



Faith Lifts

31 Daily Boosts for Sagging Faith

Isunji Cardoso



We live in the age of the makeover. If we are dissatisfied with our surroundings or our appearance, we make them over. Our spirits also need a makeover every now and then. In a practical, conversational style, author Ismji Cardoso uses examples from her own life to offer encouragement, inspiration, and entertainment designed to give a sagging spirit a much needed lift!

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Day 2 - The Voice of God

“Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it.’ Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.” (Isaiah 30:21 - NKJ)

During a church service one evening, God spoke to a member of the ministerial staff. So she stood up to share what she heard with the congregation. She said, "This is the time when I AM speaking. It's not a figment of your imagination or something you made up, but it's my voice you're hearing. Don't grow weary in well doing, for in due season you will reap if you faint not." The word rang in my spirit like a bell. The previous weekend, in a conversation I'd had with someone else, he'd said, " only those who position themselves to hear the voice of God—whether it's through the Word, other people, or from within their own spirit—will we be able to go to the next level because hearing from God is vital to taking the next step." Everywhere I turned, God was saying the same thing. Everything was tying together and the "string" was the voice of God.

I suppose it's fairly easy to hear God's voice in a church, but how about in our everyday lives? We deal with so many voices on a daily basis that compete for our attention. Not only do we have the voices of the people around us at work, at school, and at home, but there's the voice of the enemy, as well as our own inner voice. Somewhere in there, is the voice of God. Perhaps it's been a while since you last heard God speak to you. Maybe His voice has grown faint or been drowned out by the noise of life. Maybe you have never heard from God before. Whatever your experience, God is extending an invitation for us to meet Him at the altar; let's take Him up on it. There are so many facets to what God is doing in this time, and if you are anything like me, you want ALL God has for you. Well, it begins with listening for

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His voice. Would you take a moment today to still yourself and allow Him to speak to you? Make an extra effort to quiet those other voices and listen for the voice of God. It's the only way we will reach our next level; that place where we have been longing to go, but have not been quite able to reach. You will be so glad you did.

Day 16 - Apples of Gold

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.” (Proverbs 25:11- New King James Version (NKJV))

Over the years I've learned a lot about the power of words and their effect on circumstances. That's why the verse in Proverbs stuck out to me today. This particular verse makes it plain that our words are important and valuable. The Bible equates the right words spoken at the right time to silver and gold.

What we say carries weight and sets things in motion for us, whether positive or negative. In the psychiatric arena, it's known as self-fulfilling prophecy—whatever we hear (or say) about ourselves on a repetitive basis eventually becomes true in our lives.

This concept really got my attention one day and I started to pay closer attention to what I was saying about myself, and about the people and situations around me. I took a day and really focused on my conversations with others, and was amazed at the things that came out of my mouth without my even thinking about it. It began when I walked into work and didn't end until I walked back out. It was a particularly eye-opening experiment, and I was surprised to discover that I wasn't quite the ray of sunshine I always thought I was!

From the moment I started work, it was one thing after another—“I'm so tired”; “I think I'm coming down with something”; “I'm so tired of this place”; “I can never find what I need”; blah, blah, blah...and that was all before lunchtime!

It wasn't until someone challenged me to stop talking about what I saw and start talking about what I *wanted* to see, that things began to improve. Instead of dwelling on the negative, of which there was a plethora, I began to speak of what I wanted to

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see. I came into work smiling and saying how great I felt. Even though I may not have started out feeling that way, before long I really *did* feel great. Changing the way I spoke actually made me feel better about things and made me an even better person to be around than I thought I was before!

Are you tired of what you've been experiencing? Try this experiment on yourself. First spend an entire day listening to you; I mean really listening. What are you saying? Are you saying what you see or what you want to see? The layperson's definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over and expecting different results. If what you've been doing hasn't been working for you, doesn't it make sense to make some adjustments and do something different? Are your words framing what you want to see? If not, make a decision to change your speech from what it is to "apples of gold in settings of silver" so that they will refresh you and those who hear you.

Day 24 - Perceptions

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16 - KJV)

We've all received those emails from time to time; you know, the ones with questions you need to answer about yourself and then share with your friends and family so they can learn things they may not have known about you before. They are a fun way to kill some time. Well, I got one yesterday that was a little different—this one had a list of questions that your friends and family had to fill out about *you* to see how well they know you. Doesn't seem like such a big deal, does it? Yet, it was a big deal because in the first survey, I had control of how I was perceived. However, in this new survey, I was subject to how others perceived me...talk about being in a vulnerable position! Suddenly, it didn't seem quite so “fun.”

I held my breath as the responses started coming in, because, quite honestly, I wasn't sure what to expect. I was pleasantly surprised, except for one friend who put “no” next the question asking whether or not I am funny. *Me?* Not funny? Can you believe that?! But I digress....

As I read the replies, especially from those who have known me longest, I began to get a better picture of how I am perceived by others. I also had the opportunity to see the impact I've made in other people's lives. I sent it to everyone from my oldest friends of over 30 years to my newest ones. What I got in return was evidence that God has been, and still is, working in my life. What a powerful testimony! I realize that I can't take one iota of credit for it either—it's only by God's grace that anyone would have anything nice to say about me.

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Do you know how people perceive you? What would people say about you if they had to answer questions about you? How have you impacted the lives of the people who have crossed your path? In many instances you and I are the only Bible some people will ever read. The world judges Jesus based on what those who claim to follow him do and say. With that in mind, I encourage you to let your light shine and let others see Christ through you!

Final Note: As I was writing this, I got another response from the friend who previously implied that I wasn't funny. She has since seen the error of her ways and has changed her previous answer. Let the record show its unanimous - I am, indeed, funny! You may now proceed to the next chapter.



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