



PRAYERS FOR CHILDREN

Acts 19:20 I thank you Father that Your Word prevails over our children.
 Isa. 54:13 That they are taught of the Lord and continue to be
 Prov. 13:1 The fruit of godly instruction and correction.
 Isa. 54:13 Great is their peace and undisturbed composure.
 Prov. 2:6 Father, give us counsel and wisdom in bringing up our children.
 1Pet. 1:14 I say they are obedient, not conforming to the things of the flesh,
 1Pet. 1:15 but holy, in all conduct.
 1Pet. 2:2 desiring the pure milk of the Word that they may grow thereby.
 Jas. 1:19 That they are swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.
 Heb. 13:5 Their conduct is without covetousness,
 Heb. 13:5 and they are content with what they have.
 Heb. 13:16 They do not forget to do what is right and to share.
 2Pet. 3:18 I pray that they grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord,
 1Thes. 4:1 and abound more and more in how they should walk and please You.
 1Pet. 5:5 That they submit to their elders, and to one another,
 1Pet. 5:5 being clothed with humility.
 1Pet. 5:7 That they cast their cares upon You, Father, for You care for them.
 Jas. 1:22 I thank You that they are doers of the Word, and not hearers only,
 Ph'm. 1:6 effectively sharing their faith.
 2Tim. 1:7 not having a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.
 2Tim. 1:9 Father, You have saved them and called them with a holy calling,
 2Tim. 1:9 not according to works, but according to Your own purpose.
 2Tim. 4:18 Deliver them from every evil work and preserve them.
 John 10:5 They will by no means follow strangers, not knowing their voices.
 2Tim. 2:22 They abide with others who call on the Lord out of a pure heart,
 Jas. 3:10 and cursing comes not out of their mouth.
 1Jn. 5:18 Because Jesus keeps them safe, the wicked one does not touch them.
 Ps. 91:11 Give Your angels special charge to accompany, defend, preserve
 Ps. 4:8 and provide safety for them, day and night.
 1Jn. 2:5 Because they keep Your Word, Your love is being perfected in them.
 1Jn. 2:15 They do not love the world or the things in the world,
 3Jn. 1:11 and they do not imitate what is evil, but what is good.
 1Jn. 1:7 They walk in the light as You are in the Light,
 Jas. 4:8 cleansing their hands and purifying their hearts,
 2Tim. 2:22 They follow after righteousness, faith, love, and peace.
 Heb. 13:18 They have a good conscience and desire to live honourably,
 Prov. 3:4 having favour and high esteem with God and man.



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MANIFESTATION

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.”
Romans 8:19



CHAPEL OF GRACE

...restoring lives, giving hope

JUNE 2011

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MANIFESTATION

“For [even the whole] creation (all nature) waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God’s sons to be made known [waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship]” (Rom. 8:19 AMP).

God has created you for a purpose and it is time for it to manifest!

Calvary greetings in the name of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who has made it possible for us to see another annual Divine Encounter Conference. This year, our theme is MANIFESTATION. It is my utmost prayer that the King of Glory will cause Himself to be made manifest in every aspect of your life – spiritually, materially, physically and other-wise.

The dictionary defines manifestation as an indication of the existence, reality, or presence of something. Manifestation is also referred to as one of the forms in which someone or something such as a person, a divine being, or an idea, is revealed. The Greek word for manifestation is “apokalypsis” which refers to disclosure; appearing; coming; lighten; be revealed or revelation. This word also has its roots in another Greek word “apokalypto” and it means to ‘take off the cover’. That is, to disclose or reveal something. Manifestation therefore means a reflection, revelation, demonstration, materialisation or expression of God’s glory.

The Bible declares in Rom. 8:19 “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” The Amplified Version puts it even more clearly “For [even the whole] creation (all nature) waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known [waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship]” (Rom. 8:19). This tells us that all of creation is eagerly waiting for that day when God will reveal who His children really are. Know it today that your generation and those around you are waiting for the revealing or appearance of the totality of God in you to be made known. Therefore, I decree over you that your star will shine and no king Herod will be able to terminate or cage the glory of God embedded in you (Matthew 2:16). You will show forth and the whole world will know it.

When God’s glory becomes manifested in the life of an individual there is a sudden divine illumination. In Matt 5:13-14, it is stated that we are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, therefore we are His ambassadors. It is our duty therefore to let His light shine through us and darkness will not be able to comprehend it.

The Bible tells us that “... when men are cast down, then we shall say, there is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person” (Job 22:29). Are you cast down? No matter your situation, in this season of manifestation there will be a lifting up. You will rise and soar as the eagle. You shall be the head and not the tail, above only and not be beneath if only you will choose to hearken unto the commandments of God Almighty (Deut. 28:13). God spoke to us at the beginning of the year that how far He will take us will depend on our willingness to obey divine instructions (Isa. 1:19, Job. 36:11). Therefore, if you obey divine instructions, you will receive divine manifestations and the instructions you choose to obey will determine the future you create. The Almighty God will grant unto you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. You will be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He might be glorified (Isaiah 61:3). God will make your bitter waters sweet and He will open unto you his good treasure, He will bless the work of your hands and you shall be a lender and not a borrower (Deut. 28:12).

The Lord Himself will do all these things therefore look beyond your present circumstances. Don’t take any permanent decision based on temporary circumstances. Remember Jeremiah 32:27 which tells us



that our God is the God of all flesh and there is nothing that is too hard for Him. Hence the psalmist said “Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass” (Psalm 37:5). He is a God of possibilities and His purpose for your life will become manifest during this season (Luke 1:37, Matt. 19:26, Gen. 18:14). Strive to do your best! Do what you can and God will do what you can’t by revealing the greatness inside of you. Therefore, whatever you are going through, do not give up or give in but press through, for this shall also be your season of divine possession (Num. 13:30). Expect a divine turnaround for the tide will turn to favour you (Psalm 102:13). It is your season of wonders (Isa. 9:6-7).

This is also a season of total freedom for those that believe (Ex. 12:31, John 8:36, Isa 49:24-26) and your joy shall be everlasting (Isa. 51:11). Many doors that have been closed before to you shall be opened unto you. Remember the testimony of Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:9 that a great and effectual door opened up unto him, although there were many adversaries. Rest assured that you will overcome and triumph over every opposition in Jesus Name. If Prophet Jeremiah made it through despite all the oppositions, you too will make it through. Remember God told Jeremiah, “I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant” (Jeremiah 1:10). We are God’s battle-axes of this season. It is my prayer that the blade of our axe will remain sharp continually to be able to withstand every force from the kingdom of darkness in Jesus name.

Collectively as a church, we need to let the Holy Spirit do His utmost work in and through us. The supreme task of the Church is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ but many times we see this as an almost impossible task. When we do this, we are forgetting that the Church is the most powerful force on earth because the Church (the people) are the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, expect a purging in His Church and outstanding breakthroughs (2 Kings 7:8-11; Obadiah 1:17-18). Let us be reminded that the whole world is looking for an answer to the problems of the earth and the Church has the answer. Therefore as a church, as a people, we must be active, we must pray, seek God and turn from our old ways (2 Chronicles 7:14-15). We must fulfil the commission of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15-20), and we must allow the Holy Spirit to have His way in our lives and in our church.

In conclusion, I want to assure you that in this season God will put an end to any situations of hopelessness in your life in Jesus name (Luke 5:5) if only you will obey and believe Him. Just like Saul obeyed the command of Our Lord Jesus Christ and became Paul, I encourage you to walk in righteousness and uncommon testimonies shall be your portion in Jesus Name (Isa. 64:4).

... Dr. Akpo Onduku
(Pastor, RCCG Chapel of Grace)

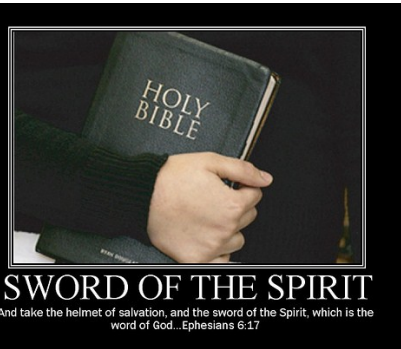
Forcefully Advancing

We give thanks to GOD for His grace through Christ our Lord. This grace gives us pardon and freedom in our manifestation as children of GOD. The question therefore is, are we fully utilising our freedom under this grace? The Bible asks ‘shall we continue to sin because grace abounds?’ Rather, we should be **forceful/violent christians** serving God with fear and trembling.

Matthew 11:12 states “*From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been **forcefully advancing and forceful men lay hold of it.***” Some other versions use the words ‘**violent men**’ instead of ‘**forceful men**’. The dictionary explains violence as an intense force. Force is defined as an active power, strength or energy brought to bear, or physical power possessed by a living being. Therefore I ask, do you want to lay hold of heaven? Are you then a forceful/violent christian?

It is a fact that every Christian wants to go to heaven but our attitudes don’t depict forcefulness. The Bible clearly states that we should **love the LORD with all our HEART, STRENGTH, MIND and SOUL**, (Mark 12:30) and as seen from above, forceful/violent means ‘an active power or strength’. But what do we see, we give God our weakest times and moments. We find it difficult to

even make time for the things that will grow our faith such **as personal Bible studies, prayers, evangelism and avoiding the sins that easily comes our way and not neglecting the assembly of the righteous at these end times** (Hebrews 10:25). Instead, we devote our strength to education, businesses, our jobs and fun in the world. We serve God when



we want and at times want to be begged before we participate in church activities for our LORD. This is not to say education, our jobs etc. are not important but as said in Proverbs 11:1 “*a false balance is an abomination to God, but He delights in a just weights.*”

Nevertheless, we can become forceful christians in areas such as;
1) Striving to be in church regularly and not being late just as we would not be late to catch our buses to

work, even running to church meetings as we run to catch our buses.
2) Active attempts to be doers of THE WORD not just Church goers.
3) Trying our hardest to please GOD the same way we try to pass our exams or to keep our jobs,
4) In the same way that we do not turn down job overtime we should not turn down activities such as evangelism, paying of tithes, giving to charity etc.
5) We should actively force ourselves to know THE WORD through every means available so that we will not be deceived.

Lastly, let us offer forceful PRAYERS, because that is how we can overcome the adversary, the devil. “**For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds**” (2 Corinthians 10:4). Can weak prayers pull down your enemies? Certainly NOT! Therefore, to be among the few chosen ones (Matt.22:14), we need to be **FORCEFUL CHRISTIANS**, praying **VIOLENTLY**, being serious and serving God with great **strength**, then we can be sure to lay hold of the **KINGDOM OF HEAVEN! AMEN!**

By: Rhoda Agyei-Bediako

Proverbs 22:17
“A merry heart
does good like
medicine”

The temporary Sunday School teacher was struggling to open a combination lock on the supply cabinet. She had been told the combination, but couldn't quite remember it.

Finally she went to the pastor's study and asked for help. The pastor came into the room and began to turn the dial.

After the first two numbers he paused and stared blankly for a moment.

Finally he looked serenely heavenward and his lips moved silently.

Then he looked back at the lock, and quickly turned to the final number, and opened the lock.

The teacher was amazed. "I'm in awe at your faith, pastor," she said.

"It's really nothing," he answered. "The number is on a

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WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

SUNDAYS
Workers Meeting 9:30am-10:00am
Sunday School 10:00am-10:45am
Worship Service 10:45am-12:30pm

The first Sunday of the month is a thanksgiving service.
The last Sunday of the month is a healing service.

Children’s Sunday School is available during the service. Parent and baby room is also available.

TUESDAYS
Digging Deep 7:00pm - 8.30pm
(Bible Study)

FIRST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH
Divine Encounter 7:00pm-10:00pm

This is an interdenominational power packed night of worship, prayers and miracles.

SATURDAYS
Evangelism 1:00pm - 3:00pm
Prayer 3:00pm - 4:00pm

QUARTERLY 24 HOUR PRAYER CHAIN
Intercession for ourselves, our families, churches, cities and nations

UPCOMING EVENTS

July—Building Better Relationships (Sundays @ 10am)
Five Sundays of practical & biblical teaching that will build and enrich all of your relationships.

Let’s Talk Relationships
An Interactive Talk Show
Date: Saturday July 16th 2011
Time: 6.30pm-8.30pm

July Divine Encounter
(An interdenominational power packed evening of deep worship, intense prayers and inspirational teaching.)

Date: Friday July 1st 2011
Time: 7pm-10pm

EXPLOSION
(A music concert featuring top UK gospel artists)

Date: Saturday October 8th 2011
Time: 7pm-10pm

The Lord Reigns
(14 days of prayer & fasting featuring daily intercessory prayer meetings culminating in a powerful Prayer Summit)
Date: October 24th– November 6th 2011

For details of other events please sign up for our e-newsletter via www.chapelofgrace.org.uk

The POWER of *encouragement*

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up...” (1 Thess. 5:11)

To encourage means to inspire with courage or confidence; to lift up; to be a strengthening presence. Many people do not have the gift and mental strength to lift up themselves when they are down due to some ugly things that have happened in their lives or what is happening around them, therefore they need help. However, what people readily receive from others in the midst of their calamity is discouragement through bad counsel, gossiping, backbiting, indictments and negative body language. Discouragement in the midst of catastrophe can be very depressing and even life-threatening. May we not be instruments of discouragement in people’s lives whether knowingly or unknowingly.

God knows and sees all the negative circumstances around us and He is a God of encouragement. Whenever we are at our lowest point because of what we have been through, God doesn’t regard us as those devastated people of no consequence and ability. Instead, He sees us from the standpoint of our future state, as a people or a person He has already encouraged and helped to overcome. In Judges 6:12-16, when Israel had repented and cried to the Lord for deliverance, from the seven years of punishment they had received at the hands of the Midianites, God sent His angel to a fear-stricken and discouraged young man Gideon - God’s chosen instrument to lead the war against Midian. The angel’s salutation of Gideon is instructive: *“The Lord is with you Oh mighty man of valour.”* God did not see Gideon as a wounded, discouraged, defeated and inexperienced young man from a God-forsaken race who could not be enlisted in a battle against superior adversaries, let alone being able to lead it. But this was precisely how Gideon saw himself. vs. 15: *“but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.”* God did not give up on Gideon because He had already determined that victory belonged to Gideon and Israel; that this battle will not be decided by physical might but by supernatural power. When we are discouraged, we can do what David did in 1 Sam. 30: 1-8, when there was nobody to encourage him after the Amalekites raided their camp, burnt it down, took all their wives and children away and his devastated soldiers threatened to stone him. The scripture says: *“But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.”* He inquired of the Lord on whether he should pursue the raiding horde and be able to overtake them. The Lord replied with some words of encouragement: *“pursue, for you will surely overtake them, and surely recover all.”* You can learn to encourage yourself with God’s word.

Jesus presided over a ministry of encouragement everywhere He went. He was an encourager *par excellence*. Jesus encouraged sinners and suffering people by His good news of God’s love, by His forgiveness of their sins, by His setting them free from demonic oppressions, by His miraculous provisions of bread after ministering to their spiritual needs, etc. Hence, Acts 10:38 declares: *“how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”* In Lk. 5:8-11, a discouraged fisherman named Peter who had toiled all day without a single catch encountered Jesus at the Lake of Gennesaret. After listening to Jesus preach the gospel of God’s love from his boat, Peter reluctantly obeyed Jesus to re-launch his net into the sea. Amazed at the overwhelming catch from the same sea he had toiled all day empty-handed, Peter bided Jesus to depart from him, describing himself as *“a worker of iniquity.”* Peter saw himself as an undeserving bad man that Jesus should stay away from, but the Lord was looking at what this uneducated sinner would be in future. Even after Peter denied Jesus and abandoned the calling following Jesus’ crucifixion, the resurrected Master still went out to look for Peter to encourage and restore him. Peter thereafter became the head of the apostles and a strong encourager of the brethren. I believe that if Judas Iscariot had not committed suicide (albeit in fulfillment of scriptures), Jesus would have also restored him back to faith.

1 Thess. 5:11 admonishes us to *“encourage one another, and bear one another’s burden.”* How are we expected to do this? There is a man in scriptures that provides us a spectacular example - a man whose name was originally Joseph but the apostles renamed him Barnabas meaning *“the son of encouragement.”* We can identify five steps about how Barnabas operated this special gift and ministry.

The first is generosity in sharing his personal possessions. In Acts 4:36-37, which is the first place Barnabas was mentioned in the Bible, we are told that he sold his land to meet the need of communal living – to feed the needy and everyone in the church. What a far-reaching material sacrifice! Encouragement demands self-denial and material sacrifice to meet the needs of others and the community. But it is important to note that Barnabas’ act of charity and that of other believers was volitional; nobody induced it.

The second is being a voice for the voiceless and accommodating the vulnerable. This activity goes hand in hand with hospitality. In Acts 9:19-31 when every one of the disciples rejected Saul because of his evil past, Barnabas was the only one that accepted him (“took him” according to new KJV bible),

stood with him, and served as his advocate before the apostles. Saul was not only accepted because of Barnabas’ intervention, but he later became the famous Paul and a great apostle.

The third is making yourself available for the various works of ministry in the church – praying and ministering to those in need, teaching and counseling younger believers and anyone who could confide in you with his problems, etc. Some compassionate believers have gone as far as to establish “Barnabas Committees” in their churches to help identify individuals in desperate need and do their level best to

help. In Acts 13:1-2, Barnabas was mentioned among the prophets and teachers in the Church in Antioch where he ministered to others. It was while serving in this church that the Holy Spirit recognized him and set him apart with Paul for the first missionary journey. Would the Holy Spirit recognize us today for any ministry we have assumed and excelled in?

The fourth is visitation, follow up and exhortation of fresh converts and infrequent worshippers. In Act 15:36, *“Paul said to Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.”* This marked the beginning of the famous second missionary journey.

The fifth is forgiving and restoring offending believers; always giving them another chance. In Acts 15:37-39, Paul refused that Mark would accompany them on the second missionary journey because he deserted them mid-way in their previous expedition. Barnabas insisted on encouraging Mark by giving him another chance. Unwilling to accept Mark, Paul parted ways with Barnabas and took Silas along with him. Barnabas went with Mark. The second chance that Barnabas extended to Mark worked out commendably well because the restored Mark was the person that wrote the first and oldest gospel that also bears his name. Early church historians wrote that Mark in his later life relocated to Alexandria in Egypt where he founded a Christian church and became its first bishop, thereby joining the Ethiopian Eunuch in bringing the Christian faith to Africa.

Beyond the Barnabas’ account, the sixth and perhaps most important point is that an encourager has to be someone trustworthy and able to keep confidential secrets. Many people in desperate need of encouragement are people rendered vulnerable by their plight and who probably have badly damaged sense of self-dignity. A Christian encourager should not take advantage of such persons’ vulnerability. Instead, he should be sensitively protective and help them to rebuild their dignity. It will be unethical to publicize people’s sensitive problems with direct attribution in the name of testimony.

Let’s always encourage one another because there is great power in encouragement – comeback power, restoration power, survival power, and prevailing power.

By Ken Omeje

The founding Pastor of RCCG Chapel of Grace. He is currently a professor with the United States International University, Nairobi, Kenya.

OVERCOMING TIMES OF CRISIS *Abigail as a case-study*

Crisis is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “A time of intense difficulty or danger.”

What do you do in times of intense difficulty or danger? In 1 Samuel 25, we see how a lady called Abigail handled a time of crisis. Abigail’s husband Nabal had so much offended David that 400 of his men were on their way to kill him and her whole household! There is a lot that we can learn from Abigail’s character traits and how she handled this crisis.

One of the first things that we notice is that **Abigail was a thermostat and not a thermometer**. She was not defined by her environment; rather she created her own style of life. In 1 Samuel 25:2 we see that Nabal had great wealth. In fact, his sheep and goats were equivalent to £50,000, he would also have had land, assets, cattle and other stock. This wealth had caused Nabal to become arrogant and selfish, however it did not corrupt Abigail.

Abigail was known to be a sensible woman or according to the KJV **she was a woman of good understanding** (1 Sam 25:3). Prov. 4:7 tells us that *“wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding”*. The dictionary defines understanding as an individual’s perception or judgement of a situation. Therefore, to overcome a time of crisis (intense difficulty or danger), we need to have good perception or judgment. Abigail was also said to be beautiful, she may have been physically beautiful but I believe that the scriptures were telling us that **she was inwardly beautiful** as is described in 1 Peter 3:3-5. *“...the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.”*

In 1 Sam. 25:17, we see that the servants came to alert Abigail to the situation and said *“You need to know this and figure out what to do.”* This meant that **she was considered approachable and wise**. The servants had confidence that she had the ability to figure out what to do. **She had the ability to listen, remain calm and find a solution**. James 1:19 says *“You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry”*. Abigail listened calmly, she didn’t cry or shout, make a phone-call or go on Facebook to post a status update as many of us would do. She listened, thought about it and quickly decided what to do.

1 Sam. 25:18 tells us that **“Abigail wasted no time”**. A crisis can have paralyzing effects, and the longer you wait to do something, the harder it will become. James 2:17 says *“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone”* If Abigail had sat down and confessed, even decreed by faith that all would be well without taking any action, that would not have been enough to solve this crisis, she needed to act.

In a time of crisis, you may have to do something, not something rash but something that is led by the Spirit. *“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. 8:14).*

Abigail was also a generous person as *“she quickly gathered 200 loaves of bread, two wineskins full of wine, five sheep that had been slaughtered, nearly a bushel of roasted grain, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 fig cakes.”* She took all of this and went to meet David personally. Generosity can get you out of many tight corners in life. In fact, giving a gift can open doors and it often gives access to important people. Prov. 18:16 says *“A man’s gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.”* We also see that **Abigail was independent** enough to make decisions on her own for the good of her family. Nabal was getting drunk at the time of this crisis and so she didn’t tell him but used her own initiative. An incomplete person will make an incomplete marriage; don’t marry someone just to complete you. Col. 2:10 tells us *“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:”* Don’t wait for your family, spouse or friends to solve every problem for you.

Another quality that Abigail possessed was **humility**. 1 Sam. 25:23 tells that *“When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed low before him.”* Bv being humble before David, she averted disaster. *“In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them”* (Prov. 14:3). James 4:10 also tells us we should *“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor”*. We are also told that Abigail fell at his feet and said, *“I accept all blame in this matter, my lord.”* She was humble to take the blame even though the fault rested with her husband. Humility however does not mean weakness. **Abigail was also brave**, she risked her life by facing 400 armed men and spoke boldly. David threatened to kill Abigail’s whole household yet **she spoke to him with kindness**. You need to know how to have a mouth full of honey - Psalm 119:103 says *“How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth”*. In a crisis, how do we speak? Prov. 15:1 says *“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.”* A soft answer is not a weak one. Often the most powerful responses are given in the mildest tone. Even though the substance is firm, the language and spirit are gentle. Such an answer is hard to resent or refute. Anger is silenced. These negative emotions or attitudes cannot burn without fuel to feed them.

In 1 Sam. 25:29-31 Abigail demonstrated that she was **discerning of spiritual matters**, she knew the promises of God concerning David



and she **chose to see the issue from the perspective of destiny not just the present moment. She was a destiny helper and not destroyer. She was a peacemaker, not a trouble stirrer**. She may have been fed-up of her husband’s behaviour but she preferred to bring peace to her home instead of destruction. Prov. 14:1 says *“A wise woman builds her home, but a foolish woman tears it down with her own hands.”* Always try to be a peacemaker as they are blessed (Matt. 5:9).

In the morning, after the crisis had been averted and Nabal was sober, his wife told him what had happened. As a result he had a stroke and was paralyzed. Ten days later, he died. God was the one that dealt with Nabal which teaches us that vengeance is the Lord’s (Deut. 32:35). When David heard that Nabal was dead, he sent messengers to Abigail to ask her to become his wife. Abigail therefore received recompense for all that she suffered at the hands of Nabal as David later became King and therefore Abigail was the wife of a King.

Abigail’s story assures us that If we are wise and listen to the voice of God, there will always be a solution to every crisis. Many people tend to respond to the stress created by the initial impact of a crisis more than to the actual situation. Their internal stress adds to the initial stress, sending them into a downward stress spiral, and they quickly lose their ability to maintain their composure and think clearly. You can prevent this scenario if you can settle yourself internally. **EVERYTHING is a matter of perspective. When you change the way you look at something, the thing you are looking at changes**. Therefore, if you can step back for a moment and try to look at your situation objectively, you can usually re-define the crisis. and this will often reveal answers you couldn’t see from your original vantage point.

Reminding yourself about why you set out on this journey in the first place will help you to give even greater perspective to the immediate challenge. You’ll be able to view it more as a bump in the road, because you’ll see there is a bigger picture to consider. Lastly, be assured that with God, nothing is impossible. John 6:33 tells us to *“...be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”* **Therefore, you can overcome any crisis when God is on your side”!**

By Andrea Onduku

Alive for a PURPOSE

The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were when we created them.” Albert Einstein

Have you ever asked yourself these questions?

- ⇒ **Why did God create me? Why am I alive and not dead? Why am I doing what I am doing?**
- ⇒ **How do I discover what I have? What do I do with what I have?**
- ⇒ **How do I move from a wishful kind of thinking to a more purposeful one?**
- ⇒ **If God created me for a purpose, why is it that such a purpose is so difficult to find?**
- ⇒ **How do I get to the next level and move my life from Gaps to Significance?**

In order to understand and resolve the problems that we face today, we need to understand some principles that I want to share with you:

We are sowing **SEEDS** every day of our lives. Our thoughts, actions and energies are all seeds we sow daily for a future harvest. Your SEED most importantly is your assignment in life and your assignment is the work God has created you for, which is His purpose for your existence.

Nevertheless, we must understand that the **SOIL** you sow into in life is also important. Stress, depression and fear and such like can be perceived as sowing into weak soil. However, you can also sow in peace, joy and love etc. These represent the fertile rich soil of God.

In life, we either sow into *God’s Hands* or the *devil’s Hands*. Into whose hands are you sowing today?

Another important principle is that of understanding that we have been created for a specific purpose.

I want to encourage you that as long as there is breath in you, there is hope. The only people without purpose or reason are those who lie six feet under the ground. We are all born with a song on our lips and you must sing yours



while you are still alive. **You may have a means of living but do you have a meaning to live for?** Discovering your God given purpose may seem like a mystery, but it is never a mystery without direction. If you are spiritually driven, the Holy Spirit will connect you and your life will begin to work

The purpose of this article is to serve as a catalyst for you to be inspired to achieve three major things in life.

Firstly you need to **Discover Gods purpose for your life. (Proverbs 25:2)** The word *‘discover’* simply means to uncover what is covered in your life. The Glory of the Lord conceals, man must reveal.

Secondly you need to **rediscover Gods purpose for your life. (Romans 8:28)**. The word *‘rediscover’* simply means you had something but you lost it. Whether it is because of life’s obstacles, stress, depression or misunderstandings, you can still rediscover Gods best idea for your life. Your life today is the best gift God has given you

Thirdly, you need to **TAKE WHAT YOU HAVE TO THE NEXT LEVEL (Proverbs 12:27)**. There is no point discovering or re-discovering yourself and not processing it to the finest level. You may be experiencing a gap in your life today where nothing seems to be moving forward, but I assure you, **SIGNIFICANCE** awaits you. With passion and Divine wisdom you can make it! Remember that you are **ALIVE FOR A PURPOSE!** Discover and live it today!

By Kofi Owusu Amoateng

Alive For A Purpose is a practical book that uses stories of men and women of our generation that you can easily identify with. It contains over **70** keys and principles to think and act upon concerning purpose and is available via www.amazon.co.uk or www.onwardsandupwards.com. You can also contact Kofi Owusu directly via chieffaro@yahoo.com or www.facebook.com/kofiamoateng

PREMARITAL Counseling

The key to saving the future of marriage

Marriage is a union created to bring about companionship, relationship, happiness and fulfillment of life. On the contrary, looking at our society today, the reverse is the case. Only few enjoy their marriages while others are on the verge of desolation. We can see frustration and regrets on the faces of many couples while divorce has become the order of the day. In many countries across the world, marriages break down with tears and regret everyday while children suffer the impact of marital conflict.

In the UK, the story is just the same, divorce has become a routine procedure and today many single parents need to claim benefits from the government to survive. According to Brink-Budgen (1990) in his book on “How to survive divorce”, he stated that Britain has the highest rate of divorce, about 170,000 people divorce every year and the average marriage that ends in divorce lasted for 5-10 years. Worryingly, he also states that approximately 2,000,000 children are affected by divorce and with the proportion growing steadily soon one in five children will see their parents’ divorce. Divorce and marital conflicts have denied many children of being able to enjoy both parents being at home caring for them.

The future in marriage looks endangered, however the good news is that the solutions to these problems are not far from achievement if only we can get access to the information that will sensitize and prepare us toward the challenges encountered in every day marriages. Indeed, a marriage without pre-marital counseling is like a building without a solid foundation and cannot last.

It is therefore essential that engaged couples go through pre-marital counseling with their pastors. This will give the couple spiritual guidance as to their choice of marriage partner and also help them to discuss issues that may arise during their married lives. God’s place in the marriage should be discussed to ensure that the decision to marry is based on this rather than physical and emotional attraction alone. Many Christian pre-marital counseling ministries explain that it is necessary to consider the place of God in marriage. They advocate that there needs to be a spiritual dimension to marriage to avoid issues that arise through a lack of understanding and rushed involvement. They assert that the consequent failure of marriage can lead to very serious damage to the soul- the very essence of the individual’s personality. The major points of discussion in pre-marital counseling may include:

The Intending Couples’ Identity: This composes of issues relating to the couples’ personal qualities in age, social, economic and spiritual maturity and the total conviction of both parties being ready for the marriage. It is essential at this stage that both parties are honest about their backgrounds, their status in life and even their medical history. If anything is kept secret, it will have a great impact on their later marriage life. Medical history and current health status is one of the areas that many couples do not consider as important in their preparation for marriage but the consequence of their ignorance or neglect can turn out to be the “thorns on the flesh” of their marriages. In fact, almost 20% of most marriages collapse due to one or more of medical problems and genetic incompatibility. Pre-marital counseling therefore should consider and address issues such as sexual and reproductive health including sexual personal hygiene, contraception and the prevention of blood borne and other sexual transmitted diseases. Any known barriers to reproduction should also be openly discussed at this point. Couples may also be screened for their genetic make-up such as ABO, Rhesus blood grouping, carrier testing for sickle-cell, other haemoglobinopathies and genetic disorders as well as their possibilities of transferring these traits to their offspring. Any incompatibilities found do not necessarily mean that the couple cannot marry, rather it is wise that both the couple and their pastors are aware of the situation so that the issues can be dealt with in the place of prayer.

The Purpose of Marriage: - Couples should be counseled on God’s purpose for marriage such as the need for help and companionship (Gen.2:18-24, Deut.24:5) and comparing this purpose with the intending couples’ motives behind getting married. Many people go into marriage with intentions different from this divine purpose. For instance, some people marry for fame, money, physical attractions etc.

The Meaning of Commitment:- Marriage is a life-time commitment. Making the decision to marry involves placing your partners’ interest above everything. This indicates readiness to sacrifice and abide by the divine commandments of marriage irrespective of conditions (Eccl.9:9, Prov.5:15-18, 1 Pet.4:8, 1 Tim.5:8, 1 John 3:18, Ephes.5:21-31).

The Role of Family and Friends: - When intending couples decide to be joined in marriage, it involves putting the two families into close relationship. This widens the branches of friendship to the in-laws and friends. To reduce the risk of damage to the marriage therefore involves learning how to relate freely through love, sharing and appreciating their company while putting adequate boundaries in place.

Roles and Lifestyles: - It is necessary to discuss roles in the family and who will be responsible for various duties in the home. For example will the woman stay home with the children or go to work part-time or full-time? Financial responsibilities, money management, lifestyles and attitude to spending and savings as well as making of contingency plans also need to be discussed. The roles of the husband and wife are clearly spelt out in the Bible and these should be used as a blueprint for their lives together. For example, The role and responsibilities of the man to his wife are amongst others love, care, petting, presence, defense and help in the time of need (Ephes.5:25-33, 1Cor.7:33, Col.3:19, 1Pet.3:7). The role and responsibilities of the woman to her husband and family are amongst others a returning love, care, respect, submission, faithfulness and cleanliness (Ephesians 5:22-24, Titus.2:4. 1Pet.3:1-6).

Communication Skills: - The intending couples will also be taught on how to communicate, exchange ideas and the pattern of resolving issues. Communication about sex is one of the major causes of conflict in most marriages. Most couples believe it is a criterion for love in the marriage rather than the consolidation of their agreement. The ability of the intending couples to counsel themselves against such expectation could enable them know how and when to communicate for the participation and pleasure of both parties. Sex in marriage should be guided by Biblical principles (1Cor.7:1-5, Prov.25:28, 5:15-23, Matt.5:27-28, Exod.20:14, Lev.18:20, 20:10-21) .

Romance:- The intending couple also need counseling on how to keep the fire of love and romance alive throughout their married life so as to make it last longer than expected and to grow new every day.

False Expectations: - The intending couple needs to focus on the reality of building a marriage which may not meet their ideal expectations. There is a danger that the couples’ false expectation could be the source of their biggest frustration. Many in courtship believe that every day of their marriage will be sweet but in fact there are times when things do not look rosy and they may not even like their spouse at that point but they need to push through nevertheless and the ‘sweet’ times will return once more. In many relationships, there can be a lot of acting and pretence. This brings about expectation from the partners about the behavior expected from each other during marriage. The failure to meet this expectation usually results in conflict. The intending couples need to counsel themselves to appreciate the finer points of their partner (good or bad) and this will enable them have a better control over their impulses and to understand how their emotions are at work.

Utilizing Information: - An intending couple who have attended premarital counseling will have had a lot of open discussion on marital issues. However, they will need to utilize the information that will be beneficial to them in their marriage.

In conclusion, pre-marital counseling provides full and open discussion on issues relating to marriage which helps to guide and clarify the intending couples’ thoughts and feelings. It will also help them to reach decisions or even make possible changes in their life as well as to plan for the future in their marriage. Pre-marital counseling therefore is a great solution that can protect future marriages against the present predicament that marriage as an institution is facing.

By : John Sylvester 3

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF

The worst habit you could ever have is to feel sorry for yourself as it is a waste of TIME and ENERGY. Do you know why?? The same time and energy can be used in praising and showing gratitude to God for the gift of LIFE.

God has raised you up to STAND on mountains, to WALK on stormy seas and to be more than you think you can be—only if you BELIEVE.

Regardless of what people think or say about you, what really matters is how you see yourself. Never underestimate what is inside of you that makes you special.

You need to learn to acknowledge yourself and remove all negatives because what you think of yourself is what you will be more likely to become. Moreover there was never a great soul that did not have some Divine Inspiration.



YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE GREAT TO START BUT START TO BE GREAT!

BELIEVE IN YOURSELF!!

By: Adaobi Obiukwu Adinnu