

Open Hands: Stewardship with Kingdom Vision

Time and Attention: Stewarding Focus in the Digital Age

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for our life on earth and waking us up this morning.

Thank you for what you have given us in our life

I ask to guide us through right to your kingdom

Keep us away from evil and sinful behaviors around us

Help us build righteous and humble relationships and friendships with others

Guide us to love our neighbors and be cheerful givers to the Lord

End our life habits to live as a tax collector and Mammon.

Help and guide us to eliminate distractions in our life outside of this service and congregation in the world

In Jesus name, Amen

I am happy that my mother is in a better place with no pain, worries and suffering. I will share with you her words and conversations I had with her by phone and in person. I am telling you this because this is a true story and relationship I had with my mother during this time of grief because of her loss of life on earth. She told me when I did come to visit her that she was preventing me from coming out to visit her in Dolton, Illinois because she told me it feels like the devil in the house out there and my sister's ex boyfriend name Jovan said the same thing that I found out he told my mom. That is why I believe my stepfather and sister were coming down on me and gaining up on me. They believe people grief loved ones in different ways and lie to me. I believe my biological father name Michael Cooper knows some of this true story from what I told him previously about my mom's stress and why she was not happy with her life for the last ten years or more. My sister got more wicked, sinful and got my bipolar disorder problems over the years. It is the reason why I do not want to lose contact with her and stepfather going forward. I strongly believe my stepfather named Leon Williams in Dolton, Illinois caused her loss of life because of stress and heart failure. She went to sleep in a separate room in the house in Dolton, Illinois and never woke up. I found out she had chest pains the day before she died. I do not like my stepfather calling her a liar based on conversations I had with her while she was by herself and not around him. It is like my mom told me about me that he is noisy, thinks he knows everything and tries to be in people's business and not his own. My mother was so stressed out with my aunt Karen on her side of the family keep moving her around to nursing homes. My mom said she could have kept her in the same nursing home after she was released from the hospital and she could have been still alive today. I remember my mom said she was done with her after my grandma's funeral by not having no contact and talking to her. She told me that she was going to only communicate with my aunt Jackie and Jerome on her side of the family. It was time I spoke to my mom saying she was done with my stepfather name Leon Williams living in Dolton, Illinois and wanted to leave. She did not have no income or nothing saved up with any stable and economic stability under her. So I believed she had no choice but to stick it out to deal with the stress, worries, suffering and pain that she had to deal with on a daily basis. She kept telling me when I called her that she was not happy for many years. She always told me that my stepfather never did anything and hated that he retired from his job early to sit around the house and do nothing. She says he started to get lazy and looked embarrassing in public. My mom said he let himself go and gained a lot of weight. My mom said to me when he went places that he looked embarrassing and disgusting. That is why she told me she did not sign up for anything of this and wanted out by leaving. He gets around really slow with one or two canes like a cripple person. He did not used to be like that. My mom told me she

wanted to stay in the marriage until my sister and I became adults. My mom always said he was always noisy and always in other people's business. That's why she never gave me my address after 2018 because she knew what happened in 2018 that she did not like and got stressed out over. I will continue to honor her memory for doing that. My mom said he acted like a woman when he did that. My mom told me what I told her in 2018 while I was living in Detroit in my own apartment before I moved to Philadelphia that my stepfather did what he did in 2018 to be noisy and thinking he knew everything to assume how I was living and living in a shelter. I believe what my biological father Michael Cooper told me was true that my mom was truly in love when they were dating and Grandma on my mom's side of the family forced my stepfather and mother to marry each other. My mom said when my grandma kicked her out of the house when she was 19 years old that she had plans to move in with my biological father's side of the family in the neighborhood on the Southside of Chicago. My grandma did not let her make her make her own decisions at the time. I wished my mom made better decisions for herself when she was young and that means my sister's name Kyana Williams would never exist today or she would exist in another family with no relation to me. I believe my mom should have waited for him to get his life together because they were young and living with their parents at the time. My grandma did not give them the opportunity to do that. I believe God called her home when she got chest pains and fell asleep and she never woke up. I miss her. I will miss talking to her and seeing her. I forgive my stepfather for all of this because I know she is in a better place with no pain, suffering and worries. I pray in my heart that she gets eternal life and be part of the new heaven and new earth with no past, pain, sin, worries and stress. I will just move on because I know that is what she wants me to do. I will focus on my own life in Michigan. All I can do now is go by her memory about how she raised me. My mom said to me in person and by phone while she was by myself and stepfather never and sister never around that she was proud of me because I never had to move back home, but my sister had to move back home over and over again because of her man troubles. My mom said to me she was always proud of me because I managed to stick it out and stay out on my own as an independent person. My sister, Kyana Williams, who lives in Dallas, Texas, does not really have a college education because she flunked out after she transferred to a university in Indiana and lost her financial aid. My resume looks better than hers because I have a three page career focused resume with my strong higher education, professional and volunteer experience, relevant experience like personal projects, and religious and social services nonprofit background. My mom actually told me she was proud of me about that too because my mom said to me over and over again that she has no college degree under her belt. I believe my mom said she was proud of me because I believe I was more goal oriented and knew more about the meaning of hard work. I believe the reason my mom always said she was proud of me was because I had my priorities in line the right way to be goal oriented and be successful in what I do in life. My mom told my sister Kyana Williams did not do that. That is why my mom told me my sister had many problems in her life like my aunt Karen on her side of the family. She does not have a college background like do and is involved in the community helping the homeless and poor. That is why I say I got my spiritual blueprint from my biological father's side of the family. I believe my mother would be more spiritual if she married my biological father because my biological father's side of the family go church a lot, read the Bible, live like cheerful givers and is deeply involved in the church. My mom told me she grew up in church as a child. I believe my mom knew so much more about me than everyone else on her side of the family that I believe she kept to herself. That is why my sister and stepfather name Leon Williams in Dolton, Illinois always assume stuff and think they know everything about me and other people. Also, I believe if my mom was able to make her decision while she was young and able to move in with biological father Michael Cooper side of the family that I believe that would have gone somewhere and my sister Kyana Williams was never born or born in another family. My biological father and mother would have gotten married and lived on their own. I

believe I would have been the only child that means me, my mom and biological father. I finally got my own life insurance policy that I can start paying on my own. I receive the first bill next month and someone is listed as a beneficiary on the biological father side of the family.

1. By show of hands, who here picked up their phone intended to do one task and doing another task on their phone minutes later?
2. What is one meaningful conversation, moment of spiritual discipline that was interrupted or derailed by notification?
3. If Jesus was sitting in the room right now, are you confident your phone habits and mental space would you fully sit at the feet and listen?
4. When was the last time you spent time in prayer or meditation without mind jumping to a digital task, social media post or unread email?
5. What is one phone setting you know right now you need to do to change in order to create a space for God?
6. Who is one person you could bless this week giving them undivided and device free attention for thirty minutes?

"Look carefully at how you walk, not as unwise but wise, making the best use of the time because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." -Ephesians 5:15-17

The Christian life calls us to be stewards, not owners of all God has given us with every moment and thought. Our stewardship of time and attention is the clearest evidence of what truly values. The Greek word exagorazo means to buy up or to buy out. It means seizing an opportunity like buying up a stock before a crash or buying a slave out of the market. Our life is not an endless commodity because our life is diminishing opportunity. We must buy back moments of the world that tries to steal for the kingdom of God. We must change that way we walk and intentionally.

Read Luke 10:38-42

Read Philippians 4:8

Martha was distracted by serving. It was nothing but anxious attention that Martha was doing. That is why we need to follow the path of Mary to put God first in whatever we do. Mary chose God, not division. Mary focused on God always. With all this technology out here in the world, it is converting our lives to be in the path of Martha with division and trouble. We worry about distractions with technology usage that we choose to lose focus on God.

Things we need to do right now to live in the path of Mary, not Martha:

1. Provide yourself a digital Sabbath
2. Do not touch your phone or electronic devices for thirty minutes.
3. Have a focus time of prayer and read the Bible to talk with God.
4. Commit your works to the Lord
5. Create a phone and electronic devices free zones in your home.
6. Train your focus on God without technology usage.