

TESTIFY

MAGAZINE

February 2026



Scan Me!



Leslie Oktober

I asked God to be merciful to me!

IN THIS EDITION

Issue 37
February 2026

COVER STORY: LESLIE OKTOBER



While I was a awaiting trail prisoner I recommitted my life to Christ an my life started to change for the better in 2011 while waiting for my sentence I ask God to show mercy unto me the court already told me if found guilty I will receive up to 20 years but God was merciful to me in 2011 I started my sentence of 10 years.

While in prison in 2012 I pray to God for a second chance with the wife of my youth an in 2013 God allow that same woman I have abuse to visit me in prison after almost 18 years i was release on parole in 2014 an in 2015 we renew our vows , only God can restore a broken family relationship.

Now we have our own R D P house after been on the waiting list for almost 30 years, now we as a couple are doing prison ministry an doing the school motivating kids to stay away from drugs, gangsterism an crime we belong to a prison ministry called Better Life Choices.

Exploring God's Word
PASTOR MIKE GOBEL

Restoration
GERDA POTGIETER

ARE YOU A BELIEVER YET?
Read and pray this
Prayer!

GIRLS ON THE MOVE FOR
JESUS
Hybre Kivedo

EDITORIAL

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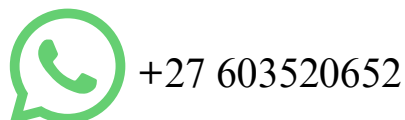
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COVER STORY

LESLIE OKTOBER: I ASKED GOD TO BE MERCIFUL!

Good day everyone, my name is Leslie Oktober I'm 66 years old an I believe everyone has a story to tell, so yes I'm the 5th eldest of 7 brother, coming from a family where I didn't receive much attention, when I was on primary school I starting doing the things



LESLIE OKTOBER: I ASKED GOD TO BE MERCIFUL!

my circle of friends were doing like bullying other kids, when I went to high school my life changed a lot started smoking cigarettes and doing drugs while in standard 6 to fit in with the friends I hang out with because of my choices I failed twice in grade 8, I left school to go work at a pharmacy my life was never the same, dagga ,drugs wine an different girls became my way of life, until I reach the age of 22 I went to church with my mom an gave my life to the lord at 24 years old I met a girl that was still on high school an got her pregnant an we decided to get married with the parents consent.

We were married for 10 years, during the 10 years of marriage I still study my friends not realizing what it is to be a husband to your wife I was 25 years old an she was turning 17 ,I became abusive towards her going down the road of doing drugs and been unfaithful to her, in 1995 she divorce me , we had 2 kids together, we went our separate ways ,in my years of been divorced my life was a mess got a girl pregnant an the families made a case against me was found guilty sentence to 10 years in prison.



LESLIE OKTOBER: I ASKED GOD TO BE MERCIFUL!

While I was a awaiting trial prisoner I recommitted my life to Christ an my life started to change for the better in 2011 while waiting for my sentence I ask God to show mercy unto me the court already told me if found guilty I will receive up to 20 years but God was merciful to me in 2011 I started my sentence of 10 years.

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Now we have our own R D P house after been on the waiting list for almost 30 years, now we as a couple are doing prison ministry an doing the school motivating kids to stay away from drugs, gangsterism an crime we belong to a prison ministry called Better Life Choices we do indeed serve a miracle working God because he send the right people on my path keep on praying for our ministry an families in Jesus name love!!

Brother Leslie

PASTOR MIKE GOBEL

EXPLORING GOD'S WORD

Exploring God's Word

New Series

The Importance of Biblical Foundations to Mentoring within the Church

Introduction

In this article, I draw on the work of Dr Alan Jansen, whose insightful piece *“The Biblical Foundations of Mentoring”* was published in the *South African Handbook on Mentoring* (2004). Sadly, it never received the exposure it deserved. I believe the Church (body of Christ) would do well to revisit these biblical principles as we move into 2026 with clarity of purpose and a renewed commitment to God's Word.

Mentoring, along with personal and business coaching, has become a popular concept in modern leadership literature. Corporate executives and business leaders eagerly consume new strategies for success, many packaged under the banner of “mentorship.”

Ironically, mentoring is not a modern innovation. It is simply another name for the discipleship model Jesus established with His followers. While the New Testament refers to Jesus' followers as “disciples,” the principles underlying mentoring are evident throughout Scripture. We see them in relationships such as Moses and Jethro, Deborah and Barak, Elijah and Elisha, and Paul and Timothy. Scripture clearly demonstrates that God uses relational investment—one life shaping another—as a primary means of preparing men and women for His purposes. However, the most profound and complete model of mentoring is found in the ministry of Jesus Christ. His three-year investment in the disciples remains the most detailed and effective mentoring model recorded in Scripture and provides the foundation upon which the Church should be built. From Luke's eyewitness account, I highlight seven foundational characteristics of biblical mentoring.



**Pastor Michael Gobel Associate
Pastor of The Campus Church,
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EXPLORING GOD'S WORD

1. Mentoring Requires an Experienced Mentor

Luke provides detailed insight into the preparation of Jesus' ministry. Before calling His disciples, Jesus faced temptation in the wilderness—temptations of power, identity, and self-glorification (Luke 4:1–13). He endured rejection in His hometown and the threat of death (Luke 4:14–30), and He ministered as a healer and deliverer (Luke 4:31–44).



Pastor Mike with one of his mentors Prof/Ps Shaun Ramroop of The Campus Church

All of this preceded the calling of the disciples. The principle is clear: **a mentor cannot lead others where they themselves have not gone.** Mentoring is not counselling or theoretical instruction; it is the transfer of wisdom forged through experience—both formal learning and the “school of life.”

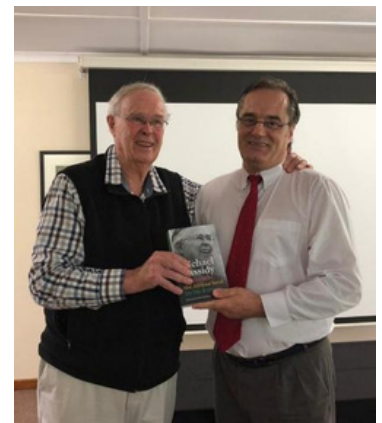
There is an integrity issue at stake. The modern church is full of leaders who preach well but invest little in discipleship. Jesus did the opposite. He devoted most of His time to mentoring, not public preaching. Preaching may produce hearers of the Word, but mentoring forms doers. It produces mature sons and daughters who walk in obedience and intimacy with God.

2. Mentoring Is Most Effective When It Is Intentional

Luke's account of the calling of the disciples makes it clear that this was no chance encounter. Jesus deliberately stepped into their world: ***“He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon...”*** (Luke 5:1–5). He intentionally called them to follow Him because they would carry on the ministry after His departure.

The most effective mentoring is never accidental. It involves deliberate investment—time, teaching, correction and encouragement. This is especially true in the development of spiritual leaders. Scripture calls this sonship, a principle sorely neglected in the modern Church.

Pastor Mike with his spiritual father and mentor Dr Michael Cassidy, Founder of African Enterprise.



EXPLORING GOD'S WORD

The absence of sonship has contributed to fragmentation, immaturity, doctrinal weakness and most importantly, the lack of a unified interdenominational Church. Leaders are sent out without adequate biblical foundations, accountability, Word-based knowledge and understanding of spiritual leadership or guidance. Christ never intended ministry to be a trial-and-error exercise. Sonship establishes maturity, continuity, and responsibility.

My own theological education provided a strong academic foundation, but it was not *theology* alone that made Christ real to me. It was face-to-face mentoring—private conversations, prayer, fellowship, correction, and guidance from faithful men and women of God. This mentoring was freely given, yet priceless in shaping my faith, character, and calling.

3. Mentoring Is Immersed in Relationship

When Jesus called His disciples, He invited them into relationship, not a discipleship programme. For three years they lived, travelled, ate, and ministered together. They witnessed miracles, opposition, compassion, rejection, grief, and suffering. Nothing was hidden or sanitized.

They did not attend a seminary after those three years—they had already been trained in the greatest school that ever existed. Biblical mentoring cannot be reduced to structured programmes alone. Without genuine relationship, it falls short of the biblical standard. Even the business world now recognizes that effective mentoring is rooted in relational depth. How much more should the Church understand this truth?

4. Mentoring Is Based on Values

After relationship, the most important quality sought in a mentor is values and credibility. Jesus taught radical Kingdom values that stood in stark contrast to the culture of His time. He taught love for enemies, humility over status, and life through dying to self.

Biblical mentoring prioritizes values over skills. While industries focus on transferring competencies, Scripture emphasizes character. If our stated beliefs are not reflected in our actions, mentoring becomes hollow. Kingdom impact begins with transformed values.

5. Mentoring Requires Accessibility

Luke records moments when Jesus withdrew privately with His disciples to debrief and reflect (Luke 9:10). Despite the urgency of His mission, Jesus made Himself accessible. This is often the most challenging aspect of mentoring. Accessibility disrupts schedules and demands personal sacrifice. Yet if mentorees do not feel

EXPLORING GOD'S WORD

they have access to their mentor, the relationship remains superficial. While structure is necessary, mentoring requires availability beyond formal appointments. Jesus was never shielded from His disciples—and neither should we be.

6. Mentoring Allows for Practical Involvement



Pastor Mike assisting youth from African Enterprise called the 'Foxfires' in mentoring and guiding them on the path to spiritual maturity and leadership.

Jesus consistently involved His disciples in real ministry, even when they made mistakes. At the feeding of the five thousand (Luke 9:10–17), Jesus challenged them: *“You give them something to eat.”* Though He performed the miracle, the disciples distributed the food.

Biblical mentoring is **hands-on**. It moves beyond ideas and theory into real life experiences. Without **practical involvement**, mentoring loses its power to transform, to lead and guide believers and followers of Christ on a path that needs to spiritual maturity and leadership within the Kingdom of God. This practical form of involvement with our youth—in particular— is critical. We need to use discernment when it comes to teaching and training our youth. Their faith must never be built on emotional attachment. It must be developed built on Word-based knowledge, biblical teaching, and practical experience.

7. Mentoring Creates a Chain Reaction

In the book of Acts, we see the enduring impact of Jesus' mentoring as His disciples, empowered by the Spirit, disciple others. The mentoring of Paul by Ananias and others demonstrates how one life invested can impact nations (Acts 9:22).

Biblical mentoring produces **multiplication**. It is not a seasonal trend but a **generational strategy**. If each believer invested in two or three others, the ripple effect would be profound.

The Church today invests heavily in events, platforms, and digital outreach. While these have value, they cannot replace relational discipleship. The Kingdom advances through faithful investment in a few, not constant pursuit of the many.



Pastor Mike presenting a sermon and teaching with a group of house mothers and community leaders just outside of Pietermaritzburg in Table Mountain, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

EXPLORING GOD'S WORD

Final Thoughts

Mentoring may be fashionable today, but biblical mentoring is timeless. It is simply the method Jesus used to prepare His disciples for the mission He entrusted to them.

If we ignore mentoring for Kingdom building, we ignore Christ's model. But if we follow it faithfully, we will leave a legacy of mature believers who carry the baton forward—impacting ministry, business, education, politics, and society at large.

The future of the Church depends not on bigger platforms, greater auditoriums, or more programmes but on deeper relationships with our fellow Christian brothers and sisters and with God.

Reference

South African Handbook on Mentoring – *Developing Transformational Leaders*.
Dr Alan Jansen, “The Biblical Foundations of Mentoring” (2004). Africa Ministry Resources.



Message to Readers and Supporters

Should you wish to support this ministry and/or the work we do through our registered non-profit called Planting Hope Foundation NPC as our social responsibility division to not only bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost but in feeding and supporting the poor, widows and orphans in the community, feel free to make your donation and offerings to:

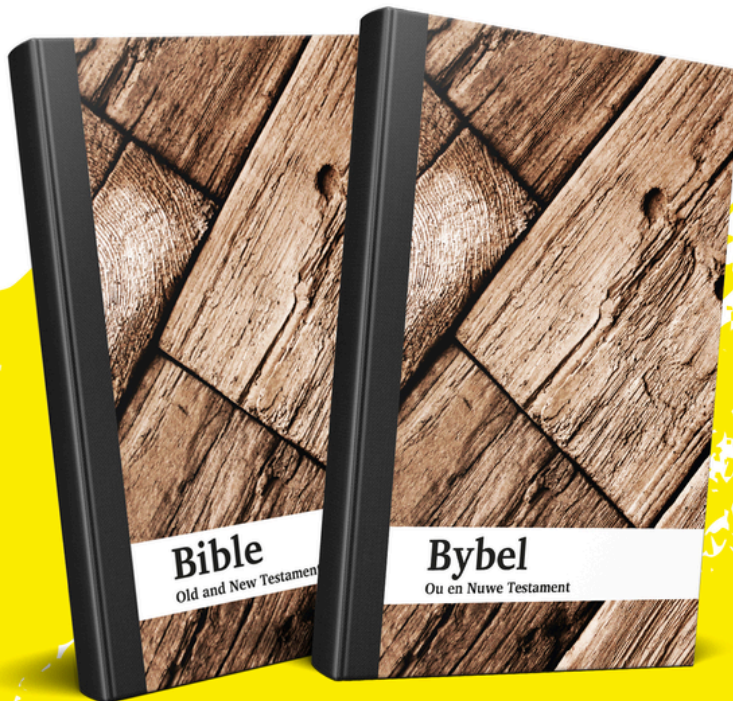
In God's love,

Pastor Mike & Jada Gobel
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The CRL drafted a controversial framework outlining how it wants to regulate religion, with a focus on Christianity. The KwaSizabantu Mission was investigated by the CRL following baseless media claims and was not treated fairly. This raises questions about what lies behind the framework, which even led its own chairperson to resign over alleged irregularities.

The State wants to regulate religion – How will that work?

By Gerda Potgieter

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It is important for the public to be aware of the CRL Rights Commission and its work, as this awareness promotes accountability. The CRL can effectively regulate religious practices.

protect rights, and prevent abuse only if the public understands its purpose, trusts its intentions, and positively engages with its efforts. When religious communities and the public understand what the CRL does, they can hold it accountable and ensure that it operates within its regulations. The CRL is currently facing controversy over its recent attempts to implement oversight and self-regulatory mechanisms for religious communities, particularly within the Christian community. Numerous Christian leaders have protested and marched, claiming that the CRL's actions pose a threat to their autonomy and freedom of worship. In addition, recent public comments from the CRL leadership raise questions about whether Christianity is under attack and whether any Christian leader or organisation can expect fair treatment from the CRL. It is important to look at the issues objectively and holistically to make an informed decision.

THE CRL AND ITS OPERATIONS

CRL refers to the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (often called the CRL Rights Commission). It is one of South Africa's Chapter 9 institutions. This means the Constitution creates it to help protect and strengthen constitutional democracy. It derives its mandate from the South African Constitution 1996 and the CR Rights Act 19 of 2002 to promote and preserve cultural, religious, and linguistic rights. Its functions include promoting respect for cultural, spiritual, and language rights, fostering peace, tolerance, and unity, and investigating issues affecting these rights, which is what it officially does. The CRL receives and investigates complaints about violations of cultural, religious or linguistic rights. It conducts research, provides public education, develops policy, and advises government and communities on

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these issues. The president appoints commissioners through the renomination and vetting process.

The CRL is constitutionally independent as a Chapter 9 body. It is designed to operate independently and be impartially accountable to parliament rather than a government department. It publishes annual reports, and its mandate and activities are clearly outlined in law and on its official website (<https://www.crlcommission.org.za>). The Chairperson of the CRL Rights Commission for the term 2025–2030 is Ms. Thoko Jeanette Mkhwanazi-Xaluva, who succeeded Prof. David Mosoma. Pres Cyril Ramaphosa appointed her as the Commissioner in January 2025. It should be noted that Ms. Mkhwanazi-Xaluva’s tenure has been marked by her leadership style and decisions, which are widely perceived as controversial. There is currently a public outcry, calling for her removal as Chair of the CRL.

RECENT EFFORTS TO REGULATE RELIGION

In October 2025, Ms. Mkhwanazi-Xaluva established an ad hoc Section 22 Committee to “address abuses in the religious (Christian) sector and develop a self-regulation framework”. The CRL appointed Rev. Prof. Musa Xulu as the Chairperson of the Section 22 Committee for the Christian sector to preside over meetings and “conduct extensive research into abuses within the Christian religious sector to protect religious freedom”. One of the significant criticisms currently facing the CRL is the perceived overreach of its Section 22 Committee. There is considerable concern that the CRL is exceeding its mandate, leading to a public outcry for the immediate removal of Ms. Mkhwanazi-Xaluva as the CRL Commissioner. Critics argue that the Section 22 Committee exhibits an overreach of power, is biased because of its all-male membership, lacks representation from minority faiths and women, and threatens religious freedom. CRL supporters claim it is essentially an effort to protect vulnerable individuals from exploitation within faith groups. The Committee released a draft regulatory framework late last year, sparking intense debate that continues to this day. The framework is built on three pillars: internal

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governance and accountability, a code of ethical and professional conduct, and legal and regulatory compliance. The controversial framework has sparked an ongoing debate about the government's role in religion, with some warning that it could lead to government control over matters of faith.

This is not the first time that the CRL has made efforts to “regulate religion”. In 2018, Parliament’s Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance explicitly rejected the CRL’s call for legislation to regulate religion. In July 2025, the Speaker of Parliament confirmed in writing that the 2018 report lapsed at the end of the 2018 Parliament and was never revived; It has no binding legal effect. As it currently stands, the CRL has no mandate to implement it. However, instead of accepting Parliament’s decision, the CRL created the Section 22 Committee—an ad hoc body seemingly designed to accomplish through bureaucratic process what it couldn’t achieve through legislation. The CRL has at times faced criticism and internal disputes, but its recent actions have sparked significant public debate and nationwide pushback. It includes protests, criticism from church leadership, legal challenges, and political and organisational pushbacks. In this article, we aim to make sense of what is happening so that Christians and Christian leaders can make an informed decision.

INTERNAL CONFLICT WITHIN THE CRL

Prof. Xulu held a press conference on 15 January 2026 and announced his immediate resignation as chairperson of the controversial Section 22 Committee. This has impacted political and legal dynamics in South Africa and sparked ongoing heated debates over constitutional boundaries. The committee’s legitimacy, especially amid strong resistance from religious leaders, is called into question. At the conference, Prof. Xulu explained the circumstances that led him to resign, specifically mentioning, among other things, “serious procedure irregularities” and a toxic, exclusionary, and intimidating process within the CRL. He mentioned racist remarks by leaders, personal vendettas, serious irregularities and the abuse of state power, stating that the “final draft framework (of the CRL) was a turning point” and that, in his view, it infringed the Constitution. Prof. Xulu stated that if he were to remain Chairperson, it would compromise his integrity, as he can

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no longer serve as chair of the committee with processes over which he does not control the outcomes, does not endorse, and the existence of which is being used as “a front to disguise a predetermined agenda of state control of religion driven by personal hostility toward particular Christian faith and traditions.” (Watch on YouTube: “Press Conference Regarding the CRL Rights Commission | 15 JANUARY 2026 - <https://www.youtube.com/live/MhnBbKaij8?si=F0-C3dQBR5jjU6mh>)

RESPONSE OF THE CRL RIGHTS COMMISSION

On the same day as Prof. Xulu’s press conference, the CRL issued a 1 ½-page press statement, which raised several red flags and is a clear indication of conflict within the CRL. The statement was released “on behalf of the Section 22 Ad Hoc Committee for the Christian Sector (It stated the press statement is released “on behalf of the Committee, excluding Prof. Musa Xulu)”. The statement further claims that the press conference convened by Prof. Xulu “is not an official activity of the Committee and does not represent the collective views, position or mandate of the Committee”. This statement was followed by a press conference by the CRL on Wednesday, 21 January, to “address several fabrications and lies that have been circulated about the Commission and the committee’s work, thereby providing the real facts”. The CRL has defended the establishment of the committee, and the Chairperson threw a few personal punches at the Section 22 Committee chairperson, Prof. Xulu. What stood out from the CRL conference was significant conflict within the CRL over leadership styles, disagreements about the proposed framework, and other issues, including personality clashes. That raised the question: If the CRL cannot regulate itself properly, how will it work when it is allowed to “regulate religion” according to its own framework? (The complete statement can be viewed on the official website at <https://www.crlcommission.org.za> . Or, watch the press conference on YouTube - CRL Rights Commission briefs media on Section 22 Ad Hoc Committee’s work <https://www.youtube.com/live/SRXjC2QZgl8?si=B3HNkmagfL3LmFnY>

HOW WILL IT WORK IF THE STATE REGULATES RELIGION?

There have been public disagreements between the commission’s leadership and

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external organisations, including allegations of defamation and governance issues. Notably, conflicts among CRL leaders in the public, particularly between the CRL chairperson and the chairperson of the Section 22 Committee she established, have raised concerns. These disputes have damaged the Commission's reputation and have prompted legitimate questions about its credibility.



Ms. Mkhwanazi-Xaluva



Prof Xulu.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The partner online magazine, **Devoted**, has released a special edition focusing on this topic. It contains all the essential information Christians need to make an informed decision on this controversial issue. **Devoted** provides valuable insights and includes links for those interested in learning more about the discussion. Additionally, the magazine offers important information regarding a controversial case: the CRL investigations into media allegations against the KwaSizabantu Mission. **Devoted** highlights that if this case reflects the quality of the CRL's work, Christians have significant reasons for concern. Read this special publication online by following the link: <https://www.devotedmag.co.za/Issue54> .

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS!

HAVE YOU ACCEPTED JESUS
CHRIST?

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

Romans 3:23 ESV

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

The abovementioned verse is an extremely well used verse and many people know it and can even quote it off by heart, but the significance of it is the reality that every single person needs to contemplate.

If you have not accepted Jesus as your Personal Saviour yet or are thin king about it, you have to start here. The reality of your sin problem cancels and disqualifies you from the very presence of God and this bars you from eternal Life. Your choices are simple here, either an eternity with God or an Eternity without God. I would think that the logical answer would be an Eternity with God. Why? Well let's look at this:

2 Thessalonians 1:9

"They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might"

NASB

This is the reality of a choice that omits Jesus as your Personal Saviour -

- = **Everlasting Punishment**
- = **Destruction**
- = **Shut Out**
- = **No Godly Presence**
- = **And no Glory at all**

This is not something to take lightly and by the way this is not scaring you into making a false decision, God is love, thus we as His followers are love, this means if I say I have the love of God, it is my duty to tell you the truth and point you into the right direction.

So in looking at the sin problem and the reality of this, what is the answer then? Let's look at this:

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

NASB

What a wonderful solution to an immense problem, God has made a way and in making the way He has also made it very clear that this is the only answer to the problem. You have to accept Jesus His Son in order to obtain Eternal Life and ward off all the destruction and other bad things spoken about in the previous Bible verse.

It also makes it very clear that this can only be done through JESUS CHRIST His Son, there is no other way to salvation or Eternal life other than through Jesus, NONE!

Let's look at this too:

John 1:12-13

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

NASB

Wow! Just look at this, not only do we get Eternal Life but we become Children of God. The impact of this is massive as it speaks to the fact that we now belong to the family of God and receive the benefits of being part of a family, and not just any family but a royal family (1 Peter 2 vs 9).

So in looking and understanding all of this, How do you accept Jesus as your Personal Saviour?

Romans 10 vs 9-10

"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

NASB

Let me just make one point very clear before we look at the above verses, your salvation cannot be obtained by good works, you cannot go to Heaven or be part of God's family because you are a good person, or you do good deeds, No! The Bible makes it clear, if you want to accept Jesus as your Personal Saviour then it gets done on the basis of two things. These two things are critical because it will also help you on your work with the Lord and attain righteousness and a life pleasing to God.

Firstly, you have to confess with your mouth that Jesus is your Lord, this is very important because by your confession God will know and people in the world will know. This is significant because one does not hide a light under a bowl. Everyone must see and hear that you are a child of God.

BELIEF

And secondly you must believe in your heart, with your whole being and understanding that Jesus was raised from the dead and is alive and is your only Saviour.

So if you have read all of this and the Holy Spirit is directing you to accept Jesus as your Personal Saviour please pray the prayer on the next page, God loves you so much.



ACCEPTING JESUS IS EVERYTHING!

PRAYER FOR SALVATION

Dear Lord Jesus,

I understand that I am a sinner and in need of desperate saving, The Bible tells me clearly that the only answer is for me to confess with my mouth and believe in my heart. I am now confessing with my mouth that I am accepting You as my Personal Saviour and believing in my heart that you are alive and well and dwelling within me. Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of other Believers and allow me please to follow in your footsteps. Amen!

Wow! Congratulations if you have just prayed this prayer, and know that you are now part of the family of the Kingdom of God. Please tell someone about your decision, pray all the time and read and study your Bible. Find a Holy Ghost, Bible preaching church and join.

Please let us know if you have made this decision and allow us to point you in the right direction.

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HYBRE KIVEDO

GIRLS ON THE MOVE FOR JESUS



Hybre Kivedo is Writer and Author with an amazing insight and passion for Jesus!

Anointed, Not Available

Scripture:

*“I will walk in freedom, for I have devoted myself to Your commandments.”
— Psalm 119:45 (NIV)*

“Even Jesus said no.”

That sentence alone confronts everything many of us have been taught about being a “good Christian.”

GIRLS ON THE MOVE FOR JESUS

We grow up believing that love means access, kindness means compliance, servanthood means self-sacrifice without limits, and faith means always being available. We are taught, subtly and sometimes directly, that saying yes makes us Christlike, that endurance proves spirituality, that silence equals humility, and that over-giving is holiness. But when we look closely at the life of Jesus, we see something very different.

Jesus loved deeply, served faithfully, healed relentlessly, and gave compassion freely, yet He lived with boundaries that were clear, intentional, and divinely guided. He withdrew. He walked away. He said no. He rested. He created space, not because He lacked love, but because He lived in obedience to the Father, not under pressure from people.

Jesus Himself spoke with unmistakable clarity when He said:

“Let your ‘Yes’ be yes, and your ‘No’ be no.”

— Matthew 5:37

That is not harshness. That is spiritual alignment. That is integrity. That is obedience. We live in a world that glorifies burnout, rewards people-pleasing, and normalizes emotional exhaustion and spiritual depletion. But God, in Christ, is calling His children back to a truth many have forgotten:

You can love deeply and still have limits.

You can be kind and still be firm.

You can be compassionate and still be clear.

You can be devoted to God while protecting the soul He entrusted to you.

Holiness is not endless availability. Sometimes holiness is simply having the courage to say “no” without guilt, because obedience to God will always require wisdom, discernment, and the strength to stand in truth, even when others expect you to bend.

This is not theory. This is testimony.

Before I speak this message to anyone else, I must speak it honestly from my own life. I am not writing as someone who has mastered boundaries. I am writing as someone who has struggled with them for years.

I write as a woman who loved too much, gave too much, carried too much, tolerated too much, excused too much, and stayed too long in places God never called me to remain.

GIRLS ON THE MOVE FOR JESUS

I confused endurance with obedience.

I confused loyalty with submission.

I confused sacrifice with self-neglect.

I confused love with access.

I confused kindness with compliance.

I confused faith with silence.

I believed being Christlike meant always being available, always understanding, always accommodating, always forgiving, always present, even when it was quietly destroying me on the inside.

The Bible warns us clearly:

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

— Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)

For a long time, I didn't guard mine.

I allowed access where God never gave permission. I carried burdens He never assigned.

I stayed in spaces He was calling me to leave. I absorbed pain I was never meant to hold.

Not because I didn't love God, but because I didn't protect what God entrusted to me. Guarding your heart is not selfishness. It is obedience. It is wisdom. It is spiritual stewardship.

Jesus loved everyone, but not everyone had access.

As we study the life of Jesus, we see a Savior who loved all, yet did not give all the same level of access. He ministered to the crowds, taught the seventy, walked closely with the twelve, confided in the three, and communed deeply with the Father alone.

Scripture tells us: “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”

— Luke 5:16

The crowds needed Him. The sick were waiting. The demand was increasing.

Yet He withdrew. Not because people were unimportant, but because His relationship with the Father was more important.

This reveals a powerful spiritual truth:

GIRLS ON THE MOVE FOR JESUS

Access is not entitlement. Proximity is not permission. Presence does not always equal intimacy.

Jesus lived by divine instruction, not human pressure. “I only do what I see My Father doing.”

— John 5:19 and therefore, ‘Obedience, not demand, must govern our lives.’

Burnout is not holiness.

So many believers are exhausted, not because they are sinful, but because they are overextended.

Burnout is not holiness.

Exhaustion is not obedience. Overextension is not faith. Self-neglect is not a sacrifice. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is step back. Sometimes obedience looks like rest. Sometimes faith looks like distance. Sometimes love looks like limits. Sometimes holiness sounds like “no.”

Jesus taught divine priority: “Seek first the Kingdom of God.” — Matthew 6:33

When God is first, boundaries follow naturally. When alignment comes before approval, peace replaces pressure.

Boundaries protect what God placed in you.

Boundaries are not rejection. They are directed. They protect your peace, your calling, your faith, your family, your emotional health, your spiritual authority, and your assignment.

Even God has boundaries. There are things He allows, things He forbids, things He blocks, and things He withholds.

Scripture warns us: “Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character.” — 1 Corinthians 15:33

Not because people are evil, but because influence matters. Not everyone familiar is aligned. Not everyone close is safe. Discernment is love with wisdom.

Sometimes the enemy does not attack through evil. Sometimes he attacks through over-access. Too much access to your emotions. Too much access to your time. Too much access to your energy. Too much access to your spirit.

Not everyone deserves front-row access to your life. Some belong in the crowd. Some in the outer circle. Some in prayer distance. Some in memory. And some in release.

GIRLS ON THE MOVE FOR JESUS

Freedom begins with a line.
Drawing the line looks like:
Saying no without guilt
Stepping back without shame
Creating space without explanation
Ending toxic cycles
Refusing emotional manipulation
Walking away from what God never assigned

This journey is still a journey for me. I am unlearning people-pleasing, and God is teaching me that I do not have to destroy myself to prove my love. Jesus did not die so we could live emotionally bankrupt, spiritually exhausted, and relationally drained. He died so we could live free. Free in love. Free in obedience. Free in peace. Free in purpose. Free in wisdom. And sometimes freedom begins with a sentence we are afraid to say: "This is where I draw the line."

Because we are called to be loving, but not limitless.
We are called to serve, but not self-destruct.
We are called to give, but not be consumed.
We are called to love, but not be controlled.
We are called to be compassionate, but not manipulated.
We are called to be anointed, not available.

Closing

Do not allow anyone to take away your joy or the giftings God has placed within you. Be bold enough to guard your soul, your peace, your purpose, and your calling. Do not let anyone dim the light God Himself ignited inside you. You were not created to shrink, to silence yourself, or to live in shadows. You were created to shine. You are beautifully made in God's image, chosen, called, anointed, and set apart. Walk in that truth. Live in that identity. And never apologize for becoming everything God designed you to be.

BISHOP O T WHITAKKER

FOR THIS CAUSE



Bishop O T Whitakker is Senior Pastor of Rivers of Hope Ministries in Gauteng South Africa.

In last article we mentioned the 8 prophetic process that God used speaking when dealing with Moses. We mentioned that the first process is: 1) Identifying the voice speaking. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture reveals a God who speaks—not randomly, not vaguely, but purposefully. His voice shapes destinies, interrupts routines, and calls ordinary people into extraordinary purposes. One of the clearest models of this divine communication is found in the life of Abraham, a man whose entire future unfolded because he responded to the voice of God.

However the apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 14:10, “There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without significance.” Voices are everywhere—cultural voices, emotional voices, internal voices, spiritual voices. Each voice seeks to influence how we think, what we believe, and ultimately how we live. The greatest spiritual battle of our generation is not over power—but over voice and every voice carries intent. The prophetic journey begins with understanding this truth: not every voice deserves your obedience. Abraham’s life reveals that God does not merely speak once—He leads through process. What began as a single word unfolded into a lifelong prophetic journey. These eight prophetic processes reveal how God speaks, shapes, tests, and fulfills His purposes in those who respond. Thus, the second of the eight prophetic processes is

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that God's Voice Instructs. (Gen 12:1)

1. The Voice Must Be Discerned

Abraham did not yet have Scripture, a temple, or a prophetic tradition—but he recognized a voice that carried authority and truth. The prophetic process begins when a person discerns that there is a divine voice distinct from all others. Many believers struggle not because God is silent, but because His voice is competing with too many others. Fear speaks. Comfort speaks. Logic speaks. Culture speaks. Yet the prophetic life begins when the heart learns to distinguish the voice that carries heaven's intent. Recognition precedes obedience. You cannot follow a voice you have not learned to identify. God's voice is not the loudest voice—but it is the clearest. It carries authority without manipulation and conviction without confusion. Discernment is the spiritual ability to recognize who is speaking, not just what is being said. Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27). Abraham discerned a voice that cut through cultural norms, family expectations, and inherited beliefs. Discernment is the gateway to destiny—without it, sincerity can still lead to disobedience.

HIGHLIGHT:

You cannot obey God accurately if you cannot discern God clearly.

2. The Voice Issues Instruction

Once the voice is recognized, it brings instruction. God's first recorded word to Abraham was not comfort—it was direction: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). Instruction often requires separation. God does not merely speak to affirm where we are; He speaks to move us toward where He is leading. Every person God has ever used significantly received an instruction that demanded faith and obedience. The prophetic voice does not negotiate with familiarity. It calls us away from what is known toward what is promised. God's voice always carries direction. Prophetic instruction is rarely comfortable. God does not explain the destination before He demands obedience. He reveals steps, not maps. Instruction requires faith because it often precedes understanding. Throughout Scripture, instruction is the catalyst for divine movement. Noah built. Moses confronted. Peter launched out. Obedience proves the voice was truly heard.

FOR THIS CAUSE

HIGHLIGHT:

Revelation without obedience is spiritual information—not transformation.

3. The Voice Enforces Separation

Instruction leads to separation. Abraham's obedience created distance—from geography, from relationships, and from inherited limitations. Separation is not rejection; it is alignment and consecration. God separates people not because others are evil, but because the assignment is specific. Prophetic separation is often misunderstood. It can feel lonely, misunderstood, even costly. Yet it is in separation that clarity is sharpened and purpose is refined. God removes competing influences so His voice can remain central. God separated Abraham from what was familiar to align him with what was prophetic. Separation is not rejection—it is consecration. Paul echoes this principle: "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord" (2 Corinthians 6:17). You cannot carry an old identity into a new assignment. Prophetic separation protects purpose.

HIGHLIGHT:

What God separates you from is often as important as what He calls you to.

4. The Voice Releases Promise

After separation comes promise. God does not ask for obedience without offering vision. To Abraham, He promised land, legacy, and lineage. Prophetic promise gives meaning to prophetic sacrifice. Promises are not instant realities; they are divine declarations that shape endurance. God speaks promises early so that faith has something to hold onto during delay. The promise anchors obedience when circumstances contradict the word. This is God's promise to Abraham's obedience "I will make you a great nation... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:2-3). Promises reveal God's intent, not the timeline. They define direction while demanding patience. A promise is not the end—it is the fuel for endurance.

HIGHLIGHT:

Promises are prophetic anchors in seasons of uncertainty.

5. The Voice Permits Testing

Promises invite testing. Abraham's journey was marked by famine, delay, barrenness, and uncertainty. Testing does not negate the prophetic word; it proves it. God tests not to expose weakness, but to develop trust.

FOR THIS CAUSE

Every prophetic promise will pass through contradiction. The test reveals whether we trust the voice of God or the evidence of sight. Faith matures when obedience continues even when fulfillment seems distant. Peter writes, “Though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials” (1 Peter 1:6). Testing exposes whether faith rests in the promise or in the Promiser. Our faith shouldn’t rest on the things that will be added but on trusting the King and his Kingdom (Mt 6:33)

HIGHLIGHT:

A prophetic word that cannot endure testing was never rooted in heaven.

6. The Voice Confirms Its Word

God never leaves His word unsupported. Throughout Abraham’s life, God repeatedly reaffirmed the promise—through encounters, altars, covenants, and divine appearances (Gen 15, 17). Confirmation strengthens perseverance. It reassures the heart that heaven has not forgotten what it has spoken. Confirmation often comes when obedience feels hardest. God confirms His word not to entertain us, but to stabilize us during waiting seasons. Scripture declares, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established” (2 Corinthians 13:1). God confirms not because He doubts—but because we weaken under delay.

HIGHLIGHT:

Confirmation is God’s mercy to sustain obedience.

7. The Voice Demands Surrender

The ultimate prophetic test is surrender. In Genesis 22, God asks Abraham to offer Isaac—the very promise he waited for. This moment reveals a profound truth: God is not interested in gifts that replace devotion. The prophetic process reaches maturity when the promise is no longer greater than the Promiser. True prophetic obedience trusts God even when obedience seems to threaten fulfillment. The highest prophetic test is surrender. Genesis 22 reveals the climax of Abraham’s journey—Isaac on the altar. God demanded what He Himself had promised. This was not cruelty; it was clarity. God will never compete with His own gifts. “Take now your son... whom you love” (Genesis 22:2). Surrender proves that God is supreme—not the blessing, not the promise, not the outcome.

HIGHLIGHT:

The promise must never become the idol.

FOR THIS CAUSE

8. The Voice Brings Fulfillment

God always finishes what He starts. Abraham did not see the full scope of the promise in his lifetime, yet fulfillment still came—through Isaac, through Israel, and ultimately through Christ. Prophetic fulfillment is often generational. God’s voice carries impact beyond the individual who hears it. Fulfillment proves that obedience was not wasted, sacrifice was not forgotten, and faith was not misplaced.

HIGHLIGHT:

When God speaks, fulfillment is inevitable—even if delayed.

Final Prophetic Charge: For This Cause

God still speaks because His purposes are still unfolding, are we listening to His instruction which is the second process. The prophetic process is not reserved for prophets alone; it is the pattern by which God leads His people. Recognition, instruction, separation, promise, testing, confirmation, surrender, and fulfillment—these are the rhythms of a life shaped by divine communication. Like Abraham, we are called for this cause: to hear, to obey, and to trust the voice that leads us from familiarity into destiny.

The question is not whether God is speaking.

The question is: Are We Listening To His Instruction?

The tragedy of the modern church is not that God is silent—but that His voice is crowded out. His voice is not silent; rather, it is simply not the loudest thus requiring a discerning ear to perceive it. The voice of God will not compete for prominence amidst the myriad of other voices in your life; it beckons you to cultivate discernment. Destiny is not discovered by intention, but by response.

For this cause, may we become a people who discern His voice, obey His instruction, trust His process, and surrender fully—until promise becomes legacy.

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Revelation 2:7).



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FAITH OVER FEAR MINISTRIES

THE POWER OF A NAME

THE POWER OF A NAME



THE POWER OF A NAME: A Biblical Perspective

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible treats names with profound seriousness. A name was never a random label—it carried identity, purpose, destiny, and often a prophetic message.

Now, as we step out of the Christmas season and into a new year, we are invited to pause and reflect. Christmas reminded us why we celebrated in the first place—not lights, traditions, or dates on a calendar, but a Name. The Name above all names: Jesus. As we enter a new season filled with fresh beginnings, decisions, and commitments, the biblical significance of names becomes especially relevant. What we learned about Christ during Christmas is not meant to stay behind in December—it is meant to shape how we live, speak, and choose going forward.

FAITH OVER FEAR MINISTRIES



1. Names Reveal Identity and Calling

In Scripture, a name often revealed God's intention for a person's life. When God changed Abram's name to Abraham, it wasn't cosmetic—it was covenantal.

“No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.” — Genesis 17:5
A new name marked a new future.

Abraham would become the father of faith—not because of his past, but because of God's promise.

As we begin a new year, this reminds us that God speaks identity before fulfillment. What God names, He also purposes.

2. Names Represent God's Transforming Work

Throughout the Bible, a change of name often signaled a change of destiny. Jacob—whose name meant supplanter—wrestled with God and received a new identity:

“Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.” — Genesis 32:28

Israel became the father of a nation.

His new name reflected the transforming work God had done within him.



FAITH OVER FEAR MINISTRIES

The turning of a calendar year often makes us long for change—but Scripture reminds us that true transformation begins when God defines who we are.



God Knows Us—Personally, by Name

In a world of billions, God does not relate to us in generalities.

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine.” — Isaiah 43:1

Our earthly names may be common or unique, but to God, each name represents a life intimately known, deeply valued, and eternally loved.

As we enter a new season, this truth anchors us: we are not forgotten, overlooked, or anonymous in God’s kingdom.

4. The Spiritual Power of a Name

Names in Scripture carried spiritual weight—but one Name stands above all.

“...God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow...” — Philippians 2:9–10

The Name of Jesus carries authority, salvation, healing, deliverance, and eternal hope.

Christmas revealed this Name to the world—but the new year invites us to live under its authority daily.



5. A New Name in Eternity

God’s story with us does not end with time.

“...To him who overcomes... I will give a white stone, and on the stone a new name written...” — Revelation 2:17

This promise reminds us that God is still naming, still redeeming, still revealing identity—both now and in eternity.



FAITH OVER FEAR MINISTRIES

THE NAME OF JESUS: THE REASON WE CELEBRATED

Christmas has passed, but its message remains. The birth of Christ revealed the heart of God and the mission of heaven.

The name Jesus (Yeshua) means “The Lord saves.”

His name declared His purpose from the beginning. Long before Bethlehem, prophets spoke of a coming Messiah whose very name would carry divine authority. “And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” — Isaiah 9:6

“You shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” —
Matthew 1:21

Each title reveals who He is—not just for December, but for every day of the year ahead.

THE HIDDEN MESSAGE IN THE NAMES FROM ADAM TO METHUSELAH

One of the most astonishing demonstrations of biblical meaning is hidden in the first ten names of the human race—from Adam to Noah. When these Hebrew names are translated, they form a prophetic sentence pointing directly to Christ:



When read in sequence:

“Man is appointed mortal sorrow;
but the Blessed God shall come down,
teaching that His death shall bring the despairing comfort.”

This is the gospel—hidden in plain sight—from the very beginning of Genesis. This powerful revelation reminds us: Names matter. They carry message, identity, and divine intention and it tells us that God has always been weaving redemption into human history—starting with the very first family.

FAITH OVER FEAR MINISTRIES

Name	Meaning
Adam	Man
Seth	Appointed
Enosh	Mortal
Kenan	Sorrow
Mahalalel	The Blessed God
Jared	Shall come down
Enoch	Teaching
Methuselah	His death shall bring
Lamech	The despairing
Noah	Comfort, rest

WHY PARENTS SHOULD PRAY OVER THEIR CHILDREN'S NAMES

A new year often brings new life—pregnancies, births, and fresh beginnings.

In Scripture, naming a child was never casual. It often involved prayer, prophecy, and divine insight.

A name can speak:

Destiny

Blessing

Character

Calling

Identity

As parents consider names in the year ahead, the question is not only “What sounds good?” but: “What does this name declare over my child’s life?”

FAITH OVER FEAR MINISTRIES

A Spirit-led name becomes a blessing spoken daily.

THE NAMES OF GOD: PROMISES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Each name of God reveals who He desires to be in our lives:

Yahweh Jireh – Our Provider

Yahweh Rapha – Our Healer

Yahweh Shalom – Our Peace

Yahweh Rohi – Our Shepherd

As we step into the unknowns of a new year, His names remind us: God has already revealed Himself for whatever lies ahead.

CONCLUSION: CARRYING THE NAME FORWARD

Christmas reminded us why the world rejoices—but January reminds us how to live in that revelation.

Above every name stands Jesus—the fulfillment of prophecy, the heart of God revealed, and the reason we celebrated.

His name is not seasonal.

His name is eternal.

As we carry the lessons of Christmas into the new year, may every decision, declaration, and destiny be grounded in the Name that saves.

Jesus – the Name above all names.

