

Hidden Heroes

(Of the Bible)

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A few words...

Hi there! I'm Adesina Henrie (of course you already know that). Well, when I started to write about these people in the bible that we so easily forget, it wasn't to publish it. As I read their hidden stories, I found a mark of greatness we often overlook when reading the word of God. And suddenly, I didn't just see black ink on white paper. I saw their disappointments and encouragements; saw the scenes play right before my eyes and I just knew someone else had to see this. Inspired by the Holy Spirit I started to look for these stories because they inspire me. And I hope they inspire you too. Please it's not just for the Christians, anyone can learn from them. I pray God's Spirit guides and assists everyone who reads this.

I'm an avid reader and believer in the power of the individual person to do good. I'm still learning about a lot but I also believe that very soon with the combined efforts of all of us nations like Nigeria will rise above the challenges besetting us.

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Woman at Shunem (2 Kings 4:8-37)

Undoubtedly, a woman worthy of emulation, she saw a need in Elisha's ministry and promptly allowed herself to be the person to be used to fulfill that need of housing Elisha's feet.

Core strengths

- Hospitality and Wisdom:

She was the perfect host; she knew just how to speak with her husband to convince him to build a room for Elisha.

- Contentment:

When asked for a favor to be done for her, a good word to the commander of the army or the king himself, she replied in essence, "Thank you, but I am living happily among my people."

- Faith:

After she got a son from the LORD he fell ill and died. Instead of complaining and cursing Elisha, she kept her calm and walked in faith, believing that God who gave her the child can bring him back. V 23

- Perseverance:

She could have left Elisha's place after he sent Gehazi to place his staff on the boy's head but didn't. She understood the need for faith and the need for persistence. Having come with the mindset that she was to leave with Elisha she stayed and her request was granted. V30

- Appreciation:

To cap it all, she knew to be grateful. Following her son's resurrection, she bowed in thanks and left- a mark of humility and an ego-free mind. V37

Scarlet Landlady in the Wall

(Josh 2; 6:22-25)

Rahab—industrious, smart and a woman of foresight. She was bold enough not to trust in the strongest of walls. Jericho's Great Wall of China looking wall was made of two layers which combined were about 32 to 41 feet high. A modern day illustration of the height would be about a 4 storey building, the walls were so thick people built houses **IN** them. An example of such person was Rahab. No AKs could break this down.

Risking her life to help the spies, she enacted a promise from them so she could be certain of the preservation of not just her life but her family and co. (oh, what selflessness!). She was as selfless as we're called to be. Because she believed in the God of Israel, she was not soon forgotten, God honored a faith in Him so much, and He made her an ancestor of His own Son, Jesus. Can God honor your faith so much as to make a move like that?

At the set time of Israel's conquest, the men fulfilled their promise, sparing all her family in the midst of the carnage. Commitment to our words is important in relationship building.

When asked why she did it, forsake her people to become an Israelite, with what I'll imagine to be a quick wit and warm smile she said, "We heard how the Lord dried up the Red Sea before you when you came from Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two Amorite kings you destroyed completely. When we heard this, we lost heart, and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on earth below." Josh 2:10, 11

Iron Lady

Dashingly beautiful and incredibly brave, this heroine almost brought a nation to a stop with her good looks and charm. Unfortunately though we don't hear much about this Iron Lady, Mrs. Rebekah Isaac.

Core Strengths:

Kind and Hospitable:

She gets her first mention when Abraham's servant went to search for a wife for his master's young son. At the end of his long journey, he asked God to make his job of matchmaking easier. Sweet, maybe petite looking and soft sounding Rebekah came out and gave him a drink-then proceeded to water his camels, all ten of them! This was before Lagos Water Corp. so you have an idea what it must have been like. This lady was strong!

Loyal and trustworthy:

When you hear bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, think of her. During a famine she followed her hubby to relocate to greener pastures (which in itself is not an easy task but a necessary one if you wanna live). While in the new land, Isaac told the people she was his sister in order to protect his life from the danger of them killing him in order to have her. She went along with the ruse and luckily for the people there, Isaac was found out by the king. (His father had performed the same trick to those folks and God promised to destroy the then king and even stopped the women from conceiving!).

Self-sacrificing:

If you don't live for something you'll die for nothing. She was ready to live-or die for something. After being told beforehand by God the latter days of her children and what was to happen she did all she could to ensure it did happen. Yes, the Esau-Jacob fiaseo. Esau was not chosen to be the heir of Abraham, Jacob was. A look at the chain of events shows how the deal went down. Esau already sold his birthright to Jacob for a plate of steaming meal when he was starving. When the time came for blessings to be passed it was Rebekah, not Jacob that first knew of it. Even then, Jacob was not so interested in being blessed but she pushed him to it. With quick responses and resourcefulness she devised a way to secure God's promise about Jacob. However, there was a catch, if they were caught Isaac would place a curse on Jacob and that would've have been a grade A+ nasty. She however was willing and ready to take the curse on his behalf that takes courage I tell ya. I pray God connects us to those who will set us up for success and be

willing to do all to secure our success in Jesus name.

Wise and Resourceful:

Also, when Esau heard it, he wasn't too pleased and thought killing Jacob would be nice enough. Yet again, she heard of it and in a very stealthy and resourceful way, got Isaac to send Jacob far away where he could escape from Esau. Pray that God causes us to always escape trouble.

She did all these things coupled with the stress of running a home and thinking of what's to eat for tonight's dinner!

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The Mrs. Fool who wasn't A Fool

1 Sam 25

Okay so maybe her surname is a bit funny. But I bet you Mrs. Abigail Nabal is as resourceful as they come. Abigail means "Father's joy/Father rejoiced", while her husband a descendant of Caleb named Nabal means "Fool".

She saved her husband and all the men in his household from sure death at the hands of David. Nabal had refused to help David with foodstuff during sheep shearing time. This was after David *actively* protected the shepherds (from animals and whatnot) while they were in the field. He also kept his boys from taking any animal.

Core Strengths:

Foresight and Intelligence:

Verses 18, immediately she heard her husband's foolishness, she packed enough food to feed a small army and went in search of David to placate him. She knew he'd make good on his promise to kill all the males in the house, after having seen and heard about Goliath and the Philistines, she wasn't about to doubt.

After getting the provisions, her intelligence shows here. She didn't lead the provisions at the front but followed behind through a hidden mountain pass (v20). From her hidden view, she could see David and know whether it was safe or not to approach him.

Diplomacy: *Imagine someone tried to kill you, twice, three close times and you escaped. And you had an opportunity to kill him but didn't. Half-starved and extremely angered you found someone who you swore to kill just after narrowly escaping death a few hours before.*

How many people do you think can stop you? Not many right? Well, you've not met Abigail yet. David was in this same position but after Abigail spoke with him, he saw reason and said, "Praise to LORD God of Israel, who sent you to meet me today! Your discernment is blessed, and you are blessed. Today you kept me from participating in bloodshed and avenging myself" (32-33)

See why I said she's no fool? Well, Nabal did die but not by David's hands. He had a seizure the next day, became paralyzed and died 10 days later (v37, 38).

David later married the wise Abigail.

Syrophoenician

Here's a wise lady from Syrophoenicia, such a tongue twister that word. I think it's pronounced sigh-ro-fo-ni-ci-an. Now her story is found in Mark 7:24-30 and she costars with the greatest of the greats-Jesus Christ Himself. Please read it, just six verses. Now picture she's about to ask Jesus' healing of her daughter from a spirit.

Core Strengths:

Unashamed/Brave:

Jews weren't big on socializing with other tribes, even their half-brothers from Samaria. She didn't mind this fact when going to meet Jesus, a Jew. She went and kept asking. Some translations say she was importunate-asking to the point of annoying. (Sounds like the widow from one of Jesus' parables).

Calm, collected and wise:

After she got a 'no' in a seemingly cold manner she didn't flare up and get angry at Him. She replied wisely, but before we talk about the reply, let's analyze the 'no'

Jesus told her, "Allow the children to be satisfied first, because it isn't right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs."

That seems like cause for trouble but let's take a look at it, the kingdoms around didn't serve God and were one way or the other always causing His people to sin against Him. In that sense, they didn't allow His people to be free and we're like...

The Israelites all the way from Abraham to the Jews were God's elite, His special people among the entire nations so...

You might have skipped this but, "Allow the children to be satisfied **first...**" Even though she was not yet a part of God's special people, He hinted that she'd still be blessed but with patience exercised.

Oh, verse 24 says Jesus went there not looking to draw attention or work miracles. Yet, in spite of this, He forsook plan A and helped because that's how He is.

Now, back to the story...

She wisely replied that even the dogs get crumbs from the children. That was smart and leads to the next point.

Faith:

She believed that even a tiny crumb of the bread Jesus gives would be enough to heal her suffering daughter. Jesus was moved by her faith. He told her to go and see her daughter healed and that's how it was.

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Specials on Service

Now we're about to meet two sets of heroes. Their stories are short but the lessons are profound and touching. Please imagine yourself right there and soak up the emotions, feelings, the mild Palestine sun's heat, and even the hunger (well not too much of this). First up is

The Lad (Teen) who shared

His story is found in John 6:4-13 and he also co-stars with Jesus and other disciples. Jesus had just finished healing the sick and there was a crowd 5,000 strong with Him. Having compassion on them, He decided to feed them but there was no bread or a place to buy in the wilderness. This teen gave up what I suspect to be his lunch as a contribution most likely for Jesus and His disciples to eat. I don't think he had the faintest idea what was about to happen.

Core Strength:

Service:

Service comes in more than one way. Basically, it is giving to others out of what you have. It brings satisfaction and true happiness to the giver when it is done from the heart. That's why the giver enjoys a bit more because experiencing such happiness is something all Central Bank's money cannot buy right now (did you say recession?), or ever. Yet simply helping your roommate from the depth of your heart can give it to you.

The boy cheerily gave 5 loaves of barley bread and two fish. Phillip (Jesus' disciple) had estimated about ₦2706.27 worth of bread would be almost enough for everyone to eat a little (Yes, the figure is correct, I did my math. But the way naira is fluctuating now eh... well its ₦7 sha). The five loaves and two fish would cost under ₦50. So picture this, Jesus was able to feed 5,000 plus people in the wilderness and still have 12 baskets surplus with less than ₦50 bread and fish!!

All this because a guy your age gave up his lunch. Wow! That should tell you, whatever you have, isn't too small for God to use. Offer your services bag. *wink*

The Four Musketeers plus One

Their story is in Mark 2:1-11. Here Jesus was in Capernaum. He was sort of hiding because like some of our modern day celebs, He couldn't walk out in the day without people

asking for autographs and all that. The rush was not always comfortable for His work. So in a room, in Capernaum He was teaching when four men carrying their friend on a mat, let him down through the roof unto the floor in front of Jesus.

Core Strength

Service and Perseverance:

Here service is seen in them giving themselves to a friend. We've established service is not only in material things. Here is an example. They gave their time, resources (the mat and ropes) and energy to getting this man his miracle. I'd like to see your comments on how you'd feel if you were one of his friends when you saw him get his miracle. I know I'd be very happy. That's service; big or small, service given willingly ALWAYS comes with joy.

They also had perseverance, not being discouraged by the crowd they had to face even to the point they cut the thatch roof, that's determination! I pray for God's grace for us to be determined to do the right things.

Me. You. We.

See now here are some of my favorite heroes. They mostly bear familiar names. They're all around. Their story is pretty much summarized by these words from 2 Cor 3: 2

"You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts recognized and read by everyone."

These heroes are me, you and we and I'm not talking to just those who profess same faith. We stand in the midst of a multitude, all unique individuals and the moment we realize that the moment the magic begins.

Superman can fly, Martin Luther King Jr can give killer speeches and hold rallies, and Gandhi's excellent at peacefully overthrowing governments, your parent, friend or relative might be extremely good at standing up for others while you're just you. That's the beauty of being a hidden hero; you don't have to do some mind boggling thing like paying the bills. Great things are made of small ones. And if there's one thing all heroes have in common whether small or great, it's the ability to touch lives. Great things are made of small ones. The greatest way to impact someone is not waiting to do something big.

It's slowly depositing small things. Not necessarily by writing a piece or giving a talk but by listening empathically, lending a helping hand, paying for lunch or just being there.

And you know one more thing? No hero ever loses his reward, not now, not then.

"...And whoever gives just a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he's a disciple -I assure you: he will never lose his reward!" Matt 10:42

The Father of Him

Matt 1:18-24; 2:13-23

Have you ever thought of how you sometimes spend an obnoxious amount of time looking for what was on the center table? Or maybe looking for your glasses while they were on your head?

That's similar to this hero of faith here. He gets overlooked a lot but his name can never be wiped from the history books, especially at this Christmas time, give it up ladies and gentlemen for the one, and only Joseph the Humble Carpenter!

Core Strengths:

- **Righteous & Tenderhearted:**

In ancient Israel virginity was a treasured virtue. It was a must have before marriage. So imagine young Jo, a good Jew who obeyed God to the core, finding out his fiancé was pregnant. I see him hurt and badly confused, "Did she ever love me?" "Why would Mary do this to me?" "I thought she was who she claimed to be." Or "I'll never trust another woman again."

In that kind of pain, he could have done something rash and publicly disgraced the innocent Virgin Mary. Perhaps remembering what God was like in His faithfulness and forgiveness, young Jo secretly ended the engagement. He was kind enough to value her image even after he thought she hurt him in the worst way imaginable.

- **Faith:**

"Joseph, Son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived by her is by the Holy Spirit."

Now, after heartbroken Jo had divorced the love of his life, he gets a dream that reveals she's innocent and he should go ahead and marry her. That takes faith. He could have brushed it aside as a hallucination or chickened out to protect his reputation but he didn't. His faith stood so firm that after he was warned in another dream to flee the country, he left to a foreign land without hesitation; possibly with no money or enough preparation for eloping.

- **Protective:**

When he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there but being warned in a dream, he withdrew to Galilee. Matt 2:22

Fearing for the safety of his family, he did not want to go where they could be hurt.

Coupled with his patience and concern for Jesus when He was left in the temple, young Jo grew up to be one of the best fathers ever.

The Generous Gazelle

Acts 9:36-42

Central to the Christian faith is the principle of giving; after all, we've been given the best gift for free, salvation through Christ Jesus.

Modelled after the underlying principles of Jesus' words "It is more blessed to give than to receive", history has recorded some awe-inspiring and sometimes unimaginable levels of giving. How else would you explain Solomon's sacrifice of over 142,000 animals or Jesus letting go of immortality to be mortal, in order to save us. Up there on the list of The Early Christians' Givers Club is today's heroine, Dorcas.

Tabitha, also translated Dorcas means the gazelle. She was an early disciple in the quiet town of Joppa where she sold purple linen (expensive stuff in those days).

She was a charitable person who took care of widows and was the exact opposite of that guy from [Peculiar Sight](#).

Core Strength

Charity:

Dear Tabitha got terminally ill at some point and died. Now, so great was her impact on her surrounding that after her death, the disciples at Joppa did not immediately bury her.

Instead, her life of giving had so inspired in them the power of faith that they believed God could raise her back. I believe their collective faith was the key factor in her resurrection when Peter came.

The Joppa Christians immediately called for Peter who was in a nearby town. On arriving, her lifestyle of giving testified for her before Peter as he was bombarded with clothes and other relief materials that Tabitha had provided for the widows.

Moved by her level of giving, Peter knelt down and prayed to God for a reversal. Based on the faith of both Peter and Joppa Christians, God overlooked the law that says, "It is appointed for man to die once" by raising Dorcas from the dead.

When last did you do something selfless for others?