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Beauty In The Beast

By Kanayo Dike-Oduah
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A 7-DAY TESTIMONY DEVOTIONAL ON DEALING WITH SUDDEN RARE ILLNESS. THESE SCARRED HANDS WERE USED TO WRITE ABOUT THE BEAUTY OF HIS HEALING POWER.

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Cover by Kanayo Dike-Oduah

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We are told to reject suffering and pain, but what do you do when you are confronted with the prospect of death? This devotional draws you into Kanayo's testimony of battling a 'one in a million' serious illness called Stevens-Johnson Syndrome.

We journey with her suffering, healing, finding beauty in the beast of pain and ultimately learn how to suffer 'well'.

This devotional is available on the YouVersion Bible app, on her site, doctorkanayo.com and as a PDF download.

Hard copies may be available on request.

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DAY 1

SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT

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Scriptures to read: James 5:13 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

We don't talk about suffering unless we are. We don't desire to share our feelings, but I want you all to see the process and never miss the highlight. I want you to see the first and the good suffering trip by this sense of a together and makes you realise that every bread depends on God.

They say things come in threes...

The third prayer point in my prayer request for my 26th birthday was concerning my health. "All ailments, known and unknown, must bow to the name of Jesus". I prayed this on August 22nd and asked others wishing me a happy

birthday to lift this prayer point, along with five others. The post is still on my profile on Instagram, Facebook and Whats

App for evidence.

The day after my birthday (23rd August) my Fitbit showed that my heart rate was abnormal though I wasn't resting. I checked it, thinking that my Fitbit was out of order and that perhaps I was just overly excited to be at the theme park on my birthday.

The second day after my birthday (24th August) I had planned to go to the beach with my family. I woke up with a swollen

right eye... but that didn't stop me from going to the beach and I stayed out.

Three days after my birthday (25th August) I had what I thought was a mild anaphylactic reaction (mild because thanks

to God my throat did not completely close). I woke up with a puffy face took the antihistamines that I had on me and

headed to church in my sunglasses through our service. Thank God I missed the first gathering to wear sunglasses!

During the church service, my eyes started stinging. I went to the toilet with the support of my younger brother who saw

me struggling. They were funny like this (paraphrasing) that my eyes could be this point, but they were bright red.

I went to the closest Accident and Emergency (A&E) Hospital and was given antihistamines, two sets of antibiotics and

steroids. I was told that my body was in shock and decided to not only fight the supposed 'food allergic reaction' with the

medications but also to see a specialist (throat, inner ear and conjunctivitis eye specialist).

So here I go with three of my own ailments at the same time.

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DAY 2

'SOMETIMES IT GETS WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER'

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Scriptures to read: Psalm 109:25 and Job 16:17

"I also have become a reproach and a word of taunting to others. When they see me they shake their heads in derision." - Psalm 109:25

It turned out that this sickness wasn't just 'the flu'. There was an unknown illness, such that over the following days I saw my face disintegrating before my eyes. My nostrils popped up in over my head. The palms and the soles of my feet had red blotches and were painful to touch. I could barely walk without pain. My vision was blurred. Eventually, I could no longer talk at length or swallow...even liquids.

By the time I had set up a camp at my mum's house since Sunday 22nd August. She was on a night shift on Wednesday 27th August, so my aunt came to pick me up at 10pm after my shift at her house (about 10 miles away).

In the middle of the night, my aunt called the paramedics because my breathing was all over the place and my whole body was in agony. The paramedics came, saw my face in all its horror, pus oozing from my lips, red blotches on my palms, rash on my body and gave me 4 more 500mg tablets of paracetamol to swallow instead of rushing me to the nearest hospital. As Job 16:17 says, I felt that my speech was offensive to those around me. I couldn't brush my teeth without my mouth feeling and looking like it was falling apart. My throat in fact, my whole mouth couldn't take anything. The paramedics worried me so well that with allergic reactions sometimes it gets worse before it gets better.

On Thursday 29th, I asked my little sister to go to my flat and pick up some of my belongings as I had not driven since Sunday due to the state of my eyes. I also asked her to pop into any pharmacy and show a picture of my face to see what they could do in the way of suggest to calm the reaction. The words of the pharmacist to my sister were 'get her (me) to hospital urgently'.

My sister returned with a small case of my belongings, stood at the door of my car and with full authority, commanded me to get in the car to go to the nearest hospital. My little sister turned it to my big sister and her actions in that day saved my life.

We arrived at the closest Accident & Emergency Hospital, my sister dropped my goddaughter and I off at the entrance and went to look for parking. We entered the hospital, stood in the queue to register and I collapsed.

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DAY 3

BRING THE UNKNOWN BEFORE GOD IN PRAYER

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Scriptures to read: Job 9:20, 1st Thessalonians 5:17, Romans 8:26-27, Psalm 141:1

I found myself in a resurrection. My life flipped away. After leaving the resurrection on earth, I was put in a hospital because the doctors immediately identified the fact that I had some blisters all over my body. To let you know how extreme it was initially, people visiting me at the hospital were instructed to wear masks, gloves and aprons.

After several tests including a skin biopsy and observations I was finally diagnosed with the critical condition called Stevens-Johnson syndrome which affects one in a million people each year. My body was violently reacting to a medication which was prescribed for persistent facial neuralgia (facial nerve pain) following a tooth extraction.

I had been taking this medication for 3 weeks (5th to 24th August) without any known issues. This year I came with a slight fever. It was destroying the mucous membrane (lining of mouth, nose, throat, eyes, lips, mouth, tongue, nose, face, skin, and internal organs) the syndrome is deadly and to a number that survive, they do so with the most horrific complications such as blindness and sepsis.

There was a case of a young lady in the UK who after using over-the-counter eye drops for just one day, found herself in a medical emergency. ON MONDAY her body started reacting to the same syndrome. I was prescribed a three-month course of this medication and had been taking it for THREE weeks, without any reaction.

If God did not cause my body to react after my birthday...remember prayer point "All ailments, known and unknown must lead to the name of Jesus". The doctors would have been happy were called and didn't walk away until August 26. But God is in control. I believe God saw my heart and heard all the prayers said over me when I shared six simple prayer points for my birthday. I do not know what caused me to include the word 'unknown' in that prayer point other than the Holy Spirit. Only believe in a divine intervention which will diggered out the disease!

In my hospital bed, when I was desperately trying to make sense of what was going on. I vividly pictured heaven's armies assembling and saying "Kanayo has previously prayed about your sicknesses but this time she said, 'all unknown ailments must bow to the Name of Jesus'. Let's go. This part of my testimony is what I implore you to utilise in your prayer. Pray at all times, in every circumstance. Pray for the things that you can see, pray for the things that you cannot see. Bring the known and the unknown before the God who is all-knowing.

Pray: Lord, I bring before you the things I know, everything I think I know and the things I do not know. I may ever bring in my life surrender to your will and your authority.

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DAY 4

"ALL AILMENTS, KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, MUST BOW TO THE NAME OF JESUS"

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Scriptures to read: Psalm 140:7, Psalm 5:11-12, Lamentations 3:42

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As I reflected on this prayer point that I lifted up to the Lord in prayer on my birthday, I am reminded that our prayers are not just for today, they are for tomorrow.

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Little did I know that this simple 'unimpaired' prayer point would dismantle what the enemy meant for harm!

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The enemy wanted to limit the way to clear the face of the earth. No full recovery, no accident, no physical vindication. Just a case of going to bed and dialling a doctor at age 40.

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Little did I know that this prayer was charging the heavens and assembling His angels to protect me from what was left of the illness.

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Since I stopped taking the medication for facial neuralgia, I have not experienced the facial nerve pain that drove my GP (General Practitioner - doctor) to prescribe the drug without stressing on the possible complications, even telling me to see the nerve which a powerful drug was to take for me.

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One would say that the nerve pain was an agent of Satan. The nerve pain drove me to my GP to prescribe a drug (which I paid £70 for) that the enemy wanted to use to silently kill me off. So much so that at one stage, my GP advised that I double the dose when I took my medication, I was still feeling the nerve pain.

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Little did I know that every day I swallowed that tablet, my life was slipping away, but God in His mercy was protecting me. I didn't know it, but HE did it!

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Pray for yourself and those around you:

Almighty, I lift up a jubilation in my heart for the name of Jesus!

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DAY 5 I FELT...

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Scriptures to read: Job 23:13-17, Job 23: 16-17, Job 42:1-6, Job 42:10-21, Jeremiah 23:17

Going through the illness, I had never felt hopeless, that I never felt useless and for the sake of being grateful and
I remember being my doctor, those words that came were, 'you're through' like a war zone

I laughed, joyfully and after crying, lamenting and feeling hopeless, I knew that this was a word for me. My throat, my
mouth piece, the very breath that God gave me to exalt Him and make Him known is at war.

My life is a threat to the enemy. I did not know that the enemy had a reason in terms of my doctorate, the
enemy wanted to silence this mouth that speaks hope, this mouth that encourages, this mouth that teaches, this mouth that
prays, this mouth that worships and this mouth that speaks God's word.

"But I am not silenced by the darkness...which covers my face" - Job 23:16-17

During this season my daily meditation was reading the book of Job. I had never connected with the story of Job (undergoing
his physical illness and emotional despair) like I do now.

I had many periods where I felt abandoned. I was left to rot. I felt like my pain was the enemy's... "It

"But if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find him. When he is at work in the north

I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him." Job 23:8

"...But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, it will come forth as gold. My feet have closely
followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside. I have not departed from the commands

His lips have not been true; the words of his mouth more than in a daily bread" Job 23:18-22

In Job, I felt lessness. I was wrong, deeply hurt. In my weakness, I was surrounded by strength. In my confusion, I made
myself in the clarity that He would bring. In my pain and loneliness, I was surrounded by a loving and supportive community. In

my perceived ugliness, I was surrounded by the beauty of The One who calls me His beloved, His masterpiece, fearfully
and wonderfully made.

"Job answered the Lord: 'You only know what I do not know, and you have no one to upbraid me. Who can
plans. You asked, 'Who is this multiplying the words ignorantly, confusing the issue, second-guessing my purposes?' admit

it. You were the one. I babbled on about things far beyond me, made small talk, got nowhere, way over my head. You told
me, 'Listen, and let me do the talking. Let me ask the questions. You give the answers.' I admit, I only lived by rumors of
you. How do you have it? First-hand-from my own eyes and ears! I'm sorry - forgive me. I'll never go and gossiped. I promise!

I never again give on critics, tearaway, or jobs or rumours." Job 42:16 (7th verse)

I have experienced God's healing first hand. I don't need someone to tell me that God heals. I don't need to hear rumours
of healing. I have seen it with the eyes that He saved from blindness. I am FULLY PERSUADED that He not only heals, He

"Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to
God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised." - Romans 4:20-21

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DAY 6

WORSHIP THROUGH HEALING.
HEALING THROUGH WORSHIP.

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Scriptures to read: Jeremiah 17:14, Hebrews 13:15, Psalm 51:16-17, Romans 8:1-5

One of the days during my time in the hospital, You Version Bible App's verse of the day was Jeremiah 17:14 - "Heal me, Lord, for I will be healed, and my soul will praise you, Lord. You are the one I praise."

While my face transformed before my eyes due to this rare syndrome, one thing remained...my voice. As my physical body healed, my voice returned. In those final days in hospital, hospitals and sickness were foreign to me. I had to find familiar ground in this strange situation.

That ground was worship. I knew my worship would focus on the eternal. For what He intended to do for my physical being, God had turned around to strengthen my faith.

I knew my worship would magnify God far above my present situation and so I chose to worship despite feeling hopeless. I chose to see God as bigger than this rare syndrome. I chose to worship the God of miracles, signs and wonders. I chose to glory in my suffering.

My response to this sudden illness was to offer a sacrifice of praise. Yes, praise, because I was not in the usual place of worship. I didn't have a band, harp, or the comforting atmosphere for worship. I didn't necessarily feel like worshipping. This worship cost me something. This worship

caused me to surrender my hope of what healing should look like. This worship was the start of my healing.

I called God, calling on His name in the wilderness and I chose to praise through my worship.

Call to action: Watch the video and worship God with me. Come to worship God in your

wilderness season. Worship is the start of your healing.

Join the worship in *Beauty In The Beast*

Watch the video for day 6 on doctorkanayo.com

DAY 7

PRAY FERVENTLY AND ACCURATELY.
YOU ARE A SIGN AND A WONDER.

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Scriptures to read: Acts 2:19, Psalm 41:1-3, Romans 4:20-21, Job 33:25, Job 42:12, Psalm 139:14, Ephesians 2:10

When I was diagnosed with this rare serious syndrome called Stevens-Johnson, I searched for my research. I read on how it affects the body and its related diseases and decided that simply praying 'Lord heal me' was not going to cut it this time. I knew that I needed to do more. I needed to pray more. I needed to pray with more fervor. I needed to pray with more intention.

I listed out 16 prayer points and asked my community to pray for me. I received the prayer points every day and I shared them with my consultants. The doctors got used to my journal being out with all my questions and I always asked them 'do you have any concerns, so I know how to pray?'. After each meeting, I would take my journal and lift up their concerns to the Lord, knowing that the God who designed this beautiful body, is able to heal and restore. I shared my prayer points with my community, who loved to pray for me.

Call to action: Watch the video to see me play through these 16 prayer points which ensured that my healing and recovery was in God's miraculous time and not man's predicted recovery time. **Create your own list of prayer points** to be accurate

As possible, do remember to lift the 'unknown' to God. I was able to do that. I was able to spend at least 5 weeks in hospital allowed by the doctors. Miraculously, I was discharged from hospital on the 8th day. The consultant dermatologist, nurse, and healthcare staff all testified to my transformation in such a short period of time and said I was the fastest recovery they had witnessed in their rare syndrome. On the day of my discharge, I held my consultant dermatologist's hands and said: "God bless you, thank you and your entire team for saving me. Do your purpose, thank you for being an agent of healing."

The sentence I kept on saying to people when they visited me or asked how I was doing was "God is faithful to his promise". I trusted God, no matter what the healing process looked like. I was fully persuaded that my God is faithful to his promise. I thank God that this sickness happened to me. I thank God for making me a testimony that the enemy cannot win. I thank God for those who stood by me and for those who prayed for me. I thank God for the testimonial work that I did without any training or experience. I would not be able to point or point to an eternal life level for those going through sickness, if not for these testimonies. So I say, thank God that this happened to me.

I am a **sign** and a **wonder**. Heaven's army battle on earth was witnessed in the nation of glory which was secured through the blood of Jesus. My faith is already greater. Thank you for journeying with me on this testimony devotional and seeing the beauty in the beast. Lord, teach us to suffer 'well'. Maybe we lose honor in our suffering, but may we cling onto You even tighter. May we encounter you like never before and know that nothing can stop You by surprise. I pray that God's merciful comfort and love will meet us and surround us in every circumstance. I pray that this testimony will give you faith like never before, transform your past life and minds, and that **YOU ARE A SIGN AND A WONDER. YOUR FATHER IS ALREADY GREATER.**

Shout out to my sister-queen Philipa B, who midway through conversation during her visit at the hospital came up with the name for this devotional 'Beauty In The Beast'!

Watch the video for day 7 on doctorkanayo.com

Watch me video for day 7 on doctorkanayo.com

BONUS DAY THANK YOU! (1)

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Scriptures to read: Psalm 41:1-3, Psalm 133, Proverbs 17:17

I can't begin to thank those who stood with me in prayer, visited me and ended up with quite literally was a sign for sore eyes. I had 5 visitors during the day of my stay. I inspired a countless number of visitors as they would come, they stood so that I was in the majority of the hospital ward.

I want to especially praise God for my **family** and **all** those who supported me.

Mum: This queen's calm stance, strength and fortitude kept me grounded in faith; she bathed me, creamed me and was with me every day. It was particularly poignant when she looked at me in the bath for the first time since I was admitted. As she removed the resuscitation tabs from my torso, I could only imagine what was going through her mind! She admitted me into her hospital (her house) and looked after me with the best food, care and company in the world.

Dad: Who was ready to fly from Nigeria on seeing my name through pictures of the end of me every day and embraced me with a warm and caring hug. Your intentional care and prayers gave me strength.

Nneka: My little big **sister**, who God used to save my life. Her tears and joyful actions revealed her genuine heart for me.

Obi: My brother who kept me joyful with threats to get me back when I get better! Cheeky fool.

My **chairman**, whose love for me has never wavered since I arrived in this hospital. When your eyes look like someone used her face for special effects for a horror film and you still remind her of her beauty within. He told me countless times that he was proud of me which gave me such strength to go on. He prayed for me, honoured me and protected me. This is a man who directly called the hospital on multiple occasions to speak to the nurse and doctor to chase on tests and my medical care. A man who found ways to make me smile in my darkest days and carried my side through it all. A man who is a professional and a doctor.

My **aunty A** who stopped at nothing to quickly pick me up from my mum's house and looked after me. During this time of money were secondary to my health. She took me to my specialist appointments when mum couldn't be there. She brought me food, brought me fresh fruit and vegetables, she did a good job in a difficult situation!

My **grandma** who at one point rubbed palm oil on my face and scalp. She was more distressed than me. Your love is unforgettable.

My **entire family**, aunts, uncles, my chairman's family, my **goddaughter A**, my **friends**, my **Pastor**, my **chairman**, work colleagues and my **students** they looked after me with love and stirred up friends in me to pray for me and not give up.

Thank God for the **staff** (consultants, expert cardiologists, expert optometrists, doctors, pharmacists, nurses, HCAs, Porters) everyone read at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Green Mary Hospital. One of my Instagram followers who is a pharmacist who was the first pharmacist to see me.

Thank you all for saying yes to your **purposes**, thank you for being agents of healing, your expertise and reassurance instilled a calmness in me.

Thank you, Lord, for making me a sign and a wonder!

BONUS DAY

THANK YOU! (2)

YOU ARE ALL INVITED TO MY THANKSGIVING AND EP LAUNCH

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My **thanksgiving service** will be synonymous with my

EP launch worship night!

Look out for it because it is going to be big and everyone
is invited!

Watch the video for the 'bonus day' on doctorkanayo.com

In the video you'll hear the raw un-mixed version of two
songs which I wrote and recorded for my EP.

One is titled: '**Like a flood**'. "When the enemy comes
in like a flood, YET You surround me"

The other is '**Hymn of assurance: Keep me**' "And I
know that You are with me through it all. When I rise and
even when I fall. Jesus, You have been there every step
of the way. I know, You will keep me going on.

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PRAYER

GIVE YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST -
REAFFIRM YOUR FAITH.

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Scriptures to read: Romans 10:9-10, Luke 9:23, 1 John 1:9

Let us pray:

Jesus, this testimony points to you. Your **finished** work on the **cross** made this testimony possible.

I **believe** that you are the Son of God, that you died on the cross to rescue me from sin and death and to restore me to **Our Father**.

I **believe** that you died and rose for me to have an abundant life. A life that is not necessarily free from challenges, but a life that delights in your wise plan and perfect will for me.

Thank you that you make **all things** work out for my good.

I **choose** now to turn from my sins, my self-centeredness, and every part of my life that does not please you.

I **choose** you. I give myself to you. I **receive** your **forgiveness** and ask you to take your rightful place in my life as my **Saviour** and **Lord**.

Come reign in my heart, fill me with your love and your life. May my most passionate desire be, to become a **grand display** of the fruit of the Spirit, your personality and your character Lord.

May my life always point to you in every circumstance.

Break me and make me like you. Restore me, Jesus. Live in me. Love through me.

In Jesus' name I pray,

Amen.

If you prayed this prayer for the first time please ensure that you take practical steps to affirm your faith. Join a church, share the start of your journey with a Christian leader or friend and root yourself in God's word.

Check out doctorkanayo.com for resources.

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