

**WELL....**  
**10 days of fasting**

**by**

**Joseph Olabiyi Johnson**

17th DECEMBER 2007  
DAY ONE (17:35)

I lied to everyone that I was going away to a secret location to train and get fit, I did this for 2 reasons:

1. To avoid people talking me into attending parties or gatherings of any kind.
2. To glamorize what would probably be seen by most people as a sad task.

Any way I'm still feeling bad, tough and like a champ. In fact if hunger was a man I'd stand right in his face and shout 'WHAT!'. But one is always tough at the start of most things like Ricky Hatton in the first round of his Bout with Floyd Mayweather in December 2007, and the England football team at the start of the Euro2008 qualifiers. Ricky got knocked out in the 10th round, and England didn't qualify for Euro 2008, hopefully that won't be my portion.

So here I am fasting, oh and it is a fast as I do praise, worship, and generally talk to God during this period of food deprivation or it would just be a hunger strike. I'm also fasting from TV, except for Christmas day, I mean there is no way I'm missing out on seeing Stacey's affair with Max being exposed. Today I left the house to sign on, which is always good for the ego, especially if you're qualified and experienced to the brim, but I can't complain as I have been called in for a job interview on Thursday at 1:30pm. After being made to feel like a loser, I did a light workout that basically involved 130 jumps of skipping, 10 burpies, 10 press-ups, 10 sit ups, 10 seconds of the plank, 10seconds of holding the press-up position on the knuckles, and 5 minutes of stretching. After feeling fit with myself I sent my CV off to another recruitment consultant. I then called a female friend (who by the way is drop dead gorgeous) because she looked kind of sad on Sunday, I didn't get through so I left a message. Kingsley, old security guard from my last work place, called to see how I was doing, it's good to be missed. Then the new consultant got back to me and tried to get me on to this limited company scheme, which basically means he will make more money off me if he finds me work. My response was:

"This guy man, find me work before you start talking to me about limited company (kissing of the teeth followed).

2007 has been a great year for me, things haven't always gone my way but I've constantly been aware of the fact God is with me and acted accordingly. Late 2006, I decided to engage in mortal combat. Why not? For years I had trained as a martial artist for fun, but never really challenged myself in the context of combat. So I officially sparred (unofficially fought) with boxers, Thai-boxers, kick boxers, street fighters, and other so called kung fu practitioners. Not that I'm bragging, but damn I'm good. None of my opponents could fathom my skills, except for this polish terminator like character that gave me a bloody nose, which I deserved seeing as I was showing off and taking him lightly. That night, as I sat on the bus home with a bloody nose, I began to think about Romans 8 verse 1 which says:

*"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus..."*

And Proverbs 10 verse 12, which clearly says 'Love covers all sin'. I also thought about the fact that the word of God clearly states that He isn't interested in how many times you fall as a Christian, but is instead interested in how many times you get up. This and other sections in the Bible got me thinking about how one of the most effective tactics of the devil is to get people thinking that they had sinned beyond the point of no return, which is a huge lie seeing as along as you are alive, God is ready, willing and in fact waiting to forgive you. This, if you think about it, can be analogized utilizing the principles of being a good fighter. Seeing as to be a good fighter you must accept 3 things:

1. You are going to be hit (and if you don't be pleasantly surprised)
2. How much you know may help but doesn't guarantee the outcome of the fight
3. To be a winner, even if you lose, is all dependant on your resolve, loyalty, and honor during the fight

18TH DECEMBER 2007  
DAY TWO (18:35)

Last night I had a wet dream, a wet dream! Only I could have a wet dream on an empty stomach. Today physically I still felt strong, however I felt the urge to eat all kinds of things like chicken, pizza, Chinese, and everything else that is edible. But when I looked in the mirror and saw I still looked the same despite 1 day of not eating, my out of control urge vanished. I spoke to God today who told me that in the future I would face less trials, here's hoping that means a steady income and girlfriend. A consultant, who sounded young and Australian, from the agency I've been with for a year now, called and said:

*"I'm just calling to see if you're all set for your interview on Thursday. It's just that a lot of candidates have been pulling out of interviews and it's making us look bad in front of clients."*

My response was simply:

*"Well if you gave two hoots about your candidates, maybe they would give two hoots about you. Take me for instance, I told you in October to start organizing me a job, but you purposely ignored me so you could squeeze every minute out of me in Brent, even though I made it very clear it would make no difference if I left at that point. Any way before you start hyperventilating I will be going to that interview on Thursday (I drop phone)."*

After giving out my dose of tough love for the day, I began tidying up my dressing table while going over the fact that even though 2007 was the closest I've ever been to God as a son, friend, and employee, I wasn't able to feel settled in any church gathering.

In 2004 I left the church gathering I learnt how to have an intimate relationship with God. Why? Well in a nutshell the Pastor asked me to leave and never come back. Bearing in mind I don't do drugs, molest children or practice any type of black magic, you do the math.

I then went to help out a Pastor friend of mine set up a branch of the church gathering he belonged to. Apart from the fact I felt a resistance to me in the air, the church gathering was a bit too spiritual for me, in the sense it lacked a sense of realness. And when I had my first dispute with a member (I use to date) that was breaking point for me. Mainly because there were scriptures flying all over the place (none from me I may add), which put me in a funny situation seeing as I didn't want to discourage the use of the Word of God, and at the time I didn't know how to nicely say "I don't want you, get over it" so I left.

Then I joined a church gathering that was predominantly white South Africans, which wasn't a big deal for me at all considering I've been within a multi-cultural society all my life. But despite my positive outlook, enthusiasm, and willingness to contribute to the gathering in any way possible, I couldn't help notice the fact that everyone seemed to be looking down on me. Now I wasn't sure whether it was because I was transparent as a person, or whether it was because I was black. I mean it got so bad that I was even getting quietly offended by the way people would pray for me (God forgive me if this was wrong). Breaking point for me was when I applied for a job in the church, that I was overqualified for, because I loved the idea of working full time for a church. It wasn't so much that I didn't get the job, but it was the fact that the church representatives dealing with the vacancy behaved worse than Barracudas in a secular corporate setting.

Then I tried a Baptist Church near where I live, which was all right really, I just felt out of place. I

don't know if it was because all the other members were all over 60 or whether it was simply because I wasn't meant to be there.

None of this really affected my one to one relationship with God; in fact it just made it stronger. Me visiting a few churches did make me think about the message God left for various kinds of churches (7 kinds to be exact).

God's message for the 'Loveless church' (Revelations 2 verse 4 -6):

*"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand from its place unless you repent"*

God's message for the 'Persecuted church' (Revelations 2 verse 10):

*"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulations. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."*

God's message for the 'Compromising church' (Revelations 2 verse 16):

*" Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."*

God's message for the 'Corrupt church' (Revelations 2 verse 20):

*" I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess to teach and seduce."*

God's message for the 'Dead church' (Revelations 3 verse 2):

*"Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God."*

God's message for the 'Faithful church' (Revelations 3 verse 8):

*"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it."*

God's message for the 'Lukewarm church' (Romans 3 verse 16):

*"So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot I will vomit you out of my mouth."*

The Church refers to any individual who has accepted Christ as his/her Lord and personal savior, which means as Christians we should constantly be on the look out for which title and message truly applies to us and walk accordingly.

We constantly have to remember love is the foundation of Christianity. This includes love for God, love for your self, and love for other people.

*"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing." (1 Corinthians 13 verse 1 - 4)*

The basis of every thing Jesus Christ did and taught was love, which is why I get a little mad when Jesus is referred to as a mere prophet. After all many men have been tortured and killed for honorable causes. So if Jesus Christ was a mere prophet, what makes his sacrifice any different? What makes Jesus Christ sacrifice special is the fact he was God in form of a man, which means if he wanted to with a simple thought he could take out billions of men, yet he let a few take him away and put him through a slow painful death for our sake (also bear in mind that a lot of people then and now didn't/ don't show him any gratitude for this). I can tell you this now, every mere mortal that died for an honorable cause wouldn't have, if he/she had a fraction of God's power let alone all of it.

19TH DECEMBER 2007  
DAY THREE (17:52)

Yesterday evening I broke a little and drank half a bottle of ice cold fanta fruit twist in the fridge. I'm not discouraged for this is a minor glitch on my road to spiritual refreshment. My only hope is that I can keep it together when I leave the house tomorrow for my job interview, which I've already shaved and ironed for. Although thoughts of food haunted me today, I wasn't that hungry.

God told me today not to go back to unhelpful things in the past, which makes sense considering I had a dream I was trying to kill my family. Any way I managed to learn the famous Mark Anthony monologue from Shakespeare's Julius Ceaser. As I later lay on my bed, feeling pretty chuff with myself, I thought about how my talent radiated in a lot of places in 2007, particularly in the work place.

In 2007 I worked in two establishments, a recruitment consultancy and a youth club. At the recruitment consultancy I worked as a customer service coordinator, and I was terrific. I mean why wouldn't I be, after all I'm a natural Businessman and a people's person. Clients and candidates loved me, but I worked in a company filled with insecure middle-aged women that was really only comfortable around kiss ups that gave into bullying. After 3months the company didn't re-new my contract despite my excellent work, but it was there loss and my gain. I did try to leave a bit of positive energy where I could, who knows may be it will help people there change their ways, after all stranger things have happened.

Besides, working in the corporate world was taking time away from my true calling, which is youth work. So I was very happy when I got my hands on a Youth Arts Development Worker role within the Brent Youth Service. The work I did there was outstanding, and God used me to positively touch the lives of many young people and adults. But a very bitter, confused and sad little man along with his minions made sure I didn't go permanent, so after 7months (right before Christmas) I was made unemployed.

The funny thing is all this, along with having to be looked down on at the job centre while signing on, has been nothing to me. Why? Well simply put, God is with me and I know his plan is to prosper me within His will. If God is for me any man is wasting his time by being against me.

*" Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

20TH DECEMBER 2007  
DAY FOUR (19:15)

Today I consumed a cheese omelet with chips, two cans of fanta fruit twist, and an apple cake with custard. What!? I traveled all the way to Croydon, which was not an easy task, for a job interview. The job came across as very attractive and unattractive at the same time. Attractive, because once again it's a centre for me to run and generally enjoy, and Unattractive because the job could last anything between 2weeks and 2months. This is why people pull out of your interviews (for my recruitment consultants if they are reading)! Any way I smacked the interview, and I'm guessing they want to hire me because one of the consultants left a message on my phone that they had good news for me. As for me having a meal, well I did an extra round of skipping, and did martial art forms for an hour.

Out of nowhere today, as I walked through Croydon's city centre, the cloak of failure looped over me, because I was suddenly very aware of all my financial inadequacies. I had this vision of 12year old me speaking to present day me (27year old), and asking all sorts of questions.

*"So let me get this straight, at 27 I'm fat, broke, unemployed and single," said 12 year old me  
"Yeah, but you've self published 3 novels, mastered kung fu, gained a degree Business economics and a few other qualifications, you've had girlfriends, you've worked in a variety of environments which have given you a wealth of wisdom and skills, you've founded and run a youth development organization, you're a part time actor, you've touched thousands probably millions of lives positively, and most importantly you have a real and intimate relationship with God," I replied passionately.*

12year old me responded by breaking down in tears. It was horrible, younger me was inconsolable, and what made it worse I began to feel depressed. After all unlike most people my age who lived in London I can't afford a house, I have no savings, or any real financial plan. But it's not my fault that I'm not as financially built as most, it's just that for the past 9years I've been finding myself, and my present calling seems to transcend gathering material goods for this life.

I brushed aside the whole ordeal as an attack from the enemy, but the Word God had for me wasn't that encouraging.

*Deuteronomy 30:19 "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live."*

21ST DECEMBER 2007  
DAY FIVE (17:06)

I was woken up today by a phone call from one of the recruitment consultants, telling me that the Croydon Youth service was offering me a job as a Senior Youth Worker. Apparently a lot of people interviewed for the post, but I was head and shoulders above the rest. Hey, during a season where everyone is trying to get rid of me or bring me down a peg, I'm going to take every compliment I can get, all glory to God though.

*"Whatever, I'll take the job," I responded like I wasn't bothered but inside a choir was singing 'we are the champions'.*

I was going to get another 30minutes of sleep, when I was awoken by another phone call, this time it was Kwaku (known to me as Quaker oat the Ghanian dragon) a martial arts student of mine I left in Brent. Apparently he and some of the other young people I use to mentor came down to the centre, after I had left, ready to surprise me with a cake and card.

*"That day everyone was sad they didn't get to say goodbye the way they wanted to," informed Quaker oat*

*"Never mind you have my number, and I'll arrange a hook up sometime," I reassured.*

*"I'm taking part in a martial arts tournament on the 20th of January, I'll text you the details later."*

*"Cool, disgrace me and die," I said unleashing my instructor's code.*

After exercising, praying, practicing my monologues, and listening to some music, I lay on my bed thinking of how 12year old me was crying, because he thought I was fat, broke and single. First of all I'm hefty, secondly things will eventually improve for me financially, and thirdly I'm single by choice. I broke off my last relationship, and many women have thrown themselves at me this year, like that cheerleader coach, the street dance instructor, that random woman on the street, and let's not forget a lot of the woman that go to the weekend acting school I attend, I just wasn't interested, which technically makes me a stud.

I actually started 2007 okay with the fact that I was single, after all I had just upgraded from sharing a house to having a whole apartment to myself. It was time to get myself together and get us much me time as possible, seeing as my calling was all about everyone else. Then in a dream God told and showed me the woman I was destined to have as my wife, was just around the corner, and that I needed to be prepared. I was excited, and it wasn't because I was sad, desperate and alone, but it was because God had set someone aside for me, how cool was that. I had broken so many hearts that on top of getting my own heart crushed, I thought God was going to leave me to find a wife all by myself.

Then it happened, Nkem appeared, a beautiful young woman who was incredibly intelligent, and spiritually aware. The first day we met was like something out of a chick flick, we had so much fun doing the simplest of things. When I went to God and asked *"Is this her?"* His response was *"love her"*. And love her I did, phone calls, outings, financial, spiritual, and emotional support. The thing is, the more I loved her the more I got put off by her. After a week with her it was apparent she was self absorbed, self righteous, and frankly a little insane. But when I went to God about her all he said was *"love her"*. One day Nkem was feeling a little low about the fact that she was feeling bullied at work, so I took her out in an effort to cheer her up, what did she do? This girl ended up telling me that things I did suggested I was expecting a lot from her, where does rubbish like that even come from? In actual fact at that point I wanted as little from her as possible, the only reason why I was even keeping in contact was because God almighty told me too. Any way when she came out with this nonsense by sheer reflex I blurted out something regarding the fact that

she needed to get over herself, which of course put her in a mood. This was fine by me (at least now she would shut up). Any way because of the Almighty one, I apologized, and went through her nonsense for another 4months before she finally got a job in Birmingham. It was then God told me to:

*"The love between you and your wife will exceed any human love you have ever encountered. Ensure as long as you have her, the love you show her will be no less than the love you have shown Nkem."*

I was so relieved, for a lifetime with Nkem as my wife would not have brought out the best in me. I then began to think over Proverbs 18 verse 22 which says:

*"He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord."*

Two things stood out for me 'find', which is an indication that a wife isn't something you just pick up anyhow, instead she is a woman specially assigned for you to give and receive love. After all 'has' could just as easily been used in place of 'find'. 'Wife' also stood out to me because God's dream along with the Nkem saga showed me that there is a huge difference between marrying a woman, and marrying your wife.

22ND DECEMBER 2007  
DAY SIX (17:00)

Today I decided to put together a show reel at the end of January. Why? Well in 2007 I faced the art of acting, and won convincingly. So in 2008 I will strive to take my acting to the next level, by auditioning to join one of the biggest theatre groups in Europe, and putting together a show reel showcasing my talents.

During my early childhood it was quite clear I had a knack for acting, but because I schooled in Nigeria and growing up for me consisted of more abuse than support, I shelved my love for acting until April 2007 where I joined a weekend drama group, which caters for mainly black people. I've had the time of my life, and God has used me immensely there to pull a few people out of the slums of low self-esteem and mild depression.

The funny thing about being apart of this drama group is that I was in the mist of many young actors/actresses desperate to make it, and of course the drama group owner took advantage of this by dangling the chance to be part of the groups agency, if they proved themselves. I was just happy to be acting, and couldn't care less about how good people thought I was, as long as I thought I was doing my best. This attitude allowed me to pick up a few pointers, learn 4 monologues, and give the best performance of the group's entire end of year showcase.

When I think of my time as an actor in 2007, I think of Psalm 127 verse 2, which says:

*" It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late. To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sheep."*

While at the drama group in the mist of so much anxiety, insecurity, and some times malicious intent, because of God I was able to stay calm, have fun, and even reach out to people constantly. My composure in the field of acting is a testament to how far God has brought me.

23RD DECEMBER 2007  
DAY SEVEN (17:04)

Today I was hungry, and allowing myself to watch the Eastender's omnibus didn't help. Forget the storyline, or I could notice was the food in it. Plus, I could smell the neighbor's Sunday dinner, and damn it smelt good.

On a less torturous note, I spoke with Charles, an old classmate from back in the day who is now happily married with an eight month old son, and a fantastic job at Mobil. It was great speaking to him, which is funny because I couldn't stand him when we were back in school. He was the king brainiac of our year with appalling social skills, and I was kind of cool and popular. I do remember looking at a bad report card in year 8 and then wishing I had his.

After catching up with Charles, I sat down and thought about the friendships I've had with fellow human beings. All in all I've had people who I've enjoyed their company, people who have given a helping hand here and there, people that have relied on me, and people who have even claimed to have loved me. But every relationship I've had with any human being always came with a catch. They were either unreliable, they looked down on me, they had zero respect for me, they were out to use me, or they simply just didn't understand me, which is understandable because no man/woman is perfect by a long shot.

Sometimes I wonder though, do I have an unhealthy outlook on relating to people? I mean from as young as 5 I was neglected, looked down upon and generally disrespected by all kinds of people including my own mother. Maybe I've been alone for such a huge majority of my life, that I've become indifferent about establishing relationships with people, which has led to me subconsciously keeping people at bay. May be before God was truly in my life, but now I'm fully aware of the fact that God easily uses me to show people love. He has brought me to a place that whether I receive love from any person is irrelevant, because ultimately I love God, and we both love me.

*"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Proverbs 17 verse 17).*

24TH DECEMBER 2007  
DAY EIGHT (17:07)

While fellowshiping with God in 2007, I learnt that lowering yourself in anyway wasn't humility, in actual fact it was pride. So if say me as an actor put on a great performance, and then lied to everyone that I thought it was rubbish, I was actually being proud and not humble.

Since I allowed God to fully enter my life, it was easy for me to embrace this principle as I was over the moon to come from a place where I thought I was no one, to a place where I loved everything about myself despite any shortcomings. This of course showed in the way I talked, socialized, and took on life in general.

However I found me being comfortable with whom I am tended to make a lot of unhappy, insecure people, and uncomfortable. If I'm honest my confidence is probably what the enemy used to influence people to kick me out of my last 3 jobs, and it's probably what is influencing my drama tutors to tell me that for 2007 I was a 75% when actually I was a 95%. Apart from that I found a lot of people being intimidated or weary of me.

On the plus side it is from my confidence that I'm able to embrace my calling as an encourager and youth worker, and it is the reason why a lot of women fancy me, which for a man is always good for the self-esteem.

However I did go back to God to find out if there was away to celebrate who I was, and my love for it without offending people. First of all he reminded me that the heart of man without Him was desperately wicked, and it was impossible to please most people, because most people hate seeing people happy or confident full stop. He did however bring my attention to Proverbs 10 verse 9 which says:

*"He who winks with the eye causes trouble, but a prating fool will fall."*

This was God's way of saying that sometimes I advertise my talents and accomplishments too much, which in itself oppresses people despite my innocent intentions. So I guess one of my new years resolutions is, be aware of when I talk too much and stop.

25TH DECEMBER 2007  
DAY NINE (14:04)

Happy Birthday Jesus, that's right it's Christmas and today I get to eat and watch TV (I'll try not to go over board). I was a bit disappointed with episode 40 and 41 of Naruto Shippuden, because 75% of it consisted of Naruto getting angry, which was just unnecessary seeing as his anger was already established in the first 5 seconds of episode 40.

After Naruto, I sat and listened to some music and pondered over the fact why, fasting and reflecting aside, I'd rather be by myself than be with my biological family. Could you blame me? My mother is delusional, my immediate younger sister is a know it all, and my youngest sister is just thought less, oh and don't even get me started on my older sister who is the mistress of mood swings. But to be honest I wouldn't have my sisters any other way, my mother and stepfather on the other hand is another matter.

I love and have even forgiven them, but I can't stand being around them, why? Well they have caused so much pain and misery in my life and the lives of my brothers and sisters, yet they refuse to turn away from the mentality behind their past horrific acts, which is one of the major reasons why my 17year old sister is today pregnant. As for my extended family, they just see me as an insignificant nobody that should keep in contact when he's told, how he's told with a big grin on his face.

Then Felix, my brother from another mother and father, called and filled me with so much joy. That guy is filled with so much love and positive energy it is unbelievable. And he's been like that since we were rugrats, back in Nigeria. After catching up with Felix the scripture Proverbs 24 verse 3 came to mind, which basically says:

*"Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established."*

This helped me to realize that my biological family aside, I have a family that I love and loves me very much, and I would have them around me anytime of the week. They consist of various brothers and sisters born of a different father and mother, but are my true family because there is a sincere presence of two-way love.

26TH DECEMBER 2007  
DAY TEN (17:10)

Yesterday's Eastenders was brutal both emotionally and physically. The acting was phenomenal, because I was close to tears. Any way today is the last day of my seclusion, which means tomorrow I rejoin civilization. Has my ten days of fasting and waiting on God changed me? Well as far as I can tell physically I look the same, which means in the context of going without food, I'm very durable. Spiritually? I do feel close to God and ready to face the New Year with a more disciplined and loving attitude.

I ignored quite a few phone calls today one of which belonged to Raphael, a 19year old I met at the drama group. I've been mentoring him in the area of his confidence, spiritual life, and in 2008 martial arts. Being an encourager and youth worker who embraces his calling full on, it comes to no surprise that I have mentored a lot of people briefly and long term, which for me will always keep me connected to God's will until the day I die.

*"And the things you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to the faithful who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2 verse 2).*

### **Profile**

**Joseph Olabiyi Johnson** Born on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 1980, Joseph possesses a passion for setting up and coordinating community projects that give back to society through youth development.

He is the founder and Youth arts development manager for the 'Platform of creativity' ([www.platformofcreativity.com](http://www.platformofcreativity.com)).

Check out all his creative outlets at [www.josepholabiyijohnson.com](http://www.josepholabiyijohnson.com).