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DEDICATION.

This book is dedicated to the Lord Almighty who has made it possible
for this book to be.

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To the Triune God, My Father and Friend who has been the source of my inspiration. Thank you for your constant reminder to work on this book. Without you there would be no “blueprints.”

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The BUD Family! Merci Beaucoup.

To you the one reading from this book. You are cherished.

CHAPTER 1

THE CROSS

Upon which my sins were washed;

Upon which Satan was triumphed on;

Upon which Satan got a blow;

Upon which all my sicknesses has being healed;

Upon which all my debts were paid;

It was a beautiful Exchange.

HALLELUYAH FOR THE CROSS.

Prayer: - Father, let all the blessings that accompany the cross be mine in Jesus Name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 2

DIFFICULT TIME

When dark clouds gather most;
When sufferings abound us most;
When you feel inadequate, unloved, and unworthy;
When its seems like life is not perfect;
That is a difficult time.

When friends and families become your foe;
When those you cherish, your heart they break;
When you feel like the world no longer wants you;
And your list of problems goes longer each day;
That is a difficult time.

But difficult times I say lead to Beautiful Destinations.
A problem is never the end for you,
The beginning of another life it is for you,
Never compare or try to copy others.
Remain firm in those difficult times.

Then when the difficult is all gone,
Your Greatest Glory will be rising after you fell,
Your Greatest Pain will be your greatest Strength,
Your greatest fears will be your greatest Lessons.
Then you will be proud of whom you've become.
Endure I say in those difficult times.

That you will get Better, go higher, & get Stronger.

Remember that Tiny Termites Build Their Gigantic Nests By
Sheer Determination.

Prayer: - Thank you Father because problems are not the end for
me. I ask that you help me not to give on the beautiful
destination you have in mind for me because of a difficulty that
comes my way in Jesus Name (Amen.)

CHAPTER 3

THIS PERVERSE GENERATION

If it causes me to wonder the rate at which this world is becoming more sinful, then I guess I have to start praying for my unborn children because I can't imagine how perverse their time will be.

What do you say about a 14 year old boy caught masturbating by his mom in his room?

The children were trained in the way of the Lord, so the parents wondered how he learnt the act. The parents were so shocked they had to just leave him that night without punishing him (as the father could almost hurt him.)

The next morning they sat him down and asked him where he learnt what he was doing since he doesn't even have a phone yet. (Cellphones were only handed over to their children when they graduate high school and he was only in SS1). He sheepishly responded that he used to watch it on his parent's phone. The parents argued that they don't have such things on their phone. It was then he confessed he would take their phone, lock himself inside the bathroom and watch pornographic videos on the browser.

His Parents then remembered times their phones had been missing. The boy had already been doing that for 3 years and

had gotten so addicted to it. Thank God, through prayers and counseling the boy is getting better now, BUT not everybody out there get the chance to correct themselves.

What will be your own decision in this perverse world?

Are you deciding to stand no matter how people compromise around you?

If you have already compromised, are you deciding to find your way to the cross?

Open up to Christian Leaders around you so they can pray for you and counsel you. May God's Grace keep us till the end.

I am deciding to stand.

How about you?

Prayer: - Keep me and everyone around me from the perverseness going on in this world. Help me not to be caught up in evil in Jesus Name.

In ways I have compromised Lord forgive me and help me to stand firm to the end in Jesus Name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 4

BEYOND THE PAIN

I

JEMIMA'S IV

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him.”

That was my Father, Pastor Francis Bamidele reading to us 1 John 2:15 at the family devotion that morning. As far as I know ; I've heard that verse many times though little did I know that this is in fact God's message to me that morning warning me against the doom that awaited me that day.

I call it doom because it was going to be one that would change my life forever.

My name is Jemima Bamidele, the 3rd child and only female amidst the four children of Pastor Francis and Bola Bamidele. It's the culture in our family to observe Family Devotion every morning. This morning I was thinking about how I would attend the Banquet night (though done in the evening) of we the graduating SS3 Students which I will be attending alongside Sharon my Best Friend. I know my Parents would not let me attend to such so I had to look for an excuse to go. The party was to take place inside our school but our friends from other schools could be in attendance.

So many warnings came across my way that day, to change my mind from going for the “Banquet night” but I had set my mind on going for the outing.

After the Family Devotion that Morning, I was asked to lead the Prayer. And then came the time to report our plans for the day.

“Mom and Dad, I’ll be visiting Sharon this afternoon around 2pm.” I said when it was my turn as I already figured out that me saying I was going out by 5pm would be suspicious. So my plan was to leave for Sharon's place by 2pm and we would go together to the venue by 5pm.

“Hope you remember today is Bible Study?” asked Dad.

“Oh, Bible Study? I have even forgotten.” I said and I really had. Oh, how much I love our Bible Study time but I just couldn’t miss the party.

“Well, make sure you are back before 5pm.” Dad finally said.

“Okay Sir” I said and I left the sitting room.

I felt prompted within me to let go of the Party and go for the Bible Study but an idea came up in my mind.

“I’ll go for the Party and leave the place when I feel Pastor is about to start the message.” I concluded within me.

I went round doing my daily chores when my phone vibrated making me aware of an incoming message. It was Sharon and what I saw made my heart leap for a second.

JEMMY, I HEARD CHRIS AND HIS FRIENDS WILL BE COMING TOO. ARE YOU GOING TO BE ALRIGHT? LET ME KNOW IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT GOING. LOVE YA.

I replied immediately “Why? I mean who invited him?”

“WHO ELSE? DAVID OF COURSE. THEY ARE FRIENDS”.
She replied.

“He and David? Friends?” I thought aloud...

David was our class captain for the session, so officially he still was till we graduated. He had asked me out once and I had bluntly refused. As a result of that, his interest for me transformed to hatred especially when he discovered I had a crush on his friend Christopher. I had once embarrassed myself in front of all their friends so mostly all our mates were aware that I had feelings for Chris. His presence at the party might definitely make me a laughing stock of the boys.

“Today is going to be a long day” I sighed.

By 2pm, I was moving out of the house to Sharon’s when Ezekiel my younger brother shouted my name;

“Aunty Jemmy” that's what he calls me.

“Yes, what is it this time?” I looked back to see him run up to me.

“You are already going?” He asked.

“Yes, and right now you are delaying me.” I replied angrily.

“Hmmm, please remind me the verse Daddy read to us this morning.” He asked pleading.

“Okay. Love not the world neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” I replied.

He then repeated it again, looking at me right in the eye like it was directed at me.

“I am going.” I said and turned to go; as I was in haste to get to Sharon’s place.

“Okay, Bye Big Sis. Take care of yourself.” he said and ran off.

“What is wrong with him? Looking at me like it was meant for me” I thought and hissed.

I was in for Big Trouble, I just didn't know it. The Big Trouble is that.....

II

CHRISTOPHER’S IV

“Someone is going to have quite an experience today.” David said to me and Bright in a stoic manner.

“Wait; what has this girl done to deserve your attention so much?” I asked already having empathy for the girl as he had not even disclosed whatever were his conceptions but I could guess that whatever was going through his mind was something spine-chilling. Something violent.

“Don't worry bro. Are you in this with me?” he asked looking at me expectantly.

“Nope. Please count me out.” I said shaking my head at him. I don't even know about what you are talking about here. Who is this girl?” I asked.

“Jemima.” replied Bright with a smirk on his face.

“Jemima?” I asked looking at David for confirmation.

“Yep, it's Jemima or you got a crush on her too?” he asked with a serious look.

“No. But what are you guys planning to do?” I asked.

“Keep cool man, I've got things under control. I just wish to give her a little pathing gift. One she will never forget all her life.” said David clenching his fist as he spoke.

“Count me out of this Bro.” I said.

“I begged her but she laughed at me. She won't even need to plead because I will make things easy for her. She won't ever forget this day. Ever.” He said laughing hysterically.

I feared David at moments like this.

“Guys, am out of here. See you at the hall.” I said conclusively as I left David's House.

David had been my best friend for 6 years, and I realized whatever he planned to do must be something terrible. He knew Jemima had a crush on me; well virtually the whole class knows that. And I heard from a friend that he asked her out which she refused.

“Is he trying to get back at her?” I marveled at how I had his type of friend.

“I hope this girl does not come, she looks so naive and innocent.” I prayed silently.

As for whom I am?

I am Christopher Bankole; the only Child of my Divorced Parents. I live with my over-protective mum and I get to spend my days out with my friend David; it doesn't matter to my mum as long as I return home before 10pm. David had really influenced me a lot I must say but at that moment I felt like my friend was really bad than I imagined .

A flashback of when I first encountered Jemima crossed my mind.

“So much for an innocent girl.” I said smiling. I realized I might have to risk saving her from whatever David had planned but how to do that was still a dead end.

III

CHRISTOPHER'S IV

I turned up at the venue around 5:30pm to find the party already in full swing. The students were playing a game of truth and dare. I started looking around for familiar faces when my eyes caught two girls sitting at a corner with a posture that showed they weren't comfortable with the atmosphere. A closer look at them both made me realize one of them was Jemima so I concluded the other girl was her friend.

"These girls should better get out of here." I thought within me as I moved towards them when someone grabbed my shoulder from behind.

I knew immediately it was David.

"Trying to spoil my plan?" He whispered in my ear. I regained my composure as I turned back to see He and Bright staring at me.

"No, just wanted to be a gentle man by greeting them." I said directing my eyes to the girls. David also directed his gaze towards them.

"Wow, so she brought her friend along. Bright, can you please do the job of a gentleman to the friend?" David said with a wicked gleam in his eyes. I was dumbfounded.

Bright left us and went towards the girls. In few seconds, both of them left Jemima alone and went outside. I felt weak as I couldn't do a thing to save the poor girl who was now looking more agitated and definitely uncomfortable. I looked back at David to find him staring back at me.

“What do you want? How about you stop now before you do something you will regret?” I said to him, trying to change his mind.

“I won't regret this.” He shot back at me. “How about you help me with something?” he asked.

“Help you? I told you count me out. Remember?” I said.

“Actually, I think I need to remind you about something. You owe me something. From two years ago.” He said and I wondered what he was driving at.

“What the heck are you talking about?” I asked confused.

“I'll gladly remind you. There was a day last year your mum caught us watching a pornographic video, which you actually got and make us watch. We told her I got it and what happened? She went ahead to tell my parents and I was punished severely. She even informed the school counselor and I can't even imagine how many students heard about that.” He said smiling.

“So?” I asked defenseless.

“It’s time to return that favor. What you’ll do for me is so simple.” He said as I stared at him.

“David, but... I thought we are friends. Friends bail each other out right?” I asked.

“O yes! That’s why you will help me too.” He said patting my shoulder.

“Not this kind of help. You kept me out of trouble but this will mean me putting you in trouble or you putting me in trouble. I’m not doing anything.” I said as I moved to go towards Jemima. She turned at that moment and her eyes met.

“I can still tell your Mum you know.” David said loud enough to catch my attention.

I turned.

“What did you say?” I asked.

“You heard me.” He said laughing softly.

I couldn’t bear that happening.

“What do you want me to do?” I asked defeated.

“Involve her in the truth and dare game.” He said blankly.

“And?”

“You’ll dare her to finish this drink in one minute.” He said as he brought out a bottle of coke from his back pocket that I didn’t

notice before. I sighed as I collected it and noticed the drink had been opened before.

I did a brief thinking.

“I presume you've added something to this drink ?” I asked with shock.

“Yeah, you got it man.” He said in a fearsome manner.

“Please just stop now.” I said.

“Looks like you’ve got a soft spot for this girl. Okay, I promise I won’t hurt her; don’t you see she is lonely.” He said looking towards her. I looked at her to see her attention was now focused on the players of the game. He noticed that too and said “She even looks interested in the game. So bro, get on the move. I’ve got eyes on you.” He said as he pushed me forward swiftly.

“What have I gotten myself into?” I asked myself.

As I moved to mix up with the players in the middle of the hall, something told me i was going to regret what i was about to do later .

IV

JEMIMA'S IV

The hall bustled with different types of activities but my attention is fixated on the truth and dare game. I suddenly wondered why of all the places I could be I was there. Sharon

had already been “kidnapped” away by a friend of David i knew nothing much about; so I was left to myself.

I was about going out to check on Sharon when someone called my name from the group of people playing the game. I looked up towards the group as I saw who had called me.

It was Chris.

“Oh my God! So it’s Chris that will embarrass me today not David.” I thought. I could hear my heart now beating loudly.

“Truth or Dare?” He asked from where he stood.

“Seriously?” I blurted out as he shook his head at me.

“Dare.” I finally said as I looked around to see all eyes were now fixated on me.

“I dare you to drink this up in one minute.” He said pointing a bottle of coke towards me.

“We seldom talk. What is he trying to do?” I thought as i walked through the crowd to where he was. People started clapping and calling my name to cheer me on. I looked at him to see him shaking his head at me as if saying “Don’t do it.”

“What does he mean?” I thought as I collected the bottle from him.

“1 minute.” he said again, his voice sending some kind of message I couldn’t place my hands on. I opened the bottle;

though I noticed it was no longer sealed, meaning someone had originally opened it. I however didn't have the time to consider why it could be so as the shouting and cheering had now increased. I downed the drink in seconds to the cheering of everybody. I turned to leave when i heard Chris mutter angrily "Foolish girl, double digit IQ dummy." I turned back to look at him to see him staring angrily at me. "Get out of here now." he mouthed at me. He didn't speak loud for others to hear but i was able to pick what he said.

I walked back towards the entrance of the hall as I thought "Really? Chris does not cease to amaze me."

I looked around for Sharon but I couldn't find her around. I checked the time; it was 6:55pm which meant the pastor's message would start anytime. My Parents definitely had not noticed my absence in church or they would be bombarded me with calls. I decided I was leaving immediately with or without Sharon. I had almost gotten out from the hall when a message came in on my phone. It was from Sharon;

I'LL MEET YOU IN TWO MINUTES, WHERE I LEFT YOU.

"Hmm! This is not Sharon's way of texting me." I thought aloud. She would have apologised for delaying me, yet she is unpredictable. I finally decided to wait for her. I went back inside to where had previously sat. In few seconds, I started feeling dizzy; at that moment the story of a Bible Character flashed in my mind.

“Dinah.” I muttered as I blacked out.

V

CHRISTOPHER'S IV

I didn't know what to do to help her escape the trap that was laid for her as she had even passed out. As soon as she did; Sharon, David and Bright came inside the hall and ran towards her playing the role of good Samaritans. Sharon decided to get a cab so she could assist Jemima in getting back home; but David offered to be of assistance so she would also get back home early. I watched as Sharon wrote down Jemima's home address and left her friend in care of David.

“Make sure you guys get her back home safely.” She shouted out as she was left in a hurry.

“We will.” David replied after her.

As soon as she left, David looked at me and said “You are free to go to.” I looked at the unconscious girl once again and left the hall.

As I got outside the school compound, i sat on a big stone and was lost in thought for about 10 minutes thinking through all that had happened in the past one hour.

“What could David want to do to her?” I thought putting together all his words and actions.

“Murder is out of it. He wouldn’t try that. He didn’t try to make a fun of her before our mates?” I thought.

“What can it be?”

“Something that her been drugged was going to make it easy for him to achieve. He also mentioned that he would make things easy for her. She won’t have to beg.” I thought deeply as an answer dropped in my mind.

“It can’t be. No, he can’t do that to her.” I shook vehemently at that thought. But I knew David could do it.

I stood up in a hurry and as I was about to take a step. A thought struck me. “To Jemima’s knowledge, everything that has happened or anything that happens to her will be my doing. She will think I planned it all.” I felt my blood run cold.

That thought sent me running back inside the school compound. When I got back to the hall; none of David, Bright and Jemima was in sight. I took to searching all classes but couldn't find them. I then noticed one of David’s teammate going towards the gate. I ran up to him and asked, “Please, have you seen David around?”

“I saw him going towards the music room!” he replied as he walked away.

“Music Room? That is my best place in this school.” I thought aloud. The Realization of what was happening hit me.

David was setting me up. He had planned it all. Anybody would conclude it was my doing.

I ran as my feet could carry me to another block in the school where the music room was situated. As i was about getting to the front of the room, David and Bright came out of the room.

They were both struggling with their trousers.

I was right but I was too late.

They had raped her.

I moved closer to both of them and before i knew what I was doing, I had landed a blow on David's face.

“Keep it cool, bro.” said Bright.

“Keep it cool? After setting me up?” I asked angrily.

David rubbed his face laughing horribly.

“How could you do this?” I asked not really expecting an answer.

“I figured she would feel better knowing it was someone she liked.” He answered with a smirk.

I couldn't believe my friend had actually done that to me.

“You better let's get out of here before she becomes conscious and I pray she doesn't remember anything.” I added trying so hard to calm myself down.

I left the place and the two followed behind me quickly.

As soon as we got to the front of the school gate, I looked at David one last time.

Our Friendship was over and he knew it.

I then walked away to await my fate.

VI

JEMIMA'S IV

“You had better let’s get out of here before she become conscious and I pray she doesn’t remember anything.”

That was what I heard as soon as i had become conscious though my eyes were not fully opened. That was Christopher’s voice and I could hear him and whosoever it was moving away from where I was.

I opened my eyes and tried adjusting my eyes to my environment. I noticed I was In the Music Room.

“Why am I here?” I asked myself confused.

I looked at myself and I knew something was not right. Memories of the day rushed to my mind as i burst into tears.

“No...No...” I screamed out.

I had been raped. I had been set up by Chris and his friends.

I wept for a long time before i could think of what to do next. I finally got up to look round the room when my eyes caught my bag lying in a corner. I crawled over to where it was.

As I stretched my hand out to pick it up my phone vibrated from inside the bag. I brought it out and saw it was my mum calling but I just couldn't pick the call.

After it had finished ringing I checked the call logs and discovered my mum had called 7 times, my dad 3 times, and Sharon 15 times.

Sharon called again and I picked it; with tears i explained all i knew. She then told me what had occurred when i became unconscious and how she had told David and Chris to take me home. She then told me to stay put as she was coming with my parents.

I guessed my Parents had gone over to Sharon's House when they couldn't find me.

Minutes after Sharon's call, I heard movements in the passageway. The door to the room opened and my Parents, my Friend and Ezekiel, my younger Brother all filed in. As I saw them, tears flowed from my eyes without control. I was short of words. I could tell Sharon had filled them in on what had happened.

I was sure of something; I had disappointed my Family and definitely God.

I was carted away to the hospital; tests were conducted and I was counseled briefly. From that night, tears became my daily-bread; I experienced several nightmares and various scary dreams. I shut out everyone from my life.

My parents that would normally invite young ones to our home were also discouraged.

Hatred took over me. Hatred for Chris and his friends; hatred for myself for been so foolish and careless.

As soon as my Parents noticed i was becoming more unstable psychologically and emotionally as days went by, they told one of their close acquaintance who agreed to help in counseling me.

Dr (Mrs.) Lawal, a medical Practitioner and Counsellor who is also a member of our Church patiently dealt with me and slowly i started opening up to her about how i felt and what i was going through.

“I feel bad and really guilty. I can never forgive myself for my foolishness.” I told her one day amidst tears. After listening carefully to me, she hugged me and said “You’ll get better.”

Indeed i got better after one particular session with her that brought hope to my life, brought a bright light to my darkened Soul and made me a better Person.

VII

JEMIMA'S IV

Mrs Lawal came to our House one afternoon and entered my room with a big smile plastered on her face.

“How are you doing sweetheart?” She asked.

“Better Ma; Thanks for your Patience.” I said with a tiny smile.

“No problem Dear. I have a something I want you to watch today.” She said as she brought out her system and placed it on my bed before me.

“Is it a Movie or what?” I asked.

“Yeah; it is. Just watch and i know by the time you are through you will have Questions.” She said with a smile.

“Okay Ma.” I replied as I settled to watch the movie titled “Broken yet loved.” As I started watching, she sat on my bed too and watched it with me.

The movie was a Christian one about a girl named Lara. She had been raped by Armed Robbers who invaded their home; she kept the fact that she was raped that night away from her Guardians whom she was living with. They however discovered she was Pregnant and in a bid to find out who owned the pregnancy by maltreating and punishing, she lost the Baby. She was so traumatized that she planned to commit suicide. It was when she went to purchase what she planned to use that she met someone

who spoke to her about Christ's Love for her and she gave her Life to Christ. Her Life got better after that and she later explained to her guardians about how the pregnancy came to be. The movie ended with her getting married and having a happy Family.

By the Time we finished the movie, I was weeping as i reflected on my life. Lara's story was not her fault but mine was totally my fault. I was born in a Christian Family but i don't live christianly.

As the Credits Rolled, I looked to Mrs Lawal to see a tear escape her eyes. She helped me sit up and said "You need Christ at this point of your life. Only he can make you the best of yourself. I can only do a little but he will heal you totally."

I looked at her with tears and asked "How sure are you? This is only a movie."

"A movie you said! How about you check the credits and check who wrote the story?" She said with a little smile .

I gaped at her as understanding dawned on me.

"You wrote it?" I asked surprised.

"Yes, I did. And that was my Past you just watched." She replied solemnly.

"Do Mum and Dad know?" I asked.

“Yes, and that was why they told me to be of help.” She answered.

Mrs. Lawal was the last person I could imagine that this happened to. She was happily married and so comfortable.

“So Christ made you this better?” I asked her, now on the verge of tears again.

“Yes, and he can make your life much more beautiful. Are you ready to go to the cross?” She said.

“Yes.” I replied.

“Say this prayer after me:

Thank you Jesus because you love me. I’m grateful Lord because you have my best interest in heart. I am grateful Lord because you have not given up on me. I come in response to your call. I say I’m sorry Lord for all my sins and faults. Have mercy on me Lord and forgive me all my sins. Purge me Lord with your precious blood and help me to live my life as a new creature. Give me the grace to go and sin no more. Heal my wounds Lord and help me to live in your strength. For I have prayed in Jesus name. (Amen.)

As soon as I said that prayer with all my heart; the joy that filled my heart knew no bounds. I had this peace i had never experienced before. That night, i slept peacefully with no nightmares.

Christ indeed changed my life; gave me joy for my tears; gave me beauty for ashes; gave me the hope to live and face my future. Even though i was broken and shattered, he still loved me in return. My relationship with my Parents and Siblings got all better. Our Home received Life and Joy again.

Months Later, Preparations were made for me to travel to States to study so as to make me feel more comfortably.

As i left the Airport to Georgia in the South Eastern Region of the United States, I heaved a sigh of relief as I said a big thanks to Christ: My Hope of Glory; The one who gave a Joy beyond my pain.

Prayer: - Jesus, you are the Balm of Gilead. Come Lord Jesus and heal my heart of every pain and sorrow. I forgive those that have hurt me. Let my life be filled with Joy continually in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 5

FAITHFUL EVANGELIST?

Since she was saved and had been empowered, she decided she was always going to tell people she met & know of her Savior's love for mankind.

On a faithful day, she travelled to a neighboring state with her mum; she wanted to speak up and tell the passengers of Christ but couldn't bring herself to do it. Minutes later, her mum spoke up and did what she couldn't do.

Few days later, she had a cause to go to that same state. As soon as the Journey began she felt a prompting to speak to the passengers. But she thought within her "I have never spoken to more than 1 person at a time, especially when they are not young adults." She kept quiet and didn't do as bided.

When she was going back home, she boarded a bus and she felt the urge to preach. She looked around the bus and thought "this bus is 60% people of the other religion and some are Hausa's. How do i cope in this atmosphere?" She didn't do as bided again.

Days later, she travelled again and the same thing occurred.

She took a bike when she got to her town and within almost 10 minutes of the Journey she didn't preach to the bike man even though the Holy Spirit was prompting her to do so.

As soon as she payed the man and turned to go, the man asked; “What church do you attend?” She turned back and replied him. Then he asked “Why is it you couldn’t tell me of your Saviour throughout the Journey?”

She looked at him shocked. This was God correcting her and she understood perfectly.

“If Christ saved you and made you better, you should at least tell me about him. I know your Church preaches Holiness so why couldn’t you tell me about that Holiness.” He continued and said so many other things. By the time he was through, she was so sorry for what she did.

Are you a faithful Evangelist?

Prayer: - Heavenly Father, help me to be faithful to the great commission no matter the situation in Jesus Name (Amen.)

CHAPTER 6.

NOT SINFUL BUT WRONG!

A writer “Allison Hyacinto” who I follow on a social platform wrote in one of his posts and I quote “I hate when my Spirit cannot talk when other spirits are talking; when my spirit cannot communicate with his colleagues from the other realm because I have desecrated his dwelling place. I hate when my spirit cannot boast of the flesh housing him.”

As I read his post, I remembered times I had done something I shouldn't have done. Not necessarily a sin but after doing such, I feel remorseful, bad and guilty for what I did. At such moments, to call God “Father or Daddy” as I do or to call the Holy Spirit “My Best Confidant” becomes difficult for me; Just because I had done something I shouldn't had done. Those little moments are usually somehow.

However, the moment I apologize or ask for forgiveness; peace fills my heart comes back and things go on as it should.

I believe as believers, we should be able to identify quickly when we make mistakes of doing things God does not agree with.

We should also know God deals with us in different ways. There have been times I have done some things or I want to do them alongside my believer friends but I just discover it doesn't feel right for me to do; though those things might not necessarily

be sinful. In our individual Christian lives, we should note such things and make sure to avoid them.

You call yourself a child of God! Do you ever feel remorseful at all anytime you do something wrong or is it just everything goes with you? If there is not at least one instance you can point to; please, check yourself.

You are referred to as a Believer! To you is it that anything that is not mentioned specifically as been a sin in the Bible is right for you to do?

I know a natural mind will find it difficult to understand what I am pointing at.

May the Holy Spirit grant us more understanding and insight in Jesus Name.

Prayer: - Help me Lord to recognize when I'm doing contrary to your will. Help me to quickly retrace my steps as soon as I discover so. For I pray in Jesus Name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 7

WATCH!

With so many things happening around us for the past years, we will all agree the world is going through a period it has never experienced. Things i had never heard of happening when i was young now happen.

What do you say of the Las Vegas Shooting; The Hurricanes in Mexico and other cities; the new law of no preaching to unbelievers without legal permission in Russia; fear that stirred up when people in USC thought shooting was going on in the place: the insurgency, kidnapping, corruption taking place in our very own beloved country?

Well, if you ask me why all these things are happening at this time; I'll say we are at the end times. The way hurricanes are happening these days got even scientists confused. They all said they have never seen things happening like this before.

“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and

there shall be famine and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows.” Mark 13:6- 8.

We are all witness to the fact that all the things stated in the scriptures above have happened and are still happening signaling to us that the coming of Christ is near.

“But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.” Mark 13:32, 33.

Now is the time to prepare lest that time come upon us unawares. Believers should not let down their guard at such a time as this. Because he that thinketh he standeth should take heed lest he fall.

Are you there still ignoring Christ’s Love for you? Here is a call from Christ to you today. He is waiting for you to open the door of your heart to him. Thank God it’s not yet late to do so now.

“And what I say unto you I say all, WATCH”...

Prayer: - Help me Lord to watch for thy return in Jesus Name.
(Amen.)

CHAPTER 8

WHY I DO WHAT I DO.

It was in a group one day, someone asked “I wonder what it is people say or do as soon they enter the Church; you see them bow their heads and close their eyes. Why and what do you do when you enter the church?”

Personally, I grew up seeing people doing it but i knew and understand what people do at that moment is pray. It also then became part of me, praying as soon as i arrived in Church because I knew what it meant. However, the Responses I read that day left me baffled. I’m not criticizing anyone but this is really something one should learn from.

Someone said “I use that moment to pray and tell God to bless and speak to me.” Well, that’s what i think everyone does.

Another person said “I use that time to remember if i switch off the Gas.” This is funny but at least she had something she does.

Another woman said “I don’t do anything; I just bow my head and close my eyes because that’s what everybody do.”

This response surprised me.

Why will you just do things because you see people doing it? What they were even doing specifically you don’t know and you didn’t wonder out loud to someone what it is they do when they just sit like that. Some people just do things because others are

doing it. I wonder if some people even know why they go to church on Sunday or they just go because they are Christians. I wonder if some people even know the significances of some sacred things like the “Holy Communion, Water Baptism” or perhaps they just partake in it because they see some people partaking in it.

Don't just do things because your friends are doing them. If you think you would be look down on or laughed at if you ask questions; ask them for the reason they do it.

Have and understand the reason for doing everything you do.

Prayer: - Help me Lord to understand the significance of everything I do so that I don't just join multitudes in doing things in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 9

ONLY HOLINESS WILL.

It was at mid-day sometimes ago when i woke up from a short siesta to a hungry stomach. I was at home with Feyi, my younger sister since our parents had gone for a one week conference. I called out for her but when she didn't reply i resorted to searching the house for her. I met her in the sitting room, having slept off on the sofa.

I woke her up and the following conversation ensued between us.

I: - Feyi! Wake up.

Feyi: - Big Sis, why are you disturbing me? (She said hissing.)

I: - I am waking you up, not disturbing you. We need to prepare Lunch, I am hungry.

Feyi: - Big Sis, don't offend me. I was having a dream of which one of your friends named Grace came to stay at our house when mum and Dad were not around. She said her Uncle sent her out of the house because of something she did. Her coming to this house was not good at all. She was about harming me with something when you woke me up. You didn't let me see what she wanted to do. (She explained to me almost murmuring.)

I: - What kind of dream is that? But you should be grateful I woke you up, not the other way round. Even if Grace comes here she can't stay as our parents are not around.

Feyi: - Okay oo. (Ko! Ko! Someone knocked at the door)

I: - Let me check who is at the door. Who is there? (I said before opening the door.)

Voice: - It's Grace.

Feyi: - Big Sis, is that not Sis Grace Voice that am hearing.

I: - It is. (I said surprisingly.) Let me open the door first. (I opened the door slightly and as she was about to enter I blocked her path.)

Grace: - Afternoon Dear, My Uncle sent me out of the house for an offence. Please let me stay here for a while. (She said still trying to get in)

I: - Please Grace; I can't let you stay here. My Parents are not around. (I told her still refusing to let her in.)

Grace: - It's me; your friend, Grace. (She said pleading.)

I: - I know but I can't let you in. I'm Sorry.

Grace: - Feyi, what is happening? (She asked as she looked at my sister for help.)

Feyi: - Sis Grace, Please go. Don't come and cause trouble in our house. I am not ready to die yet. Pls, use the gate... Abeg, waka go. "Please, walk away." (Replied my sis arrogantly.)

Grace: - Oh, Okay. Thank you. (She said and she turned to go. I closed the door as i and my sis looked at each other in amazement.)

I: - Jesus Christ! What just happened now?

Feyi: - I think my dream just came to fulfillment somehow.

I: - I know, just trying to comprehend it. But wait, can a bad child like you, that do abuse and do all sort of things still have the gift of Dreams? You just insulted Grace now. (I asked as i gaped at her.)

Feyi: - You are still abusing me? Okay oo.

I: - But that gift will not get you to Heaven at all. Only HOLINESS can.

Feyi:-You have started again? If i tell you i dreamt you were given scholarship or that someone will steal your money. Don't take action and just ignore me. Be saying only Holiness can take me there. God just proved that am not that bad. Sha lets go and cook (She said as I smiled and shook my head at my little sister.)

REFLECTION CORNER

Yes! Only Holiness can get one to Heaven. The Spiritual Gifts one possesses; the casting out of demons and devils; the prayer

one has prayed that caused miracles to happen; the amount of fasting and prayer one can participate in; even talking, writing or teaching people about Holiness without actually living it out will not get one to Heaven.

All of these without Holiness are nothing.

Holiness is the real deal. These things listed above are good, wonderful, and superb but can never be your passport to Heaven. However, Holiness combined with all those good attributes secures you a place in Heaven.

Prayer: - Help me Lord to live Godly rather than just manifesting gifts. Above all things help me Lord to portray a life of holiness in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 10

ON BEING PROFITABLE

Just a stone throw from my house is a tree. Its Leaves are green; so bright; and so beautiful you almost wish you could eat them raw. As i stopped by it to admire it one day, a realization dawned on me.

This tree had no fruit.

In a bid to find out what it could be used for, I plucked 2-4 leaves home but had to throw it away when I discovered it couldn't be used for anything. Neither for consumption, nor for treatment like some people use leaves for. No one plucked off its leaves like they would have plucked off so many leaves on an Amaranths plant. Well, it does provide shade to the animals. Except for that, it is of no other use to the occupants in that area.

Weeks after, I passed by this same tree. As i looked at it and remembered how i discovered its fruitlessness; i noticed its leaf had started withering and were now drying off little by little.

Some people most especially believers can be likened to this tree.

You are opportune to give your life to Christ at a tender age. You have Christian and Loving Parents. You have so many Christian Experiences yet you are unprofitable to God. Maybe you have never even once told someone around you about your Saviour.

You live beautifully because of the blessings God Lavish you with. People even appraise you but you don't bear fruits for the Kingdom.

You have all the Grace you need, you have all the Help and counsel you can ever need yet you are nothing to write Home about.

If we think we will enjoy the opportunity God is giving us, all our life; it might not be so. There is probably someone out there who will be so faithful as soon as he/she has the grace we are wasting. One day all those things been praised in our life might just fade away because we did not use what God gave us in the right way.

Prayer: - Help me Lord to be Fruitful and Profitable to God's Kingdom in Jesus Name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 11

HE CARES.

Minutes after Iseoluwa and her mother got to the hospital and she had fully understood the situation; she let a tear drop.

“I’ll be back. Let me discuss the issue with someone.” Her mum said and left.

She opened the door to the back seat of the vehicle. She entered. She closed up all the glass and locked all doors.

She then let go of all the tears she had been trying to hold in. Seconds ticked into minutes, she was still there sobbing heavily.

Her noise got the attention of a security officer on patrol to the parked vehicle. As soon as she saw him moving closer to the vehicle she wept in muffles. He came closer and saw her.

Since he saw nothing strange happening in the vehicle he left.

“Why worry when you can pray?” dropped in her mind.

“How do i pray in this type of situation?” She thought as she resumed back to sobbing.

Her spirit wanted to reach out for help, for comfort, for hope that all would be well. She wanted to reach for the one who had promised never to leave or forsake her.

“Father..... Lord Jesus....Holy Spirit ... Jesus.” she called amidst the tears.

Suddenly, she felt a presence in the car. She looked around, she couldn't see anyone but she knew someone was there; comforting and assuring her that all will be well.

Soon she became calmer and felt a peace she couldn't describe.

“Open the door! Why did you lock yourself in there?” Her mum said as she arrived at that moment. She fumbled with the lock as her mum pulled the door opened.

“Stop crying, God is going to take control. Go and wait in my office. I have to go, see and hear things for myself.”

As soon as she opened the door to her mum's office which was also in the hospital premises, her eyes caught a magazine titled “*FUEL YOUR FAITH*” which was on her mum's table. She closed the door gently, walked to the table and picked it up. Going through the book she read something that totally described how she felt and how to handle such.

“God Just take control.” was all she said before she started another episode of tears.

Knock! Knock!

Someone knocked at the door as one of the nurses under her mother came in. The nurse brought the news she had been hoping to hear but she feared might not hear.

“Mummy said she has been trying to get in touch with you. She said I should tell you that the problem is solved. Things are now

under control. So stop crying.” She said before leaving the office.

She cleaned her face and said to the one she knew was listening to her. “So you were listening, you were there even though all I did was weep as I couldn’t “pray”. Thank you for taking control.”

REFLECTION CORNER

There have been times and there will be times when you know putting up the charade of praying will not get you to totally express how you feel of what is happening on the inside of you to God. At such times, rather than not praying at all, rather than hurting on the inside; pour it all out to God. Cry if you have to but just make sure you cry on the Shoulder of him who has said he will never leave or forsake you.

Yes! You are a woman or man of faith, but a situation might come your way when you will need a greater portion of faith, where you will need to totally learn to depend and trust in God.

Cast all your care upon him; for he cares for you.

Prayer: - When I’m helpless and all hope is lost, help me Lord to rely solely on you. Help me to cast all my cares upon you my Saviour, in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 12

BE EXPECTANT.

This might be just for you.

Many times, we set out for our different places of worship. And in the church; we pray, we sing, we listen to our Pastors preach to us. But I've got a Question for us all.

As we leave our homes, do we always look forward to receiving something from God?

Perhaps you were discouraged, sad or angry about something bad you've done, as you leave home to the Church, do you prepare your heart to receive something special from the Lord?

You might have been waiting for God's leading concerning something, have you ever thought that God might speak to you through a part of a Service? But once your heart is not prepared, the Rhema may come and you just can't catch up with it.

Prepare your heart to receive something from God the next service day. Have something definite you want from God. Even if you can't seem to think of what you want, just be expectant and you'll be surprised at how blessed you'll be.

Prayer:- Help me Lord to always come into your presence with a heart ready to receive from you in Jesus Name.(Amen.)

CHAPTER 13

DO GOOD; ACT RIGHT.

It was around 9:30 pm when I stepped out of the bathroom after having a quick shower since I had planned to go and study inside the school as I stay off campus. My phone beeped signaling me of an incoming message. I picked my cellphone and the message was from one of my hostel mates.

“THE HOSTEL IS BEEN ROBBED, THEY JUST LEFT MY ROOM.”

I felt blood drain from my face. My room was the next to this guy's room so I understood what that meant. I quickly hid my phone in my bag which I had packed for class.

On instinct, my eyes went to the direction of the door and I saw that my door was not locked.

“Oh my God!” I said as I rushed swiftly towards the door. Suddenly, the door was kicked open and in came 3 masked guys.

“Jesus!” I shouted.

“Shut up.” One shouted back at me.

I was scared but I decided to act strong. “I don't have any money and I only have a phone.”

“Okay, just co-operate and we will be out of here before you know it.” Muttering silently, I moved to remove my phone from

my bag when I remembered that some amount of money which was kept with me was somewhere inside my bag. I stylishly removed my phone and handed it over to one of them.

He whistled as he looked at the phone and backed me as they turned to go.

I breathed a sigh of relief. At least I was not harmed.

I wanted to close the door as soon as they had all move out when one of them stopped the door with his leg.

“What is it?” I asked whispering as he looked at me with a wicked gleam in his eyes and said “You are beautiful; or what do you guys think?” I looked at the other two and they all seem to agree with whatsoever he meant. I trembled in fear when understanding dawned on me. I rushed passed them into the hallway to see if anyone could be around to help but everyone had locked themselves inside their rooms. Something rose within me and I shouted “You Lie! I had rather you kill me than allow any one of you touch me.” The thought of their hands on me send cold shivers through me but all the same I never showed that I was scared and closed my eyes waiting for my fate.

“Father, you said you won’t leave or forsake me. This is fire; please don’t let it burn me. Glorify yourself Jesus. My fate lies in your hands.” I prayed silently.

I heard the footsteps of one move towards me when a voice boomed out;

“What’s going on here?” My eyes flew open and could see by their reactions that whosoever spoke was someone they respected.

“Grace!!!” I heard the voice call my name in shock. I looked up to see a face I had never imagined seeing again for the rest of my life. It was “Senior Segun” as we called him then. He had repeated SS1 three times before our set met him in class. Most students hated him and always made jest of him but thanks to the teachings of my parents, I was good and nice to him. I was the only one he spoke to in class when he chooses to interact and he would also borrow things from me. He had later left the school with no one hearing from him again.

“Senoir Segun! Don’t tell me you know these guys?”

“Sorry to disappoint you but as already suspected, came here together.” He replied bluntly.

“Ahh! I can’t believe this.” I replied gaping at him.

He looked at me with a smirk on his face before saying; “When you are not accepted by the people around you, you turn to those who will appreciate and respect you. That’s what happens round the cycle.” he said to me before focusing on the other guys.

“What were you trying to do to her?” He asked the other guys.

“We were just trying to.....” one of them said stammering.

“To what? There are some people in this world that people like us shouldn’t dream of touching or harming because they are just too good to be harmed. She is one of them.” He said angrily to them.

“And you” he said as he turned to me “you better continue to do well, even to strangers. I wouldn’t have stopped them if it were someone else. You are just one of the few people in my good books. Another act of goodness might even save you from death.” He turned to go but suddenly stopped and said “return everything you collected from her.” I gladly collected my phone and they all left. It was after they left that my hostel mates all came out and said they had been eavesdropping but none of them was bold enough to come out.

I could say my act of goodness saved me but I know it was God.

Show a little bit of Love and Kindness; put a smile on someone’s face and you’ll be surprised at how you’ll be paid back.

Prayer: - Help me Lord to portray the act of goodness to everyone I’m opportune to come across in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 14

ALWAYS IN HIS PRESENCE

It is when you are feeling frustrated over a situation; when you feel lonely and alone; when you need someone to talk your heart out to; when you feel like crying and you know no one will comfort you; it is then you always remember you have the Holy Spirit as your Friend and Comforter. It is then you remember he cares for you and has always been there for you. It is then you're like "Daddy, am here again, please help me." It is then you know how to keep silence before him so you will not miss what he has to tell you; it is then you know how to tell God about the situation you are in and how you can't live without him; it is then you ask him of what step to take because you are just so confused; it is then you remember your Father in heaven loves you.

Only when people around you are gone, do you always think to run back to him.

Yes, you have your regular devotion, you spend little time praying, you evangelise, you are even a worker in your local Church but you are just too busy that you forget your Father wants so much to speak to you. You spent your leisure time having fun with friends rather than spending time with your maker.

In times past you've always been lucky that he is always there for you only because he loves you. I hope you don't take his

love for you for Granted. I wonder how you would feel if you were an “Option B” or “Alternative” in someone’s Life.

Don’t always run to God only when you need his help...

Stay in Fellowship with him...

Prayer: - I’m sorry Lord for those times I have put you in second place in my life. Father, I promise to stay in constant fellowship with you in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 15

SIBLING'S LOVE.

“Mercy, I Love my Cousin!” A close friend said to me one day as I was working on my laptop and he was going through some pictures on my phone. We were at the E.E Winnifred Hall situated along the Institution Cafeteria.

“That’s good, aren’t you supposed to love her before?” I asked.

“Yes, you are right; but this is different. Is Love even the right word to use?” he asked gazing up at the ceiling.

“Hmmm, I don’t get you.” I said as I continued typing.

“It’s Sensual somehow ...” my hands stopped at that.

“Sensual? I really don’t want to assume. How about you elaborate more?” I asked him as I looked at him struggling to find words to explain himself.

“I guess it’s just as you are thinking.” He replied looking at me.

“I get this sensual feeling as I said before; I get jealous when I see her with her male friends; which was never so before; I am suddenly so over-protective of her; so many images just play in my head. I can’t control myself.”

“Okay. So, what have you done about it?” I said as I continued typing.

“Nothing! Just struggling with it. I can’t even tell anyone about it. I am a Leader in the fellowship for Christ’s sake.” He said as if in anguish.

“So you are actually concerned about your position in the fellowship? That means if you are not a member of the Committee, you will not be bothered about it? This is your sister for Christ’s sake, your cousin to be precise. Ask Amnon and he’ll give you a gist of what happened to him at the end. Lust is a sin on its own but this is just so wrong. Am not judging you or anything but we’ve got to tell ourselves the truth. At least we are friends Right?” I said to him.

“Yes, we are friends and that’s why am telling you this. I won’t be telling you if I didn’t know I needed help. I am planning on distancing myself from her for some time though I know she won’t like it.”

“I understand you but Dara is not someone you can avoid and you know it. This is not just happening because you see her but it’s from the inside of you. Perhaps it’s also because you are idle these days because you are done with your examination. Have you tried using up those times images play in your head to do profitable things like studying your Bible, praying, Reading Spiritual Books? Even the personal project you mentioned to me sometimes ago; How far have you gone with it? Do something as regards your mind or you wouldn’t like yourself later. The mind is a battlefield on its own.” I explained as he shook his head.

“Dearly Beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from **fleshly lusts**, which war against the soul;”

Prayer: - Help me Father to abstain from all fleshly lusts in the name of Jesus Name. I refuse to be another Amnon in Jesus Name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 16

ON BEING CAREFUL!

“If you see any lady sleeping with her legs on the wall, be careful of such people!”

“If you see any young girl sucking her finger and looking at you, flee for your life!”

“If you hear dogs barking loudly at night, be on guard!”

“If you see this, if you perceive that ... Be careful!”

Are you familiar with statements related to the ones listed above?

Let me share this quickly; while I was growing up, I met a girl I'll call G. We were close to an extent that she visited our home and we would share snacks together; though mostly in my parent's absence.

One Evening, I heard she was dead!

I was so shocked and had to ask for information from someone close to her family. I was told she was sick and prayers were made for her. Along the line she confessed she was involved in witchcraft and had to die because she was the next in line; and probably because she had failed an assignment given to her.

You know how mothers can be! My mum was like “and you'll be doing all sort of things with her.” You understand what I mean?

At another instance, something like that was said about someone close to me when I was in secondary school too; someone I had collected drinks, birthday gifts and various things from. At hearing all these I usually wonder how I had been kept safe from “such people” since I didn’t even know God then. Though I was still young, God made me understand that I should never ever think that my been careful around some people and things is the one that keeps me safe.

Sometimes, when it’s like what people are saying about something or someone is getting into me or getting me scared and I want to be acting all careful; God brings to my mind past instances and I ask myself “If God was faithful in watching over me when I didn’t even care about him, is it now that I know he loves me that he’ll now neglect me to the wolves and dogs of this world?

I am not saying you should be careless, but never ever think your been too careful is what will keep you safe from evil happenings. As long as you are his child, know that you are safe and secured in him.

He watches over his own.

Prayer:- Father, I’m grateful for the many times you have kept me from evil happenings all around; I ask Lord that you continue to keep me as the apple of your eye in Jesus Name.
(Amen.)

CHAPTER 17

LEARNING FROM BRO JOSEPH.

“You have to start teaching me how to play a guitar or do I still have to learn from a music school when I have someone who can teach me?” Kemi said to Gbenga, her childhood friend one evening as they sat in Gbenga’s room playing Ludo.

“I can’t teach you, because you won’t be serious with it.”

“How can you say so? You’ve been acting big boss for some time now just because you’re a guitarist. At least I have things am good at too.” She defended.

“Hmm, Like what?”

“And that’s ... I won the game.” She screamed loudly.

“No, you didn’t. I won’t take that from you. Let’s start again.” He argued.

“No, I have won.” She said as she carried the board to her chest.

“Drop it. And let’s start again.” She stood up swiftly and ran to a corner in the room.

“Bring it here.” he said as he stood up to walk towards her.

“No, I won’t.” She said pointing out her tongue at him daringly.

He looked at her thoughtfully.

“And why are you staring at me that way?” she asked scared.

Silence!!! Heartbeats increased, blood pumped faster. Then the two became aware of the fact that they were the only ones in the big house of the Adereti's. Gbenga stroved closer as Kemi held the board closer to her chest like it would safe her from whatever was about to happen.

In minutes, the board went crashing to the floor, some buttons went flying, and a shirt went off, when...

“What’s going on here?” growled a voice angrily. They stopped still.

“I said, what are you doing or trying to do?” the voice asked again. The two separated from each other hastily and turned to see Gbenga’s Father, Pastor Adereti glaring angrily at them.

“We were just playing Ludo; it happened all of a sudden.” said Gbenga avoiding his Father’s eyes.

“You were so busy; you didn’t hear me open the gate and the main door. I even walked into your room without you noticing me. You should have the understanding that you are no longer kids. Gone are those days when you just act anyhow you like with each other. As from today, you two shouldn’t stay alone behind closed doors again. And Kemi, don’t come visiting if I or my wife is not around. I hope this won’t happen again. Kemi, your parents are waiting at home.” he said conclusively.

“Okay, Sir.” She said as she straightened her clothes and took her bag to go.

“Kemi!” Mr Adereti called suddenly.

“Sir.”

“Don’t get too angry at yourself or him too. You are both human and that’s why there are precautions to take to prevent such or even more from happening again. And I’ll inform your parents about it so they can talk to you more. I’ll discuss with my son here too. Goodnight.”

“Bye Sir. Thank you Sir.” She said as she escaped the room.

REFLECTION CORNER.

My dear readers; You know, in the past when I hear of young people committing fornication, “unplanned rape” or a lady getting pregnant especially secondary school students. I used to wonder how they end up in it.

I would ask questions like; “How did they let it happen?”

“Were they drugged or something?”

I would wonder that “how can just being alone with an opposite sex be the reason why something should happen between them. When it’s not like they have something with each other before?”

However, my stay on campus has changed my orientation about that because of what I have seen happening around and various things I hear happening.

However an incidence was shared with me and I was actually confirming with God if what I was hearing was true. Then I

realized that there may be cases of people who commit fornication “mistakenly.”

“Mistakenly” I used meaning they didn’t plan it, they never thought it could happen. And please, this is not about one being spiritual or not, this is not about the amount of Bible verses you can recite off-head. We carry flesh and Blood and things have happened to people in the past. It is our choice to determine not to let such happen to us too. 80% of the people it happened to never thought it could happen. Some thought they were too good or too moral for them to commit it. Joseph taught us all a lesson; he didn’t start praying in his own time at that point. He fled the scene. That’s wisdom.

If you have to go physical when such is about to happen especially in cases when the other person is all determined about it, go physical.

If you have an ungodly relationship you are in, break it before it’s too late.

Perhaps as you are reading this, instances of when you’ve almost gone into the act with someone is coming to your mind. I tell you, you just might not be so lucky the next time it happens. So my dear, act now.

Determine to stay undefiled; Work towards staying undefiled. Flee from every appearance of evil; and Avoid Fornication at all cost.

Prayer: - Help me Lord to avoid every form of fornication. Help me Father to remain undefiled in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 18

LEARNING FROM A DOE-KID.

It was around noon on a Wednesday. I went out to our farm animals since it was about time they had their feed. Apart from their normal meal, there was some few leftover bean cake I wanted to give them. But because I knew the older ones could cheat the younger animals, I held it for them all to see what I had in hand. They understood what I meant perfectly and all quickly surrounded me. Since the animals were docile and closer to me, I made sure each one got a bite. As each waited for their turn, I noticed a particular doe-kid looking at me expectantly. It was one that even if other animals surrounded you to greet you “welcome”, it would be afar off watching. I thought within me “so because of food you can come this close.”

I tried to reach out to it but off it ran; stretching the cake out to it brought it back in front of me. I noticed the same thing another time too. As I looked at it thoughtfully, I heard my younger sister say surprisingly “This goat is used to running away from one.”

“But it stayed close because of food.” I completed thinking out loud.

Enough of the doe-kid story.

As I sat to study that same night, the incident of the doe-kid came to my mind. The pleading look on its face as it waited for

a bite and I couldn't help but give it what it wanted, flashed in my mind.

“What do I learn from it?” I asked within me and almost suddenly I understood something.

Many people are like that goat; they stay far away from God when things are blooming, when they are comfortable, when life is treating them well. But the moment they realize they need something only God can give them, they run back to him. They are the set of people that know how to plead the most and God the merciful One he is, has Mercy on them and helps them. The second they have what they want, they are gone again only to come back when they need another thing.

People like these are unstable and would not even see danger closing in on them.

If you are living this type of life, I plead that you repent.

Don't be a “bread and butter” Christian.

God is reaching out to you. Get enclosed in his embrace and you'll be a full partaker of what he has in store for you.

Prayer: - I'm sorry Lord for always been far away when things are rosy for me. Help me Lord to seek you at all times; whether things are comfortable for me or not. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 19

ABOUT SINGLEHOOD.

Single hood is not to explore the pleasures of being young; but to prepare to build a healthy & successful future.

Now, it is “The Lady & Her Lord.”

Soon it becomes “The Woman, Her Lord and Her Husband.”

Prayer: - Help me Oh Lord not to waste away my life as a single woman/man but that I see it as an opportunity to build towards a successful future in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 20

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS A NO!

As Bola read through the story shared on one of her WhatsApp groups, something flashed through her mind.

Fear crept in; she held the phone tightly like it was a lifeline as she read through the rest of the story.

Tears fought its way through as she asked herself “Could it be? I pray what befell the person in this story has not happened to me.”

She was around 6 years old. Her Parents owned a shop and employed Jide, a young man probably in his twenties to be in charge of it while they go to their place of work. In the afternoon after school, Bola would go to the shop to meet her parents before they all go home together in the evening.

On one particular night, Jide had cause to come back home with them; probably to collect something from her parents. As the Family entered the living room alongside Jide, there was light out and Bola’s Father went in search of a lantern and a match while Bola stayed close to her Uncle Jide as she was afraid of being alone.

Suddenly, she felt him pull her behind the sofa. He stopped her from making any sound as she felt his fingers between her thighs. She could only search for an answer on his face as she didn’t have an understanding of what was happening. Her

Father's presence with a lantern jolted Jide back to reality as he pretended to help straighten her school uniform.

Later that night as she lay to sleep, she thought about it with her little understanding and had said to herself. "Uncle Jide will not do anything bad to me." And that night was the last time she remembered seeing him but she never mentioned what happened to her parents.

Bola wept as she thought on the little she could remember.

"I sensed things were not right then but I was too young to understand. What happened to me is somehow related to what happened to the lady in the story I read. She was deflowered by what happened to her. She had to be apologizing and explaining things to her husband after her wedding. She didn't think it counted as to even tell him before marriage. And it backfired. Is that what will happen to me too?" She thought with tears.

Fear! Tears!

She could at least talk to the one person who knew all about what happened then, even when she herself was ignorant.

Her Best friend.

"God," she started in tears "I am scared of what has happened to me that I don't even know about. I am scared I will end up like this lady. I am not even sure of how long it happened but please did something happen to me that night?" She wished she could get an answer to know if she was affected by what happened to

her. She wished she could probably have a dream showing her what happened that night so her fear would either escalate or fade away.

“Do you remember how I saved you from that naughty boy in your primary school?” She heard that gentle voice she had grown accustomed to ask her.

“Yes, I remember. I will always remember you saved me that day. I could have been raped that day.” She replied in tears.

“If I watched over you at that age, do you think I would let anything happen to you when you were much more vulnerable to evil?” He asked again.

“No.” she replied.

“Remember, your father came back at a particular time, if he came few minutes late something could have happened to you. So if your earthly Father was not there, I was.”

He said as he led her to read Psalm 41:2, Psalm 121:7 and many more verses.

She became encouraged as she decided within herself “even if nothing happened, I will still tell whosoever I am to be married to, to avoid stories that touch the heart. And nothing of such will befall my daughter.” She said as wiped her tears away.

“Hey, thanks for spoiling my mood a bit but let me announce to you that you’ve failed in your attempt to make me carry

unnecessary burden for years. And fear, be gone.” She said at the devil angrily as she put her phone aside and lay down to sleep.

REFLECTION CORNER.

If you have been assaulted sexually or an attempt has been made before on you, be strong and never let the devil enjoy seeing you tremble in fear. Put the Matter in care of your Heavenly Father. It would be safer to share such experiences with the person you know you are spending the rest of your life with. If on the other hand, you end up getting married to someone that has gone through something like this before; please, be considerate and understanding. Don't hurt them with your words and actions. It could have been you in that position.

If you see any young girl playing unnecessarily with any male, speak to such and warn her in a language she'll understand.

Fathers and mothers to be, decide now that you will do your best to make sure nothing of such happens to your kids and even if it almost happened, they will be confident and comfortable with you enough to inform you.

Protect your daughters, sisters and friends from these destiny destroyers around.

“The Lord shall preserve thee from ALL evil: he shall preserve thy soul.” Psalm 121:7

Say NO to Sexual Harassment and Assault.

Prayer: - I thank you Lord for how you have been keeping me from all the evil happening around; thank you Jesus because you will continue to keep me. I pray for those who have been assaulted in any way that you will bring healing to their hearts in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 21

THE HAVEN OF REST.

“How beautiful Heaven must be!

Sweet home of the happy and free;

Fair haven of rest for the weary,

How beautiful heaven must be.”

We all sang that evening at the Bible Study. Something prompted me to look at Sarah’s face as she sang. Her face was lit up with Joy and Happiness; it looked so beautiful like I had never seen before. I focused my attention back to singing; praying within my heart as I sang. The Exhortation soon started and once again I glanced at Sarah to see her so focused on the Preacher and what he was saying.

“Something is different about my friend tonight that I just can’t place.” I thought as I turned back my attention to the message.

“I don’t know why the message is coming like this tonight as this was not even what I prepared to preach. It looks like someone might not have another opportunity after tonight. Let us set our lives right, that his coming meet us not unaware; that death catches us not unprepared.” The Pastor said as he rounded up to lead us in Prayer. I cried and prayed as I asked God to assist me in my Christian journey to Heaven.

After the Prayer, I looked at Sarah again to see her beaming with Joy. We shared the Grace and she walked up to me as we were going to trek a long way to the school hostel together. Our discussion as we went was all about how Heaven would be as she didn't stop asking me how I felt about Heaven and how it would be, meeting the Saints who have gone ahead.

“I will meet Abraham, David, Moses, Kenneth Hagin, and Billy Graham. Wow, I will see Jesus.” She said smiling and I couldn't help but wonder what was happening.

We got to the hostel, and we agreed I cook for both of us. All through the moment I cooked and our other roommates were discussing as we were six in the room; Sarah sat with her Bible and held it so dear like a lifeline.

We ate in silence until at a point; she said “Mercy, we must get to Heaven together. Even if one of us goes ahead, the other should make it too. No matter the difference between the times we go home, I want to see you and be happy we both made it.” She said to me lovingly and I replied “God will help us. But Sarah, hope you are fine?”

“Mercy” she started, “I have never been this fine. I just feel so happy.”

As I lay beside her to sleep as we shared a corner, I heard her sing silently “Home! Beautiful Home! Bright, beautiful Home! Bright Home of our Saviour, Bright, beautiful Home.”

“Sarah” I called out, “don’t forget we are waking up to pray by 3:00am. I have a feeling you might fall into a deep sleep tonight, but arise when I wake you. And please, wake me up in case you awake ahead of me.” I said.

“Alright, dear.” she replied gently.

“Mercy” She called out.

“Yes”

“I Love you. Hope you know that?” She said.

“I know sweetie. And I love you too. Thanks for been there for me.” I replied smiling.

“Good night, dear.” She said as she looked at me with a smile.

“Good night.” I replied as I shifted into a comfortable position. Before I slept, I prayed and asked God to wake me up by 3:00am to pray.

I woke up few hours later with a strange feeling. I checked my phone; it was around 1:00am. I didn’t have a nightmare so I wondered what was wrong. I closed my eyes to sleep back but tears found its way out of my eyes. I couldn’t tell why but I kept crying. I did for about 3minutes, and suddenly I felt this great Peace words can’t explain.

I glanced at my friend but I couldn’t see her face as she faced the other side. I wondered what just happened and few minutes later I slept off.

In answer to my prayer, I woke up 3:00am. I called out to Sarah before I stood up, but I didn't hear her reply. I stood up, walked up to her bed and touched her to wake up. My friend didn't answer me. At this point, I became scared. I turned her to face me, and a look at her face told me she was gone.

Gone to that place she so much talked about.

I called out her name, pleading to her to come back and to God to give me back my friend. She had this smile on her face. Our Conversations, her words as we ate and as we came home from Church flooded my mind.

Her look as she said "I love you." and "Mercy, we must get to Heaven together. Even if one of us goes ahead, the other should make it too. No matter the difference between the times we go home, I want to see you and be happy we both made it." I remembered how she sang during the Service and how she looked.

"I should have known." I said to myself.

I remembered Paul's words.

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (I Thessalonians 4: 13 -18)”

I would miss her so much but strangely I wasn't too sad. I looked at her face tenderly as I said to no one in particular “You have gone to that Haven of Rest you talked about. You are probably searching for all the Heroes of Faith.” I smiled gently as a tear dropped. I slept off kneeling there beside her till I was awoken by daybreak by the shout of our roommates and Hall mates.

People greeted me with looks of pity knowing how close we were.

At her funeral, as I stood to pay my last respect to my friend. I said “See you later Sarah, at Our Haven of Rest. Let me go and prepare too, so we'll see each other like you wanted. Meet all the Saints, so there will be someone to show me around when I

get there. Good night my dear, till we meet at THE HAVEN OF REST.

REFLECTION CORNER.

How prepared are you for the Lord's return?

If your eyes were to close in death, where will you spend Eternity?

Are you prepared for the Haven of Rest?

Do you wish to see the face of the one who gave his life for you?

“Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning.” Mark 13:35.

If you've lost a loved one; Sorrow not, as they are waiting to see you up there. Don't let their wait for you to come in Rapture be in vain. Because I tell you, they are waiting.

Be prepared to be at the HAVEN OF REST.

Prayer: - Help me Oh Lord to make it to Heaven. For no reason Lord should I miss Heaven. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 22

MY BEST CONFIDANT.

“I am saying faithful are you Lord;

Faithful are you Jehovah,

Faithful are you Lord, faithful.”

I sang as I did my quiet time that morning. I moved to another song and another and another but I noticed something was missing, the connection was not there. And my heart felt heavy.

“Holy Spirit, Are you there?” I asked gently.

“Yes.”

“Hmm... What is happening this morning?”

“You’re the problem. There is something you need to settle with your roommate and you know it. Check, there is something in your heart you need to let off.”

“Hmm, you’re right. But....”

“THEREFORE IF THOU BRING THY GIFT TO THE ALTAR , AND THERE REMEMBEREST THAT THY BROTHER HATH OUGHT AGAINST THEE; LEAVE THERE THY GIFT BEFORE THE ALTAR, AND GO THY WAY; FIRST BE RECONCILED TO THY BROTHER , AND THEN COME AND OFFER THY GIFT.”

“Wow, you got me...”

I prepared to apologize as the words began formed in my heart .

“Talk, am waiting.” he nudged gently.

“I will. It’s somehow.” I said as I used my pillow to cover my face as I lay down.

“Are you shy?”

“Something like that. I’m waiting for the perfect moment.”

And it came; as she then came towards her bed...1, 2, 3 I counted within me silently before I called her name..

“Yes.” She replied.

Silence! I didn’t know apologizing can be this difficult when you’ve waited for so long.

“Are you hearing me?” I asked not sure what to say again with the pillow still covering my face.

“If I didn’t hear you, will I answer when you called me?” she asked me as she went back towards the bathroom.

“I am sorry for what happened yesterday night.”

Silence! But I knew she heard me.

“Okay, can I pray now?” I asked the Holy Spirit.

“No... that is not all you have to say, tell her the rest.”

“Hmmm...alright.”

“You know the thing is...” I removed the pillow slowly and I went on telling her all I needed to. She asked what she wanted to and I gave her replies.

As soon as we finished talking, peace came to my heart, and I asked “Can we pray now?”

“Yes.” Was the answer I got and I went back to worshipping GOD... As I said “Thank you Holy Spirit.”

And it was a refreshing moment in his presence.

REFLECTION CORNER.

If only we can learn to depend on the Holy Spirit’s Guidance.

If only we apologize to the one we’ve offended; do what we need to do; help someone who needs our help as soon as he nudges us to: we will realize that fellowship with him is sweet.

If only we can take all our burdens, fears and worries to him who is the teacher, comforter and friend given to us of the father. His Guidance can carry us a long way if only we learn to yield to him.

Involve him in all you do because He is waiting. He longs to be your closest friend.

Let him be your Best Confidant.

Prayer: - Draw me Lord into an intimate relationship with you in the name of Jesus. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 23

THE TEST FIRST

As she stepped foot in her Alma mater, memories came rushing to her mind. The tearful moments, the joyful and happy ones, the painful ones. She remembered her friends and everyone who had loved her in their own different ways.

Being a boarding house student had not been easy. She remembered all she went through: the moments she threatened to tell her parents to change my school yet she still graduated there; the time she was so hurt by someone she trusted that she threatened to poison herself; that moment she was been questioned about an issue she knew nothing about; the times of laughter and tears with her best friend; the moments of encouragement from teachers. She had later understood that all that happened wasn't for nothing, God was working on her.

It's been four years since she left that wall and all she could do at that moment was smile and say "Thank you Lord."

As she prepared to leave this particular day; someone asked her "Can you ever forgive me?"

"Yes" she replied as she smiled.

She did the moment she understood that God had always kept tab of her life.

She did the moment she understood that all happened with God's permission...

REFLECTION CORNER

No matter what you think is happening to you now, no matter how much you seem to hate the situation you are in, I want you to realize today that God is in charge.

No matter how it looks to you that one man or woman out there is in control of what's happening to you and you're screaming and pleading that you be set free. Look beyond the situation and see God working on you. Nothing happens to us without him knowing. He could decide to stop it from happening and he might choose to let you go through the process. He can turn your mistakes to a miracle. He can turn the misfortune the devil is planning to a breakthrough.

If you want to have a Big TESTIMONY, expect a Big TEST.

Prayer: - Help me Lord to hold on and not be discouraged that at the end testimonies will fill my life in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 24

LEARNING FROM JONATHAN

Shall we do some deep thinking?

Have you ever thought that Jonathan was the perfect person that should have wanted to kill David?

Oh Yes! But he understood that God chose him.

Wait! What if he had agreed to the plot of killing David? Well, it could have been an easy thing for him to achieve.

You want to know why?

David loved and trusted him.

Jonathan could have just treated him to lunch and kill him silently; no one would suspect him. David wouldn't even see it coming. But Jonathan choose to help his friend.

Here is a self-examination question: Are you always driven by your self-interest? Please check!

Are you sure of yourself, that no situation can warrant you to use the trust someone has for you as a weapon against him/her? Double check!

Will you still be willing to help someone when you know he is going to be given what you think should be yours?

Learn from the life of Jonathan!

Prayer:- Lord, at that moment when you will need me to help your anointed; help me not to fail you. And Father; do not let me be driven by envy and jealousy as to now hurt someone who trusts me in Jesus Name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 25

AN ACT OF KORAH

“Is he the only one in the Church?”

“What is so special about him?”

“What can he do that we cannot do too?”

Those were the words murmured from a corner in the Congregation as soon as the Pastor David finished Announcing that Brother Tunde was going to be the one to preach at the next special combine Service since he the General Overseer was going for a Conference outside the Country.

Most of the Congregation seemed to accept it with gladness as many people were witness to the fact that God had greatly using the Brother. Yet, some had this look on their face that said they weren't in support of what was just announced.

Pastor David looked at the workers with a smile as he continued; “He might just be a young and newly appointed Pastor but you all will testify to the fact that God has been using him greatly. I know the Service will be great. So let's all trust God to take Control. Shall we share the Grace in Unison?” He asked as the meeting was rounded up.

Pastor David watched the workers silently as they dispersed. Pastor Bode, one of the older branch Pastors was still sitting

down with a look on his face that said the announcement didn't go down well with him.

The Pastor shook his head as he thought. "Always struggling to get a role when the role should get him. Always wanting to do what he is not capable of doing. His ministry is lying dormant, but he desires another when it's not even the right time."

His gaze shifted to Bro Tunde who came towards him, confusion carved on his face.

"Sir, about what you announced?" he began slowly; "do you think I can do it?"

"I don't think you can." he replied as Bro Tunde looked at him in shock.

"But... Why?" Bro Tunde asked stammering.

"I don't think so, I know so. I didn't give you that assignment; God did. I will say he chooses as he wills." The Pastor said looking at the young man who seemed not so sure of himself.

"You'll understand later Bro; let's go to my office. You should get the Topic I was lead to give you to work upon." He said as he led him out of the auditorium.

"Sir, it's not a prepared outline?" the young man asked in surprise.

"No, you're preparing it yourself. Follow me." He said bluntly.

Tunde followed the Pastor silently as they went to his Office, a lot was on his mind.

So many things had happened so fast for the past few months, he had always been the one leading special prayers, even seminars. The opportunity to handle one thing or the other seem to only be for him. Yes, God had told him he was an instrument but he didn't realize how fast things was going until now. God was not wasting time at all.

“Please help me, I can't do this on my own. You chose me. Take control Lord.” he prayed silently.

The Pastor's Secretary stood up to greet them as they entered.

“Pastor Bode was here few minutes ago; I think he'll be back to see you any moment from now.” she said as they moved towards the office.

“Hmm... Alright. Show him in when he comes.” the Pastor replied without looking back. Bro Tunde followed silently behind him.

Sooner had they entered the office, did the door opened and in came Pastor Bode. He greeted the Pastor as he looked at Bro Tunde with disgust.

“Oh! Pastor Bode, I heard you wanted to see me.” the Pastor said looking at him slightly as if to read his thoughts.

“Sir, I...” he began.

“Don’t sound too desperate.” his wife’s advice came to his mind. She had noticed his face as they got up to leave the Church.

“Tell the Pastor what you think. Just don’t sound too desperate. It’s high time someone spoke up about this issue. This is a good opening.” She had said. He smiled. That woman understood him so well.

“Sir,” he started again a bit calmer; “I feel something as important as this should be handled by someone who has had so many experiences on the Pulpit. This is a Combine Service, and you are not even going to be around to monitor things. Why don’t you give it to someone matured, not someone who is just sometimes lucky to do things right.”

“Well, you mean someone like you?” the Pastor asked.

“Yes... I mean No. Anyone but him will do.” He replied as Bro Tunde stared at him at his words.

“Oh!! Well, I don’t know what I will say about that. But am quite shocked. Hmmm...” he said thoughtfully.

“Lord, what do I do?” He asked within him.

Give him the topic, let him go and prepare for it.

“Oh!!!” he muttered silently as he looked at the young and older men in front of him.

“Well, it’s alright. The topic is “A Divine Encounter that transforms lives.” You can take it. Prepare, pray and plan.” the Pastor finally said shocking both men. Pastor Bode definitely wasn’t expecting that as he stared at the Pastor in surprise. But still...

“Oh! Alright Sir. Thank you Sir. Take care, Bro Tunde.” he said as he rushed out with a smile.

Bro Tunde stared at the Pastor before struggling to say “I’ll be going Sir.”

As he stood up to go, the Pastor said “I don’t really know what to tell you but I’ll get back to you.”

“No problem, its God’s work. He chooses as he wills. Who am I to question him?” he said smiling.

“It’s alright. I will reach you later.”

The next morning found Pastor Bode checking through various versions of the Bible, Dictionaries, Concordances and previous messages of the Pastor. By the time he was done, it looked to him like it was perfect but somewhere within he knew something was missing. He explained to his wife and she ever the supporting woman she was told him, it was alright.

Metres away, in his office, the Pastor sat preparing for his Ministration at the Conference, when he felt lead to tell Bro Tunde to also prepare for the message.

Bro Tunde dropped the call in awe and amazement. Despite the Questions he really wanted to ask, he quickly got to work. By the time he was done, he himself had experienced something new. He knew in his Spirit that God was determined to move in the Service.

“But am not the one preaching.” he said almost dejectedly. Then sat up immediately and said “God should just move amongst his people, whosoever is doing the preaching does not really matter.”

“But it might matter to God.” he said shrugging.

The next Sunday morning, members trooped into the Church expectedly because the news had spread that the Pastor had announced Bro Tunde would be preaching. As the Sunday school was going on, Pastor Bode’s children began to tell the youths sitting around them that: Actually, Bro Tunde was not ministering again. It was going to be their Father.

The Service began proper and a note was passed to Bro Tunde from the moderator telling him to come sit on the podium. Pastor’s instruction, it said.

Amidst stares and glares from people around, he gently stood up and moved up to the podium.

It was soon time to listen to the message and the moderator invited Pastor Bode to the pulpit. Murmurings were heard as he stepped to the Pulpit.

As soon as he stepped to the front, all his built up confidence seem to melt away. He began to stammer as soon as he began to speak. He led the congregation in prayer in a bid to build up the confidence again. As he struggled, it only became worse. His wife stared at him from where she sat knowing things were not turning out fine.

“God help me.” He called out silently.

“I didn’t place you there. You did. You are on your own.” he heard silently.

“But your people?” he said, almost in tears as he looked at the congregation as they struggled to pray.

“They are always on my mind.” was the reply.

And as if on cue, an usher brought him a note from his wife which read:-

“It is better you get off that Pulpit now before it’s too late. Ask Bro Tunde if he was given the message. Let him handle it. I can only conclude that where you are standing was never yours to begin with.”

He looked up at his wife from where he stood. She was right.

He quickly signaled to the Moderator and simply said “Tell Bro Tunde to come and handle the teaching.”

The moderator stared at him as he asked, “what if he isn’t prepared?”

“His unprepared emergency message is far better than my prepared one. Get him here.” He replied as if in pain as he left the pulpit for the midst of the Congregation.

Bro Tunde stared at the happening as the Moderator quickly ran over to explain things to him and to tell him take position on the pulpit.

As he stepped on the pulpit, a hush fell on the congregation. The people became lively once again and it was a refreshing time in God’s presence.

As the report reached the Pastor that night, he smiled and said; “God, you are just unpredictable.”

Few days later, Pastor Bode stood before the Pastor with heads bowed down.

“I am sorry Sir. I was Covetous and determined to have the shoe when the shoe does not fit. I felt like I was been replaced.” He said to the Pastor’s disappointment.

“Replaced? No! That place was never even yours.” The Pastor said as he dismissed him.

As he turned to go, the Pastor called out and said “You know what? I feel like am watching the ACT of KORAH live. Only that you experienced a bit of God’s Mercy.”

Ever since then, the people in the Church most especially the youths would describe Pastor Bode as “the man who wanted Recognition so badly that he failed.”

REFLECTION CORNER.

Do you remember Korah, Dathan and Abiram? They rebelled and they were swallowed by the earth. The wives and children who could have corrected them, probably didn't and they all suffered for the act together.

What influence do you have on the people around you? Do you just watch them do things without correcting them when you know their act of rebellion will definitely take it's toil on you. Imagine being called “the wife or child of that man who caused problem in the Church sometimes ago”! How would one feel?

Never try to put yourself in a position not for you. The shoe will be too big for you to fit in, and failure is usually so drastic.

Avoid people who you have noticed always want to oppose a decision in the Church. Do not provide them support in any way because when God's wrath takes its toll, you will not be spared. Learn from the 250 men who supported Korah and ended up getting burnt with fire, they definitely would have thought twice before joining the coup.

Avoid being a Korah.

Avoid the Korahs.

Prayer: - Heavenly Father, may I Never be a Korah in the household of faith in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 26

JEZEBEL: MY FRIEND'S FRIEND.

“I can't continue to watch you been friends with that girl. She is so different from us.” I said to Doris two weeks after we resumed College as we sat at the Cafeteria. We had been friends since childhood and had promised to stick with each other but my friend was now moving with Sandra, one you could refer to as the most popular girl in the school.

“Mary” she started to reply though she looked like she was in a hurry to leave; “Yes, she is different but I can help change her.”

“Really, how?” I asked in disbelief.

“I can invite her for Bible Study and she can assist me academically. We can even invite her to join our discussions and vigil.”

“Are you serious?” I scoffed before I continued, “this girl's presence alone makes even her friends tremble. Be her friend and I bet you if you won't become another Sandra on Campus. She rides several cars, moves with various guys, and have you thought about you been invited to a party. Please, what will be your excuse?” I asked looking at her in surprise.

“It depends on which kind of party it is.” She defended.

“Alright. Please, tell me which kind of party a 'Jezebel' would attend?”

“Well...” she started, when I saw her smile at an approaching figure, I looked up to see the person in question coming towards us flanked by some girls who looked moderately descent, definitely some other Doris’s.

“Hey sugar-pie...” Sandra said to Doris as she pushed her and sat beside her.

“Sugar-pie” When did my friend’s name change to that? I looked at Doris with disbelief plainly written on my face. She shoved her shoulder back in response.

“Oh, I think I will see you later, Doris. I have to rest in order to prepare for Bible Study.” I said as I carried my bag to go.

“Wait,” she called after me; “let me introduce you guys to each other.” She said.

“Mary, this is Sandra and Sandra this is my childhood friend I told you about.”

“Nice meeting you.” I said as I stretched out my hand towards Sandra. Before I knew what was happening she pulled me into a suffocating hug. She smelt of a strong perfume and...

I coughed...

Cigarette!

“We don’t shake, we hug.” she whispered in my ear.

“Ugh! Alright. I’ll keep that in mind.” I replied giving a fake smile as I struggled out of her grip. I looked at my friend

thoughtfully before turning to go when Sandra said “Mary gal, hope you will be coming to the party at my flat tonight?”

“Party? I don’t know about any party.” Doris asked looking shocked before I could even ask what was going on.

“Every semester we have this get-together party; so this semester is going to be in my flat. I just wanted to tell you about it. Of course, you will be coming. I do everything with my friends.” She said to Doris while I was giving her this ‘I warned you’ look as I watch my friend stammer for an answer.

“Alright.” Doris nodded in agreement to my disbelief.

“Sure, so Mary are you coming? It’s 7pm to dawn.” Sandra turned to tell me.

“Nope, and as a matter of fact I have a Bible Study to attend and I have readings to do.” I replied blankly. I looked at Doris face again; a lot was going on her mind. I felt sorry for her but there was nothing I could do.

“See you later, Twinne.” I waved to Doris as I turned to go.

I was losing my friend to this Jezebel so fast.

“Where is thy Brother? In this case, 'your sister'?”

I heard within me.

“Hmm... She is with a Jezebel right now. I know I am my Sister’s Keeper. But I don’t know what to do again.”

I tried calling Doris's cellphone to at least try changing her mind but couldn't reach her until I left for Bible Study. I looked around for my friend in the Church but she was nowhere to be found. I felt worry prick at my heart, my friend was making a terrible mistake.

I was preparing to sleep at around 12am after reading when I looked at my phone to see if she had tried calling me back as I had placed several calls to her. She hadn't call back. I knelt to pray in preparation to sleep when a pressing urge to pray for her stirred in my spirit. I prayed for her protection wherever she was and that she realized what she was doing before it became too late. I lay down to sleep and would not have slept for 30mins when a bang at the door woke me up.

“Mary!!!”

It was Doris voice. I hurried to open the door for her and she rushed in.

“Mary, I...” and she started weeping.

I was speechless, all I could do was pat her. She then spilled everything that happened as I listened in shock.

“I was drugged, Mary. I was almost raped by Sandra's friends. Three of them to be precise. They knew I wouldn't take Beer or anything Alcoholic so they gave me a fruit juice. But, it was already drugged. I was feeling dizzy suddenly and struggling to stay awake when Sandra asked me what was wrong, I told her I

would like to come to the hostel and to my disbelief in minutes it was like everyone else was evacuating the room excitedly. I staggered towards one of those girls you saw in the afternoon and asked her if she knew what was happening. It was then she told me someone had been drugged and the victim might be raped. My eyes flew awake. Realization dawned on me. I was in trouble. The girl was the one that helped me escape. I ran all the way from Sandra's place. Mary, you warned me. I am so sorry." She said as I pulled her close for a hug.

"It's alright Sis. Thank God he used that Girl for you. I prayed for you also before I slept." I said thankfully.

"You did?" She asked in disbelief.

"Yes, I just felt I should."

"Oh!! Thanks to God and Thank you so much. You know what?" She said sitting up.

"What?"

"That Jezebel knew about the plan right from the beginning and she kept deceiving me."

"Yeah... Wait, did you just call her Jezebel?" I asked in Surprise.

"Yeah. Or what can you call her?" She looked at me daring me to question her judgement.

"I'll call her that too but it's just kind of hard to believe that a Jezebel became my friend's friend for some time. You know, if

it had continued which I had prayed it wouldn't actually; I would have continued to refer to her as "Jezebel: My friend's friend."

"Hmm! What a description." she replied thoughtfully as I smiled.

REFLECTION CORNER.

Who are your friends and Confidants?

Who are the people you surround yourself with?

Are they Jonadab's (people like the subtle one who advised Amnon.); or Jezebel's (people prone for their wickedness and evil.); or Young Vibrant Men and Women like the ones Rehoboam listened to or the ones Dinah went out with for fun?

Choose your acquaintances wisely...

"..... Evil Communication corrupt good manners...."

Prayer: - Help me Lord to mind my acquaintances. I will never be friends with a destiny destroyer in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 27

THE REAL YOU

“Monica, won’t you be fast? We’re late for class already and you’re still sitting comfortably there with make-up.” I said in frustration to my departmental mate who stayed in my hostel as she sat at a table with a mirror positioned in front of her.

“I’m almost ready. You know I can’t do without makeup plus today is my birthday. One does not celebrate birthday twice in a year.” She said as she applied blush to her cheek.

“It’s alright? If only you took care of the real you like that; your life will be so much better.” I said thoughtfully.

“What do you mean?” she asked looking up, confusion written on her face.

“Monica, how will it look to you if someone wears a new beautiful gown; but you realize the individual hasn’t bath for fifteen days and she smells? How do you feel about that?”

“Eww!! That’s bad. What’s now the essence of the new cloth? It’s all for naught.” She replied.

“Really? Honestly to me that’s what you’re doing. You are carrying a beautiful body; but your behaviors and actions are just the reverse. Don’t you know that body of yours is just like a borrowed dress that you’ll return later? The real you is not this

body but the 'you' inside. You fed your body this morning but the real you is probably dying of hunger already. It is your body people might say is beautiful but the real you inside is maybe ugly; weak; dying that is if not dead already. The real you might even look like it has kwashiorkor; with a wobbled image, bulging eyes and saliva coming from its mouth. The real you is so open to attack from the enemy "the devil." Monica, you don't even care about the real you inside. I'm talking like this because to some extent I know you. All you are always saying is "I need to get that latest gown; I need to attend that party; my birthday is gonna be a blast but... the real you is maybe so poor, wretched and has nothing. It probably has no strength sustaining it because you wouldn't even supply it food which is the word of God. You."

"Wait, Dorcas. I don't get. Are you saying that is what is happening to me now? That description is so horrible. And by the way what is this real you you're talking about?" She asked with a mixture of anger and confusion.

"Your Spirit, that is the real you. This body is going to die one day and return to the dust like a borrowed cloth is returned. Then the real you will be left to face its fate. Monica, have you ever wondered why after doing all you want you still feel empty, and sad? Or it does not happen to you?"

"It does. Because sometimes I feel I'll be happy and satisfied but I feel empty." She said.

“The real you wants help. You just think the things of this world will make you satisfied but no, it makes you even feel worse.”

“Oh! I wish that emptiness can go away. And that my real I be happy.”

“You can be strengthened in the spirit but only through Christ. You have to let him clean and heal the real you within. Let him make you shiny and beautiful. Monica, you won’t even be needing some of those things any longer because the beautiful you inside will affect your outside appearance.”

“How do I do it?”

“Say this prayer after me... I understand that all attempts to satisfy myself without you in it are vanity. Lord Jesus, this is me asking that you save me. This is me saying make my life better. I give my heart to you Lord. Be my supreme Lord and Savior. Make my life beautiful, better than I can ever imagine. For in Jesus name I have prayed. ”

“Amen.” She said as we finished praying.

“Thank you. You know what? Is it my imagination or what? I feel joyful and strengthened within.”

“Definitely, the real you is now strong and alive.”

“The Spirit wages war against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit. So let the real you win the battle by you feeding on the word daily and living by it.”

“Alright. God bless you Dorcas.”

“Amen. God bless you too. Let’s be on our way.” I said as we left for Class.

REFLECTION CORNER.

It’s good to look beautiful and attractive but how about how you are within?

Some people are still of the opinion that God only looks at the heart. I guess they haven’t read the portion of the scriptures that say “Out of the heart comes the issues of life.”

What happened to “As a man thinketh in his heart so he is.”

What about “Out of the Abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh?”

The truth is “Your physical attitude and behavior is a reflection of who you are within.”

If your words are defiling; how defiling you must be within?

If God should open some people’s eyes to see the frightening and terrible condition of their Spirit man; their lives will be changed by force.

Yes!

If you are privileged to see the way the devil is waiting for an opening to cut your neck like a chicken that is being reared for slaughter you will understand that the devil is “blessing” you to blindfold you.

Oh that you will see yourself. Yes; You! That you are on the edge of falling.

Falling into eternal perdition.

Falling into Eternal Damnation.

Look!!

Your legs might slip anytime.

Move away from that edge.

Come to the safe side of Jesus.

Let him save you.

That deceiver and terrible liar, the devil will tell you not to bother; that you are OK; that where you are is the best for you. That is a terrible Lie.

You can be better. But only Jesus can save you.

The devil is probably telling you “You’re the worst person on earth. Don’t you see how your Parents even hate you? You can’t be better. So just continue living your life as you are living it?” Oh friends don’t believe him. That is one of his Uncountable Lies.

Don't believe him. Jesus will re-modify you and make you so beautiful.

A Blessing to Nations.

See Jesus saying he loves you.

See him inviting you to come.

I think someone needs that now.

I pray for someone out there that God will open your eyes to see his Love for you.

Come and Surrender to him.

Let him make the you in You Unique.

The real you is the you in you.

Prayer: - Lord please forgive me for the times I have focused on my outward beauty. I ask oh Lord that you make my inner man pure and beautiful that I may reflect Christ for others to see in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 28

COME AWAKE

He taught them to come after him;
He taught them about denying themselves;
He taught them to take up their cross,
And to continually follow him;

Eight days after, they went with him;
To the mountain to pray, they went with him;
But as he prayed, they fell asleep;
His countenance changed but they were asleep;
His garment glistered but oh, they didn't see;
Two men appeared, shining in glory but they didn't see.
They were so heavy with sleep that they missed seeing it
happen.

But suddenly, they awoke;
Their eyes opened and they saw;

They saw their Lord;

They saw his Glory:

Moses and Elijah too were present;

They heard God's Voice;

Because they awoke,

They became witnesses to a Supernatural Incident.

Come awake; O ye that sleep, lest ye miss hearing the voice of thy Lord.

Open your eyes wide; O ye heavy with sleep, lest ye miss the divine Revelation.

When men slept, the enemy came and planted tares amidst the wheat.

When you remain in slumber, you can't see nor hear.

Come awake, Brother.

Come Awake, Sister.

See his Glory;

See his Majesty;

See his Wonders.

O ye drunken with the pleasures of this world; be sober. Open your eyes and see the works of thy Lord.

Slumbering Believers; Come Awake... See his Glory... See the move of his Power... See... Be a partaker... Come awake... Come awake... Come Alive...

At the moment he wants to reveal his Glory, when he wants to show himself to you, when he wants you to experience something divine and supernatural; I pray that you be wide awake and at alert, that you not shed tears because you were slumbering and heavy with sleep at the time he comes for you; that you do not sleep the sleep of Death. (Luke 9:28-32)

COME AWAKE and STAY AWAKE.

Prayer:- Help me heavenly father to be wide awake and alert; that I do not sleep the sleep of death. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 29

SIMPLY TRUST HIM.

The Sun was beginning to come up.

I wrote my name signifying my attendance on the farm that day and turned to leave the School farm.

My friends had gone ahead since we were all in different groups so I had to walk back alone. I figured I could use that time to talk to God about somethings that had been on my mind.

I heard noise and laughter. I looked towards my right to see my faculty mates struggling to pluck Mango.

Mango was the last thing on my mind at that moment.

I walked on....

I wanted to tell God...

To tell him how I was feeling within me but it was like the words stuck...

I stopped! I knew what I had to do... I made sure the people in front walked ahead a bit.

“God, help me. Send me help.” I cried out.

I stopped! That felt good.

I had just finished saying my own when I burst out singing
“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine
own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

He will not allow your feet to remove, he who keeps you do not
slumber. The Lord is constant with all them that call upon him.
All that seeks his eternal relief.” I sang many times and as I did
the message became clearer to me. I didn’t stop singing as I sang
till I walked out of that jungle and I knew what God was telling
me to do.

I had to trust him...

Little wonder when my father in the Lord gave me some verses
to read and study; Proverbs 3:5 was among those verses. I
understood totally.

“Trust me, my daughter.” He was saying.

And I had to just quit bothering myself and let him do it his way.

So, I’m telling you to trust the Lord. It doesn’t matter that
situation that you are; just trust him.

Even when you’ve seen the doctors’ report, trust him.

Learn to Trust him all the way.

The way trust is important in our normal day to day activities, is
the same way and even more, Trust in our relationship with God
Is important.

Trust!!

“Simply trusting every day;

Trusting through a stormy way;

Even when my faith is small,

Trusting Jesus that is all

Trusting as the moments fly;

Trusting as the days go by;

Trusting him whatever befall

Trusting Jesus that is all.”

Prayer: - Lord, Grant unto me the Grace to trust you in every situation that I find myself in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 30

TO STAND OR TO BEND?

Now is the time, when Examination malpractice is now normal. Worst of all, they want you to feel like you are wicked for not making their plans work out.

“I’m not sorry.” I told one of such one.

Now is the age when if you can’t lie to get on the good side of people, someone will look at you and be like “Are you normal?” And I’m like “You know am not a natural man, am living above the natural life; So that which looks normal to you are as a plague to me.” Period!

These days, asking of triple fold of the money you need naturally from your parents is now Normal. The Accommodation Levy is 30,000 Naira but the Aged man at home is struggling and even borrowing loans since you told him the accommodation levy is 90,000 Naira. And yet some people say that is wisdom?

These days; Bribery is now normal. Even some Godly Parents are now unconsciously going into it.

Oh these days, when you as a believer appeal to the people around reminding them of God’s judgment to come; they would say “See, all these things don’t matter. If you are not wise in this world, you will miss a lot.”

And it's like they are not even concerned about the matter of their soul at all.

Please, if the Love of God does not look appealing to you enough, aren't you scared of the fact that your soul may end up in hell?

Someone once told me when I warned him of hell that "It's some people that have been in hell since." Meaning he'll cope in hell. That answer terrified me.

What shall it profit you, yes you; if you gain all the things of this world and lose your soul?

Please if after all the enjoyments; after all the fun; after you have followed all the trend of the world; and you now lose your soul. What does it profit you?

Little wonder Jesus Christ wondered if he would still find faith on earth when he comes. He knew definitely that things would be like this. And if Jesus tarries, the devil will be making people see iniquity as been normal.

Believer, relax not, because the battle for your soul is still fierce.

Sinner repent, for anytime thy soul may be required at thy hands.

The world may even legalize sin but God's word stands sure. He will never change.

Will you determine not to let the things of this world sweep you off your feet, out of the Faith and into hell?

Will you hold the forth of righteousness knowing The Lord may come anytime?

What is your decision today?

To Stand or to Bend?

Prayer: - Help me Oh Lord to hold the forth of righteousness no matter the compromisers in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 31

ON YOUR TIME!

“Come daughter, intercede for your friend?”

“No, my Lord. I’m busy. There is no time.”

“Bro Dapo, You will be handling the Sunday School Teaching on Sunday?”

“No Pastor! I’ve got deadlines to meet up; there is no time to study that teaching.”

“Bro Tunji, Can you visit Bro Dare in the hospital on my behalf? All Leaders are to meet by seven pm at the headquarters Church.”

“Daddy, I have a get together with my friends that time. My time is all fixed up.”

Bisola has time to watch 32 Episodes of a Korean Movie on one seating. She doesn’t care not eating as long as she’s engrossed in the movie but she can’t fast till 12pm.

When it is time for Spiritual Activities like Prayer meetings or evangelism, it is then Rebecca remembers a luncheon meeting she has to attend.

For James, he says he can’t attend any Camp meeting or convention, he just can’t imagine not doing anything “tangible” for such long days.

Some people, it is the moment God wants to use them to bless a life, they give an excuse as to why they can't be an instrument and they scurry away.

Some other group can't sacrifice their time to wait on him.

When will you start giving your time to the things of God?

You say you don't like impromptu Spiritual Assignments but even the one they told you two weeks ahead you still gave an excuse.

If you can't give your time to God; then you shouldn't expect him to have your time.

That time may be precious to you. But If God didn't keep you alive you wouldn't even be talking about "your" time.

Give God your Time. He gave it to you...

Spend Your Time With God. Give Time to do those things he's committed in your hands.

Prayer: - Take my time Lord; it's all yours. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 32

MY PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH A RAT

Let me tell you how it started.

For some days, I had been staying up during the night and it gave me the opportunity of knowing something's that occur while I and my roomie are asleep at night. One of such is the fact that at around 12am a Rat enters our room and in 30 minutes time at most it finds its way out.

After observing, I concluded it was because we Bolt the door behind alone and we don't lock with key.

The next night, I locked the door with a key.

I waited. And lo, the rat arrived.

It realized that an extra force had been added to make the door more firm but it strived and entered.

It was not convenient but it entered. And soon enough it found its way out again.

The next night, I was more determined to stop it from coming in so I bolted the door, locked the door with key and blocked all spaces with a rag.

While I was doing my New Month cross over prayer that night, I heard movements at the door signalling the presence of the Rat.

“You won’t enter today, you have dared me...” I thought. I heard it struggling and struggling. The Stubborn Rat did not give up ooo.. With my eyes, I saw it entered. It saw me too. It ran..

But this Rat has taught me something. NOT GIVING UP..

In life, there may be obstacles but don’t give up.

You might overcome one obstacle and discover the next hurdle is bigger than the former one.

Face it! Fight it! And Win it!

Tell yourself; you are not giving up.

I will tell myself I AM NOT GIVING UP...

Prayer:- I refuse to give up no matter the obstacles in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 33

JUST PRAY.

What did you do the last time you were confused?

What did you do when your act of love and kindness was thrown back in your face?

What did you do that moment you hold back the tears as you walk down the street but you release it the moment you are behind closed doors?

What did you do when your emotion was played and trampled on and you were treated like you weren't even human?

What did you do when you just felt like screaming your lungs out to heaven, maybe it could get God's attention and he'll ask "Is that so and so's voice coming up the throne room?"

What did you do when you are all alone and there is no one to talk to, not even one to sympathies with you?

What did you do when that Lecturer sent you out of her office like you were some beggar?

What did you do when that Doctor looked at you pitifully and shook his head as he told you the test results?

Dear, what did you do when your parents were even tired of you and you think they almost secretly wished they've never had you?

What did you do that moment you just want to be locked up and drink your tears like water?

At such moments and more, you PRAY.

You knock on heaven's door, not giving up.

Mama isn't interested in you; God is.

Looks like Dad is taking back his word on you been his Treasured Gift, God would never give up...

Hold on To God...

Keep Asking...

Keep Praying....

He is coming for you..

Just PRAY.

Prayer:- In whatsoever situation i find myself, rather than spending time being sorrowful Help me Lord to pour my heart out in prayer to you in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 34

BEFORE NATIONS

“You’ll transcribe G.S message word for word.” Daddy, as I call my Pastor said to me one day making me to look up to him in shock.

It was the first month of the year 2017 when I went to the Church Secretariat to discuss with Daddy as we normally do. It was our first meeting that year; and the first since his return from our Ministry’s International Strategy Congress usually held in Lagos.

It was during our discussion he asked “Mercy, I’ve not seen your writing for sometime now. What’s wrong ?”

“Daddy, I have been busy and my phone has some issues.” was the excuse I gave him when he said “You’re lazy. I will give you an assignment when you’re going.”

“What assignment would he give me?” I wondered as I replied in agreement and the discussion continued normally.

I was ready to leave his office when he said “The assignment I said I will give you. I haven’t forgotten.”

“Take these messages. They are messages G.S preached at the last Congress.” he said as he gave it to me.

“ Okay.” I replied as I wondered what I would do with it.

“You’re going to listen to it and transcribe it.” He finally said smiling.

Come and see the look on my eyes as I asked “Daddy, word for word?”

“Yes.” he replied.

Writing two congress messages of propably 90 minutes each was not what i was expecting.

I started thinking about what I would need as I said “Daddy, I don’t have a Laptop to use. My Laptop is at home.”

“No problem.” He said and with a phone call, he told my mother to bring my laptop along to his office, since as God would have it she was on her way to his office.

Writing something as such seemed almost impossible to me but I encouraged myself and came to my hostel with my laptop and sufficient A4 papers. I had my deadline so I rearranged my room to my convenience and began.

With an earpiece in my ear, I was logged out of my environment and I began listening and writing with my hand.

Where G.S exclaimed, I had to put the mark; Where he paused, the comma was necessary and of course the full stop was in action.

The Prayer section was not left out.

My roommate wondered what was happening, and after I had explained she encouraged me and I continued writing.

My hands were getting weaker and weaker but I continued.

There were times everyone would be sleeping, gisting or watching movie but I persisted.

At a point I started relaxing and almost forgot I heard something to do. My roommate would ask “Mercy, are you done with what you are writing?” I would grumble a bit but still continue.

Days later, I was so tired and the deadline was that very day when I called Daddy that I was not yet finished with the second one. I was probably at point one or two. He then asked me to bring what I had written.

I got to his office and he checked through.

He was amazed as he said “God bless you.”

I had been wondering what he would use it for when he said “We are sending it to the brethren in India.”

“What?” I almost shouted out looking at him in surprise. He explained “you know the interpreters there may not be able to catch up with the Pastor’s speed. And they will need these messages for the mini-congress. So this is going to be translated for them.”

I was so happy because to me, I had also contributed to the work of God.

What I wrote was sent to India.

Even though I might not have gone to India to preach the gospel but the ability the Lord gave me was used for the propagation of the gospel.

Directly or indirectly, I had blessed a set of people because of what I wrote.

Yes, those people may never know the people involved but God knew and he definitely blessed me for that.

Imagined I had said “what type of assignment is daddy giving me” and maybe I had frowned or grumbled. He would have told me not to worry again. And I would have missed using this gift for the kingdom at that point.

My Brother or sister out there; you never know when what you've worked on will be presented before the whole world; you never know when your work will win so many souls for Christ; you never know when even a President of another country will see what you've written and will be challenged by it; you never know when you will do something that will benefit the whole world. You never know where your writeup, your post or even your status will get to.

A popular Indian actress I didn't know anything about had recently commented about a story I wrote on Instagram. It was

Google that made me know more about her. I had the privilege of even sending messages to her privately.

When God said you will stand before kings and not mean men; it is something in you that will bring you before those kings.

Take every opportunity you have, to do what you know how to do.

Don't stop doing what you know how to do.

Don't stop posting those write-ups; don't stop writing those songs; don't stop writing those short posts.

You never know when the Lord will use it to bring a hard-hearted sinner to his kingdom.

You never know when it will bring an helper to your doorstep.

That people do not appreciate what you do, does not mean God does not take notice; he will bless you in due time.

There is a point he is taking you to; and you will get there.

So Don't Stop!!!

Stick To What You Can Do

Prayer: - Help me Lord to stay committed to that which you have placed in my hands in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 35

MY EVERYTHING

I have never seen him,
But such a mystery it is, that my heart knows him so well;
The thought of he keeping his eyes on me gives me comfort;
The fact that he has given orders that i enjoy full time security
keeps me relax;
The proof of his Love for me makes me so flabbergasted.

His words:

They encourage and keep me going;
The fact that he loves me so much to want to always hear my
voice makes me blush;
The fact that he has so many secrets to tell me makes me
delighted;
The prove that he longs to have my audience keeps me calm and
sober;
He speaking to me gently even when I push everyone away
makes me short of words;

Indeed,

He is the only one I've got;

My most intimate companion;

He has so much riches but,

He's my most Personal person;

His praises been sang in his abode, half I can't offer;

But he still delights to hear my voice;

My beloved Friend;

The one who is more real than anything in this world to me;

Wonder not long of whom I talk about;

One Whose Crown is Love to me and he is just so right;

One that the moment I see him I shall be like him;

One I will be with;

With my face unveiled I will behold my Beloved.

With satisfaction will my soul be contented;

A procession will I witness;

At his feet will I sit listening to him to my heart's content;

Though I have not seen him;

My heart knows him well;

Soon, soon, and very soon I will see my Beloved.

He is Jesus..... MY EVERYTHING.

Inspired by the song: Soon and Very Soon by Hillsong.

CHAPTER 36

THE DISCONNECTION

“My Busy Reuben.”

Grace typed on a fresh page of the Writing Application on her phone ready to write as she had always done, but the words just wouldn't flow.

She dropped the phone in frustration.

“Or is this not it?” She asked herself in doubt.

“No, this topic has been coming since we did that Character Study. But what is wrong with me. Why can't I write like I used to?” Worry tucked at her heart.

She had been writing for more than half her age , though at a time she learned to surrender that talent for use to he who blessed her with it. Things were fine until now.

“I can't just write anything because I want to. Yes, I can but what use is it when no one is blessed.” She thought within her as she gave up trying.

She knew where the problem was. There was a disconnection between her and her Teacher, Inspiration and Great Source.

“Let's get that Connection back first.” She said as she decided to do all she could to get things going on fine again.

Days after found her observing Prayers, Counselling Sessions and other things that could be of help.

One of those days found her Mother calling.

“Daughter, I need you to write something for Me.” she said.

“Alright Ma, I will send it to you when am done.” She replied assuredly.

“It’s a short writing; I should be able to write it.” She thought as she set to write but not a word could she put down.

“Wow, so I can’t do anything until things get back to how it used to, not even something this simple.” She thought in anguish.

Nightfall found her Mother calling to ask after the writing but she could only assure her, she would send it.

Like a miracle after days of waiting and watching, Light shun through the night, life came in and through the activity of a new day she got a Bible verse to back up her Mother’s writing.

She picked the phone hopefully to type and phew, she started pouring the words down.

“Yes, my Inspiration is back.” She thought with a smile.

The following day found someone asking her with a smile “Is it the School Examination that made you stop writing?”

“No.” She replied smiling.

But she completed that statement within her.

Two days later, she set to write and indeed she could say boldly that her Source was back and the Connection was great.

REFLECTION CORNER

How many times have you felt cold and lukewarm spiritually and you know of a Surety that the Connection between you and Heaven is Low, yet you still delve into that Spiritual Assignment like your Spiritual state doesn't matter?

How about those moments you know it is your words you are feeding the people and you know that you have lost the Presence of God and you still go on living like it doesn't matter?

How about those times you knew your Spiritual Antenna was low but you still went on displaying?

How good will it be, if at any moment a Vessel realises himself weak, he goes back to the place of Prayer to find out what is wrong?

No matter how little you think that assignment committed to you is, you need the Spirit's help to do it successfully.

Loose the CONNECTION and there will be no INSPIRATION.

Get your Life connected back to your Source and you will keep on Dispensing more than ever before.

God's Grace is sufficient but Keep the Connection Tight.

Prayer:- Help me Lord to be in Constant connection with you
that i might minister with your Spirit's help in Jesus name.
(Amen.)

CHAPTER 37

DID I SEE AN ANGEL?

It was past 7pm when my boss dropped me off at the main road. I sighed as I looked around. It was a total blackout in the area. I trekked alongside some other people who were still outside until I got to a junction and I realized I was now on my own.

I peered into the darkness with fear.. I had hoped some houses would have generators on but oh I was wrong..

I stopped!!!

I couldn't take a bike at that point. It made no sense. I was just about 5 minutes from home and it was even impossible to get a bike at that point and time. I considered calling home too.

I was still thinking of what to do when I saw a tall, dark and huge man walking into the street I was staring into. He had no flashlight with him but thankfully the moon supplied light. He walked on boldly.

So many things probably crossed my mind but at that point a consciousness of God and his Angels watching over me came to my mind and I trudged quickly after the man without much thought.

I could have feared he doing me harm because we were walking alone but for some reasons I was calm.

With my flashlight on to “support” the moonlight and music playing on my phone, we walked on. From the junction I met him to our house are about 5 bends. As we pulled into the third bend and I realized the man and I were still walking together; alone, I began to wonder where he might be going because at that point I should have known him in our area. But never had I met him before.

It began to bother me but I walked slowly behind him until we reached the second to the last bend and suddenly I thought “What if he is an Angel?” His stature and comportment made me wonder further.

That thought got me relaxed and excited and I continued stealing glances at him thoughtfully. As we walked down the last bend leading directly to our house, I saw our house was with light obviously the generator was on.

“I’m home.” I thought happily as I quickly overtook him and moved towards the gate.

Mystery Man somehow hastened up at this point and walked down the street in front of our house. I peered after him but he soon was lost in the darkness.

I thanked God for bringing me back home safely but for some reason I couldn’t shake off the feeling that mystery man could have been an Angel.

He wasn't there while we were trekking before. I didn't see him at the junction. He just came out of nowhere. And he followed me all the way home.

Up till this moment, i have never met him again. I know probably all the people on our street even if we don't talk but I don't know any house mystery man could dwell in.

It's been more than a year now with that incident forgotten; but recently a flashback occurred.

I had been reading about Angels and Supernatural Manifestations for some weeks and some Testimonies challenged me and a desire began to grow up in me.

As I marvelled and wondered; that day came to my mind like a sharp flashback; Playing through my mind as it happened that day. And somewhere deep within I felt like that man was an Angel.

Even days after that I have been reminded of that day as I wonder "Did I actually meet an Angel and I didn't know?" If I had knowledge about some things I know now, 'maybe' I could have asked him point blank who he was and some other things.

Seeing an Angel or not is not really the issue but what it feels like to know there are some set of personalities God has given an Assignment to keep you safe.

That thought was what kept me calm till I got home. Even though I saw that Man, I imagined other men there with swords walking home with me.

I imagined God keeping his eyes on me till I got home.

His angels are always around us even when we don't see them.

He has given his Angels charge over us us; therefore you need not fear...

Prayer:- Father in moments when fear of the unknown wants to creep in, help me to always remember that you have given your Angels charge over me in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 38

THE RIGHT SOURCE OF POWER

It was on a Saturday.

I arrived The New Management 1000 seater hall. It was my seventh paper and the last for that week but I got there about 45 minutes to the scheduled time. The hall was not empty as there were few of my Faculty students who had also arrived for the examination.

I walked towards a guy and we exchanged pleasantries as I sat down in front of him. I looked around the hall as I did a recap of the things I had read, mouthing some words silently. As I did this, I noticed that there was no electricity supply. I didn't fail to observe some other things in the hall.

Then my eyes caught something of interest.

A moving fan!

“But there is no power supply?” I wondered as I checked to confirm that I was not mistaken.

Indeed there was no sign of electricity. All the other fans were stationery but this one fan was moving at such a high speed that I gazed at it thoughtfully. Well maybe it was the breeze that aided its movement but it was not the only one in that area. At least the breeze could have assisted another fan too.

I continued with my revision when not too long the Exam supervisors arrived and I moved towards the front row. The scheduled examination soon started and as I wrote my eyes caught the fan at intervals. There was something I felt I needed to learn but I just couldn't get it.

I finished my paper, submitted my script, picked up my belongings and got out of the hall. As I stepped out thanking God for my exam, the fan came to my mind again and I looked back to see it still moving.

I got out of the hall, but instead of me to leave the hall hastily, I lingered for some reason asking myself what was the big deal with the fan.

As I walked in front of the hall thinking deeply, an interpretation dropped in my heart.

As humans, we all experience setbacks, failures, heartbreaks, disappointments. But there are few among us who choose not to give up and keep moving, not bothered by what is going on. They are not bothered that their other friends have given up.

They don't say "We are all experiencing the same thing. We are all living in the same world."

These set of people choose to connect themselves to a better source of Power. They accept the fact that their natural strength has failed but they seek help for the one with Supernatural Strength.

They are determined; Always on the run; Not Seeking a temporary rest; Not giving up...

However, as I wrote one of my papers which I concluded after the one i talked about above, I observed two fans in the same condition. But on closer look, I noticed that their speed was not like the one I had seen days earlier. To me, these fans were struggling.

Another interpretation dropped.

There are some other set of people who are not giving up but they are struggling. They are depending on their own strength rather than connecting to a greater Strength; which is the strength and supernatural Power of God.

There will come a time your natural power will fail you but at that moment what will you do?

Will you give up totally?

Will you continue to struggle on with your human strength thereby achieving so little?

Or rather, will you connect to the Supernatural power of God that never fails?

One that keeps you going;

Keeps you running and flying;

Accomplishing so much;

Never slowing down;

Always on the track.

Connect to the right source of Power!

Prayer:- Lord Jesus i refuse to struggle on my own when your supernatural strength is there for me. I make you my source of power from this moment on in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 39

MY FIANCE IS HOLY.

I

The bed gave a loud thud as I laid on it.

My younger brother had just informed me that he would not be allowed to write his final exams if his tuition fee was not settled by the next morning.

“The exam is starting tomorrow morning. The fee is Thirty thousand naira but Mama sent only ten thousand to me saying market has not been doing well.” My brother had said to me.

Things had not been easy since my father died. I and Mama involved in selling of clothing materials; but who buys cloth when he hasn't even gotten what to feed on. Market had been so bad.

I sighed as I turned on the mattress. Maybe if my father were still alive, the situation would have been better.

“I have to do all I can to get the remaining twenty thousand naira before tomorrow morning.” I thought when my phone rang.

It was my fiancé of three weeks. I sat up and cleared my throat before picking the call.

“Hello, Sister Bolu.” He called excitedly the moment I picked up.

“Good Afternoon Bro Sam.” I replied gently.

“Oh God is Faithful. You remember I raised a prayer request while we were praying some days ago, as regards the money I was expecting from someone. Can you believe he has sent the two hundred thousand naira? I am so happy right now.” He continued excitedly.

“Oh! Glory to God.” I replied happily for his sake.

Silence!!

“Sis Bolu, are you alright?” he asked as I breathed a sigh of relief thankfully that he could detect I was not okay; if not I wouldn’t have liked it.

“Not really.” I replied as I explained the situation to him.

“Oh!! It is well. God will provide.” he simply said.

“Amen. But seriously?” I replied nearly shouting into the phone. I had thought he would help me with some amount; at least he just got some extra money.

“What were you expecting? Oh!! Were you expecting me to send you the money? You know it is not right. What do you want people to say? You know we are to avoid giving each other gifts. We agreed to no gifts remember?”

“Yes but...”

“I hate Compromise!” he said bluntly.

“Oh, really? You said gifts. OK!! How about you send the money to him directly? If that will make you feel better” I replied sharply.

“But I know him through you. I can’t do it, am sorry. We have to be careful of the devices of the enemy.”

“Ha! You know what. We’ll meet at the Prayer meeting in the evening. I have to go in search of the money.”

“Okay. Call me when you get it.” he replied as I gaped in surprise.

“Bye.” I said as I ended the call.

“I can’t believe this...” I shouted as I fell on the bed in defeat.

The roof of the building made sound as if it was singing as drops of rain hit it. I looked around as the Prayer was being rounded up to take note of where Bro Sam was sitting. I moved towards him immediately the meeting was over but saw him rushing to meet the Pastor obviously to tell him about his Miraculous provision.

I sat back patiently to wait for him as I needed to speak to him as regards what had happened in the morning.

For minutes I waited but their discussion seemed endless. I picked my phone to text him I was going when Tunde’s message came in reminding me about his tuition fee.

I dropped my phone back as I hissed. I had not been able to gather anything to transfer to my brother yet.

I stood up dejectedly to go when The Oyewumi's a newly wedded couple saw me and walked up to me.

“Good Evening, Sister Bolu. I see you're preparing to go. The rain is still falling, but if you can wait for about ten minutes more, you can join us. We want to meet with the Pastor but his discussion with Bro Sam seems so serious.” Sister Daara Oyewumi said.

I looked towards where the duo were seated and frowned.

“It is alright Ma. I will find my way. I have something I need to settle tonight.” i replied as I turned to go in a bid to escape quickly.

“Oh!! Are you alright Ma?” asked her husband after me.

“Am fine Sir. It's nothing God can't do. I just need money to send to my brother. The one person that could have easily helped me thinks it's a form of unrighteousness or is probably too stingy to give.” I said as I looked towards Bro Sam again. The Couple followed my gaze and as I realized what was happening and added quickly “Forget I said that. Good night Sir” I replied as I turned to go.

“Come, Sister Bolu.” Sister Daara called to me.

“Yes, Ma.” I replied as I moved closer to her.

“How much are we talking about here?” she asked.

“Twenty thousand naira, Ma.” I replied as she whispered to her husband.

“You know what, Sister Bolu. I have your account number from the payment of my wedding gown material. Expect the money tonight.” She said smiling.

I looked at both of them as tears of gratitude fell from my eyes.

“Okay, Ma. Thank you very much. God bless you Ma. Thank you Sir.” I realized the rain had stopped so I moved to go.

“I will be going then. Good night Ma. Thank you Sir.” I said as I turned to go when my phone beeped.

It was a text from my Pastor. I stopped. I turned around to look at where he and Bro Sam sat. They were both looking at me.

I unlocked my phone to check the text.

“Hello, Sister Bolu. I will need you to see me at my office tomorrow. Bro Sam told me something I will like to confirm.”

Tears gathered at my eyes as I texted him back that there was no problem.

I looked at Bro Sam tearfully as I left the Church.

II

Pararararararara!!!

Sounded the thunder in the sky as the rain began heavily again.

I had been standing by the road for about five minutes thinking about all that had happened with no bike in sight.

I decided to return to the church and wait for the Oyewumi's when the familiar sound of a vehicle caused me to look up. It was Bro Sam's vehicle with him behind the wheel.

I stood straight as he stopped in front of me.

I opened the door thankfully and got in.

"What do you think you are doing?" he asked anger written on his face.

"I don't get? Aren't you giving me a ride?" I asked confused.

"A ride? Oh sister Bolu, you shouldn't expect me to even allow you in my vehicle. Hmm, don't let the devil have his way with all this you are doing." He replied infuriating me.

"I can't believe this. Bro Sam this is getting out of hand. I don't even know what to call this kind of behavior." I said looking at him.

“It’s fleeing from every appearance of evil. I just stopped so you wouldn’t feel hurt that I just went past you.”

“You know what? You thought you didn’t want me to get hurt but your actions have done more than just hurting me. You should have just pretended not to see me.”

“Okay. I will do that next time. Now can you step out of my car?”

I gaped in surprise as I watched him stretch to open the door for me.

“Bro Sam, this is Bolu; The Lady you are to get married to. You are pushing me into a heavy rain.”

“The more important reason I shouldn’t carry you. Now please it’s getting late; so you can get home quickly.” tears flooded my eyes as I got down and closed the door with a loud bang...

Anger shoot through my body like electric shock. I felt hurt...

“Oh God!” I found myself screaming out suddenly as I cried heavily...

I stood at that same point, the rain beating me furiously. A mixture of tears and rain falling down my face.

“This isn’t the kind of man I want. This is not the best for me. God, I prayed that you might let me know him but this isn’t what I bargained for. This hurts Lord. It really hurts.” I thought as I wept.

The sound of a vehicle stopping in front of me made me look up. It was the Oyewumi's.

“Oh my God! Sister Bolu, you are still here! Get in quickly.” Sister Daara said.

I stood there just looking at her, tears dropping furiously.

“Oh Honey, something is really wrong.” she said to her husband as she moved to get down from the vehicle.

“No, don't. The rain is falling heavily. Let me assist her.” He replied as he hurried out of the vehicle and rushed towards me.

“Sister Bolu, let's get you home.” He said as he assisted me into the vehicle.

As I sat, Sister Bolu passed me her cardigan to keep me warm as I continued crying.

“It's alright Ma.” Bro Oyewumi said as he started the car.

“Thank you.” I muttered as my teeth gritted together because of the cold. Bro Oyewumi looked at me pitifully as I used my now drenched scarf to wipe my face.

“Sorry, to ask this but didn't you see Bro Sam pass?” he finally asked breaking the silence in the vehicle.

“Oh Honey, those tears speak otherwise. She wasn't crying when we separated in church.” His wife cut in before I could reply.

“When I saw Bro Sam leave the church I was happy he would help give you a ride and that you guys might even talk about what happened in the afternoon. I guess I was wrong.” He replied shaking his head.

“Do you want to talk about it?” asked Sis Daara as she turned to look at me.

“Yes please.” I replied before blurting out, “Bro Sam told Pastor about the money issue.”

“What?” exclaimed the couple at once.

“That’s not even the issue though I felt embarrassed about it. He met me where I was waiting by the road and stopped. I had even hopped in gratefully when he told me to get off his vehicle. His excuse was that we should flee appearances of evil. It was an act of unrighteousness’ since we are not married. This is just 7:15pm for Christ sake; I will be out of his vehicle in less than 6 minutes. Oh!!! I have not been embarrassed like this before. He told me; the woman he will marry to get off.” I said as I started crying again.

“This is serious. But even if he is claiming to be living a Holy life and avoiding sin, what about showing forth the fruits of Holiness? What about letting brotherly Love continue? He could have even explained himself in a more reasonable way. This is stinginess, it has no other name.” Sister Daara said shaking her head.

“So if you are in serious danger, he will not make an attempt to save you? He doesn't know your worth; I'm sorry to say.” Bro Oyewumi commented as he drove.

“You know I remember something similar to this happened when we weren't married. We finished a Combine Service that day and I didn't have a dime to return home. The people I could go home with left immediately service ended while I waited for a meeting. I accepted my fate and began trekking home in the hot sun. I had not trekked up to three minutes when he saw me and stopped to give me a ride. He dropped me at the junction to my parent's house. The funniest thing was that I didn't even know he was the one God was preparing for me but he knew already. If he didn't stop I would have nothing against him but he stopped.” Sister Daara recounted.

“What now happened? Did you have to be asking for forgiveness from God?”

“No. I sat at the back seat and he didn't even involve me in any unnecessary conversation. So what's the issue?” asked Sis Daara.

“I guess I shouldn't be too shocked to discover more when we get married.” I said as I looked thoughtfully outside the car into the dark nights.

III

I paced my room thoughtfully as I thought of what to do.

“I can’t continue putting up with this. Thank God we’ve been in courtship for just three weeks. God has better things for me.” I thought as my phone rang.

It was my Pastor.

“Hello, sister Bolu. Hope you are home already?”

“Good evening Sir. Yes I am home.”

“I’m calling as regards the text I sent to you. There is no need coming to meet me again. I thought about what Bro Sam shared with me. Were you two able to thrash it out?”

“No Sir. He wouldn’t even let me into his car no matter the heavy rain.”

“Oh!! Sorry. You know what sister Bolu?”

“Yes Sir.”

“I thought about what he told me. And looking at what you are also saying, I think you need to ask God to speak to you more. You know I asked if you were really sure God was leading you, I need you to think about it more. Once you are married, its for life. Do you get me?” said the pastor.

“Yes Sir. Thank you Sir. “

“It’s alright, Good night.”

“Good night Sir.”

As the call ended, I knew in my heart what I had to do.

My phone beeped at around 10:00pm signaling a message coming in.

I viewed it and staring at me was an alert of 30,000 been transferred to me. I stared at it for seconds thrilled.

I was about calling Sister Daara when a text came in from her.

“The money has been transferred. Don’t bother calling to thank us, just thank God. We are praying for you. Please take care.”

I sat down as I gazed at the text in gratitude. I replied back immediately.

I prepared to transfer some amount to my brother’s account when Bro Sam’s call came in.

“So calling your fiancée at 10:00pm is not unhealthy?” I blurted out as soon as I picked the call.

“I’m calling to check if you’re home. Isn’t that good?” he asked laughing.

“Oh!! I see. So you expect the airplane you left me with would have dropped me home by now. You know what; you are just taking the essentials as unessential and the important things as nothing.” I said.

“Wait! Are you insulting me?” he asked, clearly surprised by my outburst.

“No... I am telling you the plain truth. Bro Sam, all this talks on Holiness, Righteousness, I’m not seeing the practical in your life.”

“What more practical do you want? Why do you think I didn’t give you that money or carry you?”

“Stop mixing things up my friend. What happened to letting brotherly love continue? I’m sure you would have done that to any other person too. Is Stinginess a practical life of holiness too? You can’t even transfer the money to my brother directly?”

“Sis Bolu, don’t make a mountain out of nothing. Don’t let the devil cook up unnecessary issues.”

“Oh! Really? Do you know another problem you have? You don’t listen to other people’s opinion. I was even thinking you will say you will change. There is no point taking this longer. I can’t continue this relationship. We’re done.” I said.

“What did you say?” he asked in shock.

“I said we are over.” I said again.

“Sister Bolu, let’s talk tomorrow. Maybe it’s because it is late that is why you are saying all this things.”

“If you wait till next year, my answer will still be the same. We are over Bro Sam.”

I waited for him to say something but he just kept mute.

“And before you ask, I already got the money from some good believers who know how to live a practical holy life. So thank you for everything you put me through. We’ll see later.”

“Hold on. Please let us see Pastor before concluding.”

“It is concluded. We are over.” I said as I hung up.

I stopped for a minute before I said “Did I just do that?”

“Oh even though it hurts, what is this Peace I’m feeling?” I said concerned as I knelt down to commune with my father.

“Don’t tell us you are holy. Show us. Pursue and Practice Holiness the right way.”

Prayer: - Father, whatsoever relationship i am in that is far from your will for my life; cause us to be separated in Jesus name.

Align me Oh Lord with your perfect will for my life.

Help me dear Lord to live a practical life of Holiness in Jesus name. (Amen.)

CHAPTER 40

MY BROTHER'S INSPIRATION

I

“The Song is not ready yet Sir.” I heard my twin brother, Daniel reply the Choir Master that evening. I stopped with the tuning of my violin and gaped in shock.

Silence filled the church auditorium as all the choral members looked on in surprise.

My twin is very good at composing songs and most songs sung by the Choral Members were composed by him. Everyone knew his songs were Spirit Lifting and Life Changing. One of his songs had even led to my conversion. At the last Choir meeting, Pastor James, as we called our Choir Master had once again given him a topic to prepare a song on.

For the past three days, Daniel had stayed glued to his room playing the keyboard and writing seriously. He even missed his Dinner the previous night even though I went to check on him several times that dinner was ready. We had the family devotion without him.

“All that and the song is not ready? Something isn't right.” I thought.

I stood up as I handed my violin over to Bidemi, my best friend who sat beside me. I walked towards Daniel where he now stood with Pas James as he looked up and mouthed “not now” to me.

I sighed in defeat as I returned to my seat.

“We’ll move to the next song. But that means we’re all going to wait after tomorrow’s vigil to practice the song.” Pastor James said to everyone.

Murmurings and complains were heard as I looked towards Daniel where he sat.

He was staring hard towards my direction but on a closer look I realized he wasn’t looking at me.

“Bro Dan, I believe the song will be ready by tomorrow?” Pastor James asked.

“Ehmm!” he said stuttering as he turned towards the Pastor.

“Yes Sir.” he replied quickly as the Pastor nodded and once again Daniel’s face turned towards me. But this time, he had an angry look.

“What’s wrong with him?” I asked as I followed his gaze.

He was staring hard at Bidemi.

We were soon done with choir Practice and we began our trek back home alongside Bidemi. I walked in the middle of both of them silently.

I couldn't wait to demand an explanation from my brother but not with Bidemi around.

“Daniel, you look quiet. Are you alright?” Bidemi asked as she looked at my brother with a smile.

That smile! She always had this smile that could melt even a killer's heart.

Daniel groaned softly from beside me and I looked at him worriedly.

“Uh Oh!!! Something isn't right.” I thought.

“And why didn't you prepare the song?” Bidemi asked again when he didn't reply.

“You never ...” And there it was again, that angry look he had in the Church. Bidemi saw his reaction too because she quickly said “Oh Sorry!! I guess I shouldn't have asked that.”

“Yeah, it's none of your concern.” He replied sharply. “Though it's all your fault.” He added angrily as he walked ahead of us.

Bidemi looked at me confused as I apologetically ran after Daniel.

“I'll call you. OK.” I shouted to Bidemi as I went.

I caught up with Daniel quickly though I noticed he slowed down a little for me to catch up.

We walked on silently until he broke the silence by saying
“There was no Inspiration.”

“What?” I asked confused.

“I mean that was why I couldn't write the song.” he explained
guiltily.

“OK. But...” I started to say as he cut in.

“Daniella,” he called halting “I really can't tell you much now
but trust me; I'll be fine. Just ... pray for me. I need just that.
And, please don't tell Mum and Dad anything.” He said as I
shook my head in agreement.

“There is more to what is wrong with him.” I thought as I
immediately regretted agreeing not to tell our parents. I hate it
when he struggles on his own especially when he wouldn't tell
me the real deal.

“I don't like how I feel about this.” I thought as we trekked on.

II

“Where is Daniel?” I asked Mum when I joined my parents in
the living room after my dinner.

My mother pointed towards his room in response as I looked
towards his room. I could hear music playing from the keyboard
softly.

“I pray he’s OK.” I said to myself as I heard the sound stop.

I waited for him to begin playing again but heard nothing for about two minutes. I stood up to go to his room.

I entered his room closing the door softly behind him. He was in the bathroom.

I looked around his room. A blank sheet of paper with a pen was placed on a part of the piano; obviously he wanted to write something.

I looked on his table to see papers filled with his writings.

“Then what has he been writing all this days?” I asked thoughtfully as I took one of the already filled papers and read.

“It brings me alive;

It awakens my heart;

It calls me to its source;

It strengthens me.”

“God must really be dealing with Daniel. But he said there was no inspiration.” I said as I turned the paper around omitting some paragraphs.

What I read startled me, causing me to hit the keyboard in shock.

“Who is there?” Daniel asked from the Bathroom.

“I’m the one.” I replied.

“I’ll be out soon. And don’t touch anything.” he replied sternly.

I returned my focus to the paper as I read again;

“Her Smile is like a special tonic to me;

Calling me out from my place of rest;

Your cheeks are comely with ornaments, your neck with strings
of jewels.

Behold, you are beautiful, my love! Behold, you are beautiful!
You have doves’ eyes.

The fairest of ten thousand ladies...”

“Ha...” I almost shouted clasp my hand over my mouth
tightly. I had read enough.

I picked the rest of the Papers and glanced through quickly. All
my brother had spent days writing, was for someone; a lady.

I looked over to the blank sheet he had placed down. “Living
Fire” was written on it. Not a line has been written on that song
but my brother had spent days writing a love song.

I packed the papers hurriedly deciding to meet my parents
downstairs when a sheet of paper fell from the pack.

I bent down with teary eyes to pick it when my eyes caught a name written towards the bottom part of the paper.

I let go of the tears I had been holding as I read.

It was BIDE MI.

III

He opened the bathroom door and stepped into his room at that instant. I moved towards the door to get downstairs when he noticed the papers in my hand.

“Where are you going with my stuff?” he asked angrily.

“I found out and I’m informing Mum and Dad.” I said holding up the papers for him to see well as I turned to go.

I opened the door to go when he pulled me back with a strength I didn’t know he had causing me to hit my head against his closet.

“Mum! Dad!” I screamed as my brother stared at me with bloodshot eyes.

“Daniel, this isn’t you. You have never done this before.” I said crying as my parents rushed into the room.

“Oh my God!!” shouted Mum as she hurried to help me up.

I stared at my twin brother as he bent down to pick the scattered papers.

“What happened in here? And Daniella, your head is bleeding.” Dad said causing me to touch my head as I cringed in pain.

Mummy hurried out to get the first aid kit as Daniel looked at me now sober.

“Will one of you explain what happened?”

“Dad; At Church today.....” I began when my brother shouted with all his strength;

“Daniella, you promised.”

“Really? I hated myself the moment I made that promise. You know what? Suit yourself. I’m out of here.” I replied angrily as I left the room.

My mother almost collided with me as she came in.

I passed her briskly as she called after me “Wait, We need to clean that up.”

I walked down to the sitting room in tears with her behind me.

“Sit!!” she said and I obeyed.

Mummy watched my face as she cleaned my head.

“You want to tell me what happened?” she asked softly.

“Mummy, I promised him I won’t tell you because I love him. The shock of what I saw made me decide to inform you but look what he did to me. When he’s ready to speak himself he’ll inform you. But please just remind him that the vigil is tomorrow.”

“Vigil?”

“Yes; The Choristers vigil.”

“OK... Did anything happen in church?”

I looked at Mum in silence.

“I’ll take that as a yes. So what happened?” she asked.

“You know Mum; I really think it is right he tells you himself.” I replied bowing my head down.

“Sweetheart.” Daddy called Mum from the staircase.

“Yes dear.”

“I think you two have to come back in here. He’s just crying. He’s saying nothing. He said Daniella should help him.” Daddy said shrugging.

“You heard that?” Mum asked me as I nodded my head in affirmation and stood up.

Daniel had really wept his eyes out. I pitied him as I moved towards him.

“You can never really get involved in their arguments.” Daddy said to Mum smiling.

“Do you need to talk things out?” Mum asked.

“No, Sis please tell them what happened?” Daniel said looking at me as if pleading me for help.

“Are you sure? I don’t want...”

“Tell them...”

“OK...”

“Dad, Mum...” I called as I watched my parents hold each other’s hands bracing themselves for whatsoever I had to say.

IV

“Daniel couldn’t present a song to the Choir Master this evening even though he spent days writing. He was also acting odd around Bidemi and even shouted angrily at her when she asked him what was wrong. As we walked home, he finally said there was no inspiration to write. And that I shouldn’t tell you about what happened in Church today. I came to his room now to discover collection of love songs.” I explained.

“Love songs?” asked Dad surprised.

“Yes.” I looked at his face before continuing “written for Bidemi my best friend.” Mum dropped daddy’s hands in shock.

“What? And he couldn’t write the Choir Song?” asked Dad.

“How could he?” I said “when he has pushed the Holy Spirit who gave him inspiration aside. Hmm! He replaced The Holy Spirit with Bidemi. You won’t be able to write about someone you’ve ignored. It’s not possible.” I stopped to catch my breath.

“Do you think it’s a normal thing to write all those songs you use to write? I tried several times and it just couldn’t work out. After you’ve written for Bidemi, you now want to write for God; it’s not possible. You now said there is no inspiration. It doesn’t work that way.” I said moving to leave the room. I stopped again;

“He was still shouting angrily at the girl? Was she the one that said you should be lusting over her? I heard how you groaned the other time too. You better cry to God for help. And let your Inspiration come back. You also pushed me; I don’t even know what to say. I’m disappointed.” I said noticing his head was now bent down.

“Hmm... I’m leaving.” I stood up to go out of the room as Mum followed me. Dad waited behind.

“Daniel ...” I heard my Dad began as I left.

“Daniella, wait.” Mum called after me. I stopped.

“I’m sure God will take control. But you need to understand he didn’t mean to hurt you, he was frustrated.” Mum said.

“Frustrated? And he couldn’t tell me. I was still trying to make him talk. He stopped me saying I should be praying for him. How am I supposed to know what he’s going through?” I replied angrily and continued. “He was suffering all by himself. We could have prayed together. He let his source of Inspiration go. He pushed The Holy Spirit aside. How could he do that? Didn’t he know it would have been disastrous if it didn’t get exposed today?” I continued crying.

“It’s okay. I know you love your brother. You need to learn to be patient with him if you will help him. If you had been patient; without even threatening to tell us at that moment the other time, he could have confided in you himself. The issue might even be solved without informing us. But now apart from what he’s struggling with; he’ll be scared he has finally pushed his most trusted friend away.” Mum explained.

“He didn’t mean to hurt you OK?” I nodded in agreement as she pulled me to my room.

The door to my room opened after about five minutes and in came Dad and my brother. He looked sad and unhappy as he stood beside Dad.

“I’m sorry Dan. I was just so frustrated.” Daniel apologized.

“You could have told me. At least she’s my friend. And you were still shouting at her.” I said hissing.

“It’s part of her fault too?” he said.

“You said that the other time too? How is it her fault? The poor girl is probably wondering what her offence is, for you to act that way.”

“Listen, Daniella.” Dad cautioned.

“Okay Sir.” I replied.

“Your friend is always smiling too much. And she will still be looking at one eyeball to eyeball.” He explained.

“Well, that’s true. She can captivate one with that innocent smile. I wonder how many times I’ve let her have her way because of that smile. But you’re still the problem.” I said.

“Yes, you’re right.” Dad said. “I have discussed some things with him; we also prayed together. He’s going to spend some time to pray personally too. That inspiration must come back.”

“Oh! It must. People like you are even lucky. If your relationship with God isn’t okay, you won’t be able to do the special thing you use to do before. It will make you aware conscious that things aren’t alright.” I said.

“That’s true.” Mum said.

“I don’t need to tell you what to do with those papers.” Daddy said to him.

“Yes Sir.” he replied.

“Settle things amicably and meet us downstairs.” Dad said as he and Mum turned to excuse us.

Daniel sat as soon as they left.

“I’m sorry Dan.” he apologized.

“It’s okay. I’ve forgiven you. But Daniel, I can’t stop being friends with Bidemi but I will do what I can to help you in ways I can.” I said.

“No problem. Best Friends?” He asked holding out his hand for a shake.

“Of course. Do I have any other sibling?” I laughed as I pushed his hand away.

“Make things right with God. You will experience his Mercy.” I said seriously.

“Amen. Thanks Sis.” he replied as he stood to go.

The next morning, a soul-lifting music from my brother’s room was what woke me up.

V

“Living Fire”, my brother dictated at the next Choral Practice.

“Ablaze! Ablaze!!

I heard the Spirit call.

Take out those ashes off the altar;

Get thee a new wood.

Prepare to make a fire.

Ablaze! Ablaze!!

I heard my Spirit cry.

Lukewarmness be gone; Let the Fire fall.

The Altar is prepared.

Lord, send the fire.

Refrain: A living Fire!

A Terror to Hell.

A Living Fire!

A Blessing to Nations.

A Living Fire!

Is what I want to be.”

(LIVING FIRE: Copyright @ Mercy O Adebisi.)

The song was practiced but we didn't know when we plunged into two hours of prayer.

My brother's inspiration was back....

His Teacher, The Holy Spirit was once again active in him.

REFLECTION CORNER

This Story may look simple. It might even look childish to some people but someone who is in the same shoe Daniel was will tell you “It’s really serious.”

He will tell you “I feel frustrated, I feel empty, and I feel alone.” And before you know it they find themselves doing things they shouldn’t be doing.

Before Daniel started writing songs for Bidemi, he would have struggled with it for a long time but not knowing what to do push God aside.

If you find yourself in such situation, run to God before it’s too late.

Have an accountability partner most importantly a Believer.

If you are the type that you have developed a fellowship with God that you won’t be able do anything without him; by the time your relationship with him is not right; it will help you retrace your steps quickly. But if you are too distracted to notice your Teacher is gone. It will be too late before you realize it.

Are you a Writer, a Singer, A drama Minister, a Minister in God’s Vineyard?

Have you changed your source of Inspiration without even realizing it?

Find the Right One Today and you will find yourself blessing Lives in a way you least imagined...

WHO INSPIRES YOU TO DO WHAT YOU DO?

I say “Catch the LIVING FIRE.”

Prayer: - Father, for the times I had replace you with someone else; I'm sorry. I ask that you continually be my source of inspiration in Jesus name. (Amen.)

THE END

A NOTE FROM MERCY

Dear Reader,

I am grateful that you journeyed through the pages of this book with me. I believe the writings in this book has blessed and touched your life in many areas. I would like to hear from you testimonies of how this book has helped you. You can contact me at adebisimercyfunmito@gmail.com or www.peculiarinspiro.wordpress.com or message me through my Facebook account. (Mercy Adebisi.)

Remember to also follow me for more life changing stories.

I pray that the blessings received through this book abide with you.

Till next time.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR.

Mercy Oluwafunmito Adebisi (Peculiar-inspiro) is the author of "My Fiancé is Holy"; a story which spanned over one thousand readers with striking testimonies and shares.

She is a gifted writer who has been writing for more than half her life but on meeting with the Lord Jesus Christ discovered this gift and made it a channel to bless lives with inspirations from the Holy Spirit.

She is the founder of "Peculiar-inspiro"; a social media blog (www.peculiarinspiro.wordpress.com) through which she has authored over ten soul-lifting stories.

Mercy Adebisi is an undergraduate student of Animal Production and Health in one of the Universities in Nigeria.

ABOUT THE BOOK.

"BLUEPRINTS" is a compilation of selected Stories, articles and writings of the au

thor for the past 3 years. It is a book under the instruction of the Holy Spirit meant to re-awaken Relationships, build up Spiritual Lives and re-kindle Family Ties. Prayer points have been added at the end of each Chapter so that each writing will remain a part of you for a long time.

Find out from this book how "David framed Chris for the rape of an innocent girl when they ought to be friends."

It is the author's prayer that this book will leave a clear and explicit print in your life.

Peculiar-inspiro Productions.
www.peculiarinspiro.wordpress.com

