

## **LESSON #1**

### **God Takes Care of His People**

#### **The Importance of Prayer**

Church taught us that whatever our needs are, we ought to pray. As a child, school also taught the importance of prayer, especially the Catholic primary school I attended. My primary school had several prayers. We prayed in the mornings, lunchtime, after lunch and in the evenings. We prayed to God, the Angel of God and even through the Holy Virgin Mary.

I believed as a child that God would provide my needs. I prayed for health, food, guidance, help through my examinations, and if there was something that my parents couldn't provide (which was most things at the time), I prayed. After all, prayer is simply communicating with God.

I believed in prayer to the point that I even prayed for a pair of blue shoes. Oh, how I wanted me a pair of blue shoes. Did I get it? I got a pair of black shoes with blue beaded accent.

However, years later as a teenager I got my first pair of blue shoes. God does not always give you what you want when you want it. He knows your needs and provides it within his own time as he sees fit. It was years after praying that I got the pair of blue shoes and I remembered, God had still granted my request.

I always thought that praying meant that we had to close our eyes and speak to God within our minds, through sign language or speak out loud. It wasn't until recently that I realised that I could actually have a conversation with God, that I could talk to God and that the response to my request would be provided through several means. These include a thought or idea, a still-calm yet assuring voice which is heard within, someone may call you out of the blue with a word of

advice or you may even get dreams that provide you with answers. There are numerous ways in which answers may come and it's not out of chance or mere luck that our answers are received.

### **Troubling Days Ahead**

A few months ago, my family experienced a series of "unfortunate events". My car's right front end broke one morning. Fortunately I had just descended Red Hills and was on my way to the baby's day care. I had just navigated a corner to go on Waterhouse Drive when the car stopped suddenly and the wheels refused to move. I had to get a wrecker to move the car and I thanked God for making the car break down where it did. Two weeks later we experienced more distress where within a three-day period two car accidents occurred where both vehicles were written off. A month later, I apparently ran my car into a metal post at my son's school. I had no idea how it happened. All I know is when I felt the impact of the vehicle on the post and realised I had damaged my bumper.

The events that unfolded caused us to have various thoughts on our "series of bad luck". At one point my colleagues and I had a good laugh when one joked that they could take me to St. Thomas to "get a bath". Just in case you do not know what getting a bath meant, it was a ritual usually performed by the Obeah Man or the Witch Doctor to ward off "crosses" or bad luck.

On the day of the first accident, somehow I had felt like singing. Throughout the day I sang "Jehovah you are the Most High God". On the way home I received two calls notifying me that my husband was in an accident and that I was to go to the Andrews Memorial Hospital immediately. That was an extremely long night. The vehicle had overturned, spun and skated on the driver's side which injured his right hand. He had also passed out for a short time after exiting the vehicle via the windshield. I stood beside him watching him grimace while the doctor

dug into his flesh feeling and extracting shards of glass and paint, and flushing the wound as if she was handling a piece of meat. We left the hospital at approximately 1:30 a.m. feeling quite lucky, as there was no loss of life nor limb.

After the accident, several prayers of thanksgiving and protection were offered. The accused also made threats in an attempt to bully my husband who was the injured party. It was really a time of testing. However, it was also a timely reminder that God is my shield, my protector, and a very present help in times of trouble.

### **God Warns His People**

The day before the second accident I received words of comfort; words to prepare me for what was to come. As I made breakfast in the kitchen, I clearly heard the words **“fear not, be ye not dismayed”**. I knew that what was spoken was **NOT** my own. Clearly lacking spiritual discernment, I wondered if it was the Holy Spirit, God or an Angel speaking to me. I also did not know which Scripture it was that was being quoted.

After telling a colleague that we were threatened the previous night, my AWESOME work family had a prayer circle where another colleague and my family were prayed for and anointed with oil. I casually mentioned to a friend that I had heard this Scripture verse but I had no idea where to find it. My colleague mentioned Isaiah and then Googled the verse. The response was **Isaiah 41:10**.

A few minutes later my mother called and told me about two dreams received by two members of my family about eminent danger to my son. I listened and refused to accept any negativity. I cancelled any future mishaps (meaning, I said nothing like that would happen. I rejected the

premonition) and spoke confidently that God would not allow that to happen after protecting him from three illnesses that could have killed him.

The next morning, I waved goodbye to my son, husband and his uncle not knowing that what was to occur within the next few minutes would make May 6, 2016 one of the most frightening days of my life. While reversing Uncle's right front tyre dropped into a pothole. He then upon trying to get out of the pot hole, touched a light pole which swayed and also started to spark. Have you ever seen fire on a light wire? I find it quite scary.

Uncle stopped the vehicle put it into drive and the next thing I saw was the vehicle going down the hill quite fast. From the initial lurch of the vehicle, I saw a frightened expression on my husband's face and heard him scream "uncle". Neither my husband nor son had put on their seat belts. My husband also had a very hot cup of coffee in hand.

I ran from the living room to the veranda to get a better view of the happenings and that was when I saw the ball of fire gashing on the connecting light wires in the direction that the car was heading and then realised that Uncle could not stop the car. I started to call on God to save them. *"Save them Jesus, save them" I shouted!* Like a crazy lady, I jumped up and down on the veranda pleading for protection.

## **Grief**

It was after I heard the collision (as the car had passed my line of sight) and I saw the broken light pole as well as the sparks on the light wires and connecting poles affected by the impact, that my mind started to put the pieces together. Thoughts of possible electrocution and the severity of the crash entered my mind. The screams had stopped and in that a brief moment of silence I remembered something.

I remembered the dreams and warning of pending death awaiting my son. I remembered that he was in the car and that I did not take him to school today. For that brief moment I stood in shock with my baby daughter in hand imagining the worst. Suddenly, I was engulfed with the feeling of grief. That emotion that can cause one to feel that sharp “belly bottom” pain that is hard to describe unless you have been placed in that position.

I was in shock! I could not believe the events that unfolded. Did I just see a dream, a premonition being fulfilled right before my eyes? I ran for my phone, called my friend the Bishop and as I explained what had just happened I started to “bawl”. Yes, I sobbed, wept, cried, howled but more importantly as my fellow Jamaicans would like to say when not only tears are flowing but when that horrible wailing noise is being expressed along with liquid running down the face from both eyes and nose, I bawled hysterically and scared Bishop who was driving to work. He almost crashed!

After that things went haywire. I tried to call my mother; the phone had no credit. I tried to put a card on the phone but the credit just would not go on. I was pressing the numbers but the code just would not register on the phone. I tried to change my clothes as I was in my nightgown and as close as the closet was, I could not find what to wear. So, I picked up the baby and headed out in my nightgown

I decided to take a short cut (alternate route to reach the accident site). The baby, oblivious to what was happening around her was close to age 18 months at the time and was fascinated with the water that dripped on us en route through our neighbour’s yard (the shortcut). She started to sing “rain rain go away” much to her amusement.

As I ran downhill through the very stony short cut in my slippers and nightgown (stubbing my toe in the process), I saw my husband who was shouting “Lyssa, Lyssa!” “ Dem can’t kill mi – God is protecting mi”! His face had small cuts and was bleeding at the time. My son was standing in his khaki uniform looking quite worried (by that time a small crowd had emerged to see what had happened). He complained of abdominal pain and upon enquiring about uncle I was showed where he sat looking quite unperturbed outside another neighbour’s yard drinking a cup of coffee.

When I looked at the vehicle I was amazed to see that the van although it broke a light pole, was facing the opposite direction. The vehicle which was severely damaged and was written off was placed neatly at the edge of a small embankment much to everyone’s surprise.

The vehicle’s front fender got hooked in the metal ground wire that usually secures the light poles. This provided some resistance for the vehicle. I have no logical idea why or how the SUV stopped when it did, spun around and or how any injuries received were so minor. What I do know is that the vehicle stopped right on time. It was not stopped by the driver (though he tried to stop the vehicle) and that persons outside of my immediate family were spared because if the vehicle had continued onto the main road the outcome could have been catastrophic.

### **Out of the Mouth of Babes**

Upon returning to the house my son said that his tummy hurt. While I was dressing, my husband observed my son praying on the veranda. Upon hearing this I was quite surprised! However, I was really proud that my son took the time to thank God without being prompted by anyone.

What he did after that astounded my husband and me as he sent *Whatsapp* messages sharing his version of the event. The messages read:

*“Me , my father and my father’s uncle just got in a car accident because the car malfunctioned and no one could control it. It almost hit the telephone wire. The good thing is that we are alive. God healed us and spared our lives. The car was driving very fast.”*

It is important to note that my son did not realise that the SUV had actually broken a light pole as he had gone into a crouching position whilst holding on the back of the driver’s seat to brace for the impact that would stop the vehicle when he realised that the car could not stop.

### **Thankful**

All three parties in the vehicle were okay. My husband received an additional injury to his arm and the CT scan showed that he was physically shaken up a bit. My son and uncle are fine.

I have resigned to console myself by believing that I was helped by the Almighty when I called on the name of Jesus. I have since imagined that, faster than the eyes could see, just as how Superman would appear out of the clouds to assist someone in distress, my God had sent some Angels that took hold of the vehicle, spun it around and rested it neatly on the edge of the embankment. I am convicted that if “I lift up mine eyes to the hills” that help will come from the Lord when I need it, just as an earthly father would quickly help his children.

Each time I share my story I become filled with joy as I think about what could have been and what is. I can live without fear, knowing that God is able to do the impossible and that he protects his children.

In this life, we are susceptible to many misfortunes. Unfortunate circumstances will happen. However, I do believe that if we are to see, or if we were told of all the possible mishaps or many near-misses that we have escaped, we would be living in awe about our great Protector, our Shield and we would pray more.

**Prayer:** A means of getting what you want spiritually. It is a way of communicating with God or a deity.

**Prayer is a powerful weapon and tool. It yields results. Do not be afraid to use it.**

### **Inspirational Readings**

#### ***Isaiah 41:10 Easy-To-Read Version (Erv)***

Don't worry—I am with you. Don't be afraid—I am your God.  
I will make you strong and help you. I will support you with my right hand that brings victory.

#### ***Joshua 1v9***

Remember, I commanded you to be strong and brave. Don't be afraid, because the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

#### ***Psalms 46v1***

God is our protection and source of strength. He is always ready to help us in times of trouble.

#### ***Psalms 121***

I look up to the hills, but where will my help really come from?

<sup>2</sup>My help will come from the LORD, the Creator of heaven and earth.

<sup>3</sup>He will not let you fall. Your Protector will not fall asleep.

<sup>4</sup>Israel's Protector does not get tired. He never sleeps.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD is your Protector. The LORD stands by your side, shading and protecting you.

<sup>6</sup>The sun cannot harm you during the day, and the moon cannot harm you at night.

<sup>7</sup>The LORD will protect you from every danger. He will protect your soul.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD will protect you as you come and go,<sup>[a]</sup> both now and forever!



## **WHEN THINGS GO WRONG**

When things go wrong and you're in despair,  
or when you feel like no one cares

When you are sad or having the blues and you feel that there's no path to choose,  
Stop for a moment and reflect on all the things that have happened to you and yet... You had  
overcome them.

Whether big or small, you picked up yourself when you had that big fall. Had to struggle, or put  
up a fight, tried to stand firm with all of your might.

You whispered a prayer, spoke to a friend, probably saw a counsellor, or tried to make amends.  
You worked a bit harder or changed your approach to the way you would normally handle a  
problem, perhaps you started telling jokes.

When things go wrong, there are so many things we can do  
instead of dwelling on all that's bad and will frustrate you.  
Change the situation, have back up plans, and turn all negative circumstances into positive ones.

When things go wrong.....Stop, Pray, meditate, think,  
Listen to yourself.

As this may be just a simple test to see your true strength.

When things go wrong find a friend, get a hobby  
Find that inner strength as this may be the simplest test  
To prepare us for the greatest, as we all have to survive the test of life.

**Written by Lyssa-ann Clarke (2002)**