

THE GODLY YOUTH

A Periodical of words
inspire ministries

MAGAZINE

GODLY YOUTH

BLOOMING IN
HARD TIMES

SITTING IN FELLOWSHIP
WITH ABBA

CHOOSE GOD

TOP 10 APPS
TO LIVE SMART
IN 2024

IT'S FULL BLOOM O'CLOCK:
Your time to flourish

EMBRACING DIVINE
TIMING

STILL STANDING
FROM FALLEN TO FLOURISHING






YOUR HEALTH
& WATER

4TH EDITION
JANUARY 2024

Inspirational | Educational | Informational

EDITOR'S CORNER



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Hello, beautiful people! Happy New Year to you, and welcome to this splendid edition of the Godly Youth Magazine (GYM). Trust me, this edition is magnificent. You can't read it and not be blessed. You will definitely love every bit of it.

The theme of this fourth edition is "It's full bloom o'clock; your time to flourish." (Psalm 92:12-15; Psalm 72:7-8). It features great articles and stories for your edification and an amazing reading experience. It is aimed at letting you know that you can flourish no matter what. The contents are amazing, as the writers are firebrand, highly motivated individuals who have sincerely poured their souls out for you to be richly blessed. We are sincerely grateful to them for their excellent input into this edition. You will definitely leave with something.

You can connect with us through our social media handles listed below to enjoy much more content. Stay blessed! and have a great reading experience.

ADEDIWURA OLAIBI

Chief Editor, The Godly Youth Magazine
Founder/President, Words Inspire Ministries

The magazine was created and distributed as a labor of love and has been free for all souls.

If you are blessed by it and are led to give and support the ministry please send your seed of love to:

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MEET THE TEAM



Adediwura Olaibi is a purpose driven writer/author, Chief Editor at The Godly Youth Magazine and founder/President at Words Inspire Ministries. She is also a baker and an entrepreneur. She finds joy in acting for the gospel. She is married to her sweetheart Abiola Olaibi and they are blessed with 2 lovely children.



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MEET THE TEAM



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She expresses her vision through the Fragrant Life Blog and the Big Little Things podcast. She facilitates personal productivity training such as her bespoke How-To-Journal workshops. She is joyfully married and blessed with a daughter.

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Ayedun Catherine, a graduate of economics education from the University of Nigeria, is a lover of God available for the master's use in songs and music, teaching, and preaching of the word, most especially to teenagers and young adults, an assignment she does not take for granted. She also reaches out to young minds as a school teacher. She writes songs and devotionals online, through which she reaches out to people with the word of God. She is intentional about taking charge of her social media space for his glory, in spite of social vices across social media. She is happily married and blessed with a daughter.

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Choose God.

By Adediwura Olaibi.



God really is a good God, and he means so well for you; he really does. If God is calling on you, it's absolutely for your sake. He does everything for you, and whatever he asks you to do is for yourself.

(For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Jeremiah 29:11)

God requires you to choose him in order to work maximally in your life. The honest truth is that you can't sit on the fence; you've got to pick a side. If you want to choose God, choose him all the way and stick to his principles; the reward is mind-blowing. And if you still want to "not choose God," I just really hope you change your mind, because "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12) Choose God for good, because whether you like it or not, he's always in the picture. People do all sorts of stuff and think they can get away with it, and God just looks patiently from heaven and wonders if they don't know that they will get the reward of whatever they do if they continue in it. (Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.). Galatians 6:7)

You definitely can't erase God as your creator, so why do you think you can leave God out of your life and your life will still function as it should? How??? You can actually think you are doing okay in life without him, but you'll never know how it was intended to be. You can't "not choose God" and not reap the negative rewards of it. Firstly, your life will definitely be less of what it should be, no matter how good it looks.

Secondly, know that the master you have chosen has control over your life. Oh yes, you heard that right. Did you think that when you didn't choose God, you were left with no master? Man is definitely not always left independent; he's always controlled by something, but you have the choice to choose what that is. Just know that if you don't choose God, God will choose you. The bottom line is that there's always a God in the picture. Choose your God wisely.

Now the good news is that when you choose God, flourishing is not just an option; it's a must. It means you've chosen to flourish already. You've chosen life rather than death; blooming is no longer negotiable.

Choose right and remain blooming; it's full bloom o'clock.

SITTING IN FELLOWSHIP

WITH ABBA

By CATHERINE AYEDUN

Text: Luke 10:38-42

“Now as they went on their way, he entered a village, and a woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." 41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; 42 one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

The thoughts and plans of God towards us His children are not just good; they are perfect. (Jeremiah 29:11). When I said His children, I meant those who have accepted His righteousness and are now His. (2Corinthians 5:21). He says the righteous shall flourish. Flourishing is only found in God, and it is for the righteous and not any random people. Also, the righteous is not just a random Christian or one who goes to church, but someone who, after taking the life of Jesus, is then committed to spending time with Him. Someone who sits at the feet of Jesus to learn His ways from Him. The desire of Jesus is that we spend time with Him. He wants each one of us to fellowship with Him. As much as He needs vessels to carry out His assignment on earth, His ultimate calling is to fellowship. To walk with him, just like Enoch did. (Gen. 5:24).

According to our text, the Bible says Martha was distracted. As good as serving is, Jesus also called it distraction. (Luke 10:40-41). In Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus said many will say to me on the last day, We served in Your name, and He will say to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of iniquity' (paraphrased).

Let's look at this analogy. A wealthy man has a big company that requires the services of skilled and unskilled labor. His HR employs unskilled laborers who work for him without having direct contact with him. If any of these workers should walk up to him to make demands or claim any right to anything in the company, he will deny such a person

unless HR testifies about them. They work for him in his company but do not have access to him or direct contact with him. In fact, he can get them arrested for even trying to come closer to him because he does not know them. This is exactly how so many people are cumbersome with service but without a real and genuine relationship with Him.

If you are going to serve and work for the Master and reap the reward, you must learn from Him. In other words, you need proper orientation to be able to serve Him accordingly and appropriately. That is, to be able to work and walk in His will. Your service must be an overflow of your fellowship with Him; He tells you what to do.

Jesus said to the rich young ruler, Go and sell everything and come follow me. Jesus is saying, I am your exceeding great reward (Gen. 15:1). Choose me! Jesus recognized his idol. Being rich was not the problem, but something has taken the place Jesus should have occupied in His life. Jesus did not ask the man what he was willing to let go; Jesus made a demand for what had to go. In other words, we don't get to choose. He knows what the idol(s) are, and he calls the shots on what has to go. But this young man was not willing to let go of what he could see to receive this exceedingly great reward, which, though not visible to the eyes, was and is greater than whatever he had. The disciples then asked, What is our reward for leaving everything to follow you? Jesus said, For choosing me, you have everything you thought you lost. You have earthly riches, and heaven is sure and guaranteed. You will possess the earth, and you will not lose heaven. Mark 10:17-21, 28-30. (Paraphrased).

Our calling is righteousness. As the called righteous ones, our assignment is to follow Him and to sit with Him in fellowship, and this is how and where we flourish. Our calling and our assignment are to love Jesus enough to just want to sit and fellowship with him. Everything else overflows from here. This is what it means to seek the kingdom. Jesus is the kingdom, and everything else shall be added.

How do you know it's your full bloom season? when you spend time with him. If your flourishing happens outside of Him, then it is questionable and will not last. He said to Peter, Follow me, and I will make you... Yours is to follow; his is to make. Selah

NAVIGATING THROUGH LIFE, YOUR POWER TO FLOURISH IS THE WORD OF GOD.

By
Tomi Jamal-
Alayande

In the early days of relocating to a new country, I soon got a better and more practical understanding of direction. Unlike where I came from, navigating roads and journeys had always been a 'head' thing. In this new land, this wasn't the case. Many times, even those who had lived in the new land for close to a decade still needed to use a navigator to get to some of their destinations.

It is interesting how you can find similarities between navigating life and navigating your daily journeys (transportation-wise). One common factor in both scenarios is having a sense of direction. As you journey through life, you soon find out that although every human is headed in one direction or another, Not everyone is going in your direction. More critically, not every direction is the **direction** that takes you to your destination.

Finding your direction: What is your SatNav? A SatNav, in simple terms, is a satellite navigation system that helps you navigate paths. Think of another navigation system such as Google Maps, the ability for it to recognize your current position and offer you the most effective direction and transportation means to get to your destination is simply superb. As you journey through life, you need reliable intelligence to journey through life. There are several alternatives people decide to go for, but the best SatNav anyone can desire for a flourishing outcome in life is the Word of God.

You might wonder, "Why is the Word of God unique?" "What characteristics or qualities make it different from any other element that can help a man or woman decide their path?"

First, let's look at other common ways in which people figure out the directions to take in their lives.

- By relying absolutely on their emotions, ideas, logic, past experiences, or future projections.
- By asking other people and seeking the opinions of others over God's.
- By following trending ways in which the world and others are living their lives.

Even though there might be some nice results in these, they are not meant to be the primary means to navigating or finding direction in life.

Now, let's find out why the Word of God is the best resource for you to flourish in life.

The Word of God is alive and has quickening power.

The Bible is not just a book of many characters or an ancient, mysterious book handed through generations. It is alive and sharp. In fact, in sharpness, it is likened to a two-edged sword that penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.(Hebrews 4:2). The Word of God is potent and has the transforming power to lead you in the right paths. It will be hard to flourish if your life is not going according to the direction of your Father, God. In making critical decisions, you can employ the Word of God because it is alive. It is relevant to this day and age. There is no issue of life you can not find an answer to in God's word.

NAVIGATING THROUGH LIFE, YOUR POWER TO FLOURISH IS THE WORD OF GOD.

By
Tomi Jamal-
Alayande

The word of God is complete.

It is fascinating that the word of God is complete; it can meet you at every interval, phase of life, or any point of need. **"Wherewith shall a young man direct his way? by keeping your words." Psalm 119:9 BST** Because of the completeness of the Word of God, you can be sure to not just find direction but also find guidance, correction, rebuke, courage, strength, peace, and so much more. 2 Timothy 3:16–17.

The word of God is the compass you need.

It cannot be overemphasized that the Word of God is a compass. **The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you."** In Psalm 32:8, we see God expressing his interest in guiding our lives if we let him. Just as a plant can't flourish in the wrong soil; a man can't flourish out of God's plans for him. The Word of God illuminates the plans of God unto us, and that becomes the compass that guides our every step.

The Word of God is the ladder that can lift you up.

Have you experienced defeat, sadness, or moments of low emotion? Did you ever feel like you had gone so low, you cannot rise again? What if your life has gone off a tangent? The word is able to lift you out of terrible situations, be they recurring sins or life's challenges. The Word of God can be your ladder today. The potency of the Word of God can be visually seen in this scripture. At the scent of water, there is hope for a tree to begin to bud and flourish. **For there is hope for a tree if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the shoots of it will not cease nor fail, but there is no such hope for man. Though its roots grow old in the earth and its stump dies in the dry soil, yet at the scent of water, the stump of the tree will flourish and bring forth sprigs. and shoots like a seedling. Job 14:7-9 AMP.**

Accessing the Word of God.

This then brings up a serious question. The Word of God has been described as an effective navigator in the positioning of a man or woman. How then can you access the word?

The Word of God must become your food and the first source of nourishment. If you do not find your nourishment in the Word of God, you cannot flourish internally or externally. Priority must be given to the consumption of the Word of God. By consumption, it means you should not just rely on reading, but intentional reading and studying with the help of the Holy Spirit. The daily practice of reading the Word of God helps you store up treasures in your heart and makes it possible for you to have the right word for activation at times and intervals when you need direction the most.

What must you do to flourish?

To flourish, to stay nourished in the word of God. You must prioritize your interaction with the word; it should be non-negotiable. Every time you want to read the Word of God, invite and trust the Holy Spirit to teach and guide you. And when he does, obey his promptings. The Word of God, like the scent of water, as described in Job 14:7, is more than able to help you flourish in this phase of your life.

Still Standing: From Fallen to Flourishing

A fiction by Aderinsola Agunloye

Psalms 92:13–14 "Those that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing."

Lately, life as I know it has been great. You know that phase where everything seems perfect? Perfect life. Perfect Job. Perfect family and friends. Perfect joy. Two weeks ago, I was made a partner at my consulting firm. It was one of those moments I have been working very hard towards, with lots of sleepless nights and dedication to my career, so it felt like a normal day. My loved ones had to remind me of how great an achievement it was—worth a month-long celebration. I guess that explains why I am here at 11 p.m., makeup still on, still in my party outfit, saying goodbye to the final guest of the night. I gave into the idea of a 40th birthday party, which also doubled as the party to celebrate my new promotion.

I have been journaling for as long as I can remember. I think I started in junior secondary school, maybe JSS 3. It was at first a way for me to let out my anger and say things I dared not say out loud. The subject of my writing ranged from the teachers who decided to give me too much homework, to the seniors who constantly annoyed me, to my friends' escapades, which I swore not to tell another, and sometimes it was just the usual day-to-day joys of living as a teenager. I wrote it all down. I did not even know it had a fancy name then; I just wanted to write my heart out.

As sleep is drawing near, I know if I freshen up now, it's straight off to bed after my nightly prayers. So instead, I grab a cup of tea and sit at my dressing table, going through years' worth of journal entries, preparing to put pen to paper again.

I have titled today's entry *"Still Standing: From Fallen to Flourishing."* That's the best way I can capture my life's journey and how I came this far. That I am flourishing today, standing firmly and full of joy, is nothing but a testament that God is good. If I could talk to the 21-year-old me, who is currently afraid of how life will turn out and if all will work out well, I would say, *"Relax; God is good."*

"I have always been confident about how I wanted to live life. I was privileged to be born into a loving and happy home with wonderful parents and siblings. We had our issues and fights, as do many families, but we stayed close, finding and holding on to the happy things in life.

I attended a good primary and secondary school and proceeded to university. University life had its ups and downs, moments of doubt, and not feeling good enough, but it was good. I met good people and made lifelong friends. Also, I have been blessed by God with intelligence, so I have always done well in school, finishing university with good grades.



Still Standing: From Fallen to Flourishing

Then came life after university. While in my final year of university, I started to apply for graduate jobs and opportunities within and outside the country, but none worked out. I was told the job market is crazy and takes determination, so I kept applying. Two years after university, I finally got a job at a company as a junior administrative staffer. Thinking back now, I don't know how I survived on that salary. My bosses were alright, and I ensured I did the work well. I was surviving, and I kept the faith that I would get into one of the big companies soon. Soon later, I was in year 6 at that company.

I had reconnected with a friend from university and found out that my friends were planning a reunion for that December. I thought, why not? It's an opportunity to party and reconnect. That turned out to be one of my worst experiences and a killer of my already low self-esteem. It turned out that some people attend reunions just for the sole purpose of oppressing others, boasting about all they have acquired and how far in life they have gone. I was 29 years old at the time and saw it simply as boasting and pride. In retrospect, maybe they were just proud of themselves, and I was the one that needed to rise above envy and trust in the God of my journey.

That night, I got home and cried my eyes out. I was a first-class graduate working as administrative staff with a meager salary, single as the number "1," and still living with my parents.

I was wary of attending events after that. I only went out with close friends and for special occasions, and you had to be close to me for me to attend your party. At this point, I was now sure that God just disliked me, and maybe I had committed a great sin in my previous life. How was it possible that everyone except me was flourishing and excelling? I now had friends who were mothers and fathers. Friends and classmates who were now managers and seniors in their various places of work. But here I was, with a 15k salary increment after 6 years and still mid-level admin staff, at what was supposed to be a temporary workplace. To make matters

worse, I had just been abandoned by my boyfriend at the time after dating for two years. No valid reasons, no apology. I was now at a phase in my life where all I did was compare myself to others.

Do not for a minute think I was only complaining without doing anything to change my situation. I was working hard. Since university, I have completed three certification courses that my parents supported me with. I had enrolled for a master's degree part-time. I was applying for better jobs every week. I would get to the final interview rounds for some, and the companies would either reject me or just ghost me fully.

They said if you want to meet a good man, go out, pray, and put yourself out there. I did all that, but nothing worked out.

I had prayed. I had fasted. I had trusted. Nothing changed.

I had failed in life. I had fallen, while others were flourishing.

The turning point:

*One Saturday, I had slept off while crying and suddenly woke up around 3 a.m. It had been happening for a while. When I wake up like that, I either browse through my phone for a bit, watch a movie, or start arranging my room. This time around, I woke up and picked up my Bible. As I was studying the word, a Bible verse came to mind. **"The smallest family will grow to a thousand. The least important of you will become a powerful nation. I am the Lord, and when it is time, I will make these things happen quickly."** Isaiah 60:22.*



Still Standing: From Fallen to Flourishing

That night, I turned on my worship playlist, and I thanked God. I sang, I danced, and I praised God for being the God of all seasons. I worshipped him for keeping me alive till the time was right, then I prayed. I wrote and practiced my announcement speech for when I receive my offer letter for my new job. I practiced my wedding speech. I rejoiced in the Lord. That night and the weeks following, I had a deep joy that could only have come from Jesus. I was filled with gratitude and contentment for how far he had brought me.

In all this, I realized how comparison had been one of the greatest thieves of my joy. Undoubtedly, I did not have it all together yet. Some of my friends and mates had gone far above me, but I had breath in me. I had life, and I had love for family. The rest will come. From that 3 a.m. onwards, I gave it all to God. The God of times and seasons. The rest did come.

The turnaround was like a dream. About 3 months later, one sunny afternoon, I was on my way to the bank to make a quick transaction when I received a call. It was from a big consulting firm I had applied to a while back. I even had two rounds of interviews already and just heard nothing from them. They called and fixed a time for me to come to their office.

It was as though the words "grace" and "light" were boldly written on my forehead. I got the job. I, who had only a 15k salary increment after 6 years working at the same place, suddenly had an offer letter with an amount I was in awe of for 1 week.

I met my husband through what can only be described as the mighty doings of a good God. The journey down that memory lane is a gist for another day. Everything from then on seemed like I had bribed God. It felt like a big cup had been filling with my blessings, and it suddenly started to overflow. Blessings from all sides. It was truly my time.

11 years later, I became a partner today. I, Adunoluwa, am a partner at a top-ranking firm.

Sometimes, the world will ask you what you are doing while you are still serving, praising, and praying to God when it seems answers are not coming. Tell them you are "still standing." If they ask you for a point of reference, say my name. I have fallen. I have failed. I have questioned God. I have tasted sadness. I have woken up with eyes swollen and a wet pillow, wondering how everyone except me is flourishing. But here I am.

Looking back, I am very grateful for my own resilience and tenacity. Even when it seemed useless, I obtained my master's degree. I enrolled in certification courses and sought ways to better myself and increase my knowledge. The first promotion I got at my "big girl, big God" company was because I had a particular required certification. You have only failed when you quit. The only one who has messed up is the one who gave up.

Life seems to be getting tougher as the years go by. There are so many hurdles to cross, and society and the state of things are not making it better. Now more than ever, we need a source. Someone to draw strength from. Regardless of how exhausted I felt at times, I still went back to God and laid in his embrace. He wasn't counting on my strength when he called me my beloved daughter; he was counting on his.

We all need God to flourish. I need God to flourish. If I remain planted in the house of the Lord, I will flourish in the courts of our God. Obstacles do not even have a choice. They bow in the name of Jesus."

What a night! What a journey!!!

I think my makeup has stayed on long enough, and this beautiful dress is starting to feel heavy. I have written enough for one night.

"But before I go, to you reading this right now, I must say, Congratulations!!!

***You are next in line.** So long as the moon endureth, you have flourished, and you have abundance of peace. Just be righteous. **Jesus walks with you!!!**"*

Your Health and Water

By Oluwakemi Lamidi

Relationship between water and your kidneys:

In terms of your kidneys, water helps dissolve minerals and nutrients, making them more accessible to the body. It also helps remove waste products. Water is essential for the kidneys to function. If the kidneys do not function properly, waste products and excess fluid can build up inside the body. Not drinking enough water can increase the risk of kidney stones and, in women, urinary tract infections (UTIs). It can also lower your physical and mental performance, and your salivary gland function, and lead to dehydration.

Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when the water content of the body is too low. This is easily fixed by increasing fluid intake.

Symptoms of dehydration include:

thirst, headaches, lethargy, mood changes and slow responses, dry nasal passages, dry or cracked lips, dark-colored urine, weakness, tiredness, confusion and hallucinations.

If dehydration is not corrected by fluid intake, eventually urination stops, the kidneys fail, and the body can't remove toxic waste products. In extreme cases, dehydration may result in death.



Causes of dehydration

There are several factors that can cause dehydration including:

Not drinking enough water.

Increased sweating due to hot weather, humidity, exercise or fever.

Insufficient signaling mechanisms in the elderly – sometimes, older adults do not feel thirsty even though they may be dehydrated, Increased output of urine due to a hormone deficiency, diabetes, kidney disease or medications.

Diarrhoea or vomiting.

Recovering from burns.



Embracing Divine Timing: Flourishing in all Seasons

By Adeola Opeyemi

My friend, Edith, loves mango fruit so much that she wishes it were massively available all year round. Like I always say, hers is an unrealistic desire. Mango trees have their blooming season when they are fruiting so abundantly that they can satisfy the cravings of all mango lovers. Outside of that season, it is scarce and unappreciated. Look around you; nature unfolds in a cyclical order of times and seasons, and this order is not exclusive to nature; our lives' journey has also been designed; it has been patterned into several crests and troughs of times and seasons. Little wonder, God's word says, "Time and chance happen to all men" (Ecclesiastes 9:11, paraphrase mine).

There is a desire for success and fulfillment in the heart of every man. We all want to flourish, yet not everyone will, largely because some have not comprehended nor embraced the principle of divine timing. If time and chance happen to all men, it means our chances (**seasons**) to flourish or otherwise in life are woven into times. Therefore, understanding God's timing is paramount in a fast-paced world, if we do not simply follow the bustle and miss our seasons to flourish.

Life's seasons are just as modeled in nature. The first dynamics of divine timing to understand is the **distinctiveness of time** for every season. Let's look at how this plays out in the natural phenomena listed in Genesis 8:22. There is a distinct time for the rising of the sun (called day) and the setting of the same (night); there is a set time to plant seeds for any crop; planting outside this time equals toiling and a poor harvest. Summer has its own unique time, as does winter, as well as periods of heat and cold. So distinct are their times that we can anticipate and prepare for them. In like

manner, nothing happens to a person randomly; there are unique times set by God for each phase of His plans for your life to unfold. When you understand and embrace these dynamics, you will become intentional about preparing for these set times that will usher in your bloom seasons, be content through your waiting period, and learn not to compare yourself with others.

Divine times for blooming seasons are usually heralded by seemingly dry seasons. This is true even in nature, as before the rain comes the dry season. In a person's life, dry seasons are waiting periods. Hardly does anyone enjoy blooming in any area of life without some sort of waiting. This dynamic of divine timing is hard to embrace because no man likes the idea of waiting. We all want to shine with little or no effort, but that isn't the way life is programmed; fair weather always follows a storm. In fact, life experiences have taught that the harder it becomes, the closer the breakthrough. The Bible states clearly that "weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Psalms 30:5). The waiting period is very challenging, as one does not know how long it will be. The good news is we can be sure of its outcome; doubtlessly, it's blooming! Abraham waited, and Isaac came, through whom he became the father of many nations; Hannah waited, and Samuel, the prophet and priest, came; and David waited almost endlessly to ascend the throne he had been anointed for many years prior. Waiting is unpalatable, but yes, the end of it is blooming! Psalms 126:6 says, "He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall **doubtless** come again with rejoicing."



Although the waiting period isn't a blooming season, you can flourish in it nonetheless.

To thrive while waiting, you must sow rightly in it: seeds of preparation for the bloom time, prayers, patience, obedience, faith, and trust in the Lord, the writer of time. Also, you must harness your waiting period for growth—that is, improve capacity for your expected bloom season. When all these are in place, you feel contented and refreshed, even while waiting. The time of waiting, if handled correctly, always brings about tremendous personal and spiritual growth.

Discernment is also an intricate part of these dynamics.

If we must recognize divine timing in our lives, then we must be discerning. Any man who is able to discern God's divine timing will be able to take the strategic actions required to step into bloom. 1 Chronicles 12:32 describes the children of Issachar as men who understood times, thereby knowing what to do. Discernment can be imbibed through prayers, meditation on God's word, fellowship with the Holy Ghost, listening to the voice of the inner man, and obedience to spiritual instructions. Those who function in discernment rarely miss their divine opportunity to get blessed. An example of such a person is Jacob, who recognized that he wrestled with not just a man but the one who could bless him, thereby aggressively exploring their meeting for his own benefit.

God's timing for our lives is not always easy to embrace, even when we know that He has our best interests at heart. We must picture the image of the ever-enduring palm tree mentioned in Psalm 92:12: "The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon." The palm tree is known for its slow but steady growth. Similarly, in the journey of life, embracing divine timing often involves consistent, steadfast progress rather than

hasty developments. Palms have strong and deep root systems, mirroring the importance of having deep spiritual roots and grounding oneself in faith and trust during times of waiting. Until its time of flourishing comes, the palm tree continues in resilience and growth, enduring challenging conditions, including storms and harsh climates. The slow and steady growth of the palm provides it with the opportunity to flourish even in old age. In the same way, a life aligned with divine timing, not boycotting its waiting period, shall yield a continual harvest of positive outcomes and spiritual abundance.

For everything, there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven (Ecclesiastes 3:1). God is sovereign; He is the writer of time. We must therefore submit our pursuits to His plans and His timing for them. As believers, we must be confident that God's timing is always the best. It's God's desire that we flourish in bloom and thrive in waiting. Flourishing in all seasons requires faith, patience, and a deep trust in God's plans. Outside of His time, we will only struggle. Don't forget, "He makes all things beautiful in his time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

BLOOMING IN HARD TIMES

By Damilola Tunji-Gbesan

Sometimes it's hard to trust when life seems topsy-turvy; it's hard to understand how and why our Father would allow something so contrary to His nature. Flourishing in a meticulously tended garden alongside others is effortless, yet standing in solitary beauty demands unwavering determination. It is easy to grow in sunshine, but are we willing to grow in shade and in lack? I've experienced seasons when the pain was too much to endure. I was too hurt to pray. I've experienced times when I was so spiritually oppressed that I felt like a dark cloud hovered over me, and prayer just seemed impossible.

We must learn to grow in the hard seasons of life and withstand the elements that seek to pull us up from our roots and end our life cycle. The Bible encourages us to endure hardships as devoted soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Seasons where every prayer was a tear-filled cry for help. The only way to break out of those seasons is to do the hard thing—pray.

He knows how hard it has been. He knows every tear that you've shed and every time your heart cries out in agony in response to the injustice, the senselessness, and the pain. He sees your efforts to walk before him. He sees your tears as you have clung to Him. Even though it hurts, you're still clinging; that's an attitude that He can bless. It looks like submission to God's Word in all respects and trusting that God is a good, good Father who will always take care of us, no matter how hard things seem during these worst of times.

Be open to God about your unbelief.

Be honest! Allow God to remind you who He is and what He promises, and then be honest with Him. You can tell God how you feel and in what areas of your life you are struggling to trust Him. According to Mark 9, a man brought his son to Jesus for healing from being possessed by a demon. He asked Jesus to heal him "if you can."



Jesus asked the man if he did not believe that Jesus could heal, and this is what he said: Help my unbelief.

Don't walk alone.

When you are struggling, share those concerns with another follower of Jesus whom you trust—someone you know who is pursuing a relationship with God regularly and who knows God's Word. You do not have to share struggles with everyone; find those people who will encourage you and share the truth with you, not just tell you what you want to hear. Fellow believers can remind you of God's character through encouragement and accountability. They can pray for and support you. They can remind you of the truth when you're struggling. The community reminds you that you are never alone, even in hard times. Philemon 1:6 The Bible tells us to pray for one another because prayer matters. Ephesians 6:18 says, "Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. I encourage you to find a few people you know and trust and ask them to pray for you and your circumstances in the hard times (and really anytime).

BLOOMING IN HARD TIMES



Remember God and spend time with Him.

God is bigger than your circumstances. Difficult times may feel like they last forever, but they are temporary. God is present amid the bad times as well as the good. He is always faithful. God wants you to go to Him with your circumstances. He also wants you to come to him simply to spend time with him. You should not let your circumstances shape your relationship with God. God can shape your view of your circumstances.

Difficult circumstances feel all-consuming at times. It is really hard to see past them and see other good things going on, but God's grace is in all things. In your waking up. on a sunny day. In a call from a friend. He is in all of it. The Holy Spirit will lead you to what you should do. Sometimes what you need to do is wait. Faithfully continue to seek the Lord, but wait on His timing. Wait on Him to act on your behalf. Wait on Him to do what you cannot do yourself. In the book of Isaiah, God responds to the Israelites, who thought that God had turned away from them. He reminds them that he does not sleep or take a break. He always sees them and is always working for their good.

Read, memorize, and meditate on Scripture.

Increase your faith by focusing on the truth of God's word. Instead of allowing the circumstances and problems of this world to steal your focus and peace, choose to turn your focus toward the truth. Psalm 33:4 states, "For the word of the Lord is right, and all His work is trustworthy." Read a familiar passage or something that is speaking to you at that time. The thing is, God's word is true, and the truth helps us understand our circumstances a little better. God's Word sheds light in this dark world and helps us see things more clearly. "Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path" (Ps. 119:105).

Remember God's faithfulness and God's work in the past.

The longer you've been a believer, the easier this is. More time with God equals more time to observe and recognize His goodness and faithfulness in your life; more time to see prayers answered. God is faithful. "But the Lord is faithful; He will strengthen and guard you from the evil one" (2 Thes. 3:3). To remember His faithfulness, consider His work in and around your life. Think of something that couldn't have happened without God's intervention or a time when you felt God close to you.

Conclusion

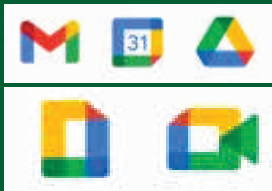
Your struggles are real, and they hurt a lot! But the key is having faith in God. Even in the midst of the storms, it's not easy. This type of faith takes time and practice. You can't wait until the most difficult thing in your life happens to implement it. We don't want to have more difficult times to practice with, so it's best to go ahead and practice these techniques when things are going okay. May we know Him in the fellowship of suffering and stay intimately aware of His presence, His power, and His prayer.

TOP 10 APPS TO LIVE SMART IN 2024

By Abiola A. Olaibi

In this article, I will be sharing top 10 easy to use apps that can enhance personal and business effectiveness, the best part is that it can also be accessed via your mobile smartphone.

1



GOOGLE SUITE (DROP BOX : File hosting service FOR YAHOO and ICloud for Apple Inc.): The Google Suite (G Suite) is a collection of teamwork-oriented productivity tools developed by google that provides business-oriented features including video conferences, shared calendars, online document editing and storing, and professional email for your company. You get a lot of things with G Suite, such Gmail for email, Calendar for planning events and meetings, Docs for online documents, spreadsheets, and presentations, Drive for cloud file storage and backup, Meet for video meetings, and much more.

2



WeTransfer: Using WeTransfer, you can easily email huge files—including original-quality photographs and videos—directly from your phone. Transfer free of charge up to 2GB.

<http://wetransfer.com/>

3



Zoom: This teleconferencing application allows you to arrange and participate in online meetings.

<http://zoom.us/>

4



EVERNOTE: Evernote is a program for taking notes and organizing stuff. It lets users collect, arrange, and save a variety of data, including text notes, pictures, web clips, audio files, and more. This is backed up automatically and can be retrieved by just signing in again.

<http://evernote.com/>

5



Canva: Canva is a user-friendly graphic design platform that enables users to create professional visual materials (social media posts, videos, slides etc) without extensive graphic design skills.

<http://www.canva.com/>

TOP 10 APPS TO LIVE SMART IN 2024

6



<http://www.linkedin.com/>

LinkedIn: LinkedIn is a professional networking site focused on career development and job hunting. Users can create profiles, search for jobs, connect with other professionals, and share professional updates.

7



AI CHATBOT: AI chatbots are software programs that leverage artificial intelligence to engage in human-like conversations, understand spoken or written language, and respond dynamically. E.g ChatGPT, Google Bard, Phind etc

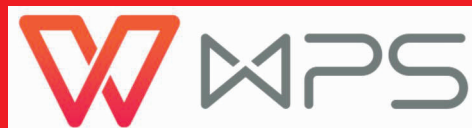
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<http://quillbot.com/>

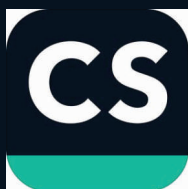
Quillbot: this is a paraphrasing and summarizing tool that helps millions of students and professionals cut their writing time by more than half using state-of-the-art AI to rewrite any sentence, paragraph, or article.

9



WPS: WPS Office is a free and all-in-one Office suite, highly compatible with MS Office Word, Excel, and PPT. It is made up of three primary components: WPS Writer, WPS Presentation, and WPS Spreadsheet

10



CAMSCANNER: Camscanner allows users to 'scan' documents and share the photo as either a JPEG or PDF, while also providing document management solutions such as; pdf converter, pdf editor, pdf to word, pdf to excel, pdf to ppt, pdf to image etc

BONUS



<http://selar.co/>

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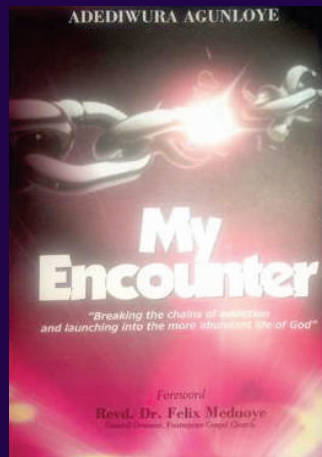
WORD PUZZLE

FIND THE WORDS

- Christ
- Godly
- Youth
- Redeemed
- Glory
- Covenant
- Grace
- Bloom
- Zoe
- Great
- Flourish
- Faith
- Zion
- Saved
- Victory

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