



*grene*pages

Issue 23

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First, let me appreciate you for accepting to read through this piece of work that God is using to bless lives today.

Have you being a recipient of the grace of God and you are willing never to take it for granted? This 23rd edition of *grenepages* is specially designed for you.

Here, we trust God to open your eyes to his expectations as you enjoy this grace. What **Thorns and Traps are there to avoid**, especially **The Trap Called Perfect**; what trainings he takes even **The Anointed** through to equip them. We hope that this issue will not only do the work of **Nurturing You**, it will teach you **How To Nurture Grace**, as much as God bestows it upon you.

Love At Its Best and **The Means Justifies The End** are two pieces that call the attention of every believer to graceful daily living.

Please feel free to share this with everyone God lays on your heart. *The grace of God that brings Salvation has appeared unto all men...* Once again, Welcome to *grenepages*.

Tobi Olowookere

love at its best




Joan Abimbola

MINISTERING RHYTHMS
joanministeringrhythms.wordpress.com

Jesus replied; “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Matthew 22: 37-40 (NIV)



Why get it wrong in this world
Yes, love gives us the grace for works
But why make it 'works' all by itself
When it should be love at its best

It's love that came to save us
When each of us was lost
We were shown love and grace
But we make it work and race

Love leads us to intimacy with our God
Love is what he wants
Love makes us crave His touch
Love should be our trust

Love leads us to serve one another
Love helps us to bond till no asunder
Love inspires works yet it's beyond works
Love is what we should feed our world

Breathe to spread this love
Live to give this love
Work but fuel it with love
Cos the greatest of all is LOVE!

nurturing you

Homegirl,

Nurture: The care, the attention, the training given to someone or something that is growing or developing

When we were newly born, our caregivers constantly, consistently and relentlessly gave us adequate food and water to nourish our bodies, appropriate clothing to protect us from elements of the weather and shelter to keep us safe and secure. If we were fortunate, we also got emotional support, spiritual and formal education, all in a bid to make us grow from a teeny-weeny, helpless baby to a strong, capable adult.

Why, then, do we become adults and neglect the process of nurturing US?

Why do we leave our bodies, minds and spirits to chance?

Yet, we expect these three to show up for



Adeyinka Oresanya

THE DAUGHTER'S INSPIRATIONS

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us when examinations of life come and there is a prize of excellence to be won. When they fail, we are quick to blame the devil and all the evil people in our village, when we are usually the orchestrators of our own failings.

Now don't get me wrong, the devil is real and is constantly waging war against us. There are evil people in the world and only by the Blood of the Lamb and the confessions of our mouths (prayers) can we overcome these ones. But, I will not be talking about that today.

Girl, what's with you downing bottles of soda (soft drink) every day, and saying you can't do without it?

Why do you neglect taking time to prepare stuff like *ewedu*, *efo riro* or *egusi* soups, and instead just reach out for meat pies, hotdogs and biscuits because they take less time? There is no time to check time, you say.

I even heard Michelle is now hanging out with girls who smoke and drink, and has started taking a whiff here and a sip there.

Girl, you need to stop it!

I know you have plans to have a family soon. One day, pregnancy alone, not to talk of the arduous task of juggling family, work and societal responsibility together,

will demand so much from your body, and if it fails in delivering nutrients, strength and vitality, you yourself will see the results. You will NOT like it. More importantly, all things being equal, you determine how healthy your child will be in life by what you give him/her from day one in your womb. Carrier of godly seeds and mighty generations, what are you reserving in your body?

Empty calories? Toxins?

One day, the health status of your family will lie in your hands as the nurturer of the home. What will be in your hands to give?

So, I plead with you to prepare your body and lifestyle for the tasks ahead. Carry your eye from that soft drink and take time to eat oranges or apples or bananas or watermelon!

Fall in love with *ugu*, *okazi*, *tete*, *soko*, potatoes, *iru*, *egusi*, *okro*, *ewedu*, *orisirisi eja* and healthy meat.

They are cheaper than drugs and countless medical tests in the end.

Your nutrient intake is one of the factors that will determine your health and beauty, which will further determine how you feel about yourself and your confidence. Do not let your body fall apart.

Watch what you take in.

And, please, stay beautiful!

Your Homegirl,

Adeyinka Oresanya

#tomyownhomegirl

#iamyourhomegirlstotalktome

how to nurture grace



Ope Rowland
THRIVE
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You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 Timothy 2:1 (NKJV)

When we received Christ, we received the content of Christ; Christ is full of grace and truth (John 1:12, 14). From this fullness, we have received grace upon grace but we did not automatically receive the truth part (John 1:16). It was the grace combined with the truth that made up the glorious Jesus in his world.

The grace upon grace we have received is favor upon favor, spiritual blessings upon spiritual blessings and gifts upon gifts (John 1:16 AMP). Thus at new birth, we have all received as many and as diverse spiritual virtues. However, these might be passive and not manifest as they need be activated with the truth.

The grace we have is as the eggs domiciled in a female but requires fertilization by a male to give it life. It is the truth that fertilizes the grace in us to give it life.

Jesus challenged those who believe in him to become true disciples (John 8:31). This implies that being a believer and a true disciple are not the same. The latter is like an advanced stage of the former. The believer has already received grace upon grace but the true disciple is one that resembles the master.

Meanwhile, the master manifested the glory of those grace embedded in (Acts 10:38).

Thus, a true disciple is one who manifests those graces in him or her. Crossing this gap requires one to remain, abide and continue in the word of Christ. Christ is the truth; hence, his word is also truth (John 14:6). Abiding in the words of Christ leads to a knowing; knowing as in intercourse with the truth. (John 8:32, Genesis 4:1). That is fertilizing the grace inherent in us.

We need to move from a casual interaction with the word to a deliberate encountering of the word. The former is like embracing while the latter is intercourse. Embraces does not lead to fertilization.

Intercourse requires privacy and quality time. It requires deep intimacy. We need to develop deep intimacy with the word of truth.

The words of truth are spirit words and life giving (John 6:63). The graces we have received from his fullness are also spiritual blessings, thus spirit. It takes the spirit to fertilize the spirit and give it life. We need to be absorbed in the word of truth continuously to secure a continuous manifestation of all the grace we have received.

You are as strong in grace as much as the grace you have fertilized.

You become strong in grace by exercising in grace. Exercising is not convenient

but makes you stronger over time. You exercise when you yield to the teachings of grace.

Grace is a teacher (Titus 2:11-13), speaking quietly within us and all believers have the teacher inside them (1 John 2:27). The teachings of grace might not be our preference per time but yielding makes us stronger in grace.

Saying 'no' is not easy when the natural tide is to say 'yes'. Likewise, saying 'yes' is not easy when the natural tide is to say 'no'. Acting contrary to the natural tide makes one look foolish and stupid before men, but the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men. These teachings make us to shun ungodliness and embrace godliness. The outcome of such teachings of grace is the cultivation of the fruit of the spirit, which is a tremendous spiritual blessing (Galatians 5:16, 22, 25).

Yielding today makes it easier to yield tomorrow and not yielding today makes it more difficult to yield tomorrow. A continuous yielded life to grace via her teachings could be viewed as being strong in grace.

Yielding cultivates humility. True humility is not about outward appearance and dispositions; it starts with your relationship towards God. Humility is depending on God! Depending on God is a lifestyle that opens you up to the grace of God (James 4:6).

Dependence on God is seen in praying about everything. Praying put you in a position to receive grace from God. Show humility by praying concerning everything. It takes humility to listen for God's voice in everything we do. Almost in all we do, we know what to do by instincts and experience. It takes humility to depend on God for everything.

Mind you, the grace being mentioned here is the total package you have received from the fullness of Christ. This comprise of every God input in you, from the 'saving grace', which takes you from ungodliness to godliness, to the 'favor grace', to the 'spiritual blessings grace' and to the 'gifts grace' with which you minister to others.

You also become strong when you express grace. Grace is expressed in service, through service and for service.

The grace in us should be of benefit to others (1 Corinthians 12:7). In addition, usage brings out the finesse of that which you have and open the flow for more expression. You only need to start expressing a grace; you will never know the end of its expression. Each act of expression opens up another face of this multidimensional grace, which you would soon want to explore.

You serve by being available, bendable, send-

able and usable. In the course of services that push your graces, you will be spent. In fact, you will sweat! The sweat of your sacrifices has a way of oiling the channel of grace flow. People who stay away from serving would not bring forth much of the grace in them.

Grace can also be stirred.

There is a company that stirs grace. Often, being in the circle of people using their graces stir up your own grace. It is a case of deep things calling unto deep things. As they use theirs, yours is pulled to the surface. That is the danger of being surrounded with people whose graces are perpetually in the passive state. They have nothing on the surface that could pull yours to the surface. However, as you relate with those whose graces are active, they pull yours to the surface and in turn, you pull theirs more. This cycle continues, making all who intentionally and sincerely belong and participate in such company to be strong in grace (2 Timothy 2:22).

In stirring graces, companies often stir up like or complementary graces. Thus, when someone strong in a grace comes around, all the similar graces in the people around seem to be stirred up. However, these 'visits' do not often last long enough to bring such graces to a level where they can float on their own. Thus, the departure of such a fellow might be a

'back to the norm' for those with the complementary graces.

Conversely, little or no stirring around such might not necessarily mean there is no grace to be stirred, but most likely not complementary or the individual is not receptive enough.

There is also an environment that stirs grace. A Holy Ghost saturated atmosphere provokes the grace of God in lives. Little wonder a sense of being superhuman when attending/ministering in some meetings. Such environment are at times a function of the prayers that have gone ahead behind the scenes and going on, on the scene or/and the music. It is then you know that there are songs and there are spiritual songs. These atmospheres are not restricted to 'church' as such music could 'hit' you anywhere.

Talking of spiritual songs, the truth is that it is beyond the lyrics. While at times the lyrics and the beats tune the environment whenever it is sang, the spirituality of the vessel singing also determines a lot. That is why a regular, casual song in the mouth of some vessels can become something else; tuning the environment to stir up the graces in the lives of the hearers.

Nurture the grace of God in your life by fertilizing it, exercising in it, expressing it and stirring it.

the anointed



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Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness. Luke 4:1 NLT

The bible gives an account of what happened at Jordan. Jesus, God's beloved son had just been baptized with a public endorsement of his personality and the genuineness of his ministry. The scriptures record that the Holy Ghost descended on him like a dove and at this point, he was full of the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus had just being anointed and endorsed, I felt he was ready for ministry and should have been posted to his station immediately. Someone who at that point was carrying so much power should have been ushered to the midst of people where he can teach, heal and deliver; manifesting the power of God and winning souls for the kingdom. Instead, Jesus was directed into the wilderness. The Holy Ghost drove him into the desert - a lonely, dry and dangerous place, with the devil that tempted him for 40 days.

What lessons are there in this story for us?

The anointing, the endorsement by the

authorities, the deep knowledge of the scriptures and our oratory prowess are not all that is required for ministry. You cannot skip training. Jesus himself, despite having so much power had to go for 40 days training. There he learnt how to say no to food (when he refused to turn stone to bread), despite being hungry. There he learnt how to say no to the devil despite how harmless his requests seem. In the wilderness, Jesus practiced the act of patience and not applying force or power always.

In that desert, Jesus practiced how to rely on the scriptures and find the accurate words to apply in every situation. Jesus in the wilderness, learnt how to stay humble, despite having so much power. He, in the wilderness practiced that being the son of God with a heavy anointing is not a license to sin. He refused to jump down when the devil asked him. Being 40 days locked up in a desert with the devil himself and coming out clean, Jesus was ready for ministry. No wonder he succeeded so much in it.

Why is training required for ministry despite the anointing?

Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region. He taught regularly in

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the means justifies the end



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In the world, the end justifies the means but in the Lord, the means justifies the end. God is much more interested in how you do it than what you did.

What you did may be applauded by the world but before the Lord, it may be monstrous if you did not achieve the end through His means.

No wonder, God constantly warned Moses to ensure that the ark was built according to the pattern shown to him on the mount. “And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain” (Exodus 25:40 NKJV).



While we are preoccupied with getting results, God is looking at how we are doing it. He asked us to “see to” the means or the method we are using.

It is not just about building the ark; it is about ensuring that it was built according to the pattern. There is a way God wanted it done. It does not matter how excellent it may look from the perspective of men, it is abominable before God if it is not done the way God wants it.

It is this issue of means that denied Moses entry into the Promised Land. Yes, the people drank the miracle water but God was not pleased. While people celebrated, God was hurt (Numbers 20:1-13).

Perhaps, Moses thought he could always use the same means to solve similar problems. Since it was striking the rock that brought out water in Exodus 17, why should this be different.

Moses’s experience teaches us that God has different means to address similar challenges. We must learn to listen each time we have a case at hand.

But why would God honour Moses in bringing water out of the rock when he was using the wrong method?

Obviously, God would not want His people

remain thirsty. He had to bring out the water for his people though His servant had failed. It could be that your success was because of the people who are dependent or connected to you; your method is faulty.

David later realized that it was not just about carrying the ark; it was about carrying the ark according to the due order. He went for a retreat after the death of Uzzah who wanted to prevent the ark from falling off the cart. It was there he discovered that “the Lord our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order” (1 Chronicles 15:13 NKJV).

The Levites had the responsibility of carrying the ark on their shoulders, not a cart.

“So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the Lord.”

David was obviously excited about bringing up the ark without asking how to do it. While it is not bad to be excited about doing things for God, we must be cautious to ask Him how He wants it done.

This is why knowing God is more important than serving God. Only those who know Him can

serve Him acceptably. When we serve Him without taking time to know Him, we will be like the Martha who was busy cooking the food He will not eat.

Whatsoever we do should be an overflow of our love for Him, not out of compulsion or a kind of venison to get His favour. Only those who know Him are strong and do exploits for Him.

Our leaders should stop recruiting people into God’s service who have no track record of a walk with God.

Ministry is the means and the method, not necessarily the monuments we are building. Ministry is not measured in the quantity of what is done but in its quality. We attain that quality by doing it according to the pattern God is giving to us.

Most of what we do in the ministry is the same, what differentiates us is the means. It is the pattern that God has given you that gives you your own uniqueness. When you miss the pattern, your ministry is lost. We must get to His heart not just to know what He wants done but how He wants it done.

Next time God asks you to do a thing, ask Him how, because it is the means that actually justifies the end when it comes to God’s work.

their synagogues and was praised by everyone. Luke 4:14-15 NLT.

By the time Jesus entered the midst of people with the power he carried, he quickly became famous. Anointing, power and working of miracles bring fame and popularity. Every minister needs to be trained on how to handle this; otherwise, he will be carried away. Soon he will think of himself as a celebrity instead of a minister. If he is not trained to handle fame, he will fail.

Jesus taught regularly in synagogues. He had invitations to minister coming in from every corner. As soon as the world sees how good a minister is, he becomes the most-sought-after minister. He will move from church to church and fellowship to fellowship. If care is not taken, soon he will have no time to hear God or for personal devotion. If he has not trained to manage his time and prioritize, he is bound to fail.

Everyone praised Jesus. The anointing attracts praises from men and most times when they come, they have the minister's name tagged. The anointing attracts glory

and honour. Only a well-trained man can return them to God who is the actual owner. Attempts to keep or feed on these have been the bane of several untrained ministers.

Nothing takes the place of training even when God has called you. Take a clue from Jesus; get adequately trained. Be prepared before you jump into it.

Study and do your best to present yourself to God approved, a workman [tested by trial] who has no reason to be ashamed, accurately handling and skillfully teaching the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 AMP



the trap called perfect



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Who doesn't want to be perfect? She asked, looking across all the faces in the boardroom and expecting no answer, she continued to speak before she noticed a hand raised. Taken aback, she wondered what her Administrative Secretary wanted to say. Motioning to her to go on, she looked at her intently.

"I wouldn't Ma'am", she said, a little above a whisper.

"Wouldn't what?" Miriam asked.

"I wouldn't want to be perfect. Perfect is a trap. Like a bottomless pit."

Side talks broke out immediately among other colleagues. Miriam seemed somewhat surprised at the boldness of her usually quiet staff and worried at her conclusion. She wrapped up the meeting and asked Stacy to see her privately.

"Stacy, your stance baffles me, as you are my most meticulous staff. Care to share why you seem so passionate about this?" Miriam Asked.

"Thanks for asking. I have been a perfectionist before I could spell the word. My whole life I never settle; 'almost' doesn't cut it for me. I feel choked with unmet goals, as the standards seem to be unrealistic almost all the time. I admire your ability to laugh at yourself many times and accept things that do not go so well."

"Then make realistic goals!" Miriam cut her without meaning to.

"I wish I could, I wish I knew how. Perfect is all I

have ever wanted to look like, sound like and act like. I walk into a building and my eyes see all the problems without meaning to. I fix things spontaneously everywhere I go. I want to be normal, comfortable with the fact that things wouldn't always be in place. I want to take your critic of my work to do better not to beat myself up endlessly and feel like I failed."

"I see your point Stacy, I wish I could help you stay so efficient at your work and be less critical of yourself. I admire your work ethics and drive. I wouldn't have you any other way. However, if being that person makes you this choked and unfulfilled, then it's time we redefine excellence without perfection."

Smiling for the first time since she began to talk, taking off her glasses to wipe the tears at the corner of her eyes, she embraces her boss. "I just cried and ruined an office meeting and I will not be beating myself up for it. Baby steps yea?"


"Baby steps," her boss replied amazed at how little she knew about her staff.

As she drove home that night, she pondered on Stacy's words, if truly seeking perfection was a journey in futility.

avoiding thorns & traps



Ibukun Abraham
MAXIMIZING TEEN-HOOD
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Nothing and no book is as rich as the word of God, no wonder the devil keeps people away from it. The Bible is the richest, most inspiring, most motivating, most enlightening, most powerful, most reliable and most comforting word that you can ever see or lay hold on in this world.

I have heard many people complain that they sleep anytime they carry the Bible to read. In fact, some see it as being boring and interesting. Little wonder people are destroyed, killed or are messed up by the devil because many children of God are ignorant of the power, defense, shield, instruction in the Bible.

Vow not to be destroyed by the devil or any force of darkness by being curious to know God's word, God's power, God's Love and instructions in the Bible. Remember every man is a product of what he knows or does not know. For instance, a mother that only feeds her baby with carbohydrate will have Kwashiorkor baby at the end of the day. It does not matter if she did it out of ignorance or not.

The same thing happen to us when we don't apply the instructions in the word of God. It does not matter if it was out of ignorance of the Word of God or out of disobedience. So far as you act contrary to the instructions in God's word, you may have to pay dearly with your life except by God's divine intervention.

Let's examine the Bible according to Proverbs 22:5

“Thorns and traps are in the way of the sinful. He who watches himself will stay far from them.”

Now let us examine this scripture with practical life example.

Those who live a sinful life make themselves prey/victim in the hands of devil. Sin itself is a trap, so even if the devil decides to ignore a sinner, the act of sin in itself brings pains and traps people's destiny. Bible says “thorns and traps” are in the

way of the sinful. Have you mistakenly carried a plant with thorn before? If yes, I know the only feeling you experienced was “pain”. What about a trap; have you seen a trapped rat before? The rat is completely helpless in pain and cannot move forward or backward.

That is the clear picture of what sin does to people's destiny. It brings pains, guilt, regret, helplessness, stagnation and shame. In addition, if the sinner refuses to repent, it will lead to death. Don't you think that a trapped rat can die if nobody rescues it on time? It is the same thing with the thorns. Imagine someone falls on plants with thorns, for hours could not stand up due to the pain and nobody comes to rescues him. What do you think could happen to such a person?

That is what exactly happens to those who sin and refuse to repent, they are suddenly cut short and destroyed by their sin.

I knew a lady who came to school just like every other student but began to mingle with the wrong/bad set of friends. She refused to listen to counsel to stay away from such friends. Unfortunately, one Saturday morning, we got the news that she was involved in an accident with some soldier

friends on their way to another city for a friend's party. All of them died. It was heart breaking news. First, she had finished her exams but refused to go home, hanging around with friends (bad one). Probably the person that drove them was drunk to have hit a stationary truck. Moreover, as a student, what was she doing in the midst of soldiers at night going out of the town?

My beloved, sin is indeed a trap and a thorn. Do not fall victim. Some people do not live to tell the story. Devil is most powerful over a soul that sins. He can waste them anyhow as far as the soul is in sin. However, as many that confess their sins and believe in Christ Jesus, the devil no longer has a say over such life.

This is where I am driving at; this particular warning against sin is in the Bible. However, when we do not carry the Bible, open nor read the Bible, how do we see these warnings and heed to them. Do not be deceived, the richest book on earth is the Bible. It is a preserver of life and destiny both here on earth and in eternity. Therefore, decide today not to be far from the Bible henceforth.

Sometimes some people want to read the Bible but do not know where to read. There are many approaches to reading the Bible. I will just give you few approaches.

Approach 1: Chronologically

You can decide to start reading the Bible from Genesis to Revelation serially. That is if you read Genesis Chapter 1 today, tomorrow you will read Chapter 2 of the same Genesis until you get to the last Chapter and move to the next book, which is Exodus. Thus, you are able to comprehend how humankind came to existence. It helps you to follow several events that happened serially up to the time of Christ.

Approach 2: Topically

If your Bible has concordance, you can go to the back pages and look for a topic that will interest you. Under such topic, they will write several scriptures that are related to that topic and you begin to feed on those scriptures.

For instance, you may decide to study on 'love'. If your Bible has concordance, check the topic and it will show you scriptures that talk about love. Thus, you are able to know and understand such topic very well.

I pray for you that God will give you understanding of the word every time you open it in Jesus Name. Love the Bible and your life and destiny is preserved!



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