

HOW TO KEEP YOUR HEAVENS OPEN

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It is God's desire to keep the heavens over your head open. It should be your desire to see the blessings continue to flow towards you. When the heavens are open, God rains down ideas, wisdom, favor, blessings, and power for accomplishment and to create wealth. The purpose of rain is for fruitfulness, therefore open heavens guarantees fruitfulness in all of life endeavors.

However, there are things to guide against to avoid a closed heaven. To keep the heavens over your head open, you need to consider carefully the points I am about to raise and discuss, and make sure you abide by the principles revealed.

1. AVOID SHORT CUTS

Any short cut to success will eventually cut your joy, celebration and life short.

"Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away from me Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' "(Matt. 4:8-10)

Satan was telling Jesus that there was no need to take the road that God has chosen for him. He was insinuating that it was "too long and the suffering will be too much, but I have come to offer you a short cut, just bow and worship me." Jesus knew his tricks, and rejected his offer. You must be bold and courageous enough to reject the offer of the devil. Avoid all illegal and dubious means of making money. Reject all forms of fraudulent practices. Avoid short cuts to making wealth.

Success is the fruit of diligent application of the word of God.

"The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty. A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare." (Prov. 21:5,6)

"Dishonest money dwindles away, but he who gathers money little by little makes it grow. (Prov 13:11 NIV)

Successful application of the word of God leads to success in life and ministry. Be patient as you pursue success and wealth.

2. DO NOT GIVE IN TO PRIDE

Success can become suicide depending on how you attend to it. Pride goes before a fall. Once you allow pride into your life because you are succeeding and climbing to the top, you will soon start falling down.

"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." (Prov. 16:18)

"The fear of the Lord teaches a man wisdom, and humility comes before honor." (Prov. 15:33)

Remain humble and submissive to God, your church leaders, parents and elders. Avoid talking to people sarcastically and with arrogance. Treat people with respect and dignity. Avoid boasting about your achievements and wealth. Don't look down on people because you are up there. Keep a low profile and keep pride and arrogance out of your life.

The way up is down. Humility is the way up. He that pours water into the hands of another shall himself be honored - another shall pour water into his hands. It is servanthood before mastership. You must be a disciple before you can become an apostle. Learn to serve no matter how God is blessing you.

3. DON'T ALLOW YOUR JOB OR BUSINESS TO EAT UP YOUR TIME FOR GOD

God our Father loves fellowshiping with His children. You were created to have fellowship with God. As a result of man's rebellion, that relationship was broken. Through Christ' sacrifice, man is once again given an opportunity to fellowship with God. So, you are born again in Jesus Christ to have fellowship with God. Therefore, if anything tries to come in between that fellowship, God will resist it.

"Come near to God, and he will come near to you....." (James 4:8)

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Heb 10:25)

God wants you successful and prosperous, but if the success is taking you away from him and he waits for you to do something about it, and you don't, he will allow the devil to attack you to get your attention. This is one of the major reasons Christians have problems. If you want to keep what God has given you, keep your zeal for God, keep your relationship with God alive. Don't get carried away by openings and success. Don't allow your job to cut you off from fellowship. In fact, don't accept a job that will not give you time to worship God at least once a week. If you cannot attend church on Sunday, at least you can attend a fellowship within the week somewhere. You must do what you have to do to keep your fellowship with God, for God is a "Jealous God". He wants your fellowship so badly he sacrificed his only begotten Son to get back into fellowship with you. It cost the life of many missionaries to get you into relationship with God. Don't play with your quiet time with God. Don't allow anything to take away bible study from your daily routine. Don't let God take away what you have to keep your fellowship. Don't turn the clock backwards for yourself. Manage success well to make sure you have time for God. (Pause a little and think on this point I have just discussed).

4. DON'T ALLOW YOUR GIVING AND TITHING TO DEGENERATE TO A COLD SENSE OF DUTY

Don't tithe grudgingly anymore. Be always motivated by love in your giving and tithing. You will always give to the one you love, because you can't love without giving. Love is all about sharing with another. You can't expect God to continue to give to you without you giving to him. Giving and tithing becomes exciting when it is done in love.

Tithing and giving is an expression of gratitude for all the blessings being received from God. Not to give or tithe is to be ungrateful. It is not enough to say with your mouth, "I am grateful Lord for what you are doing." He wants you to show it. How would you like a man or woman telling you he or she loves you without a single proof. When you don't tithe and give, that is what you are doing to God who is blessing you and your work – you are saying, "I don't love you".

Never think your tithe and giving is too much. If you say it is too much, you are asking God to cut down your income. Never think that without your tithes the work of God in your local church will not go on. Maintain clean thoughts as far as this subject is concerned. Give and tithe willingly and cheerfully, for God loves a cheerful giver. Be a delightful giver and tither, and God will continue to increase you.

5. DON'T FORGET THE MINISTRY WHERE GOD BLESSED YOU, AND THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED AND ENCOURAGED YOU WHEN THINGS WERE ROUGH FOR YOU

"Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor". (Gal. 6:6)

It will not be right for you to deny God praise and worship for your success. It is not your intelligence, skill and hard work alone that gave you the breakthrough and success. God helped you to the top and you must acknowledge it and use what He has given you to promote His work.

The church or fellowship that supported you in prayer and encouragement should not be abandoned for another because your status has changed. Some people rise in a small church, and as soon as they rise, they realize that their mates are in bigger congregations and they leave to the bigger congregations and the support that God wanted them to give to the smaller congregation to enable it rise is not given. You must understand that God has a reason for lifting you up. He lifts people up to fulfill an assignment in their local assembly among other reasons. Be a faithful person by being loyal to your local church that helped you.

Do not forget all the people God used to support, encourage and pray for you unto victory. Don't just give them a gift and throw them away. Let them remain a part of your life. Anyone who stands and helps you in time of trouble or in a time when you were nobody financially is a good friend that needs to be maintained. Do not be afraid to share with them what you have. Don't be selfish and self-centered.

If you are not grateful, you will be sorrowful.

God always places people on every man's path to success. When success has been attained, it is not right to forget the people God used to help, encourage, give, counsel and pray for you. Learn to appreciate the men of God used to help you and also the friends and brethren. The Local Church must not be abandoned for another bigger congregation. If God blessed you in that small church, remain in that church and make the church thick and big. It is an error for you to leave because you now have a car and you are growing bigger financially, and you now feel that your mates are not in that church and you must go to the bigger assemblies where you think your mates are and

opportunity for business abounds. This is dead wrong. If you have erred in this matter already, go back to your former assembly.

As a Pastor I know what it means to invest into people's lives hoping that when it is well with them, it will be well with the ministry, but all of a sudden, the Pastor's heart is broken because the brother or sister just left not because there was a quarrel but for another assembly for selfish reasons. I tell you the pain in the Pastor's heart over their leaving will reach God and affect them. Many Pastors have been wounded by many brethren they poured out their lives and energy and gifts into to lift them up. Let us stop this evil.

If you are planted in a church by God, and he blesses you there, remain there and serve him faithfully there. Be one of the pillars in that assembly. Jesus Christ did not forget his faithful twelve apostles that he used to start and continue his ministry here on earth. He appreciated them by honoring them in his heavenly city.

"The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb". (Rev. 21:14)

If you have the same spirit with the Lord Jesus Christ, act like him.

6. SUCCESS DOES NOT MAKE YOU EQUAL WITH YOUR PASTORS

Never challenge or look down on your Pastors because you are now making it in life and in finance. If you do, then it means you have become proud, and God opposes the proud. Therefore, you will be frustrated.

"..... God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble". (James 4:6)

To challenge your Pastor is to rebel against a God ordained representative. That automatically, is rebellion against God. You can be rebelling against God and remain prosperous.

"He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me." (Matt. 10:40)

Don't allow your success to enter your head. Though you become a famous Pastor tomorrow, you can never be the father of your own father. A servant is not greater than his master (Matt. 10:24). Your ministry may become more famous than your spiritual father's ministry that does not make you higher than him. You are only fulfilling your calling. You can never father your father. You may have more money, more connections, traveled more and be more famous, but you will still remain his son and never his father. God does not break ranks. God does not break order. There is orderliness in his kingdom.

Never challenge your Pastor. You can never be his equal. Don't destroy your destiny. Remain loyal and committed to him and his ministry. The day you start looking down on him, you start dying. The heavens will first give warning, if it is not heeded, it will close over you. Say, **"God forbid."**

Don't allow your success to become your own undoing. Money or no money, your pastor is your pastor and will remain your pastor. Promotion or fame, your pastor remains your pastor. Therefore, remain submissive to him and the blessings will continue to flow unceasingly.

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you." (Heb 13:17)

7. KEEP AWAY FROM SIN

Sin kills and destroys. It hinders the flow of blessing. Sin is rebellion against God. You can't be in rebellion and expect the same God to continue to bless you. If you want the heavens over you never to close, walk in holiness. Flee all appearances of evil, determine in your heart to be faithful and loyal to God and his word.

"Surely, the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." (Isa. 59:1,2)

"He went out to meet Asa and said to him, 'Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you. But if you forsake him, he will forsake you.' (2 Chron. 15:2)

Don't allow openings, success and prosperity to give you ungodly friends that will lead you away from God. If you forsake God's ways and laws, he will forsake you, and whatever you see, you are on your own. Never abandon your relationship with God. You can never be busier than King David, Abraham, Joseph and some notable figures who served God faithfully in Bible days and yet were prospered by God. You don't have an excuse. May be you will like God to take away what you are giving as an excuse so that you can have time for God. Don't allow him to forsake you. You know how long it took before your prayer for breakthrough, a new job, promotion, a business of your own, husband, or wife, children etc was answered. Don't throw it away now. Be faithful and loyal to your God.

Many have lost what God gave them because they did not give attention to pleasing God with their lives. Don't close your own heaven. Don't close the door that God has opened

8. DON'T LIVE YOUR LIFE IN FEAR.

"What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me." (Job. 3:25)

I want you to believe you will not lose what God has given you.

"What the Lord has done shall be permanent, nothing shall be added and nothing shall be subtracted from it. God does it so that men will fear him." (Eccl. 3:14)

The fear of loss always brings loss. Because it will make you to begin to think and do things you ought not to do in order to keep what you have. In many cases, believers have compromised their salvation to keep a blessing God gave in the first place.

What God gives, God is able to keep. The spiritual law is that what you fear will be drawn to you by your thoughts of fear. Your thoughts have power to attract to you and bring into manifestation what you are afraid of. Don't fear. You won't lose what you have been given by God. If you will live by all I have been teaching so far, you won't lose what you have. Don't fear.

9. DO NOT OPPRESS THE POOR BECAUSE YOU ARE RICH

"Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the LORD will take up their case and will plunder those who plunder them." (Prov. 22:22,23)

Do not take advantage of the less privileged. Do not ill treat the poor because you are rich. If you do, you will pay for it. God fights for those who cannot fight for themselves. Don't let pride enter you and make you break this rule. Whatever you have, God gave you by His divine mercy. Don't abuse it or make God angry with you.

10. DO NOT WITHHOLD THE WAGES OF YOUR WORKERS

Make sure you pay salary as at when due. Keep to your promises. Don't starve your workers.

"Do not defraud your neighbor or rob him. Do not hold back the wages of a hired man over night: (Lev. 19:13)

"Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor and needy, whether he is a brother Israelite or an alien living in one of your towns. Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and is counting on it. Otherwise he may cry to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin." (Deut. 24:14-15)

Upgrade their salary and allowances as your business grows. Pay them what will be enough for them in relationship with the prevailing cost of living. Never forget that as you have a vision so also your employees. As you want comfort, so they want comfort. Make them comfortable working for you, and they will put in their best, and your business will continue to grow. Don't be tight-fisted. Every man works when well motivated. Keep your promises and pay on time.

11. ASCRIBE GLORY AND HONOR TO GOD FOR ALL THAT HE IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE AND BUSINESS.

Never make the mistake of ascribing your success to a man or woman God used in helping you. Never ascribe your success to your brilliance, smartness, skill, education or connections. If you do, you are looking for trouble. God says his glory he will share with no man. He works for men that men may honor him and give him glory. Not to give him glory is to look for trouble. Not to give God glory is to call for a closed heaven so

that those and the things you ascribed your success to can now come and open the heavens.

"When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands; his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpion. He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it may go well with you. You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today." (Deut. 8:10-18)

1. If you can't appreciate God, you will depreciate in Him.
2. Your attitude determines you altitude.
3. If you are not grateful, you will be sorrowful.
4. Your appreciation of God guarantees your progression.
5. Gladness of heart makes the face to shine. (Prov. 15:13)
6. Your praise guarantees the defeat of your enemy. 2 Chron. 20
7. Thanksgiving not only honors God but prepares the way for God's salvation.
8. Praise is an instrument of warfare.
9. Praise is God's instrument for the defeat of the enemy. An example is the wall of Jericho.
10. Gratitude guarantees ceaseless rejoicing. And rejoicing makes the bones fat. (Prov. 15:30; 17:22)
11. Praise invokes the presence of God.
12. God is always where his name is being praised. (Ps. 22:3 KJV)
13. When He is praised, more favor flows.
14. Praise is an act - an intentional heart-felt act.
15. Praise is an expression of inner feelings towards God.
16. Praise is an expression of faith; and faith is unquestioning confidence in God and his word.
17. Praise connects one to the source of life, power and all good things.
18. Praise guarantees a happy life.
19. Progress in life and in ministry is enhanced by gratitude.
20. Praisers are high flyers. Be a praiser and you will be a high-flyer.
21. Your giving and tithing is an act of praise and gratitude to God. Show it and don't just say it.

12. MAINTAIN INTEGRITY

Keep your appointments. Speak the truth at all times. Do not be fraudulent in all your dealings. Repay your loans as at when due. Keep to your agreements with your suppliers, financiers, clients, employees or employers. Be a man of your word. If you lose your customers, suppliers, clients, financiers or your job through your own unfaithfulness or carelessness, you will have to blame yourself and not God or any other person. Be faithful. Be a man of integrity.

CONCLUSION

If you will walk by these rules and counsel that I have given in this article, you will keep the heavens over your head open and you will continue to be fruitful and prosperous. Make sure you don't set any rule or point aside. Live by all and you will continue to testify.

SUCCESS TIT-BITS

- 1. Everything big started small. Don't despise the days of little beginning.**
- 2. Great men are not made in the open, but in the secret place of training, skill acquisition, suffering and frustrations, determination and pursuit.**
- 3. Your enthusiasm about your product is more important than your name card.**
- 4. Know your product so well to be excited about talking about it with so much life that it will compel people to buy it.**
- 5. Your conviction of the effectiveness of your product energizes you to talk excitedly about it and make good sales.**
- 6. Enthusiasm brightens a man's face which makes him to gain acceptance.**
- 7. Unhappiness dispels potential customers.**
- 8. Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit will bring you to the place of abundance.**
- 9. Don't kill the dream - Execute it!**
- 10. Don't play with that idea running through your mind it may be what God will use to change your world.**
- 11. Procrastination is the thief of time. It is an enemy of progress. Kill it, before it kills your opportunity to make it.**
- 12. Always act now!**
- 13. Success is not by chance but by choice.**
- 14. Tithing secures open heavens, and open heavens guarantees rain.**
- 15. As rain is for fruitfulness so are ideas.**
- 16. Create a powerful relationship with your customers at all the connecting points.**
- 17. Learn to exceed customer's expectations.**
- 18. Evaluation is a key to improvement.**
- 19. Don't be scared of adversaries. It is the adversaries that lead to advancement.**
- 20. What you will eat later, you have to fight for today.**

WISDOM FOR ASSOCIATION

1. Openness makes relationship easy and sweet.
2. Networking is essential for success in life and in business.
3. Those who do not respect your assignment disqualify themselves for a relationship.
4. Your assignment determines your close associates.
5. Never discuss your problem with someone incapable of solving it.
6. Those who will not respect your time will not respect your wisdom either. Avoid time wasters.
7. Define every relationship to manage your life and your time well.
8. Don't submit leadership of your life to friends.
9. Your friends are counselors, but you are the decision maker. Your decisions determine your experience.
10. Those you hear always have influence over you.
11. What you see friends do repeatedly, you are likely to copy consciously or unconsciously.

RENEWING THE MIND

1. Worry drains energy and weaken a man spiritually, mentally and physically.
2. Winning starts with beginning.
3. Every tough time is a phase which must pass away.
4. No problem is a dead - end.
5. Failure is a set back and not defeat. You only become defeated when you throw in the towel.
6. Every problem takes time to grow. Don't give it time, but deal with it.
7. Your potentials are released when you face challenges.
8. You never succeed going along, but you succeed going against.
9. What seems to be your breaking point is your breakthrough point.
10. All mountains are movable only by faith.