

Listen

When love listens, heaven speaks:
A mother's journey of faith, patience,
and God's hidden gifts.

Lights, Camera, Evangelism

From popcorn to purpose,
Where entertainment meets
eternal meaning.

Interview

Shungu Masawi's unwavering faith through
premature birth, sleepless nights, and an
autism diagnosis, until answered
prayers turned struggle into song.

Marriage & Money

From the illusion of romantic ease to the
reality of shared responsibility,
Rev Carol Nyatsambo's marriage
taught her that contentment,
not cash, is the true currency of love



Editor: Lynnette Ndhlovu
lynnett@taqamagazine.online

Please mail correspondence to:
Lynnett@taqamagazine.online

Design and Layout: Native Aliens Media
info@nativealiens.co.za

Website Design: Native Aliens Media
info@nativealiens.co.za

Purpose:

At TAQA magazine, we are a family of God loving Christians who are excited about sharing testimonies of how God is still speaking today. The conventional pulpit has since evolved over the years and we are the product of that evolution. The WORD is and will always be solid and the same.

We will tackle issues from parenting to schooling to relationships to the covenant of marriage and issues that affect the life of the contemporary Christian. Our aim is to welcome you to our family and to have conversations with you on the goodness of God and encourage you in your everyday life. We hope as we embark on this journey we will move from Glory to Glory in the Lord.

Welcome to the praise world of TAQA

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TAOA
MAGAZINE



Pastor Imelda Hairwadzi

ON MINISTRY, BUSINESS, FAMILY & THE LOVE OF HER LIFE

Kindness That Never Fails

How do we find kindness in times of hardship?

Count on All JEs

What lessons can we learn from the pattern of wildness?

And What's for Dinner?

We taste some Tandoori Chicken & Lemon Coconut Slice



EDITOR'S *Nate*

When was the last time you heard truly good news? Go ahead, pause for a moment and think about it. In our busy homes and daily routines, it's easy to get swept up in the whirlwind of life: managing bills, navigating health concerns, raising children, juggling relationships, and making sense of the world around us. Sometimes, the weight of it all can settle quietly in our hearts, leaving us feeling drained, distracted, or even discouraged.

But here's something I pray will refresh your soul today: Jesus came to bring good news. Not just once. Not just for Bible times. But for you, and for me, right now. Over and over in Scripture, the Lord reminds us that He came to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of Heaven. In other words, He knew how much we would need to hear it, then and now. Amid the noise, the fear, and the uncertainty of the world, His Word still speaks life, still offers peace, and still brings hope.

Where do we find this good news today? You'll find it in the pages of the Bible. You'll hear it in the quiet prayers whispered at bedtime. You'll see it in the laughter of children, the kindness of strangers, and the strength found in community. And yes, you'll find it in the testimonies we share with one another.

That's what Taqa is all about. Issue 9 of our magazine is another celebration of God's goodness, through real stories, from real families, experiencing the real power of faith. Whether you read it at the breakfast table, during family devotion, or in a quiet moment to yourself, we hope it brings fresh encouragement to your home.

Thank you for welcoming us into your lives and for being part of our growing family of readers. May this issue remind you that even in the busiest seasons, the good news of Jesus is still the best news of all. Enjoy!

Lynn
LYNNETT MLAMBO



TAOQA
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The Treasure in the Trials:

*A Marriage Built on
Wisdom, Not Winning*

By
Pastor Emelda Hairwadzi

Marriage is a journey with hidden riches and occasional hidden irritations. Reflecting on over two decades of marriage, I'm reminded that this sacred union is not a straight shot but a bumpy road with its fair share of twists, turns, and ah-ha moments. My husband and I got married in 2002, and since then have travelled then have travelled close to every season of the sun. But through it all, we've come to discover a deeper kind of wisdom, the kind that comes not from books or fairy tales, but from honest mistakes, hard conversations, and **God's** unfailing grace.

One scripture that constantly echoes in my heart is **Proverbs 25:2**: "*It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.*" Marriage, I've learned, is

one of those "hidden things." You smile and daydream your way through your certificate, but ahead of you is a lifetime of learning. And sometimes, learning comes in the very experiences we'd rather not remember.

A Nursery School, a Heated Argument, and a Lesson for Life

I'll take you back to one of our very first and quite possibly most humbling roadblocks as new parents. My daughter was barely a toddler when I began dreaming about her future, particularly the kind of education she would receive. I wished her to attend an upper-class nursery school, not just any school, but one where she would learn the accent as well, something we could use to brag about to our friends. In our unit at the time, an English-speaking child was a discreet indicator of privilege, class, and successful parents.

My husband always the voice of reason, suggested we wait. Politely he reminded me of our financial situation. Why spend thousands but I wasn't going to be told this. Honestly, it wasn't about the education, it was about image, about fit, about feeling as though one is doing "the right thing."

So, I persevered in frustration and registered our daughter at the posh nursery. One week on, came a bolt from the

blue. We simply could not afford it. I had to withdraw her, my tail between my legs. It was a watershed moment in our marriage—a painful but healthy reminder of the value of consensus decision-making.

From Zimbabwe to South Africa: Grace in the Gaps

Jump forward. Life carried us away from Zimbabwe to South Africa, where we had to start all over again, new country, new rules, new challenges. There were moments when our children were home schooled because we had not yet obtained the appropriate paperwork. But **God** once again came through. Our daughter not only caught up—she excelled.

She completed her matric at a private school, and now she's doing midwife training abroad. Her other siblings are also well off, all in good schools, one of which will soon be starting at university in the UK. And hey, guess what? Not even one of them ever attended nursery school.

It's Not About Winning Arguments. It's About Winning as One

In hindsight, I understand how that one decision might have driven a wedge between my husband and me. Eventually, with a great big dose of humility (and advice), I realized that marriage is not about who wins an

"Marriage is not about who wins an argument. It is about disagreeing when you need to and continuing together."

"We're not ringside opponents. We're on the same team, fighting for the same things—our children, our legacy, our love."

argument. It is about disagreeing when you need to and continuing together. There were moments I had to pause, reflect, and say, "You were right." Not because I lost, but because I won clarity. And we both won. We understood that every decision, mine or his, must benefit us, not our egos. **Proverbs 14:1** says, "The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down." I've learned that wisdom sometimes means surrendering the need to be right and choosing instead to build.



Letting the Small Stuff Stay Small

It's easy for couples to get stuck on the small stuff. We've seen marriages fall apart over a misunderstood text or an unspoken expectation. But we've learned the power of laughter, of letting go, of stepping away from the heat of an argument to talk in a calmer

space—even if that means discussing serious matters over a shared meal instead of a tense bedroom showdown.

We've also learned not to expose every disagreement in front of our kids. Marriage is our sacred space, and our children should see us model grace, not drama. And when something matters deeply, when emotions flare, we've discovered the beauty of restraint, of removing ourselves from triggering environments, and handling conflict with wisdom and dignity

We're a Tag Team, Not Opponents

So this is what I've learned after all these years of truth and trial: my husband and I are not fighting against one another. We're not ringside opponents. We're on the same team, fighting for the same things, our children, our legacy, our love. Yes, tears have been cried. There's been tension. There have been days when silence seemed easier than words, but there has been laughter as well. Forgiveness. Growth. And grace. Song of **Solomon 2:15** warns us: "Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards." It's not always the big betrayals that kill a marriage, it's the little unguarded annoyances, the presumptive answers, the not listening.

So let's choose to catch those little foxes. Let's gather the treasures in the narrow places. And when we stumble (for stumble we will), let's remember the One who holds us with bonds unbroken. Our

husbands, women, pay attention to things we don't. Perhaps it's how we dress, what we say, the way we carry ourselves, they want us to shine with beauty, yes, but with dignity. Not to attract the wrong kind of attention, but to move with confidence and poise.

Beauty, Modesty, and the Mirror of Our Spouses

One last thing I'll learn you, a trivial one perhaps, but one that is everything to me: my hair. I bent to trends for years, relaxers, weaves, glue-ins, all as my husband continued to comment on how much he loved my natural hair. I scoffed. I believed he was old-fashioned or was commenting on it simply out of courtesy. It wasn't until after one woeful weave appointment (with a stylist who did everything wrong and emptied my wallet and seared my scalp) that I began to love what I already had: thick, rich, natural hair **God** gave me.

Final Thoughts

To all couples everywhere, newlyweds veteran partners, or making your way through difficult ground, here is the thing: you don't have to get it all right. But you do have to be willing to grow together.

Don't let pride take your peace. Don't let pressure compel you into performance. Let love, **God**-honouring, true love, be your guide. Because at the end of the day, it's not about who wins. It's about what you build together.



"We've learned that marriage isn't about who wins the argument, it's about building something beautiful together through grace, humility, and choosing wisdom over ego, again and again."

be

**Bonnie & Emelda
Hairwodzi**

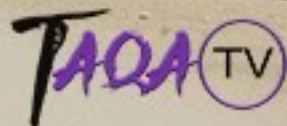


Fear Not, For

God

Will Direct Your Steps
for the Remainder
of

2025





opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

Genesis 4:9–12

I have watched many movies in the past, some showing how trees live in harmony, some showing how wild animals behave. They also communicate in their own

language. In all these

God Still Speaks, Even Through the Silence of a Child.

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which

movies, the animal kingdom is typically led by the lion, and all the animals listen to and revere it. Some imaginations are beyond limits when furniture comes alive with pots gossiping with cups, and cupboards whispering secrets to curtains. It's all very imaginative, isn't it? But amazingly enough, it's close to the truth. Yes, I said that: it's the truth. Everything is speaking. The only thing is you just don't understand the language.

In a way, everything cries out, from the smallest stone to the loftiest tree. Note what **God** spoke to Cain: "*Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground.*" At first look, it sounds impossible blood can't cry out, how can it? But I believe this is **God's** way of showing us that

everything **He** created has something to say. Just because you can't hear or comprehend something doesn't mean that it's silent.

This reminds me of a certain moment in our lives when our second son was four years old, and he still hadn't gotten the hang of talking. It's easy enough to label a child a "late bloomer" but what we endured, were blood-curdling screams that took the place of words, and it was exhausting emotionally. If he wanted something, he would scream. As parents, the desperation we felt at his situation was crushing.

During this time, he has a three-year-old sister, and I was pregnant. In all honesty I had to learn extreme patience but however as much as I needed the patience getting it was a slow process. Seeing that they were so small I couldn't drop the ball. My husband also asked years ago if he was autistic. But I held fast to stubborn faith. I did not want to adopt that narrative. Instead, I learned new methods of engaging with him. I hugged him more. I sang with him. We did praise and worship together, and I observed something: he picked up songs faster than he picked up words. So, we sang, a lot.

Gradually, he began communicating in words through music. That gave him confidence to speak. I tried to introduce other languages, and he quickly picked them up. We finally found his language, he was a singer. Children are different. Someone said to me once, "Children are gifts from God."

"If we had not been patient and wise, we would have lost the beautiful gift hidden in him, the gift of worship.."

Every gift is unique, unwrap them expectantly and be ready to be surprised." That was something that has never left me. As our son began going to crèche, his speech started to emerge. By gentle nudging and ongoing prayer, he began to string words together.

He's seven now, and I can announce with utmost joy that the boy speaks! No, in all seriousness, he's a chatterbox. We can hardly shut him up. We bribe him with candy sometimes just to give us a respite from the wave of questions. And what do you know? He loves to sing praise and worship songs. He learns them in the snap of his fingers. If we had not been patient and wise, we could have resorted to medication, just because he did not have the speech pattern we anticipated. We would have lost the beautiful gift hidden in him. The gift of worship. Trusting in **God**, and having a willingness to listen, was the key to unlocking his unique mode of communication.

Children teach us much more than we could ever expect. This lesson in life taught me that patience is, and will always be, a virtue. On top of that all people and things speak we just need to understand the language being spoken. God is love, let LOVE guide, always.

By Lynnett Ndhlovu

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Birchleigh,
Kempton Park, JHB

Marriage & Money

Marriage is not just a journey of hearts but also a merging of realities, spiritual, emotional, and yes, financial. In this deeply honest testimony, **Rev. Carol Nyatsambo** invites us into the real-life seasons of financial highs and lows that she and her husband have walked through together.

Before marriage, life as a couple often feels simple. This is largely because responsibilities are few and mostly revolve around showing up for dates and enjoying time together. Many decisions to marry are based on the belief that the other person makes us happy. But as the saying goes, “*Love is blind, but marriage is an eye-opener.*” Marriage reveals the financial realities of your partner—their rent, bills, debts, support for family, church giving, and personal expenses.

Early in our relationship, when my husband was still my boyfriend, he showed me his payslip. He wanted me to have a realistic understanding of his income and not expect more than what was on that paper. While he

hoped I would consider how many obligations that money had to carry, I saw it as a reasonable amount for us to enjoy. I supported his efforts to save for lobola, but deep down, I expected us to spend freely once we were married.



Cu CAROL NYATSAMBO
REVEREND | ENTREPRENEUR | SPEAKER | MENTOR

Our Journey into Contentment

*“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound... I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” **Philippians 4:11–12 (NKJV)***

Reality hit after the wedding when we moved into a beautiful double-storey apartment rented under my sister-in-law and her husband. Three months in, we had to start paying rent ourselves, and we couldn't afford it. That's when marriage taught us the value of **downgrading to match your season**. It's tempting to live for appearances, but doing so often sacrifices the true quality of life.

Some people drive expensive cars while sending their children to under-resourced schools. Others live in impressive neighbourhoods but have empty bank accounts. We chose to prioritize quality of life over public perception. So, we moved to a one-bedroom apartment. We had just enough furniture: a bed, a sofa, and a two-plate stove. I remember a church guest once asking, *“What kind of food can you cook with that?”* Comments like that can pressure couples into trying to impress people who won't help them get there. But I learned something precious, **we live for Christ, not for public opinion**. We were content with what we had. We could eat well, save, and even begin developing on our plot in Harare.

We shifted our focus to completing the cottage on our land so we could eliminate rental costs. But as Zimbabwe's economy worsened, we made a hasty decision to relocate. Guided by advice from friends, we moved to South Africa after selling our property, expecting an automatic upgrade in lifestyle. We were shocked. Relocation meant

starting over. We rented a three-bedroom apartment on a R9 000.00 salary. After paying rent and the babysitter, we were left with just over R1 000.00. Back then, a loaf of bread cost R4.50. I was working; my husband wasn't. I struggled with the fact that the man whose payslip I had once admired was now jobless, two years into our marriage.

I grew frustrated and often complained that he wasn't looking for a job seriously. It seemed to me that he spent his days watching TV while I worked hard for the family. But my nagging wore him down. He later confessed that he sometimes wished he were dead, just to escape the shame of not being a provider. Thank **God** for the Holy Spirit, who knew what he was going through. One day, I felt I had to stop fighting **him** and start fighting **for him**. I asked if we could fast for three days for his breakthrough. On the first day, he was invited for an interview with a top financial firm. I drove him there and waited in the car, praying. That same day, on our way home, they called and offered him the job, with a salary five times higher than mine!

Prayer shifted our financial reality. Money enters families spiritually. It's not just about hard work; it's about spiritual alignment. *“Seek first the Kingdom of God... and all these things will be added to you”* **Matthew 6:33**. Money is best received as an **addition**, not the foundation, of a blessed marriage.

After this breakthrough, we decided to live more wisely and moved into a two-bedroom apartment. Looking back, renting that three-bedroom place had been a step out of season. But the smaller apartment became a season of joy. That's when we became hosts to many who were job-hunting. At one



point, 14 people lived with us, men slept in the lounge, women in the second bedroom. But it didn't feel like a burden. **God** provided. I even got a better job, and we managed to take care of everyone. That was 2006, the year of 14 housemates. Most of them found work, and we supported them until they could stand on their own. To this day, we rejoice to see how far they've come.

In 2007, we decided to buy a house. It felt like a reward for our faithfulness. The process was surprisingly smooth. We didn't know we had to pay transfer fees, but the lawyers, seeing our innocence, allowed us to pay after the registration. That was grace. Homeownership came with new responsibilities: rates, mortgage payments, utilities, maintenance. I left it all to my husband, who silently struggled. He didn't say anything, maybe he thought he had to "man up" and handle it. We both had jobs, so we split our finances: he managed "his money and bills," and I managed "mine." That separation created gaps.

By the time I realised what was happening, **we were drowning in debt**, because he had been drowning in silence. When the body corporate handed our account over to their lawyers, my husband finally admitted that we owed over R100 000.00 in rates. I was devastated. These financial challenges took a toll on our marriage, especially as I struggled to honour a man who had quietly led us into such a deep financial ditch without asking for help.

It took us years to climb out of that

pit. But along the way, I learned something vital: to recognise the limitations of my spouse, to remain vigilant, and to step in with support when needed. Sometimes, we pretend not to see the elephant in the room until it grows so big that it forces us out of our marriages. We also came to understand the importance of multiple streams of income and have since been steadily exploring different markets. Is it easy? No! Does it always succeed? No! But we continue to press into the faithfulness of **God's** Word.

As David said, "*I have been young, and now I am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread.*" (Psalm 37:25 NKJV)

Debt is a system designed to reduce **God's** children to beggars. As much as possible, avoid entangling yourself in debt, it frees you to live a content and peaceful life. Whether you have much or little, your mind stays sound and your marriage intact. We

experienced **God's** hand delivering us from financial bondage. We're not yet where we want to be, but we are far from where we started. We hold onto the truth that "*He who began a good work in us will be faithful to complete it.*"

Money is not the foundation of a good marriage. Instead, hearing **God** for each season, obeying *His* instructions, and remaining in a posture of prayer, committing every plan to the **Lord Jesus Christ**, is what truly sustains a marriage.

By the time I realised what was happening, we were drowning in debt, because he had been drowning in silence.

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Answered Prayers & Tied Shoelaces



Motherhood is often painted in soft pastels, but for some it arrives in shades of storm and sunlight mixed together. For *Shungu Masawi*, the birth of her son at just 27 weeks marked the beginning of a journey threaded with both fragility and fierce resilience. She shares her heartfelt testimony with the Taqa Family.

Can you share your journey with autism and how it has impacted your life?

My son Nyashadzashe was born 13 years ago, very prematurely at just 27 weeks. He had a very low birth weight of 1,3kg. He stayed in hospital for about 2 months as he was severely ill and had underdeveloped lungs. Upon discharge from the hospital, we were given had a set of instructions on how to care for him and what to watch out for. “Preemies” are known to be very fragile and can even forget to breathe. We were ever on edge and as a new parent, our whole world revolved around him and his schedules.

Nyasha met all his physical milestones, but at about 2 years old, we noticed he would not respond to his name sometimes. He loved watching the same programme all the time on TV and when the show would end, he’d be very upset. However, he loved watching the credits roll and seemed more fascinated by them than the actual programme. When we were at church, he would wonder off from the other toddlers to be on his own. He had a weird fascination with car number plates and would look at the same number plates from the front of the car and then behind it. At home he would hand flap and run around humming and at times walk on his tiptoes. The worst symptom was that he did not sleep well at night. We would be up at night for hours on end and he would just not sleep.

When Nyasha turned 3, he was still nonverbal and was not potty trained. Eventually, we took him for an assessment to a Child Psychologist who diagnosed him with autism. We then started learning more about the condition. We intentionally began teaching him all the skills he lacked. Most of

all we prayed for his development. Slowly we accepted his diagnosis, and we have lived with it ever since. He eventually learnt to speak and we successfully potty trained him. Today he is an independent young boy who can look after himself independently.

How do you manage your day-to-day life as a caregiver?

These days, Nyasha is fairly independent, which is such a blessing. He takes care of most things on his own, but I’ve learned my role is really to keep a prayerful eye on his heart. I pay attention to his temperament, because when something troubles him, he tends to withdraw. In those moments, I know the Lord nudges me to reach out, to remind him that he’s seen, loved, and never alone.

How has your extended family reacted to the situation, both positively and negatively?

We don’t really live close to extended family, however initially, it made people uncomfortable, and they did not know how to act around us or him. On the positive, they now understand him and accommodate him in the best way possible. We do however take note of the people and environments he is comfortable and avoid people we know he is not comfortable around. Some people cannot help but show annoyance at some of his behaviours even though they know he cannot help it.

What outside influences have shaped your experience as a caregiver?

I research online a lot and apply whatever I learn on my son.

What is your husband's perspective on this issue, and how has he supported you?

He understands our son's condition and advocates for him everywhere they go together. He gets to do activities with him and that frees up my time to attend to our daughter and do other things. He is also very sensitive to our son's needs and will ensure his needs are met. He provides financial resources to ensure his needs are fully met.

What are some of the most rewarding moments you've experienced as a caregiver?

I really celebrate potty training successfully and watching him learn how to feed himself when he was around 4 years old. Today, 11 April 2025, at 13, he successfully tied his shoelaces, a skill we have been trying to teach him since he was 11!!!

How has the Word of **God** guided you through this journey, and how has it affected your relationship with the Lord?

Oh the promises of God are Yes and Amen!! When I reflected on my son's life and the way he came into the world too soon, and how he almost didn't make it out of NICU, it helped me to strengthen my faith. I realised that his life was saved for a purpose, and He who started this would see it to completion. The word promises that He will be with us, He has certainly seen us through this journey. We would not be where we are had

it not been for the Lord on our side.

Can you share a specific Bible verse or story that has provided you with strength and encouragement?

Isaiah 46 V 10

Do you offer support or assistance to other parents who have autistic children?

I only do so to parents who are receptive of assistance or support. Some parents have not accepted their children's condition, and it is therefore difficult to offer support. The condition is still very stigmatised, and people rarely open to each other about their challenges. How do you balance your own needs with the demands of caregiving? I manage quite well. Nyasha goes to school, and I manage to do my work in that time, an even when he is with me at home. He is independent.

What words of wisdom or encouragement would you give to others who are facing similar challenges with autism?

Do not be afraid, for I the Lord am with you, do not gaze about in fear. I will hold you up with my right hand of righteousness. God will see you through if you surrender it to Him. There is nothing impossible for God. I would write down specific prayer requests and give them to God in prayer. I prayed for my son's speech, and he spoke, I prayed for him to be potty trained, to improve his motor skills, to regulate his moods and ALL these prayers have been answered. This despite a poor prognosis from the Psychologist.

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Buckle up, little explorers - the Taqa Kids adventure is about to begin!

DAVID

The Boy Who Would Be King

David was born in Bethlehem, a small town in ancient Israel. He was the youngest of eight brothers in the family of Jesse. As a young boy, David worked as a shepherd, taking care of his father's sheep. Even though he was young, he showed great courage by protecting his flock from dangerous animals like lions and bears. Here are some of his coolest achievements:

Protecting His Flock

David took care of his father's sheep. This wasn't just any old job—it was pretty dangerous! There were wild animals like lions and bears that would try to attack the sheep. But David was super brave. He used his slingshot and his courage to fight off these wild animals and keep his sheep safe. Imagine taking on a lion with just a slingshot!



Being Anointed as Future King

The prophet Samuel visited David's family because God had chosen David to be the future king of Israel. Samuel anointed David with oil, which was a sign that he would one day become king. This was a huge honor, and it showed that David was destined for great things.

An illustration depicting the biblical story of David and Goliath. On the right, the giant Goliath stands with a fierce expression, his mouth open as if shouting. He has long, wavy brown hair and a beard, and is wearing a simple, light-colored tunic. On the left, the young David is seen from behind, looking towards Goliath. David is wearing a red sash and a red skirt, and has a sling over his shoulder. The background is a bright, cloudy sky over a sandy, hilly landscape.

Defeating Goliath

The Israelites were at war with the Philistines, and the Philistines had a giant warrior named Goliath. Goliath was huge, over nine feet tall, and no one dared to fight him. But David stepped up, even though he was just a young boy. Armed with only his slingshot and five smooth stones, and with a Perfect shot, David hit Goliath right in the forehead, knocking him down and winning the battle for Israel.

Why David is Inspiring

David's story teaches us that you don't have to be big or strong to do great things. Even as a boy, David was brave, talented, and had a big heart. He showed that with courage and faith, you can overcome any challenge. So next time you face something tough, just remember David and his amazing **God**.

faithful fun

Taqa Kids Word Search

Find the following words in the puzzle. Words are hidden → ↘ ↓

JERUSALEM

BABYLON

ELISHA

MOSES

BETHLEHEM

NINEVEH

ISAIAH

SODOM

PHILISTIA

GALILEE

BETHEL

ADAM

NAZARETH

SHECHEM

HEBRON

GOMORRAH

JOSEPH

ISAAC

SOLOMON

JOSHUA

JACOB

V F P E U S H E C H E M J G Z N R D
S S I H B G R M H G O M O R R A H N
V O Y S I A J J A C O B R J N J I E
N I D F A L B B E T H E L E A O Q L
H I S O X I I Y R J B H H R Z S M I
E V N W M L A S L S M J E U A E M S
M T Y E M E V H T O A O B S R P O H
A D A M V E F Z C I N S R A E H S A
B E T H L E H E M H A H O L T C E Y
D E S A R A H T J Q F U N E H U S I
G S S U I S A A C L D A W M Q V G Z
X Q S O L O M O N S G E U Y Z N M F



Emoji Bible Quiz



Can you guess the Bible story or character from these emoji clues?

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.



11.



12.



13.





Parenting a *Pixel*

Generation

*A Dad's Call for Digital
Discernment*

We live in an age where toddlers swipe before they walk and childhood curiosity now means asking Google before asking dad. My 10-year-old son, bright-eyed, brilliant, and brimming with curiosity, is teaching himself how to code basic games, can troubleshoot apps, and streams digital content with the ease of someone twice his age. He is, in every sense of the word, a child of the digital revolution. And yet, behind my admiration for his talents lies a gnawing concern. The digital world, as wondrous as it is, is not neutral. It's loud, persuasive, and relentless. Our kids are no longer just playing with tech—they're being shaped by it.

The World Behind the Screen

Let's be honest: technology is incredible, but it doesn't come without shadows. While screen time is pitched as entertainment and education, it often becomes a silent thief, stealing attention, empathy, and sometimes even identity. My son doesn't own a social media account, and still, he's already asking about likes, followers, and online fame. The internet's culture of curated perfection creeps in young, whispering lies about worth and comparison.

There's also the lurking danger of cyberbullying, wounds that don't bruise the skin but leave deep emotional marks. Even with filters and controls, inappropriate content is often just one mis-click away. And

perhaps most alarming of all is the slow erosion of identity. In a world where kids are encouraged to define themselves by how they look, what they post, or who validates them, how do we help them stay rooted in who **God** says they are?

Faith Over Filters

As a Christian father, I've learned that parenting in the digital age requires more than managing devices, it calls for spiritual vigilance. **Proverbs 22:6** urges us to “*train up a child in the way he should go...*”

and that's never felt more relevant than now. We're not just raising kids; we're raising kingdom-minded guides in a terrain designed to distract.

Faith becomes the compass. In our home, values like truth, kindness, humility, and self-control aren't suggestions—they're anchors. And we talk about them often, not as abstract virtues, but as shields against a world that runs on comparison, outrage, and excess. This means helping

my son understand why we set boundaries, not just because it's right, but because it reflects the heart of God.

Setting Boundaries Without Building Walls

We're learning that wise parenting is less about digital bans and more about building trust. Here are a few practical rhythms we've adopted:

- **Tech-free zones:** Dinner time, devotions, and bedtime must be sacred, free from the hum of notifications and glowing screens.

“Teach your children various forms of prayer, including prayers of Thanksgiving, Intercession, Confession, and prayers of Supplication.”

- **Co-viewing and open doors:** If he's online, I or his mother are not far. We talk about what he's watching, who he's interacting with, and what he thinks about it. Questions like, "*How did that make you feel?*" or "*What do you think **God** thinks about that?*" turn digital moments into teachable ones.

- **Tools with wisdom:** We use apps like Google Family Link and YouTube Kids, but no tool replaces trust. Our rule? Relationship trumps restriction. He needs to know he can tell me anything, especially the uncomfortable stuff.

Shared tech experiences: We play games together, dive into Bible apps, and explore the internet as co-adventurers. I'm not anti-tech, I'm pro-heart.

Teaching Him to See Clearly

More than just consuming content, I want my son to *question* it. We talk about how media shapes thought. We dissect Tik-Tok trends, memes, and influencers, not to shame them, but to help him see the deeper messages at play. "*What is this really saying about people, success, or **God**?*" That kind of critical thinking equips him to stand firm when trends shout louder than truth. Discernment isn't about suspicion, it's about clarity. I want him to spot counterfeit wisdom and know what's real. To scroll with eyes open and a heart anchored in truth.

Let's Raise Kids Who Know What Matters

Some days, this feels like a losing battle. Like I'm trying to hold back a flood with a paper cup. But here's what I know: I'm not doing it alone. **God** is with me, and **He** loves my son even more than I do. I can't protect him from every digital danger, but I can plant seeds of wisdom, water them with prayer, and trust **God** with the growth. So yes, I'll keep setting

boundaries, asking awkward questions, and showing up, even when it feels like I'm swimming against the tide. Because my son's heart, his future, and his faith are worth it. May we raise a generation of kids who don't just use technology, but who are wise enough to question it, shape it, and, above all, honour **God** through it.

DID YOU KNOW?



In Acts 8, the Spirit of the Lord supernaturally transported Philip away from where he had just baptised the Ethiopian eunuch instantly to Azotus (Ashdod), having completed his miraculous mission.

LESSON

This event is described as a divine intervention, a miracle of transportation demonstrating the power of the Holy Spirit to transform circumstances in an instant.



"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Ephesians 6 vs 4



TAQA
Kids



In the dim dorm rooms of my boarding school days, I learned that tears don't always taste salty and that canned food is both a blessing and a curse. My trunk, filled with tins of corned beef and baked beans, was my treasure, though after sometime I grew sick of them. Decades later, those same humble tins, once survival rations, inspired me and transformed with grown-up seasoning turned into hearty comfort food for my family. This **Corned Beef and Baked Beans Skillet** recipe I came across stands as a delicious reminder that God redeems all things, even our boarding school tuck traumas.

Corned Beef & Baked Bean Skillet

Ingredients:

- 1 can (300g) corned beef
- 1 can (410g) baked beans in tomato sauce
- 2 medium potatoes, diced small
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1 carrot, grated (optional, for extra veg)
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 teaspoon mild curry powder (or paprika if you prefer no heat)
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Fresh parsley or coriander for garnish

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Instructions:

- Heat the oil in a large frying pan or pot over medium heat. Add onions and green pepper,

and sauté until softened.

- Stir in diced potatoes and cook for 6–8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until they start to soften.
- Sprinkle in curry powder (or paprika), stir well, and let the spices toast for about 1 minute.
- Add chunks of corned beef to the pan. Let it brown lightly, breaking it apart gently with a spoon.
- Pour in baked beans and grated carrot (if using). Stir until everything is well combined. Lower heat, cover, and simmer for 5–7 minutes until potatoes are cooked through.
- Season with salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with fresh parsley or coriander if you have some handy.

Serving Suggestions Serve with warm bread, rice, or pap for a complete meal. This also makes a hearty toast topping for breakfast or a light lunch.



Cinnamon Sugar Toast Pudding

Ingredients:

6 slices	day-old bread, cubed
2 cups	milk (or any milk substitute)
2	eggs
1/4 cup	sugar (adjust to taste)
1 teaspoon	ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon	vanilla extract (optional)
	Butter or margarine for greasing

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 35 minutes

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F). Grease a small baking dish.
- Place cubed bread in the baking dish.
- In a bowl, whisk together milk, eggs, sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla.
- Pour the mixture evenly over the bread cubes, pressing down lightly to soak.

- Let sit for 10 minutes to absorb.
- Bake uncovered for 30–35 minutes until golden brown and set.
- Serve warm, optionally with a drizzle of honey or a scoop of affordable vanilla ice cream if budget allows.
- golden brown and cooked through. You may need to fry in batches depending on the size of your pan.
- Once cooked, use a slotted spoon or tongs to transfer the chicken nuggets to a plate lined with paper towels to drain excess oil.

Note: This dessert feels like a warm hug after the skillet and can be made with what many already have at home, making it a true budget blessing.





FOOD

as a form of worship

Food nourishes more than the body, it can also feed the soul. In this heartfelt reflection, we explore how everyday meals, from simple pap to festive feasts, become acts of worship, gratitude, and divine connection.

We don't always count the hiss of onions exploding into hot oil or the sweet tug of kneaded bread as acts of worship. Maybe we should. Maybe, perhaps even, all the chopping, stirring, and plating we do, we're not just filling stomachs, we're worshipping Yaweh. Yes, even when the rice is overcooked a little, and the kids already complain. Life is quick these days. Supper is devoured between texting and rush hour traffic. Cooking is what we do because, well, we need to. But Scripture reminds us softly to take a moment and see more: holiness in the ordinary, the holy sandwiched between our wooden spoons and aprons.

A Divine Table

From the very beginning of the Bible, food is a string in God's story. Eden wasn't paradise, it was an all you can eat garden buffet (Genesis 1:29). Later, in the desert, God fed His people bread from heaven. Imagine, daily carbs, courtesy of heaven (Exodus 16). Jesus carried on the divine tradition of the meal. Meals dotted His ministry. He did not preach alone, He ate. He broke bread with outcasts (Luke 15:2), took a child's lunchbox and elevated it to an gourmet banquet (John 6:1-14), and established the New Covenant as a shared meal of Passover (Luke 22:19). Food, naturally, is more than sustenance. It's the love letter of God. And with every meal we take with thankful hearts, we're penning one in return. *"Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."* — **1 Corinthians 10:31**

When Stirring the Pot Becomes Biblical

I spend a fair bit of my life in the kitchen but my wife spends even more. We've both come to see it as a kind of sanctuary. Whether it's simmering a bean soup on a chilly Jozi night or deep-frying vetkoek for afternoon snacks, there's worship in the work. Sometimes my wife hums a hymn softly or plays her "Praise and Worship" Playlist on her phone while peeling potatoes. She always prays for whoever will be eating the meal. And sometimes when I prepare a meal I just sit in the quiet, knowing that by this small act of service, I am mirroring Christ, who washed dusty feet and distributed fresh bread. It is said, "The kitchen can be a cathedral."

Not for its marble countertops, but because love lives there. Grace bubbles and simmers there. And where love lives, so does God.

Holy Hospitality (With a Side of Pap)

If there's one thing we Africans are experts in, apart from the art of making an awesome braai spread, it's hospitality. It's in our blood. A Maguru neMatumbu simmering on a fire in Harare, a meal shared on the stoep in Polokwane, a midweek invitation for tea and ginger bread... We feed because we love. Romans 12:13 says to *"practice hospitality."* Not perfection. Not Pinterest or TikTok. Just showing up. True hospitality is not designer spreads or scripted dinners. It's opening your door, your fridge, and your heart. A cup of



rooibos can be as holy as a roast lamb dinner, if it's served in love. Remember Zacchaeus? A humble dinner with Jesus turned his entire life around (**Luke 19:1–10**). We may not be dining with tax collectors, but your dinner table might be someone's turning point.

Gratitude in the Messy Middle

Don't be too mushy about it, dinner is messy. The dishes pile up. The children spill juice. The potatoes are too mushy once more. But still, space for worship. Jesus, when He fed the five thousand, He thanked before the miracle happened (**John 6:11**). Gratitude wasn't the afterthought—it was the spark. Even if all you've got is pap and gravy or toast and tea, receiving it with gratitude transforms it. It becomes a quiet amen to God's provision. A whispered hallelujah over the stovetop.

Every Meal a Moment

Here's the thing: food is never just food. It's memory. It's legacy. It's the whispered voice of Gogo's recipes, the comfort of chicken soup on a sick day, the sacred stillness of grace before eating. So go ahead—light that candle, even on a plain uneventful Tuesday. Say the prayer, even if the little ones are already half-way through their chicken and chips. Invite someone over. Share what you've got. Bake double and bless your neighbour. Worship with your apron on and your hands full. Because food isn't just fuel. It's communion. It's connection. It's celebration. It's a way to say, "Thank You, Lord," with every mouthful.

"Give us this day our daily bread..." **Matthew 6:11**

And thank You, Lord, for every crumb.

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**Film:***The Forge***Director:**

Alex Kendrick

Producers:

Stephen Kendrick

Writers:Stephen Kendrick
Alex Kendrick**Starring:**Cameron Arnett, Priscilla Shirer
Aspen Kennedy, Karen
Abercrombie, T. C. Stallings,
B. J. Arnett, Ken Bevel,**Release date:**

August 23, 2024

Run Time:

125 minutes

As someone who has sat through over a dozen Christian films, some of which are inspiring and others less so, I did not approach *The Forge* expecting to be reduced to tears. I expected to be hopeful, perhaps get to see a neat redemption arc or stirring prayer moment. But what I received was something much more authentic, a film that doesn't just speak about discipleship but makes you experience the fire.

Directed by **Alex Kendrick** and featuring the familiar Kendrick Brothers cast, *The Forge* is the story of Isaiah Wright, delivered with surprising depth by newcomer **Aspen Kennedy**. He is a directionless young man with no job, no patience, and no relationship with his dad or his **God**. What begins as a second chance narrative gradually becomes a meaningful exploration of what it is to really grow up in **Christ**. It's not doing, or mimicking, but about being slowly and agonizingly remade.

The title of the film, *The Forge*, is telling. This is not going to be a tale of instant conversion; it's about forging iron, and that will never be a gentle thing.

Discipleship, Not Drama

At its fundamental level, *The Forge* is about discipleship, neither the churchy kind, but the kind that changes. It's the kind that deconstructs you so you can be rebuilt. It calls you out, walks with you, and doesn't allow you to remain the same. The film does not shy away from the cost. It starts with Isaiah stuck, relationally, spiritually, and emotionally. When he meets a local mentor through a church program, we don't immediately connect the dots. What we do get is an awkward, hesitant, and authentic conversation. That authenticity is what makes their relationship so captivating. It is the practical anchor of the movie, with brutal discussions, painful confessions, and a relentless move toward truth.

The *Proverbs 27:17* verse, "As iron sharpens iron..." is quoted, but it's lived more.

The movie accurately depicts the sharpening process on the screen without rushing. It's a slow walk of faith, faith that is forged.

Isaiah's change is the heart of the movie. He comes in as a self-assured, emotionally closed-off man who's suspicious of anything having to do with the church. But he's not made a villain, but rather a man shaped by pain, by struggle with his dad, and by feeling

overlooked. His final surrender to **God** isn't a grand conversion at an altar; it's a series of little deaths, a tearing down to be rebuilt. Edward Graham is the quiet strength mentor who rejects showy spectacle. He is not preachy; he is a seasoned man who will guide people through their tribulations. Their conversations are not between cinematic or smooth; they are stumbling, raw, and occasionally tense. This is precisely how discipleship should be. The secondary characters, like Isaiah's estranged father, his agnostic girlfriend, and the men in his discipleship group, provide depth. They all bring their own background, adding to the reminder that genuine transformation impacts every area of life.



If you're in the mood for instant action or surprise plot twists, that's not this kind of movie. *The Forge* progresses like a real discipleship process, slow, calculated, and sometimes painfully so. And yet there is depth in the silence. The story makes you wait and just sit with the tension. There is a theme of blacksmithing and flame, strong enough to cause you to understand that Isaiah is changing. It is not through chance,

but through sacrifice. One of the strongest things in the film is Isaiah's video diary. These are stark, sometimes raging, and often baffled, like our psalms today, "God, where Are You in this?" and "Am I changing or pretending?" Those are better memorised than any clip from a sermon could hope to be.

The movie wisely never ties everything up in a bow. Some of the wounds remain open, and some of the prayers go unanswered. Discipleship is not about arriving somewhere; it is about obeying, even when the fire continues to burn.

The Forge stands out especially by speaking to the present. It addresses a generation of men with absent fathers, broken men, and a culture that identifies manhood with toughness or remoteness. Instead of adding to the noise, it gives a gentle but challenging message. Be known. Be sharpened. For young Christian men, particularly for those who seek more than shallow behaviour control, this movie is a must. It speaks against toxic ideals without screaming. It displays servant leadership unapologetically

and acknowledges that this process is far from smooth.

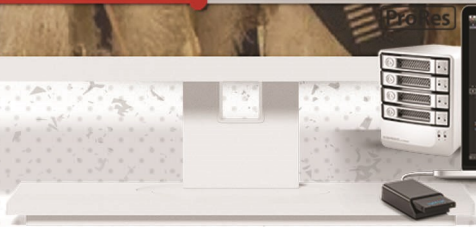
There's a moment when Isaiah confesses his exhaustion from trying to "look Christian" with no actual change. That hit close to home. Haven't we all done it? Pretending spiritual health, dancing around the flames, hoping for change without taking the initiative?

Final Thoughts: This One Stays With You

I've seen a lot of Christian movies that just set out to make you cry, applaud, or quote the Bible when you leave. But **The Forge** is not like that. It doesn't leave you with a fleeting high spiritually; it poses a question. Who is sharpening you? And who are you sharpening back? It's not flashy, and it doesn't always feel good, but it is reliable. And better yet, it is authentic. For the weary believer, the sceptical church-goer, and the young man who has yet to experience true discipleship—this film is a gentle challenge. It calls you back to the long, slow process of becoming like **Jesus**. In its quietness, **The Forge** reveals its true strength.



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Lights, Camera, Evangelism

For years Christian movies were mocked as cheesy and second-rate. So what if they're now some of the most powerful tools of evangelism the church has?

Be honest, Christian films haven't exactly been the best they could be. For decades, they were remembered more because of good motives than good story. But in the last ten years or so, something changed. The scripts became sharper, the stories more authentic, and the effect. It started appearing in lives being changed, conversations sparked, and hearts opened. Christian movies are quietly rising to become one of the most available and effective tools the church has in evangelism. And not because it's got a cross on the front, but

because they talk about faith using language this world can hear: story. So let's examine why these movies are significant and why we need to be taking notice.

1. They Address What We're All Struggling With

Life is complicated. And thankfully, so are the stories we're seeing on Christian screens. No more sugar-coated saints or cardboard villains. These movies are digging into real struggles, ones that mirror what

people carry into church (or keep them away from it). Take *Courageous* (2011), for instance. It tackled fatherhood and identity with gritty honesty, showing men wrestling with how to lead their families spiritually while dealing with personal failure and loss. *To Save a Life* (2009) went where few Christian films would dare to go, into the world of teen suicide, depression, and peer pressure, and dared the audience: what does it look like to really love the outcast?

And then *Sound of Freedom* (2023), an unexpected box office hit that addressed the global epidemic of child trafficking. It wasn't marketed as a "Christian" movie specifically, but its moral rhythm and redemptive arc spoke to faith communities around the world. Overnight, people who'd never crossed a church threshold were debating rescue, justice, and value. These films remind us that Christian storytelling doesn't need to avoid the world's pain, it just needs to offer hope in it.

2. They Tell Modern Parables

Jesus did not define **God** by passing out theology textbooks. He spoke in parables. About disobedient sons. Unjust bosses. Misplaced coins. Lost sheep and seeking shepherds. Why? Because parables stick. Christian films, when they're done well, do the same thing. They don't just tell you "**God is faithful**", they show you. They make you feel it. In *The Case for Christ* (2017), inspired by journalist-turned-apologist Lee Strobel's

own life story, we saw an atheist tracking the resurrection with the same cynicism with which many modern viewers approach faith.



Chrissy Metz and Marcel Ruiz in *Breakthrough*

These aren't lectures, they're truths lived out. Stories that bring doctrine out of the clouds and into living rooms, hospitals, courtrooms, classrooms, and dinner tables. They invite people to step into the story of God. And often, that's where it begins.

3. They're a Gentle Handshake, Not a Push

Believe it or not, Church is still foreign to many. Maybe they have a bad memory. Maybe they don't "do religion." But a movie? That's familiar. It's safe. It doesn't come with pressure or expectations. It just starts with, "Hey, want to watch something tonight?" That's why films like *Breakthrough* (2019), based on the true story of a boy who fell through ice and was miraculously revived after being dead for over an hour, resonate beyond the church walls. It doesn't open with theology. It begins with a frightened mother, a desperate prayer, and a miracle no one can explain. And suddenly, individuals

who never discuss religion are discussing prayer and the act of **God** over coffee the following morning.

Streaming has merely made it easier. The

Chosen, being technically a series of episodes more than a film, has been seen by millions who would never darken the doors of a Bible study, but will view episodes of **Jesus** healing lepers, challenging Pharisees, and cracking jokes with his disciples. It's there. It's interesting. And its evangelism no one ever realizes they're experiencing.

4. They Create Shared Moments

There's something electric about watching a story come to life with others of you, especially when that story stirs something spiritual. That's why Christian films aren't just being employed for personal motivation, but to help build community. Movie nights are now a standard on outreach calendars. Some churches screened *God's Not Dead* and followed it up with apologetics Q&A nights. Others used *Heaven Is for Real* to prompt grief support groups and conversations about eternity.



Thomas Hill and Hannah Scott in *Overcomer*

And don't miss *Overcomer*, an impetus for youth group discussion around identity, comparison, and purpose in *Christ*. Even outside the doors of those

traditional church buildings, these films give families and friends a chance to talk about stuff that matters. What does it mean to forgive the person who offended you so greatly? Can **God** really transform someone? What happens when we die? You don't need a theology degree to start these conversations.



Jonathan Roumie as Lonnie Frisbee in *Jesus Revolution*.

You just need a story that will make people lean in and ask, "What do you think?"

5. They Actually Work, In Real Life

And now for the result. Christian films are not just stirring hearts, they're changing lives. And the numbers verify it. Since the opening of *The Passion of the Christ* in 2004,

Easter crowds have been coming out in record numbers to churches worldwide. Thousands of people gave their lives to *Christ*. Talk of suffering, salvation, and what makes us human saturated airwaves and coffeehouses across the globe. *Mel Gibson's* divisive masterpiece reminded people that the crucifixion is not just a religious symbol, it's a graphic, flesh-and-blood offering.

Forward to *Jesus Revolution (2023)*, the film narrating the unlikely revival that swept across California in the '70s by preachers, hippies, and shattered people who found hope through *Christ*. Its theatrical release resulted in a wave of baptisms, rededications, and spiritual hunger across North America. Ministries experienced greater youth interest and campus ministries used the film as a door-opener for outreach. These aren't moments of inspiration, these are spiritual ripple effects. And they're proof that when stories intersect with truth, lives are transformed.

So... Should We Keep Making These Movies? Yes. Are Christian movies flawless? Not on your life. Some of them still struggle with production values. Some get preachy. And yes, some wrap things up a little too neatly. But don't throw the baby with the baptism water. Because when they do get it right, man, they get it right. They engage sceptic. They heal the hurting. They challenge the curious.

So when someone says, "*Christian movies are cheesy*," you might smile and say, "*Yes, some are. But they might also be the reason that someone will finally ask, 'Who is this Jesus?'*" And isn't that what evangelism is all about?

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+27 73 114 3092 / +27 83 278 2344

lynnett@leemlifestyle.com
www.leemlifestyle.com

Birchleigh, Kempton Park, JHB, Gauteng

THE WRITER'S BLOCK

In our continuing efforts to evangelise and share the gospel and how God is working in our lives, we invite you to share your talents and experiences with other readers through the medium of storytelling and poetry. If you are an aspiring, budding or experienced author or poet, please read through our submission guidelines below and in addition we advise that you subscribe to our social media feeds. We regularly update them with the sort of work we are looking for and give writing prompts for story ideas. Please note that all submissions are made on speculation; we cannot guarantee publication.

How to Prepare Your Manuscript

- ***Taqa Magazine*** is a free offering and all of its staff are volunteers, therefore ***Taqa does not pay for Short Fiction, Flash or poetry contributions.*** However as circulation increases we have plans to change the policy. For now credit the author with a profile on our website and social media feeds.
 - o Poetry should be 1,000 words or less.
 - o Non Fiction anecdotes must be up to 500 words.
 - o Short story prose should be between 1 000 – 1 200 words, no more.
 - o We are a Christian magazine so submitted content, has to have to have a Christian theme. The main requirement however, is that the content should enlighten the reader. An enlightening story does not suggest that difficult and trying events do not occur in a story. Challenging subjects can be dealt with, but there must be an optimistic purpose and conclusion in its telling. With our eclectic audience I believe it goes without saying that all submissions contain - no graphic violence, crude language including curse words, or explicit sex.

Please familiarise yourself with the content of our previous issues and our website (www.taqamagazine.online). You will get to appreciate the motivation and mission of the magazine.

- o Short fiction submitted to the magazine must be original and previously unpublished. ***Taqa*** considers work that has appeared online (including on blogs and Facebook) to be previously published. Simultaneous submissions to other publications are acceptable. However, if your work is accepted elsewhere first, please withdraw your submission.

All manuscripts must be typed in English, Double-spaced and sent as Microsoft Word (.doc, .docx) or Open Document Text (.odt) attachment:

Set font size to 12 and use Ariel font.

- o Include the author's name, Email address, phone number, short bio (200 words or

less), written in 3rd person. You can include a personal high-resolution colour photo (1-5 megabytes is sufficient), but this is optional.

- o Approximate word count at the top of the first page, and numbered throughout.
- o We do not accept novel excerpts.
- o There are no submission deadlines, unless there is a specifically stated deadline for a themed issue. We receive submissions on a rolling basis and notify on a rolling basis.

As previously stated, at this time, there is no payment due to the author for acceptance/publication. Contributors will receive credit in the magazine and may be promoted on our social media and website.

If your work has already been accepted, we will send you an e-mail when we publish the issue that contains your work. If you haven't heard from us yet, don't worry. We will read your work and get back to you.

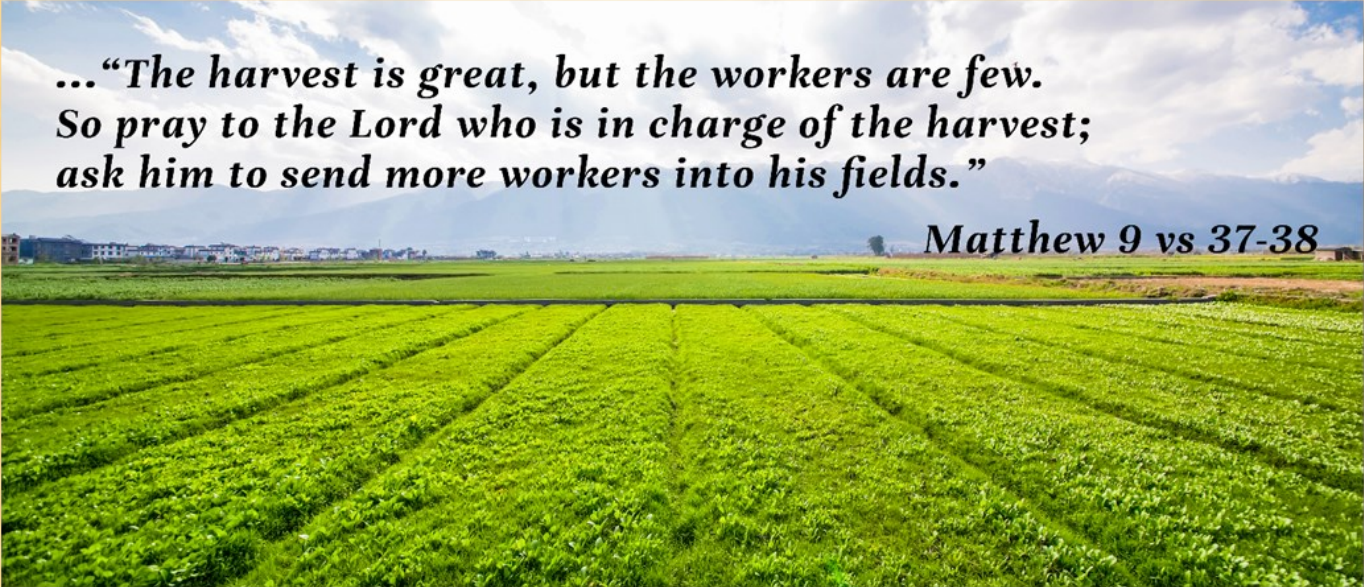
How to Submit

Email your manuscript as an attached file to lynnett@taqamagazine.online

- The editor may request revisions to the submission to better fit the goals of the particular issue and the interest of our readers.

Please allow 2 weeks for a response to submissions or queries

NB: ***Taq Magazine*** Reserves the right to make minor copy editing changes to the manuscript. Any major editorial changes will require author's approval prior to publication.



***...“The harvest is great, but the workers are few.
So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest;
ask him to send more workers into his fields.”***

Matthew 9 vs 37-38

Saving Like Saints

*In an age where rands seem to vanish faster than ice on a Joburg summer pavement, wise stewardship is no longer optional, it's essential. Today the **Penny Pincher** blends humor, scripture, and street-smart hacks to show how faith and frugality can walk hand in hand without losing joy.*

Welcome to another episode of “How Not to Panic at the Till.” In a world where the cost of living is rising faster than a helium balloon in a Joburg summer, saving money has become a spiritual discipline. Forget just budgeting and buying no-name brands, those are so 2020. It's time to channel your inner **Proverbs 31** hustler and get serious about stewarding your rands like they're the last slices of banana bread after church. So buckle up, folks, zip up that fanny pack (yes I'm from that generation), pour yourself some home-brewed rooibos, and join us on a slightly sanctified, seriously practical journey through some uniquely faithful ways your family can save money without selling your last goat. Let's dive in.

1. The Blessings Swap: It's Like Thrifting, but Holier

Got three salad spinners but no kids' jackets? Or maybe you've been praying for a kettle that doesn't wheeze like an asthmatic squirrel? Host a *Blessings Exchange*— basically a no-cash, no-stress, neighbourly loot swap. “Give, and it will be given to you...” — **Luke 6:38**

Invite friends, church members, or neighbours to bring clean, usable items. Make it fun: a table for toys, one for kitchen stuff, one for clothes—labelled and sorted like God intended. Let the kids pick what to donate themselves. It's generosity training.

2. The “No-Buy Month” Challenge (A.K.A. Financial Lent)

Think of this as fasting for your wallet. Pick one month where you only buy essentials—bread, meds, petrol, toilet paper (the good kind). Everything else? Off the table. “Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil.” — **Proverbs 15:16**

Slap a sticker chart on the fridge to track no-spend days. Turn your living room into an entertainment zone—card games, popcorn, movie night (DVDs from 2007 still count). Reflect each week on what you didn't miss as much as you thought you would.

3. Tech-Free Sundays: God > Screens

Unplug those devices before they drain your soul and your electricity bill. Once a week, reconnect with your people—and the

One who made them. *“Be still, and know that I am God.” — Psalm 46:10*

Take a walk after church. Or nap—equally biblical. Journal, read scripture, draw, or sing (off-key counts). Calculate how much you saved on Wi-Fi and Eskom that day. Bonus points if the kids didn't ask for YouTube once.

4. DIY Repair Night: The Family That Fixes Together... Saves Together

Why hire someone to fix a wobbly chair when you have YouTube and a willing 10-year-old? Teach your kids the difference between a wrench and a potato peeler—and save cash in



the process.

“Work with your hands, just as we told you.” — 1 Thessalonians 4:11. Fix one thing per week—taps, buttons, broken remote covers. Assign family roles: foreman, tool-fetcher, snack coordinator. Keep a “fix-it” box and slowly build your family toolkit.

5. The Pantry Challenge: Grocery Store Who?

Before your next Checkers trip, raid your own fridge like a starving bear in winter. This is your quarterly *Pantry Challenge Week*—no grocery shopping allowed. *“Let nothing be wasted.” — John 6:12*

Make it a cooking game: *“What can we create from two cans of beans, pasta, and half a carrot?”* Google “pantry challenge recipes” or make up your own (who's judging?). Write down how much you saved and reward yourselves with... not takeout.

6. The Holy Barter Network

Trade your talents for others'. You braid my daughter's hair, I fix your printer. It's not just old-school—it's biblical. *“Use whatever gift you have received to serve others.” — 1 Peter 4:10*

Post a list of your family's skills on your church

“Have a weekly brainstorm session over breakfast. Assign roles: marketing, finances, quality control (read: tasting the muffins).”

bulletin board or WhatsApp group. Create a “skills swap circle” with friends, everyone wins, and no one’s broke. Teach your teens that favours are worth more than fomo.

7. Use-It-Up Mode: The Fast and the Frugal

Before you rush to buy that next lotion, candle, or bag of rice, ask yourself, “Do I have one already hiding behind the canned peaches from 2020?” You probably do. “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much.” — **Luke 16:10** Create a “Use-It-Up Basket” for toiletries or pantry odds. Turn leftovers into a weekly “Frankenmeal.” Repurpose where you can: old T-shirts = dust cloths; candle stubs = new candles.



8. Staycation Nation: Holiday Vibes, Home Edition

Don’t blow the family budget trying to impress Instagram. Build memories, not debt. Home is where the fun is, if you’re clever about it. “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” — **1 Timothy 6:6** Theme your days: “Italian Day” with pizza-making and bad accents, “Camping Night” in the lounge. Explore free local events, libraries, nature reserves, pop-up festivals. Make a “passport” with stickers and photos

for each day. Instagram who?

9. Liquid Gold: Collect Rain Like a Boss

God provides rain, so catch it. Use it. Celebrate it. Especially when your water bill looks like it’s been possessed by demons. “The Lord will open the heavens... to send rain on your land.” — **Deuteronomy 28:12** Start with large buckets under gutters or repurposed containers. Use water for plants, mopping, or flushing. Teach the kids where water comes from, and why we shouldn’t waste it.

10. Family Business: Hustle in His Name

Every kid is a CEO in the making. Whether it’s muffins, tutoring, car washes, or beadwork, start something small that teaches grit, faith, and financial smarts. “She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.” — **Proverbs 31:17** Have a weekly brainstorm session over breakfast. Assign roles: marketing, finances, quality control (read: tasting the muffins). Use profits to save, give, and maybe (just maybe) splurge on a small family treat.

The Final Amen: Saving with Soul

The journey to financial health doesn’t have to begin with drastic measures. Often, it’s the quiet, faithful decisions made around the kitchen table or in the garden that create lasting change. Saving money isn’t just smart, it’s spiritual. Stewardship isn’t about scarcity; it’s about wisdom, generosity, and trust that our Jehovah Jireh really does provide. So go forth, dear saints of the spreadsheet. Embrace the weird. Share the wins. And let your frugal flag fly high, not just for your budget, but for the glory of **God**.

We Create It.

You Dream It.



**Native Aliens
MEDIA**

+27 64 811 5344

+27 78 835 3036

alvin@nativealiens.co.za

www.nativealiens.co.za

Expert Graphic Design Studio

*“So be content with who you are, and don’t put on airs. **God’s** strong hand is on you; he’ll promote you at the right time. Live carefree before **God**; he is most careful with you. .”*

Proverbs 3 vs 5-6

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+27 78 036 9682

lynnett@taqamagazine.online

www.taqamagazine.online