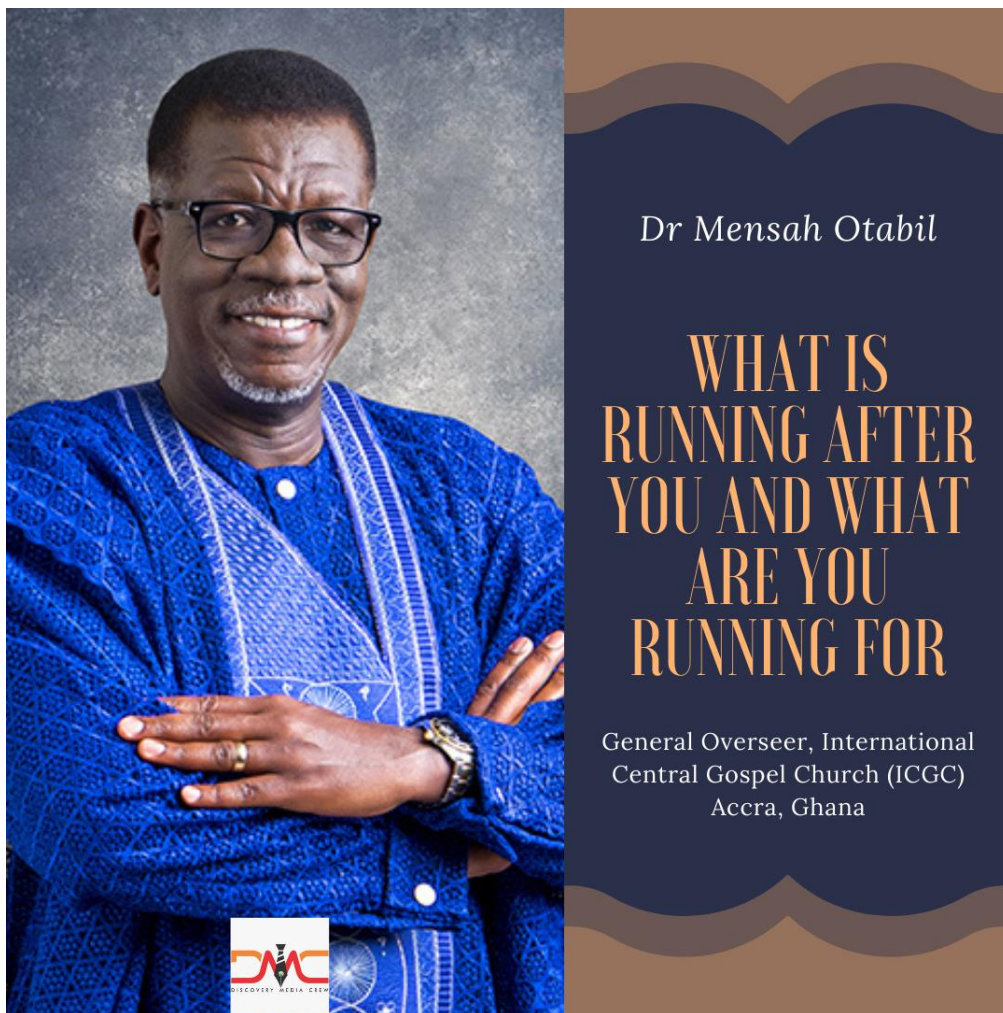


# WHAT IS RUNNING AFTER YOU AND WHAT ARE YOU RUNNING FOR

## Dr. Mensah Otabil

(GENERAL OVERSEER INTERNATIONAL CENTRAL GOSPEL CHURCH (ICGC) ACCRA, GHANA)



## Compiled by

### Discovery Media Crew

+234 802 360 4721

[www.discoverymediacrew.com](http://www.discoverymediacrew.com)

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[www.discoverymediacrew.com](http://www.discoverymediacrew.com)

Facebook: @Dmc MediaCrew Twitter: @discoverymediac

Instagram: @Discoverymediacrew Youtube Discovery Media Crew

(080-2360-4721)

Email: info@discoverymediacrew.com

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# WHAT IS RUNNING AFTER YOU? PART 1

6TH SEPTEMBER, 2020



**TEXT: GENESIS 16:6-8**

Amen and Amen and Amen!

Let's keep standing, as we make our DECLARATIONS OF EXCELLENCE in this very Special Year of Excellence.

... Are you ready? - SAY WITH ME:

Out of Zion, the Perfection of Beauty, God shines forth. The Lord my God causes the Righteous to shine forth as the Sun.

His Awesome Hands has formed me; His Creative Spirit inspires my mind. He Skillfully guides my hands.

Therefore, I boldly declare: I am Set Apart for Excellence. The Ruler of the Universe has exalted my horn among the Nations. He sets my feet on high! In His Strength, I rise!

By Faith, I Press forward towards the Prize of my Highest Calling.

I believe in my heart, and confess with my mouth: that Jesus is Lord! He is the Vine, I am the Branch; in Him I abide, in Him I Blossom.

As it is written: God, who commanded Light out of darkness, has Shone His Light in our hearts.

We have His Treasure in Earthen Vessels. That the Excellence of the Power may be of God, and not of us!

In this Year, I commit to EXCELLENCE, I commit to EXCEPTIONALISM, I commit to do the EXTRAORDINARY.

In Jesus' Name - Amen and Amen and Amen and Amen.

Today, and next week, I will be doing a two (2) Part Message.

There are two (2) different Forces and Factors, that enable each one us, to make Progress.

They are usually called: The PULL and the PUSH Factors - One Pushes you from behind; the other Pulls you from ahead.

One is what is running away from you, the other is what you are running after.

So, I am going to talk about these Two (2) Factors of life - that help us to make Progress.

And I trust that for each one of us, we can make Progress in our lives and we can move forward.

You have Probably heard of: "The LEGEND of the Lion and the Gazelle."

And for those of you who don't know what a Gazelle is: A Gazelle is a kind of Antelope.

And it READS:

"Every morning in Africa, a Gazelle wakes up and knows that it must run faster than the fastest Lion, or it will be KILLED.

Every morning a Lion wakes up, and knows that it must run faster than the slowest Gazelle, or it will STARVE to death."

It doesn't matter whether you are a Lion or a Gazelle; \*/when the sun comes up, you better start RUNNING.

And that is what I am going to allude to, or what I am going to address in my Message for this week and next week.

Whether you are a Lion - Pursuing something; or you are a Gazelle - running away from something: Everybody has to run in order to make Movement and Progress.

So, I have Titled my Message today: "WHAT IS RUNNING AFTER YOU?"

In other words: What are you running from? What are you fleeing from?

Do you feel the Pulse of a Lion trying to get you? Do you have any sense of need to avoid being caught by something negative?

Is there something negative or destructive in your Past, in your family, in your own life; that you feel: if you don't make Progress, it will catch up with you and destroy you?

Each one of us has a sense of danger - It could be something in your family, it could be something that you have seen happen to other People.

People who have nothing RUNNING after them, usually live life without a sense of Urgency.

They could be very good academically, and yet they have no sense of urgency to do anything significant.

They can come from a Good family, from a Good home, but never do anything significant; because they don't have anything that is PUSHING them from behind, to cause them to MOVE!

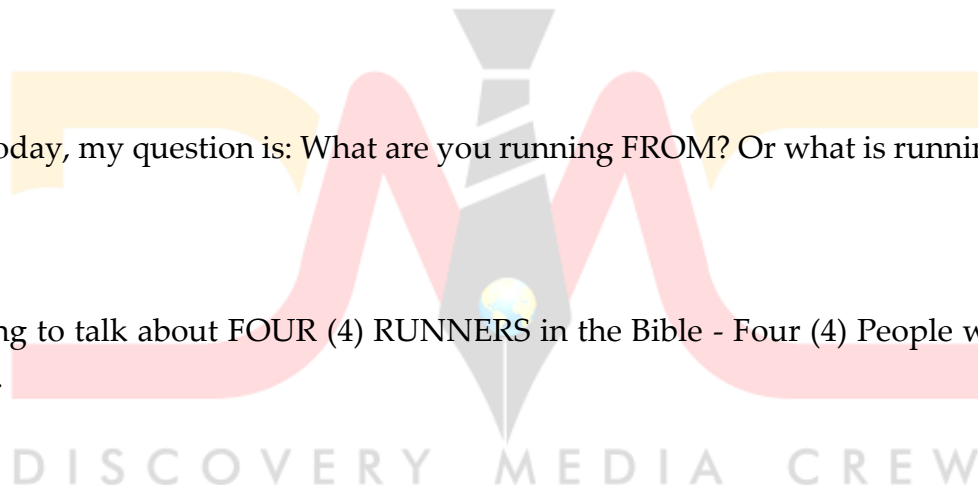
But I trust God, that He will help you to Position yourself; even the DANGERS of your life, can become the MOTIVATION of your life.

What you HATE can become your INSPIRATION; What you have seen NEGATIVELY in your family, can be the DRIVING FORCE of your family.

To move in life, you must do something that you are so DETERMINED, to run away from.

And so today, my question is: What are you running FROM? Or what is running AFTER you?

I am going to talk about FOUR (4) RUNNERS in the Bible - Four (4) People who ran in the Bible.



And I hope u can finish all four (4) today. If I don't, I will continue next week.

1. The first (1st) one is a Lady, and she is called HAGAR.

And she was a woman running away from CONSEQUENCES.

Her Story is in: Genesis 16:6-8 (NKJV)

6 So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence.

7 Now the Angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.

8 And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

She said: "I am fleeing from the Presence of my mistress Sarai."

HAGAR was Running! - And what was she running from? She was running from CONSEQUENCES

... Somebody say: CONSEQUENCES!



*CONSEQUENCES are the results of things you have done.*

DISCOVERY MEDIA CREW

Hagar accepted to be Part of an arrangement that backfired!

She slept with her Boss' husband, and she became Pregnant!

It seemed like a Good deal from the beginning, because it seemed like everybody was same the same page: Sarah was on the Page, Abraham was on the Page.

And it seemed like, this is an arrangement that would work!

So they said: Go ahead and do it.



So she slept with her Boss' husband.

And after that, it changed the whole dynamic of the relationship.

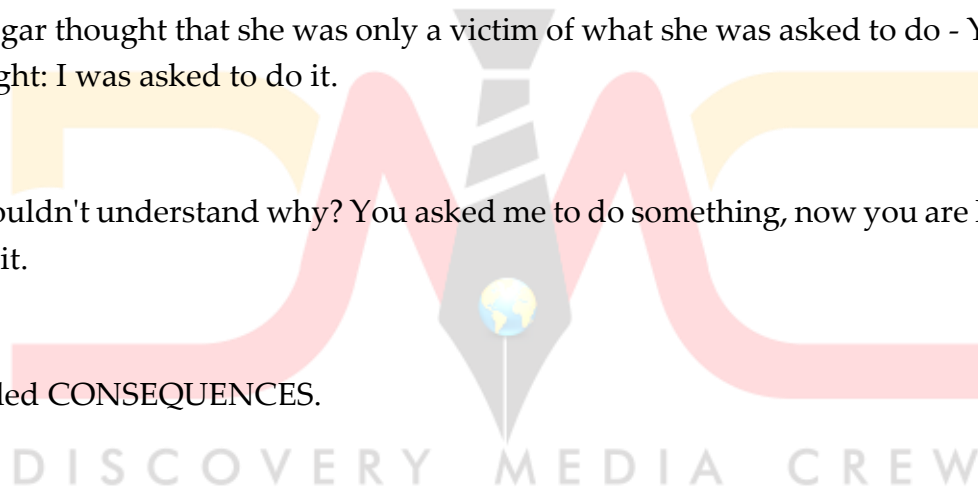
She moved from being the "Most Favoured Staff", to the "Most Despised and Persecuted Staff".

... And CONSEQUENCES caught up on her.

Now, Hagar thought that she was only a victim of what she was asked to do - You know, she thought: I was asked to do it.

So, she couldn't understand why? You asked me to do something, now you are Punishing me from it.

.. It is called CONSEQUENCES.



Even if you had the Permission to do it; if it was wrong, it would catch up on you some time!

And so here, she starts running!

And this is her life Mission - Run away as far away from the Consequences of your Past as you can.

And when she ran, she ended up in a dry Place.

There are People who are running in life - They try very HARD, but all they are doing is: Something happened in the Past that they want to leave behind in the Past. And that is making them to RUN.

The driving force of their life, is to move as far away from the Past, as Possible.

It could be something you did in school, that keeps haunting you. It could be something that happened in your childhood, that you are running away from. It could actually be the home that you came out from that you are so ashamed of.

And every waking morning, you want to keep a distance between your Past and where you are!

... And that is what Hagar was running FROM.

Eventually, she ended up in a Good Place. But her whole life was full of a journey of ending up in desert, in dry Places, near Mercies, almost dying.

It ended up well, but it was DIFFICULT JOURNEY!

She was running from the Consequences of her Past.

There are many of us who are like Hagar - something in the Past is trying to catch up with you. And you are determined: I am not going to let this thing catch up with me.

So, all you are doing is RUN! And running from Consequences.

So, my question to you (if you are Hagar): What is running after you? What are you running from?

Is it something from Secondary School? Something from Primary School? Something from your home? Something from your family? Something from your Past that you did?

And you just want to make sure that it doesn't CATCH UP with you!

It keeps you running; it may get you to a desert, but it keeps you running.

So Hagar is the first (1st) we encounter in the Bible - Running in life. And what she is running from is CONSEQUENCES.

2. The Second (2nd) Runner that I want to Introduce you to is a man we all JEPHTHAH.

Jephthah was running from REJECTION.

He felt the Poison of family coming against him, and he started running.

His story is in the Book of Judges 11:1-3.

And this is what it says:

1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a Mighty man of Valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah.

2 And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman.

3 Then Jephthah fled from his Brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him.

Interestingly, JEPHTHAH means OPENER - Somebody who opens things.

But it looks like his life was closed. He was born out of the wrong circumstances - He didn't choose it!

He wasn't like Hagar, who was a Participant in the Process.

Jephthah was not a Participant, it was a decision made by his father. He had no clue of it. His father was a married man, and his father went out of his Marriage and went to a Prostitute!

... I am not sure whether there was any form of Protection at that time!

But the deviance with the Prostitute ended up in Pregnancy. And out of that came JEPHTHAH.

DISCOVERY MEDIA CREW

So, he gets born, and one day he realizes: I am born from a MISTAKE.

My father made a mistake; went to the wrong kind of woman and gave birth to me.

And there are People who are born, out of such circumstances.

You are NOT a mistake, but the circumstances were a MISTAKE.

Because God never makes MISTAKE with People He creates; but the circumstances are a mistake!

So, as the children grew up, the other sons (the Mrs' Children) said to Jephthah: Listen, you have no inheritance in this family. You are not Part of this family.

You don't belong to us, because our father made a mistake - Went to a Prostitute. Your mother is the wrong kind of woman to give birth to a child. So you have no inheritance here.

... And he started RUNNING!

What was he running from? From REJECTION - A sense that he doesn't BELONG!

And there are many Jephthahs in this world - Who are running, because they feel a sense of REJECTION; because feel the world has rejected them, their home has rejected them, People don't respect them.

... And so they are RUNNING!

And Jephthah started running and he when he ran, the Bible says: He bounded together with WORTHLESS MEN.

In other words: People who were REJECTED as he felt. He made company with them, and they went about raiding.

But the first (1st) description of Jephthah, before his Problem pop up is that: He is a Mighty man of Valor.

In other words: This is a courageous man. He is a man of Potential; but he suffered rejection. And the rejection is driving him to the wrong crowd.

And there are many People running in life: They get up in the morning, they are hustling and they are running. And they are doing all kinds of stuff.

And you ask them: What are you doing? What Problems are you trying to solve?

... Simply because, somewhere in their PAST, is a rejection!

So, sometimes when People who are in the state of Jephthah - And they started running, they go against the expected norms; they develop and cut a BAD BOY image. Or a BAD GIRL Image for themselves.

They only want to go against Society, family, friends, authority figures, who have rejected them.

The only thing is that: For anything they do; although they are doing it against a family. They are always looking to that same Place for Approval.

... They look to the People who rejected them - for Approval.

Now, if you know the story of Jephthah; he became a BAD BOY! And then his People got into trouble. And they called him, to come and LEAD them.

... This is the man they rejected!

"The stone that the builders rejected, has now become the head of the corner!"

But his sense of rejection never stopped - He was still running, he was still trying to achieve something with his life. But he always felt, HE DIDN'T BELONG!

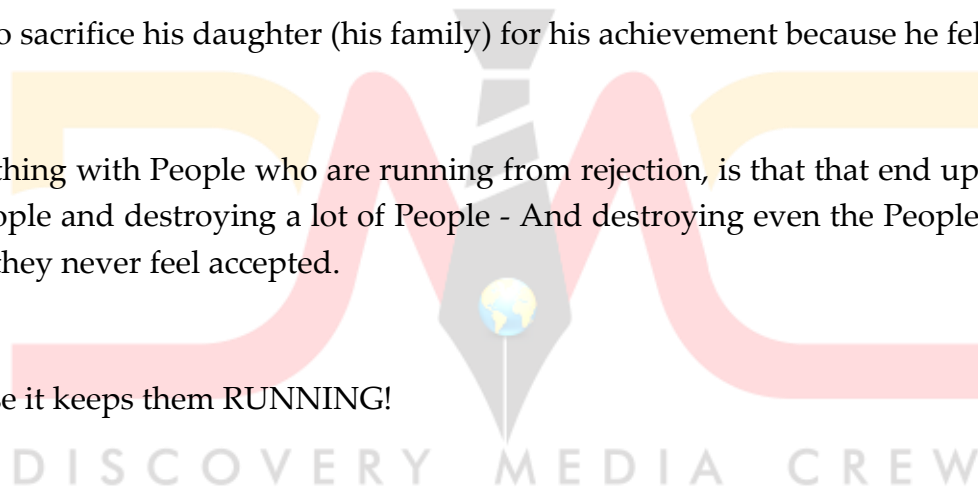
So, when they were going into battle, he made a rash, unexpected, undemanding PROMISE to God: "God, if You give me Victory, I will sacrifice anything that POPS out of my house to You!"

And when he returned with Victory, the first thing that Pops out of his house to come and celebrate him; is his daughter.

He had to sacrifice his daughter (his family) for his achievement because he felt rejected!

The sad thing with People who are running from rejection, is that that end up hurting a lot of People and destroying a lot of People - And destroying even the People they love because they never feel accepted.

... Because it keeps them RUNNING!



Jephthah was a Runner, and he was running away from rejection.

I don't know whether that is your story. It does not mean you will not become great because some is the People who achieved the greatest in life, are the 'Insecure People'.

Because, very 'Insecure People', DON'T MOVE.

They are happy, they never do anything.

That is why when you look at most families:

I. The first (1st) Generation that came out of HARDSHIP, becomes Successful!

II. Their child, who enjoy the Success, are not able to replicate the success because there is nothing running after them - There is nothing that makes them to stand up, and start running.

... They always feel, life will be good!

Everybody needs something to run after them.

But you have to be careful where it will chase you to.

... Which is what I am going to talk about next week!

HAGAR was running from Consequences. It made her want to achieve something.

JEPHTHAH is running from Rejection - It made him want to do something with his life. But the rejection was a Driving Force of his life.

For People like Jephthah, in any effort they make, they take unnecessary risk. They put everything on the line, just to Succeed.

The Jephthahs of this life end up succeeding, but in the Process, they also destroy People dear to them.

... Like Jephthah destroyed his daughter.



My question to you: What is running after you when you get up in the morning and you go to work; or you go for your Business? What is the thing that is pushing you to do that?

Is it because you are running from the Consequences of your Past? Or you are running from Rejection?

... Quite a number of RUNNERS in the Bible!

3. The Third (3rd) Runner was DAVID.

David was not running from Consequences; he was running from EVIL CONSPIRACIES.

He felt the weight of a whole Political System coming against him and it made him RUN.

Anytime David got up, he had to run.

And he was running from an evil trap that has been set for him - People who wanted to get him.

1 Samuel 19:18-19 (NKJV). And we read these words:

18 So David fled and escaped, and went to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth.

19 Now it was told Saul, saying, "Take note, David is at Naioth in Ramah!"

David was thrust into Leadership at a very Young age - Very Talented Young man: Talented Musician, Talented fighter Warrior, a very Passionate man, very Sensitive man.

... He had all the 'Goods' together!

One moment he was a Shepherd, the next moment he was in King's Palace - married to King's daughter - It looked like all of a sudden, he has broken through!

But when you rise up quickly in life and you are that Talented; you are going to have People wanting to destroy you very early.

So, very early in his life; as innocent as he was, he realized he had become the target of the KING, and Palace' CONSPIRACY.

And he had to run from the King, who is intent on taking his life.

And there are Runners like that!

Many of us are running because we feel somebody is out to get us - You are Talented, you are Gifted, and somebody is determined to KILL YOU before your time.

And I am not talking about witchcraft killing (which is the one you don't even have to be afraid of) - It is the real killing. When somebody wants to really kill you in. Somebody wants to destroy you. Somebody is fighting against you, somebody is running after you because you are Gifted, you are Talented, you are Rising very high and they want to STOP you from Rising. And they set their eyes on YOU, to destroy you.

... And that is what caused DAVID to run!

And if you read the Passage, he ran to Samuel. And the moment he ran to Samuel, information went to the

Because when the King is running after you, he has everything at his disposal.

He has FBI, he has CIA, if he is American. He has BNI, if he is Ghanaian,. He has KGB, if he is Russian.

He has People everywhere who will spy on you, Report on you, Show them where you are. And they will try to get you.

So, David had nowhere to HIDE: he was running from one cave to the other, from one hiding Place to the other. Everyday of his life was a movement. But he kept going!

Eventually, that RUNNING, made him run to God. And eventually, he ran to his Destiny.

So, you may be HAGAR - who is running because of the Consequences of your Past.

You may JEPHTHAH - Who is running because you are rejected in life.

You may be DAVID - Who is running because there are People out there to GET YOU.

I don't know whatever it is. But whenever you wake up in the morning: Something is Motivating you to RUN;

You don't want SARAH to get you; you don't want your FATHER'S CHILDREN to rejoice over you. And you don't want KING SAUL to destroy you.

So I ask you today: What is running after you? What are you running from?

If you tell me: "Pastor, nothing is running after me. I am just living my cool life" - Then I will tell you - YOU ARE GOING NOWHERE!

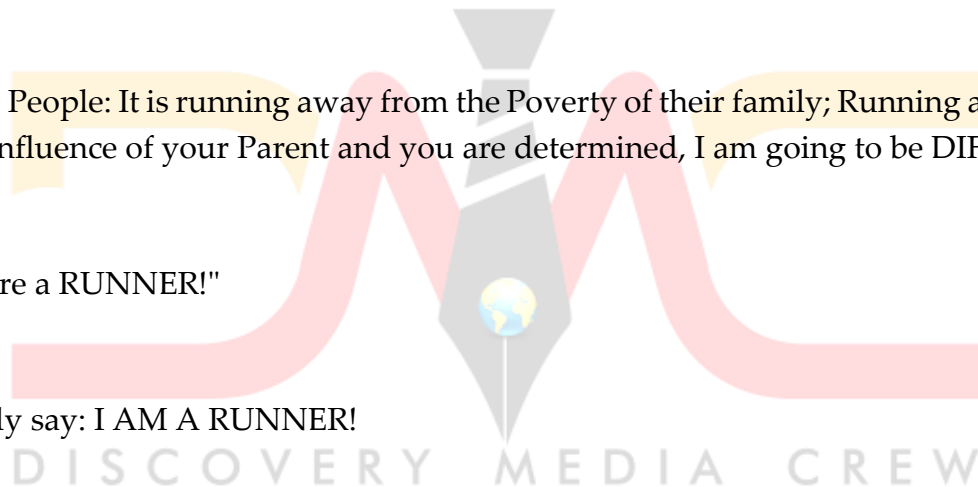
If you don't feel any sense of Urgency to depart from something, to move from someone; you may be Talented, you may be Gifted but you will make very little Progress.

It is not enough to have Vision, and be driven by Vision - You must also be driven by some Insecurities, something that doesn't make you rest because you know that: if I REST, it will eat me up!

For some People: It is running away from the Poverty of their family; Running away from the bad Influence of your Parent and you are determined, I am going to be DIFFERENT.

\*... You are a RUNNER!"

Somebody say: I AM A RUNNER!



4. The Fourth (4th) and final Runner is a man called JONAH.

JONAH was running from RESPONSIBILITY.

He felt: Called to do something he did not want to do - So he was running!

Jonah 1:10-11 (NKJV):

10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

11 Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?" — for the sea was growing more tempestuous.

Sadly, JONAH was running from the RIGHT THING.

He was running from his "True Mission" in life.

He did not like the Assignment God had given to him, so he wanted to run away from it - he wanted to do something else!

And there are People that God has Called and given a Mission to. And they know what their life is about; but they just want to do something else.

So, they wake up in the morning, and they tried to be somebody else; they try to do something else!

DISCOVERY MEDIA CREW

Some are running from the responsibility of FATHERHOOD.

Unfortunately, there are People who give birth to children and RUN from their children. Mothers who are running from their children - Responsibility is too hard them.

Others are running from a Calling from God - The hand of God is upon them, God has called them, God wants to use them but they are RUNNING!

And if you running from the Calling of God, like JONAH; you can run, but you can't HIDE.

Yes, you can run from Saul because he is King only over Israel. You can go to Philistine land or go to other land but where do you go to when you are running from the RULER OF THE UNIVERSE?

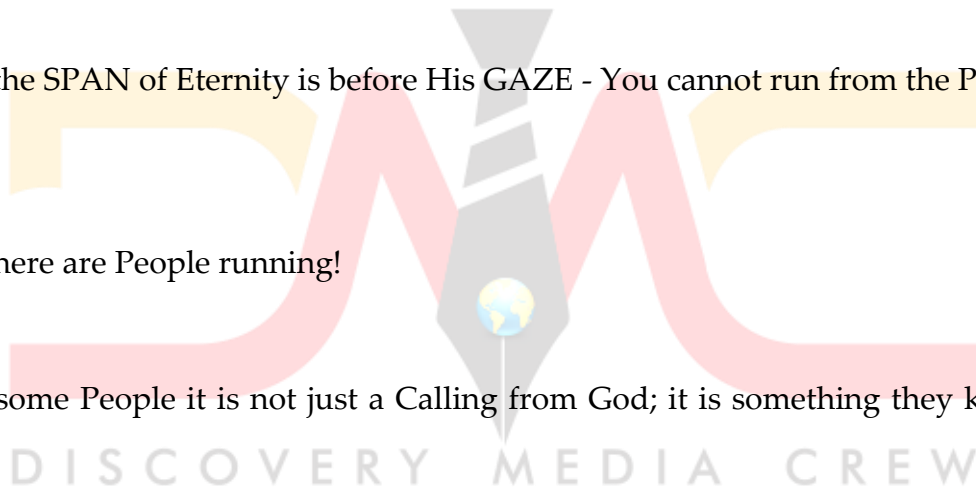
If you go to any Island, He is there! If you flee Earth and go to live on the Moon, He will find you! If you go to live on Mars, He will find you! You go to live on Jupiter, He will find you!

Wherever you go, He will find you: if you leave this Galaxy and go to another Galaxy, He will find you! If you go to the ends of the Universe, He will find you!

Because the SPAN of Eternity is before His GAZE - You cannot run from the Presence of GOD.

... BUT, there are People running!

And for some People it is not just a Calling from God; it is something they know they must do.



The weight of Responsibility is on them and they are RUNNING. And they don't want to be that; they don't want to take up that responsibility.

Some are firstborns in their family, and there is a WEIGHT of Responsibility as a firstborn. And they feel it is too much - Too much PRESSURE.

So, they are running in the opposite direction.

And that is what they get up in the morning and run after: That is a Lion running after them!

If you are a HAGAR, the Lion you are running away from is the Consequences of the action of the Past.

If you are a JEPHTHAH, the Lion you are running away from is the Rejection you feel all around you.

If you are DAVID, the Lion you are running away from is the Conspiracy of POWERFUL People who determined to destroy you.

If you are JONAH, the Lion you are running away from is your True MISSION and Assignment in life; which you think is too BIG for you!

So, the question I want to ask you today is: What is Running after you? And what are you running away from?

Everybody is running.

Look behind you:

I. What makes you get up in the morning to go hustle?

II. What makes you get up in the morning to want to go and do something great?

III. What makes you get up in the morning to achieve something?

#### IV. What makes you wake up, to get results?

It is important for each one of us to know what we are running from.

I know what I am running from - It is Personal, I am not going to tell you.

But whatever is RUNNING AFTER YOU, can be the Greatest Motivation for your Progress in life.

I have told the story many times: When I was Young, in our neighbourhood there was a man who had Mango tree. He had quite a number of Mango trees. And normally, he lived alone. He had Mango trees, and the Mangoes would be ripe.

... And the biggest temptation for us kids (at that time) was Ripe Mangoes.

And this man has a hedge around his house and a gate.

And we tried to find a way through the hedge to go to his house; and 'Deliver him' from his Mangoes.

And one day, we were there, trying to do our job - Picking Ripe Mangoes. Some of us on the trees yelling at each other. Then, we heard bark of a dog!

We never saw the dog, we just heard the bark. And then, we started running!

... I guess the dog was running after us.



And when we started running, People were calling their Mama, People were calling whatever they were calling.

Some went through the gate, some went through the hedge. And I was one of the last to go!

I was on top of the tree. So, I was one of the last ones to go!

And when I got to the hedge; for some reason (I cannot fathom up till now) - I jumped the hedge!

I was not a High Jumper, I have not jumped anything that high before but that day, what Pursued me, helped me to jump!

So, whatever is Pursuing you, will HELP you to JUMP!

But you don't jump into danger; you have to jump into SAFETY.

You don't run into the Wilderness, you have to run into the Pools of water.

You don't run into your enemies; you have to run to the LORD. Like David, you have to RUN.

But you have to run in the right direction - And whatever Pursued you, will never catch up with you - Amen. It will not destroy you - Amen. It will not eat you up - Amen!

You will not become a victim of life - You will become a Victor of life.

You are going to Jump, you are going to Rise, you are going to Fly. You are going to make Progress in your life.

So, when you look at what is running after you, the only thing it must tell you is: I have a Motivation to do.

The only that will make it catch up with you is if you are a JONAH.

Thank God it will catch up with you!

And when it catches up with you; it will redirect your energy, and take you on another Mission.

If you are DAVID, Saul can't catch up with you - because you will keep going!

If you are HAGAR, your Past will not destroy you!

If you are JEPHTHAH, no matter who hates you and does not believe in you, you will still reach the Goal God had set before you.

Because they run after you not to eat you up, but to INSPIRE you; to help you so you could rise up to soar to Greater Heights and do things that you never thought you could do.

WHAT IS RUNNING AFTER YOU?

... Let's Pray!

## CLOSING PRAYER

Father we Thank You that You are the Source of our Help - You are our Shelter!

You are our Hope, You are our Defense - You are the One in whom we trust!

Some trust in Chariots, but we will trust you; like DAVID - we run to YOU. We run to the Rock that is Higher than us!

And I Pray committing everyone who is running, who is MOVING Lord, into Your hands: May You guide their efforts, may You drive in their direction.

And more than everything else, may You give them a VISION of what to run into.

In JESUS' Name - Amen and AMEN!

Hallelujah!

Thank you so much for staying all through to read.

# WHAT ARE YOU RUNNING FOR? PART 2

DATE: 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2020.



TEXT: ECCLESIASTES 9:11

DISCOVERY MEDIA CREW

Let's rise up together wherever we are (or reading now on the Label of DMC) as we make our DECLARATIONS OF EXCELLENCE in this very Special Year of Excellence.

... Are you ready? - SAY WITH ME:

Out of Zion, the Perfection of Beauty, God shines forth. The Lord my God causes the Righteous to shine forth as the Sun.

His Awesome Hands has formed me; His Creative Spirit inspires my mind. He Skillfully guides my hands.

Therefore, I boldly declare: I am Set Apart for Excellence. The Ruler of the Universe has exalted my horn among the Nations. He sets my feet on high! In His Strength, I rise!

By Faith, I Press forward towards the Prize of my Highest Calling.

I believe in my heart, and confess with my mouth: that Jesus is Lord! He is the Vine, I am the Branch; in Him I abide, in Him I Blossom.

DISCOVERY MEDIA CREW

As it is written: God, who commanded Light out of darkness, has Shone His Light in our hearts.

We have His Treasure in Earthen Vessels. That the Excellence of the Power may be of God, and not of us!

In this Year, I commit to EXCELLENCE, I commit to EXCEPTIONALISM, I commit to do the EXTRAORDINARY.

In Jesus' Name - Amen and Amen and Amen and Amen.

Give God Praise wherever you are and you may be seated, in God's Presence.

Last week, I started talking about PUSH and the PULL factors of life and I am continuing my Message.

Last week Topic was "What is Running after you?"

And today, my Message is titled: "WHAT ARE YOU RUNNING FOR?"

... It sounds better when it is spoken faster: "What are you Running for?"

It is a question I want to ask you and it is a question I want you to ask yourself: WHAT AM I RUNNING FOR?

What am I HUSTLING for? - Because I used the word RUNNING: to mean the efforts we make to move on in life.

... Some call it the hustle!

Each one of us runs - We do something!

There is a running around in our lives.

Just take a stand at any busy intersection in a City, and you will see people moving up and down. And sometimes you wonder: "Where are they going? And what are they trying to achieve?"

To go on with my Message, I want you to remember "The Legend of the Lion and the Gazelle" that I mentioned last week.

And I will repeat it.

And it says: Every morning in Africa - And I suppose in every Country where this takes Place; it may not be a Lion and a Gazelle but something in Particular takes Place!

"Every morning in Africa, a Gazelle wakes up and knows that it must run faster than the fastest Lion or it will be KILLED.

And every morning, a Lion wakes up, and knows that it must run faster than the slowest Gazelle, or it will STARVE to death."

It doesn't matter whether you are a Lion or a Gazelle; when the sun comes up, you better start RUNNING.

And that is how our life is: Sun up, to sun down, we are running!

We are either a Lion - trying to catch something, or a Gazelle - making sure nobody catches us.

But whichever you are; the PUSH Factor and the PULL Factor of life, affect us.

**Last week we looked at four (4) kinds of Runners:**

1. We talked about HAGAR, who was running from the Consequences of her Past.

2. We talked about JEPHTHAH, who was running from Rejection;
3. We talked about DAVID, who is running from Evil Conspiracies;
4. And we talked about JONAH, who is running from Responsibility and God's Plan for his life.

It is important you figure out why you are running in life. And to determine whether the race you are on, is leading you in a Productive Direction or not.

And it is important to ask yourself:

1. Why am I in so much hurry?
2. Why am I doing all this hard work I am doing?
3. What am I Pushing for?
4. What am I trying to Achieve?



It is always a blessing to see God use our disadvantages to DRIVE us in life.

However, we could also be wrongly driven in different directions.

The Book of Ecclesiastes 9:11 has this to say. And the writer of Ecclesiastes says:

"I returned and saw under the sun that —



The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them ALL."

Swiftness, Speed, is not always an advantage when the TIMING is wrong and if the opportunity has been misused.

So, many times we are running, but TIMING is wrong! And many times you are running, but it is not our TURN to run!

And that is going to form the basis of my Message.

Because today we are going to look at two (2) kinds of Runners:

1. One who runs with a MISSION.
2. And the other who runs WITHOUT a Mission.

And my Passage is going to be from 2 Samuel 18.

The background to this Passage is about: David and his son, Absalom.

Absalom had led a revolt against his father David. And so a Civil War had ensued! And in the Process David has to leave Jerusalem, and Absalom temporary becomes King.

And in the Civil War that ensued, David's son, Absalom was killed in Battle.

And now a Messenger has to go and deliver a Message to David - That his son (Absalom) who rebelled against him has just been killed in the battle.

So, who is the Messenger who is going to take this Message - Who will run with such a Message to David?

And you have to understand that: First, when King Saul was killed, the Messenger who carried the Message to David that King Saul had been killed, was killed by David!

And then Saul's son Ish-bosh-eth, who tried to rebelled also against David - after Saul died, was also killed.

And the one who took the Message to David that Ish-bosh-eth had been killed, was also killed!

So, it looks like carrying Messages of these Nature can be very hazardous to your health.

So, who can give such a Message to David.

So, Absalom is dead in battle - One side it is a Good News! But knowing how David had responded in the Past; who is going to tell David that you have WON, but your son is dead?\*

... Very delicate Message!

And that is the background to what we are going to read in 2 Samuel 18:19-23 (NKJV);

19 Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Let me run now and take the News to the king, how the Lord has avenged him of his enemies."

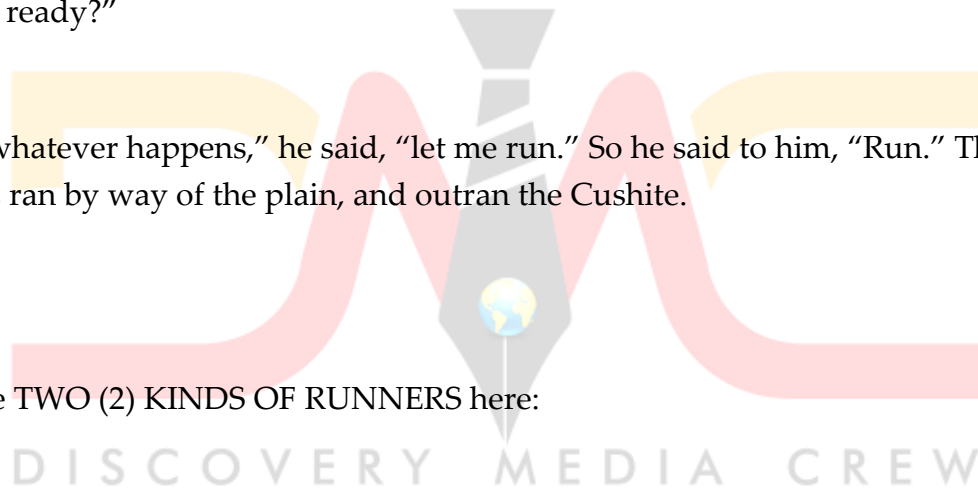
20 And Joab said to him, "You shall not take the News this day, for you shall take the News another day. But today you shall take no News, because the king's son is dead."

21 Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed himself to Joab and ran.

22 And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite." So Joab said, "Why will you run, my son, since you have no News ready?"

23 "But whatever happens," he said, "let me run." So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain, and outran the Cushite.

There are TWO (2) KINDS OF RUNNERS here:



1. The first (1st) one is called AHIMAAZ. That is his name!

His name actually in Hebrew means: My brother is rough' or 'my brother is angered'

... Whether his name indicates his Personality, or his not, is another story.

But it Publicly shows that he is highly tempered - Hot Tempered Driven Personality.

He is a Person you would call an "Action Man" - He is a Person who always wants to do something.

And the Passage describes Ahimaaz as a son of Zadok. Zadok is a Priestly Flock.

... If his father is a Priest, then he also is a Priest.

And in Israel, the Priestly Family is a very highly considered family.

So, you would say that he is from the right kind of family.

2. Secondly, he is a Faster Runner than the other fellow who is being sent the Message.

He is very, very Good Runner - He has got SPEED, he is SWIFT.

3. Thirdly, he is a Trusted Messenger of David.

Because if you read 2 Samuel 15:35-36; you realized that this was not the first time that he has carried Messages for David - It was something that he did!

In 2 Samuel 17, he carried Messages to David.

... So, this is a man with a trusted record of carrying Messages.

If you read 1 Samuel 17:15-17 (NKJV);

15 Then Hushai said to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, "Thus and so Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and so I have advised.

16 Now therefore, send quickly and tell David, saying, 'Do not spend this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily cross over, lest the king and all the People who are with him be swallowed up.'"

17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed at En Rogel, for they dared not be seen coming into the city; so a female servant would come and tell them, and they would go and tell King David.

So, this Ahimaaz - He is a Courier for David; so he is Smart, he is a Priest, he has got Speed, he is Trusted, he has got experience.

... He is the Right Man for the Job!

So, if you were assessing the situation at the moment; David has not heard the Message. It is a delicate Message. It has to get to him quickly!

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This is a trusted Messenger - Ahimaaz. He has done it all the time. David knows him, his father is a Priest, he has got speed.

Everything seems to indicate that for this moment, Ahimaaz must go on this Mission.

... Yet, he is not sent, he is not Picked.

The race is not to the SWIFT all the time. Sometimes People who seems to have EVERYTHING together may be be JUMPED OVER!

And, there is Second (2nd) Runner!

The second (2nd) Runner is called THE CUSHITE.

... It is a description, it is not a name!

His name is not mentioned - He is just mentioned by his Tribe or by the way he looks:  
He is 'The Cushite.'

Literary it means "A Black man - He is a man with no name.

He is supposedly Trusted, because he is around in the Corridors of Power.

So, there is a Crisis and this is the first (1st) time we are hearing him being called to Service.

"Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed himself to Joab and ran." 2 Samuel 18:21

He has two (2) Things that Ahimaaz doesn't have:

1. He has a MISSION,

2. And he has a MESSAGE.

... A Mission and a Message.

But he does not have SPEED, he does not come from a Royal Family, he does not come from the Priestly Flock, he does not even know the short cut of the terrain and he is not addressed by name.

So if you look at these two (2) People;

- AHIMAAZ: He is known by name. His Parenthood is right. He has got Speed, he has got Pedigree, he has got the Credentials.

... He should send the Message!

- THE CUSHITE: No Pedigree, no name, he does not have the speed, does not know the terrain so well.

... But he is called to do the Job!

The race is not always to the SWIFT; there will be an opportunity that comes, that does not favour the most Highly Qualified.

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He (The Cushite) has the Message, he is the man for the hour.

There are those who run in life because they have a Message and a Mission.

And then there are those who run in life because they just can't stand still - They needed to be seen. And Ahimaaz was like that! He is an Action Person. He can't Stand Still.

And I want you to listen to Ahimaaz' Statement. He says: "Let me run now..."

... This is the spirit of ENTITLEMENT.

Then he says: "But whatever happens, Please let me also run..."

... That is the spirit of COMPETITION.

This guy (Ahimaaz) says: The Message must be given, and I am going to give the Message.

Joan says: You will not give the Message, because it is above your PAY GRADE.

... It is beyond you.

Why? - Because the King's son is DEAD!

And history shows: If you don't have what it takes to carry this Message, you will get into trouble!

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So, although you are qualified, you would not go!

But he says: Whether I have a Message or not, I would go!

There are People like Ahimaaz in our world - Those who runs because they just can't accept that some races are not theirs to run.

They just feel: I must also be there! They are the 'WANNA BEES'.



They want to be in the midst of things. They want to be where the action is.

So, when something is happening: Whether they are supposed to do it or not; they do it anyhow!

A lot of 'Ahimaaz' in this world - RUNNING simply because they want to be seen.

And Ahimaaz also represent those who run because they want to OUTFIGHT OTHERS.

Somebody is doing it, they say - I will BEAT him. I will do it better! I can be better.

And they will give you their Pedigree: I know this guy, when we were in school - when I was first (1st) he was LAST.

I come from a rich family, he is from a Poor family. I have done this before, he has never done it before. I can beat him.

The fact that you can BEAT somebody, doesn't mean you are called to the FIGHT.

The race is not for the SWIFT, and the BATTLE is also not for the Strong!

There are those who run because they CAN'T allow others to SHINE. They always have to SPOIL IT for somebody else.

And there are People like that; and I hope you are not one (1) of them?

I hope you are not one (1) of those who RUN because:

1. You can't stand that it is somebody's turn.
2. You just can't stand that somebody you think is inferior to you has got an opportunity you don't have.
3. You can't stand that somebody you think you are better than has a door opened.

And if you are Ahimaaz - you are running without a Mission and without a Message - Very fast and very talented but going nowhere!

... So this is how the race is Set Up!

And Joab, the General for David's Army said: Listen Ahimaaz, we know everything about you.

But Ahimaaz said: Whether you like it or not, I am RUNNING.

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So eventually Joan says, RUN!

It is those kinds of Permission when they give you, you don't take it. You are forcing it and you are told: Okay, if you want to go, go ahead and do it.

... It is going to be a long time, great efforts but you are going to achieve NOTHING.

So, let me ask you a question - Between these two (2), for the race you are running now: Are you an Ahimaaz or the Cushite?

Are you running Purposely because you are supposed to run? Or you are running because you can't stand the Person who is Winning?

You can't stand the Person you think you are better than, who seems to be doing well - If he can do three (3) I can do ten (10). If he can do ten (10) I can do hundred (100)!

... I know him, I am better than him, I can beat him.

And there are many People running races like that - Life is an incessant competition!

Even when there is no competition, they will Invent one!

I. Somebody buys a pair of shoes, you must buy a better one.

II. Somebody buys a car, you must buy a nicer one.

III. Somebody builds a house, you must get more bedrooms than he has!

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Your whole race in life is to say: I can't allow the Cushite to RUN, I must also run!

There will come a time when there will be a Message for Ahimaaz - A time another message will come and you will be given the opportunity.

... But this Particular one, is not for you!

May God HELP YOU: not to run, because somebody else is Running!

... So let's see the OUTCOME:

So, there are two (2) People running - If you look at it: When Ahimaaz is told to to RUN; although the Cushite took the lead. Ahimaaz knew the shortcut of the terrain.

... He has been doing it all his life!

And so he uses a shortcut, he runs faster, and he overtakes the Cushite.

So, you will think: Oh, he has overtaken, and this guy is going to win the Prize.

Let's see the OUTCOME - 2 Samuel 18:24-29 (KNJV);

24 Now David was sitting between the two gates. And the watchman went up to the roof over the gate, to the wall, lifted his eyes and looked, and there was a man, running alone.

25 Then the watchman cried out and told the king. And the king said, "If he is alone, there is News in his mouth." And he came rapidly and drew near.

26 Then the watchman saw another man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, "There is another man, running alone!" And the king said, "He also brings News."

27 So the watchman said, "I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok." And the king said, "He is a good man, and comes with Good News."

28 So Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, "All is well!" Then he bowed down with his face to the earth before the king, and said, "Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king!"

29 The king said, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant and me your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what it was about."

Can you imagine? - He said: I saw the crowd gathering, but I don't know what it was all about. But I wanted to RUN!

It is like those days in Ghana when we used to queue up for everything.

Sometimes you go to a Place, and People have QUEUED UP!

And you don't know what the queue is about, you join the line.

And then you get to the end, you realised that they are selling something you don't need.

There are People joining line, and queue and running. And when you ask them: Why are you running? They say: I saw the crowd gathering, but I didn't know what it was about.

David says: If you ran this FAST, and you have no MESSAGE, turn aside and stand here.

May that never be your Portion - That after you have run effectively in life, you are told: Stand aside, because you carry nothing - You were just competing with somebody.

... Alright! (Continue with 2 Samuel 18)

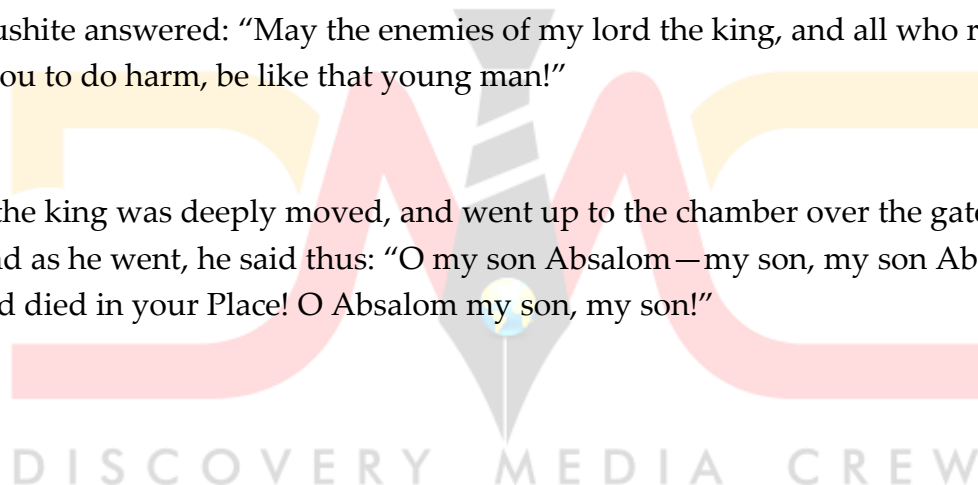
30 And the king said, “Turn aside and stand here.” So he turned aside and stood still.

31 Just then the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, “There is Good News, my lord the king! For the Lord has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you.”

32 And the king said to the Cushite, “Is the young man Absalom safe?”

So the Cushite answered: “May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like that young man!”

33 Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: “O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your Place! O Absalom my son, my son!”



I want you to note how the Cushuite delivered the Message to the King - He knows that those who have carried such Messages in the Past get in to trouble.

So, when he is asked: What is happening? Is the young man Absalom safe?

He did not say - The boy is killed. He did not say: I saw him with my own two (2) eyes - The boy has been killed. Because People who gives such direct Messages to David get into trouble.

He said: Oh King, may it happen to your enemies as it has happened to that BOY! - And the King got the coded Message.

He understood the delicateness of the moment and he gave the Right Message.

The King knew Absalom had died but death had not been mentioned.

... And that is why this guy was the Right for the Job!

He doesn't have Speed, but he has the Wisdom for the hour, to deliver the Right Message.

When you see somebody running, don't just run after them: They may operate at the Wisdom Level you don't have!

They may not have your Certificates, they may not have your Degrees, they may not have your Pedigrees; but for this race, they have something that you don't have!

Ahimaaz was told: Stand aside! He has run so long, he has run ahead. He has the best family, he has lots of Past Successes; yet, he is told: 'Step Aside!'

But the Cushite: He ran, his life is spent. The King gets the Message, the deed is done! He came second (2nd) but he was FIRST (1ST)! He came behind, but he delivered the result.

That is why in life you don't just struggle with People who are already running; because they may be running with the Message.

You RUN the Race that is set before you, and you finish it WELL.

And when you FINISH IT WELL, your Message would be delivered.

The Big Question is: WHY WAS "THE CUSHITE" CHOSEN?

- Was it a Set Up for his Failure?

- Was it a Set Up for his Death?

They just sent him because they know, this guy is going to be killed - Let's send him!

... It is a Possibility!

Because sometimes People may Set you Up for Failure and Push you into a Zone where they think you may be destroyed.

But God can use that Set Up for His Appointed Time!

And do you know the number of times they wished you would fail?

... They think you will fail, you will not amount to anything.

I have lived a little bit of this life and I have seen People who were Set Up for Failure, being Appointed by God for Destiny.

I have seen People whose Bosses Set them Up: put them into the wrong office, into the wrong Department - Just to destroy them.



... And God turned it around!

Maybe that is what you meant for the Cushite.

They say, somebody is going to die today because by experience, David is going to kill the fellow.

Ahimaaz is too PRECIOUS; the Cushite is dispensable - He is a Black man. He is Dispensable!

.. But God used that Set Up to His Glory.

That is why, in life you don't always complain about People Setting you Up - In their minds they would say: You are finished, we have got him! No way, this is the End.

But in God's Mind: This is the Race that he must run; this is his Appointment! This is something he or she alone can do!

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May God Set you Up for Success - Amen!

... I said: May God Set you Up for Success - AMEN!

You may not be running as fast as everybody; but you will deliver your Message - Amen. You will deliver your Mission - Amen!

Your Appointment, your Destiny shall Manifest - Amen!

In conclusion; the Message to every CUSHITE - And by Cushite! I mean People who are nameless. You haven't done much:

But there will come a moment in your Life, when God will Pick you up for something UNIQUE.

... And when the time comes - Be like the Cushite.

When Joab said run, the Bible say: He (Cushite) bowed himself and ran! - He doesn't have speed, but he RAN. He does not know the terrain well, but he RAN. He doesn't come from the right family, but he RAN. People have Set him Up for failure, but he RAN.

Forget about People's motives, forget about what they want to do, forget at their Agenda - Just RUN the race set before you because you going to RUN, and you are going to deliver the Message.

... Somebody say: I AM A CUSHITE!



And to the CUSHITE Nations of the world (Ghana and Nigeria included):

We may not have the speed of the other Nations.

We may not know and understand the terrain like the other People;

We may not have done this before!

But there will come a time in our Destiny, in our History; a moment of Destiny. It may look like a SET UP for Failure but it will be a Divine Appointment - Amen.

And I believed with all my heart, with everything within me; that: This Pandemic; which seems like a Set Up for destruction, is going to work for our Advantage - Amen.

Is it any wonder that those who said there will be dead bodies littered all over Africa cannot understand what is happening because it is CUSHITE TIME!!!!

And it may be a Set Up that was supposed to destroy us but it will be for our Divine Visitation, for our Glory - Amen.

We just have to run and keep running, and keep running - the RACE that is Set before us!

May the Lord grant us the Spirit that came upon this Cushite that made him he RAN!

Even when it seems like somebody was trying to send him on a wrong Mission - He RAN.

Even when it seems he did not know the terrain well and did not have the Speed.

Even when he was overtaken, he did not give up to say: Well, I am last. I am not going to run again. He kept running and running from behind.

... The first Person was told to stand behind.

If you not have a Message (as Ahimaaz); you are going to be told "STAND ASIDE:"

"You have done well to run FAST, but this race is not to the SWIFT; it is for those who have TIME and OPPORTUNITY working on their behalf."

May the Lord give you the Wisdom to discern that your moment - IN TIME; and to go know when the Grace of God is upon you - to RUN THE RACE, to finish it well, to Glorify GOD.

... Just stand up and lift up your hands to God:

And I want you to talk to the Lord - And I want you to just ask the Lord to HELP YOU, in the Race that is Set before you! To Help you, to Help you!

It may seem like a Set Up for Failure, but it will turn into our ADVANTAGE, in the Name of Jesus -Amen!

Ask God to help you to SEIZE the Right moment:

I. Not to run other People's races!

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II. Not to be among those who ALSO run! - A wanna be! A copy cat.

But to do that which is Set before you, in the Name of Jesus!

CLOSING PRAYER:

Father we come to You, fully confident that You have Good Plans for our lives, and Destiny for our Assignment.

Although men may seek to manipulate the events of our lives; You will SET IT UP for our Glory!

Because Your Word says that: ALL things is going to walk together for our Good, because we Love You.

May this Season of our lives, Set us Up for SUCCESS; Set us Up for Message, set us Up for Achievement.

We may come from behind, but we will carry a Message!

We may not know the terrain well, but we will carry a Message!

May we run our Race EFFECTIVELY, to Your Glory Lord; in JESUS' Name!

... And if you believe you are a CUSHITE for this moment, say: Amen - AMEN!!!!

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Hallelujah! We give You Praise Lord and we give You Glory. In Jesus' Name - Amen and AMEN!

Thank you so much for staying all through to read.

COMPILATIONS BY:

Compiled by  
www.discoverymediacrew.com  
(080-2360-4721)

Facebook: @Dmc MediaCrew Twitter: @discoverymediac  
Instagram: @Discoverymediacrew Youtube Discovery Media Crew

Email: info@discoverymediacrew.com

MOSES DURODOLA, TITILAYOMI AJAYI AND TOPE BABALOLA

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# WHAT ARE YOU RUNNING AFTER?



20TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

**TEXT: GENESIS 19:17, 2 KINGS 2:4, PHILIPPIANS 3:12-15, HEBREWS 12:1-2.**

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Amen and Amen! Shall we rise on our feet (wherever you are) as we make our DECLARATIONS OF EXCELLENCE? SAY WITH ME:

Out of Zion, the Perfection of Beauty, God shines forth. The Lord my God causes the righteous to shine forth as the Sun.

His Awesome Hands has formed me; His Creative Spirit inspires my mind. He skillfully guides my hands.

Therefore, I boldly declare: I am set apart for Excellence. The Ruler of the Universe has exalted my horn among the Nations. He sets my feet on high! In His Strength, I rise!

By Faith, I Press forward towards the Prize of my Highest Calling.

I believe in my heart, and confess with my mouth: that Jesus is Lord! He is the Vine, I am the Branch; in Him I abide, in Him I Blossom.

As it is written: God, who commanded Light out of darkness, has shone His Light in our hearts;

We have His Treasure in Earthen Vessels. That the Excellence of the Power may be of God, and not of us!

In this Year, I commit to EXCELLENCE, I commit to EXCEPTIONALISM, I commit to do the EXTRAORDINARY.

In Jesus' Name - Amen!!! And Amen, and Amen and Amen.

May the Lord speak to you and Minister life to you; and may His Words bring Guidance and Direction to each one of us - Amen.

As you know, I started Preaching a Message originally, I had thought that it will be a two (2) Part Message. But I had to break it up a little. And it has become a three (3) Part Message. Today is the concluding Part of it.

And I said from the beginning that there are two (2) Powerful Forces that enable each one of us to make Progress -Two (2) very Powerful Forces:



There is the PUSH Factor, and there is the PULL factor - One PUSHES us from behind. And the other PULLS us from ahead. One is what is running after us, and the other is what we are running after.

So in Part one (1) of my Message, we asked the Question: "What is running after you? "

And if you didn't read that Message, I encourage you to go and read it on the Label of DMC - "What is running after you? " on this link:

<https://discoverymediacrew.com/What-Is-Running-After-You-Dr-Mensah-Otabil>

And we looked at some of the disadvantages that Pursued us in life. We looked at four (4) Biblical Characters and the Negatives that Pursued them but which encouraged them to move on in life.

In Part two (2); we asked the Question: "What are you running for?"

And if you didn't read that Message, I encourage you to go and read it on the Label of DMC - "What are you running for? on this link:

<https://discoverymediacrew.com/What-Are-You-Running-For-Part-2-Pastor-Mensa-Otabil>

And we looked at two (2) kinds of Running: Those who run with a Message or a Mission and those who run without any Mission - They just run because others are running.

... And I hope none of you is like that!

And today we are asking a Third (3rd) Question - Which is related to the PULL FACTOR of what is Pulling us up.

And the Question is: WHAT ARE YOU RUNNING AFTER?

Remember, Part one (1) is: What is Running after you? and this one is: WHAT ARE YOU RUNNING AFTER?

I spoke about the Legend of the Lion and the Gazelle in Part 1 (What is Running After You) - One is Pursuing and the other is being Pursued.

In Part one (1); I made this statement that: "People who have nothing running after them usually live life without any sense of Urgency."

They live life comfortably, because:

I. There is nothing Threatening their life.

II. There is nothing that is Pursuing them.

III. There is nothing that makes them to get up and feel that: If they don't MOVE, they are going to Perish!

So, there is no sense of Urgency in their life.

Today, in relation to our Statement, or our Topic of: "WHAT ARE YOU RUNNING AFTER?"

This is a Second Statement I will make: "The People who don't have something they are running after, usually live life without any sense of Mission."

People who have nothing running after them have no sense of Urgency. People who are not running after anything have no sense of Mission.

A sense of Urgency, helps you to move QUICKLY; and a sense of Mission helps you to move PURPOSEFULLY.

It is great to be FAST; but to move, you have to know what you are moving for, or where you are moving to.

So we are going to look at Four (4) Examples in the Bible, of People who Pursued a Target and achieved it.

And we are going to relate to different aspects of what they did in their lives.

1. The first (1st) Character we are going to look at, is not a very nice Person in the Bible, but he is important for this Message.

... And that is LOT. Abraham's Nephew - Lot.

And LOT is important because he didn't LOOK BACK.

If you are going to run after something, you don't have to look back. You have to look ahead, you have to look forward.

Lot had a lot of Problems (I think that is why he is called Lot) - He had a lot of Problems!

He made a lot of mistakes in his life, in his choices: He choose the wrong location to live in, a wrong neighbourhood!

And so made a lot of mistakes in his life.

But today, we would not look at all the wrong things that he got wrong. We are going to look at one (1) thing that he got right:

And that is the fact that he NEVER LOOKED BACK.

When Lot and his family were rescued from Sodom and Gomorrah. They were instructed to run to the mountains - and NEVER LOOK BACK.

Genesis 19:17 (NKJV) reads:

"So it came to Pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the Plain. Escape to the Mountains, lest you be destroyed".

They had been delivered from great catastrophe - A City they had lived in; a Place they thought was going to be a Place of Prosperity, had become the Symbol of Debauchery in the world.

God is now destroying their home - He sent Angels to go and rescue them because Abraham had Interceded for Lot.

And then Lot and his family were PULLED from Sodom and Gomorrah.

The instruction is: 'Don't stay in the Plain, go to the Mountain and DON'T LOOK BACK!

DON'T LOOK BACK: If you are going to run for something; the first (1st) thing I want you to know - You don't have to look back, you have to keep looking forward.

But something happened on the journey as Lot and his family are moving towards the Mountain - escaping from Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 19:26 (NKJV);

"But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a Pillar of salt."

HOW DO WE KNOW LOT'S WIFE LOOKED BACK?

Because nobody is supposed to look behind. How could Lot know?

Now, if the wife was walking BEHIND him (Lot) he wouldn't have known that she had looked back!

... Because everybody is going forward!

If she looked back and she was BEHIND; you wouldn't have noticed. And the record would not be there that she looked back.

So, for that record to be there; for Lot to know that his wife had looked back - She had to be one of two (2) Positions:

Either she is walking BESIDES him, or she is walking AHEAD of him - Definitely not behind him!

So, can you image a man who is supposed to look back; he is walking with his wife. He looks side ways and sees that the wife has looked back, and the wife becomes a Pillar of Salt.

Or the wife is ahead of him, and the wife looks back - Lot sees it, and then the wife becomes a Pillar of Salt.

Can you imagine? - Think of it! The extreme discipline it would require for Lot not to look back.

A man of great discipline - Somebody close by you (Your wife); You are on a journey with her, she looks back, right besides you, and she is a Pillar of Salt.

And he says: I will NOT look back!

... That is extreme Discipline!

Or if he was ahead, he said: I will not look back!

And that is why I Picked him! He made a lot of mistakes, but he knew how to focus into the future.

If you are going to run after anything in life, you have to learn this Discipline from Lot: I Will NOT LOOK BACK!

Somebody say: I WILL NOT LOOK BACK!

Unfortunately, some times in looking forward, you have left some People behind.

Sadly, People who are frozen in time, People who refused to Pursue any Agenda; sometimes, have to be left behind.

Then, I am not talking about ignoring and abandoning People simply because they are in trouble.

... That is not what this is about!

Or you are just leaving your wife because you don't love her, or you have seen a New Girl.

... That is not what we are talking about!

We are talking about when you are focused on something; and you and somebody are focused on it and unfortunately, the Person looks back!

It is like friends who are both escaping a bad habit - They are escaping Sodom and Gomorrah.

It could be your friend you used to drink with - And you are both escaping Alcoholism; or you are both escaping Drugs; you are both escaping Prostitution, or Robbery, or Abject Poverty.

You and your best friend, you say: we are going to make it in life. We are going to stop drinking, we will not do drugs again.

And you are going on this journey; and your friend decides: I am going to go back to Drugs: I am going to go back to Alcohol. I am going to go back to Prostitution.

You have to be like Lot and say: Although he is my best friend, I am not going to look back because I am running AFTER SOMETHING.

And when that happens, sadly, you don't have to join the one who LOOKED BACK.

The tragedy of life is that many of us are where we are because we have joined somebody who looked back.

We went back to somebody, we went back to a relationship that was going nowhere and we are stuck inside, Frozen in Salt like Lot's wife.

When God gives you a Vision in life, or a New Hope in life, DON'T LOOK BACK!

No matter the temptation, DON'T LOOK BACK.

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Lot's view (his Vision) was the Mountain of Safety - And he had to FOCUS on it!

So if you look at Lot's life, there are Two (2) Things driving him:

- The FIRE behind him;

- And the Mountain ahead of him.

The FIRE is Sodom and Gomorrah - that is the PUSH Factor. He has to RUN from Sodom and Gomorrah.



But if that is all he is doing and there is no Vision - he will LOOK BACK.

And that was Lot's wife Problem - She knew what was running after her. She had no Vision of where she is escaping to.

So when it became stressful, the only Place she could look is backward!

It is not enough to have FIRE behind you:

I. You must look to the MOUNTAIN ahead of you.

II. You must have HOPE ahead of you; you must have VISION ahead of you.

So that when you escape the PAST, there is a Place that you are going to.

Somebody say: I AM NOT LOOKING BACK!

And for some of you:

I. God has delivered you from Alcohol - DON'T LOOK BACK!

II. He (God) has delivered you from Drugs - DON'T LOOK BACK!

III. He (God) has delivered you from Bad Company - DON'T LOOK BACK!

IV. He (God) has delivered you from some friends who are in Sodom and Gomorrah, who are there to destroy your life - DON'T LOOK BACK!

If you go around and achieve your Vision, you have to be like Lot - YOU DON'T LOOK BACK!

2. Second (2nd) Example - He is a better Person than Lot.

ELISHA is the Person who couldn't be discouraged - He was determined to go for something, you couldn't discourage him.

It's not just enough not to look back, but you have to determine: I WILL NOT BE DISCOURAGED.

Elisha was a man who was discouraged by everybody around him!

Do you feel that everybody around you is trying to discourage you? Everybody is trying to put a stumbling block on your way?

There are times in life when you get to a situation where almost everybody around you is trying to discourage you.

Your friends are discouraging you, your Parents are discouraging you, some times, even your Pastor is discouraging you.

And that was true of Elisha - Everybody was discouraging him.

He started his Mission under a Senior Prophet called Elijah.

But Elijah had a way of always discouraging Elisha, every steps of the way. And he tried to stop him in every way.

So in 2 Kings 2:4 (NKJV) we read:

Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, Please, for the Lord has sent me on to Bethel".

But Elisha said: "As the Lord lives, and as your Soul lives, I will not leave you!"

... So, they went down to Bethel.

Four (4) times on this journey, Elisha was discouraged:

He was discouraged by Elijah; he was discouraged by the Sons of the Prophet - from Gilgal to Bethel, to Jericho to Jordan.

... Every steps, he was discouraged!

But his eyes were fixed on something. He had moved from something to the Other.

He wanted something; he had a Vision.

What was Elisha looking for? Why was he not discouraged in life?

2 Kings 2:9 (NKJV);

And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?"

Elisha said: "Please let a "Double Portion" of your spirit be upon me".

Now, when I read the Bible, I try to imagine what is going on.

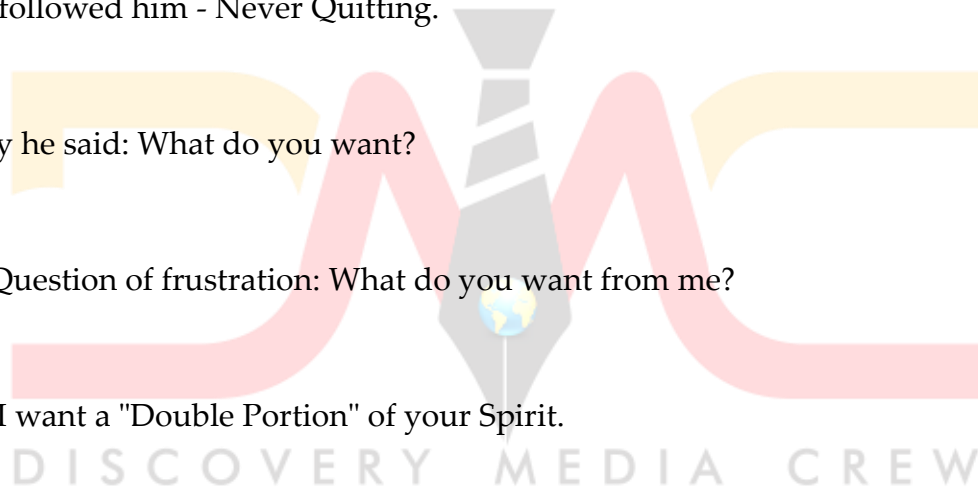
And when I read this, I just feel Elijah's Question is a Question of frustration.

It is not that he wanted the man to have a "Double Portion"; but the guy had followed him and followed him - Never Quitting.

So, finally he said: What do you want?

... It is a Question of frustration: What do you want from me?

He said: I want a "Double Portion" of your Spirit.



So why was Elisha never discouraged?

It was because he had set his heart - I am going to have a "Double Portion", I will be Significant, I will rise up, I will be used of God, and I will do Greater Things than Elijah is doing.

And if that is your Vision, then no one can discourage you.

WHAT DO YOU WANT IN LIFE?

... Is it a double portion?

If you want happiness, a Good Marriage, then nothing is going to discourage you in your Marriage!

If you want your children to do well, then nothing is going to stop you from raising Godly children.

And if you want to Prosper, nothing will stop you from Prospering because life is full of discouragements.

If you are one of those People who get discourage when you are discouraged; you will go nowhere!

Because life has Specialists in discouragement - They are Called, Ordained and Anointed to discourage you.

Every steps of the way, they are going to discourage you - It could be your Parents, it could be your Boss, it could even be your Pastor!

But Elisha said: I will not be discouraged.

WHY? - Because I want a DOUBLE PORTION in my life!

So, even if:

I. My Boss is discouraging me, I will not be discouraged.

II. My friends are discouraging me, I will not be discouraged.

III. Even if a Prophet discourages me; I WILL NOT BE DISCOURAGED!

... He wanted a "Double Portion"!

Elisha's Push Factor in life was discouragement - The more People discouraged him, the more he moved ahead.

But the Pull Factor for him was the "Double Portion".

There was something running after him! Everybody discouraging him! But that is not enough. There is also something he was running AFTER.

He had seen something he wanted, and he had determination that he will not be discouraged!

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Are you like Elisha? Or are you where you are because somebody discouraged you?

Sometimes you talk to People, they say:

I. Oh, no one believes in me! - But believe in yourself.

II. Nobody encourages me - Encourage yourself!

III. Even my Parents did not take me to school - Take yourself to School!

IV. All my friends are telling me that I can't make it - Then tell yourself 'I can make it!'

What are you sitting there for? Whom do you expect to encourage you?

Have you employed a Paid Encourager? Have you recruited and Encourager in your life?

If you haven't, then nobody owes you encouragement.

The Bible says: "And David encouraged HIMSELF in the Lord!"

... Nobody owes you encouragement!

If you are tired, and you want People to clap for you before you run, you would collapse.

If you are hoping that one day - Somebody would hold your hands and say: I believe in you.



Listen to me: You are on the wrong Planet!

Maybe, it happened on Pluto, which is degraded from the Planet! May be it happened on Jupiter. But here on Planet EARTH, we don't have many Encouragers.

... All of us were discouraged!

I remembered when God called me to Ministry and I told my BEST FRIEND (at that time) what God had said to me: He said to me: 'You are a FOOL!'

And I don't blame him because what I was doing, looked foolish - It didn't look sensible.

And a Good friend was telling me: You are a fool.

That is a Good advice.

But, I was not discouraged, and I was not angry! And I am not angry at him!

All I am saying is: If you are looking for People to clap for you to Perform; you are on the wrong Planet.

Go and look for your own Planet and settle there. And recruit your Cheerers and Praise Singers and settle there.

But here on Earth, it is full of discouragement. But you have to be like Elisha - I have have set my eyes on the "Double Portion", and even if my Boss says I shouldn't go with him, the Sons of the Prophet are saying I shouldn't do it; I know what I am looking for - I WILL NOT BE DISCOURAGED.

Somebody say: I WILL NOT BE DISCOURAGED!

Because is you are running after something, you have to be like Lot: "I will not look Back!"

You have to be like Elisha: "I will not be discouraged!"

3. Third (3rd) example is PAUL - The Great Apostle. He didn't stop pressing on!



Philippians 3:12-15 (NKJV) these are Paul's own words;

12 Not that I have already Attained, or I'm already Perfected; but I Press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

14 I Press towards the Goal for the Prize of the upward Call of God in Christ Jesus.

15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

... As many as are mature must think like this - Forgetting those things which are behind!

Paul was driving towards something and he was driven by what was ahead of him.

He called it: The Prize of the Upward Call of God in Christ Jesus.

And he kept that ahead of him - He knew what it WAS; and he said he has not attained it, but he will PRESS towards it!

\*And to Press toward this thing he called the "Upward Call" of Christ, he had to put everything behind him."

He had to put Success behind him; he had to put Great Spiritual experience behind him; his Great Vision behind him; great Accomplishments behind him; Persecutions behind him; Hunger behind him, Distress behind him; Nakedness behind him.

In other words, for Paul, Success and Failure made no difference to him - They were ALL BEHIND HIM.

There are People who are so swollen headed that they can't enter the door God has opened for them.

Their head is too 'big' by some Success they choked!

So Paul calls it a 'Goal'. And he said: I have not attained it and I am going to get it.

... And nothing could stop Paul from getting it.

He couldn't be discouraged, Prophecy didn't stop him.

In fact, there were Prophets who came, told him he was going to suffer Pursuing that and he said: I will still go!

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In Prison, he Pursued it, out of Prison, he Pursued it. On the ship, he Pursued it - Until, in 2 Timothy 4:7-8 (NKJV). This is what he said:

7 I have fought the Good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the Faith.

8 Finally, there is laid up for me the Crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

How did he know he has finished the race?

How can you know the race you have finished, if you don't know the Finishing Line?

So when Paul set out, he knew what he wanted to achieve. He knew where God wanted him to get to. And when he got it, he said: Now, I have crossed the Finishing Line, if God takes me, I am ready!

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU WANT TO GET TO?

... For Paul, it was what he called the "Upward Call" of God.

He had a lot of PUSH Factors. And the greatest thing that was a Push Factor for Paul; Motivating him; driving him, from his Past that he didn't like was what he did as a Persecutor of the Church; especially in the Martyrdom of Stephen.

And it always drove him!

It made him feel that he was insufficient, he was unworthy.

Just really disturbed him that at one time in his life, he Persecuted the Church and Participated in the killing of Stephen.

... And that was his PUSH Factor!

But was was PULLING him ahead was not what he did to Stephen; it was the "Upward Call".

You have to have something driving you from behind, or something Pulling you from ahead.

And Paul calls it: The "Upward Call" of God in Christ Jesus!

... And he was kept PRESSING ON!

We have to Press on through Success; which is very difficult to Press on because Success is a Place we all want to settle at!

You get to a Place where everything is cool, you just wish: Oh, I wish life would end - This is my final Place.

But you have to move on. You have to keep moving on. You have to Press on and Press on because beyond your Success, there is something more.

Beyond your achievements, there is something more; beyond your imprisonment there is something more; beyond your Pain, there is something more. Beyond your nakedness there is something more

... And Paul says: I Press on!

Somebody say: I AM GOING TO PRESS ON!

So, Lot tells us: 'Don't look back' - We don't look back when we are following our dream.

Elisha tells us: 'Don't be discouraged!'

Paul tells us: Keep Pressing through.

4. And the Fourth (4th) and final example - What better example than the LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself?

... He did it all, with Joy.

That is how he have to do it all; in running after something - We don't do with with bitterness and anger. We do it all, with Joy.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV);

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a Cloud of Witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 LOOKING UNTO JESUS, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the Right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus Christ shows us that what we are running after should give us Joy - Even if it is accompanied by Pain; the end results should be something that brings us great Joy.

It is like a mother going through labour to have a child - It is Painful, but she is waiting for the first (1st) cry of her Baby.

And when she hears the first (1st) cry, the Pain is no longer the most important thing - The Child is important!

For the Joy that was set ahead of Him, Jesus Christ endured the Cross, and He despised the shame.

Sometimes, life can be very bitter. Life has a way of surprising everybody and throwing bitterness our way, Pain and sorrows all our lives!

But there must be something in your life you are looking for, that brings great Joy.

And for Jesus Christ, the Bible says: For the JOY that was set ahead of Him, He ENDURED the cross.

Endured means He allowed it.

And He is now seated at the Right Hand of the Father.

That was the Joy that was set before Him: The Redemption of Mankind. Deliverance of Souls from the hands of the devil.

... And He did it with Joy.

The Cross is not the Joy, Trial by Persecution is not a Joy, being whipped is not a Joy, having a Crown of Thorns on your head is not a Joyful Thing - That is Painful.

But all of those Pains must be compensated by a Joy that you are looking forward to.

SO WHAT IS THAT JOY YOU ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO?

Ultimately for us Christians, the Joy is being with the Lord Jesus Christ - Living for Him on Earth and living for Him in Eternity.

That is our Greatest Joy.

But aside from that, there are also things on Earth that gives us Joy:

I. The Joy of seeing your children doing well.

II. The Joy of seeing your life becoming a Blessing to People.

III. The Joy of doing something with your life that the world is blessed by.

So, People go out there and say: But for so and so, I would not have done this. But for so and so, I would not have achieved that!

IV. The Joy of standing behind and watching God use your life to be a Blessing.

That Joy allows the Pain to be Tolerable.

And today I Pray that: No matter what you are going through, the Joy of the Lord will keep you running - Amen.

... So, what have we learned today?

1. Like Lot, we will not Look Back!

And I Pray you will not look back - Amen.

Even if the Person close to you looks back - You can go to your old neighborhood or old classmates, and see Good friends who looked back;

Went back to a lifestyle that you and them were running away from. And they got frozen. And you see what God has done. When you and see them, don't look back!

2. Like Elisha, we must refuse to be discouraged.

Even if the People are our Superiors, they must not discourage us.

3. Like Paul, we keep Pressing on, even when we seems to be the most successful People - We still keep Pressing on.

4. And like our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself; We do it all with Joy.

Before we close I just want to give everybody including those ones reading now on the Label of DMC: If you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Personal Saviour, we just want to Pray.

Because the Greatest Joy in life that you must Pursue is to have JESUS CHRIST as your Lord and Personal Saviour.

And if you are here or reading now on the Label of DMC, and you don't know Christ Jesus as your Lord and Personal Saviour, I am going to lead you in Prayer.

And we are going to Pray that Prayer. And you are going to invite Jesus into your heart!



... Bow down your head with me, everybody:

And if you truly want Jesus Christ to come into your heart, I am going to lead you in Prayer.

But I want you to say this Prayer with sincerity in your heart.

And everybody join me in this Prayer. Say with me:

Heavenly Father, I come to You today, just as I am. I am a sinner. I cannot save myself. Today, I ask You to save me.

Wash me and cleanse me. My whole life is to Please You, to Honour You, to Serve You and to be with You forever.

In Jesus' Name - AMEN AND AMEN!

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GOD BLESS YOU!

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