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HOW GRACE FOUND ME

A LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

A STORY OF REDEMPTION AND HOPE

By Yankho C Mhango

How grace found me: a letter to my younger self.

A story of redemption and hope

To: The girl who was broken and empty, believing God wanted nothing to do with her. The girl who had no idea how much change one can experience in a few years. The girl who had already lost so much and had no idea she was yet to lose more. The girl fearful of the future and every unknown in her life.

From: The woman found by grace, mended and whole. Believing there will never be another who loves her more than God. Convinced that His love for her in a moment is far greater than anyone's love for her will ever be in a lifetime. The woman who has reached the end of herself many times, and at each point gained the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. The woman who, after knowing and experiencing the heart of God, is excited and hopeful for the future, because come what may, her Shepherd will defend her and through the deepest valley He will lead.

Dear Reader,

If my younger self saw who I am today, she would not believe it. None of her plans have come to pass. Life has turned out nothing like she wished or thought it would, and that would shatter her. Regardless, when I look back, all I see is God's faithfulness and His fingerprint in my story. I may not be living the life I always hoped for and dreamed of, but I am living the fruit of His faithfulness. If you ask me, this life is a much better deal; I have met God and witnessed His faithfulness.

As a young girl, I knew that God is generally good. But I did not believe that He was good to me. I used to think He had His own set of people that He was good to. As I struggled through different scenarios in life, I never believed that God saw me, heard me, or paid attention to my cry. But grace found me. And I wish the younger me knew that it would. She would have laughed harder, loved deeper and lived more.

I have written this as living proof of God's goodness. His grace found me and has carried me since. Whatever your story, I hope reading mine will sharpen your hope in Christ, for it is hope that keeps us

going. Be encouraged that our God sees, hears, and is for us; all to the glory of His name.

I also wrote this as a reminder to myself. When I first started writing, I was on the mountaintop, but I descended into the valley along the way. Reading through this has served as a constant reminder that God is good. Just as He saw me through then, He will see me through now. If life ever becomes too dark and I cannot find a tunnel with a light at the end, I can look back on this and be reminded that He still is.

May the good Lord bless you.

HEALING IN HIS HANDS: FINDING WHOLENESS AMID BROKENNESS

I grew up feeling broken and unwanted, though I cannot trace the origin of these feelings. It took time for me to articulate what I was experiencing, but I always felt out of place, as though I needed to be "fixed." As I grew older, these feelings intensified, and entering secondary school only made things worse. I found myself in one troubled friendship after another, and my relationships with people were generally strained. While I recognize that some of these issues stemmed from my own internal struggles, they still deeply affected me.

Adding to this was the fact that I grew up not knowing my father. I had mixed feelings—part of me believed he didn't want me, while a small part held out hope that he simply didn't know how to get in touch. I would sometimes write letters to him, keeping them with me in case we ever met. At one point, I made the bold decision to try to reconnect with him. At 14, I decided to find him on Facebook and sent him a message. For years, I poured my heart into trying to build a

relationship with him, but he only offered small glimpses of himself. It wasn't the response I had hoped for, and it left me feeling once again—unwanted.

As the years went on, I began to despise myself. I believed I was unlovable. Friends came and went, and I was convinced that I was the problem—that they would all eventually leave, just as my father had. I scribbled "I hate myself" at the back of many of my notebooks, a testament to the depth of my self-loathing.

These feelings shaped how I saw life, people, and ultimately, God. My experiences led me to believe that I had to work hard to earn love and, even then, I remained unworthy. Even when God blessed me with loyal, loving friends, I had a hard time accepting their love. I deemed myself unworthy of it. Deep inside, I longed to be fully known yet perfectly loved, a desire I knew no one could fulfil.

My healing began when I started to walk earnestly with the Lord. The Bible tells us that God is close to the broken-hearted and does not despise a contrite spirit (Isaiah 51:17). As I journeyed with Him, I

learned to stop projecting the flaws of people onto God, for He is unlike any human. My complicated relationship with my father had made it difficult to believe in God's promises and accept His love. I thought I had to earn His favour, just as I believed I needed to earn the approval of people. Yet, the Bible teaches us that while we were still weak, Christ died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6). I didn't have to earn God's love. In Christ, I was already chosen (Ephesians 2). Whether or not anyone else wanted me no longer mattered.

One pivotal moment in my healing came through the love of a woman who went out of her way to care for me. She showed me love, even when I made mistakes, and corrected me with kindness. One morning, as I thanked God for her, He asked, "If an imperfect human can love you this much, how much more can I, your perfect Father?" This question solidified God's love in my heart, marking the beginning of my full acceptance of His love. Ever since, Christ has shown me that His love is steadfast, unconditional, and everlasting (Zephaniah 3:17,

Jeremiah 31:3). I thank Him daily for wanting me when no one else did.

As one author puts it, “To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is liberating and humbling, equipping us to face whatever challenges life brings.”

This experience also taught me the importance of people. After being hurt by so many, I decided I was done with relationships. I found it difficult- still do on some days-to stay open when someone showed genuine affection for me. But through this woman, I learned that we aren’t meant to walk through life alone—not even Jesus, who was God Himself, lived in isolation. The enemy often blinds us to the people who truly love and support us, focusing our attention instead on those who hurt or reject us. But God places people in our lives to help us through specific seasons (2 Corinthians 1:4). We must heal because it is unfair to project our pain onto others and if we don’t, we risk viewing

life through the lens of victimhood, perceiving people as villains rather than fellow children of God. Christ calls us to a higher standard of love (John 15:12). To love as He does, we must forgive, heal, and love without holding on to past hurts.

Feelings are strange. The sense of brokenness can't always be explained, but if you've felt it, you know exactly what I mean. Take it one step at a time. Cast your worries onto Him, for He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). Know that you are not alone—He is always with you (Deuteronomy 31:6). If you press on, you will heal, and one day you will be given a garment of praise instead of mourning (Isaiah 61:3). He will be with you, even into old age, collecting each tear you cry (*Psalms* 56:8). I used to wonder what God could do with someone so broken, but I've learned that He gives beauty for ashes. Your brokenness is not weakness; it's how His light enters you.

While feelings should not define truth, they are part of being human. Even Christ, the God-man, respected the human nature of feelings. So, allow yourself to feel. Cry when you need to, especially in prayer,

because He understands the language of your tears. Smile, because you have hope. Keep pouring out your heart before God and, above all, be patient. You are clay in the hands of the Master Potter. Shift your focus away from your brokenness, and one day you will look back in awe at how beautifully He has shaped you. You may not see it now, but your brokenness is a gift.

Reference scriptures: *Psalms 34:18, Isaiah 51:17, James 4:8, Matthew 11:28-30, 1 Peter 5:7, Numbers 23:19, Isaiah 61:3, Isaiah 46:4, Psalms 56:8, Romans 5:6, Romans 8:26, 1 Peter 5:9, 2 Corinthians 1:4-6, Ephesians 2, John 15:12, Deuteronomy 31:6, Zephaniah 3:17, Jeremiah 31:3.*

DIVINELY DESIGNED: EMBRACING PURPOSE AND WORTH BEYOND INSECURITIES.

As a child, you rarely think anything is wrong with you. But as you grow older, that sometimes changes—it did for me. I began noticing certain things, initially innocent observations that soon became comparisons. Eventually, those comparisons no longer felt harmless. I remember one of my friends with beautiful, thick ginger hair who could sing, draw, and dance effortlessly. In contrast, I had dark, kinky

hair that seemed difficult to grow, couldn't draw a proper circle, and struggled to dance. At the time, I didn't know how to describe what I felt, but looking back, I realize now—it was envy. I was envious of her. I also noticed that while other kids had both a mom and a dad, I only had my grandparents. The inevitable question, "What happened to your parents?" stirred emotions I didn't understand as a child. To cope, I sometimes invented stories about my parents' whereabouts. I once told someone my mother lived in the UK. Sometimes lying was easier than explaining the painful truth: my mother had passed away when I was young, and I knew nothing about the man whose surname I carried.

Despite being raised in a loving home, I often felt inadequate because we weren't a "nuclear family." I lacked the experience of calling someone "Mom" or "Dad" or having siblings to share my life with. Whenever I talked about my mother, I noticed the pity in people's expressions, and how their behaviour toward me would shift. They became overly sweet and attentive, which only made me feel more like

a charity case. Though I performed well academically, my handwriting was consistently criticized by teachers, never praised. I was also never the girl who caught the attention of boys. While my friends received compliments during our walks, I was the invisible one. I used to joke that the only attention I ever got was from bus conductors and street vendors—a joke I still make today.

Hollywood only worsened my insecurities by feeding me a narrow, unrealistic view of beauty. I didn't fit into that category, which deepened my feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. This worldview shaped the first two decades of my life.

When people pointed out my insecurities, I took it as confirmation that I was "less than." It took a long time for me to accept that by divine design, I was exactly where I was meant to be, just as I was meant to be. Looking back, some of these insecurities were grounded in harsh realities—like not having a mother. But many were unfounded, such as equating a lack of attention from boys with being unattractive. Even

when our insecurities are based on some realities, they don't—and shouldn't—define our worth.

Think of a German car, like a BMW. No matter who buys it, where it goes, or the accidents it might encounter, it remains a BMW. If something as earthly as a car, designed by human hands, retains its value despite external circumstances, how much more valuable are we, designed by our heavenly Father? Our worth isn't defined by where we're born, how we look, or the circumstances of our upbringing—our Maker defines us.

When we read the Bible, we meet people whose births seemed random at the time, but later, we see the purpose in their lives. Hebrews 11 lists individuals born into various circumstances, living through many seasons, but most importantly, walking with God. They became heroes of faith, showing that what might seem random or ordinary is often strategic. Take Solomon, for example: born to a king who committed heinous acts—raping his mother and murdering her husband—yet Solomon rose to become a wise and prosperous ruler (1 Kings 1-2).

Gideon came from the least esteemed tribe, but he became a judge and defender of Israel (Judges 6-8). And then there's Christ, born to an unmarried, humble couple in a manger, yet He is the Lord of glory (Luke 2:4-7).

The same is true today. We may not understand why we were born into certain circumstances or families, but we can trust that our Maker has a purpose. The world may try to convince us that we are cosmic accidents, but the Bible shows us we are divinely placed here for a reason. We can trust in the divine purpose of our God (Acts 17:26-27).

For many girls, our appearance is often a major source of insecurity. We compare ourselves to shifting standards of beauty, feeling that we're either too short, too tall, too dark, or that we must lose or gain weight. Even if we try to keep up, we can't because these standards are constantly changing. I struggled with this for a long time. But looking at the beauty of the world, perhaps there's a different lens through which we can see ourselves—a lens that appreciates the intricate details of our existence.

Consider the birds, whose feathers display sophisticated colour combinations, or the flowers, with each petal a unique masterpiece. The sound of water—whether a babbling brook, crashing waves, or gentle rain—has a soothing effect on our souls. And the sunset, a daily masterpiece, never repeats itself exactly, yet it's always familiar. These wonders, these intricate details, came into being through a divine command: "Let there be," and there was (Genesis 1). But we, you and I, were not just spoken into existence—we were meticulously fashioned, woven together with care (Psalms 139:13-16).

Our uniqueness defies worldly standards, and our worth transcends fleeting opinions. God didn't just declare us acceptable; He declared us good (Genesis 1:31). We are living masterpieces, reflections of the Creator who crafted all the beauty we see (Song of Solomon 4:7).

Believing this truth is a journey, one that takes time with God, prayers, and tears. Encouragement from friends and mentors also helped reshape my mindset until I could fully embrace this truth. On days when insecurity creeps in, I open God's Word and remind myself that I

am more than the world's fleeting judgments—I am a masterpiece, woven by the hands of the Creator. Self-help books and motivational talks can provide temporary inspiration, but only the living water from God will truly satisfy (John 4:14).

Finally, I want to speak to those of us who make comments about others' appearance or mannerisms. Everyone knows what they look like or how they walk, and for all you know, they may already be struggling with it. Our words should build up, not tear down (Ephesians 4:29). Pointing out what people can't change only harms them. Let us be gentle with our words (Ephesians 4:2, Proverbs 16:24). And for those of us who face constant remarks about things we can't help, may we be slow to anger and gracious in our response (James 1:19-20). We may not control what people say to us, but we can control how we respond. Be gracious, because sometimes people speak out of ignorance or without malice.

Reference Scriptures: Genesis 1, John 4:14, Psalms 139, Acts 17:26-27, Isaiah 43:7, Hebrews 11, Romans 8:28-30, Ephesians 4:29, Song of Solomon 4:7, Ephesians 1, John 8:36, Isaiah 53:5, Isaiah 43:1, Zechariah 2:8, Revelation 4:12.

SINGLENESS: HEARTBREAK, FRUSTRATION AND FINDING WHOLENESS IN CHRIST

I stood close to a night light; I had picked a couple of stones from the ground and I was throwing them as far as I could with all of my strength. I was angry and frustrated at myself, I could not believe I let this happen, yet again. “How could I have been so stupid?”, I asked myself. Let me backtrack a little bit. This was me at 21, devasted because I was facing yet another heartbreak. My devastation was not just because it had happened but because it had happened again.

A few years before this, I was 17, fresh out of secondary school. I got close to a boy. He was kind, smart and I felt that he genuinely cared for me. He said all the right things and did all the right things. But it was not long before I started to feel like something was wrong. If you were anything like me in your preteen years, you are familiar with the exciting feelings that come because you are doing something wrong, and the accompanying terror that comes because you know it will get

you in trouble. This is everything I felt with this boy. I felt excited, happy, and all the nice things, but somehow deep down I also knew this was going to get me in trouble. As a preteen, I mostly knew when I was being naughty because I was going against clear instructions but this time, I could not figure out what it was that was wrong with the situation.

I was not seriously walking with Christ and so I had not grasped the concept of conviction but I felt its weight daily. Then, by grace-yes, grace- and the help of a more mature Christian, I slowly began to understand what was wrong. My situation with this guy was blurring the lines of holiness and purity for me and I was engaging with a boy before I had seriously engaged with Christ. I went back and forth between wanting to run from this boy and wanting to stay in his life. A part of me wanted to honour God and do what was right, but I also had the biggest crush on the guy and just wanted to date him. I knew there was not a world where I could ever date this guy because my life was already falling apart; I had no peace, and I was constantly convicted

and scared to dishonour God. So, after a long flirty talking stage, I asked God to take this guy away because I couldn't do it although I knew I needed to. It broke me when he walked away, and trust me, I tried going back to him several times in desperation, but God's mercy had already closed that door. I slowly accepted, saw the situation for what it was and also chose to close the door.

Over the years, I immersed myself in God's presence. I discovered my identity in Him, unravelling the threads of His purpose for my life. Marriage, relationships, boundaries—they all took shape. I learned that my vision at seventeen was shortsighted—I was blind but thought I could see. In those years I wondered whether or not marriage was something I even wanted in the first place, I also spent it praying against the possibility of meeting the wrong guy again or getting into another relationship or having another heartbreak. I prayed about it many times than I can count.

At 21, I liked a guy, again. This time, I spoke to mentors, and friends and hoped for the best outcome. I was not looking to date the guy at

the time but was hoping with time, that would happen. However, I had misinterpreted and misread a lot of what I thought were signals.

Basically, for the most part, I led myself on. When I found out what was happening, it was too late, I had already dived in head first, with no parachute. The first one was a heartbreak, but this one was a tragedy. At 21, armed with wisdom and boundaries, this time, I had prayed earnestly, and sought counsel and yet, I stumbled again. I hated myself for it, struggled to forgive myself and carried around a lot of shame for months. I often wondered, shouldn't there be safety in the multitude of counsellors? Does not the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avail much? I thought guys in the church were safe. Where did I go wrong? Or maybe it's me? I must have the incredible talent to attract all the wrong things. And so, this night that I stood close to a night light, I was angry about many things.

The next few months after this happened, I had to look deeply inside and face some very hard truths about myself and life. A lot of times when I talk to someone going through a similar situation, I often come

off as someone who does not relate or understand. Someone who has no idea what it is like to repeat the same mistake or find oneself in a situation you vowed never to be in. But in reality, I do understand. I understand the disappointment in oneself, the humiliation and the shame that comes with it. So, I speak as someone who has been there, gotten out and is standing on the other side with many valuable lessons to share.

To begin with, I had to go back to the basics of who I am in Christ because I had allowed the enemy to scream his lies into my ears and I was beginning to believe him. I let him convince me that I was not worthy of the time and effort needed to protect my heart, that I was not worth much because if I was, only serious men would approach me, and take me seriously. But I came to a point where I had to choose, whether I was going to keep letting the father of lies and someone else's choices define me, or if I was going to gird myself with God's truth about who I am (Ephesians 2, Psalm 139, Ephesians 6). I chose the latter, so every day I woke up. I affirmed myself with scripture

until God's word became a reality in my mind and heart (Philippians 4:8).

I realised that my identity was shaken because, I had placed it in how great my boundaries were and how principled I was, so what had happened was a big blow to how confident I was in myself. As important as boundaries and principles are, they must never define us nor must we ever feel secure by them. When I started to pick up the pieces, I had to learn to truly place my confidence in Christ (Proverbs 3:4-5), not in my efforts, or friends and mentors to protect me or to get a godly man (Jeremiah 17:5). I swallowed my pride, and found rest in the reality that I am not, nor will I ever be my own hero-Christ is. He reminded me, that He already despised shame on the cross and so I do not have to carry it. I struggled and prayed through the decision to live shame-free.

I would like to mention that these events happened during a time when some ladies in my circle got into godly relationships. I mopped about this and hated that while it looked like others were happily

walking into new seasons of life, I was fixing my mess. As human beings, we tend to compare our journeys with others and use that as a standard of how well we are doing in our journey. It does not take rocket science to know that, that is a bad litmus test for knowing whether or not your life is going the way it is supposed to be going. Our journeys on earth are very parallel, even though they give us the illusion that they meet, the sum of events that make up each of our lives are very distinct. When God was creating each one of us, there was a story that He wanted the brush of our lives to paint upon the canvas of the universe (Hebrews 12:1, Psalms 139).

As God helped me out of this, the first thing he taught me, was just because I felt that I was such a failure at life did not mean His plan for my life was failing. Sovereign grace has it that even when the pieces of our lives are falling apart, the grand weaver is still holding them together and the ultimate plan for our lives is still standing. The details of our life are authored by God, and He declares our end from the beginning (Isiah 46:10, Job 42:2). So instead of looking to other

people's journey, I learnt-still learning -to look to He who holds my life together. I walk with confidence knowing that because Gods masterplan is undefeatable, my life is going exactly how it should be going (Psalms 33:11). And when I stumble, I know that all things work together for good, to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

I also learned, that in this period of singleness, it's crucial to not just survive, but to thrive, as it is a God-ordained season in our lives. We owe it to both Him and ourselves to make the most of it. Use this time to deepen your relationship with Jesus, your saviour, by understanding His heart and falling in love with Him. Focus on cultivating your friendships. Develop meaningful relationships with those who will speak truth into your life and help you grow (Luke 1:39-56).

Remember, "iron sharpens iron" (Proverbs 27:17). Love is a commandment. We are called to love every individual we encounter, for they are all bearers of God's image, however tainted it may be. Friendship, on the other hand, is a choice. Choose wisely (1 Corinthians

15:33). Opt for friends who are godly and wise. Understand that quality friendships don't happen by accident. They require intentionality, patience, and the ability to be slow to anger, slow to speak, and quick to listen (James 1:19-20).

People are fallible and will inevitably disappoint you, just as you will disappoint them. Therefore, be quick to forgive and mend relationships. To err is human, to forgive is divine. Extend grace to others as you would want it extended to you. Avoid cynicism, as it will keep you from loving others well. Not everyone is out to get you, and love always believes the best (1 Corinthians 13:7). Focus on serving God by serving in church, and serving your friends and family. Learn the meaning of marriage and God's design and purpose for it (*Ephesians 5:22-23*), and learn what qualities you ought to have and what qualities your partner ought to have. The years you get to walk alone are beautiful, you get to discover yourself, your flaws, your strengths independent of someone, and you learn the art of trusting God with your heart, life, plans and what have you. Do not succumb to

any type of pressure and do not awaken love before you are ready to handle it (*Song of Solomon 8:4*), simply wait patiently and trust in God's timing.

Two cannot walk together unless they agree, so choose a godly partner.

You cannot date a non-believer for what relationship does light have

with darkness? (*2 Corinthians 6:14*) You also cannot date someone

from another faith for what relationship does Christ have with Belial?

Be careful with churchgoers, the church is a hospital, some are sick,

some are healed and some are doctors. Therefore, develop the spirit of

discernment and always remember we know them by the fruit of their

life and not the gift or fruit of their gift. It is best to also get together

with a fellow mature Christian. Ask your friends (remember the wise

ones?) and those around you who are older and wiser before getting

together with someone, it often will keep you from a lot of pain

(*Proverbs 11:14*). God saw the need for a partner in Adam before Adam

saw it in himself, He can see yours, simply trust Him. He gives good

gifts only and when the time is right, He will make it happen (*Isiah*

60:22). In the end what truly matters is whether or not you are at a place in your life where you're glorifying God the most-whether you are single or not. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Reference scriptures: Genesis 2:21-25, Genesis 2:18, Proverbs 27:9, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Colossians 3:13, Job 6:14, Proverbs 18:24, Romans 12:8-10, Proverbs 17:17, Amos 3:3, 2 Corinthians 6:14, Proverbs 11:14, 2 Corinthians 11:14-15, James 1:17-20, Proverbs 27:17, 1 Corinthians 13, Ephesians 5:22-33, Song of Solomon 8:4, Genesis 2:22, Luke 1:39-56, Isiah 60:22, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Proverbs 11:14, Ephesians 2, Psalm 139, Ephesians 6, Philippians 4:8, Jeremiah 17:5, Hebrews 12:1, Isiah 46:10, Job 42:2, Psalms 33:11, Luke 1:39-56.

THE JOURNEY OF GROWTH: SHIFTING FROM EARTHLY APPROVAL TO DIVINE PURPOSE

I once accompanied a friend to visit an elder. I can't quite recall the reason for our visit, but it quickly turned into a mini mentorship session. My friend had shared the Word somewhere that morning, and the elder praised her, commending how well she had done. He told her there wasn't much more to say because she was already doing great, but he pointed out a few areas for improvement. Then he turned to

me. While I secretly hoped for similar praise, I received something different—an essential piece of advice.

At that time, I felt like my efforts toward spiritual growth were in vain. I wondered, "Will I ever grow? Will I become anything?" It didn't help that my peers were being recognized as elders and receiving respect. During prayer meetings, they would pray fervently while I stood there, stone cold, with only a few sentences to offer, wondering what people were still praying about thirty minutes later. I longed for the same respect and honour they received. My motives for pursuing Christ were pure—sometimes. But mostly, they were driven by a desire for praise. It hurt when people would bypass me and go to my friends for spiritual help.

But praise be to the God of all mercies for the work of sanctification He performs in our hearts. One Sunday, a preacher shared a profound truth: "You can be honoured among men, respected for your words and pious deeds, yet lack a strong foundational relationship with Christ. You may appear to stand firm, but when storms come, you will

fall.” This statement hit me hard and revealed that my focus had been misplaced. Instead of seeking recognition, my goal should have been to know Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). My motives needed to centre on knowing God and building my faith on the unshakable rock that is Christ.

The pursuit of God should be solely for His sake, not for human applause (1 Chronicles 28:9). The fruit others see in us should naturally flow from our authentic relationship with God, not be manufactured for approval. When we abide in Him, the fruit is promised to show (John 15:5). Our relationship with God should be like an iceberg: what’s visible on the surface is only a fraction of the depth beneath. No matter how impressive our external appearance is, it should never supersede our roots in Christ, for they matter most. If we seek only earthly acclaim, that’s all we’ll receive (Matthew 6:1; Colossians 3:23). But the Bible encourages us to strive for an eternal crown, bestowed by the just Judge (2 Timothy 4:8). Imagine hearing

those words from our Maker: “Well done, my good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:23). What an indescribable joy that will be!

As for helping others in their walk of faith, that too should come from a pure heart. Our desire should be to see people helped and walking their God-ordained path (1 Peter 5:1-4). Not to clone them into our image or use them as trophies of how spiritual we are. God knows our hearts, and while we sometimes hide behind that fact, it is truly petrifying. We cannot fool Him, even if we have everyone else, including ourselves, fooled (Jeremiah 17:10). May we constantly ask God to examine our hearts and motives, better today than on that final day (Psalms 139:23-24).

When it comes to growth, be patient. You will grow. Take it one day and one step at a time. Just as life is in stages, so is our spiritual journey. Other people’s growth should not pressure you or make you feel like God is not working in your life. Be careful of the fox of comparison (2 Corinthians 10:12); fix your eyes on Christ, the founder and perfecter of your faith (Hebrews 12:1-2). Celebrate the testimonies

of others, and let their journeys with God further assure you of His faithfulness. Do not try to shortcut your way through, for you'll become a half-baked Christian. Cultivate daily prayer as if your life depends on it, because it does (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Open your Bible and read it—not just parts and pieces, but the whole of it (2 Timothy 2:15). His Word is sweet; it will sanctify you, give you wisdom, show you God's character, grow your faith, and make you more like Him.

Sit under the teaching of others and learn. There are things God teaches us directly, but there are also things He will use people to teach us (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). Gather with fellow believers as much as you can; it is a gift God gave the Church (Hebrews 10:25). Knowing your purpose is important—pray and seek to understand it—but don't let the pursuit of purpose consume you to the point where you miss the present. The now is as important as the future. Your purpose is God-given, and more than anyone else, He wants you to know and fulfil it. Until then, remind yourself that you are His workmanship, created for good works, so do good works (Ephesians 2:10). It is God who works

in us, both to will and to do His good pleasure, so find comfort in the fact that He will lead you to do those good works (Philippians 2:13).

Finally, be assured of this: He who began a good work in you will carry it to completion until the day of Christ (Philippians 1:6). He will keep you from falling and present you faultless before His glorious presence with exceeding joy (Jude 24-25). Trust Him with every fear and uncertainty, and lean not on your own understanding. Remember, there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is destruction (Proverbs 14:12-16). Be cautious of how much you trust yourself in this journey with Christ. Wake up every day and put on the full armour of God! Always remember, there is never an endpoint; there is infinitely more of Him to discover. So never stop pursuing.

Reference scriptures: 1 Corinthians 2:2, Luke 18:1, John 15:5, Matthew 6:1, Colossians 3:23, Matthew 25:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Ephesians 6:18, 1 Peter 5:1-4, 1 Chronicles 28:9, Jeremiah 17:10, 2 Timothy 4:8, Psalms 139:23-24, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Corinthians 3:18, John 17:17, Philippians 1:6, Philippians 2:13, Jude 24-25, Romans 8:29-30, Song of Solomon 2:15-17, 2 Corinthians 10:12, Ephesians 2:10, Hebrews 10:22-25, Proverbs 14:12-16, Jude 24-25, Hebrews 6:19.

Yours truly, still a work in progress,

Yankho.

Doxology

To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory. He who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. Oh, the depth of His riches, wisdom, and knowledge! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! For from Him and through Him are all things. To Him be glory and dominion now and forevermore. Amen.

For my book lovers, here are a few book recommendations that helped me along the way, the list is not exhaustive and not every book is for you.

The pursuit of God- A.W Tozer

The knowledge of the Holy- A.W Tozer

The true measure of a woman (even men can read)- Lisa Bevere

Without rival – Lisa Bevere

Understanding the power and purpose of a woman/man- Dr Myles Munroe

Disciplines of a godly woman/man- Barbara Hughes, Kent Hughes

A woman after Gods own heart- Elizabeth George

What he must be if he wants to marry my daughter- Voddie Baucham

Beauty for ashes- Joyce Meyer

The power of a praying woman/man- Stormie Omartian

The friendships of women (helpful even to men)- Dee Brestin