

## READING CULTURE

### Introduction

Reading culture is one thing that is dying out in our society today. It is one thing that has affected not just a particular age group of people but seems to be a general disease that has eaten deep into the fabric of our society. Unfortunately, most people feel reluctant to read, and see reading as strenuous way of having things done or their needs met. Some do not just have interest for reading. Some assume to do or initiate something (*if possible*), without going through the rudiment of getting involved with printed matter. Others see reading as a waste of time and energy. They expect short cut to do something without the principles of doing so, especially, when reading is involved. Still, others complain that they do not have time to read.

Yet, most people especially young people would rather like to spend long time to watch video or movies than spending such time for reading. They do not realize that actors or musicians work very hard and spend time to do a lot of reading and writing to be able to produce a script of play or song that they admire and watch.

Reading has lots and lots of benefits to whoever that disciplines himself to read. Hating reading therefore means hating the benefits reading brings.

But unfortunately, this hatred to reading is transferred to a wrong attitude towards education. It bits my imagination to know that some young men hate education because it involves reading. This is a misnomer. This is not surprise when they engage in all sorts of examination mal-practices in a bid to escape the discipline of reading.

## **Chapter One**

### **The fall of cultures**

The fall of reading is the fall of cultures and legacies. Legacies and values have gone to extinction and missed out of value due to misplacement of priorities or focus. Because of this, something is wrong somewhere. Culture has to do with the values or beliefs of the people. A good culture is meant to be passed down to the succeeding generations if such a culture is to maintain and uphold its values. The only means of doing this is through reading activity and education.

The plural noun “cultures” imply not just one form of culture, but a combination of cultures e.g. life, marriage, attitudes and behavior, relationship, customs, farming system, educational system, reverence, respect, love, integrity, etc., are no more what they use to be.

Look at the social life of an average youth, married man or woman outside home, and in office or social gathering. Do they present or represent the culture of value? What do we hear and see every day on the pages of newspapers? When infidelity and all sorts of abuses to marital vows become the order of the day, something is wrong. Marriage is not for children or for those who do not have respect for themselves and the institution of marriage. Now, sentiment has taken over the core values and evidences abound on daily basis that there is a serious missing-link. No respect, no honor and no value are attached to the institution of marriage by so many as it used to be in those days of our parents and grandparents. There is a serious missing link.

Some feel they can just get into it today and tomorrow it ends as if it is a child’s play. Something is wrong somewhere because we have refused to read. We have refused to read about how our parents succeeded in their marriage. How can reading encourage a good and seasoned or fulfilled marriage?

How do we preserve and protect or project a legacy of core values to the generations unborn if we cannot maintain the reading culture?

### **Danger of not reading**

The consequences of not remembering about the past dealings of God with their fathers caused the succeeding generation of the children of Israel to be punished by God.

*After the whole generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. They forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshipped various gods of the peoples around them. They provoked the LORD to anger because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. In his anger against Israel the LORD handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress (Judges 2:10-15NIV).*

The generation of Joshua and the elders of the Israelites succeeded because they feared God and had God's fear as a core value. Read about the success or failures of your fathers who came before you to help you chart a positive course of life. Avoid pitfalls of your predecessors. Knowing about the past can help amend our ways or maintain our stand depending on the information gathered. Negligent of duty to read can bring about ignorance on what to do. That the succeeding generation who ought to have done better than their predecessors forsook God something was wrong somewhere. It is either the generation that outlived their successors did not do their home work of passing this value to their successors or the new generation just obstinately became blatant. They paid the price for their negligence.

It is not wrong to ask or read about the secret of the success or failure of someone who came to position or leadership before or after you. Ignorance or pride can set in with the idea of "old and new school syndromes" and refusing to read can cause regrettable consequences. They faced the music of becoming plunders in the hands of their enemies.

*Stand at the cross roads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and work in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, "We will not walk in it (Jeremiah 6:16NIV).*

The past speaks about the future. Elders or our fathers are the custodians of the historical antecedent of the past. They stand the best position to help us when we consult or read about them. By reading about the past, we will not make mistake.