

Finding my amazing real dad! – Testimony



A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY: Thamsanqa
Ngamlana

Ntomboxolo Matiwane asked Port Elizabeth businessman and former school friend Thamsanqa Ngamlana to share his testimony. This is his emotional rollercoaster of a story.

Having been raised by a single parent under challenging circumstances I will not lie and say I was never a happy child. I had been taught to be satisfied with what I had. So I had one of the best upbringings. It had never occurred to me that I needed a father figure in my life, let alone to ask about the whereabouts of my biological father in our house filled with five most amazing female figures who groomed me. I'm the only male among my mother's offspring and am followed by two lovely sisters.

His father's whereabouts.

I had unexpectedly reached a point in my life whereby I was

not only willing but mandated to journey into a path of searching for my father's whereabouts. However the biggest fear I had was to ask my mom for the first time who my father was. Remember that there are some things that you do not just ask or discuss with your parents, especially in my Xhosa community. So this had to freak me out as I had less than four weeks to find out who my father is, and also meet him personally. After thinking about it for a long time, I plucked up courage and dared myself to either be shouted at or reprimanded for raising the sensitive, buried question – "WHO IS MY FATHER?". But not even the fear of death would prohibit me from asking my mom about my father's whereabouts in my upbringing. So I did ask – and if only I never had.

Contrary to my expectations, my beautiful mom answered me peacefully and honestly. She told me that she had met my father in 1995. He was a police officer in the Transkei and in that same year I was conceived. She told me that she never told my father that she was expecting me. At that time my whole family had moved to Port Elizabeth – except for her. My aunt went to fetch her to join the rest of the family in PE. And so she left without telling my father she was pregnant with such a "now" fine looking gentleman as myself.

Upon receiving this information from my mother I managed to find who and where my father was. Although my mom had even forgotten his name but could remember only his surname, which was popular then, as it was used as his name. Not that I blame my mom though; time does that sometimes. I made an appointment to meet this man and after we met found out that he was a family man, respected in his profession and he had really no information whatsoever about me. He did tell me that he did not even remember my mom, let alone what she might look like. I had recent pictures of my mom with me and I showed them to him and he confirmed that he did have an affair with her – though she looked "grown up" now. But he had not yet confirmed that I was his "son". Many things were checked in my body. I

still have no idea exactly what they were looking for. But I can tell you that the paternal “uncles” would make me stand afar from them as they looked and tried to identify whatever it is that would prove that I was father’s son. After they had finished those inspections they made me open my hands so that they could intensively view both my palms.

Joyful moment

After long hours of discussion held at the back of a Hilux bakkie, it was informed by the uncles that I showed and bore symbols of belonging to their family and my father had to stand in front of them and confess whether he was fully persuaded that I was his son or not. And I’m very proud to tell you that he said I was his son that he had never been told about!

You can understand the joy that overwhelmed me in now knowing who my real father was. I came back home the following day and bragged to my friends and siblings who knew their dads. This knowledge changed how I viewed things and it satisfied me fully to know who my father was. I must expose the fact that my motive for finding him was never to ask him for any financial assistance or anything whatsoever. The only thing I was grateful for was that now I had a father and that I knew who he was.

DNA test

My father and I had agreed that I would visit his home at the end of the first school term. The time finally arrived for the visit. But then, the day before my visit was due to start, my father called me to ask if I had made the arrangements to visit for the whole of the school holidays. And during our phone conversation he told me that he had a confession to make. He told me that ever since my first visit to their house, his marriage has never been the same and that my appearance after such a long time was the cause of the marriage conflict, as his wife did not really think I was his son. Due to this doubt his wife called a family meeting at

which she asked that I be taken for a DNA test which would be the only way to erase the doubts she had about me.

If there's anything I hate, it is to inflict pain and cause discomfort to another person. So, for the sake of saving their now suffering marriage, I agreed to do the DNA test which they had already booked and which was scheduled for the day of my arrival for the "holiday vacation" I was expecting to enjoy in their house. The next day I went to Mthata, where they stay and went to St Mary's Hospital where blood test was done. We took the test and after two or three months of waiting, the results came back showing that there was no ways I could be that man's son. We were incompatible.

After I had read the results I thought I was losing my mind and I couldn't understand why God would put me under such shame and disgrace after I had bragged to so many people, not to mention to have to suddenly lose the joy I had through knowing who my father was. In the space of just a few months things had changed from better to worse –and I felt that I had been better off during the time that I didn't know my "father" . I told my mom about the test results and up to this day she tells me that she didn't know any man other man who could be my father other than this one who was ruled out by the DNA test, or rather by Science. Reliving this experience always discomforts me, and I can remember whilst I was praying together with my family before I went to sleep on the day I received the results, a word from ([Psalm 27:10](#) – *Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.*) came to my mind, and from this word I took comfort and drew strength. My father could not believe it too when I called him to tell him about the results and promised to investigate, which I think he is still doing.

Extraordinary God

Since I never spoke with him again after we received the results, I learnt that I was born out of a "thing" and that I'm the consequence of a child's play. But God had a greater

plan and purpose from the word go in His creation of me. I learnt that I'm no ordinary person because I'm formed by an extraordinary God. Looking at how everything has worked out pretty well, I now know that God must've taken quite some time in planning my life and all the escape doors he has led through in the situations that I never thought I would survive. Yes, I do not know who my biological father is – But I know that every single second God proudly keeps on calling me his Son and I'm glad to let you know that He's not only my Father but also my Dad!!!!!!

The fight back – Sophie's story (Chapter 3)

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Sophie is a South African working mom who recently became a Christian. But her abusive, gangster ex-boyfriend continues to disrupt and endanger her life. She says her faith is helping her to fight back. But it is hard. This is her story. It's a reality too many South African women face every day. Because Sophie shares her story at length, we are publishing it in three chapters. Names and places are changed for safety reasons.

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We still have to be in court for the interdict though. Every time I go to court, it has to be postponed, because he is not present. I have to request leave on three different occasions.

The third time I go to court, they ensure me they will make it their job to have him there the next time. They will organise for him to be transported there.

In the meanwhile, he is in a holding cell, awaiting trial. The first time he takes the stand he pleads "not guilty". He has a good lawyer. I know this man very well. I saw him at work during previous cases made against my ex and he always wins the case. Sometimes because of small loopholes. I know what I am up against.

My family and I cannot afford a lawyer, so the state gives me one. I never meet the person who represents me in court. I still have to take the stand one of these days, to testify.

The detective assigned to my case, visits a few times. He informs me how dangerous the man is that I am up against. But I already know. I have witnessed many things he has done and out of fear, could never come forward. That is also the only reason I could never get away.

We broke up more than a year ago, when he decided to pursue a relationship with another woman. In my heart of hearts I was glad that she came between us, because now he would stay away

from me. On the other hand, my daughter was only a baby. And now, he would have another one with this woman. Not once did he come visit his daughter, he just completely stayed away.

It wasn't long before she probably got to know him for who he really is, when she dumped him. I do not know the extent of the differences they had, but she never came back to him. She left with her baby.

This is the reason why he started to pesky me again. He was sorry for ever leaving, he knows now what he had lost and he wants it back. I was fine the way I was without him. I had a new job, my family supported me with my kids. I was doing well, all by myself.

He got arrested for wounding his neighbour and this just aggravated the matter. He had nobody in his corner. And this is when he started phoning me more, wanting to talk. I felt sorry for the man. I always wanted to help him do better. I always hoped he would change. And I really thought this time he would do better. That is why when he got out of jail, I felt no harm will come to me when I go with him for my daughter's birthday money. He got better. But just two days after he was out, he kidnapped and almost killed me.

Now he is inside those walls again and I put him there. He starts making calls from the public phone from the jail he is in. Later he uses a cell phone. He sends threatening messages to try make me withdraw the case.

He sends one that just says: "Friday will be your last day at work. I promise you."



I don't know what it means. Is he sending people to hurt me

when I go to, or return from work? Is he doing something that would get me into trouble at my workplace? I can't tell, but I know he means it.

I show my boss and he is working from home that Friday. He asks me to join him there. That way, whatever he plans, won't be able to happen.

The whole day I am restless. I don't know what to expect. Then my mommy phones.

"A detective came to our house looking for you. He wanted to arrest you, for stealing a TV."

My mom is so worried. This detective and his partner, brought my ex's niece with them. Apparently the niece was at home, her mom had just left. She didn't know where to. Then 'she saw me' coming inside the house, taking the TV and just walked out. Because she knew me, she didn't ask any questions and thought it was pre-arranged. Only when her mommy returned, they realised I stole the TV.

That is the story they told the police.

I can't believe my ears! Are they referring to the TV standing in my room for more than a year now? The one my ex left his daughter? Or are they talking about another one? Whatever it is, the story is not true. Never have I ever taken anything out of their house, that didn't belong to me. I never even went to my ex's sister's house. I knew in which area she resided, but never knew exactly where she stayed.

This detective was so rude with my parents. He was telling them how parents cover up for their children, but they do not know what they do in the dark. A case was made against me and he had to arrest me. We can fight it out in court. That is procedure.

I tell my boss about what happened and he laughs. They are

really stooping to that level to get me to drop the case? It is ridiculous.

The detective left his office number and I have to get in contact with them. I have to come see them, first thing Monday morning.

I complain to my parents. WHY do I have to go when I did nothing wrong? How can I take another day's leave? And this all before the trial for my case even started! They are adamant I have to go, even if it is just to prove my innocence.

Monday comes and my brother takes me to the police station. This is a police station we haven't dealt with yet. The assault case was opened at the police station in his residing area. The fire at the house was opened at the police station in my residing area. I now understand why he used his sister. She stays in a whole different area. And her daughter is a minor. If I should decide to lay a charge against them, what will happen to her? They are cunning.



We arrive at the police station and I am on alert for anything that may happen. Who knows if they sent someone to attack me there? Or wait until we leave?

I pray ... hard.

I get out of the vehicle and take my Bible with me. In the last few weeks, I have been in touch with God more than ever before.

My brother goes inside with me. We get to the detective that visited our home and he thanks me for coming in. That is the only nice thing he does. After that, he interrogates me. How could I just take somebody else's possessions? Every time I attempt to say something, he talks over me. He doesn't give me

a chance to explain. My brother tries to come to my rescue several times, but this man has only one thing in mind – an arrest has to be made! I start crying. I pray to God in my mind. He KNOWS I am innocent!

I ask the detective if I can make a phone call and he allows it. I contact one of the people that had come to give a talk at work. He is part of the Community Safety and Security Department. He is just finished with a visit in the area and he says he will come straight to where I am. He knows my whole story from the start.

In the meanwhile, I attempt to tell the detective about everything that is really going on. They are doing this to get me to drop a case against the brother. He cannot understand and just keeps saying, don't mix two cases. This is another case that is made against you and has nothing to do with another case!

My sister phones my brother. He too is close to breaking point. He has to sit there and watch them wanting to arrest his sister for something she didn't do. Something our whole household never had to witness. She is freaking out on the other side. We saw the visit to the police station as a formality. We never prepared for me being detained!

When the man enters the police station, it feels like he is Heaven-sent. He introduces himself to the detective and explains the story from the start.

“Sir, this is a very dangerous man. It is all because a case was made against him, that his family is retaliating.”

The detective doesn't want to listen to him either.

“You may be someone with a title Sir, but you know I also have work to do. There is a case made and that covers me. You know I am doing the right thing.”

He looks at me and while the tears are still falling down my cheeks, I know he feels helpless. It doesn't matter what he says, the detective seemingly, has made up his mind.



I don't know what happened, I don't know what specific thing made him change his mind, but then he suddenly changed his tune. He is talking about how my mother said about my ex's mom fuming about the TV that is in the house, two weeks prior. He couldn't understand how my ex's mother could talk about the TV so long ago, but the case about the theft was opened after that, as if it just happened. He looks at me and my work tag hanging on my neck.

"It's fine. Go to work. I will go back to them and question them on what is really going on."

I can shout for pure joy. Something triggered some sense in his mind and I can only thank God for that!

We get up and leave, basically speed away, before he changes his mind. My sister phones again, worried. We laugh at the whole incidence, I was almost an inmate. For something I didn't do.

Just the thought of what they could do to me in those cells or my baby going without her nursing mom... I really don't know how they could do such a thing.

But their plan did not work.

I can only assume the TV-case against me was dropped when their detective came to fetch the TV and gave it back to his family. I do not know if they confessed the truth, but I have not heard from their detective again.

One day after 11 in the evening, I wake to the alarming voices

from inside the house. I get up and find everybody else awake and running around. I check the kitchen and the living room. No fire. I can't figure out what is going on. I go into the living room and find my sister crying on her arm, against the wall.

"What happened!?"

"He burned my car!"

I know who she is referring to. I run outside and witness this huge fire in front of the garage, where their car is parked. The flames are higher than the covering of the garage. I can't believe my eyes. My brother-in-law is attempting to hose down the fire. Neighbours once again pitch in. They quench the flames, but the car is totally done. The whole front part is pitch black and burnt to the ground. This time he has gone too far. It was a new car, they haven't even had it for two years yet.

I stand on the porch, helpless. I feel to blame for everything that is happening to my family. I brought this crazy man into all of their lives.



We go through the same process again: forensics, bomb squad, statements...

All the other times we had no evidence of who it was, of who was responsible. This time is a bit different. One of the guys had dropped their cell phone, near the car. We go through it ourselves, before we hand it over to the officers. We want to make sure no evidence is tampered with or disappears. My dad takes a photo of the cell phone and writes down all the numbers and names of the contacts on the phone. One of the numbers on the contact list, belongs to my ex. Finally, we

have evidence that links him to the fires!

It is time for me to appear in court again for the interdict. This time I know he will be present and this makes me very anxious. I will have to take a seat right next to him, while we will both be questioned. My sister has taken a day's leave this time and accompanies me until we have to take the stand.

He is nowhere in sight. While in our row outside, we meet this girl who has come with her baby. Her son immediately caught our attention as he is very friendly. We start talking with his young mother, who is also in line to sit down with her ex-boyfriend, also for an interdict. She shares her story.

She also, comes out of an abusive relationship. She came for an interdict and she has a case opened against him for rape. He would lock her up in his Wendy house for days and she had to wait for him there, naked, until he came home from work. He would rape her and leave. His mother would walk around with the key to the Wendy house and just unlock it to give them (her and her baby) food, whenever she feels the need. She will then lock it again from the outside, until her son would return home and do the same thing. She also, had to literally escape from her situation. The day she fled she ran to her uncle's house, which was close by. Before she could reach it, her ex got to her and beat her up in front of the uncle's house. She screamed like crazy until her family came to her rescue.

Her ex was also arrested only a few weeks after the occurrence and I tell her that if he doesn't show today, her first interdict hearing will also be postponed. We are still talking, when a lady comes and tells me that my ex has arrived. I have to switch places with my new-found friend. I have to go first.

When I see him come around the corner, my heart nearly stops. He looks a bit different. Hands cuffed in front of him, his

eyes wanders over the crowd. He sees me and looks away. The officer takes him around the back and the crowd start buzzing. Some of them look at me with concern, when they realise he has arrived for my case.

They call me in when they are ready and I take the seat next to him. We look at each other and both of us burst out laughing. Who would have ever thought we would come to this?

He is asked if he wants a lawyer present. He says yes and I get so upset. His lawyer isn't near there and if he insists on having him there, the case may once again have to be postponed.

The magistrate explains to him that this is not the hearing for the case itself, but only for the interdict. On asking him again if he needs his lawyer, he decides against it. Thankfully, we can proceed.

The magistrate asks him: "Do you have anything to say to her?"

He says yes and starts to say how sorry he is for hitting me that day. He shouldn't have done it. He asks for my forgiveness. Then the magistrate turns to me and asks me if I would forgive him and I say that I forgave him a long time ago already.

On this, the magistrate starts scribbling on paper and leaves us to talk. I ask him why he is doing all these things to me. He knows that he is the one in the wrong, but he still threatens us, burns my sister's car? He still denies everything then I tell him we have evidence and when he looks at me I have to change the story and say there are cameras on the house across the street and I can see who it was. I can't tell him about the cell phone, just in case he has a contact that can make that evidence disappear.

The magistrate reads out the requirements of the interdict against him, out loud.

“The interdict was actually valid since the day it was written out. You are not allowed to do any of these things against her or her family.”

His attention is caught on the part where it states that he may not burn our property or belongings and I explain what it means. I tell the magistrate about the car. He asks my ex about it and he just states: “I don’t know anything about it, I was in jail Sir.”

I elbow him in his side. “Talk the truth for once!”

“Well, if anything of what she said is true, you will be held liable, because this document is made out before the petrol bomb on the car.”

He just shrugs it off. According to him, he has an alibi.

When we are done, they take him to the back again and they send me with a file to drop at the same place he is waiting. I know it will be safe, because there are officers all around, but I don’t understand their processes.



How can they make you face your offender all the time? The very person you are having an interdict against.

I come outside and go to the back room to drop my file. He is sitting there, completing something. He starts crying. Then another lady officer asks him: “Do you love her?” He says yes and continues. I start crying myself.

When she leaves with me, she asks me why I would have an interdict against this man who clearly loves me. I just answer: “...Because, he almost killed me.”

It’s been months that he has been in jail.

I still have to one day soon, stand trial as witness. My

documentary proof, pictures are all gathered and filed, awaiting for the day when I have to present my case.

He is still continuing with threats from jail. Either via the public phone or different cell phone numbers. I do not know how that is possible. The system really has a lot of loopholes.

He has gone for bail hearings twice and has been denied. The third time is coming up soon.

His cousin phones me to tell me to go to a police station and write an affidavit that he is no longer a threat to me and that I am not scared of him. A total lie. I am supposed to make a copy of my ID to accompany it and send it with his cousin, so he can present it when he applies for bail again. The cousin immediately wants to come fetch me to take me to a police station myself, but I decline, saying that I will sort it out myself. As I speak, they are waiting for those documents.

If I send it, there is a good chance he will get bail and be outside to do who knows what to me and my family.



If I don't, he can just send his men to do it for him or still has a chance for coming out on bail and do it himself.

I haven't been sleeping well these last few days, I am tossing and turning every night out of worry.

Only God can help me making the right decision.

The fight, it seems will maybe never end...

Woman saved by God's strength during shark attack



Tiffany Johnson lost her arm in a shark attack in the Bahamas. (PHOTO: [Twitter/News Max](#)).

Originally published in [Charisma News](#).

A North Carolina woman is crediting God for saving her during a horrifying shark attack while on vacation in the Bahamas.

Tiffany Johnson, of Charlotte, says it's a miracle that she is alive.

"I had this supernatural, God-given strength that just rose up within me," Johnson said in an interview with WBTV.

And I had this determination and thinking this is not the end for me. I'm not going to die here. He's not going to take my life. I'm not going to allow it to."

Johnson and her husband, James, had been snorkeling in about 6m of water near Nassau when she was attacked by a large shark.

“I felt a bump, and I look over and I was face to face with the shark. And he had my arm in his mouth,” Johnson said.

She said the entire ordeal didn't seem real.

“I went to yank back my arm, and that's when he latched down harder, and we started to struggle,” she said.

“I remember just pulling my arm out and just looking at it and seeing that it was just this mangled stump, and I just threw off my snorkel mask, and I just screamed, ‘Help me, help me, Jesus,’ she said.

Her husband, who was in the boat, jumped in to save her.

“I was just praying the whole time that the shark wasn't following us,” he said.

Johnson said she continued to rely on her faith after being rescued.

“I prayed for my kids, and I prayed for the doctors that would be touching my arm, and I even prayed that God would use this for His glory,” she said.

Meanwhile, Johnson lost part of her right arm, but for people who don't believe in miracles, she hopes her story turns them into believers.

“If you really listen to this story, you will realise there really is no other explanation but God,” she said.

Fearless Messianic Jewish evangelist dies in Northern Iraq – A tribute



Antony Simon in the Negev Desert after an outreach with Libby Norton and Amanda Hattingh of David and Jonathan Foundation, South Africa.

The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few.

The Kingdom lost one of its most fearless labourers in the Middle East last week, Antony Simon.

Many South Africans who have visited Israel may have had a bible handed to them by the evangelist or even served on his team.

Antony Simon, a Messianic Jewish believer, after years of dodging bullets on outreach, was run over by a car in a busy street in Erbil in Northern Iraq.

Together with a member of his team, he had just finished preaching the word of God at an evening church service nearby

and had been aiding refugees. He travelled to Iraq the Sunday previous to hand out hundreds of audio and printed bibles, to preach to the lost and to provide aid to desperately needy Iraqis who have been forced to flee from Isis.

[Jacob Prash](#), who witnessed his coming to the Lord and with whom he had many fiery disagreements says: ‘‘He was a fireball of the gospel... a true light to the Gentiles, to the Jews, the Muslims... a radical evangelist like from the Book of Acts, I’ve never seen anyone like him...the most radical evangelist I ever saw in my life’’.

Simon led the Voice in the Wilderness congregation in the heart of Jerusalem. For more than 25 years he led teams to other cities handing out bibles in many languages. He also felt led also to minister among Syrian Kurds and Muslims. He had travelled frequently to Iraq and helped thousands of people with food, medical care and their spiritual needs.

Simon was a man of great energy and passion. He was married to his godly and supportive wife Dona, and had a grown daughter and two sons and was looking forward to being a grandfather soon. To his family and the Messianic believers in Israel are extended condolences and assurances that they are prayed for by many in this country.

In his testimony, Simon expressed the wish that Jewish people would, like him, come to believe and trust for salvation in the Messiah of Israel, Yeshua HaMeshiach, Jesus Christ. He died being about the works of the Lord. Like David, he can say *I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

Antony Simon’s Testimony

To read his testimony of how he came to believe that Jesus Christ is the Messiah click [here](#).

Simon’s ministry was supported by the South African David and Jonathan Foundation, a mission to Jewish believers in Israel

that holds events and raises funds to fulfil Romans 15:27 and twins South African churches with Israeli congregations.

Simon was about the work of the Lord and will surely hear the Lord say *Thou good and faithful servant!*

The fight back – Sophie's story (Chapter 2)

The Sophie is a South African working mom who recently became a Christian. But her abusive, gangster ex-boyfriend continues to disrupt and endanger her life. She says her faith is helping her to fight back. But it is hard. This is her story. It's a reality too many South African women face every day. Because Sophie shares her story at length, we are publishing it in three chapters. Names and places are changed for safety reasons.

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“How did you get involved with such a guy in the first place?”

“I don’t know Sir. You know how we are. Young and make mistakes like these...”

He nods and tells us how his own daughter is involved in a similar situation. “Why don’t you kids listen to your parents? I’m sure you, Mom, have warned your daughter about him, before all this happened?”

My mom nods her head. She herself has had enough...

Once he came into our house and was upset about something. He picked up the broomstick and stabbed it hard into my stomach. My dad heard the commotion from his room and came to my rescue. He apologised and left.

I am sure in my mother's quietness, all such memories come flooding back, just as it is with me.

"Take these document to the Day Hospital for them to complete and bring it immediately back to me. This must also go into your file." He hands me the documents and as we leave, we are vigilantly careful of every car, every passer-by. My mom goes first to get the car running and me and my sister run towards it and jump in.

We go straight to the Day Hospital.

There are so many in need of medical care that we have to wait a while to be attended to. I get frustrated. I just want to go home. Feel safe for once! I go straight up to one of the nurses on duty and explain my situation. The detective is awaiting for the form that has to be completed urgently. As they saw it, it wasn't vital enough...

I reconsider. Maybe I should never have made a case against him. I know this man and what he would do to me. He just got out of jail two days ago and he would never appreciate going back so soon. And by the hands of me, above all! Still, I stayed put.

They call my name after a long while of pacing up and down the hallway. I explain to the doctor what happened and what needs to be done.

"You know what? I am not going to complete this thing! You know how many forms like these I fill in and then the girl just withdraws the case afterwards? I am not going to waste my time!"



I could not believe the irrationality of this man! I am not 'other girls' and I need help! Where else should I go?

"Doctor, the detective is waiting for this form, it needs to be completed. Please. My life depends on it."

He turns his back on me and carries on with whatever else is more important than what my needs are. I want to scream out of frustration. "I am not going to withdraw the case and I need you to examine me and complete the form. Look at this face, you will remember me. I promise you, you WILL remember me!"

I swallow the harsh words that were about to roll over my tongue and sat still, so he could examine me. He made a few scribbles on the page, lots of blank spaces open. "Put it in the box there. You cannot take the document in any case; the detective must come and fetch it himself. That is procedure."

I leave without a word. It is out of my hands now.

We made a turn at the detective again to tell him what has happened. By the time he is already busy helping another lady. I look at her eyes – also filled with trauma, like mine. I excuse myself and interrupt them. He phones someone immediately to pick up the form at the hospital.

We thank him and turn to leave.

Then my sister asks: "What if he is driving up and down passed our house. Is it even safe to go back?"

Her phone is dead.

We interrupt the officer again. "Sir, can you please phone my brother-in-law just to keep a lookout? We are scared the guy may be waiting for us there."

We say our pardon again to the lady and the detective leads us to his office. We call my brother-in-law and he goes outside to have a look. "Come home, there is nobody here. I will wait

outside.”

Still fearful, we take the risk. We go home down different streets we would not normally take.

Approaching home, I duck on the backseat once again. We can never be too sure...



My dad and brother-in-law wait outside. They run to open the garage door and close it the moment we are inside.

I am home.

Safe...

Monday, my mom phones my boss to inform him of what happened and also request a day's leave. Filled with concern he states that we should sort everything out. Take our time. I had pitched up at work with blue eyes and dark glasses before. He knew exactly what it was all about.

Yet, the next day I return to work. It would help take my mind off things. Besides, I have lots to do. The response and the support I receive from my colleagues, is mind-blowing. They had made calls to individuals to assist in my case, in any way they could.

Days pass and all our routines change. The children are not allowed in front of the house. The front door and garage are always shut. We are even scared just to go to the shop across the road.

I am anxious when I leave the house and when I leave from work. I have to travel by public transport and you never know where he or his men may be. Every afternoon I ask to be dropped at a different location and my father picks me up there.

The interdict is given to me, a case is opened against him, but paperwork would not be able to protect me against the hands of him.

Days pass and the weekend comes. I do not want to leave the house to attend any church activities anymore. He knows my routines.

Sunday comes and his car stops in front of our house. I dread it's him! It is his cousin. Bringing his mom.

My sister goes out to greet them. She does not want me to have any connection with any of them at all. There is a court case and we do not want anything implicating us. I eavesdrop. The mother just wants to talk to me. Maybe she is sorry about what happened? I come out and let my sister know that it's fine. I will be fine. I go outside and keep her outside the house while we have a chat on the front porch. She asks about my health. Maybe she is concerned. We have a long chat about my daughter. I inform her that I cancelled the party. The third one I am cancelling. Every year, her son was the reason for that. Then she asks me: "Will you please just talk to him? He is sorry about what he did. He took out a gun and wanted to shoot himself. He is suicidal. You are the only one that can talk to him."

I really thought she came with good intentions. But it was only for her son. She persuades me and she dials his number on her phone. "Here."

Maybe it was too much anger that I harboured for too long. I never spoke to him after what he did and I used this chance I was given. "You need help! You are crazy! Go for counselling or something, but I never want to see you again!" I carry on saying hurtful things to him. Things that were true, but I never said out loud. His mother's eyes widened. "Don't talk to him like that!" I pull my face at her and shake my head. Doesn't she know what he really did to me, or is she so much

in denial? "I don't ever want you near me, or my child!" I give the phone back to her. I am done. I excuse myself and go inside. If he should kill himself, it's on him. He knows where he is heading, should he follow through.

Week Three. He is still not arrested.



That week at work, I am walking with a colleague and just as we are about to exit our building, I notice some of his family members waiting for me. I inform my friend and we trace back, all the while my eyes are fixed on them. Inside I pray that they don't see me. How did they know where I work? Why would they come there? Has he finally been arrested?

We are just about to make a clean getaway when the little niece sees me. "Gran, there she is!" All of them turn around and I am caught. Dead in my tracks. Fear overcomes me.

They call me and my friend begs me not to go. I know there is security all around so I gather my courage. They won't be able to lift a hand, if they want to. The mother goes first. "How are you doing?"

How do you think ma'am? I wanted to blurt out. She continues on no answer from me. "He says he needs the money back." I could not believe it! They came for money? Her own granddaughter's birthday money?

She knows her son. Even though she is saved, her children and their needs always come first. No matter if they are in the wrong.

"I don't have the money here. Is he here?" His brother looks at me. The last time he saw me was in a whole different set-up. "When can he get it?" The mother continues.

I respected this woman as a child of God. As a grown-up. But today I see her in a different light. She knows what he did and yet she is focused on money? And that probably for underhanded deals in the 'underworld', as they call it.

"I will pay it into his bank account." That way I know I do not have to see any of them ever again. She wants to say something further, but her son stops her. "It's fine Mommy, let's go."

They turn to leave and I go back to my friend, still standing there and watching our every move. "What did they say? Did the police find him?"

"It doesn't seem like it. I didn't want to ask, because I didn't know if they knew I opened a case against him. He is probably still outside, somewhere."

I know all his hiding places. He has run away from the law a few times. I could phone them anytime and reveal all of it to them. But even through this, I could not get myself to do it.

We didn't go outside as planned.

Now they know where I work. The Lord only knows how they found out.



I had to be extra careful...

He came around the house a few times this week. Every time – thankfully – I am not yet home. My dad, brother and brother-in-law would talk to him and ask him to rather stay away, but he would come again to look for me.

Friday comes. "He is here!" Somebody shouts. We all run from where we are, to have a look for ourselves. This time he knew I would be at home. We should be getting ready to go to youth

by now.

My dad goes out to talk to him this time. "I just want to see her. I just want to talk to her." I peep through the window. This is how he portrays. Meek. One would never believe he would hurt a fly when he is like this. I have come to know all sides of him. "Please Sir, just tell her I want to see her, then I will go." My father informs him that I don't want to see him. He has to give me time to deal with what has happened. He gets frustrated and starts to raise his voice. My father comes back in the house and he hammers on the door. We don't know what to expect. We don't know if he has any weapons on him or what his intentions are so they tell me not to have any confrontation with him. He paces the porch then gets in the car. Next moment his friend, who has been waiting in the car gets out. This time he knocks. Non-stop. He goes in front of our house and peeps through the living room windows. He calls my name. My sister and I watch his every move. Maybe they will get tired and leave. The friend goes back to him to ask what my dad's name is. He himself doesn't know. Just goes to show hey.

"Sir!" He bangs on the door. My dad goes again to try and calm them down. He talks through the window next to the front door. "He needs the money."

Some of the money he gave towards the party was already paid as deposits. I did not possess the full amount he gave towards it, any longer. "Just give something, so they can leave", my father begs. We count out R1 600 and my dad goes outside to hand it over and explain why it is so little. The R1 000 I had left, I keep aside. On the cancellation, I lost a lot of money too. Besides, when last did he pay any maintenance for his child?

My dad counts the money out in front of him while recording it on the phone, without him knowing. He could turn around and say I owe him the whole amount at any time. This way we had

evidence we did give something. They leave.

I could breathe. I don't have to see him for a while.

Wasn't long until he returned. He wants more money. He did not explain why he was so desperate, but something most definitely drove him. He knew how dangerous it might be coming there, yet it did not bother him. The money he gave for his daughter, he wants back.

"Give him everything you have!" My father is fed-up. I agree. All of this torture is not worth it. My dad hands over the rest. "Let her come out, I want to talk to her! She can just stand by the window."

I would do it, if it means he would leave, but then my sister says: "What if he plans on shooting you right there? You can't trust a man in such a state." They don't know him like I do. My heart pounds, but I go to him. We talk through the window. He hands me a cell phone. "Keep this, I will phone you on this cell."



I look at this old damaged phone. "Where is MY phone?! You want your stuff, where is mine?! I don't want this thing!" I refuse to take it. My kids' photos and video clips are on my phone. And I don't have any copies of it. He laughs at my stubbornness. "You are wrong, what you did is wrong. I just want my stuff back, please. You have everything you wanted." He looks at me and I know what he is thinking. Everything besides me. He knows everything has changed. "Just go, please." I turn and walk away. We both know, for good.

Still not satisfied, he knocks on the door again. My father goes this time. I stand behind him and ask him not to stand to close. We don't know what they are really up to. Why aren't they leaving?

The children are already upset about all this commotion. My

sister goes with them to her room to calm them down. They don't budge.

We decide on calling the police. That feels like the only way.

They come immediately and we explain to the officer that I have an interdict against this man. He goes outside to warn him and he states that he never received a copy of the interdict. I fetch a copy and the officer reads it out to him. The interdict states that he should not come near me or my family, our house, or burn any of our possessions. The latter I had to add, because of an incident on January 2.

With a new year full of hope approaching, we celebrated New Year's Eve as a household in a seaside town. New Year's we were at home, because we knew everywhere would be full. We decided on a barbeque in the comfort of our home. We went to sleep late. Something to 2, the morning of January 2 2017, we woke up to a crash and bang in the front of the house. It sounded as if a car had driven right inside the house. All of us jumped up and ran, to find the front of our house burning. The dark smoke clouds filled the whole kitchen, into the hallway. My brother ran through the living room to outside, to see if he could find the person responsible for it. Somebody had thrown a petrol bomb into our kitchen! We started pouring water over the kitchen cupboards, but it didn't really help as it was the petrol that was burning. We struggled a while. Neighbours were rushing in to assist. Some took the kids to their place, to keep them out of the smoke. The fire was extinguished, before the police arrived. Because we reacted immediately, we saved our house. Our lives. We sat outside, while my dad gave the statement to the police. At the time we did not know who it might be, or why they did it.

Forensics came. The bomb squad came. Everyone speculated.

We sat on the pavement outside, to stay out of the house, still reeking of petrol and smoke.

In my heart I knew who was responsible, but didn't tell my family. While we were away in the seaside town I saw him phone numerous times from the number he phones from in jail. A cell phone number. I was out with my family and for once, didn't want to be disturbed. This may have been the consequence.

He of course later confessed to it. He had sent two of his guys to do it. To teach me a lesson. If he phones, I should answer!

The officer reads all these requests as stipulated on the interdict and asks him to leave. The officer gets in his car, they get into theirs. All of them leave. Now we know we can have some peace and quiet.

Not even five minutes later, he returns. He just waited for the officer to disappear and came back.



This time my dad is stern with him. "Go home! We will call the police again if you do not listen." I prohibited my father and everyone else to say anything about the case opened against him. It's fine if he knows about the interdict, but if he knew we have a case as well... "Go home to your mother and talk to her!" Maybe Dad felt that she could persuade him or talk some sense into his head, that he suggested that.

He gets into his car and leaves. It worked!

By this time my sister and brother-in-law had excused themselves from youth. It was the first service for this year and as its leaders, they should be there but they could not trust leaving the house.

Later we all get together and start cracking jokes. This seems to be the way our family deals with strain. Laughter really is the best medicine... My mom comes home from work and we inform

her about the day's happenings.

However, the night isn't over.

He comes back ... with his mom.

My dad's suggestion gave him a good idea. Maybe she could talk some sense into me.

This time both my parents go outside. The whole ordeal just brought so much attention to our house. A house of God-fearing Christians, attracting so much negative attention. The neighbours are probably thinking what in the world is going on there!

My sister and I eavesdrop again. We hear every word. His mother does not believe that he did all those things to me. According to her I made it all up. He just wants to see his child and I am using this to keep him away from her.

Every time it's something different.

The more they explain I don't want to see him, the more the mother gets aggravated. She too now, wants to see her grandchild and why are we keeping her away from them?

My mother comes inside to talk to us. She is out of wits, about this woman's mentality. My dad continues to talk to them, while my brother-in-law supports. "Lady, I am sorry, but your son has to stay away from my daughter. He knows what he did. Finished." He knows there is no getting through to her and he is done talking. "I asked your son to give her some time, but he doesn't want to. Come back some other time. Thank you."

He turns and walks away. As I know him, he would never do something like that, but he is getting old. Such nonsense, he does not have to stand. They close the door behind them. "Call the police." He states.

We follow his instruction. All the while, they are still lurking outside.

The same policeman of earlier attends to the call out. "Why is this man here, what does he want?" We explain about the money. We inform him that we struggled to get them away from here. I explained what he did to me. "Little girl, why didn't you open a case against this man?" "I did Sir. I don't know if he knows."



I fetch the paper with the case number and the officer makes a call and goes outside. He asks for back up. It isn't long before two more police vans arrive. Blue lights light up our street...

When his mother sees more cops, she asks him to rather leave. "We can come back some other time." She knows what is about to happen. By this time he is so fuelled up that he throws harsh words at everyone. Even his mother can't calm him down. He does not listen to her.

They arrest him right there in front of our house. In front of his mother and niece. Neighbours watching...

This is the last straw. His mother had just gotten her son back. She is not about to let him go out like that. "He never did anything to her! He never took her to that place they say! She is lying!!!"

The police carry on with what they have to do. They pay no attention to her outbursts. "What about the TV she still has of him? Go fetch it there!"

Inside, we gasp at the behaviour of this woman. She carries on like a street whore. Screaming with gesturing arms. And she lies!

The TV she is referring to, is one he gave to his daughter.

More than a year ago. "To watch her cartoons on". It wasn't his, but his daughter's.

She shouts many more inaccurate and hurtful things. "She lived with him as if she was his wife, now she does this? She has something against him." She besmirches my name, because she knows she has an audience. I didn't come out once. We all stay inside and don't say a word.

The police vans leave and the neighbours return home. His mother and niece are now stuck, without a driver.

Under any other circumstance we would assist, but not in this matter. We hear the niece make a call to her dad. "They took him", she cries. "There is nobody to drive the bakkie home."

I am upset that she would expose a child to such events. Why would she bring her along in the first place? All the other things she maybe could not avoid, but she could at least make the phone call herself? This made me think about my daughter. Would she forever be dragged into things like this, if she would grow up there?



My sister and I sit in the living room and talk, until her son and his friend come.

Until they all leave...

The fight back – Sophie's story (Chapter 1)



It's Friday the 13th ... While the world may be engulfed in superstition of what this day may

Sophie is a South African working mom who recently became a Christian. But her abusive, gangster ex-boyfriend continues to disrupt and endanger her life. She says her faith is helping her to fight back. But it is hard. This is her story. It's a reality too many South African women face every day. Because Sophie shares her story at length, we are publishing it in three chapters. Names and places are changed for safety reasons.

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Morning rituals done, productive day at work, en-route home...

My phone goes haywire in my handbag and when I saw his name full on my screen, I just got this weird feeling in my stomach. My ex is calling.

Usually I would not answer his calls – especially while travelling public transport – but seeing that our daughter is turning three one of these days, we are quite civil in the arrangements for her birthday party.

“Hi?” I hold my breath for a short while.

“Where are you now?”

“On my way home. Why?”

“I will get you halfway. Will pick you up, so I can give you the rest of the money.” Referring to the rest of the amount he promised for the party.

“Okay.” Deep down I knew it couldn’t be a good idea, but this time it is different. It’s just for my daughter. The first party she will ever have.

On the way to his house, we have a light conversation.

His brother and girlfriend are home and they greet and talk as if no time has passed between us all.

While in conversation, he asks for my phone. I unlock and give it to him, no questions asked.

A few moments later he starts to question me on photos I took not too long ago. Photos with my family members, I might add.

Seeing it as frivolous and trivial, I explain each setting as he goes through each one. One catches his eye and he hovers over it, then asks me in a louder voice this time: “And where is this?!”

I look at this picture we took at the beach. Me with a few girlfriends, posing in our bathing costumes underneath a cover-up dress. Still not understanding the frustration he so desperately tries to hide, I tell him who’s who and where we were.

Maybe it is because I don’t comprehend the gravity of his distress, or I’m too naïve to remember what this man is capable of... I do not know. But the next few moments change my view of him forever.

He starts shouting at me for exposing my body in such a manner and smacks me, right in front of the audience. I get upset, because what is he on about? And to top it all, it is to no concern to him as we are no longer together!

Yet, I keep my tone low to cool him down. “I was with my family, you saw them in the other pics? And I am wearing this thing over it. It covers my whole body...”

Yet, no words can quench the fire in his eyes...

He starts shoving me around and hits me over the head with my phone. The other two slowly and silently move out of the room and leave me alone with him. He goes outside and speedily returns with something in his hand. He lifts it high and bashes me with it. An iron bar.

I start to cover my face. The agony of each blow on my arms, shoots through my whole body. He strikes again, every time aiming for my head. I cannot shield myself with my arms any longer and he hits me over the head again. A stream of blood fountains to the floor.

“Stop!”

He does not listen...

“Please stop!”

It's like no words hit his ears, as he continues to hit hard, blow after blow...



Suddenly silence... It's dark all around me.

“Call out to The Lord” – a loud voice resounds in my ear. I pray in silence to God, to help me.

As if curtains opened, light break through and this man is hovering over me, with eyes wide in shock. That's when I know I must have been unconscious. I do not know when or how I landed flat on my back, on the floor.

He stretches out his arm to help me get up. Blood still streaming all over my face and on my clothes, he realises what he has done. “Go upstairs and clean yourself up.”

He shoves me upstairs into the bathroom and he brings me a clean cloth and towel.

I clean myself up and in my mind I am getting ready to go home. My family did not even know where I went after work. It was just supposed to be a short visit.

He leads me out of the bathroom and shoves me into his room. He locks the door from the outside.

This time I knew, it may be over with me...

Before he used to get mad and hit me, but not as badly as today. He really was furious, slightly more than the other times...

With no phone close by, I just have to sit and wait to see what he decides my fate to be.

In his room there are screens linked to the cameras that are set up all around the house. The whole time I watch his every move. He fidgets in the garage, then he moves to the front of the house. Up and down, up and down. Then he disappears.

In the early morning hours I hear him coming up the stairs. I pretend that I am asleep. He swings open the door and I pray to God that he is calmed down now and will take me home.

"We have to go somewhere." He mentions the place and I know it is close by, so maybe if he does what he has to there, he will take me home afterwards. I can only hope.

He idles the bakkie outside and comes back to fetch me.

All this time, his brother and girlfriend are nowhere to be seen.

He drags me into the vehicle by my hair, while cussing and clearly still mad.

We pass the place he said he had to be. Further and further away...

When we take the N7 turn-off, I know this could be the last

time I ever see my hometown. He will kill me and dispose of my body.

I do not want to aggravate him by asking any questions, so I just internally pray as we move along. I close my eyes a few times, so he may think I am sleeping, but I am actually praying in my mind and planning my escape.

But I do not know any place nearby. Will I get to someone who can help me in time? If I can get away from him and hide anywhere, how will I get home? I could jump out while he is driving, but what if I hurt myself and upset him even more? I have to fight my tears, silence and compliance are the only option.

Later, I gather all the courage I have left and ask him where we are going.

"I have to take care of something. I could not send you home, looking like this."

He is referring to my swollen face. I look in the mirror in front of me and almost my whole left eye is swollen shut. It is as warm as coals when I touch it. On my forehead, the scar from which the blood streamed, is closed. And tiny. I could actually not believe so much blood came from such a small snit. My head is pounding.

Hours pass and all the way I think of my small children. They will be motherless. I greeted my family in the morning thinking we would see each other again, but it may never happen...

We stop at a garage and I consider running up to one of the employees and asking him to phone the police. Fear grips me when I remember how he used to hurt other people in front of me. That skinny guy at the till is no match for him. He could have a heavy weapon on him in any case, so he could hurt even more people than just me. I have to stay put.

I engage in normal conversation with him. To remind him of who I am. He used to love me, I was his girlfriend before. If he can only remember, he will not do anything to hurt me.

His temper has subsided by the time we reach our destination.

It is a room he booked at a hotel. He checks in while I stand in the background as ordered, to hide my face from anybody we may encounter. Once settled in, he leaves me again. "I have to be somewhere."

I have this whole place to myself and I could run out any time, but fear keeps me locked up in the room. I do not know if he is just around the corner, or when he'll be back. I have to play it safe, just for the slightest chance of survival.

I use the ice in the bucket in the room and roll it in a cloth to get the swelling down. It is so painful, but I force myself to keep it on my face. I take a R20 of his money lying around and hide it in my shoe. Just in case I will need it later.

Later I become so tired from the whole ordeal, that somewhere during these early morning hours, I fall asleep..

He comes back after settling his business and I ask him to take me to hospital. By this time I can't move my head. Every movement sends a sharp shot of pain through my spine. Amazingly he agrees and goes in with me to see a doctor.

I am sent for x-rays. By this time my stomach is also growling, so I reluctantly, yet courageously ask for something to eat. He probably feels the same, as he immediately agrees to go. I ordered all my favourites as I know this will take a while to gather and he knows in his heart he owes me at least that. He now leaves my phone with me. "Phone me when you are done." I nod.



When he disappears around the corner, I immediately phone my

sister. The worry in her voice overpowers her ability to clearly grasp what is really going on. "No you can't phone the police! Just now they go to his house and his family lets him know they were there!"

She wants to come fetch me right there and then, but I know a few hours' travel lies between us and by that time he would have the phone back. Where would they find me? "Just please, wait until I get home. I just wanted to let you know where I am."

We say goodbye and I put the phone down, just in case he comes back. We continue chatting via WhatsApp and I explain every detail. As we chat, I delete our conversations.

He returns when the x-rays are done and I go to the doctor again with the results. As I enter his room I whisper to him: "He did this to me." He nods in understanding.

The images show I had a concussion.

My ex comes to sit next to me and the words of this wise man in his profession just blow me away: "Why would you hit this girl?"

I experience that moment where your whole body just goes numb. I do not know how to salvage this situation. "Doctor, I have to go back with this man!" I wanted to scream. My ex just looks at me as if to see if it was me who said anything and I just shrug my shoulders. I do not know where this doctor would get such an idea. Maybe the doc saw the tension between us, that he left the whole story? Only he would know.

The doctor makes more scribbles on his document and he writes out a prescription for me.

We go back to the hotel and I eat my meal in silence. What is this man's plan?

"When you are done, we will leave."

I can't hide my smile and want to shout in joy. I am going home!!!

I send my sister a short message to let her know we are coming. I know she will not reply, but I still keep the phone on silent, just in case.

We get back in the vehicle; this time I get in willingly. On the way we talk about anything and everything. Me, not mentioning once what has happened. He gives lifts to those along the road with a few bucks in their hands. Back in town, he does not, however, take the turnoff to my house. We drive back to his...

Just a few hours left before another day will break. All this time I am wondering what my kids are thinking, why Mommy didn't come home. But I wait it out. He knows I will have to go back to work the next day, so he will take me home soon.

I can't sleep a wink. The brother and his girlfriend are still there, but they keep their distance. They know not to intrude.

The next morning we are downstairs and he goes out for a smoke on the porch, in front of the house. "Your mom's here," he whispers.

I can't believe my ears! "Seriously?" Thank God, I am rescued!

"Yes."

I want to step outside, but when I hear my mom and sister's voices. I instinctively halt.



They ask about me, where I am. My daughter was apparently crying non-stop for me. I get up and walk closer to the front door. They act as if they never heard from me.

"She is not here. We argued and she left yesterday already."

"Did she tell you where she was going?", my sister asks.

"No. I don't know where she is. I just got here myself."

My mom this time: "So she is not here?"

"No. You can go in and have a look for yourself."

I know what he is up to. If they don't believe him and come into this house, they will face the same fate I am facing. I come forward, just enough for my sister to see me. She looks up at me and I can see the relief on her expression. I signal that she should keep quiet and rather go. I would rather face this nightmare alone, than drag the two of them into it.

She looks back at him and pretends she never saw me. "Maybe we should go look at Cousin's place," I hear her say. "Maybe she went there."

My mom, still wanting to interrogate, stops mid-sentence.

"Come Mom." She pulls her away. "If you talk to her before we do, please tell her we are looking for her."

He agrees and they get in the car and leave.

I feel better for just seeing them at least.

I run back to my seat and await his verdict.

He finishes his smoke and joins me in the living room. He asks for my phone again. I unlock and give it back to him. He already went through all my pics; all my chats and call logs were deleted, so there is nothing incriminating left. Nothing to worry about.

But I have forgotten about Facebook.

He goes on my profile and scrolls down through all my updates. The most innocent photo catches his attention, because as fate so has it, a guy that I probably saw about 10 years ago,

commented on it and that is the comment that still lingers underneath the photo. "You are still as beautiful as when I last saw you."

"Who is this man?!"

"A friend from school. I don't know when last I saw him." Here we go again...

His fury flares up again and this time I know there is no calming him down. I have to escape!

I run to the kitchen and I grab a thick cast iron pan still on the stove – with sausage from the residents' previous night's meal still in it – and I take a swing at him.

"If you come any closer, I will HIT you with it!" Now I am the one that is angry. I have been obedient in this traumatic affair for long enough!

He ducks and I race backwards.

The usual clients and friends are quite settled in the garage. I pass them and they know not to comment or ask a thing.

"Where would you run? Put down the thing," he tries to calm me down. I know I cannot give in. I have to run like my life depends on it. That is the only way.

I still have the pan in my hand. He now gets irritated as I am embarrassing him in front of people that have to look up to him. Respect him. I do not care. They also know who he is and what he is capable of...

I get through the first iron gate that leads to the front of the house. I pull it closed. If he wants to come through it, he has to run into the house first, to get the key to unlock it. This may buy me some time.

Still gathering my thoughts on the way out, he makes a request

again. "Come back inside."

I know that pretentious composure. It cannot be trusted.

I step back through the second gate. "Where are you going with the pan?!" I look at it and throw it back at him, through the gate's railings.

I turn and literally run for my life.

I hear him shout at his guys: "Catch her and kill her!"

I run down the long street and I turn to see if they are on their way yet. A few of his guys are standing on the corner, probably watching which turn I am about to take. I had to make a split-second decision: I could run to my cousins who stay only a few streets away, but those repercussions I would not be able to take on myself. He would kill them too.

I rather decide to take the road which leads to his mom's new home. Maybe they will think I am running to her house. But I'm not.

I run relentlessly and reach the river and I pray to God to help me, to give me strength to continue. My lungs painful, as I deeply gasp for air. My body still sore, my legs could not carry me.

I stop. Maybe I should just give up. Surrender and let him kill me.

...But my kids! I never said goodbye to them. I pray again: "God, please give me strength!"

I start running again, and I see a taxi standing at the pavement, busy loading people. I run towards it and jump in. In my jacket's pocket I still have R6 change. I hand it over and burst into silent tears. I know there are eyes fixed on me, but I don't care what people think of me at that moment. They probably made their own assumptions when they saw the

state I was in. I look through the windows to see if the guys are coming.

We leave and they are nowhere in sight yet. I remember the R20 in my shoe and turn to the driver. "Do you have a phone I may use please?" I give him the R20, but he shakes his head. He knows what is going on and he won't take a cent for helping me.

I phone my sister. "I'm in a taxi. Get me at the corner by the school!" I know she will react immediately. We have watched many programs with ordeals like this before. We know what to do in situations like these.

Suddenly his car passes the taxi. At high speed. The car is loaded with guys, he is driving. I know they will wait for me where I am supposed to get off. I phone my sister again. Drive past! Get me on this corner! I am getting out now!"

I am hesitant to get out. What if the taxi drives on and they come back, catching me right here, exposed?

But then I see my Mom's car and I shout out loud in pure delight! "Stop! Here!" They drive like animals and almost have an accident themselves. I run and get in the car.

I duck down on the backseat and my cry is spontaneous. "I can't take it anymore!"

My sister shouts at my mom to take a different route. She turns towards me. "This time, we are taking you to the police station," she says sternly. This time I do not argue.

We cannot go to the police station in our area, as we know the guys are roaming the streets at the moment, so we go to another one, they will never guess.

I open a case against this man that I earnestly loved for almost five years of my life. One that fathered my youngest child. All this time I couldn't get myself to do it, because I

was scared he would get out one day and kill me. But now I know he will kill me regardless...

Something had to be done!



The case and the interdict against him sound like the end to all this misery, but it was just an ignition of the terror that was to follow...

It was only the beginning of my fight... back.

Man miraculously receives dream car by obeying God's voice



Life's surprises can come unexpected especially when God moves in surprising ways man cannot fathom.

Learn from the faith story of a man who obeyed God's voice one day. (PHOTO: Pexels: Negative Space via [The Gospel Herald](#)).

By Lovely Lao—Originally published in [The Gospel Herald](#).

Miracles are common phenomenon within Christian circles, and testimonies of healing, deliverance, provisions and other unexplainable miracles are shared to encourage, empower and to bring back the glory that belongs to God.

Freshwind Global Ministries of the Philippines is among the Christian circles that celebrate the supernatural works of God among the Filipino Christians headed by a pastor named Miguel Que. And one of the testimonies that awed the believers was the testimony of a pastor named Rogelio "Roger" Saplan which Pastor Que wrote in his website, "God told Pastor Roger to go a Toyota car dealer store."

Upon communicating with Pastor Roger via Facebook, he recalled the day God spoke to him and told him that he would have a car in the month of July. And the instructions God gave him was that he should specifically wear old, worn out clothes and shoes, come by Toyota car dealer store around 1:00 P.M.

Pastor Roger said that the following day, after receiving the instructions he heard from God, he went to Isuzu instead for some humanly reason. Wearing a shirt with a hole on the backside paired with worn out slippers, none of the sales people approached him so he went back home. The next day, he went to another car dealer store, Mitsubishi at the same time, wearing the same clothing. Again, not one person approached him.

Sometimes, following the specific instructions of God can be very difficult due to our human nature that may doubt the voice of God within us.

Pastor Que wrote that Pastor Roger went back home “discouraged” and “asked the Lord why no one even bothered to talk with him. God reminded him saying, “I did [not] tell you to go to Mitsubishi or to Isuzu. I told you to go to Toyota.”

Finally, Pastor Roger went to Toyota car dealer store, wearing the same worn out shirt and slippers at 1:00 P.M. He said that upon getting inside the store, a sales lady immediately approached him. Moreover, Pastor Que added that the sales lady asked what Pastor Roger wanted and he replied “a car.” He was then offered to sit down for a while and have a sip of coffee.

While waiting, an acquaintance of Pastor Roger came inside the store and asked him what he was doing at Toyota. Pastor Roger explained and told his friend that God told him he would have a car.

It was then that Pastor Roger’s friend said that while praying to God, he was asked to go to Toyota and hand out half of the car’s down payment to someone. And that someone was Pastor Roger.

When people obey the voice of God, blessings do come by according to His will and purpose.

UK mother refuses cancer therapy to give birth to twins



Becky Anderson with her twin boys, Preslee and Buddy (PHOTO: The Sun).

Originally published in [The Gospel Herald](#)

This is the story of a mother's love. A love that ultimately surpassed regard for her own life. When Becky Anderson learned May of last year that she was carrying twins, she was overjoyed. In a cruel turn of events, however, she also discovered that she had cervical cancer. Her doctor urged her to have a hysterectomy as well as an abortion, but the 35-year-old mother refused. Anderson expressed her response with incredible rawness and emotional sincerity:

"I'd gone from being on top of the world to being in the depths of despair, worrying whether I was going to actually survive. At first, I refused to believe the results. It was really hard to take in – discovering you're pregnant and have cancer at the same time. I just held my mum and cried. I knew I needed to survive for the sake of my children. There was no

way I was leaving them.”

She denied the hysterectomy on grounds that such a procedure would claim the lives of her precious twin boys, as well as her fertility.

“They wanted to give me a hysterectomy the following week but I was adamant I would not have an abortion. A hysterectomy would mean I’d be left infertile so this was my last chance to have children.”

At thirty weeks into her pregnancy, a caesarean section was performed; both children were delivered, healthy and energetic. The pain, coupled with the anxiety of the prior weeks, left Becky bedridden and unable to care for her twins in the days following the birth. She also finally had a hysterectomy. She expressed the subsided pain, however, in simply enjoying her new-borns:

“I was exhausted and in agony but when they were placed on my chest, I breathed in their scent and just couldn’t believe they were here.”

Now, six months later, the Anderson family is happy and awaiting further test results as to Becky’s cancer-status. Meanwhile, the brave and beaming mother assures spectators that she in no way regrets her decision against chemo and abortion. On the contrary, she communicates only sheer delight and relief in her actions:

“I wouldn’t change it for the world,” she insisted, “They are an absolute joy and I love them very much.”

Mrs Anderson’s true story is a testimony – a reminder that our Christian conduct should never rely on the outcome. Whatever the end of the matter, no regret can compare to the guilt of compromise or transgression.

Nabeel Qureshi reveals heart-breaking update about his terminal cancer



Nabeel Qureshi (PHOTO: [Christian Today](#)).

Originally published by [Christian Today](#)

Celebrated Christian apologist and speaker Nabeel Qureshi revealed he has terminal cancer with doctors giving him an almost zero per cent chance of survival.

The Pakistani-American who converted from Islam before becoming an outspoken evangelist and bestselling writer asked for prayer as his latest round of treatment proved unsuccessful.

‘The results aren’t good,’ he told followers on YouTube. ‘The radiation apparently didn’t work too well.’

The author of [*No God But One: Allah or Jesus?*](#) is battling stomach cancer and said although the tumor had shrunk there, the cancer had spread through his lymph nodes around his chest, meaning he is ruled out from vital surgery.

“We don’t know what’s going to happen now,” he said. “Next week, we will be meeting with our medical oncologist who will be giving us whatever options we have now.”

The heart-breaking video update showed Qureshi saying he “can’t lose hope” and talking about how he didn’t want his young daughter to grow up fatherless.

“This is about the worst news we’ve received since the day we were first diagnosed,” he said. “And the cancer is now worse than where it was when we were first diagnosed.”

‘It’s Time’ pilgrims share their prayer day impressions



An aerial view of the It’s Time gathering April 22. (PHOTO:

@DrMichaelMol)

A million people prayed together and encountered the Holy Spirit together at the It's Time prayer day last Saturday. Here a Karoo farmer, a retired minister from Howick, a couple from Beaufort West and a woman from Worcester who travelled to Bloemfontein by train with a group of 500 prayer pilgrims, all share their thoughts and impressions of the historic day.

The desire to pray as one body for the salvation of South Africa was so compelling that it drew a million believers to the It's Time National Day of Prayer to humble themselves before the Lord God Almighty.

In the build-up to the prayer day many thought a million people attending was far-fetched and impossible.

Yet, people of faith travelled in aeroplanes, busses, taxis, motorcars, motorbikes, bicycles and on foot from all corners of southern Africa and beyond to assemble in the veld in the centre of the country, kneel before the Lord in the dust and repent and worship Him in Jesus Christ's name as their way and truth and life.

The immense prayer gathering had a singular focus, Jesus Christ, it was not about any person, but our Saviour, the only begotten Son of God, this was made clear by Angus Buchan, who called for and led the meeting.

Middelburg to Bloemfontein

Before the Church clock had struck 5am, Albertus Geldenhuis, a farmer from Richmond in the Northern Cape, met-up with 20 fellows in faith in Middelburg for the journey to Bloemfontein.

The group came together when it was still dark, in the still of a Karoo street and before they bordered their hired taxi

they celebrated Holy Communion, which Albertus said was a profound experience; standing in prayer as a body in the pre-dawn quiet – it set the journey to the national prayer gathering off in a wonderful way.

“Travelling in the taxi together with my son and 19 other believers, engaging in conversations and discussing issues was special. It would not have been the same experience travelling in my own vehicle.

“When we arrived at the event I became very emotional seeing the three crosses on the hill that overlooked the terrain. The crosses were placed in the perfect place as they were always in my awareness.

“I was amazed at how easily we entered the It’s Time site and found parking. I thought we would be in queues of traffic.

“The excitement of being there was wonderful, it was tangible, you could feel in the air, everyone was friendly, greeting each other and assisting each other. There was genuinely a feeling of goodwill.

“Being part of such a big crowd made for feeling that you were part of something big, something special, that something was going to happen that would ensure you were not the same person when you returned home,” said Albertus.

He explained that although he went to the gathering with great expectations, because of all the prophetic words and all that he had read on social media about preparations for the event, when he arrived he had the distinct feeling that the gathering was something God had planned and been orchestrating for a long time, so many different prophecies and seemingly unrelated preparations planned before the event was ever thought of by men came together on the April 22 in Bloemfontein to form the It’s Time National Day of Prayer.

Time for individual prayer included

The fact that Uncle Angus made time for individual prayer was a special aspect of a gathering that focused on praying for the nation, according to Albertus.

“It gave me time to sort out things in my own life and bring them before the Lord and it felt different doing it as part of a crowd of many people doing the same thing instead of by myself at home, because while I was praying personally, I was still aware of being part of a much larger body of believers all praying.

“Another special part of the day was when Uncle Angus asked the entire assembly of a million people to kneel. It was a wonderful symbol of how we have allowed ourselves to become proud and the necessity for humbling ourselves before the Lord and recognising our dependence on Him.”

The most important message that Albertus received from Uncle Angus on the day was that we should acknowledge the problems we face as a country, but not be negative about them. We should see them through God’s eyes and be aware that He is in control.

“Uncle Angus used the phrase, ‘But God’, so if anyone says something negative about the country we should answer ,‘But God’, because we know that He is in control and we know that ‘He works for the good of those who have been called according to his purpose’.

“He emphasised that we should be positive about our country and its people. We all know the power that is in the tongue and our words. We have allowed the enemy to use our weakness of speaking negatively for his purpose for too long.

“I think that is one of the biggest changes we can make; to be careful of the way we speak about our country, people, government, and President. That alone will make a big difference to our country. We should speak life into the nation,” said Albertus.

Personal role of bringing positive change

As a result of being at It's Time, the Karoo sheep farmer said he is more aware of his personal role of bringing positive change to the country.

"We must realise that a huge shift took place in the spiritual realm due to the national prayer day, which we should remind ourselves of every day and live according to that new reality.

"God has taken back His ownership of South Africa from the enemy. It is through those lenses that we should see our lives, that God is in control," said Albertus who is determined to go forward in such a way that he reflects the truth of God being in control in South Africa.

He is also grateful for the healing of his son's ankle, which had troubled him on-and-off for years and had restricted his participation in sport, yet was cured during the event, although they only became aware of it when they got back home.

Albertus was surprised and impressed by the number of elderly people at the event, many of whom walked with difficulty or on crutches, yet they took the trouble of joining the prayer gathering and sat out in hot sun for a large part of the day.

While the traffic was jam-packed getting out of the event, which took many hours, Albertus said it was a small sacrifice to pay for the experience of such a blessed prayer assembly.



An aerial view of some of the fields used as parking lots for It's Time. (PHOTO: Riaan Janse van Vuuren)

Howick to Bloemfontein

Another who was blessed by the day of prayer was retired Methodist Minister, Oswin Kretzman, who travelled from Howick in KwaZulu-Natal to attend the gathering.

“I was amazed by the fact that so many people attended what was essentially a prayer gathering, yet it drew a million-plus people from all corners of the country and from all denominations, which was incredible given that the prayer meeting is the Cinderella movement of the Church.

“For me it was a miracle that so many people attended a prayer meeting, the whole meeting was a miracle from beginning to end. There seemed to be no need to persuade people to attend, they just wanted to be there.

“The other thing that was miraculous was the emphasis of the meeting, which was on Jesus, His saving work, the worship of God Almighty, and the need to rely on the Holy Spirit, and that the most fundamental response we can give is prayer, especially people praying together as the body of Christ.”

Sign of revival

Oswin believes the meeting was a sign of revival.

“While the wind was there in gusts the wind of the Spirit was also there. During the whole It’s Time gathering we were surrounded by the gentle breeze of the Holy Spirit, which was very marked.

“While there were no dramatic expressions of the Holy Spirit, like people breaking out and speaking in tongues, I believe the Holy Spirit was there doing gentle, but deep work in all sorts of ways – physical healing, emotional healing and spiritual healing.

“I believe there will be a continuing impact of the Holy Spirit in the aftermath of the event.

“I think we will still see positive consequences manifesting from the meeting in months to come, especially in people’s attitudes changing particularly concerning being positive about our country that was repeatedly urged by Angus, which was a salutary reminder to all of us not to be influenced by the criticism of media.

“I believe the call by Angus to be constructive when speaking about South Africa was an anointed word.

“What he said will be etched in our memory and bring hope to people regarding the future of the nation,” said Oswin.

Beaufort West to Bloemfontein

David and Jenny Jack left their home in Beaufort West in the Western Cape at 12-midnight on Friday to travel together with friends by car to the It’s Time National Day of Prayer and arrived back home at 12-midnight on Saturday after the gathering.

“It was a milestone in South Africa’s history, it was amazing that it took place and amazing to see how many people participated,” said Dave.

“It was amazing that a million people arrived in the veld and

the hot sun, and so many families with small children, it was mind-boggling.”

Jenny says from where they sat they could not see any end to the crowd.

“Although we knew quite a few people who attended, we didn’t see one familiar face. There were so many people that it looked like a lot of ants.

Need for a positive attitude

Dave was blessed by the way that Angus spoke without blame or censure, but with sound advice and encouragement, especially regarding the need for a positive attitude towards our neighbours and nation.

“I agree with Angus’ emphasis on the need to focus on the family and reconcile relationships within our households before looking to solve the country’s problems.

“If we can relate to each other within the family in a Biblical way many things will fall into place in the country.

“I was also strongly impacted by Angus saying that a nation can be born in a day and confirming it from God’s Word in Isaiah 66:8, because if we can humble ourselves before the Lord and set the tone for the country to follow then the Lord assures us that he will heal our land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

“He is a miracle working God and he will change our land if we humble ourselves, pray, have faith and allow Him to do it by treating each with love and respect,” says Dave.

Having returned from the It’s Time prayer gathering, Dave is adamant that he will focus on building good relationships, especially among the youth and children, because so many children are growing up without father figures.

Jenny believes Angus has put the ball firmly in the court of those who attended the prayer day.

“We feel strongly that there should be follow-up meetings to encourage each other and reach out to others.

“We hope to see the fruits of the It’s Time National Day of Prayer in changes in the country,” says Jenny.



Maryke Smit, left, and Dianne le Roux on the train leaving Worcester station for It’s Time in Bloemfontein.

Train ride from Western Cape to Bloemfontein

A train was organised specially to carry people from the Western Cape to the day of prayer.

“A diverse group of more than 500 people from many different denominations and towns were on the train,” says Dianne Le Roux from Worcester.

“It was fun bumping into people from Robertson, Hartenbos, and Cape Town a real mix of people including old friends that I had not seen for quite some time.

“It was a relaxing way of travelling and we were transported by busses from the station in Bloemfontein to the It’s Time venue,” explains Dianne.

She says attending the prayer gathering made her feel as if heaven became quiet.

“I couldn’t speak either, because I was emotional and it was such an amazing feeling to be part of it. Every time I looked at the crowd on the big screens I was brought to tears realising how many people committed to attending the national prayer day and are seriously seeking hope for the country in the Lord.

“There was one incident as Uncle Angus was speaking about the gentle wind being no coincidence, but that the presence of the Holy Spirit was tangible, when a whirlwind developed and took about five hats high up into the sky as well as a South African flag, it was beautiful,” said Dianne.

Reminder of need for righteous living

She found the day to be a strong reminder of the need for righteous living.

“We can’t expect the Lord to change the country if we don’t come into line with His word and honour him.

“I think we were all reminded of the importance of spending time with God and spending time in His word. We should focus on God, realise He is where our answers lie, and not be distracted by negativity.”

Dianne says she left the prayer gathering with renewed hope.

“I walked away thinking: now the work lies ahead. Those of us who gathered need to spread what we have heard, encourage people to be positive, turn to God, and pray and seek His will for the country.

“It was also very encouraging to know that back at home there was a gathering in support of the It’s Time meeting. I have spoken to one or two people that attended and they say it was blessed.

“It was wonderful to know that many people who couldn’t make the trip still took time out to join us in spirit,” says Dianne.