

# A letter to my first born . . .

By Jamia Eaton-Martinez

In a decent attempt to send you off into your first phase of adult independence with love, wisdom, and spiritual guidance, I pray God prepares you as He has developed your dad and me for a future secure in His righteousness. Unfortunately, the world had shown you many lessons before we ever had a chance to teach them to you—some healthy and some fatal. Lessons like “. . . being born with darker skin, fuller lips, a wider nose” are not “wrong,” but everything that happens as a result of it would be, or that you would have to prove you were not a stereotype before a person even learned your name. You and your siblings learned these lessons far before we ever taught them to you. Regrettably, this new path ahead of you is both exciting and fearful for me. I am grateful that God has allowed us the opportunity to homeschool you to nurture and develop your love for the Lord and to enable you to grow in the skill of rhetorical persuasion. Your optimism inspires me as you embrace the historical attention of fuller narratives of America’s multi-cultural contributions, never denying the genocide of atrocities that still seem to go overlooked. Your passion for the law motivates my hope that God will transform your influence for His good and the nation’s growth toward equity. You have already experienced having to fight for the right to be heard and seen as an intellectual competitor amongst your white peers—in the classroom and in the church. I’m sorry about that reality. America has this “unwritten” racial bias woven into it’s economical, political, historical, cultural, institutional, interpersonal and social system that makes your fight for success twice as hard. Your love for the law has already taught you that. I’m sorry that the church of Christ universities that may have been of interest to you, academically, still admittedly, have a poor representation of what heaven will truly look like, knowing that even the Bible says you will know them by their fruits (Matthew 7:20). I’m sorry that you had to hear about a racist incident where our beautiful, brown, dreadlock sister in Christ excitedly attended one of these universities while having a noosed doll left at her dorm door for five consecutive days of her first week from school. It happened to be the year of Obama’s first term. I’m sorry that your cries to are belittled or denied when brethren are “tired of hearing racism exists” and we’re just as tired as experiencing racism. So many sorries. Too many to count.

But thanks be to God! He gave your father and me a new chance at this life when He saved us from sin on February 4, 2004, at the tender age of 31 years old. You were just three months old on the side of the baptismal as we arose to the newness of life. We had been through a lot of racial difficulties and biases ourselves over the years, at our own university where we met and countless other places from South Africa to Georgia. Surely at baptism, it would be different. Or so I thought...at least in the church.

Truth be told, baby girl, I am showing you a little piece into my own fear as a Christian black woman. We still face these challenges, but God gives us a new way to handle them. It’s a fact that we have a different hill to climb than our white sisters, and at times may feel the pains of overburdened and weary bodies. If we were in the world, we would handle it differently. But we’re not—we are Christians. Jesus died for us too, so that we can receive His grace and mercy while learning to empathize, sympathize, and grow with others. The simple fact is when it’s raining . . . we all get wet, which is a prime opportunity for us all to exercise our “love” muscles, get out of our comfort zones, and do what’s necessary to further God’s Will.

Pooh, I want you to know that it’s okay to get angry, sad, even discouraged . . . it’s just not okay to stay there and prayerfully you will allow God and His children to pull you up! Even the strongest of God’s people get weary!!! But even in our weariness, when we press through and JUST DO IT (His Will that is) . . . we never know the impact God works **through** us!

I want you to know that sometimes it may appear you’re fighting this racism battle by yourself. But always remember that God sees all, knows all, and cares about it all. For He said in Isaiah 40:31:

*“Yet those who wait for the Lord  
Will gain new strength;  
They will mount up with wings like eagles,  
They will run and not get tired,  
They will walk and not become weary.”*

We love you so much! We are praying for your peace that passes understanding, and the abilities God has gifted you. This world is crazy and sometimes . . . truth be told . . . so is the church. But with God, all things are possible, and I pray that we will all reach a place in our faith where this foolishness doesn’t affect us, but we are confidently and boldly sharing His light and truth consistently showing it by our fruits. We may not always understand the WHYs of His commands, but when we obey them . . . sometimes He later blesses nations because He is blessing His people (Romans 8:28). ▲

I love you.

Love,

*Mommy*