LESSONS FROM MS. ALICE

What A Mother's Hand Taught Me
About LOVE, FAITH, ORDER, and LEGACY

Second Edition

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Dedication to Ms. Alice

Her children arise and call her blessed. Those words from Proverbs 31 echo the life of Ms. Alice Hayes Hudson, whose faith and discipline shaped not only her family but also the lives of everyone who crossed her path.

I grew up watching her live a life that spoke louder than words. Long before I understood discipline, faith, responsibility, or legacy, I saw them in her. I saw them in the way she cared for our home, in the consistency she carried every day, and in the quiet strength she walked in, even when life was not easy. She never needed recognition. She simply did what was right, over and over again, and in doing so, she shaped all of us.

Now that she is no longer with us, I see more clearly what she was giving us all along. What felt ordinary then, I now recognize as faithful living. This book is my way of saying thank you to our mother, grandmother, teacher, and steady guide. Her life still speaks, her lessons continue to guide us, and what she planted remains a living inheritance.

Foreword

As we journey through life, we encounter individuals from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs. A person's upbringing significantly influences their identity. Some of us grow up in traditional households, while others are raised by single parents or grandparents. Some people also grow up with special needs or circumstances that shape how they see the world. Each of these experiences leaves an indelible mark on us, shaping our identity in profound and subtle ways.

But once in a while, we meet someone truly special, someone who stays with us forever. You remember the day you met them, what they were wearing, and the very first words you exchanged.

When I met Earl in 1998, I knew he was someone special. What I didn't realize then was just how much he would come to mean to me for the rest of my life.

The qualities that first drew me to Earl, his kindness, his integrity, and his gentle strength, were things he learned from his mother, Ms. Alice. She was the most integral part

of his life. When we were dating, he would share so many beautiful memories of her. And when I finally met her, I immediately understood why he spoke of her with such love and admiration. She was small in stature, but mighty in presence.

Many wives don't love being compared to their mothers-in-law, but for me, it has always been a privilege. Learning about Ms. Alice's lifestyle, her grace, and her unwavering faith has been one of the greatest blessings of my life. Even if I could have chosen my mother-in-law, I could not have selected a better one. GOD truly blessed me with a fabulous woman of GOD to learn from and admire.

The stories Earl shares in this book will warm your heart. Through his words, he brings Ms. Alice to life, capturing her essence and the profound lessons she instilled in him, lessons that have also touched me.

If you know Earl personally, this book will help you gain a deeper understanding of him. You will understand why he is so clean, organized, respectful, and detail-oriented, down to matching his clothes and accessories. You will also understand why he loves so deeply and completely.

This book offers a glimpse into the heart of a man who is a devoted husband, a wonderful father, and a loyal friend.

My prayer is that the stories in these pages will not only help you better understand Earl, but also inspire you to reflect on the relationships in your own life, especially the ones that have shaped who you are.

We are who we are because of someone else's prayers, love, correction, and guidance. I pray your life has been as richly touched as Earl's has.

And while I recognize that not everyone has had the kind of experience Earl had with his mother, the loving, caring, teaching, and praying kind, I pray you have found that kind of presence elsewhere in your life.

Life lessons come in many forms and through many people, some expected and some surprising. These are the lessons we didn't know we needed, the ones we hold on to, and the ones we pass down to our children and grandchildren.

These are the lessons that will one day shape our legacy.

"Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all." Proverbs 31:29

Tameka F. Hudson
Lithonia, GA

Introduction: Where It Began

Every family has habits, sayings, and stories that shape us more than we realize. For me, many of those lessons came from my mother, Ms. Alice Hayes Hudson. She never sought a platform or preached from a pulpit, yet the way she lived carried a message that echoed through the walls of our home. From the bed she made each morning to the sink she made sure was empty after each meal, she taught lessons that were practical, spiritual, and unforgettable.

At first glance, those lessons might seem ordinary: a made bed, an empty trash can, clean and ironed clothes, work done with care, and outfits matched from head to toe. They were simple, everyday things, but over time, I began to see that what looked like routine was shaping something deeper: order, responsibility, discipline, dignity, and love. These were not just habits. They were part of who we were becoming.

Looking back now, I can see how those small, consistent acts reflected something greater. There was a quiet order to the way she lived, a sense that details mattered as much

as the larger moments. The house did not run on pressure or perfection, but on a steady expectation that whatever was in our hands should be cared for. In practice, she was asking us to develop something within ourselves that we did not yet have the language to express.

She did not separate faith from daily life. Trust in GOD was not reserved for hard times or spoken only in prayer. It showed up in how she moved, how she worked, and how consistently she remained. There was integrity in her routine. She fulfilled her responsibilities, regardless of recognition. Well before I grasped its meaning, she showed us that commitment often emerges in unnoticed efforts.

Even now, when I think about her, I do not first remember what she said. I remember what she did. The sound of footsteps moving through the house. The sight of folded clothes stacked just right. The expectation that the kitchen would be clean before she sat down to eat. Those moments carried a weight that has lasted far beyond the house we grew up in.

This book is not only about what Ms. Alice did, but about what those actions meant. Behind every chore was a value.

Behind every habit was a truth. Behind every routine was a legacy. These are the lessons behind the lessons.

As these pages unfold, you will see how the ordinary moments of one woman's life carried extraordinary weight, shaping not only a home but generations. What seemed small at the time has proven to be lasting.

Her life reminds me that what we do daily is never just about the task itself. It is shaping something in us and leaving something behind for others. The bed, the sink, the ironing board, and the trash can were never just chores. They were part of a life that pointed beyond itself.

As you read, my hope is not just that you remember Ms. Alice, but that you begin to recognize the quiet ways GOD has been at work in your own life. The lessons may not always come through words. Sometimes they come through what is repeated, what is expected, and what is lived consistently over time.

The Bible Was Always Open to Psalm 37

In Ms. Alice's home, the family Bible was never tucked away on a shelf. It sat open on the coffee table, always turned to the same place: Psalm 37. Before you noticed anything else, you saw the Word. Its pages lay open like a quiet invitation, setting the tone for everything else in the room.

That Bible was not a decoration. It was part of the space. It communicated something without needing explanation. You could feel it as soon as you walked in.

As a boy, I did not understand the verses. I only knew the Bible was always there, steady, unmoving, and dependable, just like her. When guests came over, they saw what I saw: Scripture at the center of the room, shaping the kind of peace that lived there.

Life gave her plenty of reasons to worry. Her calm was not shaped in quiet times. It was formed in stormy times. The city I grew up in gave her many reasons to be concerned. Headlines were full of tension and transition. A new

mayor had made history as the first African American to hold the office, and the city wrestled with what that meant. Some celebrated, while others resisted. But Ms. Alice did not get caught up in the noise. She stayed grounded. If she said anything at all, it was simple: “The LORD raises whom He will. Just make sure you keep doing right.” While others argued over power, she practiced righteousness. She trusted that promotion came from the LORD, not from people.

Then came darker days. When children began disappearing from neighborhoods near ours, fear swept through the city. Curfews tightened. Doors were locked earlier. Conversations changed. Whispers of danger moved from porch to porch. Ms. Alice had only one child still in the house, and she covered me the way she knew how. Every morning, before I left, she prayed over me, placing her hands on me with quiet confidence. She reminded me that evil was real, but GOD was greater. Her stillness was not denial. It was her refusal to let panic rule our home.

Even when money was tight, she did not allow worry to take over the house. Inflation pressed hard on families, and groceries cost more than many could afford. But

somehow, we always had what we needed, and we never went hungry. “The LORD provides,” she would say. “Sometimes through a sale at A&P, but He provides.”

It was never explained in a way I could fully understand at the time. It was simply lived out. She trusted GOD, and she kept moving. Looking back, I can see that she was not trying to control everything happening around her. She stayed focused on what was hers to do: her home, her children, and her responsibilities. She trusted GOD with the rest. While others reacted, she remained steady.

Years later, after we were grown, my brothers and I gave her a curio cabinet to display family photos. At the center, she placed that same Bible, still open to Psalm 37. Nothing had changed. The Word remained at the center.

At night, a soft light from the cabinet would fill the room, resting over pictures of weddings, graduations, and grandchildren. The Bible stood in the middle of it all, not separate from the blessings, but quietly connected to them. That light came to feel like her life: steady, present, and consistent.

Even in her later years, she would sit near it, resting in the same peace she had lived by all along. The house would

grow still, and without anyone saying a word, the message remained clear.

Looking back now, I see that the open Bible was never just a habit. It was shaping us. It trained our eyes before we even knew what we were looking at. Before we learned how to respond to life, we learned where to look.

Now, when I open my own Bible, I realize she planted something in me long before I had words for it. What once sat quietly in the background has become part of how I live.

When I read Psalm 37 today, I do not just hear the words. I remember the room, the open Bible, and the quiet light. I remember a woman whose life made those words believable.

What she lived taught me something I understand more clearly now: wisdom does not come from avoiding life's difficulties, but from learning how to live through them without being consumed by worry.

Part I: Foundations of Ms. Alice's Lessons

Every house has a foundation, and so does every life. Before we step into our own responsibilities, we are shaped by the rhythms of those who raised us. For me, that foundation was laid by my mother, Ms. Alice. She was not a woman of many words, but she was a woman of steady example. Her lessons did not come through speeches. They came through the way she lived each day. Over time, what she practiced became part of who I was becoming.

The first lessons were simple: nurture, order, and discipline. A made bed, a clean room, and a cared-for home were never just chores. They were shaping something deeper. Ms. Alice trusted GOD, lived what she believed, and taught without saying much at all. Looking back, I see that those small, consistent acts built a foundation that held me long after I left her home.

Chapter 1: My Mother, My First Nurturer

Before I learned how to pray, I learned how to be held. Before I could recite scripture, I experienced comfort. And before I understood the word nurture, I had already lived it through the hands, heart, and presence of my mother, Ms. Alice.

She was my first nurturer. She fed me, clothed me, disciplined me, and prayed over me. She made sure my body, my heart, and my life were covered.

From stories my siblings shared, I learned that when I was a baby, she would not let me crawl on the floor. She did not want me to skin my knees. I don't know if that was overprotective or simply her way of keeping me safe, but I do know this: she loved me deeply. I was the youngest, born years after the others, and by then she understood what it meant to care for a child. What she had learned, she poured into me.

Her care didn't stop with infancy. It followed me into everyday life. I remember Christmas mornings in her

apartment after my siblings had all moved out. At the time, it was my mom's first and only grandchild, Subrena, and me. One year, we tried to stay awake long enough to catch Santa, but sleep finally won. When we woke up, the presents were laid out under the tree like something out of a dream.

I never gave her a list, yet every gift felt like something I had quietly hoped for. She paid attention. She noticed. Without saying it directly, her gifts communicated something I would only understand later: I was seen. When she saw our excitement, she would smile and say, "That is so sweet." It was something she said often. Simple words, but they stayed with you.

Her nurture also included responsibility. I remember dealing with a boy at school who started by selling me a pencil, but then began demanding additional payments for it every day. One day, he asked for my shirt, and because of fear, I gave it to him. When Ms. Alice noticed it was missing, she asked where it went. After I told her, she said, "Go get it back."

I don't remember what I said to that boy, but I do remember this: the fear I had of him was nothing compared to the fear I had of my mother. His fear came

from intimidation. Hers came from love. She was teaching me to value what had been given and not let anyone take advantage of me.

Another lesson came during a summer trip to Six Flags. Each parent was responsible for a group of children, and I was in her group. Before we could enjoy the park, two kids wandered off. She handed the rest of the group to another adult, looked at me, and said, “We’re going to find them, and until we do, nothing else matters.”

We spent all day searching. By the time the children were found, it was almost time to leave. I didn’t get on a single ride. At the time, I was disappointed. Later, I understood. If something is placed in your care, you don’t walk away from it.

Even in small moments, she was shaping me. If I fell asleep watching television on a school night, she would quietly turn it off. If I woke up, I couldn’t turn it back on. She wasn’t just setting rules. She was setting boundaries that would follow me long after childhood.

Her care was most visible in moments I couldn’t control. When I was about seven, I had an interesting experience with a tree near our apartment complex. My friend and I had been bending it down and tying it to another tree so

we could ride it like a horse. One day, I tried it alone. That's the last thing I remember.

I woke up in my bed, under the covers, with Ms. Alice sitting beside me. She rubbed my head, held my hand, and prayed. I had been knocked unconscious. I don't know how I got home, but I know she was there when I woke up.

Years later, I experienced that presence again. After Army training, I bought my first car. One morning, after dropping off my girlfriend, another vehicle turned in front of me. I didn't see it in time. We collided.

At the hospital, barely conscious in the hallway with many other patients, I gave someone my mother's number. Not long after, I saw her walking toward me. She came straight to my bedside, held me, and asked if I was all right.

"Mom, how did you get here?" I asked.

"I walked," she said.

The distance from home to the hospital was nearly five miles. She didn't wait or hesitate. She just came.

That was her way. She didn't always remove what hurt, but she never left me in it. She showed up and stayed. She carried a presence that made me feel safe even when everything around me wasn't.

Over time, I came to understand that the comfort she gave wasn't only about fixing what was wrong. It was about being present in the middle of it. It was steady, personal, and close, something I didn't have to question or search for.

When I later read words about a mother's comfort, I didn't have to imagine what that meant. I had already experienced it. I think about her hands, her prayers, and the way she sat beside me when I couldn't take care of myself. Those moments shaped how I understand care, presence, and love.

She taught me what comfort feels like before I ever had language for it. Long before I understood Scripture, I had already lived some of it.