reTHINK SUCCESS

Winning Through The Wisdom Of Submission

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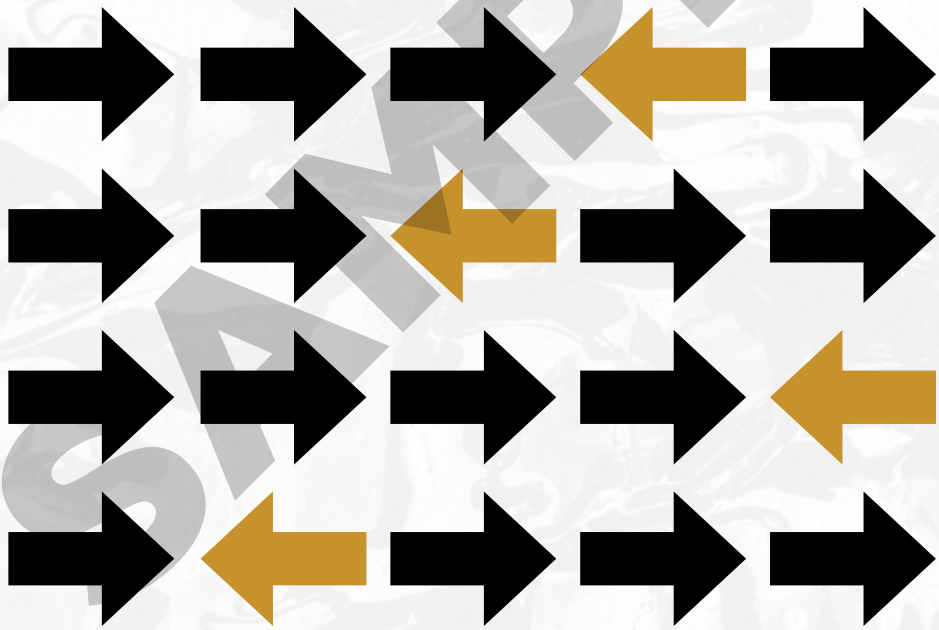

Funmi Johnson

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Foreword

IT'S A RARE AND SPECIAL THING WHEN A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TWO people transcends titles and expectations to become true friendship built on mutual respect. In my own life, I have been privileged to experience such a bond — one grounded in honest dialogue, admiration for each other's intellect, and the freedom to challenge and support one another. It's even more remarkable when that person turns out to be not only a mentor, a friend, or a guide, but also your own mother.

The author, Funmi Johnson, has always modeled a way of living that puts aside ego, expectation, and even tradition to ensure that what is best, what is true, is always what is put forward. It is this same heart and clarity that shines throughout the pages of this book.

The subject the book takes on — submission — is both critical and controversial, yet so often misunderstood. In many settings, submission has been reduced to a tool for control: a word twisted by those who seek to dominate their spouses, silence dissenting

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voices, or avoid the weight of true leadership. Some brandish it in homes, others from pulpits, podiums, or boardrooms. Too often, it is preached with shallow motives or accepted without deeper thought.

This book is different.

Drawing from decades of experience as a life coach, counselor, benefactor, and leader, my Mom approaches the topic of submission with intellectual honesty, spiritual depth, and practical wisdom. She examines it through scriptural, historical, linguistic, and personal lenses, offering a vision that is neither simplistic nor self-serving. Instead, she restores submission to its rightful place: as a key, often hidden, ingredient in lasting success.

Reading this book will challenge you, not in an abrasive way, but in the best way possible. It will invite you to pause and rethink what success truly demands. Submission, as presented here, is like yeast in bread or baking soda in a cake: quiet, nearly invisible, yet essential for true growth.

This book will push you to ask honest questions:

- What does submission truly mean?
- What does it look like to be submitted to someone — or to have someone submitted to you?

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- How might embracing a spirit of submission lead to stronger, more life-giving relationships and accomplishments?

In my own life — in my marriage, with my parents, my employers, and my teams — I've found that the healthiest relationships don't center on titles, demands, or authority. They thrive on listening, deference to each other's strengths, and mutual honor.

In my marriage specifically, my wife and I do not battle for dominance. I intentionally seek her opinions, encourage her challenges, and defer to her expertise when needed. I don't impose my own way or compel her to mine. As a result, we are able to make decisions together in ways that have helped us avoid many mistakes — and achieve success that feels shared, not solitary. This way of living reflects the kind of submission this book describes — one rooted in love, wisdom, and a deep commitment to bringing out the best in one another.

I wholeheartedly encourage you to read this book with an open mind and heart. Whether you are single, married, leading a family, a business, or a community, there is something here for you. I even recommend couples read it together — not to arm themselves for debates, but to better equip themselves to give the very best to one another. After all, if giving your best wasn't your goal, why did you choose each other in the first place?

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If this book speaks to you (and I am confident it will), don't keep it to yourself. Share it. Gift it. Spread it. Together, we can reshape the narrative around submission into something that breathes life, builds strength, and fosters true success — just as Funmi Johnson so powerfully envisions.

Thomas Johnson, *Manager, Deloitte, Canada*

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Reviews

Funmi Johnson brings not only truth but also heart. She connects history and culture to Kingdom purpose in a way that's both eye-opening and practical. And just when you think it can't get any better, she shifts the focus in Chapter Two! While Chapter One teaches us about true influence, Chapter Two shows us the power of submission. This chapter is a healing and freeing message. It clears up the confusion between godly submission and harmful control. Through the Greek word Hupotasso, Funmi Johnson teaches that real submission isn't about being weak - it's a loving choice that reflects the heart of Christ.

Together, these two chapters call the Church to wake up - to stop chasing trends and return to God's design. They challenge us to choose purpose over popularity, humility over hustle, and God's Kingdom over worldly chaos.

This book isn't just something you read; it's something you live. Funmi Johnson speaks truth with love and leads with power from heaven.

To God alone be the glory for such a timely and timeless message.

If the next chapters are anything like these, we're not just reading a book - I believe we are part of a move of God. I can't wait to see what's next. Get ready; these chapters are life-changing.

Pastor Mario Alonso

Family Revival Church – San Diego, CA

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There are books that inform, and there are books that transform—this is one of those rare treasures that does both.

In this book, Dr. Funmi Johnson doesn't just write; she wields the sword of truth, cutting through the thick fog of cultural practices that have long masqueraded as Christianity. With grace and boldness, she lays kingdom principles beside societal norms, and one by one, the lies we've embraced as truth begin to crumble.

This is not just a book about headship, influence, or submission—it's a divine blueprint for leadership in the Kingdom. She redefines yielding and submission not as chains, but as keys—unlocking doors to true authority and heaven-backed influence.

For every leader, whether in the church, the marketplace, or the home, this book is a mirror and a map; a mirror that reflects where culture has blurred one's vision, and a map that guides one back to God's original design.

Don't just read it—let it read you.

Let it undo you.

Let it rebuild you into the kind of leader heaven can trust.

Every leader needs this book.

Because in the Kingdom—you truly can't do it alone.

Praise Fowowe

Institute of Family Engineering and Development

This is a beautiful work that digs deep into the soul and reveals the intent of the same with the word of God. I found it quite engaging and a very easy read in my quest to unravel the truth of the word of God behind relationships, particularly in marriage.

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I discovered that in areas where I had previously doubted myself - such as my influence within my community - the first chapter on INFLUENCE opened my eyes to understand and appreciate the level of influence I have wielded so far and could continue to wield in line with God's purpose and agenda for me.

The second chapter on YIELD is astronomical in its bold exposé on what submission means. It is neither an entrapment nor enslavement. It is one person allowing or deferring to another in time or space over a period. It is not an incessant subjugation of will or mind to another person. Rather, it reflects a willingness to defer to a superior argument, logic, persuasion or inclination without any form of belligerence.

The book also clearly highlights that the perception and expectations of society on spousal roles in marriages can affect the quality of marriages. If such expectations define marriages, they are vulnerable. As a study guide on relationships, especially in marriage, this book will provide emotional intelligence tools on how to manage human and social connections.

Abiola Segun-Williams
Thespian, CEO Party People

What distinguishes Rethink Success is the unmistakable passion that permeates every chapter. This is not a book written from the head alone, but from the heart and soul of someone deeply convicted. Her message is not only timely; it is urgent. The theme of submission—often misunderstood or misrepresented—is explored here with extraordinary clarity, rooted in rigorous biblical research and enriched by real-life experience. This is not a superficial treatment;

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it is a compelling, scripturally grounded exploration of a principle that is both ancient and essential for modern life.

Each chapter presents a new lens, offering fresh insight and confronting long-held assumptions. It is difficult to highlight a single favorite, as every section contributes uniquely to the whole.

This book is not for those unwilling to change. It demands self-reflection, challenges ingrained ideologies, and invites the reader into a transformative journey. But for those ready to engage deeply and honestly, this book offers a life-altering perspective—one that redefines what it means to live with purpose, influence, and integrity. I strongly recommend this book to every young person aspiring to build strong, meaningful relationships and a life of lasting impact. Rethink Success is not only a timely contribution—it is a necessary and enduring gift to this generation.

Olutayo Olufemi-Fadipe
Program Director, Whitefield Foundation

BREAKING THE STEREOTYPE

"With analytical rigor, Rethink Success by Dr Funmi Johnson constructs a compelling framework that meticulously redefines foundational concepts like submission, headship, and influence. It challenges readers to engage deeply with its definitions and logic, offering a structured, thought-provoking exploration of principles vital for navigating relationships, leadership, and personal purpose with clarity and integrity. Essential reading for the discerning thinker."

Abisoye Coker,
CEO, KiaKia Global Inc.

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Introduction

Welcome, dear friend, to a journey I believe holds a key—perhaps the key—to unlocking a life of meaningful influence and true success here on earth. If you've ever longed for deeper impact, richer relationships, or a sense of purpose that reaches beyond your immediate world, you've picked up the right book.

Countless books preach the virtues of hard work, vision, and assertiveness as the sure path to success and influence—and rightly so. Yet, for all the emphasis on striving, leading, and conquering, something vital is often overlooked.

In 2005, I wrote a small book titled *Must I Submit?* The responses were strong, varied, and unforgettable. Though that book is now out of print, the conversations it sparked never left me. The questions it raised and the misunderstandings it exposed have stayed with me, urging a deeper response. That desire—to bring clarity, healing, and transformation—has led to the book you now hold.

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This book was written to shift perspectives, heal struggling relationships, and liberate readers from long-standing misinterpretations of a powerful and often misunderstood principle: submission.

In a world obsessed with dominance, power, and self-assertion, the concept of submission often evokes negative reactions. For many, submission represents the antithesis of influence and great success. Yes, I know that word can be unsettling. It may stir thoughts of weakness, silence, or loss of identity. But what if our understanding has been fundamentally flawed? What if the very thing we've often resisted holds the secret to lasting influence and strength?

Think for a moment about nature: the mighty oak stands tall not because it never bends, but because it yields to the wind. Water, soft and yielding, reshapes even the hardest stone. The natural world thrives through a constant rhythm of giving and receiving—a mutual submission that sustains all life.

This book was born from observing how many relationships—marriages, teams, churches, communities—suffer needlessly under distorted views of authority and submission. Too often, scriptures about wives submitting to husbands, children obeying parents, or servants respecting masters have been weaponized

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instead of being wisely applied for flourishing, collaborative living. Yet this principle isn't confined to marriage or church life; it affects every sphere—our friendships, families, organizations, and societies.

Across six chapters, we will explore how submission—rightly understood—brings harmony to marriage, strength to teams, unity to communities, and stability to society. We'll look at its role in parent-child dynamics, among peers, and even in the humble posture of an employee within the workplace.

We will also face the obstacles—pride, fear, mindset, public opinion, and ignorance—that often block our ability to submit, and we'll explore practical paths to overcome them. My aim is not to burden you but to reveal submission as a pathway to connection, wisdom, and lasting impact.

This is not a call to be passive or voiceless. It is an invitation to embrace the counterintuitive truth that true authority often flows from willing surrender, that real leadership emerges from service, and that enduring influence is born not from dominance, but from humility.

For people of faith, this message resonates deeply with the example of Christ—whose path to exaltation began in

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submission. But the truth in these pages is not limited to faith traditions. If you're seeking more harmonious relationships, meaningful leadership, or a way of living that creates lasting change, you'll find something here that speaks to you.

This book is for anyone—married or single, leading or following, believing or questioning—who desires relationships that thrive, influence that endures, and a life aligned with something greater than self.

History's most impactful figures—whether spiritual leaders, revolutionary thinkers, or compassionate pioneers—understood that true authority isn't seized; it's earned through humility, trust, and the willingness to yield to a higher purpose. Without submission, ambition becomes arrogance, leadership turns into tyranny, and relationships fracture under the weight of self-interest. This book reveals why submission—not as defeat, but as a divine strategy—is the missing link between struggle and significance, between force and lasting influence.

So take a deep breath and come with me on this journey. Let's reimagine submission—not as the enemy of success, but as its missing link. Whether you've wrestled with this idea or lived its truth, I believe you'll discover new insight, deeper peace, and the kind of influence that doesn't fade.

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Submission isn't about losing yourself. It's about finding your place in a greater design—one that leads to strength, freedom, and a life of real and lasting impact.

Let's begin!

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Chapter One

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CHAPTER 1

Influence

Influence is like the wind: invisible yet undeniable. You may not choose to accept it, but its presence is impossible to ignore. Its impact can shift your stability and alter your course. Similarly, influence is akin to yeast—its power is not measured by its size or volume but by the lasting effect it creates and the profound consequences it brings.

As an African, I see and feel the deep impact of colonialism all around my beloved continent. The official languages spoken here are either English or French—languages that are not native to us, yet they shape and define how we live, communicate, and relate to one another. This is the power of influence at work.

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Everywhere I look, I witness the far-reaching influence of globalization. The internet and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have brought about the most significant shift in human communication in history. Social media is teeming with content creators, many of whom boldly identify as 'influencers,' wielding power in once unimaginable ways.

While it is undeniable that leadership and influence are closely linked, influence goes beyond merely holding a leadership position or accumulating followers on social media platforms. True influence is not about numbers or visibility—it's about the impact you create and the lives you touch.

I believe that influence, just like the wind or yeast, must pass these tests:

1. **Impact:** What changed? What is the 'before and after' story?
2. **Culture-Shaping:** Did the influence redesign people's way of living and thinking?
3. **Generational Transformation:** Has the influence outlived the influencer? Have others imbibed and embodied the influence? Do we have personal testimonials of other people using the principles to experience the intended outcome?

Based on the criteria above, certain people or things come to mind as having influence:

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1. **Electricity:** Significant inventions and discoveries by Benjamin Franklin and the light bulb by Thomas Edison.
2. **Cars:** Invented by Karl Benz and revolutionized by Henry Ford.
3. **Airplane:** The Wright brothers,
4. **Computer:** Charles Babbage conceptualized and invented the first mechanical computer in the early 19th century.

We may also mention some individuals like:

Nelson Mandela, best known for successfully leading the resistance to South Africa's policy of apartheid in the 20th century.

Rosa Parks, famously became a leader in the 1950s Civil Rights Movement when she refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white passenger.

Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, activist who fought for the right of Nigerian women to vote, is also popularly known for being the first woman to drive a car, paving the way for the right of women to own and drive cars in Nigeria.

Take a moment to write one thing that has influenced you or an individual whose life has greatly impacted you in more ways than one.

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Just like the wind and the yeast described earlier, I discovered one individual whose life passed every test and criterion for influence. His example stands as a powerful lesson on how to influence the world around us. This is a person whose actions, character, and legacy have left an indelible mark on history—a figure whose influence transcends time and culture. Let me introduce you to His profile:

This Man lived thousands of years ago, and His influence is still relevant today. Though He was rejected by His tribe of birth in His lifetime on earth, He remains the most famous man from that tribe who has ever lived.

He is the central figure in the best-selling and most popular book in history. At over 5 billion copies sold and still counting, this book is not only the best-selling, it is also the most translated of all time.

Ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle spoke extensively about societal ills such as slavery, but this influential and successful man launched an equality revolution. Despite not explicitly speaking on slavery, this influential man's teachings implicitly conveyed the importance of respect and honor

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for human life, without regard to social status. He promoted mutual respect and humility in service, irrespective of one's position in life.

He embraced women and children. He emphasized the treasure and value of every human life, stating that even their hairs, as small as they look compared to the body, are numbered.

This most influential character also redefined heroism. Most heroes are recognized by their conquests in wars, and they have to defeat someone to stand on top. His own heroism came about from denial, sacrifice, and humility. In the short span of 33 years on earth, He raised men who were described as unlearned to become wise and audacious. They left philosophers of their time astonished by their reasoning. It was recorded that His followers turned the world upside down.[1]

People who fully subscribe to His ideology and honor His belief system are raised in the ocean of compassion. Just to cite a few of His billions of followers worldwide:

- Mother Teresa founded Missionaries of Charity, a religious congregation devoted to helping the sick, poor, and dying based in India.

1 Acts 17:6 (NKJV)

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- William Wilberforce is best known for his leadership in the movement to abolish the slave trade in the British Empire.

- Martin Luther King Jr. was a prominent civil rights leader in the United States, recognized for his efforts to combat racial segregation and promote civil rights for African Americans through nonviolent civil disobedience.

- William Carey: He was celebrated for his pioneering work in missionary activities in India. Carey contributed greatly to the development of Indian linguistics, education, and social reform. His efforts in promoting literacy, particularly in the Bengali language, and his work to improve the status of women in India also stand out.

These individuals are celebrated for their significant contributions to society in various forms of social justice, humanitarian work, and cultural transformation. Their actions and legacies have inspired change, uplifted communities, and sparked movements that continue to resonate across generations.

To this day, His assertion that nothing was created outside of Him has not been successfully invalidated by any individual, dead or alive. His life and legacy reshaped humanity's relationship with the divine, and since His arrival, life has never been the

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same. That personality is none other than Jesus, the Christ, Savior, and King!

Jesus' earthly life was characterized by outstanding events. He left us with enough guidance to help us lead lives of influence and impact, just as He did. Who better to learn from than the most influential human to ever live? Come along with me as we follow the trail of His life and uncover a fundamental yet often understated principle that can help us influence the world.

His birth was marked by extraordinary spiritual experiences for His earthly parents, Mary and Joseph. Despite this divine beginning, Jesus never lived a life of extravagance or disrespect. At just 12 years old, He displayed such wisdom that the teachers of the law were astonished. Yet, when His parents arrived, He reverently yielded to their care and authority.[2]

According to history, Jesus was born into the family of Joseph, a carpenter, in a small village with just eleven houses and one street. Everyone, I believe, knew Him as the carpenter's son. If a roof leaked, they'd call His dad, "Joseph, come fix it!" Yet Jesus knew His purpose was bigger than that village. He recognized

2 Luke 2:41-52

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that staying as a village carpenter wouldn't fulfill His divine assignment. He had to transition.

Jesus didn't rush into ministry. For years, He worked, learned, and prepared. When the time came, He moved decisively, saying, *"I must be about My Father's business."*

He did not abandon His growing-up season prematurely. Rather, He mastered it, using it as a foundation for what's next by growing in wisdom and stature. He did not mismanage the transition.

When He came of stature to start His ministry, in wisdom, He sought the blessing and seal of approval of the most seasoned preacher of His day, John the Baptist. Having a clear understanding of the prophecies that John the Baptist was His forerunner, He humbled Himself to be baptized. Despite His divine power, He did not despise the process, neither did He stay stuck in it. He had enough wisdom and discernment to know that growth requires guidance and humility precedes honor. Even Jesus—the King of kings —yielded to an authority figure.

What followed after the baptism was beyond anyone's expectations. The heavens opened, the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and the Father spoke in affirmation of His

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identity. What better endorsements could one receive at the start of a ministry than these?

In ministry, Jesus never walked alone. He chose twelve disciples as His closest companions and was often in the company of many followers. Their bond was so strong that it took betrayal—and a bribe—to single Him out for arrest. Throughout His ministry, Jesus served His disciples, even washing their feet to demonstrate that *"the greatest among you must be the servant of all"*[3]. Though He mingled with sinners and was often underestimated, His power and wisdom were undeniable. Even His enemies could not ignore Him. After His resurrection, He continued to guide His disciples, empowering them to spread His message. Over two millennia later, the gospel of Jesus Christ, which began in a small town in Jerusalem, has reached billions of people across generations and continues to spread to the ends of the earth. Today, the Bible, the book dedicated to His story, holds the Guinness World Record as the best-selling book of all time.

The miracles Jesus performed—healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons—are well-known and widely discussed. His storytelling, transformative messages, and timeless wisdom have been the subject of countless books, podcasts, and sermons. His

3 Matthew 23:11

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earthly journey, spanning just over 33 years, was so monumental that the Bible declares: *"…if all His deeds were written down, the world itself could not contain the books."*[4].

Despite having all power at His disposal, Jesus submitted to the humiliation of death on a cross. What the devil intended as a shameful defeat became the ultimate victory. The authority lost by the first Adam through deception was reclaimed by Jesus, the second and Last Adam. Since then, humanity has been freed from the power of sin, death, and the grave.

If we trace Jesus' influence—His childhood, His rapid rise in ministry, His relationships with His associates and disciples, and His ultimate purpose on earth—we find a recurring theme often overlooked: His willingness to *submit* His will and His personal interests for the greater good.

He submitted His Will at the garden of Gethsemane.[5]
He submitted his personal comfort throughout His earthly ministry.[6]

4 John 21:25
5 Matthew 26:36-39
6 Matthew 8:20

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He submitted His pride and dignity, ultimately submitting His life by His gruesome death on the cross and taking upon Himself the curse due to all of mankind![7]

Jesus' life taught us that submission is not about inferiority or blind obedience; rather, it is about aligning oneself with God's design for order and love. It shows submission as a strength that builds unity and preserves relationships and brings honor to God's plan. It is through submission that true influence is born—one that elevates, empowers, and endures.

Maybe you think this is Jesus… and it can only be so in a religious setting. Now, let's explore how submitting an idea can lead to elevation and success in the business world.

Here is a real-life story about how an idea grew and became a global influence while following the principle of submission.

In a business world that idolizes disruptors and charismatic leaders, Zubin Karkaria's story stands apart. His journey with VFS Global—transforming a modest visa processing initiative into a $7 billion behemoth—reveals an unconventional truth:

7 Philippians 2:8

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real influence often comes not from defiance, but from disciplined submission.

Karkaria's approach was never about bulldozing through barriers. As COO of Kuoni India, he observed a paradox: embassies guarded their visa authority fiercely, yet their systems groaned under inefficiency. Where others might have seen dysfunction to exploit, Karkaria saw an opportunity to serve. His breakthrough came not with a bold pitch, but through patient alignment.

For 18 months, he courted the U.S. Embassy in Mumbai, framing VFS not as a challenger but as a humble partner: "Let us shoulder the administrative burden so you can focus on diplomacy." This posture of submission disarmed skepticism—turning a travel executive into a trusted ally of governments.

Early victories with the U.S. and UK embassies proved his model. But Karkaria's submission wasn't passive; it was strategic. Within Kuoni, he navigated corporate hierarchies with the same deference, patiently educating Zurich-based executives about visa complexities. His willingness to submit to process—presenting data, accommodating scrutiny—earned him a seat at the table and the resources to scale.

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Governance became his silent weapon. In an industry riddled with distrust, VFS prioritized 99.9% accuracy, airtight data security, and transparent pricing (charging applicants directly, not governments). This rigor made VFS indispensable—a partner so reliable that by 2021, Blackstone placed billions on its future.

Global expansion tested Karkaria's philosophy further. Relocating headquarters from India to Singapore, then Dubai, wasn't just about tax benefits; it signaled submission to geographic realities. He empowered local teams, allowing regional nuances to shape operations. When South Africa needed residency permits or India sought birth certificate services, VFS adapted—not as a colonizing multinational, but as a servant of local needs.

Today, with 3,500 centers across 158 countries, VFS processes over 100,000 visas daily. Yet its dominance feels almost invisible—a testament to Karkaria's belief that the highest form of power is making others feel in control. His legacy challenges the myth of the lone visionary, offering instead a playbook for influence through alignment: listen obsessively, adapt relentlessly, and let your competence speak louder than your ambition.

In an age of brash disruption, Karkaria's quiet mastery of the art of submission has proven that systems reward those who perfect

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this art. The most enduring empires, after all, are built not on shattered gates but on opened doors.

Diligence, charisma, assertiveness, industry knowledge, confidence, vision, leadership, and innovation are often hailed as key elements of influence. However, as demonstrated through the story of Jesus and the business journey of Zubin Karkaria, one crucial yet often overlooked key to influencing the world is submission. This powerful concept, though seldom discussed, plays a pivotal role in shaping lasting impact.

In the following chapters, we will gain a more robust understanding of submission in order to master the art and become the true influencers.

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Personal Reflection

Some of the key factors that will play significant roles in my journey to influence the Earth are:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

I will make an effort to submit myself to serve others by doing the following:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

I will consider my present location to serve others by doing the following:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

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Practical Application

- If you are understudying someone, evaluate how you are nurturing your own potential.

- If you are a spiritual leader, assess how invested you are in serving other spiritual leaders ahead of you.

- If you are a mentor, consider from today how you can more effectively guide and model submission before your mentees.

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Chapter Two

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CHAPTER 2

Yield

A MAN WAS DRIVING DOWN A COUNTRY ROAD WHEN HE CAME TO A very narrow bridge. In front of the bridge, a sign was posted: "YIELD." Seeing no oncoming cars, he continued across the bridge and drove to his destination. On his way back, he came to the same one-lane bridge, now approaching from the other direction. To his surprise, he saw another YIELD sign posted. Sure enough, yield signs had been placed at both ends of the bridge. Drivers from both directions were requested to give the right of way. It was a reasonable and gracious way of preventing a head-on collision. This is a very illustrative description of the command:

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Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.[8]

Submission is a gracious call to let others have the right of way, avoid gridlocks and interpersonal head-on collisions, and ensure unhindered opportunity to make progress towards set goals.

Without order, a society falls apart. When all are in charge, then essentially no one is in charge. It makes for a many-headed monster, with all the heads wanting to go in different directions. So let us each be in submission to one another, and in this way show our submission to the God who created us. For it is in this way that He will receive the ultimate glory and honor for all that He accomplishes through us in this world by His Church. To God alone be the glory!

Jesus, the Author of Life, subjected Himself to death in order to save the world. God operated by submission to His own rules and regulations when He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus. And right now, the Holy Spirit is here glorifying Christ Jesus, the Son, in submission. The Bible recounts the stories of men and women who either win out or lose out because of their submission or lack of it.

8 Ephesians 5:21

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The word "submit" is coined from the Greek word "Hupotasso" (hoop-ot-as'-so), which means to place or to arrange under. Inherent in the understanding of the word 'submit' is a movement of position, meaning there are likely two things on the same level, and a removal of one from where it was to place it under the other. This explains that submission is deliberate, requiring the will of the person submitting. Thus, the person relocated himself from one position to another beneath.

Submission has been used in military circles to show the ranking of oneself under someone else, leaving things to the judgment of another person and yielding or deferring to the opinion or authority of someone else. We can choose to give preference to other people out of honor for God.

Our dedication to other people honors God and brings a beauty to our lives that reflects hearts that chase after God.

> *'Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves'*[9]

9 Romans 12:10

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Who, Then, Must Submit and To Whom?

> *'Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.'*[10]

Everyone To God

First, every believer must submit to God. Until a believer submits to God, they do not have authority over the devil.

> *"Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."*[11]

You can only walk in the reality of the "greater works or greater things" if only and when you submit to God.

Many times, we pray with the intention of exorcising demons, yet they refuse to take flight because we have not understood that only when we ourselves have fully submitted to God can we automatically have the power to do those things Jesus talked about above.

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10 James 4:7
11 John 14:12-14

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Sonship requires discipline. To experience the benefits of being God's child, you must submit to His discipline.

Many fathers shirk their responsibility over their children when they refuse to discipline them. A good father takes the pain to discipline his son and disciple his daughter because it is part of his responsibility to them. "Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!"[12]

Everyone To Governing Authorities And Rulers

Every believer must submit to governing authorities.

> *"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God."*[13]

> *"Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience."*[14]

12 Hebrews 12:9
13 Romans 13:1
14 Romans 13:5

SAMPLE

It is important that we perform our civic responsibilities because, as citizens, it is expected of us.

The Bible tells us that God placed all who are in positions of authority there; therefore, we must submit to them. This is the reason why Jesus Christ answered the Pharisees the way He did:

> *"Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?… Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."*[15]

Everyone must perform their civic responsibilities: obey the laws of the land and institutions as ordained by God. This is why the book of Titus admonishes us to:

> *"Remind people to be submissive to [their] magistrates and authorities, to be obedient, to be prepared and willing to do any upright and honorable work, To slander or abuse or speak evil of no one, to avoid being contentious, to be forbearing (yielding, gentle, and conciliatory), and to show unqualified courtesy toward everybody."*[16]

15 Matthew 22:17 & 21
16 Titus 3:1-2 (AMPC)

SAMPLE

Citizens must submit themselves to rulers in government and rulers in the marketplace.

> *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.*[17]

One of the reasons why the judiciary arm of the human government exists is to ensure that every wrong is penalized and receives the appropriate sanctions so as to bring about justice and fair play in society. The Bible commands us to submit to these authorities and rulers.

We cannot work against the Word of God and expect that same Word of God to work for us. We need to adhere strictly to the Word.

> *Believers are admonished to consider the outcome of their leaders' way of life and to imitate their faith. These leaders include those operating in the ascension gifts ministry: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors,*

17 1 Peter 2:13-14

SAMPLE

Teachers, and others in administrative capacities for the advance of God's kingdom not because they are superior, but because they are in positions of authority as ones holding the same in trust for their Lord and King.[18]

Christ Jesus, the Word Himself lived by the Word: Peter attested to Jesus' obedience to the law.[19]

Every Believer To One Another

Every believer must submit to one another as stated in Ephesians 5:21, "*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.*"

Oftentimes, the word '*submission*' is misinterpreted. It conjures a picture of being under, subservient, and inferior to a superior person. No! According to the scripture above, it means that for us to attain a state of peaceful and mutual coexistence, a degree of submission is required from all of us. The Bible expects us to walk in peace with *all men*. We must understand that the word '*submit*' does not connote servitude.

Wives To Their Husbands

The Book of Ephesians 5:22-24 strongly exhorts:

18 Hebrews 13:17
19 Matthew 17:24-27

SAMPLE

> *"Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything."*

Wives are supposed to submit; however, it must be noted that their submission is to their own husbands and not to every man on the street. In recent times, however, many men have made a big issue out of this.

An old friend of mine, who is married to another friend, once shared with me a story about a book he had read on the topic of submission. In this book, wives were advised to submit to their husbands in everything. He told me that he had made a copy of the relevant page and had taken it home to his wife, asking her to read it immediately. He placed the page on her pillow, expecting her to comply. However, unaware of his intentions, she replied that she was too tired to read at that moment. He interpreted her refusal to read the page right away as a rejection of his authority and a refusal to submit to him.

Curious, I asked him why he hadn't shared the entire book with her instead of just the single page on submission. I also inquired if there were other sections in the book—before or after the

SAMPLE

submission portion—that might provide further context. He simply responded that the other parts were irrelevant.

I couldn't help but laugh and gently pointed out to him that his wife's reaction had nothing to do with her submissiveness. Demanding that she read the book at that very moment portrayed a 'master-servant' dynamic rather than a healthy, mutual relationship. His insistence that the other parts of the book were irrelevant only highlighted a desire for control, not love or respect. Unfortunately, this mindset is not uncommon among husbands who mistakenly equate obedience with submission and domination with headship. The fundamental rubric by which a covenant kingdom marriage is measured is love, and love, at its core, is never about control—it is about mutual respect, understanding, and partnership.

Gleaning from the life of Jesus as an epitome of submission, we can track the intentionality of His journey towards fulfilling His earthly purpose of being the ultimate sacrifice for sin.

> *"Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."*[20]

20 John 15:13

SAMPLE

"From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."[21]

"Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death."[22]

"The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."[23]

Carefully reading through the words of Jesus, we see that His coming to save humanity was a choice. It wasn't a case of coercion, force, or violation of His will. He willfully submitted

21 Matthew 16:21
22 Matthew 20:17-19
23 John 10:17-18

SAMPLE

Himself to the terms and conditions of death on the cross out of His love for the Father and the human race.

> *Paul, the Apostle and writer of the letter to the Ephesians, in his writing to the Philippians, referenced this act of submission by Christ when he encouraged us as believers to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus in our relationships with each other.*[24]

Jesus chose willingly to act in response and submitted to the purpose, having seen the need for salvation. Therefore, submission is a personal, voluntary choice, one that cannot and must not be solicited, ordered, or coerced.

I've heard many people quote the following verses from the Bible:

> *"Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."*[25]

> *"Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure,*

24 Philippians 2:5-8
25 Colossians 3:18-20

SAMPLE

to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God."[26]

"Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives."[27]

"For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear."[28]

I brought out these scriptures with the intention to bring clarity to our understanding of the subject of submission. A good reference for us is to examine the marriage of the biblical Mr. and Mrs. Abraham, especially since Sarah was expressly mentioned in one of the verses.

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26 Titus 2:4-7
27 1 Peter 3:1-2
28 1 Peter 3:5-6

SAMPLE

First of all, here is an excerpt from my book *HALF THE WORLD–NOT JUST A NUMBER* explaining the word 'lord/master'.

"The translators of the New Testament have tried to give us clues about the use of the word 'lord' in varying contexts, each of which denotes distinct levels of authority. In the Old Testament, there are three different ways in which the translators utilized the word "lord": 1. LORD 2. Lord 3. lord.

***'LORD'** in all uppercase is the translation of the personal and covenant name of God, YAHWEH. This covenant name of God is used only for God, no one else. This is the name that the third commandment says never to use in vain. It is never to be used lightly or frivolously.*

'Lord', when in title case, is the translation of the Hebrew word "Adonai" and it is used in ascribing respect and honor to God.

lord or "Adonai" when used in lowercase is an expression of respect or honor between human beings and is similar to how we would use Mr, Mrs, Sir or Ma'am today, or "my lord" or "my lady" a few hundred years ago. It was this expression that Sarah used in the Bible reference above.

SAMPLE

This use of "lord" or "adonai" by Sarah was a common way of expressing honor and respect to another person in biblical times without inferring subordination. Wives should honor and respect their husbands, and husbands should do the same; in both cases, neither as superior but both as equals.

So, then what could Peter, the Apostle, be saying to the woman and the man? The summary of Peter's writings is an encouragement to wives to be fully aware of their new status in Christ and resist disrespecting or despising their "non-Christian", "not-so-spiritual" or "imperfect" husbands. At the same time, he exhorts husbands to respect and honor their wives and remember that they are co-heirs of the grace of life. Peter's exhortation brings a mutuality to the home where respect should go both ways. Using Sarah as an example communicates that God seeks women of faith, courage, and character who will respect their husbands but not fear them. These were revolutionary instructions for husbands and wives in the first century and are still so today.[29]

29 Half The World–Not Just a Number

SAMPLE

In the context of Abraham and Sarah, what then does it mean to submit to one's husband?

Let's see the life of Sarah as recorded in the Bible:

> *"But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac."*
>
> *The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."*[30]

Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her 'master', still differed sometimes in her opinion. In the instance quoted above, God sided with Sarah because she was right. God is not going to side with the husband when he is wrong any more than He will side with the wife when she is wrong.

30 Genesis 21:9-12

SAMPLE

Sarah submitted to her husband to the point that she called him 'lord'. Yet, Sarah's viewpoint prevailed over her husband's in the context we read, and God approved of it. Sarah's voice was not silenced by intimidation, she spoke her mind. She exercised her dominion over her slave, Hagar, even though she was the one who made Hagar sleep with Abraham.[31]

Furthermore, Abraham is depicted as actively participating in preparing food and serving guests[32]. He did not abdicate hospitality to his wife as a role. He demonstrated his willingness to perform domestic tasks in the way he coordinated the entertainment of the strangers. He did not do this because he was idle or laid back; this is the same Abraham who trained 318 men who, along with him, defeated five kings in a war.[33] He was very strong and industrious, yet domesticated and humble enough to actively participate in hosting guests. No wonder Peter, the Apostle, writing thousands of years later, used Abraham's marriage as reference material.

Another exemplary character is Hannah, the mother of Samuel, who went contrary to her husband's consolatory persuasion to accept her childless fate. Her husband's statement "...Don't I

31 Genesis 16:3-6
32 Genesis 18
33 Genesis 14

SAMPLE

mean more than ten sons…?[34]", missed a mark which led her to negotiate with the Lord to give her a son. She also compelled her husband to allow her to fulfill her vow of returning the little boy Samuel to understudy Eli, the Priest.

Abigail, the wife of Nabal, a man described as surly and mean, also had to go contrary to her husband's views to save a potentially destructive situation.[35]

> *"As a wife, you are answerable to God first. Should you be married to a man like Nabal who displays habitual indiscretion, or be under the influence of tyrannical behavior like that of Nebuchadnezzar's, learn from the life of Abigail. Stay well mannered, be informed with the truth, the facts, and wait on God for His intervention."*[36]

Submission of wives to their husbands does not rob them of their identity. True and sincere submission enhances the unity of the body as demonstrated between God the Father and Jesus, and the same is required of the husband and the wife (for more on this, see the chapter on headship).

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34 1 Samuel 1:8
35 1 Samuel 25
36 Half The World – Not Just a Number

SAMPLE

Simply said, God expects a wife to submit to her own husband with the understanding that marriage is a covenant. The union has a mission to fulfill, and the wife is to subject herself to the mission so that the family can be properly aligned.

Submission of the wife does not equate to the husband's rulership over her. It does not imply that she has no voice or opinion. True submission is rooted in mutual respect and understanding, where both partners contribute equally to the relationship. A healthy marriage involves both partners working together, with each having the freedom to express themselves and be heard.

Slaves to their masters

Slaves are mandated to obey their masters. Obedience is the act of following set rules, regulations, and instructions, while submission is an act of yielding one's will.[37]

In Biblical times, slaves were bonded to their masters, but the Word of God encouraged slaves to not just obey but to submit to their masters as if to God. God promised to reward everyone who serves submissively.

37 Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18; Ephesians 6:5-8

SAMPLE

Obedience does not always imply submission. Eye-service, zombie-like compliance, and doing the bare minimum are the marks of slaves who obey without submission. On the other hand, a submissive servant works with excellence, bringing value and integrity to their labor. Their actions are driven by respect, dedication, and a desire to contribute meaningfully. Figures like Daniel, Joseph, and Jacob exemplify this kind of submission. Despite facing challenging circumstances, they demonstrated unwavering dedication, worked with excellence, and contributed significantly to those they served, embodying the true spirit of submission.

If any man ever served a harsh master, it was Jacob. We see him willingly submitting to Laban in a strict master-servant relationship—not merely to earn a living, but to marry Rachel, the woman he loved. For her, he labored faithfully for seven years, only to be deceived when Laban gave him Leah instead. Yet Jacob endured, serving another seven years without rebellion.

Time and again, his wages were cut, his labor exploited. He could have fled or retaliated, but he chose submission—and in due time, God honored his faithfulness.[38]

38 Genesis 29

SAMPLE

Jesus said in Luke 16:12, *"And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own."*

Everyone and everything exists in submission to someone else. Even at your workplace, you must defer to your boss, thus showing faithfulness. God expects a boss to assume responsibility for the well-being of their subordinates. Those in authority do not necessarily have greater influence or gifts, but they have greater responsibility.

For everyone who is in a 'master-servant' relationship, the key that will unlock the door to their next level is submission. Do not merely obey; a submissive heart is the extra mile that will elevate you.

Women to the church

Women, according to Paul, are to submit to the Church. This topic has caused a lot of controversy, and I have decided to deal with the issue by rightfully explaining what the Bible says about it.

> *"women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.*

SAMPLE

If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home;

for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church."[39]

Some churches mandate that women should not talk, lead, or preach. This mandate is based on their understanding of the above passage. However, earlier in the same letter, it states:

"But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head-it is the same as having her head shaved."[40]

This scripture informs us that women pray and prophesy in the church. If scripture allows women to pray and prophesy in the church, why does it disallow women from talking in church? Let us attempt to clarify the issues addressed here and examine the context of the above passages.

In the Corinthian church, during the period in question, the converts were, up to that time, pagans. The pagan tradition allowed them to behave like the proverbial barbarians, where everybody could talk anywhere and anytime without recourse

39 1 Corinthians 14:34-36
40 1 Corinthians 11:5

SAMPLE

to propriety. When these pagan women gave their lives to Christ and became Christians, they brought their pagan culture into the Church.

Therefore, Paul's solution to this disagreeable and disorderly practice was that whenever any woman had a question, she was supposed to keep quiet and ask her husband at home. However, if this could not be resolved at home, it should be brought to the church and tabled in an orderly manner before the apostles. In the context above, "Man" and "Woman" refer strictly to husband and wife. In the original Greek, there is only one word for Man, none for husband, and only one Greek word for Woman, none for wife. You ought to determine from the context whether the text is addressing women in general or specifically wives. It is obvious that this statement "...if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands..." is not referring to "women" because not all women are married. This scripture thus, would have been rendered "...let your wives keep silent..." Paul advised the wives if they would learn anything to ask their husbands at home.

To avoid error in interpretation, we must be aware of the law of scriptural interpretation. Every scripture must be interpreted in the light of what other scripture says on the same subject. It must harmonize with all other scriptures. Paul, the Apostle, was not illogical, especially writing under the inspiration of the Holy

SAMPLE

Spirit, as to have said that women could "pray or prophesy" earlier in the same letter and then come to the latter parts to say they should be quiet.

Many years before the historic Day of Pentecost, Prophet Joel had prophesied that sons and daughters would prophesy.[41]

We have several instances of women who did or who are doing great exploits in the ministry for the Lord, both in Bible times and in contemporary times:

> *Anna: "There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem."*[42]

41 Acts 2:16-17
42 Luke 2:36-38

SAMPLE

Priscilla (or Prisca):

In the book of Acts, we saw how Priscilla and Aquila, Paul's companions, taught Apollo in the things of God. Priscilla, a woman.[43]

For a more exhaustive discourse on the issue of women and the church, please read the Guest Feature chapter in my book, *Half The World- Not Just A Number.*[44]

Young men to the older ones:

Young people are to be in submission to older people.[45]

It is empowering and beneficial for younger men and women to submit to older people. While the glory of youth is their strength, grey hair is a crown of splendor.[46] The young may be full of energy and potential, but the grounded perspective, experience, and insight of older people must also be harnessed.

Young people should avoid the error of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, as they ascend to leadership positions. Though Rehoboam had the benefit of elderly counsel, he jettisoned it and rather chose

43 Acts 18:26
44 Half The World – Not Just a Number (Chapter 9)
45 1 Peter 5:5
46 Proverbs 20:29

SAMPLE

to follow the popular opinion of his peers and age group.[47] Sadly, he ended up losing the kingdom and finishing on the wrong side of history.

Revelation is progressive. God, the Creator of the universe, expects younger people to take extracts from the life experiences and perspectives of older people to build a more fulfilling future. Younger generations should leverage the knowledge and revelation of the older generation, and not belittle, discard, or disregard them. There is a seed, a building block, wisdom for the future of the younger generation, in the hands and lives of older people. Submission will help the young person be properly positioned to avoid wandering in a cycle of unfulfilled dreams, limited impact, or vainglory.

We should respect people who are older than we are as much as possible. The mere fact that they are older accords them the honor of our respect; this, however, does not mean that they may not be wrong sometimes. Remember, Samuel served under Eli, though Eli's call was fading away[48]. Samuel served God faithfully until he ascended to the role of the High Priest. We never read that he rebelled, made light of, or undermined Eli.

47 1 Kings 12
48 1 Samuel 3

SAMPLE

What can we say to all this? God wants us to submit to become like Him, share in His holiness, and enjoy the privileges of sonship.

With the aura of holiness around us, we will decree His Word, and it shall be established as He has promised us. Why is this so? This is because in holiness, we speak as God. Our will being enthralled in His Will and our submission to Him forever grants us the grace to become like Him.

The fragmentation and lukewarmness we are experiencing in the church today can be traced to the lack of continuity in the revelation and knowledge of God as passed on from generation to generation. The young often become so puffed up by new revelation that they often forget that the old revelation was once upon a time "new". Rather, we need to learn from the wisdom of the old in administering and developing the new.

When there is no submission and humility amongst the young and the old, God cannot entrust them with His supernatural power. Any young man or woman in a leadership position who lacks submission and humility is akin to an armed but untrained twelve-year-old. They will misuse the ammunition someday because they do not understand the discipline, consequences, and

SAMPLE

implications of mishandling the ammunition in their care. Some analysts have described this kind of relationship as "mentoring."

We may never attain the height of fulfillment if we do not understand our position in submission.

I pray your heart will receive these teachings, seeing that our success and relevance depend on our willful submission to those God mandated us to submit to and, in the process, ultimately submitting to Him.

SAMPLE

Personal Reflection

The process by which I shall allow others to have the right of way are:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

Society falls apart when order is absent, through the following ways:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

I have chosen to 'YIELD' and allow others to take charge by:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

SAMPLE

Practical Application

- Since, without order, a society falls apart, then I need to determine who is essentially in charge.

- What should I know and do to allow others the right of way and thus avoid recurrent or avoidable frictions?

- The onus is on me to make the right call for submission.

SAMPLE

Chapter Three

SAMPLE

SAMPLE

CHAPTER 3

The Concept Of Headship In Marriage

ON TWO OCCASIONS IN THE SCRIPTURES, WE READ THAT THE MAN (husband) is the head of the woman (wife).

"But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God."[49]

"For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior."[50]

49 1 Corinthians 11:13
50 Ephesians 5:23

SAMPLE

It is often assumed by many that "head" means "authority over" or "leader". This would imply that husbands or men have a God-given position of authority over their wives or women, generally. It is expedient to examine the meaning of the word 'head' from the root word in the original Greek transcript. The word translated in English as "head" is the word *'kephalé'* in Greek.

Generally speaking, the word "head" is capable of three interpretations:

i. **Authority over/Ruler:** In the English lexicon, it often conveys authority or ruler; for example, Head of State, Head of Government, Head of A Committee, etc; all connoting authority.

ii. **Source/Beginning/Origin:** Some Greek scholars have argued that the word *'kephalé'* does not carry the same connotation as the English word "head." They assert that it is better interpreted as the "source." Some have referenced the creation story[51]; where the woman was taken from the side of a man, hence believing man to be the source of the woman.

51 Genesis 2:20-23

SAMPLE

iii. **Foremost/Prominence/Preeminence/First/Representative:** Others have argued that *'kephalé'* is neither a "source" nor "authority" but something along the line of "prominence." They have cited the examples of mountain peaks. They claim that something is peak or prominent does not make it a source or ruler.

The equivocality in the meaning of the word 'head' from the Greek origin compels us to interpret headship in the light of God's character and oneness. While authority and origin are important, headship should not be seen as a source of division or hierarchy but rather as a way to facilitate unity and service to one another.

This reinforces the stance of Jesus as can be seen in the following discussion He had with His disciples in the Book of Mark:

> *Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."*[52]

52 Mark 9:35

SAMPLE

> *Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."*
>
> *…When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*[53]

Whenever someone seeks to exercise rulership over another within a group of equals, it leads to indignation and breeds disunity in that family or community. So then 'headship,' even in marriage, as seen in the light of God's nature and character, and in alignment with Jesus' example and words, is about oneness and not rulership or domination of the other person(s).

'Headship,' for me, therefore, is more of a function/role to be fulfilled and not a status or position of control or dominance.

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53 Mark 10:35-45

SAMPLE

This can be seen in the relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[54]

We can see the Godhead functioning interchangeably in creation without any discord, control, or preeminence. This biblical idea of headship, when applied to marriage, will encourage couples to walk together as equals, supporting and serving each other, and working together in alignment towards a common goal and mission, rather than one being above the other.

So someone may ask, "Are you then saying that Jesus is equal with the Father?" And to this I will prefer to give the biblical account where Jesus was referenced as being equal (i.e., having the same likeness, or being similar in amount and kind[55]] simply put, having the same equity with the Father though He wouldn't grasp it[56], or when Jesus was equated to the Father by the Jews of His day themselves[57]. Apart from the truth that He Himself claimed that place of authority that He and the Father are one[58].

The scriptures explain that Jesus is equal to God, but for the purpose of oneness, to accomplish the mission of redeeming

54 Genesis 1:1-3; John 1:1-3
55 Strong's Concordance: NT 2400 "isos"
56 Philippians 2:6
57 John 5:18
58 John 10:30

SAMPLE

the world, Jesus had to relocate Himself. Jesus left His exalted position to become our savior. Though He took on human frailties and submitted to death on the cross, His identity was still very much intact. Submission does not reduce identity; it aligns it in purpose.

Marriage, an institution founded on love and the success of each of the parties, should find a balance where leadership and management of the home are operated in a way that promotes unity and service rather than division and "organizational" hierarchy.

Relationships between husband and wife can best be likened to a pair of shoes. They will have to walk together for a common cause, but for there to be progress, one foot has to lead the other at a time while the other follows in turn.

Like both legs of a shoe, husband and wife need each other, and will need to serve one another if they are to move in progress and achieve an unbroken movement forward in achieving their goal as a family unit.

Now, let us do a closer examination of some popular scriptures on marriage:

SAMPLE

"For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now, as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything."[59]

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."[60]

59 Ephesians 5:23-24
60 Ephesians 5:25-33

SAMPLE

Contrary to what has been taught and believed over the centuries, that the head is the boss, from the Holy scriptures as seen above, **'headship' means love, sacrifice and absolute oneness**. Illustrations are given to aid interpretation and intentions. Isn't it revealing that the Bible's illustration of a husband's headship is likened to Jesus, who is love personified and not to transactional relationships of "jack-boot" soldiers or master and slave?

> *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her…." is the standard set by God in His Word. This shows sacrifice, giving up one's self.*
>
> *"In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body."*

This draws a scenario of showing love, and here are five facts about love that I would love for you to consider:

Love is a command.
Love is the highest standard.
Love keeps no ledger of wrong.

SAMPLE

Love serves the other person.

Walking in love is the highest form of spiritual warfare.

> *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church."*[61]

This scripture closes in on absolute oneness, which explains why marriage has been likened to Christ and the Church, wherein, the concept of "one flesh" would symbolize intimacy, permanence, and unity.

> *"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation."*[62]

The Bible also says,

> *"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the*

61 Ephesians 5:31-32.
62 Colossians 1:15

SAMPLE

birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."[63]

The "us" here is referring to Elohim, which is the plural nature of God, and that means God is talking about Himself- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit is not inferior to God the Father, neither is God the Son superior to God the Holy Spirit. They are equal, they are the same, and they are one.

However, for functionality, one had to submit to the other. Let us refer to the story of the creation. God said, "Let us therefore now". According to some schools of thought, this shows that God the Father was beckoning on the Son and the Holy Spirit. The concept was that when the earth was to be created out of chaos, the Holy Spirit moved, and the Word of God spoke, but it was the Father who initiated the process. The Trinity was working together in tandem, but one had to step down for the other to operate.

For the unity of purpose, the concept of headship with regards to submission is intentional. This is so because in marital relationships, even among believers, many men assume that

63 Genesis 1:26

SAMPLE

their wives' submission to them implies superiority over their wives. Many men remain idle, not helping with house chores, while their wives "slave" away in the house to serve them. This is contrary to the Word of God.

As I had explained earlier, first, we are supposed to submit to God and then to one another. The issue of submission between husband and wife is for the purpose of functionality of operation, as explained by the operation of the Trinity. This is a question of requiring one driver to steer the wheel of a car to avoid a catastrophe. The husband and the wife are expected to work in harmony, with the husband steering the wheel of progress.

Headship comes with oneness, same goal, same destination, same ambition, and same focus. Just as the Bible says that a man will leave his father and his mother, a woman is equally instructed to leave her father and mother. Yes, because they are no longer subservient to them, they will now come to submit to each other and build a completely new family.

Headship is a God-given position to the husband to ensure oneness and unity in the home. When this headship is not in place, there is chaos.

SAMPLE

The Bible tells us how blessed it is for us to dwell together in unity.[64] Believers should seek to break away from traditional stereotypes that hinder unity in the home, for rightly as the Bible has shown that nothing renders the word of God null and void more than the long-held traditions of men.[65] (More on this in the next chapter).

Headship does not exclude the idea of equality. Conversely, equality does not rule out submission. We need to know that according to the Bible, the man is equal to the woman and vice versa. Being the head is not about getting your way or oppressing others for your benefit. But in the same way, when there are pain or distress signals from the body, the brain doesn't shut them down but releases the hormones, reflexes, and anything to support the body. The brain listens to the body to supply it with what it needs. Likewise, part of the body must work with the brain for its betterment, and the head responds in kind.

In a marriage relationship, the Lord has made the man the head just like the head of the human body, the male is supposed to be the central control center responsible for processing sensory information, coordinating movement, and enabling thoughts, emotions, and memories in the home. The rest of the body sends

64 Psalms 133:1
65 Mark 7:8

SAMPLE

and receives signals from the brain in seamless coordination. This means that the oneness and the unity of the body are expected to be established–initiated by the man, while the woman should cooperate with him as they achieve this unity. When oneness is not achieved in a home and cooperation is rejected in a marital relationship, it is resistance against God. I make bold to say that headship is an enormous responsibility.

More often than not, headship is substituted for breadwinner, father, or one who has the final say. These allusions are all false misrepresentations.

The Head is Not the Breadwinner: Headship is not determined by how much money a man earns or the wealth he has acquired. Women often quote 1 Timothy 5:8 as saying "any man" rather than "anyone", as it accurately reads. This is a misrepresentation. This verse of scripture in context was written directly to members of households on how to take care of widows within the church. We must agree that provisions in the family are mutually agreed upon by the partners and that the oneness of marriage is not exclusive to just finances. However, this financial inclusiveness and harmony should not be an excuse for redundancy or laziness; the husband and wife, as long as they have the capacity, should work hard to optimally resource the home.

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Does this then nullify the concept of Headship or submission? Neither submission nor headship was ever tied to financial income; it was never designed by God to determine who pays the house rent, the electricity bill, or the children's school fees. It is more than that.

In African culture, a man often ties his significance and self-worth to his ability to provide food for his family. Men derived their significance from their valor at war and from the number and sizes of yam tubers on their farms. For such a man, status is then conferred on him – along with privileges, including the opportunity to acquire a harem of women as much as his heart desires. In the stereotypical African culture of the husband-wife relationship, the man is the meal ticket while the woman (or women) stays at home waiting for her "lord and master" to return with the meat.

We must know that this was purely cultural and not really what God teaches in His word. And so now, with the advancement in societies and the increased access of the females to literacy and personal development, this practice is falling on its face and creating a crisis in marriages of people of African descent as they get far flung from their place of origin in Africa. It is increasingly clear that this narrative has become outdated. Women, like men, are now active participants in the marketplace.

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Beyond the shores of Africa, marriage is more commonly viewed as a partnership–a 50-50 relationship where partners share responsibilities and liabilities equally. As appealing as this may seem, it is often prone to imbalances. Each partner becomes assertive about their rights, with little or no commitment to permanence. It is pertinent for marriages to understand that the dynamics have changed.

Men who view headship strictly through the lens of being "breadwinners" are more committed to who they can "afford" than who they can "value". Therefore, consistently setting a limit to the "needs of their wives" is a priority to them. Likewise, women who see men as breadwinners will always measure their husbands based on their financial resources and their ability to meet their "unlimited" wants. If a husband fails to meet these expectations, he is often classified a failure.

In the end of the process, both parties see themselves either as assets to be "contested for" or to be "acquired," akin to trophies and not as companions. However, in a kingdom marriage, the principle is not 50/50, but 100/100.

Men and women are called to be united, fully committed to each other's fulfillment and purpose in life. Their income and resources are required to be managed with the best interest of all stakeholders

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taken into consideration. There should exist no competition or comparison, but rather a spirit of oneness, collaboration, and synergy. Each home must have a "sovereign" family conference on this matter to agree on and ratify their financial and relational positions. For the unmarried, it is important to have a deliberate "no-holds-barred" conversation with your fiancé or fiancée on these specifics before entering marriage.

The Head is Not The Father

Nowhere in the Bible was a husband likened to or compared with the father role concerning his wife. In the olden days, when women were less educated and men were privileged, it was easy for the husband to "culturally" assume the father-like role to his wife. However, let's be guided that it was purely economic and not a stipulation of Scripture. Today, this is no longer so; women are now well-informed, educated, and economically self-sustaining, able to lead their lives independently and apart from depending on a man's purse or "deep pocket".

While a father and a husband share some similarities, like both being males, a husband is, first of all, a partner and a lover. While indeed, a father is "ranked" above his children (he is their source, for it was his seed that produced them; and it remains his duty

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to provide for them[66]), this is not so with a husband. He is called to the same level with his wife (she is his counterpart, mate, and [67]"help-meet," both of which were made by God and blessed by Him with the same measure of blessing [68]). Wherever there is an erroneous belief that a man ranks above his wife, it gives him a false sense of superiority in the relationship, and it breaks the thread of harmony that exists in the relationship. This is at the base of most frictions in marriages, just as in any other social setting in which one person feels oppressed or dominated. Humans were not made to be "ruled" by others; even fathers were warned to be careful not to provoke their children to wrath [69] most possibly by refraining from infringing on their lives.

So then, though children are called to obey their parents, spouses are called to submit to each other.

Most of the principles governing marriages, especially in Africa, like folklore, were passed down from generation to generation. No one scrutinized them in the light of the truth of God's Word. They were simply adopted. Now, these long-professed standards are falling like a house built on sand because they were indeed built on a "shifting-sand" ideology.

66 2 Corinthians.12:14
67 Genesis 2:18
68 Genesis 1:22, 28
69 Ephesians 6:4

SAMPLE

The Head Is Not The Final Say

Mutual love and mutual respect are needed for a successful marriage where a man lovingly serves his wife, and the wife lovingly submits to her husband. The responsibility the husband has remains to proactively "lead" the united family with the fear of God in love and to raise godly offspring that will bless humanity.

Headship does not confer the power to control, the right to dominate, and the authority to set regulations, limits, or boundaries for one's spouse; being the head does not mean the man should have the "final say" in every situation. He must work with his spouse to lead in areas of their joint lives where he has competencies and defer to his wife's leadership in areas where he has not been endowed by God. This is the heart of mutual coexistence in marriage.

It is an infringement, for someone in the name of headship, to oppress and dominate another person's will or their God-given position. Even God never forced, coerced, or dominated His creation. Even in our state of sinfulness and rebellion against the laws of God, the Creator still appeals to us to have a rethink. [70]

70 Isaiah 1:18 CJB; Romans 5:8

SAMPLE

In the several instances of marriages of the patriarchs in the Bible, you will never see any control, domination, rules, or limit-setting by a husband toward his wife. Starting with Abraham, a most loving and respectful husband to his wife, Sarah–so much so that even when Sarah sent her maid, Hagar, away with Ishmael, her son with Abraham, God instructed Abraham to agree with the "rash" decision, and he submitted to the desire of his wife. To the God of Heaven, Creator of All things and Sovereign King alone should be reserved the honor to have the "final say"–not any man or woman.

The concept of headship as defined in the Scriptures is more about totally serving one's wife in the God kind of love and the wife fully submitting to the husband so that both of them can together fulfill the will of God on earth.

SAMPLE

Personal Reflection

1. Headship does not exclude the idea of equality. But it can be expressed in the following ways:

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

2. Headship is not determined by how much money a man earns or the wealth he has acquired, but by:

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

SAMPLE

3. We must agree that provisions in the family are mutually agreed upon by the partners and that the oneness of marriage is not exclusive to just finances, in the following ways:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

SAMPLE

Practical Application:

- I understand that headship is not domination or control of the lives of others.

- I understand submission and headship to be more than finances and that they were never designed by God to determine who pays the house rent, the utility bills, or the children's school fees.

- While a father and a husband share some similarities, like both being males, a husband is not expected by God to be a father to his wife.

- Headship does not exclude the idea of equality, and equality does not rule out submission.

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Chapter Four

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CHAPTER 4

Obstacles

When Emeka relocated to the USA from Nigeria, he made sure to marry a woman from his village—someone who understood her place in African traditional culture. Nneka was young, obedient, and raised to believe a wife's duty was to serve. For years, she did just that: cooked, cleaned, and tended to Emeka's every need while he played the role of the "head of the house."

But America changed Nneka. While Emeka clung to tradition, Nneka studied nursing, earned her license, and soon out-earned Emeka, her husband and "benefactor" (in the African sense). She offered to help with bills, but Emeka's pride twisted her success into an insult. To him, as a man schooled in the African tradition,

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a wife's money was irrelevant—traditionally, her real job was to be under him in servitude.

As Nneka's shifts at work as a nurse grew longer, the house grew messier, and Emeka's anger festered. "You think your job excuses you from being a proper wife?" he would snap, slamming his fist on the table if dinner wasn't ready. Nneka, most of the time exhausted from having worked many shifts, began pushing back. "I'm not just your maid," she muttered—words that made Emeka's blood boil. Then came the final straw: his mother's visit from the village in Nigeria.

"Mama deserves respect!" Emeka declared. "Take three weeks off. Serve her like a real daughter-in-law." Nneka laughed bitterly. "I'm not a house help. I won't lose my job to wait on her hand and foot." Emeka's face darkened. How dare she? After all he'd done—bringing her to America, letting her work—this was her gratitude? The argument exploded. Both tempers and voices rose. A gun was grabbed. A single shot fired, and Nneka was silenced forever.

In his rage, Emeka left a voicemail for 911, shouting at her lifeless body: "Get up! Face me like the stubborn woman you are!" By the time sirens wailed in the distance, the "master of

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the house" had turned the gun on himself. In the end, his pride killed them both.

Below are five obstacles, as deduced from the story above, that each person must overcome and guard against in order to walk in submission:

1. Mindset [Traditions of men]

You cannot put new wine in an old wineskin; for the new wine will burst the old wineskin, spilling and ruining the contents. In the same vein, you cannot put the understanding of the Word of God into an old, unrenewed mind. It will never comprehend it.

You must be careful not to base your current actions on human traditions and belief systems that were passed on over the centuries, especially if such traditions, however nice-sounding, contradict the Word of God. The Bible[71] says that it is the tradition of men that renders the Word of God ineffective.

From the story above, we see Emeka holding onto a marriage interpretation based on his cultural leaning, environmental realities, and customary beliefs. He never embraced the present

71 Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:13; Colossians 2:8

SAMPLE

realities of his new life in an advanced, contemporary society such as the US and never accepted the rights of the wife to be treated as an equal partner.

Beyond marital relationships, the traditional mindset has caused many to lose business and career opportunities due to a lack of flexibility and innovation. Parents have damaged their children due to their insistence on traditional duties and failing to learn better ways from those they perceive as beneath them. The traditional mindset hinders the bearer from accessing the much-needed mentorship, counsel, or support for growth and self-development due to biases related to gender, age, race, or any other prejudices.

2. Pride

The story also highlights Emeka's pride – his desire to always be right and obeyed. Pride demands that one take credit every time. A prideful person feels inferior when he is not the one in charge or in total control. It is an obsession with being right and obeyed at all times.

Incorrigibility is another sign of pride–the refusal to learn from other people's experiences or accept their counsel. The biblical

SAMPLE

King Uzziah[72], initially a righteous ruler, became proud after experiencing success and power. He then trespassed into priestly duties by offering incense, for which he was struck with leprosy.

The Book of Daniel[73] recounts how Nebuchadnezzar became proud of his kingdom and was subsequently humbled by God, losing his sanity and becoming like a beast before being restored.

Pride keeps a person from the truth and good judgment. It also attracts one to charlatans and sycophants, who say things that one desires to hear. If whatever you say is "law" and you refuse to acknowledge or consider the perspective of others, you are heading for destruction. Never be afraid to admit the strengths of others, whether in a relationship, workplace, or community. Instead, encourage them to use their strengths for the benefit of all.

Pride gives a false impression of self-sufficiency. It is a major reason for prayerlessness–when you think you don't need God for your life decisions or self-management.

Could Emeka and Nneka's story have ended differently if they both collectively or individually submitted to God in prayer?

72 2 Chronicles 26
73 Daniel 4

SAMPLE

3. Public Perception

Another factor, which may hinder submission, is being overly sensitive to public perception. This is portrayed as being too conscious of people's opinions, accolades and ratings. Emeka felt he would be perceived by his mother and family as being a weak man, so he lost all sense of reasoning and insisted that his wife shut down her life for the sake of his mother's visit.

Jesus, speaking about the Pharisees and religious leaders of His day, said [74]"For they loved the praise of men rather than the praise of God."

When someone lives for public ratings, what people say, and how one is perceived, it will lead to compromise and playing to the gallery. In craving public acceptance, many have ventured into enterprises or relationships that have led to compromise, loss, sickness, shame, and a life of lies. Brute force is what men are hailed for in the public eye of the African system. Right from childhood, boys are raised to always have to prove their internal toughness. Sadly, men who live like Emeka end up the same way as "Okonkwo,"[75] who, in defiance to higher reasoning,

74 John 12:43
75 'Things Fall Apart' an epic fiction by Chinua Achebe

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decapitated Ikemefuna, the boy who looked up to him and called him "father."

When making decisions at home, work, ministry, business or relationships, don't use public perception and what people say as the yardstick for your choices. Refuse the temptation to be like men who always want to exhibit the trait that the African man is the "King" that must be obeyed at home and by his subjects, chief of which is his wife.

4. Disobedience

Murder and suicide by Emeka are blatant disobedience to the law. He took the law into his own hands, all because he was not ready to submit to respecting his wife's rights or wait through the process of harmonizing their divergent positions based on their new reality as dwellers in a civilized culture. Disobedience is an act of disregarding laid-down rules and regulations. Acting in defiance of set rules, constituted authority, moral code, or the laws of man and God constitutes disobedience.

People who feel superior seem to be the ones most prone to disobedience. The lawmaker often becomes the lawbreaker because they feel above the law – for example, law enforcement agencies in my home country, Nigeria (as I am sure the same

SAMPLE

applies to most African countries). You often see the same thread spawned in the relationship between African husbands with their wives, African Parents with their children, and even older siblings "lording it" over their younger siblings.

In our story, Emeka, consumed by pride, disobeyed the law of the land. If he had embraced the principle of submission, he would have tempered his action with patience and love.

God instructed Saul to annihilate the Amalekites because of what they did to His children on their way to the Promised Land[76]. Saul, however, spared Agag, their king, and their fat cattle, defying God's order, because he reasoned that the cattle would come in handy for sacrifice. When human reasoning is used to counter the dictates of God, it is outright disobedience and a refusal to submit.

Adam and Eve acted in disobedience by entertaining the devil's opinion. They fell further into disobedience when they reasoned against the authority and validity of God's instructions to them in the garden. And in no distant time, Eve was deceived by the devil, and Adam rebelled against God.[77]

76 1 Samuel 15.
77 Genesis 3: 4-5

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Other than an extreme sense of self-importance, why would Adam and Eve feel the need to be like God when they were already created in God's image and given the authority to rule His creation?[78]

Lot's wife[79] is another example of disobedience. Her attachment to what God had clearly condemned led her to turn in defiance, and she became a pillar of salt. What about Queen Vashti in the Book of Esther[80], who was too proud to submit to the king's request and lost her place in the palace?

We must seek to guard ourselves against acting contrary to divine instructions, the laws of the land, laid-down regulations at our place of work, school, church, or agreements in relationships and business ventures. Disobedience breaks trust, breeds discontent, and promotes chaos. It is why rebellion and dysfunction fester in the world today. Many people have reasoned out God for too long. It's time to obey unreservedly–therein lies the power for dominion and great success. On the other hand, partial obedience or outright disobedience leads to destruction.

78 Genesis 1:26-27
79 Genesis 19:26
80 Esther 1,2

SAMPLE

God is never afraid of your questions; He will give you answers at the right time. Stay obedient to Him even when you don't have all the answers. If you don't fully understand the reason for the instruction, trust the loving nature and character of God and submit to His sovereignty and authority.

5. Ignorance

As a result of ignorance, a person can be sincerely wrong. Ignorance is a lack of knowledge, awareness, and of the right information. If in anything you are bereft of knowledge or lack the necessary wisdom, then expect to act foolishly therein.

Emeka was ignorant of the right order in marriage. He perceived his wife through the lens of his parents' relationship, shaped by cultural traditions, rather than within the context of his new reality and the times he was living in. He held onto the traditional belief that the wife is subservient, misinterpreting the term 'helper' as merely a house help or a paid housemaid.

A sincere person can walk in error of judgment simply because they are ignorant–not necessarily because they mean harm. When the zealous yet pompous Sadducees questioned Jesus[81] about

81 Matthew 22:29 NIV

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widows, marriage, and resurrection, Jesus likened their ignorance to living in error.

Hardness of heart, a mindset that refuses to embrace change even when it is clear and obvious that there is fresh information and knowledge, is why a lot of people would stay ignorant. Many are alienated from the life of God and remain in spiritual darkness because they refuse to embrace the truth in the proceeding Word of God that has been revealed since their last understanding of what God was saying: [82] *"They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to the hardness of their hearts."*

Sadly, when someone refuses to embrace change[83], they often end up self-destructing. Many good marriages that would otherwise have been salvaged have ended in divorce due to hardness of heart and ignorance. Many marriages are falling apart due to resentment, unmet expectations, inequity, abuse, and control, all stemming from ignorance.

It is a well-known truth that for a person to succeed in an exam, they would study the materials provided by the course facilitator and submit to the regulations of the examining body. The same

82 Ephesians 4:18
83 Hosea 4:6

SAMPLE

principle applies to building a successful home–both parties must learn and submit to the curriculum and standard of the Author of marriage, rather than rely solely on their divergent family background or personal convenience. It is why water flows through the path of least resistance.

If only Emeka had embraced fresh insights and sought out the right knowledge in his marriage, his tragic end would have been averted.

It is imperative, therefore, that before people sign the dotted lines, whether in marriage, employment, business contract, investment, or property lease/purchase agreement, they seek counsel and become knowledgeable. And when faced with challenges or difficult situations, they should not hastily jump to conclusions but rather take a pause and sincerely seek out fresh information and knowledge about their reality.

Everyone must refrain from being rigid in their worldviews and opinions; rather, stay hungry for truth, and be teachable–open to learn, unlearn, and relearn.

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Personal Reflection

a. Five factors to watch against that can withhold a person from the beauty of submission are:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

(iv) _____

(v) _____

b. The reason a modern man struggles to understand the Word of God is due to an old, unrenewed mind. True or False?

_____

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Practical Application

- I must be careful to avoid running my life (or be stuck) with an old, unrenewed mind or outdated ideas that no longer work well for modern society.

- I cannot expect to put "new wine" (new realities) into an "old wineskin" (ancient traditional beliefs and cultural practices) without causing disorder and conflict.

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Chapter Five

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CHAPTER 5

The Root "Ruth" Of Submission

TO SURVIVE AND SUCCEED IN LIFE, WE NEED TO FULFILL THE requirements of living and interacting in a community, which is similar to the relationship in the ecosystem. An ecosystem is an interconnected network of living organisms and their environment.

Let us look more closely at this interconnectedness. The dead remains of animals and plants become food, fertilizer, or manure for plants, which, in turn, become food for animals. The oxygen that comes out of the plants sustains human life, while at the

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same time, the carbon dioxide humans exhale is what the plants need to produce their food.

When ecosystems become unbalanced—due to human activities like deforestation and pollution—it can lead to habitat destruction and the loss of plant and animal species that depend on each other. These disruptions affect the food chain and can have serious consequences for human communities that rely on nature for food, medicine, and other vital resources.

The implication is that no one is entirely self-sufficient. You are independent, yet you are dependent. You are dependent on the system to survive and succeed. So, we do not live completely isolated lives but rather interdependent ones – just like the ecosystem. This is akin to submission; your submission affects others, and others' submission affects you.

As with our discourse so far, let's examine the life of Ruth, an influential female character in the Bible, and see the interplay of submission. But first, let us understand her background.

Ruth was from Moab, a nation born out of incest. When Lot and Abraham parted ways, Lot was allowed to make his choice of land first. Lot chose a plain that looked ready for harvest–he chose a place called Sodom and Gomorrah, where adultery, stealing,

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robbery, blasphemy, homosexuality, and every kind of evil work was the order of the day. The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah rose to God, and He decided to destroy them. Abraham, because of the covenant relationship he had with God, interceded on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah so that the life of his nephew Lot could be spared from the impending judgment.

The Lord acceded to this request, sparing Lot and his family. Nevertheless, God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah but preserved Lot and his two daughters.

It may be inferred that Lot's daughters had probably imbibed the culture of Sodom and Gomorrah and did not understand the nature and essence of God as the All-Sufficient Jehovah Jireh.

Since they could not see how God was able to provide husbands for them, they got their father drunk and had intercourse with him so they could conceive children–an act most odious to God.

It's clear that whenever someone holds a wrong concept or thinking pattern, they will inevitably take wrong actions[84]. Clearly, the social system of Sodom and Gomorrah had corrupted the soul and spirit of Lot's daughters. This may go on to shed

84 Proverbs 23:7

SAMPLE

light on why many believers lack spiritual power, because much of their lives are not fully submitted to God and His Truth.

As a result of Lot's daughters' incestuous actions, two nations were born: one was the nation of Moab and the other was the Ammonites. Moab, carrying the curse of the incest, also refused the children of Israel free passage on their way to the Promised Land, thereby bringing more curses upon their nation. But then, the Scriptures traced Ruth's ancestry to the same Moab, which begs the question: How did Ruth, despite this background and ancestry, find her way into the family tree of Jesus[85]–unarguably the most influential and successful man that ever lived?'

Ruth, the Moabite woman, had married into an Israelite family that had moved to Moab during a time of famine. Her husband Mahlon, along with her father-in-law Elimelech and brother-in-law Kilion, died, leaving her, her sister-in-law Orpah, and her mother-in-law Naomi as widows.

When Naomi decided to return to her homeland in Bethlehem, she urged both daughters-in-law to stay in Moab and remarry. Orpah eventually agreed, however, Ruth refused to leave Naomi but followed her back to Bethlehem, choosing to remain in the

85 Matthew 1:5

SAMPLE

family of her deceased husband. Hence, the popular saying[86] in most wedding ceremonies: *"Where you go, I will go… your people will be my people, and your God my God."* Ruth's choice to leave her homeland and follow Naomi into an uncertain future was nothing but a courageous act of faith.

Using the Book of Ruth as a template, we shall examine how submission was employed as a transformative force that altered the course of an entire generation–and history itself. It will seem that God gave Israel six laws at that time. Submission to the principles of these laws makes life adaptable or conducive to all.

Principle 1: Law of Gleaning

In biblical tradition, the practice of gleaning—derived from the Hebrew word *laqat*, meaning "to gather or pick up"—was a divinely mandated system of social support. The Law of Moses[87] instructed landowners to leave the edges of their fields unharvested and to allow the poor, widows, orphans, and foreigners to collect leftover crops. This ensured that vulnerable members of society had access to food and dignity through their labor.

86 Ruth 1:16
87 Leviticus 19:9-10

SAMPLE

A powerful example of this is found in the Book of Ruth, where Ruth–a widowed Moabite–gleaned in the fields of a wealthy Jewish man named Boaz so she could provide for herself and her aging mother-in-law, Naomi.

It was that particular law of Moses that then gave Ruth the opportunity to pick grains from the field of Boaz[88]. Gleaning served not only as an act of charity but also as a symbol of compassion and justice within the community. In love, God commanded the entire earth on principles that benefit and sustain humanity, but then, sadly, not everybody obeys.

Anyone who submits themselves to the purpose, command, and will of God qualifies for the blessings of submission–just as was seen in the Ruth-Boaz narrative[89].

So then, is there anything God has asked you to do that you have refused to obey? What systems and standards has God put in place that you are circumventing or treating with disregard? If you have not submitted to the command of the Lord, would you not be amazed to discover that several hundreds or thousands of people are suffering as a result of your disobedience? If Jesus had not submitted to the Will of the Father and died for a sinful

88 Ruth 2:2
89 Ruth 2:3

SAMPLE

world, wouldn't you and I still be under the burden of sin today? Every act of submission–or lack of it- has consequences. Like the ecosystem, our actions and inactions directly impact others.

Boaz and his servants were honorable enough to submit to God's command, and their obedience allowed Ruth–the poor and alien to have the hope of a livelihood as she openly gathered grains in the fields belonging to Boaz. The understanding here is that she would only find favor in the eyes of whosoever submits to that commandment and the will of God.

While Ruth repositioned herself by submitting to the God-given opportunity to glean, Boaz and his associates incorporated the simple law of gleaning into their farm operations. This act of submission to God's will in gleaning made life easier, bearable, and sustainable for Naomi, Ruth, and even generations yet unborn.

God has built an eternal reputation of always providing a way of escape to His people and is always on time to deliver them out of trouble. So, God's people can be rest assured that there will always be provision for every condition of their lives. The problem remains with people who–due to ignorance, mindset, pride, and other obstacles, fail to seize the opportunities as they present themselves.

SAMPLE

Modern-day gleaning opportunities can be seen in leverage systems such as internships, apprenticeships, volunteering, mentorship programs, free courses and webinars, non-governmental organization interventions, corporate social responsibility initiatives, grants, scholarships, angel investing, and more. All these avenues offer dignified solutions to bridging the economic gap in the society so that all can benefit.

Begging, scamming others of their hard-earned money, living off financial crimes, prostitution, etc., are aberrations and distortions to the ecosystem of life. They simply don't work, because someone always gets hurt.

Principle 2: Law of Redeeming Relative

In the Bible, the role of the *kinsman-redeemer* represents a profound act of responsibility, compassion, and grace. Rooted in the laws of the Pentateuch[90][First five books of the Old Testament], the kinsman-redeemer or redeeming relative was a male relative with the duty to help a family member in crisis—whether by redeeming land, marrying a widow to preserve the family line, or rescuing a relative from slavery or debt. This role maintained family integrity and reflected the values of loyalty, sacrifice, and protection within the community.

90 Leviticus 25:25

SAMPLE

The story of Boaz and Ruth illustrates this principle, in which the concept of submission was displayed, especially as regards the law of the redeeming relative or the kinsman redeemer.

Amongst the Israelites, land was the most valuable asset. Therefore, if any man loses his property, which is his inheritance, his relatives are required to ensure its prompt redemption. The law of the redeeming relative simply sounds something like "Thou shalt help thy family member in crisis."

Graciously, Boaz and Elimelech's other kinsman submitted themselves to God's community-building regulations. Soon enough, Boaz would speak to the kinsman to buy back the "lost land" for Naomi, and whole destinies will again be redeemed.

Modern-day examples of redeemer relatives include standing as a guarantor, a surety, and even as a referee for someone else. This leveraging principle has helped many to enjoy unusual breakthroughs, scale up their enterprise, and access golden opportunities.

However, one must exercise caution when stepping in as a redeemer relative. A comprehensive due diligence and risk assessment must be conducted on the part of the 'redeemer'.

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Likewise, there must be full disclosure, transparency, and accountability on the part of the 'relative being redeemed'.

Principle 3: Law on Levirate Marriage

In ancient Israel, even though widowhood[91] was not something people prayed to ever experience, whenever it occurred, the widows were protected by the legal and customary structures already in place. One such structure in the Old Testament was the institution of the levirate marriage, which ensured that the rights and possessions due to a widow without a son for her late husband could be protected and appropriated. The law simply states that if a man dies childless, his brother should marry his widow and father children through her. A similar custom[92] existed amongst the pre-colonial Yoruba people of Western Nigeria, ensuring that a widow's inheritance and welfare are guaranteed after the demise of her husband.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees in the time of Jesus seemed to know this same law so well both in theory and practice[93]. Boaz knew this too and was willing to obey God in total submission.

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91 Deuteronomy 25:5-6

92 This custom called *'Su ni opo'* (i.e.,'*Welfaring the widow*') is done by marrying off the widow to her late husband's next of kin who is required to take care of her needs.

93 Matthew 22:24

SAMPLE

James, the Apostle and brother of Jesus, spoke to the same principle of submission[94]

It must be noted that not everyone submitted themselves willfully to God like Boaz. While he willingly submitted to this principle and had his name written in gold, another man, Onan[95], the son of Judah, willfully disobeyed this submission principle of caring for the weak ones in families and suffered grave consequences.

Though the ancient practice of levirate marriage is no longer expected of us by God today, we must remain intentional and deliberate in the care for the weak[96] ones among us, especially widows and the fatherless. The moral lessons for us, modern humanity, are the requirement to submit ourselves to civic responsibilities within our communities.

Have you considered submitting yourself totally to God, even if it is inconvenient? Are you ready to obey His Word so that life will be easier for others?

94 James 4:7
95 Genesis 38:8-10
96 James 1:27

SAMPLE

Principle 4: The Law of the Betrothal

In the Bible, betrothal—often referred to as engagement—was a formal and legally binding agreement between families that marked the beginning of a marriage covenant. Though the couple did not yet live together or consummate the marriage, the relationship was considered legally binding–as if they were married.

This agreement often involved the payment of a bride price by the groom to the bride's family, symbolizing commitment and responsibility. The woman was regarded as the lawful wife of the man she was betrothed to, and any act of unfaithfulness during this period was treated as adultery.

In Old Testament times, a betrothed man was even exempted from national duties.[97]. That was how seriously God took betrothal. In the story of Ruth, Boaz understood that betrothal meant total commitment. When you tell a lady that you want to marry her, you must mean it. You should not be fixated on "sampling" her sexually before you marry her.

Today, what we call "dating" should actually be treated with the same commitment as betrothal. Once you make a mental

97 Deuteronomy 20:7

SAMPLE

decision to marry someone, you ought to start relating and treating them like one who is betrothed to you.

In the ancient practice of betrothal, sexual intercourse before marriage was forbidden because it was considered sacred and required total commitment from both partners. Sexual activity is not a casual act and must never be treated as such. When done before the actual marriage, it leaves an indelible mark on the minds of participants, thereby blurring their sense of reasoning.

The dating season should be a period of finding consolidations and for clarifying ambiguities. Find out essential details about each other: Where do you intend to live? Who are their parents? What's their history and antecedents? How was their schooling experience? What are their favorite songs? Are they committed to a local church? If in the university, what is their department? Who are their close friends? What is their social life centered around? These foundational enquiries should take precedence over rushing into "going to bed" with your intended spouse.

In the Boaz story, we see that he knew he was not the nearest kinsman, yet he set up a scenario where the nearest relative would concede to him, because he had already set his heart on Ruth. So he went ahead to make enquiries about her and asked all the right questions, carefully marking off his checklist. "Whose young

SAMPLE

woman is that?" he asked[98]. It was when he discovered that she was available for marriage, having just returned to Bethlehem as a widow. And promptly, he started looking for opportunities to impress her.

Boaz would not even as much as allow Ruth to go and glean in other people's fields. He offered her food and comfort regularly and left clear instructions with his workers to deliberately leave behind grains for her, giving her more than she could ever glean by herself. He protected her and affirmed her virtue, appreciating her unwavering commitment to Naomi, her mother-in-law.

They rarely started talking first. Boaz never took advantage of Ruth. Instead, he pursued her honorably, following the right process. On her own part, Naomi started encouraging Ruth, teaching her how to play her romance cards wisely. Yet in all of these, Ruth remained submissive to obey the process.

One must be careful not to rush into marriage simply because they are in love with someone. Take things slowly. Consider the wise counsel of your parents, guardians, and trusted people in positions of authority over your life. Never sacrifice wisdom on the altar of 'I've fallen in love.'

98 Ruth 2:5

SAMPLE

In your pre-marital relationship, always be careful to submit only to the principles that will protect you and your intended spouse. Even in other forms of relationships, submit to the principles of integrity, mentorship, and order. Refuse to let feelings and emotions solely dictate your decisions. Yes, by all means, listen to your inner self, but much more, place premium value on the Word of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Principle 5: 'Elders at the Gate' Principle

Another principle that was adhered to was the principle of "elders at the gate." We often think that courts are a recent phenomenon; not so. There have been legal frameworks and governing systems since ancient times. There were courts even in the time of Ruth as people submitted themselves to constituted authorities.

The "elders at the gate" were like the court or the city hall of today. They were meeting places of only those with the highest honor in society, just like the Supreme Court or supreme council. Whatever decisions these distinguished people made were final.

Even after Boaz had agreed to be Ruth's kinsman-redeemer, he understood that the decision had to be ratified by the elders at

SAMPLE

the gate[99]. So, he went to the elders who served as witnesses to his marriage to Ruth and blessed him.

Anyone hoping to get married should consider the consent of their parents. However, for a proper interface with society and legal institutions, ensure that your marriage complies with the laws of the land. Likewise, business relationships, ventures, and partnerships should be subject to proper legal agreements.

Principle 6. Law of the Sojourner

The Bible consistently emphasizes equal treatment and protection for sojourners (i.e., foreigners residing in Israel) alongside native Israelites. This principle is found all across the Old Testament.[100] Essentially, the "law of the sojourner" dictates that foreigners should be treated justly and afforded the same courtesy as native citizens.

Whenever a foreigner comes to your place, you must entertain or at least be favorably disposed to them. That was how Abraham and Sarah entertained angels without knowing that they had come to give them the good news of the child they had been waiting for.

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99 Ruth 4: 1-2
100 Leviticus 19:33-34; Numbers 15:15-16; Leviticus 24:22

SAMPLE

You have to be outstandingly kind and go out of your way to show generosity to immigrants. It is imperative that we bless the sojourner.

Ruth is a type of all non-Jewish Christ followers, a symbol of Gentile nations, one that was not initially chosen by God, a nation that was not privileged. Her first husband moved to Moab out of economic pressure, and while there, he married her.

Today, there are two categories of people: the Ruth category and the Orpah category (Naomi's second daughter-in-law).

It is not out of place to deduce that both categories have stumbled into the faith and become members of the "commonwealth of Israel", the household of faith. Yet it remains a truth that only a few believers in Christ understand how to maximize the privileges and kinship they have in Christ Jesus.

Orpah turned back from following Naomi because she did not understand that everything she truly needed in life was ahead of her. Ruth, however, faced the same uncertainty but made a decision not to turn back. Still, she may have nursed in her heart that fear – wondering if she would be accepted in the land of Israel, given that she was a Moabitess from that "cursed" nation.

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Ruth came into a new kingdom, and all the principles of submission mentioned earlier began to work in her favor. Her submission to Naomi, her benefactor and mother-in-law, became the convergence point for her to step into all the blessings she later would come to enjoy. Right at the gate with the elders, they began to prophesy[101] over her, and those prophecies were fulfilled in due course.

Ruth was given national recognition because the elders at the gate, who represented the government, accepted her as their own, submitting to the "law of the sojourner".

Submission is guaranteed to bring you into the Hall of Fame. It will promote you. The question then is:

'Who or what am I supposed to be submitting to?' Within the answer to that question lies the key to your great success in life.

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101 Ruth 4:11-12

Personal Reflections

I am interconnected with other people and serving my environment in the following ways:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

What are the six *(6)* principles in this chapter that engender submission?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

SAMPLE

(5)_____

(6)_____

Match each of these principles with these six headings. One example has been done for you

1. Resource Allocation–Gleaning
   - Hospitality
   - Widow Protection
   - Judges and Arbitrators
   - Foundation for Marriage
   - Kinship responsibility

"Whenever someone holds a wrong concept or thinking pattern, they will inevitably take the wrong action." True or False?

_____

I have decided to begin my journey of submission by:

(i)_____

(ii)_____

(iii)_____

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Practical Applications

- In order to survive in life, I need to be a functional part of a community and constantly build relationships.

- I recognize that in my sincere response to the question of 'Who or what am I supposed to be submitting to?' lies the key to my great success.

- I must consider submitting myself totally to God even when it is NOT convenient.

- I must be ready to obey the Word of God so that life will be easier for others to live.

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Chapter Six

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CHAPTER 6

Submission, Not Subordination

SUBMISSION AND SUBORDINATION ARE WORDS OFTEN USED interchangeably, even though they don't mean the same thing.

Subordination means being lower in rank or working under another person. It also means inferiority of rank or position. The word 'subordination' is the same as that used when God differentiated between the sun and the moon at creation[102]. So, a thing is subordinate when it is ruled by another. Also, when He made humans, He placed them as superior to everything else He

102 Gen 1: 16

SAMPLE

had made[103]. God made mankind–the crown of His creation–and made every other thing He created to be subject to them. We read in the Bible that God created man in His image; male and female He created them. Then He blessed them and commanded them to rule. That means the man and the woman are supposed to govern, subordinate, subdue, or rule over the creation of God. Contrary to what we have believed for so long, the male is not supposed to rule over or govern the female. As appealing and as sensible as that may sound to the ears of fallen humanity, it is contrary to the set divine order at creation. Positioning female mankind (made in the same likeness as her male counterpart) as subordinate is contrary to the will and the purpose of God and should not even be controversial except for the sake of mischief or to exhibit sincerity of ignorance.

Here is how God set up His order for mankind: Man was the first to appear, and from him was the woman made. They were supposed to be partners to fulfill the work and ministry of keeping the earth blessed and useful for the glory of God. They were made to be His representatives upon the earth realm and to govern (i.e., exercise rulership) over it. They were both put in the Garden of God as partners[104].

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103 Gen 1: 26 and 28
104 Gen 2: 18

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Sadly, certain schools of thought have misinterpreted–howbeit innocently–the word "help." Now, this is actually what it means. It is from the Hebrew word 'ezer (ay-zer'), which when translated into the English language means to *give aid or assistance*. The word also means "to surround, to protect," which means that God is saying He will create for man a help that will surround him with aid and assistance; in fact, that will shield and protect him. This means the purpose of a married woman is to surround her husband with aid and assistance. Clearly, she couldn't be expected to perform that role if she is pressed under, ruled over, and governed by her husband. Remember, at the beginning of creation, they were both given the same blessing of dominion and rulership.

Purpose Of A Woman

The wife was described in the Book of Proverbs[105] as being her husband's "crown," yet a deeper check of the root meaning of that word will reveal the context as not being the crown on the head of a king, as our limited understanding of the word 'crown' had been. In its primitive root, the word 'crown' in Hebrew means 'to encircle for attack or protection'. That means a wife is supposed to encircle her husband against the attacks from

105 Proverbs 12:4

SAMPLE

outside. That agrees exactly with what the Book of Genesis said of the woman as being a "Help-Meet" or "Helper Suitable."

That truly is what it means to be a "crown". She is supposed to guard and protect him from external aggressors who may want to take advantage of him. This truth explains why wives protect their husbands from attacks and from being vulnerable to "human predators". The same word in Hebrew also means 'to compass', that is, 'to achieve, to accomplish, and to obtain'. That is why a wife will not rest until her husband has achieved, accomplished, or obtained. Sadly, when she seeks to do any of these, mischievous people and predators derogatorily call her the "mother hen."

A wife's primary assignment is to see to the success of the man she is married to. She must never lose focus and divert the love that is meant for her husband to her children. It will backfire. A wife's primary assignment is also not to have children but to give aid and support to her husband. The secondary role of raising godly seeds is only possible when the primary assignment has been handled well. This role does not make the wife inferior or subordinate to her husband; neither is she superior to him. The highly touted concept of inferiority and subordination only came about as a result of the Fall of mankind. So, then let us endeavor to track "how" and "when" in the beginning. Did the words

SAMPLE

"govern" and "rule" thwart the understanding of the concept of submission?

First, Eve failed to "surround" Adam, to aid and assist him, to remind him of what the Lord had said concerning the "forbidden fruit"[106], and so Satan was able to take advantage of the gap to destroy both of them. What followed was the judgment that God pronounced[107]; that the serpent would crawl on its belly and feed on dust; that the woman would have more pains at childbirth and that her desire for her husband would be a kind of usurping desire while he in turn would seek to rule [or govern] her. One of the Early Church fathers, Augustine (4th-5th century), in his writing[108] on the same scripture (Genesis 3:16a), opined that *"this is not a command, but a punishment. The woman would desire to dominate [or manipulate] the husband but the man will dominate her instead,"* which are all consequences of the Fall as pertaining to the relationship between the genders.

The dominion mandate given to humanity was to rule over the creations and creatures of God, not over another image of God. However, it didn't all end in just the wrath and the judgment, for right in the chaos was revealed God's mercy and

106 Genesis 3:6
107 Genesis 3:13-16
108 Early Church fathers, Augustine (4th-5th century) 'The City of God and the Literal Interpretation of Genesis'

SAMPLE

reconciliation plan to nullify those judgments–and that plan can be traced right from the Book of Genesis[109] and through to the Book of Revelation. We must then be careful not to confuse the judgment of God with the instruction of God. All we see today in oppression by men and manipulation by women are never biblical commands of God, but rather the consequences of sin. Let this reader note that the expression[110] in Genesis 3:16b remains only descriptive and not a prescription by God; it must not be taken as God's ideal for male-female relationships. Therefore, a wife's submission is not from a position of the husband's rulership, rather, she is to continually surrender to her original assignment (as co-heir) in oneness and unity even when the situation is not agreeable or convenient. This is the submission required of a woman in marriage.

What Submission Is Not

Having a different opinion or viewpoint about an issue is not a lack of submission or insubordination. Asking questions, seeking clarification, or raising a point of objection is not a lack of submission either. Leaders and everyone in positions of authority should learn to allow for different perspectives and provide compelling viewpoints when making decisions. They

109 Genesis 3
110 Genesis 3:16b

SAMPLE

should also be gracious, kind, and patient with others, just like God is to us.

In the story told of Sarah and Abraham concerning the treatment of Hagar (Sarah's maidservant), we saw Sarah and Abraham hold contrary opinions, and Sarah's position was upheld by God because Isaac was to be the child of promise. Also, people must be encouraged to speak truth to power. Paul spoke truth to power by addressing Peter and the church leaders of his day because of the double standard they displayed during a meeting of Gentile and Jewish believers. Paul, the Apostle, through this action[111] demonstrated that the gospel was about embracing God's grace for all people through faith in Jesus Christ and not an extension of Jewish culture. Debilitating traits like sycophancy, eye-service, redundancy, prejudice, lack of innovation, stagnation, disunity, avarice, greed, rumor-mongering, apathy, and the like flourish in systems, cultures, families, corporations, or relationships where mutual respect and mutual submission are not common practice. Everyone should have a heart posture of mutual submission. [112]

111 Gal. 2:11
112 Ephesians 5:21

SAMPLE

What True Submission Is

Submission is total obedience to the Word of God. It is not stupidity. Allow me to explain this with the story of Mordecai[113]. Apparently, after the decree of Cyrus the Persian for the Jews to return to Jerusalem after 70 years of exile, some Jews did not return but chose to stay back in Persia. One such individual was a man called Mordecai and his family.

Though the Bible says that we should submit to the authority of the land, Mordecai chose to disobey the King's decree that everybody worship the man he had said should be worshipped, one Haman, the Agagite. His reason: the God of Israel had expressly commanded the children of Israel[114] to reserve their worship solely for Him. Additionally, Jews were taught from childhood that they were greater than Agagites. So Mordecai must have questioned why he should bow to Haman, the Agagite, and disobey his God. Mordecai was probably the only man in the whole of the kingdom at that time who understood that there was a prophecy that said that they (the Israelites) are greater than the Agagites, and as long as Haman was an Agagite, he would never bow down to him. The question then becomes, 'Where are you compromising rather than submitting?' For wherever

113 Esther 3:1-5
114 Exodus 20:1-2

SAMPLE

the word of man contradicts the Word of God, we must choose rather to obey God.

Submission Develops In You The Fruit of the Spirit

Submission helps to develop the fruit of the Spirit in one's life. While we are busy obeying the Word of God, the fruit of the Spirit develops automatically within our hearts.

It is just like the story of David, who had been anointed king and knew he was king in waiting and that it was a matter of time. So, at several times, when King Saul tried to kill him, David would run for his dear life. Yet Saul would stop at nothing to ensure that David was dead; he persisted in his chase. Then a day came when the Lord delivered Saul into David's hands to see if he would take his own pound of flesh," but because David vowed never to touch one who had the anointing of God upon his life, he suppressed the urge to avenge himself against Saul[115]. The divine principle that the action of David taught here is that every man will reap whatever he sows. If it were in our day, many would have judged him stupid for sparing the life of his arch-enemy. His next action could be interpreted to reveal senility[116]. It is humanly unimaginable that David would bow down and prostrate himself with his face to the ground to someone who wanted to take his

115 1 Samuel 24:3-4
116 1 Samuel 24:8

SAMPLE

life, but the truth is with David's demonstration of humility of heart and submission to the Will of God, great conviction of heart fell on his assailant, so much that Saul began to prophesy[117] concerning the young man. Submission does not make one stupid; rather, it develops in one the fruit of the Spirit, which elevates one! David would again catch his King and arch-enemy, Saul, and again he would refuse to lay his hands on him despite pressure from his friends[118]. Every time David spared Saul's life, he developed more love, patience, and perseverance.

Gene Edwards, in his classic book *"Tale Of Three Kings,"* quipped that whenever you find yourself as a David in the house of Saul, it is because God wants to kill the Saul tendency in you. If you submit your self-preference in that atmosphere God has put you in, before you know it, every Saul tendency in your life would have been removed. Submission processes us and makes us better people! It must be that God took David to the cave and the wilderness to make him a more mature man. Later in life, when his own son rebelled against him, he was confident that he would not succeed in taking the throne from him because he had not forcefully taken the throne from Saul. David understood enough that the 'seed of submission' sown rightly will never germinate and produce a 'harvest of regret.'

117 1 Samuel 24:16-20
118 1 Samuel 26:9-11

SAMPLE

We must learn to honor and respect the people who have gone before us and do everything within our power to ensure that they never see sorrow at our hands.

Submission Is Totally Relying On God

Submission trains us to rely totally on God. There came a time in the history of the children of Israel when they did not submit to the instructions of the Lord. The Lord had given them a specific injunction concerning the Sabbath[119] which they broke. They disobeyed this command for 490 years. They failed to observe the statutory sabbath years for the land, so the Lord sent them into captivity for 70 years. With their exile came many false prophets, advising them not to build houses, marry or get involved in any meaningful, profitable activities in the land of their captivity. Only the prophet Jeremiah gave an accurate word from the Lord; urging them to marry, build houses and get involved in the affairs of the land because they would be there for 70 years for the land to receive her Sabbath. This sounded contrary to the opinion held by most. Yet Jeremiah continued to urge them to submit themselves to God's Word and to rely on Him to take them through the 70 unbroken years of exile.

119 Leviticus 25: 1-7

SAMPLE

Daniel had to take a position only when he understood through the prophetic books that, although they were in captivity, there would be deliverance if they would turn their faces towards Jerusalem and pray [120]–an exact thing he did consistently. Then God began to reveal His plan for His children and the rest of humanity to Daniel. However, as expected, opposition arose against him. A decree intended to trap him went out; no one was to pray to any god except to the king of Babylon, but Daniel[121] opened his windows towards Jerusalem and prayed three times a day, as his custom was. Opposition will always arise whenever you are submitting yourself to doing the Will of God, but if you would maintain your purity, your conviction, and submit your heart to God, you will ultimately overcome those opposing you, and the Name of the Lord will become glorified by all.

As he and his colleagues chose to submit to the commands of the God of Israel not to eat food which had been dedicated to Babylonian idols, they came out ten times better than their peers in the king's court[122]. Like Daniel, we too must refuse whatever looks like a special privilege if it will compromise our hearts. When you follow the due process and do not allow yourself to be compromised, but instead wait on God, you will come out

120 1 Kings 8:38-39
121 Daniel 6:10
122 Daniel 1

SAMPLE

better than the people who have compromised. God will never fail those whose hearts are submitted to Him.

Submission Brings Honor

Whenever believers submit themselves to God's higher purposes, they bring honor to Him before men. It doesn't take long to realize that Daniel did not start to wear the garment of religion because he saw persecution coming. There was nothing he did after the decree went forth that he had not been doing. As Daniel submitted to God's word, he dared the king's decree on worship and was thrown into the lions' den. An opportunity presented itself for the glory of God to be seen by the Gentiles [123].

It is more important that believers be found innocent in the sight of God than in the sight of men. Our submission to God will eventually make us loved by the people around us and attract them to knowing and serving our faithful and merciful King.

Momentarily, the king, in wild excitement about Daniel, began to preach the message of the God of Daniel. It may be safe to conclude that the person we so desperately want converted does not need our Bible, but our submission to God. What followed this encounter with the God of Daniel influenced and redirected

123 Daniel 6:20-22

SAMPLE

the spiritual direction of the whole heathen nation as the king, in finality, issued yet another decree.[124] Clearly, and without a shadow of doubt, our submission to God and standing for the honor of His Name will always bring men to honor Him. Now may be the time to consider in what ways the Lord has convicted you of the need to submit. We may need to submit our appetites, our cravings, our mindsets, and our traditions so we can better embrace the Word of God.

We all have to kill the compromises in our lives and choose to stand out like Daniel.

SAMPLE

124 Daniel 6:26- 27

Conclusion

The life of Jesus Christ, the most influential person to ever walk the earth, serves as the ultimate example of influence and great success. His journey led Him through the wilderness, a place where His desires for comfort, fame, and control were tested and refined.

The wilderness represents a season of contradiction, where individuals may feel overlooked and uncertain of their purpose. Yet, it is precisely during this time that they are purified and strengthened. Jesus' experience shows that the pursuit of power, fame, and self-gratification can hinder growth and must be overcome. The wilderness process highlights the strength found in submission, revealing it as a powerful form of resilience rather than weakness.

SAMPLE

Joseph's story in Genesis also shows that submission to God's process, despite trials and temptations, leads to elevation and the fulfillment of destiny. Joseph's time in prison didn't define him; instead, he used his gift to serve others, regardless of his circumstances. Serving your gift in all situations ensures that your abilities are noticed and valued, helping you stand out and make an impact. Excellence and diligence in serving your gifts, even in difficult situations, lead to recognition and transformation.

Submission allows you to trust in God's greater plan and find strength in surrender, just as Jesus and Joseph did.

Individuals like Ruth, Esther, Joshua, and Timothy achieved great success through submission to leadership and serving their gifts. Jesus, by submitting to God's will, showed how submission leads to influence and great success in God's plan.

Paul's mentorship of Timothy demonstrates how submission can transform someone into a key figure in God's plan. Elijah and Elisha's relationship shows that submitting to leadership can lead to powerful blessings, such as Elisha receiving a double portion of Elijah's anointing. David's followers' submission to him, exemplified by their act of bringing him water, shows how loyalty and devotion inspire respect and greatness.

SAMPLE

Leaders who submit to God and lead with integrity inspire great success in others, while leaders who abuse their power face judgment.

The early church's submission to God's command resulted in the global spread of the gospel.

Submission is not about diminishing oneself, but it is the kingdom's way to influence and authority. It refines, elevates, and prepares individuals for extraordinary results, ultimately leading to great success.

- The path of submission is an integral part of the transformational, culture-redefining, transgenerationally impactful life of Christ in His earthly sojourn. We should seek to follow the same path as well.

- Submission should no longer be perceived as an infringement on our rights or power. Submission itself is a form of power—power that comes from trust and surrender to God's greater plan. It is in submission that we find our true strength. Just as Christ Jesus did when He passed the test in the wilderness, so should anyone who desires to be used by God go through and pass the submission test as well.

SAMPLE

- We must consciously and deliberately submit to the process of God in our lives. Even when the condition seems difficult, and the system is not so welcoming, we must learn to stay where God has placed us and submit to it by serving our gift(s) there.

- Submission should not just be about following, but much more about preparing oneself for greater influence.

- Submission to leadership is essential for growth, as illustrated by the relationship between Elijah and Elisha. The latter's submission led to a double portion of the former's anointing when he was taken into heaven. This story demonstrates that submission to a leader can lead to powerful blessings.

- Unlike leaders who abuse their authority, a leader who submits to God and treats their followers with respect will inspire great success in those around them.

- Submission to God's direction leads to extraordinary results. The early church, consisting of only 120 people, was only able to spread the gospel worldwide because she submitted to Christ's command to wait for the Holy Spirit. Despite never witnessing such a manifestation, they obediently waited in the Upper Room.

SAMPLE

- Submission is not only about following but about becoming part of something greater, demonstrating that submission truly makes one great.

- Submission will not make you less than who you are. Rather, it is time to rethink success and see submission as the missing link to the great success we all desire.

SAMPLE

Personal Reflection

1. I shall yield myself to others till I am fully matured and become a better person only as I do the following things:

_____

2. I should hope to develop more love, patience and perseverance when I do the following:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

3. To submit my self-preference until every evil tendency in me is removed, I have to:

(i) _____

(ii) _____

(iii) _____

SAMPLE

Practical Application

- The Lord has convinced me that I need to embrace the Word of God and submit to Him: my appetite, my cravings, my mindsets, and my traditions.

- The person I so desperately want converted from sin does not need my Bible, but my submission to God.

- Just like David, I, too, can expect that the 'good seed of submission' I have rightly sown into others will never produce a 'bad harvest of regret' for me.

SAMPLE

OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

Must I Submit?
Focuses on the benefits of submission. It debunks the myth that submission is perpetual servitude, noting (according to the Scriptures) that greatness lies in submitting oneself to a process. This book will help you maximize your leadership potential.

The Secret Black Book Of Wealth
Provides simple wealth creation answers to complex human financial problems. Read this book and you will be wise!

The Secret Golden Book Of Wealth For Couples
Empowers couples with insights on how to work together in unity in spite of their unique differences and also provides tools to help marriages successfully navigate the different stages of family life, with focus on parenting and financial management.

Half The World — *No Just a Number*
Half The World delves into the core purpose of womanhood, highlighting the unique strengths and abilities that women possess.

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OTHER RESOURCES BY THE AUTHOR

Subscribe to *@thefunmijohnson* YouTube Channel for more resources from the author.
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reTHINK SUCCESS

In this transformative book, bestselling author Olufunmilola Johnson redefines submission as a divine principle that forges harmony and unlocks true leadership. Inspired by reactions to her earlier work, *Must I Submit?* (2005), she dismantles long-held misconceptions by exploring how submission—in marriage, family, church, the workplace, and society—is not oppression, but a liberating path to freedom and power. Through six insightful chapters, Johnson reveals how yielding wisely can overcome pride, fear, and past wounds, laying the foundation for lasting influence and thriving relationships.

Whether you resist submission or have experienced its power, this book will shift your thinking, mend strained connections, and align you with God's design for a life of impact. True success begins when we yield wisely. Submission isn't weakness—it's the path to success, influence, and greatness.

Submission isn't weakness—it's the path to success, influence, and greatness.

Olufunmilola Ayoola Johnson is a multi-talented trailblazer whose impact spans entrepreneurship, finance, and social advocacy.

As the CEO of Whitefield Foundation, she has spearheaded poverty eradication efforts in Africa, empowering over 320,000 women and youth through innovative programs, with a goal to reach 1 million soon. Her 'Couples Breakfast' initiative and influential radio show, 'FamilyTodayWithFunmiJohnson,' promote familial harmony and relationship-building.

Funmi's diverse expertise in money management, investing, and life coaching enables her to catalyze transformative change in individuals and organizations. With an unwavering commitment to creating lasting impact, she seamlessly balances her professional pursuits with her role as a devoted wife, mother, and grandmother.

Connect with this inspirational force for empowerment and enlightenment at @thefunmijohnson on all social media platforms.