

COMMISSIONED FOR IMPACT:

Address by Mr. Eddy Njoroge,

Guest of Honour, 48th Graduation Ceremony – Daystar University, 14th November 2025:

Ladies & Gentlemen,

I greet you all in the name of our Lord and Saviour - Good morning.

As someone who has worked in the public sector, I was trained on how to follow the protocol of the opening salutations in an event. You must always start the protocols with the most prominent person in the function. So, if the President of the Republic was here, we would have to start with him, seeing that he would be the most preeminent person in the room. But he is not here today; and our most distinguished presence today are the 2,248 graduands – the Class of 2025. Permit me therefore to start my salutations thus;

1. The Graduating Class of 2025
2. The Chancellor – Dr. Florence Muindi
3. Rev. Dr. Donald Smith – The Founder, Daystar University
4. The Chair of Council – Prof. George Njoroge
5. The Vice Chancellor – Prof Laban P. Ayiro,

For all the other guests and in the interest of time, please allow me to stand on all the other protocols that have been established by the MC.

It is indeed a great honour and pleasure for me to stand before you on this special day as you celebrate this milestone and to share with you a few of my own reflections under this year's very appropriate and opportune theme: **Commissioned for Impact** - Which is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ in;

Matthew 5:14 – “*You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.*”

In my humble observation, Daystar's story, rooted in **faith, determination,** and **humility** from its early beginnings in Southern Africa to its home here in Kenya, perfectly and divinely embodies this year's graduation theme- ***Commissioned for Impact.***

Daystar continues to pursue **excellence** in **education, service,** and **scholarship** while recognizing that true excellence must honour God and uplift **His** people. That requires a delicate balance between the intellectual and the spiritual.

I am informed that earlier this year, you broke ground for the new chapel- a dream first championed by your founding Vice-Chancellor, the late Prof. Stephen Talitwala, who 26 years ago walked the over 670 kms journey from Kampala to Nairobi to raise funds for its construction.

With this step, you have reaffirmed that the heart of this university remains very firmly anchored in faith.

And now to our distinguished guests

To the Graduating Class of 2025;

Let me start by asking you a question.

Have you ever had one of those years where life just keeps lifing? One thing after another, and before you can even catch your breath, something new and bigger unfolds.

The highs feel higher, the lows seem deeper, and everything seems to move at once.

The kind of year you look back on and just smile, shake your head, and say,

‘Mazee huo mwaka umekuwa noma.’

A year so packed that it left its mark on you; for life, for better, for growth, and for good.

‘Mwaka ulishawahi kuwa maform mob back- to-back’.

For me, 1975 was that year- a truly gigantic year with many life changing events. ***‘Ulikuwa deadly mob’***

So impactful was the year that I remember those events as if they happened only last year.

It all started in March;

My youngest sister was born on **Tuesday 25th March**. I am the first born and she is the 10th born.

Then on **Monday, 2nd June, 1975,**

Having completed my Bachelor of Science Degree in Chemistry and Biochemistry in May at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, I began my first job as a Sales and Marketing Management trainee with Twiga Chemical Industries .

Three weeks later, on **Sunday, 22nd June**, my first son was born. I had not yet received my first salary, but I had already received one of life's greatest blessings.

Subsequently, on **Wednesday, 8th October, 1975**, I sat just the way you are all seated today, at the Science Quadrangle of Makerere University, waiting to be conferred with my degree. Will talk about that a little later.

The final major event in the year was on **Friday, 17th December** when my last born sister-in-law was born.

She was the 12th born and my wife was the 2nd born in her family.

What a truly blessed year?

But let us go back to my graduation.

As was the tradition then, the Chancellor, was **HIS EXCELLENCY, FIELD MARSHAL, AL-HAJI DR. IDI AMIN DADA V.C., D.S.O., M.C. PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER- IN- CHIEF OF ALL THE DEFENSE FORCES IN UGANDA.**

He presided over the convocation.

And when he pronounced the words that every graduand including yourself here today anxiously awaits to hear,

“By the authority vested in me, I confer upon you the degree of Bachelor of Science with all the rights and privileges appertaining thereto,”

I could barely hear those words as I was engulfed with a deep sense of **pride, gratitude, and relief.**

That day represented the completion of one journey and the beginning of another.

When I flew back to Nairobi that evening, I was overly **excited** but also **apprehensive**. I had achieved a childhood dream, found employment, and became a father, all within four months.

But like many of you today, I did not know what the future held. What I now know, is that God the master planner had already written my story just as He declares and promises us in;

Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

At the time, I did not need to see the whole map; I only needed to trust the One who held the map of my life’s journey.

Becoming a Light on the Hill

That soon to be 23 year-old young man from a small village called Kamuguga perched on a small hill in Kabete Sub-County, Kiambu County, became, in his own small way, literally a light on the hill. Not to shine for his own glory, but to illuminate the path for others. To be emulated by hundreds of young boys and girls whose lives and potential were still in their buds but being constrained from blossoming in some cases by abject poverty and in others by misplaced priorities by their parents.

Being **commissioned for impact** is about living in such a way that others can draw **strength**, **direction**, and **hope** from your life. It is about using whatever light God has given you - your **education**, your **gifts**, and your **values**, to make a difference in a world that sometimes prefers darkness. But to do that, you must first allow your own mind to be renewed.

This is what Paul was teaching us when he wrote to the Romans as recorded in *Romans 12:2*,

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Your 2, 3, 4 or more years' education in Daystar University has equipped your mind. Now let God renew it. The true impact of your diploma or degree whether graduate, master's or doctorate level will not be in how much knowledge you carry, but in how that knowledge transforms you and the lives of those around you.

Today, fifty years later, I can sense amongst you, the same mix of emotions that I carried that day. **Joyful** but **anxious**.

Proud but **uncertain**.

Hopeful, yet quietly asking ,

" Lord, What Next?"

Some of you may have jobs waiting, others are still searching. Some of you are thinking of entrepreneurship, others of postgraduate study.

I am sure there are some of you who are thinking of starting a family or already have a family. A few of you are even wondering whether the struggle was really worth it.

I also appreciate that unlike during our times, some of you are mature students already working. Whatever your status, as a graduand I am sure the feelings are the same.

I understand those mixed feelings and appreciate that they are only naturally human. The world you are stepping into is not an easy one by any measure.

It is **Volatile, Unpredictable, Complex, and Ambiguous**. This is what the U.S. Army strategists in the 1990s described as **VUCA**; an analytical tool used in scenario-setting for businesses even today. But even in this new normal, allow me to suggest to you that your destiny should not be defined by external forces but instead it should be anchored in your internal character.

Allow me share with you, five of the key guiding principles that have shaped my life's journey and which I hope can help you in your own journey.

The first of these is **Discipline**.

1. Discipline protects your future.

John Rohn, an American philosopher wrote and said;

"In life, We must all suffer one of two pains: either the pain of discipline or the pain of regret."

You are here today because you chose the first. I am sure you know colleagues of yours who by their actions (which were envious at the time) defaulted to the second pain.

While the first pain is daily and weighs just a few grams, the second one may last for a lifetime and may weigh tons and tons.

Discipline is the quiet foundational strength that keeps you consistent when others grow rebelliously complacent. It is choosing **what you want most in the future** over what you **want now now**.

It is honouring your word, showing up on time, and finishing what you start. These seemingly small habits will quietly build a life and character that speaks louder than any title you may ever acquire in your life.

When I started work, I may not have been the smartest person in the room, but I learned that discipline can outlast talent. Over time, it becomes your silent ally. It will protect you when shortcuts look tempting, and it will open doors that brilliance alone cannot.

But as the Class of 2025, I am sure you already know this. You paid the small prices—late night studies, early morning alarms, refusing to go for dates and partying, harsh feedback, do-overs—and it brought you here.

As we step into what's next, keep the first choice alive - let's keep choosing the grams of discipline today, so we don't carry the tons of regret tomorrow.

The second principle is **Focus**.

I have always strongly believed that;

2. Focus shapes your direction and destiny.

Vision without focus is just but a wish or a dream. Set your own destination and direction then guard it. Often ask and remind yourself, “***Why am I doing this?***” That simple question has been my compass through many storms. When you lose your way, as you certainly will, remember to return to your “***why.***”

One young lady I have come to know, found hers through courage and clarity. Barnice began small, took every challenge as a test of faith, and today she leads projects that light up communities and impact thousands of Kenyans.

Her story reminds us that **purpose** is always our reward for **persistence**.

Allow me to share with you **Barnice’s Story**. I have already gotten her permission to share.

It was in December 2012 and as was my tradition, I was in Mombasa for the Christmas holidays and had gone to the then Nakumatt Nyali with my wife for shopping. While pushing my trolley, I was approached by a young lady who enquired of me;

“Are you Eddy Njoroge?” She asked me in excitement.

“Yes I am.” I replied.

“The MD of KenGen” she continued enthusiastically

“Yes I am” I responded

“I have always wanted to meet you,” she said. “I am a technician and my greatest dream has always been to work for KenGen.”

I was impressed by her audacity and courage and told her that although I could not give her any promises, I would nevertheless try my best to help her secure a job with KenGen. I gave her my email address and advised her;

“Send me your CV and I will see what I can do.”

Five months later, in May 2013, Barnice was employed as a Technician Grade III in KenGen. Just before I retired and left the company at the end of June that year, she sent me a message which read;

“Thank you for giving me this life changing opportunity.”

She signed it, Eng. Barnice. (Remember she was a technician).

I replied,

“Wish you a great career in KenGen. No need to thank me. I hope you learnt two lessons from our encounter,” I added:

1. “If you want something, go for it. If you did not approach me in the Supermarket in Nyali, you would never have gotten the job.

2. Unlike what most Kenyans believe, *You do not always **have** to know someone to get ahead.*”

Today, Barnice is a Registered Engineer and she is doing her Masters. My wife and I attended her wedding in Mombasa. She now has three kids and last year she brought the children to our home. It was a most rewarding afternoon.

Her story reminds us that **focus**, **courage**, and **initiative** are powerful forces. If you truly desire something, step forward in faith.

You never know how close you are to the opportunity that will completely change the trajectory of your life.

And as the good book reminds us in;

*Proverbs 4:25, “**Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you.**”*

Keep your eyes on your North Star- your clear constant guide and reference point. Stay focused on your mission, and let God handle the timing.

The third principle is the popular philosophy that is derived from a Zulu saying that says;

Umuntu, ngumuntu ngabantu – “A person is a person through other people.”

This is popularly known as **UBUNTU** and popularized by icons like Archbishop Tutu who said;

“My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together.”

It is a concept of humanness, and common and intertwined destinies. I personally have always believed that;

3. Humanity gives meaning to success.

The tagline for **Ubuntu** is - *“I am because we are.”*

Success that tends to isolate others is failure in disguise.

The certificates you will receive today are full of fingerprints. Fingerprints of your parents, your lecturers, your mentors, your friends. There are also the fingerprints of the non-teaching staff- the accountant, the gardner and even those of the lady who sweeps your lecture theatre. Yes. Even she has contributed to the certificate you will receive today.

Put your own fingerprints on other peoples’ lives, journeys and certificates.

Treat people with dignity. Listen before you speak. Learn to listen; listen to learn. Lift others as you climb. Chui.

As you move forward, remember that leadership without compassion is just authority. True leadership adds value to others.

In my own journey, the most fulfilling moments were not when I achieved personal milestones, but when someone I had mentored succeeded.

The world needs more leaders who can combine **competence** with **kindness**, **intellect** with **empathy**, and **power** with **humility**. Wherever you go, carry **Ubuntu** with you. The world needs leaders like your VC- Prof. Ayiro.

The fourth principle is around **Responsibility**. I have always believed that;

4. Responsibility multiplies trust.

There is a philosophical question leaders often debate: do you assign responsibility to those who are already shown they are responsible, or do you entrust people with responsibility so that they learn how to be responsible?

In truth, depending on the circumstances both options can apply.

Responsibility is **stewardship**, of time, of money, of relationships, and of influence.

Be faithful in small things and you will be entrusted with greater ones, just as we are reminded in;

Luke 16:10, “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much.”

In a world that often rewards **visibility** over values, choose **reliability**. Be the person who can be counted on to do the right thing even when no one is watching. Remember, Integrity is not about perfection; it is about **consistency**.

The final principle is perhaps the most important one. It is about **Faith**.

5. Faith anchors everything.

Let God remain at the centre of all you do. Work as an act of worship. Pursue excellence with humility.

Colossians 3:23–24 reminds us, “In all the work you are doing, work the best you can. Work as if you were doing it for the Lord, not for people. Remember that you will receive your reward from the Lord, which He promised to His people. You are serving the Lord Christ.”

This practice has shaped every step of my life journey. It reminds me that excellence is not just about **performance**, but about **purpose**. Whether in business, family, or service, your work becomes meaningful when you see it as an offering and worship to God.

Faith is not the absence of difficulty; it is the presence of peace within a difficult situation. There will be seasons when God seems silent, but silence

does not mean absence. Trust that He is preparing you for what you cannot yet see and that with him nothing is not possible.

Philippians 4:13 declares,

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Hold on to that promise. It will steady you when life feels uncertain and remind you that you are never alone.

When you weave these five virtues (key guiding principles) together: **discipline, focus, humanity, responsibility,** and **faith**, you will not only make a living, you will make a difference. You will have impact.

That is what it means to be **Commissioned for Impact**.

One song that has carried me through many seasons is ***Because He Lives***. Originally sang by Bill and Gloria Gunthe the chorus is a powerful message of encouragement. Let us all sing this together;

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow

Because He lives, all fear is gone

Because I know He holds the future

And life is worth the living just because He lives.

Let this song be your anthem when life feels uncertain.

Final word to the graduands. I know that as you go out there, there are many things that you are not happy with and you would want to change them. I know you would want to change our country, the world. We all did. While this may be your goal and fundamental right, remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi:

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Transformation begins within. If you change yourself, you will influence your family, your community, your nation, and ultimately the world.

To the parents, guardians, and friends. Today is your victory too. Celebrate fully and enjoy the after parties. Your sacrifice, support and faith have made this day possible. Continue to stand beside these young men and women (and the older ones too) as they step forward into their next chapter.

To the faculty, lecturers, and administrators, **thank you**. You have not only taught minds but also shaped character. Keep your doors open; your former students will still need your wisdom.

As I conclude, allow me to also commend you, Prof. Ayiro, and your team. I am reliably informed that you are in the process of concluding Daystar’s Strategic Plan for 2025–2030. I have no doubt in mind that its implementation will yield even greater impact for the institution and for the generations that will pass through its gates.

A milestone like your new strategy remind us that being *commissioned for impact* is not a one-time event; it is a continuous calling to serve with vision and purpose.

I am also informed that you are about to start the process of ISO certification. As a former President of ISO, let me urge you on and assure you that the certification will be a great testament to your commitment to quality and consistency.

And now a

Concluding words to all the graduands 2025;

Once again,

Congratulations to all of you

Your commissioning begins now.

Go forth with courage,

Go forth with focus,

Go forth with humility,

Go forth with Discipline,

Go forth with Ubuntu,

Go forth with God at the centre.

May your light never dim and may your impact endure for generations and generations.

God bless you all.