



LAY DOWN YOUR CROWN

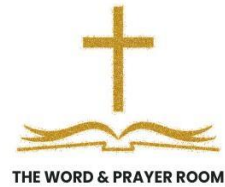
WORD & PRAYER ROOM SERIES 7

A 7-Day Journey of Humility, Grace, and Inner Surrender

We all wear crowns - the invisible emblems of our values, achievements, and standards. They remind us who we are and how far we've come. But what happens when those very crowns become too heavy to carry — when our principles are tested, our pride is triggered, and our desire to be right overshadows our call to be kind? This is a journey of letting go, where true strength is found not in wearing your crown — but in knowing when to lay it down.



Lay Down Your Crown



Day 1: The Hidden Weight of Being Right

Just because you're doing a good thing doesn't mean your heart is in a good place.

Key Scripture: Philippians 2:3 (NIV)

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves."

The Crown - What It Really Represents

A crown is more than an ornament. It's a symbol of authority, identity, and honour. It carries the weight of accomplishment and expectation. When people see a crown, they look up - it commands attention. It speaks of success, dignity, and influence. And this is why laying it down is so difficult. Because when you remove your crown, you're setting aside the very thing that reminds you - and others - of your credibility, your discipline, your standard. You're saying, "I don't need to prove my worth right now." And that can feel uncomfortable, even unfair - especially when your values are being tested or triggered.

Triggers are signals. They tell us that something we hold dear - order, respect, or excellence etc. has been disturbed. And that's where God meets us: in the space between reacting and responding.

✦ My Personal Story – “When Excellence Became a Silent Judge!”

I was invited to support a Black History Month event. The organiser was polite but vague - no clear brief, just, "We'll confirm after our planning meeting." I blocked the date in my diary awaiting a further update. Weeks passed. No follow-up. Then, out of nowhere, a colleague told me it had been announced that I was hosting the event. Hosting? That was the first I'd heard of it. My value of excellence was instantly triggered. I thought, This isn't how things should be done. I wasn't angry - just annoyed, and unsettled. My sense of order had been disrupted.

When the organiser finally reached out for a meeting barely two weeks before the event. I'd forgotten the date altogether. At that meeting, another person joined, and the organiser jumped straight into details about speakers and logistics, but never clarified my role.

So, I stopped him. "Sorry - just to clarify, what is it you'd like me to do? Are you asking me to host the panel?"

He hesitated. “Oh yes, yes - that’d be great if you could.” And I remember replying, calmly and deliberately, “Okay, then yes, I will host the panel.”

It wasn’t about being acknowledged. It was about sending a signal - this is how things are done professionally. For me, that moment was about re-establishing clarity, a small act of integrity. But looking back, it was also a crown moment - that subtle need to uphold my way as the “best” way.

As the meeting went on, I realised how unprepared things were. And without even asking, the organiser began off-loading responsibilities onto me. I had the ability to help - and I did - but inwardly, I was criticising the lack of planning. Still, I used my connections to secure speakers who are usually booked for months. They said yes. The organiser was relieved.

A few days before the event, the organiser called again. His voice was hesitant. “The guest speaker’s just pulled out.” I could sense what was coming - and I already had my answer. I was speaking at four other events that month and didn’t have time to prepare a fifth. He asked if I could step in. I said gently but firmly, “No, I’m afraid I can’t.” But I added, “Let me ask a colleague of mine - she’s also my mentor. She’s usually busy and travels constantly, but I’ll see if she might be available.”

I reached out, expecting her to decline. To my surprise, she shifted her diary to make it work. Then she began asking me a series of detailed questions over email and WhatsApp about the programme, the theme, the audience - and suddenly it hit me: I had become the owner of the event I was only meant to host. Another crown moment. I could feel my spirit say, This shouldn’t be on me. But by that point, I did all I could – slightly bemused and annoyed at the lack of excellence.

When the day finally came, the event was a huge success. God used me mightily to host a powerful panel of high-profile leaders. The atmosphere was charged with meaning and purpose — it became more than an event; it felt like the beginning of something much bigger. There was a genuine sense that various organisations were being drawn together to collaborate and stand united in the fight against discrimination. It was such a wonderful feeling, and I thanked God for allowing me to be part of what He was doing in that space.

Then came the keynote. As part of her presentation, the speaker - my mentor - shared a slide titled “The Five Mentors Who Shaped My Journey.” Each mentor had a different word beneath their name. And there, to my surprise, on the big screen was my photo with the word “Anchor.” She said, “This is Sylvia Stevenson. She’s my anchor - the one who keeps me tied to my vision and my values.” My heart skipped

a beat for a second. I was humbled, then stunned. Moments later, the organiser - the very one whose lack of planning had triggered me - took the mic after the keynote and said publicly, “And Sylvia is my mentor too.” I was speechless. The same situation that had exposed my frustration became the stage where God affirmed my influence.



So, What Am I Learning from This?

Later, I told my sister the whole story, expecting her to sympathise. Instead, she said with a smile in her voice — oh so sweet and innocent - “But wasn’t it great that the Lord placed you there to help him?” That one sentence silenced every inner complaint. And in that quiet moment, I heard the Holy Spirit whisper, “You’re My hands and feet - not their critic.”

So, what I’m learning is that God has a way of showing me that my triggers are not punishments - they’re mirrors. They reveal where my values meet His grace. Yet God, in His kindness, reminded me that the only reason I could help was because of His goodness to me. Had God not been so good - had He not opened doors for me, or allowed me to meet the incredible people I’m connected to - I wouldn’t have had the influence or relationships to make those calls in the first place. It wasn’t my excellence that made things happen. It was His favour - quietly working through me, even when my heart was struggling to align with His. That’s when I realised: laying down your crown isn’t about lowering your standard - it’s about surrendering your need to enforce it. God doesn’t ask you to compromise excellence; He asks you to balance it with grace.



Scripture Focus: Philippians 2:3 (NIV)

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.”

- **“Do nothing out of selfish ambition...”** Sometimes what looks like principle is actually pride wearing professionalism. We tell ourselves we’re upholding standards, but sometimes we’re protecting our need to be right.
- **“...or vain conceit.”** Conceit can whisper, not shout. It says, “If they just did it my way, it would work.”

- **“Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.”** Humility doesn’t mean accepting poor standards — it means offering grace before judgement. It’s seeing people through God’s patience, not our pressure. ***That’s what it means to lay down your crown.***



Why We Struggle to Lay It Down

Because our crowns are built from what we’ve earned - experience, credibility, skill. So, when others fall short, it feels personal - as if they’re dishonouring what we’ve built. But the truth is, our crowns were never meant to define us. They were meant to remind us of who we represent. Laying it down isn’t weakness - it’s an act of worship.



Declarations

- I recognise my triggers as invitations to grow.
- I will help with humility, not hidden criticism.
- I will serve from grace, not grievance.
- I lay down my crown and lift up the character of Christ in me.



Prayer

Lord, thank You for the honour of influence - for every connection, every opportunity, every open door that I did not earn but received by grace. When my values are tested, remind me that I represent You, not perfection. When I’m tempted to judge, remind me that I once needed patience too. Teach me to serve with a whole heart, to see the gift beyond the gap, and to lay down my crown every time pride whispers that I’m right. Let my life be marked not by control, but by compassion. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



Key Takeaway

Laying down your crown means helping without judging, giving without resentment, and remembering that every door you can open was unlocked by grace — not greatness.