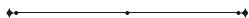


No Fear, No Doubt, No Worry



Lori Hawkins

No Fear, No Doubt, No Worry

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Dedication

THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 14:26 - *But the Comforter, [which is] the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 16:13 - *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, [that] shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

*“For with God nothing shall be impossible.”
(Luke 1:37)*

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PREFACE

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Genesis 1:26-27)

When I thought about writing a book, I could not figure out where to start? I realized that it began in Genesis with our original parents, Adam and Eve. God gave them dominion over the earth and free will. He wanted them to love Him and each other. God patiently waits for us to know, love, and fellowship with Him. Now, though, because of the choices Adam and Eve made, God sent His Son Jesus Christ to atone for our past, present, and future sins. Our heavenly Father wanted to restore the relationship with His family. In those days, there wasn't a manual to help guide them. The Word is not only our connection into understanding God's mind, but the key to living a blessed, joyful, contented, peaceful life. To begin with, we need to choose to believe and repent of our sins. It restores our relationship with Him. We need to put Him first, cultivating that relationship continually by reading the Word, praying steadfastly, and giving thanks as we praise Him for our blessings every day.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the

world; but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:16-17)

I grew up with a weak foundation in Christ through my mother's limited education of God and the Son of Man. She made sure my youngest brother and I had at least an introduction to religion. If we did not make it to church, she sat us down and read Revelation to us to instill the fear of God in us. That meant to be afraid of instead of revering Him. Unfortunately, due to our lack of education regarding Jesus Christ and God's love for us, we lacked direction in life.

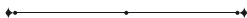
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:6)

I lived life haphazardly, lacking proper guidance while maturing. I had no solid foundation to help me make better decisions as I entered adulthood. These aren't excuses, but facts.

For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11)

After fifty-two years, God and I formed an intimate relationship. It didn't take me too long to wrap my head around the transition of putting God first in life. I was ready; it was time. The only alternative was death. This memoir summarizes my life journey through a liver transplant, God's walk with me through my trials and tribulations, and what caused me to make a life-changing decision.

INTRODUCTION



HURTING PEOPLE HURT PEOPLE

I grew up in a small rural farming town in central Illinois as the youngest and only girl out of five siblings. My mother rejected me since birth and raised me to be a survivor. To understand ourselves, sometimes we need to look at our childhood/parent relationships.

My mother's biological father died in a car crash when she was sixteen. On the rare occasion it came up, she still held pain and sadness in her voice showing they possessed a good relationship. Her stepfather abused her. To run away, she got pregnant on purpose at fifteen enabling her to get married. Her mother and stepfather wed and divorced three times. Being informed about my mom's life and what she endured while growing up, helped me to understand her better regarding her treatment toward me.

My mom married twice. She gave birth to two sons with her first husband. My smart, talented, oldest half-brother charmed three women into matrimony. They ended in divorce with two kids during his last marriage. He struggled with alcohol and prescription drug addiction which ended up in suicide at the age of forty-four. My brother tried to get help everywhere except God as much as I could discern. He couldn't get rid of his demons.

I wasn't aware of my second oldest half-brother until I was nineteen because he was adopted. My mom found out he lived only five hours away in a neighboring state. We took a road trip together to meet him for the first time; I was around twenty-one years old. Her anxiousness and excitement showed on her tired, aging face and voice. He was born on July 4, the one day a year she drank

alcohol. Her mother forced my mom to put him up for adoption when he was nine months old. My grandma told her there wasn't enough money to raise two children which meant giving up one child and getting a job. My grandmother was a stern woman who never smiled much.

In the fifties, jobs weren't easy to find for a divorced woman with baggage. She had many strikes against her. She was divorced, only seventeen years old with two kids, no high school diploma, and no job experience. My grandma worked out an arrangement with a family that wanted to have children who managed a factory. In exchange, they gave my mother a job for the adoption, easing her divorce from an abusive alcoholic husband.

She got married to my dad in the late fifties and gave birth to three kids. My oldest biological brother lived with our grandma (mother's side). I didn't know him well until we worked together forming a family business after my first divorce. My father never punished me. He wasn't blind to my sorrows, but couldn't talk about emotional things. One outstanding observation he made related to me once was, "That Lori, if she says she's gonna do something, she's gonna do it!" It impressed me; he was paying attention.

Raised in contrary fashion, I only grew up with my youngest brother. God's omniscience told Him I would take the wrong path, so He prepared me along the way. It's a blessing my parents raised me to learn how to take care of myself even though the road was tough. I rebelled because there was no mother/daughter bond. She rejected me from day one while I observed her love for everyone else. Others told me my aunt took care of me after my birth showing my mom didn't want me.

At sixteen, I overheard my mother tell my oldest biological brother, “I never liked her that much.”

It was dreadful enough coping with the rejection, but hearing my mother confirm it out loud devastated me. Afterward, I ran away a few blocks to a friend’s house. She sent the cops to pick me up. That just led to more rebellion, self-abuse, and a tarnished reputation, but I didn’t care. People shouldn’t judge and assume things concerning a person because they are not aware of what happens behind closed doors.

My imagination spun out of control for decades adding dysfunction, wondering about the truth no one shared. People want to believe they are protecting someone through lies by omission, however, the truth sets you free. Something happened to my mom either while I was conceived or during her pregnancy that caused her to ignore and turn her back on her only daughter.

She verbally said, “I love you” twice under duress. We never developed a close bond because she never tried to know me. I strove to gain approval or recognition repeatedly. There were instances I wanted her to hit me to find out if she felt any love toward me. Vowing to be a better parent, I didn’t raise my daughter the same way. I wish my mom confided in me, so I could have understood her more. I attempted to get her to go to counseling with me to work on our lack of connection, but she backed out at the last minute. She preferred to live in a state of denial. When I get to heaven, my mom and I will have a relationship again but this time it will be as God intended, in the image of His Son, Jesus Christ.

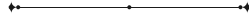
I spent the next decade as a college student. After earning two bachelor’s degrees in science, I worked until becoming ill around the age of forty-eight making work next to impossible. It was because of an unrelated problem

that major surgery at fifty-one was necessary. My body ceased operating after that surgery. Five weeks later, I became jaundiced and doctors diagnosed end-stage liver disease. They said I needed a liver transplant to survive.

Hurting people, hurt people.

Because of my mother's tough love, I have been able to endure much pain and learn to rely on myself. If I had included more God in my life, it would have been easier, but I was a warrior. Now I am a warrior of God. My academic advisor and instructor in college once told me I was a very resourceful person. I had to become one at a young age to survive. I am convinced this experience (among others) helped me to prepare for the liver transplant.

Chapter 1



MY BACKSTORY

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

My life started in the suburbs of Chicago. I was born an ill baby so that put me in and out of the hospital regularly because of respiratory complications from asthma. My mother smoked when she was pregnant with me which explained some of my health issues. They told me I came close to meeting the Lord several times as an infant. The doctor told my parents to consider moving out west since he heard others with respiratory problems did well after moving to a dryer climate. He advised my parents to get an air conditioner for our house to decrease the allergens. Illinois is an allergy nightmare for asthmatics. My mother did not want to spend the money on an air conditioner. My father demanded we get one and figured out how to pay the bill later. The families that owned air conditioners in our neighborhood were few because it showed monetary wealth (above middle class) and we did not fit that description.

Our neighbor watched me before I started school. Her oldest son was around my age and abused me one day (I was four). He got me stuck under a piece of furniture trying to convince me it was a new game. I screamed for help until his mother came to my rescue. When my mom found my bloody underwear in the laundry, she yelled, “What happened!” When I told her the story, she became angry at me as if it was my fault. The memory of her raising her voice, yelling accusations, making me lie on her bed, and shoving a suppository inside has been imprinted on my brain forever. I pray for God to help heal my memories.

First Grade

In first grade, my teacher was Mrs. Heighmeister, a tall, large-build, German woman with black horn-rimmed glasses, below the knee skirts, thick pale hose, black shoes, topped off with an old-fashioned long-sleeved blousy shirt up to the chin. Only the skin on her face and hands were visible. She was strict, mean, and terrifying.

I grew up in an era when discipline in school comprised humiliation, rulers, and paddles to instill fear in children. The method implemented was like the Old Testament fear of God; the fear of pain and wrath. My teacher humiliated me in class one day because I forgot to bring my reading book back from taking it home to practice. She made the boy next to me dump my desk over my lap to see if the book would fall out. Embarrassment made blood rush to my face and my internal temperature rose to sweating. I sat there frozen in time. She got up out of her seat, confronted me, and the ruler came out to greet my hands. After that, I forgot nothing.

One day, she asked both of my parents for a parent-teacher conference in view of the fact I couldn't read or write well. It was humiliating when called on to read out loud while listening to the other students making fun of me. During the conference, I overheard my teacher telling my parents to work with me at home to catch up with the rest of the class. That forced my mother to work with me while she worked two jobs. Thankfully, I have always been a fast learner and caught up quickly.

We had good times living there, too. We experienced the blizzard of 1967 with 50 mph-plus wind gusts creating fifteen-foot snowdrifts. It struck on January 26-27 with a record-setting 23 inches of snow. It remains the greatest snowfall in one storm in Chicago's history. I was too small to play outside long, so I watched my youngest brother and neighborhood kids make tunnels in snowdrifts. One neighbor made a slide on the back of their Volkswagen bug. Many houses couldn't use their back door because the snowbanks climbed to the roof.

During the summer, you could see thirty or more kids playing tag. I got my first bike when I lived there. It was lime green with a tallissy bar and a black banana seat with a matching green stripe down the middle. I was visible for a half a mile (in my mother's playbook).

Before I started second grade, my father went to Tucson, Arizona, to find a job and a house. We moved out west because my doctor advised it would be a better climate for my health. Then my mother, youngest brother, and I moved to Tucson to join my dad. It was our first airplane ride on TWA when they gave away wings. Afterwards, I dreamed of being a stewardess traveling the world. That year for Christmas, I got a Barbie airplane. I spent hours playing with that toy. Mom showed me how to make furniture out of little boxes and pieces of fabric. I

didn't have a sister for companionship. The ability to make friends didn't happen easily for me, either. My youngest brother was not fond of me, so creativity started early. I turned into a dreamer with a vivid imagination.

Fourth Grade

Fourth grade was a big year. I joined the band, chorus, and Girl Scouts. I always loved music. Mom played her records when she cleaned the house. It was infectious. That's how I got to know the oldies like Bobby Vinton, Johnny Mathis, Bobby Goldsboro, and Helen Reddy to name a few. She danced the jitterbug, and belted out, "I am Woman" with Helen Reddy while I dusted. I was in the band, chorus, and choral groups from fourth grade through my junior year. I can't imagine how the music in heaven will sound. Music continues to get me through life.

In fourth grade, I went to a Baptist Church. Occasionally, my parents went with me, but I rode the church bus (by myself) across town (in the city) to get there. When you went to this church without missing fifteen Sundays in a row, you got a free Bible. I wanted that Bible! My parents forced me to visit my grandparents when I was one Sunday shy of getting that Bible. I threw a huge fit and made my mother promise me when we got back nothing would intervene. I started over and made it. She knew it was important. I still have my King James Red Letter Edition Bible to this day. It's still too hard for me to read.

Sixth Grade

We sold our house and moved into a rental house on Alamo Drive right before I started sixth grade. My mother was preparing us to move back to the small town in Illinois where our family originated. That year, my mother bought me a small organ/piano for Christmas. I loved learning and playing songs! I taught myself how to play with a music book for beginners full of Burt Bacharach and Karen Carpenter songs. When I learned nearly every tune in that book by myself, I asked my mother for another one, but it never happened. I also read Beverly Cleary books, but Mom wouldn't take me to the library anymore. While growing up, I felt held back and frustrated.

In my family's brief time living there, I befriended sisters that lived on my block. They went to a Catholic church and their mother was a secretary at that church. I attended this house of God with them as many times as they would let me. That place was amazing filled with hand-carved woodwork. It was old and made of adobe stucco with massive brass organ pipes that went two to three stories high connected to a vaulted ceiling. The choir stood a story high at one end of the church. The priest walked up several stairs to get to the pulpit made into a little turret. You could see the priest wherever you sat. This church was a magical place for me, I was in another world. Looking back, I was feeling God's presence and didn't know it. I asked my friends if I could become a Catholic because I was in love with that church. They told me not to, negatively stating, "You don't understand what you're getting into." They were right, and, it never happened. We lived in Arizona for seven years then moved back to Illinois in 1976.

Junior High/High School

We moved to our parent's family roots in a small town in Illinois during the summer of 1976. When I hit junior high, mother quit doing my laundry expressing our need to learn for future circumstances. We always had chores and kept the house while our parents worked until our after-school activities took precedence. It was a nominal change moving from a big city to a small town. You left your doors unlocked and rode your bike after dark; stuff we couldn't do in the city. Our parents wanted us to grow up in a small town because they saw the world changing. We didn't realize how much freedom we had back in those days. People had less fear, doubt, and worry when compared to today.

Making friends was easier in a small town. When we moved to the village, my youngest brother and I were the new "big-city" kids. Mom signed me up to play summer softball. In the city, we wore cleats when we played ball to keep from sliding in the dirt. In the country, the girls played in tennis shoes. I didn't realize it, but they thought I would be a big-city show-off because I wore cleats. They found out it wasn't true, after knowing me. Then, every girl wore cleats. I loved sports as I was a huge tomboy with tons of energy.

When school started, I found junior high was a tough transition. In the city, you become anonymous at this level. In the country, everyone knows everyone. I became good enough in sports to start most games. In a small town with less competition, there was a lesser chance of becoming a bench-warmer. In the city, I would have started on the bench because the junior high schools

were huge. Sports and the yearly fair were the only extracurricular activities to look forward to in those days.

In junior high, I joined the local Christian church and became a part of their small choral group called the Lightshiners. We traveled to churches, put on a skit and sang. I enjoyed it. The Minister and his wife were pleasant, earthy, and understood how to communicate with young people. The church attendance packed the pews most of the time.

I got baptized at this church. Baptism by submersion only needs to happen once. When I refresh my memory, deep in my heart, though I didn't understand what had just happened, this sealed my soul. This enabled me later in life to find my way back to God after making wrong decisions and living an immoral life.

The Minister and his wife moved on to another house of God out of the area. After they left, the church went downhill. The new preacher did not have the pizzazz, so church got boring and much of the congregation left. Soon, living in the world would become harder and I needed more God in my life.

I noticed my skin turn to a yellow tinge after we moved to Illinois, unlike the other girls who looked whiter. It never left, so every spring tanning became a high priority. My skin looked prettier with a tan camouflaging the yellow. My liver was trying to tell me something, but no one noticed. The drugs given to keep me alive (since I was a baby) started the damage. My body compensated for itself; therefore, it was asymptomatic.

A Traumatic Year

When I was fourteen, I liked a guy in the neighboring town. He was sixteen, and the rules were no

dating until I became sixteen. I wore mom down and she let me go out with him because he was from a good family. He raped me refusing to take “no” for an answer. It terrified me to break up right away. It took two excruciating weeks before I could tell him it wasn't working out besides, I didn't want to alert anyone. I had to tell my mother when I was a few weeks late for my period.

At that time, she tried miserably to run for office against her now ex-boss to make a point. He was notorious for his inappropriate behavior, harassing women. He pushed the wrong button and he made sure my family suffered in exchange. In the late 70s, you didn't talk about it out loud. Women in the office warned each other for protection. In fact, the U.S. Supreme Court didn't address sexual harassment for the first time until 1986, which became the first landmark case.

She told me to “bury the rape under the rug.” Weeks later, I had the worst, painful period of my life which I had never experienced. I believe God answered my prayers and I miscarried. Pregnancy would have destroyed me at that young age. Besides, mom did not want the “incident” to impede her “running for office.” I suffered in silence.

Her short political aspirations ended in a huge fiasco resulting in my dad losing his state job and my mother losing her job as well. It sent us to the poorhouse. We were being watched by an ominous car that sat across the street from our house in a church parking lot under the lights as a scare tactic. Her boss knew what he did and got concerned for his reputation. It worked. We spent the summer moving. First, to California that lasted three days, then we moved to Tucson for two months, and finally back to the village. This time, my brother and I wanted to

move, except now our parents couldn't find work because the economy changed. They spent their savings. I have always had a hard time planting roots even though I keep trying.

My mother stood at five-foot-tall, ninety pounds (on a good day) and worked hard her entire life; maintaining two jobs most of the time. Resourcefulness and "how to stretch a dollar" were two of her best attributes. She worked mostly in the service industry. She instilled in us an impeccable work ethic. If you clean toilets; be the best toilet cleaner hired. When you rented a house, you left it cleaner when you left. It became a fiber of our being so to speak. She proudly got her GED at long last.

My dad got paid well working nights at a mine driving a monster truck while we lived in Arizona. I didn't see him much, but we got along well. He became one of the few people I enjoyed as a traveling companion in later years. He would do anything and not complain. My dad and I fished together in the Caribbean twice, danced, flew first class, went snowmobiling at Lake Tahoe, and played the slots. We saw Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gormé at the Star Dust casino, the last act before they imploded it. We sat there singing the songs we knew.

My dad was a preacher's son. His parents died when I was young. His father became a Pilgrim Holiness Preacher and my grandma was a devout Lutheran and full-blooded German. I remember her long uncut hair always worn in a bun, below the knee skirts, hose, the same outfit my first-grade teacher wore. However, this grandma was nice to me.

High School

When I became a freshman, I figured out how many credits I needed to breeze through my senior year. I always thought ahead. I wanted to play in sports, focus on working out, and getting better. I wanted my senior year to focus on athletics and having fun without the pressures of tons of homework and tests. Being an athlete and taking an overload of classes through my early years of high school turned out to be difficult, but possible.

I loved sports. It gave me something to do and released pent up energy. Your muscle fibers dictate if you are a sprinter or an endurance runner. I couldn't sprint, but long-distance running was in my blood. I exercised off and on throughout life. Muscles have memory so this helped me before, during, and after surgery. After the transplant, my muscles wasted away and my abdomen showed the "Mercedes scar" from being dissected in half. It's important to be in the best shape you can before a major surgery to make recovery easier.

My mother didn't argue about my participation in athletics except it cost money (she could always afford Pepsi and cigarettes, though). Nevertheless, she admitted it kept me out of trouble. I started track my freshman year. My family wasn't able to afford real track shoes, so I ran in my holey tennis shoes. It looked embarrassing to run in meets with holey shoes, but I didn't show it. Coach said, "You need a pair of proper track shoes," but I told her it wasn't in mom's budget. Coach came to practice one day with a brand-new pair of cleats. I returned them to her at the end of the year.

My first love happened during my sophomore year in high school. We were crazy about each other. He was a generational farmer living outside of town. He came into

town to pick me up and take me home after every ballgame. His mother and older brother didn't care for me. They tried to convince him I was no good and kept pressuring him into breaking up with me. He stood his ground, but I had issues handling it. We seemed so compatible that ending up together was a real possibility.

We came close to getting pregnant, but God had other plans. I wasn't able to handle the pressure at that age. Anxiety, along with raging hormones had taken over my brain and body, so I broke up with him.

He said, "Tell me to my face, you don't love me anymore."

I lied and told him I didn't love him anymore because he would have tried to convince me otherwise. He made me say it twice to see if I would crack. I almost did because it was tortuous keeping it internalized. We never spoke afterwards, then he dated one of my best friends. He was an awesome guy and died too young, in his forties. Now, he knows why I had to break his heart.

My junior year started in the principal's office. Turns out I could graduate the end of my junior year. If it was important to have a senior year, I only needed to take a one-credit class. Unfortunately, I listened to my mother and kept one credit, so I finished my senior year in one semester. Most of the friends I ran around with were a year older which meant we could have graduated together. Instead, I went a whole semester for one class, forcing me to sit in study hall the rest of the time. The principal would not allow me to find a job, take part in COOP, workout, or go to the music room. I did not realize it would be a waste of my time sitting in study hall all day or that I would end up pregnant.

Months after the breakup, I met someone new and assumed I understood what love meant. I ended up getting

pregnant on the pill during my senior year. We already promised ourselves to be together and he gave me a ring. We wanted to live together, but the pregnancy pressured us into marriage.

My mother blew up like an atomic bomb when told her I was expecting. She did not want to be a grandmother at thirty-five. She said I had two choices, “You can adopt or end the pregnancy.” My mom tried to pressure me into making a choice. I wasn’t aware of my adopted half-brother yet. How could she suggest those decisions knowing how it devastated her? I stood my ground against both choices and chose accountability for my actions. God got me through it even though we were separated. I didn’t entertain either suggestion for one second. I got pregnant on the pill. I became part of the “less than one percent,” the pill didn’t work for “statistic.” God wanted me to have this child.

My daughter grew up and married a godly man, choosing to raise seven beautiful children of which the first six were adopted from varying circumstances. Do you think God had anything to do with that? The Bible says no one is born a mistake because God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world in Ephesians 1:4.

It would have been difficult for me to be pregnant while going to school. It’s interesting how that worked out. In those days, expecting a child while in high school was not the norm for our small town. The secret was held just in time for me to graduate early and not face the gossip. People were already whispering about my decision as I fulfilled the final credit in January 1982. Nobody knew my choice to graduate early happened before I got pregnant. I had more important things to figure out, so ignoring the gossip became easy after leaving school early.

My mother's plan got thwarted by becoming a grandma at thirty-five. My parents were not far from having a child-free home. They had no grandchildren yet. I broke the mold; I was the black sheep, marching to the tune of a different drummer! Six months later, my youngest brother had a girl, six months later, my oldest half-brother had a girl. That brought first a blonde, second, a brunette, and last a redhead into the world!

Nevertheless, I was already engaged and planned to graduate early before I knew I was expecting. Getting a job and having a family was what everyone did in a small town. It's one of those societal norms when you grow up in a village. Innovations and fads didn't seem to trickle down to our small rural farming community for at least a decade. Small towns don't like to change certain things or ideas. You appreciate it when you get older. Besides, I couldn't stop imagining having a child who would love me back, filling an oppressive void. That hole in my heart and soul became my weakness.

Marriage

After graduating from high school in 1982, we entered marriage. Marriage was difficult. We were too young with too many issues. My mom said, "You're pregnant so you might as well get married." We married for the wrong reasons with the thought if it didn't work out, we could get a divorce. Marriage was not an answer and immaturity didn't help. After we divorced, my daughter and I moved in with my parents. He got into trouble and joined the military. I applied for welfare. Then I tried to join the army so I could move out and live on my own, but the government wouldn't accept my application. I felt rejected all over again. My mother did not want to raise another child; however, she would not let me become

homeless. I got depressed and was basically clueless concerning what direction to take with my life and what strengths I possessed. In fact, I thought I was too stupid to go to college until I graduated later with high honors. I didn't get nurtured much while growing up.

Being a single parent was the toughest job I'd ever had. I cried non-stop at times because of exhaustion. I didn't get every other weekend off and needed breaks which only came on vacations and during visits with grandparents.

Our daughter was sixteen when her father ended up with a medical discharge from developing multiple sclerosis during Desert Storm. She was presented with the opportunity to move in with him before he got too ill and was bedridden. She went to school out east where he lived and helped take care of him for a while. She got to spend time with him filling an emptiness. Thank you, God. We ended up friends and I even went to visit them once during that time. He suffered for years before he passed away in 2018. Everyone was thankful he didn't have to be in distress anymore. They laid him to rest with his dog who was ready to go, too.

My oldest biological brother moved back (before I gave birth) and opened a hair salon on our parents' back porch. My mom and brother talked me into becoming a hairstylist. We built a successful family business/hair salon together. Clients booked six months in advance and we had a waiting list. Therefore, we planned our lives half a year ahead. Mother became our receptionist, shampooer, inventory control; you name it she did it. She was the glue of the business. Everyone loved her, especially her shampoos. Since I was a single mom, it provided my daughter security and allowed me to be a good parent at the same time.

The occupation of a hairstylist is difficult on the body, though. I stood for hours on end, breathing in toxic fumes. Everyone else smoked except me. That was back in the day when perms were popular, CFC's were unregulated, and ammonia was a main ingredient in the products we used. Cutting hair is an art that not everyone can do well. We trained with European companies every six months to stay on top of industry trends.

I quit the hair business after ten years because of asthma and I couldn't get past poverty level. I was sick at least six months out of the year. Statistics in the 80s-90s showed over eighty percent of hairstylists ended up with a lung disorder. This meant I was high risk because of my respiratory problems.

I saw the writing on the wall and signed up for college to get a degree for several reasons. First, cutting hair is a certificate program, and if you want to move a long distance to start over again, you can't take your clients with you. Second, I would not make enough money to raise my daughter and afford to send her to college. Third, I had no social life. Nobody wanted to date a young, divorced, single mother. Lastly, I was self-employed and had to pay ALL my taxes. Even my H&R Block tax lady told me I needed to find another job. I double booked my appointments and worked overtime, but never got far from poverty.

When I told my mother I wanted to go to college, she said, "Why would you want to do that?"

I stood there, speechless. I quit cutting hair and attended college full time during and after my second marriage.

Second Marriage

My daughter didn't get correspondence from her father because he was in the military (what I told her.) I filled the role of both parents to our child. We went to church together. I had met a man when I cut hair and he turned out to be a teacher/coach in town. We dated on and off for the next five years. I was looking for companionship plus a father for my daughter. We decided to get married and had to see the minister for pre-marriage counseling. I wanted to do it right this time. We married in 1986. He had three daughters living with their mother that came down every other weekend. He told me he did not want to pay for my college education. We had a huge house to take care of and I became busy with my daughter's activities, high school activities, and college. Church took a backseat once again.

My mother lived a block away. I was the first one called when she died. I was twenty-seven. She died December 30, 1991, with the burial on January first. I was the unfortunate person who saw her first. Those are visuals you can never "un-see." She was sitting on the kitchen bench. Her eyes wide open, frozen like a lifelike wax figure. When I got there, her neighbors who found her were waiting for a family member to arrive. I ran in, saw her, then immediately lunged at her, but the neighbors grabbed me and stopped me. I fought them yelling, "MOM," and crying not realizing she was dead. They told me I punched one of the neighbors in the face because I resisted so hard. It took both of them to hold me back. They didn't want me to touch or move the body.

Suddenly, I got nauseous and dry heaves over the kitchen sink. I calmed down while they escorted me to the living room. My husband arrived from the Jr. Sr. High

School next door along with the ambulance. I sat in a living room chair crying a sea of tears, in shock. My husband just sat there asking me if I was okay. He did not hold me, hug me, or offer me any comfort. I sat there in shock as they broke her legs and arms so they could transport her out of the house.

My mother had a rough life in her younger years. A part of her had died inside which was sad because sometimes she showed an amazing side to herself. She possessed a good poker face and was a great actress. She knew for six years she was dying and didn't tell a soul.

A few days after she died, I had a vivid dream about her. I was on a plane with a bunch of others wearing white while looking straight ahead in total white light. As I looked around, no passengers moved or said a word. Something blurred their faces so I couldn't make them out except for hers. My mother and I were the only ones in dark clothes. It was so I could see her amongst everyone else and to know I was not part of their journey. She was standing many rows up on the left and could hardly look at me. She said in a gruff voice, "You have nothing to worry about." It sounded like her voice when she was alive, not particularly happy. When I woke up the next morning, I was sweating and crying uncontrollably. The dream was so real. In her own way, I think my mother was trying to comfort me. Once again, my husband responding to my tears by just asking if I was okay.

I wouldn't recommend doing your loved one's hair and makeup, but my brother and I were in the beauty industry. Our mother wore her hair and makeup meticulously, never leaving the house without it done. We were the only ones that could duplicate it. The number of people that showed up to give condolences was

unbelievable primarily because of the salon. They laid her to rest in the local cemetery next to my brothers.

My second husband and I mowed two of our local cemeteries for three grueling years while he attained his master's degree in education. Between the two of us, we had four kids we could have claimed on a FAFSA to help fund his education, but he was too prideful in a self-centered way. Our extra yearly "fun" vacation money paid for his master's degree. We had three riding mowers and were always straightening up graves and flowers due to inclement weather. It gave me a new appreciation for cemeteries along with the backbreaking care they need.

When we divorced in 1994, I cut my losses, asking for nothing. I went to college to get my science degree with the help of welfare. I wanted no strings attached. That had to be the Holy Spirit telling me to do it. Instead of trying to find a father for my daughter, I should have raised her by myself and sought God's plan for my life. In fact, my choice of a second husband was harmful to my child. I found out years later he had abused her. It shed light on why my daughter came close to flunking out of sixth grade. I took her to a psychologist for eight months for help. I knew something was wrong, but nobody was telling me the truth. Thank you, God, for pushing me out the door. I remember everything fell into place. I had food, shelter, everything we needed to start a new beginning. When they say marriage takes two, it takes three; husband, wife, and most important, the power of God.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (Romans 12:19)

Reflections

Especially during my teenage years, I was always looking for someone to love me unconditionally. That's what made the next season of my life so difficult! However, when I look back now, I can see where and when God had to have been with me even when I did not realize it.

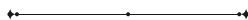
Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. (1 John 4:13)

Take a moment to reflect on how your life's backstory has affected the decisions you made as an adult.

What were the major influences during your childhood, adolescent, and teenage years?

How can you use what you have learned from my life's journey to begin to change what needs to be changed in your own life?

Chapter 2



SIN CITY

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
(Romans 3:23).*

Hello, my name is Lori and I am a sinner.

I finished college and sought a high-paying job as a pharmaceutical sales representative because of massive student loan debt and my daughter wanted to be a pharmacist. This meant a private institution costing more money. I understood this because I had been in Chiropractic school (private) which ends up resulting in huge student loan debt. Students with family support surrounded me. If you don't have family support, the road can be painstaking. Determination and support are what I needed to provide my daughter with choices in life. I learned this after not having any support of my own. I finished another bachelor's degree in human biology enabling me to understand how drugs work in the human body preparing me well for a job in the drug industry. This well-paying job would help me support her education.

Little did I know this would play a major part in my liver transplant journey. God was preparing me for the future. This education freed me from much fear, doubt,

and worry. Degrees in science educated me enough so I could talk the talk with my physicians. My experience in the medical field along with my education would aid in getting myself through my recovery.

Science taught me how to be unbiased when looking at dilemmas before forming an opinion. Statistics and clinical studies can be skewed. Unless you have the knowledge to tell the disparities, it's deception. Having a science education taught me we didn't originate from apes. I admit I was on the fence for a while, but deep inside I realized I didn't evolve from primates. By not having credentials or a degree in theology, how could I argue that God isn't real and didn't create us in His image? I didn't know God to debate the issue. I learned, the opinions of the world and man are not trustworthy. Psalm 118:8 says, "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man." Opinions are free, everyone has one, but not his own facts. Do not lean on your own understanding or you're a fool (Proverbs 28:26). God is omniscient, meaning He knows everything, past, present, and future. In the beginning, God created the world and everything in it, including knowledge.

Great [is] our Lord, and of great power: his understanding [is] infinite. (Psalm 147:5)

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. (1 John 3:20)

After ten years of hard work, I got the big job, big pay, and it was great the first year. Then, realities reared their ugly head. I had five bosses who could never be in agreement. Scripts, scripts, and more scripts, and getting doctors to write them was their common pledge. After one

year, I went to the doctor to get a prescription for anxiety. Side effects made me fall asleep while driving. I took naps in parking lots. This job required driving hundreds of miles calling on doctors. Corporate America and I weren't compatible. I had everything it took to go to the top and they planned my future. Living in hotels (nice ones) would become my new normal along with giving the same speeches to doctors all over the nation along with a generous salary.

It sounded boring and I wanted a job I enjoyed. The only great part was the science. Job satisfaction became a high priority in my career requirements. I am not materialistic; but I prefer quality things, a medical plan, and retirement. Nevertheless, I'm not a robot along with the fact that ethics are important. Drug companies and moral principles don't always mix. The bottom line becomes the focus of importance. In fact, everyone I worked with (in my pod and most people I met) did not have science degrees, they had majors in business and finance. I showed more working knowledge of what I was selling than they did, which often resulted in training others.

I drank more every night, finishing at least a bottle of wine while drowning my anxieties. The devil hustled me, telling me lies, and I believed them. I was in an immoral relationship with someone I didn't love. Everything I worked hard to get was not working out because God's plan for me didn't agree with mine. I achieved what many strive for in life, a well-paying job with lots of perks and benefits. Still, I became miserable along with my dog who seldom got to see me.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. (Jeremiah 29:11)

One day, Satan launched his attack leading me to the wrong place at the wrong time. You don't see spiritual warfare because it's invisible. I never knew it existed. Something latched on and wouldn't let go. It knew my main weakness was the lack of love and rejection I grew up with and could never fill. The devil gets into your belief system. Your reasoning gets compromised. I hadn't grown up with much guidance concerning godly convictions or how to fight the enemy.

Dr. Stanley has a series of sermons on Satan's strategy. Everyone should learn how darkness operates. I encourage you to listen and learn. Anyway, the voice in my head wouldn't leave. It led me to Las Vegas, Nevada. My unbiased judgment flew out the window. I lived there for sixteen years before I moved back home as a "dead man walking."

This chapter of my life is longer than a chapter. A book I might write someday. For now, this book will only reveal important things relating to my journey finding my way back to God.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. (James 1:13)

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed [is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak. (Matthew 26:41)

A bad seed grew and took root. Don't let evil seeds take root! Rebuke them as quickly as you can. The only way Satan can get to you is through your thoughts with your consent and cooperation. You need to put on the armor of God every morning, adapting it into your prayers and daily life. Anchor yourself with the authority given you through the death of His Son.

Dr. Stanley has a great analogy, "Satan gets a toehold, a foothold, then a stronghold."¹ The enemy clouds your judgment so you don't see the consequences.

Satan attacked me using others and he continues to do so to this day. However, I'm on to him now. Back then, I had no wisdom, knowledge, or understanding how this decision would take root and lead me to the devil's playground. I was living an immoral life and drinking heavier to escape. God sent me reality checks to change my course countless times, but I didn't listen. I was so accustomed to being abused that it desensitized me to pain. My famous words were, "I don't want to talk about it." I bottled everything up deep.

I got a DUI on the way home one evening. God kept trying to tell me something. Typically, a serious set of circumstances would have stopped me because going through a DUI became devastating and expensive. Something else was in charge, I had no self-control. I lost my license in my corporate car, so I had to tell my boss about the DUI. What an idiot. I got rid of my personal car to get rid of a car payment.

My boss was helpful which was more than I can say regarding my family. I needed someone to talk to, a shoulder to lean on, and guidance. Once again, I was alone, rejected, and judged by others no better than me. A month earlier, I had taken my boyfriend to Las Vegas to

¹ intouch.org

check it out. Satan made sure sinning was fun. I ended up taking a medical leave (since I couldn't drive without a license), found a used RV, and headed to Vegas. My youngest brother and a girl from Reno, Nevada, I met got stranded and needed to get closer to home, joined me on the trip. I needed the company and my brother was a good mechanic. I have a picture of the three of us including my dog Paco the chihuahua at a gas station in Boulder City, Nevada, when we crossed the border commemorating the moment on January 8, 2001.

Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (John 8:44)

Seared Conscience

God gave us all a moral conscience (Romans 2:15). It has a potential of getting “seared” or “cauterized,” rendering it insensitive and altering its function by forming a (sort of) “spiritual scar tissue” dulling the sense of right and wrong. The Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 4:1-2 illustrated and identified such a conscience.

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

In this passage, we learn three things about false teachers who lead others into abandoning their faith.

1) They are mouthpieces for evil spirits since they promote “things taught by demons.”

2) They are hypocritical liars, wearing a mask of holiness, but are full of falsehood.

3) They are unscrupulous since their consciences have been cauterized.

This explains how false teachers can lie with no shame and spread deception with no guilt or moral scruples. They have seared consciences past feeling that lying is wrong.²

No matter what, God’s divine light dwells in everyone’s soul communicating the difference between right and wrong, giving accountability for conduct. What I am getting at is growing up with abuse can desensitize you as a coping skill. You get used to it, similar to a train that runs by your house. You’re so used to hearing it, you become numb to the sound. When you wake up with God finally getting your attention, you realize you’re a train wreck. A seared conscience is dangerous. It gives a false sense of comfort over wrong behavior.

Welcome to “Lost Wages”

Now, I don’t want Las Vegas to come after me. I made my own choices. Sin is everywhere and many people make a huge living from it. Sin is in your face. They don’t hide it. Tourists get shocked and overwhelmed when they visit. You want to say to them, “Didn’t you read the sign?” When you live there, you can become desensitized to sin. It’s on billboards, taxis, and neon signs. It added to my years of living under emotional and

² Gotquestions.org

verbal abuse. You get used to it. This is a place where total anonymity exists. You can be anybody. Nobody knew you, which was opposite of a small town. This convinced me it was making things better for a long time. It isn't your typical city.

Several locals there told me most people that move there leave after one year because they don't have self-control. They said it was a truth that doesn't get publicized. It's cheaper to fly there than to fly out (most of the time). I would joke around and say, "Welcome to Hotel California, you can stay, but you can never leave." As the saying goes, "Vegas didn't get built on winners."

I wasn't a big gambler. The devil found my weaknesses. I was a prime target. After being a single parent for eighteen years, I didn't have the fun that young adults get to have in younger years. You know, going to college and "sowing your wild oats." I missed out on that and had much catching up to do, so I (and the devil) convinced myself. I was not aware of the need for that helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:17). I was unaware that I had been in an invisible war my entire life without the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of the power and authority given to me by Jesus. The invisible war was going to get nuclear.

Every sin openly resides there. I am not blaming Vegas for my decisions because I have free will. It is possible to visit, vacation, or live there and not sin. They have the mountains, the Grand Canyon, hiking, camping, and different fun activities. It impressed locals when I told them how long I had lived there before I left for home. I arrived there on January 8, 2001, in a used 28-foot Ford Rockwood RV so I could have a place to live just in case I stayed. Lots of folks live in RV's in the west. It's a neat way to live if you ever have the chance to just pick up and

wander when you felt like it. I arrived in an RV and I left in an RV.

I became free on the road to Vegas. A huge, heavy burden lifted off my shoulders. Too much pain and hurt existed back home. I wanted to start over without looking back. The DUI, lack of support, plus the feeling that there was nothing and no one there anymore overwhelmed me. Hurt, unloved, rejected again and again and again. Belonging somewhere didn't seem to happen. I more or less grew up a loner. The only loyal friend I could find was my dog. My dad used to tell me a story of how they had to look in on me in the playpen when I was a baby because I was so quiet which worried them. They found me contently entertaining myself.

While I grew up, I didn't get babied and whining wasn't allowed, but this story is not intended to portray a victim. I put my big girl pants on at an early age and hold myself accountable for my decisions. I was a broken sinner and didn't know spiritual warfare existed. Satan planted a seed that took root. He sprinkled miracle grow on it with my consent and cooperation. I was a terrible gardener because of my ignorance of Almighty God. Ignorance isn't bliss, it's dangerous.

I'm a Local

Sixteen years of living in Las Vegas, Nevada, can test your self-control to the outer limits since it offers every sin known to man. It isn't a town for weak fortitude. The great stuff about Las Vegas is its history, attractions, along with the best food and entertainment. The Cirque de Soleil shows are something everyone should see at least once. International artists from many countries work in Las Vegas. The casinos spare no expense. You need

“Moxy” and good comfortable walking shoes to see the sites. After the seventh time to the Eiffel Tower, you give your friends your car keys, a list of attractions, and a map telling them to have fun! You’ve had enough of the strip. You’re a local now.

I moved my dad three times back and forth from Illinois. I got concerned with his age as he wasn’t getting any younger and needed care. His behavior was getting erratic along with signs of dementia. I got my brother a job with a company I was working for because I needed help to take care of him. He wasn’t an invalid, but I could see that the day was drawing nearer. For a few years, my dad, youngest brother, and I lived in Las Vegas. We had fun, but rough times, too. They went back right after the market crash of 2009 because my brother had to walk away from his house. I stayed. My father came to visit which ended up being the last time I saw him. Somehow, I knew this, and told him as he got out of my car at the airport. I wasn’t able to go to the funeral for several reasons. My niece put a phone to his ear so I could say goodbye. He wasn’t able to speak, but he could hear. “I’ll see you again, Dad,” I told him.

I bought a house in 2004 in a housing market that burst five years later. There were people that knew what was happening not bothering to tell the rest of us. I had to walk away from my home like millions of others. It wasn’t worth much anymore. I had put my money into real estate and bought my father a house. I was doing well for myself as the devil provided until my drinking took priority. Then the crash of 2009 took everything else away. I needed God more than ever.

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death. (Proverbs 10:2)

For two years straight (2007-2009), life was punching me in the gut. They were things I had no responsibility for happening. I lost three important lives within one year. My best friend Mama Jean died, the death of a relationship of a man I loved, and my dog, Paco, my best friend for seventeen and a half years. My house was in foreclosure along with a plethora of other agonizing souls. I also learned of my ex-husband's actions against my daughter and I could add more. All of that, along with the loss of my dog, put me over the edge. Darkness and irrational thoughts hijacked my brain. Saying to myself, "Now I know how my oldest brother felt." I didn't think I could end my life until that moment.

Two years spent living in a house under foreclosure taunted me, adding to my intake of vodka and soda. I gave away my personal things, you know the ones I wanted to pass on to others. I can relate to people who want to commit suicide. It's a horrific place to be, but I am telling you so you can see that God can and will get you through it.

Lots of accelerants from the powers of darkness fed the flames, but God wouldn't let me die. I gave up trying, stating out loud, "Okay, I understand, it isn't my time. I won't do it again." Even though I was separated from God, I wasn't ignorant or blind to the fact I could not win against Him. He was trying to tell me how much He existed in my life. I am not stating all the details, however, it was a divine intervention.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Romans 8:37-39)

Within days of acknowledging His intervention, I received a visit from an angel. One sober night, exhaustion from crying took over, so I went to bed early. I had been pacing in my house yelling for my Mama Jean and yelling at God saying, “How could you take everyone away from me! They were all I had! Now I have nothing, no one. Mama Jean, please give me a sign, let me know you have my back, let me know you are here for me! How could you leave me! I need you so bad!”

That night, I went to bed alone, laid on my back, my left arm and hand gently fell to my side. Someone or something I couldn’t see laid down beside me because the bed moved. Then, a hand grabbed mine and squeezed it and I squeezed back. Drained, my body went limp, and I fell asleep. It happened so quickly, but I had one of the best night’s rest in a long time. I had been experiencing insomnia for weeks.

I realized what occurred when I woke. It was real and something changed inside of me. I was better, happier, and less depressed. The thought of my Mama Jean crossed my mind when it happened. Breaking down again, but this time it was happier tears.

I met someone who wanted a relationship during the last year of my house foreclosure. I kept telling him I had too much baggage and, “This isn’t a good time.” He wouldn’t take no for an answer. His determination got the

better of me and I was too tired and weak to argue. He was a successful, intelligent man in the high-end audio industry. His job forced him to travel which was great because I still had my solitude. I found it gets more difficult to live with others after being single and living with my dog for over a decade, so it seemed ideal at the time.

Foreclosure loomed with homelessness about to become a reality; a horrible feeling to encounter. Once again, I got the idea to look up RV's. After all, I moved there in an RV, I could do it again. When I stayed in Vegas, I sold the old one. I filed bankruptcy to get rid of my house, so I was desperate to find something. I found an RV that needed someone to take over the payments. It was perfect because there was no credit check required. They made it very clear, "It will get repossessed if you don't pay your bills." My new significant other and I moved in the RV together.

Looking back, I know God sent me that RV because it was something you didn't run into every day. An elderly man named Pope had bought it for him and his wife to travel in during his retirement. He died and didn't get to use it much. It only had 26,000 miles on it and was nine and a half years old. The surviving widow couldn't afford the payments. It had great potential and needed a little restoration. There was no credit check, all I needed to do was take over the payments and find an RV park. I named it Irv, and we made many stories together. Having Irv kept me from ever worrying about being homeless again.

Surgery and Diagnosis

I got a complete hysterectomy on April 29, 2015. Las Vegas had a horrible reputation for medical care. I turned yellow, and the doctors diagnosed end-stage liver disease (cirrhosis), six weeks after the surgery. Suddenly, I was dying; they knew it, did nothing, and didn't care. I have over 1000 pages of documentation to prove it. They let my liver rot without medications to counteract or slow down the disease. They told me there were no specialists in Las Vegas anymore nine months after the diagnosis. The housing market crash of 2009 made them leave town according to my doctor.

Encephalopathy took over my brain. There were days when I lost balance, fell to the ground, ran into things, and could not drive. Toxins buildup (ammonia) in my bloodstream and edema took over my body. Hepatic encephalopathy will lead to brain damage; your brain swells, you go into a never waking coma, and die without proper treatment. A decade-old medication called lactulose counteracts toxin buildup, but no one prescribed it until I went home for a visit, ending up in the ER. That meant my brain was getting damaged. This has had lasting effects, hindering my short-term memory, cognitive abilities, and speech. At least when I write, I can go over stuff repeatedly to the best of my abilities and then get it edited. I pray to God for restoration.

After the diagnosis, I walked around in shock. I asked for help; the doctors did nothing. The ER became a second home. Right after the hysterectomy, I blew up to 215 pounds and screamed for three weeks straight. I am not an embellisher. My body quit working. They gave me lots of morphine which aids in killing your liver. They were speeding up the process. I received my hysterectomy

on April 29, 2015, and got diagnosed with end-stage liver disease (cirrhosis) on June 5, 2015.

Then at Christmas, my significant other came home for a few days, left, and two days later told me on the phone, “I can’t do this anymore.”

“Do what?” I asked.

He stated, “I have been seeing someone else.”

I answered, “How long has this been going on?”

He answered, “Nine months.”

It devastated me. I did the math. He got involved with someone he met through his work. It began at the start of April before my hysterectomy. I got so sick I couldn’t keep him satisfied, so he found someone else. There is much more to this story I am leaving out. Turns out, he was living three different lives. I was in shock and started on a two-week bender after his call. I was very ill and abandoned without resources. His job took him to Maine. He left me with a 2000 sq. ft. warehouse to clean up pertaining to a business we had started together, and a rental house to clean. I could barely walk because the tops of my feet had swelled, split open, and oozed from edema.

I called my oldest biological brother over Christmas and drove Irv for a visit the following March 2015. While I was there, I went to another doctor because I was feeling awful. He verified my diagnosis and didn’t want to release me, but I had to go back to tie up loose ends. So, I signed myself out of the hospital. I headed back to Vegas in Irv with my two dogs and two other guys to help drive. After five days in Irv and four tire blowouts, we made it back to sin city. One guy stayed for a week and the other stayed for two weeks. They were recovering drug addicts until they got to Vegas and relapsed. I found out what “chasing the dragon” meant and didn’t sleep until they left.

I tried my best to tie up loose ends by myself. My oldest brother ended up coming out to help me pack and offered a place to stay when I got back to Illinois. Thank you, Stephen. I called my “ex” and told him I was dying and needed help. The RV got trashed and needed tons of restoration. I needed it for many reasons. I told him, he needed to do the right thing. He did, it appalled me. I went to Finley’s RV and told them I needed Irv fixed within two weeks because I was dying and needed to go back home for help. They were amazing and fixed it. It cost \$25,000, but Irv became brand new. My youngest brother and a friend flew out to drive Irv and me back. Saturday, May 23, 2016, we landed back home after a two-day 1700 mile-drive straight through to Illinois.

The first week back, I had to get a new driver’s license and switch my Medicaid over to Illinois. When I arrived back home, my jaundiced skin got worse and didn’t go away until a few weeks after the transplant. When I looked in the mirror, I was turning into not someone, but something else. Someone said I looked like a goblin. I saw Gollum from Lord of the Rings.

I never thought I would say, “I can’t wait to go to the hospital.”

The ambulance came to transport me and I spent six days in the hospital. That is where the healing started. Then I went up the chain to Northwestern Medicine to the Kovler Transplant Clinic in Chicago, Illinois. Thank you, Jesus, for never leaving me.

Separation from God

The body is the temple (dwelling place) of God. God does not dwell in non-living things without a destiny, but He uses them for a purpose. I was living in sexual

immorality. I was living in a lifestyle of sin that separated me from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But whoever is united with the LORD is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:15-20)

Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. (Isaiah 59:1-2)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is

written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
(Romans 8:35-36)

All these aforementioned situations have the ability to separate us from God because evil's purpose is not only to slaughter, kill, destroy, and annihilate mankind, but keep us apart from the Almighty. Scripture reveals nothing can keep us from the love God has for us. He will rescue us from any despair, wickedness, or infirmity.

It's a paradox. He who loses his life shall find it, he who loves his life, will lose it. You lose it from sin, flesh, and being "worldly." Then, you find it surrendering to Jesus Christ by denying yourself and following Him.

He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. (John 12:25)

He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. (Matthew 10:39)

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24-26)

Reflections

Even though I was separated from God at the time, I am not ignorant or blind to the fact I could not win against Him. He was trying to tell me how much He existed in my life.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39)

Take a moment to reflect on how God made His presence known to you during the storms of your life.

What belief system do you have anchoring you in a storm?

How strong are those beliefs?

Are your anchors dependent on others?

Are they a result of studying the Word of God?

Chapter 3

BORN AGAIN

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.
(Galatians 2:20)

Hello, my name is Lori, and I have been redeemed.

I found my way back to God when I got ill and had to

move to my hometown in May of 2016. I was an immature Christian. They define immature Christians as having or showing emotional or intellectual development proper to someone younger. Bible.org explains immature Christians are like children, they lack discernment. This leads to having the wrong friendships and the wrong relationships. They are prone to discord. I was an immature Christian.

There is more involved to become a Christian than getting baptized, going to church once a week, being a good person, living by the Ten Commandments, and believing in God. It's like when you're in kindergarten or better yet, preschool. You learn how to count to ten, know your colors, and the names of the farm animals. What a fool to expect that being a Christ-centered person could be

so easy! It takes more work getting into heaven than being a good person. The struggles in my life were the product of me not knowing the aspects, promises, laws of the kingdom, and how to put God first in my life, along with His will and ways.

How about you? What grade are you presently in?

Do you think you can get to the pearly gates in your present condition?

If it wasn't for two high school friends visiting and encouraging me to bring myself back to the Lord, I would not be here right now. They were the first vessels sent by God to guide me closer to Him. One of those friends introduced me to the teachings of evangelist Andrew Wommack. The first sermon I saw on YouTube was Andrew Wommack's "Renewing Your Mind." That got my attention. For the first time, I heard the gospel taught in an easy-to-understand layman's terms. I have always been a curious person, and this information piqued my interest to learn about God and the Bible. It reminded me of being back in college when I went to school full time getting science degrees for nine years straight. I loved to learn, but now because I was sick, I had the time to read whatever I wanted.

I needed to pick a side because I sat on the fence. This changed my life. I found myself in a serious life-threatening position with nothing left to lose. I couldn't work, but had plenty of time to read, watch Andrew Wommack, Dr. Charles Stanley, others on YouTube, and go to a local church. I began understanding the Word of God holds the answers to life and truth.

The world would be a different place and we could be better people if we learned the true meaning of what being born again embodies. The spiritual rebirth teaches a person how to live a successful, joyful life fulfilling one's hopes and desires as God fulfills His promises to provide. If someone taught the true embodiment as I grew up, my path would have been much different and less destructive. I would have made better choices if I had only known who God was.

Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." God is not dead, so why should we bury this powerful, life-changing knowledge? There are secret or discreet Bible studies going on today all over the world teaching what Jesus taught His disciples back in the day. It has not changed with one exception. We don't have to worry about Romans coming to kill us.

The pure holy Bible doesn't get taught in most churches today or let's say, "they" leave it out. John G. Lake and Smith Wigglesworth taught the true doctrine of Jesus Christ in the 1900s. John G. Lake healed so many people, a hospital had to close its doors in Spokane, Washington, where he lived. These are the same teachings Jesus gave to the disciples. Many people don't believe in the power and authority Jesus gave us 2000 years ago exists today. This is not true. God never changes, what He said never changes and will still carry on until He decides when it ends. I challenge anyone to show me in the Bible where it says those teachings or anything related to them only existed in biblical days.

We face ridicule every day, along with disbelief and getting kicked out of a church for our belief. This separates the "true believers" from the "casual believers." Those who practice what Jesus taught when He was a man

2000 years ago versus those who don't, separate the believers. The same teachings work today that worked 2000 years ago.

What does born again mean?

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38-39)

Born again is a total transformation of your spirit. It means repenting of our sins, accepting and believing Jesus Christ is the one and only Lord of lords, King of kings, and our savior. We are born in sin from carnal flesh. Our spirit is dead until we become born again (James 2:26), changing our spirit from death to life. The spirit of Jesus replaces our spirit! Yes, believe it! A person has to repent of their sins, get baptized in water, and receive the Holy Spirit of God to grow in grace and knowledge being guided by His righteous law. At the end of this process, a person enters the Kingdom of God! It does not save your body and soul. Your spirit is born again. Accepting the truth is not enough, surrender to it! Now, you're not on death row!

Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Most people believe mankind is only composed of two components—the body and the soul—because they are what we notice and sense the most. We are in touch with our body and soul, but not our spirit. We cannot feel

our spirit. Mankind is a three-part being: the body, soul, and spirit. God made us having three parts, 1/3 body, 1/3 soul, and 1/3 spirit.

1/3 Body < > 1/3 Soul < > 1/3 Spirit

1/3 Body = (physical, carnal, sin, flesh)

1/3 Soul = (valve-goes in both directions-mind, personality)

1/3 Spirit = (spiritual, holy, righteous)³

*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and [I pray God] your whole **spirit and soul and body** be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:23 emphasis added)*

Body

Before you were born again, you were born in flesh, born in sin, a child of the devil, motivated to live in sin. It is important to get born again at a young age when what you are being taught is understandable. The body lives in the physical realm revealing your outward appearance and carnality meaning your five senses are in control. You are led by your passions, appetites, and the temporal desires of the world. The fleshly body houses your spirit. Your body is not born again or saved.

But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect

³ YouTube: Andrew Wommack, Spirit, Soul, & Body Animations Parts 1-3. I highly recommend watching it for an easy to understand explanation along with animations.

*tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in **once** into the holy place, having obtained **eternal redemption** for us.* (Hebrews 10:1-2 emphasis added)

A person doesn't fall in and out, so you don't get born again and again. Jesus took care of it **once** by His sacrifice on the cross. You only need to get born again **one time**. Your spirit becomes sealed meaning Satan and sin cannot touch your born-again spirit once more. It doesn't mean you have a license to do it (Hebrews 9:11-12). The consequence of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

*By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered **one sacrifice for sins forever**, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by **one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified**.* (Hebrews 10:10-14 emphasis added)

Soul

Your soul is your mental, emotional feelings, personality, will, and conscience. It comprises your mind. Your soul doesn't get saved. The spirit overlaps and can dominate your body or soul. Your body and soul do not change after you are born again. Look again at this part of the equation:

(1/3) Body < > (1/3) Soul (valve-goes both directions, mind) < > (1/3) Spirit

Your soul (mind) is like a valve. Depending on whether your mind is open or closed (valve), your spirit can flow through to your body. For example, this is how healing takes place.

Your soul can go in either direction and get dominated by either the body (flesh, sin) or the spirit (holy, righteous). The body and spirit do not intersect or overlap. Your body is where the sinful nature dwells in the natural, physical realm and is ruled by your five senses: feel, see, hear, touch, smell. The spirit is pure, righteous, holy, perfect, incorruptible, sanctified, and sealed. Your spirit gets sealed forever, so the devil can't touch it! Don't forget it! You are a new creature. Dump your past and don't let others take your joy away. As soon as they bring it up, remind them you have a clean slate and are no longer the person you used to be. You are a new person, a new spirit man not defined by the past! If others don't understand, the time to do what God commanded us to do is at hand—convert them and make disciples!

Spirit

You can't see it, touch it, or feel it. Your spirit is identical to Jesus'. All life and power flow through it. God is a spirit. So, to communicate with Him, we must understand the spiritual realm through our born-again spirit. In John 4:24, Jesus said, "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and truth." Truth comes from studying God's Word, the Bible.

Your spirit cannot sin because it gets sealed. Ephesians 1:13 says, "In whom ye also *trusted*, after that, ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in

whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.” 1 John 3:9 says, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” 1 Peter 1:23 tells us, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”

By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:10-14)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. The natural man cannot discern the spiritual man. (Galatians 5:22-24)

The key is to renew your mind! 1 Corinthians 2:16 says, “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.” Wrap your head around this scripture. Isn't it awesome to know in the Bible it clearly states we also have the mind of Christ! “You have an unction from the Holy One and you know all things” (1 John 2:20).

*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:2 emphasis added)*

*That the **man of God may be perfect**, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:17 emphasis added)*

*Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because **as he is, so are we in this world (perfect)**. (1 John 4:17 emphasis added)*

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (Romans 5:8-9)

You must believe with unwavering faith with no doubts. You need to learn to control your mind by cultivating an intimate relationship and walking with Christ every day. Put God first and your life will change in amazing ways! Satan tries to use your mind when you let your guard down and become vulnerable. You **must** control your mind. Rebuke and command those toxic thoughts out of your mind in the name of Jesus! You need to learn how to pray effectively and how to speak to the mountain for God to answer your prayers. The mountains could be your family, finances, illness, disease, coworkers, or any issues or challenges within your life.

When you surrender your life to Christ, your heart softens and becomes less hardened by indifference, bitterness, and anger while being transformed by His love, desiring righteousness and holiness.

Philippians 3:14 states, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” He gave us the right and power to become His children when we receive Him believing in His name (John 1:12).

In the old covenant, people were not born again. People did not know what sin was until God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. He created the law so people would understand right from wrong (Romans 5:13). Otherwise, how else could you discern it? There was the wrath of God until Jesus came as the Messiah in the flesh, born perfect and sinless offering us salvation unto everlasting life. By the grace of God, Jesus is our mediator, pleading our case to the Most High. He is the best representative you have fighting for your salvation! 1 Timothy 2:5 says, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

We often feel cultivating a closer relationship to God is unattainable. Life gets in the way and blocks our path. These are excuses because God gave us free will to make choices. If we want a new designer handbag, shoes, or whatever, we will make it happen by cutting back on frivolous things or working overtime. We need to get our priorities straight. This is our salvation we are talking about! You cannot enter the kingdom of God unless you are born again spiritually (John 3:3-5).

When we pursue God and do our best to live a holy life, He sets us free from the bondage of the material, carnal world along with the consequences of our own sin. Living a holier life brings God glory and reflects His character to the world. It builds, peace, spiritual strength,

and stability in our lives. The Lord Almighty made us in His image, so we need to reflect the likeness of His Son.

And have put on the new [man], which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. (Colossians 3:10)

Once we have been born again, it joins our spirits unto God (1 Corinthians 6:17). Our spirits are one with Jesus! Galatians 4:6 says, “At the new birth, God took out our old, dead spirit and put in Jesus' spirit.” Romans 8:9 says, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit so be that the spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” After you are born again, **believe it for it to manifest.**

Heart

Your heart is your spirit and soul combined. Remember, your soul is responsible for your emotions and feelings. The key is to bring them together in agreement. Hebrews 3:4 says, “But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” God sends forth the Spirit of His Son into your heart crying ABBA, Father (Galatians 4:6).

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was

raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives for God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves

of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore, what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:1-23)

Your words give your heart away. If you have ever been verbally or physically abused, the devastation has the potential to destroy others. The longer you live in sin, the more your heart hardens toward God (born again or not). Your heart can grow bitter, hard, and angry developing a callus. The closer I get to God from working on our relationship, my heart becomes softer as the layers slowly fall away.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.
(Proverbs 18:21)

Speak life, not death to yourself and others. This is important. Most people cannot hide their feelings. The looks of sadness, worry, fear, and crying can make a huge transformation in someone's ability to get well. Despite

your condition, we should speak life to each other every day. I spent much time in solitude focusing on the Lord and uplifting Christian music to keep myself in good spirits before, during, and after my transplant. No negative naysayers allowed! In one of Andrew Wommack's sermons he said, "Sympathy can kill a person." He is right.

A Second Chance at Life

My past events were all part of God's plan for me. Now, I have a testimony He has given me to share, spreading His Word, and bringing Him more souls to save. I know who I am in Christ. I am a child of God, one of His ambassadors, and one of His servants to do what He commanded all of us to do; spread His Word and preach the gospel making disciples.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (Mark 16:15-16)

Not only have I been born again, Jesus gave me a second chance at life. If I had not gotten ill, found out who God was, I would have kept living in sin. Permitting death was an option. I had those thoughts many times while screaming in pain for God to take me. To get through this storm, it took every bit of strength and reserve God gave me. Many people don't make it because of addiction, lack of strength, a weak heart, organ failure, or time ran out waiting for an organ rendering you too sick for surgery. Getting on the list is a long, arduous, costly, and time-consuming protocol. It not only takes endurance but the mercy and grace of God Almighty.

Once I resolved to surrender myself, I asked Him to do with me whatever His will and purpose for me entailed. The Lord Almighty released my bondage. Peace entered my life, being loved beyond question and taken care of for the first time sealed my spirit. The Holy Spirit filled the hole inside of me which was what I had been searching for my entire life. God does not make promises He cannot keep. We are complete and perfect in Christ! God's Spirit protects us from attacks from evil forces and guarantees our eternity with the Lord. Praise the Lord!

*For him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And **ye are complete in Him**, which is the head of all principality and power. (Colossians 2:8-10 emphasis added)*

Faith is a gift from God. Faith comes by hearing the gift of God. Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The Bible talks about the law of faith in Romans 3:27, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)

Reflections

The struggles in my life were the product of not knowing the aspects, promises, laws of the kingdom, putting God first, and how to know His will for me. When you surrender your life to Christ, your heart softens and becomes less hardened by indifference, bitterness, and

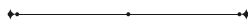
anger while being transformed by His love, desiring righteousness, and holiness. You need to get your priorities straight. This is your salvation we are talking about! John 3:1-18 explains why you cannot enter the kingdom of God unless you are born again spiritually with the right heart and conscience. Now, play the song “Redeemed” by Big Daddy Weave.

Will you choose today to surrender your life to Christ and accept God’s gift?

Will you pray and ask God to be born again and allow Him to guide you through the struggles of life?

Do you know who you are in Christ?

Chapter 4



DEALING WITH DECEPTION

Even demons believe in one God—and shudder.
(James 2:19)

It saved me, serving God to the best of my ability, yet still with great amounts of learning ahead. I needed to find out how not to lean on my understanding and discover how to handle the deceptions of the enemy. The wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of how demons work are beyond important to be victorious in life.

Wikipedia defines deception as beguilement, deceit, bluff, mystification, ruse, or subterfuge. Deception can involve dissimulation, propaganda, sleight of hand and distraction, camouflage, or concealment.

It is the act of propagating a belief that is not true or is not the whole truth, as in half-truths or lying by omission. I have been on the receiving end (of this part of the definition) many times. People think by telling only part of the truth, not the whole story, just enough to lead others into a direction justifying their actions that they are still telling the truth. They manipulate the truth by not divulging their accountability thus withholding pertinent, relevant information, telling a false reality ending up in a contrived portrayal of another person. It's deception from Satan.

But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. (Matthew 12:36-37)

Withholding relevant information, the other person needs to know is the same as lying by omission. After being on the receiving end, I practice great restraint from doing this while admitting I have been guilty of it long ago. This is the enemy at work.

“When Does the Omission of Truth Become A Lie?” by Ashley Fern says: “There are no white lies, there is only the blackest of destruction, and a white lie is the blackest of all.”

Ye are of [your] father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (John 8:44)

This is a big reason I love learning the truth because of people lying by omission. These people live a carnal life dictated by Satan with an unsaved soul. The enemy owns you when your soul isn't saved and sealed by Jesus. You don't have to be a casualty of spiritual warfare. Learn the truth provided in the Word when battling the enemy.

Self-deception (bad faith), happens when someone wavers back and forth or we used to call it “wishy-washy.” According to Wikipedia, theological translators have discussed being of two beliefs or faiths as being double-hearted or double-minded. Webster's Dictionary equates bad faith with "being of two hearts" or "of two

minds," two beliefs, two attitudes, two loyalties, two thoughts, or being as two souls at the same time. James 1:8 reveals a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. You cannot trust a person with this characteristic.

To conquer your demons and deal with deception, you must have the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of who and what you're fighting against. When playing against another team or going to war, what do you do to prepare for a fight, for victory? You learn about your adversary and their weaknesses, strengths, and habits. God gave us a manual full of guidance and instruction, a playbook to defeat the enemy—His mind in print.

Believer's Authority

As a believer, we need to recognize God has given us the same authority to fight Satan and heal others as He gave His Son Jesus Christ. He gave the same power to His twelve disciples "over all devils and to cure diseases" (Luke 9:1). Most of our churches do not teach this doctrine anymore which is wrong. Pastors and ministers need to quit preaching what people want to hear (preaching dessert) and adding to the fall of mankind. God hasn't changed, the Word hasn't changed, the teachings have not changed, we have changed. God has already dealt with Satan through Jesus at Calvary from His death, burial, and resurrection 2000 years ago. It was by His blood He purified us to be free from sin. Once your spirit gets sealed, the enemy cannot touch it. Satan's control is through your mind by lies and deception, not some demonic power.⁴

⁴ Taken from Andrew Wommack, "The Believers' Authority, What you didn't learn in church." And "God Wants You Well."

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. (Mark 16:16-18)

Most people don't realize the spiritual war happening today because the devil (sin) has blinded our minds (2 Corinthians 4:4). It has deceived us into thinking the adversities, anger, and negative encounters are natural or physical. We are not aware of the war for our heart and soul occurring every day because it's invisible. As you are reading this, the devil is (probably) in your head telling you lies, "This is not true. This person is crazy!" I challenge you to open your mind and educate yourself about spiritual warfare. Churches denying this ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ are part of the reason our world is in the state of decay today.

Once you learn and apply this knowledge, God opens your mind taking off your blinders. You start perceiving how the devil influences and controls you and others. You find out how to win the battle. In fact, we should start with our children to prepare them for the world.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

Submit to God, stand against the enemy, resisting him by using your God-given power and he will flee from you. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 states, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds); Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity **every thought** to the obedience of Christ."

*Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and **over all the power of the enemy**: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the **spirits are subject unto you**; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. (Luke 10:19-20 emphasis added)*

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. (Romans 13:1)

When you are the Lord's servant, you have His righteousness and no weapon against you will flourish and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment He will condemn. This is our inheritance.

Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD. (Isaiah 54:15-17)

Believe in the Lord and it will save you to receive your salvation (Acts 16:31). The same believer's authority exists through healing and wellness. Isaiah 53:5 states, "By His stripes, we **were** healed." Believe it! Jesus took a beating for every sickness and disease 2000 years ago. We should walk around in divine health. According to the Bible, Jesus paid for our sins and our infirmities signifying healing was done on the cross through His crucifixion. 1 Peter 2:24 says, "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." Once again, He gave the same power to the twelve disciples "over all devils and to cure diseases" (Luke 9:1).

God gave Adam and Eve dominion over the earth to rule with power and authority which mankind inherited.

The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.
(Psalm 115:16)

Lucifer envied God, wanting to take His place. He found out how God gave Adam and Eve power and tricked them into yielding and obeying him so he could become their master; becoming the god of earth. Lucifer wanted what the Almighty had, others praising and glorifying him to thwart the kingdom of the Almighty. We made Satan our master by our submission and cooperation with his deception through the inheritance of Adam and Eve.

The fall of man started when Adam sinned, leading to evil with sickness becoming a manifestation condemning humanity to suffer the consequences. God allowed Adam and Eve to be disobedient and sin because the Lord gave them free will and He does not go back on His promises.

Until God frees mankind from the bondage of sin, God uses sickness, disease, and other hardships, trials, and tribulations as opportunities to bend our will to His. I went through this until I came to the end of myself. I needed to wake up out of my blindness to fulfill His will and purpose for my life. I was blind and now I see (John 9:25). He's not done with me yet.

For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; (Jeremiah 30:17)

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

We can be rest assured that even in sickness and suffering all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

We have an immortal resurrected perfect body to look forward to in our eternal life. As John the apostle so eloquently said, “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Revelation 21:4-5).

Now, that I have gained more wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, when I look at the past, I see I encountered Satan’s deception countless times. He is such a liar and a con-artist. He uses others to get close to you. He dresses up in sheep’s clothing and attends church claiming to be a Christian just to fool you. Therefore, knowledge and understanding to gain wisdom of the spiritual realm is a very important aspect. The only way you can comprehend it is to read the Book of Truth! Fight your demons through the Word of God because demons also live in the spiritual realm. The Word gives you spiritual discernment. Let’s try to put it in layman’s terms: God is a Spirit (John 4:24), He lives in the spiritual realm. Therefore, His words are spiritual and powerful! Psalm 138:2 says, “God’s word is magnified above His name.” If you believe in God, you need to acknowledge the spiritual

realm. Plant the seeds of truth and let them take root. Run, demons, run!

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (Matthew 7:15)

I met a false Christian. This happened when I struck up a friendship with a devout Christian who played the part well. We were neighbors in an apartment complex. We formed a camaraderie and planned to go to Colorado together because I wanted to attend Bible college. I felt awesome pertaining to faith in healing my liver disease and wanted to be around true believers and heal quicker possibly experiencing a miracle or instant healing from cirrhosis. I gave up on trying to find someone (caregiver) to help take care of me if I got a transplant.

Without warning, I fell ill again and got rushed to the hospital by ambulance. I didn't have a caregiver at the time which was the last requirement needed to get on "the list." This false Christian went to the hospital and helped take care of me for two weeks as I struggled to get well. I found out I had an anatomical anomaly that caused E-coli to get into my bloodstream through my bile ducts. The pain was excruciating along with the fact it can kill a person, too. I left the hospital in a wheelchair and would need it for several weeks. Twenty percent of my body swelled and bruised. I made it through another malady. I find it interesting an anatomical anomaly appeared out of nowhere so *my plans* changed.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

My neighbor/friend had a background in basic home healthcare and we both thought God brought us together. He did for two months because we moved out of our apartments when this occurred. We planned on hitting the road soon. I know God brought us together when I needed someone to help me. The care transplant survivors need is on a different level. I informed her how difficult this commitment would be, how long it could last, and the ins and outs to the best of my knowledge. To be honest, it is hard to fathom and you don't have all the answers. I gave her the opportunity to opt out at least five times during those two months.

We moved into her parents' house for the time being until I received a new liver or my disability which I was still waiting for approval. Weakness grew so much that fighting with the State got difficult. I spent 95 percent of my time in the bedroom provided for me reading, praying, watching YouTube, and getting serious about writing this book. The depression I experienced paralyzed me. I was getting close to the end. God prompted me to write this book to save me.

I don't know how many times I wanted to end it all and felt close to making suicide a reality, planning it out in my head. God always put an obstacle in my way. I realized I could not disappoint Him. He had my back. It becomes hard to fight when you are weak, but that is when you are the strongest! Lean on God to get you through and He will. Paul the apostle sought the Lord three times when

he suffered from a thorn in the flesh from a messenger of Satan's keeping him humble.

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Within those two months, the relationship dwindled quickly, and I experienced deception from a fake, hypocrite Christian. I was dying and getting torn down by demons trying to take me out and hearing people talk death nonstop. I kept running into ungodly people and living with wolves in sheep's clothing while trying desperately to stay alive after I moved back home.

Arrogant foes are attacking me, O God; ruthless people are trying to kill me—they have no regard for you. (Psalm 86:14)

My high maintenance along with a strange spiritual experience, caused me to move out. I felt a demonic presence dwell in that house the first night when I had a vivid evil dream which wasn't normal for me. Her demeanor changed from a sweet girl into someone else within two months. I had nowhere else to go, no one to turn to except for one person where God wanted me to go. Once I moved out, she did and said ungodly things to get back at me and throwing my stuff in a storage unit. This wasn't the same person I initially met.

After a while, your spiritual discernment skill will sharpen between good and evil when you learn how to walk in the Spirit of God daily. You will know if you

shouldn't walk in a particular room, hang around certain people, and if they are telling the truth.

When I could unpack my stuff months later, much of it had been stolen. I get reminded of it when I go to look for something and it's gone. A sense of entitlement does not excuse thievery. I had found a King James Bible in a used bookstore which disappeared. The bitterness and anger have been very hard to release along with the fact they did it while I was dying. A year later, she called and apologized for "not handling it properly." I told her I already forgave her and hoped she had moved out on her own. She's on my prayer list.

God slowly peels layers off your eyes as you seek wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. He reveals the deception and arms you with knowledge against the powers of darkness to conquer them. Jesus defeated Satan 2000 years ago, so learning how to exercise the authority given you is the key. Ask God for wisdom, knowledge, and understanding when you read the Word, be patience, and then listen. Satan has no power without your consent! You overcome evil by doing good and rooting yourself in biblical teachings and truths. Our faith, along with the Word of God, guards us against deception.

For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

Moving Toward the Transplant

I had to receive disability to afford treatment and live during and after the transplant; otherwise, what's the point? My attorney told me to write my congressman. Forget snail mail, I had a better idea. A video could say so much more! After the third appeal, the state thought I could still work a sedentary job. They paid out hundreds of thousands to keep me alive. Now, I was close to death and they still wanted taxes.

I can't work or get a job let alone find one in an economically depressed area. Who would want to hire me now? No wonder people give up, but I don't give up easily. The devil kept trying to destroy me, but he discovered God cannot be beat. I knew what Romans 8:31 said, and I was standing on His promise, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"

Within 24 hours, my Congressman's office contacted me. He got my disability through without going to court! Everything got approved with wheels set in motion. Thank you, Congressman Shimkus and God for the blessing.

I prayed to God for help. I was determined not to let Satan win. He answered my prayers not long after resting from the stress. He sent me to a true friend who used to babysit my daughter. We connected when I came back home. She helped me find a place to live. I had a mattress on the floor, a roof over my head, food, and my dog. You find out who your friends are and aren't in times of adversity.

My situation changed at a rapid pace. I got out of a bad set of circumstances with my so-called Christian friend and caregiver, got on the transplant list, and moved into a rent-controlled apartment when my one friend

helped me get in her complex. It was amazing watching God in action, opening doors, and providing all the necessities with such precision. Plan to be ready for God's plans to happen. Patience is necessary because God is working on it!

If you get out of your own way and let Him take over, life becomes much easier.

It takes faith, trust, obedience, patience, and reading the Word.

Two days after I got half of my stuff moved in, the call came from the hospital. At eight o'clock on Friday morning, they said, "We have two possible livers for you, can you make it in today?"

In one month, God changed my world for the better. He loves every one of His children so much! He will move mountains for us and teach us how to move out of our own way. When we have done everything we can do, we are to give it over to Him.

Satan uses deception to manipulate others that are susceptible, weak-minded, and vulnerable. He wants to lead you astray distracting you from focusing on God. Satan steals, kills, and destroys with his narcissistic self (John 10:10). God wants you well! Acts 10:38 says, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing every single person oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."

I thought I hit bottom; deception was talking. Another level existed, a basement, more bottom, another floor, another button on the elevator panel I didn't see marked level pre-666. The place just before hell. That was the bottom for me. Stubborn me got sick and tired of being

sick and tired. The weight of burdens got too heavy to carry. I drowned from horrible decisions and now I was facing death. I tortured myself because I believed I was getting everything I deserved. Then God showed up, took my hand, saved my soul, and made me worthy. I learned to let it **all** go to Him. I had nothing left. Humbled to the point of paralysis, I put myself in His hands and made the best decision of my life.

For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell. (Psalm 86:13)

Reflections

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:9)

I have learned to put on God's armor as described in Ephesians 6, fight the battle on my knees, staying in obedience, and pray in the name of Jesus with righteous anger! Ephesians 6:12 states it well, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places]." Oneness with God is the safest place we can be.

How do we fight it? "Submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

God changed my world for the better. He loves all His children so much! He will move mountains for us and

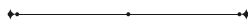
teach us how to move out of our own way. When we have done everything we can do, we are to give it over to Him.

Have you submitted to God and resisted the devil?

Do you now understand God loves you and wants you well no matter what you are suffering from?

Will you give it all over to Him and allow Him to guide you into wholeness in your life?

Chapter 5



THANKSGIVING / ANGELS

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of [our] lips giving thanks to his name. (Hebrews 13:15)

It was October 30, 2017, there I was, sitting in Chicago's Union Station surrounded by a historic presence while making a bit of my own history, finishing my last doctor's appointment on the pre-transplant liver list. I didn't realize it, but Thanksgiving was just around the corner in more ways than one. I went back to my friend's apartment waiting for mine to become available. Finally, two weeks later, I moved in with enough stuff to subsist. It was up sixteen stairs and my illness started to take control. I was declining to a crawl. If it wasn't for God sending me a neighbor calling a crowd at the last minute, I wouldn't have gotten anything done. Two days after the initial move, I got "the call." My new liver came a few days before Thanksgiving which seemed appropriate.

It is uncanny how the ability to get the apartment was through God's plan for me. I had needed seventy-nine dollars for the deposit on the apartment. I had eighty in my purse. One day a few months earlier, when I was staying at the caregiver's parents' house, a thought popped into my mind. Out of the blue, I looked online to see if I had any unclaimed money in my name somewhere. I did! I had just over one thousand three hundred dollars which

would be more than enough to pay for my apartment along with getting to Chicago. My angel friend Rachelle used her money to make the needed deposits for me until the unclaimed money came in a week after my surgery. SSI and Disability were not approved yet. Thank You, Jesus! He always provides!

It was November 17 at eight o'clock on a Friday morning. I had only spent two nights in my new apartment with half of my stuff strewn everywhere while the other half was still in a small five-by-seven storage unit. I got up off of sleeping on the floor on a mattress to take my dog outside for the morning rituals and my cell rang.

"This is Northwestern Medicine calling to tell you we have two potential livers available," the nurse said, "How soon can you get here today?"

I answered half-awake in unbelief, "Okay."

I called my friend, Rachelle to see if she could get me to Chicago first, then called the hospital back.

Time was a factor because I lived four hours away by automobile (depending on traffic) to get to downtown Chicago. I was amazed because it was just two weeks ago when I finished my last doctor's appointment, still in the queue to get off the pre-list for a liver transplant and on "the list." They put me on the pre-list when I got to the Kovler Transplant Clinic in Chicago on January 5, 2017. It took ten months of passing tests to get on the liver transplant list. Two hundred and ninety-eight days of testing my strength, faith, commitment, spirit, belief in God, and everything from molecule to cell and stuff one can't see with the human eye.

After my caregiver backed out, there was no time to find a replacement. The show must go on and it did, praise the Lord, they didn't send me home. The livers had to undergo testing for viability. Therefore, hope was what

I prayed for to end this painful chapter. Dreams and desires of starting a new much healthier quality of life occupied my mind, but this time it would include the Almighty God. I was ready, God knew it and so did my doctors. This illness took its toll and needed to end. Soon, I would be too sick to get anything except hospice. I prayed, “Whatever you want me to do God, I surrender to your will and purpose for my life.”

The “last-minute, emergency” suitcase I had packed for “the call” was half packed and thrown on the floor from the new move. Exhaustion, shock, and unpreparedness overcame me. I had no one around to do errands. It was God, me, and it was the holidays. No one had time for my situation except for my one friend who could take me to Chicago. God had it planned out.

Passing the gauntlet to get a priceless gift, an act of charity, a blessing took 298 days of obedience, commitment, and dedication following doctor’s orders, protocol, advice, and an endless barrage of bodily tests. It encompasses going to places in your mind, spirit, soul, and body you never knew existed, along with countless hours of travel (in my case). Obedience to a transplant program and to God has many parallels.

God sent me everything I needed little by little. I have Congressman Shimkus to thank for being a vessel of God by pushing through my disability in my final moments of dire need! He made it happen when I gave up and surrendered with a full commitment of trust. I did everything I could do and now it was in His hands.

God continues to bless me with His Grace. He blessed me with another chance at life. Psalm 107 is a song of thanksgiving to God, who has been merciful to His people and gathered all who were lost. This is just a component.

Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving and declare his works with rejoicing. (Psalm 107:17-22)

His Presence

Sometimes God blesses us by showing His love in person. His love showered over me like a waterfall during His presence. I cried non-stop as He held me in His arms experiencing a frequency of harmonic of energy flowing effervescently through my body. Indescribable joy surged inside as if I was levitating over the bed. Pain left leaving me engulfed in a shroud of His love, a heavenly cocoon.

I became finely tuned to His presence. I heard a preacher say once, “It is impossible to describe heavenly things with an earthly vocabulary or earthly definitions.” I get it. I stumble over words trying to explain the experience to others. This happened two weeks after my surgery and I was off major narcotics. I remember pinching and touching myself to perceive reality. My eyes got big as saucers. It was real, I repented asking forgiveness without reservation. If I could have dropped to the floor, I would have in seconds. There are no earthly words for His awesomeness! He filled the room with

energy and power. I understood what reverence means along with the fear of disappointing Him. If I had any fear, doubt, or worry left about God, it was gone and no longer existed in my mind. This experience would remain infinitely.

He shared visions of evil, love, and prophecy. The visions of evil were wicked enough I didn't want to see them any further, but became aware of their existence. I shook uncontrollably, not because of fear so much as the shock of witnessing human against human brutality pertaining to Satan's evil doings. This is nothing new, but to observe inhumanity through God's eyes and to witness such sadness in His heart was devastating. Afterwards, He erased those visions. He communicated what He sees, what we are doing to each other, and where we are headed. Even though we were created from His image, He is our Father, our Creator, but we treat Him with so much dishonor, disrespect, dis-everything as we screw up our existence one more time. We lost our perspective and principles through sin. Society has lost what the "fear of God" means along with reverence towards Him.

He sanctifies us with His heart and overwhelming love for every living soul. I cried with intense tears of joy and mournfulness because it was through His eyes. He let me discern the disappointment in His heart. How could we treat each other with so much cruelty, disrespect, and unwillingness to forgive while created in His image? Forgiveness is important to let healing take place. I still struggle with it, but to a much lesser degree.

But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:15)

We should act like it's Thanksgiving by praising and thanking Him every day, for every blessing, and promoting awareness of His presence in our lives. It reminds us of how dependent we are on Him.

Especially when you are so ill or if the world has punched you in the guts, rejoice in Him even though you don't understand. God lives inside of you through the Holy Spirit, so He knows your heart and state of mind. Don't forget, He was a man once enduring what it meant to be human. I continue to get revelations about His visit with me.

The effects of praise will redirect your focus off of your ailments, problems, and confusions. Read soothing scriptures; for, example, the Book of Psalms is relaxing and helps your mind focus on healing. I read Psalms at night while recovering in the hospital and found a rhythmic cadence that was harmonic and helped me relax and rest at least a little while. It slowed my heartbeat. I was on massive amounts of steroids and barely slept. I brought my kindle and played soothing environmental music to comfort me. My blood pressure was high nonstop. When I walked to the bathroom and back, my heart wanted to explode.

Thanking God while experiencing pain shows submissiveness. When you focus on Him, He gives you mercy which you can sense as He is showing you, He is present in your life. So many nights and days I prayed and He responded by giving mercy and easing the pain. Thank You, God, for loving and blessing me and giving me such mercy! Thank You, Jesus!

When you humble yourself, operating in joy, edifying and glorifying the Lord, you recognize God is the source for everything. Choosing to thank the Lord and

meditating in the Word when you don't feel up to it, blesses and glorifies Him.

*Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:
(THANKSGIVING) Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.
(Psalm 103:1-4)*

Thank You, God, for sending me the donor family. I pray they found peace with their decision and I hope to tell them how they changed my life with their act of charity. There are so many people to thank, so many vessels sent by God to give gratitude for my journey from sickness to health. Thank You, Jesus!

I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. (Psalm 34:1-3)

Angels

God has sent me countless angels, vessels to help me along this journey of restoration, peace, and renewal. They are people to whom I am filled with gratitude, who I can never repay. I can pray for God to bless and protect them for me. Having the grace of God is a gift that keeps on giving! Thank You, Jesus, for sending me angels.

Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. (Psalm 103:20)

Psalm 91 declares God is commanding angels on our behalf to protect us, propel us over obstacles and prevent harm from coming our way. Dr. Larry Keefauver in *Commanding Angels* wrote:

Throughout Scripture, God's people prayed, and angels were released:

- *Abraham prayed and two angels were loosed to go to Sodom and save Lot's family. (Genesis 18-19)*
- *Moses prayed and the Angel of the Lord stood between the army of Egypt and protected Israel. (Exodus 14:19)*
- *Israel prayed and the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon to defeat their enemies. (Judges 6:12)*
- *Manoah prayed and the Angel of the Lord came to declare deliverance coming through Samson. (Judges 13:3)*
- *Elisha prayed and the fiery hosts of the Lord surrounded the city, protected him and his servant and blinded the Syrians. (2 Kings 6:18)*
- *Hezekiah prayed and the Angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian enemy soldiers. (2 Kings 19:35)*

- *Daniel prayed and archangel Michael overcame the prince of Persia. (Daniel 10:13)*
- *Jesus prayed in the garden and an angel came to strengthen Him. (Luke 22:43)*
- *Cornelius prayed and an angel appeared to him announcing the salvation of his household. (Acts 10:3)*
- *The church prayed and the Angel of the Lord set Peter free from prison. (Acts 12:9)*
- *John prayed and Jesus commanded him to write to the angel over each church in Asia Minor. (Rev. 2-3)*

You have been given authority! Through faith in Christ, you possess God-given authority to invoke God's commands for angels on your behalf, for your loved ones, your family and others for whom you pray.

No longer will you ever have to face the dark forces with a sense of helplessness and hopelessness. Your understanding of what you are reading right now will allow you to walk boldly in the authority of Christ to join hands with the angels He commands for you. Protection and spiritual victory have been appointed to you if you will exercise the authority delegated to you.⁵

⁵ Used with the author's permission.

Miraculous things happened through God commanding His angels on my behalf as I prayed, believing His angelic hosts brought protection and prevention of harm. After I received the call for a possible matching liver, I called my friend Rachelle, an angel God sent me to help me on my journey. She cared for my child while I worked back in the day. She helped me get an apartment in her complex, drove me around as I had no vehicle when I moved back, plus I couldn't drive post-transplant for three months. For one month during my recovery, she took care of my dog, my new apartment, a new bank account, and multiple things I could not carry out because of moving without time to spare. She saved my life after Thanksgiving, her phone call rescued me from the first rehabilitation facility.

Because of the last-minute loss of a caregiver, I had no one to help take care of me. As a result, I ended up in the nearest nursing home rehabilitation facility two miles from the hospital. It was the holiday season, a “no room at the inn” anywhere scenario. The staff could not take care of a complicated, time-sensitive condition. Taking medication for a transplant recipient is a serious, time-sensitive matter. I went into rejection within thirty-six hours of arriving with a fever of 103 along with laying in my waste and blood because of neglect. I cried out to God, telling Him I'd had it and didn't want to do this anymore. How could anyone do this to another human being? I recorded as much as possible keeping a journal to which I alerted them when I came in the first day. It wasn't a secret and they did not care one bit!

When I go back and watch it, tears and nightmares hit me. The devil tried to take me out again. The people there showed not one ounce of care. They were emotionless human beings. I debated with myself for

hours whether I should call Rachelle or just let myself go. Something made me call her. The ambulance took me back to the hospital. That experience affected me for the next nine months as my body fought off rejection, failing kidneys, and other infirmities.

I went through the transplant with God and the Chicago Northwestern Medicine Hospital Angels. I have endured many hospitals on my journey, but the staff at Northwestern gives extraordinary, impressive care. It's the number one hospital in Illinois. I nick-named this place the Taj Mahal because they built it with love. God shines over Northwestern Hospital. It is where He blessed me with His presence. I have a picture proving how He shines over this place.

They admitted and placed me on the thirteenth floor for two days on July 18, 2018. Both mornings, I woke up to a magnificent sunrise on the east side of the hospital making a cross out of its beams of light. The luminous sphere was perfectly centered between two streaming rays of brilliance, forming a proportionate, ginormous cross in the sky above Lake Michigan and Lake Shore Drive. It shouted majestically to everyone and everything. It was beyond outstanding. I pointed it out to every person during that stay. Afterwards, I made many pictures to hand out to people. I had a big one made and framed for my wall. It was my reminder through the post-transplant, a Spring and Summer of Hell and torment, that God is always there, not just for me but everyone. He knew I'd share His awesomeness. It spoke and said, "I will never leave you or forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:6).

I got released and went home. The following six-months put me in a half living coma. I experienced many infirmities at once along with failing kidneys and rejection. When it ceased, I sat straight up in bed, my eyes

opened, and I took a slow deep breath in and exhaled. Something changed, I felt light, peaceful, and happy again. The weight, the burden, the illness lifted. It was not another occasional good day that came along, but my body said it left! I had spent the earlier three days sleeping and resting. Then, overnight something changed. I believe God thought I had come to the end of myself and He blessed my obedience. I let nothing impede working on our relationship through His Word and prayer. He let me know I needed to stop saying how independent I was (doing everything on my own) when He was in control and how (all along) dependent I was on Him.

A few weeks later, it was time for a checkup. The test results amazed the doctor! My diseased bile ducts showed signs of healing. This was a gift from God. Thank You, Jesus, for healing me!

Reflections

Feelings of unworthiness are of the devil. We are worthy and important because God gave His Son to save us! It was worth every rotten day I endured to get to this incredibly hard to explain the gift of joy. God wants everyone to feel this way. He wants me to share my testimony of His love and how He blesses us when we seek a relationship with Him!

Thanking God while experiencing pain demonstrates submissiveness.

Are you thanking God through your pain?

When you focus on God, He gives you mercy which shows you He is present in your life.

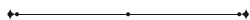
Have you experienced God's mercy in your life?

Write out some examples of His mercy and how He has revealed His presence in your life.

Be prepared to share these amazing moments with others as He shows you who needs to know of His love and mercy.

THANK YOU, JESUS, FOR BLESSING ME!

Chapter 6



MY BROTHER, MY HERO

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (Romans 15:1-2)

My youngest brother took his life on April 14-15, 2018, during this book. The weekend of his funeral started a spring and summer of hell I wrote earlier. We were two years apart in age and the only two siblings to grow up together. The coroner said he died at eight p.m. on the fourteenth which was questionable because according to his buddies they were together until eleven that night. This is a chapter I wish I did not have to write. No one saw this coming. I am convinced he didn't either as he was planning future events, according to many people including myself.

In fact, we talked regarding taking a pilgrimage road trip spreading our father's ashes on many of his old stomping grounds trying to dig up people he knew and listen to stories of him. Our father had many stories he repeated many times. Once in a while, a new story cropped up, we hadn't heard. Those were the best! Stories from the elderly are outstanding. I was the youngest child, so hanging out with older people seemed natural for me and I preferred it.

My brother didn't share he was suffering from depression. It is a serious illness if left ignored, denied, or untreated. He disliked medication and seeking any help to pertain to psychology. He internalized his feelings too much and exploded with anger constantly. I saw him as a ticking time bomb, but nobody noticed signs he was near to taking his life.

Witnessing my nieces and nephew grieve broke my heart. I am convinced he did not plan it to happen. I loved my brother and I mean no harm or harshness towards him or his family while I share his life as I knew it. He was an awesome person who had flaws similar to everyone else. I wish he could have called me, called anyone! John wouldn't call for help. All he had to do was ask, but pride got in the way. I would have done anything for him which I proved more than once. I put a roof over his head and paid the bills two times during his life's transitions to help him, never giving him a hard time. When he earned a few sparing bucks, he turned it over to help with bills. Families should do these things for each other. I would repeat it over again.

He was the only one I called right before I left for my transplant. When he helped me with my luggage, it became difficult to think of something to say or how to say it. He reached out and grabbed me and gave me a real hug. The only real hug he ever gave me. He didn't want to let go. We parted, and he held on and kissed me on the cheek. It stunned me because he never acted that way toward me. I had to hold back the tears.

I said, "I'll say hi to dad for ya if I make it to heaven first."

Here is what happened as much as we could put it together. He was out one Saturday on his motorcycle, enjoying his day off with his buddies. They met early,

around 11 a.m., at a place out in the country called Moonshine Store established in 1912. It was the home of the Moonburger with a population of two. The menu is small and easy just like the surrounding towns. It's in the middle of corn and bean fields just across the border from Indiana where he lived. This place opens early and shuts the grill off at 12:30 p.m., "no if, and, or buts." You're on farming time. Charles Kuralt did a story on it once for CBS Sunday Morning. Each year, they hold a Moonshine Lunch Run (MLR) motorcycle event to help the surrounding small communities and organizations. The scheduled event was the last MLR after many years since its beginning.

After lunch, the boys proceeded back to their nearby residing city, deciding to do a pub crawl. My brother journeyed home around three in the afternoon to change clothes and freshen up for the evening. They continued doing their pub crawl until 11:00 p.m. Instead of getting in his truck, my brother stayed on his motorcycle. As he left the bar, his buddies observed my brother did not take the straight route back to his house, which was just a few miles away. They were the last ones to see and talk to him alive. Therefore, the time frame to fit his death had to be within a short time after he left the bar according to the autopsy report. His blood alcohol level was a little over the limit. However, his buddies verified his ability to drive a motorcycle home.

Our older brother was having a hard time reaching him over the weekend (which was unusual) so he went to check on him the following Monday morning. My oldest brother found him in the recliner with a bullet wound by the heart. His motorcycle turned out to be missing. Somehow, the bike ended up in the hands of a notorious bunch of local boys being pieced out and sold in parts. We

had to assume they found his wrecked bike. They found his muddy clothes on the floor in his house. He wrote a page long note telling everyone how sorry he was, how much he loved us, how he wrecked his bike, and how he hurt “really bad.” He turned the thermostat to “off” not knowing when he would be found. That much he planned.

I knew him better than anyone alive today. Pride mixed with a few beers let his guard down making him vulnerable and the devil saw an opportunity. My brother was a dedicated gun advocate owning several, including an AR-15. He loved going to the gun range and he loved his Harley.

Funerals are notorious for bringing out the best and worst in families and friends. When you lose a loved one, it seems to bring people together or rip them apart. I put this next scripture in hoping people **will read and think**. Prophecy in the Bible states people near the end would not only act this way, but this behavior would increase. Have you noticed the world changing?

Apostle Paul described the wickedness of the last days in 2 Timothy 3:1-17:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women

laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

I wanted it included so people might read the verses before it's too late and recognize this is happening right now. Take off your spiritual blinders! Pray to the Lord to reveal this to you! Satan, the great deceiver, is preparing for the end of days.

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Before the funeral, I had been dealing with an adverse drug interaction. My doctors diagnosed me with ischemic cholangiopathy. My bile ducts kept becoming occluded because of “sludge” and stones forming thus, creating bile salts as a byproduct getting into my blood because of the inability to filter bile. Once released in the bloodstream, the bile salts can make you itch intensely over your entire body. You itch 24 hours a day and it can get so awful you cannot sleep. You are constantly miserable.

To break up any stones, my doctors wrote me a new prescription. I took this prescribed medication and suddenly, I looked like a leper. The drug was a bile salt, the enemy I was fighting. I felt concerned but had noticed no side reaction until the third pill at the end of my brother’s funeral. My body had been breaking out with tiny little blisters similar to poison ivy. In fact, it was poison ivy on steroids with hives. I was over-dosing on antihistamines, loratadine, and Benadryl with little relief. My body was attacking itself from an autoimmune reaction. I went to bed that night crying, begging to God to have mercy on me while praising Him and asking for forgiveness for my sins. God answered my prayer and I soon fell asleep.

I called my primary care physician and got an appointment right away the following Monday. He prescribed a prescription-strength antihistamine because my body was attacking itself. It made me very drowsy and helped deaden the irritation. I felt like a vegetable for

many months. To get relief, I was taking two showers a day, morning and evening and sometimes in the middle of the night. I used an antiseptic/antimicrobial skin cleanser I got from the hospital to shower with to keep my wounds from getting infected. It helped. Any help, however small, was an even bigger relief when the welts and tiny poison ivy type blisters made me scratch until I bled. My old t-shirts looked like a Jackson Pollock painting with blood, ointment, and oil stains. I was concerned about contracting a bacterial infection because of my lacking immune system. My skin needed to be moisturized with oils, ointments, and a salve for extreme dryness and irritation. I did this ritual up to seven times a day. It would end up taking months to heal.

During the funeral, I was numb and exhausted from the emotions, plus two hours of standing in line accepting condolences. I am one of those people who dislikes looking at an embalmed body. Remembering the person, the way they were in real life is my preference. I was more or less pressured with both of my arms held firmly by family members gently forcing me into viewing the body. I found out later I was not alone, while missing others that came in to sign the book giving their condolences, but not wanting to partake in the viewing. People assumed I needed it for closure, but I did it for them.

I took a few steps toward my brother, turned away, and burst out in tears, saying, “NO, NO, NO. No, John, No!”

I exploded in a total meltdown, surprising myself. Putting my head on his chest, I cried hard saying, “No, John, it should have been me, it should have been me! I love you so much!”

Then, I kissed him on his chest. I didn't want to let him go like he didn't want to let me go before I went to Chicago for my transplant. He was my hero who came to save me and bring me home. I shook so hard; I could barely stand so I sat. It was so surreal. Life suddenly got slow, similar to watching images come to life on a Polaroid picture. I had to remember it was only his shell and his spirit was with Jesus now.

It was amazing to see the number of people my brother worked with come to the viewing. It personified his character, "birds of a feather." We agreed he had such a big heart and didn't know many strangers. Whatever he tried to conquer, he tackled it with precision. He was very meticulous. We have a hilarious picture of him sitting on the living room floor when he was around five in a cowboy outfit with his action figures on each side, laying perfectly spaced next to each other in a row. He could have been an engineer. My brother could do anything and he was my handyman. He was easy to like and always willing to help anybody. Lord knows he was tired of helping me move!

Most of the eulogy was written until, miraculously, I checked my e-mail from the previous day. For obvious reasons, I had paid little attention to e-mail or social media. I saw this devotional by Dr. Stanley. God was telling me to repeat the devotional for the funeral. It was perfect.

First, I said, "John was my hero. He was the one who came to my rescue, bringing me back home just in time, as there was not much left. I saw this devotional by Dr. Stanley ironically the day before summing up many details for this day."

John's Eulogy taken from "Our Heavenly Place - New Jerusalem" by Dr. Stanley

While Jesus was on earth, John heard Him promise to prepare a place for His followers (John 14:3). Years later, the apostle was given a vision of that place, and he watched the New Jerusalem come down out of heaven. The sight was beyond human description, but he did his best to put this heavenly vision into earthly language (see Revelation 21:9-27, Revelation 22:1-5).

John saw the brilliance of God's glory radiating from the city's structure, whose foundation gleamed with the dazzling colors of precious stones. The gates were made of pearls and the street of transparent gold. This nearly 1500-mile-long cube-shaped city was designed by the Lord as a place for Himself and mankind to live in perfect intimacy for all eternity. In Revelation 22:3-4, he notes that "the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face." Though we may have difficulty imagining the physical structure of the New Jerusalem, we understand and rejoice over the fact that certain things will be absent from this heavenly city—namely, there will be no pain, tears, mourning, or death. Sin and every one of its consequences will be removed. All frustration, boredom, and problems will cease. No one will have handicaps and our bodies will never grow tired or sick.

When the difficulties you face become burdensome, focus on your glorious heavenly future. The only time you will ever experience trouble and pain is in this earthly life. When you walk on the streets of New Jerusalem with the Savior, all the old ravages of sin will be gone, and your joy will be full.

Let me clear something up. My brother's favorite scripture was John 3:16. He even had it on his license plate for a long time. People are overwhelmed every day by fear, guilt, heartache, illness, pride, disillusionment, and hopelessness. Nowhere in God's Word does it indicate suicide is an unforgivable sin. The Bible is very clear in that **the only sin which cannot be forgiven is a refusal to believe in Jesus Christ**. John believed in Jesus Christ. John believed love was the greatest thing a person could have or give to one other. We had many conversations about God and our spiritual revelations. When I miss him, I listen to The Hollies sing, "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother."

There is no love like the love of God that can infinitely and ultimately fulfill you. When Jesus was asked what the most important commandments were, He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:36-49).

When you accept Christ as your Lord and Savior, put Him first, live a holier life, and most importantly give it all to Him. In a very short time, you will find all the pressures and struggles of the world somehow shrink becoming much smaller, more manageable. All you have to do is believe with unwavering faith without an ounce of doubt in Jesus Christ to release the unimaginable power God gave you. Christ already lives inside of you. Galatians 2:20 proves it, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of

the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)

As I stood in line accepting condolences, someone said, “Maybe his will and purpose was to bring you back home.” It brings me to tears still. We had stories to tell. All I could think about was this scripture, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). I said it many, many times over and over while I received condolences. It comforted me.

Reflections

Though this was a painful time in my life, I was once again reminded how much God loved me. He once again sent me what I needed to not only strengthen me but use my brother’s funeral to minister to others and lead them to a saving knowledge of Christ.

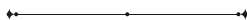
Read the scriptures God used to comfort me.

Go online and read the sermon Dr. Charles Stanley taught that day.

Begin to look for ways God sends you people to help you.

Then begin to look for ways you can help others.

Chapter 7



THE END OF YOURSELF

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. (1 Peter 5:10)

Do you wonder why sometimes life has put you in a stronghold? This chapter addresses brokenness, adversities, trials, seasons and times of hardship from relationships, illness, finances, and trauma. You get to the point of brokenness, feeling helpless, numb, and confused. Life happens, it's messy, random, and unpredictable. Trials should make us ask why, seek a self-examination, and want a desirable change. My Mama Jean, may she rest in peace, used to tell me, "When life isn't going right, take inventory."

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. (Psalm 34:19)

God wants to get our attention! It took a life and death experience to get mine. He loves me! He wants us to learn something by breaking our arrogance, pride, independence, and rebellion revealing His power. I have

learned the “hard way” to know what true surrendering entails. We have been given choices and free will along with a manual for guidance. Go to the Word to receive comfort, strength, and direction to separate the truth from carnal lies.

Suffering makes us more open to Him. We need to realize we are not in charge. God uses trauma as an opportunity to make us become dead to our self. Our perspective changes even more when we no longer put ourselves first, crucifying our flesh, renewing our mind, and becoming dead to sin with the help of the Holy Spirit. You see yourself and others differently.

God wants to break you to use you for His will and purpose to do amazing things in your life. Which direction will you choose? We don’t know how long adversity will last. I went through a long brutal season of afflictions. I prayed for mercy, while rejoicing in the Lord (Philippians 4:4). He only lets hardships last as long as necessary. By pouring yourself in the Word, your brokenness resolves quicker through God’s quickening.

This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. (Psalm 119:50)

Infirmities, trials, and tribulations change our perspective and our attitudes bringing us running to God for comfort. They build godly character traits. Through our own suffering, adversities aid us by teaching compassion toward others. The reality is we live in a fallen world. The word “fallen” is used in the Bible to describe someone or something spiritually and morally degraded. Those in a fallen state suffer the degrading and deadly spiritual, moral, and social consequences of

sinfulness.⁶ He wants to free us from our destructive nature, self-sufficiency, and emotional bondage.

My servants will sing out of the joy of their hearts, but you will cry out from anguish of heart and wail in brokenness of spirit. (Isaiah 65:14)

We live in a disposable society. If it's broke, we deem it as worthless, throwing it away as in our work, marriage, and relationships. The Almighty breaks our will to bring us to **His** will. He can fix our broken hearts, spirits, and relationships if we let Him.

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34:18)

We are His children and we need discipline like all children need to learn right from wrong, good from evil. He allows things to happen for a purpose to get rid of the weaknesses and obstacles to keep us on our path. Satan wants to tempt us, distract us, to get us off our path and not focus on God. He wants to destroy us. We need to fix our eyes on Jesus, so we don't grow weary and lose our way or our heart.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (Hebrews 12:7)

The scriptural definition of "chasten" in the Bible are acts of discipline, correction, and corporal punishment. According to the Bible, it considers the Lord's chastening painful and unpleasant (Hebrews 12:11), intended as a

⁶ Got questions.org

“rebuke or reprimand” to change one’s behavior. In the King James Dictionary, chaste is defined as to discipline; train; educate. It is correction and discipline, not wrath or judgment. God wants to motivate us out of His love, the same as we do for our children.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. (Revelation 3:19)

When we are disobedient, punishment comes to everyone who proudly resists Him. When we make a choice to disobey God's laws, there will be accountability for the consequences. There are no age discriminations. When our children misbehave, they need punishment. We love them and want to keep them safe by teaching them how to make better moral decisions.

Proverbs 13:15 shows, “The way of the transgressor is hard.” Dictionary.com defines a transgressor: to violate a law, command, moral code, offend, or sin. Consciously living in sin is much harder on you. Following the Lord’s laws has many more benefits. Romans 6:16 tells us, “You are slaves to the one whom you obey” meaning either you are a slave to sin or a slave to righteousness. Satan or God?

The Almighty longs for us to come to Him for healing. We must get out of our own heads, take our eyes off of ourselves, and focus on Him and Jesus Christ. We get so busy with our lives, families, work, problems that brokenness makes us realize our deepest need; reconciliation with God.

The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God. (Psalm 51:17)

Likeness of Christ

After that long season, I changed spiritually. I was not the same anymore. I was growing as a Christian and becoming unblinded from the gradual removal of the veiled layers from my eyes emanating into spiritual maturity.

God tries to mold and chisel us into the likeness of Christ. He is not finished with us yet! He wants to mold us back into the image of Christ! Now, don't get crazy, because we understand we can't be perfect, but we **can** be better!

My thinking needed to change and quit declaring how independent I was living my life. I heard Him ask, "So, how is that working out for you?" I answered with a resounding, "Not well!" I continue to learn how to seek His counsel before making decisions.

He is trying to mold us into the likeness of His Son. God focuses on the things in our life needing change. He made us from dirt and blew life into our soul (Genesis 2:7). We are a lump of clay that can be crushed and reformed over and over until we are formed into the likeness of His Son. God is the potter and we are the clay.

But now, O LORD, thou [art] our father; we [are] the clay, and thou our potter; and we all [are] the work of thy hand. (Isaiah 64:8)

Come to the end of yourself. He revitalizes and breaks your will, so you realize you cannot do anything without Him. Put Him in charge of your life! Do you think you can do a better job being in charge of your life than God? Just envision, you will be a trophy of His grace!

You are His workmanship (Ephesians 2:10). Blessings come after you learn to follow His plan and purpose for your life. Next thing you know, doors open, healing happens, hardships leave, and you are becoming closer to the likeness of Christ! There will always be trials and tribulation, only now, you have the knowledge to handle whatever crosses your path. Combine this with the Armor of God and you send Satan back to Hell where he belongs!

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. (James 1:2-4)

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. (John 14:13-14)

He Makes Us Worthy

He loves us so much; **we are not worthless.** Otherwise, why would He sacrifice His Son to save mankind? It is hard to be dead to yourself while suffering. Your carnal senses become alive wanting all your attention. It is difficult not to react to your five senses when attacked by infirmities, especially if you lack knowledge on how to deal with these circumstances with God at the helm. In these times, it is most important to

have self-control. Put God in control, run to Him while praising and rejoicing in Him for all the blessings He has given you (Philippians 4:4). We are valuable and He makes us worthy!

*Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ **may be glorified in you, and ye in him**, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 emphasis added).*

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. (Colossians 1:9-13)

Reflections

God was teaching me to recognize how dependent I was on Him by breaking my self-sufficiency. I needed to quit declaring how independent I had lived my life. He asked me, “So, how is that working out for you?” I answered with a resounding, “Not well!”

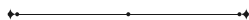
But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. (1 Peter 5:10)

God has a purpose for your tribulations. Get on your knees and pray for clarification and guidance while keeping your focus on Him and realizing He is in control. He is your Creator knowing every molecule and every cell belonging to you. He knows every hair on your head (Matthew 10:30) and every tear you cried (Psalm 56:8). There is a protein in every cell of your body called laminin. Its molecular structure is in the shape of a cross and is the “glue” that holds you together. It is a cell adhesion molecule analogous to reinforcing steel (rebar) does in building. God literally is holding you together by the cross! Put an end to yourself to make room for His power in your life.

Will you put an end to yourself in order to make room for His power in your life?

Are you ready to stand before God?

Chapter 8



ENDURANCE AND FORTITUDE

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (Jesus in John 15:5)

Endurance

To get through the adversity's life throws at us or one's we create, patience along with endurance and fortitude are imperative. Do you think you possess an endurance gene or need one?

Like most people, I believe much of my life has been one endurance test after another either self-created or just life. College, single parenting, and marriage were endurance tests. Being on a transplant list was an endurance test followed by post treatments, rejection, travel, etcetera. The Almighty gives us endurance aiding our abilities to help us grow closer to know Him.

There are rewards for obedience. James 1:12 says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Hebrews 10:36 says, "For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive

what is promised.” Obedience is an essential common factor between a victorious relationship with God and surviving a transplant program.

If you think you have it bad, read the Book of Job. Along with the patience of Job, it says in James 5:11, “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

Now, I understand why the Psalms follow Job because you need to read it next to calm yourself. I did this while in the hospital because many others prompted me to “read the Book of Job.” I read Job and the beginning is great! Then, I had to stop. Do not read Job if are ill. It added to my pain and sorrow. I jumped to Psalms. Don’t read Job unless you are well. Psalms is easy to read, full of prayers, short chapters, and soothing to the mind. Those 150 chapters help the time pass.

I didn’t understand this, but now I’ve learned there are too many reasons I cannot live without the Lord. Though I used to be an independent person, I now know I cannot do anything well without “giving it all to Him.” Now, I am “God-dependent.” It took **complete** surrender, finding the Word, and many tests before I came to this revelation.

Also, according to the Word, being independent is idolatry. When you put yourself first before God, that is idolatry. In fact, if you put **anything** first such as money, plastic surgery, or video games, others (you get the picture) that is the definition of idolatry. Idolatry is defined as the worship of idols and extreme admiration, love, or reverence for something or someone.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any

likeness [of anything] that [is] in heaven above, or that [is] in the earth beneath, or that [is] in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God [am] a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth [generation] of them that hate me. (Exodus 20:3-5)

Fortitude

It takes fortitude, courage, and bravery to get through life's tough storms. Fortitude goes beyond courage permitting us to overcome fear so we can face any physical or spiritual obstacle with endurance. Fortitude is defined as someone who has the emotional power or reserves able to withstand adversity, admired for their courage. It comes from the Latin word *fortitudo*, meaning “strength.”⁷

I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

Courage, bravery, and fortitude are required to go through a transplant or any major circumstance. I have met a few people who turned down a transplant when given a choice. They either did not want to go through the surgery because of fear, they had addiction problems, or both. I could have made the same choice, but it never seemed to be an option. You can do all things with the help of God.

The Almighty makes it easier to quit your bad habits. When you resolve yourself to being sick and tired

⁷ Vocabulary.com

of being sick and tired, get rid of your pride and self-sufficiency, the Lord will be by your side, guiding you along the way. God is your creator, your heavenly Father, and sends His Holy Spirit to live in you. Fortitude is one of the seven functions of the Holy Spirit found in Isaiah 11:1-2. This means you already own this strength of character through Jesus Christ! It's just one of many gifts God gives us to equip us to “do all things”! The Holy Spirit has other names; “your helper, comforter, and the Spirit of truth.”

But the Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will help you remember everything that I have told you. (John 14:26 AMP)

*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but **ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.** I will not leave you comfortless: **I will** come to you. (John 14:16-18 emphasis added)*

The storms of life make a person delve to places of deep internal fortitude. Sometimes, you sense falling into an abyss or a black hole. Reading the Word and listening to healing sermons and healing music helps. The Word of God has spiritual power. When you read it out loud, you are releasing the power of God. This is when rejoicing and

praising the Lord reaps benefits. This great Comforter and Helper does what He promised.

After a transplant, complications and side effects; such as, other illnesses or afflictions come with the territory requiring much fortitude, strength, and endurance. For instance, I survived spontaneous bacterial peritonitis (SBP), ascites, Clostridium difficile (C. diff), flu, pneumonia three times, over fifteen ERCP's (still counting), and E. coli from an anatomical anomaly, within a year. Having bile duct disease along with a lacking immune system brings on many challenges. It gets better with the great Comforter by your side.

Your physical and emotional health needs to be formidable to go through any surgery. If you want or need supernatural healing, you need to act in the supernatural not the natural. People expect the natural, carnal, physical response, but when you are feeling or dealing with lousy circumstances, **praise and rejoice in the Lord!** That is not a natural response!

Remember, God is spirit (John 4:24). His Spirit lives within you!

Fortitude is important to enable coping skills throughout the long-term healing process. It gives you perseverance and resilience to keep going. God gave us this gift to help us with our fight against our carnal flesh. Combine it with faith the size of a mustard seed and you can move mountains!

In Matthew 17:20, Jesus said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

You can find yourself in a place where you're going through something so difficult, only God has the ability to give comfort. There's a blessing in tears non-discoverable anywhere else. When you read the Beatitudes, they help explain what dying to ourselves resembles and to live for the Kingdom of Heaven instead of our own. The Sermon on the Mount is found in Matthew 5:1-12.

And seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto him: And He opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

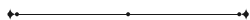
Reflections

God wants us well and uses our suffering to reveal who we are and discover Him. He wants us to focus more on what He's trying to tell us. He is waiting, longing for us to learn to respond to Him with trust. We need to listen, trust, obey, and learn to cooperate with God. He knows what we need before we ask Him. He is the source of **all** our needs and desires. When we have reached our ultimate helplessness, we turn to Him and God comes to us in our storms. His timing is always right. He is never late.

Have you reached your place of ultimate helplessness?

Will you turn to Him today and ask Him to come to you in the midst of your own personal storm?

Chapter 9



NO FEAR, NO DOUBT, NO WORRY

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (Isaiah 41:10)

Fear, doubt, and worry are forms of mental mind

control from Satan. Much of it stems from our own lack of knowledge, fear of the unknown, and not trusting God to take care of us. If we have any fears, doubts, or worries about something, we are to ask God for counsel, direction, and guidance to get to the root of the problem.

These are three emotions we learn at a young age. The potential can grow worse as you get older if you don't know how to handle your feelings. Emotions are fickle, you can't trust them. Jesus watches over us when we are in need, going through a storm, or when we are ill. He is there **all** the time; not sometimes, **always**. Fear, doubt, and worry are emotions Satan uses to distract and separate us from God. Nothing can separate us from the love of God unless we consent to it.

Separation from the Almighty started with Adam and Eve. It is everyone's problem. The Bible says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Scripture states, "The wages of sin is death [separation], but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ

Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). We can go our own sinful, independent way and stay separated from God forever. Or we can believe His Word and do things His way. He gave us a choice.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

This is a story I must tell. One evening after the transplant while I was in the second rehabilitation facility, I saw fresh blood in the toilet. Without getting graphic, it got worse as the night progressed. I kept a close eye on it. By 7 a.m., I had to tell the nurse to call the hospital because by then, it was pouring out. I got weak. The ambulance came to take me to the ER. I ended up in an ICU unit on the eighth floor for the next two-and-a-half days. The two nurses in charge of me were outstanding. They spoke life with a smile on their face. They nicknamed the room the “million-dollar room” because of the brilliant view of the sunrise. It was a “Kodak moment” place. Once again, I was on the east side facing Lake Shore Drive. Many spiritual things were happening in a short time. First, I had complete trust in God. I **never** had one ounce of fear, doubt, or worry! This would have been an opportunity for it to kick in because my situation was serious. After all, I was in ICU.

The entire time this was happening I laughed at the devil. I knew I was fine. This was a test to see if the enemy could break me, distract me, and try to separate me

from God. I would sing gospel songs when I went to the bathroom.

When you get to a place where you can laugh at your demons and put all your trust and faith in the Lord Almighty, you have passed a huge test!

After a few days, a procedure, and marvelous treatment, the doctors found nothing wrong. “Everything looks fine,” they said with astonishment. I kept telling them it was nothing and everything would be fine because God was in charge. They thought I was delusional, at least that’s what their facial expressions showed. I was ecstatic to be in such an amazing room. My spirit was soaring in joyfulness.

I had the nurse take a picture of me in front of the peak of the sunrise with my arms up in the air praising God. Taking nearly half an hour, I recorded the waking world on my kindle. While the sun was rising, God spoke and said, “It is done.” The flood gates opened again; tears raced down my face. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice (Philippians 4:4)! I would have never known to do such a thing until I remembered seeing one of Andrew Wommack’s teachings. He was trying to impress on us to not give too much attention to Satan. It has the possibility of glorifying him too much instead of the Lord. Ignore your demons as much as you can by putting more concentration toward edifying, glorifying, and praising God.

This was an attitude I kept the entire time I was in the hospital. It was a major key in getting me through a fight for my life. I put God at the helm completely in charge of my ship. Don’t let the seeds the enemy tries to plant in your head take root. Nip them in the bud and put

on the armor of God because nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37).

Fight fear with love, fight doubt with trust, fight worry with faith.

Fear

Fear or to “be afraid” was never part of God’s will for us. When Adam sinned with Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), fear became a problem for mankind. Suddenly, our sin consciousness was born. In speaking to God, Adam said, “I was afraid, so I hid.” Mankind now struggles with fear about the past, present, future, anxiety disorders, depression, and phobias. Fear has become natural to man. However, Philippians 4:6 says, “Be anxious for nothing.”

The true nature of God is love. How do you get passed fear, doubt, and worry to get to a place of peace, pure joy, and contentment, which manifests into walking in the Holy Spirit? Fight fear with God’s love. God is love (1 John 4:8). He gives a description of love: “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails” (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).

We come to a point of confession and repentance because we think we have done something wrong or God is angry with us. That is not His true nature. When you get to know who God is, you find He is all about love. 1 John 4:8 tells us, “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” Remember, He sacrificed His Son for us (John

3:16-17). There is no room for fear when you are full of love.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. (1 John 4:18)

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

I sought the LORD, and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears. (Psalm 34:4)

Adversities and storms have a way of testing your belief, faith, and trust in the Lord. When you learn to give everything to Him, put Him first, show obedience, read the Word, and live by His laws of the kingdom, then you have no fear, doubt, or worry left. You have experienced His supernatural powers working in your life by opening doors, turning from negative to positive, and seeing prayers answered!

Doubt and Worry

Trust and faith become two important factors when managing these emotions. Doubt and worry happened to Eve in the garden when the serpent questioned what God had said in regard to eating from the tree of life. The enemy made her question if she would physically die. The serpent said, “You will not surely die?” (Genesis 3:4). This put doubt and worry in Eve’s mind. The Berean Study Bible says, “Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field that the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, “You must not

eat of any tree in the garden?”” She didn’t think about the other trees she could consume.

Jesus taught His disciples how to overcome doubt and fear as they walked with Him for His three years of ministry on this earth.

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.
(Mark 11:22-24)

Jesus told His disciples not to worry about their life, what they ate, what their body needed, “And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on” (Luke 12:22).

Then, on the night before they crucified Jesus, He told His disciples, “Let not your heart be troubled” (John 14:1). He was trying to prepare them for what was going to happen. Remember, they didn’t have the Holy Spirit or the Bible yet. They only had His teachings along with their own faith. The disciples needed to have faith, trust, hope, no fear, no worry, or doubt after Jesus ascended to heaven.

The Lord’s grace provides divine assistance to mankind. Grace is the undeserved love and favor of God (Ephesians 2:8). There is nothing we have done to deserve

His kindness, nor can ever do to earn His favor. It is a gift from God.

For example, I don't worry about money because I obey His process by tithing a minimum of 10 percent. I give the first fruits to a few ministries while also giving benevolently. I live on a tight disability budget. However, money always shows up somehow, somehow through God's blessing of adhering to His commandments. You learn God's grace is sufficient for you (2 Corinthians 12:9). Praise the Lord, He keeps His promises!

Trust

Philippians 4:6-7 reveals God promises to give us peace and contentment if we trust Him. He really wants us to experience them in increasing measure, even here in this troubled world (John 16:33). He has told us how: "Trust and commit your path unto Me and I shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 7:5). It is the only way.

What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. (Psalm 56:3-4)

The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe. (Proverbs 29:25)

I will say of the LORD; He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. (Psalm 91:2)

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. (Romans 3:27)

Peace

When you conquer your fear, doubt, and worry you get to a place of peace and tranquility. You have complete faith, trust, and love in the Almighty Lord. You have confidence in His outcomes and decisions for His will and purpose for you. It becomes unwavering. Get to the root of problems by asking yourself where and why do these emotions arise? Ask Him and pray for His truth to be revealed to you. The enemy is trying to distract you to separate you from God.

Once you find yourself in the place of peace with no fear, doubt, or worry, you won't want to let it go. You will hold on to the peace you found tightly, guarding it, nourishing yourself with the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of the Word of God. It becomes exhilarating to learn the truth and watch God do His work right in front of your eyes. The Word isn't only the truth, it is the "absolute truth." Things start happening and you know your prayers are at work. Your revelations of truth strengthen your faith. You have reached intimacy with the Lord Almighty. Make releasing your cares and burdens on Him a part of your lifestyle. Next, you realize, you get to peace by walking and living in the spirit. This is when you find true peace, your true self, and the fruit of the Spirit comes alive within you. When you find peace, you have found your intimate relationship with God.

*Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace
always by all means. The Lord [be] with you all.
(2 Thessalonians 3:16)*

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. (Isaiah 26:3)

We must believe in God's promises. He is the Alpha, Omega, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, the beginning, and the end. He's the only one who knows your true self.

Revelation 1:8 tells us, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Satan would like to think there is a competition, however, God is no match. Luke 1:37 says, "For nothing will be impossible with God."

Persecution

People will notice you are different. It can become difficult to be around others who have not found this place of tranquility. They don't know what it means to walk and live by the Spirit, so they might pick you apart with accusations and disparaging remarks. In response, pray for someone to reveal God to them. During the months after my brother died, I got very ill, going through kidney failure, and a plethora of other things bringing me to the end of myself. But despite that, complete joy, contentment, and peace fell over me again and continued to stay because I understood the place my brother went, Heaven. I continued to praise the Lord.

A few months later, a family member treated me harshly, and I asked them, "Why are you treating me this way?"

This person said, "Because the family doesn't think you're upset about your brother's death."

It shocked me; nevertheless, I tried to explain their lack of education regarding God and Heaven, walking in the Spirit, and such. It sounded as if I was defending myself, but I knew they didn't know what any of it meant. So, I handled it as an opportunity to spread the Word of God. They didn't remember the message I spoke at the funeral about God and heaven. They hurt me and I ran to the Almighty for guidance and direction.

Fight evil with goodness. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21)

The enemy was working through someone else to take my joy away. I had to shut the entire world out and seek His comfort and counsel. The peace I worked so hard for, got misplaced. Through the Holy Spirit, I was determined to get it back. After three days of praising, worshiping, reading the Word, and praying for counsel, I got it back. Then, I had to pray for God to bless and reveal Himself to them.

I got quiet on the third day and God spoke and said, "Lori, don't take it personally. They don't know what it means to walk in the Spirit. You don't have to defend yourself. I will defend you. They are mad at Me, not you." I dissolved into tears, thanking and praising Him. He imparted several scriptures afterwards:

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. (John 15:18)

But Jesus, said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. (Mark 6:4)

A man's enemies will be the members of his own household. (Matthew 10:36)

He also told me to read Psalms 1-7. Later, I thought I must be doing something right for persecution to happen. I knew I needed to ready myself for more. He is my rock, my salvation, safely defending me as I defend Him.

My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defense; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah. (Psalm 62:5-8)

Walking in the Spirit with God

When you walk in the Spirit, your true self shows. Your true self reflects the fruit of the Spirit God has given everyone. This is who we are without the carnal, sinfulness of the devil's influence. When we put God first abiding by His truth, will, and way with obedience, we show the world who God says we are by reflecting His character.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23 NIV)

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.
(John 14:27)

Walking in the spirit involves denying your flesh, unholy desires, and ungodly behavior. It means giving up activities, friends, even family, or habits not matching God's best. Make a daily decision to obey righteousness, not sinful worldly ways. Present your body as a living sacrifice commanding it to submit to your Holy Spirit looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of your faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Fear, doubt, and worry no longer exist when you find peace with God and operate in the Holy Spirit. We know the end of the story according to the book of Revelation. God promises if we remain dedicated, we will make it to the end and be saved! Finally, we have hope. The book of Revelation gives us hope knowing Jesus will ride in on His white horse to save mankind.

But he who endures to the end shall be saved.
(Matthew 24:13)

Fight fear with love, fight doubt and worry with trust and faith. Put on the whole armor of God piece by piece using the power and authority given to us by the holy, righteous, indwelling Spirit He gave each one of us! Continue walking in the Spirit with God!

Reflections

How would you describe where you currently reside in your faith, trust, and love of our heavenly Father?

Chapter 10

CLOSING NOTES

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? (1 Corinthians 15:55)

A transplant survivor story never ends until

God dictates our completion. Every anniversary is a fiery dart back at evil. My next writings, website, and blog will travel the post-transplant life of a survivor with the daily struggles and victories of health, faith, trials, tribulations, and how to fight Satan, our flesh, and the world.

I will share deeper authentic experiences about real and raw revelations of truth, God's love for us, fighting and overcoming evil in pursuit of the Almighty King of kings.

While writing this book, I encountered continual attacks from the powers and principalities of dark forces. I wrote much of the manuscript while dying, going through rejection, and learning how to fight evil. Half of the manuscript got deleted from a computer crash showing the blue screen of death (BSOD). An IT friend resurrected it (taking two months) with the power of prayer, deep faith, and trust through the Almighty. The list goes on and demons continue to try, but I keep putting on the spiritual armor of God every day knowing He works out all the details while I keep an unwavering faith, trust, and obedience.

Fighting demons becomes easier and normal, so it isn't a surprise that making preparations is a key through educating myself in the Word. Steadfast prayer and staying obedient to God's laws, gives power and authority to be an overcomer. Learning how to recognize the difference between the spiritual realm and the natural, physical world enables you to move mountains!

My roots grow deeper as my foundation gets stronger like the "Cedars of God" in Psalm 92:12. I lean not on my own understanding or the thoughts of the world and focus on God lining up my life with scripture letting the truth guide me.

Get behind me Satan!

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (Matthew 16:22-24)

Psalm 1

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also

shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

I am continually reminded and feel a deep connection to Apostle Paul's vision and his "Thorn in the flesh." The stents I have to get to keep my bile ducts inside of my liver open are a constant reminder or "thorns" in my flesh. I have no confidence in my flesh but in the power of God.

No Confidence in the Flesh

Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth

of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. [And follow Paul's Example:] All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained. Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to

bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. (Philippians 3 NIV)

I have learned to rejoice in my infirmities, praying to the Lord for revelations, and growing spiritually with every hardship. It takes the sting out of Satan's attempt to make me suffer. Focus your mind on God, things above; not of the world through the study of scripture, and fervent prayer.

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

I am in no way claiming to be another Apostle Paul, but the Lord has revealed to me the similarities. During the third rejection, I fully accepted the idea that the Lord wants to keep me here at least for now. It maintains my humbleness, diverts pride, while He imparts wisdom, knowledge, and understanding so I can share it with others gently. I have learned to rejoice in my afflictions.

The only cure for my bile duct disease is through God or another transplant. Personally, unless He changes my heart revealing a new plan, I will let someone else get this precious gift as I anxiously await the coming of Christ.

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:8-9)

I am learning how to walk in the spirit every moment savoring everyday God graces me to live as He constructs His temple inside of me editing and preparing me for my heavenly inheritance. I often tell others, “The worst thing that can happen to me is I can go to heaven!”

And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:49-53)

Since the dead are to rise; all the graves are to give up all that dwell in them; since no man will die after that, where is its victory? It is taken away and spoiled. The power of death and the grave is vanquished, and Christ is triumphant over all. Paul declared unto others the gospel, that doctrine of the gospel which he had before preached to them, and which they had heard, and believed, and embraced as the truth of God.

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,

forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:56-58)

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

I yearn for the day that evil will be destroyed and we can all live in peace, truth, love, joy, and complete fulfillment.

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. (1 Corinthians 15:24-26)

Life on earth is temporary, life with Christ is eternal. As I live out my days, I have no fear, doubt, or worry and have finally found an indescribable peace with total contentment in the joy of God. The one and only thing I know I can count on is an immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent God who keeps all His promises.

Having a second chance at life enabled me to find out who God is, how to get to know Him and have a

relationship before it was too late. My soul is saved from darkness.

*Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say
rejoice! (Philippians 4:4)*

Chapter 11



BIBLICAL GROUNDS FOR ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. (1 Corinthians 13:13)

In 1954, the kidney was the first human organ to be transplanted successfully. Liver, heart, and pancreas transplants were successfully performed by the late 1960s, while lung and intestinal organ transplant procedures were begun in the 1980s. In 1967, the first successful liver transplant was performed. It wasn't until 1998, the first successful adult-to-adult living donor liver transplant was performed. Since then, modern medical technology has come a long way.⁸

According to the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN) data, as of January 8, 2019, more transplants than ever were performed in 2018. More than 36,500 transplants were executed. Deceased organ donors in the United States exceeded 10,700 with nearly 6,900 living donor transplants. On March 6, 2019, there are 113,699 people waiting for a lifesaving transplant. From January 2019 to March 6, 2019, already

⁸ <https://unos.org/transplantation/history>

3,182 transplants have been performed with 1,588 donors. Transplant trends are at all-time highs.

Currently, 95 percent of Americans believe in organ donations upon death. However, only 58 percent are registered to go through the donation process not meeting the demand with a huge needful supply. The United Network of Organ Sharing (UNOS) reported only two out of ten families donate organs from a brain-dead family member giving reasons of having an uncomfortableness, lack of communication, along with an undiscussed possible scenario.

The morality or immorality of organ donation and transplantation can partially be determined with an understanding of the Sovereignty of God and how loving one another with organ donation and transplantation morally falling into this category.

What the Bible Says about Organ Transplants by Bobby A. Howard, RN, BSN, MDiv.

Bobby A. Howard was a trauma ICU staff nurse at North Carolina Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem for eight years and is the minister of education/youth at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Asheville, North Carolina. He designed and taught a trauma nursing seminar in Croatia in 1994. In the *Journal of Christian Nursing*, Vol. 15, No. 4; 15(4):26-32, October 1998, author Bobby Howard described two documented categories of ethical biblical principles relating to organ donation and transplantation.

First, “love one another.” When Jesus was asked which commandment was greatest in the law, He said, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like, unto it,

thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matthew 22:36-40). We are to give obedience to the commands of God.

As Christians, we are obligated to love everyone even through modern technology by making organ donation and transplantation as one possibility of its expression. The first ethical principle “love one another” was cited by John Wilkerson and Richard Hughs, a tissue recipient himself, who recognized the tangible act as “love for one's neighbors.” This first biblical command was originally found in the Old Testament. Leviticus states the love one should have from God concerned neighbors, and strangers (Deuteronomy 10:19, 6:5). This biblical demand was also quoted in the New Testament by Jesus (Matthew 5:43), Paul (Romans 13:9), and James (James 2:8). The definition of who qualifies as one's neighbor is told in the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 and in Matthew 5:43-44 by Jesus.

According to Howard, the second category of ethical principles asks if the failure of a Christian's desire to donate an organ is based upon the idea that a total body will be necessary at the resurrection to receive a glorified body (heavenly inheritance). Apostle Paul taught and compared the earthly physical body is analogous to a planted seed resulting in a much different end product becoming the future resurrected spiritual body as taught in John 20:19. Therefore, neither is the physical body the same as the future spiritual body. We change from mortality to immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53).

There is also a difference between man and Jesus relating to how we were created. Jesus was a supernatural creation of God (His seed planted in Mary) and had qualities His physical body did not possess (John 20:19). When Jesus rose from the dead, He was in a transitional state between an earthly body and a heavenly body.

Scripture states, “The form in which Jesus rose from the dead was one in which he could be seen, but his present existence is in the spiritual realm” (1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 3:18). The earthly body will not enter into the heavenly inheritance (1 Corinthians 15:50). Based on these facts, there can be no justification for prohibiting organ donation and transplantation because of the need for a physically intact body prior to entering the resurrected state.

Totality

The next principle the author raises in question refers to totality; to the assumed need in the body's resurrection while still maintaining the whole body allowing for removal of part of the body if done in the interest of or for the benefit of the whole person. This includes charitable donation and mutilation of the body (i.e. amputation). Currently, the benefit of the whole person has been further defined by expanding physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and moral well-being constituting an act of charity (**with no intention of receiving anything in return**) through donating organs or tissues. This act of charity allows for the improved well-being of the giver and the recipient who needs to exemplify a permissible Christlikeness. If the giver promotes self-fulfillment, it deems the act as unjustified by suggesting a “perversion of the notion of charity.” This debate satisfies the New Testament quotes from Leviticus 19:18 describing a self-denying, spirit-guided love (agape), toward all mankind deemed worthy or not.

Mutilation

Removal of a body part defines this type of mutilation as it relates to totality. Back in ancient times, the general answer was we did not have the right or authority (or technology) to mutilate our bodies. Some religious leaders consent to the extended definition of totality to allow for mutilation (removal as a body part) benefiting the whole as stewards of God's creation in detrimental circumstances.

“Matthew 5:29-30, 18:8-9, and Mark 9:43-48 justify mutilation when the end goal is a positive benefit to the whole person.” In each of these passages, Jesus teaches we should rid our bodies of hands, feet or eyes if that part causes us to reject the salvation provided through faith in Him. Understanding these passages in context will reveal, however, Jesus is not advocating self-mutilation. Jesus emphasizes the seriousness of permitting sin into one's life and encourages extreme measures to prevent sin. Therefore, these passages do not put into context guidelines either prohibiting or justifying mutilation involved in organ donation and transplantation.

Life Prolonged

With certain transplantation procedures that prolong a potentially shortened life by a failed body part, i.e. bone tissue, or improved quality of life, i.e. corneas, scripture supports medical advancements.

The Bible does not condemn the prolongation of life, for example, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-44). Jesus says, “This illness does not lead to death: rather it is for God's glory, so the Son of God may be glorified through it” (John 11:4). This event represents

a supernatural resuscitation glorifying God. Organ transplants prolong life. I can verify this was God's sovereignty and plan for my life. There were too many times situations could have gone awry. He is not done with me yet!

Jesus healed or raised someone from the dead twenty-three times. He healed and prolonged life for someone confronting imminent death (John 4:46-53). At other times, Jesus restored the function of a part of the body to improve the quality of life (Matthew 8:2-4; Mark 2:3-12; Luke 18:35-43 and John 5:1-9). Old Testament passages also offer support for the prolongation of life. Elijah prayed to God and the life of the dead child for whom he prayed was restored (1 Kings 17:19-22). Elisha performed a similar act, as life miraculously returned to a dead child (2 Kings 4:32-35). In summary, if motives and methods are consistent with Scripture, the Bible does not prohibit prolonging life through the medical procedures of organ transplantation.

The Natural Order

One's uncertainty of bodily rejection of a newly transplanted organ or tissue becomes the last factor stemming from opposing natural law and order. In the past, before technology advanced in screening procedures and medications, bodily rejection was more prevalent. Until the early 1980s, the potential of organ rejection limited the number of transplants performed. Medical advances in the prevention and treatment of rejection led to more successful transplants and an increase in demand.⁹

Technology needs to use a moral compass, attitude by glorifying God using proper motives and intentions to

⁹ <https://unos.org/transplantation/history>

not interfere or tamper with the natural order. Therefore, it may also be asserted the morality or immorality of organ donation and transplantation can partially be determined by the motive behind tampering with the natural order. If we pridefully use technology with the attitude “we know more than God” then the act may be deemed immoral. However, if we humbly use technology in a way that glorifies God, understanding the sovereignty of God, then the act may (but not always) be considered a moral act.

The Scriptural Application

Biblical principles provided through scripture may justify organ donation and transplantation. Giving of organs before death resulting in suicide and the marketing and improper allocation of the organs and tissues would fall under exceptions to this provision. Ask yourself this question, “Is failing to donate organs and tissues when possible selfish, contrary to biblical charity?” Concerning the resurrection of the body, 1 Corinthians 15 clearly teaches that the bodies we occupy at death are not the same as the glorified bodies we will occupy in the spiritual realm. We were created from dust and to dust shall return (Genesis 3:19, Job 34:14-15, Psalm 104:29, Ecclesiastes 3:20, 12:7).

Today, prolonging life through the best medical technology available and with the power of prayer should be the focus of every person in a similar situation. To deny organ donation and transplantation because prolonging life is not biblical or moral would also require the denial of all health care and medications treating abnormal characteristics of the body. Some scholars even promote this practice as not simply permissible but obligatory, based on the biblical mandate to love one another. Those who prohibit organ donation and transplantation biblically

have weaker arguments with many inconsistencies. It may be affirmed on biblical grounds; organ donation and transplantation are at least a permissible practice and may potentially be viewed as obligatory.

Conclusion

In conclusion, results have been found to be biblically permissible and obligatory with sound, often irrefutable arguments resulting from weak, inconsistent theological debates through scripture. People wonder what their official religious stance is on this issue. According to an article called, “Theological Perspective on Organ and Tissue Donation,” nearly all religious groups support organ and tissue donation and transplantation if it does not impede the life or hasten the death of the donor. In fact, many religious groups encourage organ and tissue donation and see it as a charitable act saving or enhancing life. The United Methodists, as with several other religions, believe organ and tissue donation is an act of charity and preserving life takes precedence over any beliefs governing treatment of the dead.

God, most Americans, and religious groups don't seem to have a problem with organ donation and transplantation. So, why can't we meet the demand with our supply? I concluded after researching this question, the biggest factors of not meeting the demand with the potentially huge supply from the population seems to happen at a critical, mournful, vulnerable moment in a time when no one wants to discuss end-of-life possibilities along with a lack of knowledge and communication during a time when it's hard to think. Maybe, spiritual warfare is happening.

When a loved one dies, a person's religion suddenly becomes very important. Most people are not aware of their religious group's doctrine or position regarding organ and tissue donation. If there are *no medical directives* or the decision-maker(s) begin to ask, "What is my religion's stance on organ and tissue donation?" then the decision-maker(s) often look to a faith leader, liaison, or hospital chaplain for an informed answer. This is the time when spiritual questions arise.

Why is it important to talk about donation with your family? When sharing your donation decision, you could look at it from a different perspective. It can speak about life instead of death. It gives the opportunity to save others which is different from talking about death. By discussing and planning your medical directives in advance, it gives time for your family to process your decisions providing comfort during difficult times. Ultimately, every transplant is made possible by someone's decision to help another through organ donation. Saving lives can be a comfort after losing a loved one. Speak life and demonstrate an act of charity.

Organ, Eye, and Tissue Donation Statistics from Donate Life America (DLA):

114,000+ men, women and children await lifesaving organ transplants. (This number changes constantly)

Every 10 minutes another person is added to the national transplant waiting list.

8,000 deaths occur every year in the U.S. because organs are not donated in time.

22 people die each day because the organ they need is not donated in time.

82 percent of patients need a kidney.

1 out of 3 deceased donors is over the age of 50.
By donating your organs, 8 people can be saved.
By donating your corneas, two people can have their sight restored.
By donating your tissue, seventy-five people's lives can be healed.

How Others have helped:

In 2018, 17,500 donors brought new life to recipients and their families.
750,000 transplants have taken place since 1988.
95 percent of Americans are in favor of being a donor, but only 58 percent are registered.

Donate

You can register to become an organ, eye, or tissue donor at:

www.donatelife.net
<https://www.giftofhope.org/>
<https://www.lifegoeson.com/>

Uniform Anatomical Gift Act

The first Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (UAGA) was created after the first successful heart transplant in 1967; the operation was performed by Dr. Christiaan Barnard. In 1968, Congress approved of the UAGA recommending all states adopt it with the intention of harmonizing state laws governing organ donations for the purpose of transplantation. The Act provides a template for States to adjust public policy in coordination to developments in medical practice addressing the donation of organs, tissues, and eyes as gifts to someone who may need an organ for survival. The UAGA was drafted to

increase organ and blood supplies and donation protecting patients. It replaced state laws concerning transplantation and laws lacking a uniform procedure of organ donation and an inadequate process of becoming a donor. All states adopted the original version of the law (the latest revision was 2006). The act permits any adult to become an organ donor and manages control over the making of anatomical gifts of one's cadaver to be dissected in the study of medicine.

Since the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act was put into effect in all states, there still has been a donor shortage in the United States.

This ongoing shortage of donor organs causes major health issues because patients on the waiting list for organ transplantation are likely to die without organ transplantation.

Global Leader Model

Globally, Spain has been a leader in organ donation and transplantation for the past 26 years. Their success is due to their “opt-out” (presumed consent) system for deceased organ donation. Opt-out means a patient is presumed to consent to organ donation even if they have never registered as a donor. The United States has an “opt-in” system whereby you have to sign up to be a donor. A link is provided for more information: <https://bit.ly/2Fucdb2>.

England has also changed their organ donation laws. In 2020, the system will change to “opt-out” or “deemed consent” <https://bit.ly/2WNsui2>.

Organ donation and transplantation in other countries could change their healthcare system blueprint by adapting the successful Spanish Model to their own

system saving more lives by addressing the world-wide problem of transplant organ shortages.

More information about organ donation and transplantation can be found at:

Saving Others: <http://www.savingothers.org/>

You can find more links to resources on Saving Others website.

American Liver Foundation:

<https://liverfoundation.org/>

United Network for Organ Sharing:

<https://unos.org/>

Organ Procurement and Transplant Network

OPTN: <https://optn.transplant.hrsa.gov/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

U.S. Government Information on Organ Donation and Transplantation: <https://www.organdonor.gov/>

[The Uniform Anatomical Gift Act](#) (UAGA)

Links and resources:

<https://www.giftofhope.org/>

[Northwestern Medicine](#) Kovler Organ Transplantation Center

Assistance:

<https://www.livingdonorassistance.org/Home/default.aspx>

***All donation and transplantation stats change constantly. These were during the writing of this book.*

Thank You, Jesus, for giving mankind the knowledge, wisdom, and understanding to save the lives You died on the cross to save first. I pray for all the medical personnel who You gave spiritual gifts to help save mankind. Thank you, Dr. Ganger for your prodigious care and expertise. Dr. M. I. Abecassis, MD, MBA, the Director of The Comprehensive Transplant Center and Chief of Organ Transplantation in the Department of Surgery at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago, Illinois, told me, “God gave me the gift to be a surgeon and save lives.” It was the perfect thing to say before I went into surgery. God blessed me and picked you, Dr. Abecassis. May God bless and guide you both through all your journeys of saving the lives of others. To Dr. Larry Keefauver; my Editor Divine! In the name of Jesus, Amen.”

RECEIVE JESUS AS YOUR SAVIOR

God never gave up on me and He will never give up on you. He keeps trying to pursue you to trust in Him through your struggles, infirmities, and adversities. God is trying to get your attention. Our flesh dies, our spirit lives on. Life on earth is temporary, life in heaven is forever. You can only get to God and to heaven through the belief in Jesus Christ. To get saved you must speak God's Word out loud. It is time to make the best decision of your life!

Read out loud Romans 10:9-10, 13:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Now, pray out loud:

I believe in You, Jesus! I believe You died on the cross to save me from my sins and were raised from death by God the Father. I confess and repent of my sins to You. I believe I receive salvation through You and the Word of God right now. I praise and rejoice in You. Thank You, Jesus!

**Now, you are a new person! Rejoice in the Lord
always, and again I say rejoice (Philippians 4:4)!**