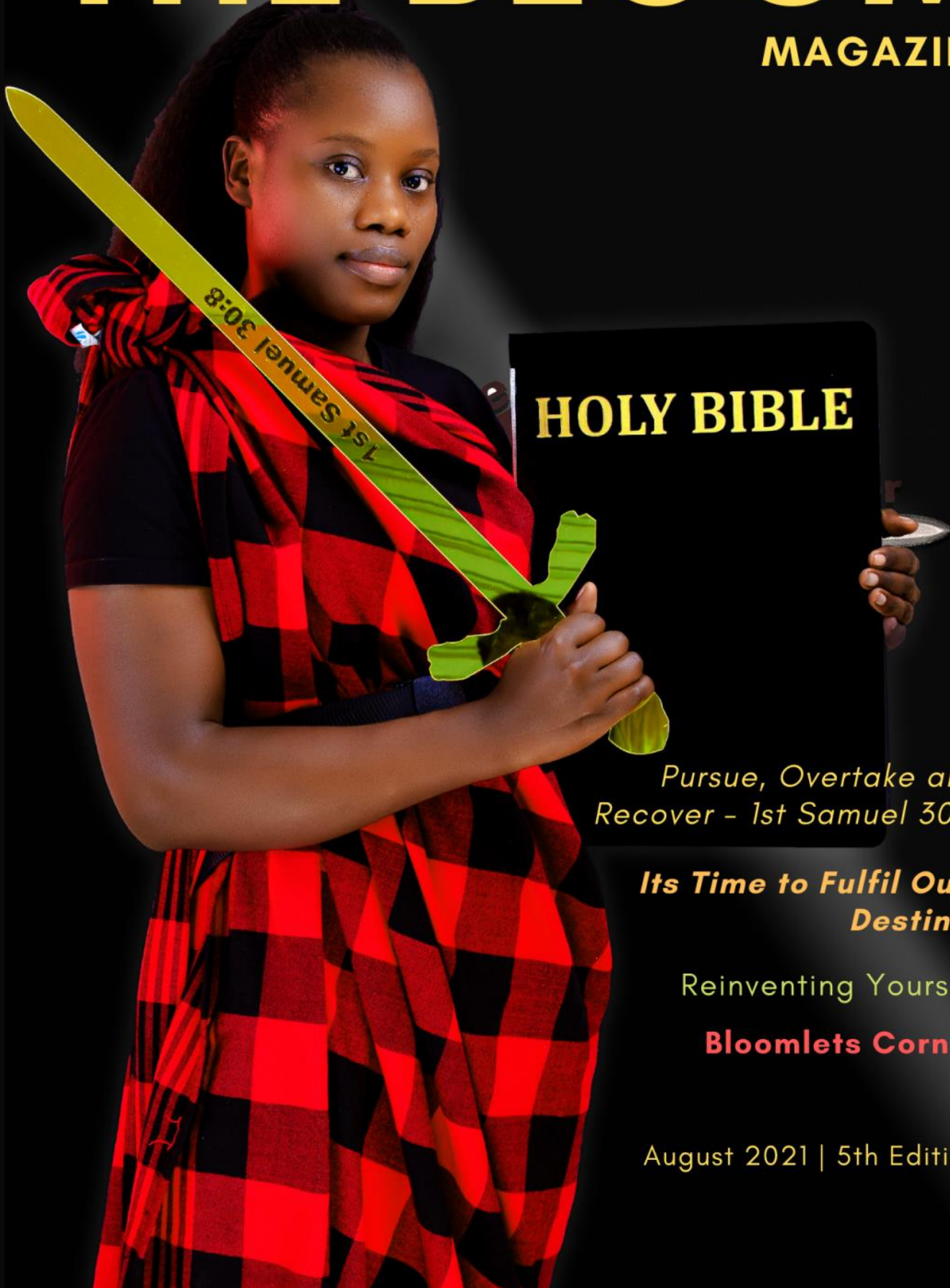


THE BLOOM

MAGAZINE



HOLY BIBLE

*Pursue, Overtake and
Recover - 1st Samuel 30:8*

***Its Time to Fulfil Our
Destiny***

Reinventing Yourself

Bloomlets Corner

August 2021 | 5th Edition

Content

Letter from the Editor	3
Its Time to Fulfil Our Destiny	4
Our Mental Health During Covid-19	6
Battling with Covid-19	7
Overcoming the Emotional Toll of the Covid-19 Season	8
Adapting to New Ways of Getting Work Done	10
Can You Hear Me? And Now?	13
Self-Care and Coping during the Pandemic	14
Youth Corner: Branding in Christ	16
Reinventing Yourself	17
Personal Value Statement in Youth Ministry	18
The Bloomlets Corner	19
A New Beginning and a New Season	25
Reset	26
My Journey in Ministry during Covid-19	28
Seizing Opportunities	29
A Message for the Widows	30
Bloom our Blooms! Bloom in Eternity	31

Letter from the Editor

Pursue, Overtake and Recover (1st Samuel 30:8)

A word so true to this season. The years 2020 and 2021 have tested our limits, tested our ability to hold on when the circumstances are untenable. It has been a period of insurmountable loss, patience, endurance, and yet victories. Many have looked around wanting to despair, wanting to give up. Businesses have come down, employment crumbled, relationships broken, people's spirits down trodden, and many looking for hope. But as we stand in this precipice, we are looking to the Lord who says, "My daughter, My son, you can pursue, overtake, and recover." That which you have lost, like Job it will be restored in double and a hundred fold.

In our Fifth Edition of *The Blooms Magazine*, we share the experiences of this unprecedented period, the downs, the triumphs, and goings. We share the testimonies of women that have Pursued, Overtaken, and Recovered. In this edition we are passing out one word, "The Lord enables us to Pursue, Overtake, and Recover" no matter how dark the moment is.

I welcome you to read the testimonies and the experiences, and gain hope in every situation. As you read, we from the Editorial Team pray that you shall regain the momentum to continuing pursuing. That you shall find that word that you need to propel you to the next step of your destiny, In Jesus Christ mighty name. §

Enjoy!

Bether



The 2021 Editorial Team:

- ◆ Bether Mulwa
- ◆ Carol Ajema
- ◆ Irene Mudaki
- ◆ Jane Mwangi
- ◆ Naomi Odongo.

Its Time to Fulfill Our Destiny

*By
Pastor Nelly Mulema
Patron - GBI*



HOLY
BIBLE

Foreward


Gospel Blooms Theme for this year is Pursue, Overtake and Recover.

Over the years, the devil struck and stole many things that belong to us such as our health, our joy, our finances, our marital joy, our children etc. To this end, we really need to recover all that the enemies took away from us all these previous years if we are to fulfil destiny. For that reason, we really need to pursue, overtake as to recover all. Like what happened to David and his men, there are many things that belong to us that are in the hands of the devil which he collected when he invaded our life and family. For some of us, it is our health, some it is our resources (Finances) while some it is peace in our families, and some it may be one thing or the other. Whatsoever be the case, we really need to pursue, overtake as to recover them all. However, before we start to pursue, we need first to inquire of the Lord. We need to pray as to get directives from the Lord. When David inquired of the Lord, the LORD answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail to recover all." It is on the strength of that assurance from GOD that David and his men Pursued his enemy.

In the book of 1 Samuel chapter 30 beginning at verse :

(1) And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire. Verse (2) And had taken the women captives that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. Verse (3) So David and his men came to the city and, behold, it was burned with fire, and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters were taken captives. The outcome invasion was devastating to David

It was GOD'S assurance that David and his men pursued, overtook and recovered all. From verses 11 to 15 we saw that David had help, a person who gave him direction on where to find his enemy. When we are pursuing under God's directives, HE will send a helper on our way to guide us to victory. In other words, most times, the success, breakthrough as well as victories we have in life is as a result of help GOD sent our way. So we need to be alert as to recognize and utilize the help God is sending our way. Those who fail to recognize the help God sent always miss out as they fail to utilize the help.



In pursuing our enemies, we need to increase our speed as to run faster than our enemies because unless we are faster, we will never catch up before we can overtake. While pursuing, we must use a faster means. The Lord is promising we shall mount up with wings as eagles, we shall run, and not be weary, and we shall walk, and not faint. What a promise. In other words, before we can recover what belongs to us that is in the hands of the enemies, we must show strength, we must be stronger than our enemies. For only if we are stronger can we defeat them like David did. That is why we must never play with our spiritual life because it determines how far we can go to recover what belongs to us. This is year is of total recovery for us. We must be determined to make it so. §



OUR MENTAL HEALTH

During the Covid-19
Pandemic

Battling Covid-19

By: Florence Ade

When we started hearing about Covid-19 it seemed so far away. Indeed, it was in other Continents and not in ours. Furthermore, those continents would quickly and easily get a solution for themselves – so we thought, but this proved different.

It was one of my normal days working around as usual when I received news that was going to change my life for a while...forever? The president had announced the closing of schools since the Covid situation in Kenya was on the rise.

The Ministry of Health gave us instructions on how to embrace this change.

The rules were: wear a mask, wash your hands or sanitize, avoid shaking hands and keep social distance. This I kept very well.

My encounter with the Corona Virus was totally unpredictable. We had been safe and secure. Who would have thought? I felt fine save for the fact that I was tired on certain days when I woke up.

There is this particular day when I felt extremely tired even though I had slept for almost 9 hours. My body was complaining. I had an ache from my nape to waist.

Since I had felt this way on and off for about a week, I sought medical assistance. I knew something was wrong.

The doctor recommended some blood work and also asked me to take a Covid test. I thought it was unfair because I did not have the usual Covid-19 symptoms like fever, coughing or sneezing. Even so, I obliged.

The results came in after 24 Hrs. and there it was - I was declared Covid-19 Positive. At first I was not shaken because I felt very normal but the mention of being in self-quarantine for 14 days made me a bit nervous and sick. I had just made it to be part of the Covid -19 statistics. **Job 30:26** says, “But when I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, darkness fell.” I was in the same quagmire. I had been so careful not to flaunt any of the Covid-19 rules. Where did it come from?

So now, I had to isolate myself. How was that going to be? What about my family? I am a people person; I love people and indeed love great company. It was what it was – Isolation. That wasn't going to be easy. Truth is, the pandemic altered my ability to engage with friends and family as I would usually but I gained other skills being in self –quarantine. I managed to write a few songs, and read books.

My daily routing to kick out corona was – Praying, taking vitamin C and another tablet as was prescribed by the doctor, eating lots of citrus fruits and vegetables, exercising and steaming at least twice a day. Another routine was to check on my family and friends. During this period, I had friends who stuck very close. We talked on a daily basis either on WhatsApp calls, texts, voice calls, Zoom... name it. On one particular day while I was still in isolation and my husband was hospitalized, my buddies made sumptuous lunch and visited my children – they even brought a surprise birthday cake for my daughter. Which other friends would one ask for?

The rate of Covid-19 death cases increased and many continued to fall prey to its menacing claws. I was not special in any way. My hope was in God. I kept believing and declaring **Psalms 118:17** which says “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.” God saw me through the season and I thank Him for His never ending blessings. §



OVERCOMING THE EMOTIONAL TOLL OF THE COVID-19 SEASON

by Christine Ogutu

It all started like a dream to me in March 2020. It never dawned on me that it was a reality when we were put on a total lockdown or as others termed it 'restricted movement' while some called it 'house arrest'. For quite a long time, everything was at a standstill, which is quite challenging when you live in a tropical place. I live in a beautiful Island called Seychelles. This unprecedented thing disrupted all aspects of our lives. The most affected was religious life with churches being closed and all other sort of public gatherings. To me this was a really drastic decision imposed on humanity; something so out of the norm. It was such a traumatizing experience so to speak, more so when you are told not to visit each other, no greeting, keep your distance and what I never imagined of, was to put on a mask. For me a mask was something for specific doctors in the theatre rooms. Worst of it was we are in a foreign land with close friends and relatives being miles away. This made it even more difficult since the feeling of loneliness crept into my life with my family.

I had to embrace technology and literally direct my mind that from then henceforth, I had to do literally all the things online; my work, teaching online classes on Zoom, following the church services online on Facebook or YouTube amongst others, which I wasn't used to. Anyway I did not have any challenge as such since am in I.T Compliance by profession, but of course it had its own challenges as well due to the reduction of human interaction.

Being in a foreign country, it was heartbreaking to see our loved ones going through a rough time, losing their precious lives, loss of jobs that brought its severe and dire consequences amongst them. Others were not even in a position to fend for their families.



I saw people who were really tortured by the effects of the pandemic. Some suffered mental breakdown which led to psychological crises like anxiety and depression. Anxiety is really the natural body's response to stress. It leads to a feeling of fear or apprehension about what is to come. Depression on the other hand is taken as a state of disinterest in the daily activities or occurrences. As people faced the pandemic, some lost hope, others were afraid of the unknown, all these leading to anxiety, stress and depression.

At some point, I also fell into the trap of grief over loss of loved ones, unprecedented physical distancing, financial concerns, fear of contracting the virus, also we could no longer interact normally as I did not know who is who, and concern over reduced skilled labour among the care givers to mention a few. The uncertainties came and really hit me hard because this is a small Island with countable people so contracting the virus was inevitable. During this time, as much as it had its negative impact on me, it also gave me the chance to learn more about God. I sought Him more and read His word. It also gave me the opportunity to be close to my family mostly my son.

For me to overcome the whole scenario I purposed to develop and stick to a daily schedule that included talking to my loved ones and friends back in Kenya (those who were reachable) and conclude the day with spiritual meditation including singing and listening to Gospel music. I am a singer and I love worship. There is a true personal friend who really called me on a daily basis or texted me with her busy schedule. I wish I could mention her name. Not forgetting my lovely and supportive husband who kept on encouraging me each day even when he knew deep down in his heart, things were not the same on the ground. My friends really helped me offload the heavy burden that I carried mentally and emotionally. It became a positive thing since I had gained very strong social engagement and ties which I had seen as an impossibility because of commitment to work before the pandemic.

Having said all that, the most important thing that I learnt was always to keep on trusting in God, His power and acknowledge Him even in the midst of the storm.

I strongly believe that we will get through this trying moment and have our normal way of running daily endeavors as we used to or even do extraordinary things as long as we trust in Him. Our loving God created a world where all things are interconnected and there will definitely be natural repercussions when the connections are broken.

I know the suffering and Covid 19 were not what God intended for all who believe in Him. He will eventually bring to an end all these pain. I would want to encourage us with the words in this song that says that “we are pressed but not crushed, persecuted and not abandoned, struck down and not destroyed. That we are blessed beyond the curse and that His promises will endure forever and finally, His joy will be our strength” (Copyright – Maranatha! Music). All these pain will surely come to an end. Let us keep the hope going, knowing that our God is still on the throne.

In conclusion, let me say that we are expected to live an authentic life; a life that is pleasing to Him. This is because despite being in this turmoil of pain, we remain composed for it will eventually bring out the best in us. Remember, we are created in God’s image and likeness. We must always try our best to be like Him and please only our God. Let nobody discourage you that all these sufferings will last for the longest time; NO It is just a season we are passing through. We shall recover all that the devil has taken away from us by force In Christ Jesus. I pray that we will overcome all these at God’s own designed time. God bless you all. Stay blessed.§

Adapting to New Ways of Getting Work Done

By Jackline Onchuru

“When working mothers had to relearn: Work, family, church, and motherhood in the new normal”

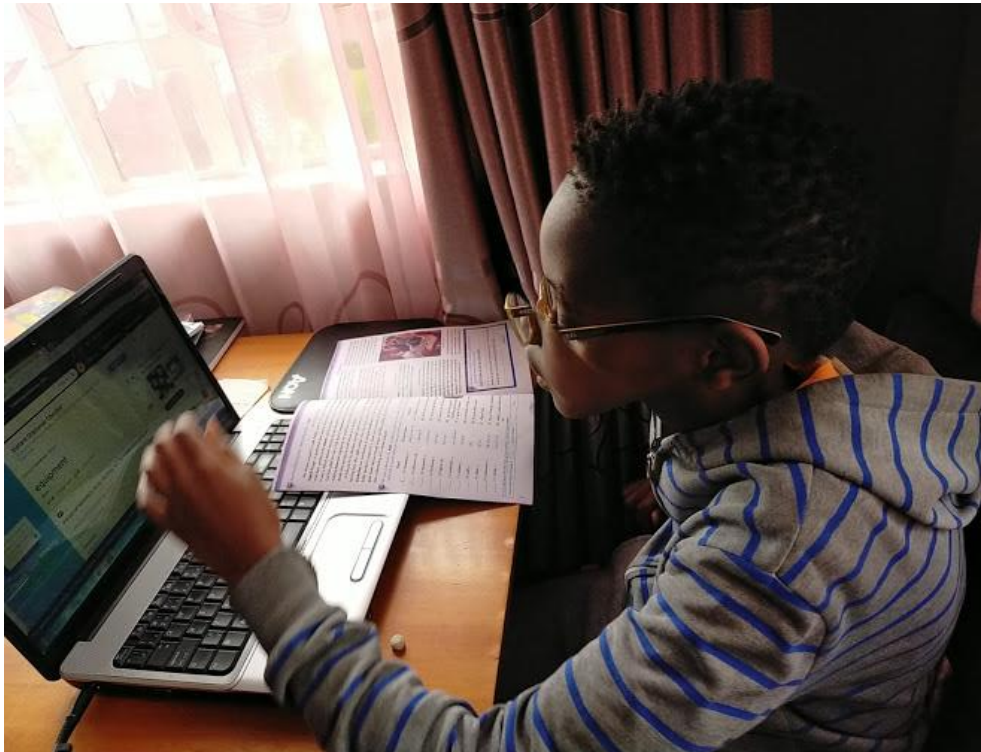
Think back. What was lifelike for you before coronavirus changed everything? Well, life for most of us was what we call normal with predictable routines such as driving to work in darkness, preparing the kids for school, attending to church activities, visiting friends and families, attending chama meetings for a good and hearty laugh, making it to the dinner table just on time among other routines. As many working mothers, we wear many hats while facing diverse challenging situations, but nothing quite prepared us for this outbreak. We thought it was the usual news that comes for a short duration and in the next few months its history. So, while we were grappling to come to terms with what was happening and the sense of a rearrangement of our normal routines, I managed to easily adjust to the new normal. In hindsight, the Lord had been preparing me for these unanticipated days that were ahead. Allow me to give you a background of my story.

In 2019 I joined an organization that amazed me. You see, for many years I was used to, face-to-face meetings, gatherings and even interviews. This is what we knew of and were acquitted to. However here I was, being asked to join an online interview, to be interviewed for a job opportunity I had applied for. Online interview? What is that? Thank God for Mr. Google.

I quickly downloaded the app before the appointment and constantly checked if it was working correctly. As a HR practitioner, I knew that all interviews had to have a physical aspect at some point and therefore in my understanding I knew that these interviews were preliminary assessments awaiting the final physical meeting. Here I was, for the first time being interviewed by different people on an online platform and responding to their questions. This seemed like a normal interaction to them and their way of working and therefore I also had to act alike.

After several engaging sessions, I was told via mail that I was the successful candidate and should report to work within the agreed time frame. How do you employee someone that you have not even met? This really baffled me to say the least. Clocking in and out of work, having regular physical meetings with my supervisor to confirm my deliverables and to agree on key milestones, this I understood to be the norm. I was used to key decisions being made in a physical gathering but not anymore. I joined this organization and most of my induction was done online.

During one of my meetings with my line manager, she inquired from me which two days of the week I wished to work from home. I almost fell off my chair; you mean you can work from home? Which organization does this? When will I clock in and clock out? Do people really work from home? Will I be sleeping throughout the day and forget that I was employed? Wow, many things crossed my mind and I couldn't help to fathom who came up with such wonderful policies.



Early 2020, I had just resumed office duties after a long break then suddenly the unexpected unfolded and we experienced a seismic change. Most organizations started working from home. The pandemic sweeping the world, COVID-19 rendered a large proportion of the workforce unable to commute to work as to mitigate the spread of the virus.

By this time, I had already tasted the benefits of working from home some days of the week. Personally, I was overjoyed to know that the organization had taken a stand of working from home the whole week during this season. Praise the Lord, to say the least, I wasn't going to miss the mayhem and chaos on our roads. With excitement of having full house for the first time, we started having more consistent



devotion time, instilling enforcing Godly values to our children, supporting them more with their school work assignment, discovering new dishes and recipes that made us bond. As a family we always looked forward to indulging in new things even having an in house appointed family physical trainer who ensured that we burnt some calories on a regular basis.



Progressively what seemed exciting and a blessing to spend more time with family at home started becoming a test. I didn't realise that it was both a stay-at-home and working mom at the same time. Schools started operating with distance /on-line learning and certainly this was a new set of obligations on us as parents to help our kids move through the day. As you know women tend to bear the lion's share of that childcare responsibilities. My office work also seemingly increased because of regular meetings to ensure business continuity.

Sometimes my children would show up with their problems while I'm in meetings and my video would be on, I would pause, excuse myself from my meetings to instruct my kids on what to do. An interesting observation was that my kids issues mostly surfaced while attending my online meetings. My children thought that they were on vacation and therefore needed constant monitoring to ensure that they complete their school

assignment. I have grappled with a "double shift" of household responsibilities, and a more difficult remote-work experience.

I have a 2.5 years old daughter who loves joining me at work. It doesn't matter what am doing so long as the door is ajar or she hears my voice, she storms into my office space and everything changes. I have held zoom meetings while feeding her. I have an extra seat next to my office space so that when she walks in, I can accommodate her and that we are both at peace with each other.

Most of the employers and employees had no experience carrying out office tasks online or from home before this pandemic. However, am glad that my employer had prepared me to start working from home before the Pandemic started. Although some struggles are inevitable for mothers working from home, God's grace has been sufficient. During this period, understanding and compassion is key in making things easier for both us as parents and for our children.

There are many benefits that I have enjoyed while working from home. I can start my days early and put my house in order. I now have the opportunity to drive our children to school and pick them up, there is no commute stress and I feel that I have increased in my productivity and performance. I'm counting my blessings and thanking God that I have more quality time with my family and have the opportunity to impact our children with Godly values and character. §



Can you hear me? And now?

By Dr. Carolynne Ajema

As we reflect on how gracious God has been during this COVID-19 period, allow me to pretend to be in a webinar and ask, **can you hear me? And now? Is the connection working?**

Sounds familiar, right? Now back to our 2021 theme, **Pursue, Overtake, and Recover (1 Sam 30:8)**. I wonder how many of us have in pursuit for God wanted, stopped to ask Him, can you hear me? Are you there? What is up with my connection? Some have even contemplated that maybe logging out and back in would be the solution. You may wonder, Logging out? Yes, you got it right, Logging out.

How can you pursue God and still log out? We have had interruptions to our physical fellowship meetings in so many ways. Due to the economic crisis, some may have relocated back to the village where they have not been able to keep up with the online church gatherings. To others, situations may have caused us to log out of our prayer closets, bible reading, to name but a few.



(CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?)

Despite the waves and the noise around them, we also have those who, compounded by an apparent 'silence' from the throne room, have opted to stay logged in. The pandemic has not shattered their resolve to press on and pursue God in line with His word. So, the question begs, as you read this, which group do you fall into?

My encouragement is that even if it seems that God is silent to your pleas. Or He seems 'not to be hearing you.' Hence the continued question, can you hear me? You have tried all manner of things to get His attention but still ask, 'can you hear me.' God already has given an assurance in His word, **Isaiah 65:24**, 'I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers!'. What we now need to do is – **STAY LOGGED IN NO MATTER WHAT**. Let us pursue God till we get this response, **YES, I can hear you my daughter, AS I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN. §**

Pursue

Overtake

Recover

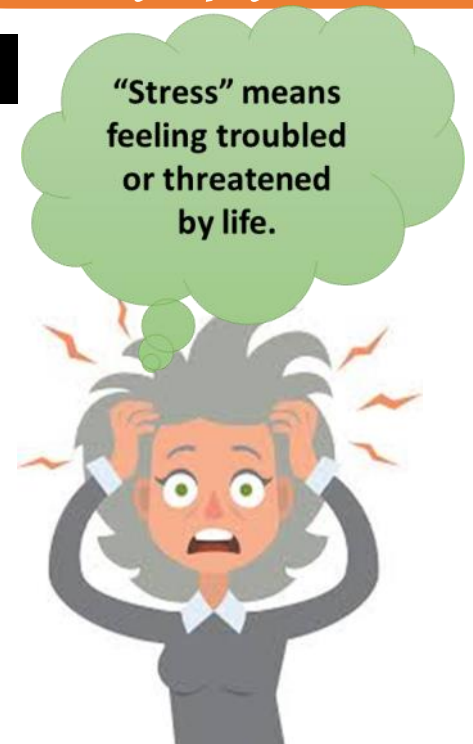
SELF-CARE and Coping during the Pandemic

By: Nelly Opiyo

“During a pandemic, stress is inevitable. So how do we cope with it?”

Stress during the pandemic causes;

- Feelings of being helpless, hopeless and/or powerless
- Feelings of lack of safety, trust and alienation from others
- Loss of faith/spirituality
- Chronic physical ailments such as gastrointestinal problems and recurrent colds
- Anxiety and restlessness
- Poor self-care (i.e., hygiene, appearance, lack of sleep)
- Reoccurrence of nightmares and flashbacks to traumatic events
- Loss of interest in previously pleasurable activities
- Difficulty concentrating and sleeping
- Substance abuse to mask feelings
- Drastic changes in weight
- No school
- Loss of income resulting to inability to provide for the family, displaced from home
- Rise Community violence and gender based violence



Signs of Stress

- Decreased productivity and job satisfaction
- Decreased quality of work
- Excessive perfectionism
- Low morale
- Reduced compassion
- Detached/withdrawn from co-workers
- Intolerance of others
- Demoralizing
- Absenteeism

Impact of Stress

Stress can impact your body, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors- it can effect so much!

- Body- headaches, muscle tension, chest pain, tiredness, upset stomach, etc.
- Mood (including thoughts and feelings)- anxiety, restlessness, lack of motivation, feeling overwhelmed, irritability or anger, sadness or depression
- Behavior- changes in appetite, angry outbursts, drug or alcohol misuse, tobacco misuse, social withdrawal, exercising less often

Things we can do to manage stress during this pandemic period

- Self-care is the intentional time taken by an individual to nurture themselves physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally on a daily basis.
- Self-care is not simply about limiting or addressing professional stressors. It is also about enhancing your overall health and well-being



Dimensions of Self-Care



- Psychological
- Emotional
- Physical
- Social
- Spiritual

Developing self-care plan

1. Identify what you do *now* to manage the stress in your life.
2. Assess your current self-care strategies and highlight the positives and identify areas of improvement
3. Identify activities that are important to your well-being, barriers to implementing these activities and how to overcome these barriers
4. Make a commitment to engage in the self-care actions regularly (Maintenance Self-Care)
5. Make a plan for emergency self-care i.e. immediate stress reducing activities under trying circumstances
6. Revise and revisit your plan as often as needed

Social Distancing, NOT Social Isolation

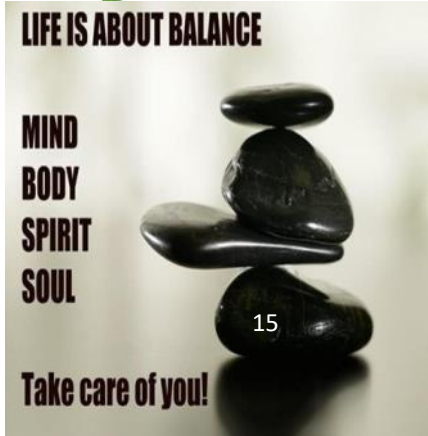
While physical/social distancing can inevitably lead to less physical contact with friends, family and cherished relationships, it does not mean that you have to socially isolate yourself.



Ways to stay connected:

Use apps or programs, such as FaceTime or Zoom, to interact with friends and family from afar	Eat meals together, either with the people you are staying at home with, or through online means	Take walks together! The outdoors is not banned, and can be a great way to interact with others. Just make sure you observe the 6ft rule	Tell others how grateful or thankful you are for them. Find creative ways to do this, ways in which you (and others) can feel loved and appreciated
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Prioritize Self-Care and make it part of your daily routine



Youth Corner

BRANDING IN CHRIST



Reinventing yourself
Your value proposition

REINVENTING YOURSELF

(A quick reinventing suggestion)/ (Are you ready to reinvent yourself) Dare to reinvent?

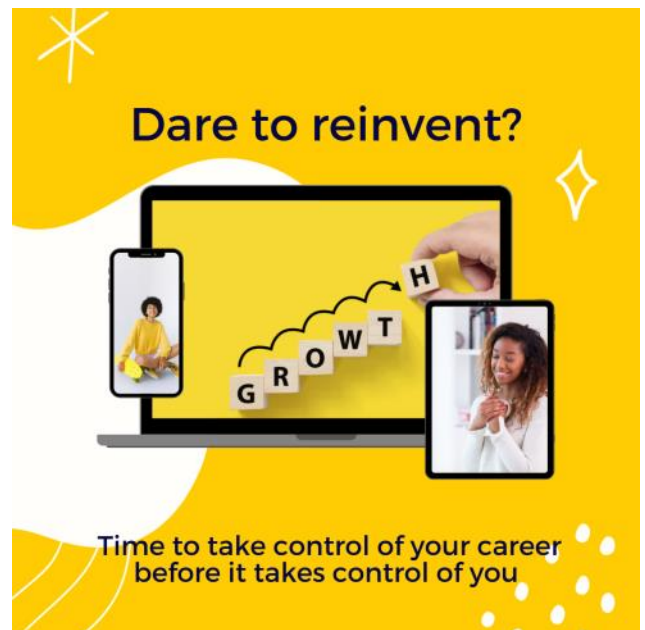
By: [Grace Mwarania](#)

Have you ever found yourself questioning the changes happening in yourself? The feeling of embracing the changes at the same time wondering if you are changing for better or worse. From the previous newsletter on personal branding, we briefly talked about reinventing yourself. How people are beginning to reinvent themselves in order to have an ever-evolving brand.

Before COVID 19 struck, the professional world was changing rapidly with technology advances, globalization, contract roles, delayed retirement, and a growing misalignment between education and marketable skills. The pandemic has accelerated this, decimating industries, turning office buildings into ghost towns, and catapulting technology into the center of all our lives from Zoom family meetings to contactless payment structures. With such changes, people and businesses are switching and adapting quickly so as to not fall behind.

In these critical times, other than hard work and stellar skills, **strong networks, marketable skills, and a visible brand** become the foundation of your career. So how do we start reinventing;

Step 1 Mindset - Becoming your biggest cheerleader goes a long way in taking control of your career. Change makes us vulnerable, it is no small task. Most of us don't realize how comfortable we've gotten in how we identify with our careers, especially when pursuing something we don't feel we have expertise in, which can be difficult if you've built up a reputation in your field as the "go-to" person.



Step 2 Reinvention - this is something we're all going to need to get comfortable with as the market continues to morph. **Reflect** on all your roles, education, projects, volunteer positions, certifications, and experiences and you will see how many transferable skills you possess. **Identify** which are most in-demand in today's marketplace and how you can present yourself as a problem solver for key challenges. Also, this exercise can help to identify skills gaps so you can proactively pursue opportunities to close those gaps.

Step 3 Brand - The key is to brand yourself as the solution to your audience's problems, in how you introduce yourself, your online content, through your network; visibly be the candidate they're looking for. Going through a [Self-awareness](#) and [Networking](#) course is the first step to identifying what type of brand you are or want to be and how to network. To be honest, it took me a while to start being aware of the value I bring. I kept asking my friends and I remember one of them saying only I would really know what I'm good at and which areas needed improvement. I listened to self-love podcasts to asking my colleagues, friends, and family about how they perceive me, my personality. Although what my friend said is true, I realized I needed to know their take in order for me to have a starting point in my reinvention journey. So if you are thinking, "I have no idea where to begin" on building your brand, break down your strengths and weaknesses according to you and compare with what your friends and family mention. This will give you insight into where to start.

Step 4 Ambassadors - Just like businesses, individuals have ambassadors. These are people who know your brand and can attest to the value you bring to your audience. One of the easiest ways to network is to start with people you know, those who already trust you and want to see you succeed. They have their own circles of contacts who can likely help if you're clear and specific in what you need.

Change is not only constant in the marketplace, but now it's accelerated, anxiety and fear packaged into it. Embrace the fear, frustrations, and anxiety. Use it to fuel your reinvention journey. Action kills anxiety, so try something new today and see where it leads. It's time to take control of your career before it takes control of you. Remember you are more than your title, don't sell yourself short. §

PERSONAL VALUE STATEMENT IN YOUTH MINISTRY

By Lorraine Kidiavai

One time I was talking to a Pastor, who asked me, as a young Christian, what do you bring to the table? What do you have to offer in the Ministry? I had never really thought about that Question. Many of us have career objectives and things we want to achieve. We write our CV for the prospective employer, outlining our skills, competencies and what we bring to the table. But have we ever thought about doing one for the Ministry.

The question made me examine myself in a new way, asking myself what was my CV when it came to ministry. For example, did I have an objective that indicated how I wanted to live my Christian life, and what I wanted to offer to those I am serving. Especially as a young Christian Leader. Today, I have a value statement, in which I seek to be a fully engaged young leader, that is honorable, and worthy to be a vessel of God. A Christian that seeks to be Holy for the Lord is Holy. One that lives within the set code of conduct for the believer.

In a world where we as young Christians are bombarded with a thousand images, narratives, and possibilities, it is important to have a value proposition for the Ministry and for our walk with Christ. To write our own CV that outlines what and whom we want to be as we serve Christ and as we await His return. In the same way we write one for the prospective employer, let's write one as a commitment to our service and livelihood in Christianity.

The Christian CV helps us to be deliberate in our separation for the work of God, and helps be deliberate in how we serve and live. If you want to pursue, overtake, and recover as a youth, I want to encourage you to self-examine, and write your own CV, outline the skills and competencies you have as a Christian, and what you need to do to improve on them. Outline how to live a life worthy of Christ. Write your CV!§



*The Bloomlets
Corner*

Proverbs 22: 6

Train up a child in the way
he should go...



My name is Esther Ndegea. I am twelve years old. I attend Gospel Centres International (GCI) Thika Road Kings Kids Church. I delight in serving God with my talents. I have passion for music, dancing and information technology (IT). I am inspired by my father who is in the IT Department. I help in projecting photos and pictures on the screens in the Church before we break to our Sunday school classes. I am being trained to play the piano in Church. GCI Thika Road Church gives posterity first priority and opportunities, encouraging many children to join in the work of the ministry. Our teachers are amazing and give us teachings from the Holy Bible. Severend N Mburu inspires many of us with the testimony of how he served God in his childhood. Seeing how he has walked with God gives us an assurance that it is possible for us too. We thank God for giving us an opportunity to learn, grow and excel in service to Him.



My name is Jabulani Onchuru. I am 14 years old and I love the Lord. Music has played a very important part in my life. Ever since I was 6 years, I have enjoyed listening to music. My dad once told me that he used to play the guitar as a university student which fascinated me. A time came when my dad decided

to teach me how to play some basic guitar progression. Day by day, I started getting the hang of it and started playing songs with my siblings. Over time, my dad was unable to continue training me because of his work schedule which forced him to engage a Teacher. My siblings and I call him Teacher Billy. My guitar skills improved with the help of my new teacher. In December 2018 when we joined GCI, I asked one of the instrumentalists if there was an opportunity available for me to play the guitar in Sunday School service. Their response was positive, however what was available at that time was a piano. Soon after, I took a keen interest and started teaching myself how to play the piano. I was amazed as to how much I enjoyed playing it. Serving in church has made a difference in my life and I thank God that I have the opportunity to serve Him using my skills. I feel



more responsible and confident about myself. My goal before the end of the year is to hopefully play the piano in the main service.

I have used evangelism to bless pupils at school and also at home for example like in school I ask other pupils questions about the bible and ask if they are born again. I read the bible to them in the book of Mathew 27:1-15. Then I encourage them to be readers of the Bible. I ask them to read the book of John, Galatians and Ecclesiastics. These books will help them in increasing their daily character dimensions. I also teach them to watch their thoughts because they become their word, to watch their words because they become your actions, to watch their actions because they become their habits and to watch their habits because they become their character and to watch their character becomes it becomes their destiny. Also advise them not to have pre-marital sex or have boyfriends because it will destroy their destinies. I tell them not to have bad characters because it will destroy their prayer lives. I do pray for them and teach them our Lord's prayer and tell them to pray for their family and friends. I meet them after lunch and teach them to pray. That's how I use my gift and talent to evangelize.



*Charlotte Cherono
Kibet*

Sandra Towett

I have always loved technology and always tried to improve on that skill.

During the corona pandemic the churches were closed therefore, we had to join the online Sunday school classes. This God given talent enabled me to contribute to the online Sunday school by helping my teachers share the teachings and songs from the internet. I did this by downloading the teachings to documents. I downloaded the praise and worship songs to help the children during the praise and worship sessions. My favorite songs were Awesome God by Proclaim and Amenitendea by Mwamba Rock Choir. I was also able to use PowerPoint to present the key points for the children to note. I thank God for revealing to me this talent so that I could use it to serve Him. My prayer is that God would reveal everyone's talent so that they may use them to serve Him.



My name is Rachel Janet from the GCI Kitengela and I am 5 years old. I have a lot of fun in Sunday school and the teachers are great. I'm particularly gifted at dancing, and the 'gift of dance' for me is very hard to put into words. It is a feeling. I began dancing at the age of two after I saw some other kids in church dance. I was overcome with a feeling of joy as I watched all the children onstage during the church service, and I wanted to feel what they were all feeling. For me, dancing has always been about expressing my feelings. If I ever feel stressed, then dancing makes me happy and calm. Dancing brings me joy, so I bless God and encourage other children in the church to dance for the Lord. **Jeremiah 31:13** says 'young women and young men will dance and be glad. God will give them comfort and joy. God bless you as you choose to dance for Him'.



My name is Samantha Seli from Nakuru- Ngata GCI church. I am 12 years old, born again and talented in singing. I discovered my talent at age six during church activities and have always been given a leading role in our GCI Ngata Children's choir. In addition to this, I have also represented my school in music festivals up to the national level scooping first position with a national trophy. My prayer to God is to mold me into a great gospel evangelist through music. I give all glory and honour to the Almighty God for His grace upon my life and appreciate my parents and the church for their guidance and nurturing. Amen!!!!

Hi, am Scola from GCI Huruma Church, I believe God has blessed each one of us with different talents which we can use to bless the body of Christ and to honor God. I also believe that our spiritual talent may be served. By helping to complete tasks that benefit others, no matter how small they may seem, we can reflect Christ and glorify Him in our actions. For me, I use my talent to bless the body of Christ through cleaning. I used to help my mum most of the time at home to do house chores and one time after our church service I usually wait for my parents to finish their meeting with my pastor and that's when I realized that there is a gap for cleaning. Since then I have loved to do it, I always help our usher to clean utensils, arrange and ensure that the church premises are left clean after we leave for our home. Serving in the body of Christ is the best thing ever.



Am Blessed Joy Kawai. Through singing souls have come to Christ and also I have been a blessing to Sunday School – MTWAPA

Children in Service



You, Lord, are
forgiving and good,
abounding in love to
all who call to you

Psalm 86:5
NIV

For all have sinned
and fall short of the
glory of God

Romans 3:23
NIV

For God so loved the
world that he gave his
one and only Son

John 3:16
NIV

That if you confess
with your mouth,
"Jesus is Lord," and
believe in your heart
that God raised him
from the dead, you will
be saved

Romans 10:9
NIV

For it is by
grace you have
been saved, through
faith—and this is not
from yourselves, it is
the gift of God

Ephesians 2:8
NIV

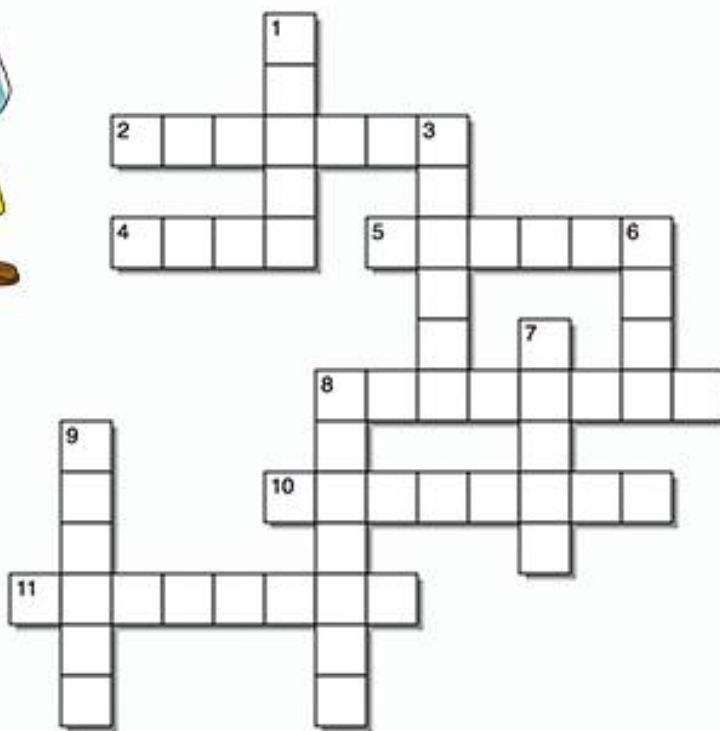
As far as the east is
from the west, so
far has he removed
our transgressions
from us

Psalm 103:12
NIV

Bible Pathway Adventures

CROSSWORD

MOSES



ACROSS

- 2) The Angel of Yah spoke to Moses out of a _____ bush. (Exodus 3:3 ESV)
4) Moses was of which tribe of Israel? (Exodus 2:1 ESV)
5) Moses sent twelve spies to spy out which land? (Numbers 13:2 ESV)
8) "Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the _____ lamb." (Exodus 12:21 ESV)
10) Pharaoh's _____ adopted Moses. (Exodus 2:10 ESV)
11) Moses married _____, daughter of Jethro (Reuel). (Exodus 2:21 ESV)

DOWN

- 1) The mountain where Moses was given the Commandments. (Exodus 19:20 ESV)
3) The spies warned Moses the land was full of _____ (Nephilim). (Num 13:27-33)
6) Moses was hidden in a basket along which river bank? (Exodus 1:22 ESV)
7) The Israelites lived in the wilderness for _____ years. (Joshua 5:6 ESV)
8) Moses stood before _____ and asked him to free the Hebrews. (Exodus 7:7 ESV)

A NEW BEGINNING AND A NEW SEASON

Pastor Queen Katembu, Deputy Patron GBI

Gospel Centres International has gone through tough times as the ministry was planning to celebrate 30 years of existence. The promotion to glory of the first Deputy General Overseer of this ministry, Rev. Simon Muasya was a big blow to the many lives that he touched including mine, he will be forever in our hearts, and mama Mercy we salute you for standing with the servant of God and your sacrifice and service to the ministry of Gospel Blooms International (GBI). Even as I come in to contribute to the great work pastors Nelly and Mercy did, I am greatly humbled and pray and trust God that you will guide and provide your invaluable counsel towards achievement of GBI's goals.

It is a great honour to serve under the able leadership of Pastor Nelly Mulema, the National GBI Patron. I was introduced to her by GO Mulema in 1986 when Rev. Katembu (DGO) requested him to take me to Victory Fellowship in Limuru Conference Centre. We were young and single and fellowshiped just briefly, little did we know that God had bigger plans for us, and now I look back and tell God thank you because his ways are higher than our ways. I have also learnt that building and investing in relationships is very important because God may just surprise you. For GCI to celebrate 30 years at such a time like this and with so many changes taking place, I believe God is beginning a new chapter for this ministry and GBI has even greater mandate to the nation of Kenya, Africa and globally to raise women ministers and to empower women and girls to be great prayer warriors even as they excel in the professional arena.



I believe the Spirit of God is not male or female, but we must be different in the physical because we are called and framed to perform distinct functions in this life. Attainment of 30 years for GCI must be significant for GBI too and thus a new chapter and a new season that we must pursue, overtake and take over.

Joseph and King David became rulers when they were 30 years old. Number 30 is also **associated with sacrifice**, as there were 30 coins of silver that tempted Judas to sell Jesus out. It resulted in the greatest sacrifice in the world, when Jesus took away all the sins of humanity with his death. As we start a new chapter, I believe God is starting to raise women in GBI to influence spiritual atmosphere in our nation through the prayer summits that are

covering every region in Kenya out of which national GBI prayer movement for women and girls will be established in Kenya. Through GBI's empowerment initiatives, I believe GCI will provide the nation of Kenya with great women leaders in the market place and in the business arena. We are committed to sacrifice our time and resources to mentor those behind us and lay a good foundation for them to serve God with great ease. Thank you, mama Nelly Mulema, for your great support and tagging me along in GBI launches and other places and making me feel comfortable in my new big shoes. I count it a privilege to serve under your leadership where we discuss serious issues and have fun as we serve God. §



By Bertha Benaya

To reset means to adjust again after an initial failure. We are living in days when a lot of people feel discouraged and fearful. We are also living in days when there is so much razzmatazz (showy or exciting display). This has also not helped with the sense of failure in people's lives and one is left wondering what they have done wrong to deserve whatever is happening in their lives, especially when around you all seems to be well for other. For example, when you look at Social Media, where people only display what is seemingly joyful times happening in their lives (not usually a reality) this has compounded the sense of helplessness.

Oh! But I have good news for you, the Bible says in Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God". Child of God, no matter what the situation may be, be encouraged that it's not over until He says so.

1 Peter 5:10, the Bible says "And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast". The book of Peter was written by the Apostle Peter who had walked with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Throughout the Gospels, we see a Peter that was presumptuous, when the Lord appeared to them walking on the Sea of Galilee, he asked the Lord to bid him to come; we see a Peter who made the greatest confession that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the Living God; we see a Peter who vowed to the Lord that he would not desert him, come what may; we see a Peter that took out his sword and chopped off the ear of one of the soldiers that had come to arrest our Lord and Master; we see a Peter that denied the Lord three times before the cock crowed; we see a helpless Peter that went into hiding after Jesus Christ was crucified, we see a Peter whom Jesus told he had prayed for because Satan had desired to sift him like wheat; we see a Peter in the book of acts who stood up boldly and declared the gospel on the day of Pentecost;

In this book of 1 Peter, we see Peter encouraging the believers who were dispersed in the diaspora. They were in exile and were very discouraged.

You may be feeling like you are in exile spiritually. I'm here to encourage you with my testimony. About 31 years ago, my husband and I pastored a fast growing church and everything was going smoothly. Apart from pastoring the church, my husband had a travelling international ministry. Unbeknown to us this had caused some jealousy among the leadership. As a young pastor's wife, I was also busy with my own business that was flourishing as I didn't want to be dependent on the church. My husband too, refused to take a salary and had asked the board to use that money towards other needs within the church.

The church leadership conspired to take over the realms of leadership. My husband was out of the country for ministry when the church leadership went among the people and organized a plot to oust him from his position. When my husband came back from overseas, they told him of their intentions and my husband and I decided to step down without a fight. They had rallied people to support them with lies. I remember one



lady who was pregnant coming up to me to laugh at me in my face with mocking remarks. My husband told them that the bible says “that a man of God should not strive”. We relocated to another town. At the time I was pregnant with our third born child. I didn’t understand why that had happened to us because there was no wrong that we had done to have deserved that kind of treatment. My husband and I had loved the people of God dearly. He even brought clothes for some of them when he traveled overseas.

One evening as I sat down to watch the evening news broadcast, there was an article on the hospitals in the previous town where we had pastored about them not having anesthetic and were rushing all emergency operation cases to the nearest towns. There was chaos, as some patients could not make the journey. They died on their way. Later that same evening I went into labor. My husband took me to the hospital and after being examined by the nurse who was helping me to deliver, she exclaimed and said that she can’t do it because the baby was too big and the baby was getting distressed. They immediately organized an emergency operation and I delivered a healthy baby girl.

Years later, I met one of the ladies who was a charlatan during the whole episode when we were evicted from the church. She was the same person who came to mock me in my face. She came running towards me and to my shock she dropped on her knees at my feet and started weeping. I was gobsmacked because I didn’t know what was going on. I held her hand and asked her to get up as this was in a public place and all eyes were on us, but she refused. She started asking me to forgive her and said that she was ignorant of what she was doing at that time and was not aware of the repercussions. She was sobbing and asked me to forgive her and said she had taken stock of all the misfortune that had befallen her ever since we were unceremoniously evicted from the church.

She narrated all the mishaps that happened in the church following our departure. There were untimely deaths, loss of jobs and many ugly things. By this time my husband had caught up with me only to find me in this situation. She begged us to go to her home so we could pray with her and her family. We told her that we were not aware of all these things happening to her and that we were really sorry. We changed our program and agreed to go to her home. Her family had gone through so much difficulties such that they had moved from the suburbs to a two roomed house in a high density area.

When we got into the house we found what looked like a baby lying on the chair and when I asked how old the baby was, she said she was six years old. The child was physically and mentally deformed. My heart went out for the child, it was most unfortunate that the child was in that state of condition. This was her fourth born child. All the others were able-bodied. It’s only then that I realized that this was the child she was carrying when we were unceremoniously asked to leave the church. We prayed with them and left everything in the hands of the Lord.

The lesson I learnt through it all is to count it all joy when you go through persecutions, James 1:2. As long as you are not being punished for something wrong that you have done. God’s ways are past finding out. He knows the end from the beginning. I also learnt to magnify the Lord in all situations. Lesson two is that you should not touch the Lord’s anointed, 1 Chronicles 16:22. Ignorance is no defense. Fear the Lord and do good. Reset!§

My Journey in Ministry during COVID-19

Norah Were -GCI Kitale



In 2019, November, my husband was sent to Kitale to start GCI church in the county of Trans Nzoia. We had been praying for God to open a place for us to serve Him and indeed he answered our prayers. **In James 5:16 b “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much”**. He moved to Kitale while my two daughters and I had to remain behind because of my job status and where I was stationed. We continued believing God to give us a better place to put the church and we thank God that he gave us the right and strategic place where the church is to date, God has brought people to the ministry for **John 12:32 says “And I, if am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to myself”**. Indeed, our God has done it and He is still doing it.

In March 2020, the government announced the outbreak of COVID-19 in Kenya and so there was a lockdown, churches closed down and gathering restricted. There were no movements across counties. I received the news in shock because by that time I was in Nairobi. This was a tough time for me but I prayed that He may give me strength. For three good months I was alone in Nairobi, I couldn't visit my family which affected me a lot physically and emotionally.

I remember, one night after having our usual Zoom meeting for Pastors wives with Mum Nelly, I had my dinner and went to bed as usual, then at around 11:32 pm I started feeling chilly and my body was burning, sweating, headache. I thank God for friends. I called my friend but because of curfew we couldn't get a taxi, but I thank God that she had a friend who was a taxi driver. The friend didn't hesitate. He woke up and they both came and took me to the nearby hospital which was Mediheal Hospital in Eastleigh. On arriving, my pressure was at 157. I was put on medication and it went down. It was a tough time and I thank God for healing me and for my husband who really prayed for me, he would wake me up at 3:00 am and pray on phone. In August the same year 2020, I had travelled to Kitale after the President announced the ban on lockdown when I received a call from my place of work in Nairobi asking me to collect my transfer letter. Waah! I couldn't believe tears rolled down my cheeks. “Tears of joy.”

God had done it, I talked to the secretary to send me on mail and she did it immediately, so I rushed to our offices in Kitale and downloaded the letter, handed it to my boss who signed it and to my surprise gave me 10 days to do my transfer from Nairobi to Kitale, this what we call instant miracles for the bible says “he will never leave us nor forsake us”. The same year I was working on three years' contract, my terms changed to permanent that's another miracle, double miracle to my family.

I like the verse in the book of **2 Timothy 1:7 which says “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love and of sound mind. Not ashamed of the gospel”** this verse really encourages me whenever I feel am down, worried and discouraged, despite of many attacks even to the extent of been admitted hospital, I encouraged myself in the Lord, for fear is not my portion. As a child of God I have learned to trust in the Lord and I usually give this testimony to the women I lead in church that our God is a faithful God, trust and belief in Him. Serving him faithfully is not in vain. The ministry is doing excellent; we are serving the Lord. My husband and I, for he brought us together as a family and we really thank Him for that, for **“who began a good work in us will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ”**. **Hallelujah!§**

Seizing opportunities

By Pastor Caroline N. Mahasi



*“Be creative, even in sharing the Gospel, all to the glory of God!
If you really want to share the gospel, no one can stop you! Its about Seizing,
to take possession or control of something as if by suddenly laying hold*

-To take by force

-Take hold quickly, firmly and forcefully

-Take an opportunity eagerly and decisively.

‘Seizing Opportunities’ can be likened to the opposite of ‘Regret’. Unfortunately, most of us let opportunities slip by everyday because we are either untrained or unaware

of the signals life throws our way. In taking opportunities, it is up to you. Don’t expect someone to nudge you or to ‘wake you up’. Years ago while in driving school, my instructor taught about ‘Defensive driving’. Being aware of your surroundings, so that nothing takes you by surprise!

I am reminded of a time in a National Park where, I had an opportunity to witness a warthog being caught by lions. It was drinking water at a pond oblivious of the danger around it. The lions looked liked they were sleeping at the edge of that pond. However, suddenly a lionesses got into the water and seized the unsuspecting warthog in its comfort zone! Every crises and setback is the chance to create an opportunity. Reject the passive approach of waiting for opportunity to knock. Instead, be prepared to create and seize opportunities yourself.

Galatians 6:9-10 “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart (give up). So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith”. Ephesians 5: 15-17 1) Verse 15 “Be very careful then how you live not as unwise but as wise”

Be careful of what goes into your mind, especially for the young people; those things that you allow in your mind will stick there, even when you grow older and want to get rid of them. It will not be easy to do so. Be careful what you read, what you watch, whom you hang around with, remember that ‘bad company corrupts good morals’. There is something about associations.

Be wise. We gain wisdom by spending time with God and with Godly people. Proverbs 13: “He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm”. You become like the people you hang around, for better or for worse. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Redeeming the time because the days are evil. Be alert to your society so that you can minister more effectively. We need to make sure that the unchanging truth of the Word of God is communicated clearly to the constantly changing times in which we live and minister. Be alert to the signs of Christ return.

Take advantage of opportunities to pray for people, to lead people to Christ, to let your good works bring praise to The Father. Matthew 25: 35-40 “Whatever you do for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” Matthew 11: 12 “And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force!” Therefore, take every opportunity to be a blessing to someone, to do what is right, do not live a life of regret, do not be associated with procrastination. Whatever you need to do. DO IT! No holding back. Trust in GOD to give you success. AMEN!

A MESSAGE FOR THE WIDOWS

Pastor Grace Ngaruiya, GCI Thika Rd

Isaiah 54:4-8 New International Version (NIV)

⁴“Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.⁵For your Maker is your husband—the LORD Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.

The Bible puts a lot of emphasis on the care and support of the widows. In fact, the book of Psalm shows that God takes up the role of a provider and protector of the widow and her children immediately the husband and the father of her children dies (Psalm 68:5; *“A father of the fatherless, a defender of the widows, is God in His Holy habitation”).*

Proverbs 15:25

The Lord tears down the house of the proud but maintains the widow's boundaries. The widows, should not feel condemned. There is yet another chance. 1st Corinthians 7:³⁹ A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. ⁴⁰ In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

THE CONFIDENCE IN GOD

Psalm 68:5

This verse says God is a “defender of widows in His holy habitation.” In other words, even from heaven, the holiest place in the universe, God looks down and takes heed of widows. He makes defending them a priority. In ancient Israel, widows were not highly favored. They were dependent on the charity of others for survival, let alone comfort. Yet God penned verses like this one to show His view of widows is different. If you feel forgotten, too dependent on others, or singled out for suffering, cling to this verse.

I have good news for you, should anyone think that they are doing you a favour when they help you, remind them that **YOU MIGHT HAVE LOST AN EARTHLY HUSBAND A FATHR OF YOUR CHILDREN BUT YOU ACQUIRED A DEVINE HUSBNABD AND AN EVER-PRESENT FATHER OF YOUR CHILDREN.**

GOD BLESS GCI. GOD BLESS GBI.



Tribute to our Fallen **Bloom Our Blooms! Bloom in Eternity!**

A rose stands out
It stands tall, blooms tall, and blooms strong
Its scent, color, texture, look; you cannot help but look
Its environment, standing; you can only marvel at
A rose stands out
Within the bush; within the thorns
It stands tall, blooms tall, and blooms strong

Our Blooms, bloomed tall, and strong
They stood test of ministry, test of family, test of friendship
They stood test for Christ, carrying the cross, to the last day
In sickness and in health, they stood tall, blooming, and strong
Roses, that stood out

In death, we remember their service, their ministry, their wisdom,
In death, we remember their admonishment, their counsel, their cooking, their smiles
In death, we remember their work, businesses, farms, experience
Roses, that stood out.

We bid thee farewell, knowing you bloomed in fullness, in our midst
Knowing you gave your all, knowing you pursued, overtook, and conquered
Knowing you rest, having bloomed in Glory.
We bid thee farewell, knowing your service, counsel, fullness and love remains
We bid thee farewell, knowing your now bloom at His bosom.

Our Blooms, Fare thee Well, Wear thy crown of Glory
Bloom at the Garden of the Lord, with full color, as you sing Halleluiah,
Bloom and join the Angels Choir, to Praise.
You have bloomed, and the testimony remains.
Bloom till we meet on the beautiful shores!
Bloom in eternity, Our Blooms!

*"Dedicated to the beautiful and strong women we have lost this year as Gospel
Blooms International"*

By Bether Njiru-Mulwa



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