

Refreshing TIMES

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Editorial

Refreshing Times is a quarterly publication whose vision is to spread the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ and make disciples of all nations.

It is our prayer that through this publication you can grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you are yet to find peace with God, all you have to do is to believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved.

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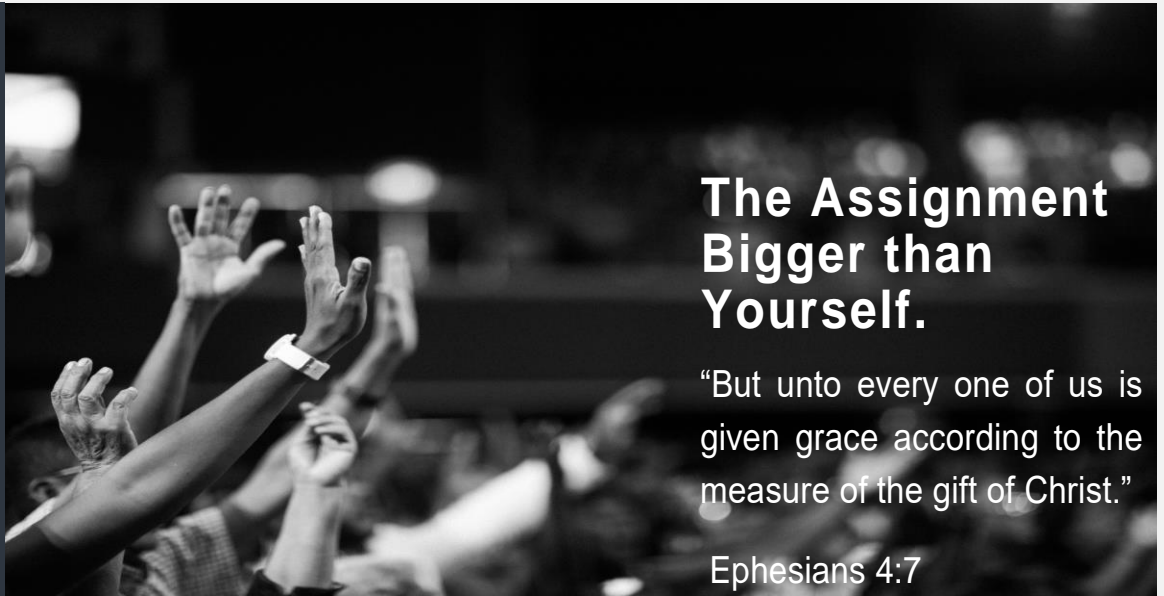
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"We have not been called to keep busy but for each one of us the assignment is precise and clear."

"God's assignment can overwhelm our human minds ... until we look up to Him to hold our hands and see us through."



The Assignment Bigger than Yourself.

"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."

Ephesians 4:7

Each one of us is assigned and is supposed to be on a mission to fulfil our God given assignment.

However, it is not always the case. Not everyone is on a mission. Some are absconding duty, and they have reasons validating their absence.

Like Jonah, some have twisted the mission. They know exactly what God wants them to do but they choose to do something different which falls within their comfort zone and in the process, they draw satisfaction from the sense that they are keeping busy. We have not been called to keep busy but for each one of us the assignment is precise and clear. It is tailor-made and has no ambiguities. Peter's apostleship was directed to the Jews, the circumcised, while that of Paul was to the Gentiles.

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles)" Galatians 2:7- 8

How Shall This Be?

"Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Luke 1:34

Perhaps you are in that moment in life where like Mary, you ask yourself, "How shall this be?" That feeling is not awkward and unique to you, a lot more people are feeling the same. God's assignment can overwhelm our human minds and provoke unbelief until we look up to Him to hold our hands and see us through.

"The assignment is normally bigger than you so that you can depend upon Him who assigned."

As we depend upon God to do His work, we are not only enabled but the flesh is deprived of glory in the process. God once warned Gideon to cut the numbers of fighters against the Midianites to ensure that the army was not going to take the glory.

"And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many

for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." Judges 7:2-3

As you sojourn and execute the assignment God has given you, always remember that victory does not come from your number of chariots, that is your competences, or talents etc.

"There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength." Psalms 33:16-17.

This resonates with the words of our Lord Jesus Christ who said that *"without Me we can do nothing"* (John 15:5).

The Bible has so many illustrations of people who never felt comfortable and adequate in the face of their God given assignments. Moses felt that he needed a more perfect speech for him to comfortably face Pharaoh. But God knew exactly what Moses needed, His presence.

...the Assignment bigger than yourself.

Nothing assures you of victory than when God accompanies you.

Jesus said do not worry about what you shall speak.

“But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.” Matthew 10:19

Jeremiah felt that he needed to grow before yielding to the call of God. But then John says: *“I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.”* 1 John 2:13. God’s kingdom has a place for all and sundry, and you to rise and embrace your assignment.

A people greater than yourself

To inherit their possession, Israelites had to face a people greater than themselves. Nations not only in big and fortified walls, but whose dwellers were huge in stature! When the news about the giants reached the camp of Israel. The weak wailed, those of little faith lost their sleep, and to some going back to Egypt was still an option. The size of your giants is proportionate to the assigned grace.

Every time God throws people into the deep end, His intention is not to drown them but to mature them and awaken a great sense of dependency upon.

“You may say in your heart, “These nations are greater than we are; how can we drive them out?” But do not be afraid of them. Be sure to remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and all Egypt: the great trials that you saw, the signs and wonders, and the mighty hand and outstretched arm by which the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same to all the peoples you now fear.” Deuteronomy 7:17-19

Your need is already met

“And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large.” Mark 16:3-4

As the women were on their way to the grave of our Lord Jesus, they had a worry on their mind about the assignment which was ahead of them. Who was going to roll the stone? There is a song which we used to sing saying “the angel rolled the stone away”. Their worries did not materialise the stone was rolled away already. God is aware of our needs, fears and worries and has already made a provision for all. You could be worrying about a stone that has already been rolled away! Arise and pursue the purposes of God.

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“Yet, my brothers, I do not consider myself to have ‘arrived’, spiritually, nor do I consider myself already perfect. But I keep going on, grasping ever more firmly that purpose for which Christ grasped me. My brothers, I do not consider myself to have fully grasped it even now. But I do concentrate on this: I leave the past behind and with hands outstretched to whatever lies ahead I go straight for the goal—my reward the honour of being called by God in Christ.”

Philippians 3:12-14



“Naturally there are different gifts and functions; individually grace is given to us in different ways out of the rich diversity of Christ’s giving.”

Ephesians 4:7 J.B.P New Testament Version

“Because of this, King Agrippa, I did not stand in dispute against the Heavenly vision, neither was I disobedient to it.”

Acts 26:19

Encouragement:

And tell Archippus, “Pay attention to the ministry you have received in the Lord, so that you can accomplish it.”

Colossians 4:7

You Have Need Of Patience.

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”

Hebrews 10:36

What is Patience?

Patience is staying power. This is the power that enables one to endure until they complete a task, assignment or endeavour no matter the cost, the challenges or difficulties. Patience therefore gives on the ability to complete.

Patience is the power to be consistent or unchanging. This means to remain consistent in your character and belief no matter the circumstances.

Why do you need patience? You will need patience in the following areas:

1. When dealing with people.
2. When facing challenges.
3. When you fail
4. When you wait for the fulfilment of a promise.
5. In anything that requires a process.

Every person is surrounded by people at every sphere of life be it family, at work, at school, neighbours or at church. These people are often at different levels of maturity, different

characters and different levels of understanding. It takes patience to be able to relate with all these kinds of people.

“When God asks us to be patient, He is not asking us to do something that He does not do Himself.”

Why is patience required when dealing with people?

1. People Will Fail

It is important to understand that people will fail us many times. The problem however is not the failures of the people around us, but how we handle ourselves or even treat them when they fail.

Peter failed and denied Jesus three times and it was not the only instance where Peter failed. The patience of the Lord was manifested on how he handled the failures of Peter. When Jesus rose from the dead, he said to the women, *“But go your way, tell his*

disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you”. (Mar 16:7) Why did the Lord mention Peter by name? He knew what was happening in Peter's heart at this point. Peter was distraught, discouraged or even felt condemned. That's why He called out Peter by name. Therefore patient people always seek to restore people even when they fail.

Often we become impatient when people around us fail. The Apostle Paul was impatient with the young man John mark who had deserted them on their first missionary journey. *“And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus”* (Act 15:37-39)

About Author

Enoch Tofa

Enoch is an apostle, a preacher and profound teacher of the Word of God. An author. He is the leader and founder of 'Jesus Is Alive Ministries,' a growing ministry which has a good presence and footprint in Zimbabwe.

Jesus Is Alive Ministry's vision is 'Winning souls and equipping the saints for the work of the ministry.'

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“Sometimes our children, brothers, leaders will fail. How we handle those who have fallen will be the greatest test of our patience”

On the second mission when Barnabas insisted on taking along the young man, Paul refused highlighting how the young man had failed and ran away during the first mission. There was a sharp disagreement between the two apostles on account of John mark. However, Barnabas through patience gave the young man a chance and took him along. It is years later that we hear Paul requesting for the young man sighting that John Mark was useful for the ministry. *“Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry”.* (2Ti 4:11). The patience of Barnabas turned the unprofitable young man into a profitable young man in the ministry.

“When people around us fail, it is an opportunity to demonstrate the patience of God in us.”

How do we handle those around us when they fail? When people around us fail, it is an opportunity to demonstrate the patience of God in us. Patience is a fruit of the Spirit. When God asks us to be patient, He is not asking us to do something that He does not do Himself. Though the children of Israel rebelled against Him in the wilderness and tempted Him many times, the scripture says, *“But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.”* (Psa 78:38-39). That is why God forgives. He is patient with us when we fail.

The Scripture calls God the God of patience. *“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus.”* (Rom 15:5). It is the same patience that He has imparted on us. It is this same patience that we ought to use when dealing with those who fail.

He says, *“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”* (Gal 6:1). Why the spiritual? The spiritual are those who are able to be patient with others.

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” (2Co 4:7). We have this treasure but the treasure is housed in earthen vessels. ‘Earthen’ means something made of the clay or soil, therefore it is frail and weak. That means it can break or fail. When we are impatient with those who fail we can even lose the benefits of that treasure that God has put in them. How many people have we discarded, written off and ostracised because they failed? Ours is a ministry of reconciliation and this ministry requires great patience. *“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation”* (2 Cor 5:18).

It takes patience to restore and help those who have failed. How many people have committed suicide because there was no one patient enough to restore them in their moment of failure? Recently I was reading an article of a headmaster of a certain school who committed suicide. The suicide note read thus, “I have failed”.

This is the patience that that the father in the parable of the prodigal son demonstrated when his son failed and squandered what he had given him in riotous living. His patience led him to receive and restore the son who had failed. Sometimes our children, brothers, leaders will fail. How we handle those who have fallen will be the greatest test of our patience.

You have need of patience...

“Live together in peace, and our instruction to this end is to reprimand the unruly, encourage the timid, help the weak **and be very patient with all men.**”

1 Thessalonians 5:14



“But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

James 1:4 NKJV

“For patience is necessary for you; that, doing the will of God, you may receive the promise.”

Hebrews 10:36

Encouragement

“But the servant of the Lord must not wrangle: but be mild towards all men, apt to teach, patient”

2 Timothy 2:24

About Author

Tinashe Mlambo

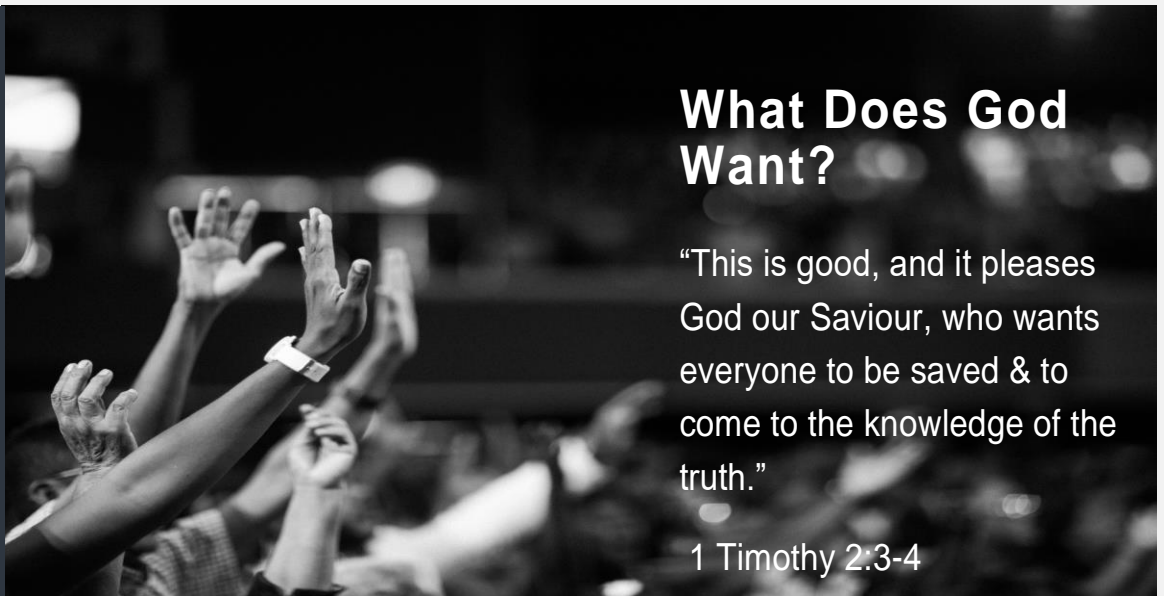
Tinashe is an able minister of the Word of God. He serves as a pastor at New Creation Fellowship Ministries. He believes in preaching the good news of Christ to all and sundry.

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He is married to one wife and they have two children.

“The most expensive thing in this world is a man’s soul.”

“Life is more than the things a man has or doesn’t have, because for all a man can possess, if he could gain the whole world and lose his own soul, he loses everything.”



What Does God Want?

“This is good, and it pleases God our Saviour, who wants everyone to be saved & to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

1 Timothy 2:3-4

In life its always important to know what God wants, because whatever God wants, it is always good, beautiful, and perfect (Romans 12:2).

However, the Scriptures also specifically tell us what God wants. So, what is it that God wants? if God is Self-Existent and Self-Sufficient, what can He “want”?

“This is good, and it pleases God our Saviour, Who wants everyone to be saved & to come to the knowledge of the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:3-4

What is it that God really wants for a man? God's primary desire is a man's primary need... it is first and foremost for him to be saved. **GOD WANTS ALL MEN TO BE SAVED!**

Why does God want all men to be saved?

There are several but fundamental reasons why God wants all men to be saved, and it does help for us to look into the Word of God and see why this is God's primary desire:

1. Man’s Greatest Need

God wants all men saved because that's a man's greatest need. The Lord says that a man's greatest need isn't the things he has or doesn't have, it is not a job, a business, a spouse, a child, a house, a car, properties or even pleasure. A man's greatest need is for him to be saved. This is because of what a man's life consists of. The meaning of life is defined by the Lord when He says, *“for no one's life consists in the abundance of his possessions”* (Luke 12:15).

Life is more than the things a man has or doesn't have, because for all a man can possess, if he could gain the whole world and lose his own soul, he loses everything. Hence God's primary desire is a man's primary need, it is for him to be saved.

“God's primary desire is a man's primary need... God Wants All Men To Be Saved.”

2. The Value of a Man’s Soul

Everything in this world has a value, everything has a price, and the most expensive thing under the sun isn't any natural resource like gold, oil, diamonds or a man's artwork like a painting, a building, a yacht, a private jet... the most expensive thing in this world is a man's soul. Because even if a man has all the riches the world can give, even if he was the richest man alive and yet lose his soul, he would be the poorest.

“A rich man without Jesus, is a poor man with money.”

To emphasise this truth, the Lord asked a soul-searching question, on the value of one's soul. He once asked what the price of a soul *“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matthew 16:26). The price of our souls cost God His only begotten Son. The spotless blood of Jesus is the single most precious thing that can save a man's soul.

...what does God want?

3. Man Cannot Save Himself

For all that a man can do for himself and do for others, there is one thing he cannot do for himself: he cannot save himself. Of all things man can do, in all his exploits, his discoveries in science, knowledge & technology there is one thing man can't do. That is to save himself..

“A man without Christ is a danger to himself and to others. He is helpless and hopeless without God.”

The apostle says a man without Christ *“is dead in his trespasses and sins”* (Ephesians 2:1), the prophet says that the heart of a man without Christ is *“deceitful & desperately wicked, who can cure it?”* (Jeremiah 17:9). Its apparent, man is not in a condition to save himself from sin, death or eternal damnation. Man's greatest need is that of a Saviour. Because that's the one thing He can't do for himself. He can't save himself because he is altogether evil. This is why God wants all men to be saved, no one else can do it for him, man cannot save himself.

4. Man is a Slave

Even if a man wants to be saved, even if he could realise the need for a Saviour, he is no longer his own, he sold himself to the devil. Through Adam's disobedience of God and obedience to satan, man became a child of disobedience. The Scriptures say, *“Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey?”* (Romans 6:16). Today man remains a slave of satan, he is bound & blinded by the devil. All of God's efforts to save man fall on deaf ears and blind eyes. For *“if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”* (2 Corinthians 4:3-4) As such because a man is sold under sin, sold to the devil, God and only God, can deliver Him.

The redemption & deliverance of man required a power more powerful than the power that held man. That's why the Lord says in Matthew 12:29 *“For who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man & plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house.”*

“The deliverance of man required a power more powerful than the power that held man.”

5. Man's Death Displeases God

The last, and possibly the most personal reason why God wants all men to be saved, is that God takes no pleasure in the death of a man without Christ. *“As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn from their wicked ways so they can live.”* (Ezekiel 33:11) It is for this reason God was personally in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Salvation is personal to God; it displeases Him personally and He personally wants all men to be saved. The apostle reiterates the same desire God has, that He does *“not want anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”* (2 Peter 3:9). That's why of all things that happen in heaven, only one thing is said to make heaven and angels rejoice: it is the salvation of a sinner (Luke 15:7).

So, what has God done to save man?

If God wants everyone to be saved, why can't everyone be saved? What is so difficult about getting a man saved? If God created a man, what's so difficult about saving him? God has done everything in His power and person to save mankind.

A man is saved by Grace through faith, there is nothing else to be done except to believe, *“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord & believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”* (Rom. 10:9) God has done everything necessary to save man. All that is required is to simply believe in the Lord Jesus.

“For all that a man can do for himself and do for others, there is one thing he cannot do for himself: he cannot save himself.”

“God has done everything necessary to save man. All that that is required is for a man to simply believe in the Lord Jesus.”

“For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So, they have no excuse for not knowing God.”

Romans 1:19



“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.”

John 3:16 NKJV

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

2 Peter 3:9

Encouragement

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season”

2 Timothy 4:1-2