



Cohabiting & the scriptures

By Dr Morounkeji Fagbemi

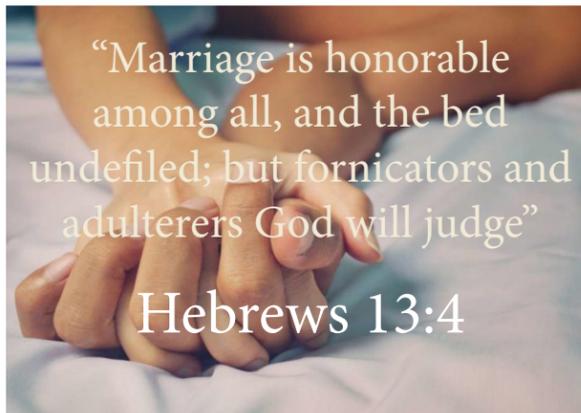
A man of God once pointed out that our belief must prepare the way on how we behave (right doctrine precedes right behavior). What is cohabitation? It is the arrangement where two people who are NOT Married live together and also having sex.

The Bible does not sanction cohabiting before marriage (no matter how trendy it may be amongst the present generation). God sees marriage as a covenant (not just a business arrangement or basic friendship). God himself instituted marriage and honors it irrespective of whether between two unbelievers or two believers. All governments recognize and respect marriage. God says Marriage is honorable. Hebrews 13:4 "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge".

Social Trends, celebrity behavior with sexual promiscuity should not be the cue for Christians. 1st Corinthians 7:2 says "But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband".

Rather than burn with lust marry!!! 1st Corinthians 7:8-9 says "Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. 9 But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."

There is no place (in the Bible) that says your marriage must be lavish, beyond your means or big. Marriage registration (license) in Nigeria cost (2000 Niara), in New York \$40. Bottom line: if someone loves you enough to want to live with you, then they should be committed enough to marry you.



"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge"
Hebrews 13:4

Not being rich is not a valid reason for cohabiting rather than marriage. Human beings are NOT cars that you test-drive.

Examples

Joseph (not rich): Even though Mary was already pledged to Joseph, he did not cohabit with her. Matthew 1:18-19 "18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

Jacob did not cohabit with Rachael otherwise Genesis 29:25 would not have happened.

Ruth did not cohabit with Boaz even though a romantic relationship was budding much earlier as outlined in Ruth chapter 3. In chapter 4:13 it says "Boaz married Ruth, and the Lord blessed her with a son."

Data on the negative effects of cohabiting shows that persons that cohabit experience more break-ups, sexual abuse, physical abuse, ill health, and always have / live in the

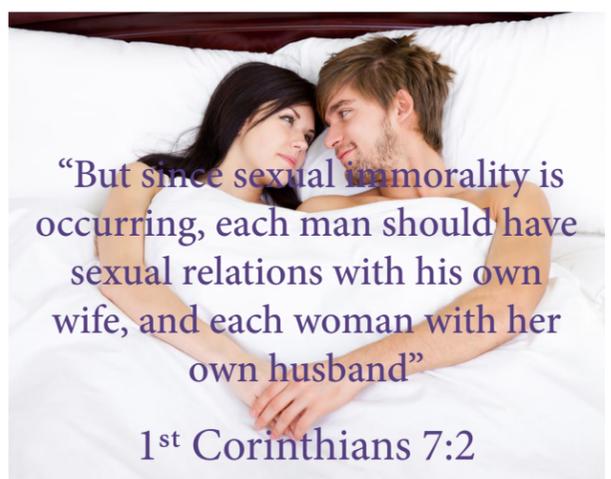
atmosphere of uncertainty which takes his toll emotionally, affects long term planning and raising of children. Worst of all, they are living in sin.

Tim Challies in one of his writings points out Cohabiting unlike marriage is ambiguous (why are they together ? Sex, who is family?, who is next of kin if suddenly one person dies?)

Cohabiting is free-floating whereas marriage brings families together. Marriage is a union of families rather than just of two free-floating individuals.

Marriage Provides Protection for the Vulnerable at the Start and Offers Some Hope of Justice to Those Wronged When It Ends.

Marriage Strengthens Private Intentions with Public Promises. Private assurances are terribly easy to break; they evaporate like the morning dew. ... But when all my wider family, my friends, my work colleagues, and my neighbors know I have publicly made this pledge, then I am much more inclined to keep it.



"But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband"
1st Corinthians 7:2

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Welcome to Panoplia.

The mission of Panoplia is to help believers develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. It emphasises spiritual growth and leadership.

It is published quarterly by City Of Refuge Ministries Inc. and is distributed free of charge.

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Most quotations in this newsletter are from the **Holy Bible, King James Version.**

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In conclusion, pastors and church leaders should not give up but spend more of their pulpit time to uplift marriage, teach on God's standard, help singles to differentiate between wedding & marriage, talk about the benefits of marriage (spiritually, emotionally, health wise, and economically) and encourage /

support singles to marry rather than cohabit (encourage those cohabiting presently to take a step into marriage). Every church should have a way of encouraging / following young married couples in their midst. All these will also help to alleviate their fears about marriage.

Dr Morounkeji Fagbemi



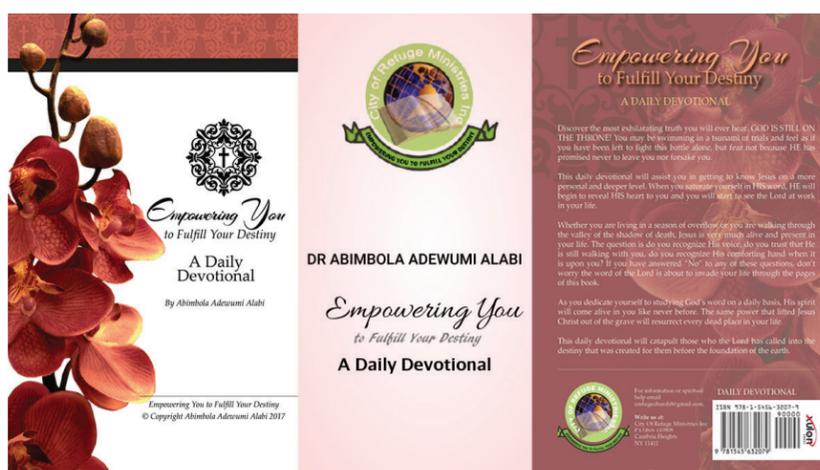
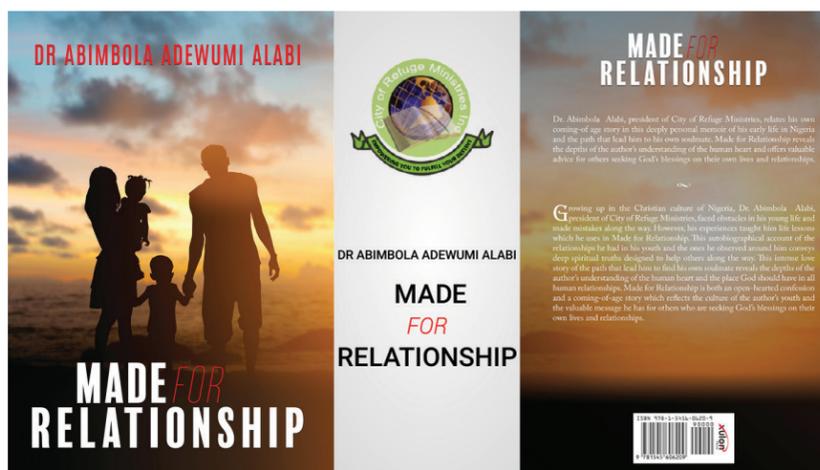
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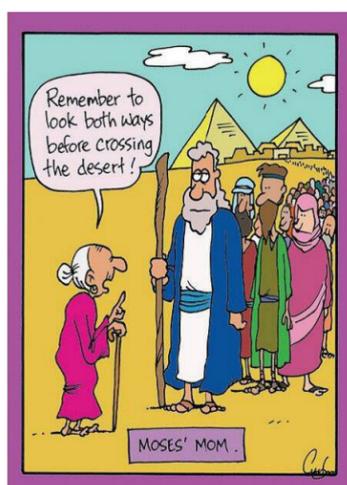
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WHEN YOU THOUGHT I WASN'T LOOKING

By David Walls

“
When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw tears come from your eyes, and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all right to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you feed a stray cat, and I thought it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw you make my favorite cake just for me, and I knew that little things are special things.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I heard you say a prayer, and I believed there is a God I could always talk to.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I felt you kiss me goodnight, and I felt loved.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw tears come from your eyes, and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all right to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking,
I saw that you cared, and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

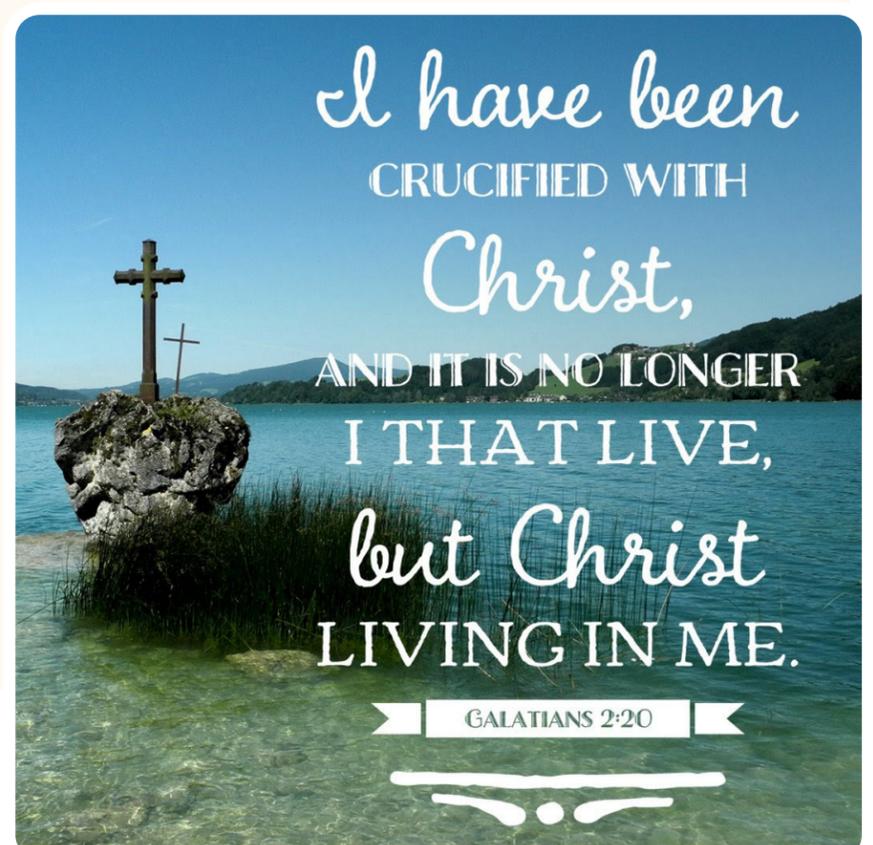
When you thought I wasn't looking,
I looked... and wanted to say thanks for all the things I saw when
you thought I wasn't looking.

When you think they aren't looking, do they see Christ (in your life) ?

*“I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but
Christ lives in me. That life which I now live in the flesh, I live by
faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.”*

Galatians 2:20

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subscribe?name=thedailyencourager](http://go.netatlantic.com/read/all_forums/subscribe?name=thedailyencourager)



The Philosophy of "Peanuts"

To receive The Daily Encourager FREE each weekday, click on the following link: http://go.netatlantic.com/read/all_forums/subscribe?name=thedailyencourage

The following is the philosophy of Charles Schultz, the creator of the "Peanuts" comic strip. You don't have to actually answer the questions. Just read the e-mail straight through, and you'll get the point.

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of Miss America.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

How did you do?

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

Here's another quiz. See how you do on this one:

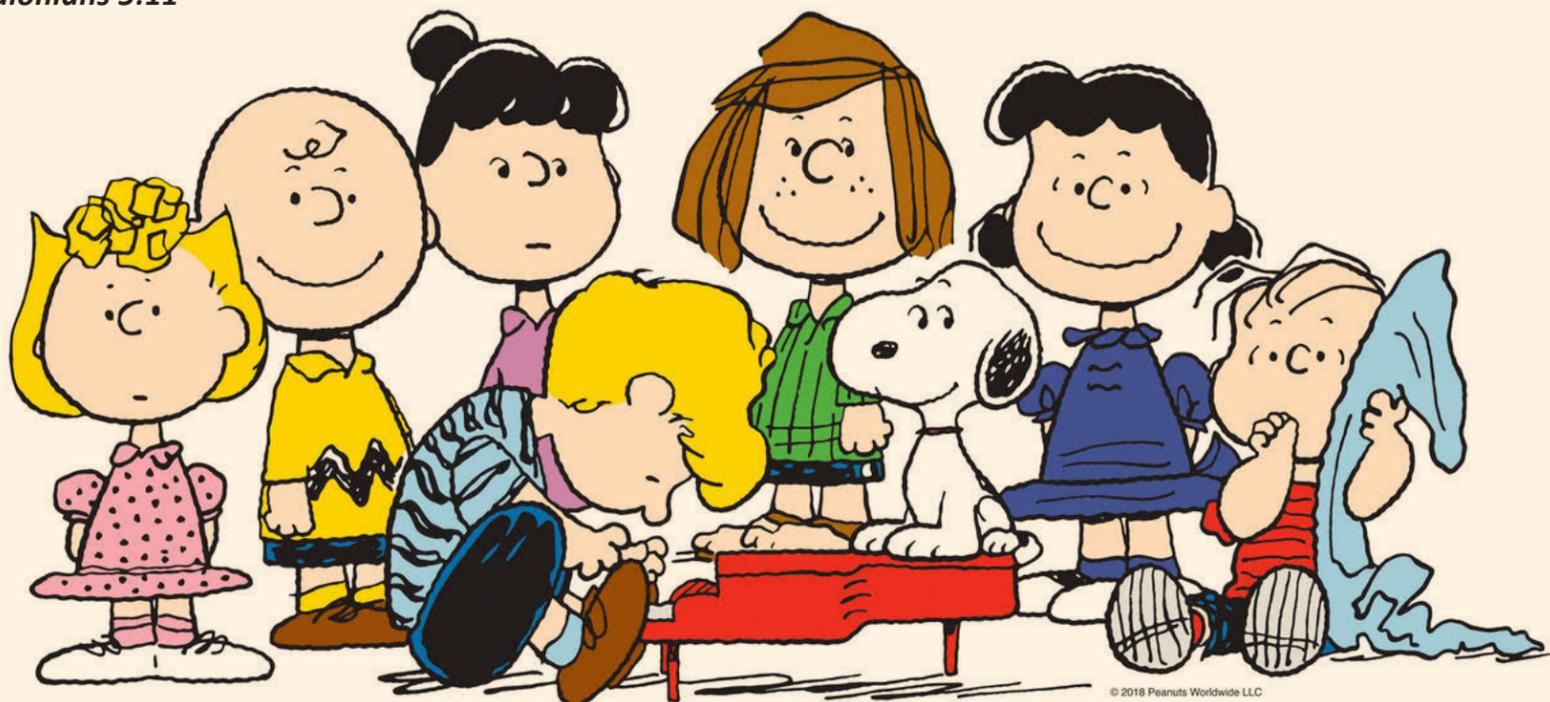
1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

Easier?

The lesson: The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that care. The people who make a difference in your life are the ones who encourage you in your Christian walk, who encourage you with spiritual strength in times of trouble and the ones who help you see your value to the Kingdom of God.

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

1 Thessalonians 5:11





But when everyone was asleep

By Dr. Abimbola Alabi

“But when everyone was asleep, an enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat and ran away. When the wheat sprouted and bore grain, the weeds also appeared. So the farmer’s hired hands came to him and said, ‘Sir, wasn’t that good seed that you sowed in the field? Where did all these weeds come from?’ “He answered, ‘This has to be the work of an enemy!’ “They replied, ‘Do you want us to go and gather up all the weeds?’ ““No,’ he said. ‘If you pull out the weeds, you might uproot the wheat at the same time. Let them both grow together until the harvest. At that time, I’ll tell my harvesters to gather the weeds first and tie them all in bundles to be burned. Then they will harvest the wheat and put it into my barn.’” Matthew 13:25-30(TPT)

But when everyone was asleep.

But while everyone was sleeping

But while he was sleeping

But while people were asleep

But while men slept

It ranges from “everyone” to the specific “men.”

It shows that the enemy of our soul has always been strategic, deceptive, and cunningly wise.

However, ranging from the church to the specific member, the general tendency is to always react.

In Matthew chapter 13, there are seven parables, and all of them are pretty insightful.

Some are for the multitudes.

Many more are for the disciples.

The question today is, are you reacting to a situation like a farmer’s hired hand?

Do you have an understanding like the real farmer?

What is happening around you now?

As an individual, as a nation, and to the entire world.

Parables contain hidden things that need spiritual understanding.

Don’t just keep reacting to situations.

Find out from God first what is going on?

Receive understanding.

Have the knowledge of God’s word.

Gain wisdom.

Gain understanding,

Make the right choices.

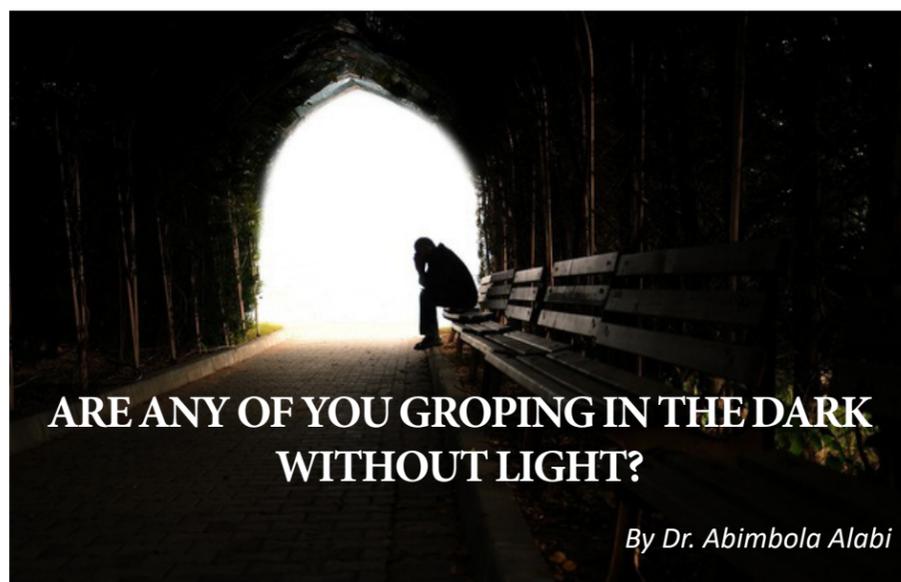
Draw closer to God.

“The fountain of life flows from you to satisfy me. In your light of holiness, we receive the light of revelation.” Psalm 36:9(TPT)

Let the light of God guide you.

“The fountain of life flows from you to satisfy me. In your light of holiness, we receive the light of revelation.”

Psalm 36:9(TPT)



ARE ANY OF YOU GROPING IN THE DARK WITHOUT LIGHT?

By Dr. Abimbola Alabi

“Who among you has true fear and reverence of Yahweh?

Who of you listens to the voice of his servant?

Are any of you groping in the dark without light?

Let him trust in the faithful name of Yahweh” Isaiah 50:10 (TPTT)

Sometimes, people of God will go through periods of darkness.

You have read, prayed, listened carefully to the sermon, you did your homework, you fasted... however, you arrived in darkness.

You woke up in crisis with your children, with no money, problems with your spouse, health issues, etc.

The question we ask during these circumstances is: Why? Why me?

As we celebrate the Easter season, let us remember that Jesus went through all these challenges.

His arrest, false accusations, biased trial, and the crucifixion.

How do you react during darkness?

What do you do when the light goes off?

Remember Job? Or Habakkuk? Also, the apostle Paul?

They all had some experiences.

Amid their challenges, God did not abandon them.

Ressurrection is coming.

What are you going through now?

Easter season reminds us again that you will overcome.

John Milton wrote a book called “Paradise Lost” after he went blind.

John Bunyan wrote “The Pilgrim’s Progress’ from prison in Bedford.

John wrote the book of Revelation when he was in exile at Patmos.

Apostle Paul wrote Philippians, the Epistle of Joy, when he was in prison.

What do you do when momentarily you don’t understand what is going on with you?

Don’t curse God.

Even when some brethren abandon you, feel lonely and alone.

He the Alpha and Omega said He would never leave you nor forsake you.

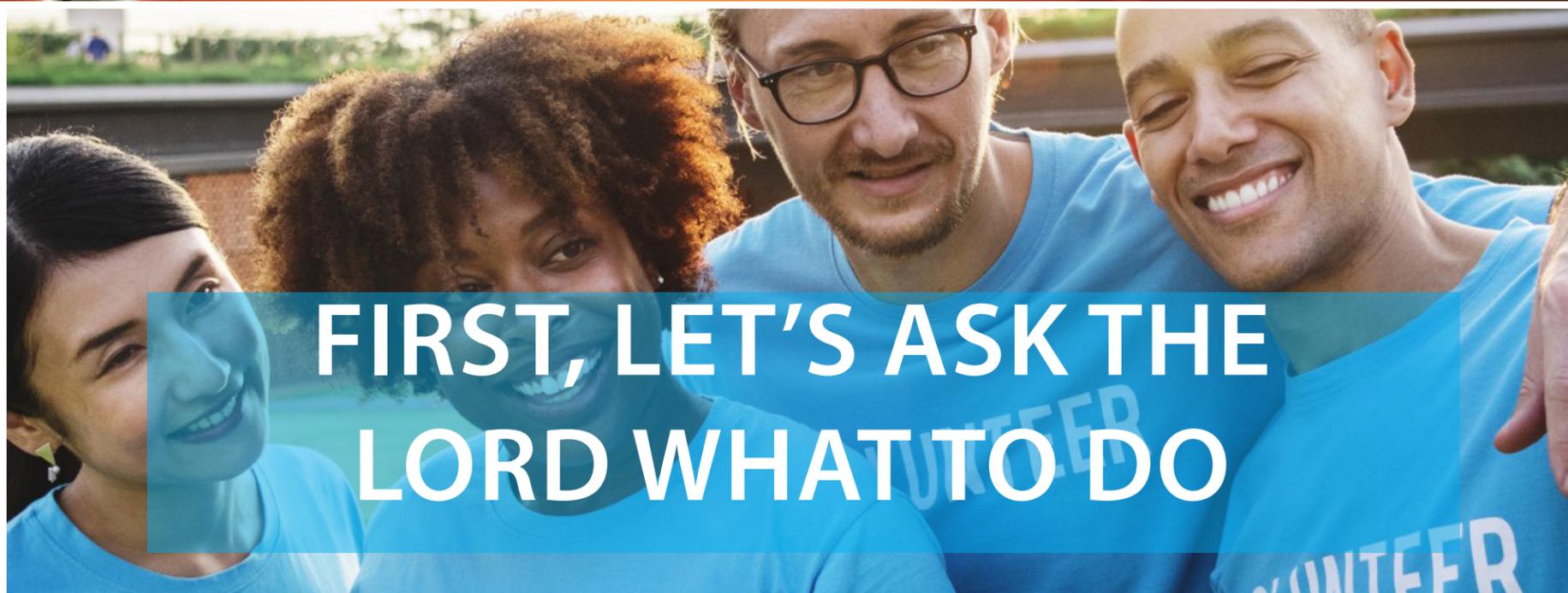
Are You literally being crucified because of your Faith?

Ressurrection is around the corner.

That same Ressurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead is still available for you today.

Don’t give up.

Don't
give up



FIRST, LET'S ASK THE LORD WHAT TO DO

By Dr. Abimbola Alabi

Jehoshaphat was now very rich and famous. He signed a treaty with King Ahab of Israel by arranging the marriage of his son and Ahab's daughter. One day, Jehoshaphat went to visit Ahab in his capital city of Samaria. Ahab slaughtered sheep and cattle and prepared a big feast to honour Jehoshaphat and the officials with him. Ahab talked about attacking the city of Ramoth in Gilead and finally asked, "Jehoshaphat, would you go with me to attack Ramoth?" "Yes," Jehoshaphat answered. "My army is at your command. But first, let's ask the LORD what to do." 2 Chronicles 18:1-4 (CEV)

When close friends ask you to join them in ventures, what do you do? It may not be a business venture.

It could even be spiritual projects.

What is usually your response to suggestions from trusted and respected friends?

Jehoshaphat had everything going well for him at this time.

Joining an inlaw in the battle against the enemy?

Seems the right thing to do.

He was flattered by the honor and reception they gave him.

Do you succumb to flattery and ego massage?

However, he knew God up to the level of asking for directions.

You may ask why a good person is associating with a bad one?

Sometimes we are attracted to the opposite character in us.

Even though the counsel of the Lord was given :

Jehoshaphat still went to war alongside Ahab.

Do you also do things under the pressure of friendship?

Are there some people in your life you can not say NO to?

It was apparent to Jehoshaphat that this venture was hazardous.

He still went.

You don't need to expend the Grace of God like he did.

He escaped death by whiskers.

What relationship are you in today that makes you compromise?

The Holy Spirit is available for you to ask for directions.

First, ask God what to do.

Receive Grace too to carry out what HE tells you.

"But first, find out what the Lord's word is in this matter."



By Dr. Abimbola Alabi

God is with you

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matt. 28:20. (KJV).

What do you tell your friends?

Do you tell them about Jesus?

Do you teach them to keep His commandments?

The last instruction Jesus gave was to teach all nations about Him.

When He gave this instruction, He also gave a promise.

He will be with us until the end of the world.

The world did not end yet.

Jesus is still with us.

Keep the commandments of Jesus.

Teach them to all nations.

Tell your friends and teach them to observe the teachings of Jesus.

Jesus will be with you.

When He is with you, He guides you in the right direction.

Can you follow the instructions of Jesus?

What prevents you to?

Application to the Christian life:

Tell everybody you meet about Jesus.

Let your friends know that you are Jesus's person.

Don't hide your faith.

Tell the about His Love for you.

Share with them some of the things He has done for you.

Teach them His commandments.

Be obedient and follow Jesus.

Be an example of the Believer.

**"MY ARMY IS AT YOUR COMMAND.
BUT FIRST, LET'S ASK THE LORD
WHAT TO DO."**

2 CHRONICLES 18:1-4 (CEV)



By Dr. Abimbola Alabi

“Now, this is what Yahweh says: *“Listen, Jacob, to the One who created you, Israel, to the One who shaped who you are. Do not fear, for I, your Kinsman-Redeemer, will rescue you. I have called you by name, and you are mine. When you pass through the deep, stormy sea, you can count on me to be there with you. When you pass through raging rivers, You will not drown. When you walk through persecution like fiery flames, you will not be burned; the flames will not harm you,”* Isaiah 43:1-2 (TPT)

God is with you in that challenge you are facing.

“This situation ?” you are asking!

Yes, in the present circumstances, you have found yourself.

Don’t take it personally.

You are probably going through this issue to test your faith.

Modern Christianity had made some believe that there will be no problem.

That’s not true.

Now that you are encountering one.

You then react, thinking something is wrong with you.

Trials and temptations will come your way because of your faith.

It is not necessarily because you have sinned.

God is reassuring you today again:

You can count on me to be there with you.!

When you’re in over your head, I’ll be there with you.!!

I am with you.!!!

Handle the situation knowing that God is in the midst of this fire with you.

“Astonished, King Nebuchadnezzar stood up in terror and asked his advisors, “Didn’t we throw three men into the fire, bound firmly with ropes?” In reply, they told the king, “Yes, your majesty.” “Look!” he told them, “I see four men walking untied and unharmed in the middle of the fire, and the appearance of the fourth resembles a divine being.”

Daniel 3:24-26 (NIV)

The fourth man in the fire is with you in this current challenge.

Depend entirely on Him.

Recognize His Presence in your life at this crucial moment.

It is difficult Praising God in a challenging situation.

However, that is the Kingdom Key.

Use it.

Worship Him.

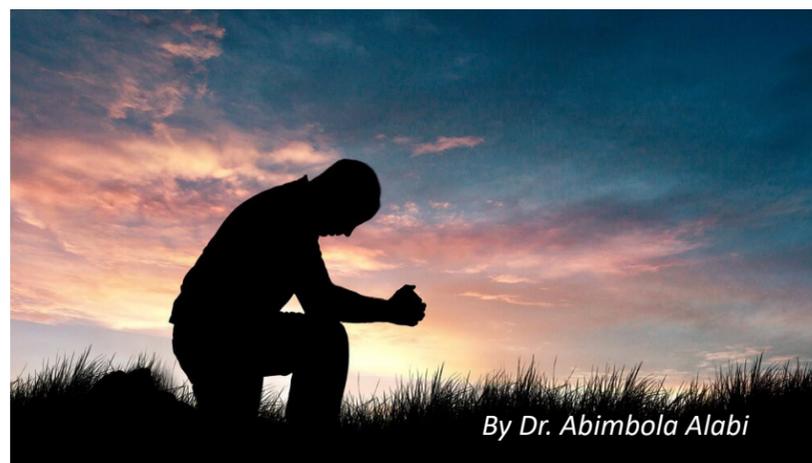
Pray more in the Spirit.

You have to use the Praise key and stop beating and berating yourself.

“When you go through deep waters, I will be with you.

When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown.

When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you.” Isaiah 43:2(NLT)



HEARTS... STILL REMEMBERING WHAT THEY LEFT BEHIND

“For clearly, those who live this way are longing for the appearing of a heavenly city. And if their hearts were still remembering what they left behind, they would have found an opportunity to go back. But they couldn’t turn back, for their hearts were fixed on what was far greater, that is, the heavenly realm! So because of this, God is not ashamed in any way to be called their God, for he has prepared a heavenly city for them.” Hebrews 11:14-16(TPT)

The easiest thing to do is to turn back once you meet an obstacle.

However, that should not be the next thing for you to do.

Challenges would always come your way.

Contradictions to the promises may appear.

The most fantastic tool of discouragement is the desire to retreat.

Desires to go back to the old ways of doing things

Desires for old but known unprofitable relationships

Desire to remain as the one-eyed blind man in the midst of the blind.

What issues are you confronting today that makes you want to go back?

The children of Israel panicked and complained to Moses because of challenges.

“They complained to Moses and Aaron, “If only we had died in Egypt or this desert! Why is the Lord bringing us to this land—just to have us die in battle? Our wives and children will be taken as prisoners of war! Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” They said to each other, “Let’s choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”Numbers 14:2-4 (GW)

Joshua and Caleb encouraged them, but they did not listen. (Numbers 14:6)

Eventually, only those two made it out of that pack.

The men and women listed in Hebrews 11 made that quality decision.

They decided in their heart not to go back.

Their hearts were fixed on the more excellent glory ahead.

Be encouraged today not to go back.

“God is not like people. He tells no lies. He is not like humans. He doesn’t change his mind. When he says something, he does it. When he makes a promise, he keeps it.”Numbers 23:19 (GW)

God that has promised you is faithful.

EMPOWERING YOU TO FULFILL YOUR GOD GIVEN DESTINY



‘How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.’

ACTS 10v 38

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