

Sankara, Compaoré, Friendship and Trust Part II

October 15, 2020 will make it 33 years since the day [President Thomas Sankara](#) of Burkina Faso was gunned down by soldiers loyal to his best friend, Captain Blaise Compaoré. In a [previous article](#), I looked at the issue of friendship and betrayal from a Scriptural perspective. We drew from the Holy Book to portray the wisdom in the necessity of friendships, despite the possibilities of betrayal. In this conversation, we shall explore the topic of friendship further, with a focus on some spiritual ways to identify and make good friends.

The first step in identifying good friends is to be a good person yourself. We often attract who we are. Jesus says that when we give, "it shall be given to us, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over shall men pour into your bosom." If you are a good person, then good people will gravitate towards you in great measure; if you are a trustworthy person, then trustworthy people will gravitate towards you; if you are a generous and forgiving person, then generous and forgiving people will gravitate towards you in great measure. Jesus says further that "Blessed are the merciful for they shall be shown mercy." Do you want to have people who will show you mercy in your life, friends who will be compassionate to you, empathize with you, treat you with kindness, bear with your weaknesses and love you for who you are? Then become the kind of person who behaves the same way towards others. When we place value on virtues over money, career and material success in determining who we make friends with, we are on a sure path to success. However, if we place value on people based on their status, education, material possession, or even looks, then we shall perpetually be in lack of people of virtue in our lives and are on a sure path to being side-tracked by good people.

Another step to the identification of good friendship is to abstain from fear. Some of us were raised to be afraid of our fellow human beings while some of us arrived at that state of mind as a result of life experiences or stories we heard from people. The Bible says that "The fear of man is a snare, but they that put their trust in the Lord shall never be put to shame." Out of a desire to protect their children from harm, some parents consider it their duty to instill a lack of trust – no matter how base – in fellow mortals. A person raised in such manner sees the world as a dog-eat-dog kind of place where people are more to be feared than seen as allies or partners in the journey of life. Others might have grown up placing a healthy amount of trust in people, only to suffer betrayals, perhaps not once, not twice. The result will be a hardness of the heart and a sworn decision to consider every potential friend as a potential betrayer. Others decide that they do not need to wait to be taught a lesson or two in betrayal, but rather decide to learn from the numerous stories of betrayal of friendships that abound in the world of today. In the Bible, "fear not" is the most repeated command, appearing about 365 times in the Bible; this is to show us that fear should not feature in the life of a Christian. Many of us have grown to be fearless in dealing with the enemy directly in prayers, but when it comes to emotional issues, we remain trapped tightly in his grip. We must work on ourselves to eschew the fear of man. The worst that can happen is that we shall be killed, but Jesus informs us that we shall drink poison and it shall not harm us. If we have faith in God, then we will be free to relate with people free of fear.

Another step to the identification of good friendships is discernment. Discernment is a situation where God guides the individual in arriving at the best decision on any particular issue. The Bible says in Hosea 4:14 that "People without discernment are doomed." A discerning mind might not have every information available to arrive at a decision, but the Spirit of God in her can bear witness to the viability of

the decision. Discernment is critical in determining who the Christian brings close in friendship. In Psalm 119 vs 66, David cried "Teach me good judgment and discernment, for I rely on Your commands." One of the attributes of a discerning mind is the patience to acquire more knowledge. In Proverbs 18:15, the Bible says that "The mind of the discerning acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks it." As we interact with people and know more about them, we are able to discern their spirit as the Spirit of God guides us.

Another important component to building and maintaining healthy relationships is wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to know what to do and the execution of that knowledge to perfection. Wisdom is critical in identifying and building friendships. In John 15:15 Jesus calls us friends. While on earth in the body, Jesus shows that there are levels of friendship and only wisdom can help one know in which level a friend belongs. In the life of Jesus, there was the multitude, the seventy disciples, the 12 apostles, the inner circle of three apostles (Peter, James and John) and finally, John the beloved. It was to John the beloved that Jesus handed over the care of his mother before He breathed His last. However, it was to Peter that He committed the foundation of the church. Yet, to none of the apostles did Jesus commit the great preaching of the gospel and the writing of the majority of the epistles. Instead, he had to raise Saul of Tarsus from the scratch in order to advance the gospel in that respect. Only wisdom could have graded and packaged friendships in that manner. We must ask God to function in such wisdom. The Bible says in James 1:5 that If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

In the final analysis, friendship is critical to a well-lived life. We must open up to friendship by being good people, eliminating the fear of people, seeking discernment and applying wisdom and sound judgment in making friends as

Christians.

***You may follow Chika Esiobu on Twitter and Instagram
@indigenizafrica***