

Starting Where You're At

Eseabasi Ntefon is a new business owner. Having launched Scent of Heaven, a plant-based candle company with a Christian ethos in July 2025, she shares what she has learnt so far about the Lord and how he loves to holistically provide for his children; financially, spiritually, mentally, and in all the other ways necessary for life and business.

Anyone that has been through financial difficulty of any kind knows that reliance on the Lord takes on a new depth of meaning in such a season. I went through such a season last year, and as I faced the real possibility of ending 2025 with no (non-business) income beyond Universal Credit that barely covered my rent, I felt the weight of uncertainty. Yet in those moments, I was reminded of how my candle business, Scent of Heaven, began, and how the Lord faithfully provided for me just as he promised. This season eventually came to an end in December 2025, (seemingly at the 11th hour), but the reminder of the Scent of Heaven story remains.

Before getting into this story of how the Lord led me to start a candle business with no prior experience in the chandler [candle-making] industry, I think it's best to introduce myself.

I was born in Uyo, Nigeria, and moved to the UK with my family in 2006, at eight years old. The combination of a starkly new environment and being the self-absorbed middle child in a family of seven, led to me growing up desperate to both fit in and stand out. In a strange way, I wanted to be a wallflower and the star of the show. Needless to say, when I met Jesus in quite a dramatic way in 2020, he began the systematic eradication of both desires, replacing them with a yearning to live wholly for him. I have been many things following this 2020 encounter, including doing a three-year stint as a Youth Pastor in a London-based church, and have learnt to recognise how he speaks to me.

A God-download

When in 2023 I watched a YouTube video where a lady shared how she started a candle business in a typical "rags to riches" tale, I recognised God's voice in the prompt to begin

dreaming with him. I bought a pretty pink journal (because, in my opinion, an attractive notebook is a necessity to write good ideas in!), and envisioned how to make the same style of striking candles with the beautiful gospel attached to them, rather than vapid messages. In this place of dreaming with God, I poured out much that I had learnt during my Masters in Advertising, Marketing and the Media. Ideas for names, scents, colours and my logo flowed easily in what I can only describe as a "God-download". It was clear, though, that this prompt was not to start a Christian business for Christians alone, but a distinctly Christian business for all; where God's creation genius could be intertwined with a sensory dissemination of the gospel for Christians and non-Christians. What this meant was that each candle and its matching scent would carry a portion of the God-story, as interpreted by me, with a message inscribed on its packaging.



Scent of Heaven Candles

For example, the Secret Place candle, with its creamy vanilla-infused cocoa-butter scent would be – and now certainly is – a physical expression of the sweetness of spending time with God. The words inscribed on the candle would bring this to life:

Created as a sensory rendering of a Bible verse (Matthew 6:6), or what our Founder describes as “the sheer sweetness of spending time with God”. A luxurious world of ooey-goey cocoa butter and vanilla awaits you with each lighting of this candle.

These products were envisioned with the hope that my non-Christian customers would have their curiosity sparked with the idea that faith in Christ doesn't equate to stuffy religiosity, but is something alive and real. On the other hand, I hoped that my Christian customers would be reacquainted with the beauty of walking with our alive and real God.

As for the plant-based aspect of the products, this stemmed from my own personal health story and a weight-loss journey that I undertook in 2019. This journey induced in me a desire to look deeper into everything that I consume, so in the same way that my food came under scrutiny, so did the different waxes available for use. Upon finding out, during my research, that the popular (and cheaper) paraffin wax candles available in many commercial stores are a by-product of petroleum,

I concluded that the medium for Scent of Heaven products would have to be plant-based. Soy wax, with its luxurious richness and familiarity (tofu and soya milk being two of the most popular by-products of soy beans) became the fixation.

I was excited that through Scent of Heaven, I would have the opportunity to combine the things that meant the most to me, namely my faith in Jesus, creativity, health and environmental consciousness. This was clearly a God idea!

Needing to pause

In my excitement, I began to try to work out where I could begin the adventure. Many locations for a start-up candle business were considered in this process, including the kitchen of the church where I worked. However, after an understandable “no” due to insurance-related reasons, and the realisation that starting a messy candle business in the small kitchen of the family home I was renting was not the best idea, I paused.

Through this experience, I learnt that God-ideas are given to be executed in God's timing, and not ours. Some ideas are given at a specific time, for another time, and patience is key for execution. So I decided to park the idea and carry on being busy with my Father's business, the youth work that he had asked me to do for that specific time, but I did not forget Scent of Heaven,

and the stunning candles with names like Eden and Secret Place.

Then 2024 came, and with it followed moving back home with my parents, and the clear instruction that my time at the church I was working at would be coming to an end. This was jarring, as I was finally feeling emotionally safe and had become comfortable and confident as a Youth Pastor. I knew what I was doing, and many previous mistakes like attempting to do ministry without the help of the Holy Spirit had been eradicated... and it was here that the Lord was asking me to walk away?! However, in the midst of feeling jarred, I remembered that it is a bad idea to argue with the Creator of the Universe. During one of my mornings with God in early 2025, I asked, “so... what's next, Lord?”, and in his wonderful way, he reminded me of Scent of Heaven and the candles that I had only ever seen on a page.

So, with this green light, the right environment being in place, and the comfort of a large home kitchen, the pretty pink notebook came out and the ideas that were only ever in black ink became tangible prototypes. I was seeing all the God-downloads become real, and that was immensely rewarding. I also undertook a Candle Making Business Diploma course, which only solidified my desire to make plant-based candles as I learnt more about the nature of paraffin wax. *Cheap really is not always cheerful.*



Cheap is not always cheerful
photo: sjhexpress.com



Brick walls

In the midst of the enthusiasm, I hit many brick walls. The first was the realisation that the candle-making process is not as simple as “put wick in, put wax in”, and that it was much more science and maths heavy than I expected, or wanted. Formulas and ratios for wax and fragrance oils had to be just right; if not I risked having a formulaically unbalanced candle. Then the wick had to be tested rigorously to avoid a soot-producing candle, amongst other candle-related issues. The temperamental nature of a plant-based wax did not make this any easier. Nevertheless, I endeavoured to wipe my tears and keep on going when frustration hit.

The next wall came up when I realised that my pay and savings could only take me so far, and to launch Scent of Heaven, I would need to do things that scared me, namely asking for help.

Depending on your background, asking for help may not feel like death, but for me, starting a Crowdfunder was deeply cringe-inducing, and something I despised doing. However, stepping out in faith led to unexpected miracles and blessings coming my way. From a work friend paying for a label printer,

to Crowdfunding money coming in just when I needed a new piece of equipment, to seemingly random “I felt like blessing you with _____”, God opened doors for financial help. One such instance came when it was time to register Scent of Heaven with Companies House, and pay for a virtual address for the business due to the legal necessity of CLP (Classification, Labelling and Packaging) labels for commercial candle products. As my depleted bank account stared at me, I realised that I could not pay the costs needed, and so sighing, I told the Lord, “if you want me to continue with this business, I need you to provide the money needed”. Little did I know that as I dejectedly walked away from my laptop that evening, the conversation I would have with an individual from church with business experience would lead to a loan that would cover all those costs, with some to spare. And to top it all off, it was communicated to me that this loan was not expected back, and thus was a double blessing for me.

A joyful adventure

With each act of obedience, conversation and step of faith, God did “exceedingly and abundantly above” and beyond what I could ask for or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). Seven months later, I am amazed at what

the business has achieved – most excitingly, being in a more stable financial position and grant processes being put into place – even during a time of personal financial hardship. I have had the privilege of being at Christian and non-Christian events and markets, piqued much interest with the inscriptions on the products, and have had great feedback from customers. I have also cried many tears and have had many late nights as I prepare for the next event. And what a joyful adventure it has been so far!

Through the Scent of Heaven journey, albeit one that has just started, I have learnt that there are times when the Lord will give the blueprint of an idea, but then desires that we listen to him to know when to move forward. He then desires that we move with the ebbs and flows of his timing; listening, moving, pausing, and reflecting when necessary. I sometimes wonder at the fact that if I had stopped at the financial hurdles or had stayed where I was comfortable, I would not have had the privilege of seeing what Scent of Heaven has become and will become (with the Lord’s continued help).

So, I encourage you to push the boat out. Tune into his voice.

Start where you’re at with what you have. Do your part as the Lord does his part. 



Esebasi is Nigerian-British and obsessed with making Jesus known and accessible to all.

This life-call has been manifested through mediums such as writing, youth and charity work, worship, and most recently, candle-making. Through her plant-based candle business, Scent of Heaven, she has tied together her passion for Jesus with those of health consciousness and creativity, with the aim of drawing people to the beauty of following a deeply loving God.