

Stepping out
when life
never gave you
a chance.

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A pocket leadership guide book.

Preface

As a young graduate Engineer knocking about after my National youth service program, I stumbled into an office which looked like it had something going on inside. I would later make my way into the middle of the central office, requested to see the proprietor.

“Yes can I help you”? A tough-looking Italian woman asked, with her eyes blazing on my startled face. “I came to fix your broken computers”. She would later come back with a rusty, old looking printer she claimed nobody could fix. In a flash of optimistic faith, I said “I can fix it”.

Few days later I would return with the broken printer perfectly in working order. She called me the “magic-man”, introduced me to her team of staff, and offered me instant employment.

No interview needed!

You are likely to get frustrated with life hoping you deserved a chance with it. Every day new lives are thrown into the world competing for a space that is already becoming smaller. The world is shrinking and life gets tougher by the day.

But the big question remains, do you stand a chance? YES!!! and NO!!!

Vacancies for jobs exist but for only one person, out of the many applications that gets thrown in. You stand a chance as much as you make your application. And as much prepared and suited for the job you are.

YES! The job may be yours if you apply for it and work hard at it, given what it takes. NO! if you never gave yourself a chance.

The buck comes back to you- what do you want?

The world works in a way that anything thrown skyward comes back to you. There is always something not allowing you get to where you dream to get to.

A pregnant mother has to push so hard against the natural wish of not wanting to have birth pangs and pains, she just have to, if she must carry a baby.

It's never enough to stuff ones heart with big dreams and wish it goes well.

You are your self's best candidate.

Have you ever observed the grim on the faces of defenders or goal keepers who man the goal posts in football matches? Such seriousness on their face is a good scare for any daring would-be scorer. No defender wants to let you walk past his vital area "just like that" with a pat on the back.

The simple belief of every goal keeper or defender is that nobody can have a go at his own yard, much less score a goal. The striker stands no chance at all in this regard. He courts been kicked down. He risks an injury. He risks not even scoring at all. He takes on these risks and make his way forward, hoping for his big moment at the goal post.

The attacker or striker armed with stupendous gut and self-belief delves into the turf of his opponent. On the mind of every striker is that he can score goals no matter the grit and agility of the defenders or goal keeper, even if he is not given any chance at it. Scorers create chances. Life is about creating chances even when you are not given one.

Life comes along with as much chance as you believe you have and none at all if you accept the fact you have none.

This book highlights spectacular characters and their own circumstances which could have made it hard, if not impossible, for them to get a chance with life. They did get their own chances. Their rather short stories and how they made it on is what this little book is about.

In the end it is about you and how you may take your own chance with life.

The Bible remains the substance and prime inspiration of this book.

Chapter one

Exploring laws of opportunity

The simple reason God wouldn't reply to complaints or complainers is because He has set in place natural and spiritual laws that simply represent His motives and intents.

Such laws or principles "speak" for Him. For that, God saved Himself the boring task of always trying to make Himself clear all of the times.

He made a peculiar code of "questions and answers", slotted it into the human brain- what we rightly call intelligence.

He would also later awaken the spiritual faculty of man through the process of the "new birth". His broad intention was to allow the major domains of man, namely- his mental and spiritual faculties deliver outstanding results as way of returning value to His profound investments in man.

God in effect left man with sufficient mental, spiritual resources to be able to "crack" into the cache of life's many secrets. Such secrets are wrapped in the universal laws and principles.

Man is an exploratory being. Anyone who can explore ultimately can explain. And anyone who can explain to others can easily rule over others.

God has watched man lift off from the cradle of Eden, perfecting his own social and scientific civilizations along the way for the past 6000 years, breaking new grounds and finding paths.

From his ambitious launch into the outer space to exploratory incursions into the farther clusters of the solar systems, only confirms God's gifts to mankind- the innate gift of curiosity and power to make discoveries.

Space scientists only discovered principles that could take man over and above the limiting effects of the pull of gravity into space. We are in effect only limited in life by what we haven't yet discovered.

Do you think Science and Technology does not fascinate God as much as it does man? He is the Mastermind of man's peculiar intelligence, the power that drives man's innovative aspirations. He loves to watch the episodes of man's scientific advancements, especially, the ones that ultimately add good values to humanity. Scientific advancements is only an intelligent way of exploiting laws that govern the universe.

In effect, anyone who gains mastery of the laws God set in place will bear rule.

One other of such laws is the law of opportunity.

What is an opportunity? **"A time or set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something"**

(Oxford dictionaries)

Time and circumstances are two important elements of the opportunity scheme. While one is more or less fixed, one changes. Time is a fixed factor for everyone, because everyone in the world have equal amount of 24 hours daily, irrespective of geography or location.

Some people are more naturally disposed to certain opportunities because of their parental background or some advantageous circumstantial placements. Good and quality education or certain early exposures to some kind of positive influences could possibly put some people nearer the borders of favourable opportunities.

But lack of such "favourable opportunities" does not mean that all is lost.

Sometimes lack of favourable opportunities could become an advantage somewhat, because, "the hungry man is an angry man". A man hungry of success is angry. Such anger well managed can become a positive reinforcement towards success.

A man in flight instinctively must run as fast, if not faster than the danger coming behind him. God balances out certain “early disadvantages” in people by freely endowing them with enormous innate abilities and grace that pushes them onto the zone of favourable opportunities.

Jabez is a perfect example of someone who was born into a difficult fate. He was born into a painful circumstance (1 chronicle 4:9). He revolted against his fate and escaped the clutch of failure.

Indeed everyone irrespective of his or her personal circumstances can receive divine supplies and support from God to face the world. God would reveal the secrets to the principles and laws of life to such a one whom so chooses to come into an abiding relationship with Him (proverbs 25:2, Deuteronomy 29:29).

There are several gifts God gave to man.

Amongst such rich blessings is the gift of time.

Time is an essential part of the scheme of opportunities. Time makes up the seasons.

In other words if one understands the seasons (His own peculiar seasons), such a person can come out successful.

God made the times and seasons to help us understand that certain things are meant to happen at certain specific times.

“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.” (Genesis 8:22, NIV)

“Seedtime” is a kind of natural opportunity that behoves every “seed-bearer”, who we rightly all are, to make a move at the right places and right times. It is a call to do the right thing at the right time within the personal context.

What should one really do with his time?

From the very first law God put in place, “seedtime” is a special opportunity window for anyone, irrespective of climate or circumstance to make preparations for the sowing of seeds.

The word “seedtime” as used in this context may seem to have misleading narrowness of application. It doesn’t just confine itself to the farming endeavour as we know it; it has applications to well other areas that are time-driven. Virtually all human activities are.

In other words, one’s hourly, daily, weekly, monthly or even yearly activities contributes to the toll of one’s personal opportunities. If opportunities are time-driven, then making good use of the time one has, gives one a fine go at certain opportunities when they finally show up.

Getting ready for opportunities is not a one-off endeavour. It's a life-going effort at doing what is required before the "harvest time"-when the person physically gets hold of the moments, realises his set goals, ambitions or dreams.

What are seeds anyway? Seeds are those "things" in our possession (gifts, talents, callings, career) which if put in their right places or uses bear abundant fruits.

Time is also a seed in itself just like all other human activities.

What makes up the quality of your daily activities?

Your activities represent a primary source of seed in your hands and what you do within such times will ultimately determine the quality and not necessarily the quantity of your harvests.

So you can start creating your own opportunities today!

So how do I go about it? Begin by constructively using your time effectively in the areas of your callings. God was very meticulous in using the word "seedtime" for the first time, because He was referring to the only occupation known to man in the garden of Eden-which was farming-the planting of seeds.

Was God's choice not rather too generic for a world that has moved away from primitive occupation of land tilling and seed planting to well several many occupations? God was in effect referring to any occupation you may find yourself in.

"Seed" itself refers to any activity or endeavour that has potentials of reproducing itself in material forms, many times over.

When you consciously sow into your thoughts and imaginations what you want to become and hold it up in your spirit and speak it forth as much as you can with your mouth, you're sure sowing a good seed for a life time. This is good spiritual and mental preparation.

Mental and spiritual preparations are important steps in courting opportunities.

Before America could send a man to the moon J.F Kennedy had voiced this lofty aspiration to the people of America in clear, inspiring terms. He charged his Scientists and Space Technology experts to work towards this dream.

His target was the turn of the century. Every moment was gainfully utilized in research and devoted planning of the eventful lift off to the moon.

America was swept into jubilation just at the verge of the time he predicted, when an American Astronaut became the first human to walk on the surface of the moon.

Preparation was a natural principle for the realisation of J.F Kennedy's space dream for America.

Dream is a seed. Joseph had a dream and would wet the seed of his dream by walking in righteousness. In all the unsavoury experiences he had, he held strong to the power of the image of his dreams.

Dreams set the stage for the emergence of opportunities. God has awakened the spiritual aspect of man by the process of new birth, so He can insert permanent images of His plans and purposes, for people's lives in their spirit.

What are your dreams? What has God shown you to become? The seeds you have in your hands must be thrown into this fertile earth of your imaginations and dreams, renewed and powered by the spirit of God.

Opportunities become easy to take for ready hearts. What do you think is the reason 10 of the 12 spies could not reach the promise land?

Their hearts and minds were contrary to the mission mandates of the team. They voiced the image they saw in their own hearts. What was the Image they saw of themselves? "Image of the grasshopper".

The rest 2 men, Joshua and Caleb with ready hearts became champions of their own belief.

The surprising thing about laws and principles is their seeming obvious simplicity. The practice and adoption of certain basic principles could produce outstanding and amazing results.

What was on Einstein's mind when he postulated that high velocity invisible particles when collided with certain heavy objects will produce fantastic volume of energy?

Most principles that produce very outstanding results are ones we may simply ignore for their apparent simplicity of concept. No one has ever seen an "atom"- but the discovery of atoms has changed the world- ranging from electronics, military hardware, medical and scientific gadgets.

Principles and laws though invisible shape our world.

As a child I had unrelenting admiration for Engineers. I was never a top maths talent; in fact I was less than an average student in maths. But my desire was passionate as it was deep-rooted. I told everyone in my home I was going to be an Engineer.

I could see myself walking in and out of construction sites fitted with heavy machineries. It was almost an exploding ambition which drove me to limits of hard work. I often wondered how I could come that far given my scant aptitude for numerical subjects.

The power of a dream has unnatural consequences-can launch one beyond the borders of his or her natural abilities.

President Barack Obama made history with his audacious ambition. What gave him the nerve to take a shot at the white house? It should have been clear to him that “coloured people” are at best second class citizens in a nation that has been swayed by racial prejudices?

His seeming obscurity in time past was not because he was mentally or physically handicapped. He was in the back ground etching out his plans, honing his skills, nourishing his precious ambition.

At such moments of preparations little is heard of the great man. When he was ready to unleash his dream, the world stood still. Obama was not a spontaneous miracle. He had ploughed his mind and mental universe for many years, in the odd, secluded corridors of personal learning and education.

He was sure one day too soon; he will arrive, not as a shabby contender, but one ripe and well-nurtured for the run.

Why would the King of Babylon “seed” chosen young men in his elite crew for a set period before presenting them for the task in hand? (Daniel 1:17-18). Had any of them failed the series of mental and spiritual aptitude set for them, such a one wouldn’t have been deemed fit for the challenges that lay ahead.

Preparation is a mental faith in the emergence of practical opportunities. Anything one dreams to achieve, without the requisite preparation, is only having a generous romance with illusion.

Lack of preparation hurts ones chances more in the face of opportunities than not having had the chances at all. Preparations arms one with mental and psychic confidence to take on the world.

If you check out many of the faltering performances at the “big stage”, one could easily spot a weak and wobbly preparation in the closet.

Sometimes people are drawn away from the “drill room” by the charm of instant success and greatness.

Hastiness is a human flaw. Perseverance and dedication to goals and dreams is a virtue that draws from the endowments of patience and honest determination. Once one’s mind becomes lit by the glow of a dream, such a person is no longer burdened by the price to be paid to achieve success.

Preparation may take days, week’s months and years of painstaking addiction to the tenets of good performance.

What are the opportunities waiting for you to take them? Have you thought of the steps you are required to take to meet face to face with such opportunities and if they happen to come by, will you be ready to take them?

Opportunities are cycles of seasonal invitations to do something about where you are at the moment.

Opportunities are not the “terminal positions” of a good job or political positions many people jostle for. These are just consequences of the work done within the invisible realm of the opportunity scheme.

Jesus understood the power of preparations. Little wonder He seized every moment to get hold of books in the synagogue-empowering His spirit and cultivating His mental atmosphere, getting ready to encounter the world (Luke 4:16)

What could John the Baptist be doing in the scorching sun of the wilderness every day for a task that would only require 6 months of his whole life?

He was ready getting set for the big stage. (Luke 1:80)

One of the most important laws of opportunities is preparation.

Chapter Two

David's first chance.

From the impressive file of gallant men standing in the battlefield to face the dreadful philistine-giant, Goliath, David stood no chance, at least in the practical sense. He was the last child of eight men of Jesse.

David had immense disadvantages. He was born into a culture that had great deal of respect for the firstborns, and so little for the lastborn', so age was a prime factor in many fronts, including the choice of selecting people.

David had been confined to the grazing fields looking after the family flock of sheep's. He was at least unlikely to be reckoned as a bright military talent.

But in his mind he felt he had what it takes to face up to the giant. Could he get that chance, of moving into the battle scene to prove his mettle?

Naturally speaking David would have no chance. He was facing what many people today face in their quest to emerge onto the scene of life.

David's experience was to an extent a collision of two powerful forces. The first one coming from the inside of him, the second from the crowd.

David had in him an unconquerable urge to step up to the scene of action and prove his might, in a battle which was almost drowning the brave men of Israel, and silenced their fighting records.

On the other hand was an equally powerful force coming from his kinsmen, pouring ice-cold words on his hot desire.

David's rise to glory was never offered on a platter of gold. He practically waded through the rigours of convincing a people already sold to tradition and fear. Historically all warriors Israel ever had were people of military renown. David wasn't.

Listen to the following conversations, one coming from David's older brother Eliab: *"Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle"* (1 Samuel 17:28)

Then he turned from him toward another and said the same thing; and these people answered him as the first ones did (30)

Now hear what the king of Israel, Saul said to David when he heard of his desire to fight the giant.

“And Saul said to David ; *“You are not able to go against this philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth”*(33).

These were no ordinary words coming from the king and David’s brother, Eliab. They indeed believed that David stood no good chance.

What could be going on in David’s mind? He was hoping to face a battalion of soldiers in the person of Goliath, so were equally the battalion of thoughts on his mind. He could have muttered silently to himself:

“So am I going to flush down this hunger to conquer, surging up in me, just for mere human words?”

He was already anticipating a good outing, and had on his mind a positive outlook in the battlefield.

A person who goes out to win must first of all get a chance. How would I get a chance when I have not been offered one by the way?

Even though it is believed that God set the stage to throw up David unto the stage of national prominence, he equally had a hand in it. He may have understood Gods plan and chose to follow it through, not allowing sling shots of negative words make an early defeat of his towering vision.

It is always not easy to stand up against formidable opinions. Opinions that weighs high in the social, cultural and spiritual scale. Eliab, David’s eldest brother, by his age and experience, was right in his estimation of David’s, high ambition. His impression was conventional.

Saul on the other hand was a spiritual personality as Israel’s anointed king. His words had a measure of divine authority, whether at that moment he had right standing with God or not was secondary. At least in matters that were affecting Israel at that point in time, his words still had ingredients of God’s authority.

David’s response to these words was impressive. *“Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by the beard and struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised philistine will be like one of them, seeing he defied the armies of the living God”* (1Samuel 17:36)

There is always a first chance at everything in life. It is always never offered.

People must offer up themselves to take on emerging opportunities. Like a magnet, a yearning heart will get the chance it craves for, one way or another. Of all the men standing in the battle ground, only one man stood a good chance-David.

Fighting records or long military career was not what was needed in this matter. After all almost all the men who lost courage and heart before Goliath were proud men of strong military records. Did they stand a chance like David did?

There may be many chances that come the way of a man, one links to another. But there is one big one waiting somewhere. It is a chance that is tied to the root of a man's destiny. It's one that puts a man's name on the list of honours. So it was to be for David.

David was not going to let up this chance. Anyone with spiritual understanding will always sense this kind of big chance coming in his or her life.

"...The race is not to the swift Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, nor favour to men of skill, But time and chance happen to them all... (Ecclesiastes 9:11)

David understood this moment as one historic chance he had to seize. He pressed his case and got this first big chance. He was not frightened by the sheer size of the challenge of facing up to a giant.

He could scale the barriers of human discouragements one after another in a peculiar graceful manner. He was never unruly to those who never believed in him. When you can prove to those who never believed in you that you can, it's far more a dignified way to settle scores. Words are vain, when you know you can. David would keep sealed lips, with his eyes on the frontline of action.

There is something about grace that is silent yet admirable.

David was a combination of graceful carriage, and wise courage. He had the quiet strength of a man who understood the power of God's deep endowments. He knew when the time is fully come he would pull the trigger from the quiet pool of an inner strength.

Life is succession of chances. One chance made good begets another. Did David make good the chance when he was confronted by a lion in the grazing fields?

He did not pass them up. He went headlong and won the day for himself. He had in his personal records proven ability in defeating wild animals that came for his lovely sheep's.

Was it a surprise that another bigger chance showed up waiting for his response?

In the end he slew the fearsome giant, Goliath, and the camp of David's enemy collapsed. What if David never took that golden chance, almost slipping away?

Facing Goliath was almost a death-daring adventure.

What if it wasn't David that accomplished that heroic deed? Life is an equal opportunity gift,

It could have been just any other person who chose to do what David did.

What was going for David? He had courage. He was fearless. He was able to recognise opportunities when they came. Most of all he had a relationship with God, which bolstered his faith.

What were the things that David never had? He had no imposing military or fighting records. He was a very young person, perhaps with little physical endowments. He was not the preferred actor in this kind of combat.

Life does often pitch people against array of "disadvantages". It is in the hand of each individual to press home ones strong points in the face of life's opportunities.

Life in itself is a scary phenomenon. God chose to hide the beautiful things of life in places that requires the brave in heart to dare. It takes godly courage to have a go at daunting opportunities like the one before David and make a fight for it. Thank Heavens that David took his golden chance.

There are many of such first chances waiting for everyone.

Chapter Three

David's second chance.

Have you ever imagined being mocked by people of your own constituency? An anointed king almost stoned to death by his own people, not minding the gravity of his person?

David was again in the firing line, with not even one person who had faith in him.

"And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; And had taken the women Captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.

So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God" (1Samuel 30:1-6)

Time and again life presents us with difficult choices. The above story took place in the life of David when he had barely finished his running battle with Saul.

His kingship and kingdom was in disarray. He had the choice to desert his kingship for reason of the many fiery encounters that beset him.

One thing that gets going for David was his bold courage. In the last verse of the above passage, it said:

"David encouraged himself in the lord"

His courage led him to yet take another chance with fate. As we advance in life so the risks and challenges become bigger.

In David's first encounter with the giant, Goliath, he was about then just a single, simple young man. He had all the freedom to take a gamble with life, if that was what it meant to confront a deadly fighter in the person of Goliath.

He was young, perhaps thoughtless and foolhardy. Now David had matured into a full blown man with wives and children. His fame and stature had grown so wide. He now has many things to contend with and for.

Right now his homestead is broken by a raid. This is life coming to meet a man at the cutting edge. This kind of disaster would freeze the courage and spirit of any man.

Would David stand a chance with a whole nation pitching against him in battle? He has in his company a corps of discouraged and distressed fighters. Those with sore nerves and bitter heart, wanting to stone him.

Life is succession of battles. Some people who may be standing too weary from old battles rather leave the scene to take solace in their fate. But would that win the day, for a battle that must be fought, anyway?

In the heat of the moment, David approached God for a divine lead and got the nod for a go in a battle with his raiders. (vs7)

Sometimes we forget the fact that God would never open a door we are never willing to enter, or opportunities we are not keen to exploit.

God must have seen the heart of David and his willingness to recover his lost possessions, then offered him a good deal. *"Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail, recover all" (vs8b)*

God is never in the business of offering up opportunities to people who don't ask for it, or too sloppy to take it when it is offered. David negotiated his chances with God and God in turn offered him divine assurances of a good chance.

In keeping with God's words to David, he returned with a great conquest and recovered his possessions, including his wives and children (vs18).

David was always willing to step out into the frontiers. He was not a fall-back soldier hiding behind the roaring storms of the battle fields. There may be today many uncrowned soldiers, not because they hadn't enlisted as soldiers as it were, but for the mere reason they retreated from battles.

Battles define the soldier. The soldier's defining moment comes when he returns from battles victorious, otherwise he is just as good as any other man walking the street.

Success and greatness are opportunities wrapped in difficult fate. The discerning gets the hint of what is in store for them even in seeming moments of distress and bewilderment.

When others are stepping back in fear and dread, the bold who dare step up to take a chance makes the world of difference.

David becomes an inspiring portrait of courage all through.

What would have happened to the rest of the nation of Israel if David slouched into hopelessness with the rest of the soldiers of Israel?

A whole nation would have been wiped off, taken into slavery, only God knows for how long.

His step of faith reclaimed the lives of many people held hostage by his enemy.

Taking bold steps just like David did, breaking out of the hold of fear and feelings of uncertainty inspired by self-doubt will always have liberating influence on others and the things that may be around them.

Chapter Four

The woman of Canaan, Blind Bartimaeus and the woman with the Issue of blood.

Jesus in some way made things “difficult” for one woman. The woman of Canaan who wanted her daughter healed.

Why do people who are destined to make history always have to stand against hard and difficult fate?

The woman of Canaan couldn't receive the grace of God because the times of the gentiles was not yet come. What a frustrating and heart breaking obstacle for someone in desperate need!

Jesus did not mince words when He declared to the woman that she was undeserving. *“I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24)*

But the formidable barrier holding down the woman's chance crumbled at the power of her honest and unyielding insistence to have Jesus heal her daughter.

Jesus's word was in the way of her cherished desire. Once again Jesus said to her *“it is not good to take the children bread and throw it the little dogs” (vs 26)*

This woman met a tough one. She fought to wriggle out from the “NO” coming from the one who had all the power in His hands. How possible could that be?

Could one win a contest with His maker? Each time life offers people near-impossible circumstances, it's merely a test of the power of their inner resolve. The woman broke through every defence in her line of quest and countered every possible argument coming from the Lord Jesus.

This time it was not a gangling giant like Goliath or the Amalekites who stood in the way of David. Hers was an invisible barrier.

She was “spiritually disqualified” from receiving what she sincerely desired. Being disqualified is a common language in a world where many people compete for a common goal. The woman understood the power of holding on, the graceful yet insistent power of inner persuasion.

Can one really persuade God out of His ways? This woman did. She would put down any defence coming from the Lord Jesus. She was graceful, yet assertive. The world will always go in the way of those who stand their ground.

This woman meant business. She felt this could be her only last chance. Who knows? She understood Jesus to be a very busy person, and in hot demand by the teeming crowd of troubled souls. She was ready to do everything in her power to convert this opportunity into a life-time asset.

Sometimes it's better to strike the iron when it is red hot, especially in things that are not within one's personal control. Procrastination has been one major killer of dreams, for people who could not take the chance when it called up at their reach.

She said *"yes Lord yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters table"(vs27)*

Jesus had no choice left than to proclaim her daughter healed and it did happen just as He said it.

There was another person just in the same mould as this woman who took his chance with Jesus. His name is Blind Bartimaeus.

But Blind Bartimaeus this time had the crowd in his way. (Mark 10:46-52). The other barrier that stood between him and Jesus was his blindness. He could not see, as such could not even figure out how to get to the place where he could get the attention of Jesus.

His barrier was a complicated condition which required greater contention. He was a beggar on the roadside. He was physically incapacitated to make his way to where he could receive help. But he had to put to good use one thing he had- his voice.

Life does not always offer everything we require for a leap into success. It requires we use what we have to gain what we desire.

Blind Bartimaeus had no chance at all given his physical handicap. He cried out very loud for Jesus to hear his voice. The crowd was almost robbing him of this chance to get noticed by Jesus, but he won't let it slip off him.

He believed his voice would empower his freedom from blindness. His voice became his asset to reach God. His chance of meeting with Jesus could have been an accidental chance.

He never knew that Jesus was coming to Jericho. He only heard.

He converted that information into a point of action. An action kindled by his desire to regain his lost sight.

He was clinging as firm as he could to his chance once it came. Jesus would not walk up to him. He could have, but this time, the man needed to set up a chance to meet with Him who meets needs.

How much power has the crowd over our crown? The crowd has enormous power. The crowd has stolen the crowns of some people like it did for the twelve spies that went to see the Promised Land. The bad thing about the crowd is that they have the majority opinion.

The crowd has contaminating influence able to poison the stream of healthy faith issuing from those who have clean, godly faith. Out of the twelve men, only two men, Caleb and Joshua stood their ground.

The rest lost their crown with God. Thousands of Israelites perished in the wilderness from the false reports of ten men who lost their chance with destiny.

It was the same crowd that would not allow the woman with the issue of blood get to Jesus. Jesus's disciples made an artificial human barricade that made Jesus difficult to reach. But she had one thing she could use effectively, her hand.

She would dare touch the hem of Jesus's garment. Her voice could have been drowned in the sweltering noise of the anxious crowd.

The real world is crowded with many people looking for one same thing. The woman with the issue of blood was a distinguished contender of the healing touch of Jesus. She made desperate moves that set her apart from her natural competitors.

She would not wait to lose a chance well within her reach.

She pushed against the wavering crowd until she got to the spot of action. The chance she couldn't have for many years would show up in her territory. She took that chance and was made whole. Women are natural go-getters.

They have hidden in them an ocean of power-a silent graceful strength of abiding tenacity.

Why would Esther put her life on the line? Her entire nation was about to be wiped off by the murderous plot of Haman. She was an orphaned, slave girl who had little or no connection to the top. How on earth could she dream of getting the king's attention? She practically would have no chance.

She created her own chance by the sheer audacity of her faith and gracious charisma. Backed by the prayer of her kinsmen, she could seek audience with the king at Shun an. She got that pricey chance that saved her life and lineage from extinction. She wrote her name in the enduring marble of history.

Life has no respect to one's social circumstances. Life deals on what we feed to it. Of all the desperate-hearted Jews whose fate hung on the death row, a little Jewish girl had the vision to take a chance. Life responds to the passion of the soul.

Esther would smash the high protocols to meet a need when it was direly needed. She knew what was at stake, she voiced: "If I perish I perish" (Esther 4:16)

Everyone has to contend with his or her own peculiar circumstance to make good the opportunities that comes ones way. Even Jesus the lord did. He was not going to die a second time.

He must take the first and only one chance that Heaven put on the line to save the whole world.

His death on the cross was not just a sacrifice He made to save mankind. He would later receive the ultimate prize from God, for His uncommon and great sacrifice of all times. What stood on the way of Christ? Dying was a big challenge. He wished He could avoid the ultimate choice of laying down his life.

Death is a dreadful thing nobody wants to encounter. Jesus's death was a shameful one, one that made him die in painful, humiliating manner. All the same He got the most precious and wonderful crown ever known to the world.

He made way for everyone.

Chapter Five

Creating for yourself chances that life requires

For many reasons the prodigal son was not qualified for a comeback.

How would a son who got a decent chunk of his father's wealth, and wasted it, deserve a home-coming? Another chance?

But at the height of his broken life, he got a flash of inspiration.

In the words of the Bible: "He came to his senses" (Luke 15:17). His journey to restoration begun.

There is something extraordinary that hits a man from the inside when he suddenly realises he has at least one more chance. Did the emperor of the land send for him, offering him temporary rehabilitation free of charge? Or was he being offered first-class air ticket back home?

Inspiration clears the way, and makes way through whatever obstacle that stands in one's path. At the point when his heart was struck with a divine inspiration to go back home, his chains of frustration with life fell off. His freedom came. His second chance with life was booked. A person who has no mental or spiritual awakening about his or her condition is doomed for life. His or her chances are sealed. His or her personal advantage crashes into vanity.

Inspiration excites the soul and empowers the physique.

The prodigal son had lived in want and squalor. His place was with the pigs and the poor of the land. The mental chain in the mind of many people makes them see how undeserving they are. What else can someone do that will amount to anything when he or she feels undeserving of life?

There is connection between thoughts and actions. The moment he got flash of who he is and what he can do with the rest of his life, his life gained instant momentum; he said "I will arise". Arise to what? Arise to where?

In the opinion of the average mind, he had no chance. The process of accepting the chance life offers takes root inside the soul. Of all the opinions making waves about his condition, none had the redeeming power like the picture he held in his heart.

So in effect life's chances begin with you, swelling up from the depths of your being.

Did you ever listen to David's confession before he took on Goliath? ; He boasted that he was going to kill Goliath. He saw victory ahead of the time. *"I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and to the beast of the fields. (1 Sam 17:44)*

Mental and spiritual preparation is essential in getting a chance with life. Mental preparation begins with weeding out the thorns and brambles that chokes the seed of one's faith in God and the opportunities he makes us see and walk on.

The prodigal son took action. He rose up from his state of dejection and ruin. He walked towards his goal. He turned deaf ears to reasons why he couldn't get a good chance with his father, in whose hand rest the final decision on his fate. But his faith and confidence in the benevolence of his father won him another chance at being a son, worthy of the father's estate and inheritance.

Many people get stuck at the point of deciding whether or not to take a chance with life. Indecision is a dreamer's assassin. Some dreams die at conception, because they were never given a chance by the dreamers.

It would be you against the rest of the world.

The outlook of the world is getting bleak by the day. It is getting tougher to win. Opportunities are shrinking, but there are yet many people contending for the same goal, same gold and same privileges.

Who first gets the chance? President Barack Obama becomes a phenomenal success in the America that never believed in the abilities of a black man. The odds against Obama becoming the first black man to rule America was as bleak as they were daunting.

The historical facts were in his disfavour. His best political effort was not near what would offer him a good chance. Most presidents had been one time governors of some influential states in America.

His credentials as far as America's politics was concerned were not attractive. Obama's handicap was not a case of mental or leadership shortfalls; it was one of racial consideration. He must prove to a sceptical world that he fits the bill to clinch the coveted seat of becoming America's president. The voice of history and the watching crowd reads correct. "Obama stands no chance".

Obama's response to a watching world with his self-belief, loaded in his words and actions was most admirable. He held out his faith and self-belief to a world that would offer him no chance.

Great golden chances are rare and dear. You must fit the bill to claim the prize. Like it is in politics so it is in every competitive endeavour.

Lionel Messi, the gifted football player was a young man with a nature-borne growth defect. How would he become the star athlete he dreamed of? He couldn't succeed any less than he dreamed.

Think of your own personal handicaps and list them out. What would they be? The handicaps as we know them are natural pressure points that hold up our quest to becoming the best.

A man who does not know he has enemies would sleep with his door wide open. He would let out his innermost personal secrets and let low his guards.

Samson was a victim of such reckless self-assurance. He was over taken by the sheer enormity of his physical strength. He underestimated the power of his enemies, just because he was gifted. Gifts not handled carefully become a "give-away" to ones enemies.

Samson gave away the chance he got on a divine platter.

The chances life offers would not come on the platter of self-pity either or on basis of historical records. It comes by knowing what to do to get the desired result.

Such results will come by the sheer audacity of our willingness to engage our chances beyond the common tradition of the average mind.

How on earth could Mandela wage war successfully with an enemy that was stronger than him? He made no wars with them. He would engage his will power against every distraction that came from his tormentors. He had a single desire, to help his nation regain its freedom from racial oppression. His fighting tool was his inner resolve and strength of vision.

He survived 27 harsh years of imprisonment, a sacrifice way beyond the endurance of normal courage.

The empowering question is this, what do you want out of life? Not what life wants out of you. Life would naturally offer no one any good. Life hopes to defeat every tall aspiration we have kept in our hearts.

What then do I do with my handicaps?

Jesus would give His disciples the reason why they failed to cure a young lunatic possessed with demons (Matthew 17:16)

This could become a big hole in the ministry profile of His twelve young disciples freshly hatched to face the world.

How would they engage a world filled with menacing problems, diseases and difficult cases waiting for solutions, when they couldn't cast out a mere demon? They needed to prove their calling, and convince the world they could deliver the lots of the gospel. Would they?

How could they if they haven't got the secrets to upturning their handicaps and turning them into winning assets.

Jesus gave out these secrets to His disciples, thus helping them come to terms with the puzzles of their own "poor performance". It was also an eye opener for them see the horizon of a bigger and greater world outside their then immediate reality.

Identifying handicaps in one's life and the way out of it is a good way to make progress.

1. **What are the things I know I cannot change about myself?** President Barack Obama was black which he couldn't change. Jephthah was son to a harlot, a cultural fact that made him lose his inheritance amongst his kinsmen. (Judges 11). Moses had slow speech. Paul was an Apostle admitted at the last-hour, he had no physical contact with Jesus, missed the great outpour at the upper room on the day of Pentecost. You may not successfully change your physical characteristics or temperament. There may be some land marks attributes engraved by nature in you that may become difficult to change, they stay.
2. **Assert your victory not your disadvantages-**Who could have been more disadvantaged like the prodigal son? He was a heir-wreck. He was a negative model of what a son should be. He lost a golden chance. Jesus who made that parable knew that many people would be caught in the difficult transition between opportunities and glory, and may never take advantage of the endless depth of God's grace despite whatever disadvantages life seem to cast on people. His story becomes the story of triumph over failure, but more of having the boldness to take another chance with life. His victory was self-borne, as much as his father was forthcoming with a benevolent heart.

3. **What things do I have, and can use to maximum effect?** Jephthah had significant, powerful fighting skills, which he would later use to redeem his lost inheritances.

So does Barack Obama, who is gifted with the power of eloquence and superb oratory. Moses had intimate relationship with God, and enjoyed the free flow of divine graces with outstanding miracles that endowed him with awe and authority. Paul had power of eloquence and effective communication skills and erudition that made his opponents in the field of the gospel submit to his convincing presentations.

4. **What more can I add to my natural content?** President Barack Obama attended one of the best schools in the world, to hone his skills for the ultimate moment. Talent without management will remain latent. Continuous skill acquisition and self-improvement widens the borders of personal efficiency. Jesus was stuck in the synagogue in search of wisdom buried in books to equip his ministry calling. Even the word of encourages men to add to what they already have. *“...And besides this giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge...”* (2 peter 1:5). As a professional or leader one needs to build a comprehensive skill matrix table to show areas where you are strong and places where you need to upskill. Life is a project of continuous learning and self-improvement.

5. **Fight the enemies within not the world.** The first seven enemies to fight that are within are:

1. Fear
2. Self-doubt
3. Procrastination
4. Broken focus
5. Too much sleep
6. Indecisiveness
7. Negative contentment, which may play out as laziness.

To step up into the chances that life throws up you need to conquer these seven enemies lurking within ahead of time.

6. **Create your own opportunities stop waiting for one.** David would not wait to be asked to do what he was ready to do. He asked for the stage to face Goliath. Rather than wait for the rain to fill your bucket, you fetch from the overflowing stream. Goliath though an enemy was a stepping platform for David's emergence to greatness. Look out for challenges and conquer them. Challenges are God-given opportunities.

The need for superior performance

The world cannot wait for excuse-makers. I was once on a panel for an interview many years back, which had a memorably funny episode. A candidate walked in and broke into tears mid-way in the interview. What was he about?

He said he needed the job so badly because he just lost his Dad. What has that to do with the job? He never got the job.

People make up reasons why they deserve a chance, but life does not listen to reasons, no matter how enticing.

Life is for real performers. Superior performance at that!

Who would doubt the superiority of Daniel in the province of Nebuchadnezzar? *"He was found ten times better than all the children in his realm"* (Daniel 1:10).

Superiority places a person on a special level. Excellence does not answer to creed or prejudices. People recognise superior performance when they see one.

Daniel was naturally not "deserving" of the high recognition accorded him all along. He was a slave. He was not a member of the king's tribe. He was more or less resented by the clique of jealous peers.

But there was one thing that could not be denied—"He had an excellent spirit".

Each time people make excuses, when you look very closely you would find that somehow they never had what it takes to come out tops. Excuses undermine the spirit of excellence. Excellence is the only thing that will silence the jeering and mocking of doubters.

In the rank and file of the King Belshazzar's cabinet of wise men, no one could interpret the writings he saw written on the wall in his dream. His dream was shrouded in mystery. It was a thing taken for granted that his class of well-groomed wise men will do the job. His confidence hinged on the first-grade quality training he cut out for them. At any rate he expected they fared well.

It was only fair that the king would tell the frightening vision to the wise men in his keep, with hope that given their learning and credentials they could provide the interpretation he believed was adequate. They all could not.

Hear this: Daniel was not present when the king spoke of his visions to his wise men.

It was all too late and futile to demand superior result from people whose resources could not meet up with the demands of giving interpretation to a “writing shrouded in mystery”. It was a feat reserved for men in the mould of Daniel who had something extra beyond the level playing field.

Small men solve small problems. Great men solve big problems.

It is at the edge of difficulties and tough challenges that distinction becomes clear.

This was Daniels chance painted on a dark canvas. It is in the dark hours that men with light sparkle. Men of strength stand out in times when everyone has grown weak and feeble.

Daniel shone like a million stars when the king had ran out of patience with the poor performance of his ordinary elite crew.

But Daniel could tell the writing on the wall and also gave interpretation to it (Daniel 5:25-29). A double notch above the average mark of the common rank.

He gave proof to his superiority. He earned a well-deserved honour from the king of the most powerful nation of the era (Daniel 5:29)

Daniels promotion to greatness was a natural reward for his superior performance. He had a chance to serve at the kings’ court, much like his peers, but was that all that mattered?

To get a chance is just a start. But superior performance is another level altogether.

Could President Barack Obama become president of the most powerful nation in the world had he been an ordinary performer?

Joseph showed superior counsel in the house of Potiphar. His skill was not in doubt. His skill gave him a place in the elite stock of the kings’ cabinet. Joseph was sold as slave to the home of Potiphar, but would not retain the demeaning status of a slave.

His performance did put an end to his old status of being a slave. Superior performance defeats the need for excuses. Excuses sometimes are clever attempts to explain away ones failures.

Superior performance should rather be the evidence why you deserve a win, a chance.

Men of skill are in great demand. Solomon had asked for a man of skill when the LORD's temple was being constructed. For such a magnificent project which was precious in the sight of God would it not require the best of skills?

“Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple and in crimson and blue and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide”(2Chronicle 2:7)

Would Daniel and Joseph not be capable of getting to any position of choice had they lived in our times?

Would they not meet the needs of kings of this era and revolutionise the political and leadership systems of these times with their superior wisdom and skills?

Would they bribe their way when they know they had what it takes?

Unemployment figures are looking very bad, many young people not having work to do. Those with an edge will always coast ahead, irrespective of the times and competition.

Chapter six

Ruth and the power of inner sight-follow your dreams.

Andre Grove the famous founder of Intel Corporation was a one-time war refugee who migrated from Hungary. He must have been trying to escape the economic devastation of his home country. He landed in America, uncertain of the promise his new home holds. America was just at the verge of breaking into a leading economy in the world. It was also a time when people's economic fortunes simply hung on hope.

Greatness has more to do with ability to spot opportunities than waiting for them to fall into one's laps. Andre Grove would move into America with an intuitive vision of its exploding economic potentials. He would some four decades later become one of the most distinguished pioneers of the computer revolution.

Ruth as well was not a blind gambler when she chose to leave for the land of Moab, after the death of her husband. Why would such a woman cling to the odd choice of following hard after her mother in law Naomi against all normal instinct?

When others were taking their leave, why would she cling affectionately to a destination that held no rational promise?

Was she not rather have felt too emotionally devastated to cling to a people that would later always remind her of the sore losses in her life? People rather forgot an ugly, painful past than hold on to it. But not Ruth.

Ruth had no practical reason to get on with the family of her late husband. But she must caught sight of the new future and glory that lay ahead. Her inner sight made connection with what God had set in place. She was going to meet with someone (Boaz), who would later become the connecting chain, to the lineage of the Messiah (Matthew 1:1-5)

A time comes in the life of every dreamer when no one believes in you or your convictions. The best chance ever any one can get with life is the only one chance you offer yourself, not one coming on the votes of people's opinion.

There are moments of "people rejection", which is always the case, but the determined dreamer never bolts down from the saddle of perseverance.

It may look dark or gloomy but the pointed desire of a dreamer is like the lone star in the sky, the kind that settled upon the abode of Jesus at Bethlehem nudging along the wise men, along the tracks. Such divinely-lit stars never dims, like it led the wise men to the home of the saviour, so would the inner light of a God-given dream bring the bearer to the appointed place.

Rejection in itself is a door opener. It opens the door to personal discoveries.

Many of life's greatest treasures are disguised in rag-tag wrappings. They may appear far less attractive than what they have on the inside of it. Inside the womb of Ruth's inner self was a Messiah lying in wait.

The saviour of the world was planted in the lineage that Ruth chose to cling to. She had no compelling practical reason to want to take that chance, but it was one chance that gave the world a beautiful gift of redemption and joy.

What lessons can we learn from Ruth? Life offers no pleasant chances. Chances that prove good at the end of the day are sometimes strewn with thorns of anguish and personal frustrations.

Ruth teaches that only the brave and those with superior discernment win the day.

What do you see in your circumstance? Ordinary people see only the immediate. The farther you are able to see the greater the reward.

Abraham was called out by God to “see”. (Genesis 13:14).

Whatever he saw would become his inheritance. Abraham could see the stars and the sands on the sea shores, as numberless as those sands and stars were, yet he was barren. But God was speaking of the future outside Abraham’s immediate reality.

What could have been on Isaac’s mind when he went down to a famine-hit land to sow his seed? There is always something beyond the ordinary that resides within the invisible realm of the spirit. (Genesis 26:1-12)

What do you see? Martin Luther King could foresee freedom for America. His vision was born at a time in the history of America when racism was at its peak. He saw freedom, even at that time he was practically being oppressed by forces of racism.

In fact he was killed by those who wanted to put scorn on him and his dreams. Dreamers always face the harsh persecutions of their own people. Joseph was thrown into the pit and sold to slavery by the sheer power of his dreams.

Yet what he dreamed was true.

Listen to the beats of the passion in your heart. What are the things in your heart that you hold dearly? In Ruth’s case it was not the comfort of a new life outside her familiar household. It was a divine affection for something that had no physical form, yet she could see and handle.

When a man’s heart is made alive in the intimacy of fellowship with God, the spirit of God enlightens such a heart with profound wisdom and makes the person’s spirit yearn to live out the designs and intents of Heaven.

Follow your heart. Follow your dreams. Like Joseph, the dream that he had many years back, would put him ahead of his peers despite his many harsh and unpleasant encounters.

Taking your first chance with God.

It's possible you chanced upon this book with the heart and mind to be blessed it. I thank God for your life. I have the firm believe that by taking this step of coming to this page could mean you have the desire to associate with God perhaps deeper than other means could afford you.

If you are not very sure you are born again-truly and experientially you can make good this opportunity by asking Christ to come into your life. As a first step, confess your sins to Him and ask Him to fill you with His grace, through His forgiveness of your sins. Make this a quality decision today by resolving to forsake your sins and let Christ take over your life completely.

Like a new creature your life will emerge from its past to a new colourful experience to the glory of God. You soon begin to see and feel the beauty of your new life in Christ.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, all things are become new, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new" (2cor.5vs17)

Congratulations! Only a life in God can become a profitable life. May your encounter with God renew your life and destiny, and may His grace empower you for an enriched life. God bless you.