

# Battle For The Young



**Gbile Akanni**



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# 1

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## WHILE YOU ARE YOUNG

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I was invited to preach at a Professor's daughter's wedding, in 1985.

You can imagine the cream of the society seated; Professors, Doctors, Businessmen and women, high ranking Government officials etc. - men and women who seemed to have made their mark in the world.

As I brought the word of life to the young couple, who were just starting their journey into marriage, I set forth principle after principle of how God designed the home to work. God enabled me to bring out the message with clear instructions and illustrations.

He also permitted me to share living testimonies of how the principles have worked both in my personal experience and in several homes I have been privileged to watch over.

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After the service, two people came to me, one after the other. The first man, quite elderly, looked at me, adjusted his spectacles and said . . .

*"Young man I wish I met you in 1943. If I had met you forty-two years ago and heard what you are preaching now, I would not have been what I am today. What can I do now? I have spoilt my life, I have wasted my marriage, and I don't even know where to begin again. I wish I had met you then."*

*"Where were you, when I just married?" he added rhetorically.*

I did not answer, I could not. I knew he was not expecting an answer from me. As I stood there looking at an old man shedding tears, I also wished I had met him then!

The second person was the wife of one of the University Professors. She walked up to me, looked at me with eyes full of regret and said . . .

*"Well, I thank you for all you have said. For me it is too late but I am going to buy the tapes for my daughter so that she will not go the way I went."*

All through the day, I could not get their words out of my mind. So, a man can hear the word of God too

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late! So, wrong choices made early in life may never be correctable again later on in life!

I suddenly realized the great privilege of being young. I realized the prime value of being a youth. It became clear that there are things that must happen to me as a youth if I will not live my adult years in regret.

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# 2

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## THE PRIME TIME

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**T**he time of youth is the prime time in anyone's life. It is a great privilege to be young. Many old people do envy the youth. They wish they could return to being young again; and that is why they try to do whatever they can, to look young.

Unfortunately, being young comes only once in a lifetime. No one can be young more than once. As a lady, you cannot be 'sweet sixteen' more than once. Once you pass the age of sixteen, it is clear that you can never be sixteen again.

**However, the time of youth is also the period of making choices.** And the choices at this prime time of life are such that make indelible marks on one's life and destiny.

There is a battle going on in this world concerning young people and it is all about influencing their

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choices.

***Choices that will mark your life out for greatness and glory are made when you are young.***

If you meet an accomplished old man, prosperous and celebrated, enjoying the care of his equally successful children, it did not just happen somewhere in his old age. It is the product of a series of wise choices that he made while in his teens and twenties.

***On the other hand, choices that will predispose you to perpetual defeat and failure are also made when you are young.***

Whatever wrong things we see in an old man today, most likely happened because of the choices he made when he was young.

If you see an old woman whose marriage has scattered and she is being pushed between one man and another, it is not likely to be due to choices she made when she has become that old. She laid the foundation to be that kind of woman when she was young!

***The unfortunate thing about these choices is that whether they were made consciously or unconsciously, they are often irreversible.***

The time of youth is not only one of making choices;

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**it is also the time for laying the foundation for every aspect of future life.** It is at this time that you lay the foundation for your career in life, your marriage and your destiny. In fact, everything that you will become in life is being founded now in the time of your youth.

**It is a time of tremendous strength and energy, a time of freshness.** It is the time all your nerves and instincts are seeking the strongest expression. The direction you 'plough' them, now that you are young, determines the destination you will 'reap' in the years ahead. This time of your youth is a very crucial time that determines what happens for the rest of your life.

**The time of one's youth is also the time of warfare.** This is when you pitch your tent on whichever side you choose in the battle of life.

***And you either choose God or Satan.***

It is in this period of your life when you are called 'the youth' that you make that choice.

God is out, mercifully looking for you, so that you will make Him your choice; but the devil is also fighting hard, to make sure he has you on his side. That is why the counsel of the word of God to anyone who is a youth is;

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*So remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you will say, "I have no pleasure in them";*

**Ecc. 12:1 (NET)**

If you overcome in this battle now that you are young and make the Lord your choice, you will always overcome in every sphere of your life.

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# 3

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## THE RAGING BATTLE!

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**T**here is a raging battle! . . . between God and the devil; and it is all about you!

Both God and the devil equally believe in the young man and in the young woman. If you get into the heart of the devil today, the greatest mobilization he is making is for the young person to become his own.

And if you are able to get to heaven to look into the very heart of God, it will surprise you that God is tremendously yearning for the young person. The Bible says,

*As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man;  
so are children of the youth. Happy is the  
man that hath his quiver full of them: they  
shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak  
with the enemies in the gate.*

**Psalms 127:4-5 (KJV)**

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That scripture even says 'happy is the man', and not 'happy is the God'. This is to tell you that apart from God and the devil, even a man is happy if his quiver is full of young people.

*The real battles of this world are about capturing the young people. When you understand this battle, then you will understand why you are facing all the conflicts that you do as a young person. You will understand why you are confronted with all the challenges that are coming your way.*

You are at a serious junction of choice in life and you dare not throw your life into this boxing ring or make any decision without definite divine guidance.

As a matter of priority, you need to come into a fresh encounter with God right away, so that you can hear him speak clearly to you on what you must do with your youth, in preparation for the years ahead of you.

What makes it urgent is that there is a fierce combat for your life and it will either make or mar you for life. You cannot sit on the fence.

*You cannot be passive. A 'Yes' to God is a 'No' to the devil and an 'indecision' for God is equally a 'welcome' to the enemy who is seeking whom to devour.*

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As a person, where I have reached in life today, including the wife I married, is the result of the choices I made long before today.

Whatsoever your destiny will unveil tomorrow cannot in any way be different from the choices you are making now that you are young.

I urge you to read this with eagerness and serious determination to break forth into the supernatural with God and pitch your tent henceforth, where your destiny will be helped.

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# 4

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## PECULIAR CHALLENGES

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*I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.*

*I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.*

*I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.*

**(1 John 2:12-14 (KJV))**

**I**n times past, when I read this passage, I was always left baffled, wondering at the repetition. But I have been brought to see something which is one reason my heart has turned again to

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the young people.

I discovered that God recognizes three segments in every man's life and each of them is quite peculiar, definite and different from the other. And because people do not understand the peculiarities and differences of these three segments, they are often overwhelmed by the challenges that come to them with each segment.

God Himself recognizes the first segment where He knows people to be 'little children'. At that time, you were a baby, a toddler and just a little child.

**That was a time when you were carried everywhere you went.** You were taken to Church; you were taken to fellowship; and as they sang, you were taught the songs and you sang with them. That is what characterizes the life of little children.

**It is the time of indoctrination.** You do what you are told asking no questions and your father or mother is ready to bear the responsibility of anything that happens as a result. All the child needs to do is just to obey.

He does not worry how to get his provision. He only needs to cry and the parents would run around to meet the needs.

**It is the time of utmost dependence.** Victory at that

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segment of life is purely in being under the cloak of the parents.

But if we will only be little children throughout our lives, the Bible would have stopped at the point of saying, 'because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.'

***When you were a little child, there were not so many conflicts in your heart. Whatever you were told, you believed. There were no questions in your mind. When 'Daddy' said, 'This thing is like this,' you believed it and went about telling everybody you met that, 'This thing is like this.' When they asked why, you simply said, 'Dad said so.'***

Oftentimes, even parents do not understand that this is only the first segment. So they enjoy it because it looks so easy to bring up a child. *But that segment of being little children, as good as it is, is a very simple, basic, but short segment.* After this there is another segment.

After writing to people in that first segment of life, I thought the next persons that God should have written to, should have been the young men. But He skipped doing so! And that challenged me.

He went on to say, ***'I write to you fathers because you have known Him who is from the beginning.'***

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My question then is, ‘but why did He skip the young man?’ I discovered again that it does not take much effort to do the correct things when you have become a father.

***Whether you repent or not, when you become a father, there are certain behaviors that will leave you. You no longer have interest in them. And even when you do not want to leave them, they will leave you.***

For example, it is only when you are a young person that you can wear high heeled shoes and cat-walk around. Look at any of your parents and grandparents; do you see them wearing such again? No. Even their legs cannot carry them in such shoes. Their excitement over such things has evaporated.

There are many fathers today who used to drink alcohol when they were young; and they did until they damaged their liver. Now when you bring an alcoholic drink to such a father, he would easily say ‘No!’ not because he has repented of drunkenness, but when he takes just a cup, his stomach gets distended.

So he sighs and says, ‘I will not drink again.’

This is because the enemy who won the battle over such a life when he was young, has collected what he wanted and has left him empty and emptied.

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# 5

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## LAMENTING THE WASTED YOUTH

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**T**here are so many people you see on the road now that are abandoned. Do you know why? The enemy has already collected what he wants from their lives and he does not want their empty carcasses again.

*Even though the devil will like to see fathers go to hell, he is not fighting too much to have them. As far as he is concerned, he has already collected what he wanted. He has sifted them like wheat and left them with the empty chaff. They will most likely end up with him in hell anyway.*

As I think about this, I remember again the story of my message at the Professor's daughter's wedding.

When I was called up to take the preaching on that day, they started adjusting their spectacles saying, 'Who is that? Where is he from?' When I asked them to stand up and sing, I heard them grumbling, 'Why

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is he worrying us? Let him say what he wants to say and go and sit down.'

They were mostly old men and women. Not many things excite people who are already old, especially if it is coming from a young man, as I was then.

When I noticed their attitude was that negative, I decided not to look at their faces again so that I would be able to speak to them boldly from the word of God. As I started preaching and the word of God began to affect them, I started hearing some 'hmms' and some 'ahhs'.

***When you preach to old people; fathers and mothers, their response is quite different. The reason is that almost everything you say to them only reminds them of their past. Most of their years are already behind them. They are not looking forward to much again.***

Whenever I remember the man who walked up to me after the service ... his lamentation and tears ... I also wish I had preached to him when he was young like you.

This is because no matter how powerful the message I preached was, and no matter how much he wished to repent, he had made irretrievable and irreversible choices that even repentance cannot change!

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Then I remember the woman and how she said, "For me it is too late."

***Those things affected me a lot. It means that it is possible for people to hear the word of God too late! It means they could even repent too late!***

***That does not mean that they were too late to be converted and go to heaven. But it was too late for them to enjoy the correct life that the word of God they were just hearing, could have brought them into.***

So when you hear God saying to the fathers . . . "because you have known Him who is from the beginning" . . . He is talking about history, referring to what is already past.

When you face fathers and elders and those that are old, most of what you talk about is in their past. You simply remind them of where they are coming from and only help them to see where they can correct whatever remains before they go to sleep in death.

Even when the Holy Ghost will come on old men, the Bible says they will only dream dreams. A dream is often a recapturing of what happened to you before, which is being brought back to your

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consciousness as a drama in your thoughts.

But when the Holy Ghost comes on young people, the Bible tells us that they will see visions; they will see things that are yet to happen.

***Yes, that is a major difference.***

***Dreams are from the past. Visions are from the future. Old men are dreamers of what they could have done or done better, young men are men of the future! They see what is possible ahead for them in life.***

It is very crucial, now that you are young, for something definite to happen to you that will make you see the invisible which will define your life in the days ahead.

***This time of your youth is not a time to be cosmetic or plastic, floating through life as if you are in a dream but rather a time to be deliberately authentic and realistic with your choices.***

This time of your youth is the most crucial part of your lifetime and it is the determinant matrix of your entire future.

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# 6

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## THE BATTLE BEGINS

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**T**hen the Lord went on to address the young men. The word ‘men’ here is used in a generic sense and it includes both the young men and the young ladies.

He says, *I write to you young men because you have overcome the wicked one.* The word ‘overcome’ indicates battle. When God, in that Scripture, came to dealing with young people, the language switched to that of battle. It is about the battle for the young.

Repeating it for definite emphasis, God said,

*I have written to you young men because you are strong and because the word of God abides in you and you have overcome the wicked one.*

That immediately shows that someone is very greedily desirous of tampering with you as a youth. That person is no other than the wicked one, the devil.

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*As soon as you step into the teenage years, the battle begins. Whereas you might have had some little agitations in your heart before this time as a child, it is nothing compared with what you face as a teenager or youth.*

This time the conflicts come fierce and incessant. It comes with an inordinate pressure from within your heart. Have you noticed that this particular segment of your life is a time when things happen to you that you yourself are sometimes surprised about? There are things that baffle you and sometimes even you are asking, 'but why am I like this?'

*One of the first significant things that would sometimes surprise even you, when you become a youth is how you started querying everything your father and mother told you as a child.*

*Before, when Daddy spoke, you simply said 'Yessir'. But now, when they say 'a Christian should not do this', you found yourself asking . . .*

*'Why? What will happen if I do it?'*

When you were a little child, your parents went to the market and you received joyfully whatever they bought for you. But how many young people now enjoy having their mothers go to the market to buy dresses for them?

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If she does so without taking you along, the immediate response as a youth is, 'No! If you meant to buy something for me, you should have asked me what I wanted, or you could have given me the money and I would have gone to make my choice by myself.'

At this time of your youth, when your mother makes a long dress for you, the first inclination of your heart is to go back to the tailor to adjust it the way you like. That shows you have reached the age where you want to make your choices.

***When you step into this second segment of your life, whatever people used to choose for you before and you gladly took, suddenly becomes outdated to you.***

***You have to choose it again for yourself.***

This is the reason why some, who were very serious choir members as children suddenly fell out in their teenage years.

It is as if something is battling for your affection, for your decision, and for your choice.

***This is the age of personal choices. It is usually the time of inner crises. At this time, there is a fierce battle for your mind, your focus and your affections as a youth.***

***It is the battle for the young!***

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# 7

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## THE ENEMY'S TARGETS

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**W**hy is the wicked one focusing on this time of the youth? I will give you three reasons.

**1 The first is that he has come to know that this is the time of foundation-laying.**

He also knows the Scripture that says, "and if the foundation be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" He knows that even fasting and prayer cannot change significantly, a foundation that has been wrongly laid.

For that reason, he decides to position himself at this crucial point, saying, "I must not allow this young man or this young lady to lay a correct foundation. Let us destroy it! And then, we shall see what he would become afterward.

The rest of his life would be a mere patchwork, a matter of struggle for the rest of his years.

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The enemy wants to be part of your foundation-laying, to stick his fingers into what should be God's masterpiece. I pray that you will not allow him. And may God forbid that in your life!

**2 The second reason is that he knows that there are certain things peculiar to you as a young person.**

This is the period of an unprecedented outbreak of all the virtues embedded in you.

*As wonderful as whatever it is you were as a baby, it was temporary. Permanence, even of your physical features only begins now that you are a youth. You are now coming to a stage when whatever is formed within you is permanent; it is not likely to change again.*

And so, the enemy, knowing that this is the time that permanence of character and direction is established, desires to make a damage that will be permanent and irretrievable for your entire lifetime.

When you see men that are disoriented in life, who have become addicted to wrong things, this is the segment when that permanence of addiction and disorientation started.

So the enemy knows that the best time to capture a man is when he can gain permanence in his life. But if you escape his hands when you are young, you

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have escaped indeed.

**3** **The third reason is that the devil knows that everything that will become your future and destiny is rooted in your youth.** So he looks for you at this time of your youth to affect your destiny.

This is why there is a scramble for your life. This is why you are faced with all kinds of conflicts, temptations and troubles.

Because you are strategic even to the devil; he desires to use you as an instrument to do his evil works and then to dump you later in life to face a fate that is hopeless.

*You are equally strategic and as well precious to God especially now that you are young. God Himself sees the time of the youth as the best time to affect a man or woman and gain the best part of his or her life. It is the best time to prepare him or her for a glorious future.*

Solomon was a young man that God had great affection for. He started out with the favour of God. He prayed at the onset of his enthronement and God blessed him with abundance of everything.

But he began to make experiments with his life typical of the young. All that his father David planted in his heart as a child were being tested and pulled

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apart as he felt he must explore life by himself. Listen to him describe one of his experiments with life:

*I said to myself, "Let's go for it--experiment with pleasure, have a good time!" But there was nothing to it, nothing but smoke.*

*What do I think of the fun-filled life? Insane! Inane! My verdict on the pursuit of happiness? Who needs it?*

*With the help of a bottle of wine and all the wisdom I could muster, I tried my level best to penetrate the absurdity of life. I wanted to get a handle on anything useful we mortals might do during the years we spend on this earth.*

**Eccl 2:3 (Message).**

*Everything I wanted I took--I never said no to myself. I gave in to every impulse, held back nothing. I sucked the marrow of pleasure out of every task--my reward to myself for a hard day's work!*

*Then I took a good look at everything I'd done, looked at all the sweat and hard work. But when I looked, I saw nothing but smoke. Smoke and spitting into the wind. There was nothing to any of it. Nothing.*

**Eccl. 2:10-11 (Message).**

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**This is the age when you feel like buying anything you see and like.** This is the age of curiosity and inquisitiveness when you want to try out things and experience how they feel.

**This is also the point of seeking personal expression . . .** you feel like doing it yourself and in any direction you want to.

**I** met a young man many years ago who was in a university far away from where I lived. He ran to my office when he came under the conviction of a wasted and thwarted life as he listened to one of the messages I had preached on their campus.

He said to me,

*'Sir, when I was fifteen, I decided I was going to sleep with at least two hundred different women before I clock twenty-one years of age. And I have been pursuing that ambition.'*

He was a very brilliant student of Architecture but he dropped out of school because of that experiment he was making with his life. By the time I met him, he was only about twenty but his life had been ruined. He said,

*"I have been trying to repent but I do not know how. I cannot just see girls and look away." He told me that, in the female hostel on campus,*

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*when ladies washed their under-wears and put them out to dry, something inside of him would tell him to go there and climb the wall and lick them.*

What a mess he got himself into! Why did satan try to destroy this young man? It was because he saw what a great man this young person could become; so he pressed in quickly to cut him short.

***God desires to help you and rescue your life now that you are young because if you miss it now, the devil will make such a mess of you. You will have become so damaged that even repentance may not be able to reverse it. At best it may just be to prepare you for heaven.***

The mistakes that he will drive you into making, would be such that cannot be erased. And the truth is, your life cannot be re-lived. You must not lose this battle now. You must overcome the wicked one now that you are young. This is because even if you overcome later, the damage of the youth is often irreversible and old age will only bear the scars.

***F***or example, suppose in her youth, a very pretty young Cecilia, gets pregnant for someone somewhere first, has a baby there and then has a baby for another man somewhere else later.

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She later gets converted, becomes a Christian and gets married properly to a husband. At old age, when she is settled, moving everywhere with her husband, there is no way to erase or reverse that aspect of her past. One of the young men with whom she had a baby may suddenly turn up one day and say,

*"Cecilia, we need to discuss".*

Cecilia may likely say,

*"No, no . . . you see, I am married now."*

Then the man replies,

*"Yes, I know that you are married but we have a matter together. Our son has a problem and we need to solve it together."*

The real husband will be at a loss, leaving his wife talking to a former lover. But there is nothing he can do, there is actually a matter here.

This woman is converted, she is now born again but when that man turns up and calls for her, he is actually calling forth the mistake of her youth. It is something that could haunt a soul throughout life. That is why it is very critical that you win your battle now in the days of your youth.

***If you do not win now, and you even come to win it later there will still be a problem. The***

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*mistakes and permanent damage of this present time of your youth may forever witchhunt you.*

The devil would normally keep any ground he gains when you are young against an opportune time in the future.

Even if you escape, he will keep that ground and in years to come, he will pitch his tent on that little ground beside your destiny and you will not be able to deny his activity in that aspect of your life.

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# 8

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## THE CHOICE IS YOURS

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**B**ut the good news is that as you read this, Jesus has come to meet you, NOW!!!

He has come at this time of your youth. The mighty Warrior is standing against the wicked one over your life. Jesus Christ in all His zeal and power is ready to fight for you.

He says to the devil even today,

*'You wicked one, you cannot touch this one! This is a proper child. She is born for a vision and you cannot damage her. I have a glorious future for her. I intend to lift her very high and make her to sit with Me in the high places of the earth and later on with Me in heaven.'*

However, while Jesus stands here and declares all these to satan so that he will not touch you, satan also has a valid response.

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And here it is, . . .

*"If she were a child, you can rightfully choose for her but see, she is no longer a toddler. She has come to the segment of choice. She must make her choice by herself. Let her tell us whom she will serve this day, You or me?"*

Imagine the Lord Jesus Christ standing with all His power and the devil standing on the other side and you are in between the two of them.

***The Lord Jesus is saying, "I am here to forgive you, to save you, keep you, sustain and direct you to make the right choices for your life. Make this one crucial and most important choice of your life FOR ME and you will be free forever from the damage of the enemy!"***

But the enemy is not silent, he is insisting that since you have come to the age of choice, you are the one to choose whom you will follow.

Young man, young woman, this is the true position of things with your soul. This is the fierce contest for your life.

***The ball is in your court. So whom do you choose? The choice is yours!***

The unfortunate thing is that so many young people quietly choose the enemy without really knowing.

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They do this by saying quietly in their heart, "Let me just try all the options available to me first. I will go just for a while and then come back."

If you do this, you will be giving satan a trial . . . a most desired opportunity to finish you . . . and for you it will be a dangerous and costly trial.

The trouble is, even if you survive and make it back, it will not be without some form of damage. And the ground that the enemy gains today may never be recovered.

***Will you still go?***

***This is the age of choice.***

***And the choice is entirely yours!***

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# 9

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## YOUNG MEN OF WRONG CHOICES

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### MY CHRISTIAN CORPER FRIEND

**A**fter graduating from the university and I was serving my nation as a Nigerian Youth Service Corps member, I had a friend who came to the orientation camp as a Christian. He was even our “Christian Corpers’ Fellowship” Zonal Representative.

When we got to our place of primary assignment, there was a choice we had to make. We met some people who said they were welcoming the new Corps members with a party.

I declared to them that I am a Christian; I took my stand and told them that I have nothing to do in partnership with unbelievers. Of course, they mocked me and laughed me to scorn.

However, my friend stood in-between. He said to

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me that we should not refuse them. He was careful not to clash with them. I remember that they took him to a Beer Parlor (a bar selling alcoholic drinks) together with other corps members they were welcoming.

There he ordered for soft drinks but those young men said to him, "How could you, a man at your age be drinking what women drink?" Then, a young lady stood up among them and said, "Even me, I can finish at least a bottle of beer at once. How much more, a man like you?"

My friend told me later that he became so ashamed that he told them to give him just a cup.

***It was painful to know that that single cup of beer opened the door to so many other things that took my friend away from Christ. There was nothing we could do to bring him back; it was terrible. He became haggard in life for many years until he died.***

Sometimes before he died, I went to see him. He looked at me and said to me, "Brother Gbile, I envy you." I asked why. He said, "We were together as Christians in the camp; and what you are today is what I could have become. But see where I am now; I am finished. I am finished", he lamented.

I wept, but I knew when he made that choice. He

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even tried to repent again but he had lost the ground.

***There is a fresh ground before you right now as a young person, which is being contested. If you give the devil that ground, you may never get it again.***

Jesus Christ is standing at the door of your heart with all His power, ready to save and to rescue you. He knows that you were born for a glorious purpose and that there is a future ahead of you.

***But the devil's contention is that you are not a robot. You must be given a chance to make your choice.***

But ever before he allows you to make your choice, he will begin to flash the pleasure you can derive from all kinds of things before you, even though he will carefully veil from you the reality and the repercussions that will most certainly damage your destiny.

***He will flash money . . . lots of money. He will flash women . . . pretty, open breasted ladies. He will flash alcohol and other ecstatic substances . . . and even a chance of becoming famous; making it to the top in your career while you are yet a youth.***

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All of these, only so you will pursue shadows and not consider God's glorious plans for your life.

*Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

*(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

**Matthew 6:31-33 (KJV)**

Several of my colleagues chose wrongly. They have not died, but they are in real trouble.

## **MY CAMPUS ROOMMATE**

I had a room-mate when I was in my first year in the university. Four of us were accommodated officially in the room but we had two students squatting with us; so we were six.

Early in the morning, when I knelt down by my bedside, to pray or read my Bible, this my room-mate would deliberately come and hit me on my buttocks with his knee. He would shout aggressively...

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*"This is not Church! This is not Church. Do not show holier-than-thou attitude here."*

He would hit me again and again. And to disturb my concentration, he would go and put on 'disco' music on his stereo set, raise it to the highest volume and the whole room would be vibrating.

When I finally stood up after my prayer time and asked him why he was doing that, he would shout at me and swear to get me out of that room.

Many years later, I went with my wife to preach somewhere and suddenly . . . what a surprise! There, sitting in the congregation was that my old room-mate! He had seen the advert on Television that one man of God, Gbile Akanni, was going to preach. He asked himself whether that could be his old room-mate. So out of curiosity, he came to the meeting.

As I stood up to preach, my eyes met his. I was so startled that I almost called out to him from the pulpit because I had not seen him for many years.

After the meeting, I rushed down the pulpit, my eyes still on the spot where I had seen him. I did not want to miss him. The organizers were calling me to follow them out, but I told them that I saw one of my school mates in the meeting and I needed to see him.

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As I was wading through the audience, he was also walking towards me.

*When we met, I thought he was going to hug me jubilantly. Instead, he looked at me with one sorry face and said, "So this is what you were planning to become. I remember when I used to hit your buttocks."*

Then he asked me if he could have some time to talk with me the following day and I agreed. When we met, he took me to a restaurant. I introduced my wife to him and then he could not control his tears; he began to weep. He said,

*"I wish I had listened to you when we were in the same room in the University. I thought I was wise; I thought I was enjoying life. But as you see me today, I am finished.*

*Do you remember the girl I was running after at that time, who used to come to our room? She has left me. Even now, though I have two wives, I have no home anywhere. I cannot sleep here, I cannot sleep there."*

When he finished telling me the story, he asked with a broken voice . . .

*"What will you do now to help me?"*

I offered him Jesus Christ and salvation for his soul

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and he received Him. "But what will I do with my life and my marriage? How do I handle the mess I have put myself in? And see, I cannot be young again".

***"That is true; you cannot be young again; you can only be young once in your lifetime",***

***I had to painfully agree.***

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# 10

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## RESPONSE DETERMINES THE FUTURE

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**I**n this battle for the young, the battle is between God and satan. But the battle is over your life. You are the one who determines who takes the victory as a young person. That is why the Bible says you have to overcome the wicked one. You are the primary character in this epic battle for the prime period of your youth.

*You have the choice to say 'NO' to the devil, to sin and to the things that satan displays around you, and to say a big 'YES' to Jesus. That is what determines your future.*

Perhaps the battle has been so strong in your life that you decide to say 'yes' to Jesus one moment but in the next moment, you change your mind and you are as unpredictable as the wind. You need to determine that such instability must stop right away, before the enemy of your soul gets an upper hand over your life.

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*The unfortunate thing about the battle for the young is that the devil does not allow the youth to look ahead. He blinds your eyes as a young man to think that life ends at the time of youth. Therefore when you should have taken a decision with the future in mind, you are deceived into concentrating on the present.*

This is the critical moment for you as a young person. If you get it right at this time of your youth, then it will be well with you in the years ahead. You will have no cause to regret or bite your fingers.

I wish you have elders around you who will sincerely volunteer to tell you the stories of the wrong choices they made many years ago and how they are still suffering the consequences of those choices.

*Your life is a fresh ground ahead of you that is not yet spoilt but I must tell you this, as I told you earlier, it is being fiercely contested.*

Between Jesus and the devil, whom do you choose? Whom do you want to follow? The friends that you have today will not always be with you all your years.

*You will suddenly discover that the friend who leads you into trouble will desert you as*

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***soon as you sink into that trouble. He would have escaped and gone his own way. He may even return to be part of the team that will ridicule you and tell the world about you, exposing your sad predicament.***

Even though the Almighty God is beckoning to you, waiting with His mighty power to save, to forgive you and to reset your direction, He will not do anything until you say a definite 'YES' to Him and a big 'NO' to satan. This is how to lay the foundation of your life and win the battle now that you are young.

***Enough is enough, take a stand!***

Perhaps you have even started to make mistakes. There is something you need to know as a matter of great importance: . . .

***the mistakes that you have made do not constitute the real problem, the problem will be to continue in them.***

The years you have spent out of your life presently are very few compared with those that lie ahead of you. You still have years enough to build the right future.

Is it reasonable to go on and destroy five million because of the five hundred that has been spoilt?

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No! It does not make any sense to sit and weep over spilt milk, or an egg that has been broken.

Whatever has been done till now, I wish you will say, like I sang many years ago,

*"The time I have spent  
for the old man (the flesh) is enough.  
I will now live for Jesus forever.  
Byegone! Byegone ! It is byegone.  
Old man, Old man, it is byegone forever".*

***Decide now while you can, that it is enough!  
The number of years spent, dilly-dallying with  
the devil is enough. Do not worry about  
whether you will have enough power to  
overcome. All you need to do first, is to make  
a choice for Jesus.***

Take a stand with the Overcomer, the mighty Captain of our salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ. He could have decided to override your will, step in to intervene for you and stop the destroyer from gobbling up the best part of your life, but His just and loving nature will not allow Him to force you.

***Jesus Christ is not a thief who jumps in  
through the window; He would normally  
stand at the door and knock, waiting for you  
to make your choice and willingly open the  
door for Him to come in. He will not make you***

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**do what you do not want to do.**

You need to make a choice; that is all He has been waiting for. The effectual working of the power of God to save and to keep you saved is available. **I am a living testimony!**

**J**esus Christ died for you on the cross of Calvary to save you from your sins. It was not His sin that He died for; He had no sin. It was the punishment for your sin that He took.

He defeated the devil on the cross for you so as to give you the victory if you decide for Him. He rose again from the dead to give you a completely new life, not an improvement of the old. He has promised:

*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

*And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

**Ezekiel 36:26-27 (KJV)**

And I wish to remind you that it is not angels He came to help but weak men and women like you and I. If you were an angel who has never sinned, He would not need to help you and His death would

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have been needless.

But it is for such a sinner like you He laid down His life and shed His precious blood. His hands are stretched out to you in mercy to forgive you and to cleanse you from every mess and everything that has ever stained your life.

*For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.*

**Hebrews 2:16 (ESV)**

Pray to the Lord now to forgive you. Call upon Him to save you. You need the Lord at this junction of your life. Open your heart and ask Him to come in. Then you will become a child of God; then you will have God on your side. Only then can you be sure of victory both now and tomorrow.

***So the challenge is yours today. The choice is yours also. What will you do with Jesus? What is your decision? Pray to God right away and commit your life and future to HIM.***

***Bow with me and pray right NOW!***

**A**nd if you have already made Him the Lord over your life before today, praise the Lord! But there is still something more for you to pray about.

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***It is time to add a permanence to your 'NO' to satan and your 'YES' to Jesus, the lover of your soul. It is time to make your choice of Jesus an everlasting decision.***

Decide today that HIS CHOICES will be your choice . . . His plan and programs for every stage of your life will be acceptable to you.

***Determine in your heart that His counsel at every bend, turn or junction in the journey of life will be sweet to your soul.***

Pray about this now. Ask Him to help you. Pray with me the wordings of this song . . .

*Shepherd of my soul, I give You full control  
Wherever You may lead I will follow  
I have made the choice, to listen to Your voice  
Wherever You may lead, I will go*

*Be it in a quiet pasture, or by a gentle stream  
The Shepherd of my soul is by my side  
Should I face a mighty mountain,  
Or a valley dark and deep  
The Shepherd of my soul will be my guide.*

Martin J. Nystrom

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*Do you have any questions  
or need any clarifications?*

*Did you make a decision  
while reading this book?*

*You will need help  
in following it through!*

**Write, Call or contact**

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**And do it now  
before the devil changes your mind!!!**

## **Battle For The Young**

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*The message in this book was first preached by Bro Gbile Akanni  
as the opening charge of the first ever Christian Students Congress  
in Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria, in May, 2004*

**It is available on DVD in video, Audio and mp3**

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