

THE MINISTRY
OF THE
ARMOUR BEARER

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The Ministry of The Armour Bearer
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DEDICATION

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Your generation shall celebrate you all. May the Lord hasten your earthly harvest and secure your eternal rewards, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Introduction



My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. James 3:1 (KJV)

The 21st century Church groans for qualitative, faithful and effective Leadership. All the sophisticated Bible Colleges and leadership seminars are failing to produce desired results. It is because service and servant hood are missing. Today, almost everyone in the body of Christ wants to offer himself for leadership. Very few people want to be led. Most saints are not comfortable with being subordinate to anybody. It is more fashionable to be the point man than to follow or serve. 21st century prospective leaders are more of professionals than the servants Kingdom

leaders ought to be. Both in Scripture and as recently as the 19th century contemporary Church, leadership was service. It wasn't about titles or another profession for earning a living. The leader was a servant. Up until as late as the 1980s, those who eventually emerged as leaders were not so excited to put themselves forward for leadership. Instead, in awe of the huge responsibility, most of them attempted futilely to persuade God to find someone else.

Moses for example, produced both social and biological evidence of his speech impediment why he couldn't be the man. Gideon never believed God knew his family background. King Saul was little in his own eyes. Jeremiah thought he was too young. Jonah fled to Tarshish.

Likewise, most leaders the Lord picked in the 1990s cried and schemed and pleaded and ran as long as they could from the Lord. The 'call' was actually an interruption upon their plans. Many of them although good Christians would have preferred to support another leader. Either because they were called contrary to personal expectation or in acknowledgement of personal inadequacy or both, they eventually served under leaders as armour bearers until eventually, it was evident they couldn't but assume certain levels of leadership. God had graduated them through service and followership. They had borne armour for Kingdom Generals. They hadn't schemed. They just served.

This book examines the indispensable Ministry of

Armour bearers where every saint can fulfill his Kingdom potential without necessarily being the G.O. or Founder. It also shows that you can thrive under your leader or mentor without strife and further examines how Leaders and not professionals are raised.

The Office of the Armour Bearer



Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side. But he told not his father... And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few. And his armour bearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. If

they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us. And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armour bearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armour bearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armour bearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armour bearer slew after him.

1 Sam 14:1,6-13 (KJV)

Armor bearers accompanied the military leaders to bring along extra weapons and defensive equipment that would be expended during a battle (arrows, javelins, shields). They sometimes aided the soldier as well by positioning their shields for them, as in the case of Goliath, and at times killing those enemy

soldiers who were left helplessly wounded by preceding combatants.

—Holman Bible Dictionary

The office or ministry of Armour bearing actually began since the days of Moses who had Joshua as his minister.

Moses got up, accompanied by Joshua his aide. And Moses climbed up the mountain of God. Exodus 24:13 (MSG)

Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant

Joshua 1:1 (NASB)

The duties of an armourbearer included the following:

- Preparing the General or Commander's weaponry and generally getting him ready for battle. In the course of the actual battle, he was there to hand over extra or defensive weapons as would be expedient.
- Attending to his personal, domestic and even menial needs.
- Accompanying into battle to help carry weapons and when necessary, finish off enemy soldiers the Commander had wounded while keeping an eye generally upon his master to both warn and

possibly defend him against undetected dangers.

- Picking up vital information that helps the commander to be more effective. A good example is in 2Kings4 when Gehazi volunteered the information (which he had apparently picked up through the grapevine) that helped Elisha reward the barren Shunammite. While she assured the prophet that she had no ‘human’ need, Gehazi who had been busy in the neighbourhood told his master;

...Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.

2 Kings 4:14 (KJV)

- Being a confidant and serving as the first line of encouragement when the commander faced difficult decisions. We find a typical example of this when Jonathan attempted the unthinkable by singlehandedly taking on an entire army in the company of only his armourbearer.

Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines’ garrison, that is on the other side. But he told not his father... And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no

restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few. And his armour bearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart.

1 Sam 14:1,6-7 (KJV)

- Serving as available companion and personal assistant who could be assigned any errand as the master deemed exigent.

In summary, it was the duty of the armour bearer to run errands and do all that was necessary to manage distractions and keep the commander both focused and effective in the main business of ‘warfare’.

Apparently, in the Old Testament particularly, most people who held important leadership positions, had armour bearers. They were referred to in different places and in different versions of the Bible as armour bearers, armor bearers, ministers, aides, attendants or servants. A few of such examples are as follows:

Moses: The Bible addressed Joshua in several places as Moses’ ‘minister’. Of particular interest however is Joshua chapter 1:1 where Moses is clearly and pointedly referred to as the servant of the LORD but Joshua as Moses’ minister.

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, ... Josh 1:1 (KJV)

After the death of Moses the servant of God, God spoke to Joshua, Moses' assistant: Josh 1:1 (MSG)

After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: Josh 1:1 (NIV)

Gideon: This fellow who started out frantically attempting to convince the angel sent to commission him to command the battle against the Midianites and Amalekites that the Heavenly messenger had come to the wrong address, had an armour bearer. God had to convince him in a dream;

But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host. Judges 7:10-11 (KJV)

If you have any doubts about going down, go down with Purah your armor bearer; when you hear what they're saying, you'll be bold and confident." He and his armor bearer Purah went down near the place where sentries were posted. Judges 7:10-11 (MSG)

Abimelech: He most probably had African roots. Like an African, this crafty son of Gideon's concubine was so desperate to usurp the throne, he thought nothing of murdering seventy of his father's sons in the process. The soft spoken but hard hitting schemer who enlisted his mother's brethren in his heinous agenda is also recorded to have had an armour bearer. When nemesis caught up with him at the foot of the tower of Thebez, it was a woman who did him in. Three years earlier, he had slain seventy of his half-brothers on one stone. Now another stone had to take his own life. A well timed stone for crushing grain broke his skull. Out of pride, he commanded his armour bearer to kill him so that he would be spared the indignity of having fallen by the hand of a woman.

*And Abimelech came unto the tower,
and fought against it, and went hard unto
the door of the tower to burn it with fire.*

*And a certain woman cast a piece of a
millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all
to brake his skull. Then he called hastily
unto the young man his armourbearer, and
said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay
me, that men say not of me, A woman
slew him. And his young man thrust him
through, and he died.*

Judges 9:52-54 (KJV)

Eli: Samuel is recorded to have ‘ministered’ before/ unto the Lord under the older Eli in 1Samuel2:18 and 1Samuel3:1.

But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. 1 Sam 2:18 (KJV)

And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. 1 Sam 3:1 (KJV)

In actual fact, the young and inexperienced son of Hannah didn’t quite know God at this time. What he was really doing was waiting on or ministering to Eli. He was Eli’s armour bearer.

Saul had David as his first recorded armour bearer.

And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour bearer. 1 Sam 16:21 (KJV)

After the first Israeli monarch fell out with David, he recruited another armour bearer with whom they both died at the battle of Mount Gilboa.

Then said Saul unto his armour bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armour bearer saw that Saul was dead, he

fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour bearer, and all his men, that same day together.

1 Sam 31:4-6 (KJV)

Jonathan: In our opening text, we are introduced to Jonathan's armour bearer. In 1Samuel 14:1 - 14, he is mentioned 8 times.

Joab: Naharai bore the armour of General Joab, king David's Chief of Army Staff. 2Samuel 23:37.

David: Now although nothing is specifically mentioned of the specific person who bore armour for king David, it would be unreasonable to believe that such a warrior like David didn't avail himself of this office when clearly, even his Chief of Army Staff, Joab had one.

Elijah: Furthermore, among the Prophets, before Elisha occupied the office of 'pouring water upon the hands' of Elijah, the Fire-calling Prophet had been attended or ministered to by another young man. We are told that he parted ways with this other servant or aide or minister or armour bearer only when he fled from the threats of Jezebel.

And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant

there.

1 Kings 19:3 (KJV)

It would seem to me that this first servant of Elijah didn't have the tenacity required to get the double portion of the grace upon Elijah. It would seem to explain why after Elijah encountered the Angel under the Juniper tree on his flight from Jezebel, this previous 'servant' was not included in the next phase of the Prophet's ministry.

So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

1 Kings 19:19-21 (KJV)

Believe me; those who focus on their long overdue 'holiday' instead of the emergencies at hand will miss out on the forthcoming glory all the time.

Similarly, those who conveniently use that season

when their leader and the Ministry are under pressure to take a little vacation will always miss the promotion train.

I have personally met people who convinced me beyond doubt that they were once on Bishop David Oyedepo's team in the 1980s. Then, he loudly proclaimed his wealth from pulpits but drove around in a jalopy car. Those days, it was a major testimony when that car got to any intended destination without breaking down at some point. Unable to reconcile his proclamations with his physical realities at the time, some of these people had advised themselves to find a more 'realistic' place of fellowship. Well, today, many of such people who even helped to push his jalopy car at the time and entered his rented house and office at will, can not even secure an appointment to see this Kingdom General.

It isn't his fault.

It is their fault. They were not there when times were tough. There is no room for them now that the glory has come.

This unfortunately was also the lot of Elijah's first servant.

As always, the loss of this vacation-loving servant became the gain of Elisha of the double-portion notoriety. Hence in his days, Elisha served so faithfully that he became famous for pouring water on the hands of Elijah.

Now may I mention that socially, there is nothing dignifying about being described as one who 'poured water on the hands' of another. In the Eastern culture

of that time, this job was meant for the lowest slaves in the house. Their duty was to wash the feet and hands of guests especially at public functions. It wasn't exactly the kind of vocation many people volunteered for. Slaves were the ones used for such purposes. However, because the culture of the East at that time compelled them to wash their hands several times a day, anyone who had a permanent agent to pour water upon his hands would most certainly carry such an agent around like a shadow.

The term implied servant hood. It also implied intimacy.

Finally, 'pouring water on the hands' also implied discipleship.

Predictably, over time, such an agent would be expected to have picked up a thing or two about the trade of his master.

This was actually the situation with Elisha. In his case, this term meant that he served Elijah in very menial jobs. Actually, some translations describe Elisha as the servant, attendant, aide or assistant of Elijah in 1 Kings 19:21. Maybe he did his laundry and cooked his meals. Perhaps Elijah didn't pay too much attention to his use of the restroom and Elisha always needed to go in there and clean up after him. Could be, the man snored in his sleep and Elisha needed to stay awake when they were in a sensitive environment to keep his master from becoming an embarrassment.

Elisha started out as a servant. He was always going to succeed Elijah but I am sure he didn't know that. Over

time, total commitment brought intimacy. He had spent such intimate times with Elijah that he could be identified as one that poured water on the hands of Elijah. Why? Servant hood, intimate commitment and faithfulness had resulted in discipleship. He hadn't only served faithfully; he had actually become a disciple. Hence, in the absence of the Prophet, he could be expected to stand in the prophetic gap.

Consequently, after the era of Elijah, when the urgent need arose for a prophetic word, someone who had established a reputation for pouring water upon his hands was recommended.

But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

2 Kings 3:11 (KJV)

But Jehoshaphat said, Is there no prophet of the Lord here, through whom we may get directions from the Lord? And one of the king of Israel's men said in answer, Elisha, the son of Shaphat, is here, who was servant to Elijah.

2 Kings 3:11 (BBE)

Elisha: Well, having paid his dues and having established a reputation in it for that matter, Elisha also clearly had an armour bearer in Gehazi.

Please you may want to pay attention to the curious fact that they were addressed in different places and in different versions of the Bible as armour bearers, armor bearers, ministers, aides, attendants or servants. It is very instructive that none of them was referred to in any of the translations as 'partners'. They never were partners. They were servants.

For many of them, servant hood was actually their school.

The place of serving or armour bearing was in reality, the training ground for them.

They learnt to lead through following or serving.

In a number of cases, they served under very difficult masters.

In other cases, for reasons best known to an All-wise God, He allowed them to serve under backslidden leaders like David who served Saul.

Others served already judged leaders like Eli who was served by Samuel.

In the end, many of these armour bearers benefited from the mentorship of their masters. Consequently, they stood upon the spiritual shoulders of their masters, saw further, imbibed the strong points of their mentors, avoided their mistakes and eventually exceeded their achievements.

Hence, Joshua for instance, took over from Moses,

overthrew Thirty-One nations (Joshua12:24) compared to Moses' mere Two nations and entered the Promise land with God's people.

Elisha got the double portion and did twice as many miracles as Elijah.

David succeeded Saul on the throne and had enough experience to avoid the mistakes of his predecessor and sustain his own monarchy for all generations.

Meanwhile, let me concede that not everyone who serves as an armour bearer automatically takes over directly from his master. However, everyone who serves in any capacity is actually fulfilling a ministry and his contribution is indispensable. The contribution of every member of the physical body is imperative. The service of every member of the Body of Christ is also imperative. Every Christian is called to ministry or service. You may not be the head but your function is strategic and your input priceless. Just as every part of the body has a definite function or occupation, every Christian has a definite ministry. Furthermore, every member of the body can't be the head. Moreover, no part of the body may be discountenanced by other parts.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ...And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the

body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:

1 Cor 12:12,21-22 (KJV)

Are you a foot? The body depends upon you to get it to where all those ideas from the head can be implemented. Elbow, the body depends upon you to give the hand flexibility. Whatever you are in the 'Body', you are valuable and necessary. Be sure to cheerfully give your best. You are a significant part of God's overall plan. You are necessary. What is required is for you to recognize your calling or ministry or purpose. Then firmly establish yourself under the 'head' where God has assigned you and give yourself totally in your service. Faithfulness in your stewardship is all that God demands and rewards.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

1 Cor 4:2 (KJV)

In consequence, whether or not you will eventually take over from your leader, be secured in the knowledge that if you serve faithfully in the capacity and place God has assigned, you are fulfilling your ministry. Thus, throw yourself completely into your ministry as an amourbearer and be found faithful.



Armour Bearing in New Testament



*I beseech thee for my son Onesimus,
..Whom I would have retained with me,
that in thy stead he might have ministered
unto me in the bonds of the gospel
--Philemon 1:10, 13 (KJV)*

Some people are of the opinion that because the word ‘armour-bearer’ does not literally appear in the New Testament therefore, the entire office is now out of vogue. This cannot be very correct.

Conceded, some people have stepped over the armour-bearing line. Some ‘superhuman’ leaders have raised an army of gun-toting or whip-brandishing religious thugs they call bodyguards.

True, there are certain Ministries where a strange army of muscle-advertising-bouncers will love nothing than to roughen you up, no matter who you are and no matter what your business is.

Again I agree that there are certain Ministries where an even stranger band of attendants believe that their ticket to heaven is secured simply because they are in charge of the Bible or tablets or assemblage of handsets of the ‘big’ man of God.

Still I confess that like you, I have also seen where in some Ministries or Churches, another specie of bodyguards are content to stand menacingly around while their ‘Man of God’ delivers the message. It is a small distraction enough that each time you look in the direction of the pulpit, you are divided between noticing either them or the preacher. I am thoroughly at a loss to understand their style when all through the message, no attempt is made to bring out or refer to their Bibles. Is it that they already know all about what the rest of us are trying to learn or is it that later in the office, the same message will be preached to them?

Yes, sir. I am also mystified at this New Testament ‘wisdom’ where secretaries start by lying that the important man of God (or is it god of Man) is not around. In the end, once they calculate you ‘important enough’ you still get to see the very man of God who ‘wasn’t available’. Wouldn’t it be better if they said rather; “The Man of God is so busy that if you don’t already have an appointment, it may be nearly impossible to see him today”?

Finally, like you, I have also been amazed that there are certain Churches where the opinion of their leader is of greater importance than the Bible itself. The

consequence is that the leader is so venerated or idolized that if he requests to sleep with another person's wife, it would no longer be adultery but indeed, an honour. If he borrows money from any member, they are forbidden to remind him about payment. When he arrives while the worship is ongoing, it must be suspended immediately and his entrance acknowledged before the worship is resumed. He can demand tithe from the members but himself must not tithe because he is the supreme priest and there is none greater to accept his tithe.

Thank God, I have restrained my personal opinion just at the nick of time so that I won't label all the foregoing as idolatry and witchcraft. Thank God, I have restrained myself.

Notwithstanding, why should some excesses, no matter how grave, force us to throw out the baby with the bathwater?

As a matter of fact, Paul hinted in a number of cases that he benefited from the 'ministry' of a few younger brethren.

Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants...

Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

Phil 2:25, 30 (KJV)

I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom

I have begotten in my bonds...Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel
--Philem 1:10, 13 (KJV)

Well, it would be very interesting to find out in what way both Epaphroditus and Onesimus ‘ministered to Paul. Certainly they were not just praying for him. They could easily have done that from a distance.

I hazard the suggestion that they were ministering to Paul in practical ways. They probably helped out with his meals, did his laundry and ran errands for the incarcerated Apostle. Please will it offend you too much if I take the liberty to finally suggest that they were bearing his armour?

Armour-bearing is as relevant today as it has ever been. The success of the Church depends on it. The following reasons buttress the New Testament relevance of armour-bearing:

1. Training School for Effective Leadership.

In the first place, it is profitable to remember that ‘armour-bearing’ from God’s perspective was not just about a super-master having perpetual supply of puppets or bootlickers or minions or attendants. Necessary as aide to the leader was, the underlying and perhaps more paramount reason for armour-bearing was the school it provided for the younger attendant. Through serving a master, the armour-bearing was actually implicitly

learning to become a leader. As always, the wisdom of God is at variance with that of men when it comes to raising leaders.

The wisdom of men says get people in an institution and teach them to become leaders. The wisdom of God says get people under leaders and make leaders out of them through teaching them service.

The wisdom of men says gather dandy-looking people together in cozy rooms and give them eloquent lectures about their importance. Add very delicious meals at the recess of every session. Keep your language socially and politically correct and remember to add fabulous promises of personal rewards. The wisdom of men hopes to raise leaders through this approach but in the end what do we actually raise? We end up with selfish, lazy, unfaithful, unspiritual materialistic con-men with bloated egos whose only pre-occupation is to be famous and who are always in haste for their 'entitlements'.

The wisdom of God on the other hand says get a true leader who has paid his dues, put a few faithfuls (usually, not a crowd) under him. Like Moses, because the leader is meek, he will put humility in them. He will divorce them of materialism and worldliness because although he once dined and wined on Pharaoh's delicacies, he has given all of that up and has learnt to survive on whatever can be found in the mountain side. He will teach them a lesson in patience because even when he clearly thought he was the deliverer of his people and was ready to deliver, he still attended Jethro's Institute of Livestock and Patience

for another 40 years. Therefore, how can you complain if he forgets you at the foot of the Mountain for 40 ‘mere’ days while he was in conference with God? He will inculcate in them a consuming reverence for God and love of men. He will bring out the ‘servant’ in them. They will be so consumed with serving others that like Samuel, they will put themselves on oath never to cease seeking the wellbeing of even those who have clearly maligned them (1Samuel12:23). He will build in them unshakeable faith in God and an unfaltering dedication to their every assignment. Like David, even after they have been clearly ‘called’ and anointed, they will learn humility by first returning to the tending of sheep.

This is how God grooms His leaders; He makes servants out of them. God breaks every vessel He is going to use. That brokenness takes place most effectively when men who offer themselves for leadership are first sent to serve under their social subordinates.

A wise man said; they are unfit to lead who have not first proved their mettle in following and serving.

It seems to me an avoidable tragedy in the kingdom that there are Leadership seminars all over the place while little attention is paid to the nobler calling of followership or servanthood.

Until we follow due process in raising leaders, we may continue to bemoan a dearth of quality and faithfulness among today’s leaders. That due process is to source our leaders in the place of service. Do you know why we have so much rebellion in the Church today? Many vessels are

not broken.

It is courting trouble when we appoint un-broken men to spiritual leadership or authority on the basis of their social standing in society. Elisha who was clearly a successful mechanized farmer and owned what passed for 12 tractors in today's agricultural parlance, nevertheless had to go through the process. He humbled himself and served until his former status as a successful and wealthy farmer was lost in his acquired title as the fellow that poured water on the hands of Elijah.

Believe me sir, the office of Armour-bearing is profoundly necessary today.

How about our myriad of Bible Colleges all around? Sure, they are good and necessary. However, those great institutions never quite provide opportunities for students to observe their instructors in practical real time situations. Students have to depend upon what they are told. Of course, it's not really criminal to doctor the testimonies a little. In armour-bearing however, you are perpetually observing your master in real time situations. Hence, you learn not just through what you have been conveniently told but also through personal observation. In the end, you know what to adopt and what to discard.

2. Mentorship:

Another essential benefit of armour-bearing is for mentoring. It is the responsibility of the master to mentor his protégé and where possible, commend such to ministry. Furthermore, the master should be an

available confidant to de-fend, support, counsel, correct and rebuke.

In the Holy Scripture, repeatedly, we find armour-bearers eventually taking over from their masters. Joshua took over from Moses. Samuel took over from Eli. David took over from Saul. Elisha took over from Elijah.

It is very instructive that Moses, representing the Law, handed over to his armour-bearer, Eli the Priest, handed over to Samuel, Elijah in the Prophetic office, also handed over to Elisha and David, the King/Priest, took over from King Saul.

It is noteworthy that although not every armour-bearer eventually succeeded his master, we are here presented very powerful evidence to slow us down from waving the armour-bearing issue casually aside. When God reveals any truth up to three times in Scripture, it is profitable not to pretend that such a truth does not exist. The Holy Book confirms:

...at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. Deuteronomy 19:15 (KJV)

This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. 2 Corinthians 13:1 (KJV)

This matter of mentorship through armour-bearing has been captured so repeatedly and symbolically that we gain nothing by pretending it is all a coincidence.

In Moses and Joshua we find the dispensation of the Law.

In Eli and Samuel, we see the Priesthood.

In Elijah and Elisha, we have the dispensation of the Prophets.

In Saul and David, we have the combination first of Kingship and Priesthood. But there is more than that. David is also a kind of both the Messiah and the New Testament saint. Both the Messiah and the New Testament saint are Kings and Priests. Conclusively, in David, we actually have a veiled reference to the office of the armour-bearer in the New Testament.

How did John Mark, Silas, Titus and Timothy cut their ministerial teeth? Well, they were un-der the mentorship of Paul and Barnabas.

Today, because the issue of armour-bearing has not been accorded deserved attention, there is also confusion in the vital issue of mentoring. Many honest intending young ministers have woken up to the imperative need of mentors. The problem is that in many cases, those who should have rightly filled this gap are completely ignorant of their responsibility. In a number of cases however, prospective mentees have not sufficiently submitted and served enough to elicit a sense of obligation or commitment from their masters. Many 'baseless' young ministers have deserted their armour-bearing posts because they were impatient, misled or victims of highhandedness. In most cases, these great potentials end up in the Ministerial wilderness and have to find a

spiritual covering . This is why there is a certain scramble for mentors in the kingdom now.

Let me however mention that there are a few genuine reasons why one may seek a new mentor.

- If your Mentor/Master has gone to be with the Lord.
- If either you or your Master/mentor has moved and you are far from each other.
- If you know clearly of an elder Minister who is succeeding at what you are called to do. Provided that such line of ministry is clearly different from what your original master/mentor is doing.

Finally, a typical mentor should be someone you are evidently ready to submit to. A colleague will not make an effective mentor.

3. Platform for Transfer of Grace/Mantle:

There are apparently other means through which Grace or Mantle may be transferred. However, the following are two of the most common:

(i). Ministering to an anointed elder with your finances and materials. In most cases, you may not get the mantle just by merely kneeling down and saying ‘Amen’ or ‘Sir’, a million times. Whereas the Anointing or Grace or Mantle is not for sale, it nonetheless answers to those who celebrate the anointed with their materials or finances.

(ii). Secondly, Anointing, Grace or Mantle transfers

almost as a matter of course, upon those who faithfully wait upon their masters. This explains why armour-bearers such as Joshua, Elisha and David got the impartation to operate in the offices of those they served.

It seems to me that no matter how long you sit under the most erudite Theological professors or teachers in Bible Institutes, you only end up with knowledge without impartation. Now make no mistake, knowledge is very critical. However, when it comes to Christian Ministry, knowledge must be backed up with the relevant impartation. This impartation could be ministered through any of the following;

- laying of hands as in the example of Joshua, of whom it is recorded operated in wisdom because Moses laid hands upon him.

And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him...

Deut 34:9 (KJV)

Paul so understood the hallowedness of laying hands and the spiritual endorsement it signified that in

1Timothy 5:22 he warns; Lay hands suddenly on no man... Paul was saying by implication that you needed to have spent sufficient time together to be absolutely convinced of a person's servant-hood and leadership potential before you committed yourself to their commendation.

He further reminded his protégé Timothy that the

younger pastor had received an impartation when the Apostle laid hands on him.

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. 2 Tim 1:6 (KJV)

- Both laying of hands and prophetic utterance.

We find such an example where laying of hands and prophetic utterance have been combined in 1Timothy 4:14;

Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery 1 Tim 4:14 (NASB)

- Prophetic utterance alone like in the case of Elisha, whom his mentor Elijah, simply decreed prophetically that if he witnessed the fire-caller go up, he would get it.

And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless, if thou see me when

I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan; And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him
2 Kings 2:9-15 (KJV)

Surely you recall that there were other students in that Bible College for Prophets? At least 50 of them are recorded to have witnessed Elisha's transformation. Well

how many of them got the impartation simply because they attended the Bible School of Prophets? None of them except Elisha. How come?

I repeat; you may not necessarily get the impartation simply by attending a Bible Institute. You may read and thoroughly digest all the books and messages of a particular Kingdom General. You may even begin to talk like him. However, when it comes to the transfer of the mantle or baton, you need to 'wait' upon a mentor and possibly pour water upon his hands. The Mantle answers to faithful and committed servants!

This truth is very humbling. It is the bane of the 21st century minister. There is very little humility today. Everyone who goes through the Bible Schools expects to become the Apostle Paul of his generation and is both in haste to make an impression and too important to serve anybody.

Predictably, there are great ministries that have not continued beyond the founders. There was no Elisha to hand over the 'Mantle' to. Those on the team were more concerned about looking after their personal interests and making their own mark, to be any person's armour-bearer. But the greater tragedy is that there are even potentially greater ministries which will never see the light of day because those ministers have despised God's method and channel of grooming them.

Unfortunately, our pride or impatience or both have not changed the divine order. For reasons best known to Him, the All-wise God will have one generation

hand over the baton or mantle of leadership to another generation. Now do you re-member where He looks? It is not on the queue of those who flaunt their experience or age or wealth or knowledge as their qualification. God looks down at that seemingly derogatory quarters where uncelebrated and often mocked servants are serving. Why does He do that? He specializes in qualifying the dishonorable and raising those who abase themselves. Well, Sister Hannah puts it this way:

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S...1 Sam 2:8 (KJV)

Brothers Solomon, James and Peter all had opinions about this state of affairs;

Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility. Proverbs 18:12 (KJV)

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. James 4:6 (KJV)

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and

giveth grace to the humble. 1 Peter 5:5
(KJV)

Advisably, a very effective place to clip those peacock wings and keep those arrogant horse-like shoulders of pride in check, is in the valley of menial service as armour-bearers.

God must find an armour-bearer to take over the mantle of leadership. They are unfortunately not always the Vice Presidents or Deputy General Over-seers. In most cases, God's Vessels never really serve in positions of glamour until God eventually announces them. This is what many New Testament 'Adonijahs' find frustrating. Many Adonijahs cannot understand why God would chose anyone clearly less qualified than themselves. That is why in most change of leadership, there are initial objections before the dust eventually settles.

But make no mistake, God needs continuity in the running of His government on earth and will get Himself the most suitable man for the job. Pastor E. A. Adebayo was an ordinary interpreter to Pa Josiah Akindayomi while there were more 'qualified' pastors and elders. From such a backbench and against all human expectations, God made him the General Overseer of The Redeemed Christian Church of God. As at 2016, RCCG is the fastest growing Church globally. It is on every continent. The only Christian Organization on planet earth that seats multiple millions in one gathering in their Holy Ghost Nights and Holy Ghost Congresses. RCCG recently moved into its 3kilometre square auditorium. I should

imagine Pa Akindayomi leaning over the balcony of heaven with a broad smile on his face while he watches that sea of worshippers at every meeting. I imagine he will be thankful that he had the courage to do the unthinkable by handing over to an ‘interpreter’.

While John Osteen led Lakewood Church in Houston USA, his young unassuming son Joel was only good enough to ‘manage’ the Tape Ministry of his father. It was his responsibility to prepare the Tape messages and get them ready for the public. There was nothing pulpit-like about him. However, while he buried himself in thousands of hours working out the Tapes, God was infact preparing His man. After the elder Osteen went to Heaven in 1999, the mantle of leadership fell upon a bemused Joel. Today, 2016, Lakewood Church under Joel and his wife Victoria is considered the largest Church in the US.

Kenneth Max Copeland’s first contact with Ministry was as a pilot and chauffeur to Oral Roberts. Today, the Apostle of Faith and Prosperity presides over a multi-billion Dollar Ministry, KCM, which is impacting humanity globally with the gospel.

Each of these examples and thousands of others buttress the fact that those who bear armour for Kingdom Generals eventually have an anointing imparted upon them and if they couple that with the right attitude, will multiply the exploits of their mentors. Apart from the fear of God and the Anointing, why didn’t David use his several opportunities to kill Saul? He

understood something most prospective New Testament leaders don't. David understood the imperative need of continuity and the indispensable element of handover. He understood that rather than plan to start from the scratch, you would make better speed if you collect the mantle and blessing from your master and predecessor. That was why he waited patiently until he got the baton from King Saul in form of prophetic utterance.

David got the blessing to succeed in his ministry directly from his predecessor and mentor, King Saul.

But it wasn't just because he was David. He earned it.

He had served faithfully as Saul's armour-bearer.

So David waited patiently until he got the mantle to rule Israel, from king Saul.

Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

1 Samuel 26:25 (KJV)

Can you beat that?

Here we find Saul technically blessing David and commending him to 'Ministry'.

Excuse me sir, I don't care the spiritual state of your spiritual mentor or father. You need his blessing for you to succeed in your assignment. Shun both folly and pride and go and secure that blessing before you take off.

There is no question whatsoever. Armour-bearing is

as necessary today as it has always been.

4. Roots.

God seems to be very particular about the roots or background of His vessels. No, our past does not disqualify us for any position in the King-dom. 2Corinthians5:17 mentions quite clearly that once we experience the New Birth, we are new creatures and old things have passed away.

However, it isn't a light thing with God if we can't be identified with a clear family in the King-dom. No wonder Psalm 68:6 declares that; God sets the solitary in families.

Perhaps one of the least read Books in the Bible is 1Chronicles. You know, the chronicling of all those families and their details really doesn't endear itself too much to most of us. All the same, I should think that if God had 1Chronicles documented, it must be important. Perhaps He is teaching us all a lesson on His value for lineage.

I believe it is very important that we are identifiable with both a clear biological and spiritual lineage. Family in any case, is the most hallowed institution God created. He should quite fittingly take exception to our making light of it whether bio-logically or spiritually.

How was Joshua introduced at his appointment to succeed Moses?

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the

*LORD spake unto Joshua the son of
Nun, Moses' minister, saying...
Joshua 1:1 (KJV)*

Here, at the appointment to the enormous assignment to succeed Moses and lead God's people, we are introduced to a man whose biological and spiritual roots are distinct.

Biologically, he is Joshua the son of Nun.

Spiritually, he is Moses' minister.

As the son of Nun, his biological lineage is established.

As Moses' minister, his spiritual lineage and apprenticeship are settled.

The Holy Ghost who inspired the Holy Scripture here in this one verse sets the stage for how leaders in all generations should be chosen. First, they must be identified by a natural family.

Secondly, they should be traceable to Spiritual mentors under whom they have schooled.

Finally, he is not just a student under Moses. The word minister here is the Hebrew 'sharath' which actually means a menial attendant; worship-per; to do service; servant; servitor; to wait on; waiter.

Isn't it very interesting that the word minister here does not even have the courtesy to convey the implication of an apprentice?

Well, the Lord chooses His leaders from menial attendants or servitors or waiters or pourers of water on hands or servants who have faithfully served a human master and who have patent family root. In fact this issue

is so exigent or important that when Nehemiah returned to repair the walls and government of Jerusalem, those whose family connections could not be ascertained were disqualified from the priesthood.

And of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, which took one of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite to wife, and was called after their name. These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. Neh 7:63-64 (KJV)

This issue of descendants was not a casual thing with the Lord. You either had clear biological and spiritual roots or you stood disqualified from the priest-hood.

These days however, it seems to be a thing of pride to claim that one was called, anointed and commissioned by the Holy Ghost and that such a one never has and does not need any spiritual parents.

I do not qualify to make myself the judge of this position. As a matter of fact, the Sovereign Lord God can call and commission as He pleases. I should nonetheless plead that nobody should find such a unique possibility so fashionable as to imitate. Honestly, I am personally wary of Ministers who seem to have just dropped down from Heaven and who have no particular person they submit to as spiritual parents or mentors. I was privileged

to serve as an armour-bearer and have found much joy and assurance in acknowledging my mentor Rev. David Olu-David at every opportunity. We have such a son-father bond that though thousands of kilometres have physically separated us for many years, we have maintained a profitable relationship.

Trust me, armour-bearing is both necessary and mutually beneficial. It helps provide spiritual bonds and roots for those who aspire to excel in their assignments.

5. We are still in Warfare. In the Old Testament, warfare was conducted with carnal or physical weapons. The Moses, Gideons and Davids of that time confronted physical Amalekites, Midianites, Philis-tines of the time. They faced physical warriors, used physical arms and needed 'help' with those physical arms and ammunition. Hence, the person who helped bear those extra arms was called the armou-rbearer. The main difference in the New Testament is that our weapons are no more physical because the enemy isn't also necessarily the strange acting fellow down the street.

By the Holy Spirit, Paul told the brethren at Corinth and indeed the global Church;

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 (KJV)

Certainly, we are still in battle in the New Testament, aren't we? Besides, there are still Kingdom Generals who are commanding battles at different fronts. Now don't they equally need to be assisted to be as focused on the main 'battle' as possible?

Granted, some showmen and worship-seeking General Overseers have abused an otherwise reasonable office. I have personally fallen victim to such excesses. In 2007, long before insurgency invaded Nigeria, I had one of my brethren, a lawyer, drive me to the office of a senior Minister of the Gospel in the city of Ibadan. I had just had a book release and somehow, I decided to give complimentary copies of those books to a few spiritual elders. At the gate of this 'big' ministry, we announced our mission. We were also ministers and had come to see the Man of God. In fact, we had a gift for the 'Daddy' or 'Papa'. The security man at the gate put a call through to somebody in the office. Apparently, he must have been instructed not to allow us go beyond the car park. His politeness suddenly changed and he seemed rather urgent to keep us from get-ting out of our car. Our protests that we were also brethren and even ministers at that, fell on deaf ears.

Well, if you know me, with all humility, I should mention that I pay attention to my dressing. We were not in any way shabbily dressed. It mattered not. We were guarded like criminals in our car and restricted to the car park. At last, someone from the office who could be 'sacrificed' to approach us eventually showed up and took

the books from us. My feeble attempt to protest that as ministers of the Gospel, we didn't deserve to be treated like criminals in God's house made little impression on belligerent ears.

Yes, there are perhaps many situations even worse than our experience. Yes I concede that there are certain 'uncles' of Jesus who surround them-selves with an army of pugnacious bouncers. I am ashamed to confess that there are certain ministries or churches where the Man of God is honoured or even 'worshipped' above God. Notwithstanding, there are still meek, humble, courteous and focused Kingdom Generals who must be waited upon, to help organize their schedules so that they can sincerely concentrate upon the spiritual aspect of the New Testament warfare. As a matter of fact, the dynamics and exigencies of the 21st century ministry which is driven by ICT makes the need for armour-bearing even more indispensable.

6. The Only Defensive Weapon for the Back or Rear. In 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 we are told that though we walk in the flesh, we do not war physically. Come Ephesians 6:12, we are reminded that our weapons are not physical weapons. By the Holy Spirit, Paul proceeds to reveal the armoury of the New Testament warrior in Ephesians 6:13-17.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins

girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God

Do you notice that there is no weapon to protect the New Testament warrior from the rear? No weapon defending the back in this awesome collection.

Well, there are two reasons for this:

First of all, you are not allowed to turn your back to the adversary. You are meant to remain alert and face the foe at all times. That is why verse 13 ends with;

...and having done all, to stand.

Secondly, the armour-bearer is all the rear defensive weapon the New Testament warrior ever needs. It is his duty to cover the back of his master.

Pardon me sir, armour-bearing is as vital to-day as it was in the days preceding the first advent of the Lord.

7. Opportunity to Sow Seed in Service and Submission. Somehow, no matter how you throw the dice in the Kingdom, the seed principle surfaces. The seed principle says you will reap what you sow.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap Galatians 6:7 (KJV)

While the earth remaineth, seedtime and

harvest...shall not cease.

Genesis 8:22 (KJV)

Now, it is important to understand that this principle is not restricted to the issues of finance. I know it is more fashionable to drive this law into the faces of people when we want to talk them into large offerings. I have no particular quarrel with that as long as we know that the principle of sowing and reaping traverses every aspect of the human existence. Whatever you sow materially, financially, spiritually, emotionally, professionally, ministerially, etc. that is what you will reap. Conversely, if you don't sow, you have no right to expect a harvest.

Armour-bearing presents those who will be-come leaders of repute, the opportunity to sow seed in both service and submission.

If you haven't served others faithfully, why should you expect others to serve you?

If you haven't submitted to others, why must anyone submit to you.

Do you now understand why there is so much unfaithfulness and rebellion in the Kingdom of God today? People who have served nobody and submitted to no one, attempt to force their leadership upon others. They are attempting to defy the law of sowing and reaping. It can't work. Whatever they gather together, rebellion breaks out and scatters it. Then those who rebelled gather their own group. Again, the seed principle or the seed-law comes calling. They sowed rebellion and they must reap. Another breakup. So the cycle continues.

For those who will make major impact in the Kingdom, armour-bearing is a fundamental opportunity to sow the seed of service and submission. The office of armour-bearing has not become obsolete. What has happened is that we seem to be more at home with the 21st century term, mentoring. But even worse than that, because the internet has made materials, messages and sermons readily available, the 21st century young minister is deluded into believing that he is already so equipped that he needs not serve anybody.

The stark reality however is that you may memorize Bishop T. D. Jakes' messages and even perfect his pulpit demeanor but you cannot replicate his anointing or results. That comes through impartation and is the preserve of those who humble themselves and draw close enough to pour water upon the hands of their mentors, or masters or parents.

ARMOUR-BEARERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY WARFARE

So in the face of the apparent difference between our New Testament era and the days when warriors used javelins, spears, swords, shields, etc. who are the Armour-bearers in today's Church?

Obviously, a primary function of the armour-bearer, irrespective of the dispensation, warfare or arsenal, has always been to wait upon the warrior in a manner that frees him from distraction and enables him to be fully focused on and more effective in the main battle or assignment.

That being the case therefore, today, every person whose daily or regular contribution helps the Setman, Visioner, General Overseer, President, Assembly/Parish Pastor to deliver on the ultimate set goals of the commission is an armour-bearer of some sorts.

Under present day Ministry or Church administrative structure consequently, the following satisfy this description; Associate/Assistant Pastors, Ministers, Deacons & Deaconesses, Homecell Leaders/Pastors, Children/Youth Pastors, Music Ministers, Intercessors/Prayer Warriors, Financiers, Administrators, Secretaries, Personal Assistants, Protocol, Choir, Drivers, Technicians, Cleaners, etc.

It must be understood that all who occupy any of the afore named positions are armour-bearers of some kind. They may or may not draw a regular financial compensation from the organization under which they serve. What however makes the difference is their motive for service. If for example anyone of them is motivated strictly by material rewards, they are more of professionals than servants. In the King James Version, John 10:12 refers to such people as hirelings. They can never be effective armour-bearers because each time the organization experiences financial challenges (and believe me, all organizations are confronted with financial challenges at some point) their availability and contribution will become suspect.

On the other hand, there are people who specifically have a covenant understanding that they are called within

the ministry of another Minister. They are driven by the love of God and a personal understanding that it is their ministry to wait upon another leader. They have a genuine heart of servant-hood and are fulfilled just to contribute to the success of another leader. While they are under this leader, they have no other commitment. These are armour-bearers by calling. The Saxophonist, Pastor Kunle Ajayi of The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) under Pastor Enoch Adejare Adebayo is a good example of this. My pick of the examples is Bishop David Abioye of Living Faith who once declared publicly that his ministry is to serve Bishop David Oyedepo. There are some people like these with special grace for armour-bearing.

Nevertheless, the wisdom is that when you have opportunity to serve under anybody in any capacity, give yourself totally to it. Paid by men or not, be a dependable armour-bearer wherever you serve. The decision as to your qualification for higher responsibility may be dependent on your serving others with all you have got.