



# The Only Blood That Matters

BY STEFANI MCDADE



**SHAMSUDEEN BAKARE STANDS BY THE DOOR EACH SUNDAY MORNING**, handing programs to the teens pouring into his church in Nigeria. Among the joy-filled faces, he can't help but notice the ones marked by quiet sorrow. Bakare recognizes in them the same loneliness and pain that haunted him [Continued on pg 46](#)



all his life—until a few years ago.

Alone in his apartment one Sunday, Bakare was flipping through TV channels when these words stopped him: “There’s a difference between loneliness and solitude.” It was a sermon by Dr. Stanley. After 30 years—and more than a decade since becoming a Christian—Bakare finally understood what it meant to belong to God.

As an illegitimate child, he’d been sent away to live with another family. His adoptive parents already had two biological children, and Bakare grew up sensing that blood made a difference. When the other children got new clothes, Bakare got their hand-me-downs. Instead of three bikes in the yard, there were two.

Though raised as a Muslim, Bakare never felt a connection to Allah during his ritual prayers. Instead, in a moment of deep loneliness, Bakare made a vow to another God—one he somehow knew by experience: “God, if You get me through this, it will be You and You alone.” But it wasn’t until he was 16 that Bakare finally discovered who this God was. Opening a Gideon’s Bible given to him by someone at school, he read a few passages and felt compelled to say the sinner’s prayer inside the back cover. Yet he wouldn’t begin to understand the gravity of this decision for many years.

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After reconnecting with his birth family during college, Bakare was determined not to suffer their rejection anew. So he kept his conversion a secret, attending church on Wednesday nights and mosque on the weekends. When he finally told his family he was a Christian, they disowned him—and Bakare realized the only blood that mattered was the blood of Christ.

Since that season of solitude, God has used Dr. Stanley to disciple Bakare in his faith. Through In Touch sermons, podcasts, and books, Bakare is learning how to love his family, deal with his anger over rejection, and wait on God for reconciliation. Now, every Sunday morning, he’s ready to disciple a new generation—by reaching out to teens who feel neglected and forgotten and showing them what it means to belong to the family of God.



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