



finding yourself again

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approach

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finding yourself... again

22nd word

For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.

Luke 15:24 KJV

The popular prodigal son of the bible was said to be lost when he parked his load, left his father's house and travelled to a far country.

Though He missed him and had him on His mind always, to Him, the son was lost.

He was not called lost because he suffered at some point in his adventure, he was lost even when he had enough to squander. As long as he was away from the father, he was not just lost; he was dead. The best part of the prodigal son's story was not when he was lost and dead. The most exciting part was when he was found again.

In this edition of *grenepages*, let's consider **finding yourself...again**.

Each article in here provides steps to a self-discovery of your present status. You will be able to tell with sincerity whether you are lost or found, dead or alive. After your discovery, you will be able to identify the steps to take in going back to the Father and remaining in Him.

As you read through, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Amen.

Welcome to *grenepages*...again.

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Tobi Olowookere

*the Thomas
approach*

loving

Homegirl,

There has been a long silence. I know. It has not been for the lack of words or time, for there can never be more than 24 hours a day, as deemed adequate for fulfillment of all purposes by the creator. Rather it is the limitation of mental space, and a constant fight to attain equilibrium. This fight is what drives us every single day to achieve all we can.

However, what is so dear to my heart is your calls and emails, just to check on me. It is so beautiful, so heartfelt and so appreciated.

Can we take it from where we left off?

I find it perplexing that we expend so much energy, so much time in learning how to love people

but pay little or no attention to learn how to love ourselves.

No, this is not a call to self

-centeredness or a lesson in selfishness, for those in themselves reflect an absurd outlook on one's life.

This is a clamor for self-love—a conscious and even unconscious regard for the totality of oneself; a devotion to discovering, honoring, admiring and nurturing the uniqueness of YOU and appreciating the specificity of your purpose, beauty, every-



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THE DAUGHTER'S INSPIRATIONS

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you

thing that makes up YOU.

It is discovering that NO ONE is better than YOU—yes, they could be more privileged, but no, not better—and acknowledging that you are not better than anyone. Therefore, there is no need to walk around town or amongst peers with drooping shoulders, head usually down in timidity and shame, face clouded in dull-



ness, constantly wishing you were like the girl standing next to you.

If you spend all your time and energy trying to be someone else, the best you can be is the version of someone else, a photocopy.

However, why don't we concentrate the same energy on being a better YOU? By that, you emerge as a refined gold.

Loving you is honoring what constitutes YOU.

It is admiring and appreciating your own beauty.

It is the teasing out of your strengths to benefit generations and the remolding of your weaknesses in becoming a better you.

Loving YOU is being at ease with YOU.

If you love YOU, you will respect YOU

If you love YOU, you will nurture YOU.

If you love YOU, you will discipline YOU.

If you love you, you will pamper YOU.

In addition, when you start to love YOU, you will be able to love others truly, just as the Lord commanded to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. You will be able to appreciate their uniqueness and live peaceably with them.

Then, you will indeed be your father's daughter.

Isn't that awesome to know?

Stay beautiful.

Your Homegirl,

Adeyinka Oresanya

#tomyownhomegirl

#iamyourhomegirlsotalktome

finding yourself ...again

them! So I made a decision to tour many countries in the world someday and I was determined to work hard to afford this.

At 21, I met the love of who completed me, understood me, shared my passion for life and by the next year, we said I do before



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loved ones. It was the best day of my life.

At 23, I had my own baby, a girl; she is everything and more. Like every child, she was demanding of my time, attention and love. I struggled with the balance, my work, marriage, parenting and living. Between all of this, I lost myself; my dreams, passion and I feel entrapped as much as I try to ignore it. I need help!

This fictional story is the reality of many men

and women today. Age isn't exactly the issue here as we grow up differently based on what we are exposed to, or the knowledge we seek. I do not claim to have all the answers, but I will love to share the things I have learned that could help before or after you get to this point.

BEFORE

Self-Discovery – Know Yourself

This means you need to find your purpose in life. It means digging deep into your childhood and revealing the experiences that shaped you (good and bad). It means realizing what your beliefs are and living by them. The effects of self-discovery include happiness, fulfillment, clarity and maybe even enlightenment!

Love Yourself

To know yourself is one thing, to love yourself is another. Forgive yourself! Yes, you messed up and it's done; forgive and learn from it. Be able to feel whole and completely happy all by yourself without the need for another person to validate your decisions, actions and reactions. Guard your heart, take responsibility for your actions and don't compare your development to others. Accept yourself as handsome and beautiful without being told. Own your weaknesses and flaws; correct what you can in character, comportment, lifestyle etc. Accept what you cannot fix like a scar on the face, a crossed eye, disability in the body or a freckled face and love you just the way you are.



Be Equipped

Having a good understanding of things before getting into it is expedient. Do not enter marriage unaware of what it takes. Ask questions, get mentors, seek counsel, read and hear talks on it. Each marriage is a unique story; however, some basics are common to all. Understand what it takes to be a committed husband/wife, have sexual intimacy, what could cause delay in pregnancy, birth control, money, communication, managing in-laws, balancing work and domestic issues etc.

Realistic Expectations

Expectations are also problematic when we use them as a measuring rod that guides our emotions. We all have the right as humans to demand and expect things and it's quite human to do so. I understand that we all have preferences and values that we live our lives by and that we hope our partners are on the same page, but that's much different from those things being absolute. The truth is marriage is tough. It's a hard path to merge your life with someone else and face life together no matter what it brings your way.

AFTER

Managing Expectations

Healthy marriages tend to have several things in common; they tend to have realistic preferences

for the way that the marriage runs (e.g. my partner is only human and can make mistakes). They tend to be resilient because they can avoid being stuck on unmet expectations. They usually roll with the punches and see difficulty in the marriage as a challenge to overcome rather than a sign of failure. Healthy marriages tend to manage their expectations.

Marriage can be challenging and can be even more so when you throw unrealistic expectations/demands into the mix. Give yourself and your partner a break and allow each other to be human. Don't be afraid to express what you want and what you hope to get from the relationship.

Know Your Spouse

I often say that if you truly love your spouse you need to have an idea of the child he/she was. Understand their strengths, dreams and goals. Seek to enhance, support, and cheer them to fulfilling purpose. To fully enjoy your spouse, you need to allow them exhale (time to connect and play with friends and family). Support their dreams (pay for that exam, support by watching the kids when they need to read). Find ways to lessen the burden on one party by sharing it. Realize when you need to seek help for your partner to feel better etc.

Overcoming Denial

Denial is one of the most common defense

mechanisms that we all use, pretending that an uncomfortable thing did not happen. Overcoming this self-deception and consciously accepting there is a problem is the beginning of finding a solution.

Reconnect

Locate your old friends who knew who you used to be. They remind you of the person you once were and allow you judge better the person you have become. It is said that talking to an old friend makes you realize how much your life has changed. Healthy friendships help you awaken the child in you.

Seek Help

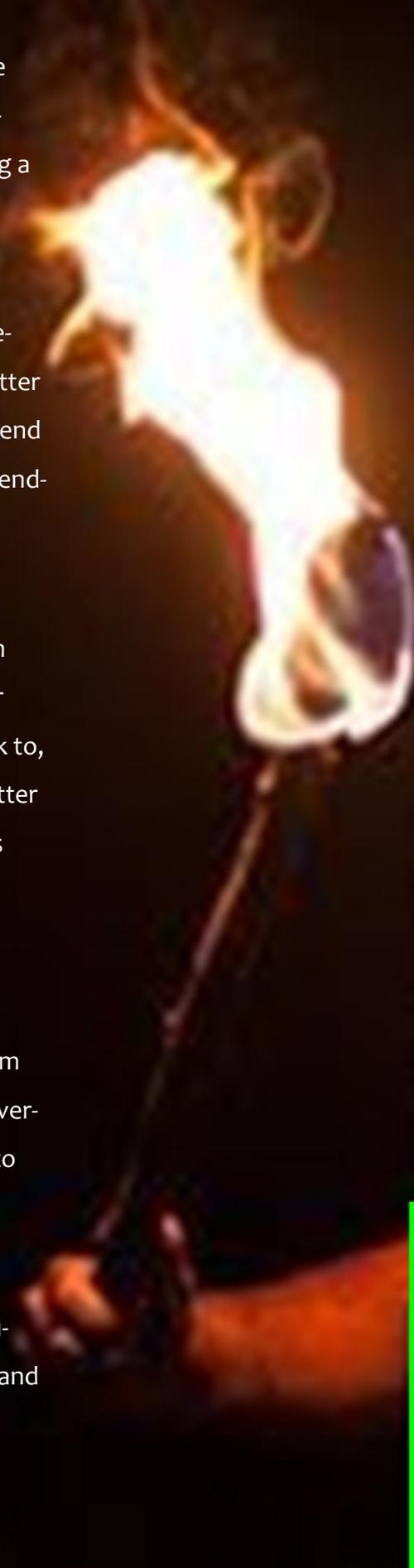
When you find that you cannot break out of the denial, or even begin to reach out to old friends as bridges have been burnt or there are actually no friends to call out to, find someone to talk to, howbeit a stranger who is experienced in counseling and is better equipped to guide you on the journey of self-recovery. There is therapy in talking about things that weigh you down.

Pray

Martin Luther King said, 'The less I pray, the harder it gets; the more I pray, the better it goes'. There is a great measure of calm and clarity that comes from the place of prayer. It cannot be over-emphasized that the quickest way to get back on ones feet is to get down on our knees in prayer.

Play

Just as in children, play helps us develop new and creative solutions to problems. It can be an important source of relaxation and stimulation for adults as well. While you let loose and laugh at yourself, you have a better experience and express emotions.



the Thomas

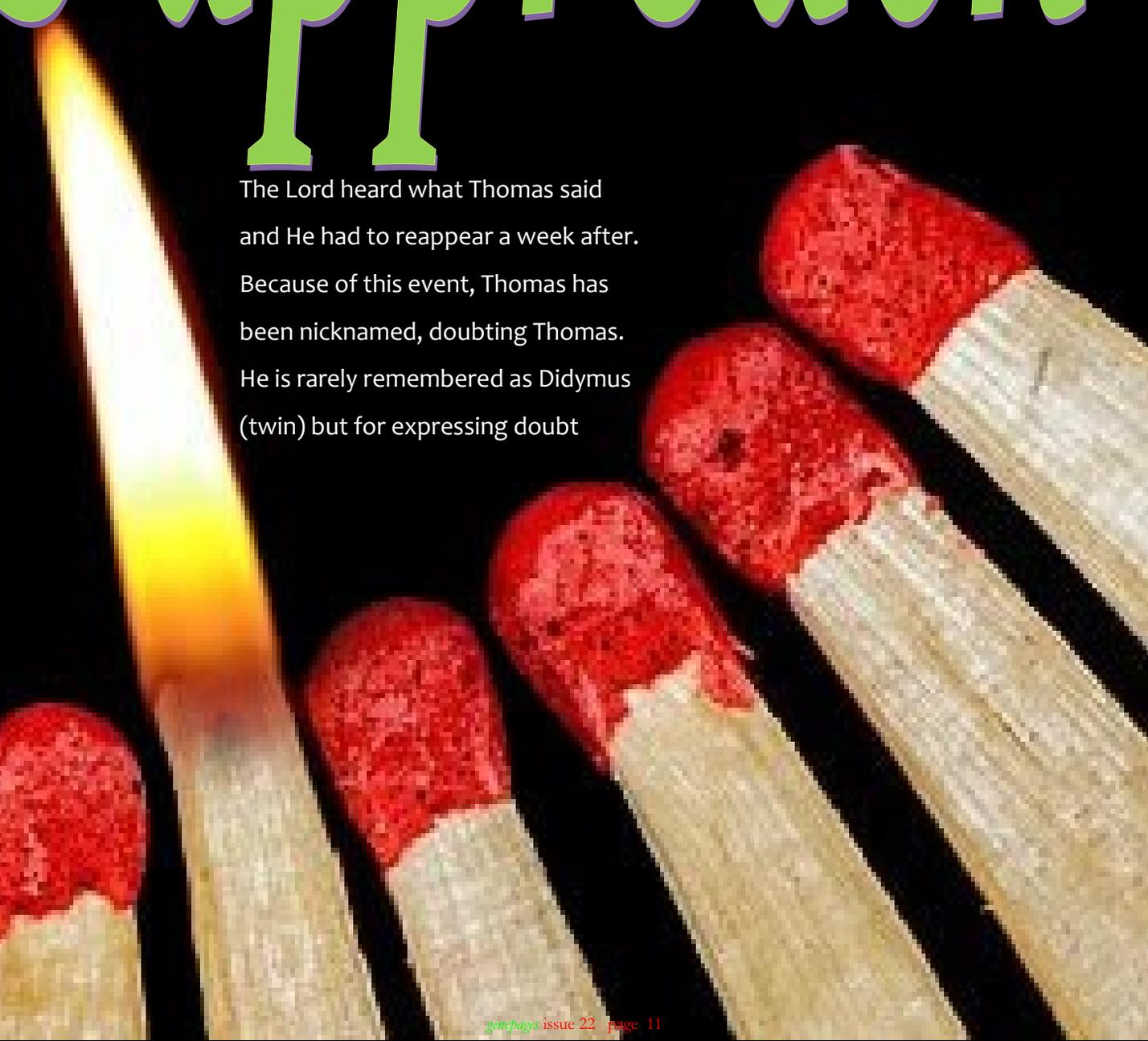
Of all the events and stories around the resurrection, the one I found most intriguing is that of Thomas. He was not there when Jesus first appeared to the apostles. Therefore, they told him of the Lord's appearance. To this Thomas replied, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it" John 20:25 NIV.



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His approach 1

The Lord heard what Thomas said and He had to reappear a week after. Because of this event, Thomas has been nicknamed, doubting Thomas. He is rarely remembered as Didymus (twin) but for expressing doubt



about the Lord's appearance.

No other character in the Bible seems to have suffered criticism through the ages for his doubt or unbelief like Thomas.

But perhaps we need to look at Thomas' action in a new light. I stand to be corrected but I make bold to say that we have been shielded from the lesson we should have learnt from Thomas because we focused on his doubt. What we failed to see was that "his doubt" brought Jesus back. Jesus had to wait one more week else, a vacuum would be left behind. One of His apostles will go into the world with a divided mind and a corruption might be introduced to the resurrection story.

Thomas did not want to base his faith on what others said but on what he saw, touched and felt. I believe his desire to see go beyond the expression of doubt but a desperation to experience what others have experienced. Thomas did not want to revel in the testimonies of others; he wanted to share his too.

Unfortunately, most of us have based our faith on hearsay; we have not seen, touched and felt the power and the presence of God in our own lives. We have heard but we have not seen. We have not experienced in our own lives what we have read in the Bible or preached to us in our churches. People have shared testimonies of deliverance from sin, healing of sicknesses, mi-

raculous provisions, baptism in the Holy Spirit and mighty manifestations of God's power. They have seen the Lord but you have not. Several Christians grapple with sin, sicknesses, and other implications of sin; the very things that took Jesus to the cross. We claim to belong to Him but we have not proofs that we are His. There is no distinction between the world and us. Unbelievers are quietly asking, "What difference does Jesus make?"

Perhaps, we need to take the Thomas approach and demand for a revelation of the Lord in our lives too. If Jesus heals, let me experience the healing. If He saves from sin, I want to experience it. If He provides then let me be a witness. I want to see too.

Today, I do not see Thomas as a doubting Thomas but the desperate one; the one who will not base his faith on what others said but on what He has seen, touched and felt. Our witness about Christ to the world is weak because our experience of Christ is weak. You do not need any special preparation or feel ashamed to tell people about what has worked for you consistently. There is a kind of confidence you exude when you tell people what you have experienced. No wonder Paul could confidently say,

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for every-

one who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” Romans 1:16 NKJV

Peter also said,

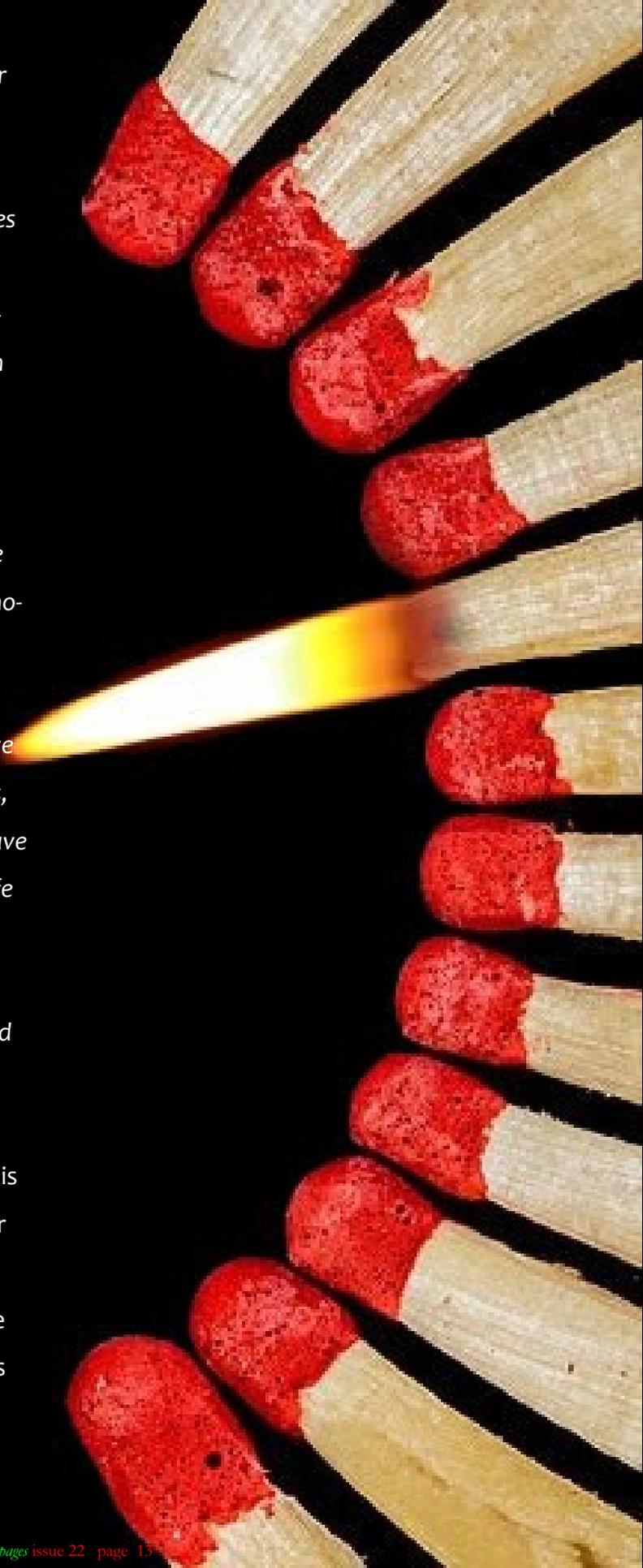
“For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory:”

This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain” 2 Peter 1:16-18 NKJV

And John,

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life — the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us” 1 John 1:1-2 NKJV

Perhaps we should reevaluate our efforts in winning the world over to Christ. Perhaps, it is not that souls are difficult to win but that our witness is weak because our experience of Christ is weak. Maybe we need to cry out like Thomas and ask Jesus to reveal Himself to us again so that we can go and boldly tell the world what we have seen.



something m can't b

What do you think about the man that the Bible called Zacchaeus? Yes! I mean the short man who climbed the sycamore tree to see Jesus. He's probably most famous because not only he was short, but also for his desperate act to catch a glimpse of the greatest man who ever lived.

Here, I find it shocking that the man at the center of this funny tree-climbing story was not a pauper. He was a bil-



lionaire of his time. His wealth brought him fame. He probably had a lovely

family too. The fact that he had a home ready to receive Jesus suggests this. Wife was beautiful and supportive. His kids were doing just great, finishing on top of their classes every term. What else can a man ask for? It is therefore astonishing that his status stands paradoxical to the scriptural account of his action – that which we have to learn from in our own day. Meeting the man Zacchaeus made me realize there's something just more important.

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Money Money

The Zacchaeus' story definitely tells us more than the tale of a rich short man who caught Jesus' attention by climbing a tree. In the Scripture, we find the tale of a man, who had all the wealth he could gather; that kind of job with which he could defraud people easi-

...continued on page 19

how to li

Depression is a state of the mind, which has the absence of hope as the underlying cause irrespective of the diagnosed causes. It is a culmination of thoughts over time in the process of which hope thoughts are being squeezed out.

People need a sense of hope to move on in life. It is hope that generates a positive vibe about the future, be it distant or otherwise. People build this hope on people, things, events and assumptions. However, when these premises of hope fail or change, a riot of thoughts would likely occur. The first re-



sponse in us as humans is that our thoughts quickly adopt another premise to ab-

sorb the shock. The newly adopted premise could have been a conscious or unconscious backup premise. At times, it is just an emergency premise that our mind quickly brought up to counter the shock.

Nevertheless, even the new premises have the potential to fail and do fail leading to a cycle of shifting to several new premises. The cycle generation amplitude and frequency differs from person to person. This could explain the reason some are more susceptible to depression than others are over seemingly similar matters and conditions. As these cycles continue, alternative premises diminish and in turn hope thoughts vanish.

Even in the supposed presence of these premises, people might still get depressed. This is because those hope were only present to the soul but absent in the spirit of the individual. Giving hope to the soul without giving hope to the spirit is only a cosmetic fix. Such superficial hope even at its best is false.

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ve above pression



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