

LIVING POSITIVELY

The miracles I need to see working in my life

Healing isn't one of them; rather, I need to be able to look after those whose needs would make a difference if only they were met

I know this is hard to believe, but when I look back, I feel the best thing that ever happened to me was getting infected with HIV. This virus has taught me a lot about courage, friendship, and practically everything else I know about life. Why do I say this? Because many are the times in my line of work, or even in my social life, when I have met people who have the 'answers' to my problems.

"Asunta, I know of a pastor who can pray for you to be healed," they will say, while extolling the amazing healing powers of the pastor.

Correction: I am not a victim. I hate that label. I am simply living with HIV, period. Victim implies a helplessness; that I'm at the mercy of this virus. Truth is, I'm living my life to the fullest, like any victor would. I don't doubt that God can heal. It is possible. However, one thing I now know for sure is that even if I were healed today, it would not change any part of my life because I made a conscious decision two decades ago to live positively.

"I really don't have a problem," I categorically told one lady who was on my case, believing that she was doing me the biggest favour in the world. I wish people would see that there are more pressing matters that need prayers.

Meant to be

I don't know about you, but I think this was meant to be. God meant for me to get infected so He could use me. Sometimes I try to imagine what my life would be like if I were HIV-negative, and I draw a blank. That's because I have lived all my adult life with this virus, and I think I would literally have to take a crash course in living without HIV if I woke up tomorrow and found myself HIV-negative.

Let's talk about miracles. Right now I have over 400 orphans and vulnerable children who need school fees. And if I don't do something real quick, they won't see the inside of a classroom next year. I wish these 'concerned' folks would pray so I could get miracles for everyday stuff like this. The world doesn't start and end with me. It's not only about Asunta. I'm just a cog, albeit a visible one.

With all due respect, I wish that pastor I'm being told to go and see about a miracle healing would pray so that my orphans could find decent shelter and three square meals a day. I wish there was a miracle so I could have salaries for my 100-plus staff who care for people living with HIV.

"My problem is not actually my HIV status, but the way the society reacts to those who are infected," I politely told the lady who was giving me directions to the faith healer's haunt.

I'm thankful for the concern coming from all these well-meaning people. But I've said this before and I'll say it again: immediately after I tested HIV-positive, I spent a lot of time rushing from one healing crusade to another. "God, I swear if you heal me I will serve you for the rest of my life," I bargained with the Almighty.

Strange towns

Sometimes I found myself in strange towns, and penniless, because I had heard that a miracle healer was coming from overseas and he had an "impressive healing resume".

After a while, I learned to accept my status and asked God to use me the way I am. I was healed of one ill, though: foolishness. I learned that God works on His own terms.

Most of the people who are on the outside looking in think that if I'm somehow rid of this virus, I will have a 'normal' life. What they don't know is I'm actually living a normal life right now. HIV may have grabbed hold of a part of my immunity, but I'm still in life's driving seat. And that's what is important.

I do need miracles in my life, just not the ones people think. For instance, could someone please pray that we would see an end to the bottlenecks that sometimes mean people who are living with HIV have a hard time accessing treatment?

I also wish someone would pray and move the mountain that is the relevant authorities so that they can put their money where their mouth is, especially with regards to basic things that mean life and death for women and children living with HIV.

I'm not done yet: I wish all Christians would practise what they preach because, there are thousands of bed-ridden folks who will die unless someone – read, that church-going Christian neighbour – gets to them on time with a mug of porridge, or even just a shoulder to lean on. Those are the miracles I need to see working in my life.

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