

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**I AM ETERNALLY** grateful to God the Father Almighty, My God and King, for His mercy and love unto my life in getting this message out to His people. I had delayed and procrastinated over a period of time, giving one excuse or the other. But 'His mercy endures for ever'. He persevered with me and God the Holy Spirit strengthened and guided me through. At every turn I saw that this message was timely and it was more impressed on my spirit that the return of Our Lord Jesus was nearer than anyone could imagine, making its dissemination imperative. I am grateful to you my Lord Jesus Christ for saving me and making use of me as Your Chosen vessel of honour.

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**VERONICA OGODIMA NNOGO**

# **THE CLARION CALL FOR MEN**

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## **FOREWORD**

TODAY'S WORLD IS fast paced. Man is encumbered with the challenges of living: the pursuit of career with its associated challenges, the burden of the

enormous task of providing for the family etc. The “topsy turvy” system of the world causes him to lose focus from that which ought to be his priority.

“The Clarion Call for Men” is a timely revelation to awaken men to reflect on the eternal consequences of their leadership style in the home. The author exemplified the lives of the families of Lot and Noah, in a deep insightful teaching that can be related to today.

This book will be of tremendous blessing to the seeking soul. I recommend this master piece “The Clarion Call for Men” for all to read for a revolution of the spirit man.

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## INTRODUCTION

**THIS BOOK IS** as a result of observations made from the present day family situation. Homes are in shambles, hearts are broken, and children are thrown out to the 'dogs in the streets'. Apart from this, counseling cases I have had to handle over the years as well as direct interventions made by me, all show a sorry sight in which the family is in today. We are told in 2Timothy 3:1-5, that '...in the last days, perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money...disobedient to parents, unthankful... unloving... lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power....'

The spirit of the last days is pervading. It is like poison in the air. The only antidote is the Spirit of Christ. **The family needs to be preserved, packaged and branded for Christ; for the Lord to take away His own when He comes.** The family needs to be positioned to receive the fullness of the Spirit to make them do what they ought to do and to be what they ought to be. Who else does this responsibility fall on other than the Man of the house, the leader, and the head, to make sure that with the grace of God, his family is watching, waiting and getting ready for their Master, our Lord Jesus Christ?

Someone asked me at the draft level of writing this book about the role of the church; ‘Must the sole responsibility of preparing the family for the second coming of Christ rest solely on the man’s shoulders?’ Of course the church has its role to play. But the focus of this message is on the man of the house. If the family is prepared, it is naturally distributed into the main channel, which is the church, for a greater impact on the society, of which the family is a basic unit of, and the man, is the head.

No one knows the day or the hour when He will come. But he who is alert in the spirit can sense that our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. “Be prepared” is the motto of the Boy’s Scout. But for you, child of God; “you are all sons of light and sons of the day... *Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but watch and be sober..... But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet the hope of salvation.... For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

1 Thessalonians 5: 5,6,8,9.

The greatest task facing any family man today is not, as good as it may be, the acquisition of wealth or properties, having power, position or being successful according to worldly standards. The greatest task is your being able to lead your family to God, remain as one and grow together in God; to be able to say with all assurance that if the trumpet were to sound this very minute, you are sure that by the grace of God, your wife and children will make the *Rapture*. That is the greatest task before any man. That is the greatest task of being a man! That is why this book is written, addressed primarily to the male, the

head of the family, for him to take cognizance of what has been given him in the Bible and to take appropriate measures to accomplish them.

In this book, the issue addressed is that of the man of the house taking up the challenges of leadership in his God given position. Attention is drawn to the fact that we are in the end time and there is a lot of complacency. The head of the home is admonished to wake up to his responsibilities and not to allow the pursuit of material things or any other thing override his family responsibilities. The families of Lot and Noah were used as types or examples to show the basic ingredients of family life that made them succeed or fail. Their strengths and weakness were indicated in order to highlight what should be done or what should be avoided in order to be 'rapture-ready'. Each family head was righteous, yet the stories of their family lives ended differently. Lot lost out on the salvation of his wife and children at the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. On the other hand, Noah with his family were able to successfully avert God's judgment that came upon his generation.

## CHAPTER ONE

# **PREPARING YOUR FAMILY FOR THE RAPTURE**



**FEMI WORKED FOR** one of the biggest banks in the country. His promotion was in leaps and bounds. He took several professional exams and came out tops. He started his private company on the side, obtained a heavy loan from several finance houses to kick start the business. He combined his business and job beautifully. He rode the best cars money could buy. He had a son and a lovely daughter, a beautiful wife and a dream house. Everything seemed to go right; everyone loved him and was proud of him, everything he touched turned to gold, until he woke up one morning to discover that his future was not cast in gold as he had thought.

A bizarre twist in fate was his undoing. Suddenly everything that could go wrong started going wrong. Banks were merging, workers were being laid off. Femi was confident it would never affect him. He worked too long and hard for that to happen; in fact he was over qualified. But unfortunately, he was the first to go. He did not bother too much about that; he had his business to fall back on. But by a bizarre twist, within three weeks his company made unusual losses. They were going bankrupt! The finance houses heard the news and came calling. In two months he lost his beautiful home and cars. His debt had spiraled out of control. He sold his shares to stay afloat; but even that was not enough, he was grasping air. His friends were nowhere to be found. 'Not to worry, he could always cope. He didn't need them. He'd get back up.' He thought within himself. If it has just been him tragedy struck, he would have known how to handle it. But how on earth can a man manage without his family on the threshold of tragedy?

The few weeks he stayed at home made him discover he had lost the intimacy they once shared as a couple. He was almost a stranger to his wife. They felt

awkward in each other's company. They spoke only when necessary. He didn't realize how far apart they had grown. His teenage daughter was pregnant and his son was expelled from school for cult activities. Everything seemed to have fallen apart, 'for the centre was no longer holding.' So they all sat at home constantly at war with each other. The situation was driving him crazy!

What had he done wrong? He had lost his job, now he was about to lose his family! All he had tried to do was make a living for them. He never missed Sunday service. He gave his tithe regularly. Yes, he may not have always been there, but what was his good-for-nothing wife doing? After all she was always at home with them. Maybe he had been a little obsessed with his work not to have noticed the problems in his family; but wasn't obsession a needed ingredient in the achievement of success?

It will be very apt at this point to bring to your notice, the comments of a Christian brother, a Minister of the gospel, Archibong Attang Williams, who made the following observation:

*"Manhood in this country is at a crossroad. This statement is true today than years ago. The culture we live in values possessions and accomplishments higher than people and relationships. Instead of encouraging and nurturing family relationship values, our culture suggests professional achievements and financial success. These have become the ultimate yardstick to measure the value of a man. This is very dangerous. We wish to ask, 'when was the last time you met a man who described himself in terms of the impact he is having on his wife and children?' This is the crux of the matter. There is a clarion call that has gone forth for men to respond swiftly to their leadership role in their respective*

*families: to assume their position of authority that will direct and redirect the families back to God. Thank God for material things He has provided through the sweat of Fathers, but the need of the family is beyond material provision. Rather, providing the vision to drive the family is more crucial. Where the man fails to provide the needed vision and direction for the family, it will become increasingly difficult for him to communicate Christian ethics, which is the surest foundation for a stable family living, in the End-time. It is time that the greatest picture the family and the nation should see in the life of the Christian man should be that of the resurrected and soon coming Christ....”*

The above statement ably captures the dilemma of today’s man. He is faced with the challenge of having to prove himself. The Christian man is not exempted from this either, and living in a modern world gives him few options. The above quotation came from a man I know, a family friend, who has had to ‘prove his onion’, and yet had not lost his God given vision of being a husband and a father.

This assignment of ‘tending the garden’ was a God given one in the Garden of Eden to Adam. Genesis 2:15-25. He was given the task of cultivating the garden, making sure all was in place. Eden represents the home as well, not just a job assigned to him. Adam was to tend the garden before Eve’s arrival. How well he tends his garden today is relative. In Eden, Eve was given to Adam to complete him. His hands were full literally. Notwithstanding, he paid attention to Eve, before The Fall. But thereafter, his perspective changed. He had to ‘eat by the sweat of his brow’. But thank God that man was not left

forever in that condition. After the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus on the Cross of Cavalry, the situation became different.

Though a man still has to work for a living, for the Christian, he does not have to prove himself according to worldly standards. His fulfilment in life does not consist in the things he possesses'....*for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses*'. Luke 12: 15. But today's world dictates who a success is by its standards, and many get carried away by this deception. Man's focus is then diverted from that which matters most, the leadership of his family in his God given position. Failing in this means failing in all! Eve too had challenges. She was to give birth in pain and her desire was now to be to her husband. That raises a lot of issues, but that is presently not the point of discussion.

The male as a person needs to understand himself. He sees himself different from what God has designed him to be. The greatest challenge before any man today is his identity crisis. Being able to surmount this will put him in right position to tackle other questions of life. What compounds the issue may be what I call 'the enigma of the woman'. The typical man does not understand the woman. She is a mystery to him within or without marriage; yet a necessary 'component to his existence'. Not knowing the right way to relate with her in order to get the best out of her, compounds the male-female saga of superiority/inferiority complex. According to Dr. Myles Munroe's observation in his interesting book, 'Understanding the Purpose of The Man', he said that when you do not know how something is meant to function, you

will misuse or abuse it. This is a major part of the problem plaguing the family well-being. Suffice it to say that this is another topic for discussion.

## **TYPES AND EXAMPLES**

There are two characters in the Bible that can be taken as types or examples for us today.

How did these two men lead their families? We will briefly examine Lot in this and the next chapter and Noah in the subsequent one. They were both righteous family men. How did they face the situation of their time which seems very similar to ours today?

2 Timothy 3:1 says that ‘.....*in the last days perilous times shall come*.....’ Both men found grace with God and they feared the Lord but they were faced with;

- Violence in the society. Gen. 6:11
- Wickedness. Gen 6:5
- No fear of God. Gen. 6:5
- Corruption. Gen. 6:11-12
- God’s Judgments. Gen 5:13, 7

## **LOT’S POSITIVES**

## **He was a righteous man**

The Bible attests to the fact that Lot was a righteous man. He hated the evil practices of his day. 2 Peter 2:7-8 says;

*...And delivered righteous Lot who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked...(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds).....'*

The depth of the depravity of the men of Sodom was shown in their riotous behaviours in wanting to have carnal knowledge of the angels. They refused to listen to Lot's reasoning with them. Rather, they were becoming violent, both old and young. Lot was a righteous man and hated their evil ways as shown earlier. He had lived among them for such a long time and had been able to hold up his own, since he did not join them in their perversion and neither did they abuse him sexually.

## **He was also very hospitable**

When he entertained the angels as shown in Gen. 19:2-3, he was like Abraham his uncle in this respect. But Lot tried in vain to protect his guests (the angels) from the demonic lust of the homosexuals of Sodom. *"But they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door."* Gen.19:9. He was not only righteous but hospitable and could not think of allowing such an assault on his guests. Thank God for the timely intervention of the angels in

saving Lot. They were struck with blindness and could not find the door, and the angels forcibly removed Lot and his family.

Unfortunately, he failed to carry his family along by not bringing them up in proper godly values' just as it is happening in our days today. Some men love God but fail to carry their family along with them. Lot was faced with the challenges of his time just like that which face us today. He lived with his family in a corrupt, sinful society, a place full of homosexuals both young and old; people filled with sexual lust, ready to rape anyone at any given moment. Recently in Nigeria, there was a newspaper publication of a nine-year old boy, who was raped by a man who was over thirty years old! It is not peculiar to Africa; it is a worldwide phenomenon today. Lot lived with his family in such a society.

### **How he got there**

The Book of Genesis records the separation of Lot from his uncle Abraham, when their herdsmen clashed. Abraham allowed Lot, his nephew, a man younger than him, to make the first choice of what part of the land to possess. *'Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go towards Zoar)'*Genesis 13:10

### **An example**

The story of Lot is an example of what could possibly happen to a family whose head is not ready for the Lord's coming. He himself was saved but he

lost his family. In spite of the urgency of the message, he could not convince his sons-in-law to come with him.

They were not God fearing men, for had they been, they could have heeded the warning from the Lord. Rather they made light of it and were eventually destroyed along with the wicked. So would scorners and unbelievers have to face the Judgment of God someday!

Imagine this, Lot himself lingered to leave the city! What could have caused him to delay even in the face of such danger? Was it a sentimental attachment to the place? Was it the wealth he had acquired that kept him wondering of what would become of it? Whatever might have been his reason, the Bible did not say. Only God knew what was in his mind then. But the fact was that he lingered! Are you in the same position today? Is there something holding you back from taking a decisive step towards doing God's will? If you are aware that the coming of the Lord is near, what are you doing to get yourself and your family prepared for His coming! Lot lingered! You and our family should be saved. The angel said to him, *"Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here....."* Do arise and take your own too!

The grace of God is available for his own. The grace of God allowed him time when he delayed; the grace of God helped to pull him and his family out, using the angels; the grace of God allowed him to choose and to go where he wanted to stay before fire and brimstone rained down on Sodom and Gomorrah. He was removed from the scene of Judgment. God cares for us and His grace is still available for us today to escape His judgment as we give our lives to Jesus



Christ our Lord, the Deliverer. The grace of God has appeared in our Lord Jesus Christ. We should not take it for granted.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **CONSEQUENCIES OF NEGLECT OF GODLY VALUES**

**DUE TO NEGLIGENCE**, ignorance or the rat race, parents fail to inculcate Christian values into their children. Some simply shove this responsibility to

the educational or religious institutions. The effect of ‘Absent Parent Syndrome’ now takes over. Even where the mother is present, there is a big vacuum created with the absence of the father, with increasing result of juvenile delinquency, pornography, homosexuality, lesbianism, prostitution, corruption, cheating, deceit and the like among the youth. Unfortunately parental control seems to be reducing to zero level, especially when the children get to teenage or young adulthood. Some parents even assist or support their children in their immoral or criminal acts; examination malpractices, incest, pornography, cultism etc. It is made worse where there is an absent father. An absentee father may not necessarily be absent physically. He may be there and yet be detached emotionally, mentally, spiritually and sometimes financially. He shrugs off issues or responsibilities and may only wake up to face up to the situation when it is almost too late. What you witness today in our society is as a result of the bad seeds sown in families, where the negatives impact of the media then becomes “the third parent”.

Christian parents especially fathers, should inculcate the right values through their exemplary scriptural living like Noah. We will examine what made him to be different in his generation. For now, here is a result of a research carried out about American Families. It was conducted by Rutgers University Sociologist, David Popenoe and it summarizes the calamity in the families with clarity like this:

*“The decline of fatherhood is one of the most basic, unexpected and extraordinary social trends of our time.....In just three decades, from 1960 to 1990, the percentage of children living apart from their biological fathers more than doubled... If this rate continues, by the turn of the century nearly 50*

*percent of American children will be going to sleep each night without being able to say goodnight to their dads..."*

This statement is quite alarming. Imagine having 50 percent of a nation's children fatherless. What does that hold for the future of that nation? Can you picture the emotional and mental trauma a child goes through when the father is absent?

I know a lady whose husband absconded for ten years with a younger woman. During that time, he never was in contact with his family. So she had to fend for herself and her children. He showed up later seeking a reunion. Like most women would do, she forgave him and they got back together again. But by then, the damage had been done; he was a stranger to every member of his family. His eldest son was on drugs and never saw eye to eye with his overbearing father. Later on, one of his daughters got pregnant outside wedlock and they arranged a hurried wedding to cover up the shame. Unfortunately, the marriage didn't last for more than three years. Today, the young lady is a single mother. The wife who is supposed to be the mother of the home lives outside the family home in another city doing her business, visiting home once in a while.

David Popenoe continues;

*"Father absence is a major force lying behind many of the attention grabbing issues that dominate the news: crime and delinquency, premature sexuality and out-of-wedlock teenage births, deteriorating educational achievement, depression among teenagers, and the growing number of women and children in*

*poverty.....The United States may be the first society in which children are distinctly worse off than adults."*

If it was so then, you can only imagine what it is now! The situation described above by the Sociologist, incidentally is a universal phenomenon. If you look around in our nation Nigeria today, the Christian norms and values are struggling for expression in a world full of evil. So many fathers and husbands are helpless as to what to do to steer the ship in the right course. We will examine the life of a man who faced similar evil situations but missed it. What were some of those things he failed to do that contributed to the family tragedy? There are lessons to learn from Lot's mistake. This is not to pick holes in the life of a man. Rather, it is for us to learn from what happened to others. To be forewarned is to be forearmed and as the saying goes, prevention is better than cure. Moreover, the scripture says *'Now all these things happened to them as examples and they were written for our admonition.....'* 1Corinthians 10:11

## **LESSONS FROM LOT'S MISTAKES**

### **He walked by sight**

When given the opportunity by his uncle Abraham to make a first choice of where to move to, he went by sight. He chose the side of the valley that appeared lush and green. Unfortunately, all that glitters is not gold. The moral and spiritual life of the valley dwellers was rotten. He assumed there would be

comfort, but found out he lived among a people who made him uncomfortable by their way of life. Just like many of us might do today, he looked on the external lush greenery, a seeming place of luxury, and chose where to go to for himself. It typifies many in the so called “third world countries” who would seek for greener pastures abroad and only to end up in tragedy. Unfortunately, as lovely as the region looked externally, it was spiritually defiled. While Abraham lived in the land of Canaan, Lot lived in the cities of the plain. The scriptures say that:

*“...The men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord...”Genesis 13:13.*

Like their father, Lot’s daughters walked by sight too. After their escape from Sodom and Gomorrah, when they settled in the mountains, they looked around them, and saw there was no man to father children for them for the continuity of the generations. What did they do? They hatched an ungodly plan of making their father drunk and they slept with him in turn. He indeed fathered children for them. He fathered his own grandchildren! If they had profound faith in God, they would have trusted Him for a solution to the dilemma rather than to do what they did. But they preferred to take the matter into their own hands.

Do you blame Lot? Don’t some of us do the same today? When we have to make choices, we consider the ephemeral or peripheral. We look at what we think is most beneficial to us and go straight ahead with the project or decision, not seeking God’s face or even waiting to hear from Him. We consider the externals. We look for superficial answers to life’s problems. Not

all that glitters is gold. Unfortunately, a lovely Christian home is suffering today due to such an impulsive decision by the head of the home. He moved from the big city where he was doing fairly well in his ministry, to another mega city, believing that the grass was greener on the other side. Unfortunately, they suffered greatly and faced many financial challenges among other problems, in the process of that unguided change. He lost respect before his children, some of whom were becoming rebellious and the wife was considering a separation at the time of this write up.

A father, as head of a family, must be aware that every decision or choice he makes would affect his family positively or negatively. This must be paramount when making a decision about where to live, knowing that children or young people would naturally interact with the people in their environment: they could ultimately imbibe their values. What happened to Lot's daughters? They ended up marrying the men of the place, men who did not trust in or fear God. Had they been believers in God, they would have believed the message of Lot to them.

### **No indication of a family altar**

There is no record that he prayed to God concerning his family or worshiped with his family. Even after the traumatic escape from Sodom and Gomorrah, where he lost his wife and sons in-law, he did not offer up any worship to God with his daughters. Had they been used to regular family worship, a spontaneous act of worship would naturally have followed such a great

deliverance. If you want your family to be preserved from evil in the world, interceding for your children must be a priority, just like Job did regularly for his children.

*“So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, ‘It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts’. Thus Job did regularly.” Job 1:5.*

You are the priest of the home; stand in the gap for your family. This assignment must not be left only to the mother. It is equally your responsibility. Emulate Job, pray for your family. Teach them the Word.

John Amaechi in his testimony told of how his father had always prayed for them and anointed them once a week. He had two sisters. He was the only son. So when he got admitted in a big university somewhere in the northern part of Nigeria, his excitement knew no limits. He had finally gotten the freedom he craved for. “World here I come”, he said to himself. He had gone clubbing one night with some friends. They were all having a good time until the alcohol decided to interfere with their brains. A fight began and he was shot in the stomach. He was left to die. He crawled to the road. No help was in sight. He was in a pool of his own blood; he was drifting in and out of consciousness. ‘Oh God, help me’ he prayed. He desperately wanted to live. Just then he started hearing his father’s voice praying loudly for him. At that time far away in Lagos the father got a witness that his son was in trouble and he started praying. Within a minute, a huge police officer came to his rescue, took him to the hospital and then paid the bill. He came to the room where John was

recovering and told him what he had done. He said he had contacted his father and he was already on his way. John asked him how he had gotten his father's contact but he refused to say. He also refused to give his name. John closed his eyes briefly but by the time he opened them, the police officer had disappeared. It left John feeling that he had been saved by an angel. This is indeed a beautiful example of the result of having a praying father. But as for John, that experience changed his life and he became more dedicated to God.

Another real life story of protection because of the prayers of a praying father was told to me by this young Liberian lady called Agnes (real name withheld). She said they always had daily family prayers. They felt their father was wasting their time making them go through long periods of praying. She later got to appreciate the effect of that when after the civil war, none of them was killed. Her siblings were nine in number and they were all scattered in different parts of the country during the war.

From these testimonies we have seen how praying together as a family impacts upon the life of an individual. John Amaechi and his siblings most likely felt their father was wasting their time any time he called for prayers. They probably looked for any and every excuse to avoid going for prayers. What about Agnes? Any one conversant with the Liberia civil war would know that it was very bloody. Every part of the country was engulfed in horrific genocide where whole families and tribes were massacred. From her testimony her father made them pray for protection. We cannot



overemphasise the significance of the family altar. Not only does it impact spiritually, it impacts physically and psychologically. It creates a feeling of togetherness and oneness. It allows a busy family to spend time together. No matter how brief it is. It encourages the individual to know God on a personal level.

Lot's daughters too showed they had no private time with God because they did not pray concerning the problem that faced them. *'Now the first born said to the younger, our father is old and there is no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth... Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father....'* 1 Gen 19:31-32. They took the matter into their own hands to seek for a solution the fleshly way. Possibly, the influence of the city in which they lived impacted negatively on them, since there was no strong spiritual or parental influence. They seemed to have imbibed the heathen culture of the ungodly Sodomites and so committed incest with their father, without batting an eyelid! If they had times for family worship, where God's ideals had been propagated from childhood, the fear of God would probably have kept them from perpetuating such an evil act. *'.....Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it....'* Proverbs 22:6.

### **Anything can happen in a home devoid of the fear of God.**

I heard of a home where the father himself impregnated his own daughter. When the mother got to know, she protected her husband by taking away her

daughter to a remote village and stayed with her till the delivery of her baby. When they came back to the city, she deceived people by passing away the child as her own. How did this story get out? Of course in the process of a quarrel with her father one day, (he had lost respect before her), the beans was spilled.

The second example was that of a lady who came to me for counselling. Her husband threw her out of the house, kept her daughter as a prisoner (she was not allowed to relate with her peers) and impregnated her eventually.

The mother threatened fire and brimstone, and wanted to take her away for an abortion! Of course I tried to reason her out of that decision.

“Why would you want to kill an unborn child, what about the implications of your daughter’s health?”

“What kind of bastard child does she want to have? It is better she bears the risk than give birth to that thing”. She raged. “I will go to her father’s house and disgrace him before the people in the compound and take away my daughter.

“Why don’t you get his family involved?” I asked her.

“No, too much time would be wasted and the pregnancy would get more advanced. I have to deal with the issue now”

“So what do you want to do?”

“I will go and fight him.”

She was adamant, saying that she would go ahead with her plans, no matter the consequences. She never came back to see me. Neither could I reach her. (This was before the days of improved telephone services).

### **Every family should have a family altar**

Please work out appropriate or convenient times to do so. It could come spontaneously too, showing your family, particularly the children, that God is approachable anytime, anywhere. Please avoid setting rigid times of worship which might show up a different picture of God the Almighty or of the worship of Him. But just having family worship does not solve all problems.

During our courtship, (my husband and I), I got to know a family that was quite close to him. They were very religious, rigidly observing the family worship time. Unfortunately, one of the daughters got impregnated outside marriage. It was such a scandal! But do you know what happened? She explained to my fiancé that she was tired of the stifling religious atmosphere,

from which she wanted to break free. Unfortunate, I would say. The young lady cut off her nose to spite her face!

The point of the matter is this. It takes more than just a gathering of people together to pray. Family worship should be an integral part of family life. It should not be ritualistic.

Many young people are in rebellion today because they are looking for answers to life's questions and they are not getting it; not even from the home. Is there a cohesive family unit? What kind of relationship exists between family members? How close is the father to the children, particularly the daughters? You will be surprised to know that some prostitutes or morally loose young ladies are those who were denied parental love, particularly paternal love. They go out consciously or unconsciously seeking for love from men.

### **No powerful witness**

Another of Lot's mistake was that he had no powerful witness. He was a righteous man only for himself. His influence on his family and community was negligible.

A father is supposed to be a strong role model for his family to follow or believe in. Unfortunately, his witness was not strong enough. First, his wife did not walk in line with him. She followed her own way and lost out.

Secondly, his daughters did not fear or respect him enough not to try to do what they did with him. (Or was it done in ignorance?)

Apparently, he had no strong spiritual influence over his family and thirdly, none whatsoever over his sons in law. In fact, they thought he was joking when he told them what the angels said. They ignored the urgent call to leave. Gen. 19:14.

He lived in an evil environment, and kept out of evil's way, but did nothing to change or affect it. Did he talk to his sons-in-law about God? The Bible does not indicate. 'He sat in the gate of Sodom' showed that he was placed in a place of power, authority and influence. But did he make effective use of the opportunity? How many of us have opportunities to witness Christ today in our immediate environment but are silent. If he had been a silent believer all along and all of a sudden, began to say something so dramatic, talking about judgment against sin or sinners, do you think he would be taken seriously? No wonder his sons-in-law thought he was joking. Dearly beloved, if you are a man reading this and you expect people to take you seriously, then you have to be not only a positive role model, but an outspoken one. You have to be the beacon of light so others can find their way to follow you. You must declare who you are wherever you may be.

If you are not born-again, it is time to say, 'Lord, have mercy on my soul, for I am a sinner'. You must be the light that must shine for others to follow. Can you find your way in darkness? No dear one. Come to the Light and He will lead you out to green pastures. So, as a father or head of a home, you must declare who you are, what you believe in and reach out to others as well. Above this, live as a true child of God. Your family will believe in you, respect you and follow you!

### **Slow response to God's revealed will**

Total obedience to God's command is absolutely necessary. Failure to do so could lead to severe consequences. After the traumatic experience of escaping from Sodom and Gomorrah, one would have assumed that Lot would immediately be moved by divine directives. But no! He still wanted things his own way. He behaved like many of us today, who go according to their self-will and not according to God's divine purpose. Many still resist even when it is obvious that it is will God's will or purpose for them.

What did Lot do? First, he lingered, even in the face of the forthcoming danger. Genesis 19:16. He and his family were literally dragged out from the city by the angels. God's mercy prevailed. Why did he linger? Are you also dragging your feet like he did, even when it is clear to you what the Lord wants you to do?

After being pulled 'out from the fire', for he was saved by 'force' by the angels, he refused to go to the mountains as directed. He gave excuses for not wanting to do so, preferring to be in the plains. God's grace still prevailed, for the area

he was in was spared from destruction. It was indeed an unmerited favour. But note something about that; he was not in God's perfect will concerning his stay; he was in his permissive will. God knew what was best for him, but Lot said he feared something bad would happen to him if he went to the mountains. Would God save him from destruction by fire and then send him to another place to be destroyed? He missed God's perfect will for them.

Eventually, he left Zoar where he had taken refuge, a place he had pleaded to stay in because he was afraid to go the mountains. He eventually went to the mountains with his two daughters and dwelt in a cave. He made provision for himself at this point. Suppose he had promptly obeyed, I certainly believe God would have directed him exactly on what to do. He did not get any divine directives but decided to fend for himself.

God who sent Elijah to the brook knew what he was doing. He provided him food and water and was directed on what next to do as that supply began to run out. 1 King 17. 15-10. But because Lot missed the perfect timing of God he had to fend for himself. This is what happens to some of us today who delay over what should be done and later end up struggling down the road.

Again, how many have the call of God to go into ministry but have resisted The Call. They argue, reason, and bargain with Him, giving various excuses for not responding promptly. Have you been convicted of your behaviour or way of life and you still say to God, "I will, but not now please?" How many have heard His voice and are reluctant to say 'Yes Lord'. This is the acceptable time brother!

In a nutshell, when a man gets a directive, a revelation or an instruction from the Lord, he is expected to promptly obey, especially when it is a clear cut instruction, or revelation, on what to do. This concerned Lot's family as a whole but he chose to go his own way.

### **Lot's wife – not in her God given position**

Lot's wife positioned herself behind her husband. She walked in disobedience; going against the angels' instructions, she looked back and turned into a pillar of salt. Gen.19:26. What a tragedy! You might blame her and say she deserved the judgment. What she did simply reflected the behaviour pattern she was used to. That meant she was used to having her own way, she was not used to following instructions. If she had been used to obeying her husband's instructions, obedience to the angels' words would have come promptly. But if Lot her husband lingered, what do you expect of the wife? This simply reflected a situation of a man who was not in control of his house. Lot could have made sure she walked right beside him. Since he dared not look back due to instructions given, he could have slowed his pace a bit and called out to her to hasten hers. Rather, he allowed her to lag behind, leaving a very big loophole for tragedy to occur. Many blame the woman for her disobedience, but her husband, the leader of the family, "allowed" her to be so.

You might argue that in their time, wives do not walk side by side with their husbands. But Lot's family is a type of the negative home setting that may not escape the judgment; a lesson for us all to learn. If he had been more assertive, she possibly could have complied and probably could have been saved. God's grace should not be taken for granted.



## **Preachers' example – lesson to learn**

Many preachers use Lot's wife in their sermon, as an example of a stubborn, worldly and disobedient woman, who ended up in tragedy. Quite right. If she had done what was expected of her, she could not have suffered that loss. An unsubmitive wife usually creates an open hedge, through which the serpent bites. Though she suffered her punishment duly, it affected her home badly, for that was the opening through which the serpent bit them. Her absence created a big loophole through which her daughters committed the abomination that resulted in their having ungodly descendants that became a thorn in flesh of Israel. So, if you are woman reading this, please REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE.

Another lesson to learn from this incident is the need to know the proper positioning of the wife in the family. God took the rib from the side of Adam to create a woman. He did not take a bone from his head (for the woman to rule over him), nor did he take a bone from his feet (for him to trample her down). He took a rib from Adam's side, close to his heart, a soft and pliable bone, to make a woman for him. "The bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh", to be by his side, to be pampered and nurtured. But culture and tradition put the woman under the man's feet, to be trampled and trodden upon, in every aspect. She is put behind the man, made to be a second class citizen; a being of little or no consequence, someone to be seen but not to be heard. Advocates of women liberation put the wife in front; tradition and culture put her place behind; but the divine positioning puts her beside him. She is to complement him, not compete with him. Gen.2:18.

Is your wife stubborn, difficult, or unsubmitive? Something is certainly wrong. Try to find out what it might be as you go to the Lord in prayer. Seek help from matured Christian professional counsellors or ministers versed in handling family matters. Show her practical love. Love her into submission I repeat! God will give you the grace as you seek his face on how to handle this problem.

And wife, please submit to our husband to make his leadership of the home easy. What does this tell us? We need both husband and wife in their God given positions in order to have a stable home where Jesus is Lord and God will be glorified. A home where everyone is rapture ready!

### **Lot failed to be close to his daughters**

This brings us to another question. As a father, how close are you to your daughters? Most often the training or discipline of the girl child is usually left to the mother. When anything goes wrong, society is quick to blame her. But God made the man and the woman to parent the child. The man has a crucial role to play too. There is need to spend some time with girls, training and preparing them for tomorrow. The girl child needs to be prepared for the world of men, not only by the mother but also by the father, for each has its own perspective. Are you too busy to make out quality time for them? Or do you place more value on boys than the girls and decide not to be bothered with 'that'. As children of God, we should have the right perspective.

Many traditional African cultures place a higher value on the boy child over the girl child, believing the boy child will perpetuate their generations; while the girl child eventually ends up in being given away in marriage, why bother to invest so much into her life, they reason? For such and others excuses, the female child is denied a full opportunity of a Western Education. Some enlightened homes today that may not discriminate over the question of a formal education, may be influenced unconsciously by certain norms and traditional beliefs that will deprive the female child of certain rights, inheritance laws for example. I am absolutely grateful to God for my late father's stand, Peter Ashikwe Okonji, over such issues. He never allowed himself to be swayed by such prejudice during my own time. There was the strong belief then that female children ended up getting pregnant and ending their education prematurely. If they scaled through at all, they reasoned, they would carry all the benefits of their education to another family when they got married. They believed it was a waste of resources. My father simply drew my attention to the pressure he was facing, telling me not to fail him. I never forgot that admonition even till this day. Thank God who saw me through my primary and secondary education successfully. Unfortunately, during the civil war in Nigeria my father was killed in 1967. It was so devastating for me.

But God raised someone else for me, someone who believed in education, female or not, my husband. He was a graduate and insisted he wanted me to become one too! But you cannot imagine what dust was raised over this issue by some family members. How could a married woman with children go to school! All sorts of objections were raised, even by his friends. But thanks to his firm stand over the issue. His father was very supportive too and that

helped to douse the heat. We became pacesetters in our area. By the grace of God, and with the full support of my husband, between having children and doing my courses, I was able to do the Nigeria Certificate in Education programme at the College of Education, Ondo, as well as a first and second degree in Guidance and Counselling at the University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria. After some years, I went on to do some further studies in biblical studies, and today, I am involved in Christian ministry.

Why am I delving into this personal story? I am doing this to buttress the fact that education of the girl child benefits not only herself or her immediate family, but also the larger society. When you educate a man you educate an individual. But when you educate a female, you educate a nation. If God had not raised for me men who believed in giving everyone an equal opportunity to prove themselves, you probably would not be reading this piece from me. Moreover, my late father was a very responsible and caring man. He was not wealthy, but he never compromised his parental responsibilities. In spite of his lean resources, he made sure he provided for my educational and other needs. He impacted my life positively. So did my husband.

Beloved, whether our offspring are male or female, whatever you build or fail to build into them, sooner or later you will reap, *'for whatever you sow you will reap'*, according to scripture, which has become a popular adage today. It is both a physical and spiritual law. If you are a believer, allow the word of God to guide you and be grateful for the children you have, for they are all a gift from God, male or female. Do not value one above the other: rather, making heaven should be the ultimate goal for them.

We are told that Lot sat '*in the gate of Sodom*', Genesis 19:1. This indicates that he was an important man in the society; he was a man to be reckoned with. Apparently, he was too busy with the affairs of the state to spend time with his daughters. See the high price he had to pay for that!

Obviously, Lot's daughters had outside influence that swayed them to do their abominable acts. They transferred into their family lives, what they had imbibed from the custom of the heathens among whom they lived. "*.....Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it....*" Proverbs 22:6. Lot's children produced the Ammonites and the Moabites, heathen nations that literally became a thorn in the flesh of the Israelites! Bad seeds that produced bad fruits.

Being close to your daughters involves teaching them biblical values. Consider a family where the mother happened to be the disciplinarian of the family. Daddy was close to his daughter quite alright, but he spoilt her.

As she was growing up she began to have a bad reputation in the neighbourhood for her waywardness.

Her way of life was lousy. Her dad himself was no better example because he ended up being drunk, putting up a show of shame almost every evening. The young lady moved with a crowd of people that lived for themselves. The parents were supposed to be active church members, while their daughter lived contrary to the Christ they were supposed to be serving. This is nothing new today. But there is need for a change.

## **Be close to your children, fathers!**

I generally do not hear being emphasized, this interesting passage of scripture. It tells the father of a home what to do concerning his children. First, he himself has to lay up God's words in his heart and then, he has to teach his children. "... *You shall teach them to your children, speaking often to them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up . . . and you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gate . . .*" Deuteronomy 11:18-20 this shows the need to spend quality time with the children, teaching them not only by what you say; but by what you do. Spending quality time with them positively impacts their lives. Sending them to boarding school will not make them better kids but spending time with them; be available. Don't shift away from your responsibility. The power of negative peer influence is reduced; it will not compete with parental influence.

Most often, children spend more time with their mothers than their fathers. Dad is too tired to have little word to find out how the children fared for the day, with the result that over time, the children grow away from him. They become strangers especially as teenagers or young adults. They have a formal relationship. How glad I am when I come across families that have strong father and children bonding. They have someone inside they can talk to.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **WHICH TYPE OF MAN ARE YOU?**

**IT IS VERY IMPORTANT** that you appraise yourself to find out what inner stuff you are made up of. It is very easy to shield one's inner person from others, including your spouse, one's children or pastor. But deep down I want you to tell yourself some simple truths about who you really are. Are you a man that hears from God concerning His will for your life, family, ministry, or business? Do you listen at all to the prompting of the Holy Spirit? Are your daily actions dictated by God? Are you a man God can testify of carrying out every instruction of His to the minutest details? Are you capable of carrying your family along in every righteous decision? There was a man called Noah in the Bible who unreserved walked with God. He minded every detail given to

him by God concerning how to escape from an impending judgment upon the earth through a flood. God's judgment is coming again.

## **A brief panorama of Noah**

Noah was another righteous man in the Bible. Gen.7:1. Like Lot, he was a family man, married with three sons and had three daughters in-law. He was a well respected man in the society. He faced a similar scenario of wickedness, evil, violence, and fear of God in his time. He lived among them just like Lot. What made the difference in the life of Noah? How did his family get insulated from the evil of his day? We will examine a few points to see how he was able to successfully carry his whole family along with him to be able to escape the judgment of his time.

## **THE SECRET OF NOAH'S SUCCESS**

### **The grace of God**

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Gen.6:8. He found it and made use of it; Lot found grace but did not adequately 'spread it around' so to say. God's grace is still available today.

### **Prompt obedience to God's commands**



He did not linger to respond to what he was told to do. He promptly obeyed. *'Thus Noah did according to all that God commanded him, so he did'*. Gen.6:22 and 7:5. We will list out some of the things he did.

- He received the instruction that he should build an ark because the earth was to be destroyed. He promptly obeyed and built according to specifications.
- He was told to load the Ark with needed provisions for the period of stay
- He was told to bring in the animals, male and female, seven clean ones of each kind and two unclean ones of each kind; of birds seven of each kind. He did so.
- Finally when the ark was ready, he was told to bring in his family. They all went in. *"On the very same day, Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, Japhet, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the Ark. They and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind; every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort".* (Vs.13,14)
- *And they went into the ark of Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. (Vs15) So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God commanded him, and the Lord shut him in. (Vs.16)*

### **God's perfect will and timing**

He waited until God gave him another directive before taking any decisive step. He checked to see the situation after the flood by sending out the raven and the dove at different times. He himself finally looked out through the window and saw that the earth was dry. He waited patiently till God spoke to him. Then God spoke to Noah saying “... *Go out of the ark, you and your sons’ wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you....*” Gen 8:16-17. So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him. He waited for God’s time. What about you beloved?

### **He was led of the spirit**

Noah did not just move as he desired; he did not move impulsively. How some men today would have just taken the matter into their hands to go on to open the door since the ground was dry. But no, he waited patiently. He waited and moved as directed by God. Godly leadership follows God’s revelation or direction. Those who are God’s children are directed by His Spirit. “*For as many as are led by the Spirit God, these are the sons of God.*” Romans 8:14. We need such today. Have you ever taken a step you later regretted, or failed to move at the impulse of the Spirit and later regretted such?

### **He had a family altar**

Noah was a righteous man alright; he had a relationship with God. But he did not do so alone. He carried his family with him. Had they not had a family altar, the response to their deliverance could have been different; it could not have come immediately. Their's was a spontaneous act of worship and adoration, in thanksgiving for their deliverance.

*"...Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar...."Gen.8:20*

This godliness in the family must have impacted every life because they all supported their father and obediently followed him into the ark. You know how some grown up sons can assert their independence. In this case, they did not. . They believed their father. When a man is a positive role model in his home, respect comes easily from his family. There is no contention about who is in charge. Everyone falls in line. He must have brought them up with godly ideals. This is shown later on in Gen.9:20-26 when his sons respectfully covered him up when their brother discovered him in his nakedness, in his drunken sleeping state.

A family altar is an absolute necessity for any family success. The question is who takes charge? Who is the priest of the house? Obviously, the father should, being the head, be the leader. Even if it is a family headed by a female, or a single parent family, the responsibility as priest of the home still falls on whoever is the head. But if you are a man reading this, please do not abdicate your God given responsibility or role over your family. No matter how busy your schedule maybe, please make out time to have family worship time.

There are books you can read to guide you on what to do, if you have any problem about this. Noah spread the grace of God that was upon him to cover his family, by involving them in the worship of God. You cannot worship God if you don't know Him. He must have taught his children and that was why he could carry them along. They were all saved.

Marriage, family, church, community and the nation, all rest on the balanced pillar of Biblical manhood, and all will collapse when the pillars become out of balance. Thank God for a man like Noah who stood in the gap for his generation.

*"Be strong therefore, and prove yourself a man*

*And keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk*

*In His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments,*

*His judgments, and His testimonies... that you may prosper....*

*1Kings 2:2-3.*

## CHAPTER FOUR

# **RIGHTEOUS BUT NOT PERFECT**

### **Lot and Noah**

Both men in their times feared God; they were righteous family men. But that did not mean they were perfect. They had their faults like anybody else. Lot made mistakes that cost him his family. Under the influence of alcohol, his

daughter had sex with him and produced heathen nations that did not fear God.

Noah on the other hand cursed his son Ham for seeing his nakedness in his drunken stupor. Ham when he saw him, went out to tell his brothers, who came and without looking at him covered him up. Noah's curse upon Ham came to pass, for Ham, the father of the Canaanites, indeed became '*...a servant of servants to his brethren.*' Gen.9:23, 25.

## **Saved by Grace**

What does this convey to us? We are indeed saved by grace. The men feared the Lord but had stints with alcohol that cost them something in their family lives. It is not by power or by might. You may not be a perfect father or husband, but you should know that His grace is sufficient for you. Do that which is necessary for your family and leave the rest to God. There are some instances where children turn out to be rebellious in spite of appropriate training with Biblical values. What can the parents do? In that case you have done your best. Commit them to God and He that is faithful will do what He will do. But, first and foremost, if you are not born again, just give over yourself to the Lord and He will save you, then you will have the grace to do that which is expected of you. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may

abound? Certainly not! "Rom. 6:1-2. There are lessons enough to learn, looking through the life of these men.

I would like to share the quotation from Dr. Myles Munroe in his book, *Understanding The Purpose and Power of man* '*... That is why, when God began to build the human race, he began by laying the foundation of the male. God placed males at the bottom of the entire building of humanity. This means that society is only as strong as it's males... That goes for America, Canada, Russia, China, and all nations of the world*' pp74

So knowing and understanding your purpose on earth will give you a better perspective on critical issues that face the male today. You may not be perfect but you need to know your purpose - that you are created to be the foundation of your family: to have a relationship with God as you remain continually in His presence; with the responsibility of tending the garden, leading, protecting, visioning etc., you ought to know your priority, position and assignment. Then you can begin to fulfil your purpose on earth as a male.

Fulfilling your purpose on earth is equally tied to your understanding the value and the role played by your spouse. It would enable you to understand and appreciate how different each role is but yet complementary.

I once heard of a story where aliens invaded the earth. Their mission was to infiltrate and take over.

So, one of the aliens transformed into a woman while the real woman was kept somewhere in their ship. The plan was to study the life style of the earthling before launching an attack. It entered the home of the original woman and was made to cook, mop the floor, shop, cater for the kids, do the laundry for the house, attend to five kids, plus an ever demanding husband. The alien noted that the man was constantly throwing around annoying orders.

Yet he seemed to have an affinity for the woman. The exhausted alien reported back that it preferred being a man since the imperfect man was the creature of authority. He became the head of another household and had to go to work all day in dire conditions. He returned back exhausted only to be faced with a nagging wife who needed his attention, screaming kids and a lawn that had to be mowed. The alien reported back to his superiors that the imperfect earthling had detected his presence and wanted to eliminate him with primitive task. The mission was aborted and they had to go back to mars!

## **CLOSING COMMENTS TO MEN AND WOMEN**

**[A] FOR THE MAN**



If you are a man reading this, you have the onerous task of leading your family 'home'. ***Your ultimate job, irrespective of your family situation is to package your family and have them 'branded for Christ.' Quit blaming circumstances, situation, your wife or even your children. Blame games only compound the issues, tackle them. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.***

### **Actualization tips for men**

- i.** Acknowledge your God given position as the head of your home. (Gen.3:16) Your headship does not depend on your financial or physical power; neither does it give you authority to abuse. physically, sexually, psychologically or otherwise.
- ii.** Stand in the gap as priest and ask for forgiven for family sins (Job 1:5)
- iii.** Determine to start again where there has been a failure.
- iv.** Humble yourself before the Lord. Ask for forgiveness of your sins where you have failed.
- v.** Ask for grace to start or to continue from where you have stopped.
- vi.** Separation, divorce, or abuse of difficult mate is not an option. Rather determine to make a fresh start.
- vii.** Reach out to your wife and children. Never be too proud to apologise or to ask for their forgiveness if necessary.

- viii. Reassert authority by staying in your God given role, making sure to carry out your expected responsibilities spiritually, physically, financially, psychologically as much as you can.
- ix. If necessary, seek for counsel from a pastor, a mature Christian or from a professional Christian Counselor.
- x. Do not be discouraged if you face any challenges. Persist, you must prevail.

## **[B] FOR THE WOMAN**

It is not easy to be a man. Leadership goes with a load of responsibilities. Any male who is a husband, a father or a head of a home is answerable to God for his family. The women folk are expected to support, cooperate and encourage them to realize those dreams or family goals; indeed, they should pray for and pray with them. They are a pivot for the success of the family. Remember woman, that if you fail to perform in your God given role, you are a loser. Remember Lot's wife!

## **HOW TO BE OF HELP TO YOUR HUSBAND**

### **Decide to obey God's Words**

Your husband may not be perfect, but all you have to do is submit to his leadership. Through this you could cause him to change. See what the Book of 1 Peter 1:3-6 says. Even if he is not born again, follow what the bible says. Submit and behave indeed as a child of God. It may not be easy, but ask for grace to do what you must do and to be what you must be for Christ. For as you do it to him, you are doing it onto the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will not lose your reward.

### **Forgive and forget offences**

When you do so, you will have peace with God and peace with men and indeed peace in your soul. This gives you victory over the situation because your prayers will be answered.

### **Ask God to forgive you your trespasses**

It takes two to tango. You are not perfect yourself. You must have contributed in one little way or the other, to the problem you are facing today. Are you really a help meet for him? Are you doing him any good at all as a virtuous wife should? Do not play martyr here.

If he been a bad husband, remember your vow to love and obey him for better or for worse. Stand like a soldier of Christ to fight the battle of your home. He needs you now more than ever. This is not the time to abandon the 'ship'. But if your life is in any danger, you must seek help at once.

### **Seek forgiveness from your husband**

You may or may not be aware of the area of offence. Please humble yourself to ask for forgiveness even if you feel you are justified. If he accepts your apology, fine but if otherwise, you have done that which is right. Leave the rest to God who knows the best what to do.

*Cooperate with him, not mock him. As long as he is not involved in any criminal act, support his vision. Show him practical love through your submission and reverence.*

*Get the children to respect and obey him. Use a mother's positive influence to do this, no matter how bad your relationship with your husband has been. Do not use the children as weapons of war.*

*As a virtuous woman, take out time to pray for him. Pray like you have never done before. You will surely get a reward from the Lord for your action. Pray also for your children. You can do so much to help restore an atmosphere of peace in your home. Never allow your emotions to dictate your actions, rather let the Word of God be your guide. You can never miss*

*it if you do so. By His grace I am not just telling “fibs”, I am sharing with you through practical experience, what I know can work for you.*

## **A CONCLUDING WORD**

**NO MAN** IS perfect. No one expects you to do the impossible. All that God needs from you is for you to fear Him. When you do, you will have the grace to do His will.

**For example, Abraham, the Father of faith, was he perfect?** No! He made mistakes on occasions. He made wrong choices too. Imagine him telling lies to King Abimelech that beautiful Sarah was his sister. He told his wife to say so! He did so to save his neck, but at whose expense? Sarah’s of course!

He took wrong counsel from his wife later. This is costing the world so much today; what with Ishmael’s descendants literally holding the world to ransom.

Abraham was not a perfect man, but he feared God and walked with Him, for God’s grace was with him.

God expects you to submit to His Lordship. God is looking for a God fearing man who will join Him to carry out His purposes on earth by having godly children and godly homes that are heaven bound and whose homes are ‘heaven on earth’. He is looking for a people, that when He would come, would be ready to go with Him in the Rapture.

Abraham, though not perfect, was the friend of God. He obeyed God to the point of offering up his only son Isaac for a sacrifice. His descendants, even up to the fourth generation, feared God. God trusted Abraham to the extent that he told him what was going to befall Sodom and Gomorrah. He testified about him:

*“And the Lord said, ‘shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing... since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed by him? For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to keep righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has spoken to him’”* Gen.18:17-19.

**Can God trust you in this generation to package your family and brand them for Jesus Christ Our Lord, so that when He comes, He will take that which belongs to Him?**

Check it out, can God trust you enough to testify about you in this generation as a man who can ‘command’ his children and household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord...? Or have you been shirking your social, economic, spiritual and other responsibilities? There are present and eternal consequences if you do not lead our family right. *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own **‘family?’**”* Matthew 16:26. ‘Family’ I changed for ‘soul’ to stress the importance.

Of all the achievements and glamour of this earth, of all the pains and bitterness, of all the failures and regrets, if a man cannot have full grip of his

family, to train, nurture and lead them in the way of the Lord, that man has truly failed indeed. But thank goodness, our God is a God of the second chance. If you fear Him and work righteously, you are accepted of Him. Acts 10:34-35. You can now ask God for forgiveness and decide to turn away from your former ways. Invite The Lord Jesus Christ to come into your life if you have not done so before. You should hand over your home and ask for grace to be able to be and to do that which is expected of you, so that you and your household will be saved. God cares about families; that was why the centurion and his household as well as the jailors, were saved? Yours can be saved too! There are many good Christian literatures you can read to help you understand what it takes to build your family. But do not neglect the primary book, the Bible; the Word of God.

### **Food for thought**

God holds the family so dear to his heart.

He created man and instituted marriage, a sacred covenant between a man and his wife. He gave the man the assignment to tend the garden. Man in himself was incomplete, so he made one, a help meet for him; made not as an afterthought but to complete him, each of them having a specific role to fulfil, according to their purpose. He cared for man, even after his fall. He still cares for the family.

Indeed to show his concern about the family, God set about the salvation of man using the family set up. For example God first used Abraham, a family he

set aside through whom the nations of earth will be blessed, through whom the Saviour would come.

God also used a Levite family, Amram and Jechobed to give birth to Moses, whom he used mightily in the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt.

Even a family with a single female head, was useful in the plan of God in the destruction of Jericho. Rahab, a prostitute fulfilled God's plan and purpose, so she and her house were saved. (I believe she closed shop to her prostitution after this encounter!) Joshua 2:1-24, 6:24-25.

In the New Testament, Christ has brought both Jews and Gentiles together into one new man, a new family on earth named after Christ, the household of God. Ephesians 2:19. This family will live together with him forever. The Lord went into this trouble of coming to save men because he also needed the family to begin to carry out his purpose on earth. But how many families have indeed made Christ the Lord and Saviour? How many homes are indeed 'heaven on earth'?

Dearly beloved, if you are man reading this, please, take out time to read the message in this book. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is sooner than anyone can imagine. As the head of your home, there is an urgent call to put your house in order if it is not so yet. Many men are not in their God given position anymore. This is no time to begin to put the blame on circumstances, your wife and children or on whatever else. Once the 'centre is not holding, things will surely fall apart!' If you are not where the Lord has put you, it



cannot be easy or even possible for all others to be in their proper positions. Once the head is in the right position, all other parts will sit right.

God has assigned you leadership position in your home. Your spouse has her role to play towards the well being of the family too! But the responsibility of being a leader still lies on the man. When things went wrong in Eden, Adam was held accountable for Eve's wrong action (Genesis 3:17). This does not exonerate her in any way, but probably, if Adam had acted otherwise, things could have been different *".....through one man's Sin, Adam, the first Adam, sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men....."* Romans 5: 12. Eve is nowhere in this picture, though she was the instigator. What does this tell us? Adam was held accountable. By the same token you are held accountable for whatever goes on in your home, no matter the situation beloved. Don't be like the little kid who blamed the candy for tempting her and making her steal it.

This picture is different from usual where emphasis is placed on the woman as being the home builder. Indeed But where is the supervisor? Most times the woman is blamed when things go wrong in the home. In saying this, no bias is meant against the men folk. There are some wonderful God fearing men, leading their homes, with Christ in the centre and everyone else in their God given positions. You are the foundation of your home, man! The foundation which is usually out of sight (except for the pillars), determines the stability of the structure. No matter how strong the pillars may be, if the foundation is weak, the whole structure collapses. This can be linked to the life of a man. A strong foundation produces a stable home, while a faulty foundation produces an unstable, troubled home.

The woman of the house is likened to the walls and all other visible structures in place, including the furniture. Your first impressions of a home are made from what you can see and feel from both tangible and intangible things, like the orderliness of a home, or its atmosphere. This is likened to the life of the woman that can easily be seen.

The husband comes in again as the roof, the covering, the protector of the home, the priest. If the roof is leaking, if there is no proper spiritual covering, there is a problem. He is positioned to be above and below, wrapping round his home. When he fails to be where he ought to be, it makes the work of the woman of the house more difficult. **I do not defend any woman who is not walking according to the dictates of scripture. I am not a women's liberator.** Christ has finished his work for us all. All I am saying is that for long, we have looked only in one direction and have forgotten to look in the other, causing an imbalance in thought, direction and action, which has adversely affected the home today.

To make matters worse, tradition or cultural norms have pervaded the church, dictating the subservience or inferior role of the woman, rather than holding on to the Word of God. This is the time to look into the scriptures for our own good, to see examples of those who have gone before; to learn from them.

In the Garden of Eden, God put the man in charge of the garden and made the woman his helpmeet. It has ever been so. The tragedy today is that they both have moved away from their God given positions. The family today is in

turmoil. The coming of the Lord Jesus is drawing nearer more than ever before. What is happening? The midnight cry has begun! Families should be preparing for his coming; but are they?

Please, enough of the family squabbles and bitterness. Enough of the sex supremacy war between couples. It is time to heed the clarion call to be ready. The End Time events listed below are not meant to frighten you. Rather they are meant to draw your attention or emphasize the kind of period in which we are. It should not be taken for granted please.

### **DO YOU NOTICE**

- A worldwide climatic change, resulting in unprecedented cases of typhoons, hurricanes, tropical storms, famines, forest and bush fires with increasing cases of floods and famines, pestilences and diseases, and global warming too?
- Do you observe an increase in moral decadence? Behaviors which were in years past unacceptable are no longer frowned at. Sexual perversion seems to be the order of the day-homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, incest. Same sex marriages are now legalized in some countries while others are pushing for it. Pornographic materials are easily accessible even to teenagers and they are in common use today.
- Have you noticed an increase in violence in every sphere of life from the home, through the streets, governments and even between nations as they go

to war? Terrorist organizations and militants groups are actively on the increase, fighting against perceived unjust causes at the expense of innocent human lives. The spirit of violence has pervaded even the mass media; from violent movies and cartoons meant for children, to every day street language use. It seems life has lost respect and meaning.

- Have you observed strange happening in the constellation? For example, the year 2006 witnessed two major eclipses of the sun. These are marking off times and seasons. What about the nearest 'Meteorite' that is in collision course with the earth? What does it portend for the earth?
- Have you also observed an increase in occult and cultic activities? The interest of young children is captured through seeming innocent cartoons and games and to the adults, the promise of a better life is offered.
- Do you take note of some Christians having a form of religion and yet denying the power? What about lukewarmness and compromise in the churches?
- What seems to be order of the day? No fear of God! Lawlessness seems to be taking over. The list seems to be endless, pointing to the fact that the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is near, as it is written in the Scriptures. Matt.24, Luke21.
- The last and the greatest sign is the restoration of Israel as a nation. *"Then he spoke to them a parable: look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is*

*near*” Luke 21:29-31. Israel as a nation has come to stay. No man can ‘wipe them away from the face of the earth’ as some claim they will do. They are in God’s perfect plans and purposes. No man can annul that.

**The ant provides her supplies in the summer and gathers her food in the harvest. So beloved, are you ready for the coming of the lord? What about your home? God will hold you responsible for your family as the head of the home.** You have to stand in the place God has positioned you, a place of authority, a place of good leadership by example, a place of humility and the fear of God. In Genesis 3:9 when Adam and Eve fell, though orchestrated by Eve, God held Adam responsible for the act. Genesis 3:17.

As the head of the home, you need to get not only yourself ready, but also your family. Your wife and children may have their faults. They may have greatly offended you or betrayed your trust; but you need to forgive and work towards getting everyone ready for the rapture.

Dearly beloved, I do not quarrel, judge or blame you for anything. I am only a messenger. This book is just for you to read to get some more details of what is expected of the men folk this End Time, as the coming of our Lord draws nearer. You will have to give an account of those under you. What will you tell Him? They were too difficult to lead? What did you do? Is your family fulfilling God’s purpose on earth? Think about it beloved and do something positive about the situation confronting you. You are more than a conqueror! You can be an over comer! The choice is yours!

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Mrs. Veronica Ogodima Nnogo, an Educator and a Guidance Counsellor, holds the B.A Education degree in Guidance Counselling and a Master in Education in the same discipline from the University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria.

She went into private practice after her retirement from the Lagos State Government Service. For several years, she anchored a successful live radio-counselling programme, "The Counsellor" on Ray-Power 106.5FM and hosted a live TV Counselling programme "OASIS" on a cable channel, Time TV, Ikeja, Lagos.

She also organizes Seminar/Workshops on family and marriage issues, which are her passion.

Apart from her first published book 'How to Plan a Stress-free Wedding', she has written other published articles.

She is the founder of Life Counsels Services, an Organization involved in HIV/AIDS prevention activities in Nigeria.

An ordained minister of the Gospel, she has served in various ministry capacities and is currently an associate pastor with her home church, Faith-filled Christian Assembly, Iju, Lagos, Nigeria.

She was married to Rev. Dr. John. O. Nnogo for thirty-four years before his home call to glory in December 2003.

The Lord blessed them with six grown up children.

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