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(PhD)

Kingdom Marriage: Finding Purpose in Love

Finding Purpose in Love



Emmanuella Espinosa

**Kingdom Marriage: Finding Purpose
in Love. Finding Purpose in Love**

«Издательские решения»

Espinosa E. T.

Kingdom Marriage: Finding Purpose in Love. Finding Purpose in Love
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This book entails true life experience and touches on love and spirituality leading to purpose. It is not merely a guide; it is a heartfelt invitation to explore the depths of Godly marriages and the profound impact they can have on our lives. With each page, I aim to share the beauty of love that transcends the ordinary, drawing from personal experiences that have shaped my understanding of what it means to truly partner with someone in a covenant relationship through divine help from God.

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Kingdom Marriage: Finding Purpose in Love Finding Purpose in Love

Emmanuella Torkwase Espinosa

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SYNOPSIS

In a world that often seems to prioritize fleeting connections over enduring bonds, the concept of a kingdom marriage stands as a beacon of hope, illuminating the transformative power of love rooted in faith. This book is not merely a guide; it is a heartfelt invitation to explore the depths of Godly marriages and the profound impact they can have on our lives. With each page, I aim to share the beauty of love that transcends the ordinary, drawing from personal experiences that have shaped my understanding of what it means to truly partner with someone in a covenant relationship through divine help from God.

As I reflect on my own journey of how God prepared me for a covenant marriage, I am reminded of the moments that tested our commitment, the challenges that sought to pull us apart, and the divine interventions that brought us closer together. Each trial was a lesson, each victory a testament to the strength found in a marriage built on faith. Through these stories, I hope to inspire others to embrace the idea that marriage is not just a legal contract but a sacred covenant — a reflection of God's love for us.

In these pages, you will find practical insights, biblical wisdom, and encouraging testimonies that affirm the belief that love, when centered on God, can withstand any storm. Kingdom marriage is about more than just coexistence; it is about thriving together, nurturing one another's dreams, and walking hand in hand on the path that God has laid out for us. It is a journey that requires intentionality, prayer, and a willingness to grow both individually and as a couple.

As you embark on this exploration with me, I encourage you to open your heart and mind to the possibilities that a faith-based marriage can bring. Let us discover together how love, when anchored in hope and faith, can transform not only our relationships but also our lives, communities, and the world around us. Welcome to a journey of understanding, healing, and divine love — welcome to the Kingdom Marriage.

Marriage is a complex and multifaceted institution that has been a fundamental part of human society for centuries. It is often defined as a legally and socially recognized union between individuals, typically characterized by emotional, romantic, and sometimes spiritual bonds. While the concept of marriage can vary significantly across different cultures and religions, several common themes are often present.

###1. **Cultural Significance**

Marriage is deeply embedded in cultural traditions and practices. In many societies, it is seen as a rite of passage, symbolizing the transition from single life to a partnership. Wedding ceremonies often reflect cultural heritage, with unique rituals, attire, and customs that celebrate the union.

###2. **Legal Aspects**

In most countries, marriage carries legal implications, including rights and responsibilities related to property, healthcare, and inheritance. Legal recognition of marriage can provide partners with specific benefits, such as tax advantages, spousal rights, and access to joint insurance plans.

###3. **Emotional and Social Aspects**

At its core, marriage is about companionship, love, and support. It provides a framework for individuals to build a life together, share experiences, and navigate challenges. The emotional bond formed in marriage can lead to a sense of security, intimacy, and fulfillment.

###4. **Challenges and Growth**

While marriage can be a source of joy, it also comes with challenges. Partners may face conflicts, differing expectations, and external pressures. Successful marriages often require effective communication, compromise, and a willingness to grow together.

Couples may seek counseling or support to navigate difficult times.

###5. **Evolving Definitions**

The concept of marriage has evolved over time, especially in relation to geographical roles, sexuality, and individual rights. For example, same-sex marriage has become legally binding in many countries around the world, challenging the traditional notion of marriage and broadening its definition to include diverse unions. However, this does not mean it should be accepted as a substitute for the fundamental purpose of traditional marriage, which is the exclusive union between a man and a woman who contribute to society and procreation. Since the concept of marriage as God originally intended it has been challenged by various uncomfortable perspectives in our ever-evolving world, it is important to honestly understand the fundamental purposes of marriage. This leads me to the sole purpose of writing this book on marriage according to the principles of God's kingdom.

###6. **Personal Reflection**

For many, marriage is a deeply personal commitment that reflects individual values, beliefs, and aspirations. It can be a source of personal growth, as partners learn to navigate their differences and support each other's dreams.

Marriage is a significant aspect of human relationships, encompassing legal, cultural, emotional, and social dimensions. It can offer profound rewards and challenges, ultimately serving as a mirror of society's values and a foundation for family life.

As societal norms continue to evolve, so too does the understanding of what marriage means, making it a dynamic and ever-relevant topic.

Marriage traditions vary widely across different cultures, each with its unique customs, rituals, and meanings. Here are some specific cultural traditions associated with marriage in various societies:

###1. **India: Saptapadi**

In many Indian weddings, particularly among Hindus, the Saptapadi (Seven Steps) is a significant ritual. The couple takes seven steps together, each representing a vow they make to each other, such as promises of love, fidelity, and support. The ceremony is often accompanied by vibrant celebrations and rituals, including the exchanging of garlands and elaborate feasting.

###2. **Japan: Shinto Ceremony**

Traditional Japanese weddings often take place in Shinto shrines. The couple wears traditional attire: the bride in a white kimono (shiromuku) and the groom in a black kimono. A key ritual is the san-san-kudo, where the couple takes three sips from three cups of sake, symbolizing their union and the joining of their families.

###3. **Mexico: Lazo**

In Mexican weddings, a lazo (a rope or floral wreath) is placed around the couple's shoulders after they exchange vows, symbolizing their union and the binding of their lives together. This is often accompanied by a Catholic mass and vibrant festivities with music, dancing, and traditional foods.

###4. **Greece: Stefana**

In Greek Orthodox weddings, the couple is crowned with stefana (wedding crowns) made of flowers or metal, symbolizing their roles as king and queen of their own home. The crowns are connected by a ribbon, representing their unity. The couple then walks around the altar three times, signifying their journey together.

###5. **China: Tea Ceremony**

In Chinese weddings, the tea ceremony is a vital tradition. The couple serves tea to their elders as a sign of respect and gratitude. In return, the elders offer blessings and gifts, often in the form of red envelopes containing money, symbolizing good fortune and prosperity.

###6. **African Traditions: Bride Price**

In many African cultures, the practice of paying a bride price (lobola) is common. This involves the groom or his family providing gifts or money to the bride's family as a sign of respect and commitment. The wedding ceremony may also include vibrant dances, music, and traditional attire that reflect the couple's heritage.

###7. **Scottish Tradition: Handfasting**

In Scotland, hand-fasting is an ancient custom where the couple's hands are tied together with a ribbon or cord, symbolizing their union. This tradition can occur during a wedding ceremony or as part of an engagement, and it emphasizes the couple's commitment to each other.

###8. **Jewish Tradition: Chuppah**

In Jewish weddings, the couple stands under a chuppah (a canopy) during the ceremony, symbolizing their new home together. The ceremony often includes the signing of the ketubah (marriage contract) and the breaking of a glass, representing the fragility of relationships and the joy of the occasion.

###9. **Filipino Tradition: Unity Candle**

In Filipino weddings, a unity candle ceremony is common, where the couple lights a single candle together from two separate candles. This symbolizes their coming together as one family. The ceremony is often rich with cultural elements, including traditional attire and music.

###10. **Nordic Tradition: Ring Exchange**

In Nordic countries, the exchange of rings is a significant part of the marriage ceremony. Traditionally, wedding rings are worn on the left hand, symbolizing love and commitment. Some couples also participate in a “handfasting” ceremony, similar to the Scottish tradition.

These traditions reflect the diverse ways in which cultures celebrate the union of two individuals, highlighting the importance of community, family, and shared values in the institution of marriage.

In a world where marriage is only seen as a celebration but not as an institution that should be taken seriously and nurtured by the individuals that have agreed to come into the marriage there is need for us to go back to the sole purpose of marriage and why God intended for us to be married and stay married. A marriage involves the coming together of two separate individuals a man and a woman to be joined together as one by a legal agreement in the presence of two or several witnesses in an event called wedding. A kingdom marriage however, is a marriage that is God centered.

Kingdom marriage, also known as covenant marriage, is a marriage in which a man and a woman agree to unite as one in a marriage covenant known as Holy Matrimony for the purposes of the Kingdom of God and to fulfill God’s will for marriage on earth, as the spouses seek to use their gifts and desires to accomplish God’s works by serving others and advancing the Kingdom of God here on earth so that God’s name may be glorified.

Marriage according to the kingdom of God illustrates His original plan for us: that we be His bride and He, our husband, Jesus Christ. Therefore, couples called to enter into marriage according to the kingdom of God, also known as covenant marriage, prepare for this union, which depends on God. Since God is at the center of this union, couples submit to God first before submitting to each other in marriage, and the Holy Spirit is the threefold bond that unites them.

In contrast, a worldly marriage doesn’t put God at the center, but rather focuses on other aspects that might unite the couple. Therefore, divorce can easily occur in a worldly marriage, as it is based on selfish motives and carnal purposes. In a worldly marriage, problems of division, jealousy, pride, manipulation, and control can arise. On the other hand, a covenant marriage is not governed by selfishness or lust, but by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. While a worldly marriage may be driven by lust, a covenant marriage is guided by the Spirit. Therefore, the stirring of the heart upon experiencing a surge of emotions when meeting someone is a sign that this person is not good for you; therefore, it is dangerous to marry such a person, since it is their flesh that makes the decisions, not the Holy Spirit guiding them through discernment.

In writing about a “kingdom marriage,” I define it as a sacred and purposeful union between two individuals that is founded on the principles of faith, love, and commitment to God. It goes beyond

the traditional understanding of marriage as a mere legal contract or societal expectation. Here are some key elements that encapsulate the essence of a kingdom marriage:

— ****Covenantal Relationship****: A kingdom marriage is rooted in the belief that marriage is a divine covenant instituted by God. This means that both partners commit not only to each other but also to God, recognizing that their relationship is a reflection of His love and faithfulness.

— ****Faith-Centered****: At the heart of a kingdom marriage is a shared faith in God. Both partners prioritize their spiritual growth and seek to align their marriage with biblical teachings. This foundation of faith fosters resilience and unity in the face of challenges.

— ****Mutual Respect and Honor****: In a kingdom marriage, there is a deep respect for one another as individuals created in the image of God. This respect translates into honoring each other's dreams, goals, and unique contributions to the relationship.

— ****Purposeful Partnership****: A kingdom marriage is marked by a shared sense of purpose. Couples in a kingdom marriage work together to fulfill their God-given calling, whether in their personal lives, family, or community. They support each other in their individual missions while also pursuing a collective vision.

— ****Unconditional Love and Grace****: Inspired by God's love for us, a kingdom marriage emphasizes the importance of unconditional love, forgiveness, and grace. Couples learn to navigate conflicts with compassion and understanding, recognizing that they are both imperfect beings on a journey of growth.

— ****Joyful Servanthood****: In a kingdom marriage, both partners embrace the role of servant-leaders. They seek to uplift and support one another, finding joy in serving each other and their family. This selflessness cultivates a nurturing environment where love can flourish.

— ****Community and Accountability****: Kingdom marriages thrive within a supportive community of fellow believers. Couples engage in accountability, mentorship, and fellowship, recognizing that they are part of a larger body of Christ. This connection provides encouragement and strength during life's challenges.

By defining a kingdom marriage in these terms, I aim to convey that it is not just about the relationship between two people, but also about their relationship with God and their commitment to embodying His love in every aspect of their lives. This understanding invites readers to aspire to a higher standard of love and partnership, grounded in faith and purpose. A kingdom marriage promotes God and His kingdom.

CHAPTER ONE

ADAPTING A KINGDOM MINDSET AFTER A ROUGH START IN LIFE

It was a fantastic moment to reflect as I recounted the circumstances that led me to trust and believe in God's word for a kingdom marriage, which would be made manifest in the physical world years later. As a child, I always prayed and wished that my parents would be a happy and loving couple because I wanted our home to be beautiful, peaceful and warm so that my siblings and I could enjoy the unity of our parents' union. But that was a wish that never came true in the family I come from. I experienced the toxic relationship my mom and dad had. I witnessed the constant fights and arguments, the sleepless nights my dad spent just to start a fight. Oh, yes! As a child, I went to break up fights between my dad and my mom, my mum's terrifying screams of "He's killed me, ooh, Torkwase, your dad wants to kill me, come! Come! Come!", while I, young and naive, went and could do nothing because I was caught between my mom and my dad, who was bigger than me and was hitting my mum when I walked in, I was helpless, all I could do was say dad, stop hitting mum.

The tension was so high the room felt like a sophisticated cage. Then, the anger emanating from my father was so intense and felt undeniably justified. His gaze was so violent that when I finally grasped the meaning of domestic violence, it took me years to recover from the trauma because I witnessed it firsthand, not from the outside, but from within the confines of my home. The domestic violence was directed at my beloved mother, who essentially stood up and took the lead in caring for my siblings and me without any resentment toward my father. According to his own conception of marriage, he had repeatedly told my mother that she and everything she owned belonged to him, while my father's property belonged exclusively to him. This assertion harks back to the history of my country's culture, which seems to view women as property that a man buys when he goes to pay the parents' dowry.

As a consequence, the fundamental purpose of marriage has been thwarted by the cultural belief systems that most African nations maintain to this day. This has led many malicious men, with the means to pay the dowry, to become possessive of their wives and deny them their legal rights as equals in marriage, manipulating them in various ways to succumb to unfair and biased treatment by their husbands, and even harsher treatment by their in-laws in some cases. In the case of my parents this happened when my father allowed his mother have a say about the matters of his personal life and marriage and for peace to reign in the family my mother endured a lot of hardship in her marriage. Even though, my mother embraced pleasing her people especially her in-laws at that time of her marriage to my father, she still experienced hardship in her home just by being nice and accommodating to her in laws.

Trying to please others could lead us to a terrible place in life and in our destiny. The one we should strive to please is God, and what we are capable of doing for everyone is based on the love and grace that God bestows upon us. That said, I saw and heard how my paternal grandmother mistreated my mother, trying to control everything that happened in our family. She dictated the kind of food my father had to buy us and demanded that my mother hand over her entire salary to my father every time she received it, which, in her opinion, was a sign of a good wife if my mother could do that. But when my mother rebelled against her advice and refused, she became her enemy. She began encouraging my father to let my mother take on the financial responsibility of buying clothes and paying bills for my siblings and me, and even encouraged him to bring unknown women into their home. Then one day in 2003, my mother went to see my father because he hadn't returned from his mother's house, which was an hour away from our family home. She drove there and found a woman with my father in the room where they usually stayed when we visited his mother. When my mother

asked him why he hadn't returned home as usual after spending the weekend at his mother's, he didn't know what to say, but seeing the woman with him gave my mother the answer she needed. My mother was furious to discover that this woman was her own English student, whom she was teaching at the time. My mother started dragging the woman out, I suppose out of betrayal and rage upon learning what had just happened between her husband and the woman, who was also a student of my father's, since my parents worked as professors at the same institution of higher learning at the time. While my mother was hitting the woman, my father's mother came to the defense of my mother's student and began hitting my mother, which was terrible. My mother belongs to a different tribe (Idoma), while the student was from my father's tribe (Tiv). Because my father's mother was a tribal woman, she chose the stranger over my mother. That day, my mother came home with her forehead covered in bruises, and it was devastating to see her like that. At that moment, I couldn't understand why my father had done that or why he had allowed his mother to hit his wife over a stranger. The people my mother called family chose a stranger over her, and this made me understand now that family is not something we should build based solely on feelings, but on a purpose and God's divine help.

I observed how most women in my state became providers and men became dictators in their homes, contributing nothing to the financial, spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of their wives and children, but only attending events like traditional weddings to receive praise and recognition for raising their children. I wondered why this was happening and why no one was making an effort to uphold the biblical values of marriage found in Scripture (Ephesians 5), even though most families profess to be Christian and continue to rely on traditional forms of marriage that only benefit the men in that society. Then, I told myself that I didn't want to become part of the statistics of marriages marked by gender bias and the selfishness of self-centered parents who only seek recognition in happy moments like weddings, to take credit for something in which they haven't actively participated. I longed to see a shift in the narrative surrounding fatherhood, motherhood, and marriage as a whole, to serve and glorify God, honoring the core guidelines written in Scripture, which are for the benefit of believers and useful for doctrine, reproof, and correction. As they say, wisdom is useful for guidance.

As I grew up and began to feel attracted to the opposite sex, I prayed every night asking the good Lord Jesus Christ to give me a man who would love and revere Him in our marriage. I remember praying that I didn't want to marry a man like my father and asking Him (God) to please help me choose the right partner. I also remember ending many relationships with men as soon as we started talking and getting to know each other, and I sensed, or perhaps noticed, some trait of my father's personality in them. I was very cautious and careful when dealing with men because I was terrified of getting involved with someone like my father. It was so traumatic that I would enter and exit relationships without becoming emotionally attached. I realized that it's possible to love someone but still be emotionally unavailable because there's no emotional connection with that person. I became extremely observant and watchful, and although I genuinely cared, I was never ready to settle down with someone who displayed any of my father's traits in a relationship. I viewed marriage as a prison sentence growing up because I didn't have a clear understanding of God's intended meaning.

Furthermore, having witnessed some forms of toxic parenting in the society in which I grew up made me perceive marriage as a form of slavery that parents send their daughters into to satisfy their own selfish interests. Given that, some toxic parents used their daughters to improve their lifestyle, encouraging them to marry men they didn't care about or even know, simply because these men could support the family. Thus, even after the wedding ceremony, if the daughters were subjected to cruel treatment and harsh realities, in most cases they felt pressured to remain in abusive homes to continue funding their family's lifestyle. Since some daughters may be financially unable to leave an abusive marriage due to the cost of repaying the dowry upon separation, some of these abusive husbands may

demand repayment of all the money they have spent on them and their families before they can leave the abusive marriage. Because some toxic parents allow the “upgrading” process to begin as soon as men show interest in their daughters, presenting a long list of what the man must buy and do for the woman’s family, some families may demand that a car be bought for them or even that a house be built or renovated before traditional marriage rites are performed for their daughters, making it difficult for them to want to leave a toxic marriage. The second type of toxic parents often demands help and favours from his daughters, especially if they are the eldest. These fathers automatically transfer the burden of their younger ones to her and her new family, to the point that the husband feels overwhelmed by the excessive demands and begins to lose respect for his family. This becomes a serious problem that eventually causes difficulties in their home or even leads to divorce, and she ends up returning to her parents’ home.

On the contrary, the positive aspect of knowing and walking with the Lord Jesus Christ is the light He shines on the darkness in which you might be languishing due to ignorance stemming from a lack of truth and the knowledge needed to climb out of that dark place in your life. I remember the nights I cried and the days I fasted, pleading with God to help my parents reconcile and restore peace to our family, when my mother finally made the decision to leave my father in September, 2005, taking my siblings and me with her to start a new life as a single mother after 15 years of marriage. I come from a society where children from single-parent families weren’t fully respected, and children from two-parent families were advised against marrying women from single-parent families because they were perceived as poorly educated and likely to divorce like their parents. Furthermore, the stereotype of being ignored by peers sometimes because you only mention your mother in most conversations about your family is quite discouraging.

From then on, I fervently wished that my parents would reconcile and that we would be one big, happy family again. But everything changed the day I lay in bed praying, asking God to help my parents reconcile, because I wanted to return to the house we had just left. In the middle of my silent prayer, my mother came into the room and said, “If you’re praying for your father and me to get back together, you’d better stop, because I’ve decided never to go back to your father, and I won’t remarry. I will do everything I can to make sure that you and your siblings receive the best possible education.” That devastated me and made me stop praying for my parents’ happy marriage and instead started praying for my own happy marriage in the future. Knowing that I couldn’t do it alone, I began to draw closer to Jesus. Even though I didn’t know how or what to pray for in a marriage, I continued to pray and trust God for a happy and peaceful marriage. The importance of prayer is fundamental, as it is one of the keys to manifesting the miracles you desire in your life. I remember praying that the Lord would guide me to a place where I could meet and marry the husband He (God) had destined for me, to give Him glory. Now I see God’s hand in my life, because He not only heard my prayers, but He answered them according to His will and in His time.

My journey toward kingdom marriage according to the precepts of the Kingdom began when I allowed God to lead me to serve in a state where I met a beautiful and loving woman of God, Mrs. Excel, who was the principal of the high school where I served as a member of the Nigerian National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in 2017. She was like a mother to me while I worked at the school, she made sure I was okay. She would sometimes bring me food at the hostel and invited me to her home on several occasions, which was a blessing for me because it opened my heart to the possibility of having the happy and peaceful marriage that God desired for my life. I saw how the woman all the staff were afraid to cross became so relaxed, caring, and sweet when she took me to spend Easter vacation with her lovely, happy family. It was truly powerful and inspired me to believe in God and ask for the happy family I had always longed for. Now, seeing Mrs. Excel revere God and submit to her husband, and seeing how he loved her, how they treated each other with respect, helped one another, and were so kind, their daughter felt so comfortable around them and honored them equally. To this day, that image of a peaceful and happy family I witnessed has never left my mind. I realized

that life can be what you see, and not just what you don't see, because seeing can shape your thinking and illuminate your imagination with a range of images you never thought possible.

On the contrary, after my year of service, I felt the urge to leave my homeland for another, so I prayed and fasted, asking God where He wanted me to go. Then the passage of Scripture came to mind where the Lord tells Abraham to leave his homeland and go to the land He (God) will show him, and I felt a surge of peace in my heart. Then I knew that the Lord was calling me to leave my homeland and go to the land He will show me, just as He did with Abraham.

"The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you." — Genesis 12:1 (NIV)

My journey from my homeland to another land began by faith and obedience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. What started as a simple thought became a living reality. Our thoughts and imaginations are very powerful; that's why Scripture speaks of "guarding our hearts, for everything we do flows from them". (Proverbs 4:23). It became a reality for me because I thought it, imagined it, and expressed it just as the Lord placed it in my heart and gave me His word. It is written:

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us," — Ephesians 3:20.

CHAPTER TWO

LETTING GO TO FIND PURPOSE

It all began in the early hours of the morning before the break of the dawn, even before the cock crowed. The quest of wanting to follow a path that leads to purpose was all that was in my mind. So, I searched and found a way and this way is no ordinary way. It was a way that requires total submission to the will of the Father who gives life, hence I was moved to start applying for admission online I knew deep within me that I was supposed to leave my motherland to a far destination. A destination I did not know about, a destination that kept pulling me to stay up and find it. Thus, before then, I applied to over 10 different schools in different countries, but one thing led to another, and I ended up with one excuse for each of these schools. I stayed up late at night searching for that destination that kept calling me, until that particular day that I came across a school which had what I was looking forward to studying in my second degree. Been that as it may, I knew I would get accepted but did not know how. So, I applied fortunately for me I got a quick response the next day to send my documents for further evaluation, which I did instantly. Notwithstanding, I liked the sensations I was getting and all, but I was skeptical about moving to that particular country due to the information surrounding it. It is a place where folks are so scared of visiting talk more of staying for a long duration, therefore this made me hesitant. More so, it felt abstract to me living there since they speak a different language and not English. When I got another response that my documents have been checked and I stand a chance to be admitted immediately, provided that I get all of the documents legalized and notarized for an interview to be setup by the person in charge of my programme of interest. I ignored this for a while and kept looking for admission in other English-speaking countries. It wasn't until I told my first friend, Carmella, an older sister anyone would be lucky to have, that she encouraged me to try. She said, "I'll never know if this is where my destiny lies." Even though she was far away, in another country, her words touched me deeply, and she promised to convince my mother to help me with the necessary funding. My mother was also hesitant because the place was so far away, it was very cold, and it was a country where English wasn't spoken, and I told her I would easily adapt to their way of life since I am a very adaptable person, so she should worry about my adaptability God will help me. My sister returned to the country just to make sure I was keeping our promise to try. Nevertheless, I started all the paperwork, and I'm so grateful for the mother I have. She made sure I lacked nothing good because she did everything humanly possible to raise us in a comfortable environment. My mother is an ambitious, goal-oriented, and passionate woman who pursues her dreams and, above all, is devoted to her family. She keeps her word; she often told us that, as long as God kept her alive, she would do everything possible to help her children reach the highest level in their chosen careers and professions, and that she would support them in any good decision they made in life that contributed to their happiness. May the Lord bless her soul and grant her the grace to live a long, healthy, and fulfilling life, so that she may reap the fruits of her labor and glorify the Lord's name on earth! As I headed out to follow my purpose of making a difference in my career, everything was moving smoothly, and I finally got a visa to Russia to start my master's degree. Moving forward in life entails courage, persistence, and determination. Even though, I had no clue of what to expect when I arrived there, I had hope that everything was working for my good and the faith that I will be favoured wherever God has destined me to go, I will dominate and flourish. In all these events happening in my life I never left God out of my business, I remember praying that He should make everything favourable for me if it is His divine will for me to leave my motherland to a distant country to make a positive impact as I go there. I prayed to find a helper one who will see that I get registered successfully in the desired programme of my choice, since I could not speak

nor understand the Russian language as a new bee who just arrived a foreign destination. And it all happened that my requests were granted.

Whereas, before leaving I filled in a form online to get a buddy in the school who would accompany me to do all the necessary things that I needed to be initiated into the academic system as a student. So, a young friendly lady called Julia contacted me few days to the day of my departure and inquired of me about the day of my arrival I was arriving in Russia. She said “Hi, my name is Julia I am your buddy, you filled the form that you needed a buddy to help you around on your arrival to the city, I volunteered to help”. I was so excited, and I told her I was glad she reached out to me and from that day we kept in touch. She made sure I got a place to stay as soon as I arrived. I took off after a few weeks to the land that was abstract to me at first but now was becoming a reality.

On the 26th of September 2018, I got to Nnamdi Azikiwe Airport Abuja as I reached the airport, I was ushered in to be checked in. But my luggage weighed more than the amount that was stipulated by the Turkish Airline and I said to myself “there was no way I am going to drop any of those items my mum has helped me in packing” I was silently praying while, I was standing on the queue to be checked in with my luggage, then I was handed a form to fill the destination of where I am going to. While filling the form a girl approached me and said hello with a smile and I responded with a smile, so she went ahead to ask about a section of the form that was given to us to fill before check in. I told her and asked where she was headed, she told me and I told her mine, then a man approached us and she introduced him to me as her uncle, I greeted him and he asked me where I was going for my studies I told him, he was happy and said, “That’s great”! With a smile on his face and He went further, to say “Since, you and my niece will be boarding the same flight please take care of her for me, as this is her first time to enter the plane to a faraway place” I told him “No problem I will see to that and make sure she doesn’t feel lonely”. He went ahead to ask where my luggage was. I pointed at my luggage, and he followed me to where I kept the luggage and asked me if I had checked the weight, I told him yes, but it was more than the required weight and I don’t want to drop any of my items. He immediately carried my luggage to the place where it would be checked, and he told them that I was his younger one and I needed all these items in my luggage. So, what can be done? He asked. The personnel in charge told him to pay for extra baggage he came and met me to inquire of how much I can pay I told him I don’t have that amount, but I gave him the amount I was having on me he went to pay it up and made sure all my belongings were successfully checked in before he left. As, we all stood to bid farewell, he whispered to me that he works at the airport and that he just finished his shift for that day and that if he was still on shift, I would not have been charged for extra baggage because they have a right to help assist their loved ones when they are been checked in. I thanked him and Mercy, who is his niece and I went in to wait for our flight that would be taking off at 11pm that day. Trust me, whenever you do not see anything happening physically there is something happening in the spirit realm. We can only take charge of our lives when we learn how to invite God into our daily lives. If I had not invited God to help me in my quest of pursuing a second degree, I won’t be fortunate enough to have attracted the kind of favour I was attracting to help me in ways I could not have imagined. One can call it coincidence, but I will say is favour and grace packed in one form. How far your life goes is determined by how far you are willing to push until something remarkable happens that puts you in a position for more remarkability in life. I knew there was something different about me when most of my mates back then in my undergraduate days wanted to finish and just get married without any plan of impacting lives other than to be called a wife and mother. However, I believed there was more to life than just becoming a wife and a mother. Do not get me wrong but I feel going outside your own personal life and touching lives matter a lot too. They are people who need the talents and gifts you carry inside of you but how will you know you carry such gifts within you when you are self-absorbed and are fixated about you and yours alone. I came across a video about Pastor T.D Jakes when he was interviewed by Oprah Wilfred about “How to find your Purpose in Life” And He said, “Purpose is found in what you have passion in doing with

ease that tends to bring joy and peace to others anything outside that is not a life of purpose because we are called to serve others and so by doing that we are happy”. Living a life of selfishness gives a person dissatisfaction and a life of self makes one go into depression after a while. Finding oneself is hidden in finding your purpose in life. Start by asking what makes you happy? What drives you? What gives you a sense of belonging? What gives you the courage to move forward in life? What do you do that people have pointed out that you do with ease and gives them joy when you do it?

Alas! The constant nudge within me was being fulfilled as I proceeded to the path of satisfying my desires for a better career life.

It was the beginning of winter when I arrived safely in a new land called Yekaterinburg on September 28, 2018. Although I was in an unfamiliar territory and didn't understand or speak the language, I felt right at home; a warm feeling washed over me as soon as I arrived. Then, the Lord gave me a word that He would show me His wonderful goodness in the city, and I listened to that word and prayed with it daily until I began to see evidence of God's favour in my life.

“Praise be to the Lord, for he showed me the wonders of his love when I was in a city under siege.” — Psalm 31:21.

I was in a relationship with someone then before I travelled to Russia and this person was so good to me and we didn't have issues but I felt something was not right with the relationship.

It was dawn and I had to wake up in the early hours of the morning. The cold was becoming intense as the autumn season was coming to an end. I woke up feeling excited about my enrollment to school even though I didn't know what to expect in my new school. As I prepared myself to go out, I felt like a nervous wreck thinking how things were going to unfold.

I was in the queue waiting to enter the admission office, to get myself enrolled for a master's degree in food biotechnology. While talking to my buddy and asking her details on what I need to submit I heard a male's voice behind asking if they have started issuing visa to the students who reapplied for visa renewal. The person was speaking in English, and I turned and saw a guy of slightly above average height approaching where I was standing, so I briskly turned to face my buddy and we continued talking. I was trying to avoid contact with this guy. A small still voice whispered to me “what if he is your husband?” I giggled and dismissed the idea. Not because he wasn't handsome enough or anything like that, but because I thought it was absurd to marry someone I barely knew, and he was from another continent.

Moreover, I was still dragging on a relationship I wasn't sure about, hoping it is the one I needed. However, the whisper continued, and he said, “Look, now he's going to talk to you.” I was just praying he wouldn't come near me or speak to me, but he did, and asked, “Are you here to pick up your new visa?” I said no, and he proceeded to ask if I knew the visa was being issued at that moment. At that point, my buddy stepped in to help him with the answer. I was busy tapping on my phone, and he gestured to me, asking where I was from. I told him I was from Nigeria. “And you?” I asked. “I'm from Brazil,” he said. “Please, how do you say good afternoon and how are you in my language?” I told him I actually understand two local languages because my parents are from two different tribes in Benue State, Nigeria that speak different languages.

In Idoma language which is my mum's language good afternoon is “Uma yeno. How you are in Idoma is “Abole”? He tried to pronounce it, but he could not get it quite right. It was nice knowing he wanted to speak my local language.

Moving on, my buddy had classes and she had to leave me because she was getting late for her classes but my new friend went in to ask about his visa if it was ready I was still standing on the queue while I waited for my time to enter the office, my new friend let's call him Fred, came out he saw

me standing alone and he inquired about my buddy I told him she went for her classes so He asked “Are you all alone?” I said yes and he offered to help me by saying okay “if you need help, I can help you”. I was like thank you, so he offered to help me, I allowed him so we went into the office together he spoke to the lady in charge of admission and she gave me some forms to fill while he waited for me we went afterwards to the insurance lady and she gave me a form to fill for insurance I picked the highest form of insurance even though he kicked against it telling me this is too much I should go for the average one which he got I was like no I needed a higher amount of insurance so he watched me why I got the highest form of insurance when we were done from the office he asked me if I want to take coffee I said yes and he asked if I was hungry I said I was hungry so he said OK let me get coffee afterwards we would go and eat something somewhere. After getting coffee we went to other offices to inquire about accommodation in the school dormitory because I needed to get an accommodation in the dormitory. He asked me to save his number I wanted to save it but he collected my phone and he dialed his phone number and said I can save it in case I needed his help another time. I saved his number in my phone. Later he now suggested we should go home and asked if I knew the way back to the hostel I was lodging. I said I don’t know but I can try he said he will take me home but he insisted that we both should go and eat before he takes me home so he took me to his dormitory where he prepared something for us to eat after eating we got talking and he asked me about my family, how many are we? What do my parents do for a living? I told him and he told me his dad is a medical doctor and mother works in a bank and that he’s the first child of his parents and he had 2 brothers. So why we were talking my phone rang it was my ex calling to ask me how it all went with the registration, I told him how everything went and I found a new friend that was able to take me around and so on it was of great help to me. After few minutes I told my new friend that I would like to go back home he said okay we should go home when we were going home I felt really cold he offered to give me his jacket also why would you give me your jacket what will you wear he said I should not worry, I should take it I collected the jacket on my way to the hostel where I was lodged and I told him thank you as I collected his jacket and wore. When we got to the lodge we entered, and he sat down with some students who also were just newly admitted students at the same university that we were enrolled. The people were friendly, and Fred was too, so we exchanged pleasantries. I excused myself and went to take a shower. He said he was going home. I walked him to the door, and he hugged me. He pecked me on the cheek and forehead. I was stunned because it was the first time gentleman had ever shown me so much affection. As he left, I felt a shiver for the first time. It was a strange feeling because I thought, “This is the first person who’s been so kind to me in this new place. What does he want from me?” since I wasn’t used to such displays of affection from people I barely knew. But I just ignored it. At that time, I was in a relationship with someone who had already introduced me to his family back home. So I wasn’t thinking about having a relationship here; I just wanted to focus on finishing my studies and having something to do. I would try to move somewhere else later, but here I was, feeling a rush of dopamine down my spine from a complete stranger who was so nice and friendly, and had just given me his jacket when I was cold. It was like watching a movie, but at that moment it was real. Later I discovered that, in Fred’s home country, the way to greet loved ones was with a hug and a kiss.

Later on, I called my friend and explained everything. She said, “Oh, friend, go ahead, this is just a gesture of pure love.” So I knelt down and said, “Oh, Lord, I don’t want to cheat on the person I was in a relationship with at the time, and what does this Fred guy want from me? Please, Lord, don’t let me fall into the wrong hands. I don’t want to be unfaithful in any relationship, but I do want to be faithful.” Looking back, I really was loyal, but there was something about this new guy; his spirit was appealing. I felt a sense of harmony and welcome, and I was optimistic about this new place.

Although, the gentleman I was in a relationship at that point in time was a Christian even though we prayed together before I travelled and we kept in touch daily I still couldn’t understand why my

peace left me. I clearly recall the dream I had and in this dream I saw this gentleman with another lady which was strange because he was faithful and honest with me so why the weird dream, then, as I kept seeking God for answers to show me if this guy is the one He has ordained to be my husband I heard within me “let him go and focus on me I will bring your husband to you” I tried to brush it off but whenever I prayed about it, I still heard the same voice within me say “let him go he is not your husband, I have another person for you focus on me” but now I know it was the Lord Jesus speaking to me because He had good plans for me not evil plans although the man was good doesn’t mean he would have been good for me and it could have worked but maybe won’t birth purpose and wouldn’t bring the desired glory to God. I told God during my prayer time that if truly is the Lord asking me to let this gentleman go then, the Lord Himself should be the one to cause us to break up without any problems but let it be done peacefully and let God bless him with a job and a good wife too since he didn’t do anything bad to me but he has been kind to me all through our relationship and God answered my prayers and the relationship ended in a good note. But he asked me before we went our separate ways, if I had found someone in the new place hence the break up I said no but I told him I felt a strong and urgent desire of wanting to focus more on discovering myself and knowing God and I really wanted to please God with my life. I encouraged him to consider leaving the country to study abroad, probably join me where I am, so that he can also see and experience life in a different lens than what he sees life to be. I sent scholarship links to him so that he can apply and join me, he did apply and got positive feedback from schools but he couldn’t follow up with the process and was giving me excuses, right then I knew he wasn’t my future husband because as an go-getting lady I needed a man that is also ambitious about self-improvement. Few days later, he informed me that he got a job and this confirmed that God indeed was ordering my steps and he was not my husband but someone else’s husband. It was a thing of joy when he said he got a new job. Since at that time he was seriously looking for a job and I wanted him to be happy even if I wasn’t going to be in his life anymore and it was great knowing he was gainfully employed.

At that moment, I had so many questions running through my head. So I prayed, I hoped, and I begged God to give me clarity.

I wish I could know how he felt and what he wants from me. Did he like me the way I thought he did? Did he ever love me? Was he just being nice? Is he simply a good person? I really wish I knew right now. I had a lot of restlessness in my heart about letting go of my ex maybe because

It is best to listen to God regarding our relationships so that we do not end up marrying someone else’s spouse, which will cause us to lose the original purpose for which God created us — to walk with Him and realize the meaning of life. While it may seem counterintuitive in the moment, the Lord may ask you to give up a relationship or something you hold dear, rest assured that it will make sense later as you obey God and allow Him to lead you toward a purpose in life that aligns with His will.

Granting, I was no longer interested in the relationship with my ex; I just wanted to seek God, to listen to Him, to do His will, and to know Him better. I simply wanted to be in God’s will because I felt deep in my heart that my life was going to change for the better. Therefore, as part of my consecration to the Lord, I exchanged beauty for ashes. I shaved my head as a way of rededicating myself to God because I had begun a spiritual journey that I didn’t know how it would turn out, but I knew for sure that I was on the right path. The weight of praying for Fred was heavy on my heart, so I kept praying, asking if he was the one. There was something different about him that made me seek God more because I wanted to know what it was about him that was different. I didn’t desire him in a sexual way, but I desired something deeper, something only God could satisfy. Over time, I realized that I was finding my purpose on this journey I had embarked upon because, thanks to meeting this stranger, I found purpose in love by surrendering all my desires to God.

Love isn't just a word; it's an action. The action I took in following the guidance of the Holy Spirit led me to understand that my purpose was in God, showing me that this stranger was more to him than I thought.

For it is written: "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but indeed and in truth."
— I John 3:18 (NKJV)

Consequently, the following week, he came and helped me carry my luggage to the university residence and wanted us to get something to eat, but I don't know what happened; it just didn't happen. He invited me to church the following Sunday, and we went together. He paid for the taxi there and back, so on the way back, I asked him why he wasn't responding to my messages promptly. He said he didn't like chatting on WhatsApp because it was time-consuming and that if someone wanted to talk to him, it was better to call him. I didn't agree with that idea, but the taxi driver supported his point of view. Although I wasn't entirely convinced, I tried to see things from his perspective, which focused on fewer distractions and more concentration, since app notifications can be distracting. It made me realize the importance of managing my time by reducing activities like chatting, which can distract us from what we were doing before the messages arrived on our phones. Therefore, this interesting conversation led me to also silence my phone notifications. This way, I was able to concentrate and avoid being distracted by irrelevant messages.

Days and weeks passed. The feeling of knowing this person was different from the men I had known before was wonderful, and the thought of him weighed heavily on my heart. I longed for him to open his mouth and confess his true feelings for me, to say, "I love you." Days went by, but he said nothing to indicate romantic interest in me. Yet I continued to pray and convince myself that one day he would say he wanted to commit to me. He gave me mixed signals through his actions, which I ignored, hoping that denying the reality of who he had shown himself to be would make a difference. But it didn't, because his words sometimes didn't make it clear what he wanted from me, even though he gave me gifts and invited me to social and religious events. Days turned into months, and months into years. So for two years straight, I prayed for someone who wasn't God's will for me, because nothing changed in the situation. But my path of faith was becoming more important to me than anything else, because my faith in God was deepening as He began to reveal His will for my life, and Fred mattered less to me.

The casual relationship felt like a trap I'd been waiting to fall into my whole life. It seemed like we were just playing around, as if we didn't know what was going on between us, even though at the time it seemed like we were more than friends. That said, the more I prayed about whether he would be my future husband, the more restless I felt, but my dreams indicated that he was. Later, the Lord revealed to me that the dreams could be the result of constantly thinking about the future with Fred and imagining him, and the devil found an excuse to keep my mind captive, turning it into a stronghold of idolatry, since that's what I thought about most. And He (God) cannot bless an idol in my life, so it was best to break free from the spiritual bond I might have formed with Fred through ignorance and lack of discernment. Fred was an imposter sent to open my heart to believe in God for a covenant marriage. Although he did not become the husband I had promised to marry, the situation prompted me to seek God's will regarding my life in general, my destiny, and the marriage the Lord has planned for me.

Hence it is written *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose"* — Romans 8:28.

In the midst of all this confusion, God was creating a purpose within me. This situation taught me not to rely on my feelings or my perceptions, but to trust God throughout the process. Even if it seems like what one desires, it may not be what is needed to fulfill a purposeful destiny. Our desires are fleeting and can stem from many things, such as emotions, longings, people, and fear of the future, leading us to settle for the bare minimum in life.

CHAPTER THREE

EMBARKING ON A FAITH WALK

My journey in search of the Lord began with a zeal and determination born of pain and trauma. When it all began, it was with a fire and love for the promise the Lord had spoken, which was unfair to God in retrospect. But I thank God for lovingly and patiently teaching me that the promises still stand and His faithfulness is certain. However, I needed to work on my own faithfulness to God. I was distracted by a counterfeit who resembled what I believed God had said would be my husband, and for two years I prayed for this counterfeit husband I had created in my mind, believing he was the one. The Lord rebuked me countless times, saying, “He is not the one, and stop praying using his name because you are preventing your true kingdom husband from finding you by putting his name everywhere in your prayers.” And I was led to the scripture that says:

“Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward.”

— Deuteronomy 2:3 KJV

Much later, I felt led to join a live prayer group on YouTube where the woman said the same thing I had heard the Lord say. Before, I was rebuking the voice that said he was the wrong person wasn’t my kingdom spouse because my flesh desired them, even though my spirit wasn’t at peace. Every time that person came near, I would tense up and couldn’t be myself around them, but in theory, they seemed like the perfect partner, according to my own understanding. And to top it all off, my friends around me thought we were in a serious relationship, which subconsciously prevented me from moving forward with my life. Then, I heard God tell me to stop praying with a specific name, so I started using “my kingdom spouse” instead of a specific name, since I wasn’t sure who I should be praying for as my kingdom spouse. The Lord broke me and rebuilt me so that I could handle the answer to my prayer for a kingdom spouse

My friends and I celebrated the New Year 2019, prayed and talked about what we wanted to achieve that year. My prayer that year was to find balance in my love life and grow spiritually strong in the things of God. It so happened that in January 2019, I embarked on a 30-day prayer challenge for my Kingdom spouse. I told this to a friend who wanted a committed relationship but couldn’t find a man willing to take her seriously, so I encouraged her to join me in the 30-day prayer challenge for her Kingdom spouse. She joined, but I told her to give up something she found difficult to live without as a sacrifice to God, to show that God is more important than anything in this world and that He will give her the desires of her heart. I encouraged her to embrace celibacy because we can’t be in a sexual relationship if we want God to bless us with good men as Kingdom husbands. I was convinced by the Holy Spirit to say no to men who were showing interest in me in a carnal way, and I told them of my decision not to have sex before marriage. Most of the men left immediately without bothering me, which made it easier to focus on... Those who wanted commitment. When we began to pray consistently at a set time, I started dreaming and seeing different people asking me to marry them, and it was strange because it felt so real. But the Lord made me understand that some of those dreams didn’t come from Him and that the enemy can disguise himself and appear through my dreams to reinstate evil agreements, bondages, and evil habits of the soul that I was trying to break. So I had to rebuke and annul the dreams by the blood of Jesus Christ. As we approached the end of the 30 days of prayer to find a husband, my friend was offended because I left her behind and went with my roommate to celebrate her birthday, but that wasn’t the case. I told her that since she was taking so long to come see us, my roommate, whose birthday it was, was tired of waiting for her, so she begged me to come with her, but asked me to call my friend so she could relax because we had waited more than two hours for her to join us and for us to go to the cafeteria to celebrate the

birthday. I called my friend when we got back, and she didn't answer. Instead, she sent me a message saying she was mad at me and that I wasn't a good friend because I had left her and gone to celebrate my roommate's birthday, but she had forgotten that we had waited for her until dark before leaving for the celebration. Then, at midnight, I called her so we could do our 30-day prayer challenge session over the phone, but she didn't do it, so I sent her a message with the prayer for that particular day, and when we got to class, I said hi, but she ignored me. And I continued praying alone until day 30. On day 30, she called me, we talked, and she apologized for her behavior. I told her I had forgiven her and prayed that God would help her overcome her weaknesses as well. This episode taught me something: it made me understand that when you're close to making a breakthrough and sharing your testimony, you receive more attacks. Once the enemy can no longer stop you, he'll try to make you react in ways that prevent God from flowing in your life, causing disagreements, especially with the people who are supposed to be with you and help you fulfill your destiny. In this case, the enemy attacked my friend and me to stop the 30-day prayer challenge for my future husband, but I kept praying alone until the Lord convinced her, and she came back to continue praying with me, and everything went back to normal. Sometimes, you simply have to be silent and let God fight for you, because the Lord defended me and restored peace and understanding between us.

Moving on, we saw God's hand at work in our love lives. My friend met her husband in October of that same year, during our 30-day prayer challenge for her future husband. They married a year later; their wedding could have been sooner, but the pandemic delayed it. I felt so blessed to know that she would be marrying her husband, whom she met on a dating site. The Lord led me to create an account for her, even though she had many doubts. I encouraged her, we prayed together, and the first message she received was from her husband, which was a blessing and a miracle, since they couldn't communicate verbally due to the language barrier. However, they were able to understand each other through text messages, and that's how I knew the Lord was present in this journey of trusting Him for our marriage. It filled me with joy and peace to know that my friend met and married a man who loves her and is willing to serve and honor God in their marriage. Her marriage blessed me deeply and gave me more hope to continue trusting God for my own. I thanked the Lord that my friend, who took a leap of faith along with me, even amidst her doubts about whether a man would wait until marriage before having sex, was finally carrying her evidence that with God everything is possible. The Lord manifested Himself and demonstrated His word that says:

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for him that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

— *Hebrews 11:6 KJV.*

I was proud of my friend for sticking with the word of God above all her fears and skeptics, she embraced faith and I was so delighted I listened to the voice of God to open the dating app for her to put herself out there believing the LORD will order her steps and that of her future husband to meet with her.

Faith is what we believe we have without having seen it before. As you embark on your journey of faith, keep in mind that you will face challenges, loneliness, and doubts when you don't yet see the manifestations of what you ask of God and what He has revealed to you. But be certain that God is with you even in times of uncertainty, for it is then that you should dedicate more time to Him through worship, prayer, and meditation on His Word. Receive grace through prayer and praise to have the strength to remain in His presence and the grace to persevere in the midst of uncertainty, and continue to trust that you will see the manifestations of God's word in your life; you will surely see the fulfillment of the promise.

So, I went back to inquire of the Lord concerning my own marital settlement and I asked the Lord when will my marital testimony materialize? And the Lord said to me "Focus on me and let go of the counterfeit he is hindering you from receiving your marriage testimony for I am preparing you

for a kingdom marriage and not just a marriage. For your marriage is not ordinary for it will bring glory to my name” So I was crying when I heard the Lord. But before I finally let the counterfeit go, I kept resisting and wrestling with the feeling of losing the connection I had with the counterfeit, because of the dreams I kept having that we were getting married, and my former roommate called me from Italy during this period to hear from me. She knew Fred and I together as friends, so she said “I dreamt you got married to Fred and you were living happily together and I was talking to you guys on video call in the dream”.

I was elated and thought the dream my friend had shared with me was a confirmation from God, but instead of clarity, it brought me more confusion. Therefore, more questions arose within me about why she had dreamed about me and the counterfeit. This further fueled my desire for the counterfeit, and I began to reject the voice telling me to let him go because of what I saw in my dreams: that Fred was the one. I started to convince myself that it wasn’t God asking me to let him go, but there was no significant change in the dynamics of the relationship. It seemed I was the only one trapped in this delusion I had created through a lack of discernment.

A relationship requires mutual agreement to stand and progresses with time. But what I found myself in with Fred was a situation-ship because I was wishing Fred was actually the one. A situation-ship is a relationship of convenience, is one where you find yourself wanting and imagining that you and someone are in a relationship, but it’s only in your head. If the person doesn’t agree to an exclusive relationship, it means you’re the only person in that relationship. Therefore, there isn’t a relationship, but rather a situation that has taken up space in your life and is consuming your time, emotions, and resources because you become vulnerable to this person. However, the person doesn’t agree with what you want between you, as their actions and words don’t align. This makes you think you’re in a relationship one day and single the next, creating an emotional rollercoaster and a fear of losing the person. You’re afraid to break up because you can’t seem to accept the truth that there isn’t actually a relationship.

But the scripture says *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” — John 10:27 (NKJV).*

Since I was in rebellion I couldn’t hear the voice of God, I didn’t know Him (God) and I couldn’t follow him just like Saul in the scripture (1 Samuel 15), he was in rebellion and during war he couldn’t hear God and didn’t follow His instructions to get complete victory over his enemies.

Looking back, I can clearly see the mercy of God upon me, even in my delusion the Lord showed me his love and mercy. It is because of the mercy of God I wasn’t consumed by my carnal desires. Obviously, I was certainly moved by my flesh not by the Spirit of the living God, to have stayed in such a “situation-ship that was hindering me from going forward in my love life because whenever I asked the counterfeit what we were doing due to the time and energy we spent together going to church, visiting places together and our friends knew us together but our relationship wasn’t defined because no title was given to what we had. But he was nice to me, brought medicine to me when I was sick and we cooked and took to each other, when he was sick I visited him, and celebrated him on his birthdays yet no title was given to our relationship.

So when I prayed about it again, the Lord remained silent on the matter, for He had spoken once, He had spoken twice and given me signs and revelation that Fred was not my future husband, but I chose to use my free will and rejected what God was telling me. For it is written:

*“For God may speak in one way, or in another,
Yet man does not perceive it.
In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on their beds,
Then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction.*

*In order to turn man from his deed, and conceal pride from man,
He keeps back his soul from the Pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.”
— Job 33:14—18*

I was in a state of confusion and emotional turmoil until I mustered the courage to cut ties with the counterfeit after he asked me to send him bikini photos. This was the final straw, and my eyes were opened. From that moment I got my freedom knowing he was the counterfeit. Perhaps God allowed me to walk down that blind path of falsehood so that I might learn from my foolishness in not listening to His voice of truth.

“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” — John 8:32

I told him I believed he was the one and that I thought he was a believer. Why would he ask me for bikini photos? Then I asked him to delete my number by blocking me and told him I was disappointed. I fell to my knees and wept in repentance, begging God for forgiveness and mercy for not listening to His voice when He told me I should let him go. I began to hear God telling me what to do next. The lesson I learned from this experience was that God cannot fight against a person's free will because He gave us the ability to choose between His will and our own. When we sincerely repent of our sins and ask God for mercy, He is merciful and compassionate, for His grace is sufficient. He hears us and rescues us from the abyss. His grace in our lives is incomparable to our disobedience; this does not mean we should continue sinning, but rather that we should remain faithful in obedience to the Lord's command, for obedience to God means love for God. I allowed myself to be deceived by my own lie because I rejected the truth that God revealed to me.

*“And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,” —
2 Thessalonians 2:11 (NKJV).*

More so, God is not the author of confusion but of peace (I Corinthians 14:33 (NKJV)). However, when something comes from God, there is no confusion, but rather peace that brings order and clarity, because the Lord will illuminate your path. Since the counterfeit thing didn't come from God, I experienced confusion and fear of breaking free from it, as I felt I wouldn't find anyone better. The fear of letting go of something that shouldn't be in your life is a trap, and because I rebelled by disobeying God's voice at that time, I experienced a closed heaven in my life and in some areas of it. I experienced a lack of spiritual vision and hearing, financial difficulties, and toxic relationships. Rebellion is worse than witchcraft, as it is written in Scripture.

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