

the monthly
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Issue 25

The Official Magazine of the Power Must Change Hands Programme

Time to Awake!

Prophetic Outlook For Year 2013

The Mystery Of First Fruit Offering

The beginning of Miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth his glory: John 2:11

Welcome Message

From The Assistant General Overseer

Dear Sisters,

It is a privilege and with the blessings of the Almighty God, the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost that we all are part of today's gathering which, by His Grace is to His glory. It is that time again when we all gather together in one accord and in one voice, expectant of the Lord Almighty, the God that answereth by fire to meet with us all at our points of need.

I welcome you all to the Annual Women's Deliverance of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

A programme like this is not ordinary, neither is it spurned together by mere compulsion of man. This gathering was ordained by God to set the woman free from the ceaseless attacks, wars and bondages that the devil has been placing on her since the beginning of age. The battle against the woman is strategic and deliberate. Regardless of what anyone tells you, you, the woman, are very special and dear to God. So great is the woman's role in creation of life that she was chosen to carry the deliverer of mankind, Jesus Christ the Redeemer, who defeated Satan, crushing his head. For this reason, Satan's enmity is extended to her and her seeds. Her spiritual seed, through Christ, against which Satan now wars, is all true believers who form the Body of Christ, the Church. The woman, the Church, has always been, and will always be persecuted and hated by Satan. Beloved Sisters, a programme such as this has been set apart by God to bring forth a great deliverance for the woman. It is specially

organised to set her free, to place her on a high place so that she can achieve her destiny. I prophesy that every woman who has been put under the bondage of the enemy will break free in Jesus name.

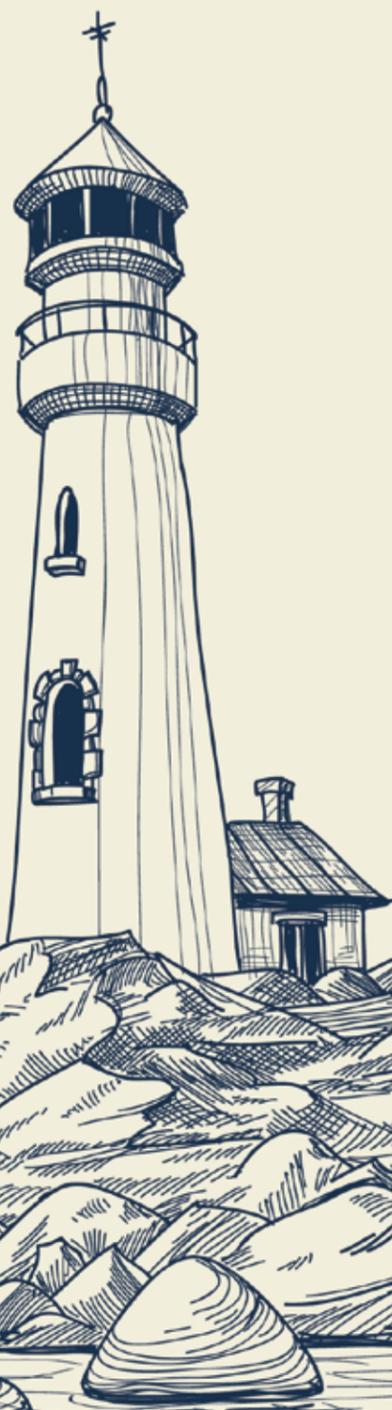
Luke 13 v 12 says, "And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." This scripture is specifically for the woman who is reading this message. It is a scripture that shines light on how the Lord feels about any woman in bondage. You will note that it was when Jesus saw her that he spoke healing into her life. You will note that "he called her to him." He invited her to his grace, his compassion, his love. If you are here today, Jesus specially invited you here and I pray that as Jesus sees you, sitting in this service, He will reach out with compassion and declare you loosed from every form of infirmity. Regardless of what form, either physical, marital, financial, academic...regardless of how this infirmity has taken shape, or for how long it has plagued you, be rest assured that the Lord who is mighty to save will touch you in a special way today in Jesus name. By your encountering Jesus through coming here for this mighty programme, I decree that your life would never be the same in Jesus name. It is my prayer today that wherever you are, the Lord will locate you today and anoint you as queens of His Kingdom and that your coming here will mark a positive turning point in your life from now.

Finally, I pray once more that your heavens will open and all the powers fighting

against your destiny be destroyed by the fire of the Holy Ghost in Jesus name.

Once again, welcome.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Kehinde Adegbolahan
A.G.O (Missions & Evangelism Worldwide)



From The Editor's Lounge

Dear beloved,

For years, I longed to hear from the living God, and hoped that he'd perhaps speak to me. I thought I had to do something special to earn this right. I continued hoping until one day, I listened to a sermon that sent a thundering revelation through me. The man of God preached about the importance of establishing a quiet time in order to hear God speak. He further assured the congregation that: "God wants to speak to every one of you."

That statement had a profound impact in my life. God wanted to speak with me? It took a few days for my mind to wrap around this wonderful truth. After worshipping, praising and praying to God, I reached out to the Lord, opened my heart to him and waited for him to speak. For a moment, I held my breath, doubting if he would.

And then he did. It was the gentlest whisper of love and assurance that I had ever experienced in my life. I laughed. I cried. I worshiped God had heard me, and had spoken to me. My heart swelled with joy and gratitude as I conversed with my father, the love of my soul.

For months, I thrived. Right before my eyes, my behavior transformed, and for the first time in my life, I felt truly loved, and I loved. Time flew by, and I neglected my quiet time. Don't get me wrong. I still prayed. Oh, I fired prayers, loaded with deadly ammunition against the evil powers. I attended every church service, confessed scripture of protection and warfare on a daily basis and did the work of God with zeal. But I had cut off The Voice. The effects were almost devastating. My life began to lack direction. I noticed a change in my attitude. Tempers

flared quicker, impatience reigned, doubt nagged. Worst of all, I felt empty, lost, somewhat abandoned.

Desperation and sadness hung around me like a nook, taunting me, ready to squeeze precious life out of me. It drove me to my knees and I cried out to God. "Why have you deserted me?" I wailed. "My spiritual life is dry, Lord, fill me."

The response was swift, as though He'd been waiting for me to ask all along. "Seek me and I will be found."

And then it hit me. My quiet time with God was an opportunity for me to seek him.

You see, the life of a Christian cannot be fruitful without that two way communication with God- you speak, and He speaks. You converse with him, and he with you. He directs, you obey.

Beloved, do you have a quiet time? Or like a mobile phone battery that has not been charged in a while, are you slowly losing power? Is your spiritual battery bar turning from amber to red, warning you?

When we do not spend time with God in a moment of quiet searching, we get disconnected and eventually, if we do not reconnect and charge up, we die a spiritual death.

The articles this month are specially selected to encourage and direct us back to the source. Be blessed as you read and share.

Happy new year once again,
 Abimbola Dare

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Hymn 1

Praise my soul The King of Heaven:

1. Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven;
To His feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Evermore His praises sing:
Praise Him, Praise Him.
Praise the everlasting King.
2. Praise Him for His grace and favour
To our fathers in distress.
Praise Him still the same as ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Praise Him, Praise Him.
Glorious in His faithfulness.
3. Fatherlike He tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame He knows.
In His hands He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Praise Him, Praise Him.
Widely yet His mercy flows.
4. Angels in the height, adore Him;
Ye behold Him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before Him,
Dwellers all in time and space.
Praise Him, Praise Him.
Praise with us the God of grace.

Hymn 2

1. They were gathered in an upper chamber,
as commanded by the risen Lord,
and the promise of the Father
there they sought with one accord,
when the Holy Ghost from heaven
descended
like a rushing wind and tongues of fire:
so dear Lord, we seek Thy blessing,
come with glory now our hearts inspire.

Let the fire fall, let the fire fall,
let the fire from heaven fall;
we are waiting and expecting,
now in faith, dear Lord, we call;
let the fire fall, let the fire fall,
on Thy promise we depend;
from the glory of Thy presence
let the Pentecostal fire descend.

2. As Elijah we would raise the altar
for our testimony clear and true,
Christ the Saviour, loving Healer,
coming Lord, Baptizer too,
ever flowing grace and full salvation,
for a ruined race Thy love has planned;
for this blessed revelation,
for Thy written word we dare to stand.

3. 'Tis the covenanted promise given
to as many as the Lord shall call,
to the fathers and their children,
to Thy people, one and all;
so rejoicing in Thy word unfailling,
we draw nigh in faith Thy power to know -
come, O come, Thou burning Spirit,
set our hearts with heavenly fire aglow.

4. With a living coal from off Thy altar
touch our lips to swell Thy wondrous praise,
to extol Thee, bless, adore Thee,
and our songs of worship raise;
let the cloud of glory now descending
fill our hearts with holy ecstasy,
come in all Thy glorious fullness,
blessed Holy Spirit, have Thy way
come in all Thy glorious fullness,
blessed Holy Spirit, have Thy way

21 Things The Devil Wants To Kill And Destroy In Your Life

By A.G.O- Pastor Kehinde Adegbolahan

John 10:10 says:

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy." In the life of every Christian, here are 21 vital things the devil targets and determines to rob you of. This message is especially vital to women. What are these 21 things?

1. Your Purpose: It is purpose that gives a life definition and meaning. A life with no purpose becomes worthless.

2. Your Desire: The bible says the desires of our hearts shall be granted but when desires are killed, frustration sets in.

3. Your Vision: Vision takes a person to their destination. Vision creates room for the next level and enlarges your coast. When vision is killed, stagnancy prevails.

4. Your gifts: The gifts of a man shall make a way for him and cause him to stand before great men says the word of God. Many have not been able to stand before great men because the gifts which will open this door unto them have been buried.

5. The fruit of your body: Woman, the devil's desire for your children and children's children is to destroy them. He is after the wasting of your generation and its non-existence. We have to pray hard for our children.

6. The fruit of your labour: The great delight of the devil is profitless hard work. He delights in men and women not having anything to show for their labour.

7. Your Marriage: Marriages crash daily at an alarming rate. Once the family unit is broken, the society and nation will have a problem of unity.

8. Your Calling: As the kingdom of light threatens the kingdom of darkness, the devil does not want anyone to fulfil their ministry. The fulfilment of your ministry to the devil means the defeat of his kingdom.

9. Your Potential: Potential is defined as what you can do but have not done. The devil prefers it when men and women do not wake up to their own potentials. Ignorance of what you can do leads to an unfulfilled life.

10. The instrument of your blessing: When the devil takes this away from you, while others are boldly speaking of the Lord's goodness you will not have a testimony to share.

11. Your expectation: The expectation of many has been killed due to lack of faith. When you are not expectant, you end up receiving nothing.

12. Your star: A shining star signifies a colourful destiny. When the devil dims the light of your star, the end result is a wasted life.

13. Your voice: Every man has been given a voice by God. One of the joys of the enemy is to silence voices and make sure the authority of your voice is lost.

14. Your life: This represents your divine assignment in life. It's the devil's delight when men and women do not discover, start or complete the agenda of God for their lives.

15. Your divine helper: Divine helpers are those God has raised up to assist you. When the devil rages, he makes sure you miss your divine helpers.

16. Your career: This symbolizes what you are able to do. When a career is under the attack of the devil, it will struggle to succeed.

17. Your name: The devil also enjoys erasing the names of families, men, women, children etc from existence most especially if they constitute a threat to his dark kingdom.

18. Your destiny: Destiny is summed up as your mission here on earth. When a destiny is killed a man or woman becomes a walking corpse.

19. The promises of God: When the devil attacks the promises of God for you, they will not come to pass. The danger of this is that one will remain in the valley of promises instead of arriving at the mountain top of fulfilment.

20. Your Future: As Christians, our future is in heaven. Any one who ends up in hell has simply been cheated and outsmarted by the devil.

21. Your present life: The devil does not want anyone to complete the number of their days on earth. Untimely death is one of the weapons of the devil to fulfil this aim.

My Sisters, Jesus Christ reminds us in John 10:10 that "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." The ministry of Jesus Christ is to undo the works of darkness. If you haven't, surrender the totality of your life to Him, for in Him alone is found deliverance, healing and restoration. This special programme in this month of may, be filled with the son of God and live life to the full.

As you pray the following prayers with faith in your heart, believe the Lord Jesus for a great miracle.

Prayers

1. *The potential of heaven in me be fulfilled in Jesus name.*
2. *Every ground I have lost to the enemy be recovered by the blood of Jesus.*
3. *Power to excel physically and spiritually fall upon me in Jesus name.*
4. *The power that wants to silence my voice I silence you with the fire of God.*
5. *The power that wants to erase my name out of existence I stop you with the blood of Jesus*



Medicine for Winners

Deuteronomy 28: 13 says, "And the Lord shall make thee the head and not the tail and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath."

WHO IS A WINNER?

A winner is someone regarded as a conqueror. Romans 8: 7 says, "Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." A conqueror will not only win a battle, but he will also hold captives and gather the spoils of war. He returns home with all these to show all as evidences of his victory.

A winner is someone whose exploits have been made known or exhibited to all. This fact is the same not only at the physical realm but also at the spiritual level. Jesus is an appropriate example of an all time winner, whose exploits cannot be matched by anyone. Of Him Colossians 2: 15 says, "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." That is the type of winner you have to be.

Furthermore, a winner is a person who is well ahead of others; he is undoubtedly on top and not beneath. He is a person noted for outstanding or unusual accomplishments. He is someone who never gives up at all. He pursues, overtakes and possesses what the enemy has taken.

A winner is a person who is above adversity, worry, poverty, depression, fear, frustration and sin. When you are above, every other thing will have to come under you. For example, there is no way a bicycle would challenge an aeroplane in performance.

A winner is a person that the Bible calls an overcomer. 1 John: 4-5 says, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

Revelation 21: 7 says, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

A winner is a person whose life is under the complete management of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a person has left the management of his life to the Lord Jesus Christ. A winner is a person from whose eyes the scale of unbelief has fallen off.

All winners know the following things:

1. The devil is a thief and a liar.
2. The devil has no legal right to control their lives.
3. Satan can be forcefully commanded to restore whatsoever thing he has stolen.
4. All the seeds of Satan can be forcefully destroyed. (At this point, I implore you to close your eyes and pray like this: "All conscious and unconscious satanic seeds in my life, be destroyed, in the name of Jesus.")
5. The devil is interested in converting winners to spiritual paupers and he pursues this evil mission very vigorously.
6. Everything winners come across is a part of God's purpose for their training programme.
7. Fear is a great enemy. It paralyzes faith.
8. It is only losers who cover up their sins. Winners always keep a straight account with God.
9. There is always a divine way out of every satanic problem.
10. God specialises in doing the impossible, and He never comes late.

WHO IS A LOSER?

A loser is a person who fights aimlessly without any purpose and direction. A loser

By Daniel Olukoya

thinks that God can be geographically located. It is a loser who believes that he has to go to a particular mountain to pray before God can wake up from His sleep.

Such a person keeps going backward instead of moving forward. If he makes any progress at all, it is in the wrong direction.

Losers are those who reveal their secrets to their enemies. They make senseless advertisements of their lives.

Senseless advertisement is the sign of losers. All losers cover up their sins, confirming the scripture, which says that, whosoever covers his sins shall not prosper. All losers carry their burdens on their heads and refuse to keep them with the Lord. They keep account of past offences, complaints, bitterness etc.

All losers quit very easily. They may decide to give up and die because of small problems. All losers have one interesting motto: "Seeing is believing," whereas winners believe and then see. Losers are those who still think of defeat even when they are on the verge of victory. Losers pay serious attention to what people say or gossip about them. Losers follow satanic roadmaps, celebrate parties of sorrow and also walk in the broad way.

There are many reasons why many are sick in the spirit and why people with winners' potentials fail. We shall consider the reasons. Though God says, "Thou shalt be head and not tail," some people nonetheless are tails, operating always at the tail level. I know the tail of a cow can be cut off without too much problem for the cow, but you cannot cut off its head, because if you do, the cow will die.

Some people may go to a great extent to start a type of business. However, as soon as they notice any trace of failure, they will switch over to another business altogether. This is nothing but a floating life. It is only a dead fish that floats. A living fish can swim powerfully against

the water current. Many human beings are dead fishes as far as God is concerned, because they float about endlessly in the ocean of life.

WHY DO PEOPLE WITH THE POTENTIAL OF A WINNER FAIL IN LIFE?

1. Inherited or genetic problems: People with unfavourable inheritance fail even with the winner's potentials in them. For example, a boy whose mother is the tenth wife of his father has undoubtedly inherited an evil thing and it will affect him unless he stands against it.
2. Spiritual indiscipline: Some people are so undisciplined in the spirit that every opportunity that God gives to them for self-advancement is neglected. Some are too proud to do what God wants them to do in order to receive physical and spiritual breakthroughs.
3. Lack of determination: Many lack determination to
4. Difficult sickness: Some people find themselves suddenly in problems which cause they do not know.
5. Bad environmental influences: Bad environmental influences especially at a young age can also cause a winner to fail.
6. Inconsistency: Inconsistency can make a person with a winner's potential fail. Once a person comes across a little problem or obstacle, and readily abandons whatever he
7. Evil companions: When one's friends are the children of the devil, such a person cannot receive blessings from God or expect God to bless him. The Bible says that evil communication corrupts good manners.
8. The wrong job: Doing the wrong job can rob a person of God's blessings.
9. Possession of wealth of sorrow: Many people fail because their fortunes or investments were based on ill-gotten or satanic wealth. No matter how hard they try, they will not succeed.
10. Lack of vision: Many people do not have any vision about what they are doing. It is obvious that where there is no vision, such people will perish.
11. Gossiping: A person with a winner's potential may end up as a failure if he or she engages in gossip or becomes a satanic broadcaster.
12. Lack of knowledge: Lack of knowledge about prayer can also result in serious failure.
13. Excessive talking: Excessive talking can easily spell a person's doom.

rise above their present level. They want to remain where they are. Something tells them to remain in their position, like it was said to blind Bartimaeus to remain quiet in his blindness. To their surprise, Bartimaeus left the position and sought after his miracle.

Some people find themselves suddenly in problems which cause they do not know.

Bad environmental influences especially at a young age can also cause a winner to fail.

Inconsistency can make a person with a winner's potential fail. Once a person comes across a little problem or obstacle, and readily abandons whatever he

has laid his hand upon, failure sets in. Thank God that the Bible preaches messages of perseverance and persistence.

When one's friends are the children of the devil, such a person cannot receive blessings from God or expect God to bless him. The Bible says that evil communication corrupts good manners.

Doing the wrong job can rob a person of God's blessings.

Many people fail because their fortunes or investments were based on ill-gotten or satanic wealth. No matter how hard they try, they will not succeed.

Many people do not have any vision about what they are doing. It is obvious that where there is no vision, such people will perish.

A person with a winner's potential may end up as a failure if he or she engages in gossip or becomes a satanic broadcaster.

Lack of knowledge about prayer can also result in serious failure.

Excessive talking can easily spell a person's doom.

The spirit of procrastination is also an agent of terrible failure.

Greed for material possession makes people fail woefully.

The Bible says we shall be heads and not tails, we shall be up and not beneath, we shall overcome our enemies and all those that come against us shall fail. So, check yourself this day to find out whether or not you know the word of God. If you do not know the promises of God for you as contained in the Bible, you will not be able to claim them.

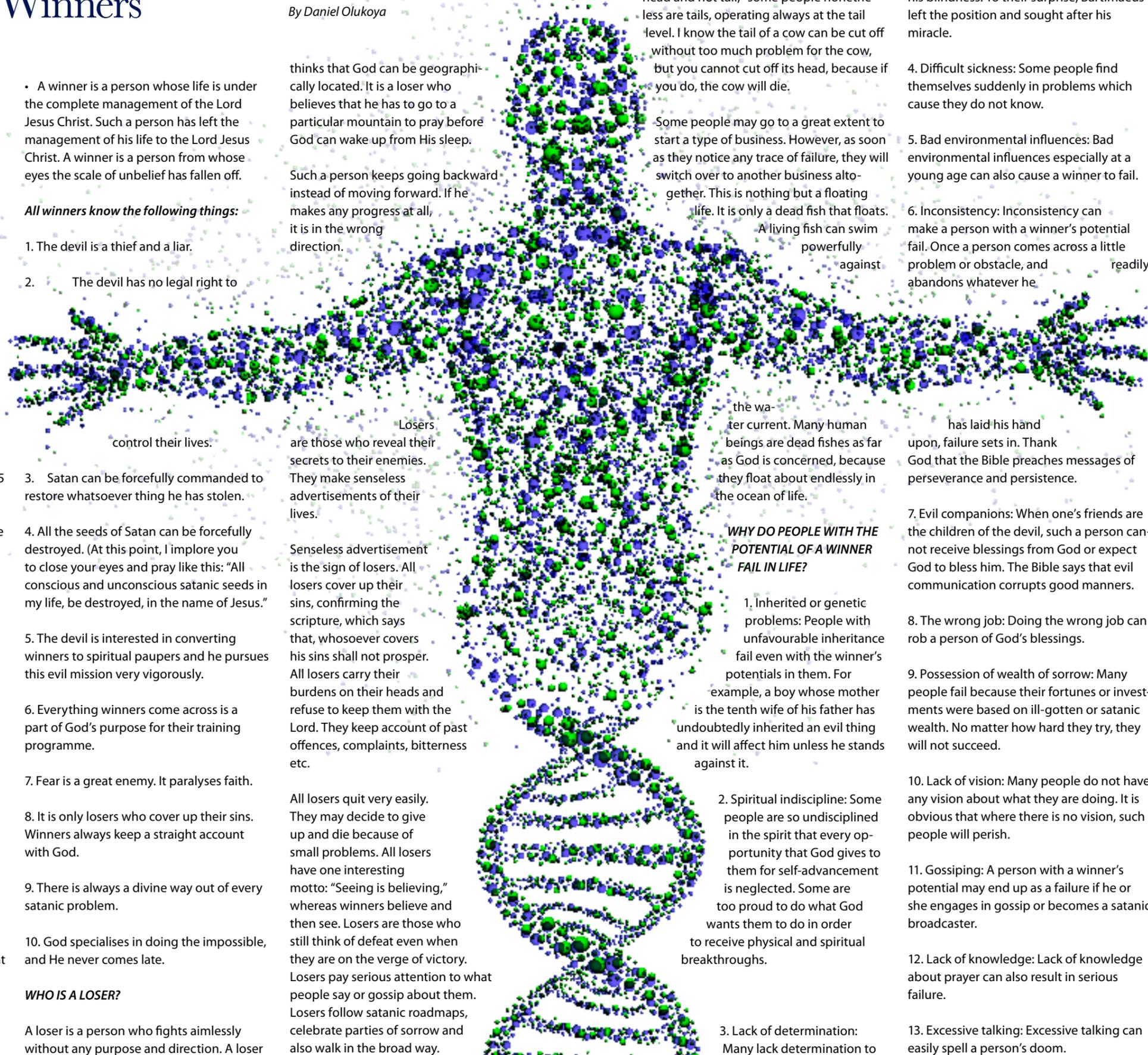
Are you operating below your level? Are you operating under God's guidance at all? Are you a lazy Christian? Are you living without a vision? Have your parents misled you? Are you under a curse of non-achievement? Are you one of those men whose goodness and virtues have been transferred to sugar mummies? Are you one of those ladies whose goodness and virtues have been transferred to sugar daddies?

Are you operating under the powers of the emptiers? Have you been pouring away all the things that are supposed to come to the cup of your life? Are you operating in the wrong place or in the wrong vocation? Ask yourself all these questions. And perhaps household wickedness has caged what you should do and you have become a loser.

Whatever your problem is, I have good news for you. Jesus Christ is ready to deliver you today because He is still very much in the business of deliverance. Ask Him to take over your battle by resting in Him alone and it shall be well with you, in Jesus' name.

PRAYER POINTS

1. I refuse to inherit any spirit of failure, in the name of Jesus.
2. I climb the mountain of promotion, in the name of Jesus.
3. I bind and paralyze every anti-progress spirit operating in my life, in the name of Jesus.
4. Father Lord, by the power in the blood of Jesus, catapult me to greatness, in the name of Jesus.
5. The will and purpose of God for my life must surely come to pass whether the enemy likes it or not, in Jesus' name.





God's Love Letter To Women

By Josh De Gracia

When I created the heavens and the earth, I spoke them into being. When I created man, I formed him and breath life into his nostrils. But you woman, I fashioned after I breathed the breath of life into man because your nostrils are too delicate. I allowed a deep sleep to come over him so I could patiently and perfectly fashion you. Man was put to sleep so that he could not interfere with the creativity. From one bone, I fashioned you. I chose the rib, which protects his heart and lungs and supports him, as you are meant to do. Around this one bone I shaped you, I modeled you, I created you perfectly and beautifully. Your characteristics are as the rib: strong, yet delicate and fragile. You provide protection for the most delicate organ in man, his heart. His heart is the center of his being; his lungs hold the breath of life. The ribcage will allow itself to be broken before it will allow damage to the heart. Support man as the ribcage supports the body.

You were not taken from his feet, to be under him, nor were you taken for his head, to be above him. You were taken from his side, to stand by him and to be held close to his side. You are My perfect angel... you are My beautiful little girl. You have grown to be a splendid woman of excellence, and My eyes fill when I see the virtues in your heart. Your eyes... don't change them. Your lips, how lovely when they part in prayer. Your nose, so perfect in form. Your hands, so gentle to touch. I have caressed your face in your deepest sleep. I have held your heart close to Mine. Of all that lives and breaths, you are most like Me. Adam walked with Me in the cool of the day, yet he was lonely. He could not see Me or touch Me. He could only feel Me. So everything I wanted Adam to share and

experience with Me, I fashioned in you; My holiness, My strength, My purity, My love, My protection, and support. You are special because you are an extension of Me. Man represent My image, woman My emotions. Together, you represent the totality of God. So man, treat woman well. Love her, respect her, for she is fragile. In hurting her, you hurt Me. What you do to her, you do to Me. In crushing her, you only damage your own heart; the heart of your Father and the heart of her Father. Woman, support man. In humility, show him the power of emotion I have given you. In gentle quietness, show your strength. In love, show him that you are the rib that protects his inner self. "Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man." Genesis 2 : 22

Reflections of a Lovely Lady

By Kisha H. Salters

Reflections of a Lovely Lady... Her hair perfectly coiffed... Her skin and makeup flawless... Impeccably dressed with all the matching accessories. Lovely indeed, but in whose eyes and for what reasons?

As women, we are often concerned about our appearance. How often do you check yourself in the mirror before leaving the house or go to the ladies' room to freshen up while you are out? What do you see when you look in the mirror? What is it that you are looking for? Is it really what you should be looking for? Proverbs 31:30 states "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

Reflections of a Lovely Lady... "Mirror, mirror on the wall who's the fairest of them all?" As Christian women, we do not want, or maybe I should say we do not need, to be like the evil queen in Snow White – looking into the mirror concerned only with our vanity and making sure that we look better than those that we consider our rivals.

James 1:22-24 says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the

word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like." We need to look into a mirror of truth – one that reflects what God see s. And once we get a glimpse of what and who we really are, we need to acknowledge and seek to change what is not pleasing to Him.

Reflections of a Lovely Lady... Who is she a reflection of? We see the moon because it reflects the light of the sun (S-U-N). A lovely lady should reflect the light of the Son (S-O-N). Just as the moon can help us find our way and provide light in the darkness, she is to be a shining light to others. Bringing them out of the dark places and lighting their path to a more intimate relationship with Christ.

She should be as Titus 2:3 says, reverent and devout in her deportment, a giver of wise counsel and a teacher of what is right and noble. When people look at her, there should be no question of who she is and, more importantly, whose she is. Matthew 13:43 states, "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear." Matthew

5:16 tells us to, "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." So, the lovely lady lives a life that brings honour and glory to God. She becomes less, so that He can become more. She is a living testimony to what God can and will do in a person's life. She is a reflection of Him.

Think of your reflection in a pool of water. When the water is calm, your reflection is normal, but when the water becomes troubled, when its natural flow is interrupted, your reflection becomes distorted. A lovely lady is a reflection of Christ in spite of, and many times because of, her circumstances. We have to be careful not to change based on the circumstances of our lives.

We must be true to Christ because He is true to us. He never changes. His Word remains true despite the changes that occur around us. We cannot reflect Christ only when things are going our way. In fact, I believe it to be a great testimony when we stay faithful to Him in times of trouble. God promises us His peace – peace beyond understanding. By standing on His word.



10 Steps Towards Respecting Your Husband

By Cyndie Hamley

With downcast eyes, Kathryn confided, "I have a hard time respecting my husband. I want to be obedient to God's command, but I don't want to be dishonest to my feelings."

God doesn't command a wife to feel respectful toward her husband. She is to be respectful. Her responsibility is to obey God; not her feelings.

A wise woman once told me, "If you want a truly fine husband, respect him at the level at which you want him to reach. A man will usually not rise above the level at which his wife respects him." This is a general principle, not a hard and fast rule because God does not put accountability or responsibility for a man's character on his wife. Nevertheless, strong evidence indicates a woman holds great power to make or break a man. In his book *His Needs, Her Needs*, Willard Harley amends the saying "Behind every great man is a great woman" to "Behind every great man is an admiring wife."

Something in a man needs the respect of his wife. He thrives and grows toward godliness when his need is fulfilled. This explains why God emphatically says, "The wife must see to it that she respects her husband"

(Ephesians 5:33 NASB).

10 Steps Towards Respecting Your Husband

Pray for him daily and trust God to answer your requests.

Pray for his well-being, wisdom, protection, blessings, guidance, knowledge, spiritual maturity, success, purity, strength in temptation, etc.

Look for God's answers to your prayers.

Thank God for working in your family.

Thank God for your husband.

Pray for your attitude.

Remember that God has put your husband in a position of leadership, and He will lead you through your husband.

Make a list of your husband's qualities that you appreciate. Review and add to your list regularly.

Tell your husband what you appreciate about him. Tell others what you appreciate about him.

Don't criticize your husband to others – especially your children.

Look for the positive side of things that you may find irritating. If you find it boring when he spends time telling you about his bad day, remember that at least he is talking to you, spending time with you, sharing his concerns with you, bringing you into his confidence, and giving you the chance to be an encourager and helper.

Respond to his loving advances with enthusiasm.

If you are concerned about a decision your husband has made, ask him the following:

"I'm confused about _____. Can you explain it to me?"

"Can we talk about _____? I feel uncomfortable about _____."

Don't ask: "WHY in the world would you do it that way?" or ask "Why?" in any way that implies you think he is foolish.

Respect his likes and dislikes. If he likes a particular food, make a point of serving that regularly. If he hates the color purple, don't wear purple in his presence. If he likes you to wear perfume, do it.

If you find yourself thinking negative thoughts about your husband, stop and choose to think of something else – especially things from your positive quality list.

Remember, God is working on you and your husband. You can both learn from your failures as well as your successes. Give God the freedom to teach your husband through failure. In the same way, give God the freedom to teach you to trust Him through your husband's failure.

Fearful or Fearless?

By Heidi Bayly

The majority of women today, would not admit to being fearful and anxious. Today we roll our eyes at the women of the past who fainted far too often and squealed much too high. Fear has become distinctly un-American. After all, in recent times what do we have to fear except fear itself?

However, if we are honest with ourselves, we realize our life is governed by fear. Fear that we will never get married, or never have children, or that our babies will die, or our husband will stop loving us, or our children will not repent, or that the pain in our back will not go away, or that we will not have any friends, or that God will

require too much of us. The list goes on and on.

From the time we are little girls, we are fed lies that we can conquer our fears on our own, or maybe with a little help from a medical professional. We are taught to think we are invincible, powerful, strong, independent, and fearless. (What is independence, though, than a fear of depending on others?) If our fear is heights, we should "face that fear" until it is gone.

True, we may be able to get over some fears in this way, but what about the big ones? Well, with the big ones we rely on idols to save us. We rely on our education or our job to replace the family we do not have. We rely on medicine to relieve the fear that our babies will die. We rely on baptism or the sinner's prayer to ease our fear for our child's salvation. We rely on entertainment to pacify us into a stupor where our fears do not exist. Or we keep our life so busy that we don't have time for fear. There are as many fear conquering idols as there are women.

How are those idols working out for you? Do your fears still come creeping back in the wee hours of the morning when you

can't fall asleep for the third night in a row? When

life suddenly does a big upheaval of all you hold dear, do you find yourself fearless? My educated guess is no. It is no because scripture tells us what we are.

"As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes." Psalm 103:15

"For the sun rises with a scorching wind, and withers the grass; and its flower falls off, and the beauty of its appearance is

destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away." James 1:11

"All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust." Ecclesiastes 3:20

We are weak and helpless as grass and dust, so it makes sense that we are fearful. We should, ultimately, fear God; the one

who can create and destroy, who holds the power in all our other fears. Matthew 10:28 "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Only when we have a true fear of God and trust the promises made in scripture, will

our earthly fears fade. The apostle Peter says we will be Sarah's daughters if we "do what is right without being frightened by any fear." (1 Peter 3:6) Christians do not conquer their fears themselves. They allow their fears to take them to God, humbly and with faith.



Spend Wisely and Have More to Give

By Carrie Balrok

To me, frugality has two parts. The first is an aversion to spending money. You must take a close look at your spending habits and decide what necessities are, and what are not. If you can live without it, don't buy it. Learn to enjoy saving money as much if not more than the enjoyment you would get from owning a particular item.

This doesn't mean you can't buy anything purely for enjoyment, but be very selective with what you choose to spend your money on. The second part of frugality is spending as little possible on the necessities.

Shop around for the best deals, research prices, and think about second-hand items. It takes more time to get the best price but it's worth it.

Whether your finances are tight or not, it's a good idea to sit down and make a monthly budget of your expenditures. By itemizing your expenses for a few months you may be very surprised how much you are spending in certain areas. If you're not ready to jump completely into frugality just yet, pick one or two areas to work on first.

For people who are new to frugality the food budget is a good place to start. Look for ways to save on shopping, learn to make cheaper meals and reduce eating out. Once you feel good about your shopping expenditures, move onto another area and look for things to cut out or ways to save.

Regardless of your income level, I would urge all Christians to look closely at their budget for ways to save money. Most importantly, are you being good stewards with the money God has given you? If money is tight already then it's not hard to make the case to try and spend less. Many people have to be extremely frugal just to pay their bills each month. But for those of you out there for whom money isn't much of an issue, I would urge you to learn to be frugal in order to increase your giving.

"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." Matthew 6:24



Instructions For Lighting Up Your World

By Ronke Olajide

As God's children, we are called to be a shining light in a dark world. One of the challenges of living the triumphant Christian life however, is maintaining the glorious light of the gospel. Since the bible is a book of wisdom to be applied to real life situations, below are ten biblical instructions to keep your light shining.

- Fear God: Whoever fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for their children it will be a refuge. Proverbs 14:26
- Obey His commandments: For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. Romans 2:13
- Don't disappoint the Holy Spirit: And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30
- Acquire the trust of heaven: Then the Lord said to Satan, Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still

maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason. Job 2:3

- Be mindful you are being watched: So that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. Philippians 2:15
- Depart from iniquity: When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarrelling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19-21
- Practise Hospitality: Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 1 Peter 4:9
- Possess Godly traits: Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Colossians 3:12

- Be spiritually awake: Look, I will come as unexpectedly as a thief! Blessed are all who are watching for me, who keep their clothing ready so they will not have to walk around naked and ashamed. Revelations 16:15

- Remain joyful: For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17

Be empowered, take charge, arise and shine in Jesus mighty name. Amen.

Prayer Of A Single Woman

By Abby Aranzamendez

Dear God,

I thank you for this precious season of singleness. Today, as I did before, I offer my single years unto you. Please use my singleness in the way you want to, and let it bring honor to your name.

I know I was put in this season at this exact period for a reason, and although I can't always wrap my mind around that reason, I am confident that I am living under your will. More than anything else, Lord, I want to do your will, so let me see this period as a wonderful opportunity to serve you with undivided attention.

Please give me more strength so that I can accomplish the work you have for me, and give me more wisdom so that I can make decisions with lasting significance. Lord, I want to live this singleness as meaningfully as I can. This is the desire of my heart.

My journey as a single woman, you know, Lord, is not always rosy. There are times when the pangs of loneliness unmercifully hit me, so I ask you to wrap your hands around my shoulders. Please comfort me with your embrace and let me feel the warmth of your love. Cover my heart so that no lies can invade it. Always, God, remind me that I am not abandoned, that you are my comforter and lover, and that you uphold me with your righteous right hand.

When I try to source out my joy from other people, material things, or experiences, please whisper in my heart that you are that, Lord. My joy. I require no one or nothing else to make me feel complete. I am already complete in you. Show me how to truly appreciate this season when I seem to forget you designed it and especially when I become emotionally vulnerable.

When I feel insecure, which always happens, may you remind me that my security lies in you. My possessions in you can't be measured by earthly standards, and my value is not from this world. When I question who I am, let me ponder on my identity as your daughter -- precious and forever loved. And always remind me that you, my Father, delight in me.

God, let your love for me be the overarching theme of my life, and allow me to express my love for you in the best ways that I am capable of. Let me fall more deeply in love with you. So deeply that my whole being sinks and fails to recover. Please fill every need, every longing, every hole.

When temptations to compromise are so strong, please, Father, allow me not to give in. Remind me of my vow of purity. Hold me and make me firm. Instil in me an indestructible faithfulness so that I can continue to stay pure in my actions, thoughts, and words. Father, please take captive of my mind and heart today in my singleness and for the rest of my earthly existence.

May you surround me with good friends with whom I can share and from whom I can experience more of your warmth and love. Help me make more meaningful friendships, for it is your desire for me to intertwine my life with others.

And, Father, as I wait for my love story to unfold, guard my heart with towering walls,

so no one, except the man you made for me, can enter it. Lock my heart into yours. It is the only place where it is secure. Don't let my heart escape and wander down the winding and dark road of expectations. I want it to be clean. I want to reserve a part of my heart for my man, who I know will come at your appointed time.

But, Father, as I wait, allow me not to be distracted by my desire for a love story. I want you to still be my focus, the centre of my existence. Help me keep my eyes on you, Father, and please silence my heart when uncertainties come my way.

God, I recommit my life to you today. Do whatever you please with my life, for you own it. Thank you for your presence, unending love, and overflowing grace. Thank you for this season, for it reveals more of you in a way that only singleness can. From this season, I will gather plenty of lessons and stories that I will soon bring into the next season of my life.

May your name be glorified in this season, and may you give me the steadfastness of spirit as I watch your plan take place. Amen.



Ten Tips for Christian Widows

By David DeWitt

A Christian counselor friend says, "If you were my sister, my mother, or a dear friend and your husband had just died, here are the ten things I'd tell you to successfully navigate the waters of widowhood."

1. Trust God. Easier said than done, I know. But just do it, one step, one breath at a time.
2. Trust yourself—for the most part. Don't let others make decisions for you like what to do with his clothing, when to change your pillowcases, etc. You can do this. On the other hand, realize that this huge jolt in your life can put you in a spin and make some irrational actions seem perfectly logical. Now's not the time to start an affair, make large donations or rush into plastic surgery. "Don't make a decision in a storm that you wouldn't make in calm weather". ~Max Lucado
3. Breathe, cry, walk. Kind of reminds you of Eat, Pray, Love doesn't it? But I wouldn't advise any of those yet. They'll happen on their own. Breathing, crying, and walking are what you simply must do.
4. Don't worry about sleep. It'll happen sooner or later.
5. Take care of your kids and/or grand

kids. They just lost their father and/or grandfather; they don't need to lose their mom or grandma, too.

6. Read these 3 books right away. First, read *Widow's Key* by Linda Lindholm. This is a practical comprehensive step-by-step guide through all the before, during and after aspects of loss. Second, *Grieving: Our Path Back to Peace* by James R. White. This is a short book that describes the patterns of grief and God's part in it, so you know you're not going crazy. Then read *Miriam Neff's From One Widow to Another* for some other tools in dealing with widowhood.

7. Find your support group/board of directors as mentioned in *Miriam Neff's* book. Use these people, call on them frequently to help with your many decisions and new way of life. Don't worry about payback, you'll do the same for someone else someday.

8. Get counseling. Attend a Grief-Share group, join a Widow's Walk calling group, find a local grief or widows support group like *Widow2Widow*, or see a professional Christian counselor. Look up *Christian Websites for Widows*.

9. Give this chapter of life to God. This problem is really His problem anyway. Widowed author, Sandra Aldrich, decided to "tithed" her years of life like she tithed her financial giving. This gave her great freedom in the

use of her time and in setting priorities.

10. Rest. It's OK to do nothing at times. Grief is physically exhausting. Lighten up and give yourself time to recover. Schedule a check up with your doctor, allow yourself some breaks, and don't feel guilty about laughter or feeling happy again. Don't feel guilty about feeling sad, either. I love the example authors Ron Marasco and Brian Shuff offer. In their book, *About Grief*, they write, "Truth be told, as long as mom is not boarded up in her room with a bottle of Jack Daniel's and an Uzi, the situation may not need immediate intervention."

11. Oops, I just have to add one more. Give yourself something fun to look forward to. For example, my best friend/cousin couldn't come to the funeral, but she scheduled herself to fly out to visit me a month after the funeral. I really looked forward to her coming! After she left, a trip to San Francisco to visit my daughter went on the calendar, plus lunches with various friends, everyday walks with my friends, long-distance phone calls, pedicures, long drives (because I love to drive) . . . all sorts of activities I enjoyed gave me things to look forward to and helped me endure those down days when the house was one person too empty.

More advice on www.widowskey.com

A Short Story Stepping Stones

By Unoma Osiegbu-Nwankwor

This "Excuse me, excuse me coming through" I raced through the airport, the announcer had called the final boarding call for my flight. I was about to miss my flight due to all the prayers my family insisted on having which if you ask me where excessive. Missing this flight was not an option I was willing to entertain; I had to get out of this country and fast.

Oh no. I thought as I approached the escalator; there was an out-of-order sign positioned right in front of it. Only in Murtala Mohammed airport would there be such a shiny escalator that almost never worked. Only in 'Naija' and the funny thing was that no one seemed to complain, or raise an eyebrow but as usual we all adjusted to not having a working escalator at the airport. I am still proudly Nigerian but the reality is that we still got work to do!

Speaking of reality, it was my reality that the man I gave my everything to was really moving on. My mind flashed back to the day I walked into the Domino's Pizza in Ikoyi to pick up my mouth-watering pizza, I just happened to buy the latest gossip magazine from the vendor standing by the door. My eyes widened when there, plastered on the front page was Nedu; he was getting married. My mind went back to that day a year ago that my world came crashing down.

I wanted to keep it a secret and sometimes wish I did, but I loved him too much not to tell him. My bible also said that whatever was done in the secret will surely come out to the light. On that fateful, beautiful evening he whipped out the ring I had been waiting on for a while. I remember he went on bended knees about to give what I thought would have been the most unforgettable proposal there was. Right before he spoke, I had to open my big mouth. I told him the truth I had known all along; one of my tubes was blocked making the possibility of me having a child slim to none.

Just like that a relationship that spanned six years was gone down the drain. He suddenly was very busy at the office, then he gradually stopped picking my calls or

replying my text or bbms. All the signs where there, he had changed somehow, he was no longer my Nedu. I wasn't going to go down like that. Gathering up the nerve I decided to go visit him. I was confident we could talk this out, after all there were other options available. I called and he said he wasn't back from Abuja. Since I had a key, I quickly packed an overnight bag and headed to his house. I was going to surprise him. I intended to spoil him; cook clean and tidy up for him. He would get a feel of what he was missing when he arrived tomorrow afternoon.

The air was sucked out of my lungs when I arrived and his car was parked in the covered parking space. Wishing for the best while making a thousand excuses for him in just a matter of seconds, I approached the house and could hear laughter. Ringing the bell, I waited and then the door opened. The opened door brought me face to face with Toyin. "Honey who is it" questioned the voice I had become so used to hearing; Nedu.

Our eyes were glued to one another. Both expressions clearly different, hers had a hint of guilt but somewhere in there was a smirk; mine was filled with despair and shock. My worst fears were confirmed when he appeared, wearing a white T-shirt and his lounging pants. He was no longer mine. He was oozing of nervous energy, he couldn't be that nervous as he didn't waste time locating Toyin's waist. When he wrapped his arms around her waist, I felt like I was punched in the gut. My best friend and my man. How wicked could the world be? She was the one I cried to, laid out all my problems to. Too much the bear, the last thing I heard was "Amaka, wait I can explain"

That was a year ago; it was time to turn over a new leaf. I had to stop feeling sorry for myself and get busy. I had goals, dreams, and visions for my life. I was not going to pine away anymore, if God gave me a husband in the process, glory be to His name. Now on my way to the USA, I could see new possibilities and was grateful. My godparents were gracious enough to send for me when my parents had complained about my inability to get over my heart-

break.

My dad had been a faithful driver to the Omojola's. During those years an unlikely friendship had blossomed. They were bonded together by the fact that both men married the love of their lives. These women were their soul mates and they loved them but the unions were still childless even after five years of marriage. After ten solid years, God blessed my parents with a child; me. Since his employers still didn't have one of their own my parents decided to share and that how they became my godparents. They had been blessed with riches but didn't have the one thing they wanted; children. The Irony of life.

I got to the gate just in time, I scurried to my seat in the plane, securing my hand luggage in the overhead compartment, I breathed a sigh of relief. I was determined not to blow it, my life may not be where I thought it should be but it is not over. U S of A, here I come.

Six Years Later.....

"Sir are you still here? I asked you to let me reschedule for you for another time" the secretary said as she came out of the office belonging to her boss.

"What kind of question is that? Of course I'm still here. I had a 2pm appointment and I have to see him today" Looking at his watch and taking note of the time; 4:30pm. He was frustrated. If only he could finally get to see him, it would be his big break. He has been trying for what seemed like ages to get an appointment. He finally did and now this.

A friend had referred him here; the man had relocated from America a year ago and was fast becoming a force to be reckoned with in the literary arena. If anyone could get a book sold; Dr. Igwebuike could. His wife was quickly losing patience in his inability to breakthrough as a writer; something he promised her he would do when he stopped working two years ago. They had run out of their savings and he needed a

miracle.

The secretary was about to respond when her attention shifted to the door, following her direction, he saw a women trying

to break up a squabble between two kids, it didn't take him long to see they were twins.

"Welcome madam" the secretary said genuflecting even when the woman had yet to lift her head to acknowledge her.

"Thank you dear"

the woman said lifting her head as she had managed to get the kids to quiet down. With each kid on her side she approached.

They made eye contact; he stood up and

walked towards her

"Amaka?" he said in shock

"Nedu?" She said equally shocked.

"What are you doing here?" He asked

"This is my husband's office" she answered, just then the door behind them opened and a man who had a close resemblance to the American actor Boris Kodjoe, standing at about six-foot four walked

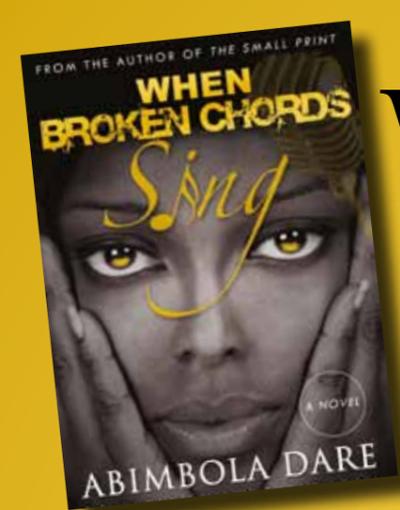
through. He was dressed in a well starched native attire and before Nedu knew it, the kids flew out of Amaka's hands and ran to him shouting "Daaaaaaddy". He picked them up and twirled them around. As he approached, Nedu was blinded by the glow of love between both of them. He planted a wet kiss on her lips as if no one else was in the room. Releasing her he said "Hey honey ready to go?"

"Oh I'm sorry Mr. Okam" the man said turning to him. "I was tied up that's why I told my secretary to give you another appointment." he explained

"Please make another appointment and we will see what we can do" the man said. With one child one each arm, and his wife's arm around his waist, Dr. Igwebuike turned around and left. When they got to the elevator Nnamdi looked down at his wife with all the love in his heart, she was his heartbeat and he knew without a doubt he was hers. Then he asked "Honey, you two know each other?"

"Yeah babes, he was one of stepping-stones that brought me closer to you and I thank God for it" she smiled as the elevator opened

"Failure/ disappointment is another stepping stone to greatness"



When Broken Chords Sing. *(An excerpt)*

By Abimbola Dare

August 1999: Lagos- Nigeria

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today in the presence of God and these witnesses, to join Destiny Omolara Okoye and Stanley David Briggs in matrimony."

The Pastor cleared his throat, raised his head from his book. I'd only met him a week ago, during a rushed counselling session where he'd asked two questions and dismissed us. A student pastor and friend of Stanley's, he was a short round man with dark jagged skin that reminded me of a badly worn Michellin tyre. He smiled, displaying scanty broomstick- like teeth in a wide mouth. "Marriage is a gift from God..."

Barely listening as the Pastor rattled an over-rehearsed speech on marriage, I stood on the altar in the small hall which we'd rented on the outskirts of campus, draped in an ivory satin and tulle wedding dress, tears in my eyes, beaming at Stanley.

He stood tall and handsome in his navy blue tailored suit and gold and wine cravat. It was hard to believe that I was finally going to be his wife. Behind me, Toks, my chief bridesmaid, sat on a single chair next to Stanley's best man, Kunle, a friend of his I had only just met. We'd had kept the numbers minimal because Stanley insisted on an intimate ceremony. It mattered not much to me. I was marrying the man of my dreams. My mother had initially protested. She felt cheated that her only child was getting married in such a "shabby," way. But I'd stood my ground. Stanley wanted it so, and I wanted Stanley. In the end, we agreed to do a church blessing first; as a way to seal our love and then much later, we could have a lavish event.

The Pastor ended his speech with a prayer:

"... We pray with them that the Holy Spirit will guide and strengthen them, that they may fulfil God's purposes for the whole of

their earthly life together."

My fifteen man congregation mumbled amen in unison.

Stanley's jaw clenched, droplets of sweat forming a pattern on his forehead. His eyes flickered with something. Hope? Love? Despair?

When he swallowed, his throat bobbed underneath his wine cravat. Surely not despair, I thought. He wanted to marry me. He loved me.

It's the nerves, I thought, as I flashed him another assuring smile.

He flicked a smile back, and then drummed his fingers on his navy blue, crisp trousers and darted a look through the crowd as though looking for something.

The Pastor nodded, took a step closer. It was time for us to say our vows.

"You will say this after me," the Pastor said to me. "I, Destiny Omolara Okoye..."

I held my head high, eager and thrilled. "I Destiny Omo—"

A sudden shout erupted, slicing my vow mid-sentence. Chairs scrapped the floor, belting out a sound of sharp metal raking through smooth concrete. A dull murmur cut through to me, and then a voice, feminine, declared: "This wedding will not hold."

What? I swirled, caught a glimpse of the hem of Toks's wine dress as it swept through the aisle towards the woman who had spoken. Kunle dashed behind Toks, diving at the woman, blocking her from charging further.

Who was she?

The woman was dressed in our wedding colours, down to the wine and gold gele planted on her head. A barrel of a woman, she had a flat round face, deep

set eyes and cheeks that might have made a pop sound if you pricked hard with a pin. She looked much older than Stanley— an estranged older sister perhaps? I gazed at her, at her hands, at what—no whom— she was holding. Two children. Twin boys.

The children looked exactly like Stanley.

My world tilted. It didn't crash. Not just yet.

She clung unto them, and screamed and fought my friends. The crowd scattered. Some rushed towards the woman, others clamoured to understand what had just happened.

"W-who is she?" I stammered, pointing at the chaotic scene that now mocked my wedding.

Stanley, who had seemed frozen on the spot when this happened, suddenly uprooted himself and charged towards the woman with a cry. "Pamela, why would you do this? Why do you want to ruin my life?"

"You have two children, Stanley," Pamela shrieked. "How can you do this to us?"

Pamela? His wife?

This was where someone needed to yell: "April fool!" and burst into laughter, even though it was August. Instead, Stanley barked at the woman, his wife, "You shouldn't have brought them into this!"

I staggered; fell into the Pastor's arms. Dizziness swirled around me, darkness beckoned.

That was when my world crashed.

When Broken Chords Sing

A gripping (Christian) novella from the author of *The Small Print*:

Out in summer 2013.
abi@abimboladare.com

Women and Infertility in the Bible

By Rachel Keller

Although I have not struggled with infertility, it is a topic that has interested me since I know women who have faced this issue. Recently, I became curious as to what the Bible had to say about infertility. I was surprised at what I discovered. I have no statistics concerning the rate of infertility, but I suppose it was higher since there were no tests, procedures, or fertility drugs available back then. (I do know that mother and infant mortality was higher due to lack of medical care.) Children were a sign of God's blessing, so all couples dreaded infertility. It was a stigma to not have children. What had a person done wrong to incur the punishment of God?

Here are some of the women (and men) in the Bible who struggled with infertility. I hope this brief article is an inspiration to you!

~Abraham and Sarah had given up hope of ever having their own children when God gave Abraham the promise that he and Sarah would have a son whose offspring would be greater than the stars in the sky. Sarah laughed at the promise of God since she was well past the child-bearing years, but God fulfilled his promise with the birth of Isaac. (You can read more about the story in Genesis 16-21.)

~Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah, married Rebekah. The Scriptures tell us in Genesis 25:21 that Isaac pleaded to the Lord for his wife who was barren. It was 20 years after their marriage that the Lord blessed

Isaac and Rebekah with twin sons, Jacob and Esau.

~Jacob married sisters Rachel and Leah. Leah had six sons and a daughter, but the Lord had closed Rachel's womb. Rachel tried everything she could think of to have children. Once in anguish, she cried out to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die" (Genesis 30:1). Jacob in anger replied, "Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?" It wasn't until the Lord opened her womb that she bore Joseph and Benjamin. She died giving birth to Benjamin.

~The Scriptures do not tell us the name of Samson's mother, but she was childless until an angel appeared to the wife of Manoah promising a male child, a Nazarite, who would judge the children of Israel (Judges 13).

~King David married Michal (daughter of King Saul). The Bible tells us in 2 Samuel 6:23 that Michal never bore children.

~Elkanah had two wives. His favorite wife Hannah was barren. Peninnah, the other wife, taunted Hannah since she had no children. Hannah pleaded with God to give her a son, promising to give him back to the Lord's work. God answered her prayer with the birth of Samuel, the last and greatest judge of Israel. (1 Samuel 1).

~2 Kings 4:8-17 relates the account of the Shunammite woman, whom the Bible calls the great woman. She was great in faith, wisdom, and silence. She opened her home to the prophet Elisha and made him

his own little private chamber, a favorite place of retreat for him. Elisha wanted to repay the woman for her hospitality, but she made it clear that she was not seeking honor, recognition, or favors from him. Gehazi, Elisha's servant, told Elisha that the woman was barren and her husband was old. Elisha's promise that she would have a son when spring came around again was fulfilled.

~The Bible describes Elisabeth, the cousin of Mary who bore Jesus, as well-stricken in years and barren. She and her husband Zachariah had long already given up hope of ever bearing a child, when an angel appeared to Zachariah promising a son. That son was John the Baptist, the forerunner and greatest prophet who prepared the way for Jesus (See Luke 1 for the story.)

Except for Michal, God opened all the wombs of these previously barren woman. In two instances the women were clearly beyond child bearing years, yet they bore sons of promise. I do not understand the ways of God, but I know he can and does perform miracles, even today.

Psalms 113:9 "He maketh the barren woman to keep house and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD."





Dear Editor,

Why is living together before marriage considered living in sin? - Interested member

This question could be much more easily answered if the Bible made a clear proclamation such as "living together before marriage or outside of marriage is living in sin." Since the Bible makes no such definitive statement, many (including some who profess to be Christians) claim that living together outside of marriage is not living in sin. Perhaps the reason the Bible does not make a clear statement is that in Bible times, unmarried people living as husband and wife was relatively rare, especially among the Jews and Christians. For the purposes of this article, when we refer to living together, we are referring to living together in the sense of living as husband and wife, including sexual relations, without being married. We are not referring to a man and woman living in the same house without sexual relations. That

issue is covered in another article.

While the Bible does not make an explicit statement about living in sin, that is not to say the Bible is completely silent on this issue. Rather, we have to put several Scriptures together and glean from them the principle that any sexuality outside of the marriage of one man and one woman is definitely sin. There are numerous Scriptures that declare God's prohibition of sexual immorality (Acts 15:20; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:13, 18; 10:8; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Jude 7). The Greek word translated "sexual immorality" or "fornication" in these verses is porneia (from which we get the English word "pornography"), and it means literally "unlawful lust." Since the only form of lawful sexuality is the marriage of one man and one woman

(Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5), then anything outside of marriage, whether it is adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, or anything else, is unlawful, in other words, sin. Living together before marriage definitely falls into the category of fornication—sexual sin.

Hebrews 13:4 describes the honorable state of marriage: "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral." This verse draws a clear distinction between that which is pure and honorable—marriage—and that which is sexually immoral—anything outside of marriage. As living together outside of marriage falls into this category, it is definitely sin. Anyone living together outside of lawful marriage invites the displeasure and judgment of God.

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SUNDAY - FAMILY SERVICE

9am - 12noon

2ND FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

Great physician night

10am - 1pm

1ST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

Power must change hands

9am - 1pm

TUESDAY - BIBLE STUDY

7pm - 9.30pm

3RD WEEKEND OF THE MONTH

Deliverance Service

DR. DK OLUKOYA

(GENERAL OVERSEER MFM WORLDWIDE)

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Theme **ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE**
 Mark 9:23

EVENTS:

Power for the Next Level

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7:00pm - 9:00pm

Family Deliverance

Sat. 25th May 2013

3:00pm - 6:00pm

Thanksgiving Service

Sunday. 26th May 2013

2:00pm - 5:00pm

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Kids Bible Wordsearch

Animals in the Bible
Puzzle # 1

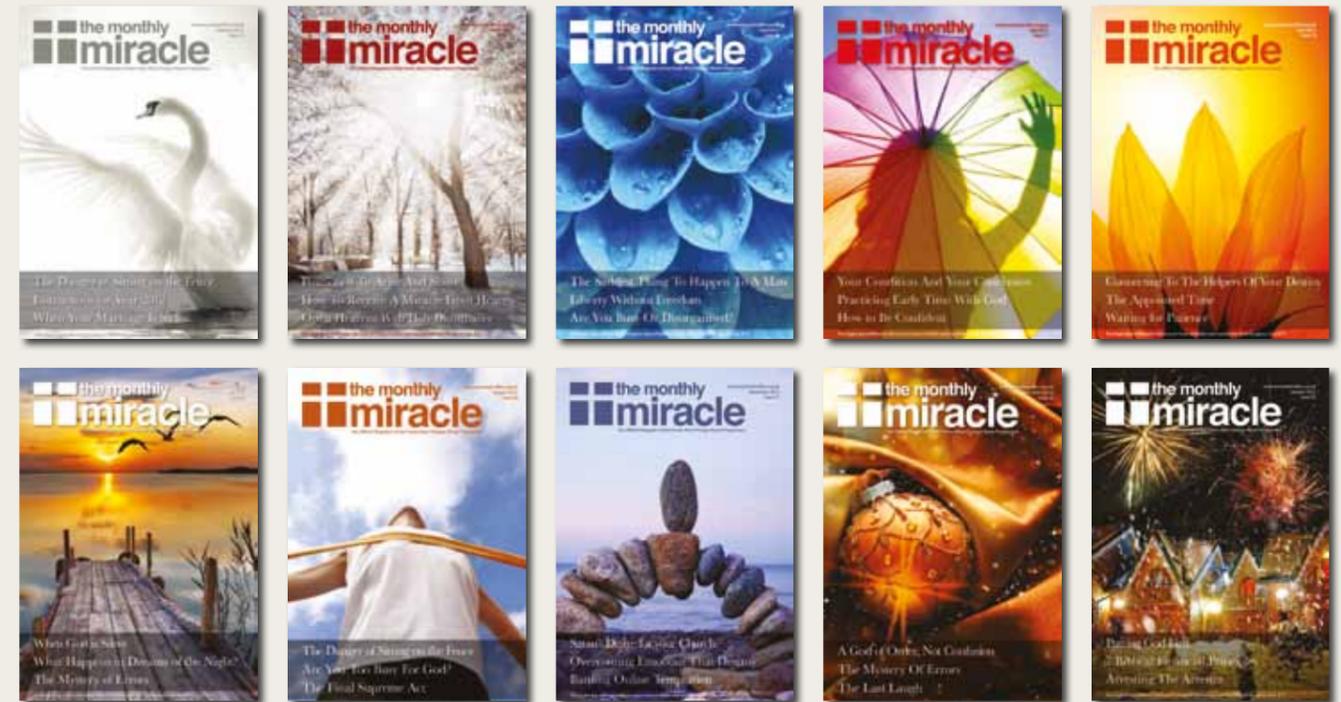
Fit the words in the list into the diagram below reading forward, backward, up, down, diagonally, always in a straight line.

BEAR
CAMEL
DONKEY
GAZELLE
GOAT
HART
HORSE
IBEX
JACKAL

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| L | A | P | B | A | R | T | M | N | O | A | H | N |
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| O | X | U | A | Y | T | E | L | L | E | Z | A | G |
| B | H | O | R | S | E | R | G | M | O | A | K | H |
| X | G | E | J | H | R | K | A | S | P | K | C | T |
| Q | X | S | S | C | O | C | N | H | A | I | A | H |
| K | T | R | E | U | N | I | C | O | R | N | J | A |
| B | R | R | Y | N | O | E | R | T | D | Q | M | W |
| C | S | J | X | J | I | M | S | M | M | O | L | K |
| I | F | Z | P | F | L | O | W | U | E | K | X | J |
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| Q | L | B | W | V | N | M | J | N | Y | O | C | P |

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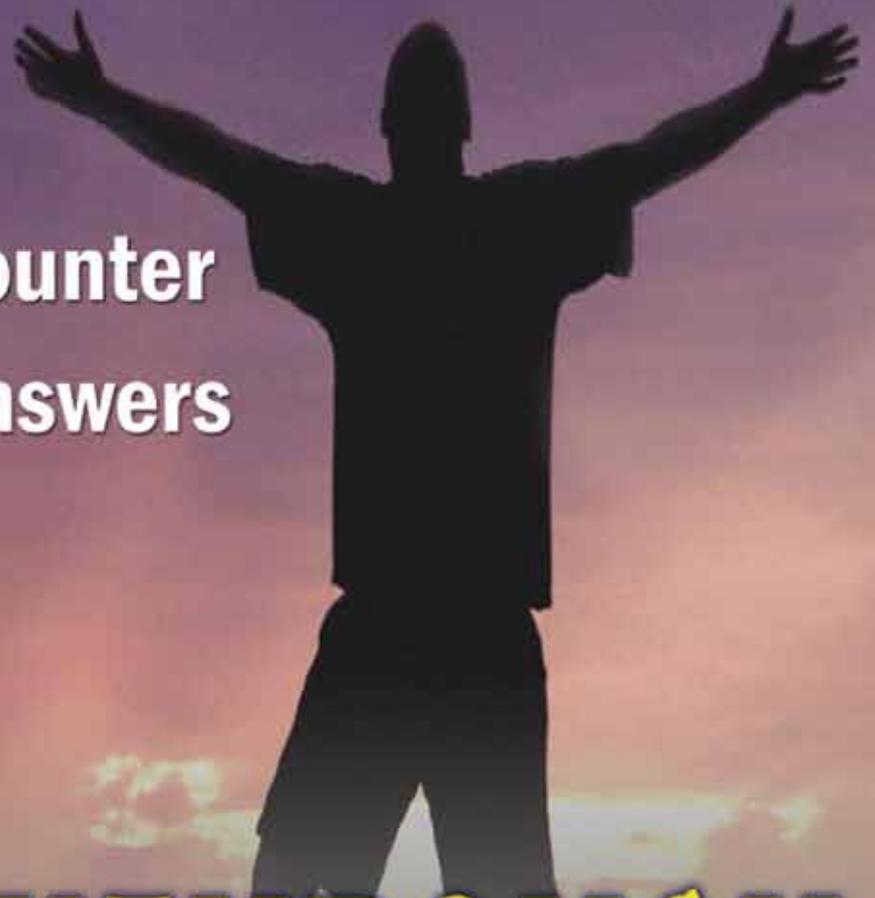
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