

DO YOU HAVE AN H?

Having a relationship with God
and growing your faith

Sibo Hlabangana

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Having a relationship with God and growing your faith

By Sibho Hlabangana

DEDICATION

To you who is reading this, may you find love in these pages and more than that, may it help you grow closer to God and also grow your faith.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I'm grateful to God the Father, Christ my Lord and Savior, and the Holy Spirit for choosing me, and for continually leading me on the right path and directing my steps. Oh what an amazing journey it is.

To my mother, thank you for always reminding me what faith looks like and for believing in me, with me and for me. I love you.

To my vision ladies, who are my sisters in Christ, thank you for being my friends, my sisters, my confidantes, and for showing me what walking with Christ looks like.

To my `TV, book, and online pastors and preachers; thank you for your guidance and your messages of hope, faith, love, and grace.

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Book synopsis

This is not a book on theology, but one based on relationship, love, and faith through experience. Although theology matters, it is not in this book. The aim of this book is to let you in on how much God loves you and help you build a better relationship with Him, whilst growing your faith. All from a daughter of God who is learning as she grows in her walk with Christ. She wants to share her experiences with you, to draw you closer to Him. To appreciate this book, forget rituals and religion and focus on getting closer to God.

This book answers questions such as:

How can I find fulfillment?

How does God talk to us?

I'm a newbie Christian or just came back to God, what do I do?

Does God love me? Even after I did that?

How can I go from feeling lost to being happy?

How can I figure out the purpose for my life?

How can I grow my faith?

How can I believe when my circumstances say otherwise?

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FOREWORD BY NOMATHAMSANQA NYONI

I have known Sibó for over 17 years. Over the years, we started to affectionately refer to each other as “my John”. This was taken from an old song that we used to sing, which went something like, “Simon Peter was your friend, but John was your best...” To me, that is what our relationship is all about. We may have many other friends, be separated by country borders, but at the end, she is my best friend above all.

Having read her book “**Do you have an H?**” it was easy to draw parallels. This book took me on a journey of intimacy between a Father and His daughter, where a daughter, through seeking and abiding in God, developed a level of intimacy with the Father that can be likened to that of best friends. The book took me on a journey of realization of the love that God, our good, good Father has for us, a love where nothing and absolutely nothing can ever separate us from His love. This is all encompassed in one of my favorite scriptures:

“For I am convinced, that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord”

Romans 8 vs 38 - 39

I love how Sibó brings this point of God’s love home by taking us on her own personal journey on becoming intimate with God and taking up her rightful place as a daughter. Reading through the chapters, I was so convinced that this was not a journey reserved for Moses or David, but that even I, can develop and dwell in that intimate place with God.

Broken down, we find that intimacy when we first run to our Father to fill us up with His goodness like the lost sheep that was found, to trust in the good shepherd and choose His brand of love over the one that the world offers. We also find intimacy in sitting at His lap and listening out for His voice, exploring the many ways in which God speaks to us.

As readers, we are encouraged to not only read and marvel about how God has spoken to Sibò in the past but to also pause, and seek God and listen out for His voice in our lives. It was an amazing experience when God showed up and spoke to me, answering questions I had asked Him weeks ago, and also giving me solutions to those questions I did not even know to ask!

The most impactful part of the book for me was how Sibò explored the ever so complicated question of faith. By using personal experiences, she breaks it down into simple and understandable concepts. She challenges us to rouse our faith and not merely profess it with our mouths but to act, think, dream and expect in faith.

She poses a very challenging question "*How big are you believing and dreaming? Are you believing for a bicycle when what you need is a car?*" This statement literally shattered me and drove me to re-evaluate what I was praying for versus what I was expecting to receive. I heard a famous preacher once say that God is not afraid of our dreams. We limit God's power by dreaming small. The kingdom is not on a budget!

I know what my '**H**' is. I am now actively seeking an intimate relationship with God and trusting Him for my **H**. I'm inspired to dream bigger and hold on to my faith in the Good Father. ***What is your H??***

INTRODUCTION

I've never been more excited about writing a book than I was this one. I pray what you read in this book will minister to you personally. I hope you will read with an open heart and allow only love out of the words in this book. I pray that what you read, you would be able to see how you can apply it in your life, in a manner that suits you.

I pray that God would customize the words in this book especially for you as you read, so it touches you where your heart needs it the most. I pray you would have one or two parts, if not more, where you feel like this book was written specifically for you. If that happens, then the book would have served its purpose.

Relationship and faith

So many of us consider ourselves Christians, yet don't have a relationship with God. We go to church, yet we don't know the power we possess, not knowing we have direct access to the same God that spoke to David, Jeremiah, and Moses. I know because I used to be like that too. We don't need a go-between in the form of a priest or pastor or anyone else. Go to church, among other things, but don't let that be all. Everything else depends on you. God will pursue you; He will court you, then you need to seek Him.

If you live a life of faith, you will be able to believe God can do the impossible and live to see it happen. I hope to help you grow your faith, and your relationship with God because it will determine what happens in your life. God is waiting for you to seek Him. YOU, not your pastor or anyone else but you. The Bible is your main source.

Why this book?

It's very easy to find yourself in a situation where you're living your life as though nothing matters. To wake up every day and do the same thing. To go to that dead-end job you hate, be around people you don't like. You find yourself hating your life,

and in some cases, you don't even realize that there's anything wrong with that because you tell yourself "that's life." Not realizing that there's more to life.

I used to be in that situation. This resulted in me throwing my life away, living a life with no improvement, and turning to different vices to make myself feel better. I didn't have to live like that, neither should you. In this book, I'd like to share how to have a relationship with God, grow your faith, live with purpose and find fulfillment.

Before any change could take place in my life, my spiritual life had to change first. If your spiritual life is suffering or is not being fed or your life is in contrast to it, you will not feel fulfilled. You might blame it on other things, but if the way you're living your life is not in line with your spiritual needs and values, it will cause friction in your life. Until you do something about it, you'll feel disjointed and lost but unable to pinpoint exactly what the problem is. You might even blame it on your circumstances.

For me, things changed around when I turned to God. That's where I find my spiritual fulfillment. I had turned away from that, and until I accepted that it was the missing link, what was causing discord in my life, I couldn't move forward in anything worthwhile. I felt found when I turned to God. I now have an anchor. I feel loved unconditionally. With so much uncertainty in life, this one certainty allows me to face life confidently. Feed your spirit and nourish your soul because without sorting that out first, it will be difficult to find fulfillment in your life.

What is an H?

In case you're wondering what an **H** is, an **H** is anything you're hoping for, believing for and trusting God for. Something you know without a doubt is on the way that you're willing to put it in a book before it even happens, as you'll see me do here. Without any proof that it will happen, having an unshakable knowing that it has already happened. Why? Because you trust God and know if His word says if you "delight yourself in Him, He will give you the desires of your heart" then He will do

it. **'H'** for me is my husband to be, whom I call **H**. What is your **'H'**? If you don't have one, it is my hope that you will by the time you finish reading this book.

PART 1 – RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

HOW TO GO FROM FEELING LOST TO FINDING FULFILLMENT

I ran a blog in which I wrote a post titled 'Letter to you who is feeling lost.' It turned out to be the most read post on that blog. That told me that there are many people out there who feel lost. People who don't know what to do about it, and people who would like that to change.

Not long ago I was one of those people. I was living a life without happiness, no improvement, drinking a lot, smoking a lot, among other things. Things that I would never have seen myself doing. All that birthed so much guilt and shame in me that I thought God would never accept me. I felt like I was damaged goods and I wasn't "good" enough anymore.

A journal entry I made sometime in 2013, crying out to God, changed my life. I told God how broken I felt, how I was throwing my life away and wanted to change but didn't know how. I had turned into a person I felt like I didn't know, someone I wasn't proud of anymore. After I cried out to God when I felt like I'd had enough, when I felt lost and had nowhere to turn, He heard me. He took me back with open arms, no questions asked.

I told God exactly what I had become and said: "God, please help me." God, the good and loving Father that He is, accepted me as I was. I didn't try to get myself in order before going to Him. That's not to say I hadn't tried in the past. I'd stop something, for example drinking, for a few weeks or months and be back at it again before long. I was trying to treat the symptoms, not the root cause.

Now, my life is completely different from what it was before. Turning to God gave my life significance. It's made me know I am loved and that my life matters. It's given me a sense of belonging. It didn't just affect my spiritual life, but my whole life. I now live with purpose and with peace in my heart with the knowledge that

God's got this. I can safely say I am happy, something I doubted would ever happen. Don't you also want that?

As you are

I turned to God as I was. And through the Holy Spirit, now living in me, over time, I stopped all my different vices without even trying. There was no willpower needed on my part. That doesn't mean I don't sometimes think about those things, but I make sure I don't place myself in situations where I will be tempted. That means I don't go out partying anymore and avoid being in places where I'll be likely to indulge.

There's nothing wrong with those places, but I know my triggers and my limits. After God dealt with the root cause of my actions, that is, my feelings of insignificance and feeling unloved and alone, it led to me no longer needing to self-medicate through the drinking and smoking which were damaging my body.

The point I'm trying to make here is that you can turn to God as you are. Turn to Him as you are and the Holy Spirit will work in you, to "will" you to walk the right path. Accept that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for your sins and that He is your Lord and Savior and repent of your sins. You should also ask God to send His Holy Spirit into you. I can't tell you the exact words to use, but I'll tell you this, God knows your heart, and if you cry out to Him, He will hear you. In time you'll look back and be able to pinpoint exactly when things turned around for you.

You will be saved. That means you will be born again in Christ Jesus. That means you will be covered by grace. That means you don't have to work to be forgiven. All your sins will be forgiven, and you start a new life where you don't have to feel guilt or shame.

This is because, through His mercy, God sent His son Jesus Christ on this earth to die for our sins so we can be born anew and go to heaven when we die. He did this so we could be free to come to Him no matter what we have or haven't done. I'm

not a pastor or a Bible scholar who could explain it to you in detail, but I can speak from my experience.

From my experience, turning to God was the best thing I ever did. Instead of throwing my life away the way I was doing, I'm now living a life I'm proud of as a daughter of the Most High God. It doesn't make me perfect, but it makes me able to share my testimony with you today, so you know you don't have to walk alone on this earth. You don't have to continue feeling lost. There is a Father, who loves you, waiting with open arms to call you His daughter, His son.

He longs for you to come to Him. What you are reading right now is one way He is courting you because He loves you. He loves you as you are. Even if you don't think so. He loves you unconditionally no matter what you have done or haven't done. He loves you at your worst and will love you at your best.

Turn to Him, and He will hear you. Don't worry about how He will work in you or how long until you see change, God knows you and He knows what will minister to your heart.

What to do next

You can join a church that preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ. You can even pray for God to lead you to the right church. I've found if you're starting out sometimes it's not easy to know which church to go to because it's not all churches that minister in a manner that reaches to people feeling lost. If you come across such a church it doesn't mean there's something wrong with God; it just means as human beings, we don't always get it right. I say so because it's us people who sometimes fail other people and those individuals end up thinking God failed them.

When I was lost, I tried going to some churches, and I sometimes left feeling worse than when I went in. Not because they didn't care, they did but just didn't know how to care for someone who needed to know love first before any exhortations. I wish I had known then that it was not a reflection of how God felt about me, I might have

turned to Him sooner. He loves you and is waiting for you to come to Him, no matter what you have or haven't done.

Going to church gives you the opportunity to fellowship with others. Above that, there are things that you can do to grow in your faith and belief in God and His love for you. You can even do these before going to church. What helped me was reading the Bible myself.

I'd suggest you start by reading the New Testament, namely the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. I find John the best to start with. Over time, the Holy Spirit will lead you to what you need to read. There's a chapter here on the Holy Spirit in case you're wondering what I'm talking about. Choose a version of the Bible that you find easy to understand. I use the New International Version. It's up to you, which one you prefer.

Watching different preachers who preach love more than anything else also helped me. Preachers like Joel Osteen and Steven Furtick. There are many more, but these are the ones I started with because I felt no judgment from them. I needed that because I was already judging myself.

When you feel loved by God and know you are covered by grace and are ready to fellowship with others, you can then join a church in your area. If you feel the need to do so right from the start as I suggested above, then do that. Be sure to continue reading the Bible yourself so that you are not led astray as many have been. If you're not sure about something, go and read about it yourself in the Bible.

You can also ask God about it. I know that's a whole other topic, which I'll discuss in chapter 5, but God answers when you ask questions. It might not be a loud voice from above; it could be through something you read, a sermon you watch, something someone says to you, something you consider a coincidence or a million other ways. If you ask and be open to see and hear the answer, you will.

If you're still not sure if God loves you or not, I hope the following letter will help with that.

HOW MANY WAYS DOES HE LOVE YOU?

In the past, I didn't think anyone loved me. As a result, I didn't think God loved me. Now that I know He does, I still go through times where I wonder about that love. Not because of what God does or doesn't do, but because as I've recently discovered, I was conditioned to feel unloved from a young age. Now, because my identity is found in God, I have to remind myself time and again of His love for me.

One way I do this is writing letters to myself to remind me why He loves me, incorporating scripture. This reminder is very important because it determines how I view the world and everything that happens to me, and around me. Do you ever wonder if God loves you? If you do, this letter is for you as much as it is for me.

Dear you, who wonders if God loves you,

Without a doubt, God loves you. Maybe you know that, but sometimes you don't feel it. Well, He loves you unconditionally and will never leave you. His love endures forever. He wants you to know you are lovable. You are His most prized possession. The apple of His eye. You are His beloved son/daughter, and He is pleased with you.

He loves you just like He loved David. He is proud of you and happy with who you are, just as you are, even if you did that, yes even that. You might feel you could improve in some areas, turn to Him as you are and He will work on those for you.

God says "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart." So that means you were not a mistake. You were wanted and are still wanted. He says "Do not fear for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine." He made you in His image, which means you are beautiful. You are a child of the King of kings, and that means you have royal blood flowing through your veins. You are royalty.

God also wants you to know that He knows you have been through a lot and sometimes wonder why He allowed it to happen. It feels like a battle sometimes. It

is one, but the great thing is that it's a battle that's already been won and you're on the winning team. He says for everything that has happened in your life; He will use it for your good.

It will all allow you to be able to minister to His children. You are one of the people He trusts to do that and to do it with love and understanding because you have experienced it yourself. It will all make sense when you find yourself in situations where you help others who are hurting. Others who, without you, would lose it. It really will all make sense, my precious, He says.

If you ever find yourself wondering about God's love, remember what He has done for you. He sacrificed His son Jesus Christ to die for you. He didn't have to do that, but He chose to do it because He loves YOU. You might also wonder if He sees you. Yes, He does. He put a tracker inside of you, the Holy Spirit, so He knows where you are at all times.

I know you have a lot of dreams and things you're believing God for that seem impossible right now. You might have some faith, but sometimes it feels like it's taking forever. God says "Is anything too hard for me?" and He says "At the right time, I the Lord will make it happen." Delight in Him and He will give you the desires of your heart.

*You probably don't hear this enough, but He loves you, more than you could ever imagine. If you ever doubt that, come back to this letter or better yet, go and read all the scriptures used in this letter, especially Psalm 136, which you'll find below. No matter what anyone says to you or does to you, don't ever forget **YOU ARE LOVED.***

With love,

Sibo Hlabangana.

Bible verses used in this letter:

Isaiah 55 verse 3, Jeremiah 1 verse 5, Genesis 1 verse 26, John 3 verse 16, Deuteronomy 31 verse 6, Zechariah 2 verse 8, Matthew 3 verse 17, Isaiah 43 verse 1, John 14 verses 16 and 17, Jeremiah 32 verse 27, Isaiah 60 verse 22, Psalm 37 verse 4, Romans 8 verse 32, and Psalm 136.

HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

As I've already mentioned, God loves you. If you don't love Him back or show that you love Him, then it's a one-sided relationship. I'm sure you wouldn't want to be in a relationship like that. Well, neither does God. It actually pains Him when we are far from Him or when we are hurting or in distress in some way.

In Isaiah 22 verse 4, God says: "Turn away from me; let me weep bitterly. Do not try to console me over the destruction of my people." I cried when I read that because it had never crossed my mind that God actually cries over me. He loves me so much my hurting hurts Him. Your hurting hurts Him. It's even worse when we're hurting Him or ignoring Him. He is forgiving and will always love us but if we want Him to be happy, we have to do our part, and that is pursuing Him.

Sometimes as Christians we think going to church is having a relationship with God. It's not. Having a relationship with God means spending time with God, getting to know more about God. This is primarily through reading the Bible. In addition to that, it could be reading books or watching sermons that teach you what you want to learn more about. For example, if you want to learn more about the Holy Spirit, you could watch John Bevere sermons on YouTube where he preaches specifically about that. At least, that's what I did when I wanted to learn more about the Holy Spirit.

Having a relationship with God means finding out more about Him and His character, and wanting to know what pleases God so you can make Him happy. Not just thinking about what God can do for you. It's loving what God loves and staying away from what He hates.

In a relationship with a loved one, you'll want to spend as much time as you can together. You'll want to find out everything you can about them. Chances are you'll Google them to see their social media or any interview they've ever given. Well, the Bible is that Google for you. It will tell you everything you need to know. So, go

ahead, Google Him.

Take time out to seek God. Matthew 6 verse 33 says: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." There is so much noise in our lives. We need to stop for a moment and make God the main focus.

If we're too busy with other things, we might miss God's whispers to us. Depending on what you spend most of your time on, you could stop watching TV, being on social media or going out. Or for some, working too hard, basically, anything that keeps you busy. Spend time alone with God, just you and Him. You can start with a week, a month, however long it takes until it becomes your normal.

In that time, silence the noise around you and take time to be still, so you're able to listen and grow closer to God. I know you can't stop your life, but even if you start with 30 minutes a day, start somewhere. Use the time to read the Bible, read books on spiritual topics you need help with. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Use the time also just to listen. You could also watch sermons from different preachers you trust.

Watch with a discerning eye and ear. Don't put your trust in or believe in people. It shouldn't be about the preacher but about God speaking to you through different people. If you don't trust a message or are not sure what you're hearing is right, go to the original source, the Bible. You can also ask God for clarity and for whatever explanation you need. He will answer you.

Make time for God, and He will make time for you. Jeremiah 29 verse 13 says "Seek me with all your heart and you will find me." If you truly and sincerely seek God, there is no way He will elude you.

Relationship with God will lead to other things which are important in your walk with Christ, such as obedience and submission. I still pray for these. I've found myself

doing things I never imagined I would because God told me to do it. If you want to please someone, you'll do what pleases them. God is pleased by your obedience and your submission. You lose nothing when you do these because when you let go of everything else and truly trust God, you gain everything.

HOW DOES GOD SPEAK TO US?

Does God speak to us?

I know many people wonder why God doesn't talk to them or if He ever talks to them. The answer is yes He does. You might not hear it or ignore it, but God is forever talking to us. The God who spoke to Moses, David and Solomon is the same God who speaks to us. He might do it differently for each of us, but He speaks to us.

It would be remiss of me to tell you the how without telling you the prerequisite first. To hear God, it takes having a relationship with God. If you skipped the last chapter, please go back because it explains what having a relationship with God looks like.

How God speaks to us

Now, how exactly does God speak to us? I've found God speaks to each of us differently. It could be through reading the Bible, something you hear from someone or through a sermon. It could be through a dream you have, an idea that comes to your mind, so-called coincidences or just a feeling you have. It could be through nature, a beautiful flower that makes you cry, or a painting that talks to you. It could be through a prophecy or a dream that someone has concerning you. These are just some of the ways. There are many others. God speaks to us in ways He knows we will each understand.

Let me give you examples from my life because I've sometimes found people or preachers will talk about something and I keep thinking "I need examples, so I can understand exactly what you mean." This is not to say this is how God will speak to you; it's to show you that it can be in many ways and sometimes, you might not realize it's God when it is.

Examples of how God has spoken to me

1. A message of love

There's a day I'll always remember clearly because of a message God sent to me.

On that day, sometime during the day I briefly wondered if God could ever love me the way He loved David. I thought of this because I've always admired the relationship that David had with God. I love how close they were and have always wanted that kind of relationship with God.

That same evening, I opened my Bible to read the book of Ephesians because that's the book of the Bible I was reading that week. For some reason, my Bible opened to Isaiah 55 instead. I thought to myself, let me read that and then go to Ephesians. As I read Isaiah 55, I cried when I got to verse 3 because it said: "Give ear and come to me; listen that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *my faithful love promised to David.*"

I hadn't even asked God a question, it's something that just crossed my mind that day, and God saw it necessary to answer me that same evening. I've never felt more loved than I did at that moment. Now I know God loves me and you, the way He loved David.

2. Being told to wait

In this instance, I directly asked God if it was time for me to do something. If I should move forward with it. I believe He said wait. The reason I believe that is because, in the space of a few days, I saw the same verse about 4 or 5 times and the verse was about waiting on God. I didn't like the answer, but there was no doubt in my mind it was the answer from God. So, I waited.

3. An audible voice

In this example, God spoke to me in a way He had never done before that time. I wanted to go and visit someone who was gravely ill, in a different city. I was getting opposition from people close to me, with sound reasons why I shouldn't go and I started doubting my decision. I was so torn, and the morning I planned on going I was still not sure.

I prayed about it, and when I was done, I said: "God should I go?" I distinctly heard a voice in my head saying "Yes." I couldn't believe it then I said: "If I go will you go

with me?" And the same voice very clearly said "Yes." That was the first time God had spoken to me that way. I will never forget that experience because as I made the drive that morning, I felt God's presence. When I got to the person I was visiting, she told me she dreamed about me visiting her, and I had the opportunity to pray with her. She died a few days later, but I will forever remember that experience.

4. An answer about purpose

Whilst reading the book *In a pit with a lion on a snowy day* by Mark Batterson, he suggested that we should ask God what we should do with our lives. I had never thought to ask that. I asked God what I should do with my life. Within days of asking that, I kept seeing this verse everywhere, Ephesians 2 verse 10 which says:

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

I must have seen it 3 or 4 times in less than 48 hours. I knew God was telling me something, but I wasn't sure what exactly. Then the next morning, even though I was reading a different book of the Bible, I felt compelled to read a chapter from another book of the Bible. I read it.

That day, I watched two separate sermons, and they all preached about the part I had read that morning. I knew God was telling me something but I had an event to attend that evening, so I didn't get a chance to dwell on it too much.

The next day, I watched a sermon where the preacher preached on this same part of the Bible. In less than 48 hours, I had read this part of the Bible and watched 3 different preachers preach on it. I sat down and asked God to reveal to me what exactly He was saying. When He did, I realized it was the answer to my question of what I should do with my life. When I saw how big a task it was, I freaked out.

I started hyperventilating and crying. It felt like I was having a panic attack. Then from nowhere Ephesians 2 verse 10 came to my mind, the verse I had kept seeing a

few days before. "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

I said that verse to myself over and over until I calmed down because that verse made me see that God has already prepared it all, I just have to walk in it. This means God knew that when I found out what I was meant to do, I would freak out and had me memorize that verse before I needed it. God doesn't leave anything to chance.

Because I asked God, now I know the purpose for my life. As a bonus, God even told me the purpose for my marriage, within days of each other. I believe in fulfilling my purpose; God will allow me to live out my dreams as well.

The sense of peace this has brought me is indescribable. It's filtering into all areas of my life. I'm so grateful to Mark Batterson for writing this book, and to God for letting me read it when I did. If you don't know the purpose for your life, ask God. Ask Him what He'd like you to do with your life. If you will seek Him and take the time to listen, I believe He will answer you.

He is forever speaking

I hope my examples have shown you that God does speak to us if we will listen. He is forever talking; we are the ones who happen to miss it sometimes because we're too busy to listen or we think it's just a coincidence or something like that. Get to know God better. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you and stay open to hearing God. If you want to know something, ask. There is nothing too trivial for God. He cares about what you care about.

THE HOLY SPIRIT – A TRUE COMPANION

In the past, God was separate from His people. If you're familiar with the Old Testament, you'll find that God spoke to a few chosen people like Moses and they then relayed the messages from God. That is not the case anymore. Now God lives in us. Jesus, before He left this earth, spoke about the coming of the Holy Spirit, who would take His place here on earth.

In John 14 verse 26 Jesus said: "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

After Jesus left, the Holy Spirit came in His place to be the one to now walk with us the way Jesus did with the disciples. That means we can now communicate with God ourselves, instead of the way the people in Moses' time did. God talks to us, walks with us and communes with us through the Holy Spirit. In the last chapter, I talked about the ways God talks to us, using examples from my life. None of those experiences would have happened without the Holy Spirit in me.

I realized I didn't really know the Holy Spirit when I watched a sermon titled "The Holy Spirit: An introduction" by John Bevere where he preaches specifically about the Holy Spirit. He did it so passionately that he got me wanting to learn more. He explained it so well and talked about Him as though He was talking about a very close friend and by the time He was done, I knew I wanted that. So I prayed for it. I watched more of his sermons on the same topic and started talking to the Holy Spirit, something I had never done before.

Even though I hadn't been communicating with the Holy Spirit, He was still working in me. The changes in my life were evidence of that. Getting to know the Holy Spirit explained some experiences that I had but couldn't explain. For example, I once saw a painting called 'loneliness' and it made me cry. I didn't understand why because I didn't feel lonely. Knowing what I now know about the Holy Spirit, I know it was the Holy Spirit that was feeling lonely because I never engaged Him.

It is an amazing experience when the Holy Spirit starts to work in you and reveal things to you. It only happens after you seek Him. Words cannot express the feeling of the Holy Spirit revealing things you wouldn't otherwise know if not for the relationship you have with Him. The only way you can comprehend it is if you're in it. I can tell you this though, the joy you will feel cannot be compared to anything else.

How to commune with the Holy Spirit

I don't believe you can truly walk with someone you don't know. Talk to the Holy Spirit or as I call Him, Spirit. He wants to be close to you. To be friends with you. For you to hear when He teaches you. For Him to be able to comfort you. For you to laugh together. Ask Him questions, and He will answer in a manner that you will understand. Let Him guide you and lead you in everything.

Let Spirit reign in you, and your life will never be the same. Now that I know through the Holy Spirit, God lives in me; I can talk to Him anytime, day and night. To chat, to laugh, to cry.

I go to Him with big things and with small things. He cares about all of them equally. God talks to me in a number of ways as I've already mentioned. One of them is through the Holy Spirit in me. I'll ask something and Spirit will give me the answer or lead me to an answer somehow. Let me once again give some examples, so you have a better idea of what I'm talking about.

Examples

I expected something to happen by a certain day and it was the last day it had to happen and it didn't. I was disappointed because I had thought God would take care of it. I thought God really? And deep down inside I heard "**trust.**" I was so upset by that point; I ignored it. The next day what I had hoped for happened unexpectedly even though it now looked impossible. I remembered that whisper of "trust" and I knew it was the Holy Spirit. Even though I allow the human in me to doubt

sometimes, Spirit is always there to remind me who God is. Now, whenever things don't look promising, I remind myself of the whispered "trust."

Sometimes, it will be small day to day things. If I'm looking for something, I'll ask Spirit where it is and He'll lead me to it. Other times someone will message me about a problem and I don't know what to say, I'll ask Spirit to use me to minister to that person. In such cases, they'll message back about what I've said being some sort of revelation or exactly what they needed to hear.

When I read the Bible, sometimes instead of reading a book until I finish it, like I normally do, I'll instead ask Spirit to tell me what to read. I usually get revelations that way. Spirit reveals to me things I never thought God lets people know. My mind gets so boggled I have to ask myself "did that just happen?" Sometimes I do so out loud. Oh, let me point out here that when Spirit starts to really work in you and reveal things to you, you'll find yourself talking to yourself out loud. You have to be okay with seeming or looking crazy.

The Holy Spirit manifests differently in people. Some people cry, some laugh and do many different things. For me, it's usually crying. I can tell when it's me and when it's the Holy Spirit. When God revealed to me the purpose for my marriage (which hasn't happened yet) I knew it was coming from the Holy Spirit because overwhelming crying started happening. I also knew it wasn't coming from me because it's not something I'd ever thought about.

A few weeks ago (July 2018) an amazing thing happened. I prayed in the Spirit (in tongues). When I was done, I was curious, so for the first time, I asked Spirit what He had prayed. To my surprise, He told me, word for word. It was the most amazing experience. One of the things He said in the prayer was "reap me, harvest me." I wondered what it meant. Then He led me to Hosea 2 verse 23 about how God says "I will plant her for myself in the land."

Spirit feels I am ready for reaping. How wonderful is that? I had felt for a long time I

was in the wilderness, and it could be frustrating. Spirit led me to Hosea 2 verse 14 which says: "Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her." That and the whole chapter made me see that God had me in the wilderness for a reason. He had me there to tenderly minister to me, to help me find my way and grow spiritually. And now, with so many other revelations I've been getting, it all makes so much sense.

I don't know if I'm explaining properly, but the best way to get to know the Holy Spirit is through experience. He lives in you and wants you to be close to Him. Engage Him. Now that you know who He is and who He can be in your life, allow Him to work in you. Get close to Him.

You have to connect with the Holy Spirit on an intimate level. If you take time to seek God, you will find Him in you through the Holy Spirit. Take time out to seek Him. Ask Him to come to you.

I know I've overshared in some instances, but I'm trying to show you what life can be like if you walk with, fellowship with and connect with the Holy Spirit. Living a life where Spirit is your friend. I can assure you your life will never be the same. Spirit will work in you and "will" you to do things you never would have managed on your own.

Galatians 5 verses 16-17 says:

"So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want."

Galatians 5 verses 22-23 further says:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

These are some verses that refer to the Holy Spirit. They describe what happens when you allow the Holy Spirit to reign in you. Instead of your flesh being in charge, the Holy Spirit takes over, if you'll let Him. In our walk with Christ, we're either allowing our flesh to lead or allowing the Holy Spirit to lead. When I'm frustrated by something, losing my temper, afraid of something or stressed in some way I know it's coming from my flesh because those are not part of the fruits of the Spirit.

As you walk with the Holy Spirit, please bear the following in mind; Ephesians 4 verse 30 says: "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." The Holy Spirit is God living in you and in as much as He wants to be your friend, He is still God. He is so loving and caring and sensitive as well. Both God the Father and Jesus Christ are protective of the Holy Spirit, so don't grieve Him.

If you'd like to learn more scripturally and theologically, I'd advise you to go and do so. Unfortunately, I'm not the person to offer that. What I can tell you is what I know from experience as I've just done here. If you want to learn more about intimacy with the Holy Spirit, I'd advise you to watch John Bevere's teachings on the subject. His teachings on this topic revolutionized my walk with Christ. I believe it will do the same for you.

WHEN RELATIONSHIP TURNS TO INTIMACY

In chapter 4 I talked about the importance of having a relationship with God. After that, I talked about how God is forever talking to us and how we should walk with the Holy Spirit. I knew all this, and it allowed me to have a relationship with God in a way I had never done before. Lately, God has been showing me it can be deeper, more intimate.

I watch a lot of sermons and teachings on YouTube when I want to learn more about something. As I do that, I will get suggestions of what else to watch. A sermon by someone named Brian Guerin got to me in ways that no other has. I watched as he talked about having an intimate relationship with God and I knew immediately I wanted that. He gripped me and excited me so much that I wanted to watch more.

The more I watched his talks or teachings, I felt a hunger for intimacy with God and to learn more. As I usually do after seeing something I admire in someone, I prayed for what he has, for intimacy with God on a deeper level. I'm learning as I go but if you want to know what intimacy with God looks like, watch Brian Guerin's sermons on the presence of God and spending time in the secret place.

Brian Guerin also talked about how God speaks to us through signs and wonders like dreams, angels and many other ways. I already knew God speaks to us but I hadn't experienced anything beyond what I already knew, or at least I thought I hadn't. So, I prayed for God to speak to me in those ways too and to reveal Himself to me differently. For days, I watched more and started reading Brian's book "God of wonders."

The next few days were something else altogether. I can't count the number of times I became speechless. The number of times I marveled out loud all by myself. I asked more than once "is this really happening?" It's like something was opened, and suddenly things started to make sense. You think you know God until you get to

know Him better. To give you an idea of what's been happening, let me give you some examples.

1. Messages through numbers

Since getting to know God better, I don't believe in coincidences because I've found it to be one way God talks to us. For the last few months, I've been seeing the same numbers together. For example, I kept seeing the numbers 1111, 4444 and 5555. It's as though everywhere I looked they were there. I suspected God was talking to me, but I didn't know what it meant.

Watching one of Brian's sermons/talks where he explained how God could talk to us through numbers or time as a sign, opened my eyes. I researched what the numbers I'd been seeing meant and my mind is blown away! God has been speaking to me, and I didn't understand. I think it's because I wasn't ready yet, now it's been revealed to me what He was saying, and I couldn't be happier. It's as though I'm seeing with new eyes. God has been speaking and is now revealing exactly what He wants me to know right now.

2. Messages through letters on number plates

Another example is that a few months ago, I kept seeing the letters ADB on car number plates. It must have been about 9 times in 2 weeks. At one point, it was three times in one day. I noted it down because once again I suspected God was talking to me. I didn't know what it meant though. Now that I know about the different ways God can speak to us, I researched what those letters meant. God has given me an understanding of what He was saying and confirmed it in other ways as well. It all explains what's happening in my life right now.

3. Phone ringing at 2:22 am

Another time, after watching and reading about Brian saying God will sometimes speak to him through waking him up in the middle of the night with a message, I wanted the same. So, that particular night before going to bed, I said: "Spirit, please wake me up tonight."

I went to bed and woke up to my phone ringing. It stopped as soon as I picked it up. I looked at the time, and it was 2:22 am. The call was from a colleague. Due to the time, I was worried something was wrong, so I texted her to ask if she had tried to call me. She said she dialed by mistake and apologized for waking me up. I didn't know how to tell her it was Spirit without sounding crazy.

I've found as God continues to work in me and through me, I've become that person. You know the one who doesn't make sense, who thinks everything is about God and who believes in what seems ridiculous and unlikely to those around her. And I couldn't be more proud to be anything else.

So back to the story, Spirit used my colleague to call me at exactly 2:22 am when I had been finding out about signs and wonders and what certain numbers mean. Through 2:22 God led me to chapter 2 of a certain book in the Bible at verse 22 to confirm a message He had given me the night before. It was a message from God, one that was loud and clear and made sense because of what I now know. How amazing is God?

4. Rain as a message

All this has reminded me of something that happened at the beginning of the year that I hadn't really thought much about, but had written in my journal. I've just read through it, and I'm amazed at how God used a sign that I didn't think too much of at the time.

It was the second day into a 5 day fast, and when I got home from work, a friend messaged me. She said her pastor had a prophetic word which began "There were bowls of water at the altar and people could come through and wash their hands..." The prophecy involved water.

We chatted for a bit and then I opened my Bible to read from the book of Ephesians but ended up at Isaiah 55. (It was the day God led me to the verse about Him loving

me the way He loved David.) The first verse of Isaiah 55 reads "Come all you who are thirsty, come to the waters, and you who have no money, come buy and eat, come buy wine and milk without money and without cost." Once again something to do with water.

Later that same evening someone I don't talk to often, sent me a message which was John 4 verses 13-14 talking about our Redeemer being a fountain of blessings, a well of water springing up into everlasting life. A message about water yet again. I realized then that God was speaking to me. But that's not even the best part.

At the time that all this was happening, I didn't know much about signs and wonders. Now that I do, imagine my surprise when I read this in my journal, regarding this particular evening: "As I read Isaiah 55 about those who are thirsty and about rain coming down from heaven, it started to rain! God talked to me and even used props! How amazing is my Dad?" Granted I was calling it props, but God used the rain to reiterate the message He was giving me.

From all the readings and what I now know about the Holy Spirit being said to pour down like rain, I can see God was undoubtedly speaking to me. If I hadn't read or watched Brian talk about signs and wonders, I'd still be writing off things God does as so-called "props." I'm laughing at myself as I write this. Sometimes I don't know how God puts up with me.

I'm sharing this to let you see that God really wants to be close to us. If only we would get closer. Pursue Him, seek Him, want Him more than anything in the world. Make time to spend with God on a daily basis. As you get closer, God will reveal things you could never have imagined. I can't wait to learn more and experience more. That's become my prayer now, to get closer to God and become more intimate. And to also understand His messages to me. Now I get why Solomon asked for wisdom above anything else.

There's just so much more to know and explore, and I'm so excited to keep going on this wonderful journey of walking with Christ. If you're not in it already, hop on, don't get left behind. God loves you and wants to be close to you if only you would close that gap and move a little closer. Before you know it, you'll be telling others how you got to be so close to Him.

God will speak to you in a way that caters to you and where you don't understand, He'll open your eyes to it. For example, He started drawing me to Him and speaking to me through self-development books. He used that way because He knew that's what would reach me.

I used to talk to a colleague's teenage son about faith, but he didn't care to hear what I had to say. He told me he didn't believe in it and would roll his eyes when I tried to explain its importance. Then one day, after a school vacation, he just came and said "you know that faith thing you keep going on about? I get it now." In his, I don't really give a crap kind of way. I wanted to jump for joy but for fear of chasing him away, I had to present a nonchalant "oh really? How come?"

It turns out he watched an episode of the TV series *Supernatural* that got him thinking. I couldn't tell you exactly what happened, but that's what did it for him. I, of course, would like to think it's all the praying I did for him, lol. I had tried to reach him and failed, but God used an episode of *Supernatural* to do it.

There is no one way that God uses to reach us. It's different for each of us. When He has you where He wants you, then He'll ask you to let go of other things and pursue only Him. He'll want you to give glory only to Him. God will use the Bible, other people, dreams, signs, and wonders to talk to us. He doesn't do so with believers only. If you're not a believer and you've been seeing different signs, it could be that God is courting you.

As I crave for and pray for more intimacy with God, so much has been revealed to me that I'm willing to share with the world. Some things though, are so supernatural

that I can't even share with anyone. For now, it's just between God and me because if I told anyone, they would not only think I'd lost it, they'd make me doubt. I journal about it though. When it happens, there will be no question who is behind it, my God Almighty.

Dare to be bold. Dare to believe the same God who spoke to Moses will speak to you. That the same God who used signs and wonders will communicate with you using the same. Pray for guidance and pray for discernment. Remember to put God first. That means consult through the Holy Spirit before doing anything or moving in a certain direction. If you will seek God this way, He won't leave you out in the cold.

PART 2 – FAITH

FAITH – HOW TO GROW IT

“Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see”

Hebrews 11 verse 1.

As I was talking to a friend about what my future looks like, she asked me how I got to believe so much. How I got to the point of believing in things that seem impossible and things that I don't see around me. I hadn't really thought about it, so I had to look at exactly what I did to get there, to see what helped me believe even more than I already did. I believe faith is a muscle that you have to grow, so the question was how was I growing that muscle? More importantly, how can you?

1. Look for examples

To answer the how, let me ask you this: What do you hope for? What is it that you secretly desire, that you haven't even told anyone about? Do you see it around you? If not, where are you looking to see it exemplified? Look for examples of what you want. Examples of how God has done it for others. Examples of how others like you have made it or have received what you want. That will help you believe it's possible. If there are no examples around you, look for them elsewhere, in places such as books and online.

For instance, one of the things I see in my future is being in a marriage ordained by God. I found no example for the kind of marriage I want around me, so the internet became my friend. I Googled people that lead the kind of life I'd like to lead. People in the kind of marriage I see myself in.

The Holy Spirit led me to some awesome sites like Kindredgrace.com that share stories of how God wrote different people's love stories. Recently, He led me to men

who love Jesus above all else in the most amazing way, men like Brian Guerin, Michael Dow, Eric Gilmour and Michael Koulianos.

He led me to men like Devon Franklin who chose celibacy until marriage. The first time I read about men like that I thought, they actually exist?! It turns out they do. We just don't get to read about them much. I might not see it around me, but Google shows me it's possible, so I'm believing for that kind of man. My very own Devon Franklin is on his way to me. And because God is so amazing, He didn't just reward him with a wife; He gave him Meagan Good!

When I look for proof of what I want to see in my future, I don't do it once off. When I go through times where I start to doubt or wonder if it's really possible, I go back and read some more, and search some more. I even keep a bank of them in my head, to draw from when it starts to look impossible again.

2. Prayer

Another faith builder is prayer. Pray for faith. When I was around 14 years old, someone told me about something called faith. They told me about faith that can move mountains. I was so fascinated that I started praying for faith whenever I prayed. Over time, I forgot all about it until I was at varsity and many people on different occasions told me they wished they had my kind of faith. It reminded me of how I used to pray for it.

I believed so much that once, I read only one page for a test because I was having too much fun to study and was still convinced I would pass. When we wrote the test, the whole test was based on the one page I had read.

If you don't nourish it, water it and grow it, faith can recede. The great thing though, is that it can be rejuvenated. I lost my faith along the way in my twenties, and when I came back to God, I was reminded of how much faith I used to have. I started praying for it again and working on growing it.

The result is that I now believe so much I'm willing to share *vision letters* and similar things with anyone who will read because I know without a doubt those things have already happened. When they do happen in the physical, I'll be able to point people to the articles and books where I've shared bits of my future, to show them what faith results in.

3. The Bible

Read the Bible. It has many verses and stories about what God can and will do. Read Bible stories where God did what was considered the impossible. Look for examples that go with what you're hoping for. If you're hoping to be healed, look for stories to do with healing. For example, where my marriage is concerned, I read Ruth's story in the book of Ruth in the Bible. The beginning doesn't tell of the ending and yet, because God honors what He sees as qualities pleasing to Him, He changed things around for Ruth.

If you have something you consider a giant, hindering you from believing or moving forward, read about David and how he took down Goliath with a slingshot and a stone. Even Chuck Norris couldn't have done it, and we all know Chuck Norris can do anything! That God, the God of David and Ruth, is the same God we serve. Why would He do it for them and not us, His children? How big are you believing and dreaming? Are you believing for a bicycle when what you need is a car?

4. Surround yourself with the right people

Another way you can grow your faith is through being around other people who believe, not only for themselves but for you too. I have a tribe of what I call my 'vision ladies.' We build each other's faith up. Although we are in different countries, we spur each other on and believe for each other as much as for ourselves. Through our WhatsApp group, we remind one another what our future looks like before we've seen it. It's not everyone who's going to be excited about what you're believing for, so you don't have to share with everyone.

Thankfully, the closest person to me, my mom, is a big believer. What I share with her, she believes with me. She actually takes care of her garden for when my husband to be, H comes. She'll just throw it in conversation, "what do you think H will think of this?" Or "do you think H will like mangoes?" Building my faith up. Reminding me of what God has done for her, on days when I feel like it's taking forever.

5. Watch sermons or talks that ignite your faith

Watch preachers and speakers who will stir your soul and ignite your faith. Pastor Michael Todd is one example. He is one preacher who will grow your faith in ways you never thought possible. After watching this man, I felt like I'd found myself in a pastor. If I could move to Tulsa Oklahoma today, I would. His faith and expectancy is so contagious that I watched 9 of his sermons one after the other in one day. Yes, I know that's crazy but I already know I'm crazy so it's okay.

I'd watched his "Before the person: Relationship goals" sermon and because of the millions of views, thought he was a well-known pastor who'd been doing it for a while. Watching his earlier sermons made me hear his message a little differently. I saw him talk about things that he had faith for that hadn't happened yet, that his later sermons showed was already happening. I love people who are willing to share what they have faith for before it happens because when it does, they can go back and say "look at what God has done, look at what faith can result in."

Watching his sermons has solidified my belief that anything is possible if you believe. If I ever visit Tulsa, Oklahoma, my first stop is Transformation Church.

You have to keep growing your faith in something. It's not a once off thing. You have to work at it until you believe so much that no matter what anyone says you will still believe. If you don't, people and circumstances will attempt to make you doubt and manage to do so. It's up to you whether or not you do it. Are you going to believe them or God? Them or the Holy Spirit whispering in you? Them or the word of God which says if you believe, anything is possible?

FAITH – IT REQUIRES EXPECTANCY

There are many verses in the Bible that show what can happen when you have faith, verses that will remind you that God can do anything. One of those is Ephesians 3 verse 20 which states:

“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.”

This verse is telling us that God is able to do anything. Anything! Not just anything but “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.” That means whatever you pray for, no matter how big you think it is, God can do much more. If you know that, then why would you pray small prayers? Why would you expect little? Many times the Bible says “according to your/their faith.” That means what will happen in your life to a certain extent depends on your faith.

I’ve already talked about having faith and how you can grow your faith. Now I need you to know God is able. You, therefore, have no reason whatsoever to believe otherwise. No matter what your past says or what your circumstances show you, He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above and beyond what you can ask or think. What will you ask? What will you think?

Are you going to show the kind of faith that made Jesus marvel a few times in the Bible? I don’t know about you, but I want that kind of faith. Because then, I know God will do what I’m believing Him for. In fact, He’ll do more than that. When I think about that, I can’t help but smile because if my future holds more than what I’m already dreaming, then great things are on the way.

If you believe that God can do anything, you have to be willing to dream big and be expectant. I’m writing this next part to show you what can happen if you dream big, record that dream in some way and believe it will happen.

I wrote down something in November last year, and in May this year, I got to live it out word for word. I didn't even engineer it. It's only when it was happening that I realized I've written about this. I was out of the country and when I got home and read what I had written, my mind was blown away. It was as though my life was following a script I had written! Even now as I write this, my mind is boggled.

If we live in God's purpose for our lives, He will make sure we get to also experience the desires of our hearts. So, dream big and record that dream or vision in some way, and one day you'll get to live it out. There are many ways you can record your vision, let me outline the 3 that I use.

Exciting ways to record your vision

A **vision letter** is a letter that you write to someone and date it 3, 5 or 10 years from now, or however long you wish. You tell this person you're writing to what your life is like, where you are, what you're doing and who you're with. You would have to be as descriptive as possible. For your own vision letter, think about what you want to see in your future and go for it. Dream big. They are your dreams; there is no need to limit yourself. What is needed from you is belief. If you believe, anything is possible. Even if it takes 3 years, 5 years or 15 years, it will happen.

The second way is a **vision board**. This is a board where you put pictures, drawings or words of things you want to see in your future. You can use any board as a base. I used an old calendar for mine. You can use cardboard. You can get pictures from old magazines or print them from pictures online. Again, don't limit yourself, go crazy on that board. For every picture or words you put on that board, know what they represent so that every time you look at them, you think of that thing.

The third way is what I call a **vision obituary**. This is where you write your obituary detailing your life's work. You write what you want people to say about you at your funeral. You write it as though you have lived out your life. This will help you to see what you want to have done in your life before you die.

My latest vision letter

Let me share one of my vision letters as an example. I'm sharing my latest one because I'm even more convinced I will experience it word for word. I've done one about my life in general; this one is for a specific aspect of my life. I hope it encourages you to do one. Here it is:

Date: Not willing to share that☺

My dearest H, (By now I'm sure you know who that is)

I'm wearing the biggest smile on my face right now! Tomorrow I get to walk down the aisle towards you. We get to exchange vows and afterward become husband and wife. What?! I'm screaming as I write this! It all just seems so unbelievable.

I'm so excited and can't wait to become your wife. I still can't believe God groomed and raised a man like you to be my husband. A man who loves Jesus and people, who is trustworthy and supportive. I've never felt more loved by God than I do right now because you're my dream come true. Knowing that you love me is what's keeping this smile on my face.

How great is God?! I still marvel at how He orchestrated our meeting in such a way that there was no doubt we were meant to meet when we did. I'm still amazed at the way He wrote our love story, with all those signs thrown in so we would have confirmation that we were meant to be together.

I love how you were drawn to me because of my physical beauty. How you asked to court me because you discovered the beauty of my heart. And how you asked me to marry you because you became privy to the beauty of my spirit.

I'm writing this letter as the last letter I'll write to you as Sibongile Hlabangana. The last letter before I become your wife. The next time I write to you, we'll be married. I look forward to that. I also look forward to us living our lives together. I'm the

happiest woman in the world right now. I hope you're as happy as I am. Until I see you waiting for me as I walk towards you tomorrow, good night my love.

I love you,

Sibo Hlabangana (for the last time lol)

What are you waiting for?

What are you believing or having faith for? Have you recorded your dreams, your vision in some way? What's stopping you? I can tell you from experience, if you write down your vision in some way, believe it is going to happen, you will live to see it come to be.

If you're someone who wonders how God feels about doing things like vision boards and vision letters, Habakkuk 2 verses 2-3 states:

Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end, it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

Go ahead, do that vision board, write that vision letter or vision obituary. However you do it, record your vision so that when it happens, you can tell others about it and show them the proof. I can't wait to refer people to this part of the book when what I'm believing for has come true.

FAITH – IT GOES WITH THANKSGIVING

If you have faith and truly believe something is going to happen, then you should have no problem thanking God for it before it happens. Thanksgiving is the next step to having faith. It's very important to always thank God for what He has done. In this case, though, I'm not talking about thanking God for what He has done but for what He is going to do. He has already done it; it just hasn't been manifested yet. Thanking God before it happens tells God you trust Him and believe you will live to see what you have thanked Him for.

It's something better than gratitude because it brings out faith, something that Jesus time and again told people it was their faith that made them well or allowed Him to act. If you grow your faith to a point where you're thanking God for things that are yet to be, you can rest assured you will see what you're believing for.

I want to share one of the letters I wrote to H. The last one was a *vision letter*, this one is just one of the many letters I write to him in general. Yes, I write letters to him every once in a while. Growing my faith and all that. I wrote it after thanking God for him. I'm sharing it because when he and I are together, I want to be able to refer others to this letter so they know if you put your trust in God, He will not fail you.

April 3rd, 2017

My darling H,

So today was an amazing day. Your mother in law and I had a celebration, a sort of thanksgiving. I decided last night I would celebrate you coming into my life (after reading "The soul mate secret" by Arielle Ford). I got up early and told my mom who was happy to indulge me. I made a bit of an elaborate meal which was meant to be lunch but turned into dinner because the power went out lol!

It brought me closer to you. Every time I think of you, I can feel it deep in my heart. I don't know how to explain it. Can you feel it too? I'm trusting that you do. I can't wait to see your list of what you'd like your soul mate/wife to be. I'm believing that I tick all the boxes, including that one you weren't so sure about, yes that one [here I drew a wink].

I'm so glad God brought us together when He did, and the way He did. You were so worth the wait.

Forever yours,

your wife to be.

FAITH – IT GETS TESTED

Having faith will at one time or another require waiting, and it is through that, that it will sometimes get tested. Before I truly surrendered all my dreams to God, as someone who is a dreamer, there is a lot that I was trusting God for. That means there was a lot I was waiting on God for. For the most part, I found myself waiting on God in faith but sometimes I would go through periods where it got too much when specific things were involved. I'm sure we all go through times like that.

Although in everything, I can do my part, ultimately God is in charge. At times I would forget that. At the beginning of the year, I had to be reminded that if I say I trust God, I have to trust His timing as well. Not only that, but I have to be obedient.

There was something I was hoping for before the end of last year, 2017. After the great year I had, I was ready for this thing, so I asked God if it was time. In answer, I felt God was telling me to wait. In sermons, Bible reading and talking to people, a certain verse came up about 4 or 5 times in the space of 2 days. That's how I knew what God was trying to tell me. So I waited, allowing myself to be comforted by the verse.

The verse was Isaiah 40 verse 31 which says: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not grow weary; and they shall walk and not faint." (KJV)

I had been asking God what to do. To move with what He had put in my heart or to wait? When the answer was to wait, I realized I had been asking already with an answer in mind. We tend to do that a lot, but if we're going to trust God, we have to trust even the answers we don't want to hear.

When it became clear that what I hoped for would not happen anytime now, it brought me to tears of frustration. I remembered though that in the Psalms, David took his frustrations to God, so that's where I took mine. In my spoiled brat crying,

one of the things I said was "God I know you love me, but it doesn't feel like it right now." I'm even embarrassed to admit that because I know without a doubt, God loves me and that Christ loves me. Enough to experience death, even death on a cross! How ungrateful could I be?

God, the loving Father that He is, answered me the next morning when Spirit led me to read the first chapter of Mark. At verse 11, I read "behold, this is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased." I started crying because I felt God saying that to me as His daughter. I felt God talking to me through that scripture. I am His child, and He loves me. Not only that, He is pleased with me. Now, how can I continue grumbling when I'm being showered with that kind of love?

That experience also showed me that it's not just about me, but it's about anyone that I wish to impact. I want my life to be a testimony of God's goodness and love. How will that happen if I'm willing to let some impatience bring me down? I'm no superman, so I won't claim to be strong. What I can do is turn it over to my Daddy, God, who is the strong one in our family. I hope you do the same when what you hope for doesn't happen at the time you hoped it would. When waiting feels too much and your faith is being tested.

I don't know what you're waiting on God for or what is making you feel unloved, but I just wanted to share this, so you know you're not alone. In the past, feelings like that would have resulted in me taking matters into my own hands and ending up worse off than I was before. Taking my frustrations and disappointments to God has had a better effect. Not only am I left feeling loved and appreciated, I know no matter what happens, God hears me when I speak to Him, and He will answer me if I will listen.

I'm still waiting but with peace in my heart. And now that I've surrendered my dreams to God, it doesn't feel like waiting anymore because I know He's got this.

WHAT TO DO WHILST GOD WORKS

If you're a believer in things to come, chances are you're waiting on God for something or some things. It could be healing, a certain move, a job you want, furthering your education, marriage or a business you want to start. Because there are many things I've waited on God for, I know it can be easy to just want it and want it now. Waiting is not an easy thing to do.

It can feel too much if you're just sitting around waiting. Sometimes when we wait on God for something, He's actually waiting on us to do something. Even so, He is working on giving us what we hope for, what we are believing for. So, what can you do whilst God works?

1. Work on your relationship with God

I've already discussed this in detail in chapter 4 and chapter 7. Please don't neglect this because if you do, all the waiting you're doing will be in vain.

2. Preparation

However preparation looks like for you, do it. If you're hoping to start some business, learn all you can about it. Do a business plan where necessary. Sometimes, people don't do anything because they say they have no money or the necessary resources. That doesn't stop you from doing what you can to prepare for when you do. Get the required knowledge and prepare the best way you can. That way, when what you need becomes available, you're ready for it.

Another example is if you're waiting for marriage, work on yourself. That list of characteristics you hope your significant other will have, do you embody them? If not, make sure you do because like attracts like. You could even go so far as to read books on marriage. I know some might think that's too much but if it takes years to study to be a teacher, lawyer, engineer, why would being a wife or husband be any

different? Yes, in any position you learn as you go, but the foundational knowledge is important.

The reading I'm doing now is helping me notice things I need to work on. I don't know if they'll help in my marriage, but I know they're helping me in the way I relate to other people. The rest I'll learn as I go. If the reading doesn't help at all, at least my husband will know I valued our marriage enough to try.

3. Wait with faith and expectancy

Grow where faith and expectancy are concerned. I've already mentioned faith is a muscle, that means it can grow. I had faith, but I realized I wasn't expectant because I'd hoped for many things that didn't happen. Expectancy can be built too. Develop these two because without them your wait can get frustrating.

I'm not just telling you about something I don't know. I've experienced it often and have had to remind myself time and again that my attitude whilst waiting determines how I experience it. It doesn't help you to sit and do nothing and then be surprised when it gets too much for you. Where you end up focusing too much on what's happening right now and you can't look past that.

What I've been learning about faith of late is that you can't think you have it and abandon it. You have to continually work on it the way you would to keep fit. It can disappear on you before you even realize what happened. It really is like a muscle.

Do what will work for you. For me, it's all the things I've already mentioned. It's also reading inspirational material, watching different sermons, looking at my vision boards, reading my vision letters. Basically holding in my mind a picture of what I believe is to come, before there is any evidence of it.

No one can do this for me. I have to do it myself. No one can believe for me. There are days where I doubt, days where I don't see how it's possible and on those days,

I have to remind myself that it's not in my power but God's power. Then I take my medicine, all the things I mentioned above, to get me back into a state of believing.

If I don't, it's me who gets down, frustrated and depressed. It's a choice I have to make. Do I want to live with faith and expectancy or do I want to be sad and frustrated? If I choose the former, then it's up to me to get myself into that state of being, no matter what the circumstances are. If for some reason I find it difficult, I pray and keep using my medicine until something changes.

4. Surrender

This was not an easy one for me and might not be for you either. It was more about me and less about God. I had thought I had let go in the past, but I hadn't. In the past, I thought praying for what I wanted and then saying "God willing" was enough. It wasn't.

I didn't know how much I was trying to hold onto control until I truly surrendered it all. It wasn't because things were great. I had reached a point where I had done everything I could and was getting no results that I told God: "I can't do this anymore. Have your way." I mentioned all the things I was trusting Him for and said "I'm surrendering it all. I still want it, but I'm giving all my dreams to you and will trust your will above mine." I finally truly surrendered, and I meant every word.

Not long after that, God revealed the purpose for my life the way I've already described. My mind was blown. Even now I still can't believe it. The sense of peace that has given me is beyond words. It took me surrendering it all, for God to trust me with letting me know what He wanted me to do with my life. It took me giving up everything I've ever wanted and saying to God, have your way.

It's something I never saw myself doing or becoming. He'd already been leading me towards it, but I didn't know it. I was following blindly. I still am, but bit by bit, God is letting me in on the bigger picture. That kind of trust, it humbles me and makes me see God for who He is. A Father who wants to take care of us and work whilst

we rest, if only we would let go of our control and surrender it all to Him. Him who has the most amazing plan for our lives, one better than that which we could ever imagine for ourselves.

Now that I've surrendered, I don't have to worry about or care about the dreams I had before. Now my dreams are God's dreams for me. I do what He tells me to do, and I go where I'm led. It's not about me anymore, and I couldn't be happier. I resisted surrendering for a long time because I wanted to hold on to what I wanted. Now that I have surrendered it all, I feel such peace like never before. There's such alignment in my life because I know I'm living in God's purpose for my life.

It doesn't even feel like I gave up anything even though I've had to abandon some things. I did that willingly because I see God's big picture and my dreams were nothing compared to what God wants me to do. I believe though as I live out the purpose for my life, God will still let me experience some of the dreams I had. They might be different from what I expected, but He's a loving Father, and for anything He asks us to give up, He's got something much better in store.

Surrender. Let God be God in your life. Your surrender allows God to work, to do things His way. It also gives you a sense of peace because you've done everything you can, and now all you have to do is live in your purpose, your calling. If you don't know what that is, then ask God to tell you what it is. For Him to open your eyes to it when you're ready for it.

I believe if you do the above things, you'll be too busy to feel the strain of waiting. Too busy to become impatient. So go ahead, work on the above in this your time of waiting, and in time God will answer your prayer. It's my hope that you have prayed already, if not, pray first because you can't expect something you haven't prayed for.

FAITH - IT TAKES COURAGE

I hope by now you've realized how important faith is. The Bible says faith without works is dead, and rightly so because belief alone is not enough. There are times where some action is required from you. That action might seem daunting, it might scare you, which is where courage comes in.

Before I talk about courage, let me state this first, don't forget to ask God if it's time to act or make a move or not. When you've asked, be willing to listen for the answer. Listen even if you don't like the answer. As I mentioned, God told me to wait regarding something and I waited. Now, months later it's become apparent to me why I had to wait. If I had not waited, by now, I would have had to abandon what I wanted to do then because of the way things have turned out.

Back to courage. Let me use Peter as an example. He was the one to walk on water towards Jesus in Matthew 14. He knew there was a chance that he might sink but he had the courage to walk anyway. In John 20 after the death of Jesus, Peter and John went to the tomb where his body was supposed to be. John went ahead, and when he found Jesus' clothes outside, he was afraid to go in. Peter boldly went in without thinking twice even though he didn't know what awaited him. When Peter and some of the other disciples saw Jesus on the shore in John 21, he jumped into the water to get to Jesus.

I mention these stories about Peter because in all of them, he showed what courage looks like. He took the first step. Sometimes that's all we have to do. Just take the first step, and God will do the rest.

When Peter walked on water, he got scared along the way. When that happened, Jesus was there to catch him when he fell. Taking a step doesn't mean you won't fall. You might fall, but Jesus is always there to catch you even if it doesn't seem like it sometimes. When he walked into the tomb, he didn't know what was on the other side. He went in, and there was nothing to fear. He became the first to witness that Christ had risen.

Sometimes you don't need to pray more, to read more or learn more, sometimes you need the courage to act. To act on what God has put in your heart. To take the first step. Only you can take that step. Only you know what that step is. Be it talking to people about Christ, writing a book, changing your profession, moving on from something.

Have the courage to act. Take that first step. Whether big or small. What you have in you is not just about you. It affects others too. There are people whose lives you're going to change, and the sooner you act, the better for them too. It doesn't mean you're not scared, just that you're taking action in spite of the fear.

For instance, I felt the desire to inspire people. I had to sit down and think about how I could do that. I started with giving people around me inspirational books. I talked to friends, family, and colleagues about faith and following their dreams. That led to starting an inspirational blog. Which led to writing books, and motivational speaking. All the while, still at my 9 to 5 job. It doesn't matter what you do or how you do it, or how big or small it is, just take the first step.

CONCLUSION

I don't know what your life is like or what makes you happy or sad, but I know if you're living a life that is not fulfilling you, you need to do something about it. Life is too precious to spend it just getting by. There's no reason for you to live another day, another minute, another second feeling lost. Turn to God as you are, and He will accept you with open arms because He loves you.

As you go on, keep pursuing God because the closer you are to Him, the better it will be to hear Him. Remain in faith and grow it if you need to. Bear in mind that having faith doesn't mean much if you don't have a relationship with God.

Above all, surrender, because when you truly allow God to take over your life, things will change in ways you could never have imagined. God will trust you and let you in on Kingdom secrets that will blow your mind. It can happen to anyone. If you'll let God work in and on you, He'll use you in the most amazing ways.

It's not all going to be sunshine and rainbows

This next part is an extract from my book "When feeling lost: Finding solace in God's unconditional love." I include it here because it's worth repeating. It's something any believer needs to know, especially if you're a new believer or if you're a come-back-child of God.

When you turn to God, it doesn't mean everything will be rosy but that you can get through anything through Christ who strengthens you. I wish somebody had told me this when I started out because it would have saved me a lot of heartache.

You will have days and times where you doubt yourself and even doubt God. Days where you wonder if God is on your side because you are hurt and disappointed. It's fine to go through that because we are human with human emotions.

The important thing is to give those feelings and thoughts to God. I'll say something like "God I don't understand why this is happening. I thought you led me to this. Why did you put me through this because you opened the door and then closed it? But I know you love me and know what's best for me, so I'm going to trust you. If I'm supposed to learn something from it, please let me do so. Please, heal my heart of this hurt that I'm feeling."

In time, God will show you why what happened took place. You will see how it was for your benefit. Even if you realize why 5 years later, you'll look back and thank God for closing that door. My mom once didn't get to buy an apartment she wanted to buy because the sellers changed their minds at the last minute. She didn't understand why God would allow that to happen. A few years later she read about how that apartment block burnt down. God knows what will happen in the future, so we have to trust that He always has our best interests at heart.

The sad part is that sometimes we are so hurt or disappointed or angry that we turn away from God. As a result, we never get to see what was on the other side. And we could have been so close to our breakthrough or to what we hoped for.

Sometimes it won't be anything God does or doesn't do. It will just be us disappointing ourselves. You might still struggle with that anger, guilt, shame, or other feelings. These might manifest themselves through you becoming irritable, shouting at loved ones, screaming in traffic, turning to old vices. Just because you turn to God doesn't mean the world stops trying to get you. Temptations will also be there.

What can you do then? Trust God through the Holy Spirit to guide you and counsel you, and show you the right path. If you fall, get up, ask God for forgiveness and move on because God is a loving Father who knows your heart. You just need to be sincere.

I hope you found what you were looking for in this book. Remember, no matter what, God loves you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sibo Hlabangana is a daughter of the Most High God. She believes her life took a different turn once she turned to God and wants to encourage others to do the same because once you have God in your life, you will never be alone. She believes with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; she can do anything because with God anything is possible.

When she was about 6 years old, she got chucked out of the school choir because she couldn't sing. It hurt, but it was true. What they didn't know is that she would later discover karaoke. She currently lives in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

You can contact her through:

Email – sibo@inspirationbysibo.com

Twitter – [@SiboHlabangana](https://twitter.com/SiboHlabangana)

Other books by Sib0 Hlabangana:

1. When feeling lost – Finding solace in God's unconditional love
2. Letters to my daughter to be – Life lessons to a young woman
3. Find your bliss – How to change your life from the comfort of your bedroom.

These are all available on Amazon. [Link to Sib0 Hlabangana's books](#)

DO YOU HAVE AN H?

Having a relationship with God
and growing your faith

Sibo Hlabangana