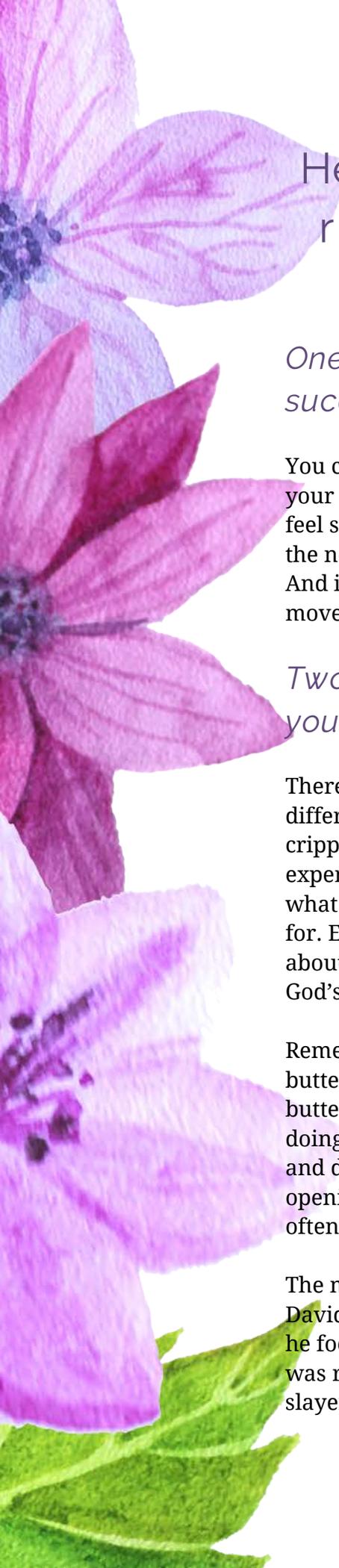


You know that there is some reason that you are here; you know it. But you feel frustrated and unfulfilled because you are not "there" yet. You feel that you are ready to live out your God-given purpose, so why isn't God allowing it to happen? It's like being on an airplane ready to take off, seatbelt buckled, everything else in order, and yet hours later, you are still on the runway. When will you take off already? What happens when God makes you wait so long, even after you've prepared, but you feel like you're beyond ready? You are *ready* to take off for your next level. But are you *prepared* for that next level? Before you answer that, let's talk a little.

Nobody takes a trip successfully to another destination, without some kind of preparation. Good preparation involves packing the essentials and leaving behind the unnecessaries. If you were flying from Miami to Orlando, even if you didn't pack any luggage, you'd at least need a ticket, identification, and go through security. If traveling by car, the tank must be filled, tires must be travel-ready...you get the picture.



Here are 5 truths you should master right now that will get you to your next level quickly:

One: Busyness does not automatically bring success.

You can be busy and feel empty and stagnant. You can work 60-70 hours at your job, but still feel unfulfilled. You can get degree upon degree and still feel stuck in your current level. Being extremely busy does not get you to the next level, if you are not busy doing the *right things* for your next level. And if you're too busy to spend time with God, it will be difficult for you to move up.

Two: Getting to your next level is determined by how you handle your current level.

There is a process we MUST go through to get to our desired destination. It differs for each of us, but it is vital. Trying to escape the process can be crippling. I understand that it can be really hard to go through certain experiences or watch someone you love go through difficult times. I know what it feels like to look for an easier way to get the results you're looking for. Even Jesus asked God to "let this cup pass" regarding the pain He was about to endure. But He also said that it was not according to His will, but God's will" and many times the process is God's will.

Remember the story of the man who tried to help the butterfly? He saw a butterfly struggling to come out of its cocoon and decided to help the butterfly out. He slit the cocoon open and the butterfly came out. But by doing that, the butterfly came out with deformed wings, was unable to fly and died shortly after. You see, the struggle to get through the small opening pushes fluid out of the butterfly's body and into its wings. So it often is with us. The struggle might be real, but it is necessary!

The more faithful you are at your current level, the higher you will go. David (in the Bible) was a multi-skilled person, and at each level he was in he focused on giving his best. He was a shepherd during the season that it was required of him. Then he was a messenger/delivery boy. Then a giant-slayer. Finally he became king. BUT, it was his "lower level faithfulness"



that prepared him for his highest level. If you can lead sheep, c'mon now, surely you can lead people.

Another story that illustrates this is the story of the bamboo tree. Let's say you plant a bamboo tree and you water and nurture it. One year goes by, you don't see anything. A second year and then a third and fourth year, and still you don't see anything. If you don't know much about the bamboo tree, you might be discouraged. You might even wonder if you should continue caring for this plant. Finally, in the fifth year, you see a small sprout! And then six short weeks later, the sprout has grown up to 80 feet. What was going on in those years where it seemed like there was no progress? The tree was growing a strong root system, a firm foundation that would sustain the heights it would achieve. And so it is with us. The more prepared we are in the current level, the higher we can grow AND SUSTAIN THAT GROWTH in our next level.

Three: God's timing does not always make sense to us, but His timing is best.

Have you noticed that God doesn't act like we do? For example, in my mind it would have made more sense for me to achieved certain things when I was younger. But some of them are only just now happening. Like my dream to be a singer/songwriter. Why am I just releasing my first CD, when the industry is full of teenagers and 20-somethings? As I reflect on this question, I realize that my songs back then would not have been about God and my relationship with Him when I was 10 years old is not what it is now. Now anything I write, whether a song or a book will be from a place of experience. Truth be told, I was not ready. Not even close. My character needed to be shaped to handle where God was sending me. I had actually made singing, leading worship, being on a worship team, my idol. Sure I was singing Christian music, but that had become too important to me, almost more important than God. There were other areas that needed developing too. I was a people-pleaser and wanted to be liked by everyone. I would frown (publicly, from the stage) whenever anyone sang a wrong note, even if they were lost in worshipping their King. I played the comparison game constantly, comparing myself to others and not feeling adequate. The list goes on. So yes, I needed a whole lot of pruning in order to grow and be ready for where God was taking me.



God loves you too much to take you to that next level if you're not ready. God wants you to get to you next level. However, if your character is not ready to sustain you there for the duration of the assignment, He will keep you where you are until your next-level character develops. There had to be sufficient refinement for the assignment.

Four: There are valuable lessons in the journey.

Joseph the blabber mouth became Joseph the secret keeper (I love Joseph's story, so I say this with love, especially because I have been a blabber mouth in my own journey). He had learned his lesson from his earlier experience with telling his brothers about his dreams. And so later in life, when his brothers came to get food during the famine, they didn't recognize him. He didn't let anyone know that those were his brothers, even his own brothers.

David learned valuable lessons that helped him later in life. He learned how to slay a giant by first experiencing being attacked by a lion and a bear. He learned how to lead people by first experiencing how to lead sheep. I even believe he was able to deal with Saul's jealousy because he first experienced being overlooked by his brothers and his father.

Five: Preparation will help you handle the challenges that come at the next level.

What happens when the trials come (they will come)? Imagine a beautiful beach. Imagine clear blue water, lovely white sand, radiant flowers, and tall palm trees. But beaches are not immune from storms. I love this story I heard Joel Osteen tell a few years ago. During fierce storms, palm trees are made to bend, but not break. The palm tree might look like it's gone as it lays flattened. But it's only laying low while the storm rages. When the storm is over, the palm tree is able to stand up tall once again. Like the bamboo tree, the preparation from its root system helps the palm tree withstand the storms, when other trees snap and break.

Character preparation keeps you from snapping when you are bent. Your gifts and talents can only take you so far. Your character is what will sustain you in your next level and all the challenges that it holds. Which "you" do you want showing up at the next level? More importantly, which "you" does God want showing up? The best version of you, right?

Getting to your next level is attainable. God wants you to get there. He wants you to go higher. It is not His will that we remain stagnant and in a mediocre place. He absolutely wants greatness for us. And it is not a sin to want to go higher, as long as we don't make an idol out of our dreams and ambitions. But to get to the next level, you must prepare and be ready for what it holds. Are you ready to get ready?



About Emem Washington

Emem Washington, is a multi-passionate creative entrepreneur who is utilizing her experience as an attorney, speaker, singer/songwriter, coach and mentor to serve emerging thought-leaders and world-changers. She has a soft spot for those who are often overlooked or underestimated, including children from disadvantaged backgrounds and single mothers.

With a B.S in Biology, a Juris Doctorate in Law and an LL.M in Intellectual Property and Information Law, Emem combines her life experiences, her training and her voice (singing, writing and speaking) to support other creatives and visionaries to reach their fullest potential. Her advice and counsel have been much sought after for many years. Utilizing her strengths in advocacy and research as well as her persistently optimistic mindset, Emem is on a mission to show others how to thrive wherever they are and to realize that they are not too old (or too young) to be successful. Her recent projects include her debut album, "Rebirth" (available on iTunes & other music outlets), which is contemporary Christian and inspirational album with a focus on planting seeds of hope. One popular song on the album is titled "Flip The Page" which draws on Emem's own story to remind listeners that no matter what their situation looks like, their story is not over. To get to know her more, visit her home online at www.ememwashington.com.



Testimonials

"My sessions with Emem started with God placing her on my heart. I was in a place in my life where I was feeling stuck and couldn't seem to move ahead. I called her and it just happened that she'd been writing on how to get unstuck. She shared what God has placed on her heart with me. I felt a lot lighter after our session. I'm thankful for divine connection. She's not only led by the Spirit but she also has the experience to go along with it and is able to comfort others" - Y.O.

"So wonderful to be able to reach out to you for clarification & affirmation." - M.O.

"I feel that God is calling you to champion and encourage those who are driven to do more. Maybe they know God and just need to ask Him how to use what He's put inside them. Or maybe, they don't know God at all and don't recognize that their desire to achieve more is born of Him. Either way, God has chosen you to speak to those who He has called to achieve great things for His Eternal Kingdom" - A. G.

What's Next

Our new group, Christian Entrepreneurs & Creatives On Mission was created with you in mind. Come on over!

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