



I was reading through an article on the internet about the UK tour of President Barak Obama and his wife Michelle recently and saw something that stirred my mind. The first lady paid a visit to a girl's school in London and was asked what they teach to their two children Sasha and Malia to help them achieve their goals. She replied, "Read, write, read, read" She went on to tell them that one of the reasons why President Obama is a good communicator is because he is a good writer and a voracious reader. First lady Michelle told the girls; "read, read, read" She encouraged them to write, saying that practice makes one better. The other advice that the first lady gave to the girls on relationship with spouses and with one another in her own words is: "Do not bring people into your lives who weigh you down. Trust your instincts. Good relationships feel good, they feel right, they don't hurt and they are not painful – not just with somebody you want to marry, it's with friends that you choose too and people you surround yourself with. That is just as important as the school that you choose." Reading and identifying with these made me to think about how as women and men too we can *move forward* to achieve our goals in life. If there are steps to be taken to get to the next level and you fail to take them, you will have no one to blame but yourself when you see the years rolling by and can see only little or no achievement.

The Israelites in the Bible were the chosen people of God whose lives as a nation were chronicled throughout the old testament of the Bible. The entire book of Exodus tells the story of how they were delivered from the bondage that they were in under Egyptian rule. They had to escape in the night - everyone, men, women, children and cattle. In Exodus chapter 14, we read of how they were pursued by the Egyptian Army into the wilderness. The people started to complain to Moses, who was their leader when they started encountering problems. One of the major ones was that while they were resting at Pihahiroth, Pharaoh and his army almost caught up with them and they began to panic. They started to complain to Moses, telling him that they would have preferred to have died in Egypt than in watery graves in the dessert. Moses reassured them of God's power to deliver them saying, "Just stand where you are and watch the Lord rescue you. The Egyptians that you see today will never be seen again. The Lord himself will fight for you. You won't have to lift a finger in your defense!"

Further in the story above, the Lord told Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people

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to *go forward*! Use your Shepherd staff, hold it out over the water, and a path will open up before you through the Sea. Then all the people of Israel will walk through on dry ground" (Ex.14:15&16). The first thing that comes to mind in these verses is that God pointed out that the power to move forward is in Moses' hand. This He did by reminding Moses of the shepherd's rod that was in his hand. Secondly, God told him to command the Israelites to *go forward*.

Moses had faith and obeyed God, the red sea parted by divine orchestration and the people passed through the water on dry ground. Their enemies who pursued after all perished in the sea. The Israelites had a choice to go forward or be overtaken and destroyed by their enemies.

In *going forward*, there are several things that you need to know and do, among which are:

1. You must assess your past and current situation.
2. Know that there are risks involved.
3. Examine your current network of friends and acquaintances in order to upgrade or increase them. You may also need to cut off some relationships. Abraham and Lot in Genesis 13:6 had to go different ways because of the constant strife between their servants which did not foster progress.
3. Have faith in God to see you through and know that you have the power in you to overcome every obstacle.

One of the things that the first lady went on to share was about her concerns when she had to attend Princeton University. She said, "Well meaning but misguided people sometimes questioned whether someone with my background could succeed. I had all kinds of worries and fears and doubts before I entered. I worried that I wouldn't be as well prepared as students who had come from more privileged families. I worried that I wouldn't fit in somewhere so different from where I had grown up. But after a few months in college, away from home on my own, I realized that I was just as capable and I had just as much to offer as any of my classmates. I realized that if I worked hard enough, I could do just as well as anyone else." I have personally seen the above to be true. Cutting the placenta of some relationships can be painful but necessary for you to achieve your purpose. People around you may not understand your

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decisions; you may even lose some friends. It is alright, because eventually everything will become clear and the same ones who criticized you will glorify God on your behalf. As a woman, you have the power to soar to great heights but you must move. Take time to complete that education, change jobs to a more satisfying one, jumpstart that business that has been in the oven, or take a hard look at your marriage not resolving within you that it is normal to live in misery for the rest of your life!

President Obama wrote an open letter to his daughters in Parade magazine letting them know of his expectation from them and this is "to grow up in a world with no limits on your dreams and no achievements beyond your reach, and to grow into compassionate, committed women who will help to build that world." Yes you can! Yes I can! So help us God.

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