

**JIREH**

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# **CHAPTER 1.**

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I would never have imagined I had insufficient funds as I tried to withdraw again, this time around, trying out my faith by increasing the intended amount. **"INSUFFICIENT FUND"** the ATM machine wrote in bold letters.  
  
*"There is no cash to dispense?"* the corporately dressed middle-aged man questioned from behind me as my card slipped out of the machine. *"It is dispensing"* I smiled and responded to his query. I dared not to stare back as I suspected he understood what just happened. *"I dare not stare back"* I said to no one but myself as I walked to my university's prayer ground under the scorching 3:00PM Enugu sun, waiting for Ola and Cassandra. Maybe I would feel better if we prayed. Just maybe.  
  
As I found shelter under a tree, left alone with the battle of insects disturbing my ability to concentrate on "Lauren Daigle—You say I am loved" playing softly from my phone, I questioned *"Am I even loved?" "God, do you love me?"* I began to cry out to God in prayers. All I could hear was silence. No word of reassurance from God. And so as I saw Ola and Cassandra getting into the prayer hall from afar, I quickly dried off the tear on my eye, pretending not to be aware of their presence.  
*"Ceecee...Cecelia"* Cassandra called out as they approached me. I still was finding it hard to wipe off the tears clouding my eyes so even as they kept coming, I was grateful that I had my headphones plugged in. *"She cannot hear you, let us get closer"* Ola said as she observed my headphones.  
  
With a feigned surprise, I rose my head from its bent position towards the floor and smiled as Ola tapped me. *"Olamma!" "Cassy!"* I said as we all hugged. *"Ceecee, did you eat only beans during the holiday? Why are you looking so tall?"* Cassandra said cheerfully as she kept observing me from head to toes. *"Ha-ha. Did you also notice my hips?"* I said as I wiggled my hips from the left to the right, in an attempt to distract Ola who was observing quietly and had seen beyond what Cassandra could see in her excitement. *"Ceecee, have you been crying?"* Ola asked and I quickly responded *"Yes!"* Immediately, they both queried *"Are you still thinking about Paul?" "Paul? No way. I have understood and accepted that it is God’s will for us to be apart at this season of our lives, so why awaken love when it is not yet time?"* I said, now seating on the bench that was provided for people who would want to have a chat before moving to the inner court of the prayer ground. *"Preach Sister!"* Casandra said *"Cassy, we will miss out important information with this your sudden excitement. Why have you been crying, Ceecee?"* Ola asked, as she and Cassy joined me to sit. *"Burden, my sisters. The Lord was just speaking about his heart intent for the season before you both came in. It led me to tears.”* I lied.

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# **CHAPTER 2**

# ***"Why did you lie to your friends?"***The Holy spirit questioned me as I got back to my room after the prayers and chit chat with my best friends, Olamma and Cassy.

*"I did not want to be a burden to them. I do not want anyone to help me out of pity. I believe in you as my Jireh so, why should I tell them when I know they will definitely help me out and sort all of these bills. I do not want to be a burden to anyone!"*

***"And you lied?"*** The Holy Spirit asked again.  
*"For a good cause"* I responded shamefully and took up my laptop to submit my entry for the Peter Bonwire Foundation Essay Competition.

***"Drop the laptop and let us talk,"*** the Holy Spirit said.  
*"No. I have bills to settle and if I don't submit this essay, I won't get any scholarship to sort my bills. We can talk when you prove that you love me and send helpers."*

***"Daughter"***  
*"Daughter? What Father does not provide for His daughter? I returned to this school with not a single money and you call me Daughter? Why did you love Abraham? Because he had so much faith, right? Well, I exercised that same faith at the ATM today and guess who was mocked? Your daughter! I want to understand, how do you love me and let me live in lack? How do you love me and do not reward me? I am sorry I lied today. Yes, I know there is no such thing as lying for a good cause but, God! I am tired of calling you Jireh and not seeing the reality in my life."*  
***"Beloved. What does Jireh mean?"*** The Holy Spirit asked.  
*"God will Provide"* I responded as I slid my laptop to a corner and began flipping through my Bible to confirm through the encounter of Abraham in Genesis 22.

**With tears streaming down my cheek, I began to study the book of Genesis 22 1-13: Some time later, God tested Abraham’s faith. “Abraham!” God called. “Yes,” he replied. “Here I am.” “Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you.” The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about.**

**“Stay here with the donkey,” Abraham told the servants. “The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back.” So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac’s shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together, Isaac turned to Abraham and said, “Father?” “Yes, my son?” Abraham replied. “We have the fire and the wood,” the boy said, “but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?” “God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son,” Abraham answered. And they both walked on together. When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.**

**At that moment the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, “Abraham! Abraham!” “Yes,” Abraham replied. “Here I am!” “Don’t lay a hand on the boy!” the angel said. “Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son.” Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son.**

Before I got to the 14th verse, I was on my feet and now in tears, crying out *"Jireh! Abraham had so much Faith in You. I want to have Faith in you too but, my circumstances do not permit me to. The demands and pressures of life do not permit. The responsibilities do not permit. I want to be content and be filled with You alone but I lack, I have wants and why are you delaying to bless me? I do not want to compare myself with anyone but, I know I am so devoted in serving you in spirit and in truth yet it seems that you keep on blessing the wicked and the good ones keep suffering. Why do you think they say 'poor church rat?' It is because they see Christians as those that suffer and make excuses for their miserable state by saying 'God will provide' Jireh! How long do we keep saying this? At what point will you show up?”*  
***"Ceecee, take a look at verse 14 now"*** The Holy Spirit said.  
**Abraham named the place Jehovah Jireh (which means “the Lord will provide”). To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.” Then the angel of the Lord called again to Abraham from heaven. “This is what the Lord says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.”  
  
*"Did you see? Did you see that there is a reward system for the Kingdom? Do you know that I am more pleased in your obedience than your sacrifices? Do you know that I cannot hand over the wealth you seek because you need to know what makes you capable of handling the Kingdom's wealth?”***  
*"I know, Father, but what do I need to know? I am devoted to the word, fasting, prayer and living a Consecrated life. You know how much I love Paul yet, I have decided to let go and wait on you. What else do I need to know?"*  
***"Death. You need to know that you should die daily, Daughter. When Abraham took the step of obedience to sacrifice his son Isaac, It wasn't Isaac who was the sacrifice but Abraham.***  
*"How, Father?"*  
***"What do you have on this earth that was not given to you? Abraham knew he was in the world but not of the world. So despite his possessions, he considered himself dead in this world, of its possessions, accomplishments and needs because he did not belong here."***

***"Ceecee, you belong with me in Heaven so do not store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. (Matthew 6:19 & 20)."***

*Father, but I have needs and what do I do when I keep calling you Jireh and no provision is made.*  
***"Because you have limited me and so, you have become ungrateful. Was it translated that Jireh means I will provide only money? You do not realize my essence as Jireh because you do not see my provision in your excellent academic grades, in your beautiful friendships, in your shelter and clothing. Should I name more?***

*"Father! Jireh! Father! Jireh!" I kept calling out in tears.*”

***"Daughter, have you ever had a need and I did not show up for you? The fact that I do not release it unto you means it was never meant to be or you do not need it at this season of your life; just as you and Paul need not be in each other's life at this season of your lives.”***

*"I want to be dead, Jireh. I do not want to hold on to anything on this earth."*  
***"Even if calling me Jireh means that all I provide is more of me and less of what the world has to offer?"***  
 *"Yes, Jireh"*

***"Even if you learn to depend on me when I demand of your finances? Would you still know that I love you and fellowship with me despite all? Do you really want to be dead to self?”*** *"Yes, Jireh! That is all I want. More of you and none of this world. Keep me at your feet. Like the woman with the alabaster oil, I want to lay down whatever treasure of this earth and worship you. I want to love you more, Father."* I cried out in prayer as I made a pledge to give all of myself to God *"my life is not my own, to you I belong..."* I began to sing the lyrics to William McDowell’s music as I realized I have spent 4 hours in fellowship with God and haven't sent my submission for the Peter Bonwire Foundation Essay Competition.

As I clicked the enter key on my keyboard while sending my entry to the scholarship foundation, I felt joy within, inner peace and reassurance that God will provide—Jireh. I was about to shut down my laptop when I noticed an unread email with the subject **"Congratulations on your successful Application to the Millennium Scholarship!”**

I quickly opened the mail and saw that it was sent 2 days ago. I had applied during the holidays and never thought I would be considered because it was specifically for Graduates and I was just in my final year at that point. I read carefully through the email to convince myself that this was an error but, it clearly was not an error. I have been notified to send my bank details to receive the scholarship award of #100,000.

*"Is this a dream?"* I said to no one but myself.  
*"Father, is this a dream? How did I not know this email had been sent two days ago? Jireh!"*

***"Daughter."*** *"Father, I love you and will always do whatever you want. Thank you for providing. Jireh!"*

***"Daughter. That money is for Ebenezer, his family needs it urgently."***  
*"I rebuke you devil! I silence your voice trying to steal my possession."*

***“Daughter, the kingdom wealth is a trust and not an achievement"*** *"Father, I will do whatever you want but this is too much for me. I need money too. Ebenezer is not even my close friend, we are barely course mates."*

*"Daughter...'Even if you learn to depend on me when I demand of your finances?'"*

I became quiet as I remembered when I earlier responded affirmatively to that statement. My initial excitement on receipt of my Scholarship award was gone, all I could do was cry as I whispered *"Is this how I die? Is this how Abraham felt too?"* I was still in tears and contemplating whether to obey God or sort out my bills when the silence in my room was broken by my ringtone.

As I picked up my phone, hoping it was either Cassy or Ola, I dried off the tear from my eye, clearing my throat but choking almost immediately as I stared back at who the caller was **“Ebenezer Okafor.”**

# **THE END.**

