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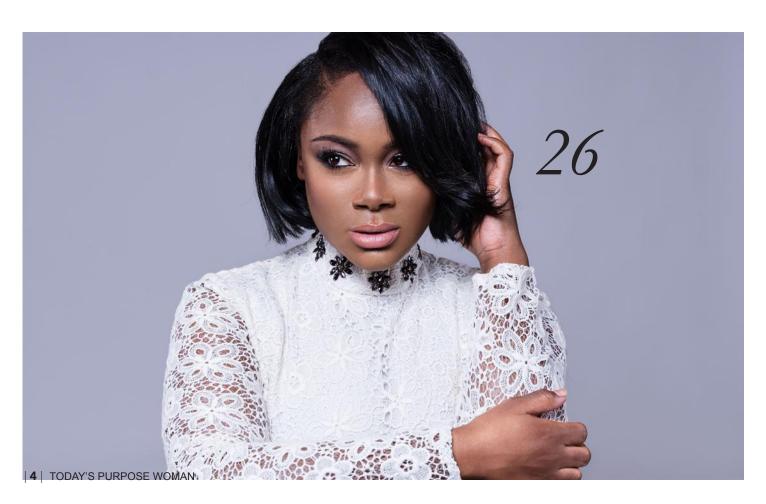
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**EXODUS 9:16** 

SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER 2020





## **SONGS OF HOPE**

As I sit down to write this editor's note, I reflect on the battles currently going on in our nation and the world. As a reminder, there is the TV, with its COVID-19 news updates, the voices of political parties trying to convince the masses why they should vote for their party and not the opposing party, and the unrest and protests due to social injustice. I am also aware of the battles taking place among some in the body of Christ over political views, which has become a distraction for some of God's vessels, which are the voices of hope in this season.

In this season, with all of the distractions, I continue finding peace in God's word. I find peace in praise and worship music as well. For the September/October issue, we caught up with women of faith who use their gifts through music to spread hope, healing, and faith to the world. Our cover star Jekalyn Carr, music is a perfect example of the power of Gospel music. Jekalyn's ability to inspire and encourage people through music has been something she's wanted to do ever since she was a little girl. Her traditional with a hint of modern-style music contains a prophetic flow and supernatural faith activation that inspires and encourages the hearts of those who listen to her music. Recently she released two on-time singles, "Power of Love" and "Changing Your Story." We also caught up with our digital cover star Keyondra Lockett who reminds us that God is our "Cornerstone." We also caught up with Gospel artist San Franklin and Ayiesha Woods.



In this issue, you'll also read about Julianna Slager, the co-founder of Ballet 5:8, a non-profit/ministry that uses ballet to spread the discussion of life and faith throughout the nation through innovative storytelling and breathtaking dance. As a ministry organization, they are passionate about showing people the beauty and glory of God.

Although we live in unprecedented times, I want you to know that there is hope, and God is still moving. So grab your playlist and fill the atmosphere with songs that uplifts, inspire, and glorifies God.

Until next time!

Sherrell Valdezlogui

Everything has an appointed time, never forget God is an on time God.



## PATIENCE

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## CYNTHIA JOHNSON, MS THE BISHOP'S DAUGHTER

I have not always been a Christian, even though I was brought up in the church. I played the piano, I sang in the choir. My dad was a bishop at our family church, but I still was not a Christian. I thought I was because I went to church all the time and felt entitled because of who my father was, so the laws and commandments of the Bible did not pertain to me. In the church, I was the bishop's daughter, but in my personal life, I was living a double life. My family knew, but always protected me and cheap grace became the norm in our household. It was not until an older man became interested in me that I realized that my family had enough. At 14 years old, I became a married woman who traveled the United States with an abusive military husband. (You had to maintain the family's name, right?) Although I did not have my first child until I was 16 years old, my life had already started

to spin out of control. Dropping out of 9th grade, smoking cigarettes and marijuana, and drinking alcohol became the norm for me to cope. It took five years to gather strength to leave my marriage and return home with a two-year-old daughter in tow, but it was only the beginning of an even more troubling life. Now divorced and a single parent, I found myself partying and trying all types of drugs. It was only the grace of God that I did not end up dead. But one day, I became tired of getting high. It came to a point in my life that I had to turn my life around.

I realized I needed Jesus and received Him into my life when I found myself, the only female getting high off crack with a group of men - the majority I did not know. Again, the grace of God stopped me from being harmed, but something came over me. I can say that although I was high, the Holy Spirit convicted me of my sin in the nick of time. There was no telling what those men had in store for me. I couldn't help myself, but Jesus knew and I knew I needed Him right then. I went to an elder friend's house and she referred me to a pastor and his wife. I immediately drove to their home and thankfully, they opened their door.

They prayed and took me through sin confession, repentance and deliverance. They tarried with me until I laid prostrate on their living room floor. I do not know how long it took, but when I got up, they both had smiles on their faces. They brought out a mirror out for me to look in and I barely recognized who I was. The spirit of the Lord had transformed me in an instant. Since that time, 30+ years ago, God has been patiently working with me to overcome my religious ways and develop a personal relationship with Christ.

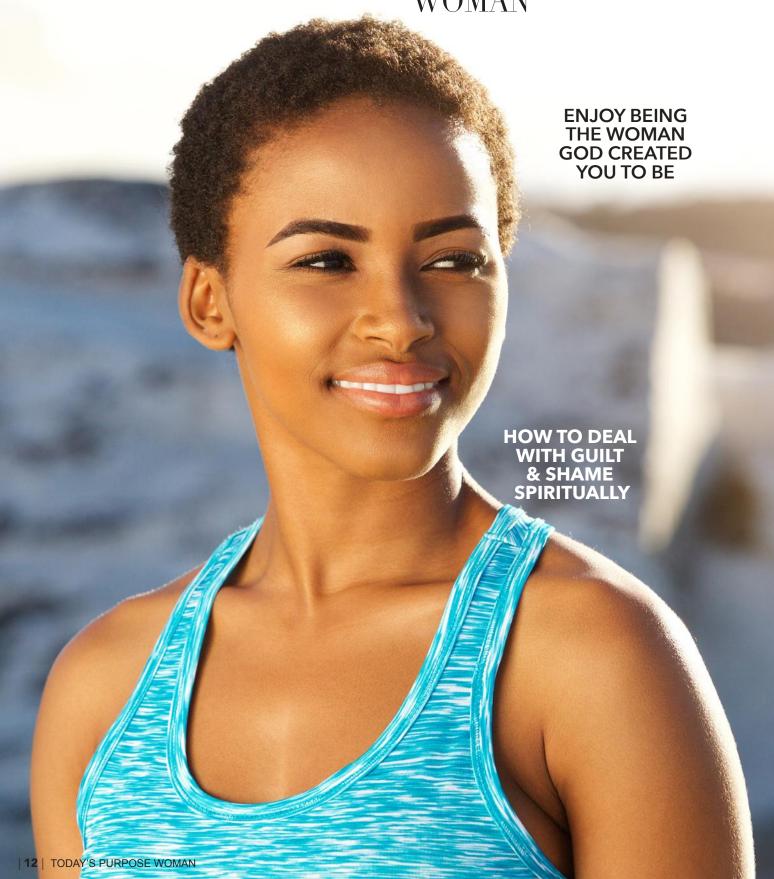
The biggest change I have noticed in my life was my lack of desire for cigarettes, hard alcohol and drugs. God took the desire away from me immediately and I have never gone back. Also, I wanted to know more about Jesus. Now, remember, I was raised in the church, so I knew the Old Testament, New Testament bible stories, the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, Sermon on the Mount,

> etc., but this time was different. I began to pray and attend Bible study as often as possible. I also noticed God healed my heart. There was no more hurt and unforgiveness of what I felt was justified because of the things I went through at a young age. The peace, the protection and all God provided for me and my children was more than anyone could have ever done. My journey has not been a goody, two-shoe journey, but God has kept me through everything. He kept me when I

went through another failed marriage - even though we were leaders in the church. He has forgiven me when others continued to bring up my past from 30+ years ago. He answers my prayers and gives me the strength to do His works. I should have been found dead in a ditch somewhere, but He had other plans for me. As long as I am obedient to Him, His blessings are beyond anything I could ever imagine. Words cannot fully explain the wonderful, magnificent, glorious plans God has for those who love and obey Him. He, and He alone, is amazing and greatly to be praised!

"MY JOURNEY HAS NOT BEEN A GOODY, TWO-SHOE **JOURNEY, BUT GOD HAS** KEPT METHROUGH **EVERYTHING"** 







ue to the global pandemic, many of us had to slow down this year. While some people worked on their faith and purpose. Some abandoned their faith and God-given purpose. They became discouraged, lost faith, and called it quits.

Now that things are trying to pick up, we mustn't fall back into getting caught up with the busy life and forgetting our purpose. Most of all, we should not forget to embrace and enjoy the woman God created us to be. But how do we do that? How do you enjoy being the woman God created you to be?

#### **Embrace** your **Identity**

The truth is many of us have allowed the world to define us. We have unknowingly allowed other people to define our identity. So we end up doing things that are not in alignment with God or things that leave us feeling empty. Thankfully we can start over and live life the way God wants us to, and it all begins with knowing your true identity in Christ. Knowing your identity leads to a confident and fulfilled life, allowing you to enjoy the woman God created you to be. Instead of comparing yourself to others, you'll find yourself living a content life, knowing that your fulfillment comes from Jesus alone. (Colossians 2:10)

#### Focus on Your Potentials

Many of us struggle with focusing on our potentials. We continuously focus on our limitations, and this causes us to be unhappy and vulnerable. But how about being intentional about focusing on your potentials.

Instead of focusing on your weaknesses, focus on your strengths and the untapped potentials in your life. (2 Timothy 1:6)

#### **Embrace Criticism**

Unfortunately, we are living in times when people love to criticize others. There will always be someone out there that will have a problem with how you live your life no matter how good you are or how much you try to please them. You may try to run away from critics, but that is not the best solution. Choose to embrace criticism. If it is bad, don't dwell on it. Know that the criticizing person has issues that they are trying to project on you. You can listen to what they are saying, take out the lessons, and the things you want to learn from their criticism and then move forward.

Remember that not all criticism is destructive, so don't be quick to brush off what other people say about you just because it doesn't stroke your ego the right way. Your completion comes from Christ and not what other people say about you. (Proverbs 19:20)

All in all: God loves you, and He created you so that you can have life more abundantly. But to enjoy this life, you need to embrace the woman He created you to be. Comparing yourself with others will leave you feeling discontented. Love the person you are becoming flaws and all and choose to walk in the ways of the Lord.

#### **HOW TO**

## DEAL WITH GUILT & SHAME SPIRITUALLY

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus... Romans 8:1(NIV)



LIVING BOLDLY in faith doesn't come easy. It is not something that happens automatically. Living a guilt-free life means believing God forgives you despite what you've done. It means being intentional each day about your faith and standing firm in the word of God, knowing that there is no more condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus. So how do you deal with feelings of guilt and shame when it tries to come over you?

#### Find out what is causing you to feel Guilty or Ashamed

Is it a certain experience, conversation, or a particular place that causes you to feel guilty or ashamed? Doing or saying certain things can trigger a feeling of guilt, reminding us of that wrong or shameful thing we've done in the past.

#### Repent

It could be that you keep struggling with shame because you have never confessed. Go to your prayer closet and ask God to forgive you. Now, this doesn't mean that the feelings of guilt will go away automatically. After asking for forgiveness, you need to believe that God has forgiven you and see yourself forgiven. Repentance doesn't mean just praying and doing some religious acts to show God that you are sorry. Repentance means turning away from your sins. So start transforming your mind with the word of God so that you don't repeat your mistake. And if you do make a mistake, keep renewing your mind and believing that you are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Knowing this will set you free. (Isaiah 30:15)

#### Know that Jesus took your shame

You don't have to keep living in shame and guilt anymore.

Jesus already took your shame. He bowed down his head before breathing his last so that you could lift your head high. (Psalm 3:3)

It doesn't matter what you did. It has been paid for at the cross. The enemy doesn't have the right to remind you of your past shame. But he will do that, and you need to stand firm on the word of God and declare that Jesus has set you free, and you are no longer under condemnation. Don't meditate on the negative thoughts that the enemy is feeding your mind. Instead, focus on the truth that is in the word of God.

#### Forgive yourself

Maybe you have never really forgiven yourself for what you did in the past. But it doesn't matter what it is that you did. Your heavenly father loves you, unconditionally. He says in his word that he will remember our sins no more (Hebrews 8:12). If God, the all-knowing mighty God, doesn't remember your mistake, why should you? Why should you live in defeat because of that past mistake? Forgive yourself just like God forgave you and start walking in the freedom that Jesus died so that you could have.

#### In short:

The enemy would like for you to keep on living in guilt and shame. When you keep allowing thoughts of guilt or shame to cloud your mind, you are, in essence, allowing the enemy to control your mind. You don't have to live that way anymore. Surrender all those feelings to God and walk in the freedom that Jesus has given you.

Sally Becky Makungu







There's plenty of bumps on the road of life. Struggles happen, and when they do, it can be tempting to simply buck up and pretend everything's okay. But stress has a

way of affecting you whether you acknowledge it or not. Knowing how stress impacts your whole life can help you take the steps you need to in order to keep on the journey of becoming all that you're called to be.

#### Physical Health

Your body is designed to keep you safe against danger. In fact, many of the effects

of stress on the body come from your body trying to respond to danger. But chronic stress—when the body keeps responding to a danger that isn't there—can take its

toll after a while. Stress makes it more difficult for your body to fight off illnesses, making you more prone to getting sick. It can also cause your muscles to tense up, leading to soreness and tension headaches. Stress can even lead to an increased risk of heart, lung, and gastrointestinal issues.

#### **Emotional Health**

Anyone who's experienced stress can tell you the truth of the proverb, "Anxiety weighs down the heart." Stress has often been linked to feelings of depression, restlessness, irritability, or being overwhelmed. A person who doesn't realize they're stressed may find themselves feeling one of these things without knowing why, making it difficult to deal with the emotion.

#### Relationships

## HOW UNCHECKED STRESS IMPACTS YOUR WHOLE LIFE

All these things can have an effect on your personal relationships. If you don't recognize the cause of your emotions, communicating with the people in your life about them is difficult. Worse, if you're feeling irritable, you may take it out on others. Beyond this, humans are designed to empathize, and stress can become "contagious." When others are stressed, it tends to make us stressed, too, and the next thing you know, we're responding to each other in kind.

#### **Work Productivity**

Another aspect of your psyche that stress can attack is your motivation. This can make it difficult for you to even get to work, let alone get things done. Even when you are able to complete your work, stress can affect the quality of the work. Some people thrive on the adrenaline of a last-minute deadline, but for others, stress takes away their focus, leading to mistakes or shoddy work.

All of this isn't meant to make you feel enslaved by your stress. On the contrary, knowing how stress impacts your whole life is the first step toward being free of it. By naming recognizing stress, you can begin to take steps toward mitigating the effects it has on your body and recognize when it affects your emotions so that it doesn't also affect your relationships or work.

Take a deep breath. Being stressed doesn't mean you're any less of the person you're meant to be. In fact, recognizing its effects can be your way of standing up to it. From there, you can keep marching on the road of life.

## LIVING HIV+ X

Among the many social, economical, and overall lifestyle changes that we are faced with, living with HIV can be extremely tough during this time. The quarantine has separated many people from being able to interact with their support systems and has reduced the interaction with society due to the increased risks of having a compromised immune system.

I am here to encourage you, listen to you, and provide one on one life skills coaching for men and women that are adjusting to the 'new normal' while living with HIV.

My name is Monique Howell. I am an Author, Filmmaker, Mother of four children, Coach, Friend and I am here for you. I live with HIV+ and I am a Survivor.

Visit my website and sign up to receive my Newsletter that will encourage and keep you connected to a community of people that care about topics that matter to you.

Stay encouraged,

Monique

Monique@MoniqueDHowell.com



Visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website to learn more about HIV and the CoronaVirus Disease (COVID19). <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/default.html">https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/default.html</a>



Working and taking care of children can be very stressful. However, learning how to balance these aspects of life is essential for your well-being and personal success. This guide will teach you about ways working moms can balance work and family.

#### Set Challenging Yet Realistic Goals

Every improvement you would like to make requires challenging and realistic goals. To make life a little less overwhelming, make a list of weekly goals. If you are more focused on work than family, a weekly goal could include

replacing two hours of off-the-clock work with two hours of family time. To achieve your weekly goal, you can replace 24 minutes of off-the-clock work with 24 minutes of daily family time. Check your progress and notice how these achievements affect your life balance.

#### Spend Time Bonding With Your Family

As stated before, spending time with your family is very important. If you notice that you have not given your children or your spouse much attention, you can schedule specific family bonding time. Here are some things you can do with your family.

#### Teach Your Children New Skills

If you have young children, their minds are still developing.

## WAYS WORKING MOMS CAN BALANCE WORK & FAMILY

Help them enhance their development by teaching them new skills. You can teach them educational games. Show them some of your favorite childhood hobbies. They will appreciate your lessons, and you will feel good for teaching them something new.

#### Establish a Family Exercise Routine

Family exercise promotes good physical and mental health for everyone. This is important so that you can all enjoy staying active and being mindful about the present.

Community parks and playgrounds are great for both children and adults. They allow children to make friends, enhance social skills, and work all their muscles on playground equipment. Also, if you go to the park with your spouse or your friends, you can become closer to them. This will make life more enjoyable and less stressful. If you can, take your family to the park after work and school hours. This will give your family an incentive to be productive during the day. It will also promote better sleep, which will lead to better grades, work efficiency, and behavior.

Now that you know some ways working moms can balance work and family, you are ready to make some positive changes. Remember that change does not happen overnight. Consistency is key. Little by little, you will achieve your goals and find the perfect life balance. You go, girl!

Women who are transforming lives through Gospel Music

# JEKALYN

Changing YOUR STORY

SHE WANTS YOU TO KNOW THAT WHATEVER YOU'RE GOING THROUGH, GOD IS GOING TO CHANGE YOUR STORY





t's a beautiful, sunny, summer afternoon, and I am preparing to interview Jekalyn Carr for Today's Purpose Woman. Before our interview, I'm going over a few questions and listening to some of Jekalyn's songs. Jekalyn's traditional with a hint of modern-style music contains a prophetic flow and supernatural faith activation that inspire and encourage the hearts of those who listen to her music. Jekalyn's ability to inspire and encourage people through music has been something she's wanted to do ever since she was a little girl. At the age of 13, Jekalyn burst onto the scene as a highly sought-after speaker. Two years later, at the age of 15, she released her single "Greater Is Coming," allowing the world to experience her incomparable vocals and distinguished grasp of gospel wisdom well beyond her years. Jekalyn has earned eight career Billboard # 1's before the age of 21. Jekalyn is a GRAMMY® Award nominee, GMA Dove Award-winning independent recording artist, profound speaker, entrepreneur, actress, and author.

Jekalyn and I are on the line. It's been months since the global COVID-19 pandemic began, and one of the things that Jekalyn currently misses right now is being on stage ministering through music. "It's very motivating and inspiring to me," she says as she talks about how being on stage allows her to connect with people and watch them experience the move of God as He uses her as a vessel. Watching Jekalyn flow in the anointing on stage is inspiring to watch. I've personally watched a few of her (live performance) official videos via You-Tube and felt every word released ministering to my spirit.

In early June, Jekalyn released two new highly anticipated singles, "Power Of Love" and "Changing Your Story". Both releases are on time, as many face hardship, sickness, death, and issues that have divided America: social issues, race, gender, etc. "Power of Love' is probably one of my favorites so far," she says. "I wanted to release the message of love. It doesn't matter your background, color, where you come from, what you have or

don't have. Love knows none of that." The song declares the power of walking in love and togetherness, reminding us that we can talk, walk, and live in love and unity. "When we operate in love and unity, we can do some amazing things together."

"God gave me 'Changing Your Story' two years ago. I did not know what time we would be in when He would say, "Release it to the world". Through this song, I help you to understand that whatever you're going through, it will not remain your story. However, you have to believe it, and you have to declare it daily so that your story can change for the better.

Cultivate your atmosphere with God's word daily because miracles and breakthroughs respond to His Word, and consistency brings about progression. As you continue to declare God's Word, you will eventually see yourself progressing, and those very things that you're speaking become your reality. I know this because God has shown himself and proven himself to be God because I cultivate my atmosphere daily by speaking the right word," she says. "Put on those affirmations, those encouraging messages that can cultivate and stir up your faith. I always say, if your atmosphere cannot produce miracles, what you're around cannot produce miracles, sometimes that's a strong indication that you need to shift your company/environment. You don't want anything pulling you back when you're trying to move forward."

Jekalyn's journey as an independent artist is proof that your story can change for the better if you have faith and don't give up. "My family and I own a family record label, Lunjeal Music Group, and a publishing company, Aljelun Publishing. Everything that we've built has been God, so it looks easy, but it was not easy at all. When you're building something, there are things that you come up against: trials, obstacles, and roadblocks. There were certain things that people felt like you had to have to be qualified or to be able to step on certain platforms." Jekalyn shares how God let her know that His hands were upon what He had given them and to trust him. "It was an entire faith walk, and still is a faith walk. It wasn't easy, but God continued to carry us and we're living testimonies to peo-

> ple all across the world that if He carried us, He'd carry you."

> Jekalyn sees gospel music as a powerful tool. "So many people are in different places and stages of their lives. They're up against a lot of things, and one of the things that they can pull from is encouraging music. There is a reason why we have gospel music. There's a reason we are here," she says when I asked her how she feels gospel music helps people heal. "I celebrate all of those who continue

to put out music to inspire people so that they can be encouraged."

#### "EVERYTHING THAT WE'VE BUILT HAS BEEN GOD, SO IT LOOKS EASY, BUT IT WAS NOT **EASY AT ALL"**



The 23-year-old is ready to show the world that there's so much more to her winning platform! Beyond the stage, she has engaged her interests in fashion and beauty. "Since I could remember, I've loved fashion and have always wanted to own a cosmetic line," Jekalyn says. She's currently working on her cosmetic line, Jekalyn Beauty. "God has blessed me... it's coming very soon," she says with excitement. As God continues to enlarge Jekalyn's winning platform, she knows, for her to be fully energized to pursue those things that God has placed in front of her, making time for herself is important.

"I'm a big family person, so I love spending time with my family. I love to have good, clean, fun." Jekalyn also loves animals, "I just got a new baby, his name is Bentley, he's a horse," she says. She also has a Pomeranian she calls Champion. This proud mama posted both her babies on her social media page, and her fans adored them.

As we prepared to wrap up the interview, I asked Jekalyn if she had any words of encouragement or final thoughts she would like to share. "Absolutely," she says. "I just want to remind everyone... I know that for many of you, you're in a tough place. However, I want you to understand just because you're in a tough place, that doesn't mean you can't rise from that place. I believe that God is causing you to climax into something greater than what you've ever realized. What you went through was a part of your story, but it's not the end of your story. I know that God is shifting things for the better for your life. And I just bless your life. I bless your ministry. I bless your children. I bless your home. I bless your finances and everything else that has to do with you, because I know that God is with you and God will not let you fall. Continue to extend your faith and trust God. When you trust Him, he will show you who He is. I know it may be hard sometimes, but you have to practice these things daily so that you can see the results you want from God."







**Keyondra Lockett,** is a soulful gospel singer, songwriter, two-time Stellar Award Nominee, entrepreneur, and the first gospel artist to ever ink a doll deal with an ethnic brand - The Kenya® Doll Brand (Kenya® & Friends). Keyondra has shared the stage with artists such as Yolanda Adams, Karen Clark, Kierra Sheard, The Clark Sisters, Mary Mary, The Walls Group, Alexis Spight, and many more. She is one of the original members of the all-female gospel group, Zie'l, l noted for their striking multi-part harmonies and impressive range. As a songwriter, Keyondra's writing skills can be heard on Kierra Sheard's LED EP on which she co-wrote "Make Me Better," as well as writing Ziel's "State of Emergency," which reached the top 15 on Billboard to name a few.

As a solo artist, some of the projects the soulful, jazzy, and urban-style gospel artist has released are "Beautiful", The Heal (EP), and The Heal Reloaded (EP). Recently, Keyondra shared on her social media that her song "Trouble Won't Last," from "The Heal Reloaded" EP, came in at #12 on Billboard. The song motivates listeners to trust in the Lord and His track record and is also a written testimony of God healing Keyondra vocally. She shares that coming from a gospel group known as powerhouse vocalists to becoming a solo artist dealing with vocal issues was hard to deal with. She experienced both depression and low self-esteem. Instead of giving up, Keyondra found her strength in remembering that if God did it before, He would do it again. "I had to tweak my sound and kind of rebrand myself as the artist I am today." Keyondra wants to encourage others to be okay with having to change things. "Sometimes we feel like the things that happen to us is God punishing us. However, it may just be that He wants to bring you into a new season. Don't look at it negatively. Look at it as something positive through a spiritual eye. When you come up against opposition, it's only to build your character."

Currently, Keyondra is in the studio working on her new EP "Cornerstone". This time in the studio, due to the pandemic, she takes more precautions to ensure her safety while still pushing out the songs God has given her to release. One of the tracks on the EP shares the name of the album "Cornerstone". Keyondra begins sharing some of the lyrics, "It goes: You are my cornerstone. In you, I rely upon. My hope is built on you Lord. 'Cause You are my, Cornerstone." Keyondra uses an example to paint a clearer picture of the importance of the cornerstone. "When you think about architects and how they build, they start with the cornerstone. Without it, when storms come, the building collapses. With us, Jesus, the chief cornerstone, is the foundation of our lives; if you don't build on Him, you'll sway, and collapse." Keyondra knows what it's like when Jesus isn't your cornerstone.

"Even as a Christian, I have been in situations where I didn't depend on God. There were things that I built with my own hands and things that I felt like I should accomplish- I can do this, this is me, you know, that type of thing." Keyondra quickly realized that those things she did on her own sifted through her hands, but the things she did that glorified and honored God lasted.

"I've gone through so many things," Keyondra shares when I asked her about other issues and struggles she's dealt with. "I've had to deal with forgiving people I never received an apology from, which can be one of the hardest things ever," she says. However, Keyondra realized she had to move on and be okay about not receiving an apology. "You better be okay with not receiving an apology because, at the end of the day, those people are sleeping, and if you haven't forgiven, you're the one losing sleep." Keyondra's practical advice for someone dealing with unforgiveness is to have an accountability partner to help you towards forgiving. "There were many times I was angry to the point of tears. I had to talk to people who kept me accountable for forgiving so that I could move forward." "You also have to pray and leave that stuff before God. I was so hurt at one particular time, I started reading the book of Psalms, and it was an eye-opener. It shows how God will fight on your behalf and how He will keep you through all of the terrible times, issues, and people who are not for you. Because if He's for you who can be against you."

Keyondra sees gospel music as a tool that points people to God. "Pointing people to God is what needs to be done in everything, especially right now. Gospel music is the glue that sticks us to God, because again, it points us in His direction." Since the pandemic, Keyondra's workload has become greater. She shares that she's done more work now than when she was able to go out and roam freely. "I've received more calls to sing, interviews as well as more work on our business, and I'm very grateful for that." The business Keyondra refers to is "Jolie Noire", where both she and her sister Kim are partners in pushing the narrative that black is beautiful. "Jolie Noire stands for "Pretty Black" in French. The focal point of our business is to encourage, validate, and affirm black women," Keyondra says. When Keyondra isn't on stage or in the studio, she gives her time and donates by participating with Nonprofits-Glam Camp for Girls, Saving Our Daughters, Rock, Paper Scissors. Currently, Keyondra spearheads the "Beautiful Experience" campaign, which empowers women and girls of all ages to realize their beauty within.

When it comes to relaxing and rejuvenating after pouring into others' lives, Keyondra enjoys spending time with God and spending time with her family.



Grisanthia Franklin or "San," as she is affectionately called hails from the Oakland-San Francisco Bay Area by way of Chicago, Illinois. She now makes Nashville her home. As pastor and founder of Kingdom Love Worship Center (KLWC), and as a rising gospel artist, San is in a focused season in her life, poised for greater works with incredible outcomes. Being noted as one of Gospel and Christian music's most commanding vocalists and professional session singers, San Franklin is strategically stretching her artistry and ministry beyond any boarders that man can establish.

Her brilliant background vocal arrangements and production, and solo vocals are heard on several Grammy®, Stellar and Dove award-winning recordings. She has worked with and traveled nationally and internationally with some of the biggest names in music. Now San has positioned herself with her own music for eager fans and for a world that will gravitate to her voice and be changed by the God in her.

"This journey has been a series of rises and falls, joy and pain and gain and loss. One can never fully navigate where the 'yes' of God will take you!" San says when asked about her journey that led her to the Today's Purpose Woman she is today.

San is currently most passionate about the endless journey of healing. Her focus is on the ministry of saving souls and healing the hurts of believers who have been oppressed and bound by enemy tactics; making it hard for them to live a victorious life in Jesus Christ. She believes that healing is continual, and we will forever heal from things that shaped our lives (mostly stemming from childhood). In regards to how she feels music ministry can help with healing, especially in the times we are currently living in, San feels that music in itself is healing. However, she also feels that as a gospel artist, one must be intentional about what they say during such a critical time in the earth. "Being honest and writing honest songs can and will heal the land." San best describes her music style as very eclectic. She doesn't let any genre put her in a box or category.

"Whatever God needs, is what I will be. I'm really an Evangsinger," she explains. "My dad was a quartet singer, and there is where I learned to squall and the art of performing. I draw from everywhere I feel God's spirit." Although San has been in the music industry for over 30 years and has worked in most genres (and has quite a few cameos), she has stepped out front and into her season to flourish musically with a highly anticipated debut album THE FREE PROJECT.



"This is my debut project. The songs are amazing. The production team was amazing! THE FREE PROJECT is under one of my new business ventures, Basse' Song Music. I am also a writer on five of the songs. And, the messages are life-giving and freeing!" San's album represents her vocal agility and significant anointing that will now be experienced via a global platform. "I'm positive it will incite the believer to a greater quest for God!"

The album encourages the listener in the things that we were taught in the beginning: Listeners will experience songs such as "Faith", "I Choose Free" and "El Shaddai". San shares that she was inspired to do the album when life shifted for her, and she began healing in public. "Many of my ministry and music social media videos started going viral, and my producer encouraged me to stop waiting on others and broken promises. THE FREE PROJECT is my emancipation from me to me! So often, we live a life of bondage and have no idea that we are bound. An unexpected divorce changed my life and catapulted me into the best season of my life!"

As encouragement, San wants people to know that no matter where their track in life has taken them, and no matter how far they feel from God, His love is unmeasurable, and He will never give up on us. "It's never too late to become what He has designed you to be."

## FRANKLIN

"THE FREE PROJECT"



Ayiesha Woods-Hillery is a Grammy-nominated singer, songwriter, musician, wife, and mother. She is a multi-talented artist who has undoubtedly made her mark in Christian music and ministry. Recently Ayiesha released her new single, "Family," and the accompanying music video. This is a timely pop tune that celebrates family-whether it's the family of humanity or your own family. Woods co-wrote and produced the song with her husband, Joseph Hillery and Andy Anderson. Besides delivering a Christian message of love, peace, and harmony, Woods brings the celebration of community with upbeat music so needed in this troubling time.

The story behind "Family" goes back to 2017. "Back in 2017, when Hurricane Irma ripped through the Caribbean and Florida, we sustained some damages to our home and were without power for almost a week. We were on 'stay at home' orders of a different sort! It was dangerous to be out and about due to downed power lines and heavy debris. During that time, affected families and communities were pulling together and holding on dearly to one another, remembering what's most important in this life. It was then that I was inspired to write #Family. My husband and I revisited it during this quarantine season and COVID-19 global pandemic. We finished writing a song we started in 2017, and our eldest son, Joseph II, even contributed!"

Woods has always delivered encouraging messages through her music and ministry, with such hit singles as "Happy," "Big Enough," and "Beauty." Her ministry has also focused on women and teen girl conferences that teach them who they are in Christ, with appearances that included Thomas Nelson's Women of Faith events and their spin-off for girls' Revolve Tour. This ministry is also important for Ayiesha's family, as their motto is Love God, Love People. Serve God, Serve People.

Although we are still in the middle of a global pandemic, Ayiesha isn't letting that stop her from servicing her fan base. This fall, she's releasing her new album, Full Circle, which features the current single "Family." "We were inspired to record Full Circle because our last independent project was released back in 2017, and we felt it was beyond time to service the fan base with new music," she says.



Ayiesha shares that she calls the project "Full Circle" because, in so many ways, it is similar to her very first recording as an independent artist. When it comes to music, Ayiesha sees it as a universal language that reaches beyond cultural barriers and touches hearts. "Music goes beyond race, and it goes beyond ethnicities. There's something about music that God has given that transcends other means to reach people," she says. "I think about David in the Bible, when he had to play his instrument for Solomon and the evil spirits had to leave because of the music, this lets you know how powerful music is."

With the many hats Ayiesha wears, I asked her how she maintains all that God has called her to do. "I thank God I have a lot of help," she says. "I don't think that I would be able to do what I do without the support and the help that God has provided. It's challenging at times, but I keep in mind that in the big scheme of things, it's something that God has called me to do. I know that if He called me to it, then He'll grace me through it."



"FULL CIRCLE"







ulianna Rubio Slager is the Artistic Director and Resident Choreographer for Ballet 5:8, a non-profit ballet company located south of Chicago in Orland Park. Ballet 5:8 was founded in 2012 by both Julianna and Amy Sanderson. The mission of Ballet 5:8 is to spread the discussion of life and faith throughout Chicago and the nation through innovative storytelling and breathtaking dance. The vision of Ballet 5:8 is to be one of the foremost professional dance companies in the world and to be a place where artists create, thrive, and exchange ideas informed by Christian faith.

As a little girl, Julianna wanted to be a ballerina. "I saw the Nutcracker when I was five years old, and from that point on, I was captivated. I think a lot of little girls think that when they're little, but for me, it stuck." She loved the expression of ballet. "I love the movement; just the feeling of dancing and being able to express ideas and stories through movement captured my imagination from a very young age. And so, as I grew older, I was trying to decide where to go with my dancing, and I began to realize that for me, dance was more about being able to express my faith and my love for God than anything else. I started looking for other Christians who were dancing so that I could get to know other people that have the same passion."

Julianna ended up at Ballet Magnificat, a ballet company in Jackson, Mississippi. She danced with Kathy Thibodeaux in her late teens and early twenties, "That was just a huge, huge blessing," Julianna says. "I knew from there that I needed to continue creating dance that was going to spark discussion of life and faith. When Amy and I moved to Chicago and got involved with the dance community here, we saw the need for a company similar to what Kathy is doing in Mississippi, but with mission and vision that would reach Chicago's urban audience." At Ballet 5:8, they're creating classical, contemporary, neoclassical works inspired by Scripture and great authors like C.S. Lewis, bringing timeless truths to the stage through the joy and athleticism of dance.

While dance and ministry may not pair together for many people, Julianna has experienced dance as a way of expression when words fall short. As a dancer, Julianna appreciated how movement can communicate what is too deep or too difficult to form into words. This unique aspect of dance becomes a powerful vessel to proclaim the mystery, depth and beauty of God. "It gives a different perspective when you watch something through movement, it gives a diverse perspective that is not stopped by the barriers of language or culture. Dance is a universal language and can be a powerful, fresh expression of the Gospel to a new generation."

As our nation is currently dealing with difficult times, Julianna finds herself passionate about helping people process grief and emerge from the shadows with hope. "We've endured so much hardship, so much sickness and death, so many jobs lost. The pandemic has stripped away so many of the things that make life worth living. In this moment, I believe Ballet 5:8 can be a ministry to bring hope and healing. We're performing outdoors in our community over the next few months, and we're just excited to be able to share the joy and the hope that we have in Christ with those that have been through really tough stuff over the past six months." The ministry is not touring as much due to COVID-19. "We will be returning to tour as soon as things get a little bit back to normal," Julianna



says. "But for the time being, we're actually really excited to let you guys know that we're going to be dancing in an online venue. We're going to do some live performances that will be streamed on the Internet over the next few months. That way, anybody can watch us and not be limited by geography." Those interested can visit ballet58.org and can sign up for news and announcements see the dates of the online performances.



#### Julianna's final thoughts:

Beauty is an attribute of God that gets overlooked. We think about His truth and we reflect on His love, and those are so important. But when I see the beauty of the trees, the mountains and the sunset, they all speak of His glory and greatness. God didn't create a beautiful world on a whim, it was an extension of His character. For Ballet 5:8, our passion is to create living art that reflects the glory of God. As a ministry organization, we are passionate about showing people the beauty of who God is and inviting them to experience that little taste of heaven, a place where our faith becomes sight, where wrongs will be made right and we will see with clear eyes the goodness of God. That's the reason we exist, to show people the beauty and glory of God.





### MARY COLE WATSON **AUTHOR OF WISDOM WARRIORS**

Born in Ansonia, Connecticut, Mary Cole Watson was the second of eleven children. Her world was often marred in chaos and confusion. Her mother suffered from an undiagnosed bout of mental illness, while her father suffered from alcoholism, like many men of color during the 1950's. Watson is passionate about education and has made it her life goal to ensure the next generation of learners understood their designated place in African-American heritage. Her drive resulted in graduating Magna Cum Laude, and later the recipient of a Full Graduate Assistantship to the University of Toledo, with a Masters in Early Childhood Education and Reading.

During Watson's entire teaching profession, she witnessed self-hate among her African-American students. "The students felt so devalued that they derailed their education by disengaging in school, misbehaving, and feeling completely hopeless about changing their circumstances because the educational system had failed them and their parents were telling them to ignore what they could not ignore in order to graduate from school," she says. "Students couldn't focus on their education because so many of them already suffered from hardships at home that their sense of hopelessness was compounded. They were being asked to think and respond as adults when they didn't have the capacity to think like adults."

It was the emotional plea of an African-American student who was distraught over the fact that she had been denied the type of cultural lessons that Watson was teaching in her reading class that inspired Watson to write her book, Wisdom Warriors. "She wanted me to write the type of stories I was telling them so other children could learn lessons that changed her self-esteem much earlier in their lives."

The book Wisdom Warriors is a culmination of more than twenty short stories designed to address culturally difficult discussions with young African-American minds in the 21st century. It cleverly invites parents and young minds into some of today's most challenging conversations. "The storyline focuses on the wisdom of African-American grandparents to instill immense cultural pride in their granddaughter Skye and to help her navigate racism, and other challenges so many African-American children encounter with a sense of empowerment and resilience. Solutions to every problem reinforce the idea that as African Americans, we are warriors of freedom through knowledge and resistance to the false narrative that America has presented of African Americans and people of color." Watson intends to impact her readers with the realistic stories and solutions of critical hardships that leave Skye prideful, empowered, resilient, and hopeful.

Watson has received powerful reviews for her book. One reader says: "This book should be on the reading lists of teachers and parents alike. Wisdom Warriors are thought-provoking, short stories told through the eyes of a child (Skye). The book takes Skye's complex questions and experiences and ties historical and cultural facts into the explanation given to her by the "Wisdom Warriors". The author gives the reader background knowledge that

helps us to understand WHY African Americans in society are perceived as different and therefore, treated as such. There is much to be gained from these stories that are relevant at any time, but especially, at this time. I loved the topics, the solutions, historical highlights, cultural lessons, positive self-image and the message that everyone's life has value. Wisdom Warriors gives us a way to begin the tough, but necessary conversations that should ultimately lead us to an understanding and appreciation for all people."

various activities promoting her book. She shares that if Wisdom Warriors sell well, she plans to write stories featuring Skye in high school.

Watson is currently spending time in



www.wisdomwarriors2020.com



#### Wisdom Warriors

Mary Cole Watson Twenty short stories designed to address culturally difficult discussions with young African-American minds



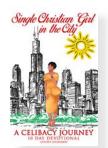
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Dr. Ketra Davenport-King "The Struggle Has no Hold on the Outcome"



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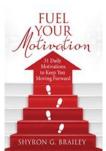
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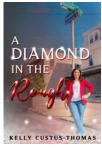
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# TONYA RAYMOND AUTHOR OF DEAR GOD'S DAUGHTER

Tonya Raymond is a writer based in Toronto, Canada, self-love coach, and the founder of Dear God's Daughter, an online community teaching women selflove through God's eyes. Tonya believes that once women see themselves the same way God does, they will no longer settle for less than what He wants for them, which is the very best. "He does not want us to be in unhealthy and toxic relationships," she says.

In fall 2014, Tonya received a text from her boyfriend advising her that their relationship was over. It was something she did not see coming. And due to his unwillingness to provide closure, she suffered a major panic attack. "When he refused, I was left to deal with the pain of rejection. I instantly felt broken,

worthless, and confused," she says. "I didn't know what to do other than I knew I had to run to Jesus." Tonya shares how she became vulnerable with God. "I told Him I hated the heart that I had and I hated who I was because of it." She said it was right after condemning herself was when she heard God speak for the first time, "There is nothing wrong with you. I love you." "It was audible. It was loud. It was Him. Yes, God spoke to me!" From that moment on, Tonya's life has never been the same. "Not only did He reveal to me that I was in an emotionally abusive relationship, but He also taught me how to love myself through His eves."

Since then, Tonya shares that God purposely brought women to her, who have at one point or another, been in unhealthy relationships. This has inspired her to write her book, Dear God's Daughter- Words of True Love When False Love Fails.



A book in which Tonya shares her personal story on how she healed from her toxic relationship, through a collection of poetic love letters between herself and Jesus. She, however, wrote the book in the perspective of the reader so that they will have their own intimate journey.

When asked why she feels the release of her book is important, she responds: "Since being under quarantine, domestic violence cases have increased," she says. "I believe this book will serve as a tool for women who are thinking about leaving their significant other or have since split-up with their partner during this time."

#### Tonya's Advice:

I would highly recommend journaling while on your healing journey, as it serves as a great tool for tracking your progress. Also, to remember, healing is never linear. We can flip-flop from anger to worthlessness to self-blame, and then back to anger. We can feel as though we are healed, but then experience emotional triggers, which bring everything to the forefront again. I know this still happens to me, even today. But thank God for His grace and mercy!



# WORDS OF TRUE LOVE WHEN FALSE **LOVE FAILS**

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# DR. KETRA DAVENPORT-KING

AUTHOR OF SEEING BEYOND THE SHATTERED GLASS

Charismatic, Energetic, and Captivating are words that describe the personality of Dr. Ketra L. Davenport-King. Armed with over 20 years of serving the community, Dr. Davenport-King is an advocate, speaker, mentor, coach, and philanthropist who has radically impacted the lives of believers under the flagship of her ministry. Dr. Ketra, a native of Dallas, Texas, spent much of her life serving people in various capacities. One of her greatest joys is starting Life After Advocacy Group, Inc., in 2004, to help individuals who have been victims of sexual abuse recover and live a healthy life. She opened the doors to Rock Dimensional Consulting (formally known as KLD Consulting Services) in 2005.

Her latest accomplishment is her new book, Seeing Beyond the Shattered Glass, a fictional memoir based on her true-life events. Dr. Ketra is confident that her book will inspire victims of sexual abuse who have suffered in silence to

speak their Truth. Her passion for the book is to empower women to Speak their Truth and take back their voice." As victims and survivors of various origins of abuse, specifically sexual abuse, we tend to suppress the internal hurt to mask the pain we endured," she continues. "It is my hope for those who read the pages of the book that they will be empowered to become FREE or inspire someone they know who has been victims.

# "BECAUSE OF THE RELATIONSHIP I HAVE WITH **IESUS CHRIST, I WAS ABLE TO** FORGIVE MY Abuser"

This book is for everyone – not just those who have been victimized by sexual abuse."

The journey to writing Seeing Beyond the Shattered Glass started about 15 years ago. "It was a challenge because when I began writing the story, I realized how the story wasn't ready to be told to the world - there were still some chapters in the life that I needed to live through, along with totally releasing the healing and forgiveness in my heart." Dr. Ketra shares that her relationship with God started at a young age and has always been the foundation of her life. "Because of the relationship I have with Jesus Christ, I was able to forgive my abuser."

In the book, Kassidie Noel Winters is tired of living behind shattered glass! Kassidie was a child full of joy, laughter, and pure innocence. At the age of six, her life drastically changed forever by the one person she trusted. The dark hole left by being robbed of her innocence became filled with low self-esteem, anger, and poor decisions that would follow her into adulthood. Through professional counseling, Kassidie unlocks the buried parts of her past to face her childhood struggles, forgive her abuser, and put the shattered piec-

> es in her life back together. From the first page of the book to the explosive ending, the reader will experience Kassidie's pain, recovery, and, ultimately, her triumph.

> Dr. Ketra's Advice to understand the journey to total healing begins with:

- 1) Identifying you have a problem and that keeping it inside will keep you in bondage.
- 2) Admit that it happened and be released from the shame, guilt, and spiritual bondage the enemy meant for evil and know that God has already turned your tribulation into triumph.
- 3) Accept that God knew you before you were born, according to Jeremiah 1:5, and He knows the plans that He has for your life, according to Jeremiah 29:11. Speak your Truth, and watch God work in your life!





Chat with Dr. Ketra via the website www.DRKETRA.com www.lifeafterag.org Email: info@DRKETRA.com Social media: Facebook: @Author Dr. Ketra Instagram: author\_dr.ketra Twitter: @DrKetra LinkedIn: Dr. Ketra L. Davenport-King



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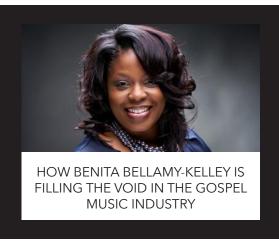
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# DR. LYNDA BARNES

How This Kingdom Success Expert and Business Strategist Helps Kingdom-Driven Entrepreneurs



Dr. Lynda Barnes, a Kingdom Success Expert, Business Strategist and Ex-Psychologist, has consulted with many on business strategies to 10X their influence, income and impact through the structure of ministry, business and community programs. She's also an advocate and survivor of childhood sexual abuse and domestic violence.

She has counseled many children and women on letting go of fear and inner turmoil so that they can maximize their capabilities. Dr. Lynda is passionate about helping others by using her experiences, training, and education. "Because I am sure that God would want me to use these things to help others, overcome the same." Dr. Lynda helps Kingdom-Driven Entrepreneurs align with a Success Kingdom Mindset, get clear in their call to serve, and teach about integrating and 10Xing ministry, business and community programs without the internal battle or making costly mistakes. "I educate others from a place of personal and or educational experiences. I coach from mistakes and lessons learned while building a consecutive multiple 7 figures earning mental health practice and multiple ministries, nonprofit and for-profit businesses."

She is also the founder of the #Kingdom-CEONetwork and Academy, Omega Alpha Nu Ministries, OAN Life Church & Christian Academy, CO2CEO, Anthony Barnes Concrete,

1Accord Construction and many other businesses and community programs. Dr. Lynda has always had the drive to be an entrepreneur because her mom and dad were entrepreneurs. Her dad owned an auto body repair shop, and her mom loved interior decorating and owned an upholstery shop. Her grandparents were entrepreneurs also. "So it was inevitable that I would become an entrepreneur as well. My journey started at a young age but full-time after being involved in a car accident, going back to school for my MA in Marriage & Family therapy then going straight into private practice as my ministry. Later led to a church ministry and other nonprofit, for-profit business ventures and community development programs.

Dr. Lynda's faith is embedded in her business, and she now operates with full obedience to God. "I have learned a valuable lesson about how obedience affects your ministry, life, and business. The choices we make are important to following what God wants us to do and what he wants for us. I have a story about how my disobe-

> dience played a role in me almost losing everything from my ministry & businesses that created multiple 7 figures as well as what I learned about how being obedient solidifies favor with God." Dr. Lynda's story: From Prison to the Palace, which is a part of a book anthology will be released in late September 2020.



#### Dr. Lynda's Advice:

"No matter what you've been through, no matter your situation or circumstance, hold on to your faith, hold on to God. He will see you through the storms and calm the seas. Never let your past negatively impact your present or your future. Always know that God is with you, and he is available. HIS power is within you, so act like you own it. Remember to pray about everything and be obedient when God makes HIS request. Seek help when you're feeling down, surround yourself with up-

lifting people. Get a counselor, coach, or mentor to hold you accountable and to support you. Don't let other people steal your joy or your confidence. If you don't believe in you, no one else will. Remember, God always loves you, and he is everything, God gave his son Jesus to save you. To live a fulfilled, successful life, we must operate in our calling. God has given you a call to serve."

Dr. Lynda shares she has a virtual summit: Impact & Success: How to Be An Impact & Success Using Ministry, Business, and Community Programs, coming in Sept. 2020.

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# **BENITA BELLAMY-KELLEY**

IS FILLING THE VOID IN THE GOSPEL MUSIC INDUSTRY MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS SECTOR

Benita Bellamy-Kelley is a Marketing and Public Relations executive with over 20 years of experience in the arts and entertainment. She is the founder and CEO of The Bellamy Group located in Music City USA - Nashville, TN, launched in 2008 with the objective to fill a void in the marketing and promotions sector.

Benita grew up in a small rural town in the mountains of East Tennessee. There were not many opportunities for professional advancement in her hometown, so she found her way to Nashville, TN. After working her way up the ladder at record labels, she launched her own company to assist artists, small labels, churches, and organizations with marketing. The Bellamy Group has grown into a multiple, award-winning, marketing, agency and is the top agency in Gospel music. As a little girl, Benita knew she would grow up to work in music and arts. She was the only black child in dance class. She was the only black child that took classical piano lessons. "I wanted to grow up and be the role model other black children could look up to."

# "I LOVE HELPING SOMEONE LIVE THEIR DREAMS AND ACHIEVE GOALS"

Benita was inspired to start The Bellamy Group out of frustration with the lack of integrity she witnessed to in Gospel music. "I was so frustrated that I quit my job as Vice President of a record label. At that same time, labels did not keep artists due to the economic change in the music industry. Indie artists were now needing help, and they began to call me. So I launched the Bellamy Group to assist these artists without a record label home."

Benita is most passionate about helping people become their best. "I love helping someone live their dreams and achieve goals. I want people to be well and happy. Walking within one's purpose is the most fulfilling thing a person can accomplish. If I can assist with that, then my life is being lived within its purpose. Benita shares that the most rewarding is bringing ideas to life. "I get to create and manage brands that impact the world."

Benita also shares that every day can be challenging, but that is part of what she likes about what she does. "I have to think outside

# "IF YOU HAVE AN IDEA OR innovative and com-A DREAM, GO FOR IT..."

the box continually. I have to always come up with something petitive so that my clients succeed in the marketplace. Prayer and brainstorming is a daily practice in or-

der to come up with fresh ideas." Benita shares that she cannot do what she does without the guidance of God. Last year, Benita wrote her first book, BORN 2 BE; she's now working on BORN 2 BE HER for women.

#### Benita's Business Advice:

If you have an idea or dream, GO FOR IT. You won't know you can succeed until you try. Just in case you fail, try again. Success is nothing but overcoming failures. You'll make it if you stick with it!

You can find Benita at YouAreBorn2Be.com and TheBellamyGroup. com

# BUSINESS HIGHLIGHTS

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Felicia Shakespeare owner of A Purpose Driven Woman, shows career professionals and female entrepreneurs how to be successful both in business and life through a conference series, podcast empowerment episodes, and more

www.www.apurposedrivenwoman.us Social Media handles-@feliciashakespeare



#### **CAN'T BREAK ME**

Kristel Robinson Bailey is the founder of "Can't Break Me Retreat", a traveling wellness and healing retreat for women. Can't Break Me Retreat was born as a space to find healing from heartbreak and trauma. It's a sacred place to disconnect from the world and give all your burdens and pain

www.cantbreakmeretreat.com



# **OTTAWA HAIR LOSS CLINIC & WELLNESS**

Mikaella Celestin is a Certified Trichologist and a Board-Certified Holistic Healthcare Practitioner. She is the CEO and Founder of Ottawa Hair Loss Clinic & Wellness, the first black owned hair loss clinic in Canada. Mikaella helps clients that are dealing with different types of hair loss.

www.trichosolutions.com



**NINE BATH AND BODY** 

Ruby Jeanine Batiste is the owner of Nine Bath and Body Products, LLC- which focuses on the total wellness of the mind, body, and soul through body care, relaxation products, and self-care products.



# A WOMAN WALKING IN HER PURPOSE IS A DANGEROUS WEAPON TO THE ENEMY!





# LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE STARTS WHEN YOU LIVE LIFE ON PURPOSE!