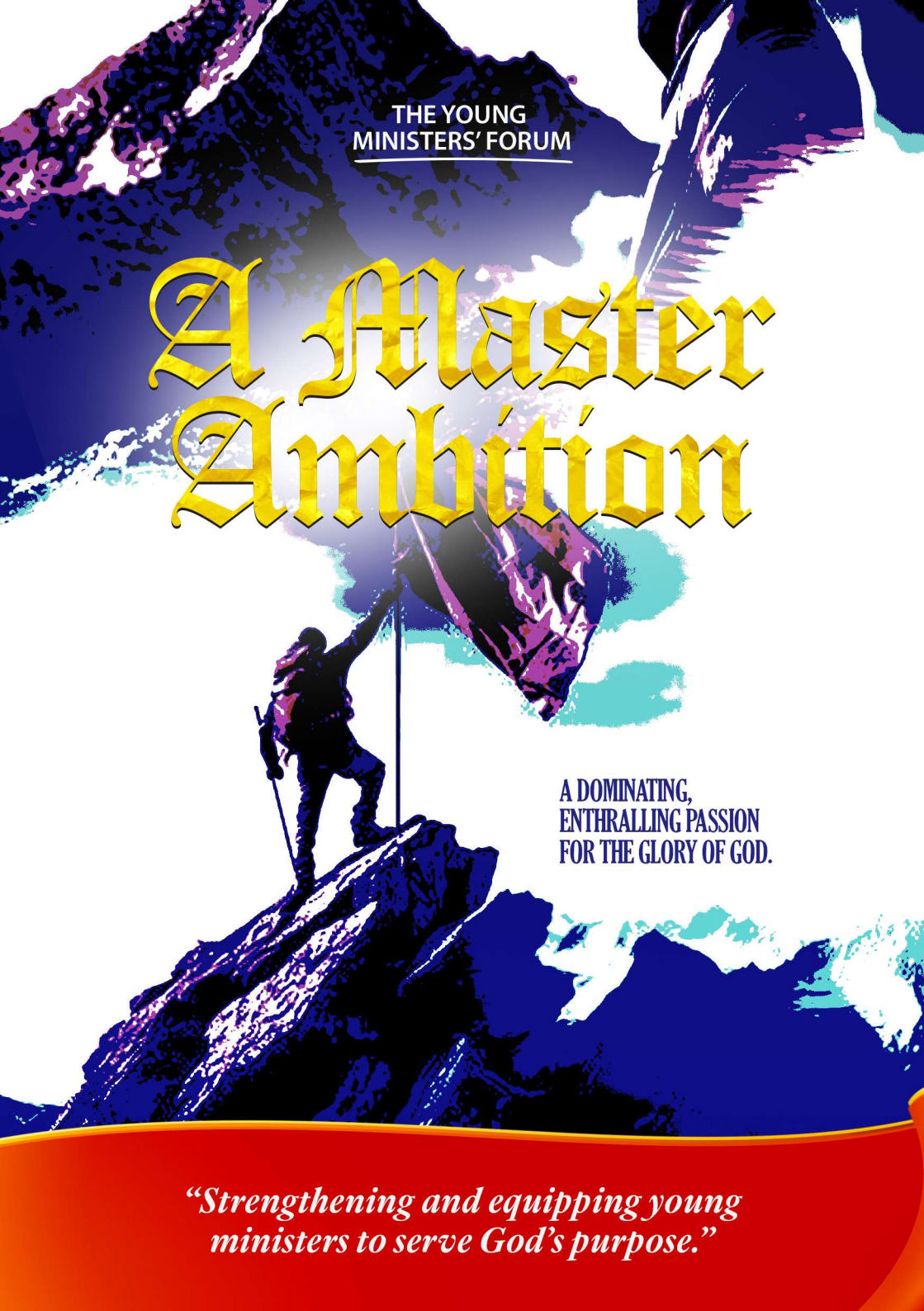




THE YOUNG
MINISTERS' FORUM

A Master Ambition

A DOMINATING,
ENTHRALLING PASSION
FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

*“Strengthening and equipping young
ministers to serve God’s purpose.”*

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ISSUE PAPER: A MASTER AMBITION

The Power of a Master Ambition

The Story of a Determined Student

In his book *Spiritual Discipleship*, J. Oswald Sanders tells the story of a student in Britain who took a course in optometry and boldly declared, “*One day, I am going to be King George’s optometrist!*” His friend laughed skeptically, “*Oh, yes?*” Yet, that student eventually became King George’s optometrist!

Sanders concludes, “*He was in the grip of a master ambition, and that channeled his life in a single direction until he reached his goal.*” Then he challenges believers: “*We should do well to ask ourselves if we have any such clearly defined ambition.*”

Biblical Perspective on Ambition

Paul affirms that “*To aspire to leadership is an honorable ambition*” (1 Timothy 3:1 NEB). He also expresses a similar aspiration regarding his own life in 2 Corinthians 5:9 AMPC: “*Therefore, whether we are at home [on earth, away from Him] or away from home [and with Him], we are constantly ambitious and strive earnestly to be pleasing to Him.*”

Other versions use the word *goal* instead of *ambition*. 2 Corinthians 5:9 NIV “*So we make it our goal to please Him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.*”

Worldly Ambition vs. Holy Ambition

The Difference Between Worldly and Worthy Ambition

The difference between *worldly ambition* and *worthy ambition* is clear:

- **Worldly ambition** is centered on self.

Worthy ambition is Christ-centered.

A Christian life devoid of this worthy ambition lacks inspiration and motivation for spiritual excellence. Such a person settles for mediocrity, like the half-tribes of Manasseh and Reuben, who camped at the border instead of pressing into the fullness of God's promise. They strive for nothing, pursue nothing, and drift through life without a God-sized purpose.

The Danger of a Life Without Holy Ambition

Without *holy ambition*, a person becomes easily distracted by fleeting pursuits and captivated by ignoble sights. They run, but without certainty—without a definite aim. They box the air, wasting their punches! Such a Christian life knows no holy adventure; it lacks the faith of Caleb, who declared, “*Give me this mountain*” even in old age. It does not resonate with the longing of David, who said, “*One thing I desire, that will I seek after.*”

Biblical Examples of Holy Ambition

David's Singular Focus: Psalms 132:2, 4-5 NIV: “*He swore an oath to the Lord, he made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob: I will allow no sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, till I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob.*”

Esther's Courageous Resolve: Such a person cannot comprehend Esther's resolve when she said, *"If I perish, I perish"* for the sake of God's people.

Nehemiah's Determination: They do not grasp what compelled Nehemiah to say to the king in Nehemiah 2:5 KJV: *"Send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it."* Nor do they understand his rallying cry to the people: *"Let us arise and build."*

The Call to Devotion: Living for a Higher Ambition

The Devotion of Ezra: Consider **Ezra**, a man consumed by a holy ambition—a noble objective to which he channeled all his strength: Ezra 7:10 GNT *"Ezra had devoted his life to studying the Law of the Lord, to practicing it, and to teaching all its laws and regulations to the people of Israel."*

Ezra **devoted his life!** He committed himself entirely to one thing—the Law of God—in study, practice, and teaching. Such dedication commanded the attention of even a heathen king. Look at how the king addressed him in Ezra 7:12 GNT *"From Emperor Artaxerxes to the priest Ezra, scholar in the Law of the God of Heaven."*

Jesus: The Ultimate Example of Holy Ambition

Even our Lord **Jesus Christ** spoke of His singular, driving purpose: John 4:34 ESV *"Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.'"*

John 18:37 ESV *"Then Pilate said to him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.'"*

The Need for a Singular Focus

We must be **men and women of noble ambition**—men and women of **one thing**. Our lives must be marked by a **singular, dominating influence** that drives our hearts in a clear direction. This ambition channels our passion toward Christ, compelling us to live with **purpose and wholehearted devotion!**

“Let it once be fixed that a man’s ambition is to fit into God’s plan for him, and he has a North Star ever in sight to guide him steadily over any sea, however shoreless it seems,” wrote S. D. Gordon in one of his well-known devotional books. *“He has a compass that points true in the thickest fog and fiercest storm, and regardless of magnetic rocks.”*

These words by **S.D. Gordon** require our **holy contemplation** because they are poetic in expression, deep in thought, and full of light that can spark this holy ambition in our hearts.

Fixing the Ambition: Aligning with God’s Plan

The Historical Meaning of Ambition

Ambition is often celebrated as a driving force behind success, a relentless pursuit of greatness. The world sees ambition as the hunger for **power, influence, and recognition**—an intense campaign to be known, admired, and exalted. It is the pursuit of **prominence**, sometimes at any cost.

The Origin of the Word Ambition

The word **ambition** comes from the Latin *ambitio*, which is derived from *ambire*, meaning “to go around” or “to solicit votes.” In ancient Rome, it was

said that politicians would walk around (*ambire*) seeking public approval, votes, and support to secure power. So, you can see the idea of an **active seeking** or a **passionate striving**.

Ambition in Today's Culture

Thus, *ambitio* was often associated with the **pursuit of honor, influence, and political advancement**—sometimes through flattery, persuasion, or even manipulation. Over time, this idea became synonymous with striving for **personal glory, leadership, and dominance**. In many cultures, ambition is still linked to **self-fulfillment, authority over others, and the quest for personal prestige**. But what does *holy ambition* look like? And how does it differ from the world's definition?

The Greek Perspective: Love of Honor

The Meaning of *Philotimia*

The Greek word often linked to ambition is *philotimia*, a compound of *philos*, meaning “love,” and *timia*, meaning “honor” or “price.” Thus, *philotimia* literally means “love of honor” or “the desire to be highly esteemed.” In the Greek world in which the New Testament was written, ambition could be used positively or negatively. It could be noble or selfish, depending on the motive behind the pursuit of honor.

The Cultural Weight of *Philotimia*

Philotimia has been said to be difficult to translate, not because the word cannot be explained or broken down, but because its essence is so rich in

Greek culture that it resists brief description. In classical Greek literature, *philotimia* could refer to civic virtue—a noble ambition to serve the city-state and bring honor through courage and excellence.

In ancient Greece, when a man lost his *philotimia*, he lost his honesty, his human sympathy, his honor—his very dignity. Any man accused of this was judged more harshly by his fellow citizens than even a thief or murderer. If found dishonorable, he was expelled from Athens, cast out of society, and stripped of all civil rights. Such a man was deemed worthless to his community. Even today in Greece, if someone acts inappropriately, they might be asked, “How could you act that way? Have you lost your *philotimo*?”

The Dual Nature of *Philotimia*

While *philotimia* could represent a noble ambition, it could also manifest as a destructive craving for personal distinction and fame at the expense of others. Plato used *philotimia* ironically in *The Republic*, portraying the pursuit of honor as an obsession with status and recognition.

Modern Interpretations of *Philotimia*

When some Greek-speaking people were asked about the meaning of *philotimia*, their answers reflected its richness:

- “*Doing the right thing*,” said Dr. Pinelopi Kalafati.
- “*Loving and honoring God and your society*,” said Priest Nikolas Papanikolaou.
- “*Striving for perfection*,” answered actor Kostis Thomopoulos.

- “*Stepping out from your comfort zone to help someone in need,*” suggested Tatiana Papadopoulou, a volunteer in a refugee camp.
- An old man poetically described it as: “*Two to three positive thoughts, one liter of zest for life, 500 grams of hospitality, 10 drops of sympathy, an ounce of pride, dignity, and your inner guide.*”

The Question of True Ambition

This raises a vital question: What kind of ambition does God call us to?

While worldly ambition often revolves around self-exaltation, the Bible speaks of a different kind of ambition—one that is **Christ-centered** rather than **self-centered**. Paul expresses this in 2 Corinthians 5:9: “*We make it our ambition (philotimeomai) to please Him.*”

Paul’s Holy Ambition

Here, Paul uses the verb *philotimeomai*, meaning “*to strive earnestly for something honorable.*” Instead of seeking self-glory, Paul’s ambition was directed toward pleasing God in all things. His daily life was a **joyful offering to the Lord**, like the sweet savor of a burnt sacrifice.

To be *pleasing* in Greek means to be **fully agreeable**—a life that aligns with God’s expectations, a life that God enjoys. Paul was essentially saying: “*I ensure that my daily actions, my thoughts, my responses to life, my choices—whether small, tiny, big, or titanic—fully agree with God’s desires. When I think, talk, enjoy my leisure, or make a choice, I ask: ‘Is God happy with this?’ If He is not, I leave the practice, drop the thought, and embrace what pleases Him.*”

In life, in service, in eating or drinking, in private or public, Paul's ambition was to **please God in all things**.

A Call to Self-Examination

Do you have this mindset in your daily life? Or do you merely display a form of godliness in public, without a radical pursuit to please God in your thoughts, actions, and choices? Hope you are not offering lip service while being far from heaven in your daily walk.

A Prayer of Holy Consecration

Lord, I want my WHOLE life to be fully agreeable to Your desire! Just as the burnt offering in the Old Testament was wholly Yours, I refuse to compartmentalize my life. From library to kitchen, from social media to personal relationships, from my local church to my workplace, from my home to the public space, from my prayer time to my leisure—let my holy ambition be to please You in all things! Amen.

Will you add your prayers in your own words? Write it down.

Paul's Ambition to Preach Christ

Paul reiterates his holy ambition when writing to the Romans:

Romans 15:20: *"It has always been my ambition (philotimeomai) to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation."*

The Characteristics of Paul's Ambition

Paul's use of *philotimeomai* here conveys a strong sense of striving earnestly for something honorable. His ambition was not about self-promotion but about **pioneering gospel work in unreached places**. His ambition was marked by:

1. **Intentionality** – Paul **actively sought out the unreached**. He longed for a **holy adventure**, to break new frontiers and refuse to build on another's foundation.
2. **Embracing Difficulty and Sacrifice** – Preaching in new territories was not easy. Paul faced **shipwrecks, loneliness, persecution, hunger, and hardship**. His was a life of **faith, endurance, courage, and perseverance**.
3. **A Christ-Centered Focus** – Unlike worldly ambition, which seeks personal gain, Paul's ambition was driven by **bringing the gospel to those who had never heard it**.

A Call to a Holy Adventure

Dear young ministers, we need a **holy ambition** like Paul's—one that breaks new frontiers and advances the gospel one more mile! We need a desire that:

- **Drives us to drive the new atheism into retreat**
- **Subdues the strongholds of Islam**
- **Pulls down the walls of renovated idolatry**
- **Shuts the roaring mouths of falsehood**
- **Extinguishes the fierce fire of Babylon**

Oh Lord, we seek a **divine ambition** that is greater than **Neil Armstrong's moon landing**. May the Holy Spirit birth in us a **holy desire the world has never known**—one that sweeps through our gatherings, covers young minds in our nation, and floods our cities, campuses, and churches. Let **celebrity culture die**, but let **the spirit of Paul fall upon us!**

Fitting into God's Plan

From the very first aspect of S. D. Gordon's quote, we must establish a critical truth: **our ambition must be to fit into God's plan**. It must be **fixed, unshaken, and rooted** in a desire to serve God's purpose, not to exalt ourselves.

This is the **true measure of a worthy ambition**—not seeking prominence for personal gain, but striving for **excellence in life and service to Christ**. It is a holy ambition, not for **exaltation**, but for **God's glory**.

True Greatness in the Kingdom of God

Many pursue greatness according to worldly definitions, but in God's kingdom, true greatness is found in serving Him and His church. Our ambition is not about pleasing ourselves or securing our own success. It is about fulfilling the purposes of Christ.

The prophet Daniel **purposed in his heart** that he would not defile himself because the law of God consumed him, despite the great opportunity for worldly greatness around him (Daniel 1:8). We must also purpose in our hearts to make Christ our consuming passion. His ambition was not political power, wealth, or self-promotion. Instead, his focus was on being faithful to

God's plan. This attitude brought God to the scene for Daniel. When God saw that he purposed in his heart according to His plan, **God stepped in.**

The Outcome of Daniel's Godly Ambition

Daniel 1:9,17,19-20 *"Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.*

Daniel's heart was fixed on God's plan, and God's wisdom and power were demonstrated through them. Likewise, our pursuit of greatness must align with God's definition of greatness: **serving Him, honoring Him, and advancing His kingdom.**

Jesus' Teaching on True Greatness

Jesus' disciples often struggled with ambition. They asked Him: *"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"* - Matthew 18:1. Like many of us, they longed for recognition and status. Jesus' response was unexpected:

Mark 9:35: *"Whoever wants to be first must be the servant of all."*

True ambition in God's kingdom is not about **being first** in the world's eyes, but about being first in **serving** in Christ's name. Christ was not against the desire to be great or first but he shows how? To be the servant of all.

The World's View of Ambition

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid's Ambition

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, has consistently emphasized the pursuit of excellence and leadership across various sectors. His vision for Dubai reflects an unwavering commitment to being at the forefront globally.

Striving to Be Number One

Sheikh Mohammed's ambition for Dubai is encapsulated in his statements about leading in multiple domains: *"We always seek to be number one. In the UAE and Dubai, we are number one in terms of investment, security, quality of stable life, economic and social progress, and infrastructure."*

In an interview with CNN, when asked about his aspirations for the UAE, he succinctly stated: *"We want to be number one."*

Achievements Under His Leadership

Dubai has achieved numerous **world-firsts and record-breaking accomplishments**: **Burj Khalifa** – The tallest building in the world at 828 meters; **Dubai Mall** – The world's second-largest shopping mall; **Dubai Fountain** – The largest choreographed fountain system in the world; **Dubai International Airport (DXB)** – The busiest airport for international passengers; **Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park** – Holder of multiple Guinness World Records in renewable energy.

Dubai continues to expand its reach, constantly setting new records in tourism, technology, and innovation.

The Contrast with Christ's Kingdom

While this ambition is admirable in worldly terms, **Jesus taught that God's kingdom turns human ambition upside down.** True ambition is not about **climbing higher for personal glory**, but about **stooping lower in humble service of Christ and His Church.** The foremost thing is not to be number one in the world or in competition with others, but to be number one in who **God** wants you to be.

The Disciple's Ambition: To Know Christ and Make Him Known

What Should a Disciple's Ambition Be?

If we were to campaign for anything, what should it be? The answer is simple: **Christ.** Oswald Sanders said: *"The ambition of Count Nikolaus Zinzendorf, founder of the great missionary Moravian church, was enshrined in these words: 'I have one passion: it is He, He alone!'" This Christ-centered passion and ambition was imprinted on the church he led. It pioneered a world missions program in a day when missionaries were few. For a hundred years, there arose night and day an unbroken stream of prayer from the church at Herrnhutt. His was a worthy ambition that found its center in Christ and reached the world. So, as we speak of our ambition we mean living for the glory of Christ, partnering with Him in building his Church, making His name known far and wide."*

We can test the quality of our own ambition with this measuring stick: *"Will the fulfillment of my ambition bring glory to God and make me more useful to Him in building His Church and reaching out to a lost world?"*

Karl Jobe lyrics in 'The Cause of Christ' is touching:

*The only thing I want in life
Is to be known for loving Christ*

*To build his church, to love his bride
And make His name known far and wide
For this cause I live, for this cause I'd die
I surrender all for the cause of Christ
All I once held dear I will leave behind
For my joy is this, Oh, the cause of Christ
He is all my soul will prize regardless of the joy or trial
When agonizing questions rise, in Jesus all my hope abides
It is not fame that I desire
Nor stature in my brother's eye
I pray it's said about my life
That I lived more to build Your name than mine*

Jeremiah 45:5 *“Do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not.”*

A wrong ambition is that which is directed towards self. Self-centered ambition is a dangerous distraction and the scripture warns against it. It is easy to desire recognition, success, and influence, but a disciple's dominant passion must be to **please Christ**.

Paul expressed this well in Philippians 3:10: *“My goal is to know Him and the power of His resurrection...”*

For a disciple, the ultimate ambition is not **self-fulfillment** but **Christ-fulfillment**. The passion that drives us must be:

- To walk in obedience to Him,
- To serve His church,

- To bring His name to the world.

The Ultimate Plan of God

What is the Ultimate plan of God? That **His glory fills the earth**—that is what we must fix our heart to plug into, that is our ambition. That God will be held supreme and honored in every nation of the heart. That **the knowledge of Christ covers the earth as the waters cover the sea.** Habakkuk 2:14 *“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”*

Ask yourself:

- Is my ambition centered on **myself** or **Christ**?
- Am I seeking great things **for myself** or seeking to serve **God’s purpose**?

Take a moment to evaluate your ambitions. Are they aligned with God's purpose? Let us ask the Holy Spirit to refine your desires so that you may walk in the greatness of His plan, not your own.

The North Star: Anchoring Ambition in God’s Purpose

“...he has a North Star ever in sight to guide him steadily over any sea, however shoreless it seems...has a compass that points true in the thickest fog and fiercest storm, and regardless of magnetic rocks.”

This imagery of the **North Star** as God's unwavering purpose is worth considering. It reflects how those who align their ambition with God's plan have a steady point of reference in life, no matter how vast and unpredictable the journey may seem.

Historically, sailors have relied on the **North Star (Polaris)** as a fixed celestial guide in an otherwise shifting and chaotic sea. Unlike other stars that change position, Polaris remains constant, making it a trusted anchor for navigation. **Similarly, God's unchanging purpose serves as a spiritual anchor** for those seeking direction.

Navigating Life's Vast and Uncertain Sea

Life often feels like a boundless sea—vast, unpredictable, and sometimes overwhelming. Without a clear sense of purpose, we drift aimlessly, carried by the tides of circumstance. Like sailors navigating shifting, chaotic waters, we face different phases, make crucial choices, and confront inevitable challenges.

To stay grounded, we must anchor our lives in what is eternal—God's plan and purpose. True ambition, then, is not mere personal striving but a firm grip on God's will, directing the entire course of our lives like a ship steered toward its destination. When ambition is rooted in God's plan, it becomes a North Star, providing clarity, direction, and unwavering guidance.

This resonates with the lyrics of Hillsong's *Oceans*: "*You call me out upon the waters, the great unknown where feet may fail.*" The song captures the essence of **stepping into the unknown** but His call becomes the star that gives direction on the unknown path.

Genesis 11 vs. Genesis 12: Two Kinds of Ambition

In Genesis 11, the people of Babel said: *Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.* - Genesis 11:4

Their ambition was about self-exaltation—building a name for themselves and securing their own future without dependence on God. They pursued greatness on their own terms. This was more than architecture; it was a spiritual rebellion, a movement centered around human pride, unity in defiance of God, and occultic practices (as seen in the ziggurat culture of ancient Mesopotamia).

But then, in Genesis 12, God tells Abraham: *I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. - Genesis 12:2*

Instead of Abraham seeking greatness for himself, God gives him greatness—not as an act of pride, but as part of a divine mission to bless the nations. This is the essence of holy ambition—not ambition for self, but ambition from revelation.

Key Differences Between the Two Ambitions

Babel (Worldly Ambition)	Abraham (Holy Ambition)
“Let us build for ourselves” (self-initiated)	“I will bless you” (God-initiated)
Driven by human pride	Driven by divine promise
Aimed at self-glory	Aimed at God’s glory
Temporary and earthly	Eternal and generational
Seeks control apart from God	Depends on God’s direction
Ends in confusion and scattering	Results in a lasting legacy

The Anchor of Holy Ambition: God’s Word

God’s promise became Abraham’s North Star, guiding his every decision. Despite life’s uncertainties, barrenness, and trials, Abraham navigated by faith because he had an ambition given by God, not self-fabricated.

Christian Ambition: Living for a Greater Purpose

This is the fundamental difference between ambition in the world and ambition in Christ:

- The world seeks to build its own tower.
- The believer seeks to live out God’s promise.

Worldly ambition builds Babel—Godly ambition builds the Kingdom.

A Blood Washed Africa

Reinhard Bonnke saw a vision four times—a sure word from the Lord, given consecutively. He saw the map of Africa suffused in the blood of Jesus and heard a voice declare, *“Africa shall be saved!”* He saw a blood-washed Africa, a continent covered with the redeeming blood of Jesus. God was gathering the chaos, the collapse, and the disbandment, uniting everything in Christ. That vision ignited a war cry within him: *“From Cape Town to Cairo, Africa shall be saved!”* Oh, to hear the Church today cry, *“Nigeria shall be saved!”* This is the spirit of Christ for All Nations (CFAN).

But this is not just about CFAN—it is about capturing what God is doing. Under Daniel Kolenda’s leadership, the vision has continued with a Decade of Double Harvest, pressing forward with the same consuming passion for the salvation of souls.

Bonnke was a man whose dominating, consuming passion was shaped by the fear of God and the vision God gave him—a vision of a blood-washed Africa. That vision became his life’s pursuit: *“From Cape Town to Cairo, Africa shall be saved!”* He once received a prophecy that he would preach to a million people making a decision for Christ in a single crusade. At the time, it seemed impossible. But it came to pass.

He was not a man who simply let life happen to him—he was a man with a pursuit, a vision, and a gripping, dominating ambition. And because of that, he did exploits for God.

A MASTER AMBITION: WHAT GOVERNS ALL?

Every man has an ambition, but not every ambition is worthy of governing his life. Ambition, in itself, is not evil—God created man with the capacity to desire, to pursue, and to achieve. However, what defines a man's life is not merely that he has ambition, but what ambition governs him. There is always something that dominates a man’s pursuits, something that gives meaning to everything else.

Oswald sanders quoted Billy Graham: At the funeral of Dawson Trotman, founder of the widespreading Navigator movement, Billy Graham delivered the sermon. In the course of his address he made this revealing statement: *“Here was a man who did not say, ‘These forty things I dabble in,’ but, ‘This one thing I do.’”*

Your whole life must have that singular goal such that all you do fits in into it. Some are governed by the pursuit of wealth, others by the craving for recognition, power, or comfort. But for the one who belongs to Christ, there is only one legitimate, all-consuming ambition: **the glory of God.**

Paul expresses this truth clearly in **1 Corinthians 10:31**: “*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*”

This is the **master ambition**—the one pursuit that must shape and define everything else. The ambition to glorify God is not merely a priority among many; it is the governing force that gives every other aspect of life its meaning and identity. To live under the Lordship of Christ is to live with this singular, dominating ambition.

It is not an ambition that competes with others; rather, it is the ambition that rules all others, shaping how we live, work, relate, and serve. But what does it look like when this ambition truly governs a man’s life? It must take root in three major areas: **personal life, ministry, and relationships**.

1. A MASTER AMBITION IN PERSONAL LIFE: HOLINESS, CHARACTER, AND DEVOTION

The first place where this ambition must take root is **within the individual**. Before a man can channel his strength into serving God outwardly, he must first be ruled by God inwardly. The Lordship of Christ must govern his **character, his pursuit of holiness, and his devotional life**.

A man who has truly embraced this ambition **does not take holiness lightly**. He does not excuse sin or treat spiritual growth as optional. Instead, he sees holiness as a reflection of his ultimate goal: **to glorify God**. The pursuit of holiness becomes an expression of his deepest desire—to be conformed to Christ (**Romans 8:29**). He does not seek to be an average Christian but strives to be the best version of what God desires him to be. He does not tolerate mediocrity in his spiritual life but aims for **excellence in integrity, purity, and love**. His daily decisions are guided by one question: *Does this glorify God?*

A man with such a master ambition is Pastor Williams Kumuyi who has emphasized **holiness** in life and ministry, a major excerpt of one of his messages reveals this dominating ambition. It was both emotional and convicting. This is the transcription:

In this country, and in this life, the Lord has called me that I will preach the sanctification and the holiness and anybody, no matter how useful you are, no matter how profitable you are, and no matter if you have the minds of all the people in the church, and you can drive them, and you can motivate them, and you have all the people behind you, if you go against, either in a subtle way or in a direct way, against the word of holiness and sanctification, we part. Because that's my very vision, that's my very life, that's my very calling. All the other doctrines are standing because of sanctification, because of holiness, and when you touch it, you touch the whole ministry. Kill me then! What am I living for? If you touch the holiness, and you take the holiness away, and then you influence people not to accept the holiness, what am I living for? And then you say you are a friend, and then you say you are a worker, and then you say you are a financier, and then you say, Pastor, I'm giving you this, and keep it to yourself. Who wants your car? Who wants your money? Who wants everything you've got? When you destroy my very heart, the heart of the Christian faith is holiness and sanctification. When you pinch the heart of a man, when you put your dagger on the heart of a man, when you kill that man, you take his heart away. After you destroy his heart, then you give him a car? How is he going to drive the car with no heart? You've taken his life away. You've destroyed him. And now you're giving him a car? What am I going to use that for? All your talents and all the gifts you have, all your smiling and all the ability, all the skill you have, all the running around, what's it going to be useful for when there's no more holiness? Then we confuse the people and they are not ready to get to heaven. Give me holiness and take the rest of the things away. Do I need salary? Do I need money? Do I need car? Do I need house? Do I need children? Ask

my wife. If it were not because, you know, she prayed and she said we must have children. Do I need children? Do I need money? Do I need anything? Isn't it only holiness I need? And if you take the holiness away in a certain way and then you are eroding into it and you are destroying it and then we don't have any mouth again to talk about holiness, what are you doing? You pack your load and go. I don't need you with any of the things you have...sobs...Give me holiness and take the rest away. Holiness!

His **devotional life** is also transformed. Prayer, Bible study, and all spiritual disciplines are not mere religious duties but his **lifeline**—his means of communing with the One for whom he lives. The ambition to glorify God drives him to know God **more intimately** and to love Him **more deeply** every day.

In his 92 years of fruitful service, George Mueller of Bristol had read through the Bible more than 200 times. More than 100 of those biblical journeys were traversed upon his knees, actively praying about what he was reading from the Word of God. He expressed his personal conviction in this way: “As the outward man is not fit for work for any length of time unless he eats, so it is with the inner man. What is the food for the inner man? Not prayer, but the Word of God – not the simple reading of the Word of God, so that it only passes through our minds, just as water runs through a pipe. No, we must consider what we read, ponder over it, and apply it to our hearts.”

It should be no surprise that George Mueller is numbered among the giants of the faith. The Apostle Paul expressed the truth so clearly in his letter to the Romans: “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (10:17).[1] As we review the life of George Mueller of Bristol, it is evident that he not only read God’s Word but that he dedicated his days to implementing its truth – faithfully and dependently – in his life. Haginns Peter

Or David Brainerd was a man of prayer and disciplined devotional life despite his sickness. Brainerd spent long hours in prayer, often in solitude and harsh conditions. He wrote: *"I withdrew to my usual place of retirement in great peace and tranquillity, spent about two hours in secret duties and felt much as I did yesterday morning, only weaker and more overcome."* - *Life and Diary of David Brainerd, April 17, 1742*

It is recorded that: *"He would often kneel in the snow, sometimes for hours, until his body was chilled and nearly lifeless, wrestling with God in prayer for the salvation of the Indians."*

Brainerd himself wrote in his diary: *"I got alone in a retired place in the woods, and there poured out my complaint to God. Oh, that I had a heart to be wholly devoted to Him!"* (Diary, February 18, 1743). Also he said: *"Spent this day in secret fasting and prayer, from morning till night. Early in the morning, I had some assistance in prayer."* (Diary, June 14, 1742)

This shows how much he valued solitude with God, considering it essential for spiritual vitality. He called this, secret duties. What is it about your secret duties? Brainerd believed the Bible was central to his walk with God. He wrote: *"Was enabled to meditate with some composure of mind, and especially my thoughts ran upon Psalm 73:28, 'It is good for me to draw near to God.'"* (Diary, July 30, 1742). He didn't just read Scripture—it touched his soul.

2. A MASTER AMBITION IN MINISTRY: EXCELLENCE FOR HIS NAME

"It is the responsibility [and great opportunity] of the disciple to be the best he or she can be for God. To please Him is a most worthy aim. He wants us to realize the full purpose of our creation; He does not want us to be content with bland mediocrity. Many fail to achieve anything significant for God or man because they lack a

dominating ambition. No great task was ever achieved without the complete abandonment to it that a worthy ambition inspires.” - Oswald Sanders

A man ruled by this ambition **does not approach ministry half-heartedly**. He recognizes that every platform, talent, and opportunity given to him by God is a means to **glorify Christ**, and he is determined to use them **to their fullest potential**.

Ministry, in this sense, is not just for those in the pulpit—it is **the believer’s divine calling to represent Christ wherever he is placed**. Whether in preaching, teaching, writing, singing, or serving, he seeks to offer God **his best, not his leftovers**.

He refuses to settle for mediocrity because **excellence honors God**. His talents and gifts are not for self-glory but for the **exaltation of Christ**. This means he approaches his work with **diligence, discipline, and passion**. He does not serve with laziness or inconsistency but with the *mindset of a steward who will one day give account - Matthew 25:14-30*. His desire is that when Christ examines his work, it will **not be found lacking**.

A Master Ambition for Ministry

A master ambition for ministry means that I am deeply concerned about the glory of God in His Church and the spread of the gospel on the earth. My ambition is to see that this end of Christ—His mission and purpose—is fulfilled. This master ambition helps me to be the best I ought to be, to deploy and harness all my God-given talents. That means every gift that God has given me must be maximally utilized for the profit of the Church.

I will discuss this ambition in three ways:

1. Covet – A Holy Ambition

The word “*covet*” is a strong Greek word exegetically, meaning a deep and strong desire to have something. However, this is not sinful covetousness, but a righteous longing for God's gifts and purposes.

A believer is encouraged to covet spiritual gifts. Paul instructs us to earnestly desire the best gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31). This means we should actively seek what is lacking in the body of Christ and desire to be used by God to fill that gap.

Elisha is a prime example. He showed us what it means to covet maximally. While Elijah was about to be taken up, Elisha refused to give up. From Bethel to Gilgal, from Jericho to Jordan, he pursued Elijah relentlessly. And when the time came, he asked for a hard thing—a double portion of Elijah’s spirit (2 Kings 2:9-10).

Likewise, we must covet spiritual abilities that will help enlarge God’s Kingdom. We must be passionate about seeking what is needed for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

2. Exercising the Gift – Maximizing What God Has Given

It is not enough to possess spiritual gifts; we must exercise them. Jesus illustrated this in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). The man who was given five talents maximized them and gained five more. The one with two talents also multiplied his gift. However, the one who buried his gift was rebuked. You are not to be idle with your talents but you are to use them, harness them and deploy them.

David’s life exemplifies this principle. Before he became king, he developed his gifts in the wilderness, not in the palace. He honed his skill in music, and at the right time, he was called to play before Saul (1 Samuel 16:23). He

trained in warfare, first as a shepherd fighting off lions and bears, and eventually, this training led him to defeat Goliath (1 Samuel 17:34-50). His leadership skills were developed as he led sheep, then a band of men, and eventually, he ruled an entire nation.

David maximized every opportunity to exercise his gifts. He even displayed spiritual ambition by asking, *"What will be given to the man who kills Goliath?"* (1 Samuel 17:26). He was a man who practiced, exercised, and expanded his abilities before stepping into the fullness of divine destiny.

Many believers have dormant gifts, but these gifts can be refined and rekindled through consistent use and training.

3. Setting Goals – A Vision for the Future

Paul was goal-driven. His ambition was to reach the Gentiles (Romans 15:20). He set goals to plant churches, train leaders, and spread the gospel to regions beyond.

One of the keys to excelling in spiritual gifts is setting clear goals. Success is measured by the fulfillment of goals, and without goals, a man cannot measure his progress.

When a man is goal-driven, he can focus his efforts on achieving specific objectives. The most successful ministers and leaders are those who have clearly stated goals, a defined vision, and the discipline to pursue them.

Examples of Goals That Can Be Set for Ministry

To grow spiritually and advance God's Kingdom, one can set specific, measurable goals such as:

1. Preach the Gospel Consistently:

- Share the gospel with at least one person daily.
- Preach in buses you enter.
- Engage in street evangelism or market evangelism once a week.

2. Distribute Christian Literature:

- Share at least 10 tracts per week.
- Write and distribute gospel-related content on social media, blogs, or print magazines.
- Publish Christian articles, devotionals, or books.

3. Targeted Outreach:

- Visit and minister in secondary schools or university campuses.
- Engage in hospital or prison evangelism.
- Organize a youth fellowship or discipleship program.

4. Operate in the Supernatural:

- Pray for the sick around you and exercise faith for healing.
- Desire and seek to function in the gifts of the Spirit (prophecy, healing, word of knowledge, etc.)
- Spend at least 30 minutes daily interceding for people in the need of gifts

5. Personal Growth and Development:

- Read at least one book per month on spiritual growth, healing, or a gift you covet.
- Study the Bible deeply, following a structured Bible reading plan.

- Memorize at least 5 verses per week for spiritual edification.

6. Commitment to Church and Fellowship:

- Be active in a local church, serving in a department.
- Lead or join a small discipleship group.
- Volunteer in missions or work.

When we align our ambition with God's purpose, we navigate life with clarity, direction, and divine fulfillment.

You are Inexcusable, oh Man!!

During my undergraduate days, I remember our Bible Study Secretary (BS) challenging me and my friends with these words: *"You are inexcusable"* using the words of Apostle Paul to charge us as freshmen because we were to lead the freshmen arm of the fellowship. What he meant was that we didn't have an excuse to fail spiritually, in our academics, or the work set before us. We often applied Romans 12:11 in the sense of our academics being the business, our devotion's commitment/spiritual exercise being fervency in the spirit, and our labours in the household of faith as serving God. We strived to live out this tripod. We knew we didn't have excuses not to make it. There were times when I didn't get it all right, but I have kept pushing and striving, even after the campus experience.

Mary Slessor, the courageous missionary, hailed from a family with a history of alcoholism. She had excuses to be a failure, but she persisted in her passion. At the age of eleven, that young girl started employment at a Dundee factory, enduring long hours from 6 AM to 6 PM. Despite this demanding routine, it

didn't deter her from pursuing self-education, setting the stage for her remarkable career as a missionary and shining in the dark region of Calabar.

David Livingstone started out at the age of ten, labored in a Dumbarton cotton mill for an extensive fourteen-hour workday. While he could have easily made excuses for not studying and for not making the most of the limited leisure time he had, he defied the odds and managed to acquire knowledge of Latin, reading works by Horace and Virgil by the time he turned sixteen. Remarkably, by the age of twenty-seven, he had successfully completed programs in both medicine and theology. I have no excuse!

Martin Luther had so much to do daily but still said: *"If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day. I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer."* He gave no excuse for prayerlessness.

Professor Fomum achieved academic excellence, obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree with first-class honors from Fourah Bay College at the University of Sierra Leone in October 1969. He furthered his education, earning a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry at the age of 28. Later, in October 2005, he received a Doctor of Science (D.Sc) from the University of Durham in Great Britain, recognizing his significant contributions to scientific knowledge through research. Supervised or co-supervised over 100 Master's and Doctoral theses and co-authored more than 160 scientific articles in reputable international journals.

Alongside his academic pursuits, he also excelled in ministry. He was a missionary, covered over 70 nations worldwide. He preached in numerous localities, sent out national missionaries, and established numerous churches in Cameroon. He planted a church with thousands of members in Yaounde. Furthermore, he founded the Christian Missionary Fellowship International

(CMFI), a global evangelism, discipleship, church-planting, and missionary-sending movement with a substantial presence across continents. He also wrote over than 200 spiritual books.

I have no excuse, I know! God will judge our generation using these men.

3. A MASTER AMBITION IN RELATIONSHIPS: LIVING FOR ETERNAL IMPACT

Finally, this ambition must shape how a man **relates to others**. Every interaction—with family, friends, colleagues, and even strangers—is governed by one question: *How can I glorify Christ here?*

He does not engage in relationships **for personal gain or comfort**. Instead, he sees every interaction as an opportunity to **reflect Christ, to love, to serve, and to influence others toward eternity**. He values people **not for what they can offer him** but because they **bear the image of God** and have **eternal significance**. This ambition also governs how he **leads**. Whether as a mentor, a pastor, a teacher, or a friend, he seeks to **leave a spiritual legacy that outlives him**. He does not want to be remembered for worldly achievements but for a **life that pointed others to Christ**.

A holy ambition must shape how we **relate to others**, beginning first with **family**. From the very beginning, **God's purposes on earth have been deeply connected with family**. The stories of Scripture reveal that **God's work often unfolds through households**—from Adam and Eve in the Garden to Abraham's covenant family, from Israel's generations to the early church, which often met in homes.

When God declared, ***"It is not good for man to be alone"*** (Genesis 2:18), it was not merely about companionship but about man **living to the fullest of**

God's plan. Relationships, particularly marriage, are not just personal decisions; they are integral to **God's redemptive mission on earth.**

a. A Holy Ambition in Marriage and Family

For those who belong to Christ, marriage must not be **an isolated pursuit of personal fulfillment**; it must be **governed by God's dream and purpose.** Our desires in marriage should not be dictated by **selfish ambition, fleeting emotions, or societal expectations**, but by **God's overarching purpose for His people.**

Even a **good marriage choice**—such as Adam and Eve's—can miss God's purpose when **selfish ambition takes root.** The fall of humanity was, at its core, **a choice to live independently of God**—to pursue wisdom on their own terms. It was an unholy ambition to be their own god. This remains true today: many marriages, even among Christians, are built on **personal dreams rather than God's ambition.** They become centered on financial security, personal happiness, or simply raising children for the parents, but **lack a greater, eternal vision.**

Yet, in Scripture, we see how marriage played **a critical role in advancing God's purposes:**

- **Abraham and Sarah** were chosen because their family would birth **a lineage through which all nations would be blessed** (Genesis 12:1-3).
- **Isaac and Jacob** could not marry just anyone—their **marriage choices had to align with God's covenant plan** (Genesis 24:3-4, Genesis 28:1-2).
- **Ruth**, a Moabite widow, entered into God's redemptive plan through her marriage to Boaz, ultimately becoming **an ancestor of David and, therefore, of Christ** (Ruth 4:13-17, Matthew 1:5-6).

- **Mary and Joseph**—their union was **the means by which God’s greatest promise, the coming of the Messiah, was fulfilled** (Matthew 1:18-25).

Marriage as a Platform for the Gospel

Marriage is **not an end in itself**; it is a means for **God’s eternal purposes to unfold on the earth**. This is why, throughout history, marriages have played a pivotal role in **the advancement of God’s Kingdom**.

- **Aquila and Priscilla**, a devoted couple in the New Testament, used their home as a **church gathering place** and were instrumental in mentoring Apollos, a powerful teacher of the gospel (Acts 18:26, Romans 16:3-5). Their partnership in ministry was **a model of a marriage wholly given to God’s purpose**.
- **House churches in the early church** played a crucial role in spreading the gospel. Many Christian families **opened their homes as places of worship, fellowship, and teaching** (Colossians 4:15, Philemon 1:2).
- **William and Catherine Booth**, founders of the **Salvation Army**, exemplified how a marriage could be a powerful alliance for the gospel. Together, they led a movement that transformed lives, emphasizing both **spiritual revival and social impact**. Their marriage was not just about their personal happiness—it was **a vehicle for advancing God’s Kingdom**.

Marriage must be viewed not as an isolated pursuit **but as a covenant that serves God’s purpose**. A holy ambition ensures that both our **choice of marriage** and how we **live within marriage** are surrendered to the will of God. *“Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain.” - Psalm 127:1*

b. A Holy Ambition in Christian Fellowship

Beyond marriage, a master ambition must shape **our relationships within the body of Christ**. The church is **not merely a gathering of individuals**; it is **God's chosen instrument to accomplish His purposes** on earth.

The New Testament is filled with examples of believers working together in **holy partnerships** for the sake of the gospel:

- **Jesus sent His disciples two by two**, emphasizing the power of **kingdom partnerships** (Mark 6:7).
- **Peter, after facing persecution, went to "his own company"**—believers need a **spiritual family** to strengthen and sustain them (Acts 4:23).

Christian fellowship is **not merely social**—it is **a means of achieving God's will**. Hebrews 10:25 exhorts us: ***"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."*** - Hebrews 10:25 KJV

A holy ambition in relationships means that we seek **godly partnerships** that:

- Encourage faithfulness (**Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**)
- Foster spiritual growth (**Colossians 3:16**)
- Advance the gospel (**Philippians 1:27**)

c. A Holy Ambition in Reaching the Lost

Lastly, our ambition must shape **our relationships with those outside the faith**. Our interactions with unbelievers should not be driven by **casual friendships alone** but by **a deep burden for their salvation**.

Jesus was **a friend of sinners**, but His friendship was **not aimless—it was redemptive** (Luke 5:30-32). His encounters with people—Zacchaeus, the woman at the well, Nicodemus—were **deliberate**. They were not just conversations; they were **invitations into the Kingdom of God**.

This does not mean every conversation must turn into a sermon, but it does mean that:

- **Christ dominates our mindset, our pursuits, and our interactions.**
- **We are conscious that every relationship carries eternal significance.**
- **We do not isolate ourselves but engage meaningfully with the lost for the sake of the gospel.**

Paul describes this mindset in **2 Corinthians 5:20**: *“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”* **Our ambition is not just to coexist with people—it is to lead them to Christ.**

The Glory of God: The Center of All Relationships

A holy ambition ensures that our relationships—whether in **marriage, Christian fellowship, or outreach to the lost**—are governed by **God’s greater purpose**. Many live for **lesser ambitions**, pursuing relationships solely for:

- Personal comfort
- Emotional fulfillment
- Social status

But for the one who is gripped by a **master ambition**, every relationship becomes a means to **bring glory to God and advance His kingdom**. *"Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."* - 1 Corinthians 10:31. A life governed by **this ambition** is one that **leaves a lasting impact**—not just in this world, but for eternity.

The challenge is before us: **Will we allow God's ambition to shape our relationships, or will we be consumed by lesser pursuits?** The choice is ours.

EXAMPLES OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO LIVED UNDER THIS AMBITION

History is filled with men and women who **moved the frontiers of God's Kingdom** forward because they were **gripped by this singular ambition**. They did not live **divided lives**; their strength and might were channeled in **one direction—the glory of Christ**.

From the apostles to the reformers, from missionaries to preachers, **one common factor** marked them: *They were consumed by a holy ambition that left no room for half-hearted devotion.*

Paul expresses this kind of ambition in **Philippians 3:13-14**: *But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.*

This is the life we are called to live—a life **dominated by a single, worthy ambition**. Let me quote Sanders: *Jonathan Edwards, noted revivalist and educator, declared: "I will live with all my life while I live."* The founder of the Salvation Army, William Booth, claimed: *"So far as I know, God has had all there was of me."* *With all the resources of God at our disposal, we need not plead our*

weakness or inadequacy as an excuse for poor performance. The least promising among us may yet be used greatly by God.

*Thomas Scott (1747–1821) was the **dunce** of his school. The teachers expected little of him, so why bother with him? But his brain and heart only needed to be awakened. One day, some statement from a teacher penetrated his deepest being. Then and there, he formed a **resolute purpose—a master ambition**. Although his progress was slow, the teachers noticed a difference. He grew to be a strong and worthy man and succeeded the noted former slave trader **John Newton**, composer of the hymn *Amazing Grace*, as rector of the church at Aston Sandford. He also wrote a large and valuable **commentary on the whole Bible**, which had a great influence on his generation. So valuable was the work of this erstwhile dunce that the **commentary is still available in America today**. Other classmates have all been forgotten. But the one of whom least was expected, the one who labored under the greatest handicap, is the very one **whose name and influence endures**. And all because he was **gripped by a master ambition**.*

Every man lives for something. The only question is: *Is what you are living for worth Christ dying for?* A **Master Ambition** is not just another ambition among many—it is **the ambition that governs all others**. It is the singular, all-dominating pursuit that **gives meaning to everything else**. It is the ambition to glorify God in **everything**—personal life, ministry, and relationships. The challenge before us is clear: *Will we live under the rule of this ambition, or will we waste our lives on lesser pursuits?* The choice is ours.

Bibliography

1. Spiritual Leadership 2. Spiritual Discipleship

*It is of note to say that I quoted Oswald Sanders words so well. Having read his works and reading honourable ambition and the Disciples ambition and listening severally to his message on *The Power of a master ambition*, I have been Challenged and shaped in thoughts by His words.*

ABOUT THE YOUNG MINISTERS' FORUM

The Young Ministers' Forum (TYMF) is a parachurch movement committed to strengthening and equipping young ministers to fulfill God's purpose. Our goal is to inspire and train a new generation of Gospel-driven leaders who will actively advance the Great Commission in every sphere of influence. We provide mentorship, teaching, and fellowship to help young ministers navigate challenges such as distractions, ministry decadence, loneliness, and balancing life responsibilities.

Vision: "Strengthening and Equipping Young Ministers to Serve God's Purpose."

MISSION

Mentorship: We connect young ministers with experienced leaders who provide biblical teaching, practical ministry insights, and personal guidance to foster spiritual growth and effectiveness.

Training and Equipping: Through workshops, seminars, and structured training sessions, we enhance ministerial effectiveness, doctrinal understanding, and active ministerial engagement.

Fellowship and Camaraderie: TYMF provides a network for like-minded ministers to connect, share experiences, and strengthen one another in faith and ministry.

Resources and Support: We produce resources like tracts, booklets, ebooks, evangelistic and study materials for outreaches and strengthening local churches.

Personal and Spiritual Development: We emphasize character building, spiritual disciplines, and holistic growth, ensuring that ministers are well-grounded in faith and integrity.

Mission and World Evangelism: With a strong passion for evangelism and cross-cultural ministry, we encourage young ministers to embrace their calling to spread the Gospel globally.

TYMF invites young ministers seeking growth, mentorship, and alignment with God's purpose to join our community and benefit from its resources.