



SAFE DRIVING

with **JONAS AGWU**

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How I Killed My Unbelted Daughter

When I narrated the story you are about to read in my Church, Rhema Chapel International Churches last Sunday, there was dead silence followed by heavy sigh of pity and pain for the father involved in this tragedy. Yet when I set out to write today, I lost the inspiration to open up an intro of my choice but quickly recalled a touching text sent to me a day before December 25, 2015 by Usama, one of the on air personality with Naija FM in Lagos. Please kindly read through before you read mine. "They waited 18 years for her arrival. 18 years of TTC! The jabs from noisy neighbours, the quarrels with family members, the late night tears, the prayers, the fasting, the doctors poking every part of your body barely leaving you any dignity... she arrived on Christmas day, like my awaited gift she was... (yes, was) for only days ago she hopped into a vehicle with her doting mum, said goodbye to her loving dad. She was on her way to spend Christmas (and her 10th birthday) with grandma in Benin City. Split seconds, an accident... precious young life drew her last breath! Its goodnight for this little one! Mother has broken limbs-not yet stable. Two other family members-yet to regain consciousness! Father is devastated. Ah! Sadness! Broken dreams!!! Whose fault was it? What does that matter now? Tears, only tears... stream down the faces of all who hear the story, a story that is someone's reality! Driving and teaching others to drive defensively is about YOU!"

Usama message captures the event of December 23, 2015 which will forever remain fresh in my memory. On this fateful day, my schedule was to monitor Commands under my Zone in the Federal Capital Territory. After monitoring Abaji, I drove to Yagoji Command along the Abuja-Lokoja highway to get a first-hand information on crash status along this critical corridor since the commencement of the end of year patrol which commenced on the 18th dec, 2015 and ended on Wednesday, 13 Jan 2016. My rescue officer at Yagoji informed me that two fatal crashes had occurred within two days. The second crash, he told me involved that man (he pointed) standing by that accidented vehicle. When I glanced at him, I saw the tall black man who should be in his late forties or fifty by name Wale Edwards (not real name). After pleasantries, I expressed condolence and solemnly asked him how the crash happened.

He was quiet for few seconds and he confessed to me, sir, I killed my own daughter, my Jewel. It was my entire fault. She could have