What God Has Taught Me *by Claire Davies*

*I am going through the Intentional Relationships for Singles Bible Study for the second time, which I highly recommend. The first time I did the study, I was in a relationship built backward. We started dating, and then I wanted to become friends. There were so many red flags. But, like most of us, the desire to have someone can easily outweigh any concerns you might have about that person. We have since broken up. God has shown me so much. I am in a healthier place in all of my relationships. I am excited to be going through the study again; this time, more willing to make the changes needed in the present. See below for some of the observations from Chapter 1: We Got it All Wrong*

* "Even marriages that last sometimes aren't fulfilling" Enduring versus Enjoying - for this to happen, both parties need to demonstrate the correct love language and be active in their walk with the Lord, i.e., less of self and more of God - the fruits of the spirit.
* “A man must be big enough to admit his mistakes, smart enough to profit from them, and strong enough to correct them." Humility and self-awareness are two rare traits as egos get in the way. The active pursuit of God should indicate where they are in the journey and ready for the challenges of relationships. Communication is a two-way process and is often missed due to the inability to listen to understand genuinely and not to respond and communicate without fear of conflict; both are equally detrimental to the longevity and success of a relationship.
* "The best time to save your marriage is before it starts." Prepare - I am complete in Christ and healing from past hurts. Often, we project our hurts onto others and have unrealistic expectations that somehow the marriage will cure our voids.
* Why hasn't God brought me a spouse? A pastor shared that the number one reason why marriages fail is that people don't live out their singleness. I couldn't agree more; finding security in God and not in my relationship status has been challenging but also liberating.

Reflecting upon my most significant relationships, I can see that they directly reflect how I see myself. It also echoed my emotional health, which lacked self-love, which meant I had poor boundaries. I often question myself is this okay? Am I being overly sensitive? This stemmed from my childhood when my feelings were often dismissed or minimized. How I saw myself significantly impacted my career choices, relationships, and the notion of 'being enough.' I also invested too quickly and didn't do my due diligence.

I have learned that relationships start with self through God - allowing God to heal and leave the past in the past. I am embracing his truths rather than the shortcomings of my childhood. I still have insecurities about being single, especially at my age as a woman; however, the difference is that I do not live in that space.

“If we do what's hard, life will get easy. If we do what's easy, life will get hard.” I have observed this time and time again in my own life and with people around me of how true this is.

Preparation will set the tone for planning, pursuing, and proposing, i.e., dealing with personal issues and struggles. If I want to be a wife, I need to reflect the characteristics of a good spouse, i.e., someone I want to marry. If I am looking for someone who loves God, finances are in order... I also need to have those qualities. Remembering emotional health matches emotional health.