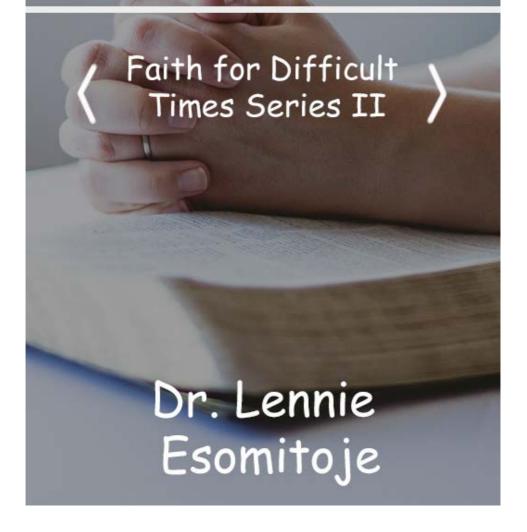
ACTIVATING GOD'S MERCY IN DIFFICULT TIMES



ACTIVATING GOD'S MERCY IN DIFFICULT TIMES

(Faith for Difficult Times II)

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PREFACE

Faith for Difficult Times (II) is coming to you with the theme - Activating God's Mercy in Difficult Times. God's mercy is available to you when faith seems difficult to exercise. God's mercies are sure for you, if you will just appropriate and activate it especially where cause of present difficulty is traceable to a mistake you made (your fault) or the fault of someone else.

We all sometimes fall short of expectation, and deserve to be reprimanded. Guilt often makes it difficult to exercise faith or boldness in asking God for help. Just imagine how hard it could be for a felon to ask God for mercy, to spare his or her life after death sentence has been pronounced but as difficult as this may be, God's

mercy is still available. So, it is up to you.

God's mercy, the extension of His patience (compassion, consideration, salvation, shalom, pity, undeserved favour and help) is not given because we deserve it. If you see it this way, you may come up with the wrong conception- that God owes you mercy. BUT mercy cannot be owed, it's just an extension of God's kindness and grace to those who do not deserve it. It will be nice we have a bit of educating on mercy. However, settle it within your heart, that God's mercy towards you are new every morning.

<u>Mercy in Hebrew</u> is Racham, Kapporeth, or Chesed: Racham means "to love or have compassion," to have a disposition of mercy; Kapporeth means "ransom" and it's associated with the "mercy seat" in Scripture; and Chesed means "goodness," "kindness," or "mercifulness."

<u>Mercy in Greek</u> is Eleemon or Oiktirmos:

Eleemon, meaning "to have pity on," to "show compassion," or to "be merciful"; and Oiktirmos also suggests compassion or pity. It's the idea of divine forbearance in showing compassion and passing over sins.

Oxford Dictionaries asserts that,

Mercy is compassion or forgiveness shown towards someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm. Additionally, it presented mercy as a thing, incident or happening to be grateful for, because it prevents something unpleasant or provides relief from suffering.

<u>Dictionary.com</u> states that,

Mercy is the discretionary power of a judge (in this case God, the supreme judge and jury in one) to pardon someone or to alleviate punishment.

One of our main actors in this edition of faith for difficult times, Jonah, enjoyed the kind of mercy thus described. His was a story of the wisdom and benefit of having faith in God's mercy. God

challenged Jonah to activate His mercy instead of burying his life in the wrong place or while going the wrong direction. He was running away from God in refusing to take up his purpose and assignment.

He was going a direction contrary to what the Creator assigned. God has made all things (all creation including humans) for the purpose of giving Him pleasure – yes, we are all here to please God. But Jonah was going to Tarshish instead of to Nineveh a city God assigned him, when he met his waterloo. Then God stepped into the situation, a first display of mercy; and instructed him to activate mercy or be buried outside his purpose.

God's mercy interrupted and stopped him from going a

direction opposite God's pleasure for him; and received him into a submarine. God stepped in to buy Jonah enough time to review his decision to walk away from purpose, reconsider his position on the assignment, reconcile with God and repent of his defiance; and be delivered into His purpose and assignment thus Jonah was saved!

INTRODUCTION

Faith means different things to different persons, but the underlying fact is that everybody has faith. Yes; everybody has faith because everybody BELIEVES in something and has hope for something.

Living today means there is hope for tomorrow. You reading this now, means you have faith but wants to build on it because you want to strengthen your ability to stand against difficult times. You want to have a certain kind of FAITH FOR DIFFICULT TIMES.

There are different kinds of faith which we will not dive into but know for yourself that whatever you do today – actions you take,

choices you make and your inaction are all provoked by your faith in this case, the picture you see of your future.

Your mentality gives you a mental faith; a mental attitude, It programs you to respond in a certain way to circumstances and situations. It conditions you to respond and react the way you do.

The happenings around the world today are so tight for many but do you know that these same happenings and circumstances are promotion for some? Absolutely! When the waters in the days of Noah in the Bible, was drowning many, it was taking Noah and everyone in his ark up. That same water was propelling them to meet up with God's plan for them.

So, what do you see today? How do you see what you see? What do you say about what you see? That is FAITH my friend - FAITH!

Ride on with me then let's see how we can ride on in triumph even in difficult times as we build our faith for difficult times.

God bless you

See Purpose In Difficult Times.

Difficulties come in various shapes and sizes. It could be in the area of finances, marriage, health, job, businesses, relationship, parenting, education, self-esteem, etc. Difficulties are a part of life. There is purpose for difficult times; every difficulty arrived to achieve a particular purpose.

There are aspects of our lives we would not have known if not for some trying times, we went through or the difficult times that went through us.

It is possible to go through a trying time or season, and not let it go through you and get you down; this can be achieved by faith. If you allow trying times go through you and get you down, you will not arrive at the purpose that particular season of testing was for. The faith for difficult times series is written for you to develop the attitude that looks for the sweet in the bitter, the calm underneath the troubled sea, the humour in the humiliation, the circle of honour the circumstance is introducing you to, the seat of honour the situation is lifting you

up to, and the bright sunshine the cloud will deliver to your life.

The covid-19 scourge is a very difficult time, it introduces some difficulties; and as it seems right now, it is going to hang around for some time. Thus, the only way out is to find a way around (above, or through), but not under it. Coming under it is surrendering to it. There is nothing yet bigger than the human mind. The possibility, optimistic and positivism wired brain, is in the same frequency with Infinite Intelligence, the Spirit of the Creator.

All things are possible to him or her that believes. This is not the time to cast aspersions; and propaganda won't help us. And somebody, please help me tell CNN not to use covid-19 as political weapon against President Donald Trump of America; it is obvious he has challenges with coming out and getting across to the rest of us. But his body language shows he means well for the world, especially the Americans. I had to say this; and I just did.

Other trying times will come due to human selfishness and hidden agendas. The way the world is, people are crying, but while you are mourning with them, don't be carried away. They might be digging a pit behind you to push you into. It is difficult to comprehend, the kind of things that could generate bitterness and hatred; sometimes, over very silly and flimsy issues. When we are designed to complement each other and compensate one another's weakness; we would

rather take advantage of others to their hurts.

Attitude, attitude, attitude!

Here we are faced with a common enemy, and this is not the time for finger pointing; let us team up to find a way to control the messy situation we are in right now. And it calls for faith (lots of it), faith in ourselves; and in each other. Above all, faith in God-by acknowledging that He has put inside us the ability to ride on any wave and weather any storm. We have within us the genius to solve the covid-19 challenge. This shall soon pass. Covid-19 met you, and covid-19 will leave you alive. That is the spirit. That is the attitude.

Depending on your disposition as it regards the current global

challenge, you can be a determiner or let the stuffs covid-19 came with determine your life. And you need a daily heavy dose of positive affirmation to be a determiner. Affirmation simply means you talk to yourself affirming what you want to see in your life and circumstance. You can start by saying, "I have my hands solidly on the situation; I'm winning this bout. I know I may temporary suffer some deprivation, but I'm going to face it with a great attitude."

And you should progress to saying, "I will comply will all reasonable and tested control measures in faith; I will not let fear drive my compliance with medical directives." Yes, fear has torment. It is known to collapse immunity, and inject into its culprit the

hopelessness, that attracts sudden death. Faith, faith! You need faith all the way.

The attitude of faith will land you in some purpose at the end of covid-19. Again, you are prophet of your destiny. You can kill (and bury) yourself with your mouth, faster than anything or anyone else can do it. You are either snared or sheltered by the confessions of your lips. Choose wisely what you'll be saying in this season. Faith is first God's nature in our spirit, an attitude of the mind, before it is an act.

The Five Ps of Joseph

If you go through my presentation, "The Five Ps of Joseph" – Pleasure, Pit, Potiphar, Prison, and Palace, you will find that the lad – Joseph

had to have some solid faith that his purpose will come to pass amid the hard times, difficulties, temptations, testing, and trials he went through. And because he let them go through him without getting him down, he was landed in his purpose.

Trying times seen with the eyes of faith, the right attitude; will cause us to open our minds up for possibilities. Yes, trying time embraced with the right attitude; will land you on the side of celebration. There are things you will not know about, that might not emerge from inside you, until you go through a season or some seasons (if you are not a very fast learner). So, a great way to exercise faith in these trying times is to, believe there is a learning

curve in it for you, somewhere, somehow.

Learning on Joseph's example, man has to be delivered from pleasure to be landed in purpose. And do you know the real lasting pleasures are in accomplishing your purpose? Oh, the fulfilment, satisfaction! If Joseph was left in the pleasure of being his father's favourite, to continue basking in the euphoria of the one fit and chosen for the coat of many colours, he may not have amounted to much. Ever heard this line "who the cap fit, let them wear it" from Bob Marley's track - man to man is so unjust?

Steamed To Thrive

The challenge of an early crownthe cage that those who were always tops in the young days are trapped in. The sudden, I'm entitled to success feeling in the early adulthood that depletes them of the steam to thrive in life. But the real caps, are for those doggedly determined to cancel the lies that they were not bright enough, not disciplined enough, not serious enough. The not so goods in their early stages have a point or many points to prove.

They are out to force the naysayers to swallow their shitty words; and make sure they swallow it down the bottom of their stomach. They grovel from the very bottom of life, fighting their way to their very top. You need steam to thrive, and you find such steam during trying time. Painful reality is, only those with solid faith and the right attitude

gain the advantage of challenges. Yes, only those looking for opportunities to use the covid-19 challenge to become millionaire.

All you might just need to do in this season is to sit down with yourself, and review your journey so far; locate your lapse, see areas you need growing in, others you need to improve and overall discovery of a better way to do whatever you are doing right now. This is the season to seed or plant for some great harvest. This is the season to do some strategic investing; and if you have the guts to doing some heavy risking go ahead.

There Is More to Challenges

Just look around, there is more than death in covid-19. Shine your

eyes. Every wind that blows carries with itself and everything on its path - sort of taking along with it the good, the bad, and the ugly. But what you pick up from the wind depends on what you were or are looking for. Millionaire status, bankruptcy, divorce, strengthened marriages, wisdom, foolishness, death, life, industries, companies, etc., came with covid-19 just as they came with recessions and depressions of the past. I almost forgot; depression and repression (emotional, financial, economical, political, societal, national and global) also came with covid-19.

As for Joseph, providence, cut short the euphoria and released him to face the Pit, Potiphar and Prison; just as covid-19 is to some of you out there. But you have to see it.

Again, I advice you against being overambitious; and that you do more soul searching than anything else you plan on doing or are doing right now. And please, put some faith to whatever you are doing. Additionally, I'll advice you to stay safe; in all that you do, it will be to your benefit to abide by all the known covid-19 prevention measure. Rest assured, the physical cure is with us, waiting for the container to see it.

It Is For Your Own Good.

For his own good, Joseph was rudely; harshly pulled from the grip of the pleasure of his father's love. He first went down below the plain of normal human

participation, he found himself in a pit; the people into whose arms and world he was born into - his family, people of his own house; his background and upbringing. He left the pit for slave labour in Potiphar firm, where he got his first opportunity to train for his supervisory, leadership and productivity skill. It took slavery to expose his leadership, administrative skills. Right there his integrity was tested, and he passed. Who knows what school the covid-19 has enrolled you in; and what you are learning right now.

This is purposeful, the first time he was outside his father's constant attention and love. He must have built his life around his father's greatness, and must have harboured the opinion that his

father would give him a smooth take off. He shared his dream with them, probably thinking they were going to help. The Creator more often than not, arranges situations and circumstances to separate people for their purpose. He does this to detach them from the familiar. Your purpose is an uncharted territory yet. So, that attachment to the familiar could be an hindrance; that is why life creates seasons, times or moments of separation.

Reassess/Review Your Journey.

In the pit Joseph might have wondered how he was going to make it without his dad; he may have wished that his brothers were going to change their mind. At a point, it might have seemed to

him, a huge joke. This could be what covid-19 represents to some of you out there, yes, you reading these lines. He was facing the big test of his life. He was dragged into the reality of life outside the cover of his father; and the possibility of still making it without his father.

In the pit he was alone for the first time – outside the love of his father. Can I make it alone, how do I get out of this pit? Providence intervened and he found himself on the surface and on his way to the place of purpose, with the wrong title. And many of us ended inside the wrong title, we failed to hold on to the possibility of our dreams coming to pass. See the gap between the titles - slave and prime minister. Don't give up. To give up is to kill your dream. You might be wearing the wrong title

or identity right now; still, don't give up. Attitude is everything. Attitude is altitude

A great attitude is how to retain your conviction, no matter the hard times you must face to reach there. Everyone is sure of himself or herself, until a test shows up. Tests come to check the depth of your convictions and commitment to your dreams and destiny. Joseph's mind was made up to go all the way; he was not going to compromise his dream, destiny or purpose for a one-night stand. He had a great attitude, the way he kept contributing excellence at all times, with any badge he had on at the time.

With his great attitude, there was never a dull moment. And he was promoted from governing a household, a one-man business – Potiphar's firm, to head a state institution. He had to move over to the prison, to learn state affairs; he was getting closer to the manifestation of his destiny. He interacted with state officers, had some discussion and got insight into such level of governance. He developed solid rapport with the minsters of wine and pastries; to the extent they discussed with him their personal fears about regaining their offices.

There's Change in Your Challenge.

The angle from which I'm approaching the difficulties of Joseph on his way to fulfilment of purpose, made the whole ordeal he went through to seem little. Yes, it will be the same for you if you

can find a connection between you and previous or present difficulty. All you need to look for in difficult times is that connection. Suffering, difficulties and hard-times are wasted if we cannot link them with our purpose. Anyhow, there is always something to learn from a difficult situation.

The gist is; being a person of purpose, you have faith to move to the other side of difficulties; i.e. the promotion it is preparing you for. See difficulties as preparations for excellence, eminence and greatness. Difficulties hinder or cause us to have to face challenges; it is being conditioned by physical/emotional separation, social stigma and economic hard times. As seen from the case of Joseph, our difficulties could be the individuals we relate with, who do

not understand us, and rate/conclude on us from their skewed judgment of us.

Such individuals in workplace settings especially if they are your supervisor, could conditions your growth in the organization, for career ladder jobs. That a very difficult situation right there; and the way organizations functions, even if a new person takes over, they often carry on with the status quo. This is really hard, but could be an opportunity for you to check yourself, what the real issues are. You may want to know if you are in the wrong industry for your make up. You also want to find out if there are aspects of your life you should be more alive to. And so on.

Once you've deduced that your assignment in life, is from God, you

should be at home with the reality that it is going to be hard to accomplish; I didn't say it will be impossible. The first difficulty to overcome is bringing yourself to agree that executing your assignment is partnering with God, and you must acknowledge him the way you go about it.

Sometimes, you are handed a difficult task or project to handle at school or work. Difficulties are always hard to deal with, or understand. But they are points of self-release and self-application.

Do you know the fun thing about difficult and hard times? They are blessings in disguise. Difficulties can be fun. How? When you embrace them with faith and focus on the good, they came with. With a great attitude of faith, you can see some virtue in difficult times.

Despite knowing how uncomfortable and unbearable they can be, they can be fun if you see them as mere challenges of life.

Perception to Perfection

Perception! That's what life is all about; your perception, how you see things and what you name the situation. Faith gives one an edge and a possibility angle to see everything from; just like picking out the light in darkness, grace in every disgrace, sense in every nonsense, honour in every dishonour.

My faith education and training under the likes of Benson Idahosa, Napoleon Hill, Norman Vincent Peale, John Mason, Ayo Oritsejafor, Oral Roberts, Kenneth Copeland, and a host of others, enabled me to know and apply faith variedly as it fits into the situation on ground. They and my study of bible heroes made me know that there are different kinds of faith and different ways to apply them. So, the kind of faith you'll apply depends on the nature of the difficult time. Not to worry, there is a common master faith that works for all situations: Your trust in God that He is ever available and able to handle your case; He is master at making a way where there seem to be no way.

Every man born of a woman is born to take advantage of troubles, challenges and difficulties.

I had this particular hard time that so stunned me, I didn't know what to do; I couldn't pray, didn't know how to go about it. It was my share of difficulties times. And it's not always fair, no matter the size and shape in which they come. But I somehow, came out on top of the situation with victory. It took a great attitude of calm reliance in God and faith action as a result. It was a caesarean section operation that stood my wife and baby between life and death; but I knew that God is able, available, willing to do good things. Which in this case, meant safe operation, with mother and baby alive.

Victory all the way!

The night before, from around 9pm my pregnant wife began to be in serious pain, she was still a month and a week from her DD.

We held on till the dawn of a the next day, 5am, the morning, the morning of a new day; and I took her to the clinic, a distance of 45 minutes from our house. As we drove to the clinic. I did what is usually the case with me in tensed up situation; I called families, friends and co-pastors to support us with their prayers. It was an emergency when we got to the clinic, and in six hours over nine pints of blood has been pumped into her, in preparation for the caseran operation; then I had to leave her there to go to work the same day.

After about one hour when I got to work, the clinic called, asking me to endorse them the permission to go ahead with the operation. Of course I did, it was the only one way out, reading from the

situation; she had to go through with it. The situation has degenerate to the extent that the child had to be removed safely; the medical specialists felt it was safer to take care of both of them separately. Thus far, all I did was ask God, how He expected me to pray, as I had not faced anything of such before. Those times when I don't know what to pray, I'll just get very calm inside, opening up to get a whisper from God, on the next step to take.

So, I leaned back on the Spirit (Infinite Intelligence), who prod me to log on to the internet and type on google – Lying Vanities. I'd learned overtime to align with God before asking Him to do anything for me; at least He gets to answer a prayer He put in my heart in the first place. So, I got really quiet

inside. Guess what! It was in that quite moment, I heard clearly, "log into your computer and look up the phrase 'Lying Vanities." This was me, with my wife 15 minutes away from entering into the thearter for an operation that was a 50/50 affair; and the LORD leading me to check this phrase out. So, I logged into my computers, and typed into google search "Lying Vanities."

Guess what I found, a Bible verse, Jonah 2:8 and commentary on it in bible hub: They that observe (regard) lying vanities forsake their own mercy. A summary of the commentaries stipulates that those who regard lying vanities depend on things except God; they refuse their own felicity and that goodness which they would otherwise receive from God.

From my very short research it occurred to me that "Lying Vanities" are things as they appear; the nastiness, unredeemableness or irreversibleness of a bad situation. Especailly when everything is shouting, there is no way out; you have lost this fight (game, match, bid, contract) and you are going down.Which in my case, believing that good will come out of the situation from the way things were, was difficult to release: conditions were messy, unless God's mercy plays its part. God is saying, I'm with you in this valley of the shadow of death; but here we are in the very valley of death. So, where is your faith? In the recesses of my heart, it was settled that God could do this, but the

condition was screaming how do you trust God to save.

The situational report was totally inconsistent with God's ability to redeem the situation. The Word of God about my situation: "Is there anything too hard for God to do?" No! A zillion times No. That my wife had 50/50 chance was a lying vanity, as it ran contrary to God's word. With this calm assurance, was a sudden surge of faith within me, I didn't have to pray again. I stepped right on top of the situation; and almost asked people to stopped praying about it.

God's Mercies Overrides Lying Vanities

The sudden incursion of the corona virus caused a global panic;

indifference, suspicion, fear, propaganda, lies, etc., was flying everywhere. The panic and fear was due largely to the way the media was reporting the situation; the number of deaths everyday across the globe was on the rise. Those who maintained their poise were able to reason:

- ◆ Are more people dying now than before on daily basis?
- ◆ It is possible that some (if not most of the death) attributed to the virus, may be due to other diseases or sicknesses with related symptoms.
- ♦ No matter how long we stay here, we get to die some day; and people die everyday in the world from other disease, we are yet to get cure for.

- Why all the panic, afterall we brought the situation upon us?
- ◆ Is God trying to tell us something, like we need to be careful before we destroy ourselves?
- ♦ Is covid-19 going to close the age?
- What should we do now? In answer to this question,
 - √ Some went to the laboratory to research the situation
 - √ Some began looking into reports of related previous researches on chemical/biological warfare; and were coming out with findings
 - √ Sound clergies began clarifying misconception

- on teachings about the last days
- √ Some went to the frontlines to give help, medical personnel put their lives on the line
- √ Government started implementing control up to declaring economic, political, social, border lockdowns
- √ Some used the situation to build on their social media presence
- √ Senior pastors and televangelist across the globe called for international and national days of prayers on social media

Some situations come into your life that makes praying difficult;

the panic stage of covid-19 was such a time. But after two months or so, nations, institutions and individuals are finding a way around it.

From my experience of God's intervention in the victorious delivery of my son – mother and baby alive and strong; I began looking for God in the covid-19 scourge. Listening for what He has to say (stayed away from the social media) and comparing the situation to my knowledge about the last days.

Have you ever been in a situation in which it was hard to pray (for those who do) or come up with a workable direction out of the problem? Have you ever found yourself in a confusing, frustrating, no-wind situation; situated

between the devil and the deep blue sea? Harsh experience, I agree. I heard that at such times, you should calm down, maintain poise, clear your mind, come out of the panic, face the reality, weigh the situation and decide to see victory at the end of you. You should begin looking for little wins here and there. To those who believe in praying to God, it is at such times that you should pray most, especially when you cannot articulate the challenge (when there is no feeling to pray).

Conclusion

Rounding of in the words of Pastor Chris Oyakhilome:

➤ A lying vanity is anything that isn't consistent with the Word of God for you as a new creation in Christ Jesus. Refuse to observe lying vanities. Those who observe lying vanities forsake their mercies; they frustrate the grace of God, thereby short-circuiting the power of God from working in their behalf.

They that regard lying vanities forsake their own mercy. Jonah, the original recipient of this challenge was running away from God, and was being drowned by his disobedience; when God

extended him mercy in this words, "as it appears right now, you are done for, and going down with the situation; but Mercy is available to you, reach out and grab it." All Jonah did was acknowledge that even in his sinful, disobedient state, all he needed to do was turn to God, and away from his inability to handle the situation he landed himself into.

Some school of thought are of the opinion that since you brought the situation on yourself, keep God out of it; some individuals feel they must suffer the consequence of their sin. Jonah thought so too, when he said throw me into the open, this situation is my fault; let me suffer the consequence alone. But then God interrupt the situation saying to Jonah, who told you such a lie; see My mercies

(they are renewed daily, you have a daily dose of mercy), grab it.

Jonah suddenly awakened to the covenant of the sure mercies of David, made this declaration: "I called God, He heard my voice, He answered me, and He's brought me out of the pit this situation threw me into. At Your prodding, I remembered (was reminded and recalled) your mercies (and gave up lying vanities); my prayers and petition for Your mercy caused You to lift me above the situation into safety."

That your soul fainted within you, might be a fact, but it is a lying vanity; and God's mercies is available to override your situation, and land you in victory. Lying vanities always stand powerless against God's mercy.

Affirmations:

- ➤ I am apportioned sure mercies from God (and it is renewed daily); making available to me a daily dose of mercies.
- I refuse to forsake my own apportioned God's sure mercies.
- In thanking God for a way in His mercies, I am thanking my way out of my present predicament and down day.
- ➤ I am making victory vows and offering sacrifice to God for delivering me out of my present predicament and down day.
- Salvation help, rescue, deliverance, protection, peace, life, safety, security, defence, wellbeing, vitality,

vigour, health, healing, satisfaction and fulfilment is mine by God's mercies.

Tap into God sure mercies, its apportioned to all of us, equally available; and like faith it is waiting for you to grow in it and revel in its use.

You will need to get up to living everyday on God's sure mercies; for most of the time, it's all you have left. To get in flow of God's mercies offer Him thanksgiving, sacrifices, making vows in acknowledgment of His commitment to rescuing and granting you complete SALVATION.

A hidden figurine of mercy in Jonah encounter in the deep was the fish: God did not let him drown in the sea, he kept a natural submarine to pick him up and deliver him to his purpose and assignment.

Affirmation:

- God is keeping me in a big FISH until his wrath over my sin be over and kept in His forgotten past.
- ➤ The situation or FISH God landed me in in my down days, has landed me into my purpose (assignment or calling).
- ➤ God's big FISH, the situation He provoked to cause me to come to my senses, kept me from wandering about, guessing, and wasting my resources in the vast sea of life.

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We provide executive coaching classes for corporate organizations to spur employees and management to better serve the organization.

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