

Lifelines

MAGAZINE

February 2015

Handling **Marriage** Expectations

UNDER A
GENERATIONAL
CURSE *Or*
BLESSING?

How to **pray**
for your child



***Don't beat the **red** light.
Have a conversation with
your **Heavenly Father** while
you wait.***





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Lifelines

Editor - **Godreigns Amedari**

Associate Editor - **Jadesola Amedari**

Photography - **Adams Mark**

Design & Layout - **Mark Onotu**

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info@godreignsamedari.org
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Editor's Note

Welcome to the first edition of Lifelines magazine. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, a lifeline is a rope used for saving or preserving life. It also refers to something regarded as indispensable for the maintaining or protection of life.

At one point or the other in our lives, we have received the help of a lifeline or may presently even have someone in our lives we could call a lifeline. As Christians, we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is the lifeline of the world. As co-labourers in His vineyard, we also believe that we are called the salt of the earth and the light of the world. With Jesus in our hearts we become lifelines for the world, showing the light, seasoning our world and preserving the values and principles of the kingdom of God on earth.

This magazine is for the young contemporary Christian family living in a world where morals, values, principles and beliefs are going south daily. We would be bringing articles, stories and stuff that would provide encouragement and support to Christian homes. The Christian home should be an example to the world; of the beauty God gives when Jesus is in charge and this is the cause we are committed to - Christian families rooted in Christ, flourishing like palm trees in their spheres of influence.

We are building a team of regular and guest writers who share this vision and who would make sure each edition stays fresh and relevant each time you pick it up to read. Happy reading!

Ever in His grip,
Godreigns

Contributors...



Kola Falayajo is an engineer by training and a pastor by calling. He has been involved in management at various levels in the private sector. He would be a regular columnist for Lifelines magazine and writes here about the benefits of spending time in communion with God (page 3). You can follow him on twitter @kolafalayajo with a cup of coffee.



Ifeanyi Okoye is medical doctor by training and has a keen interest in music. He also has a passion to pray for Nigeria and believes in bringing national transformation through worship. He writes an interesting article on generational blessings and curses in this edition (page 4). He blogs and can be found at www.ifeanyiokoye.com



Yemi Falayajo is a marriage counsellor, blogger and dentist. In this edition she writes on handling expectations in marriage (page 10). She resides in Abuja with her family and loves drinking tea. You can connect with her on her blog, www.thewomanofvirtue.org.



Chioma Uzor is a banker turned baker who has a passion for cooking and baking. She runs a confectionery company - Chizzy Chops n more - which specializes in creating exquisite cakes and meals. She lives in Lagos with her husband and two children. Her article is on page 24.



A Day in His Presence

- Kola Falayajo

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Psalm 84:10



ighty accomplishments are not achieved in one day. They are an accumulative effect of daily achievements. Big cities are not built in one day, but day by day. Godly habits are not cultivated in one day, but day by day. What we do

day by day therefore becomes the determinants of our outcome in life.

I personally believe that time is one of the most valuable things that God has given to us. Our time is an accumulation of the days of the weeks of the months of the years. How we use the days determines how we use the weeks and the months. How we use the time that we are given determines many things in our life.

From the scripture above we get the impression that the psalmist had a high sense of value for the presence of God. He understood the importance and impact that just one day in His presence could have on his life. He said if he had to choose between just one day in God's presence, and a thousand days elsewhere, he would choose one day in God's presence. He seemed to know something that many do not know today; something that would result in a change of our priorities. Sadly, it is difficult to tell if the average Christian today would choose just one day in His presence above a thousand days elsewhere.

Our choice is usually based on our perception of the benefits we will derive from the activities that are linked with that choice. Is time spent in God's presence time well spent? I believe it is. Time spent in His presence is not wasted time. I would like to teach a few things based on this truth - that time spent in His presence could not have been better spent elsewhere.

Time spent in His presence will add days to your life: The psalmist said that one day in His presence is better than a thousand elsewhere. He is actually saying that if you spend one day with God, it has the potential to add at least one thousand days to your life. In other words, it would add days to your life and life to your days.



Time spent in His presence will deliver more to us than time spent elsewhere:

The psalmist was also teaching that the value one day in God's presence will deliver to you will be more than the value that a thousand days elsewhere will deliver to you. So even from a business perspective, spending time in His presence is a wise investment of your time. Remember time is one of the most valuable things God has given to us.

Time spent in His presence will empower you to accomplish more with your time:

The psalmist is also teaching us that time spent with God empowers us to gain more from our time spent doing other things. We are able to get more done during the day, in the week and in our life as a whole.

Adjusting your priorities to spend time in fellowship with God is not doing Him any favour, rather, you are doing yourself a big favour. When you seek God first, other things will seek you. However, when you seek other things above God, you certainly will not find God; the things you are seeking may elude you, and you end up losing on all sides.

May the Lord grant you the courage and discipline to seek Him, and prioritize spending time in His presence above time spent with anyone and anything else.



Adjusting your priorities to spend time in fellowship with God is not doing Him any favour, rather, you are doing yourself a big favour.





TRIGGERS OF A GENERATIONAL BLESSING

Introduction

In today's Church world, it is quite common to see a handbill, a poster, a billboard, or some form of advertisement that offers an invitation and an opportunity to the reader to have any generational curses over their lives broken. Whatever the title, the message is rather very clear. The premise is that a whole lot of believers are struggling under generational curses that need to be broken in order for them to find the relief, comfort, and prosperity they so eagerly and strongly desire. The target audiences are those believers who have struggled for years with issues like financial prosperity, finding a marriage partner, conception, marital problems, etc., and who have seemingly done everything they know to do and have still made no headway. The spiritual diagnosis then suddenly becomes that they are most likely under generational curses which need to be broken. These curses are due to some of the evil activities and deeds of the ancestors, a classic case of "**... The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge...**" Jer. 31 vs. 29 (NKJV).

Interestingly, you do not hear too much (if you hear at all) in the church about generational blessings. During one of my personal studies and reflection, the Spirit of God prompted this issue in my heart. The Bible clearly tells us about both generational blessings and curses cf. Deut. 28 vs. 4 & 18. Both arise from the deeds of our forebears. However, the undue emphasis on the curses, especially after the awesome work that was done on the cross of Calvary on our behalf, is rather disheartening to see and hear.

Generational Blessings

A generational blessing is a blessing that originates from a progenitor and runs throughout the lifetime

of his entire lineage. Let's look at 3 examples in the Bible.

Abraham

God blessed Abraham with such an amazing blessing - a blessing spanning both his physical generation and a spiritual generation - which is in full effect even to this day.

Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son-- blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." -

Gen. 22 vs 15-18 (NKJV)

The latter part of verse 18 tells us that Abraham's obedience to God's voice was the reason for the blessing. The writer of Hebrews (Heb. 6 vs. 13 - 18) emphasizes the seriousness and profound nature of God's promise to Abraham. God swore an oath by Himself (there isn't anyone greater) that He would fulfill His promise to Abraham. Abraham's continued obedience to God brought such a blessing that even those of us who are not direct physical descendants, have become partakers of the blessing through Jesus Christ (Gal. 3 vs. 29). Praise God!

King David

Chapter 17 of 1 Chronicles tells the story of God's covenant with King David. The king had moved into his new palace and then came to the realization that while he dwelt in such opulence and magnificence as befitted a king of his stature, the Ark of the Lord was

- Ifeanyi Okoye



dwelling in a tent. He spoke to Nathan the prophet about this and Nathan told him to do all that was in his heart. That same night, the Lord spoke to the prophet and gave him a message for the king. God essentially said that right from the time He brought Israel out of Egypt, the Ark of His presence had always dwelt in a tent or in a tabernacle, and that He had NEVER (emphasis mine) asked any of the rulers of Israel why they had not thought about building Him a house of cedar. He then goes ahead to chronicle David's history and ends with the promise of an eternal dynasty of kings; of a Son who would build a house for God and whose throne would be established forever (vs. 7 - 14).

Reading this story, I get the impression that God was so thrilled and moved with David's intention that He could not help but bless him. Even though God had said that David would not be the one to build the temple (1 Chron. 22 vs. 6 - 10), His promise of a Son who would build a house for the name of God is what we see fulfilled today in Jesus Christ.

The Rechabites

The Rechabites were a relatively unknown family whose story is tucked away somewhere in the middle of the book of Jeremiah (chapter 35). God sent Jeremiah to test the Rechabites - to prove their adherence to the command of their progenitor Jonadab (the son of Rechab) not to drink wine. This test was to serve as a general example of obedience to the house of Israel. Interestingly, the setting for this test was in the house of God, in a chamber with pots full of wine. Despite what I call the 'spiritual pressure' from Jeremiah, the people gently turned down the offer. Jonadab's commandment to them not to drink wine was esteemed greater than the

offer by the Man of God. God set them as an example of obedience before the children of Israel and then in turn blessed the Rechabites with the blessing of a perpetual generation for the honour they accorded the word of their father Jonadab.

Triggers

The scriptures tell us that the things that were written were written for our learning, that through them, hope would be instilled in us (Rom. 15 vs. 4), and that they also happened as examples especially for us who live in these present times (1 Cor. 10 vs. 11). So then, what do we learn from the stories above?

- **Obedience to God**

From Abraham's encounter we see how his obedience to God triggered a blessing that was well beyond anything he could have imagined in his heart and mind. God blessed Abraham for his obedience in spite of the extremely difficult (in natural terms) instructions he had been given. When the Lord God saw that Abraham was ready to obey to the letter without any hesitation, He quickly called to him to stop, and then swore by Himself to bless Abraham. It is pertinent to point out, that this was not some random event or occurrence of obedience. Reading Abraham's story, his obedience to instructions by God is chronicled through each page of his life; the sacrifice of Isaac was like the tipping point which brought with it the blessing.

- **Obedience to Parental Authority**

The Rechabites were blessed with perpetuity in their lineage because they honoured the word of their father Jonadab more than that of Jeremiah, who was acting on instructions from God. In today's world, that would probably create a conundrum for the average Christian. God knew that their father had issued them a number of instructions, one of which was that they were not to drink wine. Yet, He commanded Jeremiah to take them into the house of God and give them wine to drink. This was a test of their obedience, not to God, but to the instruction of their father. It was also supposed to serve as a lesson





in obedience to the rather rebellious house of Israel. The Rechabites honored the word of their father and till today as sure as God's Word stands, the descendants of Jonadab are still on the face of the earth.

• **Initiative**

King David did not receive any instruction from God to build Him a house. He also made no sacrifice or pass through a test of obedience in his case. In actual fact, the price of David's blessing was the price of an idea or even more accurately, the price of a perceived need. David felt it was wrong for him to dwell in a house of cedar while the Ark of God remained in a tent. His immediate resolve to do something about the situation caught God's attention in a wonderful way. David unwittingly connected to something that was in the plan of God for all of humanity. God's plan was for the Messiah to be a legitimate heir to the throne of Israel. David's initiative and God's blessing for it set him up to be the father of a dynasty of kings from which the King of kings would eventually physically descend.

Exhortation

The work that was done at Calvary was complete. The Lord Jesus said "It is finished" and indeed it is. The Bible clearly tells us that we are new creations in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5 vs. 17), ALL THINGS are become new. He blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that were against us and that were contrary to us; He took them out of the way, nailing EVERYTHING to His cross (Col. 2 vs. 14). Rom. 6 vs. 4 tells us that in the same manner Christ was raised from the dead, we should walk in newness of life.

Take a step back for a moment and study the lineage of Abraham, David, and the Rechabites. God asked Abraham to leave his country, kindred, and father's house to go to a place He would show him. Abraham's ancestors were most likely involved in idol worship. His ancestry did not have any effect on his obedience to God and did not count one bit when God pronounced the blessing. Abraham had developed a lifestyle of continued obedience to God (e.g. leave your father's household; circumcise all the males in your household; send Ishmael away; sacrifice Isaac etc.). In Isaiah 1 vs. 19, the Bible says that if we were willing and obedient, we would eat the fruit of the land, as Abraham proved. This kind of blessing could care less if one's ancestral antecedents were rooted in all kinds of maleficence.

For King David, it is worthy of note that his ancestral lineage included Rahab the harlot, who was his

Trivia



*To the optimist, the glass is half full.
To the pessimist, the glass is half empty.
To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.*





great great grandmother. Now, that did not stop God from anointing him king or from blessing him with an eternal dynasty of kings.

Based on the principle of First Mention, it is likely that the Rechab mentioned in 2 Samuel 4 was the ancestor of the Rechabites. You would see from that scripture that he was not a good man. He was a murdering opportunist who in a bid to curry favor from King David, along with his brother Baanah, slew King Ish-bosheth while he was in bed having a siesta. Somewhere along his lineage, Jonadab came along (2 Kings 10 vs. 15 & 23). Jonadab was allied with King Jehu in ridding Israel of the idolatrous mess Ahab had created. You would think that the evil deeds of their father would prompt them to change their name and probably be known as the Jonadabites (because of his good deeds) instead of the Rechabites. They kept the name but heeded the righteous instruction of Jonadab, and God blessed them for it. Also note that Jonadab became the reference point for this blessing, as it applied to his own lineage.

Salvation through the precious blood of Jesus Christ wipes the slate clean for any person who comes to give his or her life over to Him. It takes care of whatever the past may have been. It provides the

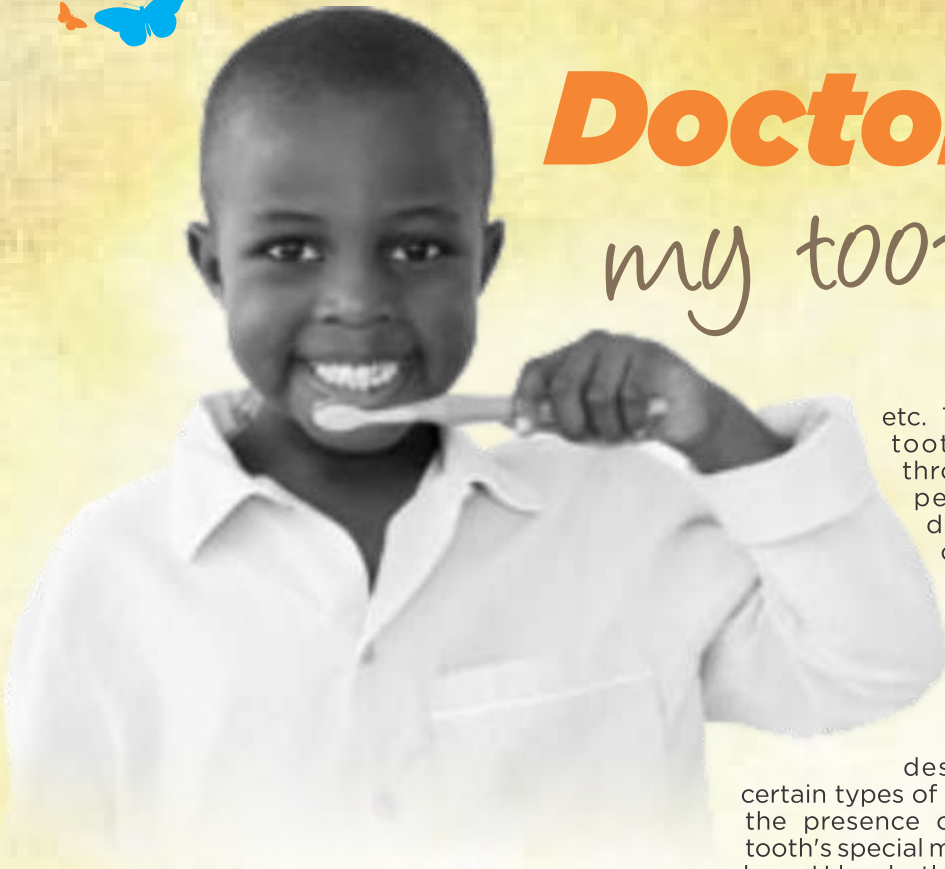
opportunity for a future that is beyond comprehension; as the scripture puts it, 'Christ in us, the hope of glory' (Col. 1 vs. 25 - 27). It puts us under the lineage of Abraham and makes us heirs according to the promise. It gives us opportunities to trigger our own heritage of blessings that would span generations yet unborn rather than struggle under burdens or curses we had no part in. Moreover, Christ has been made every curse in the whole wide world for us (Gal. 3 vs. 13 - 14). This knowledge, this truth, gives us power and the freedom we need to embrace the blessings.

In conclusion, triggering generational blessings is not restricted to the Old Testament Bible characters alone. The things were written for us to learn from them and to know what we can accomplish as well as the things we cannot. We live in a much greater dispensation than they did, and we are thus empowered to do so much more than they ever did. I strongly believe that through a lifestyle of continued obedience to God and to parental authority (physical and spiritual); through taking spiritual initiatives aimed at pleasing God and being led by the Spirit of God (an unparalleled advantage), we have the opportunity to trigger blessings that would run through our entire generations for years and years to come.

COOKIE CUTTER CHRISTIANS? A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. - ROMANS 15:7 NIV



Doctor, my tooth hurts!

-McKing Amedari

mary walked into the clinic sheepishly on that Monday morning. Her eyes were heavy and her hair unkempt; she was dressed in one of those misfits. It was the look of anguish, discomfort and nostalgia as she wondered when she would get back to spotting the bright toothy smile she was known for. As she sat gently on the well cushioned dental chair, the swelling on the right lower part of her jaw revealed the reason for her current demeanour.

The dentist cheerfully greeted her and of course got cold whispers in return. 'I have a toothache and it hurts badly', she said.

What happened?

Some may have had a similar distressing situation or even worse experiences with their teeth. Quite interestingly a lot of people think very little of their dental health, probably because many dental diseases are not life threatening in a sense and very few people have enlightenment on their dental health. But to those who have had Mary's experience and seen its effect on their wellbeing and quality of life and even suffered some socio economic consequences, or even for those who have never known a toothache, the questions on their minds may be: "What causes it?", "How can I avoid it?", and "If it does happen, what should I do?"

Let's answer some of these questions. The teeth are small, calcified, hard whitish structures found in the mouth. The roots are embedded in the jaws (upper and lower) and are covered by gum. Toothache may be caused by tooth decay, tooth fracture, a damaged filling, abscessed tooth, infected gums,

etc. The most obvious symptom is tooth pain that may be sharp, throbbing, or constant. In some people, the pain is felt when drinking cold or hot water or when chewing. Swelling around the tooth, foul tasting discharge from the infected tooth with associated headaches and fever are also symptoms that could be experienced.

Tooth decay is the commonest cause of toothache. It is a destructive process caused by certain types of bacteria, which produce acids in the presence of fermentable sugars. As the tooth's special mineral composition is sensitive to low pH levels, the resulting higher acidic content of the mouth leads to gradual loss of mineral salts from this hard whitish structure. Unless the triggering factors are checked, this will ultimately progress to irreversible cavitation (decay).

So perhaps Mary loved sweets, chocolates, candy, burgers, biscuits, fried plantain, etc. Having a regular intake of these foods, she probably gave little attention to the cleanliness of her oral cavity (mouth). The well-nourished bacteria in her mouth got busy on her teeth, and unfortunately, like most people, she did not notice the tiny hole in her tooth because there was no pain, until it was large enough to cause distress.

How can we avoid this? Prevention is definitely cheaper than the treatment of tooth decay. Practising good oral hygiene, which consists of brushing regularly (twice daily) with a fluoride-containing toothpaste, flossing once daily, and seeing your dentist twice a year for professional cleaning, will go a long way in preventing tooth decay. This should be combined with dietary control. Reduce the intake of refined carbohydrates (e.g. cakes, cookies, pies, ice cream, chocolates, candies, sweetened dairy products, and soft drinks). When these things must be taken, brush your teeth or at least rinse your mouth properly afterwards. Furthermore, the quality, combination and consistency of foods, as well as their nutritional composition can affect dental health. Research shows that antioxidants and other nutrients found in fruits, vegetables, legumes and nuts may strengthen immunity and improve the body's ability to fight bacteria and inflammation, all of which can help protect the teeth and gums.

Many people try out lots of ideas gotten from friends



and relatives for the treatment of dental diseases. This, while doing the individual no good, accounts for late presentation at the dental clinic. Thus if there is any painful experience, regardless of the cause:

Visit the closest dental clinic around you for proper assessment and possible treatment, by a dentist.

If pain occurs at a time and a place that a dentist cannot be accessed, do a quick rinse with warm water and a level teaspoon of salt before and after each meal. Take an over-the-counter pain reliever.

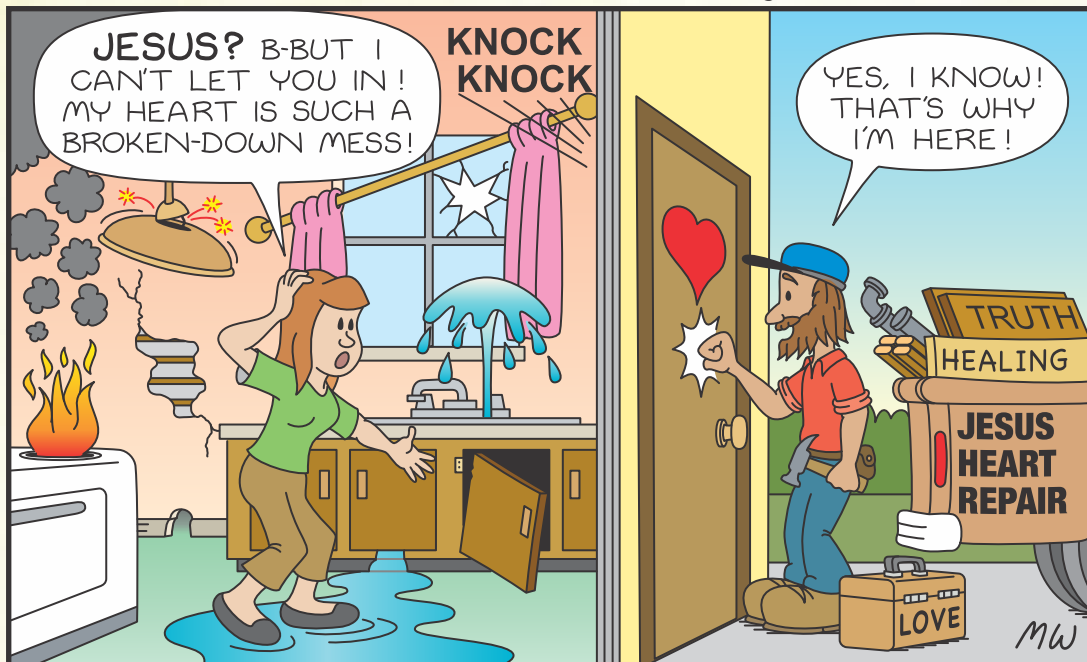
Don't place aspirin or any pain killer directly on your gums, as it may burn your gums.

Once you notice a cavity (hole) or decay in the tooth, painful or not, visit your dentist as soon as possible. The treatment will depend on the extent of the destruction of the tooth. The dentist takes a history of the case, carries out an examination and may take an x-ray of the tooth. This guides the dentist in adopting an appropriate treatment plan. The options available when there is a decay (hole) may include a simple filling (when the cavity is still within the tooth's hard structure), a root canal therapy (when the infection has gotten to the nerve supply to the tooth), or an extraction (in extensive cases). Although it may seem small, weak and of little importance, the tooth like every part of the human body is very important. Proper care of the tooth can prevent the loss of working hours for the busy corporate worker and loss of school hours for the sedulous student and ensure we have the optimum quality of life that we all desire.

Dr. McKing Amedari is a doctor in OAUTH Ile-Ife. He is a member of the International Association of Dental Research (IADR).

extreme heart makeover

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

— Revelation 3:20 niv



Marriage...

SO WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?

- Yemi Falayajo

She: *"Before we got married we couldn't bear to be apart," "I thought we'd do even more things together once we were married. But now he says he needs more space. It's like he's not the guy I married."*

He: *"Marriage isn't what I expected. I didn't expect a big honeymoon or some grand romantic getaway. I just thought she would make life a little easier for me. Instead, when I come home from the office, all she wants to do is talk and talk."*

They (thinking): *"Our marriage isn't what it is supposed to be."*

Does that sound familiar?

We all have expectations in life. We have expectations for our marriage. We have expectations about rules, about roles, and about marriage in general. Some of our expectations surface quickly, while others lie dormant beneath the surface. When these expectations are not met, we feel disappointed. We seek the easy way out, looking for someone else to



blame. Sometimes, the expectations we bring to marriage carry a potential for disaster. Sometimes we even deny that such expectations exist and this doesn't help matters.

Tunde and Nkechi, who'd been married for four years, each had a clear image of what life together would be like, although they never really discussed it. They simply assumed that the other party had the same picture in mind.

"I expected married life to bring more stability and predictability to our lifestyle," Nkechi said. "To me it meant working in the garden together every weekend."

"I wanted our marriage to be exciting and spontaneous, not routine and boring," Tunde said. "To me it meant riding my BMW motorbike together."

One person had expectations of stability and predictability while the other had expectations of excitement and spontaneity. Their expectations clashed, leading them to wonder if their marriage was a mistake.

Is it wrong to have expectations? Are our expectations realistic? How do we ensure that we are on the same page with our partners?

Every partner brings to the marriage a host of conscious and unconscious expectations—many of which remain unfulfilled. At some stage of our relationships, we get to the critical and defining moment, where we come to the realization that our expectations of each other and of marriage are not the same. In some cases they are even contradictory.



For some, this occurs the day after the wedding, for others, it is a gradual awareness as the years go by. Plaguing every unsatisfied couple is a vast assortment of expectations about what marriage should be, juxtaposed with the reality of what marriage is.

Here are some reasons why:

1. We form conscious and unconscious images of our partners and what it would be like married: As we grow up, we form images and scenarios in our minds of the kind of person we will like to settle down with and the roles they will play. Familial interactions contribute to these images - positively and negatively. Books, novels, television and the media in general, also contribute to the images and impressions in our minds. Other couples we have observed also contribute to these images. We begin to form expectations of our partners from the images and impressions that we have subconsciously built over the years.
2. We assume we both have the same images and expectations: We assume that because we are in love with each other and we 'click' so well, we must have the same expectations about each other and our life together. We assume that the other person has the same expectations we have in mind.
3. We do not discuss our expectations with each other: This may be due to several reasons. Some of us just assume that our expectations are the same

and thus there is no need to discuss them. Some, out of fear of conflict just let them slip by. Some do not want to appear overbearing, too forward or too eager. A lot of us simply do not know how to communicate these expectations. For some, our cultures also play a large role in whether or not we communicate our expectations. Thankfully, times are changing and people are becoming more expressive.

In order to keep little problems from becoming big ones:

Don't believe the myth of identical expectations. No matter how much you love each other and how much of soul mates you are, you will have different expectations.

Be aware of your unspoken or subtle rules. What role did your culture and childhood perceptions play in developing those rules? What are the biggest influences on your perception of marriage and the roles of the man as husband and the woman as wife? Sincerely answering these questions would help you discover your expectations about marriage, both the spoken ones and the unspoken ones.

Communicate your secret expectations and make your subtle rules known. Talk about your expectations of marriage with your spouse. Do so with the intention of understanding each other's point of view. Let there be a deliberate attempt to seek to understand first before being understood. As you begin to voice out your clashing unspoken rules, you and your partner can create a balance of relationship rules you can agree on. The essential thing here is communication.

Build your own expectations together: Talk about your expectations or rules as a family. Start with basic rules of five, discussing them and agreeing on which ones to keep as a family. It may take some negotiation. Don't rush it, and be ready to yield and meet each other halfway.

Dear friend, talking about your expectations together helps establish healthy boundaries for yourselves, your marriage and your family. Next time we would talk about dealing with unrealistic expectations. God bless you in Jesus' name.

Trivia



Did you know that women have twice as many pain receptors on their bodies than men? On the average, women have 34 nerve fibres per square centimetre of facial skin compared with just 17 for men.



WORKING *with your* HOME SPACE

- Mary Anthony

in the Holy Scriptures, it is written that, every wise woman builds her house but the foolish one tears it down with her own hands (Proverbs 14:1). I believe this scripture applies to everyone who is interested in building a godly home.

The architecture of a house and how well you keep or tend it is an interesting aspect of home building. Architecture here refers to the structure and layout of your space as well as the various provisions available to you in terms of walls, ceilings, floors, windows, doors and everything else that defines the space you live in.

Before you begin decorating your space, you should take a detailed look at the layout of the space; the arrangement of doors, windows, height of ceilings, etc. This would help to identify the negatives and positives of the elements making up your space, as well as the fixed elements you are stuck with.

The next step is to ask yourself some questions such as, "How do I want to live?", "Do I like a large, spacious but entertaining living room?", "Do I want a

more private and cosy space that encourages interaction?" The answers to these questions would help to align your space planning with your needs.

Thirdly, you should get rid of major structural flaws before adding any extra decorative detail. This however depends on the budget you are working with. One way to go is to remove or replace the flawed element completely. You can also choose to use what I call the camouflage method. This is where a flaw is disguised using some other decorative item. For instance, a stain on a wall can be disguised with book shelving.

Next to dealing with flaws, is to highlight your home's finest elements by making them focal points. This marks the highest point of your decor. This is the part where you direct attention to the best features and distract the eye from the worst features of your space. This can be achieved by working with paint colour contrast and textures derived from various finishes and materials.

Subsequently, we will be looking at the subject of colour and material in more detail. Happy reading!



FAMILY *Company*

- Godreigns Amedari

On the evening of one Christmas day, my family and two others got together in the home of one of us to celebrate the season over barbequed turkey and some drinks. It was not an organized event and the evening was supposed to proceed as the wind of fellowship blew. One family brought along their Nintendo Wii console and we took turns playing *Let's dance*. We even had some rounds of dads competing against mums. Not sure who eventually won because we had no score keeper. Next, our host put on a DVD for us to watch. *Laugh your way to a better marriage* really made us roll on the floor laughing. And as sure as you could guess, the subject of our conversation following was based on matters arising from the DVD we had just seen.

The men were pitched against the women as we argued on the subject at hand. It had to do with the differences between men and women. A couple of differences came up... Women multitask, men don't. A man's five minutes is different from a woman's five minutes. Men's priorities are different from those of women. A man wants to get to church on Sunday morning by 8am and his wife is convinced that she has to clean up the house before she leaves for church because the sanitary officer would be checking the house later in the day... Well that's the impression she gives when you see how engrossed she is at the cleaning business. The discussion or debate I should call it, went on and on. As we talked and talked and people shared real life scenarios from their homes, I found out that there were common issues. No home is perfect. In fact, that the little rattle in your home could actually be a potential storm in another home. Everyone puts on an appearance in public but the issues are still waiting at home to be picked up when we shut the doors on the outside world.

Following that meeting, I discovered that one of things that has kept homes standing is that they have learnt to understand the differences each personality in the relationship has and they have learnt to manage this effectively. They have learnt to build on the strengths of the individuals and protect

the vulnerabilities of the human beings God has brought together.

I also learnt that when families get together to share quality time, they build stronger families. We should not only meet to celebrate a new baby or a new business deal. Neither should we only visit to offer condolences or welcome a family that has just relocated to town. We can visit just to have fun.

Such visits open up unorganized patterns of discussions. You get to talk about family, parenting, sex, relationships... You get to share marriage stories and experiences. You get to discover that marriages generally have similar problems. And hearing the experiences of others could help in handling your own. Of course, this is only true if you are willing to make yours work!

In Acts 4:23, the Bible says that Peter and John, after they had been released by the Sadducees, *returned to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.*

We need to have a company we return to for support. We need to have buddies, joint BFFs - or whatever you would want to call those families you bond with - that we can go to and talk about the common challenges we face. In our company, we can discuss handling the pressures families face in these modern times. We can draw strength from the victories of others. We can learn new and effective ways of handling difficult situations in our homes.

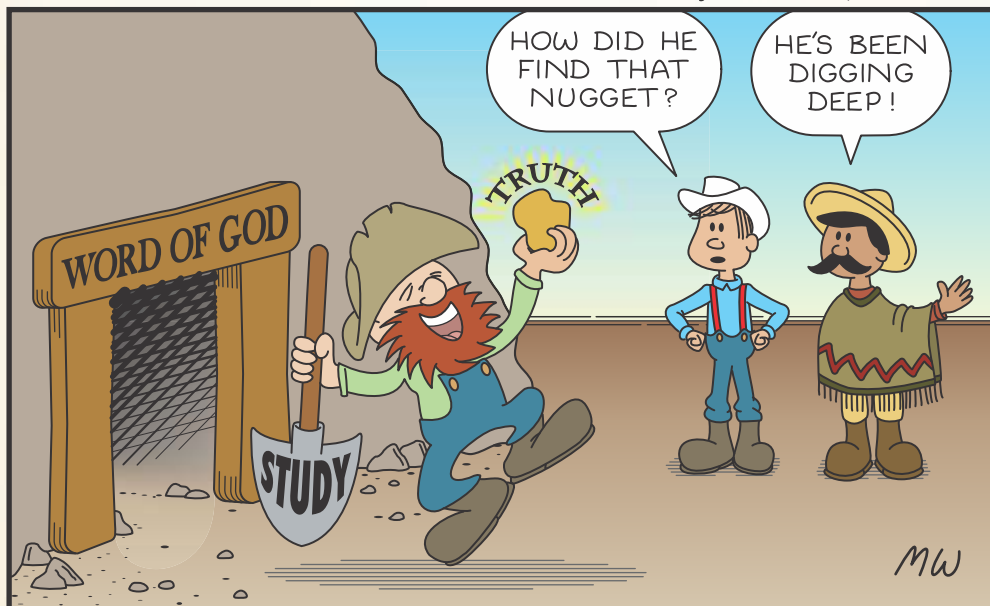
“ We need to have a company we return to for support. We need to have buddies, joint BFFs - or whatever you would want to call those families you bond with - that we can go to and talk about the common challenges we face. ”

Note that this is not about discussing really private issues or washing our dirty linen before our friends. Seeing a marriage counsellor might be what is needed for such cases. This is more of collaborating to face external forces unleashed against families, it is about gaining knowledge in areas we are deficient. It

is about praying for one another and covering each other's back. No man is an island unto himself and no Christian family should be an island too. You can connect today with families of like minds and start meeting periodically to fellowship and share genuine fun moments that are pretty scarce these days.

STRIKE IT RICH

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



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and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

— PROVERBS 2:4-5 NIV

Don't *jump* queues.



You might have *left*
God *behind.*

Child discipline in modern times



An interview with Mrs Seyi Oshikanlu, owner of The Manor School, Kubwa, FCT

LM: Briefly talk about your experience in children education

SO: I got interested in working with children from my work in Children's ministry in 1999. As a Sunday school teacher I noticed that I had to have more skills than just presenting bible stories. I needed to learn classroom management, lesson planning, how to observe what was going on and learn to assess and evaluate what we were doing. I then went back to school to get a qualification in education.

LM: What has changed in child discipline/upbringing over the last 20-30 years?

SO: A lot actually. Higher standards of living have forced parents to work harder and spend more hours away from the home. Hence children are raised by nannies and not moms or dads these days. Also parents expect schools to carry out parenting responsibilities in addition. This results in children having the values of the nanny or teachers and not those of mom or dad.

LM: What makes child discipline in this generation peculiar?

SO: Money matters a lot today and as humans we can only do one thing at a time. People are supposed to work 8 to 5 these days but leave home much earlier to get there for 8am and get home quite late at night due to extra work hours or traffic delays. God has not designed us to work for a living but to live for a giving. Salaries are a bag of seeds and we are to live from the harvest. This must be understood by God's children. He is our source with many unlimited channels.

LM: How important is understanding a child's personality in discipline

SO: Very important. Understanding a child's personality helps you to work better with his or her

learning style. Discipline is to help the child identify the mistake, make necessary changes and learn from it.

LM: Does each parent have a unique role in discipline or are the roles interchangeable?

SO: I think a bit of both and this is dependent on the surrounding circumstances. The key is team work and presenting a united front to the child always.

LM: When parents disagree on disciplining a child, how can this be best handled?

SO: Simple...they must agree to disagree but agree always in front of the child.

LM: How do we balance discipline and showing love to the child?

SO: Explain why the disciplinary measure is being taken. Focus on the action and not the person. Let your disciplinary measure indicate your displeasure with the child's act and not his or her person. Your love for your child is unconditional but you must still be clear on your displeasure with a wrong behavior or attitude.

LM: What are some of the limits or boundaries we should define in child discipline?

SO: Don't react in anger. You do not need to respond immediately. Focus on the action and allow the child think about a new way of acting. Give consequences with empathy.

LM: Do you believe some children would turn out badly behaved no matter the amount of effort you put into correcting them?

SO: No. As the Bible says, Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6.

Praying for your children



Mrs Celestina Amedari

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arents and guardians are stewards of the precious gifts called children, which God places in their care. They are responsible for the spiritual, physical, emotional and material wellbeing of these gifts they have been blessed with. These responsibilities are huge and

consequently require that they are people of prayer so that they can be as effective as God would want them to be.

The moment you decide to begin a family, you take up a position of responsibility; to design and pattern your home, and this is a lifetime responsibility.

Our society is full of people who really do not reverence or fear God. A major contributing factor to this is that a lot of parents have failed in their real responsibilities to their children – the responsibilities of bringing them up in the way of the Lord. Rather, they have occupied themselves with other pursuits of life such as the pursuit of money; leaving out more important issues like the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of their children. It is interesting to note that taking care of these aspects of a child's life can fix other aspects of the child's life

It all begins with the right foundation – a foundation of faith in Jesus Christ. Standing on this foundation, parents can partner with God to raise godly children. They can pray God's will into the lives of their children.

It is never too early to begin praying for your child. In fact, at conception you should have already began praying. Dad should lay his hands on mum's tummy and pray, decreeing life, protection, normal development, and safe delivery. Mum should do likewise, speaking words of life to the unborn child. Babies hear even while in the womb.

The foregoing presupposes that both parents have already acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

If you are seeking ideas or suggestions on what to pray about, the following prayer points may serve as a guide.

1. Pray that the child will know the Lord Jesus and be filled with the Spirit of God.

John 17:3 ***And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.***

2. Pray that your child will have a full realization of who he or she is in Christ, even from an early age

Eph 1:17-19 ***That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:***

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.

3. Pray for your child's protection, preservation and promotion.

4. Pray for your child's normal and progressive development as he or she grows.

Luke 2:40, 52 ***And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him...And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.***

5. Pray that your child would excel in his or her academic endeavours

Dan 1:17 ***As for these four children, God gave them***



knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

6. Pray that your child would be guided with excellence into God's choice of career for him or her.

Exo 31:2-3 *See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship...*

**“
As you spend time in prayer for your children, you would be able to discern God's thoughts for them and help them align with His plan.
”**

As you make deliberate efforts in praying for your children, you will begin to see God's hand in their daily affairs. You begin to see evidences of God's favour, mercy, protection and guidance in their lives.

You begin to discover that your children can actually live out God's plan for their lives in full. The stress of parenting is reduced and the destinies of your children are no longer obscure

Don't forget that praying for your children is not a onetime event. It should be done always, in fact for life. As a parent you will enjoy the benefits as you faithfully

7. Pray that your child would make the right decision

do this God-given assignment. Even when all you prayed for have come to pass, you need to keep



concerning the choice of a life partner

8. Pray that your child would be happily married and would build a godly home too.

Praying for your children does not end with the words you say when you get on your knees by your bed or in any other position you may prefer. The thoughts in your heart towards them must agree with the things you say in prayer. God takes notes of the thoughts we think and the comments we make about our children in seemingly harmless conversations. Remember He is omnipresent. So mind what you think and say about your children. Say good stuff, bless them often and wish them well. As you spend time in prayer for your children, you would be able to discern God's thoughts for them and help them align with His plan. In praying for them you are taking sides with Him to fulfil His purpose. Remember, God has a unique plan for each person, even the offshoots of multiple birth.

praying because God always has more to give. And for anyone who is yet to be blessed with these gifts of children, as you read this, the Lord, the giver of life will grant you your heart desire in no distant time, in Jesus name. Amen.

Trivia

Did you know that when babies are born, they have 300 bones. Adults have 206. Bones fuse together during growth to come up with the new number.



Get the Wish Look



STYLED BY
Ed-john Apparels

Making a BEADED PENDANT

- Temitope Arogunmati

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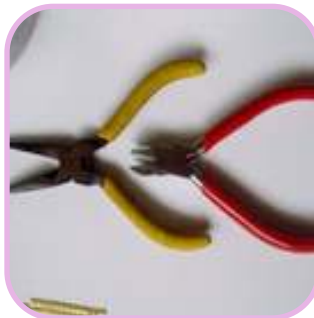
pendant is a piece of jewelry that hangs from a necklace (or a chain) worn round the neck. The pendant is usually attached to a small loop (or hole) through which the necklace string is passed before it is worn around the neck. A pendant enhances the elegance of the necklace on which it is attached, whether it is a single or a multi-strand necklace.



TO MAKE YOUR OWN PRETTY BEADED PENDANT(S), YOU NEED:



0.5MM FISHING LINE & BEADS TO MAKE THE PENDANT & NECKLACE



CHAIN-NOSE PLIERS & CUTTER PLIERS



STOPPERS



CLASPS

For this pendant project, 6 pink beads and 1 purple bead are used.

INSTRUCTIONS

1

FOR THE PENDANT, CUT OUT A 12-INCH STRING OF FISHING LINE. STRING ON THE 6 BEADS.



2

MAKE A CIRCLE WITH THE BEADS BY TYING THE 2 ENDS OF THE FISHING LINE TIGHTLY TOGETHER.



3 SLIP ON THE PURPLE BEAD ON ONE OF THE STRINGS. GENTLY PLACE IT AT THE CENTRE OF THE CIRCLE OF PINK BEADS.



4 PASS THE STRINGS TO THE BACK OF THE PETAL AND TIE. MAKE SURE IT IS TIGHTLY KNOTTED.

5 CUT OFF THE EXTRA STRINGS. YOU CAN SEE HOW PETTY THE PETAL LOOKS!



6 KEEP THE PETAL ASIDE AND BEGIN TO STRING A SIMPLE NECKLACE THAT THE PETAL WILL BE ATTACHED TO. YOU CAN MIX DIFFERENT COLOURS OF BEADS LIKE IS DONE IN THIS PROJECT (2 COLOURS ARE USED) OR YOU MAY DECIDE TO USE ONE COLOUR ONLY.

7 STRING YOUR NECKLACE HALF-WAY AND THEN SLIP ON THE BEADED PETAL USING ANY OF THE HOLES OF THE 6 BEADS THAT FORMED THE CIRCLE. CONTINUE THE NECKLACE BEAD STRINGING AND ATTACH YOUR CLASP WHEN YOU ARE THROUGH.



THE FINISHED BEADED-PENDANT NECKLACE



VARIATION OF THE PENDANT ON NECKLACE DESIGN



COLOURFUL BEADED PETALS STRUNG ON A NECKLACE

INSTRUCTIONS

1 MAKE YOUR BEADED PETALS IN DIFFERENT EXCITING COLOURS, AS DEMONSTRATED PREVIOUSLY. ABOUT 5 OR 6 PETALS WILL DO.



2 START STRINGING YOUR NECKLACE BEADS, SLIPPING ON YOUR PETALS AT REGULAR INTERVALS

3 ATTACH YOUR DESIRED CLASP, WHEN YOU ARE THROUGH.



A BEAUTIFULLY STRUNG NECKLACE WITH BEADED PETAL PENDANTS.



Hope you enjoyed learning how to make pendants.
Go ahead and have fun stringing your beaded petal(s) on your necklace!



MENUS & RECIPES

- Chioma Uzor

t

he culture of preparing special meals for lunch on Sunday is one of life's great pleasures and it has gradually become a tradition to reserve the best dishes for Sunday afternoon. Most homes prefer to stick to the good old fashioned rice recipes while others try to be more creative with 'swallows' and the likes. Whichever one you choose, you will agree with me that it is always nice to have something different added to the menu. The recipes here come from two different cultures. We'll be looking at how to prepare Chicken Curry sauce and Bitter Leaf soup (Ofe Onugbu).

Chicken Curry Sauce



Curry sauce is a dish with a million lives. The number of ingredients required to prepare it vary from just a few to as many as you can imagine. The list is endless. So many variations exist, from chicken to lamb curry sauce, beef to seafood curry sauce; even vegetarians have their own version of this amazing dish. The nutritional benefits depend on the kind of ingredients you use. It's one of the easiest ways to get your children to eat vegetables, if you ask me. Chicken curry sauce contains an array of vegetables and spices rich in vitamins and nutrients. Chicken is white meat and depending on how it is prepared, could turn out low in fat and calories and high in protein. It's also full of essential nutrients and vitamins.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 kilo soft chicken or soft Orobo
- 10 medium size carrots (cut into large chunks)
- 2 medium sized green peppers
- 1 small bunch spring onions
- 4 stock cubes

Chicken stock

- 2 table spoons curry powder
- 1 table spoon nutmeg
- 1 table spoon garlic powder

1 cup flour
1 jug of water
Vegetable oil (for frying)
2 medium size onions
4 small peppers
Salt

METHOD:

Wash and season the chicken with the stock cubes, salt, curry and thyme and put to boil. Divide the boiled chicken into two parts. Lightly fry one part of the chicken and shred the other half. In a clean pot, pour in 2 cooking spoons of vegetable oil. Add the onions, curry powder and shredded chicken. Pour in the chicken stock and leave to simmer for 5 minutes. Season with the stock cubes, garlic powder and nutmeg. Add salt to taste. Add the carrots, pepper and fried chicken pieces. Leave to simmer for 10 minutes. Mix the flour and some water in a bowl. Pour the mixture into the pot and stir. Add the green pepper and spring onions and leave to simmer again for 5 minutes. Serve with rice. This meal serves six people.

Bitter Leaf soup (Ofe Onugbu)



Bitter leaf popularly known as Onugbu in Ibo, Ewuro in Yoruba and Shiwaka in Hausa is a leaf that has been with us for a while now. Although very popular in the eastern part of Nigeria, it is still very relevant in other parts for its medicinal properties. Its juice has been known to relieve fever. It is also known to speed up metabolism and help reduce high sugar level in the blood.

INGREDIENTS:

A bunch of bitter leaf (washed and chopped)
7 small cocoyams
2 tablespoons crayfish
2 medium size dried fish
1 medium size stock fish head
1 kilo beef (cut into medium sizes)
500g shaki, pomo, tripe (assorted meat cut into small pieces).
Stock cubes
1 teaspoon ground dry pepper
2 cooking spoons palm oil
Salt
Water

METHOD:

Boil the beef and assorted meat until soft and tender. Wash and add the stock fish and dried fish to the pot and boil for 10 minutes or until soft. Peel and boil the cocoyam in another pot until very soft. Use a mortar to pound the cocoyam into a soft and smooth paste. Add some more water to the beef in the pot. Add the stock cubes, pepper, crayfish, palm oil and cocoyam into the pot. Add salt to taste. Lastly add the bitter leaf to the pot and leave to boil for 5 minutes. Serve with hot Semovita, Eba, Akpu or pounded yam. This meal serves six people.

Note: To ensure all traces of bitterness are removed from the leaves, boil in water for about 15 minutes and rinse properly in cold water. Variations also exist for the choice of thickener used. Cocoyam, yam, egusi, achi, ukpo can be used as soup thickeners. Palm kernel can also be used instead of palm oil. The choice is yours. Be free to explore the numerous options available. Enjoy!

Trivia

Did you know that banana plants can walk? They can move up to 40cm in their lifetime. This is because they have no central root, but lateral roots which grow and move towards the sun.





***Don't* litter.**
God lives *here*