

THOUGHTS *and* **STORIES**

**On a Life God Leads, Guides and
Protects**

**through Quiet Time journals
through dreams
through visions
through stories**

Joan Whitacre Royer

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to the Lord Jesus Christ,
my best Friend.
May it bring Him glory
in the lives of others as they read it.

SPECIAL THANKS

A special thank you to my daughter, Beth,
for inviting me to stay in her lovely quiet home
during the months of writing this book,
for letting me use her computer and printer,
for putting this book on the internet,
and for being such encouraging company.
Thanks, Beth!

INTRODUCTION

My purpose in writing this is to share with you thoughts and stories about how God has *lead* me through my whole life, *guided* me in specific situations throughout my life, and *protected* me in some very special circumstances. This will be shared in Sections 1, 2 and 3. As you read I would like you, my reader, to ponder your own life, and see how God has been doing that for you also. Know that He knew you before you were born, that He has been watching over you throughout your life, and that He guides and protects those who give their lives to Him and become His children. Psalm 139:13,15 says: **“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb...My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place.”**

In Appendix A, I list the translations used for the scripture references. Then I list scriptures regarding spiritual armor, heaven and hell, judgment, protection, and forgiveness. I also give a section of recommended verses to memorize. It tells us in Psalm 119:11 **“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”** As we study the Word of God and come to know His way of thinking, we can come closer to Him and become more like Him. In Proverbs 4:20, 22 we are told some significant words: **“Listen closely to my words...for they are life to those who find them.”** So I encourage you to listen closely to His words. They are sprinkled throughout this book. They are very significant!

“My son, if you accept my words, and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.” (Proverbs 2:1-8)

“Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the Lord.” (Proverbs 8:34-35)

In this book I begin by sharing with you my “Spiritual Journey” and encourage you to see your life also as a “Spiritual Journey.” The steps of this journey are explained in Appendix B, along with other helps to disciple you along the way. You will also find in Appendix B how to commit your life to Christ, how to have a daily quiet time, some possible Bible reading plans, and information about spiritual armor for protection.

In Appendix C, I mention authors of books that have been meaningful for me to read, knowing I surely can’t remember all the great books I have been privileged to read over the years. I try to suggest 1 or 2 books by some of my favorite authors, and you can see if you like those authors too... and look for more of their books if you do. I have learned a lot by reading other people’s “thoughts and stories” as I hope you learn by reading mine.

Please know this scripture as you read this book: **“When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about**

God...I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power." (1 Corinthians 2:1, 3-5)

Please realize I am not coming in superior wisdom or in eloquence, but I am praying for the Spirit's power to invade each word in this book and communicate to each person who reads it exactly what that person needs to hear and understand to grow spiritually.

If you are reading this book and find you just don't grasp what is being said or just don't find anything here which encourages you in your inner person, perhaps you need to ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in that. Or perhaps you have never really invited Jesus to come into your life and be your Lord and Savior. If you haven't done that, and would like to learn how, you will find that discussed in Appendix B under "How To Give Your Life To Christ."

Remember the scripture says in 1 Corinthians 2:14 **"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."** And in John 16:13 it says: **"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you in all truth."**

If you are not sure whether you have clearly asked Jesus to come into your life and be your Lord and Savior, you can read that section and go through that commitment so you can be absolutely sure you belong to Him (and therefore have His Spirit in you). I had a time in my life as an adult when I did that. I went through a time of recommitment to the decision I had originally made as a child of 10. When I did, I shared this with a friend and then felt like I was floating on a cloud of joy! The Spirit renewed our relationship and we became closer and closer day by day in our Quiet Times. At that time I wanted to be rebaptized to symbolize this new death to the old self and resurrection to the new life in Christ, and eventually I was.

**Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.
(Psalm 96:3)**

One day in my Quiet Time the Lord drew my attention to the scripture above. He impressed me that He wanted me to write a book which would tell of *His Marvelous Deeds* among all peoples, both in my life and in others' lives. You will find many stories of *His Marvelous Deeds* sprinkled throughout this book. That is one reason this book was written.

This book is meant to be an encouragement for you. Hopefully it will strengthen your faith as you read how the Lord has revealed Himself and His ways in these thoughts and stories. I have been praying for you as I wrote the book.

*Joan ("Jo Ann") Whitacre Royer
August 2004*

SECTION 1

A LIFE GOD LEADS

MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

One day, as I was telling my daughter about an event which took place in my life some years before, she remarked that she would like me to write down the things which took place in my life. Then she could have a record of all the stories I refer to in my conversations. I believe I am to write such an account for my children, but also for anyone else who might find it encouraging and helpful. So I am sitting at the computer with the prayer in my heart that the Lord will guide me in writing that which will glorify Him and show His mighty works in my life.

My life journey began when I was born on March 8, 1936, into a Christian family which already had three children and had lost another child from pneumonia in 1931. Soon after I came, another daughter came along, so I had little time to be the center of attention. Five years later another brother came along making a total of six children - three boys and three girls. I do not remember any time in my childhood when I was not surrounded with many family members. I liked living in a big family!

My family lived in three places by the time I became five years old. I was born in Bluffton, Indiana, then we moved to Ft. Wayne, Indiana, where we lived in two different locations. We started attending West Creighton Avenue Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and this had a great positive effect on my life. It was just down the street from one of our homes, so we walked there on Sundays. From that time on we continued to attend that same church. I was baptized in that church, married in that church, and my parents attended there until they died. That is most unusual in our transient society! I know the stability of my early life and of my parents' lives had a good effect on me and I have a deep appreciation for that.

For as long as I remember my parents took me to church and Sunday School and lived out the Christian faith as an example for me. As a child they taught me to tell the truth, to tithe any allowance I got, and to treat others with fairness and kindness. For that I am very grateful!

When I was about five years old my parents bought a home in the country near New Haven, Indiana, where they could raise their children, have a garden, and live the country life in which each of them had grown up. They carefully looked at the school system which we would attend because education was very important to them. My father had graduated from Engineering School at Tri State College in Angola, Indiana, and had his own successful business with refrigeration service. Except for one short interval of time, I remember my father as owning his own business and being very independent. I know this influenced me greatly and I've often wanted to be my own boss and run my own business.

My mother took one year of teacher training at Tri State College (where she met my father), then taught one year of public school before marrying. When I was in junior high school she began

substitute teaching and returned to college to complete three more years of education to receive her Bachelors Degree in Education. After that she completed her Masters Degree in Education and graduated on her 50th birthday. I always admired her strength and courage in completing both those degrees while caring for a home and large family at the same time.

Life in the country in the 1940's and 1950's was quiet, peaceful, and work! I remember we worked hard to grow most of our own food, including vegetables, fruits of many kinds, chickens, and even rabbits and goats for a short while. I now treasure those years of peace and quiet. We had no TV, no stereo, no computer, no videos, a little radio on occasion, and we saw very few movies. So my life was not filled with entertainment from the outside. There was much time for thinking and reflection. Having a quiet introverted personality, I pondered much the searching questions of life. During those years I started developing a relationship with God.

I cannot remember missing a single Sunday at church except for rare occasions. Church and God were just part of my life. I had no idea it wasn't part of everyone's life. I was taught about Jesus--that He was the Son of God, that He gave His life on the cross to pay for our sins, that He died on Good Friday, and was raised to new life on Easter Sunday. During all my childhood years we celebrated Easter Sunday as the day Jesus was resurrected from the dead. At our church we took communion every Sunday and remembered what Jesus had done for us.

At the age of ten I was asked if I wanted to make a public declaration of my belief and faith in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior in front of the church on Palm Sunday, and I said yes to that. I went in front of the church congregation that Palm Sunday and declared that I believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of the living God and that I wanted to take Him as my Lord and Savior. And then I was baptized by immersion at an Easter sunrise service the following Sunday. Thus began my "Spiritual Journey" (see appendix B) as one belonging to Christ. Later, as an adult, I asked the Lord in prayer time one day if that was a real and genuine experience as a child, and He impressed on my mind that the childhood experience was genuine as I had acted on the "light" or understanding I had at that time, even though I grew to know Him much better later as an adult.

During my childhood years I took steps in my spiritual journey through the influence of my family, my church, and through church camp. I grew through a long slow pathway toward the maturing Christian I was to become. These were small steps, but important steps. They got me started on my journey and taught me a lot on the way, especially through Sunday School classes and the church camp I attended each summer. I memorized some scripture during these years, especially The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13 KJV), the 23rd Psalm (KJV), and John 3:16 (KJV) which says **"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."**

I loved school and learned easily and quickly. It was so much more fun to go to public school than to stay home and help with the work there! We rode a school bus each morning and afternoon two miles to school and two miles back. On occasions the bus would break down, so we would walk, but not often.

We had cold winters in northern Indiana with lots of snow and not very efficient snow removal equipment, so we usually missed several days of school for snow. Our school year ran from September through April, much shorter than the current school years, however I don't remember any spring break. We were off four months for summer and had to do a lot of garden work: planting, hoeing, weeding, harvesting, cleaning, canning, freezing, etc. Most of my friends lived on farms and evidently were also needed at home for work.

My favorite season of the year was Christmas. I loved every aspect of it, but especially the secrets, mystery, and anticipation. I loved to decorate the house, buy gifts, wrap them, and all the other exciting preparations. I loved the visits to our grandparents' homes and the Christmas programs at school and church. In those days we could celebrate Christmas at school by singing about and dramatizing Jesus' birth. We always prepared a program at school for the community to come and see, then we received a visit from Santa in front of the whole assembly of parents and children, and received a treat of big juicy sun-kist oranges and hard candy. Since we had little of the extras at our home (I'm sure my parents couldn't afford it as I think back) this was a wonderful treat.

At church we also presented a program telling the Biblical story of Jesus' birth with shepherds, wise men, and all. We sang Christmas songs so I learned many of the Christmas carols by heart while still young. At one of those Christmas programs I was given the scripture to recite from Luke 2:19 (KJV): **“But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.”**

That scripture became part of who I was during the rest of my life. I became like Mary: one who kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. I know God was leading me to that verse, even as a child, because it fit my life and helped shape me as I pondered over the years the things that happened to me from a perspective of what God might be doing.

There were two highlights during the summers in my childhood years which stood out for me. One was getting to visit my favorite aunt and uncle for a few days each summer. They would take me to an amusement park where I learned the joy of riding the merry-go-round, and they would take me swimming in a public pool and try to teach me to swim. But the greatest treat was getting to play their piano! I was fascinated by the piano and had an intense desire to learn to play it. So I would play it and play it when I was there.

The other highlight I remember vividly was church camp each summer. I got to go to this Christian summer camp for a whole week and I loved it! I made many friends there after getting over my initial homesickness. I went back year after year and got to see some of these same friends again and again. The things I learned at camp from the Bible, from the songs we sang, from the influence of watching Godly leaders, and from the Christian atmosphere had a lifelong and profound effect on me. I always soaked in the teaching and came home with an intense desire to live a better life for the Lord and to be closer to Him.

It was at this camp, at Lake James in northern Indiana, that I experienced what I now realize was the call from God to me for Christian service. I realize now it was the Holy Spirit working in me which brought such a deep tug on my soul that one special day at camp, as we sat on the hillside singing the invitation hymn “Just As I Am.” I wanted to go forward and make a commitment to

the Lord, but I kept saying to myself, “But I have already done that.” So I sat there, not really understanding what was happening to me at the time. I do know that after that event I talked about going into missionary work some time.

In later life I asked the Lord what really took place at that event which I still remembered many many years later. He revealed to me that He called me into ministry that day, and His call had been on my life ever since then. Recognizing that call on my life has helped me understand some of my intense interest in spiritual things the rest of my life, and why full time Christian ministry was my consuming desire for many years before I was able to follow the call fully.

When I look back at my childhood years, I wonder what we did to fill all our evenings as children without the entertainment children have now. I remember we played games a lot with each other - like kick the can, softball, etc. We Indian wrestled on the living room floor. We played cards. We played Monopoly. And I guess we went to bed early because I know we got up early. Once in awhile we could even talk Mom into playing cards with us, especially when the electricity was out and we played by candlelight and kerosene lamp. With electric and telephone wires above ground and not in cables, we often lost those services when the weather coated the wires with ice. In the winter, in times of play during the day, we made snow forts, had snowball fights, and played “fox and geese” on our snowy game diamond. We made slides down the high stacks of snow that were left along the roadsides after the snowplow piled it up there. I remember one time my younger sister’s red mittens turning our snow slide pink.

All through my school years I liked music, art, writing poetry, and reading books. I was in 4-H club all summer for many years and worked each summer on my projects for the county fair. I mainly took baking and sewing as projects. Mom did a lot of sewing to make clothes for us to wear, and I did, too, as I grew older. I wrote poetry and sometimes illustrated it. My teachers encouraged this in me.

As I got closer to high school age I wanted to play in band as my oldest brother did. I looked up to him and admired him, so I wanted to do what he did. I told him one day that I wanted to play a brass instrument which played treble clef, but I didn’t want to play trumpet. This was because I could already read treble clef and didn’t want to learn bass clef (!), and also because I loved the sound of brass instruments. Soon after that he came home from school with a French horn which the band director let him bring home for me to use, and he taught me how to play it. From then on I was a French horn player. I played for eight years (four in high school and four in college) plus a little more after college. I love that instrument! I don’t know how I could have picked a better one if I had known what I was doing. I see God’s hand in leading me to the very musical instrument He knew I would love.

When I think of some of the highlights of my high school days, I remember band events at the football games, basketball games, concerts, and band competitions. I participated in the solo and ensemble instrumental contests each year. As I took piano lessons, I had to perform in recitals. I loved to play piano for myself. I also liked to sing in our high school choir. We had a choir director who demanded a lot of us, but gave us a good choral experience. I organized and sang in a trio for which I arranged the harmony in the songs we sang at banquets, etc.

As teenagers in the evenings we used our little single play 78 rpm record player to play Glenn Miller records and dance to them. We practiced together in the evenings. I made many friends in high school and went to almost every dance they had. We had two big dances each year--one about Christmas time, and the prom in the spring. We also had dances after football and basketball games and I attended most of those as I recall. My dancing instruction at home in the living room to the Glenn Miller records paid off!

Before I turned 16 my summers were mostly spent helping at home with the garden, food preparation, house cleaning, laundry, ironing, sewing, etc. Our garden was huge and took many many hours of work from all in the family to plant, cultivate, pull weeds, and harvest the crops. When we would pick peas or beans we would heap them on the dining room table into a mountain covering the whole table top, and we would sit for hours preparing them. Then we would can them, or later, during my teen years, we would freeze them.

Since my dad was an electrical engineer in refrigeration service work, he made our freezers. We harvested corn, peas, beans, tomatoes, peppers, carrots, beets, turnips, cabbage, lettuce, potatoes, pumpkins, cucumbers, spinach, strawberries, black raspberries, red raspberries, blackberries, plums, cherries, asparagus, grapes, gooseberries, and apples. We also bought bushels of ripe peaches from Michigan when they were available and prepared them.

When each crop was ready we usually spent the whole day working on it--for as many days as needed to finish the job. Since I grew up with fresh, canned, and frozen foods available I had a difficult time adjusting as an adult to buying those foods from a store. The prices seemed to be exorbitant compared to the "free" foods we had at home. Of course, now I realize they were not "free," but came with many labor hours of work, and with God's provision of the seeds, the earth, the sunshine, the rain, etc.

A big event of my teenage years was when I turned sixteen and could get a driver's license. I took driver's training as a class at school and was able to take the driving test in the driver training car at school--which was nice! I remember entering and winning an essay contest in high school about driving safety. Even then I liked to write, and I still do. God was training me then for what He had planned for me later. He was leading me through giving me an interest in writing.

The summer I was sixteen, in 1952, I had the opportunity for my first job outside the home. I "child-sat" an elementary age boy whose parents both worked full time jobs. I spent all day, 5 days a week, from 8:00-5:00, with him including taking him to the park for crafts and recreation, taking him to music lessons, etc. For this I was paid \$10.00 per week, which was big money to me at that time!

The next summer I worked as a "car-hop" at a root beer stand taking orders from the drive-in customers, and carrying their food to the car after it was prepared. For this work I was paid \$.50 per hour plus tips.

The summer of 1954, just after I graduated from high school, I got a job at North American Van Lines in their world headquarters in Fort Wayne, Indiana, doing typing work in the billing

department. I worked there for three summers. This job paid very well for that time and helped pay my way through college. I also continued to work in the evenings at the root beer stand as a car-hop.

For several summers during my high school and college years I played in the orchestra for the summer light opera productions given at the Franke Park Outdoor Theater in Fort Wayne. I loved doing that! Some of the musicals we performed, for anywhere from 7-14 days in a row, were: "South Pacific," "Oklahoma," and "Brigadoon."

My senior year was the best high school year of all! That year I got to participate in a lot of "important" things (to me) like student council, class officers (I was vice president), band, choir, Sunshine Girls (a service club), GAA (girls' athletic association), intramural sports, and National Honor Society. If you would look in my yearbook you would see us dressed in the typical 50's outfits as we graduated in 1954. Life was just beginning to open up for me as I made my plans for college.

A big decision during my senior year of high school was choosing which college to attend. I knew I wanted to study music which was my primary love at that time. I was taking piano lessons, singing in choir, and playing in band, so music took much of my time and interest. I was ready to leave home and go to college, but not too far. I didn't know how college would be paid for, but I had confidence the money would come somehow. And God provided the money!

How did the money come for college? Well, I worked each summer and saved that money for college. I also worked at college--two years as a waitress in the college dining hall, and several years as a lab assistant to one of the music professors. I was awarded scholarships from the college and from the E. H. Kilbourne scholarship fund. My mom and dad gave me money as they were able. Somehow God worked it all out so that I ended up four years of college with no debt! Isn't that amazing!

Manchester College where I attended was a Christian college, and there were opportunities for growth through Bible study, prayer, fellowship, speakers in Chapel services, and Sunday church services, as well as the college courses themselves. Much of my fellowship came through music activities since I was a music major and participated in choir, band, and orchestra as well as music classes. Music became a lot of the expression of my Christian life...especially in the A Cappella Choir when we went on tour to churches during spring break. My heart was expressed through the music. I graduated from Manchester in 1958 with a major in music education and a minor in English. The English minor fit right in with the desire to read and write which had been developing in me since childhood. God's hand was in this choice of college and in the subjects I studied.

After college I taught music for one year before marrying in July 1959. We moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where my husband attended graduate school and I taught in the public school system of Melrose, Massachusetts. The expression and growth of my "Spiritual Journey" there came mainly through our attending the Congregational Church in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he assisted the pastor with the worship services, I sang in the choir, and we had wonderful fellowship on Sunday afternoons and evenings with the people of that church.

Also I expressed myself through music as I sang in the Boston Chorus Pro Musica, a choir under the direction of Alfred Nash Patterson, which joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra for concerts of great music based on scripture: Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, Mahler's *Second Symphony*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, and Handel's *Messiah*.

Then in 1960 I started into what I would call a dry period in my spiritual life where I spent little time in three areas of Christian growth: Bible study, prayer, and fellowship with believers in a church. We moved to Tokyo, Japan, the summer of 1960 where my husband worked for his church as their representative in the Far East and I taught school at the American School in Japan. I call it a dry period because I wasn't attending church, wasn't doing any Bible study, wasn't often in prayer and wasn't having Christian fellowship. I drew farther and farther away from those things which now help me grow in my Christian walk.

Even though I was not seeking God during this time of my life, He was still with me. He led me, without my even seeking Him, to the help I needed when our marriage began having trouble. It all came about in such an unusual way that I could look back and see God's hand upon my life even then. I returned from Japan to the U. S. in January 1963 and began my graduate degree while living with my parents in the New Haven, Indiana, area because my husband and I had temporarily separated. I eventually completed my Master's Degree in Education from St. Francis College (now University) in Fort Wayne.

This "dry period" of little growth spiritually lasted for several more years as my husband and I got back together and we spent two years in North Manchester, Indiana, while he finished his pre-med work and I taught school. Then we moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1965 and my husband started four years of medical school at the Indiana University Medical School while I finished my Master's Degree in Education and spent several years teaching school. In 1969 we adopted our oldest daughter and moved to Ft. Wayne, Indiana, for his internship program. I still was without Bible study, prayer, or church fellowship. I see that now as a time of not growing in my spiritual journey, but being more on a plateau. I feel God was waiting for me to return to Him even though He never left me.

Then God began what I view now as a wonderful work inside me to draw me back to Himself. During those years in the late 60's I began to have such a hunger, such a yearning, such a questioning, coming up inside me to know what life was all about, why I was on this earth, what the truth was about my life, and what was the way to live during my life. I kept wanting to learn the TRUTH! And I began to search... search for answers to the questions coming up inside me in my spirit and in my mind. I began to talk with others about this, to read books about it, to listen to tapes, etc. I began finding I was dissatisfied with life as it had been. I began to question why I existed, what was the meaning and purpose of my life, and whether God really existed.

I believe God created this yearning in me to draw me closer to Himself. I shared this quest with three important people in my life: my mother and my two sisters. They were also looking for answers to life's questions. I read and discussed books from many philosophies while I was trying to learn what was really truth. Gradually I centered in my seeking on Christianity and read testimonies from others who had given their lives to Jesus as Lord and who were empowered by

the Holy Spirit. I learned what a tremendous difference this made in their lives! It was a different witness than I had heard before and it appealed to my inner needs.

My younger sister was like a mentor to me during this time. She shared her beliefs with me and her spiritual journey. She gave me books to read and tapes to hear. I especially listened to teaching tapes by Derek Prince, Bob Mumford and Charles Simpson. They became my mentors also through those tapes.

One day during the spring of 1971, as I was sitting at home reading one of these books, I made a decision that I wanted to seek Jesus' way for my life. I said out loud to Him something like: "OK, Jesus, I believe You are the way for me to find the truth. I want to know about Your way. Now what do I do about this?" I received a strong inner impression that I was to go to the telephone, call my older sister, and ask her about the Christian camp she and her husband attended the previous summer in 1970. They had mentioned it to us when they helped us move into our new home in Indianapolis that summer when my husband became a member of the staff at Indiana University Medical Center.

So I called and got that information. As a consequence of that I attended the camp that following summer and experienced Christian teaching and fellowship which was different than any I had ever experienced before. The Lord became very real and meaningful to me. I asked Him to be not only my Savior, but also the Lord of my life, and I committed myself totally to Him.

The camp experience gave me a real burst of growth and commitment in my "Spiritual Journey" with Christ. I met others who were also seeking Jesus for a closer walk with Him. I came back from that first camp inspired and warmed by the wonderful teaching, prayer, Bible study, and great fellowship I found there among Christians. Slowly I began to realize the truth - that God was really real, that what Jesus had done for me (in paying the price for my sins on the cross so I could be forgiven of them) was true, and that He really is the WAY, TRUTH, and LIFE (John 14:6).

I began looking for something to keep me growing in Indianapolis during the rest of the year. I committed to God that I would follow only Him and not any other path but His. In essence, I recommitted my life to God in a similar way to what I had done when I was ten years old. I stated that I believed Jesus was the only way and I committed my life to Him again...this time as an adult. And Jesus became my best friend as well as my Lord.

Our second daughter was born in December of 1971 and my two children occupied much of my time while we lived in Indianapolis for several years. Eventually I learned about Bible Study Fellowship in Indianapolis which met exclusively for Bible study, prayer, and fellowship once a week for 9 months during the school year. I attended this and began really digging into the Bible and learning from it...more than I ever had before.

By 1974, when we moved to Columbia, Missouri, for my husband's new job there at the University of Missouri Medical School, I was ready to find a Bible study group as soon as the "settling in" was accomplished. I prayed and asked for direction to find such a group. The leading came through a birthday party to which my oldest daughter was invited by her school

friend. While she was attending the party, her mother and I were talking about my desire to find a study group. She gave me the name of someone in the Neighborhood Bible Study groups in Columbia. After contacting her, I began attending one of those groups where I was nourished weekly through Bible study, prayer, and fellowship. We decided to attend a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) where our daughters could attend Sunday School and we could attend church at the same time.

By about 1979 when our marriage was again having difficulties (which went on to separation in 1980 and divorce in 1986) I found myself taking the girls to church by myself most of the time. I wasn't getting the spiritual food I wanted and needed there so I began to look for a different church which might help me grow.

The leading to that new church came through my oldest daughter as she was invited to attend Calvary Baptist Church with our neighbors. She liked it and wanted to continue there. When I visited the church I felt God wanted us there. So we three began attending this church together.

During the time there my oldest daughter talked with the Pastor and asked to be baptized after accepting Christ as her Savior. Later my youngest daughter also was baptized after making her decision to accept Christ as her Savior. I became a member there in 1980 and this became the place, for me, that my explosion of growth took place in being a disciple of Christ.

As I look back at the year 1980, the year I joined Calvary Baptist Church, I realize God knew that separation and divorce were soon to come in my life, and the lives of my children, and He lead me to a church where I could find the support and help I needed to go through the next difficult years ahead. People there cared about me, supported me, and prayed for me when I needed it very much.

It started with the wonderful sermons on Sunday mornings and evenings and the Bible study times on Wednesday evenings. It wasn't long until I became involved in the choir and this group became my support group, my sharing group, and my way of expressing myself musically (after a long separation from musical expression).

When I went to the Christian camp the summer of 1981 I wrote this idea from the Holy Spirit to me in my Quiet Time:

This will mark the beginning of a new era in your life--your seasons of life. You are now ready to launch out into a new area of ministry for Me. Look to this to begin soon, this fall, and unfold before you. You do not have to prepare. I will and am preparing you, in My way, My kind of preparation. Just spend lots of time with Me each day, an hour a day, in study, writing, and prayer, plus tape listening and book reading.

Then in the fall of 1981 I was asked if I wanted to participate in a discipleship group studying *MasterLife: Discipleship Training* which was a study to help you grow in your Christian walk and life through Bible study, prayer, evangelism, retreats, memorization of scripture, learning your spiritual gifts, and having close fellowship together. It was held once a week for nine

months and was power packed with things to do, learn, and practice. I consider this course a time of great and significant change in my “Spiritual Journey.” Many of the discipleship helps I list in Appendix B are ideas from the *MasterLife: Discipleship Training* course.

At the end of that year’s study I was asked to lead a group through *MasterLife* the next year - which I did. Leading *MasterLife* groups and eventually directing the leaders of many *MasterLife* groups occupied much of seven years at Calvary Baptist Church besides all the choir and musical activities.

Then in 1989 I was asked to pray about becoming the Director of the Discipleship Training program for Calvary Baptist Church. I said I would pray and seek my answer. As I prayed I asked God not only to show me His answer, but to give me ideas about what to do for the Discipleship Training program since I was not specially trained for it. His answer was to give me many many ideas about things He wanted done, how to organize them, etc. So my answer was yes. For the next eleven years He faithfully guided me to finding materials, finding teachers, and setting up and promoting discipleship courses for Calvary. As I studied the new materials each season I learned a lot also and continued to grow spiritually. During that time I wrote a friend who had moved away:

My life has changed internally also, has become much much better and closer to the Lord even than when you lived here. The Lord has been a wonderful friend, help and support during the difficult changes of the past two years. You know, when I was a child I confessed Jesus as my Savior, was baptized, and became a member of my local church. At that time I didn’t realize there was another step I needed to take in my relationship with Jesus - that step being to make Him Lord and boss of my life. I tried to be a “good Christian” on my own power for many many years, not realizing that there was a power to be had by turning my life over to Jesus completely. I found I had to go to God myself and seek my answers for myself directly from the Lord.

Through this process I read many books which gave personal stories of people who had asked Jesus to become the Lord of their lives and who had given themselves totally to Him. They had asked the Holy Spirit to come into their lives and give them the power to live lives of victory. Eventually I came to the place where I made that commitment also, and that was the beginning of a whole new realm of personal relationship with Jesus. My desire to be like Him, to read His Word and to grow spiritually grew and grew. It has been a long process, which isn’t finished yet, but has been the greatest and most meaningful experience in my whole life.

When my most recent marriage difficulties came about, I found my strength to face and deal with them came from taking each small detail to Jesus in prayer daily and asking Him to help me, or guide me, or take away the bitterness or hurt, etc. And He was faithful to do this each time. It has made such a victorious difference in my life.

During the spring of 2000 I realized God was guiding me to resign as Director of Discipleship Training at Calvary, so I did that and finished my term of service at the end of June that year. Also during those years I had taken on a full time job as secretary of Fairview United Methodist

Church, so I didn't have as many free hours to volunteer my services at Calvary. Still it was a big change in my service activities, but the spiritual growth kept on since that was now done primarily on my own with personal study, prayer, etc. in daily Quiet Times (see Appendix B on How To Have A Quiet Time) and fellowship with my many friends at Calvary.

Two years later, in the summer of 2002, I became aware that my friend, Doug Phillips, (with whom I had worked for five years at Calvary in Discipleship/Education) was being guided by God to start a new church in Columbia. This was to be a non-denominational church which he called CenterPoint Church--with Jesus, and witnessing about Him, as the center point focus of the church. After talking with Doug and seeking the Lord's guidance about it, I felt led to join with Doug and the others starting this new church.

This is the place I began to experience more freedom in corporate worship with a body of believers. It became the place of continuing my "Spiritual Journey." along with daily Quiet Times and reading books to learn from mentors. I found myself seeking more and more to learn from some of the great Christians of the past who had written Christian Classics which have helped believers over the years. (I mention many of my book mentors in Appendix C in the back of this book.) My desire was to keep growing in intimate communion with Him all the days of my life and I could learn a lot from reading of others' experiences.

In the fall of 2003 my daughter, Beth, and I attended a Christian conference at Christ Triumphant Church in Lee's Summit, Missouri. This became a turning point in my life - although I didn't realize it at that time. Through the influence of that church, and that conference, and with God's leading, both Beth and I felt called to attend that church and move to Lee's Summit. God's hand was very evident in all the steps we each went through to make that change. It reminds me of the song we used to sing in choir: "God will make a way where there seems to be no way." He made a way for Beth to buy a home in Lee's Summit and for me to join her there later.

And Lee's Summit is the place where He has me writing this book to tell you about my life and how He has lead me all these years. Like Mary in the scripture, I have "kept all these things and pondered them in my heart." I see the hand of God all the way through my life bringing me to today, right now, to the task of writing this book which He has commissioned me to do. I want this book to be a testimony to His leading, His guiding, and His protecting all through my life. There are many scriptures and stories I want to share with you in each of these areas, so here we go.....

SCRIPTURES AND STORIES ON GOD'S LEADING

One day while I was at the summer Christian camp having a Quiet Time before the Lord this event happened to me. I realize now that this is a perfect description of how God has led me throughout my life, yet He gave me this vision before I could see the pattern unfolding....

THE WELL OF SALVATION

As this vision began I saw myself standing in front of an old fashioned well - the kind where you had to dip a bucket down into it to get water. Beyond the well was the ocean, yet I drew water from this well. In my hand was a small dipper. With this dipper I would reach into the well, get a small dipper of water, then reach up and pour that water into the top of my head. It would run down inside me to my feet and begin to fill me.

Slowly I dipped, on and on, filling myself with this water. I sensed the water level rising within me. The task seemed tedious and tiring as it went on for a long long time. Then, when the water level inside me reached about two-thirds full, I suddenly found in my hand a much bigger dipper! As I dipped with it I filled up much faster! I could sense the water level coming up higher and higher within my body until I was full.

As I have meditated on this vision and asked the Lord to give me revelation about it, I saw that it had two perspectives. One perspective referred to my own spiritual growth which paralleled the picture. It came slowly over many years, then the growth increased and speeded up at a particular point in my adult life almost like I had a bigger dipper.

The second perspective on the vision picture pertains to the church in the world. It, too, has followed the pattern of slow tedious growth, but also will come to a time (and perhaps has already come) of the "big dipper" when the water of the Spirit fills the church quickly.

I think God sometimes shows us something before it happens, then, when it is accomplished, we know He did it and that He knew ahead of time what would happen. It surely gives a feeling of His intricate plan for life, and a feeling of His leading. I remember Jesus told His disciples in John 14:29..."**I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.**"

**With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.
(Isaiah 12:3)**

The first and most important thing you will ever do in your life is to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. If you have not done that yet, I encourage you strongly to be sure you do. Jesus is the only way to the Father (God) and only through Him can you be assured of salvation and going to heaven when you die. Listed in Appendix B you will find an article called "How To Give Your Life to Christ" which will guide you through that process. If you don't accept Him as the One who carried your sins to the cross and died in your place for those sins, then you continue to carry those sins on yourself. The scripture says in Romans 6:23 **"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."**

I made that decision and commitment as a child of 10, and again as an adult after coming back to the Lord after my “dry period” plateau. When you give your life to Jesus, then you begin on your “Spiritual Journey.” In Appendix B you may read more on the steps in this journey.

In 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 it says **“We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom, but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.”** I am trusting that it is by the Spirit who is from God that this book is written that we may understand what God has freely given us. I pray this book is expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words, and that these words will enter your heart and grow there to help you on your “Spiritual Journey.”

God assures us in His Word that he will be with us and lead us on this journey. He says: **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.” (Psalm 32:8).** He also says: **“Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don’t try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God’s voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he’s the one who will keep you on track.” (Proverbs 3:5-6 TMB)**

Now I want to share a story about God’s leading in my life when I was diagnosed with cancer in 1990. This story shows how He walked with me through this traumatic event.

GOD’S THERAPY

It was Friday...the day for chemotherapy again! How I dreaded those days! Twice a month for four months I had been taking treatments in that therapy room with other cancer patients. Some had much worse stories to tell than my story, so I learned to appreciate how well God was taking care of me even through the mastectomy and chemotherapy I had to endure. God was with me - and how much I needed Him! Especially today!

It all started with a routine mammogram which I did not want to have, but thought I should. Then came the letter saying something looked suspicious in the X-ray. Next came surgical biopsy day with many of my dear dear Christian friends waiting and praying with me for a report of “no cancer.” Finally came the telephone call telling me there was definitely cancer, and I broke down and cried and secluded myself for the rest of that day as the news took on reality for me.

But God was with me. He brought my daughters and Christian friends to comfort me in my grief. I praise God for them! During the next two months I went through the mastectomy and surgical recovery period with a love blanket of support from my daughters, my church family, and my friends who gave me food, flowers, cards, love, and prayers, as well as much appreciated visits and telephone calls. I did not know how much those things meant until I needed them myself!

But now that time was past. And today I had to face another chemotherapy treatment. I would show up at the treatment room where the male nurse would insert a needle into my left arm to begin an IV setup. He would draw blood samples to test to see if my system was strong enough to take the treatment. Then I would wait for an hour or two until approval was given and drugs were sent to the therapy room for me. After that the drugs would be dripped into my veins for several hours - first the anti-nausea drugs, then the chemotherapy drugs. Then I would wait...and pray.

Before I began chemotherapy I had asked the Lord how to pray about taking this therapy, and He instructed me to bind the bad effects of the drugs, and loose the good effects, so I did that day by day. I especially prayed not to lose my hair. I heard some stories from those who did lose theirs, and kept praying to be spared from that. God answered that prayer, and I was so thankful for that blessing!

But today this therapy day was different than the others. In my instructions I had been told to report any intestinal problems I developed. Well, they had been developing, but I had not yet told the doctor about them. Today I knew I must because I was getting sick for one to two hours at a time more and more frequently. I never knew when or where the sickness would hit me. As I reported this the words came that I did not want to hear: "We may have to postpone your therapy treatments."

One of my greatest desires at that time was to finish those treatments as soon as possible! I certainly did not want to postpone them. So that evening I cried out to the Lord, "What do I do about this, Lord? How do I handle this? How do I pray? I do not want to postpone these treatments! I want to get them finished and get on with my life again! Please help me!"

And my wonderful God, in His still small voice, said, "*You can ask Me to heal you, and I will.*"

Well, I asked! And He did! After four months of times of sickness coming with increasing frequency, for the next two months of therapy I had no more sickness!

As I write this story many years later, I still have no sign of cancer in my body! So I share this story with you to *declare His glory* and tell of *His Marvelous Deeds!*

**And my God will meet all your needs
according to his glorious riches
in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:19)**

Here is a story about my Aunt Fern which I heard from my Mom as I was growing up. This is such a wonderful illustration of God's caring love in times of grief and change!

COME TO SAY GOOD-BYE

From the time I was a child I knew there was a spiritual realm which we did not ordinarily see or experience in our daily lives. I knew this because of a story my mother used to tell me about her sister, Fern...

Fern was pregnant and the time of birthing was near. Even as she waited for this event, her mother (my grandmother) was very ill and near death. However the news of the graveness of her mother's illness was being kept from Fern because the family did not want her to deal with this until after the baby was born.

Then her mother died. The family did not tell Fern, but waited. The delivery time came and the new baby arrived into this world. Sometime after the delivery, the family gathered at Fern's bedside to tell her the news about her mother.

As they walked in they were surprised when Fern said she knew why they had come! She said, "You have come to tell me Mom's dead, haven't you?" As they questioned her about how she knew, she told them this incredible story:

She and the new baby were lying in their room when she saw her mother walk into the room. Her mother walked over to the baby's bed, looked at her, and said, "I just wanted to see the baby before I go." So Fern knew her mother was "leaving" and told the family this with peace in her heart. It was as if her mother had come to tell her good-bye.

The family all knew that their mother had not visited Fern in her physical body because she died before the baby was born!

As this story was shared with me as a child, I saw God's hand in this situation, and knew there was a supernatural spiritual realm not usually visible with our natural eyes which had appeared at that time. God, in His mysterious ways, and for His own reasons, had performed one of *His Marvelous Deeds* which brought comfort to their whole family and especially to Fern!

**There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die.
(Ecclesiastes 3:1-2)**

One day while attending a committee meeting at Calvary Baptist Church one of the members of the committee, Harold, excitedly told us about something which happened to him the previous week. I asked Harold to put the story on tape for me so I could add it to my stories I was collecting about ways God works in our lives. This is Harold's story:

HELP ALONG THE ROAD

It started out as just another routine day for Harold. He and a partner were to deliver cars from Columbia, Missouri, to Effingham, Illinois, and they were just getting underway. Little did Harold realize that today God was going to display one of *His Marvelous Deeds* in his life - one he would never forget! As Harold tells the story:

We started our trip from Columbia, but somehow got separated from each other along the way. It suddenly dawned on me that I knew the town to which we were going, but did not know the name of the car dealer. I did not know if my partner was ahead or behind me on the road. I was in a quandary as to what to do!

“Lord, I need Your help!” I prayed as I stopped along the side of I-70 east of Columbia. I spotted a telephone not too far away, but was afraid I might miss my partner if I left my car to use it. What should I do?

About that time a car pulled off the road in front of me and started backing up. As I approached the car a stranger said, “Could I be of any help?” As I explained my situation and reluctance to leave my car to telephone, he said, “That is no problem. I have got a phone in my car.”

The stranger proceeded to call my sales manager in Columbia and learn the name of the dealer I was to contact in Effingham. I felt immensely comforted to learn that information.

As we chatted a bit I said to him, “I do not know where you stand in your religious life, but I want to share something with you. I was standing out here along the road, and I was really in a quandary. Finally I thought about the Lord and I said, “Lord, I need Your help!” And about that time you pulled off the side of the road. It really proved to me that the good Lord can take care of us!”

The stranger kind of grinned and said, “Well, I think you are right!” And he shared with me that he was a Baptist minister from near Atlanta, Georgia, and was traveling from Kansas City where he had just visited his mother. He even said he had been to Columbia before and had sung at my own church in Columbia some years ago! Then, wishing me well, he drove on.

Later I was surprised when stopping at a rest stop in Wentzville to find my minister friend there, so we got to talk some more. Even so I made it to Effingham to the right place only about fifteen minutes behind my partner.

Sometime later I received a letter from my newfound brother in Christ from along I-70 which said:

Dear Harold,

It was good to meet you by the side of the road last week. I am sorry it was under such circumstances, and I hope everything worked out the rest of your trip. Oftentimes in my travels I have needed help along the road, and the Lord sent me the person I needed at the time. I appreciate your testimony to me that you prayed and I showed up. It was no inconvenience to me, and it was a delight to meet you. May the Lord richly bless you in all things, and if you are ever in Atlanta, give me a call.

Awaiting the shout!
Bill

What started out for Harold as a perplexing situation leaving him troubled and uncertain as to what to do, turned out to be a testimony of God's care, and a display of *His Marvelous Deeds!*

**The Lord will hear when I call to him.
(Psalm 4:3)**

God leads us in many ways. Often we don't even realize His leading until we look back later and see from that perspective. One of the greatest ways He leads me is through Bible Study and Prayer in my Quiet Time. I will be giving many illustrations of this throughout this book. Much of what I write has come through those special private times with the Lord in the mornings. The time for this varied during different seasons of my life.

For instance when my children were little, my Quiet Time needed to be when they napped or when they were at school. As I worked a full time job later, it needed to be early in the morning before work and meant getting up very early. Each of you may find the best time to set apart to be with the Lord varies according to your own times and seasons of life. Here are some of the ways the Lord has led me...

THE WORD

The Lord has led me at times while reading His Word. One day in my Quiet Time I read and wrote down this scripture from Exodus 23:20-21 – **“See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. Pay attention to him and listen to what he says.”** This was before I moved to Lee's Summit, Missouri, and I was packing and preparing to do that. Then the Holy Spirit impressed these thoughts into my mind and I wrote them down also:

I give you this promise this day as My Word to you, Joan, and to Beth also. I sent an angel ahead of her to her new home and prepared all the way for her transition, and I am doing the same for you too. EVERY STEP OF THE WAY. KNOW THIS!

Another day in my Quiet Time I was reading and pondering the scripture from Matthew 6:12,14-15 which says: **“Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors...For if**

you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

As I meditated on these verses from Matthew, these thoughts from the Lord began to form in my mind and I wrote them down:

I am coming soon. Tell others I am coming soon and ask them to see if their house is in order, and if they are ready for Me. See if you have forgiven all who have sinned against you... so I may forgive your sins. My Word is truth. What I say in My Word is true. You may count on it! You may stand on it!

**He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’
(Revelation 22:20)**

Here is a prayer which you might want to pray regarding this: Lord, I know your Word is true. You tell me you will forgive my sins as I forgive those who sin against me. As I wait before You in this quiet time together, guide me to remember those whom I need to forgive. Help me to truly forgive them. I pray in the name of Jesus, my Savior. Amen.

PRAYER

Another day in my Quiet Time I read this scripture from Jeremiah 33:3 – **“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”** After reading that I began to write to God (a prayer) about how I had been feeling recently, and then I wrote His response...

I have been restless for days, Lord. Nothing seems to satisfy me. I have called and called to You to learn what is happening. You have led me to this scripture, and now I am waiting upon You. I feel so restless and non-directed. Perhaps I should go back to old things, things which brought satisfaction. But I do not really believe that is where You are leading me. Where are you leading me, Lord? Where do You want me to go? You say, “I will show you great and unsearchable things”... What do You want to show me, Lord?

I read that when I pray, seeking Your will, there are two things You want to show me. The first is Yourself, and the second is what You are able to do. Show me Yourself, Lord; Show me what you are able to do. Then He said:

I want to do that! I want to prove who I am so all will know. I want you to know this ahead of time and to receive it from me...Revival WILL break out.

As I prove Myself to your people then they will proclaim Me and ask Me to move among them. They will allow Me free reign as they have not before. Then the fire of My Holy Spirit will come, and burn, and clean.

Look for this. Pray for this. I will come first with healing, then with many manifestations of My Spirit. Keep coming to Me. I am making you restless. I have much to say to you.

This is something He taught me as I prayed one day. It is about the attitude with which I come in prayer.

I will teach you, and lead you into more understanding of prayer as you pray. That is really the way to learn. Pray, and let me teach you step by step. Set yourself apart unto this ministry. Make yourself available. Expect Me to come to the prayer closet with you - to anoint you, and meet you there. I will always have something for you to pray.

I may have you wait awhile on some days, but wait quietly for Me. Do not be afraid to sit and wait for Me, just as you would sit and wait for a person with whom you have an appointment. My timing will be right. I will come. I will speak and you will pray. We will talk and I will show you "great and unsearchable things which you do not know." Come expecting me!

PICTURES OR VISIONS

Sometimes I have received leading from the Lord through "pictures" which appear before my inward eyes, my spiritual eyes. Sometimes this is called a vision. It is not a dream, because it happens when I'm awake. One such vision came to me while I was in worship at the summer Christian camp:

ANGELS WITH TRUMPETS

The worship leader was leading us in praise and worship songs and we were singing before God. As I shut my eyes while singing one song, suddenly I "saw" this picture. In the picture Jesus was standing before the congregation holding out His hands in blessing over them. They were all bowing their heads like in prayer before Him. It didn't seem as if anyone was aware of His presence but me.

I was standing in the upper left-hand corner of the back part of the room (where I actually was at the time). The meeting area was shaped with the stage down at the front of the room and the seats sloping upward from there, with the highest seats toward the back. I looked at Jesus and He looked at me.

Then I looked up to my right and saw high up on the right wall of the room three angels holding long trumpets to their mouths. The trumpets were pointed downward toward the people. That was the end of the scene, and I was again aware of the congregation singing the worship song. I was amazed at what had just happened!

Then I opened my eyes and the worship leader lead us in another song. Again, I closed my eyes, and again I suddenly saw the same scene. Jesus was standing in front of the group with His hands out in blessing over them as their heads were bowed. I was standing up in the same spot as before and looking at Jesus. Then I saw the three angels again; but this time they were holding their trumpets in a straight out position. When I opened my eyes again we began singing another song.

This third time I closed my eyes while worshipping and saw the same picture. The only change in the picture was in the position the angels were holding their trumpets. This third time they held the trumpets in an upward position pointed toward the sky. When this happened for the third time I was just stunned by what had happened. I was touched by the vision and was never the same after that. It kept coming into my memory and I pondered what it meant and whether I was to do something about it.

Over time I asked the Lord to show me the meaning of the vision repeated three times. I think now I was seeing into the spiritual realm--which exists all the time but which we seldom have eyes to see. I came to realize this represented three time periods in my life under three different authority arrangements:

1. The time I was in my home growing up under my father's authority.
2. The time I was married and under the authority of my husband.
3. The time I was single again and under God's authority.

I came to realize it represented to me that I would see Jesus as real and personal and with my spiritual eyes. And this has proven very true over years of time since that vision. I believe it was given three times to especially emphasize that it was "set" and would not change, that this would be a reality over the rest of my life. I am now in the third "trumpets held up" stage which I believe also represents the end times and that the coming of Jesus for His bride in the rapture is not far away.

This vision has stayed with me and helped lead me through the rest of my life. Another vision was just a quick glimpse rather than one taking time and being repeated:

ONE SEED AT A TIME

One day my attention was drawn to some birds eating in the grass outside my kitchen window. I noticed the birds picked up one seed at a time to eat. The Lord gave me a mental picture of a whole pile of seeds. Then He said He did not provide a pile of seeds for them, but just one seed at a time - and He would provide for me the same way!

RELINQUISHMENT

Another way God lead me was through relinquishing what I wanted very badly and letting God decide the situation the way He knew best. A difficult experience took place when I became pregnant in the fall of 1970. Previously I had not been able to have children and we were blessed to be able to adopt our first daughter in 1969. But in the fall of 1970 I became pregnant. We were excited about this and, as soon as it was verified, we began telling our family members at our annual Thanksgiving gathering.

But the day after Thanksgiving I was taken to the hospital when I started a possible miscarriage. I was told to go home after days of observation in the hospital, and told to stay off my feet for the rest of the pregnancy period. God was really with me during that time and I felt the prayer rising up within me that if this baby was not right in some way, or there was some reason it was better for this baby not to be born, then it was ok if God took that baby to be with Him. And that is what happened. The miscarriage was completed after a day or two at home.

I expect to meet that child someday in heaven along with my sister, Virginia, who died (at about 1 year old) before I was born.

CHANGE OF INTEREST

Another way He lead me in the past came because I lost interest in something which had previously been very interesting to me. I had gone through a year of being in Bible Study Fellowship in Indianapolis and just loved it. I looked forward to the new school year program beginning that coming fall. But when fall came, my interest just wasn't as keen as it had previously been, and I was disappointed and wondered why. Then I began to understand, through a suggestion from my sister, that sometimes God might decrease our interest in something because He has a change coming in our lives and is preparing us for it.

And that proved to be so true! I didn't know it at the time (but God did) that I would be moving away soon after that to another state. He lovingly took away my interest in what might have held me back from a good attitude toward the move.

DREAMS

One more thing I want to mention about ways God leads us is through dreams. I became quite interested in understanding my dreams when I found I had some dreams which remained in my mind for a long time and seemed like they might be significant. I began to study about dreams and read books about how to better understand them. I began to keep pen and paper beside my bed and write down a dream that I felt might be significant as soon as I awoke from it. If I didn't, I might forget the content or details of the dream. I'll relate one dream here as an illustration:

A DREAM

I was sitting in a single file row of people who were to play the accompaniment to some performance. We weren't given time to warm up our instruments but just began rehearsing. I was in front of the row (facing forward) and couldn't see those behind me, but I knew they were there.

I also couldn't see the conductor except when I turned my head to the left for a quick glimpse. I think I was holding a French horn but I wasn't playing it. I was afraid if I did try to play it I would hit the wrong notes, or wouldn't remember the fingering, and anyway I didn't have the music script. What I did have, instead of music, was a paper with numbers of the sections/pieces we were to play. These numbered 1 through 9.

Out in front of me was a large open space (reminded me of an open field). In this area in front of me a singer started singing with us, like a female voice, but I didn't see anyone.

The performance was to happen sometime and I didn't want to sit there not playing.

This was my interpretation: Jesus is the conductor. The singer is the Holy Spirit. When I asked God for an interpretation the question came to mind: What does the horn represent? I said it might represent prophecy (a sounding horn) or the last trumpet (the rapture). If the horn represents prophecy, I felt that I was not to do that now - not play the horn. I am to be in Praise and Worship now.

This dream represents the uncertainty of the times--not knowing my role in them. The numbers before me represent seeing events passing in a prophetic timetable. #1 means beginning; #9 means harvest. So this displays the beginning through the harvest which we who are living now can see.

People behind me represent the people who have gone before me who are part of the same orchestra, who are watching from heaven so I can't see them right now, but I sense their existence and participation. We were all following Jesus' conducting.

This is a picture to tell me "what time it is" prophetically (i.e. #'s of events) I am "out in front" which means I am alive now. The others behind me lived previously. I only get quick glimpses of Jesus, but He is still conducting it all.

The singer we are to accompany is the Holy Spirit and He has begun His song. The open area/field ahead means I see nothing about what is next, I am only to accompany the singer (Holy Spirit). He sings. All of us in the orchestra go with Him--accompany Him. He leads! The performance means His kingdom coming, His will being done, on earth as it is in heaven. It's the harvest of Jesus' kingdom working in His people.

The open field in front refers to the fields are white unto harvest. Pray to the Lord to send workers into those fields. The conductor goes through the whole song with the orchestra and leads them to the very end. The Holy Spirit's song: He has begun His "final" song for the Church, the last days' Church.

I didn't want to sit there, very visible, and not participate. I felt like I wasn't participating; but today the Lord is telling me that I AM participating in these ways:

As a part of His orchestra (past and present). Just being in it, letting Him conduct, letting Him sing. Being aware of His work/timing (seeing #'s on page), getting brief glimpses of Him conducting, hearing His song, seeing the open field, wanting to do what He has me here to do, and praying for the harvest.

Here is another dream which taught me a lot about the church, the Body of Christ:

A DREAM

In the dream I saw a house sitting in the dark. On the outside of this house there was an elaborate design formed with lights, like strands of Christmas tree lights. I was hardly able to distinguish their presence, but I gradually became aware of them formed into this design. The lights were not only on the side and front of the house, but even in the yard on the grass. I knew the design was beautiful, but I could not see it.

I began to see faint flickering occasionally from the lights...a tiny flicker here and a tiny flicker there. There was one bulb which seemed to stay on and not flicker. It was shaped differently than the others. That light shone, but I did not see any light coming from it to illuminate the surrounding area. It seemed like it was frosted and that kept it from coming forth brightly.

When I awoke the dream was so vivid I remembered it clearly. I asked the Lord what it represented. It was revealed to me that this house represented the church, the Body of Christ. The "lights" are on the house and they are formed into a beautiful pattern which would look glorious if it could be seen. However, the electricity, the power, is at such low voltage the lights do not shine out. We need more "electricity," more power through the Holy Spirit, to empower those light bulbs. I knew I was to pray for the power to come so they can be seen for what they really are: a beautiful design by the Lord to glorify Him.

Then the Lord revealed that as He lights up those bulbs, I will find some that are not lightable. They are dark, black. They either have no ability to shine (not having the Holy Spirit in them) or they are darkened, dead, refusing to let the Holy Spirit empower them and shine through them.

The design is by the Lord, but it will be sad to see some of the black places in it when the rest are lit.

The one bulb that already shines has light in it, but is clouded, is self-contained, and does not illuminate others around it. The reason the lights are on the outside of the house, not on the inside, is because this represents what the outside world sees of the church - a little flicker of light occasionally, not a strong, clear, steady light. But, the Lord says that will change as the “power” is introduced - soon!

**You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;
and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,
and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
(Acts 1:8)**

REVELATION

Another way God has led in my life is by what I call revelation. He just reveals something to me by popping it into my mind - usually at a time I am surprised by the information. It might be an answer to a question I asked Him in the past. It might be the solution to a problem with which I need help. The solution will just “appear” in my mind and I just stop what I am doing and say, “Oooohhhh!” It may be what a pastor of mine used to call an “ahah!” experience. This is another way He leads me in life. It fits the scripture which says: **“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.” (Psalm 16:11)**

LESSONS

Do you want to know what the Lord is like? I do! And as I go through life, I have found that He gives me “lessons” through which He teaches me about Himself, His purposes, and His ways. One day He taught me a lesson which I have remembered ever since. It all started with the rain which came...and came...and came.

THE LESSON

Into the lower level of my house came that flood of water. I could not keep up with it as I mopped and mopped. No matter how long I soaked it up, it just kept coming! My back started hurting from the mopping. My discouragement increased.

The water invaded the carpet and I knew that carpet would have to be taken up, dried, and tacked down again. This was not the first time this had happened, so I knew the cost. That was one of my great concerns - the cost. My finances were extremely tight, and I did not want to pay for water damage again.

So, as I continued mopping, experiencing the back pain, and grumbling in my mind, I began weeping. It all seemed so hopeless! As I did this, I started to talk to the Lord about it.

Finally, after pouring out my troubles to Him, I became quiet long enough to hear Him speak. And what I heard was certainly not what I expected! I heard His still small voice say, “*Have you praised Me yet for this?*”

Praised Him? For this? I certainly had not! I had not even thought about praising Him for this awful situation! But now I knew He wanted me to do just that!

Slowly I began to speak the words He wanted me to say...”I praise You, Lord, for the flood. I praise You, Lord, for the aching back. I praise You, Lord, for the cost of fixing up my carpet.” I didn’t FEEL like praising Him, but He did not ask me to feel like it, only to praise Him.

As I did this, He revealed a thought to me which has remained throughout my life. The thought was that God’s purpose was not to save me from the distress and difficulty of the situation, but to teach me something He wanted me to learn in the middle of the situation. In fact He wanted to use that situation for my good! He wanted me to learn to praise Him when things were difficult as well as when they were easy.

At this particular time He did not choose to change the circumstances...He chose to change me! I remember this as one of *His Marvelous Deeds!*

**In every thing give thanks:
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus
concerning you.
(1 Thess. 5:18)**

Another day He gave me a lesson while sitting in Shelter Garden in Columbia, Missouri, near the waterfall and pool. I needed an answer about a very pressing question that was on my mind at that time. As I watched the water in the pool moving along I noticed a leaf that had fallen into the water. It was being carried along by the water wherever the water took it. The Holy Spirit began to show me that my life was to be like that leaf and He was the water carrying me along where He wanted. I was not to tell the water where to carry me - just relax and rest in the water’s ability to carry me to the right place for me.

I trust as I write these thoughts and stories telling about things God has done in my life, they will bless those of you, my family and friends, who also will read this book. These things might help you deal with events in your own life as they helped me.

Here’s what He wants me to do in my life, as He told me in my Quiet Time:

To be close and intimate with Him, sharing each moment, each happening, together.

Perhaps that is what He would like for you also. God leads us in many many ways if we will trust Him. I know He knows what is best, and He will do what is best for me if I ask and allow Him to.

Next I want to share with you thoughts and stories about some specific daily guidance from the Lord in my life.

SECTION 2

A LIFE GOD GUIDES

IF YOU SEEK ME YOU WILL FIND ME

It says in James 4:8 **“Come near to God and He will come near to you.”** God wants us to seek Him and assures us we will find Him if we do. It also assures us in Jeremiah 29:13-14 of this: **“You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart. I will be found by you.”**

In a Psalm by David he tells of his desire to seek God when he says: **“One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.”** (Psalm 27:4)

This scripture especially assures us He will guide us: **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you, and watch over you.”** (Psalm 32:8) Ask Him to awaken you each morning according to this scripture: **“He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.”** (Isaiah 50:4b)

So what do we learn from these verses?

1. We are to come near to God
2. We are to seek God with all our heart
3. We may ask to dwell in the house of the Lord
4. We may ask to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
5. We can ask Him to instruct us, teach us, counsel us, and watch over us.
6. We can ask Him to waken us morning by morning to listen.

If we do these things, this is what we will experience:

1. He will come near to us
2. He will be found by us
3. He will take us to His house
4. He will let us gaze upon His beauty
5. He will instruct, teach, counsel, and watch over us
6. He will waken us and waken our ears to listen to Him

HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE THESE PROMISES

If these are His promises in the Bible, how do we get there? What do we do to experience these things? There are three things that are important for this: 1) Give your life to Christ, 2) Have a daily quiet time, and 3) Attend church

1. GIVE YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST

The first thing is to give your life to Christ and ask Him to be Lord of your life - that means He has control over what you do instead of you. I refer to this in Appendix B where it tells you how to give your life to Christ. If you haven't done this, and want to, go to Appendix B and follow the instructions in "How To Give Your Life To Christ."

2. HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME

After you have done that, then begin having a daily Quiet Time. This is a time that you set yourself apart from other things and people and seek the Lord. In this Quiet Time it is good to read the Bible, to pray, to worship, and to give thanks. Look in Appendix B again for "How to Have a Daily Quiet Time" for specific instructions. I like to write in a journal what the Word means to me that day and what the Holy Spirit is impressing into my thoughts.

3. ATTEND CHURCH

Another step in growing on your "Spiritual Journey" is to attend a church which teaches the Bible accurately and has opportunity for fellowship and service for you. This is an important step, so do it prayerfully. I told you the story in section 1 about how God led me to Calvary Baptist Church, then later to CenterPoint Church, and now to Christ Triumphant Church. He knows the place where you can grow and have fellowship that is right for you. Ask Him. If you are not being fed what you need at the church you are currently attending, ask Him if you should stay or change. Then wait for His answer. He wants to guide you. Remember the scripture in Hebrews 10:25 which tells us: **"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."**

EXAMPLES OF JOURNAL WRITING IN QUIET TIME

As an example of writing in my journal in my Quiet Time, one day I read Psalm 73 and wrote these things in my journal....

My scripture reading today is Psalm 73...a psalm of Aseph. Favorite parts of it:

24 "Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

25 "Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

26 "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

28 “But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.”

My Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for letting me be near You, for keeping me close to You. Thank You that You are my refuge. Thank You for guiding me with your counsel and thank You that You will take me into Your glory. Earth has nothing I desire besides You. You are the strength of my heart and my portion forever. I love You, Lord. Thank You for loving me!

Holy Spirit: I AM with you forever, Joan, and you DO get to come and be with Me in glory when you eventually leave this world. That is the greatest gift of all and it came because, in My love, I gave My life for you. I took your sins upon Me and died for them so you wouldn't have to die for them and be punished for them. That's how great is My love for you. “Greater love has no man than this, that he lays down his life for a friend.” You are My friend!

As you spend time with the Lord you grow to know Him better and sense His Presence more. You find His peace about things that concern you. This daily Quiet Time establishes a spiritual habit or discipline in your life which has long reaching results as you continue over your lifetime. We are told in Romans 12:2 **“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.”**

So we can know His will if we allow our minds to be renewed. Reading God's Word daily helps renew your mind to be like Jesus' mind.

One day in my Quiet Time I asked this question: “Lord, what do You want us to do...Your people, born of Your Spirit? This is what He put in my mind

Listen to My Spirit. Seek Me daily, for life is a daily walk with Me. I have a way, and I have a plan. You cannot find My way unless you seek Me. I want you to learn how to do that.

Listen to Me, find My way, and walk in it. I'll not give you the wisdom of man. I'll give you God's wisdom. Which do you want?

If you do not seek Me, then I will know which you want, and I will let you go man's way and into his folly. Seek Me until you find Me. Do not give up. I want to be found!

If you ask the world for advice, you will get the world's counsel. If you ask Me, you will get My counsel. Which do you want, My friends? Choose you this day whom you will serve!

Write down what He impresses in your thoughts as you read the Word and pray. As you read back over these thoughts later, they will be very meaningful to you. I have kept a journal since I was taught to do this in 1977. Now I find great assurance in reading back over those journals. For

instance, this message has meant a lot to me and encouraged me when I wonder about my financial provision so I can take the time to write this book. This is what I wrote from the Holy Spirit in June, 2004:

*You have everything that I have, Joan, everything. You do not need to fear not having enough money to live on. I will give/bring you all you need. Your position is to trust Me. I gave you that scripture this morning: **“In repentance and rest is your salvation; in quietness and trust is your strength.” (Isaiah 3:15).** Walk in quietness and trust all the rest of your life. Herein lies your strength - resting in Me. Repent whenever you don't rest in Me. I want you to rest in Me all the time. Rest in Me this day and you will receive My very best for you.*

Another time I wrote these thoughts from the Holy Spirit:

Now why didn't I give you word of your provision plan yet? I am testing you to see if you will continue to depend on and trust Me for your provision, as I have instructed you to do, or if you will take things into your own hands and make provision yourself. I do not want you to do that, but it is your choice.

One day I wrote down these words He impressed in my mind as I had quiet time:

Just keep going day after day listening to Me and obeying Me and trusting Me to provide everything needed to accomplish My purpose for you. I will be with you and I will do it all--if you let Me by waiting for Me and trusting in Me...faith. Your faith will please Me and I will act in response to it. Keep having faith.

Choose your best time to meet with the Lord. The Quiet Time needs to be at a time when you are freshest and at your best. For me that is in the morning because I am a “morning person” and it gets me started out right on my day. If your best time is in the evening, then set apart time in the evening. Start with an amount of time you feel you can commit to and stick with. Perhaps 15 minutes is where you feel you should begin. Then, as your Quiet Time becomes more and more meaningful, you will likely want to add more time, maybe 20 minutes, or 30 minutes, or even an hour.

On special occasions you can have your Quiet Time in unusual places. For example one day I had a Quiet Time sitting on the outdoor porch-balcony of a large meeting hall at a church camp I was attending. It was overlooking a beautiful lake scene. It was all quiet and still as I drew away from camp activities to relax and meditate and commune with the Lord. The scripture it reminded me of is in Isaiah 30:15 where it says: **“In quietness and trust is your strength.”** As I meditated, these thoughts came to me and I wrote them down.

THE REFLECTION

*The quieter the water the more perfect the reflection.
The more you know who you are in Me, the quieter your soul is before Me,
the more perfectly you reflect Me!*

Prayer: Lord, quiet my soul before You. Still all the thoughts within me that want to think about worldly things. Focus my thoughts on You. Help me to be a reflection of You to the world, to my friends, and to my family. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Next, think of a plan for reading the Bible that suits your interests. If you want to read it through in a year, there are many yearly plans available (see Appendix B). I have used different plans over many years of reading it. Currently I alternate between different sections of the Bible, reading Old Testament one day, Psalms and Proverbs the next day, the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) the next day (so I continually read what Jesus is saying), and the rest of the New Testament (Acts through Revelation) the next day.

If you haven't read the Bible much before, I would suggest beginning in the book of John and reading it first. Read slowly and ponder what you read. If you have questions, talk to God and ask Him to teach you what it means. When I ask Him (and I have done that many times) I usually discover the answer later - perhaps in a book or in a talk I hear.

Spend time praying (talking to God) then listening for thoughts He gives back to you. Ask for Him to be with you, to guide you, to protect you, to give you favor with others for that day, etc. Pray for your loved ones also. You can ask for guidance for that day based on the scripture in Psalm 119:105 **"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."**

Ask Him to be that lamp and light and to give you His Word to show you the way to go. As you put His Word into your life more and more, you will find the Spirit bringing that Word into your mind in situations as guidance.

Remember the scripture which says in Matthew 6:6 **"When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."**

One day in my Quiet Time the Holy Spirit taught me about His purpose in creating me:

My child, My purpose in creating you was not to do a lot of daily worldly work. My purpose in creating you was to fellowship with Me. That is what I long for, and that is what I put a longing in you for--fellowship together. Come apart with Me, My child. Come apart every morning for a special time of fellowship alone, together, just the two of us...to love each other, to share our love, to plan your day together.

Do not let the world mold your day; let Me mold your day--every day. Without this time together, how can I do this? You will not hear Me through the world's clamor. Our special time must never be violated. It must be your first priority! I love you, My child, and I want to show you My love. You need it!

Do not commit yourself to come and "be something" for Me today, just come and be "with" Me. I want your companionship today. Let's share the day together!

Spend time worshipping Him--that is telling Him about His attributes such as His loving kindness,

His goodness, His faithfulness, etc. This is a good time to worship God by offering your life to Him for that day. It says in Romans 12:1 **“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship.”**

Spend time thanking Him for all He does for you - for giving you strength for that day, for your health, for the ability to earn a living, for your family and friends, etc. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 we are told to: **“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”**

THINGS WE DON’T UNDERSTAND

There are times we experience things we just do not understand! That’s when I like to remind myself of the scripture from Proverbs 3:5-6 (which is one of my favorite verses). It says: **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths.”**

Perhaps you have had times also when you experienced things you just didn’t understand. When that happens to me, this verse is a comfort to me. It reminds me that my dependency is not to be on my own understanding of a situation, but is to be on God.

What does it mean to “acknowledge Him” in all my ways? To me that means to say to myself and to others that I am in His hands. It also means that I am to look to him for guidance when I do not know what to do in a situation. I am to thank Him and praise Him each day of my life and acknowledge He is in charge of me.

I am so glad He says in this verse that He will direct our paths. He sees which direction we should go much more clearly than we do. He is all knowing while we know only partly. We can trust in His wisdom and guidance to take us the right way--the best way for us! He gave me three vision pictures of this very thing:

PICTURE OF A PATHWAY

In this picture I was walking on a pathway and Jesus was walking backwards ahead of me, facing me, and holding on to my hands. He let me know that, if I would keep my hands in His, He would keep me on the right pathway and keep me from falling off the side of the road.

PICTURE OF A FAN

Another day I saw a picture of an opened fan looking like a turkey tail. At the top of each fan section an instruction was written. The understanding came to me that different people in the Body of Christ were to respond to these different instructions

according to their giftedness and God's leading. As they did this all the instructions could be completed--as each one did his part. The piece of fan given to me had this instruction on it: "Follow Me."

**"They follow the Lamb wherever he goes."
(Revelation 14:4)**

PICTURE OF A MAZE

I saw in my mind the picture of a maze, as if I was looking down on it from above. I saw myself in this maze, letting the Lord lead me each way it went. The thought came to me: How could He really teach me and test me on following Him if He did not lead me in some ways that were different, not logical to me. If He only led me in ways I expected, ways He had led me before, that would not really test and grow my ability to follow Him. Even if He said, "Do nothing," I was to follow that. That might be the best for me at that time.

Then I wrote these words from Him: *I am leading you, like in a maze. You do not see each turn or see to the side. Just keep following Me moment by moment. It is a lonely path but I am always with you. I will always show you the way to go.*

KEEPING YOUR SPIRITUAL FERVOR

As you journey in the world remember to **"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."** (Romans 12:11) How do you keep spiritual fervor and zeal in your day? I have found it comes by continually stirring up interest in spiritual things by what I read, what I talk about, what I watch on TV, how I use my free time, etc. For instance, after my Quiet Time in the morning, I continue to "talk to" the Lord throughout the day as things come up. I "practice His presence" as mentioned by Brother Lawrence in his book *Practicing the Presence of God*.

During my lunch hour at work I would read material that was inspiring (see Appendix C for a list of good books, fiction and non-fiction). After dinner in the evening I would watch Christian television which I taped during the day (e.g. Joyce Meyer, Praise The Lord show, Benny Hinn, The 700 Club). Before I retired at night I often tried to read something uplifting like a story from *Guideposts Magazine*.

A STORY OF GOD'S GUIDANCE

A story about God's guiding me came about in what I want to share with you next. It is called "A Tremendous Substitute." Did you know that sometimes we can be fooled into thinking we have God's guidance when an opportunity arises and it seems an answer to our prayers? This story will explain how that happened one time in my life.

A TREMENDOUS SUBSTITUTE

As I arrived home from church that Sunday evening the Lord spoke to me to turn on the TV. As I did, I heard a pastor in the middle of his sermon say something which I immediately knew I was to write down. The idea he gave was this: "Just before God is ready to give you His very best, Satan often offers a tremendous substitute."

The idea of a tremendous substitute was a new one for me, but since that time I have often found those words to be true.

It applied to my life one summer when I knew I needed to find a part-time job by September of that year because part of my financial provision would stop at the end of that month. As I took this need to the Lord in prayer, He gave me a picture of a door set before me. That door was open and behind it was bright light, so bright that I could not see what was there...but I knew it was His provision. He told me to keep walking toward the "door" in September, and He would have something for me at that time.

So I walked, in faith, and kept the picture before me. I had to fight battles with anxiety as the time drew closer and I still did not have the financial provision I needed.

By August I expected the Lord to bring me a job at any moment. Just at that time a friend called and invited me to lunch. She told me of a ministry position open at her church and asked if I would let her submit my name. She knew I had a call to ministry, and this looked good in so many ways! Could this be what the Lord had planned for me? I knew I must pray about it and give it serious consideration.

As I pondered it there was one thing which bothered me about the job. If I took this job I would have to leave my church "family" of many years duration where I had friendships which were close and meaningful to me. Only with the Lord's help could I do that. So I sought Him in prayer.

I have learned over the years that if I really want to hear the Lord's will I must first give up my own. This was very hard to do! I wanted the job the Lord had for me, and I needed the money soon, but I did not find peace about leaving my home church. So I prayed until I could say, "God, whatever You want for my life, that is what I want too. I am willing to pursue this job if that is what You want."

Then He revealed to me that this job was a "tremendous substitute" which He had warned me about. It had seemed so perfect in many ways. That is often the way a "tremendous substitute" seems - perfect in many ways. It is hard to tell it from the real thing except as you seek God and listen to Him.

I chose not to pursue that job, but to wait longer. One day, in mid-September, two weeks before part of my financial provision ended, I walked into a Christian bookstore to buy a card. As I chatted with the owner, he casually mentioned, “By the way, you don’t happen to be looking for a job, do you? I have one available.”

With those words the Lord began the process of bringing me the “real thing.” For years a desire in my heart had been to work at a Christian bookstore because of my love of reading and sharing Christian books. Now, in the Lord’s perfect timing, He fulfilled that desire. In the process He showed me another of *His Marvelous Deeds!*

The picture of the door with the light on the other side finally became a reality! I walked through it with joy and thanksgiving!

**“I am the Lord;
in its time I will do this swiftly.”
(Isaiah 60:22)**

A LESSON ON GOD’S TIMING

One day the Lord gave me a lesson on His timing. Here is what He taught me: **“After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: ‘Father, the time has come.’” (John 17:1)** Then the Holy Spirit said and I wrote down:

Remember when I would talk about time and how it was or was not the right time? My timing is very important to seek so you can follow it exactly. Satan knows enough to keep trying to steal and thwart My timing. He works on man’s impatience and lack of vision to try to alter it. He often will try to anticipate what I am going to do and make a wonderful looking substitute--just before I bring My best into the picture. You can always watch to see if this is happening!

Another day He taught me on the scripture from Isaiah 30:15 (KJV) which says: **“In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”** This is what He said that day:

I am coming soon, My child. Remember, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength. Face each day and each moment with quietness and confidence, knowing I am with you always, and have an answer for every question, every decision.

I am your quietness. I am your confidence. I am your God. I am your Lord. I am all in all. I am your provider. I am your source. I am your sufficiency. I am your power. I am your strength. I am all you ever need.

GUIDELINES FOR DAILY LIVING

There are some great guidelines for daily living in the Bible in Romans 12:9-21. I will list them here for you to read and ponder:

- Love must be sincere
- Hate what is evil
- Cling to what is good
- Be devoted to one another in brotherly love
- Honor one another above yourselves
- Never be lacking in zeal
- Keep your spiritual fervor serving the Lord
- Be joyful in hope
- Be patient in affliction
- Be faithful in prayer
- Share with God's people who are in need
- Practice hospitality
- Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse
- Rejoice with those who rejoice
- Mourn with those who mourn
- Live in harmony with one another
- Do not be proud
- Be willing to associate with people of low position
- Do not be conceited
- Do not repay anyone evil for evil
- Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody
- If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone
- Do not take revenge
- Leave room for God's wrath
- If your enemy is hungry, feed him
- If your enemy is thirsty, give him something to drink
- Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good

TEACHING US

One of the lessons God has taught me is that He loves us by teaching us. He teaches us lessons in the different situations we face each day. As we learn the lesson, He takes us on to new ones. If we don't learn the lesson, He repeats it.

Here is an example of that process from scripture from Exodus 16:4 when God gave manna to the Israelites while they were in the desert: **"I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions."** Some people didn't follow instructions and their bread (manna) became spoiled. They had to learn the hard way to follow God's instructions

to get good results.

Later in Exodus 16:17-18 it says: **“The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little. Each one gathered as much as he needed.”** The Holy Spirit impressed me with these thoughts:

So don't fight against what I am doing; cooperate with Me. I will correct you as we do this together. I have a plan, an idea, of how I want this to be and I will lead you on that path.

Another thing the Holy Spirit has taught me is about sowing seeds. It says in the Galatians 6:7-9 (TMB) that **“What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others--ignoring God!--harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds. But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life. So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit.”**

Therefore think about what seeds you are sowing with your life and what kind of harvest you want to have. If your seeds are good, you will reap good; if they are bad, you will reap bad. If we sow deception, we will reap deception, etc.

To give you another story illustration about how God gave specific guidance to someone, I want to tell you a story about my sister-in-law, Jean, when God gave her guidance during a stressful time of relocating to a new city and finding a new house there.

SAWMILL

God sometimes shows *His Marvelous Deeds* in our lives when we are in great need and we cry out to Him for help. That is what happened in the lives of Jean and Jack at the stressful time of a job change which involved a move to a strange city.

Jack had just gotten a new job near Columbus, Ohio, which was a much larger city than where they lived in Indiana. At the time of this story Jack was already in Columbus and Jean was preparing to drive there to meet him. Together they planned to choose a house to buy so the whole family could move.

Jean felt overwhelmed with the task before them. How were they to find a house in that large city which was just right for their family? The day before her departure to drive alone to Columbus, she was especially concerned with what lay ahead - the decision about the right house. Jean was a Christian and knew God could help her. So, in her need, she cried out to Him, “God, will You show me a *sign* to help find our house?”

That night, as Jean slept, God gave her a dream. Although she awoke not remembering exactly what she dreamed, she did remember a strange thing about that dream--the word "sawmill" kept being repeated in the dream. When she got up she did not think too much about the word "sawmill" because it did not mean anything to her. But - it did to God!

She started out on her trip to Columbus and things went along quietly for her. As she neared Columbus she began to look for the exit she was to take to meet Jack and the realtor. Her thoughts were about where to turn off the highway.

As Jean says: "Then all at once I saw it--a *sign* along the highway said **SAWMILL!!!** Immediately bells started ringing in my head, and I praised the Lord for His *sign* to me!"

When she finished her journey and met with Jack and the realtor, she told them about all this. The realtor was really surprised because one of the homes she was going to show them was in *Olde Sawmill Addition*.

Yes, they did buy that special house in *Olde Sawmill* and they knew they had the house the Lord had chosen for them! God had just performed another of *His Marvelous Deeds* in their lives!

**I will praise the Lord, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.
(Psalm 16:7)**

I think after this experience Jean could agree with the scripture in Psalm 40:3, 5 which says: "**He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God....Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.**"

Here is an example, a story, in my own life where God specifically guided me. After following His guidance, then I saw the wisdom of it. But I had to be obedient to His guidance before I could see it.

I KNOW THE PLANS

For several months the thought had been slipping quietly into my mind--the thought that someday I would move from the house I owned at that time. I would glance briefly at that thought and then let it slip by, feeling the move would come at least one or two years in the future. I had good reasons why I should wait that long to move--logical reasons.. They made sense to my mind. But that was not the Lord's plan.

It was Friday, June 23, and I was having my Quiet Time. The Lord spoke to me in my thoughts saying He wanted me to place my house up for sale. In spite of all the previous thoughts about this, I was still surprised. I had not given much thought to actually doing it. I wanted to be sure this was really God's will before I acted on that word. That would be a big step for me to take by myself. I had never sold a house by myself before! So I waited.

On Saturday, June 24, He said the same thing to me again in my Quiet Time. Since the word was reinforced, I began to look at it much more seriously.

On Sunday, June 25, as the Lord spoke the same message to me, I was convinced I needed to act on it. So, on Monday morning, in my Quiet Time, I agreed to put my house up for sale. Then, with His guidance, I carefully outlined the steps I would take and the approximate times I wanted to take them.

At first I thought I would place the house on the market in September to give myself preparation time. But He said I should plan so the new family could move in before school started. So I made plans to close on the sale during the third week in August, around the 21st if possible. I planned to begin renting my new home on August 1st so I could have three weeks to move my things, have a garage sale in the old house, and have time to clean the house I was selling before completing the move.

I believed these plans were from God, and yet, what amazed me was this only allowed one month for God to sell my house! At that time many houses were sitting on the market in our city for 6-12 months without selling!

On Wednesday, June 28, my prayer partner and I prayed about this, and the advice that came was: "Call the realtor right away and set this up." What Godly advice this turned out to be!

The realtor and I met on Friday, June 30, one week after the Lord spoke to me to sell my house. I shared with her about the Lord's instructions, so we were both excited to see what He was going to do!

It was scary to sign my name on that document to sell my house while not knowing what lay ahead. I was agreeing to a huge transition without knowing its far-reaching effects. But what enabled me to sign was the assurance this was from the Lord.

I wanted the multiple listing realtors to tour my home on Wednesday, July 5, during the following week. Therefore my realtor said she would have to put it on the computer on the following Monday, July 3rd. I agreed to that, thinking I would have the 4th of July holiday to thoroughly clean and prepare the house for showing before Wednesday, July 5. Little did I suspect what God was already doing even as I made these plans!

On Monday, July 3rd, my house listing was placed on the computer system. A realtor saw it on the computer and came over that very afternoon. That evening she brought her client to view the house, and they wrote a contract on it that same night. I had not even cleaned it yet! That extra special cleaning was not what the Lord needed to sell my house. He just needed my obedience to list the house at the exact time He told me to. He did the rest!

God knew something which I did not know when He said I should list my house for sale. He knew there was a buyer who wanted a house just like mine and wanted it in my neighborhood. He knew she would make an offer on a house just down the street from mine during that first weekend in July just before my listing was put on the computer. He also knew she would miss buying that house because someone else made an offer just prior to hers. She was eager and ready to move as soon as possible. God was already at work in the situation. He just wanted me to join Him in what He was doing!

And guess what! The closing date she wanted was August 21st! In fact, God worked out every detail of the schedule we set that Monday, June 26th, when I said “yes” to His request and we set the plans. He even helped me find a lovely home to rent beginning August 1st as we had planned.

Once again in my life God revealed Himself, His purposes, and His ways by displaying one of *His Marvelous Deeds!*

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

RENEWED EACH DAY

As I read the Word, pray, and write the words the Holy Spirit brings into my mind during those special Quiet Times together, I am renewed each day to keep on going...not in my strength, but in the strength He puts in me during these special times. One day I wrote in my journal this very special promise scripture from Isaiah 43:1-5 (NCV): “Now this is what the Lord says... **“Don’t be afraid, because I have saved you. I have called you by name, and you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. When you cross rivers, you will not drown. When you walk through fire, you will not be burned, nor will the flames hurt you. This is because I, the Lord, am your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior...Don’t be afraid, because I am with you.”** Then I wrote these words from the Holy Spirit:

This means to you that I am with you (and your children) at all times, and I save you in all situations. When you drive cars places, I am with you. When you take airplane

trips, I am with you. When you walk places (like in corporate parking lots) I am with you. "Don't be afraid, because I am with you."

And if I use that situation to allow your life to be snuffed out, then it is because it is time for you to come and be with Me in heaven. I know that special time (and it is truly special) for each person. But I have promised you that you and your children will be kept safe on the earth right up to the Rapture, and I WILL do that. Trust Me for this.

SECTION 3

A LIFE GOD PROTECTS

Does God really protect us? I can only say “yes” to that question because I have had so many experiences where He has protected me. I’ll start off with a story that happened one cold rainy day in February 1974 in Indianapolis, Indiana:

TROUBLE ON THE HIGHWAY

“God, help me!” I shouted as my car slid out of control on the slippery Indiana highway on that cold rainy day in February. I instinctively shut my eyes as my car careened down into the ditch on the right side of the road and into a field. I “felt” the car moving for awhile as I sat braced for an impact or whatever might happen. I was totally out of control of the steering of the car. The car gradually slowed down enough for me to open my eyes and discover I was almost back on the highway! I was approaching the same roadside ditch I had just driven through, but this time from the field side of it! I accelerated the car trying to return to the road, but got stuck in the ditch.

As I sat in my car along the highway trying to grasp what had just happened, I began to see an amazing picture of what God had just done for me.....

The day began with plans to fly our private plane from Indianapolis, Indiana, to Columbia, Missouri, for a job interview for my husband. I was busily packing the clothes for our two daughters so we could make a stopover at my sister’s home in Marion, Indiana, and leave the girls there while we visited Columbia. I anxiously watched the cold rain and low clouds, wondering if they would hinder our flight and make us late for our appointment that evening.

Just then my husband called saying the weather was too bad to fly privately and we would need to catch a commercial flight very soon. Would I make the trip by car to Marion? Would I drop off the girls at my sister’s home, and return to Indianapolis in time to catch the commercial flight? There was just barely enough time if all went perfectly!

Driving at a high speed, I quickly made the trip, but I learned that the cold rain in Indianapolis changed to freezing rain and snow as I went north toward Marion. Cautiously I arrived at my sister’s home, left the girls, and began the return trip - knowing I would not make the commercial flight on time unless I drove fast.

As I drove too fast for the icy road, God and His angels were watching over me, even in my unwise choice of speed. All of a sudden I realized the car was sliding, and it

was totally out of my control! As I shut my eyes with the approaching danger and yelled, “God, help me!” God took over.

When I looked around as the car came to a stop in the ditch, I knew He had taken over, because I could see where His angels had steered the car - off the road, through a ditch, into a large open field, around a tree in a U-shaped turn, then back up to the edge of the road where the car stalled in the ditch. The car and I were totally uninjured, not even scratched!

I walked to the nearest farmhouse where I used their telephone to call a AAA service truck to pull my car from the ditch. Needless to say, we missed our commercial flight and had to postpone our visit to Columbia until the next day.

I knew, as I pondered the event, that an angel had guided my car that day because my eyes had been shut, and a car does not steer itself in a U-turn around a tree and back up towards the road where my car went!

Some weeks later, as I drove along that same Indiana highway, I noticed something which again caused me amazement about God’s guiding hand. I noticed that “my field” with the tree in the middle was the only open area for a long way that was without buildings, fences, or signs which my car could have hit!

What could have been a tragedy turned out to be an enduring memory of *His Marvelous Deeds!*

**To the Lord I cry aloud
and he answers me from his holy hill.
(Psalm 3:4)**

So I KNOW God protects us at times, because He did this for me that day. I knew I wasn’t steering that car off the road, around a tree in a U-turn, and back up to the edge of the highway. How could that have happened except God did it?

And He uses His angels to help those who belong to Him, as it says in Psalm 34:7 “**The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.**” Or in Psalm 91:11 it says “**For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.**” I am especially encouraged about His protection when I consider what it says in Hebrews 1:14 “**Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?**”

Now I want to tell you a story about my brother, John. John lived in the country on the same property where I grew up as a child.

WARNING LIGHTS

John was driving his car home one day along a country road which had little traffic at that time. He had driven along this road many times and felt comfortable knowing what to expect. He was coming upon a railroad track which he had crossed many times before. He couldn't see down the tracks because there was too much brush and trees, so he didn't see any train.

This railroad track was one of those lines which probably used to have trains along it regularly, but now was seldom used any, if at all. It was the kind of track where you seldom stopped and looked because you had been over it so many times without seeing a train. John certainly was not accustomed to seeing trains on it!

But this day a very strange event took place as John approached those country train tracks. Just before reaching them, he suddenly saw flashing red warning lights signaling an approaching train. He was so surprised by this he slammed on his brakes twice and each time the car went sideways and the car behind him did the same. He stopped almost on the tracks and a train passed by immediately in front of his car! Either John's car, or the second car, may well have been on that railroad track at the time the train came and been hit by it.

As my Mother wrote in a letter to me about this event: "Joan, why did he see red lights flashing?" His wife, Carol, immediately told him that God was watching out for him. Mom said she believed that too. As Mom said: "There are no lights there and yet he saw some. Someone was watching over him. I have heard other people having similar experiences and they gave the credit to God. I believe it too. Praise the Lord. Carol said wouldn't that have been terrible, if he would have been killed today. Thought you'd like to know. Love, Mom"

There were no electric signal lights at that crossing! There was only the old wooden X sign indicating a RR crossing, but no electric signals. But he knew he had seen flashing warning lights and that was why he stopped.

It is one of those mysterious ways of God which we cannot explain but at which we marvel. It was truly one of *His Marvelous Deeds!*

I warned you when you felt secure...
(Jeremiah 22:21)

Want to hear another story where God's protection was very evident? This one took place in Central Indiana, near the town of Marion, in a twin engine plane my husband was piloting. We were both in this plane and just approaching the airport in Marion when this happened...

I WILL RESCUE HIM

“Oh, God, help us!” I began to pray as my husband and I flew in a twin engine plane toward the airport at Marion, Indiana. “We need You right now, Lord! This plane is having engine trouble! Help my husband land this plane safely!” I prayed hard and fast, over and over, as we descended toward the landing strip. Engine trouble was evident but we didn’t know why.

The plane which my husband was piloting suddenly had one of the two engines quit working as we were in mid-air. Even though he had had training in what to do if this should ever happen, this had never happened to us before! He navigated the plane with his attention riveted on the instrument panel trying to keep the plane level with power coming from one side only. This was very difficult! While his attention was riveted on the instrument panel, my attention was riveted on the Lord. We needed Him right now!

Joyce, my sister, was standing outside the small airport building at Marion with our two young daughters watching for our plane to appear. Kim and Beth were excitedly watching for their Mom and Dad to come and get them after their trip. They loved to visit Aunt Joyce and Uncle Edd, but they also missed Mom and Dad. Their eyes repeatedly looked across the sky to see the first sign of the arriving plane.

As they watched, a plane did indeed come into view off at a distance, but there was something strange about that plane. It had a long trail of gray-white smoke coming from one of its engines - an ominous-looking trail! They began to wonder and ask Aunt Joyce if this could be their parents’ plane.

Joyce, suspecting the worst, knew this probably was! But she did not want the girls to see it coming in and watch what might happen! So she skillfully took them back into the airport building and tried to divert their attention...all the while wondering what was happening outside. She was a praying Christian woman, so she also was calling on the Lord in her heart as much as she could while entertaining Kim and Beth.

Gradually, in what seemed a long period of time, my husband maneuvered the plane toward the runway - closer and closer - while I watched breathlessly and prayed all the way. Was there a fire? We could not see it if there was! Would we be able to land, get out of the plane, and get away from it in time? Unanswered questions assailed my mind in those moments before landing.

God was right there with us in those moments of desperate prayers. We landed safely, got out of the plane, and saw the reason for our engine loss as we watched the smoke coming from it. The smoke was being blown behind us as we flew, so we could not see it while in the cockpit. We did get away from the plane quickly and it did not catch totally on fire. But it did ruin that one engine. We had to have repair work done

so we had to leave the plane at that airport for many days until that was finished. But we were thankful nothing worse happened!

We had an extra thankful and joyful reunion with our loved ones in that airport that day! God had spared our lives from the danger near us and kept us for His purposes. He had revealed Himself as our protector and deliverer. He had truly performed one of *His Marvelous Deeds!*

As I reflect back on this event etched vividly in my memory, I am reminded that God kept us safe from a possible fuel tank explosion from that burning engine. And I am also reminded that the engine loss could have taken place over a large city or over the countryside instead of near the airport of our destination. God was, indeed, watching over us even before I started praying!

**“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, I will rescue him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.
He will call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.
With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”
(Psalm 91:14-16)**

SCRIPTURES ABOUT PROTECTION

One of our promises in the Bible about protection is from Psalm 32:8 which says: **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.”** Another verse tells He will sustain us in Psalm 55:22 **“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.”**

This scripture in Psalm 57:1 speaks of our taking refuge in Him **“Have mercy, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster is passed.”** One of my favorite scriptures is in Psalm 91:1 which says we can dwell in the shadow of the Almighty. What a place to rest! That close to Him! It says: **“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.”**

Here is another story showing God’s protection when great harm was possible...

CHARGE OVER THEE

My sister, Lois, and I were driving along a highway in Indiana heading toward Fort Wayne. She had just received word that a friend of hers needed her immediately so she dropped everything to go. As she left she asked if I wanted to ride along to keep her company. So, together we left the Christian Conference we were attending telling friends we would return the next day.

As we traveled along the two lane highway, we came upon a large semi-truck and began to pass it. When we were about half way around it the driver of the truck, apparently not seeing us in his side view mirror, began pulling into the passing lane where we were.

The next thing I knew we were careening off the left side of the highway with our car turning completely over and finally coming to a stop in a cornfield! It was the strangest sensation turning over in a car...one which I hope I will never feel again!

My eyes were shut as we went over, but I was quite aware of every sensation. I felt all the bumps and jolts, but at the same time became aware of a stinging pain in my finger! I pulled my hand back from the pain thinking I must be receiving a cut from broken glass in the windshield. My strangely calm thought was: "This must be what it is like to turn over in a car."

As we thudded to a stop, right side up (Praise the Lord!), I opened my eyes and began to look around. There was dust or smoke all around the car. At once I realized the car could catch on fire! I said we should get out immediately in case the car caught on fire. We assured each other we were OK as we hunted for her glasses which had been thrown off her face.

Then we tried to open the doors. They would not open! At that moment I began to feel panic! I began to pound on the door frantically. But it would not open! Just then Lois got the door on her side open, and we realized we could get out, so the panic stopped immediately.

As soon as we got out we walked away from the car through the field to the side of the highway where we sat down a moment to try to grasp what had just happened and what to do next. Then we heard people yelling at us to come across the road away from the wires hanging near us. We had not yet noticed them!

After we crossed the highway to those friendly voices calling to us, we sat down again in our shocked state and began to listen to them speak. They said, "We never expected anyone to come out of that car alive!" They told us that we had hit a pole and broken it in two so that the wires were hanging down around the car. My side door, which I had frantically tried to open, was lodged against the pole we hit. Thank the Lord I could not get it open, because I might have walked into live wires before realizing it.

After the ambulance got us to an emergency room they had Lois lie down because she had a headache. When the nurse asked me if I was hurt, all I had to report was a cut finger - the pain I felt while the car was turning over. A little later I overheard the nurse quietly tell someone that our blood pressures were "sky high!" She immediately had me lie down also when she discovered that.

Due to the high blood pressure they asked us to be admitted overnight for observation even though we were not hurt. As we lay in our hospital beds we called back to the Christian Conference we had just left, and the whole conference group stopped and prayed for us immediately.

We rested in our beds, bathed in prayer, thanking God for His protection. He had just performed one of *His Marvelous Deeds* in our lives as He kept us safe through the accident.

**For he shall give his angels
charge over thee,
to keep thee in all thy ways.
(Psalm 91:11 KJV)**

HOW PSALM 91 HELPED SUSTAIN ME

During the time immediately after my separation from my husband in December 1980 I had quite an adjustment to living alone as a single parent with my two daughters. One of the hardest parts was trying to go to sleep each night. So almost every night I would read Psalm 91 before going to sleep for assurance that the Lord was with us and would look after us. What a comfort!

SPIRITUAL ARMOR

Certainly prayer and calling out to God are two things we can do when we need help and protection. Does the Bible teach us anything else we can do? The answer is “yes” and is found in Ephesians 6:10-18. In my Bible this section is titled *The warrior’s power*. We often refer to it as our *Spiritual Armor*. It says:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

In Appendix B I will tell more about putting on the *Spiritual Armor* to protect yourself and your loved ones from the evil one.

FORGIVING OTHERS

Another thing the Lord has dealt with me about is whether I have forgiven all people for whatever they have done against me. Unforgiveness is an entry way into your life by the enemy and you want to stop all such entry ways. Remember in Matthew 6:12, 14-15 it says: **“Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors...for if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”**

Now I would like to tell you a story about a time in my life when God really dealt with me about forgiving people...

NAILED TO THE CROSS

One of the Lord’s marvelous deeds is giving us the opportunity to become clean before Him through Jesus’ work on the cross. There was a day in my life when He took me through a giant step in the process of becoming clean from past grudges, hurts, and unforgiven circumstances. It all began at the very last meeting of the conference...

The conference I was attending at Ridgecrest in North Carolina was on “Prayer for Spiritual Awakening.” One thing I learned is that if you want spiritual awakening you need to pray, but I also learned that effective prayer must come from a cleansed vessel. God began a process of cleansing in me that day. He started to clean me from past experiences.

I sat listening intently as the speaker shared a fresh experience of God’s work in his personal life - an experience only two weeks old. I thank God for this man who was willing to be vulnerable enough to share how God revealed his own needs for cleansing and how God taught him to be free from the bondage of past events in his life. He shared how he took each revealed memory of past hurts, grudges, and unforgiven events to the cross, confessed his part in those events, asked forgiveness, and then nailed those sins to the cross in his imagination as he accepted in his heart Christ’s finished work of paying the penalty for them.

I knew deep down inside God was calling me to do the same. I felt like the conference was just beginning for me because there was so much inner work I wanted to do before returning home.

But the conference was over! Even so, my heart was filled with the intense desire to be alone with God and let Him do that cleansing work in me also. Oh, how I wanted to stay!

We packed the van with our luggage and began the 1 and 1/2 day trip back to Missouri. The drawing by God to come apart with Him and begin that cleansing work was so real I could not escape it, nor did I want to. However God knew what to do with all those travel hours!

As the miles flew by and people became quieter, I began looking out the window and drawing apart in my mind to communicate with the Lord. "Lord, please show me those areas in my life that need cleansing! Take me back, Lord, in my memory to times and events which I need to confess before You."

And He did! The first event He brought to my mind seemed so insignificant to me, I would not have considered it if He had not shown it to me from His viewpoint. He reminded me of a time when I was six years old and my mother was in bed recovering from the delivery at our home of my baby brother. My aunt was taking care of our family until my mother was able again. I had injured myself and wanted a bandage on the wound, but she would not give me one. I went to my mother and asked for one, and she let me have it.

The Lord began to show me I had never forgiven my aunt for not understanding the need of a small child, not just for a bandage, but for the love and concern that mother gave with that bandage. I had held a grudge against my aunt ever since that day and did not even know it!

First the Lord had me confess my sin of holding a grudge, then forgive my aunt for not helping me. As the speaker taught us, I pictured myself taking my sin to the cross and nailing it there. Christ had already paid the price for it and I accepted that payment and thanked Him for it.

What a wonderful cleansing followed! All the way home, for hour after hour in the van, the Lord took me back in my memory and worked cleansing from past events. The prayer Jesus taught became very real to me: "*Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors!*" As I forgave others, He worked cleansing in me of my debts. Those debts got nailed to Jesus' cross all the way across the country from North Carolina to Missouri as God worked one of *His Marvelous Deeds* in my life!

**For if you forgive men when they sin against you,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
But if you do not forgive men their sins,
your Father will not forgive your sins.
(Matthew 6:14-15)**

One of the people I went through a long process of forgiving was my father. He was a pretty harsh disciplinarian and was rather distant from me when I was a child. This affected me a lot in my feelings about myself and my self-worth. But as an adult the Lord lead me to forgive him

each time something came into my mind about the way he had treated me. I gradually found my attitude toward him softening and becoming more loving. In light of that background I want to share a story about that relationship toward the end of my father's life.

I LOVE YOU

It was the last day I could visit my father in the hospital. He had a stroke and we did not know how long he would live. We also did not know what his condition would be if he did live.

When I heard of his stroke I made the ten hour trip from Missouri to Indiana to see him. After spending several days there, it was now time to return to Missouri...return without knowing the outcome of this stroke.

I did not look forward to this last visit to the hospital, knowing it could be the last time I might see my father alive. What do you say at such a time?

My father and I had never been close. He was not the type of person to be affectionate or share his feelings with others. We did not communicate much except about surface things. I wanted to be close to my father, but somehow it was not easy to feel close to him. I had never heard him tell any person, "I love you." And as a child it would have made such a difference in my life to have heard those words!

Now, as an adult, I could see that Dad had loved me "in his way" by taking care of my material needs along with those of our family. But, as a child, I did not perceive that. I needed, as a child, to be told and shown that I was loved. Therefore, I grew up thinking he really did not care much about me.

And now the time had arrived to say good-bye. I dreaded this moment. What should I say? I leaned over his bed to hug him and said, "Dad, I have to leave now. I have to go back to Missouri....I love you, Dad."

And he said the words I had waited all my life to hear: "I love you, too."

As my sister and I left his room and walked down the hospital corridor, she said, with tears in her eyes, "That is the first time I ever heard Dad say 'I love you' to anyone in my whole life!"

I knew it was one of life's rare and touching moments... and that God gave that moment as one of *His Marvelous Deeds!*

Oh, that we could turn aside from all our pride and pain
And take the risk to tell someone "I love you" - what great gain!
Take the time to tell someone of the caring in your heart,
Before the opportunity is past, before you have to part.

Here is another story about emotional healing the Lord brought to me in regard to a traumatic incident I had as a child with my father and how God healed that memory...

LIKE A LITTLE CHILD

As an adult I have often been guided by the Lord to look back into my past and remember an event which needs to be worked through. Sometimes I need to forgive someone, sometimes I need to ask the Lord to forgive me, sometimes I need to be freed from a wrong attitude, and sometimes I need healing. This story involves both forgiveness and emotional healing for something which happened to me as a young child.

I do not remember why, but my father was angry with me. In the process of dealing with me in his anger, he sent me outside our home to stand by myself on our front porch in the dark. I was very afraid of the dark, so that was a dreadful punishment for me. But there was also a feeling of rejection and fear during that event...enough that it continued as a very painful memory for many years.

As an adult I brought that memory to the surface under the Lord's guidance one day. I had to forgive my father for treating me that way. It was easy enough to say "I forgive him" to the Lord because I now had children of my own and could understand how irritating they could be at times. Perhaps I had been that way.

But somehow the Lord was not finished with that memory. I did not have a sense of peace about the memory, and it kept returning to my mind. So I asked the Lord how to be free from the pain of that memory. Then I began to see that the feeling of being unwanted and rejected was still there and needed to be healed. "How could I be healed?" I asked Him. Then He performed one of *His Marvelous Deeds* in my life to bring healing to me.

He had me bring back and review in my mind the picture of myself standing on that porch as a little child. Then He reminded me that He was always with me and that I could imagine Him there on that porch with me - because He really was. So, in my imagination, I pictured Him standing there with me. And, somehow, it was not dark anymore when He was there, and I was not afraid.

What happened next was a vision. In it He took my hand and we walked together down the steps off the porch and into a grassy area beside the house. His presence blessed me and freed me to be the child I was. We took hands and danced around in circles as children do. Then He stooped down and waited and watched as I danced and ran around in the grass full of joy and delight in being with Him.

This was so healing to me that now it is a pleasure to go back to that memory. When I do, I remember, not pain, but Jesus being with me and accepting me for being a child and acting like a child...and just loving me as a child. My earthly father could not accept me acting like a child, but my Heavenly Father loved me that way!

He said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.’ And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.
(Mark 10:14-16)

(In Hebrew custom, blessing was the act of a father.)

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE

As I end this section of the book, I want to share some scriptures to alert you to what the Bible says will happen to each of us when we die and leave this earth life. It says in Romans 14:10b **“For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat.”** In the New Century Bible Romans 14:10b-11 states it this way: **“We will all stand before God to be judged, because it is written in the scriptures: ‘As sure as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘Everyone will bow before me; everyone will say that I am God.’ So each of us will have to answer to God.”**

Know that the scripture says in Deuteronomy 4:39 **“Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on earth below. There is no other.”** In Joshua 24:15 it says **“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.”** And in Deuteronomy 30:19b it tells us **“Now choose life.”**

This is the day of your salvation. If you’ve not previously accepted/chosen Jesus as your salvation, do it now. In Acts 4:12 it says: **“Salvation is found in no one else.”**

If you have previously committed your life to Christ like I did as a child, then today is the day to recommit your life to Him. Remember this about Jesus from Philippians 2:8-11: **“And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

Therefore, when you stand before God at some point in your future, what will you answer if He asks you, “What did you do about My Son, Jesus?” Will you answer that you didn’t accept Jesus as your Savior and therefore still have your sins upon yourself? Or will you answer that you accepted Jesus as your Savior and that He died in your place for your sins? Remember that it says in Romans 10:13 **“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”** And it says in Romans 6:23 **“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

THE WARNING LIGHTS AT THE RAILROAD TRACKS

Remember the story about my brother, John, and about the warning lights he saw as he approached the railroad tracks? Sometimes we all need a warning sign that we must heed. Be sure you stop and make the decisions now that will affect the rest of your life and affect where you go after this earthly life is over. There is a whole eternity we will each live out after this life. Our choices now determine where we will spend that eternity.

What we experience now is just training, like a school, where we learn to know God and to follow Him. If we reject Him, we will live out our eternity forever separated from Him in a place the Bible calls hell. If we confess our sins and give our lives to Him, we will live out our eternity forever with the Lord in a place the Bible calls heaven. Which place do you want to live in?

WHAT HEAVEN AND HELL ARE LIKE

If you would like to read about what hell is like, read the story Jesus told about it in Luke 16:19-31. It is the story of the rich man and Lazarus. One man went to hell and one was carried to Abraham's side by angels. (See Appendix A for the scripture) If you want to learn more about what heaven is like, read Revelation 4:2-11 and Revelation 21:2-22:5. (See Appendix A for the scripture)

DECIDE

Then decide which place you would rather be and choose accordingly. This book comes as a "warning" (as the flashing RR crossing warning) that the time is short and the time is now to commit your life to Christ and receive His free gift of salvation - and to share this same message with all whom you love.

Remember these scriptures as my final message to you:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. (Ephesians 6:10)

Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9)

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

APPENDIX A

SCRIPTURES

SCRIPTURES USED IN THIS BOOK

The scriptures used in this book are all from the NIV: New International Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated. The other versions used: KJV: King James Version, NCV: New Century Version, TLB: The Living Bible, AMP: Amplified Bible, TMB: THE MESSAGE Bible by Eugene Peterson, and RSV: Revised Standard Version

SCRIPTURES ABOUT THE SPIRITUAL ARMOR

Ephesians 6:10-18

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

SCRIPTURES ABOUT HEAVEN AND HELL

Luke 16:19-31

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire."

But Abraham replied, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And

besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.”

He answered, “Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.”

Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.”

“No, father Abraham,” he said, “but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.”

He said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.”

Revelation 4:2-6

At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

Revelation 21:1-22:5

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with

the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third calcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

SCRIPTURES ABOUT JUDGMENT

Hebrews 9:27

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Romans 14:10b

For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

Romans 14:10b-11 NCV

We will all stand before God to be judged, because it is written in the scriptures: "As sure as I live," says the Lord, "Everyone will bow before me; everyone will say that I am God." So each of us will have to answer to God.

Deuteronomy 4:39

Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on earth below. There is no other.

Joshua 24:15

Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.

Deuteronomy 30:19b

Now choose life.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else.

SCRIPTURES ABOUT PROTECTION

Psalm 3:4

To the Lord I cry aloud and he answers me from his holy hill.

Psalm 34:7

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

Psalm 91:11

For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

Hebrews 1:14

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Joshua 1:5

I will never leave you or forsake you.

Joshua 1:9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

SCRIPTURE ABOUT FORGIVENESS

Matthew 6:12, 14-15

Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors...for if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURES TO MEMORIZE

Read through these scriptures and note the ones that are especially meaningful to you. These scriptures are good ones to memorize. If you do the Holy Spirit can then bring them to your mind as He uses them to guide you. They are all listed in NIV version unless otherwise indicated, but you may write them in the version you prefer to study and memorize. Copy the ones you want to memorize on 3x5 or 4x6 cards and carry them with you to practice during times of waiting

(sitting in the doctor's office, etc.) Try memorizing a scripture for a week, then add another the next week, and keep reviewing the one you have already memorized.

Joshua 1:5

I will never leave you or forsake you.

Joshua 1:9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Joshua 3:4

You have not been this way before.

1 Samuel 15:22

To obey is better than sacrifice.

2 Chronicles 16:9

For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

Psalms 1:2-3

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Psalms 16:5-6

Lord, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.

Psalms 19:14

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Psalms 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside the quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalms 27:1

The Lord is my light and my salvation - whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life - of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 27:4

One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.

Psalm 27:5

For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock.

Psalm 27:14

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Psalm 32:8

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you, and watch over you.

Psalm 32:10b

The Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.

Psalm 34:7

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

Psalm 34:18

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Psalm 37:4

Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:7

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.

Psalm 46:1-3

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

Psalm 50:15

Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me.

Psalm 51:10

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalm 51:17

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Psalm 55:22

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

Psalm 55:23

But as for me I trust in you.

Psalm 57:1

Have mercy, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster is passed.

Psalm 91:1

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

Psalm 91:5-6

You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

Psalm 91:9-10

If you make the Most High your dwelling - even the Lord who is my refuge - then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent.

Psalm 91:11

He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

Psalm 91:14-15

Because he loves me," says the Lord, I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

Psalm 96:3

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Psalm 127:1

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.

Psalm 138:8a

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me.

Psalm 139:1-3

O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.

Isaiah 30:15

In repentance and rest is your salvation; in quietness and trust is your strength.

Isaiah 41:10

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 43:1-3

Fear not for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Isaiah 50:4

He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.

Isaiah 55:8-9

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:10-11

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Isaiah 60:17

I will make peace your governor and righteousness your ruler.

Isaiah 66:2

This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.

Jeremiah 29:11

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

Jeremiah 29:13-14

You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart. I will be found by you.

Jeremiah 33:3

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.

Jeremiah 39:17-18 TLB

I will deliver you. You shall not be killed by those you fear so much. As a reward for trusting me, I will preserve your life and keep you safe.

Lamentations 3:22-23

Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Matthew 5:23-24

If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

Matthew 6:9-13 KJV

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts As we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, And the glory, forever. Amen.

Matthew 18:19-20

I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.

Matthew 28:18-20

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Luke 9:23

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

John 1:1,14a

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

John 1:12

To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 3:16 KJV

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.

John 3:36

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

John 8:31-32

If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

John 10:10

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 13:34-35

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

John 14:1

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

John 14:3

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

John 14:6

I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 15:5

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:7-8,10

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

John 20:21

Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses.

Acts 3:19a

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 10:9-10

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Romans 10:13

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship.

Romans 12:2

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

1 Corinthians 2:14

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Do you not know that your body is a temple 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 body.

1 Corinthians 10:24 NCV

Do not look out only for yourselves. Look out for the good of others also. ()

2 Corinthians 5:21

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 9:6

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:10

Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Galatians 6:7

A man reaps what he sows.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 3:20-21

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to

his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 5:18

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

Philippians 2:3 NCV

When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide.

Philippians 2:5 NCV

In your lives you must think and act like Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:13

For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:19

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:28-29

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:22-23

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

2 Timothy 2:2

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 12:2

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

James 4:8

Come near to God and He will come near to you.

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.

1 Peter 4:10

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

1 John 5:14-15

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him.

1 John 5:11-13

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

3 John 2

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.

Revelation 3:20

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

APPENDIX B

HELPS FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

HOW TO GIVE YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST

(Taken from a message by Ben Hogue on TBN)

The purpose of this is to give people an opportunity to receive Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. This is about telling you of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a very specific and wonderful message.

And this is the message: that 2000 years ago in real human history, God came. He came in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, so that you and I could know Him as our personal Lord and Savior.

The scripture teaches that all of us have sinned, every one of us. Because of that we're separated from God. But because Jesus came 2000 years ago, because of who He was, the Son of God, and because of what He did on the cross--pay for our sin, enter into hell, be raised from the dead, ascend to the Father--because of what he did, you and I can know Him as our own Lord and Savior.

Now, think of what that means. That means that regardless of who you are, regardless of what you've done, regardless of the mistakes you've made, regardless of what you've been like, Jesus Christ can come into your life, He can forgive you for all those sins, and you can become a child of God. That's the gospel, the good news, that regardless of what you've done in your life, you can be forgiven, and Jesus can now be Lord and Savior of your life.

I want to invite you to receive Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Savior. And I want you to pray this prayer. If you will pray this specific prayer, according to the Word of God, the Lord will come into your life, He will forgive you of your sin, and you can become a Christian.

How do I know that? Here's how. The scripture says in Romans 10:13 that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. That means if you'll pray and you'll invite Jesus to come into your life, and you're willing to genuinely surrender your life over to Him, and receive Him as Lord and Savior of your life, that means you can be saved right now, right where you are.

So I'm going to write here a prayer which you can pray. If you'll pray this and mean it, upon the authority of the Word of God, you can be a Christian right now, so pray this prayer now:

Dear Heavenly Father, I ask You to come into my life; I ask you to forgive me of my sin. And I ask You to make me a Christian. Father, I believe Jesus is Your Son; I believe He came to this earth; I believe He died on the cross; I believe He was raised from the dead; and I believe You would forgive me of my sin if I would ask You to

do it. So right now, in Jesus' name, I ask You to forgive me of my sin, and make me a Christian. Amen.

And if you prayed that prayer, and you meant it, I promise you, on the authority of the Word of God, that God just came into your life, and your sin has just been forgiven, and you've just been made a Christian.

If you prayed that prayer, and you invited Jesus to come in to your life, call the telephone number for Trinity Broadcasting Network telephone counselors at 1-888-731-1000. Call that number and behind that number, answering that phone, there will be some wonderful folks who will love you and pray with you and minister to you as long as it takes until you get all your questions settled. The reason they are there is so that you can receive the ministry that you need 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Now if you are a Christian, and you're away from the Lord, and you need to return to the Lord today, then you call that number also. Those folks know how to help you to get back into a real powerful relationship with the Lord Jesus.

FOUR THINGS TO KNOW IN REGARD TO THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

1. God loves you and has a wonderful purpose and plan for your life.

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

I have come that they may have life, and might have it to the full. (John 10:10)

2. We have all sinned and fallen short of God's plan for us, so we deserve death and hell. This separates us from God so we cannot know and experience His love and plan for our lives.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

For the wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23)

3. God made a provision for us to be free from sin through Jesus giving His life on the cross to pay the penalty for that sin. He is the only provision for man's sin.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Christ died for our sins...that he was buried...that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

Jesus answered: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

4. Our response to what Jesus did is to repent of our sin, ask Jesus to take away our sin, and have faith in Jesus and what He did. We must do this individually. Then we can know and experience God’s love and plan for our lives. A prayer we can pray: “Lord Jesus, I need You. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. I know I am a sinner. Please forgive me of my sins and come into my life right now. Take control of my life and make me the kind of person You want me to be.”

To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:1)

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20)

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:11-13)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

FOR YOUR CHRISTIAN GROWTH

1. Go to God in prayer daily
2. Read God’s Word daily - begin with the Gospel of John
3. Find a church where God is honored and His Word is preached.
4. Obey God, moment by moment
5. Witness for Christ by your life and words
6. Trust God for every detail of your life

HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

For a believer Christ needs to be at the center of your life. Spending time with Him in your daily Quiet Time will help keep Him there. In my own “Spiritual Journey” I know of nothing else that has been as important to me as the daily Quiet Time for keeping my life focused, for giving me strength for each new day, for encouraging me when I am weary, and for developing over my lifetime a personal intimate relationship with Jesus. So, because I believe it is so important to my own “Spiritual Journey,” I want to share with you how to have a personal Quiet Time in your life too.

1. Set aside about 15 minutes (or as much as you wish) each morning. (I like to do an hour) This is more than a discipline, it is a personal appointment with Jesus. If you look at it that way, you will be more likely to keep that appointment.
2. Prepare for it the night before by setting the alarm to get up in time for that extra time. After I get up I find it helps me to do some things to wake up more fully... things like putting on my makeup, dressing, etc.
3. The place is important so find a place where you can be alone and not interrupted. Make this a special prepared place with your Bible there, a notebook and pen for writing ideas that come, and good lighting.
4. Ask God to be with you and guide you in this time.
5. Read the Bible according to the plan that suits you. There are some plans listed later in this Quiet Time article. As you read, ponder what you are reading, and possibly read it over more than once.
6. As you read, talk to Jesus, ask Him questions, write down your questions and the ideas He brings to your mind, and listen for His answers. Your purpose is to be with Jesus, so focus on Him. It's a time of communication and connection. You want that connection to continue all throughout your day. So talking and listening is an important part of growing that relationship.
7. Pray in relation to the scripture you just read. The Word of God is powerful, so pray it out loud back to God.
8. Bring before him anything else that is on your heart but intersperse it with thanking Him, loving Him, telling Him about who He is to you and what He means to you. That's what you would do with a loved one, right? And He loves you more than anyone else!
9. Be sure to write down in your journal:
 - The date
 - The scripture you read
 - What you said to God
 - What God said to you
10. Do this each day in the morning. Don't feel terrible if you miss a day, but return to having the Quiet Time the next day.
11. This will develop a habit in your life that will reap great rewards, new understandings, and the friendship with your Best Friend, Jesus.
12. God's love for us is not affected by our failure to return it; but our love for Him is. If we don't keep our communication with Him fresh, it may diminish or grow stale. The daily Quiet Time nourishes that fellowship.

13. We receive direction and guidance in our Quiet Times. This is a time and place where we learn God's will for us through His Word and communing with Him. It is important for us to present our needs to Him and receive His wisdom and direction. It was in my Quiet Time that He guided me to write this book for you.

BIBLE READING PLANS

1. Start at the beginning of the Bible and read it straight through about a chapter a day.
2. Read Old Testament on Monday & Tuesday, Psalms and Proverbs on Wednesday, New Testament on Thursday and Friday, your Sunday School lesson on Saturday
3. Divide your Bible into sections and read a portion from each section each day: (e.g. a chapter or portion from the Old Testament, a portion from Psalms and Proverbs, and a portion from the New Testament). This way takes a longer Quiet Time, but helps keep your reading balanced.
4. I have had many different Bible reading plans through my years of Quiet Times. Right now I am using a plan whereby I divide the Bible into 4 sections: Old Testament, Psalms and Proverbs, Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), and the rest of the New Testament. I read from the Old Testament one day, Psalms and Proverbs the next day, the Gospels the next day, and the rest of the New Testament the 4th day, then I begin again with the Old Testament the 5th day, etc.
5. It might be helpful to list the books of the Bible and the chapters in each book, then cross off each chapter as you read it.
6. Some publications may have a suggested plan printed in them.
7. There is a Bible that is divided into daily readings in such a way that you cover the whole Bible in a year. If you want to see this ask at your local Christian bookstore.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Before you give your life to Christ you are traveling the pathway of life as an unbeliever, on your own. After you hear the good news of what Jesus did for you (that He died on the cross for your sins), and after you give your life to Him, you become a believer at the beginning stage of your "Spiritual Journey."

You might think of yourself as a little baby who starts getting nourishment by drinking milk. The milk of God's Word is what nourishes you daily. This milk can come through your daily Quiet Time, and through learning at church from the Pastor and from Sunday School classes. It might come through participating in a fellowship group or Bible Study group. Growth can come

through watching Christian television, through reading Christian books, through sharing and praying with other Christians. If you are not helped with your growth, you could remain as a spiritual baby as long as you live. So it is very important to do things for your own growth.

In the scripture it refers to the spiritual baby in 1 Corinthians 3:1-2 where it says: **“Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly--mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it.”**

During this stage you need people to teach you and mentor you. I had wonderful mentoring during this stage from my sister, Joyce, and from many books and tapes she loaned me to listen to. The apostle Paul said we are like babies who need to grow or like a field in which seeds are planted or like a foundation for a holy temple.

During your “Spiritual Journey” it is important to have contacts with people ahead of you on the pathway who can mentor and teach you. It is also important to have contacts with others who are about the same distance along the spiritual pathway as you are. These are people with whom you can share, and pray, and with whom you can grow together. There are also people who will be behind you on the journey. They are those you can help and witness to about things which you have learned. When you begin your journey, you can witness to others who are still unbelievers and tell them about how you gave your life to Jesus. As you grow you can share what you have already been taught with others to help them grow too.

Eventually, as you grow and mature, you could become a discipler or mentor to someone else. Then your ministry could begin to multiply others into disciplers also. Perhaps you could become a Bible teacher, or have a helping ministry, or minister to the poor, depending on the gifting God gives you. You will find that your interests will coincide with your gifting. God will begin to build a passion in you for that which He purposes for you to do in serving Him. Your church may have a class or way of identifying your spiritual gifting. Seek this and learn all you can about ways God might want to use you.

Think about ways you could grow as a Christian. Be sure to include these ways in your daily life so you won't become stagnate. Here are some things to consider doing:

- Have a daily Quiet Time, read the Word, pray
- Attend church regularly and learn from the pastor and teachers there
- Participate in a Bible Study group
- Listen to Christian television and learn from leaders there
- Read good Christian books (I list some in Appendix C)
- Attend special conferences or camps where you spend an extended time learning
- Ask another Christian to be your prayer partner, then learn and pray together
- Ask someone to be your mentor and teach you what they have already learned
- Listen to Christian videos, cassette tapes, or CD's
- Receive emails from Christian contacts such as ElijahList.com, etc

Keep stirring up your enthusiasm for growing as a Christian. Don't expect someone else to do it for you, even though they can help. The main thing to do is read the Bible and do what it says.

SPIRITUAL ARMOR

What is the Spiritual Armor and what do we use it for? Here are the scriptures from Ephesians 6:10-18...

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

The Spiritual Armor is what we use as protection for ourselves and our loved ones. We use it as protection against those spiritual forces of darkness in the heavenly realms. Did you know there was a "heavenly realm?" It is a spiritual realm which exists right along with the natural realm in which we function daily. It has in it the forces of evil and the forces of good. We can influence that heavenly realm with our prayers, petitions, and declarations.

The Apostle Paul tells us about it in this passage from Ephesians. He tells us that our struggle is not against people, but against this spiritual realm which has in it rulers, authorities, powers, and forces of evil. And he tells us that our armor of protection consists of salvation, righteousness, truth, the gospel of peace, faith, and the Word of God. He tells us to "put this on." Why? So that "when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground." Do we each have "a day of evil" come in our lives? Oh, yes! That is what he is teaching us. Do we want to "stand our ground" and not lose these battles? Well, I do, don't you?

So I need to put on this spiritual armor and so do you. How do we put it on? I put it on in prayer by speaking out loud each piece of the armor and declaring it over myself and my loved ones I also want protected. I say something like this in my prayer:

Lord, I place the helmet of salvation on myself. I declare that I belong to You and I have your salvation from sin and sickness because of Your body and blood given for that. I ask for Your mind to be in me today.

Lord, I place the breastplate of righteousness on myself. I declare by Your Word that "I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus." You, Jesus, became sin and took my sin upon Yourself that I might be free from it. If there is any sin in my life, please show it to me right now that I may confess it before You and be cleansed.

Lord, I place the belt of truth on myself. I declare You are the truth and that Your Word is truth, and I stand on those because I belong to You. Guide me in speaking truth today.

Lord, I place the gospel of peace on my feet. Everywhere I go today, I declare peace will go with me. Guide me to those You want to share the gospel of peace with this day.

Lord, I place the shield of faith in my hand as a shield from all the fiery darts of the evil one. I declare faith in You, Jesus, and in Your victory over that evil one. Guide me in recognizing any fiery darts sent to me from the enemy, that I might deflect them with the shield of faith.

Lord, I take up the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. I declare Your Word as true and alive and active and powerful. I use Your Word to fight against the evil one. I ask You to place that Word in my mind and heart throughout this day that I may speak it forth as the Sword of the Spirit.

Lord, I pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and petitions. I ask You and declare that You, Holy Spirit, will put those prayers in my heart and mind as I go throughout this day.

Thank You, Lord, for this spiritual armor which You have given us to put on for protection against the forces of evil in the spiritual realm that we may be able to stand.

APPENDIX C

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

NON-FICTION

Bentley, Todd: JOURNEY INTO THE MIRACULOUS
Billheimer, Paul E.: DESTINED FOR THE THRONE
Blackaby, Henry, and Claude King: EXPERIENCING GOD: KNOWING AND DOING THE WILL OF GOD
Brother Lawrence: PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF GOD
Christenson, Evelyn: LORD CHANGE ME
Christenson, Evelyn: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WOMEN PRAY
Copeland, Kenneth, Productions: JOHN G. LAKE: HIS LIFE, HIS SERMONS, HIS BOLDNESS OF FAITH
Davis, Paul Keith: ENGAGING THE REVELATORY REALM OF HEAVEN
Davis, Paul Keith: THRONES OF OUR SOUL
Deere, Jack: SURPRISED BY THE VOICE OF GOD
Edwards, Gene: 100 DAYS IN THE SECRET PLACE
Fife, Dale: THE SECRET PLACE
Frangipane, Francis: THE THREE BATTLEGROUNDS
Goll, Jim: THE SEER
Goll, Jim: WASTED ON JESUS,
Hamon, Bill: THE DAY OF THE SAINTS
Helm, Loran W.: A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS
Huch, Larry: FREE AT LAST
Hunt, T. W.: PRAYERLIFE
Hunt, T. W.: THE MIND OF CHRIST
Hunt, T. W.: DOCTRINE OF PRAYER
Hunter, Charles and Frances Hunter: TO HEAL THE SICK
Jacobs, Cindy: POSSESSING THE GATES OF THE ENEMY
Jeffrey, Grant: CREATION, THE SIGNATURE OF GOD
Johnson, Bill: WHEN HEAVEN INVADES EARTH
Joyner, Rick: THE CALL
Joyner, Rick: THE FINAL QUEST
Joyner, Rick: THE TORCH AND THE SWORD
Lucas, Jerry: THEOMATICS
MacNutt, Francis: THE POWER TO HEAL
Marshall, Catherine: CHRISTY
Marshall, Catherine: SOMETHING MORE
Meyer, Joyce: THE WORD, THE NAME, THE BLOOD
Milligan, Ira: UNDERSTANDING THE DREAMS YOU DREAM
Murray, Andrew: THE BELIEVER'S SECRET OF WAITING ON GOD
Murray, Andrew: WITH CHRIST IN THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Ogilvie, Lloyd John: GOD'S BEST FOR MY LIFE
Ogilvie, Lloyd John: LORD OF THE IMPOSSIBLE
Piper, Don: 90 MINUTES IN HEAVEN
Prince, Derek: (various books and teaching tapes)
Sjogren, Steve: THE CONSPIRACY OF KINDNESS
Sorge, Bob: SECRETS OF THE SECRET PLACE
Stanley, Charles F.: HANDLE WITH PRAYER
Stone, Perry: THE MEAL THAT HEALS
Wagner, Peter: PRAYER SHIELD
Wagner, Peter: WARFARE PRAYER
Warren, Rick: THE PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE
Wilkinson, Bruce: THE PRAYER OF JABEZ, A LIFE GOD REWARDS
Willis, Avery T., Jr: MASTERLIFE: DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

FICTION

Austin, Lynn: (all of her books)
Blackstock, Terri: (Newpointe 911 Series)
Bright, Bill, and Ted Dekker: BLESSED CHILD
Bright, Bill, and Ted Dekker: THE BLESSED MAN
Bunn, T. Davis: THE BOOK OF HOURS
Bunn, T. Davis: THE MAESTRO
Copeland, Lori: FAITH
Copeland, Lori: HOPE
Copeland, Lori: PATIENCE
Gansky, Alton: TARNISHED IMAGE
Henderson, Dee: (O'Malley Series and Uncommon Heroes Series)
Herman, Kathy: (Baxter Series)
Hunt, Angela: THE NOTE
Hunt, Angela: THE TRUTH TELLER
Karon, Jan: (Mitford Series)
La Haye, Tim, and Jerry Jenkins: (Left Behind Series)
Lewis, Beverly: THE BETRAYAL
Lewis, Beverly: THE SACRIFICE
Morris, Gilbert: (House Of Winslow Series)
Myer, Bill: ELI
Myer, Bill: THE WAGER
Rivers, Francine: (all of her books)
Tenney, Tommy: HADASSAH
Whitlow, Robert: LIFE SUPPORT
Whitlow, Robert: THE SACRIFICE
Whitlow, Robert: THE TRIAL
Wick, Lori: BAMBOO AND LACE