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Making God Proud: How My Drawings Improved When I Changed My Intentions.

Brian, a student of Architecture, describes how discovering he can offer his work for God helped him meet the targets set by his teachers.

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This was how I moved up the ladder:
from producing just a handful of

drawings on presentation day to offering up even more than I thought I could.

Anyone who had heard of my presentations was always intrigued with the fact that I seem to do a lot of thinking, yet come up with only a few sheets of design drawings to show for it. Like in other Architecture schools, we begin each semester with a *design brief* to usher us in, during which we are told the project we would be working on for that semester. This is a prerequisite course that demands more school hours and takes a sizeable chunk of our final grading. Actualisation of the design brief requires a semester-long cycle of work and criticisms from our mentors (lecturers) in preparation for the final defence before a set of assigned jurors.

On the D-day, the number and quality of sheets one pasted was a

statement of how much work had been done by the student. Since my second year, producing the required number of sheets for the presentation work had always seemed an uphill task. I would always fall short of the target, such that I soon became the talk of the school: those who submit the least number of design sheets, but still manage to get decent grades.

Apparently, only a very creative person could get away with this. My drawings were decently done, highly informative, well-illustrated but few. It was the number of sheets that really gave me concern.

While in my final year at the University of Nigeria, I decided to share my experiences with a group of friends at the Hillpoint University Centre, Enugu, and it became clear to me that I needed to do more. Earlier, during the preparation for our final jury which was two weeks away, we

had a preliminary design presentation. While some of my classmates had about 25 sheets ready to present and paste, I had a humble 12 sheets. I needed to beat the shyness and indicate just when the lecturer had asked for who had about 15 sheets to fit into a small space he had allotted. I had 12! My presentation went well, they applauded my work but weren't pleased with the brevity of the pasted works.

The new task

A few weeks to my final presentation, I attended a spiritual retreat for undergraduates which took place at Iwollo Conference Centre, Enugu. One of my resolutions from the retreat was the decision to see my drawing space as my altar and every sheet I create as an offering to God. With this new outlook, I knew I needed to do better.

I sat down one evening to plan. I listed all the required drawings and numbered up to 35 of them. Wow! This was my new target and I was ready to surprise myself. Now, the numbers were no longer as important to me as making each sheet a worthy offering to God, converting them to prayer. I told myself that I was going to create these sheets, caring little about the remarks I would receive from anyone. During this demanding period of preparation, my grandmother was sick and I remember giving up extended moments of rest and whispering to myself that this was for a purpose, an intention. Instead of another break, I would linger a little more, drawing. *"Big Mummy, this one is for you to be healed soon"*, I would mutter. Friends would later come up and pop the big question a few times, asking about the number of sheets I had at the time. "This is a test", I'd make myself

think and reply them in a vague manner with a figure I felt they anticipated.

The presentation morning came and while we were adding a few finishing touches, I decided to count my sheets: "... 14, 15, 16?" I was puzzled! Then, the thought immediately struck that we had submitted some sheets earlier for accreditation. I quickly reached out for my other sheet jacket again and completed the sum. Twenty-six (26) sheets were ready, all together! A smile came to my face. It felt as though I had just won a trophy. I was very pleased with the number. Even though I didn't meet the target of 35 sheets, it was a tremendous improvement for me. At that moment, I felt I had just made God proud. He too would have smiled then, I think. And he would appreciate that previously, my works weren't done with a clear intention to please Him but now both in

number and quality, it was a better offering.

Please pray for my Grandma... her legs still aches.

Brian is a final year student of Architecture in the University of Nigeria.

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