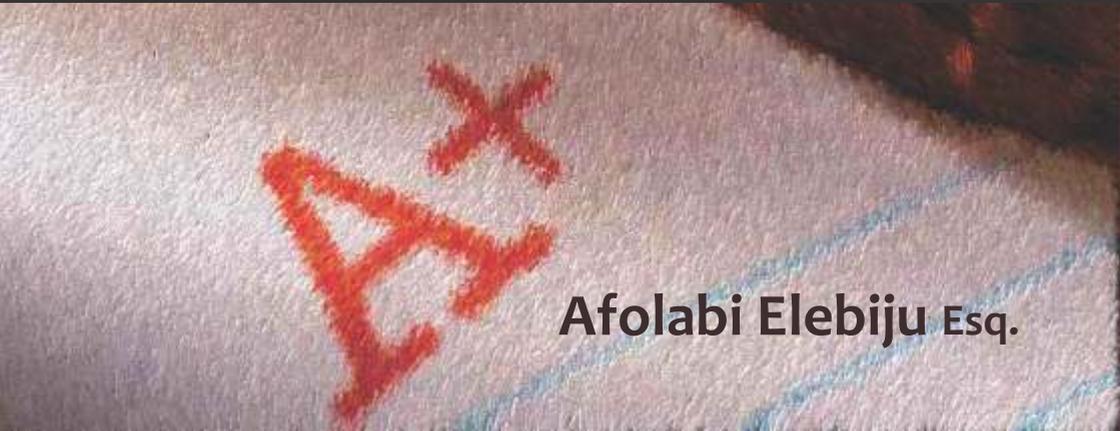




YES, YOU CAN!

TEN STEPS TO
SCALING UTME (JAMB)
AT FIRST ATTEMPT



Afolabi Elebiju Esq.



© Copyright Afolabi Elebiju 2015. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be copied, altered or reproduced without the prior written permission of the author.

To request copies, please email:

teenschurchbajulaiye@gmail.com
teenschurchjebako@gmail.com
foursqrshomoluym@gmail.com
a.elebiju@lelawlegal.com

Also, downloads available at www.mentorhouse.net

Images are credited to respective owners as appropriate



Background

Its November 2015, the advertisement announcing flag off of competition for spaces in Nigeria's tertiary institutions, has since been out. The exams hold next February, results should come out same day and then the post UTME conducted by respective universities, follow. Eventually, the men would be separated from the boys: some would be admitted to read the courses of their choice at their preferred universities, whilst some others will have to try again the following year. Yet some others will console themselves with less than what they initially aimed for – going to less prestigious institutions or settling for non-competitive courses in order to take themselves off the admissions market. You can get ahead of the curve with these ten tips:



1

Convince Yourself its Realisable and Commit to its Realisation

All things are possible to him that believes (*Mark 9:23*) – he who puts his belief to work or 'works' his beliefs. The testimonies of several people who successfully secured admission for their preferred courses and at preferred Universities is proof that such goal is realisable for you. *If others can do it, then you can.* You can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens you (*Phil 4:13*). No exceptions, it includes realizing your goal of getting admitted to University. What is required is resoluteness, and total commitment to the goal. Where there is vision, there is energy and passion. Picture yourself in your matriculation gown next year, and daily speak it into being as you also take all the other 9 steps below. The expectations of the righteous shall not be cut short; you can prophesy your desired outcomes. After all, we can call forth the things that were not as if they are (*Rom 4:17*). By your covenant relationship, you are entitled to enjoy the best of the land.

“

***If others
can do it,
then you
can.***



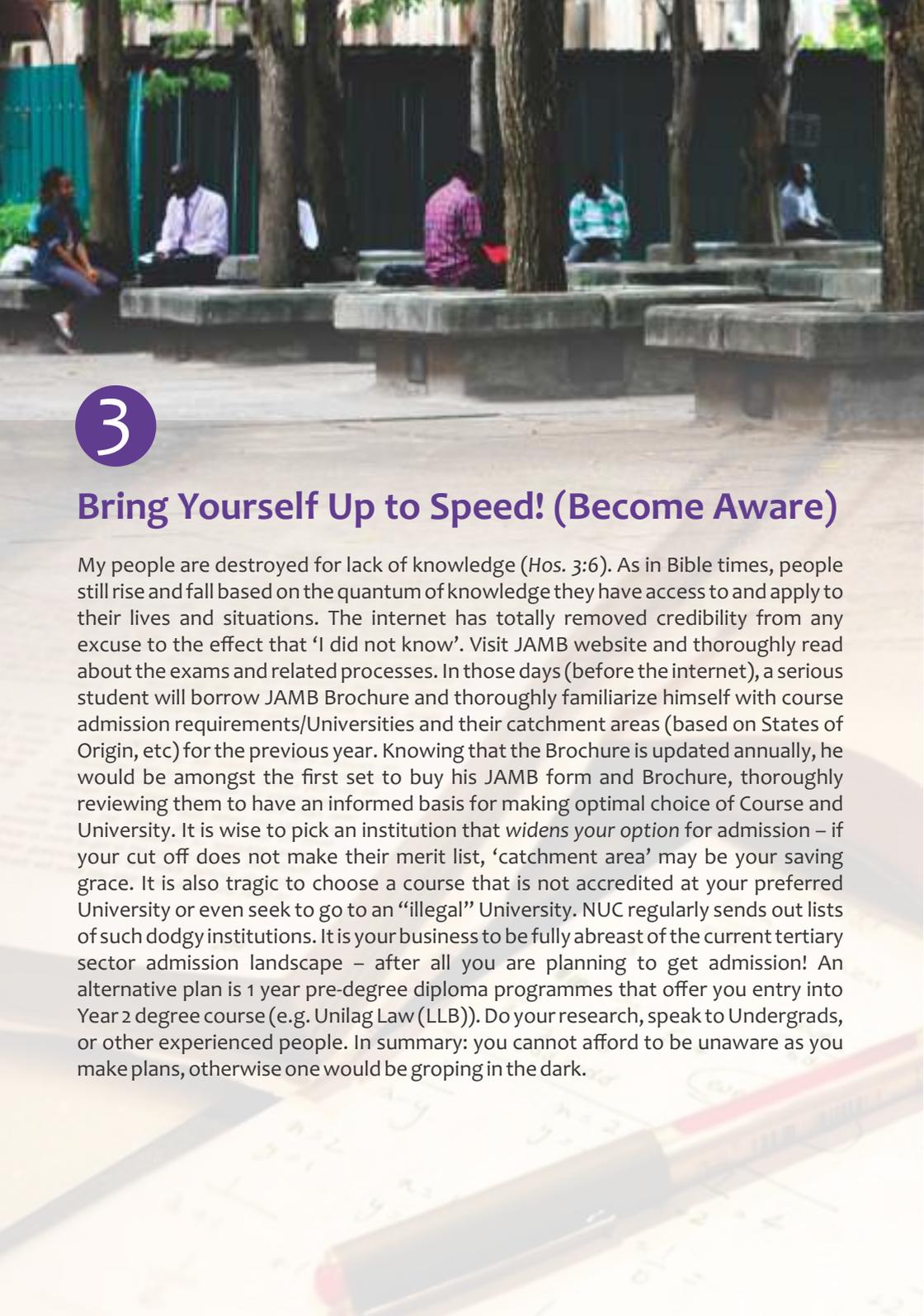
2

Partner with God

“Commit
to the Lord
whatever you do,
and all your Plans
will Succeed.”
Prov. 10:3

The University applicant who is a Christian has a huge competitive advantage; and the wise candidate will leverage this advantage to the fullest. The God who is Jehovah El Shaddai (the Almighty) that can do all things (*Job 40:1-2; Luke 1:37*), whose thoughts towards you are of good, not of evil to give you a hope and a future (*Jer 29:11*), who said don't be afraid because “I will help you” (*Isa 41:10*) and that you are to be the head and not the tail, above only and not below (*Deut 28:13*), that you should move forward (*Ex 14:15*), who desires that you prosper (*3 John 1:2*), who is ever faithful and is committed to His Word, should be your ally in this venture. Study the Word to lay hold of His promises, confess them and pray fervently that the lines will fall to you in pleasant places (*Ps. 16:6*). If God be for you, who can be against you (*Rom 8:31*)? With God as your ally, every stronghold of failure is bound to crumble and you can only excel to show forth His glory and praise. In His omnipotence, He will do whatever it takes (which you cannot do), in order to ensure that your hard work (which is what you can do and He won't do for you), is crowned with success.





3

Bring Yourself Up to Speed! (Become Aware)

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hos. 3:6). As in Bible times, people still rise and fall based on the quantum of knowledge they have access to and apply to their lives and situations. The internet has totally removed credibility from any excuse to the effect that ‘I did not know’. Visit JAMB website and thoroughly read about the exams and related processes. In those days (before the internet), a serious student will borrow JAMB Brochure and thoroughly familiarize himself with course admission requirements/Universities and their catchment areas (based on States of Origin, etc) for the previous year. Knowing that the Brochure is updated annually, he would be amongst the first set to buy his JAMB form and Brochure, thoroughly reviewing them to have an informed basis for making optimal choice of Course and University. It is wise to pick an institution that *widens your option* for admission – if your cut off does not make their merit list, ‘catchment area’ may be your saving grace. It is also tragic to choose a course that is not accredited at your preferred University or even seek to go to an “illegal” University. NUC regularly sends out lists of such dodgy institutions. It is your business to be fully abreast of the current tertiary sector admission landscape – after all you are planning to get admission! An alternative plan is 1 year pre-degree diploma programmes that offer you entry into Year 2 degree course (e.g. Unilag Law (LLB)). Do your research, speak to Undergrads, or other experienced people. In summary: you cannot afford to be unaware as you make plans, otherwise one would be groping in the dark.



4

Have a Study Plan

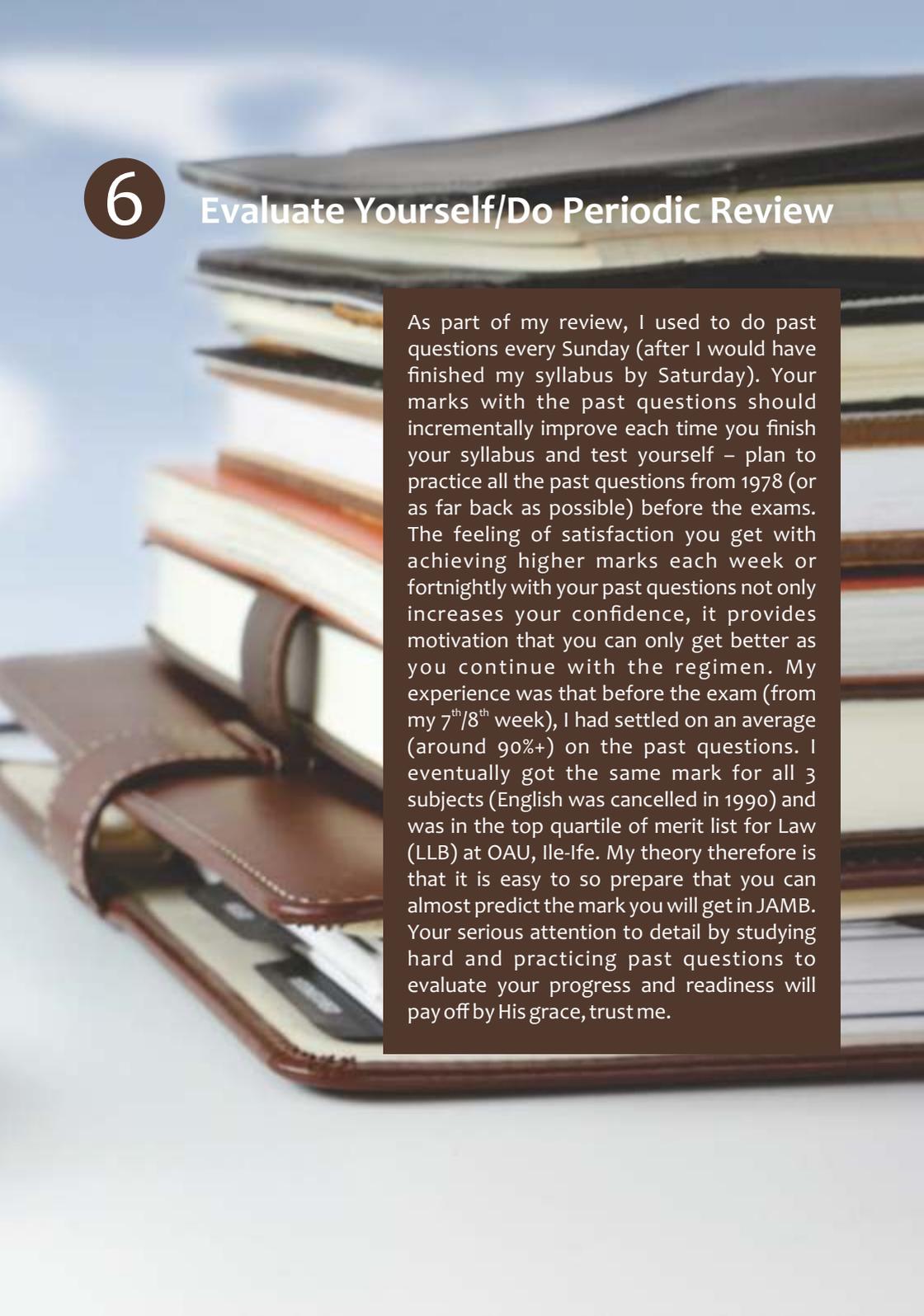
Next thing is to have a study plan. If you have 8 or more months till the date of UME exams, how many times do you want to cover your syllabus and practice all the past questions? Your study plan should be exact to the point of how many hours you will study a day – from wake up time to bedtime. In 1990 (when I did JAMB again because of the momentary ban on direct entry law (LLB) admissions for graduate applicants) and whilst still working as a secondary school teacher, my target was to finish my syllabus (allocating 2 days for each subject, excluding English), every week. Then on Sundays, I practised past questions. Within the 3 month period that I prepared, I had gone through the syllabus at least 12 times. I knew most of the materials stone cold. My study plan made me to appreciate the opportunity cost of my time – 2 hours of 'gisting' could mean that your Literature (for example) is being neglected. You could have finished your 'Lion and The Jewel' and some reviews just one more time within the period. Your reading efficiency improves as you keep to the study plan – the more you read, the faster your reading pace and the rate of assimilation. Of course this must be in a well rested mode and in a quiet environment. As you will see below, you also need to schedule rest time, to avoid being affected by the law of diminishing returns. Everything must be planned (maybe with a very small window for flexibility), including discussion time with other '*serious friends*' who also cannot see themselves anywhere next session, except as Year 1 undergraduates of their courses and at their universities. Don't be discouraged if you can't turn in many hours at the beginning, with commitment you will gain the discipline to increase the hours you study per day. The intensity of your preparation should be such that if you start with 6 hours daily 8 months to the exam, you can increase to at least 8 hours daily 5/6 months to the exam, then around 12 hours daily 4 months to the exam. In the last 3 months, you should average 14 hours daily. Having been so immersed, you may 'relax' in the last week with past questions – going over all the past questions again.

5

Align All Your Activities

The law of focus comes to play here. Whatever is not contributing towards the realisation of your goal should be discarded totally, but if otherwise a necessity, time spent on such should be reduced to the barest minimum. TV and home videos are easy examples – suspending your fanatical followership of EPL and Champions League won't kill you, neither will going offline (bye to Facebook, texting and whatsapp)! In any event, you have to decide whether getting the high marks to ensure certain admission is more important to you than other pursuits that could compete for your time and compromise your competitiveness. Everything should be in alignment with your goal, even reading the newspapers (in your spare time to relax!) should be to improve your vocabulary towards getting a higher score in English. Persuade your parents to let you do less of household chores to free up more time for studies. If you have younger siblings, delegate more work to them – you need to study more than them right now. The favour can be returned next year or whenever they too are preparing for their SSCE/JAMB. Because there is no time to waste, you need to be creative. Leverage the synergies that come from being in SSS3 and preparing for both JAMB and SSCE/NECO in the same year. Don't let any resource go to waste – tap from the knowledge, wisdom and experience of your teachers, parents, senior relatives, and other people who could mentor you. If you have already finished SSCE and are preparing for JAMB fulltime, you still need to align your activities – avoid the false sense that you have time to burn. Rather, that time means you have the opportunity to go the extra mile with your preparation in order to score exceptional marks (300 and above).





6

Evaluate Yourself/Do Periodic Review

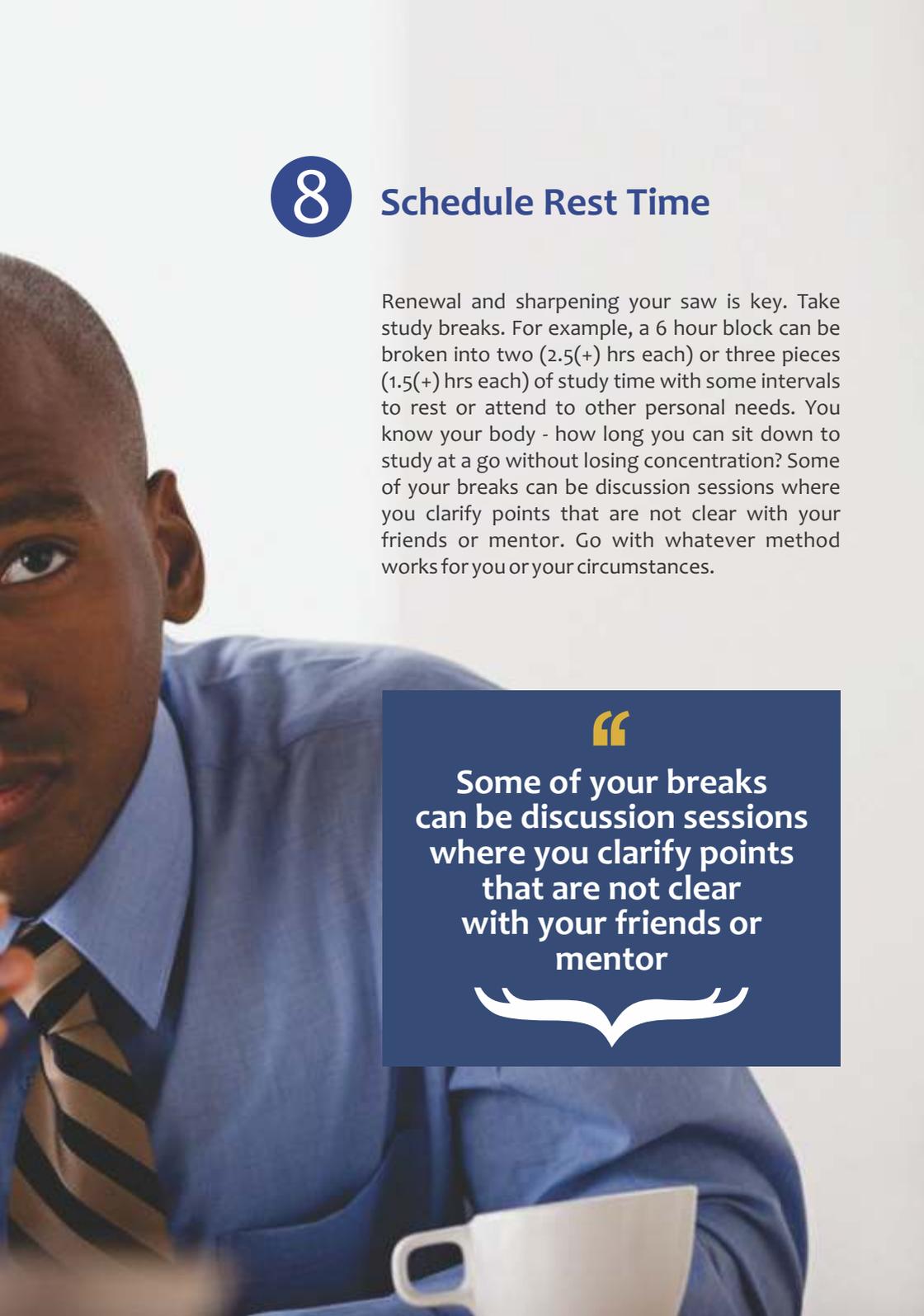
As part of my review, I used to do past questions every Sunday (after I would have finished my syllabus by Saturday). Your marks with the past questions should incrementally improve each time you finish your syllabus and test yourself – plan to practice all the past questions from 1978 (or as far back as possible) before the exams. The feeling of satisfaction you get with achieving higher marks each week or fortnightly with your past questions not only increases your confidence, it provides motivation that you can only get better as you continue with the regimen. My experience was that before the exam (from my 7th/8th week), I had settled on an average (around 90%+) on the past questions. I eventually got the same mark for all 3 subjects (English was cancelled in 1990) and was in the top quartile of merit list for Law (LLB) at OAU, Ile-Ife. My theory therefore is that it is easy to so prepare that you can almost predict the mark you will get in JAMB. Your serious attention to detail by studying hard and practicing past questions to evaluate your progress and readiness will pay off by His grace, trust me.

7

Leverage Mentorship

We touched on this in point No. 4 – there are resources around you waiting to be leveraged. How did those who scored 300+ in last JAMB do it? Make friends with, and learn from such people. Be part of a serious minded study and prayer group. If you have similar study plans, you are likely to encourage each other in the process.



A man in a blue shirt and striped tie is sitting at a desk, looking towards the camera. A white mug is visible in the foreground. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

8

Schedule Rest Time

Renewal and sharpening your saw is key. Take study breaks. For example, a 6 hour block can be broken into two (2.5(+)) hrs each) or three pieces (1.5(+)) hrs each) of study time with some intervals to rest or attend to other personal needs. You know your body - how long you can sit down to study at a go without losing concentration? Some of your breaks can be discussion sessions where you clarify points that are not clear with your friends or mentor. Go with whatever method works for you or your circumstances.

“

**Some of your breaks
can be discussion sessions
where you clarify points
that are not clear
with your friends or
mentor**



9

Start Early

The rule always is: the earlier, the better. You gain an unassailable headstart, can gradually increase your pace and peak just in time without over-stressing yourself or being anxious as the UTME exams approach. Keep in mind that JAMB is 'first past the post' utilising cut-off marks (unlike SSCE where a 'C' is counted as much a credit as an 'A' or 'B'). Also, what is the better use of your time now rather than to start early? By starting early, you can cover your syllabus several more times (therefore gaining more depth) than the candidate who start studying in December or January. Starting early is a critical differentiator and I will advise you to take it seriously.



10

Consistency is Key

The race is for finishers; there would be no plaudits or awards for also-rans. Its no use to start early and start strong but fizzle out before reaching the finish line. Like Paul, we must (in this academic sense, but no less important spiritually) press forward towards the mark (*Phil 3:13-14*). As someone said, *“if you keep going in the right direction, you will arrive at your destination.”*



Conclusion

Success is your portion and is within your grasp! Pay the price, put in the effort and you will be surprised at how much, with God's help, you can achieve. After all, eyes have not seen, ears have not heard, neither has it entered the heart of men the beauty of what God has prepared for them that love Him (1 Cor. 2:19). There is hope in your future (Jer 31:17). Go all out for it!

Pursuit of excellence in all our endeavours is an integral part of living our lives for Him and showing forth His glory. As “the salt of the earth”, “the light of the world” and “a city set on a hill” (Matt 5:13-14), the Lord has invested so much in us, and He commands that we “arise and shine” (Isaiah 60:1). Do not demand anything less from yourself.

Please share with all your friends so they can practice these tips with you and also share with all their friends who need these tips. We look forward to hearing your testimonies next year, if the Lord carries. Stay blessed.



PREPARE WELL

PRAY

READ

EXERCISE & EAT

PLAN

ASK QUESTIONS

REST & RE-ENERGISE

EVALUATE



NOT FOR SALE



Folashade
Enitoluwafe
Elebiju
Foundation

*Written under the auspices of Youth & Teens Ministries of
Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria, Shomolu District Headquarters
(40 Bajulaiye Road & 26 Oluwalogbon Street, Shomolu)*

AND

Folashade Enitoluwafe Elebiju Foundation (FEEF)