

GUIDED RETREAT

THE KEY TO SOARING IN ANY GIVEN YEAR

WRITTEN BY

HEPHZIBAH FRANCES

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okorofrances@gmail.com

www.hephzibahfrances.com

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Email: Beautifulfeetpublishing@gmail.com

Tel: +2347035539092

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DEDICATION

*To everyone saying yes to birthing a new season, year after year
after year.*

*We will not stop. We will not give up. We will live in the fullness
of every year God has for us. And we will mount up on wings of
an eagle and soar.*

PREFACE

I am finally doing it. I am finally putting pen to paper to talk about what has consistently changed my life since year 2016 when God introduced it to me. This game changer is not such a secret as it is the title of this book. It is the simple but not so simple practice and habit called ***retreat***.

God first introduced me to the concept of retreat in 2016 but as I think about it now, a majority of what I did in 2015 was also retreat; locking up myself in my small youth corper room while praying and studying my Bible for hours. But in 2016 it became more distinct because it required me to leave where I am domiciled to another place to seek the Lord's face. I went to Ekiti State from Lagos State where I was living at the time to do nothing but spend time in fasting and prayer. I didn't know what God was doing with it but I stayed alone in fasting and prayer thinking I was fasting for a job but it was really for an advancement in destiny. At the end of that time, I returned back to "normal life" to find that I would speak at meetings and the power of God would fall. I had clarity of direction also as I released the book ***Prayers for your future husband*** in that season that quickly became a bestseller and took on a life of its own being publicized by strangers I didn't even know. My work with youths also took on a life of its own with revival being strung all around schools we went to, volunteers popping up

from everywhere to do the work. At the end of that year we had multiple doors for ministry open to us in different parts of the Nation where before we had only ever reached the city of Lagos. God Himself expanded our (me and my ministry's coast) and spread our works across the earth. All glory to His name alone. But when I look back on that season, I can trace the explosions to beginning from my retreat.

That has not been the only time this has happened to me.

In 2017 God called me away for a 40 days' retreat with Him at Calabar. Again it required me traveling from my state to Calabar to do nothing but sit at God's feet in word and prayers.

At the end of that time, I had my gift of writing fiction opened to me; I suddenly began to write fiction books with no one teaching me how to do it... God changed my name to Hephzibah, increased the anointing upon me and again ministry exploded to a new dimension by the time I came back from my retreat.

2019, Jesus Himself anointed me after a time of retreat at Ibadan (where I actually also received this book you are reading right now).

November 2019 God gave me favor for more Nations at a retreat at the city of Jos.

2020 three Nations opened up to me immediately after my retreat plus God gave me the scepter of [Deborah](#).

2022 the power of the Holy Ghost increased upon me with open doors to several cities in different Nations of the earth.

Every time I have advanced further in destiny, there has been, prior to that, a calling away to retreat and to spend time in God's presence.

I like to see it as the usual way of the kingdom being upside down. To get ahead, you have to slow down. To receive speed, you have to be delayed first of all – to be delayed in the presence of the Lord but after all is said and done; you would be shot as an arrow out of the bow of God Himself.

If you can consistently pay the price of what I would be teaching you in this book, you would see your life flourish year after year after year.

Now come along with me to learn a few things...

INTRODUCTION

My pull to the secret place for a retreat would usually begin gradually. Perhaps from a season of longing for God in more ways than I have ever felt before, or a season of dissatisfaction, or a call to fast, or a push to set more time aside in the secret place, or a season where I just know God Himself wants to exit me from an old season into a new one. It usually starts as a faint voice because let's face it, our flesh screams for hearing and do not really take too kindly to being shut away with God. But mostly for me, I can hear Him calling me if I just listen more intently.

I have never received a call to a retreat from the outside; it has always come from within as the Spirit bid me *come*.

I remember in 2017 when we had a ministry meeting with the theme *Bring me back to loving You*. I was the convener but at the end of the meeting, as I led prayers of repentance for falling away from our first love and letting other things cloud our sense of priority, I felt convicted by the Holy Spirit also. Right there I felt Him saying to me to come away to Calabar for a retreat with Him. Over the next week He continued to speak to me, "come for God encounters with me". That was when I found the book by James and Michal Goll titled *God encounters*. Even as I struggled with this decision to obey God, I woke one morning with the scripture, "lest after preaching to others I become a castaway" (see 1st Corinthians 9:27). I had preached to others to

place Jesus first as priority in their lives, now He was asking me to do the very same thing I preached and I found myself stalling. That scripture cemented my obedience and indeed 2017 retreat became a God encounter for me.

In 2019 I sensed I was entering into a new season, again there was that call from the inside “come away to Jos for a ten-day retreat with me”. I struggled for days with this till I was worshipping with the song *Yeshua* by Upperroom one day and I felt God say to me in the words of scripture “*why do you call me Lord, Lord, if you will not do what I say?*” I packed up my bags that day and took a night bus to Jos. And what a reward waited for me there, God elevated me by giving me three Nations from that retreat. Indeed, there is always a price to pay for the elevation from God we seek and that price is obedience.

I am trying to show you who may be wondering even as you read this book, “but how do I know that God is calling me to a retreat?” is a retreat my church’s call to fast and pray?

Your church’s call for fast and prayer at the start of the year or at any other time may or may not be God’s call personally to you. Though it may help kick start your obedience. A church I went to at the beginning of 2022 which was about to start a fast, helped cement my obedience to fast also when God was calling my attention to spend more time with Him so as to enter into a new season. But I heard the call first within me before it came from the outside.

The call to retreat would come from God to you. This call is Him signaling a new season for you. A new season of going deeper so you can come up higher. God is not doing you evil by telling you

to drop the busyness and sit still in the silence because that is how you rise up as an eagle and fly.

You must learn to decode the signs when God is saying “come away with me and rest a while”. Sometimes we wait till we are burnt out, never taking the time to be replenished in God’s presence. Consequently, our vision is stale and we live far below that which God has for us. My aim with this book is to get you to learn to live life from within. To live your life by God’s voice – God’s voice not only speaking to you about what to do but also speaking to you about retreating and seemingly doing nothing when all the while it is in doing nothing that you rise up and soar.

WHY RETREAT?

“And He said to them, “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.”

-Mark 6:31

So many times God Himself is giving us advice like the scripture we see above but we never listen to Him. We calculate the time we would lose by just sitting in God’s presence and we say no. I

want to go fast. I want to hit the ground running. I don't have the time to take time out to seek God's face. God is always right so He says if that's what you want to do, you would find it all blow up on your face (paraphrased). The journey you set out on without seeking God's face never ends well.

In this book, I hope that you would listen, take notes and actually implement as the way you live your life from here on out. And chose the way of waiting to mount up as an eagle and fly.

***“But those who wait on the LORD Shall
renew their strength; They shall mount
up with wings like eagles, They shall run
and not be weary, They shall walk and
not faint.”***

-Isaiah 40:31

For every time I have heeded the voice of the Lord to say yes to waiting, quietly retreating in prayer, be it seven days or forty days or more, I have also experienced tremendous speed, help, favor and increase in return such as I didn't have before I waited on Him.

Waiting on the Lord in retreats is a discipline that is profitable for all time, if you are able to obey God, drop the things that

threaten your time with God and begin small you would see results,

Sometimes these results are more within before they are without, I remember coming back from my 2019 retreat, my elder brother looking at me and just saying “you have changed”. That was such a testament to the work God had done in me. I remember at that retreat the Holy Spirit leading me to pray for purity of heart and cleansing. And God Himself answered.

I want to introduce you to a way of life, such that whenever you feel the tugs of the Holy Spirit to come away with Him for a while, you would say **“yes”**.

CHAPTER 1

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A NEW SEASON

God's New season always starts at night.

-Pst Bemigho Omayuku

The announcement of a new season by God is always followed by a call to hide deeper in Him.

If you remember the story about Elijah in the Bible (please see 1st Kings 19) God actually called Elijah to a forty days' retreat, after which He then gave him a set of instructions for his next season.

"But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." Then he looked, and there by his head

was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again.

And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you."

So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.

And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an

***earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake;
and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.***

So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria.

Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill.

***Yet I have reserved seven thousand in
Israel, all whose knees have not bowed
to Baal, and every mouth that has not
kissed him."***

-1st Kings 19:4-18

New seasons are not automatic. Meaning, you do not just step into a new season just because you sensed it or it was announced to you by the Lord. No. there is usually some spiritual warfare to overcome that gets you promoted and qualified to step into your new so if you do not love retreating with God, it means you love staying stagnant in old seasons. You get to choose which you love or want more and pay the price for that. Whether a new season, which would have you pressing deeper into God or to stay in old seasons which would have you paying the price of stagnancy and repeating seasons. You choose.

Let's look at another example in this which is our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Luke chapter four we see this same pattern play out in Jesus' life as He stepped into a new season of beginning His ministry.

***"When all the people were baptized, it
came to pass that Jesus also was
baptized; and while He prayed, the
heaven was opened.
And the Holy Spirit descended in***

bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli,..."

-Luke 3:21-23

Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.""

Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I

give it to whomever I wish.

***Therefore, if You will worship before me,
all will be Yours."***

And Jesus answered and said to him,

***"Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written,
"You shall worship the LORD your God,
and Him only you shall serve.""***

***Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set
Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and
said to Him, "If You are the Son of God,
throw Yourself down from here.***

***For it is written: "He shall give His
angels charge over you, To keep you,'
and, "In their hands they shall bear
you up, Lest you dash your foot against
a stone.""***

And Jesus answered and said to him,

***"It has been said, "You shall not tempt
the LORD your God.""***

***Now when the devil had ended every
temptation, he departed from Him until
an opportune time.***

***Then Jesus returned in the power of
the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him
went out through all the surrounding
region.***

***And He taught in their synagogues,
being glorified by all.***

***So He came to Nazareth, where He
had been brought up. And as His***

custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

-Luke 4;1-21

An announcement was made about the Lord Jesus, "this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased", but that announcement did not automatically kick start a new season for him. He was required on the heels of that announcement to go into the wilderness, fast and pray, deal with the temptations

satan brought his way, fighting warfare with the word of God and only after He was proved victorious, did His new season of stepping into what God had previously announced begin.

Why do you think it would be any different for you? If the Lord Jesus Himself could be made to follow this pattern, it should tell you that this is the way of God in bringing us into New seasons.

First of all, you would feel the rumbling within you signaling that there is a new thing coming. That rumbling is the Spirit bearing witness to you that something's going on in the realm of the Spirit. You are not meant to ignore that rumbling within your Spirit; it is to lead you into the secret place. Then from the secret place come the testing', temptations and trials. Sometimes we think it strange when we go through this part of warfare forgetting that this is the way to be promoted both in the realm of the Spirit and on the earth. You must have overcome before you are crowned with the victor's crown. This stage of fighting and engaging in spiritual warfare also serves to build the spiritual muscles, capacity and strength needed for your new season. You cannot by pass this part in the equation no matter how hard you try. Because believe me you, retreats sometimes can test your flesh.

Let's face it; there is nothing fun about being in the wilderness when others are going on about their lives. I remember my retreat of 2019 when God asked me to go to Ibadan for forty days. The first twenty days were spent at a house of a sister then I was led to Ogbomosho where I was led to sow (I would speak about the things we are sometimes required to do in a retreat soon) and then I came back to Ibadan for the last twenty days to a small retreat room alone.

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This season was hard for me. I would try to pray but couldn't pray. Every time I sat at my prayer spot I was filled with thoughts of 'your mates are in Lagos working, what are you doing here?'

A friend was even getting married at the time and everyone else I knew was attending that wedding. I felt left out, alone and useless. The thoughts in my mind were giving me serious issues.

One night in the midst of this spiritual battle - this is really what it was. I was facing thoughts from satan which were meant to stop me from receiving what God had for me and they were so effective I couldn't pray. Not to mention that I was also broke. It just wasn't the right time to take a retreat praying and broke and not working but just sitting here? No Lord.

That night I had a dream. In this dream I was in my secondary school and had just finished writing an exam. My classmates were rejoicing but I was sad because I didn't read for the paper. I went to a hall we usually used for prayers, knelt down and started praying for God to have mercy on me. I still slept off and couldn't pray after this dream (that was how bad my state was at the time). When I awoke in the morning, I tried to pray with a thirty minutes' tongues programme I have from Papa Kenneth Hagin, then I remembered this dream and instead found myself crying out for the mercy of God. It felt like I was directly before God's throne of mercy pleading for mercy. Prior to this, I had never had an experience with what the mercy of God means. I prayed and cried for a while, praying from deep within me as the Holy Ghost helped me till at the end of it all, I felt that God had answered me. Immediately after my prayer, my elder brother messaged me checking on me and sent me 10,000 naira to take

care of myself. I knew somehow God was communicating to me that He had answered me.

After this time, prayer became easier for me. The depressing thoughts disappeared; also the fasting was done with more than enough grace available for me. I couldn't have done this retreat but by the mercy of God. And oh, what weighty treasures were at stake. It was after this retreat in May 2019 that Jesus Himself visited me in the face of Daddy Adeboye and anointed me for ministry. Indeed, He fulfilled His promise to make me a sharpened instrument for His glory as well as I returning in the power of the Spirit.

After this time of retreat though, anytime people would ask me about retreats and how to make them effective, asking me what do I do at retreats etc. I would always start with humility by saying "the mercy of God".

Retreats are hard.

Seeking God is hard on the flesh.

Fasting is not a joy to the physical senses.

Isolation, being still and remaining silent enough to hear God's voice is not favorite pastime of our bodies... but it has to be done if we are going to advance into a new season. Even the warfare during these seasons can weigh the normal man down. I have sometimes been in warfare for weeks and weeks as I processed a new season. Only the help of the Lord can keep a man strong and sane during times like these - God's mercy.

It is God's mercy that helps cross us over into a new season. So when I am asked how to start a retreat, I always now say, "Start with the mercy of God".

Start by asking for God's mercy to help you successfully scale through this season.

Retreats must and will be done over and over again through your life as God leads you from an old season into the next. It is either you chose the hard way by going through the wilderness but you would indeed birth and be advanced further in destiny or you harden your heart and not obey God but remain in stagnancy. It is your choice. The day you decide not to go further with God, you would remain stuck in cycles you should have passed. But if you say yes to God no matter how many times in your life He desires that you go into the cave of Adullam with Him so you can be promoted into the next and the new, you can also ask for mercy that makes that decision easier on your flesh as well as gives you the grace to obey God.

And the results of obedience are always fuller and richer than that of disobedience; the harvest more than we could ever have envisioned when you set out on the journey of obedience.

I encourage you to obey God when He calls you out to seek His face in a retreat; He has yet more to show, tell and give you. He also has instructions, redirections as well as people connections He wants to show to you as well but you can only get them in the secret place.

At that same 2019 retreat, I needed connections at Ghana for a meeting we were going to have that year. I decided I wouldn't worry about it.

I saw this scripture during my retreat;

“And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes.

It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many.”

-Ezekiel 47:9-10

The Spirit of God breathed life on that scripture and I began to call my fellow fishermen who would help me reap the harvest for God. After my retreat I came back online to a connection to a sister that remains one of my God-given relationships today. She opened her ministry to us where we had the meeting and went ahead to connect me to several others. The next stage of my advancement needed new relationships and God did that as I spent time with Him.

I have also experienced greater influence, ideas as well as business increase during retreats. All it may have seemed like I

lost by sitting at Jesus' feet, the Father multiplies back to me. He also gives me speed immediately after retreats where what I couldn't do sometimes for a whole year, He compresses and makes happen in less than a month, such as when He opened three nations to me in year 2020.

I have seen God reward time spent in His presence retreating with much more than I could ever have struggled for on my own. Obedience to God in this area pays more than we can ever ask, think or imagine.

Obey God as He stirs your heart towards a retreat. Whenever He does so know that there is a new season opening up to you and God wants to give you the anointing, grace, instructions, victory over devils, influence, provision, supply, resources as well as strength that it takes to enter into that season. Do not say no; simply ask for God's mercy.

CHAPTER 2

IT'S TIME TO BIRTH

“Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, Like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, You shall dwell in the field, And to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; There the LORD will redeem you From the hand of your enemies”

-Micah 4:10

In one of my birthing a new season while I was at Kenya in August 2022, I lifted up my eyes in a time of groaning in the Spirit, and my eyes lighted on this scripture in my Bible.

Be in pain and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion. Wasn't this exactly who I was at this moment in time? At the time, I was sitting on the floor after a dream I had had, interceding in tears and pain. I literally was in deep groaning as I prayed and then my eyes lighted on this scripture. God was saying to me “this is exactly what is going on in your life right now, you are in pain right now because you are birthing. Stay there and labor to give birth”.

Of course this isn't what you want to hear from God when you are going through a hard season, you want to hear that it would be over soon but God was saying to me birth!

I think about the first time I was really introduced to this during a retreat. It was September 2017 at my forty days' retreat at Calabar. One night I had a dream. In this dream I was pregnant and in labor. I had two midwives standing behind me who were encouraging me to push. I was in that state of pushing when I woke up. The dream seemed so real. I slid to the side of my bed in the dead of the night and started praying in tongues since I didn't know what this was about. With time my prayers turned into groaning. I was in this state of prayers when I heard the voice of the Lord say just four words, "I will help you". A deep sign arose out of me and I slid back to bed certain that God will help me birth. Of course, afterwards my ministry and life calling shifted onto another dimension. In that retreat, God had helped me birth the next season of my life.

"Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child.

Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children. Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the LORD. "Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?" says your God."

-Isaiah 66:7-9

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In this scripture God is saying the process we pass through before we give birth to new seasons in our lives. There would first of all be a season of travail; a season of birthing in the Spirit. A season of bearing down to birth before we are allowed to enter into that new season. The magnitude of what we are birthing determines the amount of pain we would sometimes have to go through. The bible doesn't call it travail and labor for nothing. You would go through pain in the Spirit. Sometimes you are groaning in prayer and wondering what is going on? The Spirit may in those times be processing and birthing your new season. Let Him.

In a time of retreat you are able to give yourself to the prayers needed to birth your new season. You are able to bear down without distraction and birth. Scripture says that it is certain; as soon as you travail, God would surely help you to birth. God Himself is the one who has instigated your travail in the Spirit. He is the one who has brought you to the time of birth and He promises that if you would travail, He can even make that birthing faster.

The early months of year 2022 were hard months for me. I had such travail in the Spirit that lasted more than four months cumulatively. In all these months I was fasting, praying, praising, worshipping, doing all sorts of fast within fasts but the season didn't seem like it was letting up. I kept asking myself 'what is going on?' Why am I going through this? Most persons ended their fasts at the end of January but by February, March, I was still in travail. April finally I had a breakthrough but it continued again in May, June, July, August, September, October, November

and December. All through these months I had one kind of fast or the other, sowing seeds of prayer, fasting, giving etc. God sent word that I was stepping into a new season. I was turning thirty which is such a significant year in God and He had me birthing this new season in a more intense way than I have ever done before.

The deal with birthing new seasons is that God Himself would instigate your labor with a call to fast, a call to seek His face more in a season, you have to answer that call if you want to advance into the new thing He has for you. I have birthed by the grace of God and the help of the Holy Spirit, new seasons consistently in this way. New anointing and new graces have also come out this way, new levels of finances also have come out in this way, new angels assigned to me have come out in this way. One time I stopped and said to myself “the day God calls me further and I refuse to go is the day I stop being relevant”. So I asked the Holy Spirit to always help me yield whenever God calls me to come birth a new season. The truth is our God is a progressive God; He is always moving forward. He always has new things, new places, new assignments, and greater works etc. for us to do. So while we are rejoicing and building monuments at the old season, He is calling us further to see, birth and enter into the new thing He is doing with, for and through us.

Every assignment done well in the name of the Lord is simply a pedestal for a promotion. My new seasons have always come on the heel of an assignment I have done for God. I remember in November 2021 after having just come back from a trip to Cameroon that was very hard, I wanted to rest for the

remainder of the year, then I encountered DDK, and the Holy Spirit poured out on me. God said “I am handing over more Nations”. My promotion after Cameroon was more Nations. This is how we advance into the new thing God is seeking to do with and in us.

A new year is a call to seek the Lord for the new thing He is doing with us. It is a time to hide in the caves and rocks as we labor and travail to give birth. God has helped me do this consistently since year 2015 and each year has seen a marked increase into new things and territories in God. Every year since then I have advanced further in destiny in a marked difference that I can look back and say ‘I made progress into new places this year’. This is our God. But He won’t drag you into this dimension. The scripture above is not a scripture to be read, it’s a scripture to labor over in your own life in the secret place. Be in pain and labor to give birth. Labor to birth new seasons in your life each New Year. So when you go on a retreat, you are asking the Lord to instigate and initiate your labor and the Holy Spirit to be your midwife so you will birth and not abort or miscarry your new season.

***“A woman, when she is in labor, has
sorrow because her hour has come; but
as soon as she has given birth to the
child, she no longer remembers the
anguish, for joy that a human being has***

been born into the world.”

-John 16:23

Make no mistake about it, birthing a new season is painful. It is done in the secret place, in the labor room which no one sees, but you need to allow the Holy Spirit push you through this season to birthing. Sometimes you are birthing a new business, a new financial level, a new anointing, new grace, Nations, a marriage, your children, the promises of God, etc. Like Anna the widow in Luke chapter 2, you will have to trust God for the grace to stay in the temple day and night in fasting and prayers till you see the birthing of what God Himself has put into your Spirit.

I will never forget birthing Malawi Nation in August 2022. It seemed like we wouldn't make it but then I got together with another sister and as we prayed, God said you have been birthing Malawi and now it shall be birthed in a day, through collective prayer the city opened that night and few days later I was en route the Nation of Malawi where we did ministry for a month plus all glory to God!

When you are positioned to bring forth a new season, it is important that you do not leave until you know of a surety that you have birthed. God may speak to you in a dream or a vision, through scripture or shouts of rejoicing erupting out of your Spirit, or He may speak to you like He did me that night "I will help you". No matter how you know you have birthed, please do not leave your retreat midway without finishing your labor in the Spirit. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will let you know what you

have birthed immediately; sometimes all you may have is the shout of rejoicing of the Lord in your midst. Whichever it is, make sure you get the spiritual sense that you have birthed successfully before you leave. Remember that when a woman is in labor, if she doesn't push that child out, it can cause problems where the child may end up dying or even herself may be in danger of losing her life. This is where they may have to call for surgery just to save the child and the mother's life. Birthing a baby is as well a very spiritual procedure.

satan doesn't want us to birth new seasons and will do everything to try to stop it, maybe through discouragements; birthing seasons are one of the most trying seasons I have ever encountered in my life with satan toying around with my mind. I experience the most discouraging thoughts at these times also. Know that you are in warfare and the enemy is trying to do anything to have you leave that baby in your spiritual belly in distress. You need lots of help from the Holy Spirit in this time which is why retreats, where God can have your full attention without outside recourse to distractions or every other kind of voices is one of the best ways and places to do this. As you begin every new year, ask God to instigate and initiate your labor, to bring you to the time of birthing... ask the Holy Spirit to help you as your midwife in the realm of the Spirit to help you birth all God has for you for the year. If you can birth them all in the realm of the Spirit, then it's only a matter of time before you find yourself physically holding your baby in your hand and at that time you will no longer remember the pain it took you to birth your child or children. So go through the pain of birthing during your retreat, trust God to not give up, stay there and

ensure you are coming out of that retreat with your baby in your hands.

Remember, God Himself promises He won't let you go through birthing without carrying your baby in your hands. If God caused this season of travail to come on you, it is because He has something New - a new baby He wants you to carry in your hands in this new year. So go through the pain, it would all be worth it at the end.

Get into the secret place and birth! God is with you to make sure that either you or your baby do not die in the process.

He will help you!

CHAPTER 3

DEALING WITH SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN TIMES OF RETREAT

***“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the
Lord and in the power of His might.***

***Put on the whole armor of God, that
you may be able to stand against the
wiles of the devil.***

***For we do not wrestle against flesh
and blood, but against principalities,
against powers, against the rulers of the
darkness of this age, against spiritual
hosts of wickedness in the heavenly
places.”***

-Ephesians 6:10-12

There are no retreats I have gone on, that have not included lots of spiritual warfare. The first few times this happened, I thought something was wrong with me, but as I grow a bit in this thing, I know that every new level as they say brings on new devils. That is true. When a door opens to you in the realm of the Spirit,

satan would come to test your qualifications to walk through that door. One of the ways he does this is bringing on the guns of spiritual warfare.

Take Jesus for example. During the fast that defined His ministry at the very beginning, satan visited him with warfare. The warfare wasn't physical as scripture says, but it was warfare nonetheless. satan tempted the Lord Jesus with pride and showing off his power (turn these stones to bread). he tempted him with placing his physical appetite above God's word (when you struggle with food desires at the time of breaking through into a new season). he tempted Jesus with suicidal thoughts (jump down and God will catch you with His angels), he tempted Jesus with a love for pleasure and money. You will also go through these and many more temptations specific to you and your journey of destiny during your retreat. I am writing this so you think it not strange when certain things begin to happen to you. Demons you have won attempt to come back, i.e., during your fast, if you used to struggle with lust and masturbation before, you all of a sudden start experiencing a strong urge to masturbate. Don't do it! satan wants to trick and disqualify you from entering into your new season through sin. You are in warfare!

You may also experience a lot of discouragement, doubt and despair during your retreat. Your mind is being attacked! You are in warfare and you must hang onto God's word for your dear life.

The period of our fast during retreats actually opens us up to being sifted by the devil. Something is going on in the realm of the Spirit you need to pay attention to so you aren't sifted out of

your new season. When you know what is going on, you can better ask the Holy Spirit for help to navigate with grace so you aren't disqualified.

We do not need to be afraid of the big guns satan sends us because something that also happens during a retreat as you are going into new levels, is that God also sends new angels to walk alongside you. In other words, he changes your guards!

“Don’t you realize that I could ask my heavenly Father for angels to come at any time to deliver me? And instantly he would answer me by sending more than twelve legions of angels to come and protect us?”

-Matthew 26:53, TPT

Jesus Himself waked in a recognition of this truth; that I have a heavenly Father, if it seems as if satan sends big guns against me, I can ask for legions of angels and my Father would send them to fight for me and protect me!

You need to be aware of the help God has for us in times like this.

“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”

-Hebrews 1:14

God has help for us that can match and are far above whatever guns the enemy has brought against us. It is a given that God would increase the angelic activity around us as we draw closer to Him. Like Daniel when he began to fast and God sent angels to him? We need to realize that that is what happens with us when we draw closer to God too. God releases His angels to aid and help us in whatever we need but we need to be aware of this and call for help when we see we are encountering spiritual warfare during our fasts and retreats.

I remember the Holy Spirit leading me to pray these prayers when satan sent a demon of lust against me in 2019. Every night it was one dirty vision or the other. I was nearing my breaking point. I would wake up, pray, cast, bind, decree and start all over again. One day as I interceded I heard the hymn "Christian seek not yet repose, thou art in the midst of foes, pray that help may be sent down, watch and pray". I heard exactly that line and I prayed that the Lord would send me the help of angels down! And He did!

I also remember my 2020 retreat, waking up to pray one morning and bursting into declarations as I prayed, hitting a gusher and finding myself declaring "open doors!".

I went to a meeting for believers that evening where my personal encounter with God was confirmed by a minister saying God had sent me an angel to open the door as I go to Nations. The next Nations I travelled were during COVID in December 2020. I saw the work of that angel making situations that

seemed impossible possible, opening doors in strange lands for me and He is still working now.

I have seen God send help down for me during my retreats. As I spent time in prayer and seeking Him, yes there was the “normal” spiritual warfare (remember, don’t think it’s strange anymore) but there was also a heavy artillery of angels that were needed for my destiny that was sent down to me from my Heavenly Father.

As you go on your own retreat either after reading this book, or perhaps you are on a retreat currently right now as you read this book. Remember to make use of the help your heavenly Father can send you if you would only just ask.

Pray that help may be sent down!

CHAPTER 4

KEY INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR RETREAT

1: Be Led By the Holy Ghost:

The most effective type of retreat you can have is one where you are led by the Holy Ghost. You can just make a decision and say I want to go on a retreat, you can. But the most effective retreats I have had have been those where I can sense the impression of the Holy Spirit and I am led by Him saying He wants me to spend so and so time with Him. That is heaven itself telling you there is something going on, a change on the horizon for your life.

Going on a retreat shouldn't just be something good you want to do or imitate someone else on but it is really good and important that you hear the voice of the Spirit. And this may not be an audible voice. Sometimes it's just the impression of the Spirit. For me it could manifest in me not fasting but God taking away my appetite, I find myself spending long hours in prayer, etc. I already know that something is going on. And I also even hear specific dates and times. Like going to Jos, take 10 days there etc.

So be led by the Holy Ghost and when the Holy Ghost is leading you, know that there is something for you.

2: Always Ask for the Grace to obey God and for the mercy of God:

After my forty days' retreat in 2019, people would always ask me, "Hephzibah, what do you do at retreats" etc. I had had an experience with God at my forty days' retreat where God humbled me. The retreat was divided into two parts. I spent one part at Ogbomosho where God led me to sow some seeds, and the last part at Ibadan. At Ibadan, I was meant to fast and pray for a specific number of days. I found out I couldn't pray. I would be awake and not be able to pray, filled with so much thoughts, feeling sorry for myself that I was out here when others were living their lives at Lagos. One night I had a dream where I had written an exam without reading or it. I knew I would fail. The only thing left to do was that I found myself kneeling down, asking God to have mercy on me. I woke up from the dream at night and still couldn't pray. The next morning, I woke up, I was about to do my routine tongues when the Holy Ghost reminded me of that dream and I found myself literally feeling like I was before God's throne, crying out for mercy. That day was the day the prayerlessness broke. God answered my cry for mercy.

This experience was how I realized that no one can pray except God helps you. And the fact that you can even pray is God having mercy on you. It is God Himself who gives us the will, desire and the power to obey Him.

A retreat is not for show. God is the one who gives grace to obey. So make sure you ask for mercy and ask for the grace to

obey in humility else you would be there looking at ceilings and your time would be wasted (God forbid).

3: Listen for the instructions God gives you during your retreat:

For example, I always hear God telling me what to sow, where to sow and who to sow it to. During my retreats there is almost always an instruction to give. Listen to instructions that would come up to you during your retreat a retreat is meant to change you. To change you and also change something in your life God is doing. You are the one God wants to make into a new wineskin so if God leads you on a retreat, be sensitive to listen for the voice of God to you during that retreat because there are instructions that He would give to you that would very likely unlock the next level of your life. This is the difference between someone who goes on a retreat and there is no change and someone else comes out and they hit something in God during that retreat.

God always gives instructions as the bridge to our next level. Instructions as the bridge to our next season. So make sure you listen for your instructions from God during your retreat. It can be giving, forgiving someone, a seed to sow in service, help to render to men, directions for your ministry, business etc. Write them and if possible and as God gives you grace, obey quickly.

4: Pray, pray, pray especially praying in the Spirit a lot:

For me, sometimes when I go on retreats, I know God wants to do something but I am not so sure about what He wants to do. So during that time of the retreat I would usually find myself praying a lot in the Holy Ghost.

It is a retreat so it means that God has set you apart in dealing with key and specific matters. So sometimes the Holy Ghost is doing something in your life that you don't have the words for it. Do not say 'oh I don't know what to pray for'. Make sure that you are drilling deep down in the Spirit. Make sure you are drilling deep down by praying in the Holy Ghost. I have broken into new seasons a lot during retreats and most of them happen as I keep praying in the Spirit and all of a sudden I hit a gusher and I just begin to declare and declare and speak words for my new season and what God wants to do in my life and those words are coming with power. Those words are coming with fire. One particular incidence in 2020 God had led me on a retreat and that retreat was so significant because God had told me He wanted to make me the woman He had called me to be before the beginning of time. And that retreat was so significant because it was a specific crossover in my life and destiny. Most times before a new season the Holy Ghost would call you for a retreat. I heard specifically to go to Ogbomosho at this time where I had a couple's house I used. That particular morning, I remember praying a lot in the Holy Ghost and all of sudden there was a gusher and I started to declare "Open doors!"

In the evening there was a meeting with the brethren and I went for this meeting. In the midst of this meeting the power of the Holy Ghost hit me. And then one of the prophets came to me

and started prophesying over me. And he told me ‘immediately I saw you, I heard “Open doors!” and he began to declare that over me and he began to say God had released and sent me an angel to release and send angels with me to the Nations of the earth. Now this happened in November 2020. In December 2020 there was a breakthrough in my life where I began to see Nations open more to me in a faster way. God’s angel had gone forward to open the door.

Trust God for graces to break you into new seasons of your life. Trust God for next level dealings with God. As you go on retreat, trust God for change of the guard of angels that follow you. That heaven would release angelic forces for your next level. This is how people break through into higher levels in the Spirit. Even in 2022 this happened over me. I went to pray, someone saw me and was declaring there was a change of guard over me. Because for every new level people say that there are new devils. That is true but God also has new levels of angelic help for you. But they only come in response to pushing, digging and drilling in the realm of the Spirit. Be sure to trust God for this happening in your life during your retreat. To break into gushers in the Spirit. To break into next level and new dimensions. That places, things, people would be opened to you, angels would be released, help will be released. Trust God for this.

Make sure that during your retreat, you trust the Holy Ghost for a gusher like this. You should know that during your retreat there was a press. There was a move of the Spirit and shift of the Holy Ghost. Don’t go on a retreat to mark your new year.

5: Trust God to not only do a work outside of you but to do a work inside of you:

During my 2019 40 days retreat I remember the Holy Ghost crying out to God for a pure heart. I remember prayers like ‘place a sword of fire within my heart, cleanse my heart, purge my soul. Purify my soul’. I was praying such prayers in that time and during that time in my life I was struggling a lot with offense. I had been through a season where people had hurt me. As I prayed and the Holy Ghost began to do a work of cleansing in my heart. And God did not only cleanse my heart but God began to change my character. I found out that I became more loving, more thoughtful of the needs of people. I didn’t like to cook but I began to think of what people would eat etc. my brother looked at me and said “you have changed”. I said really? He said yes. People could actually see the changes in me.

So during the retreat trust God to do the changes in you.

At one of my retreat at Ogbomoso, first day I slept in the house I slept off and God showed me this quick vision where He showed me envy in my heart and told me to pray and ask Him to cleanse me of dead works. And I started praying that prayer, “Lord cleanse me of dead works”.

So at a retreat you need to trust God for a work of change to be done on the inside of you. So the dimensions of gushes, new levels, new seasons are great but ask the Lord to do a redeeming work on the inside of you. Set aside times of prayer where you are asking God to cleanse you.

A retreat is also a dividing line between an old season and a new season so pray prayers asking God to remove things piled up in your heart from an old season, things you cannot take into a new season, ask the Holy Spirit to purge you, wash you, work on your character, take away every dross... take praying for yourself, your heart and your inside very seriously.

I remember during 2020 retreat also God revealing to me there was a breach of discouragement, despair and doubt into my heart. He asked me to pray that He would close that door and the enemy would no longer have access into my life. So I have seen God use retreats to do a work in me so that when I'm out I am not only coming out with power, I am coming out with character. And He can do the same for you too.

6: During a retreat, you can also trust God to win spiritual battles for you:

***“But when Paul had gathered a bundle
of sticks and laid them on the fire, a
viper came out because of the heat, and
fastened on his hand.”***

-Acts 28:3

When the place was cold, the viper didn't come out but when the place was lit, the viper came out. So there may be things in our lives, things in our bloodline, generational patterns etc. that hide because there is no heat but when you go on a retreat, because of the intensity of what you are doing with God, they will begin to come out. You can trust God to win your battles for you as these things show up during your retreat.

During a retreat, the level of spiritual warfare you go through actually skyrockets. I used to think "God what's going on?". Well, you are pressing in the realm of the Spirit and vipers are coming out but you don't need to be afraid or think something strange is happening to you, the heat is only causing the vipers to come out and you need to put on your warrior garment, your armour of war and deal with them as God reveals them during a retreat.

Battles can be won during a retreat and they will never show up again. You find out that God can win warfare for you during a retreat, chains can be broken, He can raise up new foundations of generational lines, etc. Trust God for it.

7: Trust God to overcome temptations:

During a retreat the temptations you encounter may also skyrocket high because the enemy is doing everything to try to stop you from breaking through.

Now that I have gone over breaking into new seasons over and over again, I find out that if God helps you break over into a new season in your life you should thank God! Because the enemy is raving mad. Satan would everything to keep you stagnant, he

would do everything to keep you roaming around in circles. So just like when a woman is pregnant and the period when she is in labor is very intense, you must bear down into your contractions and birth.

“Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, Like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, You shall dwell in the field, And to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; There the LORD will redeem you From the hand of your enemies.”

-Micah 4:10

God gave me this scripture last year while I was at Kenya birthing the Nation of Malawi. He said ‘you are in pain because you are laboring to give birth:’.

Retreats would involve you being in pain because there is a process that has been started and the enemy is trying to do everything to short circuit that process. You need to know beforehand so you do not allow him. When you know what you are up against it keeps you on guard. He would use temptations., even past temptations, trying again to see if you

would fall. I remember my 2017 retreat; I who God had delivered from sexual temptations suddenly started getting sexual temptations. I knew it was from the pit of hell. And when I won that temptation, I knew. All went silent and heaven, hell and earth knew they needed to allow me move to the next level.

8: Listen to the messages and teachers God wants you to listen to:

We have teachers for each season of our lives. When you go on a retreat, keep your ears tuned for the messages God wants you to listen to, the worship songs, books to read, etc. they contain your answers.

9: Plan with God:

Listen for new visions for your new season. Ask God questions, what's working, what's not working? What do I do about this and about that? What about my marriage? My role as a wife and parent? Any parenting template for this child I am struggling with? Direction for my career? Business? My finances? My health? Take a journal and your bible, get the answers God gives you specifically tailored to you and plan with God. We don't get goals from social media, we can hear from God on what He intends for our lives and run with that specifically crafted to us.

Please also get the book ["Starting your year right" here](#) for more on this.

10: Rest:

Some of us are so tired, we need God to actually get us first into resting state before we can hear from Him. God is a God of peace. When your heart is in turmoil, exhausted, stressed etc. you may find it hard to hear from God. So don't be surprised if you find yourself spending the first day or days of your retreat actually being too exhausted to even pray. Do some self-care, sleep, relax. Life has been 'lifying'. Maybe even watch some movies, just relax and don't be so spiritually as to think, no I have to pray this first night. If God leads you to rest first, please rest!

These instructions are not exhaustible, please add any personal instructions God placed on your heart for yourself as you read. I hope it kick started how to go about your retreat practically.

Take Bibles, journals to write, books your heart is drawn to in that season, load up on messages God may be leading you to download, and if possible go off the internet. In fact, I heartily recommend going off the internet. The world has many voices and many responsibilities may be on your shoulders. You want to hear God., at least block the channels of other voices and concentrate on God's voice in your retreat season. You won't die.

Please note that retreats are not only to be done at the start of the year. Anytime that instruction comes, it's great to obey and obey promptly.

For my 2019 retreat that broke me into more nations for 2020, God had told me to pack my bags and go to Jos but I struggled. Later I was worshipping with “Yeshua” song and God spoke to me with words of scripture, “why do you call me Lord, Lord, if you don’t do the things that I say?” I packed my bags that night and went to Jos. On the last day of the retreat I was listening to Apostle Joshua Selman message on favor. I go to bed and I have this amazing dream of favor.

My point here is that, God knew what He had for me and if I didn’t obey Him promptly I may have missed that open door of favor for more nations (which is my life calling) in the Spirit.

When the Spirit beckons unto you for a retreat please obey promptly. A lot may be hinging on your prompt obedience.

God is God of times and seasons and when something is going on in your life, the Holy Spirit is seeking to alert you so you can partner with God to birth your new season.

The prompt for a retreat may not only happen at the start of the year, it may happen whenever God is seeking to break you into something new. So be very sensitive. And trust God for grace to promptly obey.

CONCLUSION

When God calls you for a retreat, your flesh would always struggle. You would have thoughts like, 'what am I going to be doing? What am I doing alone here? What about my business etc."

But you must understand that anytime God is calling you for a retreat, the one to be blessed is you.

During a retreat, you receive new vision.

During a retreat you break into new seasons.

During a retreat you receive fresh and new graces.

During a retreat you gain clarity for the level ahead of us.

God comes to you during a retreat.

You win spiritual battles during a retreat.

The benefit from when God calls you for a retreat is so immense, that you are the one God wants to bless when He calls you for a retreat.

You go higher the more you are able to go deeper into the Lord.

A retreat is withdrawing from your regular way of life and coming to God to say “I want to spend this time with you” (see Mark 6:31&32).

We see an example of this in Jesus’ life. We see Jesus modelling what a retreat is to us, waking up early in the morning before others are up just for the purpose of praying to the Father. And at this time He would receive grace for the day, fresh flow of ideas, strength, spiritual graces etc. We also know that perhaps some of these retreat times included not taking food for the day etc. Because Jesus was the one who said some demons cannot go out without fasting and prayer.

Jesus also took a retreat in Luke 4 before His ministry began. When He was about to begin His work on earth, the Holy Ghost led Him into a time of retreat a time of fasting and a time of prayer.

We also see the result of what happened after Jesus came out of that retreat.

***“Then Jesus returned in the power of
the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him
went out through all the surrounding
region.”***

-Luke 4:14

After the retreat Jesus returned in the power of God. Just like my 2019 retreat where Jesus wooed me by saying “come for the power of the Spirit”.

Retreats are a price to pay for returning in the power of the Spirit. If you want to be powerful in God... if you want the anointing... if you want that then you would have to pay the price by spending time in retreats with God.

Please obey the wooing on of the Spirit on going on retreat with the Lord. Taste and see how it causes you to soar in any given year and do it over and over again for each year to fly on the wings of the Spirit.

Happy retreating!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Hephzibah Frances is a VOICE FOR THE LORD called to the Nations. Through her songs, books and the new media, she proclaims God to the Nations. She is a child of God and the Lord's delight. She is a Lawyer, an author and a Christian Blogger. As a Social Entrepreneur, she is the founder of ***Awakening Youthful Seeds for Christ initiative*** ([AYSACAFRICA](#))

She is also the founder of ***The Women at The Well Ministries***, a Christian ladies ministry passionate about raising women filled with Jesus ([@TWTWINTERNATIONAL](#) on social media) She is the CEO of ***Beautiful Feet Publishing*** ([beautifulfeetpublishing@gmail.com](#)), a publishing house that exists to help aspiring authors' birth their books to life.

Connect with Hephzibah Frances via the following channels:

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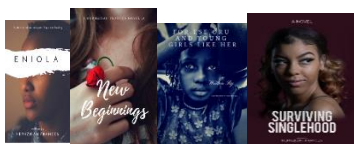
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