTHING WITHOUT COMPLAINING Philippians 2:14

Do *everything* without complaining or arguing, so that you might become blameless and pure, a child of God without fault. Not even a *little grumble* seems to be allowed for anyone who desires to be a blessing. The

society definitely feels one's impact positively when he gives himself out for God's use to help others.

Other Ways to be a Blessing to Others

- The scripture says: "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4).
- Notice the needs of those God have set in your path. Pray about ways of solving someone else's problem. Pray to be a source of constant encouragement and a blessing to others
- There is good part in every act, and there are countless ways we're given the chance to act. How do we do this? By lifting others up, complimenting and loving them.
- It's not enough to simply feel love. We have to show it. We have to express it. Love is not love until we give it away, and we should be giving it away at every opportunity. Therefore, be a blessing by releasing to others part of what God has given you, admonish anyone found in sin and bring them back to God (Gal. 6:1; James 5:20).
- Having known how to be a blessing; the next discussion focuses on the benefits of being a blessing.

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A BLESSING

It is undoubtedly very important for a man to be blessed as he can be of a blessing than someone who is not blessed. A man who is blessed enjoys virtually, every good thing one may think of in this world. Of course, the reverse is the case to a man who is cursed; he suffers virtually every bad thing one may think of. To a man who is blest, life situations turn out for the best to him in most cases. Trials he may experience are, in fact, only present for a season; God surmounts all his challenges.

The focus will first be on the benefits that flow out of being blessed and then the benefits of being a blessing to others. It's not meant to be an exclusive list, or the last say on the matter. They are just things that have impacted me and many over the years. Some of these fall in agreement with Prothero, 2010. It is however of note that we have many wealthy or blessed people in the economic, social and government circles of our country. But the question is, are they blessings to the altruists, the society and the nation?

The blessed man is a fruitful man in all areas of life. In the scriptures fruitfulness is measured in terms of the ability something has to reproduce itself. This only happens with things that are organic - that have life. A fruitful tree produces fruit. Remember the fig tree where Jesus looked for fruit (Matt 21:18-22). It wasn't there, so He cursed it. Fruit is the ultimate sign of blessing. The tree was not fulfilling its purpose. It could not reproduce itself. It had the appearance of life, roots, trunk, branches and leaves, but no fruit. Jesus was not

impressed. In Gen. 1:22, 28 and 9:1 we have the record of two beginnings: One with Adam and Eve and the other with Noah after the flood. The command is the same on occasions, "*Be fruitful and multiply*". Note, it doesn't say 'be fruitful and *add*' but 'be fruitful and *multiply*'. This is God's heart for creation. And because creation reflects His life, it has the ability to reproduce life, 'after its kind'. A blessed person easily reproduces his kind in a positive way. Barrenness is antonymous and strange to a blessed person.

A blessed man has power to bless others. Think of Abraham. God blessed him so that he could be a blessing to the nations - Gen 12:1-3. In fact the word bless is used three times in this text. Not only that, how people positioned themselves in relationship to Abraham determined whether they were blessed or cursed. To bless him was to be blessed by God. God's heart is to touch the world, but He looks for a vessel; someone He can trust; someone who will be a channel for His blessing to flow to the world. Abraham was such a man. He followed God and obeyed Him to the point of offering up Isaac. Listen to God's response to this act of obedience: *Gen 22.16-19, "Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son - blessing I will bless you and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice"*. With this it's clear that God can pass through a blessed person to bless any individual or group of people. A blessed person or government can change a jobless thief or cultist to be a good citizen of the country.

Blessing releases deliverance and victory to many. Genesis 14:18-20 records the encounter between Melchizedek and Abraham after Abraham returned from defeating King Chedorlaomer. *And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High who has delivered your enemies into your hand"*. Remember God's earlier promise to Abraham to possess the gates of his enemies? Now, it was beginning to happen to Abraham as promised. Abraham went to deliver his nephew Lot. It was a risk. There were no guarantees. But Abraham was living in the blessing. This fight was to deliver Lot, not to increase his own power and wealth. And God honoured him by delivering Chedorlaomer into the hand of Abraham. The King was defeated. On his return from this battle Abraham had an encounter with Melchizedec. It is significant. For after it, Abraham goes on to meet the King of Sodom who offers him all the spoils of the war; stuff that was stolen when Lot was captured. It would have been tempting to take it. Victors take the spoils. That was accepted practice in war. But this encounter changed Abraham. He knew it wasn't his victory. God

had given it to him. It was part of the blessing. And he made a vow not to touch it, Gen. 14:21-23.

Think of Joseph, he was a blessed fellow. Every time something bad happened it worked for good. His brothers wanted to kill him but he was delivered from death because one brother spoke up for him. He was sold as a slave but became a successful manager in Potiphar's house. He was falsely accused of rape and ended up in prison but then was promoted to run the place. And eventually he was made second in power only to Pharaoh. Deliverance followed him because he was blessed. He was a son (descendant) of Abraham.

Blessing releases revelation - an open heaven. Peter made a famous declaration about the person of Jesus, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"* (Matt 16:16). Now hear Jesus' response; *"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven"*. The revelation Peter received was a sign of blessing.

The new birth has secured for us a new heart; a heart that has received the Spirit of God. To have the Spirit is to have the blessing of God, for He is the fulfillment of the blessing promised to Abraham (Gal. 3:14). And to have the Spirit is to have the possibility of hearing from God through revelation (Read 1Cor 2:10-12). *"But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.....Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God"*. We receive in order that we might know. We are blessed in order that we can move in revelation. Open heaven guarantees revelation and blessing accompanied by positive, impactful and rewarding ministration and leadership. Blessing releases revelation and vice versa. Mere stories profit very little.

Blessing always brings the reality of an inheritance. 1Pet. 3:9 and Matt. 25:34 speak of this. Jesus said; *"Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"*. The blessing promised to Abraham included an inheritance, part of which was the land of Israel. We are promised the Kingdom as our inheritance and, through the Spirit, we can begin to taste it now (Roms. 14:17; Heb. 6:5).

The idea of inheritance is very important in scripture. Esau despised his inheritance and sold his birthright to Jacob, just because he was hungry (Gen. 25:29-34). You see an inheritance is all about the future. It's about what we have, kept safe for us (Matt. 6:20). Now because it is in the future it is sometimes hard to see why we should wait for it. Why not meet our needs now? What is its real relevance after all? That was Esau's thinking. "I might die before I ever get to experience the inheritance, better to have a good meal now and meet my need now". It is short term thinking

that overestimates the importance of our needs and underestimates the value of our inheritance. As a blessed person you can help someone meet his expectation, dream and inheritance.

Blessing releases the desired miracles and healing! Think of Jesus in Luke 4:18-19; as He reads from the prophet Isaiah, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me for He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted; To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord"*.

This is more than metaphor. Jesus moved in the miraculous and empowered His disciples to do the same. The blessing of the gospel brings freedom in every area of life. Part of that freedom requires at times, a miracle or a healing. When the woman of Nain was following the funeral procession of her son, Jesus intervened. She makes no request. None asks Him to get involved. He is simply moved with compassion and acts. He blesses her by raising her son back to life (Luke 7:11-17). James and John both warn us about having the language of blessing without the acts of blessing (James 2:15-16; 1John 3:17-18). Part of this is deeply rooted in our fear that there won't be enough if we give what we have. But Jesus teaches us a different way. In Mark 6:30-44 is the account of the feeding of the five thousand - Jesus performs the miracle of multiplication. He said: *"You give them something to eat"* (Mark 6:37). *"And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to His disciples to set before them...."* (Mark 6:41).

Jesus took, blessed, broke and gave. Jesus could only bless what was surrendered to Him. It had to be given, freely. Notice too that as He blessed the loaves He was looking to heaven. And a miracle took place. Needs were met, people were fed, the disciples were humbled and amazed and loads of bread was left over - 12 baskets full - something to remind the disciples that our resource never limits God's ability to bless and do miracles. A blessed person experiences and performs unimaginable miracles and healings.

Blessing brings prosperity to the poor. Sadly, many of the prosperity preachers I've heard have a strong focus on personal prosperity. It's been about getting more and getting on. Joshua was told that if He lived according to God's law he would be prosperous and successful (Josh. 1:8). This is Biblical truth. What is important to understand is that prosperity is not just about material wealth. It's about prospering in all areas of life; our personal life, our relationships, our health, our vocation, our academic development - everything. John the beloved disciple writes to Gaius and says, *"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers"*, 3John 2. A

prosperous soul leads to a prosperous life. John wants Gaius to prosper "*in all things*".

People say that money is the root of all evil. But the Bible says that it's the love of money that is the problem - not money itself (1Tim. 6:10). The problem really lies in the heart of man. When a man who loves God gets money, he is able to direct it towards Kingdom purposes. He can use his wealth to bless others. But men like that are rare breads. Pride and self sufficiency has to be dealt with in order to make the poor, helpless and jobless prosperous too.

As government, rich people and indeed everyone would choose to create impacts in their capacities by being blessings, poverty, cultism, joblessness, prostitution, illiteracy, corruption and other political and social vices will be things of the past in the Nigerian societies.

CONCLUSION

The article has pointed out the reasons of being a blessing, how to be a blessing and the benefits of being so. There is a call to serve and save many in present day society. Really, serving and saving others are great ways to honour God. Whether serving within the church, community or saving the downcasts, outcasts and sinners in the society, God expects us to be fully involved for His revolving blessings. This book offers a variety of ways you can utilize your natural gifts, passion and interests to being a blessing having activated your love for God. Whether in the Church, community or home, your goal should be to build relationships and to share life with God and one another.

Make use of the variety of groups within and without the Church in the society that are available to help you grow spiritually, build strong values and enjoy your fellowship with others. Release the loads that may hinder you from being what God wants you to be. Never carry the burdens and hurts of the past into the future, learn to forgive and pardon your offenders in order to meet God's expectation of you. Forgiveness is a choice and not an emotion. Do it and be a blessing.

There's need for a positive change. If we consistently think the way we used to think, then we will perhaps unceasingly do the things we used to do in our society. For us to do things differently and better, we need to think differently about ourselves, our world and those around us. *As we become a blessing to someone each day, we will receive God's grace and supernatural uninterrupted open doors* even as our society shall be an interesting place to live.

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