Event: Titus 2

Topic: Fighting Temptations While Married & Proving

Hostess: Sisters Yana, Azaliyah & Kayla

Date: August 17, 2022



**Sister Azaliyah**

Dealing with the temptations of married life and proving.

* Facts about single black women from the year 1990 to 2020: 4.25 million black families in the United States were raised by single mothers.
* I was brought up in a house with a single mom, and a lot of us can relate to that.
* We have a choice; we can be better than our surroundings or we can become our surroundings.
  + I was raised in the projects, and my older brother let the lifestyle dictate his life until he was in his thirties. He was overtaken by the life of drugs, girls, and fast money. He went to prison for shooting someone. My sister fell into temptations of whoredom; she has five babies by five different fathers one of whom is an Edomite. Not saying I am better than them, I just knew that I wanted to get away from the temptations that were around me.
  + My dad was present, but he wasn't constant. He didn't teach me what kind of man I should marry. My mom was like the mother and the father. She did her best being a working mom.
  + I could have fallen into those temptations and lifestyles, but I chose better for myself. All praises the Most High led me to the path where I am now married to a righteous man with beautiful children and grandchildren; we have been together for almost 30 years.
  + Now, there are different types of temptations, not just sex but most often it is. We want to make sure when we walk in this truth, we walk righteously.

We all have struggles in our marriage.

* We don’t like to talk about it as if the struggles are not happening to us.
* If we have a story that can help someone else, we should be willing to share it with sisters who need help. You never know who is going through something unless we open our mouths.

The struggles can be…

* watching too much tv, not fasting enough, not tending to your husband or his house like you need to.
* Another temptation may be that you think the grass is greener on the other side - you may end up lusting after someone else who isn't your husband.
* Many lusts can come through television.
  + For example in the Tyler Perry movie, his wife was getting dressed up for work and for her husband, it was a whole different look. She had a temptation at work; some women call it having a work husband.

**1 Corinthians 7:28 (KJV) But** and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

* **S**isters prove without getting the proper counsel. They slip up and sleep with the person and decide to make it right by getting wedding papers. We did not seek counsel first.
* We had opportunities to get it right before sleeping with that person.
  + What did we know about the person we are proving?
    - How he lives.
    - If he brushes his teeth consistently.
    - If he is clean.
* We always meet the representative first of the person we are proving.

Leadership has told us to prove for at least a year. Many Sisters don’t hear the “at least a year” part.

Three-plus years is necessary before you really get to know someone, before committing yourself.

What lies ahead for this brother? What does his bank account look like? What is his house situation, etc., before making a commitment?

* We hold the power with the type of headaches we will have.
* The Bible says he that findeth a wife findeth a good thing. Stop looking for him and let him find you.
* While you prepare yourself, the Most High will send you what you are supposed to have.
* Don't be looking at vain things like clothes, cars, or shoe size to determine a good husband.
* You don't know what you're getting yourself into if you don't know how to properly prove a person.
* Make sure you're not falling into those diverse temptations.

Types of Sisters:

* Busybody Sister – the sister who is looking for a lord that’s a busybody as well.
* Lonely Sister - the sister who just sits there looking like her head hurts all the time and she really doesn't want to be here. She is waiting for someone to ask what's wrong.
* I Don't Need Anybody Sister – that’s the sister who is married to Jesus. This sister is more manly than a man.
* I Need Somebody Sister - She will prove ten people before she realizes that it’s her that needs work.

In the beginning, when God created Adam, he was not to be alone. All of us come from a rib. Some of us find a man and that's not the rib that we came from.

You become somebody’s rib, and that's not whom you came from, and then you have trouble in the flesh. He's not doing what you expected:

* He’s not paying the bills.
* He is looking like Al Bundy with his hand down his pants.
* He’s expected you to pay the bills while he keeps pumping you with babies.
* You made a mistake by not properly proving him.

Definition of Temptation: the desire to do something, especially something wrong or unwise. Meaning you had no counsel at all.

The second definition is the act of tempting or the state of being tempted by evil or enticement.

What are your enticements? Television? Looking at that brother across the way during Sabbath class?

I've heard a sister say I need to get married because I need somebody to help pay my bills.

* She should have stayed home with her daddy because he was paying the bills.
* That is not all that the man is for.
* That man is to go to war. From the movie 300, come back on your shield, or on it.
* He is fighting this war so we can get the kingdom.

Do you appreciate your husband?

When proving, he is the type of man you want. Someone that will put you last because you will be first when you make it to the kingdom.

We want the title of being a wife, but we don’t want the job of being a wife.

Where are your works, Sis? We want the Lord to say, ‘good job’ not spew us out of his mouth ‘I never knew you’.

Definition of Enticement:something used to attract or to tempt someone; a lure.

But we have to learn to do better and in order to do better we have to learn to kill the things luring us in.

There are many enticements surrounding us. We have to seek counsel in order to make wise decisions.

**Philippians 4:8 (KJV) Finally**, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

* Think on these things. If we are tempted to do something, our fringes first are a sign of repentance.
  + Our fringes should be a reminder for us before we do something unwise; toss that skirt up.
* Knowing how to hold on and hold out will gain you way more respect.
* We have to pay for our sins.
  + Even after marriage, if we first slept with the brother, judgment is going to come.
  + Wonder why the marriage is going through it because we didn't get counsel first.
* Scripture says to find a counselor of a thousand.
* If you want anything from the Most High think about these things. When you do things against the will of God, you will have issues, and it's a domino effect.
* Fix that person that you are; study, pray, and apply.

**James 1:13 (KJV)** Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

* He has in the law don't commit adultery, don't commit fornication. God is not going to tempt a wife with another husband or a husband with another wife because he’s righteous, and that is against his will.
* He is a righteous God and has never tempted his children to break his laws

How do you not make provisions for the flesh?

There must be a transformation of the mind; study, pray, apply, and fast.

**Romans 12:2 (KJV)** And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Renew your mind to do everything God has called you to do according to his will.

He will never give you more than you can handle.

Whatever the burden, you can handle it. He gave it to us; we can handle it.

**Sirach 2:1-2 (Apocrypha)** My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation. [2] Set thy heart aright, and constantly endure, and make not haste in time of trouble.

Prepare for temptation by putting on the whole armor of God.

* You can't go to battle without your helmet, sword, or breastplate. You can't go out into the sun without a hat, you have to stay protected. Put on the helmet of salvation to protect you from temptation.

The scripture says constantly endure; if you are ready for war, you will constantly endure.

When proving and in marriage you want to make sure you are constantly enduring the temptations that will come.

If you're married, you have temptations from the opposite sex. Some of these demons are bold, wow, the disrespect.

We had to check ourselves to see what we are not doing physically and spiritually.

* If being in each other’s faces is what your husband wants or if you're proving that's what he wants when you get married, then so be it.

**Proverbs 24:10 (KJV):** If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

* In order to build our strength, our fasting needs to be improving.
* Our studying, praying, and applying need to improve so we don't faint in times of trouble.

One of my favorite men in the Bible is Job. He never fainted when Satan tempted him.

* I don’t want to be Job’s wife who said, curse God and die.
* I don’t want to be Lot’s wife who disobeyed by turning to look back.

I know if I am tempted to do different things, I stay prayerful, so I don’t fall into these diverse temptations.

* Make sure you are studying, praying, and applying.

Galatians is talking about walking in the spirit. How do we walk in the spirit? By putting on the whole armor of God.

* With the temptations that come at you, you want to make sure that you are always in these scriptures and reading your four chapters a day.

Someone said that she didn’t have time to read her four chapters a day. What if God didn’t have time for you? Even if you don’t have time to read, listen to the audio while you're driving or doing whatever.

* That will keep your mouth closed too, as women we talk a lot. We need to shut up sometime.
* Read your four chapters a day, and that's how you walk with the spirit; the Most High will guide you. Your steps are ordered by him in the first place.
* In order for us to walk in the steps of righteousness, we have to first present ourselves as righteous.

**Galatians 5:16 (KJV):** This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Everything that you think about and everything that you want to do according to the Most High., you will get your answer one way or the other.

**Proverbs 31:11 (KJV):** The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

We are slick with it. Our husband presents himself like he's the head of the house, but I see the pants on up under your skirt. You are tempted to be the head of the house but in front of everybody while you look like to be righteous. That's evil. The Most High sees all, and he knows all, so your wickedness won't go unnoticed for so long.

* Does your husband trust you?
* While he's gone to war, does he trust you?
* How many of us have a good meal cooked when he comes homes?
* How many can say we are his pillar of rest?

Shut up and just let him rest; war is everything. Let him put you last because you will be first in the kingdom.

The scripture says safely trust in her so that he shall have no need of spoil, meaning he has no need for temptations.

I hope you got something out of what I was saying.

For sisters that are proving; prove righteously. Bibles open legs closed.

Shalom, Most High and Christ blessed.

**Sister Kayla**

I come from a single-family home, and my mom had four children from a married man. My dad was married, so I have a total of 13 siblings altogether. Everybody knows that my mom was in whoredom when she conceived me and a lot of my other siblings, but I thank the Most High that my life didn't go in that direction.

I had to learn things all over again. I was married almost two decades before I came into the truth, so I had to learn how to fight these temptations. There are different forms of temptation we have to fight every day.

I wanted to share this movie. It talks about fighting temptation.

1st Video: [Tyler Perry's Temptation: Confessions of a Marriage Counselor - 10 Minute Preview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0V61lrjFqg)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0V61lrjFqg>

They were really in love, and everything was good. They didn't have much, but they had each other.

If you're proving, you want to make sure you really get to know the person.

**Sirach 6:7 (Apocrypha):** If thou wouldest get a friend, prove him first and be not hasty to credit him.

For the proving sister, it is going to take more than a year or longer to get to know the brother. Leadership tells us at least a year, but for some, you're going to need longer than a year.

The sister in the movie ended up in a situation because she yielded to sin. So you want to get to know the person that you're proving.

**1 John 2:16 (KJV):** For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

* When they fell in love and got married, they didn't look at what each other had then. He loved her unconditionally.
* Initially, the temptation hadn’t overtaken her because she was content with having little but each other.

2nd Video: [Tyler Perry's Temptation (2013) - 'Attracted'](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CW3bs8FFqTY)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CW3bs8FFqTY>

**1 Timothy 2:9 (KJV):** In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array

* We want to make sure we dress modestly because we don't want to cause brothers or sisters, for that matter to lust after us.
* Don't let anyone make you feel bad about your modest dress.

I was having a hard time with the attire because I was so used to how I dressed before the truth.

I would say to the sisters when you come around a brother, make sure your cleavage and body are fully covered; that everything is on point.

I thank the Highest because we don't always have on the Sabbath garment.

We can tell sisters what they have to wear, but some don't want to do it. So, the Sabbath garment was enforced. As far as the head covering, we have a policy regarding uniformity.

We are teaching sisters how to dress and how to be shamefaced.

* As you saw in the clip, she was not shamefaced, and she began to lose respect for her husband.

**1 Corinthians 15:33 (KJV):** Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

* She was on the plane with him, she began talking to the brother about things other than her job.
* She started losing respect for herself and her husband.
* If you're proving a brother, you don't want to be on the phone talking about things that don’t edify your spirit.
  + Things that are going to cause you to have to fight the temptations.
  + Things that may bring on that sexual desire.
  + You want to make sure that all your conversations are righteous conversations.
* You could talk about other things other than the scriptures, but you don't want to find yourself wavering into those conversations that are going to be bringing out lust and temptation.

We all fight temptation every day. We all have our own struggles.

* Sexual desires don't bother me because I have a lord.
* For some of you that don't have a lord, you don't want to find yourself watching movies that have sex scenes in them.
* This video has sex scenes in it, so if it's going to cause you to have a lustful spirit, then you shouldn't watch it.

We all have our own different temptations.

That's what we don't want to do stop fighting the temptations because once you give into it them, they will persist even more.

**Sister Azaliyah**

Sometimes they will put you with someone because that person desires to be with you because they want to try you.

You have to stick to your guns, knowing that the person knows that you're married.

They want to get you away from talking about your husband.

That's when you're fasting and praying needs to come in much stronger because that demon is trying to get you to a level where he can make you feel comfortable.

If that demon knows that he can tempt you to the point of letting your guard down and next your panties off. Like the scripture says in Proverbs 31, could he trust her?

**Sister Kayla**

**Hebrews 13:5 (KJV):** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

* Never let anyone come in between the relationship we have with our lords.
* In the video, he knew she was naïve.
* We have to be mindful of the people out there and have our spiritual eyes open.
* We will be around men daily. A woman knows when a man is hitting on her, and we shouldn't be naive to that.

Respect for your lord and your marriage comes first, and, as a proving sister, develop respect.

Whenever you do get into those situations, you want to seek counsel.

**Titus 2:3 (KJV):** The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

* Being teachers of good things isn't just sharing the scriptures; we have to actually live the life we teach and be that example.
* I shouldn't be trying to help you, and I'm not doing what I'm supposed to at home.

As leadership wives, we have to be careful we are not a bad example by fighting harder to make sure we are doing what we are supposed to.

**1 Corinthians 10:13 (KJV):** There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

* Having leadership sisters to counsel with.
* If you get into a situation where temptation is hard to fight you have to use your resources and reach out to get counsel.

3rd Video: [Temptation Movie Clip](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GK60JDuxTaw)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GK60JDuxTaw>

* If you feel like you're going to fall into that temptation you need to use your resources.
* Call your counselor of a thousand, someone that can help you through that.
* Use your resources and pick up the phone so you can avoid falling into sin or temptation.

**James 1:14-15 (KJV):** But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. [15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

The scripture actually explains itself.

* Be mindful before you actually commit the sin like she did in the movie clip, by the end of the movie she had contracted HIV.
* Being single and proving, sexual sin is the probably the biggest thing that we battle with.
* Pick up the phone, call somebody, be honest and truthful, and get the help that you need.

We all are in this together, and we're going to continue to fight temptations until Christ comes back. Together, we can get the kingdom. Thank you all for listening.

**Sister Yana**

That was perfect. Be not ashamed when it concerns your soul. We need to call somebody, pick up our phone.

We read 1 Corinthians 10:13, there are no temptations taken you but such as is common to man. I want to go over some common temptations.

**Mark 7:21-23 (KJV):** For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, [22]Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: [23]All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

These are some common temptations, adultery, fornication.

This scripture also tells us that out of the heart proceeds evil thought.

* This is where your temptations begin, in the mind.
* I want to discuss some common temptations and what contributes to the temptation.
* I am going to talk about the catalyst that drives the temptation.

Definition of Contribute: to help to cause or bring about.

* Instrumental in
* Be a factor in
* Be partly responsible for

These things are what help to bring about the temptation that is starting in your mind.

Definition of Catalyst: Someone or something that speeds up or brings about an event.

* That's like all of your armor is off and you're about to fall into the temptation.

Types of Temptations:

Fornication in relation to proving.

* Many single sisters are battling sexual lust, and when they start proving, the sexual desires tend to get stronger.
* Sisters are not making it to the actual wedding and they end up committing fornication.

**1 Corinthians 7:2 (KJV):** Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

* Sex before marriage, it is fornication.
* If you're betrothed, and you have not gotten those marriage papers, and you lay down and have sex, you have committed fornication.
* Some sisters are making provisions for the flesh in their mind.
  + Because they are planning to get married anyway it is okay to do it.
  + But when you have those fringes and borders of blue, it is a reminder to keep God’s laws.
  + That should stop you right then and there.
  + That is disrespectful towards your spiritual fathers.

Contributors of Fornication:

Evil communication is in music and movies.

Corruption of good manners examples:

* Not having a cut off time when having conversation with the brother she is proving.
* Being alone or unsupervised dates only. She has the good sense to have chaperones with her.
* Sexual flirtation: bumping into him, rubbing him, or sitting on his lap.
* Having friends in the world. How do we still have friends in the world and we are in this truth?

**Amos 3:3 (KJV):** Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Are you really trying to come out of this world while still having worldly friends? Something to think about.

**Sirach 13:17 (Apocrypha):** What fellowship hath the wolf with the lamb? so the sinner with the godly.

* You're trying to be godly, no longer a sinner or coming out of your sin, but you're still having communications with a sinner and that's your friend, it doesn't make sense.

Catalyst of fornication:

**Ephesians 6:11 (KJV):** Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

With that evil communication you've been corrupted.

* a breastplate has come off.
* a helmet has come off.
* A lot of your armor has already come off and that is why when he's knocking at your door, you're probably going to let him in because your defenses are low, you've let all that go.

We still have low self-esteem and it shows itself when you close your Bible, open up your legs before marriage.

* We have devalued ourselves.
* We have forgotten our value, our worth.

Many of us were not able to have a wedding feast or a marriage chamber.

* That's a treasure right there to have.
* There is no greater way to have sex for the first time than with your husband in your marriage chamber after your wedding.

**Sis Azaliyah:** The reason why you let him in is because you have become familiar with him.

You've allowed yourself to become familiar. You've been talking until 2 and 3 o'clock in the morning. You have allowed the brother that you are proving to know that this is what you were like in the world. This is now a booty call instead of a conversation of righteousness.

**Sis Yana:** It starts the marriage off wrong.

Though you're proving and getting to know each other, he is going to lose a level of respect.

He would respect you and cherish you a little bit more, knowing that you had the strength to say no, we're almost there, we can do it.

**Sis Azaliyah:** You're not a whore.

So when a man comes knocking at your door at 2 o'clock in the morning, you are nothing but a booty call. You are nothing to him but whoredom.

**Sis Yana:** My older brother, he calls me every now and then. You know what he always says when he calls me who's working at the salon? I'm like no, whoredom.

**Sis Kayla:**When you allow the sin to actually take place, you're not thinking at that time because you have to realize that there are consequences to your actions. You reap what you sow.

* Be not hasty to credit, prove that person first.
* At the end of the day the reality sets in, and you realize oh, it wasn't what I thought, and now you have to live with whatever comes along behind that.

**Sister Yana**

Types of Temptations:

Power in Marriage - It's a power struggle in the house.

* The first thing I want you to think of is when we're texting each other we say M.H.N.C.B.Y.L.H. It means Most High in Christ bless your lord's house
* I want to talk about power. This is the temptation, power in marriage.

**Genesis 18:19 (KJV)** For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

* He will command his children and his household, not she will command her children and her household.
* We are part of his household command, which means to give an authoritative order to dominate from a superior height.
* It is his house, that's the first thing to remember when we are having a power struggle; you are a part of his household.

Contributors of Temptation of Power:

Bringing the boss home - meaning maybe you're a manager, or maybe you have your own business.

* You are the head and you get to boss people around and then you come home and you still have that boss energy, and you're bringing it into your lord's house.

**Rest of Esther 14:16 (Apocrypha)** Thou knowest my necessity: for I abhor the sign of my high estate, which is upon mine head in the days wherein I shew myself, and that I abhor it as a menstruous rag, and that I wear it not when I am private by myself.

* As queen, Esther hated upholding the heathen’s kingdom.
* We have to have that same mindset when we're out there in the world, working and upholding Esau's kingdom.
  + We can't bring that energy back to our lord's house and tear down what we're trying to build over here for the nation.
* If you bring the boss home, you're still upholding Esau’s kingdom just like when you're out there at work.

Evil communication is a contributor and often, it is your family.

* When you're saying I have to check with my lord first.
* The evil communication is when they say,
  + Aren't you an adult, why do you have to check with him?
  + Why do you call him lord?
* You listen to evil communication and it will have you questioning your role.
* Observe the time, so that you won’t be corrupted.

Another contributor is withholding of sex.

* That is a control mechanism.
* You think not having sex is power, that's destroying the marriage.

Catalyst of Temptation of Power:

The catalyst in this would be Satan.

* Because back in Genesis 3 he tempted Eve first, he is going to tempt us first.

**1 Corinthians 7:5 (KJV):** Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

You open up the door for Satan. It says that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency, that's lack of self-restraint.

* You will be upset if he goes to mess with somebody else and you're making it worse for yourself.
* You think you don't need sex until you are tempted.

The temptation to leave your marriage.

Sisters, there is no divorce.

**1 Corinthians 7:10 (KJV)** And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

Sisters, a woman cannot depart from her husband.

Contributors for Tempted to Leave Marriage:

* Counsel with the wrong people, or no council at all or not listening to counsel.

**Proverbs 24:6 (KJV):** For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.

Video: [Black Love Live | Love is Not A Perfect Story](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RT0ET26JcEw&list=RDLVRT0ET26JcEw&start_radio=1&rv=RT0ET26JcEw&t=134)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RT0ET26JcEw&list=RDLVRT0ET26JcEw&start_radio=1&rv=RT0ET26JcEw&t=134>

* You need a counselor and you need to be choosy about your counselors.
* There's some that counsel for themselves.
* You need somebody that's going to really help, and that's why leadership sets up someone up good report to help you.
* We have to get council. You have to be honest.
* You have to follow counsel.

Contributors for Leaving the Marriage:

* Envy: the grass looks green on the other side.
* Holding on to anger and hurt.
* Feeling abandoned and lonely when your Lord travels; maybe you're idle, you don't have a lot to do, and so this really affects you when he leaves you.
* Not communicating feelings.

Catalyst for Leaving the Marriage:

* Heaviness: depression has gotten on you because you're not getting or following counsel.
* Always looking at the grass on the other side.
* Social media has caused you to be envious.

**Sis Kayla:** If you're thinking about leaving your lord, you're thinking that the grass is green on the other side.

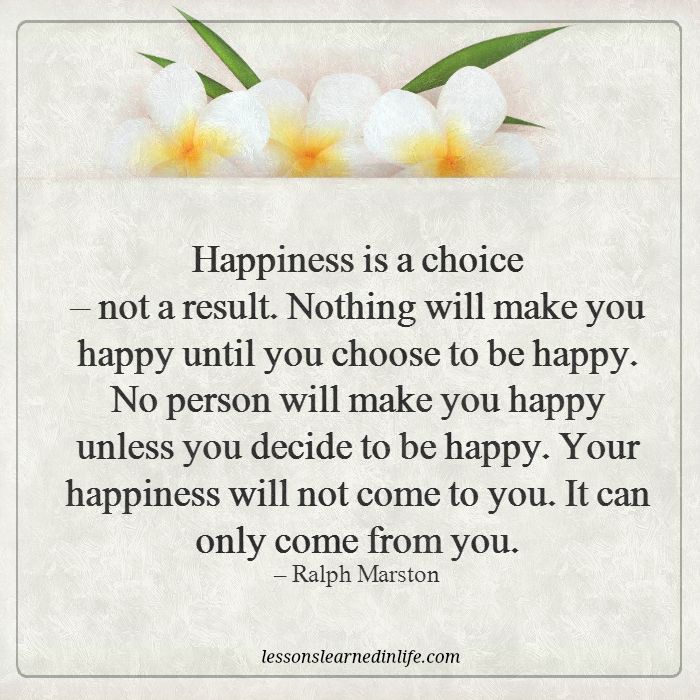
**Proverbs 14:12 (KJV):** There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

You may think it's okay to leave your lord. The grass is not greener on the other side.

We are going to persevere.

**Sister Yana**

Many of us are looking for happiness. We are looking for our Lords to make us happy when we have to find happiness within ourselves.



You have to really examine yourself and figure out what you deal with, what you struggle with, and what you like.

You have to find happiness within yourself. It's a constant effort and it is a choice.

As is marriage a choice.

You will be disappointed every single time if you're looking for other people from the outside to make you happy, you have to learn to be happy with yourself.

I hope this was edifying, and it helps somebody.

Thank you for joining us today. Let's not be a dragon.

Shalom Most High and Christ blessed