

# AFTER GRADUATION: WHAT NEXT?

1 SAMUEL 2:18-26

## INTRODUCTION

Graduation is a big event in the lives of many people—students, parents, guardians and the School authority who worked to arrive at this event. It is usually a day of joy that some young people or even adult learners completed a course of studies and are ready to be deployed to the society to make use of their learning.

There have been examples of graduations in the Bible. Among the notable ones are: Elisha graduating under Elijah. Daniel and his three friends also graduated from the Babylonian Administrative University under Nebuchadnezzar. While we admit that these individuals did not attend traditional schools or colleges as we have them today, nonetheless, they went through formal training and they finished at a point for them to be released into the mainstream of the society. We are doing the same today at this graduation ceremony.

I decided to use Samuel as an example of a graduate who finished training and entered into the society to restore the battered image of his then society. Samuel went to school under one “Professor” Eli who was the prophet-seer at the time. Such people were the main leaders of the society—they served as judges, administrators, “mobilizers” of strong men to defend the country in the face of foreign aggression. In a sense, such people managed the entire economy to make sure the people enjoyed the good things of life.

However, Samuel met a rotten society at the time he assumed duty of prophet-seer. He was literally mentored by unruly seniors Hophni and Phinehas, two brothers whose father, Eli, taught Samuel in his training school. These former graduates of the same school Samuel attended messed up very badly. Somehow, Samuel decided against their lifestyle and attitude. The Bible describes their lifestyles thus in 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 29;

<sup>12</sup>Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD. <sup>13</sup>Now it was the practice of the priests with the people that whenever anyone offered a sacrifice and while the meat was being boiled, the servant of the priest would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand. <sup>14</sup>He would plunge it into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot, and the priest would take for himself whatever the fork brought up. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. <sup>15</sup>But even before the fat was burned, the servant of the priest would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give the priest some meat to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw.” <sup>16</sup>If the man said to him, “Let the fat be burned up first, and then take whatever you want,” the servant would then answer, “No, hand it over now; if you don't, I'll take it by force.” <sup>17</sup>This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD's sight, for they were treating the LORD's offering with contempt.

<sup>29</sup>Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?

That was the society into which Samuel finished his training and he replaced the corrupt leaders he met on ground. Nigerian society is not different from where Samuel served after graduation. Ours is a corrupt society. We have so many prodigals—wasters of our hard-earned resources. Some of those who graduated some years ahead of you are part of those who are messing Nigeria up today. Just this week, we ended a terrible saga in the House of Representatives, and the ICPC decided to prosecute those found guilty of corruption. The EFCC is still after so many men and women we considered to be honorable, but who are dishonorable in their conduct and lifestyle.

We are grateful to God for what is happening in our courts today, that an aggrieved person can get justice, what used to be elusive to the majority simply because of corruption, or those who would not respect the rule of law. Ours is a society where we do not care for maintenance of our public properties, and we even turn our facilities that are to provide us with comfort into sources of danger and calamities—such as our roads, hospitals and even school system.

Someone who called himself a scientist from another region of the world made a mistake to say that his own specie appears to be better than those of us in this part of the world. I know it cannot be proved scientifically, yet, why would some so-called graduates of our various universities join others to loot our treasuries and even try to chop it finish? And yet, those in another region of the world who are of the same intelligence and ability keep adding value to their own economy? How come that we drive out one set of farmers who were really providing jobs for many and also producing a lot, and replacing them with others, and run the entire agricultural businesses bankrupt?

In other regions of the world, a mere mention of corruption or just a mistake by a law-maker or minister will lead to resignation without wasting time and without waiting to be humiliated from office. We may go on and on to list so many other atrocities some of our graduates from our universities commit without qualm, and who consider others who are not in their camps all kind of names!

So, after this graduation, what next is the question? What would be your contribution to effecting positive changes in our dear country? There are so many who are honest graduates who work with the government and those who are in private enterprises. We expect you to join them to turn our battered image around for good. We need more of Nuhu Ribadus, Dora Akuyilis, Charles Soludos, Ngozi Okonjo-Iwealas, Gamaliel Onosodes, and so many like them who are making serious positive impact on our society. These men and women are writing better history of themselves and of course in relation to our dear nation. Will you join such good men and women to keep writing the best of history for our nation?

You have received good education and moral training at Bowen University. We expect you to go and be worthy ambassadors of the Lord God and of what this institution stands for. Samuel resisted temptation to be corrupt and his life was an indictment on the lives of those corrupt graduates who preceded him. You have the grace of God to do us proud—your parents, Faculty and the entire nation when you leave here to join first of all the National Service and then into the market-place. If you join the government service or private world, please go and make a difference.

The investment on your life has been enormous—from your parents and guardians, the Faculty and fellow students, and even your own personal sacrifice. You must not allow the investments to go into the drain through bad behavior and corrupt group that you will meet out there. Our prayers go with you, and we know the Lord will prosper your future for His own glory and for the advancement of our country.