



# The Scroll

Spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and equipping the People of God through the written word.

## Guest Columnist—A Broken Mirror is not the Ruin of Your Image

Co-Pastor Shantail L. Miller

**F**earfully and wonderfully made, I have come to realize not all fears are bad. Instinctively, it can serve as a safety mechanism signaling potential danger. The fear of God is positive because it is from a reverence and honor standpoint. Alternatively, unhealthy fear paralyzes, hinders healthy progression, and causes procrastination. Faith combats fear causing active progression. Hebrews 11:6 says, *“That without Faith it is impossible to please God.”*

One day, the words *“Fear is not My Home”* yelled at me! I was tormented with fear for years: fear of dying, fear of loved ones dying, natural disasters, the dark, rejection, letting my voice be heard, conflict, being in front of people, hurting people, someone breaking into my home, crashing in an airplane, car, or train, and more. Until one day I realized I needed to come face to face with the bully named *fear*. I began to ask questions. *“What’s the worst that can happen?”* I cannot die until it’s my time anyway and the Lord has that time clock. *“What if people do not like me?”* Well the reality is whomever is supposed to be in my life will be...period. *“What if I mess up my words or mess up something in general?”* Oh well, my best is good enough! I made a conscious decision that fear would not rule me anymore. It is not the boss of me! I was ready to live and do the opposite of what fear said I could not do. I could do all things through Christ who strengthens me, literally.

One year, I was asked to speak on fear and a vivid poetic analogy came to mind:

I heard a knock at my door.

“Who is it,” I asked?

**I learned to place my trust in God and embrace faith for things I cannot control.**

*“My name is Fear, can I come in?”*

Hesitantly, I cracked open the door.

*“I have been dispatched on a mission, an assignment full of determination and resolve to challenge, conquer, and emerge victoriously.”*

“Hmmmm, sounds interesting. What exactly is your assignment?”

*“Terrorize then paralyze by enslaving people deeper into the bondage of fear to immobilize their destiny and purpose. “(My heart immediately identifies with the terror of fear).*

*“If you let me in, I can make you doubt a wondrous number of vital truths, which will eliminate you from moving forward and from doing anything purpose driven. I will conquer your faith. In me, your belief will die and your faith RIP.*

*If you resist my entry, I will disturb your peace, seeking any opening—consciously or subconsciously—to draw you in. I can weave my way through your eyes, ears, or the very gate of your mouth, as you forget the truths for which your Christ sacrificed everything. In your agreement and delight, I find my entry point, transforming belief into doubt and understanding into ignorance.*



*Guess what? The somber truth is, in that moment I knocked at your door through the small, cracked opening, you did not even realize I had distracted your attention by engaging you in conversation, allowing fear to creep in unaware. And, just like that, like a home invasion your faith and peace of mind became vulnerable to unraveling the sanctuary you thought was secure.”*

Oh, no! This is not how my story will end! You see to paraphrase, 1 John 4:4, *“Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world!”* John 8:32 tells me that, *“I shall know the truth and the truth shall make me free!”* 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:7 shares that God has not given me the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and of a sound mind.

Fear is often the root of anxiety, and I found freedom by identifying and uprooting its deeply entrenched beliefs with my mindset. I learned to place my trust in God and embrace faith for things I cannot control. This shift allowed me to confront my fears, transforming anxiety into resilience and strength! Continued on page four.

## Editor's Corner—Moving Beyond Fear

Sister LaTonja Brown

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I am a huge fan of the Peanuts. Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus, Sally, Peppermint Patty, Franklin, Marcie, Snoopy, Woodstock, and the gang are some of my favorite characters. Amongst my collection of Peanut books is one called *My Anxieties Have Anxieties*. The title has always made me smile, but truth be told, I totally get what the title means.

During the pandemic, people who were already struggling with anxiety and/or depression saw symptoms worsen. And people who had never experienced either began to struggle with one or both. Post pandemic, the numbers remain high. Add in inflation and people having to choose between buying groceries or paying utilities, stress levels are up, which only heightens symptoms.

Race, politics, and religion are all topics that can cause more stress. Being in the midst of a highly contested presidential election does not help either. I joke that the results of the election will either have us living out the plot of the *Hunger Games* or *Handmaiden's Tale*, and I am not sure which I would rather have played out. I do know that thinking about the election is causing me stress. During my prayer time, God has had to remind me **several times** that it doesn't matter who is or who is not in the White House. My faith must be rooted in Jesus, not a political party or the elevation of another human being.

My question to the people of God is what emotions are driving you? Because what I see play out in social media is **fear**. As a verb, the word *fear* means, "be afraid of (someone or something) as likely to be dangerous, painful, or threatening." Star Wars is another childhood favorite of mine. Yoda told Luke, "Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering."

And that is exactly what is happening. People's fear leads to anger, which leads to hate, which leads to suffering. As 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:7 tells us, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Isaiah 41:10 tells us, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold

*thee with the right hand of my righteousness."*

Before I go forward, I want to go on record as saying fear is not always a bad thing. If I am in the wild, and I am stalked or hunted by a wild animal, then my fear is natural and reasonable. It will trigger the fight-or-flight instinct, which has helped us survive all the years in the wild.

The fear I am talking about is the fear that is caused by divisive rhetoric that causes you to be afraid of whole groups of people. It is what I often refer to as the fear of *other*. If you find yourself suffering from fear of *other*, is there a way you can gradually introduce yourself to this group. The more I travel, the more I realize how much in common humanity has. Way more than those who are trying to cause division care to admit.

Outside of our treatment of other people, fear can also hinder us in our daily lives. How many of us have a dream or vision that we are not pursuing because of fear. How many times has fear caused us to not go after that job promotion or to where God is calling us. There is a song that says, "Fear is a liar." Next time fear rings your bell, remind yourself that fear is a liar. You are who and what God says you are. If I could make a pact with each of you to follow your dreams and not let fear hinder you, I would do that pinky swear time after time.

As I get older, I realize how fast time is moving. While it is still day, move and don't be hindered by your fear. There will never be a perfect time to do anything. There will always be something. Just don't let it be fear that stops



### Recommended Reading:

- Jonah
- Genesis 16, 21, 25

**Next time fear rings your bell, remind yourself that fear is a liar.**

We would like to extend our warmest, most sincere welcome to the newest members of PCC. †

## Creative Expression—You Got This!

Minister Kimberly D. Garrett

Some days are just harder than others, but **You Got This!**

We show up day after day despite what's going on in our personal lives, despite what weighs heavily in our hearts and what continues to cycle through our minds.

Some days are just hard, but **You Got This!**

We continue moving forward because life has not afforded us the privilege to just power through; it is because life has forced us to learn how to survive.

Some days are just hard, but **You**

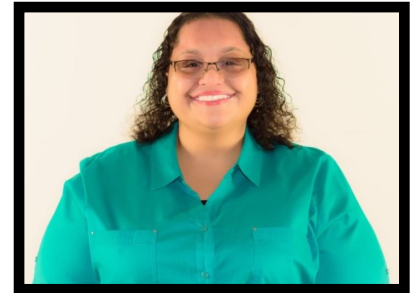
### Got This!

No matter how much we go out of our way to do the right thing, the poor actions, behaviors, decisions, and words of others still manage to seep in causing turmoil.

Some days are hard, but **You Got This!**

We know the good days outweigh the bad days, and we've had more wins than losses. It's just that some things hurt a bit more than others and are a bit harder to shake off.

But **You Got This!**



Keep on showing up day after day!

Keep on moving forward!  
Keep on doing the right thing!  
Keep on accumulating those wins!

**You Got This!**

## Guest Columnist Continued—A Broken Mirror is not the Ruin of Your Image

Co-Pastor Shantail L. Miller

Encourage every reader to stand with me and take on the mindset of determination. Face and conquer unhealthy fears so that you can experience what you never thought you could. Remember, fear is not your home nor is it the **boss of you!**

Shantail L. Miller's book *Who's That Lady?: I Am That Lady!* is available online.

### Synopsis

Everybody knows the cliché, "Right place, wrong time." As for this young lady named Shantail, she was the wrong person, in the wrong place, at the wrong time! This memoir—about an invisible girl—is a haunting narration. It is a portrayal of a child suffering in silence, who is confronted by many traumas that leave deep scars that mark her journey.

Shantail carried fragments of her innocence into her adulthood. The remaining scraps of her identity were

ruptured by the perverted indignities committed. Just when she thought she was in the clear, her past would always find her. She saw no way out and no way of escaping the years of suffering endured at the hands of those driven by impulsive and carnal cravings. Her pain was no respecter of time.

No matter how many years went by, Shantail often gazed at her broken reflection, begging to be anyone other than who she was. She craved straighter hair, smaller nostrils, a prettier figure, lighter skin, and even to be white and erase the color curse. Her low self-esteem created a demand for attention by seeking to compensate for the breaches in her childhood. To her, the grass would always be greener on the other side. Crying inward, she yearned for protection, for someone—anyone—to notice her pain, and a way to recover what was lost: her time, her innocence, her security, and her sense of self. She continued in shameful silence and



longed for justice, yet, by grace, she remained merciful and compassionate.

After time, as a wife, she arrived at a crossroads between facing her past and recovering her aborted destiny. Through healing and deliverance, she learned that a "broken mirror" was not the ruin of her image.

## Word of the Quarter—Moving Beyond Fear

### *The Editing Team*

**In** the last issue of *The Scroll*, we finished the overarching theme “Hearing the Voice of God.” In this edition, we begin a new overarching theme “Interrogating Our Defaults.” In this issue, we come from the topic “Moving Beyond Fear.”

When the editing team met to discuss the new overarching theme, we talked about the world around us. With somber realities hitting us from left and right, it is easy for us to default to our comfort zone. Before we respond, we should ask ourselves if God is being glorified or are we seeking personal comfort to feel better. Defaulting to what we know and are familiar with gives us a false peace, so we are not motivated to change.

When forced out of our comfort zone, the unknown is often responded to with fear.

As Christians, we must be mindful to how we respond to fear. Throughout history we can see the results of people responding to fear. Those who were oppressed have reacted with self-protection. Then they became the oppressor because they did not want to feel helpless again. Fear has also caused people to build walls of protection.

In this season, especially around the upcoming election, it is important for each of us to critically think for ourselves, not default to what the community

says out of fear. We can’t jump on any bandwagon without doing our own research. It is important to interrogate, not just accept a bunch of rhetoric. It really is okay to ask questions without fearing being seen as less intelligent.

We sometimes default to what people tell us the Bible says without reading the scriptures for ourselves. This can cause us to unintentionally spread lies and ideas that are not in the word of God because it is easier to listen than to inquire on our own. But we must research to learn what something really means because we hear so many voices. We are

**It is time for us to get back to inquiring to the Lord.**

bombarded by information coming at us from different directions. We must deliberately take the time to research and hear the voice of the

Lord. Listen to what God says about it and read what the Word says about it. Our trust can’t be outside of God. The pressure is on us, but we must be so firmly anchored in God that we can’t be swayed.

Always give God the chance to speak and affirm your direction. Be open to God showing you something new. If you feel like

God is leading you in a direction, have the courage to move forward in obedience. Don’t worry about failure or getting it wrong because the grace of God will cover you. Take the first step, then another, and then another. Move when God moves knowing that God is in it and will take you step by step. God knows what you can handle so don’t allow fear to trap or paralyze you. Know that God is there to meet you. If we are not careful, we will miss the ways Jesus challenges us and allow wanting to be secure keep us from stepping into our destiny. We instead will remain in fear of things being lost. We will wrestle with power and control and be unable to learn and be renewed and miss some of what God has for us. But we must let fear go.

It is time for us to get back to inquiring to the Lord. We must recall, refocus, and readjust as many times needed to get to the truth and God’s voice. Let’s us move from prescriptive, regimented, routine performance, and legalistic relationships with God. With so much falsehood out there, we must really be careful of what and who we are listening to. To move beyond fear, we must make sure that God’s voice is the loudest voice we are listening to.

### **Prayer Requests:**

- ♥ Pastor and Minister Jo Ann
- ♥ National and local leaders
- ♥ Military and their families and veterans
- ♥ Youth, families, singles, and marriages



## Finding Hope—Battle into Blessings

Sister Amy Pemberton

**M**y son once told me someone had asked him if I am who I appear to be. The question made me smile. His answer did too. “Honestly, yes she is.”

I had an exceptional teacher guide me toward becoming a better person. The teacher’s name was *buccal basal cell adenocarcinoma*, an incredibly rare form of salivary gland cancer.

Less than 700 cases of this cancer have been reported, so, even after meeting with a specialist, I found myself with more questions than answers. The words *radiation* and *chemotherapy* were used liberally during my first appointment. There were mentions of a possible neck dissection and a permanent hole in my cheek. I was warned I may not retain the ability to speak afterward. It was impossible for my surgeon to predict what would happen. The one thing I was assured of that day was, without surgery, the cancer would travel to my brain, and I would not survive it.

The surgery was scheduled for August 20, 2010.

In the recovery room, I gathered the courage to touch my throat. No bandaging. Afraid to raise my fingertips any higher, but even more afraid not to, my hand hovered over my left cheek before

lowering it. My face was unscathed! Inside, the cancer and a layer of muscle had been removed and new skin was grafted over the site. My jaw was wired shut, but I could feel the rest of my mouth had escaped the possibilities that had been tossed around during my consultation just weeks before.

My dad accompanied me on the day the wires and packing were removed. When I was finally free to speak, my voice was unrecognizable. The half apricot sized hollow, excavated on the inside of my cheek during surgery, created a haunting echo. Glancing at Dad, I saw shock spread over his face.

**I now wield it with great responsibility, choosing to base my words in kindness and love.**

Later, as we walked toward the elevator, Dad said nothing and was several paces ahead of me, which seemed odd because he had been a protective gentleman

on our way in. Before, he was patiently at my side while I ambled along using a cane as an assistant to the leg that had donated skin for my procedure. Now, sadness and grief swiftly propelled him as I walked alone. I realized I needed to find a way to conceal the change, if possible, for myself and for those I would speak to in the future.

Over time, I discovered how to sound “normal,” but substantial effort is involved. I had been careless with the gift of speech for 42 years. I now wield it with great responsibility, choosing to base my words in kindness and love. I cannot think of a better way to express my gratitude to God for His continued protection, love, and blessings.



### **The Scroll Editorial Policies**

- Members and friends of PCC are encouraged to submit original work, including but not limited to, Testimonies, Book Reviews, Creative Expressions, and Healthy Recipes.
- Please limit your submissions to original work.
- Please submit your material electronically. The preferred format is a Word document.
- Please limit your word count to 650 words or less.
- All submissions will be edited by *The Scroll* Editing Team.

*If you would like to receive an electronic version of the newsletter, please send your request to [latonjab@hotmail.com](mailto:latonjab@hotmail.com).*

## Women of the Bible—Hagar

*Sister La'Shandra Perkins*

**Name:** Hagar

**Meaning:** Flight

**Her Character:** Hagar was brave, determined, obedient, and faithful.

**Her Sorrow:** She was enslaved and mistreated by her mistress, Sarah.

**Her Triumph:** God provided for her, and her son became the father of a nation.

**Key Scriptures:** Genesis 16, 21, 25:12-18

**H**agar was a lowly, enslaved young lady taken from her home country of Egypt, who found herself amid foreign people. African Americans can easily relate to Hagar; we were also taken from our homeland and made to serve new masters. Hagar served Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Sarah was given the promise that she would be the mother of a nation. Sarah got impatient and decided to take matters into her own hands without consulting God. She offered her husband her maidservant, Hagar, to take as a wife. Through Hagar, she would make a family to fulfill the promise of God. Abraham listened to his wife, and he took Hagar to bed (Genesis 16:1-3). Hagar didn't have a choice in the matter. She wasn't asked if she wanted to participate in this triangle. She was enslaved. She had to give her body, so she obeyed what her mistress wanted.

Hagar became pregnant and forgot her place. One version of the Bible says that Hagar despised Sarah while another says Hagar disrespected Sarah. Hagar started being callous and flaunted her pregnancy toward Sarah. Sarah complained to her husband, and he reminded Sarah that Hagar was her maidservant. Sarah treated Hagar poorly, and Hagar ran away. God's angel found Hagar

weeping in the desert and asked why she was there. She said that Sarah had treated her poorly. Hagar was told to return. Before she did, she was given the promise that she would give birth to a son to be named Ishmael, and that God would increase her descendants (Genesis 16:4-15). Hagar was amazed that God saw her, a servant girl. Hagar is said to be the only person in the Bible ever to give God the name *Beer-lahai-roi*.

We don't hear of Hagar again until Genesis 21 after Sarah had given birth to Abraham's son, Isaac. They held a feast for Isaac, who was weaned. Sarah was still threatened by Hagar and Ishmael. During the feast, Sarah accused Ishmael of making fun of Isaac and told Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away. Abraham was torn, but God told him that Ishmael would be the father of a nation. Hence, he packed them with meager supplies and sent them on their way.

Hagar found herself in the desert out of food and water. It wasn't just her this time; it was her and her child. She didn't know what to do. She was lost and confused. All she saw was desert and shrubs. She couldn't dare watch her boy die, so she put him under a bush and went away off. The angel of God appeared to her again because God heard the boy crying. The angel reminded her of God's plan. He showed her a well, and she retrieved her child—renewed and refreshed with a new direction. She raised Ishmael alone, and he became the Father of the Arab nations (Genesis 21:14-21).

How many of us can relate to family, friends, and co-workers



throwing us away? How many of us have been slaves and steppingstones to our family and friends, overlooked and overshadowed. Always there but never the one who gets invited to significant events. When we finally stand up for ourselves, we are treated as though we are the ones in the wrong because we took back control and set boundaries. This is Hagar's story: beaten, broken, abused, and used. But she didn't let fear stop her; she kept moving, and she kept trusting God. We can't stop; we can't let the roadblocks of this world hinder us.

Although this is about Hagar, there is also a life lesson for us in Ishmael's life. God's plans for our lives incorporates the mistakes made by others. Even when we want to give up, we must remember that we are the promise and the descendants of Abraham. The promises that God gave for Isaac extends to us. We should fall on our knees, lift our hands, and give Him praise.

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for our lives  
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## Men of the Bible—Jonah

*Sister Cassandra Broomfield*

**Name:** Jonah

**Meaning:** Dove

**His Character:** He had strong feelings of resentment and hate toward the people of Nineveh.

**His Sorrow:** He became sulky because things didn't go how he wanted them to.

**His Triumph:** Convincing the people of Nineveh to repent.

**Key Scripture:** Jonah 2:1-9

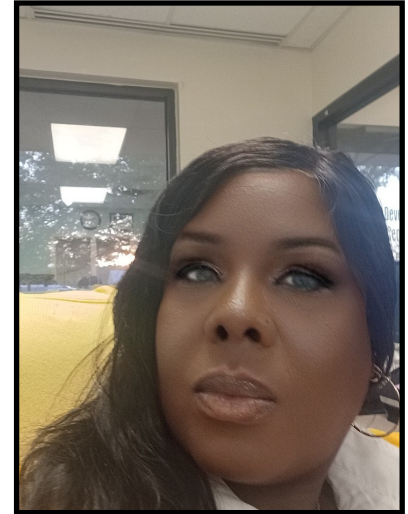
**J**onah was commissioned by God to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh. Jonah believed that the inhabitants of Nineveh were wicked and without repentance, so he chose to go in a different direction than God had told him to go. Instead, he mounted a ship heading to Tarshish. While on the ship, a great storm arose, and the crew and passengers began to throw things overboard in hopes of saving not only the ship but their lives as well. In the meantime, Jonah was asleep. Isn't that like many of us? Trouble is brewing in the lives all around us, and we separate ourselves from them and rest in our own bubble. When the shipmaster found him, Jonah was in the hull of the ship. Being followers of many gods, they began to cast lots to see whose god was angry, and the lot fell on Jonah. When questioned, Jonah told them that he was running from God. He told them that the only way to save themselves was to throw him overboard. The men tried to row to land, but the storm was too strong. Before they tossed Jonah overboard, they prayed and repented. Once Jonah was overboard, the storm stopped. The sailors believed in Jonah's God, offered sacrifices, and vowed to serve Him.

**Jonah recognized that God had provided away for him not to drown, and he made a proclamation at that moment.**

Jonah was swallowed by a large fish and would remain there for three days and three nights. There had to be fear because Jonah began to pray. He called out to God from the depth of his soul, recognizing that he had been banished from the presence of God. I believe he thought that his current situation was like the emotional torment that he felt after being told that he must go to Nineveh. He was overtaken with so much anguish and disdain for the wicked people of Nineveh, that it felt as if he was being drowned spiritually.

After being in his own personal hell, Jonah reevaluated his options and chose to look again at God's holy temple. He remembered the Lord. Jonah recognized that God had provided a way for him not to drown, and he made a proclamation at that moment. He prayed and knew that God heard him (Jonah 2:6-9). The fish then vomited him upon the land, and he was again told to go to Nineveh. This time he went. His sermon was exact. He proclaimed to the people that in forty days Nineveh would be overturned. The Ninevites believed him and began to proclaim a fast. The king declared that everyone would fast including the animals. The king ordered that everyone refrain from evil and violence, so that God might turn from His anger with them, and they might not perish.

God was pleased, but Jonah was angry. Jonah began to sulk. He told God that he knew this would happen. When the people heard that God was going to destroy them, they would repent. Then God would forgive them. Jonah told God that is why he went to



Tarshish because he knew God was too nice. God would have mercy and would not destroy them. He asked God to take his life because he would rather die than to watch this. God asked Jonah if it was right for him to be angry.

Jonah walked up a hill to sit, and he looked down at Nineveh. While Jonah was sitting on the hill, God caused a leafy plant, perhaps a tree, to grow where Jonah was sitting. It brought Jonah peace, shelter, and shade. At dawn, God brought a worm, which destroyed the tree. The sun and strong wind began to burn Jonah's head. Again, Jonah pleaded to die. God reminded Jonah that Jonah did not create or tend to the plant. God asked Jonah should He not care more for the people that number more than one hundred and twenty thousand.

We are called to be light in this dark world. It is not for us to judge mankind, but we are to preach the word in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2). We are called to be the light (Matthew 5:14-16).

## Your Money Matters—Moving Beyond the Numbers

*PCC Scroll Staff*

**I** was recently in a conversation about money, and we talked about how much money you make/have is not always the issue. There are so many stories of movie/television stars, athletes, musicians, and lottery winners who had millions and ended up with no money. Perhaps a more relatable example is people who make six figures but are still struggling. It really is a phenomenon because I can personally attest that I feel like I handled money better when I was making less. Perhaps I was more mindful of keeping my budget because there was no room for overage.

I like that the tithe from the Bible is the same for all of us, 10%. Although people are giving different amounts based on incomes, we are all giving the same sacrificial percentage. It doesn't matter how much you give; it all goes to the same storehouse.

Although inflation is going down, many are still struggling financially. As you shop this fall and winter, be aware of the food drives that are going on around you. While you are shopping, pick up one or two extra non-perishable items to donate. Your one or two may not sound like a lot, but if 100 people picked up one or two extra items, it makes a huge impact.

There are so many ways to give.

- Donate gently used items to charity. This could range from clothes to a shelter or supplies to a local classroom or senior center.
- Volunteer time to a cause you care deeply about. For example, I volunteer every second Saturday

with Friends of the Library. I get to meet new people, be around books, and (bonus) get two books per shift.

- Attend a gala for a charity that you care about. Outside of outright financial giving, there are often silent auctions where you can donate money to the charity and come home with fantastic items.
- Be aware of employee matching gifts. If your job matches charitable giving, you can multiply your giving.
- Give stock. Give stock to the youth in your life, and they will benefit from any price increase.
- Give to charities. Giving to charities, including your local church, helps fund organizations who help the community.
- Estate and beneficiary giving. You can leave money to a wide range of organizations including your church, alma mater, or charitable organizations of your choice. This leaves a legacy. You can contact the organization to let your desired use of the funds be known.
- Donate flight miles to a charity or friend in need.
- Adopt a street to clean with a group.
- Start a good times/bad times dinner program in your community. When birth, death, illness, etc. happen, you have a team to provide dinners on a rotating basis.

There are also ways to get and give what you need via exchange. Some ideas are:

- Arrange a clothes and accessories swap with your friends.
- Arrange a toy or sporting goods swap with your friends and family.
- Partner with someone to buy food or supplies in bulk to split.
- Hold a homemade bread or dessert swap with your friends and family, which is perfect during the holiday season.
- Start a babysitting or childcare co-op with trusted and known family and friends.
- Form a home-repair team, especially for our elders.
- Exchange lessons such as music, art, or cooking.
- Arrange a used book swap.
- Start a skills exchange in your community. For example, designing websites or flyers.

Although we give freely, giving also helps us. Giving has been found to make us happier and more satisfied. Giving improves our mood and outlook on life. Giving has been found to help lower anxiety and stress levels as well as improve physical health. Volunteering of time helps build social bonds and relationships, increases gratitude, encourages each other, and helps us be more aware of how our actions impact those around us. After the holiday season, keep it going. Make giving, whether time or money, part of your lifestyle.

**Although we give freely, giving also helps us.**



## Fit for the Kingdom—Beyond the Numbers: A Fitness Perspective

Minister Demetrius Robinson

**C**an you imagine living for a hundred birthdays? The Italians say, “*Cento di questi giorni*,” which means “*May you have a hundred birthdays*.” This seems like a very nice sentiment, but why just a hundred? There are many circumstances and factors in life that determine whether we make it to a hundred years or not. As they say, life is always “life-ing.”

Some people are young with bodies that seem much older. Meanwhile, some centenarians behave like they are in their twenties. Maybe this is why they are still active. Is it all in the mind? Is it all about how you think? The “*age is just a number*” attitude could be the key. Okinawa, Japan, is home to the world’s longest-lived women, and Sardinia, Italy, is home to the world’s longest-lived men. Ikaria, Greece, a tiny island community, has significantly reduced rates of common chronic illnesses. And in Loma Linda, California, there’s a community that outlives the average American by a decade.

Let’s talk about the numbers. Goals, targets, and deadlines—there’s nothing wrong with these measures. It is healthy to have a target in mind. However, sometimes the metrics seem out of reach. What if we focus too much time and attention on making the mark and hitting the target, rather than the depth of the task itself? When we do this, we run the risk of being on a hamster wheel—running in circles and getting nowhere.

There’s an old saying that says, “*If you want to go fast, go alone. But,*

*if you want to go far, go together.*” While we are working toward better spiritual, physical, and mental health, we must know that we cannot do it alone. While you are focused on goals, targets, and deadlines, look to include mentors, physical trainers, and mental health professionals to help you reach your goal. Sometimes it’s a prayer; sometimes it’s a phone call; and sometimes it’s a note that says thank you.

Back to the numbers. Numbers can be misleading. For example, most of us have been told that drinking eight glasses of water a day is optimum. However, this really depends on the person. It depends on their weight, activity level during the day, health status, and even the temperature outside. If it’s a hundred-degree day, you will drink more water.

Do the math and the numbers always line up? Not always. The numbers depend on you. Life is more complex than two plus two. Where does your mind begin and your body end? Where does your body end, and your heart begin? Work on your mind. Develop and build your mind to help build and develop your body.

Consistency is key. You can do it. You can be healthy, and you can be strong. It starts in the mind. You can make it to a hundred if you have the will to. What is a hundred years? It is 1,200 months, 5,217 weeks, 36,525 days, 876,600 hours, 52,596,000 minutes, or 3,155,760,000 seconds.

Do you want to count the numbers, or do you want to make your life meaningful? Let’s measure our lives in prayers, smiles, hugs, and a life filled with purpose. The genuine measure of success goes beyond numbers. Let’s decide on quality over quantity.

**Let’s decide on  
quality over  
quantity.**

### Happenings and Events

Bible Study—Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. preceded by prayer at 6:30 p.m.

Family Prayer—Saturdays at 9:00 a.m.

## **The Power of Words** **Sister Ursula Lovely**

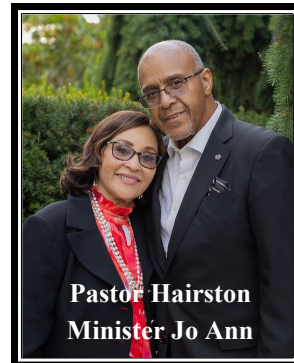
It's amazing the power words have.  
Some help, but some can cause harm.  
It depends on how they are used  
that sounds the alarm.  
God's Words can make the use of words in your  
life clearer.  
Helping you to see what to do to save your soul,  
making salvation nearer.  
Man's words can be like a cloud or a deep fog hiding  
your vision of the clear blue sky and the brilliance  
of God's beautiful sun.  
However, God's Words can remove that cloud and  
those things. Clearly exposing what you should see  
and what needs to be done.  
Don't let man's words keep you buried in the dark.  
Remember that God's Words are given out of love.  
Rely on that. Come out of the dark and do what He has  
asked.  
Now walk with Him and do your part.



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