

THE BLOOM MAGAZINE

3RD EDITION • AUGUST 2019

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EDITOR'S LETTER

pressing on with inner and outer beauty: translated noble character

Last year, 2018, the Gospel Blooms International was focusing on the theme of being Beautiful Inside and Out, and this year 2019, on Pressing On. This Edition further tells us how a beautiful woman gets to Press On, even when things are extremely difficult.

Proverbs 31: 10-31 is one of the most renowned passages in the Bible about women. We all talk about the wife of noble character, as you read this edition of The Blooms Magazine, I invite you to reread Proverbs 31: 10-31. It describes in minute details what it means to be a woman of beauty inside and outside.

A beautiful woman is one that inspires confidence in those around her including her husband, children, siblings, parents, and colleagues in school, the workplace, and business. She is trustworthy; she does not do harm, translate she keeps away from slander, malicious gossip, and destroying others with her tongue and actions. She does not eat the bread of idleness. Instead, she uses her tongue for instruction and passing on wisdom. She respects those in authority maybe it be the husband, father, mother, teachers, colleagues, and boss.

She works hard. A beautiful woman wakes up early, she provides for her family, she even buys land and plants a vineyard. She trades in profit. This tells me she doesn't sit around and wait but goes out and does what needs to be done. More so, a beautiful woman is caring, and she shares. She gives to the poor and extends her hand. A selfish woman is not beautiful.

Do you seek beauty, then you earn it not so much with make-up (yes make-up and dressing nice is good, we even have an etiquette section in this edition), but you earn it with character. Beauty is a reward for the character of your heart. A reward of integrity, righteousness, and holiness. A woman whose beauty is defined by character is called blessed, she earns praise.

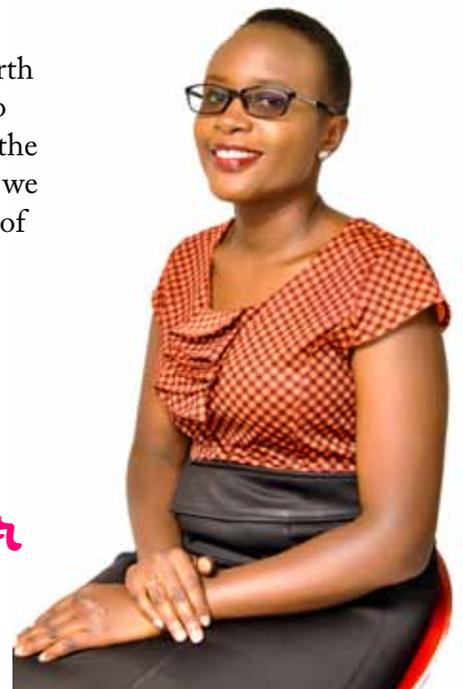
Charm (outer beauty) is deceptive and fleeting, but a woman who fears the Lord (character) is to be praised. This year as we talk about inner and outer beauty, I urge you to aspire to be the woman defined of character. Yes, have the outer beauty, and yes clothe yourself as the Queen and Princess you are, but let your praise come from your character. Fear the Lord, and your reward is sure. You shall be praised at the city gate. As a young Bloom, a blossoming girl, an older bloom, and elderly bloom, be the Beauty defined of a Noble Character.

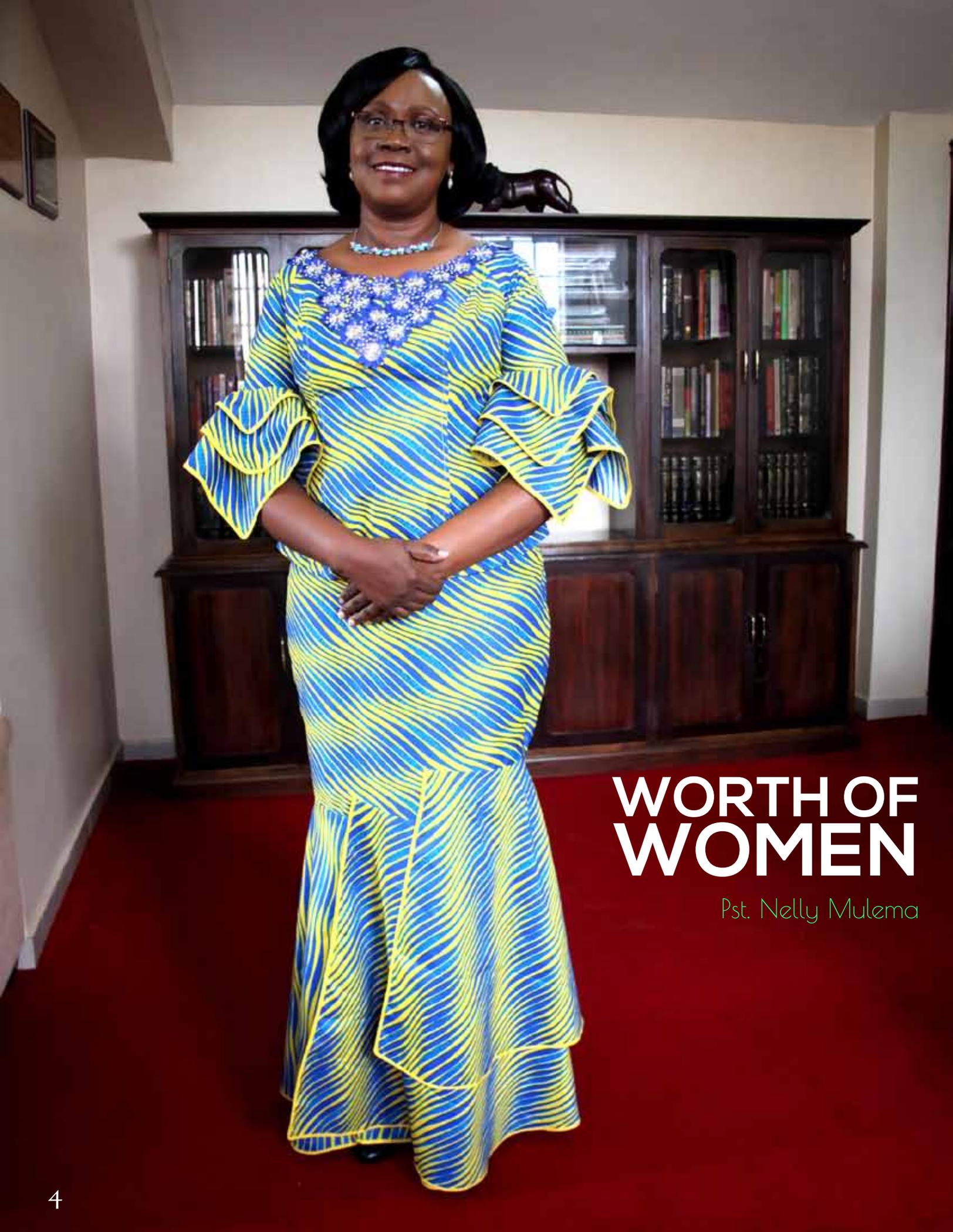
Welcome to the 3rd Edition of The Bloom Magazine. We are talking about our worth as women, the Man Enough Program, how to pray for children, to be royal sister, to move on after loss, how to balance the different activities in our busy life schedules, the woman in the county churches, we have testimonies on the Lord's grace and mercy, we talk of etiquette and grooming, making that sweet meal, and of course the posterity of the church in the kids corner, with bible trivia, puzzles, and Christ's love for the children.

Enjoy the 3rd Edition of the Blooms Magazine. Find your place of Beauty, Grace, Mercy, and Pressing on with the Lord! •¶

Bether

BETHER MULWA
Editor In Chief





WORTH OF WOMEN

Pst. Nelly Mulema

“When women and girls, everywhere, begin to see themselves as more than inanimate objects; but as beautiful beings capable of deep feelings and high thoughts, this has the capacity to create change all around. The kind of change that is for the better.” –C. JoyBell

I believe that every woman has been created in the image of God and is infinitely valuable and significant to Him. When you value something, you protect it. God values women. And God wants women to be protected. We live in a society where women are not valued, and sadly the women have believed the negative report the society has spoken about them.

Towards the beginning of the book, the writer of Judges describes women in greater detail, like Deborah and Jael (ch. 4-5). But gradually, women’s identities become less and less defined and more and more in harm’s way (like the woman in ch. 9). Instead of being named, they are anonymous. Instead of being quoted, they are silent. By the time we hear about the Unnamed Concubine in chapter 19, Israel had so morally declined that they were just like the surrounding pagan nations. The writer is telling something about the nation’s spiritual state – when they turned away from the Lord, they devalued humanity.

The extent to which a culture rejects and rebels against the only true God, means its women will be unvalued and unprotected. Millions of women and girls are trafficked each year, women are abducted, some are forced to marry men they aren’t in love with, women are open to abuse by sponsors because they must make a living for themselves and provide for their families. Where women haven’t been physically enslaved, they’ve become slaves to the idea that their power is measured by their sexuality. In both cases, women are not seen as persons; they’re regarded as products.

God considers women as worth the life of His Son to redeem them (Is. 43:1-4). He values women and wants them to be protected. Even when we see, hear, or even endure the wrongs and atrocities against women in this world, He never forgets their worth. A day will come when every injustice against women will be answered in perfect measure by a justice-keeping God. He sees every violation of the women and girls that are so precious to Him. No matter how women are devalued, denigrated, or discarded in this sinful world, nothing can lessen the immeasurable worth that they have in the heart of God. He values women. He values us. He values you.

“If people want something to be wrong about you—they are going to make things wrong about you. That is why it is my belief to never try and prove anything to anyone. Real diamonds belong to people who know how to spot a real diamond; they don’t belong to people who need to be convinced that they are real diamonds.”

What is your worth child of God? •¶

VICTORY CONTINUES

MARRIAGE AFTER 16 YEARS

Mary Melby Steiner

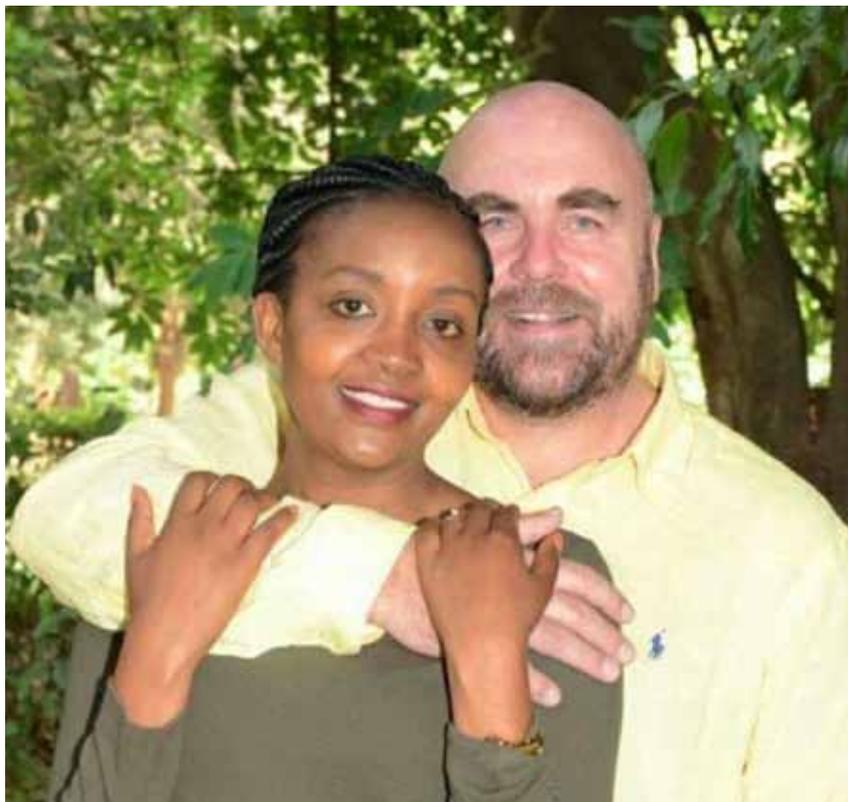
In our 1st Issue of The Bloom Magazine, Mary Muteti gave us a story of how she had lived as a widow for 16 years and raised two young men alone. Today she shares another piece of her triumph now as Mary Steiner. It's a journey of the goodness of the Lord. Are you hurting and lost hope, let the story of Mary speak to you – a widow that found love in Christ.

It is yet another opportunity that I thank the almighty for His unrelenting love for me. He has continued showing Himself strong in my life and I am indebted to share His greatness. It's an honor to inspire widows because they hold a special place in my heart. If I can help even one widow and remind them that they will smile again one day, then sharing my story is worth it. The message is that life can be beautiful post-loss. You just have to search for the glimmer of light in each day and make that your beacon of hope.

Did you know that in the genealogy of Jesus four out of the five women named were widows? And that in Scripture, widows are repeatedly the subject of miracles? God cherishes the widow and keeps a careful eye on her. She knows much of Jacob's wrestling with God. For that reason God does not despise her tears nor shudder when she doubts her faith in the darkness.

Grief teaches perspective, patience, love, kindness, tolerance, appreciation for the present moment, and much more. Grief is perhaps the greatest teacher known to man and it comes at a very steep price. I've paid the ultimate price. I have loved and lost, grieved and grown, survived and thrived. Widowhood has greatly shaped who I have become.

At 28, I joined a club I never wanted to be part of: the young widows' club after being married to Solomon for five years. I went through a very scary and heartbreaking period of my life, one I thought would never end. But by God's grace, sixteen years down the lane, God has put a



new song in my heart and enabled me to walk hand-in-hand with a wonderful friend Steinar Melby. I have remarried!! God has made us stewards of a lovely blended family of two beautiful gals and three awesome boys. He makes everything beautiful at his own time (Ecclesiastes 3:11) This was God's doing. Having Him as the rock foundation of our marriage has enabled us to withstand the "cultural" storms and our individual shortcomings.

How was the journey? Well, it wasn't easy getting to this place of opening my heart to love again. If you've ever lost someone, you know that grief is a grueling journey that involves two steps forward and one step backwards. I had to get to a point of acceptance. That the life I shared with Solomon was truly over and that it was God's design. Counseling and prayer helped kill the old me to be able to truly open my heart to new love. I understood that I was not destined to remain in mourning forever. I believed and embraced God's

IN CHRIST

promise that He had good plans for me, plans to give me peace and a future. I understood that I could honor my past, treasure my past, love my past but I did not have to live my past.

I am honoring Solomon's love and service by modeling the best example and being a beacon of light. You can defy the myth that once widowed, you have reached a glass ceiling, that your destiny is to remain alone longing for a life that is no longer here to live, that it is not proper for a widow with children to date, that you are dishonoring your late spouse. As a child of God, your decisions should be backed by the word of God and not by myths or traditions. Paul speaks directly to your situation "A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If the husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. But in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is" (1 Cor.7:39-40). If you want the first verse to come true in your life, then trust God today to provide.

How about a widow who chooses to remain single? This is where our Christian responsibility comes in. We can lessen her pain and make her happy according to Paul. Sometimes all she needs is a listening ear when she needs to talk it out. Studies show that widows lose 75 percent of their network when they lose a spouse. They move from the front row of the church to the back and then out of the door. From serving and singing in the choir to solitude and silent sobbing and then on to find a place where they are accepted and understood. Due to the stigma that comes with widowhood, the widow is the most invisible person amongst us!! When you are in the thick of loss, even as a Christian, its hard at times to feel God's comfort. It's isolating. To offer compassion in any circumstance is to share in another's suffering, and in so doing we mirror the suffering of Christ.

Today is the day when pain can take off it's disguise and praise can start to rise. God understands the emotional roller coaster of grief that you are going through. Am here to remind you that tough seasons can bloom into beautiful seasons. Everything you have been through is a set-up for your next best season. Do not put a period where God has put a comma, do not deem your light.



Overcoming your fears and refusing to be a victim is the greatest victory you can ever have. Joyce Meyer says “Do it afraid.” It’s the same principle here. Don’t wait until you don’t hurt to move forward, because “not hurting” is not going to happen. The acuteness of your pain will lessen, but it will not go away. It’s not supposed to. So quit expecting to stop hurting! It’s not one or the other; it’s both. It’s pain and healing. It’s suffering and hope. It’s sadness and joy. We must embrace both. Remember Jesus promised us both trouble and peace. (John 16:33). While embracing our present reality, we can also look forward with absolute certainty to victory in the end. I love the song by Linda; “One day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time,” one moment is all we have to worry about.

Have you been waiting for the pain to end before taking the next step? Jesus told the lame man. “Get up, pick your mat and walk”. (John 5: 8-9) The mat was to be a reminder of God’s faithfulness. The issue here is that we want to leave the mat of pain behind, I say pick it and walk by faith.

•¶

MOVING ON

MESSAGE FOR THE WIDOWS

Pst. Grace W. Ngaruiya

DEFINITION

WIDOW: A woman who has lost her spouse by death and has not married again. The Hebrew word for widow is *almana* and has appeared 56 times in the Old Testament and 26 times in the New Testament.

INTRODUCTION

You can never be somebody else. God will use you the way you are. Tap from the source Jesus Christ. Christ is able to change the end of your hope to a thunderous victory- 2nd Kings 7:3. The lepers had reached the end of hope; they were neglected and stayed at the gate. God can, when He pleases, make the stoutest heart to tremble; and as for those who will not fear God, He can make them fear at the shaking of a leaf. Providence ordered it, that the lepers came as soon as the Syrians were fled.

MOVE ON

I admire people with the courage to face hard choices, make a decision, and move forward in faith. In 2 Kings, Benhadad, King of Syria, laid siege to Samaria, the capital city of Israel. The result

was a famine so severe that a donkey’s head sold for 80 pieces of silver, dove feces sold for five, and the women of the city cannibalized their own children. Four lepers, outcasts from society, sat at the gate of Samaria. Because of their disease, it is doubtful anyone in the city cared what became of them. Like the rest of Samaria, these four men were starving to death. Unlike the rest of Samaria, they decided to do something besides eat bird droppings and each other. Just like the lepers moved on despite their situation, I would encourage you to move on.

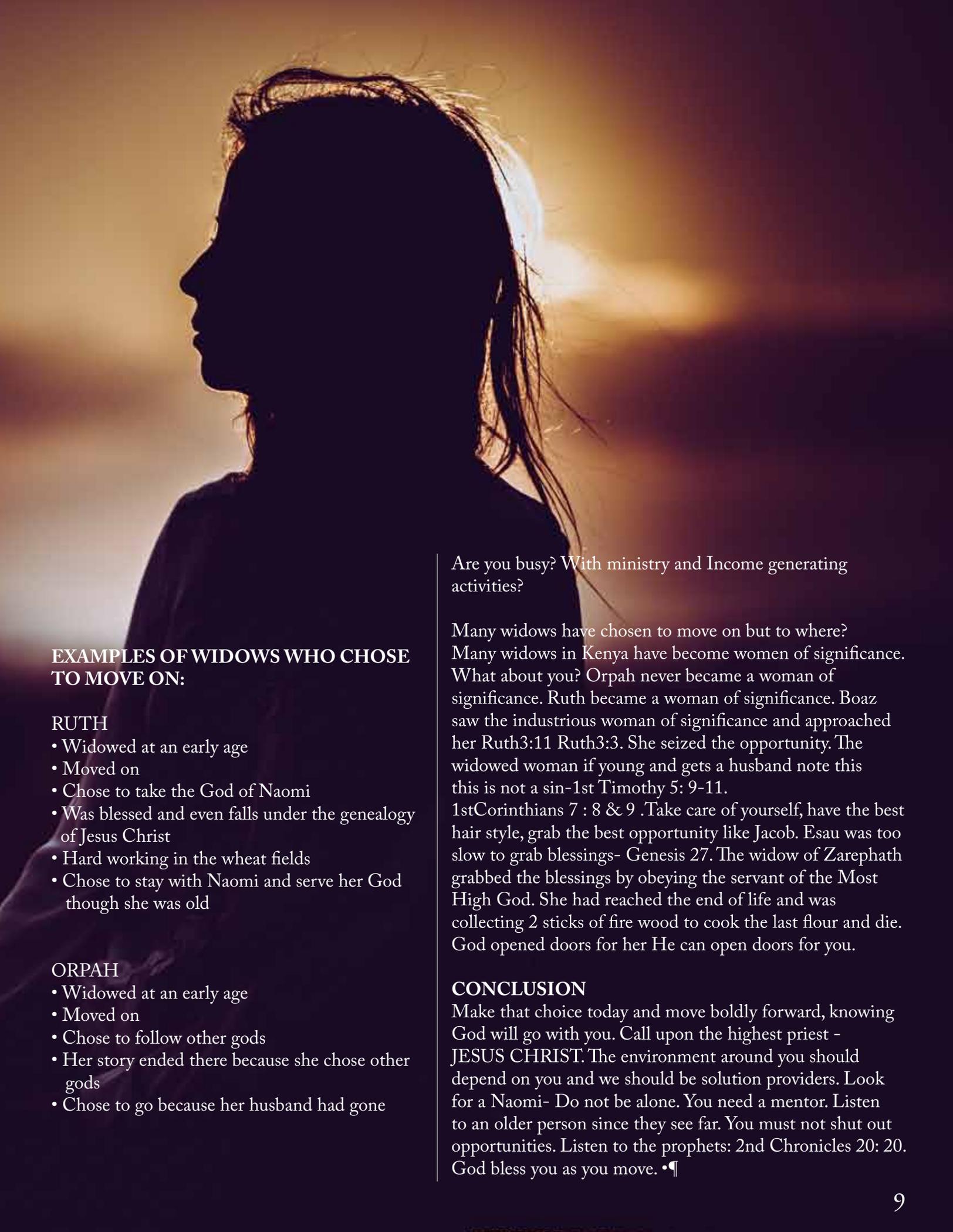
The lepers began by asking the most important question: “Why sit we here until we die?” Unfortunately, most people never even reach the point where they ask that question, choosing instead to sit around and complain about their circumstances. The lepers also realized they had just three options:

- A. Enter the city and starve
- B. Sit at the gate and starve
- C. Go to the camp of the enemy on the slim chance the Syrians would give them something to eat.

Out of the three, only option C offered any hope whatsoever. There was a better than average chance- Moving on and not going backwards. The Syrians would kill them outright, but perhaps they would have mercy. . . At twilight the four lepers began walking towards the camp of Syria. There are very important things we see here:

- They woke up early.
- What time do you wake up? Get out of your comfort zone. How many jobs can you afford to do?
- And as they went, God worked a miracle that saved the city.
- Are you on the move? Do not dwell on the seat of self pity.

God did not use the king or his cautious counselors (2 Kings 7.2): He used four societal outcasts who were willing to face the facts, make a decision, and move forward in faith. At some point in life, we all face what appear to be no-win situations. Sometimes it seems every road leads to ruin but when we step out in faith, we open the door for God to work a miracle.



EXAMPLES OF WIDOWS WHO CHOSE TO MOVE ON:

RUTH

- Widowed at an early age
- Moved on
- Chose to take the God of Naomi
- Was blessed and even falls under the genealogy of Jesus Christ
- Hard working in the wheat fields
- Chose to stay with Naomi and serve her God though she was old

ORPAH

- Widowed at an early age
- Moved on
- Chose to follow other gods
- Her story ended there because she chose other gods
- Chose to go because her husband had gone

Are you busy? With ministry and Income generating activities?

Many widows have chosen to move on but to where? Many widows in Kenya have become women of significance. What about you? Orpah never became a woman of significance. Ruth became a woman of significance. Boaz saw the industrious woman of significance and approached her Ruth3:11 Ruth3:3. She seized the opportunity. The widowed woman if young and gets a husband note this this is not a sin-1st Timothy 5: 9-11.

1stCorinthians 7 : 8 & 9 .Take care of yourself, have the best hair style, grab the best opportunity like Jacob. Esau was too slow to grab blessings- Genesis 27. The widow of Zarephath grabbed the blessings by obeying the servant of the Most High God. She had reached the end of life and was collecting 2 sticks of fire wood to cook the last flour and die. God opened doors for her He can open doors for you.

CONCLUSION

Make that choice today and move boldly forward, knowing God will go with you. Call upon the highest priest - JESUS CHRIST. The environment around you should depend on you and we should be solution providers. Look for a Naomi- Do not be alone. You need a mentor. Listen to an older person since they see far. You must not shut out opportunities. Listen to the prophets: 2nd Chronicles 20: 20. God bless you as you move. •¶

THE TENT EXPERIENCE

Pst. Kasasi Lynnette

Welcome to Kakamega GCI church. It was in 2015 when GCI Kakamega Church began. It was exciting to begin our church inside a rented church. We actually were in the will of God. The numbers grew day by day; we felt the presence of God. In 2016 November there was an earthquake, we were ordered to leave the church not knowing our next destiny, a little boy by the name Emmanuel went home crying, "our members have been sent away from the church". The dad came by running and asked us to keep all our items at his house. This is none else but Bishop Chemiat. We became aliens in Obeddon compound.

He has been a blessing and did not get tired of us, but you know what!! God has started expanding his boundaries. The daughter who dropped out of campus for lack of fees has joined medical training college this year, the fee paid miraculously. The first born son who has been on temporal job has been confirmed last month on permanent terms. God has been Faithful.

Numbers 9: 17 "Whenever the cloud lifted from above the tent, the Israelites set out; wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped." And so when the cloud abode at Chemiat's home we pitched a tent and kept asking God, are we still in your will? Is this your plan for GCI Kakamega? The still voice spoken of in Numbers 24: 2 (When Balaam looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came on him) came on our General Overseer, Rev. Charles Mulema who lifted up his eyes and saw the Kakamega brethren in a tent and he came to encourage them. Behold the picture.

Before long, our accountability Pastors incharge of Kakamega Branch, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Najoli heard and came to worship in the tent. The experience was awesome. We worshiped God, he cried like a little lad- his handkerchief was wet like the cotton of Gideon Judges 6:37. It confirmed to us that God was in the tent.

We have had two weddings in the tent. It was awesome. Rev. Kennedy Monyoncho came to officiate, on Sunday he had the experience of the tent worship. He exclaimed, "I wish my wife was here! It's awesome; God is here on this ground!" Oh!! Brethren the Lord has confirmed to us every Sunday that He is in the tent. People hear us worship and they come to see and they stay. A man going to visit his relatives with the daughter on Sunday came and has stayed. One going to Catholic Church stood by the roadside just to enjoy the worship. He came to see and has stayed. One brother heard the worship from his house and he came on board on Sunday 01/07/2018. What miracles do we need to see and believe that God is in the tent?

Whatever, whichever issues you are going through, if Kakamega Church can see God inside the tent, I want to assure you today that thou shall have everlasting encounter with the Son of God. God bless you, God bless GCI. Amen

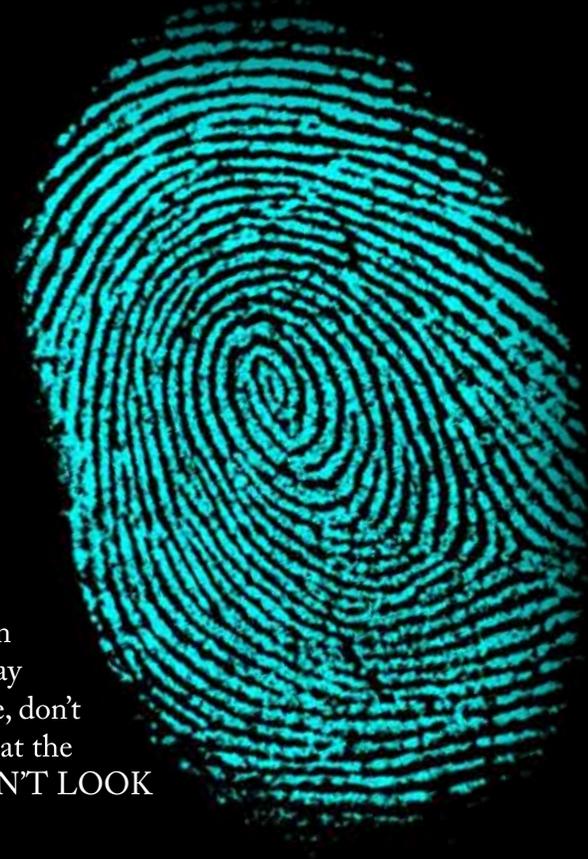
TESTIMONY BY MRS. SILVIA TINDI

It has not been easy. It has been a sacrifice by a few brethren to mount the tent every Sunday morning and bring it down. Being one of the people who raise the tent, sometimes the only lady it needs some ugali to do the job for it has taught me to prepare early for church. It's so tiring but sweet. It's a story I will always tell the ones who will come after this. It has taught me to honour God for Who and What he is. It has taught me to trust Him for great things. •¶



WHOSE DREAM ARE YOU LIVING?

Pst. Caroline Mahasi



Many parents, myself included, are guilty of wanting our children to live the dreams that we want. You are probably living your parents' dreams but it comes a time when you must discover who you are.

When you are running a race, you stick to your lane. You don't keep on looking back to see how others are running. (Philippians 3: 12-14) Stay in your lane, be focused. Keep your gaze locked on Jesus! Don't budge, don't be distracted, bought, or side tracked! Stay fixed, undeterred, looking at the prize that is before you! Fixing our eyes on Jesus... on the prize. (DON'T LOOK BACK!)

Often times in the office we are always competing with others, we also compare our children with others. But God created you as an individual, even your fingerprints are not like anyone else's, you are unique. You are so different and you don't even have to worry to be like someone else.

The different body parts have different functions. (1Cor 12:14-27) We need to discover which part we are in, in the body of Christ and our function and therefore we won't have to compete with each other. Find your purpose. It will simplify your life!

Focus on knowing who you are in the body of Christ, even in the church there is so much work to do, so find your place.

- *Everything happens in its time. Be patient.
- *Don't let anyone rush you on their timelines.
- *Create meaningful purposeful life for yourself.
- *Don't compete to be like each other; enjoy your individuality. Just be yourself!

Caleb at the age of 85 years was still strong he said... "Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day.. (Joshua 14:12) Do not conform any longer to the patterns of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-His good, pleasing and perfect will for you.

*God did not make me to impress you. God made me to be real, to be honest, to be open, to never compare myself to you; but to strive to become my own best person, to have character & dignity.

- Follow after your dreams, they are valid.
- Run your own race don't compare yourself to someone else.
- Avoid the comparison trap, pave your own path.

*When you know your position; you don't have to fight for your place! •¶

I do not know how many women have been ridiculed when their children appear like they are headed nowhere in life, when they perform poorly in their academics or even probably when they appear to be heading to failure. I have been in that situation, not once, not twice, but enough times for me to acknowledge that with God all things are possible. One day, my child was paraded in front of the class to be humiliated for being last in class. He cried a lot. We did not rebuke him but prayed with him, confessing that that was not our portion. We trusted God that he was going to be first and that he had a destiny. We prayed and fasted, believing our child was the head and not tail.

He passed his Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exam with 398 marks out of a possible 500. In high school, his class teacher told him that he was not an “A” (first-class) material unless God performed a miracle. We prayed and believed God that the teacher would see our God come through for our child. From grade “D” he progressed to a strong A-(minus) missing grade “A” by only one point in his Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams. Our God proved the teacher wrong. He was among the best students in the school and with others received an award for making the school proud. Today, he is in University, undertaking a Degree in Medicine.

The other one was also ridiculed and called names. He was number last at one time while in primary school. After prayer and fasting and standing with the child, he scored 389 in his KCPE. In high school he was called a reject, but through prayer he got an A-(minus) and is a medical doctor today. Our youngest son got 407 in his KCPE exams and is now in high school. We had to change him to another school when he was in class 6 because his class teacher believed he could not pass these exams. This is all because of trusting God.

Have your children ever been called rejects? Are you having a difficult time with them? Trust the Lord and keep confessing that in the eyes of men they may be seen as failures, but in the eyes of God they are first. Daniel was considered 10 times wiser because he honored God with his life, choosing to follow the wisdom flowing from above. So they entered the king's service. Let us teach our children to honor God and pray.

“In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom.” Daniel 1:20 •¶

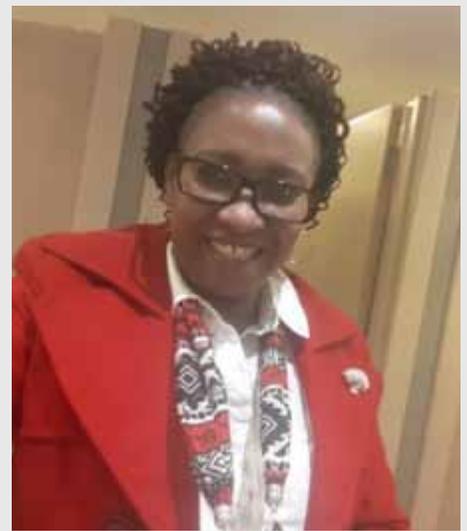
PRAYER OF FAITH FOR OUR CHILDREN

Pst. Grace Wanjiku Ngaruiya



RENDING OUR HEARTS FOR CHRIST

Pst. Queen Katembu



2ND ROYAL SISTERS CONFERENCE - GCI UTAWALA

THEME: Joel 2:25, “BEING RESTORED” - “I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten-- the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm -- my great army that I sent among you.”

Two days of great experience in the presence of God and cry for restoration. This has been GCI Utawala theme verse. We have gone through challenges as a church and individually and the theme verse was so timely and we felt as Royal Sisters, we needed to run with it and cry out for restoration. Restoration does not just come because you are crying out for it, there is weeping and repentance and returning to God with all of your heart, your soul and might. In Joel 2:13 we are called to “Rend your heart and not your garments, Return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate....” Many of us do not like rending our hearts, but we rend our clothes because that is what people can see, we look holy from the outside, but inside we are full of bitterness, unforgiveness, pride, envy, immorality, etc. Through this conference, I learnt that I am responsible for retaining or chasing the presence of God from my life and so are you – the choice is yours and mine. I have to be willing to be restored.

An analogy by the guest speaker – our phones irrespective of how expensive and flashy they are, they are only useful if they are charged. The phone charges faster and better when it is not being used and even when off. To be charged by the Lord you need to be off things and people that eat away your spiritual battery. When you are not spiritually charged, you will always be 'mteja' with God and you easily become a tool to be used by the devil for gossip and slander and other negative things. Also install spiritual “true caller” so that you can differentiate the many voices around you – differentiate the voice of God and the voice from the devil. Learn the block key too so that you can block negative voices before they reach your heart and destroy you. This is high calling, many are called but few are chosen. Let us endeavour to charge our spiritual batteries and stay charged, carry your charge or power bank – may you receive the revelation.

God bless you. •¶

LUCY'S TESTIMONY

Testimony of Restoration during Royal Sisters Conference on 1st -2nd June 2018. Theme was based on Joel 2:25

My Story

We moved in a marriage (kind of come we stay thing) in the year 2005, and we were blessed with a baby boy a year later, 2006. I gave my life to Christ in March 2009. The four years in marriage were not very interesting, I had this big picture in every girl's mind of living happily ever after. The relationship moved from good to worse, dominated with serious domestic violence to a point I opted for separation by the end of 2009 because our lives were at very serious risk.

The year 2018, 9years after separation, I have single-handedly raised our son who is now 12 years. The years have been by God's Grace and His overflowing provisions every day, despite many attempts seeking for assistance from the father with no forthcoming results.

During this time of separation, we tried to work on reconciliation with the help of a Church counsellor, but it never worked. During the early years of separation, I experienced seasons of resentment, pain, loss of hope for future, shattered dreams, But I thank God because he delivered me from all these and I am a living testimony of his overflowing JOY & PEACE.



June 2018 Conference

We were notified of the conference whose theme was Restoration, I started seeking God earnestly at His word and promises in Joel 2:25, as a human being I wondered how I will recover ALL I had lost for the 9years as wife (Joshua 14:11-gives me hope) and not to mention the bonding bit between son and father among many other losses. The evening of the first day of the conference, while going home I was checking the phone to return any missed calls and messages; I received money transfer through M-Pesa from my son's father, which was unexpected considering for many years he never acted on my requests.

This was/is a big statement of restoration in my life (1Kings 18:44), I may not have the full total restoration at the moment, but I know without a single doubt that God has started a journey which Him only will bring to an end according to his perfect will. (Jeremiah 29:11, Ecclesiastes 7:8.)

My encouragement to all the sisters is to keep attending sisters meetings by all means as I know that God does speak to His servants who are placed above us, the word He gives them is for our good. •¶

THE “MAN ENOUGH”

Deacon Kennedy Kasamba

The men fellowship at GCI recently commissioned a “Man Enough” Camp at the Central Church. The first group graduated on 12th August and two other groups have successfully undertaken and graduated from the program. We are aware that many people have silently queried what this is all about. As a sister you could even have a further question, “So how does this help my man (husband/fiance)”?

Well, the Man Enough experience involves 8 weeks of interactions through topical sessions that will take men through the journey of redefining true, godly Masculinity and reasserting their roles as they together deal with the real life issues that affect them as men. The eighth week does not mark the end of the journey, but the beginning of a focused, deliberate change in men. If you know a sister whose spouse was in our first battalion, I encourage you to talk to her and I am sure you will agree.

The reason this experience is so potent is because it identifies four major needs of men, and seeks to answer to these needs, namely;-

- 1) The need for Identity and Definition – Who is a Real Man, and do I measure up? This knowledge liberates and empowers the man to start the change.
- 2) Provide a Safe space to share manly issues - Yes, we may deny it, but just like the girls have their moments and share stuff, our men need ManTalk with other men, and to get like-minded godly companions to walk this walk with as well as to unmask and be real around;
- 3) Relevance – What is the big picture, and how do I fit in?;
- 4) Purpose. – Leaving a worthwhile legacy - What is my vision and what will I be remembered for after I am gone? Every man asks himself this. Those who give up on this end up walking through life in a daze, rudderless and with no enthusiasm.

In a sense therefore, the Man Enough Experience answers to the discipleship need in men. Any man past school going age (form 4) –is eligible to participate, and will find the entire course relevant and applicable. (Only that the octogenarian will ask why it took them so long to do this!!)

The programme has presence in over 17 counties in Kenya as well as 3 regional countries as well as in USA and in total over 12,000 men have gone through it, and their ladies have invariably been glad they did. Here’s a summary of what your man will cover in the course of the programme;-

UGH" EXPERIENCE

- Manhood Defined--We establish a clear identity of Real, godly Masculinity and debunk the lies that the media and contemporary society has made us believe about men. This develops a secure man, who is not struggling to fit in to some convoluted societal mould; Any lady will tell you how depressing it is living with an irresponsible and insecure man who will not take initiative. We address these.
- Roles of a man- We highlight Man as a Warrior, King, Mentor, Friend, - and how the man functions in those roles.
- The Wounded warrior – It is tough being a man, we receive knocks and bumps in the battlefield. Here, we confront the hidden inner wounds that limit our masculinity, and cause us to wound those we love.
- Man on a mission – Discovering and Pursuing our manly Purpose. We believe God did not place us here to fumble and stumble through life; we do have a purpose. Every man needs a cause - something to daily wake up for, a goal to pursue, a vision to which he is committed and is leading his family to attain.
- For God and for Country - Service and Patriotism. Service to God, our duty to our country and immediate community.
- Code of honour-Values every man should embrace and live by. Holding ourselves accountable for our conduct.
- Finishing Well - Awareness of the pitfalls and traps that would otherwise ensnare the man and frustrate his mission and purpose.
- Man and Sex- Possessing our vessels with honour. Avoiding the pitfalls of misused/ misdirected sexuality.

These topics are reinforced through external outdoor activities, including an overnight camp with other men.

To the lady, the benefits will emanate from the changes you will doubtless see in the man around. We therefore urge every lady to encourage and help their spouse, fiancé, brother, dad, boss – simply every man you know, to enroll for the next Man Enough battalion. You will thank yourself when he's done. •¶

GOSPEL BLOOMS

SIAYA COUNTY

Pst. Vicky Owuor



It is important to note that during Jesus' physical presence on earth, women played a very crucial role in supporting his earthly ministry. In the early church they were among the first and earliest members of the church and an important part of its life. They were outstanding in their abilities to extend hospitality, they served Him with their money, time and energy.

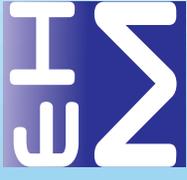
The journey of GCI Siaya can be said to have been a divine "coincidence". It all began in February 2014 when on NGCI Facebook page the man who would eventually become the senior pastor of the church – Pst. Patrick Owuor came across a post entitled, 'Rapid Church Planting Strategy'. The curiosity to know more led him to inquire more from Rev. Kennedy Monyoncho and other GCI leaders, followed by a visit to the GCI Central Church for a meeting with the General Overseer Rev. Charles M. Kinusu.

From then the journey to start a GCI church in Siaya began. This was realized seven months later in October 2014, when GCI Central - Siaya County team led by Sister Lilian Otieno moved very fast and secured a land where the church stands today. The church held its first worship service on 2nd November 2014 and was officially launched on 1st November 2015, by none other than the General Overseer among a contingent of a powerful team from the Central church and various other county pastors and leaders.

Soon after the launch, I started gathering women in the church after Sunday church services with the aim of starting a ladies fellowship. I realized that when women work together towards a common goal, the journey becomes easier and so much greatness can be achieved. In addition, ladies play a great role in any healthy church. We later rescheduled our meetings to the 3rd Saturday of every month and continued to meet in church. The main challenge here was poor attendance, sometimes I would find myself alone or with just one or two more attending the fellowship. At some point, a bigger percentage of the ladies we began the fellowship with left the church and we had to start all over again.

Through prayers and continuously talking to the ladies, God brought more ladies with a passion for God. We then had to change strategy and decided to be meeting in members houses on a rotational basis. Currently, opportunities that equip women in our church include, Bible studies, Monthly get-togethers, Prayers, visiting new-born babies, visiting the bereaved among others. This strategy has propelled the ministry to a higher level. Since then, we have stood together, lifted each other up and empowered one another through prayers. Glory be to God for being our Ebenezer. •¶





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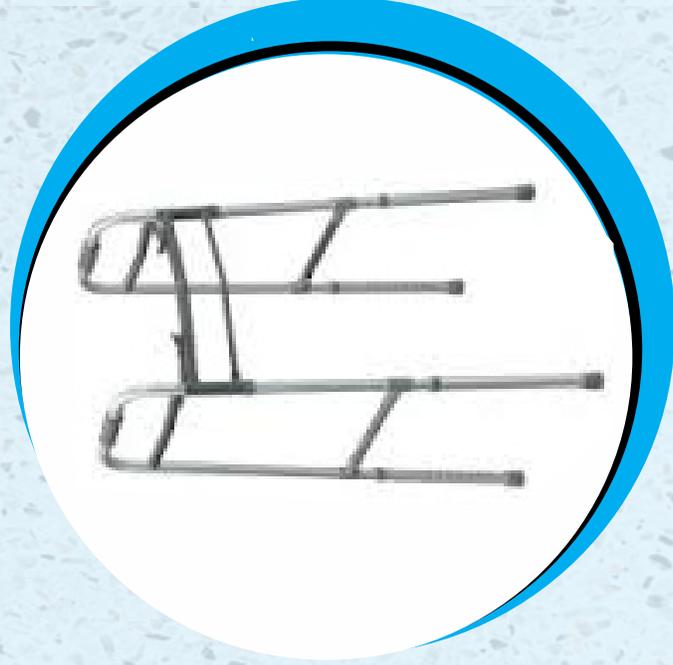
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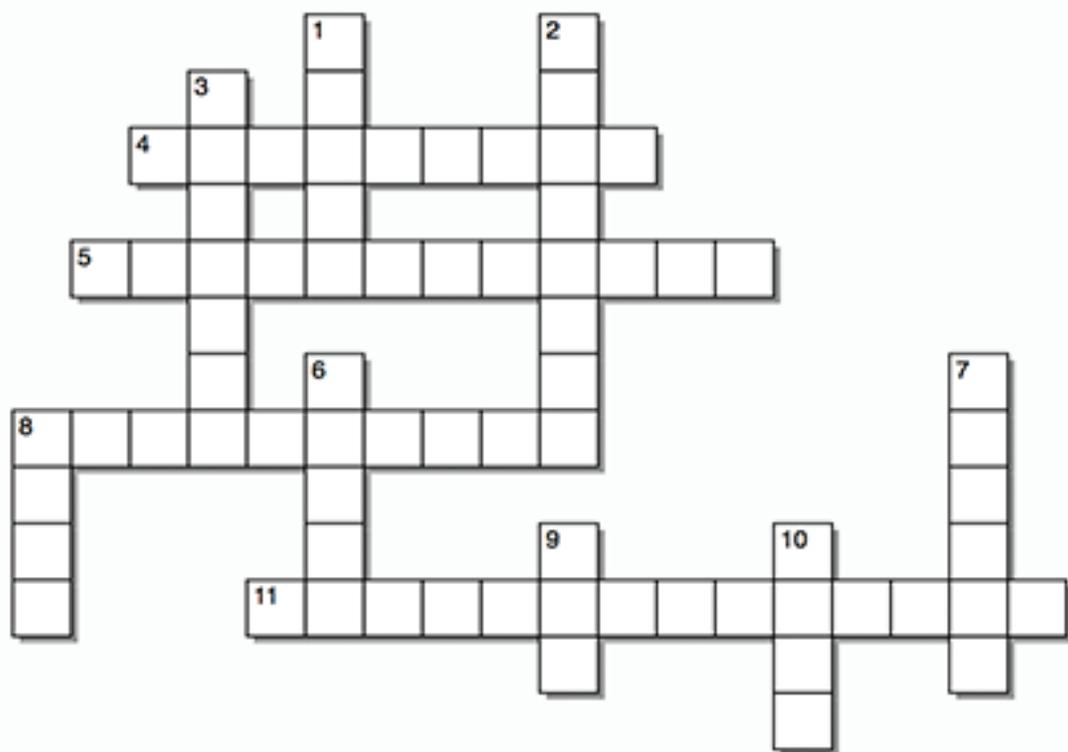
BIBLE TRIVIA

1. How many brothers did Joseph have? What was their names?
2. What birds did Noah send out from the Ark to survey the land after the Floods ended?
3. What sign did God use to show that He would not destroy the earth with a Flood again?
4. What is the name of Ruth's mother-in law?
5. Who did Ruth marry in Israel?
6. How many days did the Israelites go round the walls of Jericho?
7. Who led the Israelites across River Jordan?
8. On which mountain did Moses receive the 10 Commandments?
9. What was the First miracle that Jesus did?
10. How many disciples did Jesus have? What was their names?
11. Who rescued Moses from the River?
12. How old was Moses when God called him and sent him to free the children of Israel?
13. How many years was the ministry of Jesus Christ?
14. In which garden was Jesus when Judas came to betray Him with a kiss?
15. Who was the Roman ruler in Jerusalem during the trial and crucifixion of Jesus?
16. Who was the one that came before Christ, but was not fit even to tie His shoelaces?
17. What animals did Peter see in a vision, when he saw the clean and unclean animals?
18. Who was the enemy of the Jews during the period of Queen Esther?
19. Who was the queen before Esther?
20. What was the name of the uncle of Esther, who raised her?



Bible Pathway Adventures

CROSSWORD FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT



ACROSS

- 4) Book of the Bible where Paul mentions the fruit of the spirit.
5) Great is your _____. (Lamentations 3:23)
8) Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, and _____. (1 Tim 6:11)
11) "One who loves what is good, who is _____, upright, holy and disciplined."
(Titus 1:8)

DOWN

- 1) Hebrew name for the Holy Spirit.
2) God is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and of great loving _____.
(Psalm 145:8)
3) Love is _____, love is kind. (1 Corinthians 13:4)
6) Do the best you can to live in _____ with everyone. (Romans 12:18)
7) The Creator
8) Yahweh is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble. (Nahum 1:7)
9) Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the ___ of my heart. (Psalm 119:111)
10) _____ your neighbor as yourself. (Mark 12:31)



Bible Stories coloring page



Jesus love little children.

FURTHERING MY DREAM WHILE PRIORITIZING FA

Rachel Oyier Kangwana

Going back to school is very exciting, but it can also be demanding and exhausting in itself, so it's no surprise I get this question from people. How do you balance the two?

Family demands are as numerous such as supervising children's Homework, Groceries and Housework, being a wife, emergency calls and various other activities.

In School I serve within the student Body Leadership as the Vice President of K.A.G East University, undertaking a four year degree in Biblical Study and Theology, as well as serve as the Women/Ladies Chair (Koinonia Fellowship) and I also serve in the Mission Department as the Chair. When you combine family, school and the extra curricula activities you get a perfect recipe for burn out or breakdown or both.

My Husband and I are blessed with Three Children, ages 12, 10 and 7; they are our ministry too. So I have to find a way to balance all. And this is how I do it.

To be honest I have had my share of burnouts especially when I added the workload from school e.g projects, exams and personal readings, but as the Bible says in...all things work together for the Good of those who love the Lord. I took those Low moments to explore ways from the Bible, friends and colleagues on how to make family and school work well.

As a mother and wife, I realized there was not enough time in a day to accomplish all the things I needed to do. So I had to prioritize items. It's all about placing God first, my family second and School, ministry and other people third.

If you give each its time, you will find a balance. God comes first, so as a woman I learnt that if I want to stand firm I have to delight in and meditate on God's word, that is a source that would continually be true and it has anchored me.

For your Family, time has to be put aside to meet their needs, many are the times I had to purposely find time to be with my family. School work too had to have its space, talk of revisions and Projects, all this have to be done and done well in order for you to excel in your studies.

FAMILY



Ministry, Friends and relatives are very important too, so also time should also be given to them but in order of Priority.

Any woman wishing to pursue further studies should first prioritize her life to make a healthy balance and look for a support system(s). Leaning on God's word has been my greatest Support. The second is my husband. I thank God for giving me a supportive Husband who supports me emotionally, financially, spiritually and morally from my day one in School.

Other support systems could be identifying a fellow lady to walk with you in your school journey, especially one who has passed the same route. Another would be, if need be, getting a person to assist with house chores.

Finally, I can conclude in saying that in every woman's pursuit of Education, one should remember this, "As a mother in school, its not worth destroying your family, the family is way more important, its priority has to be higher." •¶

THE LORD SHOWED UP IN **POWER** FOR ME

Tabitha Muriuki



Huh! What a day when God revealed himself to me as an ever-present help in time of need as David rightly put it in Psalms 46:1. I was born in a small village in Rwika in Eastern province, where I grew up and later found myself married and ready to begin a family. As soon as my husband and I were blessed with our firstborn daughter Victoria, it was our desire to have another baby almost immediately. This was our plan as a couple so that we could bring up the two together but our plans failed as I was unable to conceive immediately. We teamed up with my then best friend and prayer partner, the late Anglican Canon and chairlady of ACK Mt. Kenya diocese Mary Itumu who walked with me in prayer until I conceived. My heart leapt for joy to know that I would soon embrace my second baby.

Everything was normal and I attended clinics as required until one day on the 5th month when it was discovered that I had *placenta previa* (a condition in which the placenta partially or wholly blocks the neck of the uterus, so interfering with normal delivery of a baby). This condition normally causes the pregnant woman to have excess bleeding which could be fatal. It was an alarming report and my doctor prescribed total bed rest immediately to prevent a miscarriage.

I was totally devastated. Remember this is a baby I had so much longed for and now I was at risk of losing her – never! I was given a bunch of medication and required to visit the doctor every two weeks for close monitoring. All through I knew I had a God in heaven whom I had seen healing and delivering me from worse situations. I found myself occasionally reminding Him that I knew Him as a dependable God and that I had faith he would see me through. I also reminded Him of His never-failing promises and for sure as the word says in –Mark 11:24 “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in

prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” indeed God answered my prayers. I really hate swallowing tablets and God knew it so He healed me without the medication. I did not bleed as would have been the case if I didn’t take the medicine and did not take the bed rest but continued working until I was due for delivery. The doctor was extremely shocked that I made it to full term without complications. It was truly a testimony and the enemy was not happy that I had won round one of the battles.

In November 2008, I was admitted to Nairobi Hospital where I gave birth to a bouncing baby girl. It was in the season when Barrack Obama won the elections as the first black President of the United States of America and there was *Obama* hype everywhere especially in Africa - on the streets, cities and everywhere there was literally Obama mania all around. Children born in the season were identified as Obama or Michelle (his wife).

Immediately my baby was delivered through a c-section, the neonatal paediatrician together with the others who were supporting announced that I had gotten “Obama” signifying it was a baby boy. I was extremely shocked because all along I knew from the scans that I was carrying a baby girl. After some seconds, another nurse said, “no, it’s Michelle” meaning it was a baby girl. At that moment I realized they were playing with my psychology. At that moment, my blood pressure was rising steadily and the procedure was not yet complete. I was at risk of stroke, heart complications, kidney failure or death – which are complications that arise when the blood pressure shoots at the operating table.

Suddenly there was a flurry of activities to save my life. I was immediately connected to machines but the bleeding could not be contained. An announcement was made from the theatre that they were losing a lady by the name of Tabitha Muriuki and needed some urgent

reinforcement indicating they needed some more gynaecologists to help and a witness in-case I lost the battle. Remember all this time the cut was still open, the procedure was on and I was bleeding profusely yet I could hear all that was going on. The anaesthesia had backfired yet I guess the doctors didn't know.

My husband who was outside the theatre room was called into counter-sign as a witness to what had killed me. All this was caused by a sudden rise in blood pressure as the procedure was taking place. I am grateful that the blessings of God make rich and adds no sorrow as recorded in Proverbs 10:22. The doctors with all their knowledge and wisdom had given up on me but God was right there with me. As I continued bleeding uncontrollably and the machines beeped that the blood remaining in my body was getting lower than 3 pints they knew nothing could be done any more to save my life. In that helpless state, the God of the impossibilities was right there beside me on the tiny theatre bed.

At that point, I was completely helpless and in immeasurable pain due to failed anaesthesia. I had lost too much blood, therefore, was very frail to do anything. In my belly I felt like a 100 tons were placed on me, I mumbled in a faint voice to the doctor to tell me what he was holding over my belly and he responded: "it is your blood". I told him to remove it since it was so heavy and I was in severe pain, he said " "Tabitha my hands are tied; I cannot continue with this process until your family members and at least another gynaecologist signs." I pleaded with him to continue but save me from pain, and having given him consent my-self, he continued with the process.

In this case, it was only me and God, the two of us and I remembered Proverbs 3:5-6 that trust in God with all your heart and He will direct your paths. I trusted God for an escape door at that moment. I continued getting weaker due to blood loss and the doctor faced me and told me to "talk to the other side (meaning to God) since you are *going*". I said only a short simple prayer: "Lord cleanse me I'm coming but in your will, if you find it good to give me another chance to live I'll serve you. I now can tell you how desperately people die, I had no more strength to talk to God. I left it at that. I neither remembered my few minutes old baby nor my husband who was waiting for me outside, not even my other little daughter whom I had left at home. Nothing at all was in my mind at that point. I was tired and

desperate and finally accepted death due to the pain I was in. I attempted to throw in the towel, but God threw it back and within no time I started kicking but strong men in theatre held me tight because as they say once you kick you die, they made sure my eyes were open because again if I closed my eyes I would die. They also pleaded with me to try and at least breath since my breath was breaking too much and immediately they started transfusing blood in me after which they injected me with the second anaesthesia and to my joy I slept and thought I had died.

Finally, after the lengthy and complicated procedure, I was taken to ICU, to HDU and later to the general ward, one thing I'm not sure whether they realized is that I had lost my mind in the process. The following day after I woke up, a white lady nurse came riding a small beautiful baby cot and inside was a tiny beautiful baby who was as white as she was and not knowing or recognizing anybody I dismissed them. The following day the same happened an old man came with the same baby and started updating me on the progress and explaining that the baby had jaundice (yellowing of eyes) and other things and I was wondering what he was saying what I had to do with those stories. Little did I know that it was my baby - my daughter Gloria. That day immediately after the doctor left I suddenly recalled that - like two years ago I had given birth. In a real sense, it was just 2weeks ago.



Questions started trickling in my mind wondering where did my baby go, who takes care of her, how would I find her, was she alive or dead, at that moment I came back to my senses, but with sorrow about my baby's whereabouts which hit me so hard

until my blood pressure shot again. Thank God for this time, though I was so tired of the devil tormenting me, I must say I had discovered that when God pushes you to the edge of difficulty, you just need to trust Him, either to catch you when you are falling or to teach you how to fly. I trusted God. Now I clearly know how people grow mad, yes, I know how the enemy takes over. It is a terrible experience because you clearly feel your mind being stolen and at that times if you do nothing, you just lose it.

I remembered my God! I refused to give in to the attacks, I jumped out of my hospital bed forgetting that I had a fresh wound, I was also continuously on drip and I fell with everything on the floor declaring loudly " I refuse to go mad" repeatedly until the duty nurse came and injected me with some sedative to manage the situation. Later on, they explained that my daughter was only two weeks old and not two years though it took a bit long for my mind to recollect.

I was later discharged and sent back home full of victory. God always fights our battles and He always wins. He is so dependable, if only we learn to trust even just a simple and sincere prayer to will change everything. For sure God gave me a second chance and to Him alone be all the glory. •¶

THE JEWEL IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

Pst. Steve & Pst. Grace W. Ngaruiya

Sisters are like treasured Jewels in the house of God. They are a symbol of beauty, excellence and expression of love. They are gifts to both the church and their families. When they function as they ought to, they bring out joy both in the church and in their homes.

BEAUTY: The beauty of a believing woman is both inward and outward. 1 Peter 3:3-4, "...which is not corruptible, but the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit..." It brings out joy and peace to the family and church. When the inner beauty in a woman lacks, the bible describes that woman as quarrelsome, who changes the entire environment. Proverbs 21:3 say "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling

woman in a wide house "It is not so with our GBI as what has been demonstrated and continue to be felt is calmness.

EXCELLENCE: Excellence means continuous improvement. A woman is an improved man, she was taken out of the rib of the man and made to a specific need that complemented the man Adam (Genesis 2:22). Women bring out the excellence that God intends in society. They care for details because they were made in details that were missing in a man.

EXPRESSION OF LOVE: God gave Adam a wife as a gift of love. Genesis 2:18 "... I will make him a helpmate for him." Women are gifts that God has given to the church to perfect the body of Christ by the gifts in them. They complement what lacks in men.

The commissioning of GBI Thika Road on 16th March 2019 was a gift from God to the church, a clear demonstration of beauty and excellence and expression of Love that God has for the church so as to perfect her (church) for himself (Ephesians 5:25). We appreciate the GBI ministry and the entire GBI leadership for the work they are doing. You are like Jewels in the house of GOD. The GBI Thika road commissioning was graced by our mum Pastor Nelly Mulema with over a 100 blooms and bloomlets attending including those from Central Church and other GCI branches. We are now sailing in that flow of anointing that flows from the throne of mercy in her hands. The Redemption voices graced the occasion with sweet melodies. We adopted the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the bigger GBI. We expect to reach out to every woman in Kiambu County with the love of Christ. We look forward to mentoring bloomlets, teenage girls and the youth in our church and beyond. So far, we have adopted 5 teenage girls from the praise gate children's home who are all in high school where we have allocated each one of them to a mother for provision of Love and mentorship. In the month of April, we did back to school shopping for them. We pray for long life and God's grace to Pastor Nelly as she continues to bear more blooms and bloomlets. We continue to be loyal to her and to the entire GBI leadership.

God bless GBI. God bless GCI, our General overseer Reverend Charles Mulema and GEC for giving us the golden opportunity to serve in Kiambu County. •¶

GOSPEL BLOOMS INTERNATIONAL - THIKA ROAD COMMISSIONING PICTORIAL



BLOOMING HOUSEHOLD

Fluffy Homemade Vanilla Cake

Many times we walk into the shop to purchase that Vanilla or Chocolate Cake, and enjoy its delicious melting on our tongues. But how much more fun would it be to bake a cake with your daughter, sister, mother or friend. More so, how fun would it be to serve for dessert or breakfast, or just a family snack, a cake that you yourself baked. More fun than the one from the shop. In this edition, we learn how to bake a fluffy home-made vanilla cake.

(Recipe and photo from www.thespruceeats.com):

Ingredients:

- 2 ¼ cups of all purpose flour – have a little more for the pan coating
- 1 1/3 cups of sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1.2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter – have some more for the pans
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs

How to Make It

1. Get all your ingredients to room temperature
2. Heat your oven to 350F
3. Butter and flour two (9 inch) cake pans
4. Combine flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt in the bowl. Mix until the dry ingredients are combined
5. Add the butter, and blend until the mixture forms a grainy consistency. Scrape down the bowl with a rubber spatula
6. Add vanilla, and slowly pour the milk. Stop and scrape, and mix for another minute.
7. Add the first egg, and mix on medium-low until fully mixed; add the second egg and repeat. Scrape the bowl down.
8. Pour the batter into the prepared pans and give each one a couple of solid taps on the countertop to release any air bubbles; transfer pans to the oven.
9. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean or with a crumb attached. The tops will be golden brown, the edges will pull away from the sides of the pan, and the cakes will spring back when you touch them.
10. Cool the cakes on a wire rack for 10 minutes, then loosen the edges by running a knife along the sides of the pan; turn the cakes out onto the racks and cool for at least 1 hour before frosting.
11. Frost and enjoy!

Some tips:

- 🕒 Before you put the baking powder, make sure it's not expired. Try using fresh baking powder.
- 🕒 Make sure your butter, eggs, and milk are at room temperature. Too cold butter will not form an emulsion, so it will not make a light and fluffy cake.
- 🕒 You can use a buttered parchment paper for your pan to make it easy to remove your cooled cake. •¶



A



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BEHIND AND STRAINING TOWARD WHAT
IS AHEAD, I

PRESS ON

TOWARD THE GOAL TO WIN THE PRIZE FOR
WHICH GOD HAS CALLED ME HEAVENWARD
IN CHRIST JESUS.

PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14 (NIV)

