

The Sacred Vow: Choosing the Life God Placed in Me

It was the season right after I graduated from college, when I moved back home with a biology degree in hand. I thought coming home would feel like relief. I applied for jobs and kept hearing no. On top of that, I had to face something I didn't want to admit out loud: I needed to take two classes to bring up my grades from undergrad.

In my mind, that was responsible. In my father's mind, coming from a traditional Ghanaian culture, it was embarrassing. To him, my choices weren't about my growth; they were about how it would look.

I needed money for classes, so I took a job at a thrift store. It wasn't glamorous. But I was determined. My mother and my aunt helped where they could, and I will never forget that support— But inside the house, I was dealing with constant verbal abuse from my father. It was criticism, disrespect, and the feeling that I wasn't good enough.

Around that same time, I was dating the man who is now my husband. He lived out of town, but he showed up for me, helping with lunch and driving in on weekends. He was gentle, consistent, and kind. And because of that, my father tried to stop the relationship, as if it were another thing he could control.

Then everything escalated. My family decided to move from Peoria back to Chicago, and I was expected to join them. But I was in the middle of my own plans, and I couldn't just leave.

When I told my father I wasn't moving, the house turned into a storm. He berated my choices, as if I were being rebellious rather than responsible. He talked to me like I was a child, like I didn't have the right to make decisions for my own life. I moved in with my best friend and her family, and he called me foolish.

But the defining moment—the moment I realized I was no longer a Black girl—came when I made another decision that he didn't approve of: I told him I didn't want to go to medical school.

That conversation could have broken me. In many ways, it felt like it might. He blew up. Not because he had been supporting me financially or guiding my career in a real way—he hadn't. It was about appearances. About being

able to say his daughter was a doctor. And in that moment, I saw it clearly: I needed to live the life God wanted me to live.

So I stayed calm. I stayed levelheaded. And I stayed firm. I stood on business, and I stood in the direction God was leading me. I chose myself completely. I chose my future over fear. I chose purpose over performance.

That was me womaning up. That was the shift. The transition into a Black Woman is the moment you realize that boundaries aren't an act of disrespect—they are an act of holy protection.

My transformation didn't happen on a graduation stage; it happened in the quiet, fierce resistance of my own soul. I had to learn to stand tall, even when the wind blowing against me came from my own home. I had to look into the eyes of those I loved and refuse to let their fear or negativity talk me out of the divine plan God had whispered to my spirit.

I chose to stand on business. I finished what I started. I kept going when the path was steep. I married the sweetheart who saw my strength and stood by me through every season of trial. Today, as we prepare to welcome our second child into this world, I look back at that young woman with nothing but gratitude.

I am immensely proud of my titles: a Master's in Public Health, a servant to my community, and a leader for the women I empower. But the real victory—the one that defined my life—happened long before the degree. The true triumph was the moment I refused to give up on the life God placed inside me.

Hear me when I say this: If God has given you a dream and a vision for your future, do not let anyone—not even family—drown out His voice. Listen to your instincts. Stand firm. If I hadn't fought for my own peace and purpose back then, I wouldn't be standing exactly where I am meant to be today.

I am here because I chose to believe God over the noise.

I am Lydia Lamissah-Harris. TS#6 of 52 of The Soutltown Magazine. I want to thank you all for having SOUL! 🙏



TS#6

<https://thesoutltownmagazine.com/ts52>