

**CONVICTED CONVICTION: WHY I QUIT THE RELATIONSHIP**

**Mtune Benson**

## **Introduction**

It is true, yes, it's true. Someone is out there typing a pretentious good night message. The text ends with a footnote labeled 'I love you', yet this affirmation does not come from their heart. It is true someone is still going out for dates but still the heart is elsewhere.

No doubt someone has already started lying about their day's schedule because they don't want to talk to the almost-to-expire darling. They know the darling they currently have cannot become their wife or husband. Sad, isn't it? But they still hold on. Hold on to the pressure of loving someone and fail to hold unto Jesus.

Sad it is, to know that someone is in a relationship and they truly know this is just for fun. Deep down in their hearts they know the current sweetheart is not a material to take home. The sad story goes on as hearts will not just disclose their wishes. (I wish I can develop an application to derive such lies lying down in the hearts of people.)

So, every time they are exchanging sweet good night words, the heart of one person cannot stop wishing for a day when the relationship will expire.

It is sad to know, someone will call it quit tonight. It can be the gent or the lady. No matter who or which method they will use, they will have communicated, 'it is over.' It can be via text message, through phone call, a friend or face to face. I don't know which one you prefer personally? As a consequence, a lady will shed tears and wet her pillow tonight and a man might drop in a club and to be drunk dumb silly all in the name of, 'why has someone left me?'

## **When did you start breaking up?**

More sadness is in this reality. Let's analyze the situation together with you. Taking the example of a sick person who goes to a health facility to be treated, the doctor will ask a number of questions. Let's say someone has a fever. The common question the doctor will ask is 'since when did you start having the fever?' The response would be something like 'two days ago or a week ago'.

Now, let's drag this example into a relationship that has just broken up. If I find a friend who has just broken up, the first question would not be 'why did you break up'. The first question should be 'since when did you start breaking up'. Why would I ask such a question? It is because no couple, in the midst of perfect situation calls off their relationship. There must be some unresolved issues which have been gnawing and eating either or both parties. When the issues remain unresolved and pile up, there and then the break up recipe has started. It only culminates with the three words "it is over".

### **The clinic**

I have seen friends who seek sweet refuge in a relationship when their previous one could not work, and perhaps I was a victim sometimes back. They jump into another relationship just to find consolation. And perhaps as my friend would tell me, to make the other person, I mean their Ex, know, they are not that 'little'. They too can get someone, they too can be loved. However, after a few months, people who looked happy and heavenly, end up reciting a piece of poetry titled 'it is over'.

When you hear such news, perhaps you are like me, you try to help them get back together. Or flex your spiritual muscle to declare and decree the heavens to intervene. But phew, no results!

What happens in such a situation? According to a research by my elders in the village, they call such a situation 'a clinic'. Reason being, when someone gets sick, they rush to the doctor and from day one they start feeling better because of the medication. The doctor books them for a clinic every week or month. A few months or weeks down the line, the clinic is over and the person is completely healed. The minute the person will get healed, he will never report to doctor again.

Let's now come back to the dating clinic. If today I get wounded in a relationship, there is a temptation to get into another relationship blindly. However, after some months of getting healed, I will take my mat, rise up and walk swinging a placard labeled, 'thanks my doctor, I am healed now, services terminated, its over!'

Have you found this to be true in your life or with a friend? Has it happened to you or are you already in a clinic as you read this book?

### **A failed business**

To understand the difference in the question ‘why did you break up and since when did you start breaking up’ even better, let’s look at a failed business. If today I find a person who has failed in business, I would not start by asking why they failed in business. I would start by asking, since when did they start failing in the business. Why would I prefer that question first?

This is because, if a person gets into business without consulting, without researching, without testing the market, they are bound to fail. So, at the point someone is not consulting, researching or testing the market, that’s when they start failing. They don’t fail 6months later when the business cannot make profit. They start failing just from the start when they skip some steps.

A friend of mine would tell me, an athlete does not win in the day he or she is crowned champion in a certain race. Rather, he or she starts winning when hitting the road every morning to train. When an athlete is running up and down the mountains and valleys, that’s when he or she starts winning.

It is the same in a relationship. It starts failing or flourishing during the early stages. If someone finds the other person is overly aggressive, uncontrollable and high tempered but still tolerates the trait, it is not a wonder when such a relationship or marriage ends up in ... (we both know how it ends, don’t we?).

Therefore, before minding why we broke up, let’s mind when we started breaking up.

### **There are no two ways about it**

Many people expect to receive mystical revelations on the person they should get married to. And please, that statement does make me an infidel. I know God and I am sure he sustains me. But I cannot tie myself in the wrong relationship and wait for the angels to come demonstrating,

raising placards written 'quit the relationship.' Or wait for a tear gas from heaven to spoil my date so that I can know I am off the track. I got to use my brains given to me by God and make the right decisions.

Let us take an example: Your best friend invites you for lunch. He makes several trips to and from the kitchen and finally sets up the dining table. He invites you over to the dining table and even recites a short prayer before you start eating.

All this time the food in the hot dish. He tells you welcome and there you jump; on your hand holding the plate and the other hand with the serving spoon. However, upon opening the first hot dish, you find properly packed saw dust and from the smell it looks like the saw dust is from a eucalyptus tree. You get embarrassed mildly and decide to move to the second hot dish. Surprisingly, you find cement fully packed in it.

In disappointment you turn to your friend and ask him what could be the problem. The friend confidently, turns to you and says, "come on, this is how we eat here, we enjoy saw dust and the cement stew". Jaw droppingly, you stand and ask, "how comes", but the friend says, "yeah, it is a delicious meal, you need to try it out".

Now, regardless of how good and trustworthy that friend is to you. There are no two ways about it. You won't take that saw dust and the cement stew. Will you? Hell No! Never!

It is the same in a relationship. There are no two ways about it. You either want it or don't want it. You are either interested in the relationship or not. You cannot see hope and desperation in the relationship at the same time. You will only see each a time.

Many people have ruined their lives because of falling for the wrong person. At the onset of the relationship, only one person seems interested, the other is just being pushed like a robot.

However, you are either in or out. No middle ground. If you decide to still go on flirting and you are not interested, time will come and the mask will be peeled back.

Have you heard stories of people who were doing so well in a relationship only for them to break up? What happens in such a situation? You thought both of them were prince charming and princess the queen, but their story ends like prison break, in tears and heart break. But let us find

out if in such a situation the two people break up or they have been breaking up only for them to make it official someday. We are talking about a file path, what is a file path?

### **The dating file path**

I am of the thought that, when you see a big tree, it means the tree has not just dropped from the blues. It has been growing slowly by slowly until now everyone can see it.

If we drag this scenario in a relationship, it is true, that break ups don't just happen. They start like a small seed, get enough moisture by being entertained and overlooked, germinate and until it becomes a huge tree. When the two or one of the parties realizes they can't live with the tree, or as they say, the elephant in the house, they call it a break up. But it is not a break up; it is a graduation ceremony for a habit which either or both parties have been entertaining.

When I hear someone broke up, I am reminded of a file path. A file path in computer defines the route which you can follow to identify the file location. In computer, for you to trace where a document has been saved, you follow a file path. It is the same in dating, when hell breaks loose, you can simply follow the file path and identify where and when the problem started.

Let's say two people today, call it quit because of religious issues. In such a situation, the two people have not just made an abrupt decision, either or both, have had the wrong expectations about religious issues. Therefore, they break up not because of religion but because of their expectations about religion. Your expectations thus set the stage for the outcome.

### **The marking scheme**

When I was growing up in the village, there is a way I was taught by my mum how people should dress. However, when I went to college, I had a problem becoming friends even with some people. The simple reason being, I had a marking scheme on how people should dress. Therefore, when I found someone dressed in a manner that my marking scheme deemed wrong, I gave that person a down vote. For those who were dressed in a manner that my marking scheme deemed right, I them an up vote and they became close friends.

However, my friends who were raised in different homes where their parents had no issues with dress codes they did not have a problem like me. I realized later, my perception about people even before I saw them, was the basis of how I would view them when I met them.

Dragging the same example in our lives, we can see how wrong we at times get because we have the wrong marking scheme. We judge people wrongly and put them off just because we have rated them according to our misjudgment.

Imagine a teacher in school has the wrong marking scheme while marking end of term exams. It means, he or she would be unable to differentiate who is right and who is wrong. It is the same in our lives, if we have the wrong marking scheme, we will not differentiate between the wrong and the right people we need to associate with.

If you have the wrong marking scheme of how to treat the next person, how to forgive or how to be patient, you will have a heap of trouble. But you can choose today, to get the right marking scheme, it's that simple.

### **The manual is Christ**

Everything is right without a marking scheme. No wonder God had to give Adam some instructions. I don't think the Garden of Eden had much of temptations we face today. There was no temptation to tithe, a neighbor to steal from and no business partner to be jealous of.

For Adam he had no other woman to tempt him sexually and Eve had no other man to flirt with. Someone might think this was a perfect condition to remain holy. However, God knew in every situation there are temptations from the accuser of brethren. Therefore, he gave them instructions which would keep them off sins.

But was God giving Adam a manual of instructions because he doubted his character? No. He gave him a manual to help him do the right things and avoid sinning.

The same matrix is copy pasted in our lives today. We buy electronics but no matter how simple they are, they come with a manual. We buy drugs and no matter how common they are, they

come with a prescription. We buy vehicles and no matter how good we may be as drivers, we are given a manual.

It does not mean the manufacturer doubts our intellectual capacity. It just means the manufacturer cares so much that he would not like to see a customer confused or disappointed by the purchased item. Or he would not like to see a customer misuse (underuse or overuse) the item. Still, the idea of manuals is used in our homes. There is a manual of doing things without which there is confusion and mistakes.

The big question, therefore, is, do we require a manual from God about relationships and dating? Someone might argue, maybe, maybe not!

Let's find out more in the *kitchen bulb* argument.

### **The kitchen bulb**

Imagine how sad it would be for someone to light the bulb in the kitchen and find out that it is not working. The person goes on to press the switch to the living room bulb and it too doesn't seem interested in lighting up the room. Without desperation, the person changes the bulbs and still finds out they are not working. A step further, upon enquiring from friends and experts, the person decides to change the switch, but still no lights. After a long struggle, the person decides to check the main switch only to find out it has been off, all along. Upon switching it on, every bulb in the room lights brightly.

So, the problem was not the switch, the problem was not the bulb, the problem was the main switch. In life, when we put off the main switch, we too are in darkness. In this case, Jesus is the main switch and we cannot do anything without him.

In fact, he says, 'I am the vine you are the branches, without me you can do nothing'. Did that word sink in? '...without me, you can do nothing.' Do you imagine of the many times you have been a mere nothing just because Jesus is out of the equation?

That tells you something. It is not a matter of trying to argue our point out, it is about implementing God's point. I call it HPOV (Heavenly Point of View). It involves asking



questions like; how does Christ want me to date plus asking what would Jesus do? When it comes to our way, I call it MPOV (My Point of View). Which way do I prefer? Do I still want to pose like a modern Pharisee who uses social media and integrates coffee dates in a relationship but my intentions are crowded with hypocrisy?

### **Why are manuals important**

Manuals are important in everyday life. You can see how we can waste time and resources, trying to change the bulb and switches when we miss to follow the manual on putting on the main switch. We are, therefore, indebted to find the manual on dating and follow it.

Love, dating and relationships are not an exception. It has a manual to guide the pilgrim who wants to attain the higher mark. Sadly, this manual called Christ has been pushed to the periphery by many who opt for backstreet guides.

In fact, people have crafted their personal manuals which they are comfortable with. Crafting personal rules resembles a student who crafts a personal marking scheme. Can you imagine how laughable it would be convincing your parent that the reason why you did not pass in that paper is because the teacher did not use the marking you personally generated?

In fact, it sounds odd to talk of love, relationships and dating and still insist about Jesus Christ. But let me give you one more example to show you how deep the rabbit hole goes.

### ***They caught nothing***

For three and a half years, Jesus prepared the disciples for the ministry work after which the disciples were not to go back to their previous career of fishing. Instead they were to start fishing men.

However, when Jesus died, the disciples decide to go fishing. It amazes me that the whole night they caught nothing. Why did they not catch any fish yet they had been in this field for long and

they had the skills and experience? For three and half years when they walked with Jesus they could not have lost the fishing skill.

In fact, even after leaving college, a person can still remember some mathematic formulas in high school. So, is it that the disciples had forgotten fishing strategies? No! In fact their idea of fishing was a strategy of running away from God. They were in the initial stages of drifting back to their past and they failed terribly.

However, when Christ came in the morning, they caught many fish in the same lake they had failed to catch fish. It is amazing to know the depth of loss we go through when Christ is out of the equation. And so, is a relationship without Christ, similar to a fishing expedition without Christ, where the disciples caught no fish.

### **Thy will be done on earth**

Let me introduce the personality of Jesus in this topic so delicious for many to hear. Allow me to quote Luke 11:2 '*... thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*'. Here Jesus was saying, everything we do should be in line with the standards of heaven. No wonder he says, *as it is in heaven* meaning, therefore, we are supposed to copy heaven.

He does not say, '*...thy will be done in heaven as it is on earth*'. He says, '*... thy will be done on earth AS it is IN heaven*'. Mark the difference. Therefore, nothing is to be done on earth if it is not a reflection of heaven. If any, it amounts to sin. The question, therefore, is not, how then should we date? The question is, how is heaven doing it, so that from that point, we can copy heaven? The idea is not crafting our ways and asking heaven to accommodate them.

Someone may be asking, is there love, dating and relationships in heaven? I doubt. In heaven, the angels, seraphim and cherubim have different bodies. So, they don't date either romantically or non-romantically.

However, we can draw lessons from the way they worship. Angels worship faithfully every day with the intention of pleasing God and not themselves. This idea should be injected into our relationships. This means loving the sweetheart or darling you have faithfully with the right

intentions. The intention is not attracting praises from friends or be crowned the couple of the year but to please God. Therefore, the question is, 'is God happy with the way I am dating my sweetheart?'

### **The way Christ loved the church**

The movie 'What Would Jesus Do' is also a great reference of how a relationship should be. Imagine if Christ was to be in a relationship, how would he do things? Some wonder who would be his girlfriend, whereas it is already indicated that the church is his bride. Therefore, the way he loved the church, he calls upon men to love their wives in a similar way. Young men should also copy this example, to love the way Christ loved the church.

Did I pose so spiritual by dragging the example of Christ and the church into the discussion? No! The point is the way Christ loved and gave up his life, similarly, that is the way to go. He did not give up his life to ascend into more hierarchical power in heaven. He gave his life for you. He did it for the next person.

Young men and women should also learn this. To love in a way that pleases the next person but not themselves alone. Yet, in many situations we get into a relationship because we want to be happy without considering if the other person is or will be happy.

### **Judging relationships**

Ecclesiastes 12 says the sole duty of man is to fear and obey God knowing we shall be judged for all that we do. Relationships will also be screened microscopically and judged. But on which basis will they be judged? This will be according to the way things are done in heaven. Therefore, Christ must be in the equation of romantic love to make it complete.

Let me introduce another concept just to make a point of how relationships can be done on earth as it is in heaven. In the beginning, God created man in his own image. This means everyone is a reflection of God. So, if our bodies reflect God, our character should also be a reflection of God.

This means whatever we do should be a representation of what is happening in heaven. This topic, so delicious to hear, should also be a representation of heaven.

God looks down on earth and sees himself because our bodies are made in his image and likeness. Similarly, he should also look down and see a character like his.

### **How do I go about it?**

Let me start with a personal story.

Previously, my dating confidence was made shy 8 times. Using the formula 'once bitten twice shy', it means I broke up 4 times. "Was it 4 times really?" Feels hard to accept, but anyway, let's imagine they were 3 times so that my case study doesn't look so severe.

In any case, my heart was broken, my heart was hurt. And there i was seeking courage from scripture. Repeatedly i would meditate, "the sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite spirit", just to find courage to brave the heartbreak. I made the verse my theme and slogan and could gain some courage from it.

However, it was now dawning to me that if I needed to get a girlfriend, it would be without much struggle, but finding a wife would only come as a gift from God. I am not being unrealistic here, but who can't get a girl/boyfriend? What does it take to get one? I believe it is simple. But getting a wife only comes as a gift from God. True or not true, take a case of friends around you and carry out a small survey and write back to me please.

### **Focus on the Flower**

In those breakup moments, I felt like I had led myself in the forest. There, I saw different flowers and decided to pluck one. The beauty was dazzling. Electrifying, I could say, but as I walked from the forest towards home, the flower started wilting. The far I went from the forest and the nearer I got to home the wilting turned into withering. I started fearing and shaking for the joy I anticipated the flower would bring to me, family and friends was soon turning into sorrow.

Yes, the flower was beautiful but I could not take it home. It was drying, losing the beauty and all I could do was to drop it and walk home with nothing. The next time I went to the forest I found nice, beautiful and bright flowers again. On trying to pluck one, I remembered my previous frustration but I was held back. So, I loved the flowers and wanted to take one at home. What could I do?

I decided to see the forest manager to get a solution. To my amazement the forest manager had helped other people to get flowers. He also narrated to me the ordeal of millions who had used my method of plucking flowers, running away with them but ended up frustrated. The forest manager asked me to sit down and listen to his prescription.

### **This was the prescription**

“I have many flowers in this forest and I have no problem giving them out to anyone who comes to me, for I am a giver. Actually i don’t sell”, said the forest manager as I listened keenly.

“However, not all flowers are fit for anybody. Every flower has a match. You can’t just pluck it and think it will work for you.” “In fact, it is like a type of tree that performs well in a certain specific climatic condition and performs poorly in another”.

And there I was getting a revelation like John in the island of Patmos. The bell kept ringing, ‘not any flower can work for you.’

The forest manager now had to reveal how I would get my flower, my match and my love. How was that to happen?

First, we didn’t go round to the forest to wonder at the glowing beauty of the flowers. However, the forest manager first asked me to take him home so that we could assess the environment at home and determine which flower would fit that climate at home. We took our sweet time to assess the climate for we didn’t just want the daily weather, we wanted the climate.

As we were finishing the process, the forest manager tapped my shoulder and said, “my son, if you need a flower, a flower that will not wilt, you don’t need to pluck it. You need to create an environment similar to the one in the forest and then I will give you a seed to the specific flower

you want. You will plant it and water it and its success will be dependent on your effort to nurture it.

There and then i realized my mistakes. I just wanted the grown up flowers but I was not willing to water my seed until it becomes what I want. I also remembered Myles Munroe's message on relationship. He stated categorically saying, "a woman comes as a raw material, the man has to make the woman he wants from the raw material supplied by God".

All this time, i was running after girls, not knowing i was plucking them not knowing the lovey-dovey would soon wither, dry and become a heart break.

From the revelation of the forest manager, i found out, for you to be happy seeing a flower by your side, it's not about what you need it's about what the flower needs. It is all about how good you can be in nurturing the flower.

However, I do not pose as a feminist who is fighting for better treatment of ladies, whom in our story are represented by the imagery flower. The word flower is double edged. If I am a lady looking for a prince charming, my question should be whether, I can nurture the greatness and potential in him until it matures. Similarly, the man should ask if he is ready to treat the lady in a manner that will make them release, express and exploit the potential in them. But how sad it is, some don't want the nurturing, they want just to be in a relationship for fun.

**END**