

THE SINGLE LADY & HER DREAMS

IFE GRACE



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The Single Lady and her dreams

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PREFACE

Dear Reader,

My journey as a single lady has been a roller coaster ride. But on this journey, I have learnt quite a lot. I have made mistakes that would have been avoided. I have focused firmly on the wrong things while God was constantly calling my attention to a deeper life. There were times I was desperate and anxious to tick off the list of things I wanted to achieve. I have been very insensitive to God's timing and the seasons He has set for my life. Well, God finally captured my attention.

In the process of realigning myself to God's plan for my life, I have had divine dealings that left me in tears as I yielded to His pruning. I have encountered tough seasons, struggled with understanding processes and given in to bouts of depression.

Yes! I learnt patience. I learnt to move at God's pace. In my search for clarity, I have taken up jobs, resigned from those jobs, got frustrated with life. I have been emotionally unstable at some point, while wondering why I was stuck. I have enjoyed great times with God. I have experienced the Fatherhood of God. I have stepped into fire and came out stronger. I look back at my life and I really don't have regrets. Everything-the good and bad-have contributed to the level of growth I am currently experiencing right now.

My beloved single ladies. I have written this book to deeply connect with you. I want to share a piece of my life with you

and help you stay in touch with the woman you dream of becoming. My goal in writing this piece is to stir you up to become all that God wants for your life.
We have dreams- a happy family, a caring husband and beautiful kids. We want to be considered thought leaders, fueling impacts in our field. We want to be somebody held in high esteem. We want to serve God in the ministerial functions designated to us. We want to excel in our careers or businesses. We want good things for ourselves and these I must say are great desires.

But there are times we wonder if our dreams would ever become reality. We say they will, but sometimes, circumstances before us weaken our faith. We see ladies running great businesses, organizing empowerment programmes, becoming influencers and then we ask ourselves, 'Is something wrong with me?'

Gradually, we cave into the flesh, opening our hearts to comparisons and engaging in thoughts that lead us down dark alleys. We start to question God's love for us and the potentials we claim we have. We wonder if our lives would ever make sense. We allow negative thoughts sip into our hearts and crush our desires until our lives are set on autopilot.

In this book, I want you to fix your gaze on what is fundamental and run after it. I sincerely pray that your eyes will be opened to see what counts at the end of the day. I want you to leverage your strength, activate the deposits within you and walk in the path God has called for you.

This is not a book to be rushed. Prayerfully stay with each chapter and reflect on the stage you are at the moment. May your eyes be enlightened. May you be filled with the spirit

of wisdom and knowledge in the revelation of Christ as revealed in this book.

Your fellow Single Lady,
Ife Grace.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

CHAPTER 1
The Search For Clarity

CHAPTER 2
Listen With Your Inner Ears

CHAPTER 3
It Is Just My Mind

CHAPTER 4
You Will Know

CHAPTER 5
Why The Rush? Incubate

CHAPTER 6
What Are You Investing In?

CHAPTER 7
The Woman Of Multiple Expressions.

CHAPTER 8
Burdens.

CHAPTER 9
Stepping Out Of Fear.

CHAPTER 10
Divine Sequence

CHAPTER 11
Learning Never Ends

CHAPTER 12
I Want To Be Happy.

CHAPTER 13
Your Dreams And The Secret Place

CHAPTER 14
Comparison Trip.

CHAPTER 15
Help Is On The Way

CHAPTER 16
Consistency Speaks

CHAPTER 17
God's IdeaVs People's Opinion.

CHAPTER 18
Teachers In Your Seasons.

CHAPTER 19
What Are You Saying?

CHAPTER 20
Don't Play With Your Thinking Retreats.

CHAPTER 21
How Important Is An Instruction Journal?

CHAPTER 22
Accountability Secrets.

CHAPTER 23
Be Bold!

FINAL WORD

ABOUT AUTHOR

1

The Search For Clarity

I will instruct and teach thee in the way which thou shall go, I will guide thee with my eyes…
Psalm 32:8

In my interaction with single ladies over the years, one of the statements I have been confronted with by some ladies is this;

"I am confused. I don't even know what I want to do with my life."

For some other ladies, they have seen a picture of what their future could become and have actively pursued it, but they got stuck somewhere in the middle and can't seem to find a way out. While some ladies are jumping from one career to another in search of fulfillment, some others are presently running a master's degree not because they enjoy the course they applied for, but because they just want to prove to society that they are at least doing something with their lives.

If you are at any of the stages I have described above, can you just come around for a hug? I have been there too. My journey into discovering God's plan for my life started one Saturday afternoon at the Nigerian law school Enugu. That day, the Christian Law Association (CLASFON) had organized a picnic outside school but I didn't feel up to it so I stayed back in the hostel. That afternoon, after listening to a

sermon, I went on my knees and prayed intensely for direction. My question was direct.

'Lord, after law school what next? What do you want me to do with my life?'

Did I get a clear direction immediately after that prayer? In the human sense, no, because everything stayed the same.

After school I walked the streets of Lagos in utter confusion, wondering why my life wasn't making sense. Countless times, I sat before my laptop and applied to almost any position on different job sites.

My hope dampened at some point in my search. One frustrating incident was when I came across a job that I could have easily gotten, but I was restrained in my spirit from applying, yet it wasn't clear what I wanted to do.

At an outing with a friend one day, he asked me what my dream was. For some seconds, my head went blank. Dreams? What were they? I looked for words to describe what I thought I loved to do and after perambulating for some minutes, I just knew I wasn't making sense. My friend had very clear goals and as he narrated his dreams to me, I felt like a completely lost soul. That day I went home really sad.

'God, but I asked for direction, what's going on? Why am I still like this?'

It was as though God had turned deaf ears to me. I was angry and grumpy. I woke up believing the best life was to find a man who cared about me, pop out babies and peradventure I might be lucky to get a job in the process.

You know what? The very first time I sought the Lord about direction, He answered. Yes He did! But at that time, I couldn't see it. The fact that we don't immediately get clarity after we spend time praying concerning a situation does not mean that God decided to press 'pause' on our requests until He feels like responding to us.

We don't have a Father who loves to see us roam around like lost sheep. If his words say, I will instruct you in the way you should go, then He means every word.

Many times, we want the blueprint- the full picture of our lives when what God wants to do is lead us step by step. While our eyes are fixed on seeking a destination, He will point us to the step to take.

Gaining clarity is a walk of faith. The way of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, which shines ever brighter until the full light of day. **(Proverbs 4:18)**

God shows us the step in front of us and then we trust him that when we take that step, he will point us to the next step. We will remain frustrated if we ignore the nudges in our heart because there is a certain way through which we desire to receive answers.

A single lady who is praying daily for clarity has to be sensitive to what the Lord is doing per time. She has to be ready to surrender her mind to the leading of God's Spirit. She must be willing to let Jesus take the wheels.

While I was still in law school, I had begun to sense that I would work with secondary school students. It was strong in my heart that my one-year national youth service deploy-

ment would take place in a school. God eventually worked that out. The time I spent with those wonderful students was one of the most satisfying experiences in my life. Why I had to be with them at that time, I don't know. What I was sure about was that I was following God. When I was led to teach in another school, I knew it was God too and interestingly, it was there that writing began to call for my attention.

We are not meant to understand every process God takes us through, ours is to follow. You might understand later and even if you don't exactly know why God took you through a path, the most important thing is that you are following Him.

Everything that has happened since my law school days prepared me for the stage I am today. Let me say this quickly, as you take steps to gain clarity into the current stage of your life, you will find your heart moving towards a particular direction. It could come as a thought or an impression. Your heart will always return to it. When that begins to happen, don't just sit there doing nothing.

As you spend time praying and you sense that your heart is pulled towards an idea, don't discard it. Find out what it entails. No matter how hard you pray, if you don't step out into the gleam of light you have already received, more will not be opened to you.

Your interest is one way your mind expresses direction it receives from the spirit. You just find out every time you come across certain works or tasks done by someone else, your heart immediately connects. Let me share an experience that happened to me, it might give you a better understanding of the wisdom I'm sharing with you.

For three years now I have blogged consistently on my self-hosted website. It started one day as I scrolled down my Facebook newsfeed, I saw the link to a blog post shared by a lifestyle blogger. I stopped and gazed on that link for some seconds. The next time, I stopped again to stare at it. Every single time I checked my newsfeed, I always stopped to stare at it. At some point, I couldn't get it out of my mind that I needed to start my blog. I tried to push the thoughts away because I knew self-hosting a blog costs money but I was restless. I started to visit her blog almost every night, and every time I did this, I'd hear my inner voice shout,

"You can do this!"

It was as if I had been drugged. Then something else happened. I started noticing links to blog around me. It was as if blogging was screaming my name through all of those blog links I was seeing. Ideas started to flow seamlessly. The nudging was intense. I knew I had to get the blog up and running. It's almost three years now and I have no regrets.

You've been asking for clarity, praying night and day but here you are, ignoring promptings in your heart. I have lost count of the number of times I visited Google in a day to find out how to start blogs, christian bloggers in the industry and the kind of blog posts people put up. Sometimes, my eyes would be heavy with sleep, but to put my phone down was a big deal. I just wanted to know more about what it took to run a successful blog.

Again, I must emphasize this. If you do nothing with the light you already have, you may not receive more. God has been opening your eyes to areas of your talents and gifting, but you are not searching in prayers and in research to ex-

pand the light that has already been revealed to you.

Let me also say this, it is possible that you know to an extent what your strength is or what comes easy for you but God is leading you in a direction that has no direct bearing to your talents. Stay there and learn. God may be using those times to mould your character. There may be something you need to learn in those places that will determine the success of your assignments in the future. The best bet: Maintain a posture of surrender.

We have a father, yeah? Be assured without any doubt that God will instruct you and guide you in the way you should go. Even if you think you have made mistakes, you will find redirection and realignment.

Clarity starts by trusting absolutely in God's Word. Believe this with all your heart and He'll make your life a beautiful one.

Reflection: Have you started praying for clarity concerning the divine purpose for your life? Are you observing the promptings that the Holy Spirit is already pointing your heart to?

Further reading: Isaiah 41:13, Ephesians 1: 16-18, Colossians 1:9

2

Listen With Your Inner Ears

And when he has brought out all his sheep, he walks ahead of them and they will follow him, for they are familiar with his voice. ***John 10:4*** *(The Passion Translation).*

Journaling is how I get my mind unstuck. For years, I poured my thoughts on paper and although I did not know how to use journaling to fuel my progress, it gave me some sort of satisfaction. When I think about some of the things I had written in my journal back in my intern days as a Law student, I laugh at how emotionally unstable I was and how I screamed out my mind on every page.

I knew I wanted to serve God. I knew there was a call of God upon my life even though it was not clear at that time. At some point, I wanted desperately to be in a relationship and for some years, I lost sight of the vision God wanted to show me. Even though my bible was opened in front of me, I wasn't listening. Yeah, I was reading the word, but I was not paying attention. My emotions were in control and I couldn't hear God.

I would write about my frustrations. I would ask God why He was quiet. I would pray and plead for help. I would even be upset and slip into depressive moments. All that time, God was talking to me but I wanted Him to give me answers on my own term.

Years later, as I thought about the content of my red journal,

one sentence stood out among all of the release of negative energy and emotional outburst in that journal.

'Rest in me and wait patiently for me.'

That was God speaking to my heart. Why didn't I hear those life changing words earlier? If I had listened, I would have saved myself from months of frustration and discouragement. What I was craving after was not in God's plan at that time, yet I was bent on getting the answer I wanted to hear.

It is very difficult to hear God when you are dominated by feelings of worry and anxiety. You won't be able to see what God is doing at that moment. I tell you, those were the days I would have solidified the dreams God would later put in my heart and prepare me for what was ahead.

I lost opportunities God created to enable an atmosphere for what He wanted to do. I lived with an amazing family that took care of me and gave me the space and freedom I needed. The law firm I interned also didn't bother me very much. Those were times I would have created a future but all I was thinking about was finding a life partner. It was my sleeping and wake up call.

Living out God's plan for your life is never first of all external. It starts from the state of your heart. If I asked you one question, it would be whether you have given your heart space to accommodate the instructions released from your inner man.

When you want something badly and you don't care about any other area of your life, you need to take a pause. Get into prayers and deal with that desperation. God's instruction may demand urgency but it never comes with worry

and impatience.

There is a way to hear God and it flows from a state of peace. When you jump from one place to another, acting like a person who does not have a Father, it will be difficult to align with God's will. Sometimes when I listen to some ladies share their feelings, even when they claim they are not bothered about a particular issue, many times, you can tell how desperate they are from the words they speak.

Don't deny the emotions that want to overwhelm you. Don't go around saying, 'If the brother likes let him come, I don't care. I have a career to build.' when in the secret, you are scouting for any brother who will look your way. That deceit is unnecessary.

Train your mind to constantly get on your knees when those emotions threaten to bury you. Pray in tongues until your mind is calm. Get into worship to set your heart's atmosphere. Confess the fatherhood of God to yourself and meditate on scriptures that speaks about trust and love. You will hear God. He loves to talk to you.

I know there are counselors who encourage single ladies to get busy and build a life for themselves. They get on Instagram or Facebook and show off their latest accomplishment. They write words like;

"I am a go-getter woman. I wrote three books in a year. I am a CEO/ Founder. I organized the first Boss Lady conference. I don't play small."

I hear you well and I rejoice with you at your achievements. My question still is, are you walking in alignment with God's will or is it just a cover up for the unmet desires that

is eating at your heart? Did your boyfriend just break up with you and you feel the way to show him you are important is by starting something quickly and adding a title to your name?

Get those emotions in check and move only as the Lord leads!

You also do not want to be a person who just throw repeated requests at God. Train your mind to listen. Don't just hear, listen. God has something to say to you.

Well, It is also important not to box God in the manner He desires to speak to you. It is possible that the light you need for the season you are in is right before you but you can't recognize it because you already have a preset notion on how such answers should arrive your door step.

Your heart may be drawn towards resources- Youtube channels, articles, websites and many other platforms that provide answers to the questions in your heart.

God can speak through the people God has placed in your life for that season. God speaks through the processes he is taking you through. I'm not talking about an audible voice but that knowing in your inner man that every daughter who has accepted Christ has come into.

Have an instruction journal and put down the instructions you are hearing in your spirit and from time to time take note of them and ponder quietly over them.

What if I thought I heard God and it didn't work out? Avoid dwelling on those past mistakes and learn to hear better. If something didn't work out, it's not enough to just toss the

truth aside on the leading of the Spirit. Trust is all we have. You keep trusting in God's plan for your life. You stay expectant to hear God more.

Reflection: Do you have an instruction journal? Do you really trust God's plan for your life or are you figuring out your path by relying on your intellect?

Further reading: Philippians 4:6,7; Isaiah 26:3

3

It Is Just My Mind

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what he will say unto me…
Habakkuk 2:1

I was in my early teens at that time. We didn't have a television at home and once in a while at the close of service on Sunday, I'd sneak out to watch TV.

On one of those days, I was peeping through the window of a living room, my eyes glued to the television set when I saw a young woman stand in front of an audience speaking from her heart. It was not just the speech that caught my attention but the audacious way she presented her thoughts. I could not take my eyes away from the screen. The boldness, the confidence she exuded, her clarity of speech. It was as if I was the one talking. My heart kept going back to that scene even after I had retired to bed. For days, the image of that woman stayed in my head.

At another time, in Senior Secondary School I (SSI), I lay on the sofa in the living room and saw myself helping teenagers find their purpose. In my mind I was already grown and I clearly remember walking around some buildings in a large expanse of land, mentoring girls who were boarders in that school. This was long before I ever knew I was going to teach in secondary schools and get connected to teen girls in deep ways.

There are flashes of the future that come to us at different times. I wish I could tell that teen girl to stop discarding those images that are deeply impressed on her heart. We let go of those images because society presents before us what looks like the definition of a bright future.

It's either you are striving to be a lawyer, medical personnel, an engineer or an accountant otherwise you cannot be successful. We all know this old principle wherever it came from, is faux. Many teens come into the real world after they graduate and find out they had been deceived. The wise ones begin a new journey of finding their gifts, strengths and places they can lean on to pay their bills and survive in this harsh world.

As adult ladies we get these flashes too. Many of the things I have come into were birthed first as images in my mind. The wisdom is to arrest those flashes and roll them out before the Lord in prayers.

There are times we receive flashes like that and the first statement that comes out of our heart is, 'It's just my mind.' We discard the images because they look impossible to our human minds. Never forget that the vision God gives will be bigger than what your mind can capture. Rather than disregard those images, take note of them and pray them until conviction is birthed in your heart.

One other mistake we make when we get these images and ideas flooding our minds is to immediately run with them. There are pictures the Lord will be putting in your heart that in His plan should not come to fruition until after a decade. It is important to know the right timing for the things placed in your heart.

Do you have a dream journal? I mean a place where you put down the pictures and flashes that come to your mind?

Let me end this by saying that, our dreams are first established mentally before we step into them physically. One powerful way this happens is by images and pictures that settles on our minds. They are released in bits at different times and it is wisdom to observe and pen down what is seen immediately.

Further reading: Genesis 13:14-17. Jeremiah 1;13,14 NLT, 1 Kings 18:43, 44. Colossians 1:9.

4

You Will Know

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. ***John 16:13***

In a particular assembly, there was this brother called Kayode. He was very fervent and committed to the things of God. He's always the first person that drops on the Pastor's heart whenever a difficult task that requires urgency arises in the church. He worked in different departments in church before finally becoming one of the Pastor's associates.

One Sunday evening, as the Pastor finished his counseling session and was ready to leave for home, Kayode walked into his office.

"Good evening sir." He greeted, bowing slightly.

The Pastor raised his head and smiled. "Kayode, you are still around?"

Kayode nodded and sat on the chair facing the Pastor. "I wanted your permission on something."

"Go ahead." The Pastor responded as he took off his tie and tossed it aside.

"It's about Temi. I have been praying for a while and I be-

lieve God wants us to take a journey together. I need your permission to propose to her."

The Pastor grinned. He loved connections like this. Temi was his spiritual daughter. He'd got her saved, raised her until she became a fiery teens coordinator. She had also lived for some years in his house until she moved into a rented apartment. His spiritual son marrying his spiritual daughter was the best news a spiritual father could hear.

Permission granted, Kayode made his intention known to Temi the following week in an eatery. Temi told him she would pray about it but as she walked out of that eatery, she sensed he was not the one. She could not explain the reason but she knew. As she prayed, it became stronger that her response to his proposal would be negative.

"But God, he is a good brother." She said aloud as she tossed on her bed from side to side. "I have watched him serve you with all his heart. This is the kind of brother I want. A dedicated man devoted to you."

She didn't hear an audible voice. There was no specific scripture to confirm how she felt. All she had was a restraint in her spirit. She had trained herself to know the responses of the Holy Spirit. She had felt the same way when she was torn between taking up a HR position and managing a start-up. When she rushed to take the HR job, she'd felt restrained and declined the offer. A similar situation had happened when she started an application process to run a master's degree abroad. Therefore, this time too, it was easy to know what God was saying concerning Kayode. She turned down his proposal.

Kayode was shocked and hurt. The Pastor was also sur-

prised. When Kayode started to make silent moves to cajole her into changing her mind, Temi reported to the Pastor who warned the young man to stop his antics.

A year later, Kayode disappeared out of sight after duping some church members of over five million naira.

There is a knowing in every believer that is activated by a regular communion with God. As a single lady, you cannot use your brain to analyse which suitor looks good and nice.

Discernment is built by knowledge which develops in communion and intimacy with God. Times when you just know you should not get involved in something, when you cannot exactly explain the reason for your decision except a knowing that it doesn't feel right. It is the same impression that enables us to say, I know I should be doing this. I know this is God's call upon my life. The inner witness of the Holy Spirit is still at work in us today.

Don't ignore this witness. Sharpen yourself to follow the Spirit's leading by maintaining intimacy with the Father. It will save you years of heartbreak. It is dangerous to wait until you are ready to make decisions on marriage before training yourself to recognize God's voice. You will hear only what you want to hear.

If you have made some mistakes where you thought God said something but it didn't work out, that's not enough to conclude God does not speak. He does. You will keep making mistakes if the only time you seek the leading of the Spirit is in critical decisions. You cannot become familiar that way. Trust that the Holy Spirit's got you. We don't have to walk through life confused. The Holy Spirit lives in you. He wants to guide and lead through every step of life's jour-

ney.

Reflection: How committed are you to a regular communion with your heavenly Father?

Further reading: Psalms 32:8

5

Why The Rush? Incubate

The plans of a hard-working person lead to prosperity, but everyone who is always in a hurry ends up in poverty. ***Proverbs 21:5***

Sister, calm down. The Lord has started placing in your heart images and words concerning the specific assignment you have been called to do right? I know that your journal is packed full with prophetic words and instructions. I understand that purpose has begun to make sense in your heart and you want to run with it as fast as possible. I want to delve into those assignments too.

Wait! Relax first. Channel that excitement to the Lord. Put the seed in the ground and give it room to get nurtured. Many dreams have been destroyed because ladies jumped out without hearing further instructions on the vision they claim God had given to them.

When you receive anything in the place of prayer, it's not the time to get on social media bursting about ideas you've not even sat with.

Incubate it!

What exactly does it mean to incubate? It starts with birthing the instructions, images that you are receiving in prayers, soaking in the requisite knowledge, taking steps to understand what those ideas entail, staying sensitive to di-

vine timing and directions.

Now, the following questions may be running through your heart:

"God, how do you want me to do this? How do I run with the things you are placing on my heart? Where do I go from here?"

I was that spontaneous lady who loved new projects. Once I'm bored with something, I'm already out looking for a new idea to excite me. Oh yes, I thrive on excitement. I hardly finished most of the projects I started.

However, through some unpalatable experiences, I had to learn how to stay put in boring times. It was tough but I stayed and I'm glad I did.

It's a sign of instability when you jump from one project to another in other to maintain excitement. It's something to take cognizance of and deal with.

One way to deal with this is to address your feelings and understand that you won't always be excited at the goals you set for yourself but you must keep pressing on. It is the lady with staying power that produces powerful results.

Sometimes, we get to rough seasons and immediately believe that we didn't hear God well. The fact that you experience difficulties does not mean God is not involved. Sometimes, all you need is to keep going with it.

Consistency disregards your feelings and I must say that if you have never finished anything in your life, take a pause now and make a written commitment to finish whatever

project or task you are working on. Communicate your decision to the friends in your inner circle. Give them the permission to be blunt with you when you veer off track.

The woman of depth is one who will not take shortcuts. She understands that preparation is inevitable and that her uniqueness is developed from a place of expertise which has a foundation in knowledge- spiritually and intellectually.

You may read this and say, your spontaneity does not affect your productivity. Once you get an idea, you move immediately. You feel, that's how you are wired and when you are tired, you get on board with something else. Frankly, you may not produce deep work that way.

Proverbs 19 verse 2 says for the soul to be without knowledge is not good. Jesus in Luke 14:28-30 said a man who intends to build a tower would sit down first and count the cost whether he has enough to complete the task. It is wisdom to find out how things should be done. You want to be a coach but here you are starting a webinar because you googled few articles on what coaches do. You have a dream of building a company, but you barely have an idea of what it entails.

Why rush ahead of God? Where is the place of building depth? Why expose your dreams too soon to the world before time?

Even though David had been anointed, he did not become a king until after several years. Don't kill your dreams with your hands because you want to prove to people that you are heading somewhere. They will know eventually. Journal the process. Learn to build. Incubate those dreams and

when it's the set time to move, you will know. The nudging of the Spirit will stir in you an urgency.

Reflection: What knowledge are you interacting with where the dreams God is placing in your heart is concerned?

Further reading: Proverbs 19:2, Proverbs 24:27, Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 12;10, 24:1 NLT, Luke 14:28

6

What Are You Investing In?

Saving up for a rainy day, putting your money to work and multiplying it is a wise thing to do.
Proverbs 21:20

I loved to acquire every kind of knowledge for free. Once money is put on a course, training or book that I know will benefit me greatly, I'll shove it away. If I can get the free version of such resources, I jump right at it. This miser mindset did two things to me;- It kept me stuck at a level and it affected my giving life.

Well, this changed when I met a transformation coach who ran a 21 day coaching session for free. As usual, I jumped on board only to have my mind blown away by the knowledge I interacted with. I asked myself, 'why am I just knowing this woman for goodness sake?'

At the end of the free program, she introduced us to her courses that required a membership fee. My first reaction was to withdraw as always. My friend, on the other hand, had already paid for a quarter and was running some amazing collaborations with another lady. It didn't move me. Yes, I wanted that knowledge badly. I knew it would push me towards more discoveries about myself. Yet, I was not willing to pay the price. Even after a discount had been given, I still would not budge. This poor conditioning, money slavery, poverty stricken attitude was going to keep me from reaching for gold.

Well, the Lord came to my rescue. I was praying one evening when my heart went back to the coaching site. As I opened the site, I saw that membership into the coaching community was going to close in a few hours. I looked at the courses and my heart pounded hard. This was the shift I wanted. I asked God for a miracle.

Couldn't He send somebody to just bless my life with some money.

Guess what the Lord did at that instance? He pointed me to the money I had saved in the bank.

I murmured. Of course I remembered all the while that I had some money saved up but I wanted free money. The kind that came with, 'Sis Ife, the Lord said I should send some money to you.' I'm speaking of a miracle. You know, something supernatural.

The Lord's response was the same. Take that money out of the account and pay for the membership fee. I calculated how much I'd have left and my heart almost fainted.

Many times, we don't see what God is trying to teach us with the resources we have because we are waiting for one sign from heaven or one supernatural provision. Investment starts with us as individuals. The liberation you need to build a successful career or become financially wealthy starts from what you are investing into. This is huge, I tell you.

I remember when I started writing on different platforms. I knew I was passionate about writing stories, and many nights I stayed awake, scribbling down words, rephrasing them, reading novels and analyzing words. I didn't see any

reward at the moment. I didn't know I'd ever make a dime from writing stories. I just knew I loved to tell stories and I plunged into it.

The fulfillment of great dreams come with a cost. When God places a vision in your heart, what you need to run with it will involve lots of sacrifice. It will cost you money. It will require that you invest in people. It will take hours of rigorous practice.

I'm grateful I paid for that membership fee. Beyond the wealth of wisdom I interacted with, it liberated me from poverty mentality. Sitting with those courses was the help I'd been crying for. It wasn't just about the things the coach said, it was the light that birthed forth out of the things she didn't say. I started to understand the importance of structuring my life. My eyes were opened to systems and my dreams became clearer. Seriously, if you are a person who can comfortably put down cash for aso-ebi and make-up sessions, but where your dreams are concerned, you hesitate and refuse to invest, it clearly shows how much that vision means to you. Stop complaining, because this is you not setting your priority aright.

There is a level you will never attain if you are bent on getting every profitable resource meant to help your life for free. This mentality will not only affect your approach to knowledge quest, it will also hamper the call of God on your life. It will make you a slave to money. Another limitation is where for every impact you make, you only think of the money you'll make out of it.

Investments in the right places deal with your money conditioning first before it flows into the expansion of the capacity you desire. You'll come to a point where money is

just a tool to serve your purpose.
Now, investing does not mean putting yourself in unnecessary debts that'll create embarrassing situations for you. If for now, what you can truly afford is data on your phone, start with investing in knowledge from Youtube videos and free courses but don't stop there. Reach for an abundance mentality by learning to release the little you have as seeds for a bountiful harvest.

Invest in your personal development. Reading is one great way to gain exposure into the knowledge area. Don't just read books for the sake of reading, read in line with the personal transformation areas in your life.

Investments are seeds we plant for the future. It is important to think long term. Delayed gratification is not a just a cliché. There are certain things you can hold off until later while you concentrate on building the blocks for your future. You may not need more shoes right now. You may not need to get another bag. In the end, your life goes in the direction of the priorities you set for yourself.

I can't end this chapter without speaking about the power of observation. There are people who model the life I want for myself, and I watch how they do things. As I follow their works back-to-back, I'm watching their processes, learning something new on how they stepped into their best selves. Even though I can't yet connect with them personally, I'm not waiting for that time before taking notes of the resources they have made available.

Many times, we cry to be mentored by a successful person who is walking in similar paths like our dreams. You won't read their books, watch their videos, check what they are putting up on their social media platforms. What kind

of mentoring do you exactly want? Observation is such a powerful investment strategy. Beyond just volunteering or signing up for an internship, keep your eyes opened to the little details. It is from this kind of investment that we draw juices of quick wisdom that may become templates for our goals.

Can I speak to you about misplaced investment for a minute? Jumping in and out of every course or program is really a waste of precious resources. Get all the certifications you can, you'd still be lost if there is no direction for your life. The wisdom therefore is to invest more than anything in your relationship with the Lord.

This is a life long journey that requires deliberateness and commitment to daily devotion. Not every conference is for you. It's not all seminars or webinars you should attend. There are seasons in God's timing for us and each of these seasons come with the resources we'll need per time, and we can only discern this in the place of intimacy with our Father.

Reflection: What are you investing in?

Further reading: Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 16:10

7

The Woman Of Multiple Expressions.

*She finds wool and flax and busily spins it…she gets up before dawn to prepare breakfast for her household… she goes to inspect a field and buys it, with her earnings she plants a vineyard...She makes sure her dealings are profitable...Her hands are busy spinning thread...she makes her own bedspreads….she makes belted linen garments and sashes to sell to the merchants...**Proverbs 31:13,15,16,18,19,22 NLT***

When I started writing stories on my social media platforms and my blog, I actually thought that was all I'd ever do. I was content with that expression. I was comfortable with churning out stories and writing books. As I spent time with God, He began to open my eyes to see other areas apart from writing that I was going to explore. I didn't believe it at first until after a series of prayer meetings with my friends. They prophetically confirmed the other expressions God had been putting in our heart.

There are ladies with multiple expressions and that's absolutely fine. You can be a great chef, run a non-profit, write books, run training programs for companies in the food industry, bag a Ph.D. in special needs, run a children ministry while also preparing to be an amazing wife to your beloved and a super mother to your kids. As a single lady, you can become all of these.

How can a lady create screen-plays for movies, work a 9-5

in a research institute, run a successful blog, write novels and short stories, run an active spiritual mentoring group, build contents around non-fiction genre, build a non-profit, build coaching methodologies for spiritual and personal development, serve as a leader in her local church and yet she knows there are still untapped deposits to be released? How have I been able to handle all of these?

Is it possible for a single lady to develop her different expressions and yet be great at it all? Oh yes! I have seen this possibility modeled before me. When you meet a young woman who pastors a church, runs a thriving coaching company, runs a non-profit, has a Bible school, runs two to three ministries and is a great wife and mother to three kids, we know there is no playing small and room for excuses.

Here's the truth. The woman who has decided to explore her different expressions must be ready to stick to processes. If the expressions she claims she has is birthed out of a rat race order, I'm not sure how long she will last in it. She must be willing to be patient with her growth at different levels. She learns divine sequence, how to build systems, structures and a support team, otherwise she will burn out at the end of the day.

Dear single lady with multiple expressions, keep going. When you are told that you are doing too much and a man will be intimidated by your exploits, you know deep in your heart, the man who will walk down the aisle with you will have the capacity to handle what you carry. There are men who are vision driven too, comfortable with seeing their women rise. You are not expecting to give your pearls to dogs, are you?

If you carry the kingdom agenda in your heart, it's a treasure and you'll need a man who will not treat it as a common thing. God has his men out there and you'll meet one of them soon.

As you pursue your dreams, it puts you on a different pedestal. You won't have time for petty conversations or idle talks. Twenty-four hours suddenly seem so small. Like a magnet, you'll attract friends passionate about fulfilling divine mandate.

You are not an ordinary woman when you submit to training under the hand of God. You will soon ooze out the supernatural.

There are times when you will feel overwhelmed because your different expressions are calling out to you at the same time. I have had moments when my mind encountered blocks so hard I could barely talk.

This is one secret that has worked so well for me. Have thinking retreats.

You will be depressed, frustrated and overwhelmed if you are always producing without taking out times for reflections. Thinking retreat is where you apply lubricants to keep your mind working smoothly.

Experiment with structures and systems too. I have done this consistently for almost a year. When I try building a system to establish a habit and I see that it isn't effective, I use other methods until I find the one that is realistic. Again, you don't have to juggle different new things at the same time. You can focus on a certain area, build systems that create recurrent goals around them and move to the

next. It is wisdom not to run two heavy projects at the same time especially if you don't have a solid support system. Knowledge is how we prosper in our different expressions. Don't ever forget this, you can be great at a number of things and be excellent at them. You need a biblical example? Check out the Proverbs 31 woman.

Reflection: Have you started searching out how to build systems and structures for your different expressions?

Further reading: 2 Kings 13:14-19

8

Burdens.

For the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. ***Romans 8:26 NLT***

For years, I asked this question. What is career? What is ministry? What is purpose? Are they all synonyms used to describe the tasks and responsibilities I'd perform on this earth? These questions rolled in my heart for a long time until light broke forth and I gained clarity into those terms.

There is only one primary agenda in the heart of God to which we have all been granted stewardship. It is not to make money. It is not to amass wealth. It is not to become the next Nobel prize winner. It is to get souls into the kingdom.

Is it wrong to make money? Of course not. Is it foolish to build profitable businesses and carry out humanitarian efforts to alleviate suffering? No. However, for the believer, the pursuit of a viable career is just a means to the end goal. Every field or industry we connect with, every business we set up are tools to propagate the message of the gospel. Material things do not represent the core of what we have been placed on earth to do. They are only tools meant to serve the primary assignment God has placed in our hands.

On the last day, at the judgment seat of Christ, you will not be asked how many start-ups you developed or how many

villages you reached with educational materials. The question will be about souls. God is particular about getting men to hear and believe the Gospel because this is what counts at the end of the day.

Never confuse tools with the message.

Men need to hear the Gospel. Believers need to grow. As we employ the different platforms and tools available to us, we look beyond to the men coming our way. We do not just build strategies that will expand our businesses, we also structure and strategize ways to get men into the kingdom as well as proper discipleship of believers.

Once this light settles in our heart, one of the things the Lord will do is to drop burdens in your heart. As you respond promptly to these burdens, you step into alignment with God's plan. One of the beautiful things about responding to burdens is that God will be able to count on you to birth his will on the earth.

A believer you have never met would be going through some challenging issues somewhere and God would drop in your heart a burden for such a person. Sometimes, your heart groans for an unbeliever you know and the more you pray, the heavier your heart becomes. When you pray until your heart becomes light, something great has happened in the realm of the spirit.

Don't ignore that restlessness you feel sometimes. Pray. It's a way to train yourself to carry the burdens. Rather than sit with a movie to kill the restlessness, get on your knees and pray in the Spirit. We won't stop having burdens as long as there are souls to be saved.

That school where you teach, the start-up you manage, the group you belong to, those friends you play with, where are they headed? Are you just chasing career while ignoring what's most important? Start by praying for the souls around you. Ask that the hearts of the unsaved in your vicinity be opened to receive the Gospel. Pray for utterance to declare the gospel with such boldness.

One of the attitudes of kingdom-minded believers is that they see ministry in whatever platform they are operating on. As a tech expert, your heart is drawn to ways to reach out to the unsaved. As business consultants, while you create amazing business models, your eyes see souls. As lecturers, the classroom become your tool to snatch more souls from the way to hell. If you are serious about souls, the Holy Spirit will guide you on how to effectively win the hearts of men and women to the Lord.

We want to make God proud. We understand that after we've taught people secrets to become influential in their fields and created powerful 'self-confident you-can-make-it' modules, if they die in their sins, they are forever damned. This is the real ministry that every believer must take seriously.

Again, we are not all called to be founders of ministries. I'm talking about running an organization built around ministerial callings. For some, their assignment may be to serve with the founder of a ministry. I have had ladies approach me, confused about starting a ministry. God may be saying, 'Yes I have called you to reach teenagers' but it does not mean He is necessarily asking you to start a teens organization.

Many have veered off the right path because they sensed the

call to reach out to a particular set of people and they presumed it implies establishing a ministry. It is important not just to know what you have been called to do but to discern how to carry it out.

Finally, while you can clearly see that you are called to be the set lady in a field ministry, you may be required to serve another ministry for a while until you are able to proceed with yours. It is important to know exactly what the Lord will have you do per time. However, this does not stop personal evangelism and discipleship for the believers.

Reflection: Have you won any soul to the Lord this year? What are you doing about your unsaved friends and the people in your neigbourhood?

Further reading: Colossians 4:12, Nehemiah 1:1-4.

9

Stepping Out Of Fear.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.
2 Timothy 1:7

Yewande was passionate about starting a business in the education sector. She remembered how for several months, she watched videos, took courses and got certifications to pursue her long-term dream of establishing a creche and preschool center. Her mother had owned a creche before she passed away. Yewande worked there for about four years and loved every bit of her time spent there.

She'd wanted the creche to become top-notch but unfortunately, the weeks following her mother's admission at the hospital brought an end to the school. They had to raise money to settle the hospital bills even after her death. It was a sad time for the twenty-four -year-old-girl.

She got a job in a bank and even though she hated the job, she stayed there for a few years, planning her exit from the time she received her employment letter. She invested heavy, thought about the creche all night and dreamt of taking care of babies. Every time she saw the billboard of a creche, her mind soared with joy.

Finally, she resigned. Exuding with so much excitement, she kicked her preschool off the ground and got a few staff to work with her. She was worried the first month. Why

were kids not pouring in? Was there something she was not doing well? She didn't expect it to be tough getting kids in, after all, she was passionate about nurturing children.

The frustration grew. She cried and prayed. She needed wisdom. She wanted to understand what was going on. One evening, she went online and found a chat by a friend who had shared the link to a webinar about growing a profitable childcare center. It was the answer Yewande needed. She dug into knowledge, spoke to a few persons and within months, results began to show up.

A year into starting the business, it crashed.

A child was brought to school sick. His mother insisted he was fine and that he just needed to rest. She was such in a hurry to get to work. An hour later, the boy fainted. He died on his way to the hospital.

His mother was enraged and accused her of killing her son. A law suit sprang out of the accusations and it dragged for several weeks. The woman finally dropped the case. However, parents had withdrawn their wards and for Yewande, it was like starting over again. There was no money. A single lady at 30, she convinced herself that running a creche was definitely a misplaced priority.

She later got a job as a marketing executive in a multi-national firm and poured herself into it. She was not exactly happy with the job but she swore she would never do anything relating to children again.

"Are you just going to give up?" Daniel, her fiance asked, one evening as they sat across from each other at a restaurant. He was the lawyer who had worked on the case with

her. They had started dating shortly after the lawsuit was dropped.

"You shouldn't be saying this Daniel. You saw what I went through with that case. I'm done with kids abeg. I will grow here as a marketing executive."

Daniel laughed. "I see. Keep fighting, okay?"

Yewande pushed the food aside. Why was Daniel opening up a past she didn't want to remember. "I have lost my appetite."

Daniel reached for her hand and squeezed it gently. "What is your heart saying?"

Yewande closed her eyes and a tear trickled down her face. She had been seeing children in her dreams for the past two weeks. Two days ago, at a client's home, she had been attracted to the woman's twin babies. She almost forgot why she came and began to play with them. She taught the woman some creative ways to help the kids learn faster. The woman stared at her in astonishment.

"My God! What are you doing in a corporate organization? You are so good with kids." The woman had said.

The previous night, she had been unable to sleep. She had rolled from one side of the bed to another fighting the images that bombarded her mind. She remembered her dream to run a top-notch daycare institute. She remembered her book of creative ideas for preschoolers and when she reached for it, more ideas poured in. Every time she prayed, her thoughts were diverted to children care.

Yewande held Daniel's hand. "I'm scared. I'm so scared."

He held her chin and brought her gaze to meet his. "We are together in this sweetheart. I sense there is an urgency and until you take a step, you won't see the help God is putting before you."

That night, the fear returned stronger than ever before. Her mother had died and the business had been destroyed. She had started her own business and it had flopped. What if it happened again? She had been fortunate to get a job. At her age, it was difficult landing a job with a good pay. If she started the creche and it crashed again, would she have to spend her life relying on Daniel's income after marriage?

She knelt down and placed her hand on her forehead. "Lord, I am so scared. Please help me."

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your path.

Those words brought peace into her heart. The following morning, she applied for a job position in one of the pre-schools she had always admired. Her heart dampened as she typed the application letter. She was never going to be selected. She wanted to delete what she had written but she remembered Daniel's words. She knew nothing would change until she did what God was impressing upon her heart.

She handed her resignation letter to the Human Resource department. On her way out of the office, she felt relieved and then the fear resurfaced again.

What was she going to do now?

On her way home, she had a nudge to call the client whose home she had visited and attended to her kids. She told the woman she had taken her advice and left the job. The woman screamed in excitement.

"I'm glad you finally left that place. Listen, it may be tough, but you have a heart that mothers can trust their children with. Do you have any plans yet?"

Yewande sighed. The future was blurry. "I'm looking out for a job in a preschool until I'm able to start mine. I have applied to a few places. I'll just keep looking around."

"Oh, I forgot to tell you that day, my elder sister returned from the US some years back. She started one somewhere around Ikeja."

Yewande's heart pounded fast. Was a miracle about to happen? "What's the name of the school?"

When she mentioned the name, Yewande shouted. It was the place she had applied the morning she resigned. The same place she convinced herself she'd never get in. She had day-dreamed of interning there. She had been blown away by the technologies and teaching methodologies they employed.

"That's the place I've been dreaming of getting into. I can't believe this!"

The woman laughed. "I'll talk to her and get back to you."

That evening, as soon as Daniel pulled into the car park of

the eatery they regularly met, Yewande ran into his arms. There were tears in her eyes. He held her hands and listened as she narrated what had happened earlier in the day.

They found an empty seat and sat across from each other. Grinning, Daniel leaned forward.

"Since we started courting, I've never seen you this happy. Look how your eyes lit up."

Yewande, still bursting with excitement, raised her hands to heaven. "It will work out in Jesus' name,"

The client called while she was halfway through her meal. Her eyes darted from Daniel to the phone screen. She let out two deep breaths before answering the call.

The call was short. She was to be at the preschool by 7.30am to meet with the woman's elder sister. Yewande bent her head down and started crying.

"Is this how God works?" Yewande said as tears streaming down her face.

Daniel moved closer and wrapped his hand around her shoulders. She went into his arms.

"Thank you." Yewande said softly, looking into his eyes.

Few days later, as Yewande stood in the class assigned to her, she lifted a plump infant to her chest and watched him laugh in delight. Her eyes welled up with tears of joy. This was exactly where God wanted her to be.

Why did I share that fiction piece? Fear brings torment. It

desires to hinder you from stepping into the possibilities available to you.

Your mistakes do not define you. Whether they are broken relationships or sinful habits that have weighed you down, there is always restoration with God. The smart lady knows she has to get up and keep moving. That's what she hears every time.

Never allow those mistakes to hinder you from trusting in God's plan for your life. If you have accepted Christ, understand that you have obtained mercy. You cannot walk with God or enjoy the rest He provides by constantly looking back at your past experiences. Trust is a currency we must continue to trade with every day of our lives.

What do you do when the past keeps haunting you? Pray scriptural prayers particularly the prayers from the Epistles. Confess God's word over your life. Meditate on verses of scriptures that speak of the Father's love for you. Remind yourself of the things God has said to you and the promises in His word. If your lack of confidence is birthed out of your past sinful deeds, you need revelation into the forgiveness of sins offered to you by Christ.

Unto him who is able to do exceeding, abundantly, far above what we can ask or think. When you truly understand the nature of the Father you have, it will truly liberate you.

Reflection: What are you afraid of? What steps can you take to step out courageously into the instructions God is putting in your heart?
Further reading: Joshua 3:9-17; Luke 15:11-32.

10

Divine Sequence

...Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established. ***Proverbs 24:3***

From the first quarter of 2021, I've had loads of creative ideas pouring into my head. Some of them came with instructions that required intense preparation and research. At some point, I felt overwhelmed. When I thought about all of the things I had to do, I was discouraged already. The recurrent schedule for my week was already packed full. I began to ask myself, how do I accomplish all of these things?

In my frustration, I went to Agodi Gardens somewhere in Ibadan with my friend. I thought if I surrounded myself with nature, the inner heat I was experiencing would cool down. You won't believe that as I opened my journal and held my pen, instead of getting clarity to the things I had already written down, I got more instructions. The heat increased and my heart became heavier.

Have you ever experienced that moment when the Lord is speaking to you about certain details of your life and you just become so quiet even when you have others around you? I walked out of the garden quietly that day and barely said a word to my friend. On transit home, I had a conversation with the Lord and he reminded me about divine sequence which I want to share with you today.

That there is a floodgate of ideas and instructions into the details of your assignment does not mean the Lord expects you to handle all of them at once.

Even the lady with multiple expressions knows that she can't take more than two or three widely important goals per time She also knows how to structure her goals in line with what is available. For instance, two years ago, I wrote contents, edited, designed images to go with my content because I didn't have a support system at that time. There was no way I could write blog story series weekly and at the same time carry out some heavy activities.

There are instructions that God may not require you to kick off until after some years or even a decade. One of the ways to know this is in prayers. When you pray for clarity about a goal you want to pursue and God keeps redirecting you away from the subject of your prayer to something else, you had better focus on the redirected subject.

If there are a thousand ideas flooding your mind, in the place of your communion with God, you will know which to start first. It is a step by step leading of the spirit. God will not ask you to do more than you can handle. If you are continually being stressed out, you should get back in prayers to see what you are not doing properly.

Divine sequence is God's wisdom employed to balance the many areas of our expression. Divine sequence already implies getting big on systems and structures.

If you ever feel overwhelmed with the immensity of the tasks in your hand, learn to lay them before the Lord. Christ has been made to you wisdom, remember?

Sometimes, you may just be focusing on the wrong things. Life partner instead of therapy or healing. Building a consistent Christian life instead of chasing some big dreams. For some other persons, they may have confused a means for an end. Like I said earlier, realignment takes place in your place of devotion with the Lord.

Reflection: Are you presently taking divine sequence into consideration with regards to your goals?

Further reading: Psalms 32:8

11

Learning Never Ends

...Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain wisdom.
Proverbs 1:5

I have a covenant friend who is an amazing counselor and coach. One time, we were sharing lessons from our growth process when she mentioned how she had felt stuck at some point in her career advancement until she took a break and found out why she was having those mental blocks. It was a knowledge gap problem.

As she shared her thoughts with me, I saw light shine into an area of my life I had been struggling with. I understood that many times I'm not able to move a project forward because I am not interacting with the right knowledge for that task. It is possible that at the beginning, I had interacted with a certain kind of knowledge which was perfectly all right for the level of performance required to run that assignment, but then as I pushed for more capacity, I did not realize that there was a new level of knowledge I should be drinking. Imagine feeding a seven-year-old child breast milk, it is absurd right?

Learning never ends. Get your journal and write down the number of times in a week, you will give to personal development. At first, you might not know exactly what depth of knowledge you require but as you search using the little you already know, the search engines will lead you to deeper

knowledge areas. You'll find out that as you read articles or watch a video, you'll be led to subjects in your field that you had no idea about. Scribble them down in your journal and let them form tools for subsequent researches. You must never lose the growth mindset. To keep growing requires that you are opened much more to learning.

You hear people say that when God commits a task to your hand, it will flow smoothly because you would be riding on the wings of the Spirit. I also believe in the supernatural. Still, the fact that you run a ministry does not mean you should not learn the general principles surrounding productivity or apply for courses that addresses your personal transformation developmental areas. Intellectual knowledge is not against the spiritual in that sense.

At the end of the short chat with my covenant friend, we realized that it was time to delve into the knowledge that synced with the capacity we were trying to build. Just like you have words like 'beginner,' 'intermediate,' 'advanced' in many course programs, it is possible that you are struggling because you are stuck at the beginner' level while trying to attract results at the intermediate or advanced level.

There are cases where you stumble on information relating to your assignment that you never knew existed and you suddenly feel like you have not done anything and you are asking yourself, 'what have I been doing since?' That dissatisfaction should drive you to learn more. We are students with a daily desire to grow in every area of our lives.

Reflection: Do you have a schedule for personal development?

Further reading: Proverbs 9:9, Proverbs 24:4

12

I Want To Be Happy.

Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice.
Philippians 4:4

One windy evening, Eunice sat at the back of her aunt's duplex, sad and discouraged. Her cousins were all in the living room, about ten of them, laughing and feasting on grilled chicken and home-made Chapman. One of her cousins had just returned from the US and a small celebration had been organized. Eunice loved cakes, especially chocolate cakes but she refused to touch the pieces of cakes the servers passed around. She just wanted to be alone.

"Eunice, why are you sitting outside?" One of her cousins asked, after he had found her.

She shrugged and said she was fine. He tried to persuade her to return to the living room but she remained adamant. She didn't want company.

Thirty minutes later, her aunt came out of the house. "You have started again abi? How long will you continue to allow bad moods own you? By the way, have you applied for that course I forwarded to your email?"

Eunice shook her head and turned her face away.

Her aunt was greatly upset. "What is wrong with you Eu-

nice. You don't want to learn any skill or do anything with your life. I wanted to connect you with a friend who is a fashion designer, you refused. I asked if you would learn how to bake, you said you were not interested. Now I'm saying I'll pay for whatever online master program you choose and you didn't even take a look at the link I sent to you. I don't know what you think life is about. You have to grow up!"

Her aunt hissed and left. Eunice sunk deeper into sadness. Why won't anybody understand her predicament. All her cousin sisters who were laughing in the living room were all married. She was the odd one out. Even Yomi that she rocked as an infant was pregnant. She would be thirty-one in two months. Her aunt who was here dishing advice had conducted wedding for all her daughters.

If only I didn't have a big stomach and puffy cheeks, things might have been different, she muttered amidst silent tears.

Eunice liked Pelumi, the head usher, but he wasn't looking her way at all. Didn't she just hear at the choir rehearsals that he had proposed to Stella? One time, Timothy had winked at her and she had thought he was interested in her but he had since not given her much thought. Why were they all avoiding her?

She wiped her tears with the back of her hand. "God, I want to be happy. Is that too much to ask?"

Few months later, Eunice was able to finally grab a man. The night he proposed, she couldn't sleep out of so much excitement.

She's been married now for two years and the joy had since

drained away. She cannot understand it. She feels alone and the happiness is all gone.

When our source of joy comes from people and circumstances, we will never be satisfied. Only in Christ can we truly be joyful.

The Holy Spirit produces such joy that in the worst of circumstances, our hearts are at peace. How do we stay constantly joyful? We pray in the spirit and lift our voices in thanksgiving until those negative emotions are out of the way.

We are called to live by faith, not by excitement. You cannot draw your happiness from unmet desires and the situations around you. I know this can be tough sometimes. Proverbs thirteen verse twelve says when hope's dream seems to drag on and on, the delay can be depressing.

I'm not denying that we will not feel discouraged or be tempted into despair. Our response to these feelings is what matters. When you can dance all the same, laugh and shout in praise, kick out those feelings and declare your trust in God, you drive the devil mad.

When God's Word says, rejoice always, then it means we have the ability to do so because joy is an inherent part of our reborn spirit. We do not allow circumstances dictate the atmosphere of our heart. Your present situation should not stop you from believing in the ability of God to handle those contradictions. You should not be a believer whose prayer life goes on vacation because something isn't working out well. You push against that sadness and do what the word says. Rejoice always.

Stop embracing your so-called melancholy temperament that indulges mood swings and pessimism. We have the spirit-controlled temperament. We walk in the Spirit (Would you stop for a moment here and do a spin dance while you shout, 'Glory!')

Two practical ways to stay joyful always; Pray in the Holy Ghost until your heart bursts forth with joy and declare utterance received while praying. So next time, when anxiety and worry attack your mind, get away from the public and pray in tongues. Build up yourself in the Holy Ghost. You will not only burst forth with joy, you will receive utterances and words of encouragement. The Holy Spirit will give you songs for the moment. In the long run, your feelings will catch up.

We snap out of bouts of depression, discouragement by doggedly plunging into spiritual activities. It's a training process and even when you have indulged the voice of discouragement, snap out of it as soon as you realize it by getting into fellowship with your heavenly Father. God's Word and a consistent prayer and confession life is what we need to stay sane in this world.

God has great plans for your life, no matter what is going on with you right now. Stand in faith and receive all that God wants to do in your life.

Reflection: What steps are you taking to stay joyful in the midst of challenging circumstances?

Further Reading: Acts 5:40-42; Joshua 6

13

Your Dreams And The Secret Place

...But let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. ***Romans 12:2***

At the beginning of January 2020, the Lord emphasized intense prayers that led to hours of stretching in prayers. At that time, my friends and I knew the constant pull to prayers was as a result of the ministerial work ahead but the intensity of one of the assignments that I later stepped into towards the last quarter of that year taught me a lesson that I'll never forget.

The level of consecration for every one differs. You can't compare your process with another person. It is true that there is a level of consecration that we should all possess but you see, as the Lord reveals the nature of our assignments, it comes with different levels of intensity.

For you the Lord might demand that you stop watching movies completely and your prayer partner may not have that nudging. You can't try to convince yourself that there is nothing wrong with watching movies once in a while when the prompting is that you stop completely. Your prayer partner may talk about how interesting a trending movie is, but you know the instruction you have received.

There may be a period of time when the Holy Spirit will in-

struct that for six months you stay away from social media and spend long hours in fellowship with the Lord. To ignore such instructions is to quench the leading of the Spirit. It is by obedience that we heighten our spiritual perception. The Spirit of God knows the depth of the plans God has for us. He sees the blueprint and understands the enormity of the tasks placed in our hands.

Now that I think about the assignment that I carried out later that year, it is clear that if I had not responded to the nudges for those intense prayers in the first and second quarter of the year, I would have crumbled under that assignment. In our secret place, we train ourselves to carry the assignments committed to us.

Is it possible for a believer to miss God's instructions? Of course. God communicates with our spirit and the delivery of such instructions received in our spirit has to be interpreted in our minds so we can carry it out in the physical. This process- moving such information from the spirit to the final delivery stage- will meet with many factors like our emotions, our thoughts, cultural influences, background experiences, traditions and so on. It is in our secret place that we properly align with the will of God.

In prayers, we come into awareness of the shifts in the spirit realm. We understand seasons. We are able to put our emotions under control.

Where God pulls your heart towards long hours of prayers than usual or drives you into that season we call wilderness season, it is wisdom to respond promptly. Your assignment is dependent on these processes.

One other thing I have found out is that the Lord will not

always explain what He is doing. Ours is to act accordingly. You will miss God if you are always waiting for him to explain the process He is taking you through. He is the Father you trust right? That's enough to step in line with his instructions.

Have a prayer calendar that addresses every area of your life. Schedule each day to represent the different dreams and expectations you want to see.

As important as our dreams may be to us, beyond ministry and career, our fellowship with Christ must remain priority such that even if there is no ministry to pursue or career to build, we are satisfied with a daily communion with the Lord.

Reflection: Have you identified the instructions that come with the season you are presenting experiencing?

Further reading: Psalms 17:15 NLT; Luke 6:12-16

14

Comparison Trip.

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves are not wise.
2 Corinthians 10:12

I was growing my influence steadily, yet I wasn't seeing the results God was placing before me because my eyes were glued to what some other persons were doing. The annoying part was that I started to entertain doubts about the veracity of my calling.

I had to reset my mind quickly. How did I do this?

In the place of prayers, I went over the prophecies and instructions I had received and prayed over them again until my convictions were strengthened. While I was doing this, I stayed away from the sources of comparison to reflect on the progress I had made so far.

The second step was that I started to speak out words of thanksgiving for what God was doing in my life. A dance, a loud rendition of songs may just be what you need to get your mind in order.

Another thing I did was connect with someone in my field who had gone through challenging moments before getting

to the level of influence he presently enjoyed. Men like Tyler Perry encouraged my heart on days when I felt I was not making progress. Their process story helped my heart to keep pressing on.

The truth is, we want results. We desire exponential growth. There is nothing wrong about seeking to reach out more with our skills. It is how we go about it that really matters.

Comparisons birth jealousy and envy. It creates inferiority and ungodly desires. You'll forget that there is space for everyone to fulfill their calling and think everyone should be paying attention to you. That's never going to happen. When you are angry or sad because someone is exploding in an area you are passionate about, that's a bad sign that envy has crept in. You must watch it.

Distract yourself by reading books by men and women who became successful through perseverance and resilience. Learn how they effectively stayed in the process. Focus on what it takes to grow your career.

Social media is one of the biggest comparison traps. We see a person posting their titles and accomplishments. CEO this, Founder that, and for you, the Lord is just saying, take care of these teenagers in this school and you are upset or discouraged thinking that you are not making progress in life. That's one definition of not living worthy of the call you have received and such attitudes do not please God.

Spend more time reading books and watching videos that challenge you to be better in your field. When you are too busy fine-tuning your dreams, comparisons will have less effect on you.

More than anything, spend time in God's word. Find out pertinent questions. What season am I in right now? What moves should I be making? What resources should I be interacting with? As you fill your mind with these, there will be a shift away from carnality to contentment in God.

Reflections: What's the state of your heart? How's your reaction to the progress of the people carrying out similar assignments as yours?

Further reading: 1 Corinthians 3:3; Proverbs 14;30, Philippians 2;3; 1 Timothy 6;6-8; 2 corinthians 10;17

15

Help Is On The Way.

Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. ***Isaiah 41:11***

You are a lady. Two weeks ago, you got a job you had no experience in. You had assured your boss that you were capable but when you sat down to look at what it entailed, fear gripped your heart. Where will you start from? For several nights, you stayed up reading and trying very hard to get a grasp of the basics but it looked like Greek to you.

After complaining to one of your friends, she introduced you to a guy who was willing to help you with the basics. You were very excited. The relief was written all over your face. Few weeks after you met him, he started talking dirty with you. You were taken aback and irritated. You didn't waste time to tell him you were not that kind of girl. He got angry and stopped picking your calls. You panicked. How were you going to survive without his help? The management staff were expecting a powerful presentation from you in less than a month.

You apologized. After a few days, he visited your place and tried to kiss you. This was your fault, you thought. You had insisted the training held in a public place but he had refused. What irritated you more was that he was married. Why are some men like this? You wondered.

That day, you ordered him out of your house. He smiled knowing you were helpless. He believed you would return to him to apologize.

That night you sat and cried to God. You tried your hand on some videos. You couldn't concentrate as the presentation date just kept banging hard on your head. You cried yourself to sleep.

A week before the presentation, your slides were far from being perfect. You haddone the best you could. You knew you'd be sacked. If only you had told them from the beginning that you didn't have any experience in projects like that.

While you were cleaning the chairs in preparation for the mid-week church service, one of the new brothers who had joined the team noticed your sad countenance. When he touched your shoulders, you could not hold back the tears. He was kind to take you to the back of the hall and waited for you to be calm.

"What happened?" he asked gently.

You explained your predicament. You were close to losing your job. All of a sudden, the brother smiled. You almost got angry but you were curious too. Why the smile?

"I'll be free tomorrow evening. We can hook up after work and I will help you with it. There is a simple and straightforward method."

You stared at him in disbelief. He smiled and led you back to join the others.

You were shocked at the level of knowledge he displayed. He was patient with you, teaching you some new software that made the work easier. He helped you through every process, giving you resources he'd paid a lot to get. He made you run a mock presentation in front of him twice and taught you how to make your presentation go smoothly. On the eve of the presentation, you held hands with him and prayed together. The tears came again but this time they were tears of gratitude.

Don't go against God's Word to please anyone. It shows a lack of trust in God. Always understand that men are channels and only God is the source. There is help on the way.

You don't have to sleep with that guy to make him marry you because you think at thirty-seven, no other man will show up.

You don't have to forge that contract document to keep your job.

Relying on humans can be dangerous. It will put you at their mercy.

They that trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion which cannot be moved. **(Psalms 125:1)** No matter what happens, we know that the lines will fall to us in pleasant places. This comes only by trusting the Father.
The chorus of this song by Leeland registers in my heart. It might speak to you too.

Even when I don't see it, you are working.
Even when I don't feel it, you are working
You never stop, you never stop working
You never stop, you never stop working.

Cheer up! Help is on the way.

Reflection: Do you trust God even though you have not seen the manifestation of your desire yet?

Further reading: Isaiah 26:3, Psalms 20:7

16

Consistency Speaks

...And sow fields and plants vineyards, and gather a fruitful harvest. ***Psalms 107:37***

Two years ago, I stumbled on the very first article I published on one of my social media platforms. I smiled, amazed at how much I had grown and the level of influence God has brought me into. I still remember how discouraged I was in my first year of blogging when my stats were in trickles. Compare that to last year where thousands flood my blog to read my stories.

I can't forget how I gasped when I saw my mailing community grow speedily within a few months of setting up the subscriber's box.

Consistency pays. When I speak of consistency, I'm not just referring to putting your best into your work, I'm referring to consistent learning and tapping into the right knowledge. I'm saying that you get exponential results when you stay true to your calling and the dreams in your heart. The process of learning, developing, growing and building solid foundations, one block over another will bring great harvest. The results will soon become evident.

I read the parable of the mustard seed and it gave me so much joy to see that there is a process in the agenda of God. Many times, you will start small but God's design is for

growth and exponential increase. **Mark 4 verse 31** speaks about how the mustard seed planted in the ground became greater than all the other plants. Note the words, the seed was planted.

Get your seeds into the soil. Water them and expose them to sunlight. In literal terms, stay diligent, train yourself to be so good even when you can't see much result yet.

For seven years, people did not show up at Tyler Perry's shows. He had to sleep in his car, he got broke and yet he kept going. There is one part of the story I don't get tired of hearing. In 1993, as Tyler Perry prepared for another show, he expressed his frustration to the Lord. Right there, he got a nudge to look out the window. Lo and behold, there was a long line of people waiting to see his show. Tyler Perry went on to selling all the tickets made for that show and since then he has sold out on every single show.

Don't despise the days of small beginnings. They are pruning days that will prepare you for the bountiful harvest ahead. You will see results.

Remember Jesus' words about the process of growing crops? First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. We can't escape processes where the agenda of the Kingdom is concerned. Treat the little you have now with the best you can offer and expect to blossom.

Reflection: What are your expectations? What results are you trusting God to do in your life and career?

Further reading: Psalms 126:5-6; Proverbs 10:5; Galatians 6:9

17

God's Idea vs People's Opinion.

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men. ***Acts 5:29***

I watched a YouTube video where a renowned young man in Nigeria shared his experiences and thoughts about life. After watching that video, I was greatly disturbed. For hours, I found myself wondering if I wasn't just wasting time claiming I was following God's leading. I began asking questions like, didn't God give us brains to brainstorm ideas and build a good life for ourselves? Was it not foolish to say we want to build goals from the place of prayer? Am I not being too spiritual? Who says every fantastic idea is not God's idea? Am I not a child of God? What stops me from prospering?

God's word came strongly to me from **2 Corinthians 5: 15**

And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

For several minutes, I meditated on that verse. I reminded myself that my life on this earth was to please God. In the meeting I had with myself, I reiterated that no matter what, I must walk strictly in line with the leading of the Spirit. I do not pen down quarterly or yearly goals without getting

on my knees first. I must build my dreams from the place of revelation of the spirit. The details of the accomplishment of my mission on earth must flow from constant sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

The world talks about hustling. We speak about being led by the Spirit. We love to see results but never at the expense of divine instructions. We are content with following the leading of the Spirit as He instructs us per time.

There is always the temptation to deviate from the leading we receive in our places of prayers especially in the face of financial lack, desire to get quick results and societal pressures. Like David who when the Philistines surrounded his base, went straight to the stronghold and sought the Lord for solution, we get into the secret place and ensure our minds are in line with God's will.

Remember **Colossians one verse nine?** That is a prayer to hold steadfastly unto especially when the temptation to deviate is strong and when our minds are in a turmoil.

Let me say that we are products of influences. There are people you should not be listening to, no matter how captivating their words may sound. Run from people who despise divine leading. They will weaken your conviction to run with the assignments God is putting in your heart.

As single ladies, we must keep reminding ourselves that Christ is now our life and we can't do whatever we want whenever we want. We build around us a force of Kindgom minded men and women. That's a safe place I tell you. These friends will pull you back in line when you allow sentiments to move away from your calling.

No matter the high-sounding captivating language the world may use to get us on its side, we stand and move only as we are directed by the Lord. Amen.

Reflection: What guides your life, God's instructions or people's opinion?

Further reading: Galatians 1:10, Acts 15:1-32

18

Teachers In Your Seasons.

Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors, there is safety. ***Proverbs 11:14***

A certain man religious leader had thousands of people flood his tent daily to receive counsel. It was so intense that this man would sit from morning till night dealing with disputes and the line only got longer day by day. Resolving disputes was not his only assignment. He was also saddled with the responsibility of leading and overseeing the affairs of the nation.

One day, his father-in-law paid him a visit. As they sat down to talk, this visitor watched the counseling sessions events unfold before him and called his son-in-law aside.

"You will break down if you continue like this." the man said.

"Appoint elders to deal with the minor dispute in their tens and hundreds while you focus on more important disputes. You will weary yourself out if you keep attending to all disputes alone."

That's the story of the legendary Bible character, Moses. He had the gift of men but didn't realize he could use it to his advantage. With these men's support, Moses would be able to focus on the nitty-gritty of the state affairs. He would

have burnt out if he had continued with the status quo. The wisdom from his father-in-law, a teacher in that season of his life saved him from endangering his health.

For every season we step into, there are teachers waiting for us. Whether in form of direct mentoring, resource materials, indirect followership, there will always be those teachers to guide you into the fulfillment of God's plan for your life. Some of them may be for a short time and others will be with you for a very long time. It takes discernment to recognize the difference.

As you step into every season of growth and stay more sensitive to the leading of the Spirit, your heart will be drawn towards certain persons or the wealth of wisdom they have provided by way of books, podcast, videos. I don't even know most of my teachers personally but as I read their materials and watched their videos or signed up for their courses, I have received the tools I need to run my career and assignment.

While it's okay to research and gain the requisite knowledge to push your career forward, these teachers carry the specific wisdom you need to solidify your current stage in life. They don't even have to be believers but you would be able to apply the principles they will be passing across to you to the work you do.

Again, I have to repeat this. There is the deposit of wisdom in the teachers that God will lead you to. The lady who thinks she knows it all is ignorant. She will not be able to tap from this wealth of wisdom we are talking about. I strongly believe that this book is a teacher in someone's season. She may never meet me personally but through this material, she gets the wisdom to move her life forward.

One way I have been able to recognize my teachers is by the strong connection I have with them. As I read their books or feed from their resources, it just resonates in my heart. I find myself always looking out for more of their materials. When it's time to shift to someone else, I also recognize this by the same knowing. All of these happens in the place of intimacy with the Father and sensitivity in the spirit.

You don't determine your teachers by the number of followers they have on their social media platforms. There may be teachers who are not even known by a lot of people but the wisdom you need for your season is right in their hands.

Just the way you know the different seasons by intimacy, your heart will be drawn to the teachers that way. You must also never forget that if an opportunity comes for direct contact with any of your teachers, you will not receive anything if you allow familiarity set in. It is immaturity to despise people God has positioned in your part because of your access to their vulnerability. Honour is a virtue that will keep you drawing loads of wisdom from your teachers.

Reflection: Have you recognized the teachers God is bringing around you? Are you interacting with the different resources they have poured themselves into?

Further reading: Exodus 18:1-27; 1 Corinthians 4:15

19

What Are You Saying?

We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken, we also believe therefore we speak. ***2 Corinthians 4:13***

I am what God says I am. I can do what God says I can do. I have what God says I have.

No matter how impossible the vision looks to my physical eyes, I choose to see with the eyes of the spirit.

I walk by faith. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

In Christ, I have boldness to be all God has called me to be.

My business grows. My career finds new dimensions. Light shines in every area of my life.

I have the gift of the Holy Spirit and therefore I enjoy his leading. I can never be confused. I enjoy clarity all day and every day. I know exactly what God wants me to do.

As a result of my right standing with the Father, I enjoy help in every area of my life. I delight in prayers and in the Word. The entrance of the Word brings light to me. My momentum for the things of the Spirit will never drop. I keep rising higher and higher.

I have a floodgate of creative ideas. I have the ability and capacity to create amazing mind-blowing projects. I excel at everything I do.

My future home is blessed. My kids are blessed. My future is blessed.

I am a light in dark places carrying the Gospel of Christ to different corners.

My works are heard in distant lands. My works stand before kings.

I am content in the plans of God for my life. I am not trapped by comparisons. My gaze is fixed on Christ.

I am sensitive to know the teachers in my seasons and I align in every season with what the Lord will have me do.

My heart beats for what God's heart beats for. I am an ambassador of the Father and I fulfill my divine mandate.

My eyes are opened to the assignments placed in my hands. I see what I must do at every point in time. I break forth to the left and to the right. I fulfill God's purpose on the face of the earth. I use every platform given to me to propagate Kingdom agenda. I am Kingdom minded.

Christ has been made to me wisdom. The wisdom of God is made available in every area of my life.

Thank you Jesus because this life you gave me, I give it back to You. I represent you well.

Reflection: What are you saying?

Further reading: Colossians 1:9

20

Don't Play With Your Thinking Retreats.

*He went out to the field one evening to meditate and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching and Rebekah lifted up her eyes...**Genesis 24:63,64***

I didn't know about thinking retreats until last year. It was a game changer for me. I didn't know that when a person becomes exposed to loads of information as his dreams take shape, it is very important to take certain times weekly or monthly to sit quietly and get the mind unstuck. It never occurred to me that the production of deep creative ideas had been hampered because times of deliberate quietness were ignored

Every time I observed this retreat, I find clarity for my goals and I'm able to see areas of improvements and the next step to take. I always have my journals during my thinking retreats. I have journals for divine instructions, journals for my different expressions, my thought journals and others.

I must say that clarity on paper is one sweet way to have effective thinking retreats. During these retreats, you can write down the things you can't seem to get right, your desire for progress, your affirmations and the images popping up in your heart concerning your vision. In those moments, you are down to earth with yourself.

Thinking retreats or recovery sessions are times when you visualize your future and pour your thoughts out. Be flex-

ible during this time. Move from thought A to thought D and back to B if you like, the point is spread your wings and fly around the world from your bedroom or wherever you are having the retreats. Phone calls are not welcome during those hours of intense introspection. If you must have your phone around, put it on airplane mode.

How do these different journals serve me?

My dream journal contains, in clear terms, the different expressions of my life. You will also find quotations from materials I have interacted with which stayed with me. In that journal, I have my widely important goals, which are the major goals I want to achieve during every quarter, you'll find several reviews of my goals, and ideas that drop in my heart.

In my thought journal, I write about everything. No shakara on paper. It's a freestyle zone. How much progress I have made, the areas I need personal transformation, visions of what my future is like, knowledge I am interacting with.

I also have my idea journals. In that journal, I pen down lots of creative ideas and story ideas that drop in my heart from time to time.

I believe a single lady who desires to achieve God's plan for her life must guard these quiet moments. You can be busy and not productive. It is in these quiet times that you are able to reflect and soak in depth of ideas. Thinking retreats could be a few hours in a week or month-a weekend in a month, a day in the week- depending on how much time you can get away from the public space. If you have not started doing this, do get on board.

In your thinking retreats, what are some of the things you do? Journal. Let soft inspiring songs play. Enjoy the stillness and allow your brain to relax. Mutter tongues at intervals. Go over the dreams and promises God has given to you. Meditate on some of the highlights or quotes from the knowledge you've been interacting with. Write some more. If you are running a personal development coaching course, bring in your work sheets. Use the questions to stir deep thoughts.

Every lady needs this retreat especially if you constantly get overwhelmed or you have a 9-5 you don't enjoy. It's for everyone basically. Your thinking retreat is the place to unwind. It is where hope is birthed. It is at this place you affirm God's Word to yourself.

As I write this, I just imagine sitting by the sea alone on a beautiful morning with my journals, enjoying the morning breeze and the rushing waves of the sea. Oh, how sweet!

Finally, let your thinking retreats end with action plans and possibly a review of your schedules.

Reflection: Will you start your thinking retreat today?

Further reading: Philippians 4:8, Psalm 49:3;119:148,

21

How Important Is An Instruction Journal?

This is what the Lord God of Israel says, 'Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you.
Jeremiah 30:2

Two years ago, while I was praying, I heard a word. I didn't know what it meant. I just knew that the word was connected to a ministerial function that would kick off later. I wrote it down in my journal.

The following day, while praying, some other instructions connected to the word dropped in my heart. I put the words I'd heard down again. After some days, I heard nothing in that line until about two years later.

I was praying one day when it returned to my heart. While I was still trying to understand what the Lord was instructing me to do, I immediately remembered that the instruction was familiar. Quickly, I rushed through my journal and started to flip through it. When I found it, my eyes widened with surprise. It was like a puzzle fitting together. The steps I was supposed to take started to take shape right before my eyes.

Imagine that I had not written what I heard down, I would have lost precious information. Of course I know after another season of praying concerning it, I would get them back but that time should have been used to move to the next stage, not recovering an information. The connection

between what I heard two years ago and the new instruction I received strengthened my confidence in the leading of the Spirit.
Here's what I'm trying to say. Our brains have limited capacity to remember all that goes into it. By writing things down, you provide a place you can easily refer to. This is why as a single lady, you should have an instruction journal.

This instruction journal is the place where you pen down the words God is saying to you in prayers. In this journal, you also have scriptures that have come personally to you as well as prophetic utterances that have come to you. I remember going through my journal and my eyes caught a promise God had given me earlier in the year. It encouraged my heart at a time I was faced with some battles.

As you pray with this journal right beside you, it shows a readiness to hear God. Sometimes, it is only as you pen down the few words you are receiving that more wisdom will be opened unto you. I still remember hearing just one sentence concerning one of my expressions but as I started to write, a flood of images and words followed.

You can decide to keep a physical journal or use apps like Evernote, Google Keep or One note. Whatever the case, be expectant to hear the Father. He will speak to your heart through the inner witness.

Is it possible that during your prayers, you pen down words that flow from your emotions? Absolutely yes.

When you are emotional about something, at first in prayers, you will hear your own desires and thoughts on the matter. It's possible to pen down instructions that were not accurate because your emotions were wrapped around it.

What do you do in this case? Give it time. Spend more time in fellowship with the Lord before making any move. As long as there is a desperation and anxiety hanging around, you'll want to deal with that first while you tarry in prayers some more.

Hold your instruction journal dearly. It will keep you going when things are rough. You will be able to look at what you have written and be encouraged that God is with you.

Reflection: Do you have an instruction journal? Are you regularly taking note of the instructions God is placing in your heart?

Further reading: Habakkuk 2:1-2

22

Accountability Secrets.

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
1 Thess 5:11

Having a goal accountability partner was one of the best highlights of 2020 for me. It put me on my toes and opened my eyes to see that systems are inevitable. It also made me aware of where I was going and reminded me of the things I needed to do.

This is how accountability worked for me. At the beginning of a quarter, I write down my goals for the quarter and break down those goals into monthly plans. During my meetings with my partner, we share our notes and talk about them.

I remember the first time we started the accountability structure, I was really excited about all of the plans I had laid out but by the end of the month, I was discouraged because I had not met half of those goals. There again I learnt not to do too much at a time. I learnt how to create balance with my recurrent goals, that is, the goals that run on a weekly basis like my blog posts, letters to my mailing community and social media content. Those accountability sessions have been learning modules for me. It pushed me to set up structures and systems that kicked out complacency.

You can have an accountability meeting with a group of your friends. While I prefer physical meetings, virtual ac-

countability meetings are great. These friends should be passionate about excelling not just in words but in action otherwise you'll be discouraged. Some ladies want to be 'great' but they want to that by stretching out on their bed or staying glued to entertainment.

Have an agenda for the meetings. What are you going to talk about? Add new creative ideas to keep your meetings full of life.

You can set up a WhatsApp group or decide to meet at the end of the month majorly to evaluate how well you have gone with your systems and goals. It is not a place to criticize or show off your progress otherwise it will lose its purpose.

In my meetings, we are as open as possible. We look at the areas where we are failing and try to bring up solutions. We applaud ourselves for efforts and progress made with our goals. We also understand that learning is a process and building foundations for our careers may require experiments and flexibility.

Accountability meetings are not about having some 'big goals' as we sometimes define certain kind of accomplishments. Your Widely Important Goal (**WIG**) for a quarter could be that you want to build your spiritual life or deal with a past that keeps creeping into your present.

Who sets the standard for big goals anyway? If all you did in a quarter is concentrate on building consistency in your spiritual walk, you'd have achieved something great. If for a quarter your focus is knowledge quest in a personal transformation area, that's big. How do people become top shots in their fields? Is it not by small consistent steps they have

taken over time?
Be flexible with God about the goals you have set for yourself. Last year, I had planned my last quarter so well. I had Christmas packages ready and had executed them mentally but God had something else in mind. I had to pack up those plans for the work God wanted me to do in that quarter. Even when you have shared strategies on how to achieve those goals or build a system, we constantly place all of that before the Lord and allow him to lead as He chooses.

What kind of accountability partner(s) should you have?

A believer yielded to the Holy Spirit is a great advantage. I have had sessions of corrections and light into instructions via discussions with my partner. She didn't even realize that what she was saying was the answer I needed but it helped put me into shape. I will say that, be led by the Holy Spirit before making a choice of accountability partner.

What's an accountability meeting like?

1. You can start off with prayers. Afterwards, share a copy of your monthly goals or system installation plans with your partner. For virtual meetings, you can send as a document on any of the messaging app like WhatsApp or Telegram. For physical meetings, printed copies can be made.

2. Speak about your action plans. I know many ladies love to express ourselves. Sometimes it's fine to just talk randomly once in a while but during meetings, it is important to stay on track otherwise there might be diversions to unprofitable discussions. Everyone in the group could take rounds explaining what they intend to achieve in the coming month

3. Make affirmations.. Here's an example of how affirmations run during my accountability sessions.

Myself or my partner affirm with words like,

"I am smart and intelligent. The wisdom of God flows through me. I enjoy the favour of God. The works of my hands prosper. I am a go-getter. I understand the workings of my dreams quickly..." and so on as the utterance comes.

4. End the meeting with prayers. Ask for wisdom to carry out the various task for the month or quarter. Declare wisdom and strength for your goals. Pray that you will stay only in God's plan for your life **(Colossians 1:9)**

For monthly plans, you can spread out your goals or system methods into different parts. You can have goals for personal development, spiritual goals, project goals and recurrent goals.. Different styles work for different people.

There is also the place of personal accountability. At the end of the day or twice a week, you sit with your goals and systems, find out where you are and what you need to improve on. These are part of the activities for your thinking retreat.

One of the reasons personal accountability is important is that after your monthly meeting, you may forget some of the discussions you made at the meetings. It was few hours to another accountability meeting that I remembered I had run the month on autopilot. Personal accountability and corporate work will keep you on track.

Reflection: Do you have an accountability partner? What steps are you taking to build an accountability strategy?

Further reading: Proverbs 27:17, Colossians 3:16,

23

Be Bold!

In Him I have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. ***Ephesians 3:12***

Sometimes, we confuse 'restraint from the Spirit' with 'complacency.' God is saying move but fear keeps us stuck at a place and we deceive ourselves by saying, God has not given a go-ahead.

There was a time I sensed God wanted me to start a project. The immensity of that project was scary with my natural eyes. I didn't like the fact that it would require me to step out into a zone I was not comfortable with. I wanted to keep doing what I was familiar with, yet the nudge to step out did not leave. I saw already that I would be stretched, pulled out to the front, and it would make me get into the lives of a lot of people.

I tried to convince myself that it might not be God speaking to me about it. But I knew in my heart-this was exactly what God wanted me to do. Every time, I prayed about other things, there was a redirection to the project and increased details on how to run it.

I have discovered that when something is really going to stretch you, it is easy to confuse it with 'God is not leading me.' One of the excuses I wanted to give was that when I get married, my spouse and I would work together on it. I felt I

couldn't handle it alone.

Well, who says God has to wait for you to get a man before pushing huge assignments into your hands?

You might deceive others but you cannot do so to yourself because in prayers, that assignment will stay impressed on your heart. You must be bold to step out into what God is saying.

Remember the story of the Israelites? When Joshua brought them to river Jordan that stood as an obstacle, the only thing he had was the instruction God had given him.

...The priests will carry the Ark of the Lord,the Lord of all the earth. As soon as their feet touch the water, the flow of water will be cut upstream and the river will stand up like a wall. **Joshua 3: 13**

Nothing changed until that instruction was obeyed. It is in obedience to the prompting of the Spirit that we see the supernatural. When God says, move, even when all you can see are contradictions, move!

You are bold! Declare it and move in faith.

God is looking for courageous single ladies who will get out into the arena and snatch men from the kingdom of Satan.

If you stay back in fear, you will never fulfill the assignments for which God has appointed you. No one wants to be replaced right? That will happen if you keep delaying an assignment that requires urgency. As you take little steps of boldness, you get bolder and strengthened. It is in obedience we learn to walk by faith.

Reflection: Is God already speaking to you about anything? Will you allow fear to keep you from stepping into what God has for you?

Take those courageous steps today.

Further reading: Joshua 4: 22-24; Proverbs 22:13

FINAL WORD

I trust that the Holy Spirit is already pointing your heart to different areas that require improvement, transformation and renewal. I believe you have taken hold of a word you need to run with, where your dreams and the divine call upon your life is concerned.

God has a plan. You can become all that He is placing before you. There might be discouragements along the way, you might encounter challenges so intense you are tempted to give up and you might at some point wonder if your life is making sense at all. There may be times in your life when you would have to 'KIV' some necessities to invest in your dreams. You might find that at certain seasons, you are standing alone because people around you can't understand your call and the vision God is placing in your heart.

Sis, always put God's instruction in front of you. Keep your gaze there. When it looks like discouragement is setting in, get aside and spend time with the word and in prayers. It will keep your heart moving in the right direction.

Big dreams are achieved by faith. We look at the assignments in front of us and by trusting in God's Word, we know that there is a great harvest coming even when we cannot see it with our physical eyes yet.

Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy bringing his sheaves with him. **Psalm 126:5-6**

This is the reason we must keep following the leading of the Holy Spirit even when there is nothing tangible we can hold

on to yet. Harvest time will come. We will see the results of diligently pursuing the instructions that we received from our spirit.

Dear single lady, maximize this season of your life. Fulfill God's plan for your life in this phase. Spend time building spiritual stamina and discernment. Soar with wings like eagles. Enjoy the fatherhood of God! Ride on the wings of the Holy Spirit.

This is your best season yet.
Amen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ife Grace is a graduate of law from the University of Benin. She is a faith-based blogger, a platform where she shares biblical principles through the medium of storytelling. She is also the founder of Elevate Transformation Clinic, a faith-based nonprofit organization where she equips and stirs men and women towards the kingdom agenda.

Ife Grace loves to tell stories. She is a scriptwriter and the author of four books; **The Reunion, Spring, Before we got married** and **Lekki Sisi.** She is the publisher of the popular acclaimed blog story series, ***The Diary of a Nigerian Christian Girl.*** Her stories inspire, uplift and communicate meaningful life lessons through the eye of God's word.

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