



Open Heaven 17 December 2025 Today Devotional & Commentary

Description

The Open Heaven 17 December 2025 devotional for today is **DONâ??T BECOME AN EX-CHAMPION.**

This is a daily devotion written by Pastor E. A. Adeboye, General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG).

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OPEN HEAVEN 17 DECEMBER 2025 TODAY DEVOTIONAL

TOPIC: DON'T BECOME AN EX-CHAMPION

MEMORISE:

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

Haggai 2:9

READ: 1 Samuel 13:13-14:

13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.

RCCG OPEN HEAVEN 17 DECEMBER 2025 TODAY MESSAGE

There are people who used to be wealthy or influential but have little or nothing to show for it today. There is nothing as terrible as being a fellow who used to be wealthy or influential.

For example, when those who have never had a car struggle to enter a public bus and someone steps on them, they would see it as something normal. However, people who used to have their own cars might find it difficult to adapt when they find themselves in a similar situation. Also, if they complain about getting stepped on while struggling to enter a public bus, they might feel really insulted when people say, “If you don’t want to be stepped on, why not get your own car?” May you never be a has-been, in Jesus’ name.

There is nothing as terrible as being an ex-champion. Boxers will tell you that the moment you become a champion, other boxers in your category will want to challenge you to a fight.

If you want to remain a champion, it means that you need to work harder than you used to before you became a champion. If you relax after becoming successful, saying, “I am the best; everybody already sees how good I am,” you might soon lose your edge and become irrelevant. Instead, you must start working harder on becoming more excellent. The things you need to do to remain at the top are even more rigorous than what you must do to get there.

When God called me to become a pastor, I prayed that I would become so influential for the kingdom, and I can tell you with all confidence that the way I used to pray before I got to the level I am now is nothing compared to how I pray now. As God has continued to take me higher, I have been fasting more, studying my Bible more, preaching more sermons, and working harder generally. This is how I have been able to maintain an upward trajectory.

Beloved, if you want to be the best in your field, you must be ready to put in all the necessary efforts. Most importantly, to remain at the top, you must be ready to put in even more efforts by acquiring more and more knowledge, networking more with other experts in your field, and generally working harder. I pray that you will get to the top and remain there, in Jesus’ name.

KEY POINT

It takes more effort to remain at the top than to get there.

BIBLE IN ONE YEAR

Hebrews 1-4

HYMN 12: ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

OPEN HEAVEN DEVOTIONAL 17 DECEMBER 2025

COMMENTARY

MEMORISE: Haggai 2:9

â??The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.â?•

This prophetic word speaks of increasing glory, not diminishing returns. Godâ??s desire for His people is a forward-moving trajectory where each season surpasses the last. It is a promise against becoming a â??has-been,â?• ensuring that the best is always ahead for those who align with His rebuilding process. The promise culminates in *peace*â??the wholeness and settled prosperity that comes from sustained divine favor.

BIBLE READING: 1 Samuel 13:13-14

This passage is the classic biblical narrative of a lost throne and a â??has-beenâ?• king:

v.13: Samuelâ??s Rebuke â?? *â??Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God.â?•* Saulâ??s disobedience (impatience and presumption) was the crack that began his decline.

v.14: The Divine Decree â?? *â??But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heartâ?!* because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.â?• The mantle was removed because character did not match the calling. He transitioned from king-in-waiting to king-in-decline.

The Peril and Principle of Sustained Excellence

Pastor E.A. Adeboye delivers a powerful and sobering message on the fragility of success. Using vivid analogies and personal testimony, he teaches that reaching the top is only half the battle; the greater challengeâ??and workâ??is *staying* there. The devotional warns against the complacency that creates â??has-beensâ?• and prescribes the discipline of increasing effort as the only safeguard.

1. The Tragedy of the â??Has-Beenâ?•

The Psychological Agony:

The example of the former car owner on a crowded bus illustrates that loss is felt most acutely by those who have known better. The â??has-beenâ?• lives with the tormenting memory of past glory, making present humiliation unbearable. It is a state of regret and social displacement.

The Spiritual Analogy:

This is the condition of the backslider or the believer who loses their spiritual edge. They once walked in power, favor, and intimacy (â??their own carâ?•) but now struggle in the flesh, vulnerable to the â??steppingâ?• of the enemy and the worldâ??s scorn.

The Prophetic Prayer:

â??May you never be a has-been, in Jesusâ?? name.â?• This is a prayer for sustained relevance, continuous favor, and the grace to finish well.

2. The Champion's Dilemma: The Fight to Stay on Top

Increased Target, Increased Effort:

Becoming a champion makes you the target for every contender. The defense of the title requires *more* discipline, *more* training, and *more* strategy than winning it initially. Complacency (*“I am the best”*) is the champion's deadliest opponent.

The Law of Increasing Rigor:

“The things you need to do to remain at the top are even more rigorous than what you must do to get there.” This is a universal law in all spheres: spiritual, professional, and personal. Maintenance at a high level demands a higher output of energy and wisdom than the initial ascent.

3. The Personal Testimony: The Ministry of Increase

The Prayer of Ambition:

Pastor Adeboye reveals he prayed to *“become so influential for the kingdom.”* This was a God-honoring ambition for increased impact, not personal fame.

The Discipline of Sustenance:

His stunning admission: *“the way I used to pray before I got to the level I am now is nothing compared to how I pray now.”* As God promoted him, his spiritual disciplines intensified proportionally: more fasting, more Bible study, more preaching, more work. His upward trajectory was fueled by an upward curve in personal sacrifice and diligence.

4. The Blueprint for Sustained Relevance

Continuous Knowledge Acquisition:

In a changing world, resting on past knowledge guarantees obsolescence. The believer must be a perpetual student of God's Word and their God-given field.

Strategic Networking (Fellowship):

“Networking more with other experts” speaks to the need for iron-sharpening-iron relationships (Proverbs 27:17). In the Spirit, this means deep fellowship with other committed believers and mentors who challenge you to grow.

General Increase in Effort:

There is no substitute for hard work. The grace for increased capacity is activated by increased labor. You must be *“ready to put in even more efforts.”*

How to Build a “Latter House” of Greater Glory

1. Guard Against Spiritual Complacency:

The moment you feel you've *“arrived”* is the moment you begin to decline. Cultivate holy dissatisfaction. Pray, *“Lord, let the glory of my latter days be greater than the former.”*

2. Intensify Your Discipleship Post-Promotion:

If God blesses you with influence, wealth, or platform, immediately increase your prayer time, giving,

and service. Let your spiritual growth outpace your material or social growth.

3. Study the **Has-Beens** and the **Finished-Wells**:

Analyze Saul (the has-been king) versus David (who finished well despite flaws). Study Hezekiah's lapse (2 Chronicles 32:25-26) versus Paul's sustained fight (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Learn from their patterns.

4. Embrace the Burden of Leadership:

Understand that higher levels bring heavier burdens. Like Nehemiah, be prepared to combine vigilance (watchfulness) with work (Nehemiah 4:9). The top is a place of greater responsibility, not just greater comfort.

Warning: The Ease of the Downward Slope

It is easier to descend from a height than to climb it. The descent often begins with a single act of disobedience (like Saul), a season of neglected discipline, or the pride of accomplishment. The fall is not always immediate, but the trajectory, once set, is difficult to reverse without drastic repentance and recommitment.

Conclusion: Securing an Upward Trajectory

Pray this:

Lord God of Haggai's promise, I desire a life of increasing glory for Your name. Forgive me for any complacency. Save me from the tragedy of being a has-been. Fill me with the discipline of a defending champion. As You lift me higher, give me the grace to pray more, study more, work harder, and humble myself deeper. Let my latter days truly be greater than my former, and in this place, give me Your perfect peace, in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

Action Steps:

- **Conduct a Champion's Audit:** In your primary calling (career, ministry, home), list three specific things you did to win your title. Now, list three *new*, more rigorous disciplines you need to adopt to *defend* it.
- **Increase Your Spiritual Output:** This month, consciously add 15 minutes to your daily prayer time or add one extra day of fasting. Match your spiritual input to your current level of responsibility.
- **Find a Contender:** Identify someone godly who is excellent in your field. Seek their counsel. Let their passion challenge your comfort and sharpen your edge.

Remember: Your past success is not a resting pillow; it is a launching pad. The anointing for the next level is found in the increased sacrifice of your current level.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14). The pressing never stops until we see Him. Keep pressing.

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