

Her Story: 'O Woman, great is your faith': Pulling through to pursue her dreams in the face of rejection and little hope. Be encouraged as you read this edition of Her Story from Eno Usoroh

**The Issue:** I finished medical school 9 years ago and graduated in one of the prestigious medical schools in Nigeria. I had goals and aspirations for my career, but marriage and kids was also a priority, and so I was willing to put my career on the back seat and focus on my marriage and children when they came. I eventually started an 8-5 job with a Healthcare Management Facility six years ago which at the time, seemed fine in order to have time to juggle the demands of motherhood. Four years ago, I decided to try my hands at an online Masters Programme (MPH), so I took a bank loan. I struggled for 2 years academically and financially due to the loan but eventually dropped out of the Programme because of lack of time and adequate domestic support. I then made up my mind that a full-time program was best for me, as I could just face the studies squarely, excel and move on with my life and career. Getting admission was no challenge; the challenge now lay in funding! So I began to hunt around for cash and also scholarships.

**Effects on my Marriage, Job, and Life:** By now, my husband had made it clear to me that I likely didn't succeed because I hadn't consulted him to get his blessings before starting the online MPH. I simply assumed he would understand and support me! I was astounded, but because I needed his blessings and support, and joint faith for a scholarship this time around I let him know step-by-step my plans and moves. He was also apprehensive about my going to school away from home because of care of the children. In the meantime, I was getting increasingly frustrated at work. The salary

wasn't just it, all the public health jobs I applied for kept asking specifically for the MPH degree. I felt I had wasted my years with the HMO. I was increasingly swamped with work, when I fell behind with my targets and tried to make a case for at least an intern doctor or pharmacist to help me, I was branded as being lazy! By May 2011, I had received rejections from almost all the scholarship bodies I applied to, yet I was determined that 2011 won't pass without me starting my Masters Degree Programme.

**From a Bad Situation to a Desperate One:**

Towards the end of May, I had a serious face-off with my line manager at work. The situation deteriorated to the point that May 31 2011 was my last day at work! I was asked to leave and all appeals even from my mother fell on deaf ears! Suddenly I was jobless and almost hopeless about going to do my MPH! I almost fell into a depression, but my husband, siblings and parents really encouraged me not to be too hard on myself. So I started job-hunting because I feared not being able to do my MPH and of course the family needed my income. But again all the public health vacancies requested MPH and my experience alone was not enough. By July, I got the last scholarship rejection from World Bank, my savings were depleted, I saw no way to pay my MPH fees. My situation was desperate. All along though, I kept telling my friends I had resigned (out of a sense of stupid shame) because I was going to school (imagine) and I just didn't see myself not in the MPH program after September.

**God's Intervention:** I finally realised that I NEEDED TO LET GO AND LET GOD...these words in Mathew began to minister to me.....**O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt...Matt 15:28.** I decided then that I needed to have faith despite my circumstances. The kind of faith that Jesus described ...'the one that moved mountains'! So as I talked more about going to school, I entered into thanksgiving mode for funding from anywhere. I told God to take all the glory for freeing me from shame. I prayed like I never had and I began to experience a peace that only God could grant in spite of being jobless, broke and without a scholarship or money for my school fees. Then sometime towards the end of July, I made a pledge in church and struggled to redeem it the week after. The call was for people seeking God's face for a blessing in foreign exchange currency to sow a financial seed. I sowed \$100 out of the little money in my hand. Roughly a week after, I heard from a scholarship body that had rejected me since May.

Some scholarships were rejected by some candidates, so I came up for re-selection, and the award since I still responded that I was still available and interested! It is the Lord's doing & it is marvellous in my eyes! Oh, this act of God's mercy surely restored and strengthened my faith in Him!

I have promised God that I will testify of His goodness, so others will be encouraged! I did so publicly in church, but will continue to do so to keep encouraging others on the brink of despair like me. God was working behind the scenes while I struggled...Indeed, God has been very faithful! I am now in the Netherlands for the next one year and He has given me peace of mind concerning my family back home. He made a way that my sister-in-law was available to move in with my family for the next one year. She, my husband, parents (especially financial support), siblings are all being so supportive now and I just give God all the glory!



*Eno E. Usoroh, a Nigerian is currently finalizing her Master Programme and the Royal Tropical Institute at the Netherlands. She is the wife of Aniekan, and the mother of two boys.*