

Inspirational Stories & Poems

CHRISTINE BROOKS MARTIN

Christine's Short-Shorts

Inspirational Stories and Poems

by

Christine Brooks Martin

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Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from the King James Version of the Bible.

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Dedication

To the Most High Lord God and Saviour. Thank you for enabling me to fulfill my desire to evangelize and encourage Your people with words that will go into places my eyes will never see and my feet will never tread.

Acknowledgement

My pastors, Ivan Corinth Horton and Nicole M. Horton; my church family, Anointed Connection International Ministries; Jennifer Bihm and Dr. Daniel Horton.

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Introduction

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Hebrews 13:5

When you hear the words "short-shorts" what comes to mind most likely is a pair of extremely short pants. Most of us at one point in time have seen someone wear short-shorts, whether in person, on TV or the movies, in magazines...wherever. Those who wear short-shorts tend to get some attention because it is their motivation and intention. And it doesn't matter if they have a great figure or not. In fact, some may not necessarily care what you think about what you see. To them, they have achieved their goal of getting the attention they wanted.

"Christine's Short-Shorts," is a collection of inspirational stories and poems. These "short-shorts" relate some of my experiences. And some are the result of basking in God's presence. The motive and intention for using the words "short-shorts" in my title is to get your attention. Not on me, but on an Almighty God who reveals His love, compassion and faithfulness to us in so many facets. I was not a Christian or lived for God all of my life. But after conversion, I soon realized that He had always been with me. He is always evident and ministers to me when I avail myself to watch or listen. So I offer you a look at my "short-shorts" so you might consider who an eternal God has been, is and can be in your life.

Band-aids, Duct Tape & Crazy Glue

Has your heart been broken by someone or some thing? Many times it is difficult to get over the person or situation. Attempts to reassemble the shattered thoughts, feelings, emotions and spirit can't and shouldn't be accomplished alone. Left to ourselves, visualize a heart with band-aids all over it or the ugly fix of duct tape. Crazy glue dries quickly but fails to hide the cracks and seams.

Our lives are a witness and testimony to the choices we make, good and bad. When we chose to allow the Lord God to intervene in every aspect of our lives, He knows how to fix and make us over better than we could ever fathom. Isaiah 61:3 says: *To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*

If your spirit is heavy, consider these scriptural-based affirmations to give the Lord access to your situation:

Father as I remember your goodness toward me, I pour out my soul in me. I rejoice loudly so that the earth will tremble at the sound. I hunger for your word of truth and consume each one. Your word brings rejoicing to my heart because I am called by your name. You are the Lord God of Hosts. When I present myself before your altar, I come with exceeding joy and I praise you because you are my God. I will not be sad because the joy of the Lord is my strength and I place all my trust in you.

Lord you are a refuge for the oppressed and in times of trouble. I sanctify you in my heart. And because I am the ransomed of the Lord, I come to you with songs and everlasting joy upon my head. Jesus Christ bore every one of my griefs, and carried my sorrows. He was stricken, smitten, and afflicted for me. So I have your strength, and all my sorrow is turned into joy.

My works are committed to you Lord and my thoughts are established. I wait with patience and courage for you to instruct me in the way in which I shall go. Guide me with your eye as I rely on your Holy Spirit to help me in my weaknesses. You are for me, so who can be against me? I follow after the things that make for peace and the things that equip me to encourage others.

I am joyful in you and I love your name. Although I may sow in tears, I reap in joy. I am your chosen and you have brought me forth with joy and gladness. I rejoice in the Lord God of my salvation. Thank you for the healing, wholeness and newness of my heart, mind, soul and spirit.

Being In Relationship

Are you having doubts about your relationship with God? It is important to pray and congregate with other believers but we have to be careful that we don't judge our relationship with God based on how much we engage in traditions, formalities and rituals.

The devil condemns but the Lord convicts by His spirit. When the devil condemns, he makes you feel bad about yourself, but when the Lord convicts, it is a gentle nudging that is loving and kind. He also shows you how to make necessary corrections. If something or someone is keeping you from doing the right thing, then He will make changes, open the doors of opportunity for you to do what is right. The scriptures say "So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death." It also says "For every temptation, he will make a way of escape."

Your relationship with God and your mate or loved ones is not just saying and doing things. It involves Being. Being in relationship with God and others is listening, feeling and observing. Relationship involves the 5 senses (see, hear, smell, touch, taste) and includes the spiritual sense--your inner most being and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. When you truly pray, you don't just say everything on your mind then get up and go about your business. If you did that to your mate or others, they would not appreciate your not giving them the opportunity to express themselves.

Prayer is two-way conversation. Yes, you can tell God what is on your mind and heart, but it is also waiting to let Him minister back to you. Sometimes, you don't have to say a thing because He is all knowing. The scriptures say that He knows what you have need of before you ask. And since He is all knowing, you can just spend time being quiet with Him (that's prayer). Then wait to see what He says to your inner most being (your spirit).

Sometimes He won't show you anything. That's OK because you spent time with Him waiting (that's prayer). Then sometimes He will show you things in nature or through other people that will give you an answer or better understanding for what you need to know or do. That's prayer also because you spent time with Him observing other things and people while you waited. Moses asked the Lord "Show me your face." In other words he wanted to know God. But to know God is to learn how to just BE in each moment with yourself and BE with Him.

You know how to BE with your mate or loved-ones. You can be in the same room but don't have to talk. Being in the presence of each other can

be gratifying because you get to observe and listen. It is the opportunity to observe all the beautiful, goofy, quirky, even annoying things about a person. The scriptures "say, taste and see that the Lord is Good." That is having a consciousness that God is all around you and you have the opportunity to experience Him as He reveals Himself level upon level to you. He is omnipresent. He will never leave nor forsake you. The Holy Spirit is always with you.

Being in relationship with God is allowing yourself to rest in the Lord. He says "Come to me all ye who labor and are heavily burdened and I shall give you rest." Rest doesn't mean you have to NOT be doing anything, but it is coming to an assurance that no matter what you are doing and not doing, you have everything that He is with you. It is love, peace, joy, happiness, goodness, grace, compassion, mercy....everything, every virtue, the Great I AM.

You don't have to strive or work hard to make yourself look or seem "religious." The scripture says "Let your light so shine among men that they will see your good works." When you learn to just BE with the Lord, there is the presence of His glory that will surround your life. That's the light that the scripture is talking about. That light will be so evident in your life that it will cause changes to your relationships, circumstances and environment.

A suggested book to add to your library is "My Utmost for His Highest" by Oswald Chambers. It is a devotional that gives a daily scripture with the practical application of that scripture for your life. The book will show you how to BE in relationship with God and everyone else. If you can't purchase a copy, it is available to read online at http://utmost.org.

The Bible is your greatest tool to learn how to BE in relationship with God.

Do You Love?

No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. --1John 4:12

It is good to say that you love someone when you feel it. I believe if you are a man or woman who truly loves God, then it means that He has filled you with His Holy Spirit. The scriptures say in Galatians that the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. He has given us the capacity to feel and demonstrate all of those virtues. It is the greatest demonstration of the fruit of the spirit when we can say that we love someone because we want to and because we can. So never be afraid to love.

Most of the time we measure our love for others based on how they treat us. But the foundation of God's love is merciful and gracious. With God's love, feelings of frustration, perplexities, disappointments, discouragement, hurts and woundedness are minimized. The source of all of those feelings comes from unrealized expectations of the other person.

If we allow true love for someone to increase, it does not come from us, it comes through us from God. It is because we have stretched our capacity to receive more from Him, which can then pour out through us. Just as this happens for love, it also happens for the other fruit of the spirit – joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. Never be afraid to allow the virtues of the Spirit to flow from you to someone else. You are not the source, God is. The Lord says that we are the vessels of the Holy Spirit. When we represent Him as His vessels, He uses us to pour out those virtues to those who need what you allow Him to give to them.

Mindful Generosity

Whether we admit it or not, most of our giving and sharing has the condition of reciprocation. Luke 6:38 (New Living Translation) tells us "Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."

When we share our time, talent and resources, expecting nothing in return, it is labeled philanthropic or unconditional generosity. It generates joy, satisfaction, relief and so much more for those on the receiving end. The reciprocation for the giver, especially wealthy benefactors, is the satisfaction of knowing they have helped many people and/or resolved a problem. But how often do you purposefully practice unconditional generosity? You don't have to be wealthy to do so. Opportunities, even small ones, are around us each and everyday and you can spot them by being attentive. There are people who have needs but out of fear of rejection or pride will not ask for help.

All of us have the ability to help someone else. God will show us how and what to say and do. Do you see your opportunities to give and share because it is the good or right thing to do? What are your life issues? Do you need the fruit of the Spirit, provision, healing or deliverance in your household? God is the one who will see to it that you receive, in full, pressed down, shaken together, making room for more, running over, poured into your lap. His abundant reciprocation will be what is essential for your life when you mindfully display generosity.

Then they will reply, "Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?" And he will answer, "I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me."--Matthew 25:44-45 (New Living Translation NLT)

"Name-Calling" Mindfulness

While waiting in line one day, a young lady in front of me was talking on her cellphone. The woman in front of her turned around and said, "Lower your #&*% voice because no one wanted to hear your #&*% business. Needless to say, the two proceeded to call each other some very descriptive and offensive names. Several people in the line voiced their objections to the disturbance (using comparable expletives) by suggesting that the two take the noise outside. I made a decision that my transaction could wait and removed myself from the establishment.

Our words are seeds, and just like seeds, when planted in our mind, soul and spirit, there will be a harvest. The scriptures tell us that when you decree and declare a thing it shall be established. It also says that you shall have whatsoever you say. You can call those things that are not as though they are. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, He has given us the Holy Spirit as our teacher, comforter, keeper and more. We also have the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through us. Words are so powerful that we can make or break things, create or destroy, heal or wound, enliven or kill.

Our mouth is prophetic and we must remember to be quick to hear and slow to speak in most if not all situations. The Lord told Ezekiel to speak to the dead, dry bones, and they did live again. Do you know people whose parents or others told them they would be nothing, they would have nothing, become exactly what or worse than what was declared or decreed (prophesied) over their life?

There have probably been some occasions where someone said very offensive things to or about you. But if you extended grace to forgive them, then allow that grace to help you guard your subsequent description of them. We have all done things that are worthy of punishment, maybe even death. But when Christ gave His life to put us in right standing with God, He delivered us from the curse of the law which is death.

When someone has done despicable things to us, not only do we forgive them but we must be mindful not to attribute offensive names contrary to forgiveness and grace. Be cautious about agreeing with someone who curses another person because the power of agreement gives what has been spoken life to become or establish what was declared. Jesus has given us a powerful admonition when we are tempted to name-calling.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. --Matthew 5:44

Pressed and Blessed

Did you have a hectic day? Well, the good news is God gave you the strength to accomplish what was necessary for today. His word says that in your weakness, His strength is perfected. So you had a Perfect day!!! Don't downgrade it or let someone else minimize your day for you. In God's eyesight, you stepped out in faith to a day full of uncertainties, but you stepped out and that is the most magnificent and powerful thing you did today.

Don't worry about tomorrow because the scriptures say that His mercies are NEW each and EVERY day. So rejoice over what you were able to accomplish through the love and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ today. Hallelujah!!! I am so proud of you!!! And bless you pressed down, shaken together and running over.

When you got out of bed, you pressed.

When you got dressed, you pressed.

When you walked out of your door, you pressed.

When you made it to work or ran all your errands, you pressed.

When you stuck with every task the whole day, you pressed.

When you thought about your day and maybe cried a bit, you pressed and released the pressure.

When you testified about your day to someone else who barely listened, you pressed.

But more importantly, YOU kicked the devil in the head, because you pressed.

You ran the race today, forgetting those things that are behind, looking to the prize of the High calling which is in Christ Jesus. (reference: Philippians 3:13-14)

So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. —Galatians 6:9 (NLT)

The Beauty of Suffering

I was asked why we have to suffer. I hesitated for most of the day before offering what I consider a tidbit of an answer. I didn't want to say anything that would make my friend feel worse, or God-forbid, guilty. I have suffered many times throughout my life. I know suffering is the fruit of a myriad of seeds that have been sown. Seeds of our choices, decisions others have made that affect us...the reasons are endless.

But I know that when joy and blessing seems afar off, so far that you can't even fathom that it will ever exist for you, the consolation is that God is watching and He does care. I remember wondering why He would allow me to suffer so much and for so long. But in retrospect I find that He was positioning me on the potter's wheel. I needed Him to make me over because I was a broken mess. I had to patiently endure the squeezing and reshaping, and when I thought I was done, I met the fiery furnace.

The whole process of suffering seemed so callous and uncaring of God because it was painful for me. But He made me a vessel anxious to encourage others who are in the beginning phase or going through the process akin to mine. It is possible to float when you're head under inhaling an ocean of water. You can live when you're in the midst of the flames

We suffer so much, but the scriptures call it a light affliction. What appears endless, the scriptures say that it is but for a moment. It doesn't make natural sense but the spiritual sense is that it will create for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of Glory. How excellent it is to look like, talk like, be like someone else—the One who is regal—Jesus Christ. As we endure the fellowship of His suffering, we come out likened to pure gold because we hid ourselves in Christ Jesus during the process with prayer and praise.

We can rest in God, trust in, and love God enough to allow Him to take us on what appears to be a perilous journey. That journey with Him will always reveal self to self, but it also yields a greater dimension of anointing. Count it wonderful to toss all that we are into God's love and care, in faith that He will sustain us while being transformed into the image and likeness of Christ.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.--2Corinthians 4:17

Not Forsaken

Sometimes when our earthly cares are hard to endure because of lack, delays, denials and rejection from people, we tend to feel forsaken by God. I used to feel that way because when I accepted the Lord in my life, I experienced the tangible presence of God frequently. When that sensual tangibility began to fade even though I was growing in the word of God, I thought He abandoned me. I was going through so many challenges, but in actuality He was teaching me how to trust and have confidence that I was yet His daughter.

As I delved into the scriptures and embraced the words that described His virtue, character and nature, I did learn to trust. Now I have the sweetest times when I get quiet and talk to Him spirit to spirit. And when I'm busy, I hold on to a consciousness that He is near, watching me and caring for everything that concerns me. I am encouraged by my favorite scriptures: Isaiah 54, Psalm 18, Psalm 23, and reminded of His safety by Psalm 91. My Father God has never left or forsaken me.

I believe He takes special care of us as we extend grace to others when we demonstrate forgiveness, love and mercy to them. This is especially so if our hearts have been broken, or we have been wounded or afflicted by them. We have to allow the love of God to pour into our heart to heal, renew and restore.

You have His love when you give to others in spite of your material lack. Sowing is not with money alone, but to God it is giving of your time, talents, and service that are seed. And when you sow that, He is faithful and just to the law of His kingdom that you shall reap a bountiful harvest. So expect your harvest to be whatever is needed and necessary for your life, peace and well-being. Just as God is faithful, we must remain faithful to trusting the promises of His word that are "yes" and "so be it and not otherwise."

Here is a little project that you can do to help build your confidence and relationship with the Lord. Go through the book of Psalm and underline or highlight every word that describes his character, nature or virtue. Example: Lord, Redeemer, Father, Lord of Host, King of Kings. When you are down and out, or want to worship Him, open the bible and just read all those names aloud. He will love your worship and praise. It will dispel the darkness, loneliness, hurt and pain, or rejection. He has been, is and will always be all of those names and much, much more to you.

He loves us with an everlasting love. Let the word of God help you learn and know about your spiritual Father, Husband, Brother, and Friend. He says He is those relationships to us. Be in expectancy that He will

abundantly satisfy and do miraculous things for you. You are not forsaken.

The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." – Deuteronomy 31:8 (NIV)

Embrace Your Identity

When I visit my grandchildren I tend to monitor what they watch on television. Most of the time, it is the cable channels that are geared to youth, history or animals. Once in a while they will rest on a channel that might not be appropriate for them. So I intervene and remind them of the instructions they have been given by their parents because we are careful about what is being fed into their spirits.

I saw the movie "Princess Diaries" with my granddaughter several times and regarded it as a delightful movie. One afternoon while at home, I was channel surfing and came upon the very beginning of the movie, so I decided to watch it. This time I found it to be very inspirational. From start to finish, it teaches a lesson about embracing our Kingdom identity if you view it from a Christian perspective. If you have never seen the movie, I'll try not to spoil it for you while making my points. Or if you have, then I might provoke you to watch it again.

The main character, Mia, is a teenager who is considered a nerd. But she and her best friend are mutually happy about who they are despite mockery by the "elite" in the private school they attend. One day Mia is summoned to a consulate and on this visit, she finds out about her true identity. The queen dowager, who is also Mia's grandmother, informs her that she is really a princess and heir to the throne of the Kingdom of Genovia.

The movie depicts Mia's initial struggle with accepting this information. In my first book, "Pray What God Says," I share a little about my best friend ministering to me. As I listened to her and other Christians, I discovered that my thinking, words and actions were not bringing desirable solutions to my problems. Whenever I hesitantly followed their wise counsel, read the scriptures and prayed, I experienced significant changes in my life. I struggled nearly 13 years with making a decision to accept the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. I finally said yes to salvation and eternal life with Him. My spiritual tug of war came from feeling that I alone was more than able to fix any challenge in my life. But now, I thank God everyday for His Holy Spirit, who helped me yield and give up "self" and discover who I am in Christ Jesus.

Titus 3:4-7 New Living Translation (NLT)— Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other. But—"When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life

through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of his grace he declared us righteous and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life."

After Mia finds out about her identity, the queen assigns a guard to watch over her. He was also responsible for taking her wherever she needed to go. When we accept Jesus Christ into our hearts and confess Him as Lord and Saviour, He fills us with His Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is our comforter, helper, teacher and much, much more.

John 14:16—And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.

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

Mia yields to the transformation that is necessary mentally, emotionally and physically to prepare for her position and inheritance. When we yield to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, study the scriptures and pray all manner of prayer, we are being transformed and conformed to the image of Christ.

Romans 8:29—For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Romans 12:1-2—I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Hebrews 13:20-21—Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

James 1:4—But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Mia receives the gift of a bracelet that has two connected hearts. When we allow a love connection with God, He takes up residence in our hearts. We are able to experience His love in so many ways, and learn to love Him and others in return. We also prove our love for Him through obedience to His will.

Psalm 33:21—For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.

Psalm 40:8—I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within

my heart.

Psalm 69:32—The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.

Mark 12:30—And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

Luke 12:34—For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Mia's transformation is noticeable to classmates even as she attempts to conceal her identity. When we allow the Lord to have His way in our life, the change is noticeable. The perfecting work of the Holy Spirit on the inner man will be evident outwardly. Our new life in Christ Jesus undeniably marks us as belonging to Him.

Matthew 5:14—Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Philipians 2:13-15—For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

Even Mia's grandmother makes a transformation. The queen wore dark colors in the beginning scenes of the movie. For years, she had been in mourning for her deceased husband the king and stepson, the prince. But one day, the guard she appointed to watch over Mia tells her in one sentence that she has grieved long enough. From that point on, she changes her wardrobe, wearing beautiful pastel colored dresses, suits and scarves. Just like that, the Holy Spirit can quicken us with one word of instruction, exhortation through the scriptures or His presence to deliver us or cause us to proactively make changes in our life.

Isaiah 61:3—To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

When Mia tries to fit in with her classmates as her true identity, she is challenged and discouraged. Once we become a child of God, there are instances where we can no longer engage in activities of our past or align ourselves with people who resist a godly lifestyle. The environment or associations will challenge your faith and desire to be pleasing to God.

2Corinthians 6:14—Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

2Corinthians 6:17-18—Wherefore come out from among them, and be

ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

She receives another gift of a diary that her father left for her. The Lord will minister directly to your life when you spend time in prayer and studying the scriptures. You receive wisdom, understanding, knowledge and revelation of the truth relative to your circumstances and needs. When you journal, it is an opportunity to capture your Rhema word or what has been unctioned by the Holy Spirit. When you revisit your entries, you will find documented evidence of spiritual growth and the activities of God in your life.

Proverbs 3:3—Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:

Habbakuk 2:2—And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

Revelations 1:19—Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

Revelations 21:5—And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

The diary is sealed and has a red cover. To me, the red cover of Mia's diary represents the Blood of Jesus. All of our sin, transgressions, iniquities, cares, concerns, trials and tribulations have been covered by the blood of Jesus. Every imaginable circumstance has already been nailed to the cross and overcome by the shedding of blood by the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ. Your journal can also be used to write down the deliverance from challenges in your life.

Revelations 12:11—And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Revelations 12:17—And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The connected hearts on Mia's bracelet is the key to unlock the diary. The connected hearts represent the personal relationship between you and God. There are secrets that no one else can have access to. Many times they are the desires of your heart that can't be shared with others. You can write your desires as affirmations or prayer points during your times of devotion. And God has planned to manifest your desires in His due time and season.

Psalm 119:11—Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin

against thee.

She receives another letter that her father had written to express his love for her. It was also a reminder of her identity, inheritance and responsibility to the Kingdom of Genovia. The scriptures are God's letters to us. He tells us who He is and who we are in Him. We learn of our access to Him, the Kingdom promises, and instructions for fulfilling our purpose and destiny.

Genesis 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Hebrews 8:10—For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Hebrews13:20-21 (NLT)—Now may the God of peace—who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and ratified an eternal covenant with his blood—may he equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to him. All glory to him forever and ever! Amen.

Romans 8:17—And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

After she reads the letter, Mia earnestly accepts her destiny and inheritance. The more time we spend developing our relationship with God, we receive revelation of our purpose and destiny. We discover our gifts and talents, and learn how to gather the resources available to us for achieving a victorious life.

Romans 6:4-6—For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin.

1Peter 2:9-10 (NLT)—But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light. "Once you had no identity as a people; now you are God's people. Once you received no mercy; now you have received God's mercy."

On her way to the ceremony to be officially presented, her car stalls but

Mia's guard comes to the rescue. When we embrace our identity, purpose and destiny, we are going to be challenged by the enemy. But God has already given us the victory. The power of the Holy Spirit, the angels and the arm of the Lord is greater than anything satan can put in our path.

Isaiah 59:19—So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

Psalm 91:3-4—Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

Psalm 91:11-12—For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Mia is confirmed and officially presented in her royal capacity to family, true friends, dignitaries, and the world. Obedience to the will of God will cause people to see how God has elevated you mentally, physically and spiritually. Your life will reveal the fruit of the Spirit as you acknowledge and embrace your identity in the Kingdom of God.

1Peter 1:18-22—For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but he has now revealed him to you in these last days. Through Christ you have come to trust in God. And you have placed your faith and hope in God because he raised Christ from the dead and gave him great glory. You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.

1Peter 3:15-16 (NLT)—Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.

Romans 14:17-18—For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Mia moves to the castle and is shown the territory of Genovia she is to rule. As a servant and ambassador of God, you have dominion and authority over natural and spiritual territories, in measures, realms and degrees.

John 14:12—Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Matthew 10:7-8—And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Matthew 16:19—And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

As you spend time in the scriptures, you will learn that you have a great identity in Christ Jesus and the Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit will help you acknowledge, then learn to embrace it.

Holy Waiting Single Ladies

As of this writing, I believe that I will remarry. Sometimes I joke about it with my friends by saying, if "he that findeth a wife findeth a good thing" is looking for me right about now, he really needs a Thomas Guide or GPS. I'm not on safari, nor am I exposing myself and prowling the internet sites for my future Mr. Wonderful Lion-King. In fact, I'm very patient and trusting God for His plans, purpose and destiny for my life because it will be Yes and Amen!

In the animal kingdom, the male species present themselves to the females by the methods they were created to use to attract. It is the female who selects her mate according to how she was created to choose. Over the years, humans have deviated somewhat from traditional methods in the pairing process. In the past, interested males would woo (use methods to impress) the female. If selected he got permission to begin the courting phase. After a reasonable period of time where the couple had a chance to learn more about each other's character, nature, intentions and goals, the male would (propose) ask the female to select him for her husband. Then she could accept or refuse his proposal. In some cultures, selection and acceptance was or is determined by the female's family.

But now it seems that some women are under the impression that men are the ones who are in complete control of the selection and acceptance process. So they feel they have to flaunt, expose, and "catch" a man by whatever physical means necessary to get a husband. No dear, not so. Relax. You can put away the 3" eyelashes, clothes that are two sizes too small, and the 7" stilettos. Why? Because if you catch him like that, you might have to keep it like that, to keep him like that.

I believe a man should have the opportunity to present and express himself in whatever manner he deems appropriate and necessary to get your attention. Once he has your attention and interest, and if marriage is the expected outcome, you have a responsibility to discern whether or not he can be a suitable and compatible prospect for marriage. Even the laws of the land, (although they vacillate, deviate, and fluctuate) protects the premise that the selection process is all yours. If a man decides to select and take you by force, then by law, he has falsely imprisoned, assaulted and/or raped you.

Until the day comes when you have the opportunity to select your knight in shining armor, you have much to keep you busy. Most women have the mental, emotional and physical preparation together. But spiritual preparation should not be side stepped. This is especially so if you want a godly union that will hold fast to a major covenant vow, "until death do

you part." But before you say, "I'm saved, sanctified, filled with the Holy Ghost, speaking with other tongues, casting out demons, devils and imps, woman of God, knowing my God-given rights... et cetera, et cetera, et cetera," allow me to offer the following. And that is, to the "Holy Waiting Single Ladies" you need to know how to "Get on the MAP for the one with GPS." Indulge me a bit.

One day, my friend and I were taking a drive to San Diego. She has GPS in her car so I watched as she set it up for the trip. Once she entered the destination address, the GPS generated a travel plan. It presented an onscreen map showing where we were located. Then it proceeded to guide her with audible, street and freeway turn-by-turn instructions. In addition, it calculated the distance and amount of time it would take to reach our destination. When she did not deviate but followed each instruction, we arrived at the location exactly as the GPS calculated. "So Christine, what's your point?" Glad you asked.

I desire a 'happily-ever-after' with a man with spiritual GPS. To me, GPS stands for **God's Positioning System**. The qualities of a man with spiritual GPS are: He is not God. God is God and Jesus Christ is his Lord and Saviour. He yields and submits to the internal compass of the Holy Spirit that aligns and positions him in right standing with God. And he follows the instructions and paths that God has ordained for his life.

In a car, GPS has a map and the destination address must be on its map. If you put an invalid address into the system, it will not generate a path or instructions. If anything, it might generate some information to put you in the vicinity of your request. But here is what all of you "Holy Waiting Single Ladies" including me, must do. We need to be on the spiritual MAP for spiritual GPS to find us. MAP stands for: **Maturity** in the scriptures, obedience to the word of God and holy lifestyle; **Anointed** because we are yielded and submitted to the Holy Spirit's work in, on and through us; and allowing **Patience** to have a perfecting work in our lives—and keeping busy while we wait. So ladies, you can stop hunting and chasing. If our life is not on a MAP, a man with GPS is not going to find us where we should be. A man with GPS will be on course for the right address, not the vicinity or invalid addresses.

Mental, emotional and physical compatibility between a man and woman is necessary for a fulfilling life together. But for a man with GPS to find a woman who is on his MAP, it is essential for both to be spiritually compatible:

Love the Lord first and foremost, mind, soul, body and spirit: Deuteronomy 11:1—Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, always.

Mark 12:30—And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

Be obedient to His scriptures. It indicates your desire to live a life of holiness and righteousness:

1John 2:5—But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

1John 4:8—He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

Be filled with the Holy Spirit. Submitting to Him will yield the fruit of the Spirit:

John 15:26-27—But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Act 13:52—And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Ephesians 3:19—And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Galatians 5:22-24—But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Study and meditate on the scriptures. They are instructions and direction for living a fulfilling and godly lifestyle. Then obey the scriptures.

2Timothy 2:15—Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Joshua 1:8—This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Psalm 1:2—But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Pray without ceasing because it develops and nourishes you relationship with God:

1Thessalonians 5:17—Pray without ceasing.

Praise and worship the Lord with sincerity of heart. It demonstrates your love for Him:

Psalm 29:2—Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Psalm 109:30—I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.

Intercede with prayer and service for others:

Jeremiah 31:6—For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.

2Corinthians 5:18-20 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Be a tither, to honor God and declare that He is your source of provision:

Malachi 3:10-11—Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

Know your position in the kingdom:

1Peter 2:9—But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Operate in the kingdom power, authority, influence and dominion that will manifest in your life through obedience:

John 14:12—Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

The couple that desires to be married will have an expectation that only God is perfect. Both should have a desire, willingness and commitment to unity, faithfulness and submission to one another. They will allow God to referee each condition promised in the vows: for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do you part. Some couples have fought, almost to the death during the better, richer and good health. But each condition is the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to help you learn about and work with one another's strengths and weaknesses.

Proverbs 5:15—Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well.

1Corinthians 7:3-4—Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

1Corinthians 7:10—And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

Hebrews 13:4—Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

The list of spiritual qualities could go on, and this is a short list in God's eyesight. But for a fulfilling life in any area, we need to know, believe and trust that God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above whatever we ask or think. So men of God, make sure you have GPS and holy waiting single ladies, make sure he can find you on the MAP.

Understanding Joy

In 1998, a dear friend asked me what I really wanted to do with my life and the question was echoed the next day by my boss. This led me to the mirror to check my appearance in case I was unwittingly neglecting something. But I quickly concluded that I was just fine.

I believed the scripture that says if I seek the Kingdom of God, then I could have the desires of my heart. So from time to time I would think about my desires and immediate goals. I felt these goals could to be achievable by hard work, endurance, patience, and a dogged tenacity to stick with it until accomplished. But without fail my goals never came to pass. It was mainly because I had gotten used to settling for less. Consistently I catered to the whims and desires of other people, accepting whoever or whatever found its way into my life. Sometimes I was a doormat for people who showed no regard for my happiness and wellbeing.

My friend suggested that I write out my goals and desires again. "Hold nothing back and don't settle for less than the best," he added. So challenged to desire and challenged to hope, I had to ask myself what I really wanted. I took out a piece of paper and began to list some of my talents and abilities. I realized that I had a knack for helping others become what they wanted to be. Through words of encouragement, I would evaluate and mine the treasures of others to catch the fire of their vision or goals. I coached with ideas, suggestions and sought out resources to help them achieve their dream. Excited, as if their destiny was mine, I worked until their vision was a reality. I really enjoyed helping others succeed but I failed to pursue my own dreams.

The level of expectancy for good things and my desires were modified and distorted so much until they seemed like fantasies. Emotional pain and occasions of rejection I suppressed throughout the years evolved into episodes of depression. I lacked personal fulfillment, and I needed help. Resisting the work of the Holy Spirit as my helper left me kidnapped by depression. The first thing a kidnapper does is get control of you. To hold you captive, they bind your hands so you can't do anything, like fight or resist. Your feet are bound to keep you from getting away. And your mouth is gagged so you can't scream or cry out for help. My life seemed like it was stuck in cement, and I didn't want anyone to know what was going on with me. I felt, looked and was depressed.

When I accepted Jesus Christ in my life in 1992, I was overjoyed about the tangibility of His presence in my life. It made me hungry to know more about Him. So I read the bible over and over, highlighting words that

described His character and nature. There was joy in my salvation, wanting the Holy Spirit to have His way in every facet of my being. Then three years later, I experienced a complete transition. Every facet of my existence was challenged: physical, financial, relationships, environment, and career. Fortunately I was a member of a great ministry and found myself in church every time the doors were open. Prayer sessions were my significant indulgences and a source of comfort. Studying the scriptures and a consistent prayer life helped me live by faith to endure and overcome daily challenges.

Although I thought I was pursuing a deeper relationship with God, almost six years later, He had not been allowed into the places in my heart where I needed deliverance from loneliness, rejection and pain. I was casting provisional cares on Him, but held fast to depression that was dictating to my daily life. I was separated from my husband, a single mother, and loving the Lord. I had what the world calls a secure job (nothing is secure), pursued the purchase of a home (representing stability), and whatever came my way. My thinking was: "This is as good as its going to get for you Chris, so keep on loving God. Care for the remaining chick in the nest until he becomes an adult, then just die, go to heaven and be with the Lord."

When I focused on challenges more than the victories I received when exercising faith, there were pity parties. When I rehearsed the victorious testimonies in my heart and praised the Lord, they moved me out of the confetti corners of misery and doubt. And I would get back on track with God for a while.

When my friend and my boss asked the question about what I wanted to do with my life, I realized later that they must have seen me shifting into depression. When depressed, I usually isolated myself from friends—especially church members. I didn't read the scriptures nor did I pray. I started to think God didn't love me and He had forsaken me. He wasn't moving fast enough in my life. So I concentrated on my problems, creating scenarios in my mind of failure, and envisioned doom and gloom consequences. I was becoming an emotional wreck. And sobbing in the ladies restroom at work began to attract too much attention.

One day I decided to take a drive to a nearby park on my lunch break. The privacy of my car gave me the liberty to cry to my heart's content, purging every possible tear. Afterwards, I adjusted myself and headed back to work. En route, I started talking to God. I told Him I know He had joy unspeakable and full of glory. Then I yelled out loud, "God if you have joy, then show me what it looks like and give it to me today! Then I added ... "Please?"

Just as I made my request I had to stop for the red light at an intersection. As I waited, there was a woman and a little girl standing on the corner and when the "Walk" signal flashed for them to cross, the woman grabbed the little girl's hand. As they stepped off the curb and entered into the crosswalk, the little girl started skipping. She had a great big smile on her face and her ponytail bounced and swayed as she skipped. She kept pace with the woman until they reached the opposite corner. They started walking in the direction I was driving, and the woman let go of the little girl's hand but she continued to skip with joy and abandon. The scene grabbed my heart and I burst into tears. I witnessed the Lord's response to my request.

When I got to the parking lot at work, there was still a little time left for my break. So I stayed in the car and praised the Lord. He ministered to me about what I had seen. The woman was just like God. He takes us by the hand to lead, guide and direct our path. He grips us firmly in the places where our walk with Him may present danger, obstacles or challenges although we have the right of way. But we can be like a child and skip with joy. We can abandon our hearts to His care and safety, even when our hand is not in His. It is all about keeping our faith, trust and confidence in Him.

Matthew 18:3—And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 18:17—Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

Romans 14:17—For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

I felt so happy because the depression quickly faded away. And I repented to God for willingly indulging in fear, anxiety, sadness and depression. My actions had opened the door for oppression. I knew better than that because I was filled with my comforter, helper and teacher, the Holy Spirit. He is joy and I resisted Him to have my own way. And I didn't allow Him to help me, but accused Him of forsaking me.

All of us are confronted with sorrow, grief, and losses in many facets and on many levels. There are times when it seems like God isn't moving fast enough on our behalf. But we must keep our faith, trust and confidence in Him and do so with patience. Even if our circumstance does not change right away, He is still able to give His peace as you wait. When God works in our life, He removes affliction, pain, brokenness, discouragement, fears and anxiety if you allow Him to. I am so glad to learn that when we ask Him to intervene in any circumstance, He does.

Isaiah 61:3—To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

When children skip, they always appear to be happy, like there is not a care in the world. And I've never seen them do it while sad. No one is taught how to skip but it is something that is accomplished naturally.

The word "skip" according to Wilkipedia is -A hippity-hoppity gait (foot strike) that comes naturally to children. According to the American Heritage Dictionary it is — to move by hopping on one foot and then the other; to leap or bound lightly about; and to bounce over or to strike a surface at such an angle as to be deflected.

After a period of time and maturity, children stop skipping. It is rare to see an adult skip. But Dorothy, the Tin Man, Scare Crow, and the Cowardly Lion did skip down the Yellow Brick Road on the way to see the Wizard of Oz. Although we adults may have stopped, we have the memory and ability to skip if we desire to do so. To me, skipping on the Yellow Brick Road scenes in "The Wizard of Oz" depicts a faith, trust and belief that we are on the right path, God's path of righteousness. And we will get what we need most from the One who has it all and is able to give it. The Lord gives exceeding and abundantly above all we could ever ask or think.

One evening, a few years ago, while in an intercessory prayer session, we were praying for people bound by oppression and depression. The Lord reminded me of the little girl skipping. So my daughter-in-law and I prayed that the child-like joy and abandon of the Lord would overwhelm the spirit of heaviness and sadness for those who needed deliverance. And in their hearts they would experience the exhilaration that comes from skipping.

If you try it, skipping is a great cardio-vascular workout. And you will most likely get a good laugh, because you'll think that you, or the other person doing it with you, look ridiculous. When you skip, you are physically leaping up and moving forward. That is what God wants us to do as we grow, mature in Him, and listen for His voice through the unction of the Holy Spirit. Skipping moves us upward and forward.

Psalm 29:4-6—The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.

Wow, can you imagine trees skipping? But God is all powerful and mighty and He can do what He pleases. The spiritual implications of the

word "skip" are very significant. Other definitions according to the American Heritage Dictionary include:

1. To pass from point to point, omitting or disregarding what intervenes.

When you know and trust that your life is in the hands of the Lord, you don't have to indulge in inordinate fear and anxiety of people, places or things.

Psalm 27:2-4—When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.

2. To cease consideration or treatment of.

When you guard and direct your thoughts with good things it helps to keep you from dwelling on past failures, present challenges, or an unknown future.

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

Philippians 4:8—Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

3. To be promoted in school beyond the next regular class or grade. Because of obedience to God, your life will yield spiritual growth, maturity, acceleration, promotion, or elevation.

Psalm 92:12-13—But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon. For they are transplanted to the LORD's own house. They flourish in the courts of our God.

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

4. To break loose and leave suddenly, as from confinement or from a difficult or threatening situation.

This is having the ability to escape captivity and bondage to people, places, events, or things that challenge your walk with God and leads to sin. Depression made me feel as though I was kidnapped and stuck in my

circumstances.

Luke 6:22-23—Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

1Corinthians 10:13—There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

5. Fail to attend on purpose.

You will not commune or engage with the enemy when he tries to provoke you into coming into alignment with his plans. Keep your trust and confidence in the Lord as you wait on instructions from Him.

Psalm 37:7—Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Proverbs 4:14—Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

The next time challenges come your way to steal your joy or hold you captive to depression or any other circumstance, remember your position in the kingdom of God. Your enemy satan, will try to gag your mouth or bind your hands and feet so he can ultimately destroy you. So open your mouth wide to praise the name of the Lord. Clap your hands with thanksgiving to your Great King and Abba Father. And use your feet to skip a little.

God's Mother's Day Promise

And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children
—Isaiah 54:13

Happy Mother's Day to all mothers near and far, even those who are caretakers for other people's children. Everyday is Mother's Day. I can't forget about the mothers who, for various reasons, are presently estranged from their children. I know and have experienced days, weeks, months even years of not communicating with a child you brought into this earth. The grief and anxiety that comes with not knowing where they are, what they're doing, and who they're with is beyond measure. This is more so if there was no confrontation to cause the separation. You can't report them missing because they are only missing from your life. There were sleepless nights, pacing the floor, and weeping that endured throughout the night, but joy didn't come in the morning. Just keeping it real.

One rainy Mother's Day morning about 12 years ago, I sat at my kitchen table looking out the window. I felt as though all the tears I had shed outwardly and in my heart far exceeded the torrential drops that splashed against my window pane. Then I glanced down at the pages of my Bible which was open to the Book of Isaiah, Chapter 54. I had read it before, and it was just that — I had read it before. But this particular day, every verse grabbed my heart in such a way that the tears started flowing but not in sadness.

Through Isaiah 54, God was talking to me and letting me know that He knew all about me — my past, my present circumstances and my future. So much more was going on in my life besides the estrangement from my son. When I got to verse 13 is when I slipped out of my chair and laid prostrate on the kitchen floor to praise the Lord. My experiences at that time demanded that I learn to live totally by faith but the promise of verse 13 gripped my heart.

From that day, I have held on to the promise of God that said, all of my children would be taught of the Lord. To me that meant that all of my children would come to know the Lord and have a lifestyle indicative of that knowledge. They would have great peace — a genuine and lasting peace which comes only from the eternal realm of the Kingdom of God.

I continue to hold fast to Isaiah 54 for my life and especially to the 13th verse because it is a daily affirmation included in my prayers for my children and grandchildren. I have seen miraculous results from my faith in that scripture because my son and I have been reconciled now for over

10 years. I was patient and kept believing in faith that God was able to perform what He promised in His Holy Word. I didn't do anything but wait and trust God for two years.

I remember the night my son called asking to come visit me. All I said was "Yes!," and nothing else. When we hung up the phone I cried tears of joy and danced around the room. Hey, I know how to praise God!! My praise was to make sure my son wouldn't change his mind too. I went to the airport to meet him and when he came out of the tunnel and we saw each other, all he did was grab me. He said he loved and missed me and cried aloud. I know how Joseph felt when he revealed himself to his brothers in Egypt. My son was speechless and we cried all the way home. All I said was I loved him and was so happy to see him again. To this day, I have never asked for an explanation of our estrangement. I have gladly received the work of the Lord and enjoy every opportunity my son and I talk and get together.

Whatever relationship you have with your children, keep praying for them, trust and hold fast to God for the promise that He has given in Isaiah 54:13—And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. Amen?!

By the way, if you are an estranged son or daughter, call your mother or send a letter if you can't see them right now. God will bless you for it!

Exodus 20:12—Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

<u>Life Virtually Virtual - But Ain't Nothing Like the Real</u> Thing

I am presently processing major transition. Recently my beloved pastor passed away and I miss him. I know he is resting in the bosom of the Lord joining my friends and family members who have passed on to glory. Then, a best friend moved from Los Angeles to a new life in Atlanta, Georgia. Other close friends live in other states and countries now. Friends and I have shared many, many years of trials, tribulations, laughter, tears, joy, pain, births and deaths. Our relationships have stood the test and weather of time. And it dawned on me that all of my "nearest-and-dearest-to-my-heart" friends have transition into the "virtual" world. Virtual, meaning immediate contact is via email, phone, texting, Tweeting, Facebook, Skype and whatever new technology might spring up. Boats, planes, trains and long automobile rides will be the only means of natural contact with them now. Lord, what are you doing with me?

Years ago a high school buddy told me, "You haven't met all the friends you're going to know." My social media connections are evidence of that statement. I've connected with people from around the world and all walks of life. But it's all "virtual" because what I know about them is what they post on their profile pages. True, false, elaborated, exaggerated, or minimized, I get snippets about career, family, thumbs-up likes, thumbs-down dislikes, comment rebuttals to other comments, a few photos of family and social life, and other indulgences. I have "virtual" friends, friends and more friends that I haven't and may never see face to face. But that's OK because most of it is about connections of interest and some of it is business.

When I think about the virtual world a great portion of my relationships has evolved into, I can hear my all-time favorite song by Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell, "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing." And I say to myself, when it comes to time and relationship with my closest friends, "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing." I know I am going to meet, greet and make some new "natural" connections but I am missing my friends who have moved into the virtual world. I look forward to visits, reunions and reconnections so we can be in each other's face and each other's space again. I want to look in their eyes while we're talking and know that everything isn't when they say it's all right. I want to share meals, sights and scenes, critique what we see, hear, smell, touch and taste together. "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing."

Even though the virtual world is convenient, I like the natural better. I don't order take-out from my favorite Chinese restaurant by phone

anymore. I order on the premises and wait for it. Standing in long lines at the post office or supermarket doesn't bother me. I get to see, talk to, smile at, laugh with, and sometimes complain with other people. My children and grandchildren live nearby and that is great consolation, because time spent with them is so valuable and precious. Maybe I'll finally admit that I kinda like their spoiled dog Sugar's lapdog indulgence with me more than she thinks she deserves it. It makes thinking about the transition of my friends into the virtual world "virtually" smoother.

So until those new "closest-nearest-dearest" friends come along so we can spend some quality "natural" time together, I will keep my DSL working so I can keep my "virtual" connections connected. But.... "Ain't Nothing Like the Real Thing!!!"

Proverbs 18:24— A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Proverbs 27:17— Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

I Can't Get No Satisfaction... But I Tried God

The world is turning, churning and groaning for the manifestation of the sons of God to be revealed. There is a spiritual tapping on the shoulder of those who are the sons and daughters of God. We are to be devoted to introspection (self examination) and consecration—dedicating mind, will and emotion, body, soul and spirit to Him. Our focus and goal should be to live a life of holiness, in right standing with God through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Time in the scriptures, fasting and prayer is the perfect vehicle to get us there.

In the midst of our dedication to the things of God, a little dissatisfaction is bound to creep in. There are so many people who are disgruntled, disheartened, discouraged, disenfranchised, dismayed and just downright "dissed." Your time, talent, and tenacity works for a moment or for a circumstance. And just when you're about to exhale, another circumstance presents itself to take the wind out of your sails.

Although earthly things or random favor from others might bring some resolution to your ills, you find that it only yields temporary satisfaction. Then the lyrics from the classic rock song might ring in your ears to wrench your heart or turn your stomach... "I Can't Get No... Satisfaction."

Even the scriptures say this is going to happen:

Haggai 1:6 New Living Translation (NLT) — You have planted much but harvested little. You have food to eat, but not enough to fill you up. You have wine to drink, but not enough to satisfy your thirst. You have clothing to wear, but not enough to keep you warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes!

Or, what if you are bound by addictions, compulsions and wicked distractions where you have lost all sense of reasoning?

Ezekiel 7:19 (NLT)— They will throw away their money, tossing it out like worthless trash. It won't buy their deliverance in that day of the LORD's anger. It will neither satisfy nor feed them, for their love of money made them stumble into sin.

Galatians 6:8 (NLT)—Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful desires will harvest the consequences of decay and death. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.

But God has words of encouragement for those of us who will sincerely cast our cares upon Him and seek Him through prayer, praise and worship:

2 Timothy 2:4—And as Christ's soldier, do not let yourself become tied up in the affairs of this life, for then you cannot satisfy the one who has enlisted you in his army.

Romans 3:25 (NLT)— For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin.

People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past,

When we reverence and honor God with our whole heart, He has abundant satisfaction for us.

Psalms 91:16 (NLT)—I will satisfy them with a long life and give them my salvation.

Then we are able to say then exhale with joy:

Psalms 90:14—Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, so we may sing for joy to the end of our lives.

Psalms 145:16—When you open your hand, you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing.

Psalms 63:5—You satisfy me more than the richest of foods. I will praise you with songs of joy.

Many times I have said, even thought, "I Can't Get No...Satisfaction." I am happy to report... "But I Tried God!"

The Goodness of Solitude?

The Christmas season for me commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ. My thoughts are found in a state of reverence and thanksgiving to God. He gave us the wonderful gift of the Redeemer who came to put all of us in right standing with Him. I am also thankful for my deliverance from depression, agoraphobia, infirmities, ungodly soul ties and so much more. Out of that gratitude is a heartfelt consciousness of those who can not emotionally connect with the myriad of holiday celebrations with food, fellowship, and euphoric shopping that the season means to many others.

All of us have something in our life that has the potential to draw us into a place of solitude if we allow it—regardless of the day, week, month, year or season. Yet there are some who are all around us: family members, friends, work mates and acquaintances who have smiles so broad that you would never know that in the recesses of their heart, there is a lamentation that manifests as sadness and/or loneliness, even in a crowded room. They live in a place of emotional solitude.

I believe God uses the solitary times and seasons in our life. It is quite possible that He wants us to separate ourselves from people and the hustle of this world. So He uses the very circumstances that put you in that emotional space to get you alone with Him. However satan tries to make you feel sad, frustrated or depressed when you are in emotional solitude. He makes it uncomfortable to be there or stay there. Jesus Christ was challenged by satan during his 40-days in the wilderness.

But the solitary places—desert, valleys, wilderness, caves, or pits—are your opportunity for spiritual rest and revelation when you use it to talk to God through prayer and meditation. In the solitary place He strengthens you for any challenges and elevation in ministry—your lifestyle that represents your dedication to Him. God gives you fresh ideas, plans and strategies for your future. You can use the time as an opportunity to reevaluate who and what is in your life. What do you need to release and detach from, or what do you need to bring into your life to enrich or fulfill it?

When Jesus came out of the desert, he stepped into His ministry. Abraham came out of the solitary place to step into his destiny as a father of many nations. Jacob wrestled in the wilderness place, and he was renamed Israel. When Moses came down from the mountain the first time, he was given a mandate to deliver the nation of Israel from slavery. In the wilderness, he came down from the mountain with the 10 commandments. Ezekiel was taken to the desert and was shown that he could speak to dry bones and they would live. At the mouth of a cave God spoke to Elijah in

a still small voice to let him know that he was not alone. Job lost everything and asked God to let him die. But God restored him and gave him more of everything after he interceded for those who sat and scorned him when they were supposed to be his friends. Hannah got alone with God in the temple, and He gave her more children than she asked for. Samuel, her first born, was the first prophet to the nation of Israel.

So to those who may be in a solitary place, do not despise these days. Turn it into a healthy season of prayer with scriptural praise and worship. Don't ask God for anything right now. Don't ask for changes, just soak and saturate yourself with praise and worship to Him. Sing when you don't feel like singing. Listen to worship music that tells God who He is. Make it all about Him and nothing else, even if you don't like Him right about now. Give Him crazy, lunatic, radical praise and worship and watch for a shift in your atmosphere. Believe me, I do it all the time and I always see results.

Praise and worship will put you in a new realm and dimension with God, into the high place. In the Book of Revelations when John was in the spirit on the Lord's day, God told him to *Come up hither*. —Revelations 4:1. What you are experiencing right now is most likely God wanting you to come up hither so He can refresh you. He may want to take you into new realms of the length, depth and height of His knowledge. Consider His ways that are past finding out. He has something for you in that new place and He is using your circumstances to woo you into it.

There is a revival coming into the land and the Lord is choosing whom He may. They will be those men and women who carry the mantle to bring souls into His kingdom. They will move in signs, wonders and miracles. These are the ones God can trust to give Him all the glory and not exalt themselves. But know that our God lives, rules and reigns and He has not forsaken you.

The following is excerpted from my first book "Pray What God Says." Prayer establishes hope. When you HOPE in God, you will begin to:

- *H-Hear Him through His word, prayer and your experiences. John 10:27—My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
- *O-Obey His word and submit to the care and charge of the pastor He has designated to shepherd over you. Jeremiah 23:4—And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.
- *P-Pray the word of God without ceasing. 1Thessalonians 5:17—*Pray without ceasing*.
- *E-Expect His response. Isaiah 65:24— And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

When you HOPE in God, in return are some of His benefits.

- *H-His Hearing ear. Psalm 4:3—But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.
- *O—Open heaven access to His presence. Malachi 3:10—Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.
- *P-Peace while you wait for His response to your prayers. Psalm 29:11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.
- *E-Eternal results. Ephesians 2:11-13—You have Christ in this world. You are not alien of the commonwealth of His kingdom. You are not a stranger to the covenant promises. You have His glory (the presence of His virtue) in your life. You have earnest, sincere expectations—Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Prayer establishes TRUST in God

- *T-Turn to Him and tarry in His presence. Habakkuk 2:3—For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.
- *R-Rest in and rely on His finished work. 1Kings 5:4—But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.
- *U-Understand His ways are not our ways. Isaiah 55:8—For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.
- *S-Surrender to Him. James 4:7—Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
- *T-Take Him at His word. 2Chronicles 20:20—And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

To Encourage the Discouraged

God has a wonderful plan and purpose for His sons and daughters. So many times, we are challenged by pits, stumbling blocks, and nets designed to hinder our destiny. But as long as we acknowledge that there is an Almighty God who cares about the very hairs on our heads, then we know He can see all of the mess around us. We are tried in our faith ever so much, but when we say yes to Him in our hearts, He is the great deliverer. He even delivers us from our own destruction—the things we do to ourselves. That is because He is so full of grace, mercy, love and compassion.

God nourishes until we are full and made fat. Oh, how wonderful when He has fed us from His holy table the sweet and agreeable promises of His word. He will never leave nor forsake us. He opens His hand to satisfy every living creature, which includes us, His most precious creation. He has made us a little lower than the angels who abide in His presence to praise Him eternally. All He asks of us is to love Him, and when we do, we are able to trust Him, obey Him and cast our cares upon Him. We can hold fast to the confidence that we gain from Him, so we can rest in Him.

To know the beauty of His presence in a deeper and greater dimension is available to us. He told John, who was in the spirit on the Lord's day (he was nearly in heaven), He said to come up hither. So now we know that no matter how high we get into His presence, there is so much more that we can reach for and move into. We can't allow the devil to deceive us into thinking he has captivated our physical, emotional and spiritual being. Our God has a manna that is not made with hands but comes from His excellent glory. It pours down upon us to satisfy our soul and spirit. And when it comes from His holy place, it leaves the residue of His exceeding joy and gladness. He says that if we lack joy and gladness, He will anoint us with it

We must say what God says is true about us, not what the devil tries to make us say and believe. Many times we are the cause of missing out on the good things when we resign to refusing those good things. We are to desire the things that are good, beautiful, wonderful, satisfying, fulfilling, nurturing, cleansing, purifying, hopeful, peaceful and loving.

I can't fix you, I can only point you to the One who can. He is God, the only one who can do it so marvellously. His work was already finished on the cross of Jesus Christ. The blood was already shed for our deliverance. Jesus does not have to be recrucified for us to be well. We just have to let God have His way by reminding ourselves with the scriptures and opening our mouth to thank Him out loud (so the devil can hear it). If it is hard for

you to praise God, read Psalms 23, Psalms 34 and Psalms 91 aloud. It can give you a jumpstart.

I lift up utterances to my Lord and Father and ask Him to wipe away every tear that falls from your eyes. They are infused with the pain, brokenness, fear, and anxiety that have been purged from your soul and spirit. I ask Him to cover your heart with His love and peace. He will pull you close to His bosom so you can rest in His arms to hear His heartbeat. The sound will cause you to know His love and care.

1Chronicles 16:8— Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.

Psalms 30:4— Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

Psalms 107:1— O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Ephesians 5:20— Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Disappointment

When people disappoint us it is painful but it is also a way for God to show us that He alone is God. Through disappointments we realize people are people just like us--we have our strengths and we have weaknesses. We learn that we can't do everything and we can't be everything to everybody.

Disappointment comes when we have an unrealistic expectation of another person. Based on what people say or do, we unwittingly assume they will always be reliable, always available, always resourceful, always, always, always. But, at the weakest or most vulnerable point in our life, we experience reality which leads to feelings of rejection, betrayal or abandonment. This causes hurt, pain and disappointment. God expects us to expect Him to be God. He doesn't want us to expect people to be everything His word says that He is. What people do to us is a test to see if we bear or yield the fruit of the Spirit.

If you are disappointed, I know exactly how you feel because I have been abused, rejected, betrayed and abandoned. I have had to go through trials and tribulations while on the path to getting healed from the last trial and tribulation. Of all the friends, associates and acquaintances in my life, none of them can compete with what God has done for me. He has delivered and healed me of so many things, so many times. Most of the time, I had no one to talk to, confide in, or get help from. Because of that, I sought God who was the only one who had answers. I could not find my joy in people, places or things. Once in a while someone would pray for me if I asked. But I learned to cry out to God in my distresses. At times it seemed like it took Him forever, but it didn't when He answered my prayers and healed me from depression and agoraphobia. It is so wonderful that the side-effect of His healing anointing is more love for Him.

That is why I thank Him passionately everyday. I try to tell everyone I know to do the same because He is an unfailing Lord and God. That doesn't mean I don't have troubles. Yes, I do even now. But I know the one in whom I live, move and have my very being. I can trust, rely on, call upon and be heard from the Lord my God. He makes me over each and everyday because I want to let Him. He helps me love those that He uses to make me a better and more anointed person so I can be His instrument of help to others.

Don't hate the person(s) who disappointed you. Sometimes God will use people to see if you will turn and cast your cares on Him. I have friends who I call friends because that is what I am or try to be to them.

We may have gone through many things together, yet some I can not confide in. I am a sounding board for most of them, yet the very same don't care to hear about my pain, joy, disappointments or achievements. But that's OK because we have to ask God to show us the purpose for each and every person we engage with. He will allow us to see and experience the strengths, weaknesses, capabilities and limitations of each one. We are not to despise them for what they are not. Just rejoice over what they bring to the table to bless, nurture, test and even try us. Remember, most people test the fruit of the Spirit in us. How is your love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance?

God observes how we respond to every relationship. But most importantly, He wants to be everything we want and need. His word says that He opens His hand to satisfy every living creature. We are His precious creation, so He will not fail nor cause us to lack any good and beneficial thing. Spend time praising or learning how to praise the Lord. When you do so, your mind can't think negative thoughts and rejoice at the same time.

If you feel disappointed or discouraged, don't feel bad because you ask for help. And don't let the devil make you upset about a person who is just being who they are--limited. One thing is for sure, they are not God. They didn't lie if they said they can't fix you or your problems. Praise the Lord because their fix might send you to hell. No one knows how to fix you and your circumstances like God can. If you have been seeking the Lord as your helper, you may not realize it, but you are on the pathway of healing and deliverance. Nobody's mad but the devil. How about that? Praise the Lord, Hallelujah!!

The Bark and Breath of the Enemy

All my life I have retained a vivid recollection of times and events throughout my childhood. As age creeps upon me, I have started to make lists or notes to myself about things I don't want to forget. Sometimes I will walk into a room then try to figure out why I did so. I joke with friends by saying that my senior moments are turning into senior episodes. Despite the episodes, the portion of my brain that recorded my childhood is functioning quite well. I can even recall conversations, sounds, odors, colors, and temperatures of uneventful moments like they happened a few hours ago. I would say yesterday, but some of yesterday has already erased itself. Psych! I'm kidding about that one.

Anyway, as I recount for this writing, I was in the second grade at Green Elementary School in Knoxville, Tennessee. The only thing I didn't enjoy about the second grade was walking home from school. Excluding the days when schools were closed due to inclimate weather, I was escorted in the mornings by my mother or Aunt Bessie, and I walked home with my neighbor friend.

There was a green-eyed mutt about the size of a golden retriever that lived about 2 blocks from my house and he would chase me every single day. He absolutely terrified me. On the first day of school my mother and I walked on the side of the street where the dog lived. The yard to its house had a fence, but there was no gate to the driveway. Therefore the dog was able to come in and out of its yard at will. He was lying close to the fence and didn't move as he watched us pass by.

After school, my friend and I like most of the children, walked on the other side of the street. At the intersection before the house where the dog lived, I saw him standing on the sidewalk. When we got close to its house, the dog started crossing the street. When he ran up to me and started growling and barking, I screamed and ran. As he chased me, I could feel his breath on the back of my calves. There was a light at the intersection. It was red, but I didn't even know it because I was so afraid and running for my life.

I thank God for sparing me because all I heard was the sound of brakes from the cars travelling in both directions trying to avoid hitting me. I saw nothing but the curb on the other side of the street and I was running for it. After I made it, I didn't stop running until I got to the porch of my home. I was screaming, crying and banging on the front door. One of the drivers had parked and was on our porch by the time my mother opened the door. He told her that I ran through the intersection and was nearly killed. I was so shaken, that whatever else he said was a complete blur. That was OK

because some of it was not too nice and it upset my mother. After he left, she calmed me down and I was able to tell her about the dog chasing me. She reassured me that the dog did it only because I ran when he barked. "Let him bark, but don't run," was her advice.

The next morning as she walked me to school, the dog was lying in his spot by the fence. He watched us but didn't rise up or bark. "See, he's not going to do anything to you," she said. "Just remember, let him bark, but don't run." I felt relieved that the dog appeared totally harmless.

On the way home, at the corner, I saw the dog standing in front of its house. As my friend and I got near, it was a repeat of the day before. He barked and I ran. But when I got to the corner of the intersection he stopped chasing and went back home. I was shaking and crying but I had enough presence of mind not to run through that intersection again. I caught my breath and waited for my friend so she could walk the rest of the way home with me. This time, I didn't say anything to my mother about the dog. I figured since he chased me just to the corner, that he might not do it again. I was wrong. Everyday, the dog would look at me on the way to school but after school, he would bark and chase me.

The routine between me and that dog became a treat for the other kids. We never failed to give them the pleasure of a good laugh. They joked and teased me at school, but I didn't care. Each day I was determined to be brave and not run, but the bark and hot breath of that dog was always the giant faith eraser. The only consolation I held on to was that he would only chase me to the corner then turn around and go back home. He didn't bother any of the other children and I was his exclusive chase for the whole school year.

During the month of May, our school observed a celebration called May Day. According to Wilkipedia it is described as follows: May Day was taken up in America as a socialist movement celebrating workers' rights, a tradition that remains strong in Europe. All told, modern May Day celebrations today have evolved into a hodgepodge of traditions including parties, sing-alongs, Old World maypole dancing, parades and workers' demonstrations, along with general protests against Big Business on the streets of major capitals worldwide.

I was one of the students selected for the wrapping of the Maypole during the May Day school-ground festivities. My mother dressed me in a new pink dress complete with starched underslips to make it stand out, ruffled socks and ribboned hair. I was all dolled up and anticipated the fun the day would bring. Then I got a wonderful surprise during the festivities. My father had accompanied my mother to see me wrap the Maypole. She took photographs of me with her little Kodak Brownie camera. (I'm not

telling you what year that was either). I was so happy to see his face in the crowd of other parents and family members. When I got the chance to talk to him, he said my mother had to leave but he was going to wait and walk me home from school

My father was a wonderful man. He worked an early shift for Alcoa Aluminum and usually got home around 2:00 p.m. During the spring and summer months, he liked to take long walks in the evening. My greatest joy was accompanying him when he took the short walks. When we were a few houses away from ours, I got foot rides. He would let me stand on his feet as he held my hands and walked the rest of the way home. The next best thing was when he pushed me on the swing so I could go high in the air. It felt as though he was helping me leap into the clouds.

When I met my father when school was dismissed, my mind was on getting a foot ride. It was also the first time he walked me home from school. I was estatic until we got to the dreaded corner. I had forgotten about the source of my terror until then. I tightened the grip I had on my father's fingers. When he looked down at me, I guess he could tell by my expression that something was wrong. And he asked "What's the matter?" By this time, the dog saw us and was starting to cross the street. "The dog Daddy. That dog is going to chase me because he chases me everyday," I replied. "No, he's not going to chase you," he said. I started trembling and tried not to cry but the tears fell like rain. I moved closer and held onto the leg of his pants with both hands.

The dog was in the middle of the street and started to growl as he looked at me. I was ready to run but my father tightened his grip on my shoulder then yelled at the dog in a loud voice, "Get back over there!" The dog stopped in his tracks and tucked his tail between his legs. When my father shouted again, "Go," he ran to the doghouse in his yard.

I had never heard my father raise his voice before. He was a soft-spoken man of a few words, and sometimes you had to strain to hear him. He was over 6 feet tall, muscular and strong, so I never knew his quietness to be misinterpreted as a weakness by anyone. When I saw what happened with the dog, all of the anxiety and fear left me. I was so glad that I got a reprieve from being chased that day. And the other children didn't get the chance to laugh at me.

The next day was another story. Since my father was not with me, I was prepared to run. As my friend and I got to the corner, the dog did his usual thing. We neared the middle of the block, but this time for some reason I wouldn't look at him. I thought about my father protecting me the day before and kept walking. He didn't growl or bark as he stood in the middle of the street. After we passed him, my friend looked back then whispered

to me, "He's going back to his yard." I was so happy and afraid at the same time that I could have wet on myself. Then for the next two weeks that were left of the school term, I was able to walk, not run to the corner of my block. Never again was I chased by the green-eyed mutt with the terrifying bark and hot breath.

My father passed away the following year in April. When I think about all the wonderful times I had with him, his loving care and gentleness, I am also reminded of how his voice and his presence eradicated a frightening situation in my life. In fact, he never asked me anything about the dog. I guess he had confidence it wouldn't bother me again.

The dog had watched me and knew I was afraid of him. He had access and opportunity to chase me, and if he wanted to bite me, he could have, but he didn't. Maybe the dog thought that chasing was my way of playing with him. Who knows what and how dogs think. I just know he wasn't fun. When my father told the dog "get back over there," he was commanding him to get back where he belongs. And I was liberated from fearful encounters with it.

In the introduction to my first book "Pray What God Says" I relate how Aunt Bessie told me that my father was in heaven with God. Then she said God would be like a father to watch over and care for me. And He has demonstrated that He has been and is continuing to doing so. The scriptures say we have protection from the enemy, satan. He has already been cut off, limited, judged and condemned by God.

Like that dog, satan intimidates, pursues, threatens and causes us to fear for our spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental well-being. When things go wrong with our life, health, finances, and relationships, we feel discouraged, anxious and think he has complete control of our circumstances. But satan is a thief, liar, deceiver and murderer. He comes to steal, kill and destroy anything and anyone he can get access to. But the blood of Jesus was shed to deliver us from all the work, plots and plans of the enemy.

When we decree and declare the Word of God—the scriptures—over our situations, we are reminding satan of where he belongs. We also remind ourselves about the nature and virtue of God, our identity and liberty in Him. There is continuous and unfailing access we have to Him and His covenant promises.

Isaiah 41:10-14 (New Living Translation)—Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand. See, all your angry enemies lie there, confused and humiliated. Anyone who opposes you will die and come to nothing. You will look in vain for those

who tried to conquer you. Those who attack you will come to nothing. For I hold you by your right hand—I, the LORD your God. And I say to you, 'Don't be afraid. I am here to help you. Though you are a lowly worm, O Jacob, don't be afraid, people of Israel, for I will help you. I am the LORD, your Redeemer. I am the Holy One of Israel.'

As long as we have the Word of God—His scriptures—and His holy presence, we never have to fear the bark and breath of the enemy.

Answers to Any Test

No one is exempt from the testings of life. We are tested daily through relationships, health, finances, environment, career... and the list goes on and on. Many people's major concerns are financial due to the lack of employment or not making enough money to make ends meet. We have seen profound changes and improvement in science, technology and medicine. But more and more people are suffering from diseases, and other physical and mental dysfunctions. No matter what type of test or degree of its intensity, there are natural and spiritual answers and solutions.

The Word of God, the scriptures, addresses every physical, mental and spiritual challenge. Even those of us who consider ourselves devotees to the scriptures can, many times, find ourselves distracted or discouraged when confronted with situations that appear unsurmountable. But we can take comfort in knowing there is a life's manual open and available to us. We never have to face challenges blindly. Answers and solutions can be found easily by searching, reviewing or rehearsing what God has said to us.

Throughout the scriptures, He has told us who He is, what He does for us, what He has given to us, and how we can receive from Him. The Word of God has answers for every test, every trial, every situation, and every circumstance that life dishes out.

God calls many situations infirmities. We generally categorize them as physical ailments or disorders, illnesses, a loss of health, or diseases. But infirmities are not limited to the physical. They can take on many forms such as mental, financial, social, and moral.

Infirmities are challenges or afflictions that have momentary access to us. When handled immediately and properly, they can be corrected.

2Corinthians 4:17— For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

We all know what happens when we neglect or fail to maintain our health. If we don't care for possessions, meet obligations, especially when resources are unavailable, it is difficult to rectify a situation. The results are (mental, financial, social or moral) impairment, decline, defects, decay, or deterioration. This ultimately leads to breakdown, collapse or invalidism.

In the scriptures Luke 13 tells us about a woman who had a spirit of infirmity. She had been suffering with it for 18 years.

Luke 13:10—And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. v11. And, behold, there was a woman, which had a spirit of

infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

Although she had a physical manifestation of an infirmity, God describes it as spiritual in nature. Over two thousand years later that spirit is still operating in people's lives including the Body of Christ. A spirit is an apparition, shadow, or presence. But this one is demonic and its activity is real, lingering and persistent. It warfares against God, to oppress, suppress, depress or obsess the people of God.

Oppress is defined as: To impose excessive burdens upon; to overload; hence, to treat with unjust rigor or with cruelty. To ravish, violate, or cause to suffer.

Suppress means: To overpower and crush; to subdue; to put down; to quell; to keep in, or to restrain from utterance or vent.

Depress means: To press down; to cause to sink; to let fall; to lower. To bring down or humble; to abase, as pride. To cast a gloom upon; to sadden; as, his spirit was depressed; to lessen the activity of; to lessen in price; to cause to decline in value; to cheapen; and to depreciate.

Obsess means: To besiege; to beset. Excessively preoccupy the thoughts or feelings of; to haunt the mind persistently; to be excessively or persistently preoccupied with something. —Source: Webster's Online Dictionary

Do you see everything the spirit of infirmity can do to you mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually? The intention of its work is to ultimately separate us from God. In other words, it wants to destroy our witness and faith in the promises of God. Infirmities can stifle your efforts to evangelize. God appears powerless according to what you see, how you feel, or what you think.

The spirit of infirmity lies in wait for access and permission to operate mostly through lack of knowledge. This is especially so when you do not read or study the scriptures. You are open season for access if you lack spiritual covering. So it is important to align yourself with a ministry that teaches and builds upon scriptural foundation in your spirit. The spirit of infirmity takes advantage of those who harbor unforgiveness, commit acts of disobedience to authority, practice witchcraft, or have ungodly soul ties. Associations, entanglements, or time spent in environments conducive to sin is another point of access.

When the spirit of infirmity attacks physically, there is a loss of energy, zeal or enthusiasm for good health and well-being. Mentally, the person believes what is occuring is supposed to happen and it is only going to get worse. Thoughts tend to project a negative outlook on life. There is a demeanor that rejects help or the resources necessary for improvement or

change. Socially, attitudes or mood will vary from explosive anger to deep sadness or grief. And morally, there will be a tendency, disposition or attachment to inordinate affection or perversions.

Verse 11 said the woman with the spirit of infirmity was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up. This meant that her body was bent over, turned, crooked and twisted. It was possibly contorted or arched. She had no ability, method or technique for changing her physical condition. Apparently her health was beyond the help of physicians.

Some people are bowed over mentally. This makes them feel subdued, suppressed or overwhelmed by a negative thought life. They have difficulty setting goals, or making decisions that will yield significant adjustments. When financially challenged a person might feel powerless to affect the system that controls money and wealth. Morally afflicted people tend to be governed or influenced by a warped, sometimes distorted sense of what is good and decent.

The spirit of infirmity prevents lifting or pulling yourself up. It will seem impossible to emerge from the situation. To improve or advance to a better level or condition in life is out of reach. It can leave its victim unable to aid, assist or support others.

I have seen some people resign to a devotion or alignment to their condition. Unhealthy bonds or allegiances with others in the same condition cause them to feel unworthy of healing or deliverance. And they are sometimes drawn to or fixated on other afflictions and the cares of the world

These people can be spiritually contagious or infectious. And like a plague, they affect others, even generationally. A physical or mental spirit of infirmity will manifest as esteem issues or fearfulness. Financially, the manifestations are a poverty mindset, hoarding or selfishness. Social manifestation is alcohol and/or drug dependency. Other results are caustic relationships, disobedience, strife, a victim mentality, lying, violence, braggard and pride. Morally, the manifestations are perversions and pornography. Additionally, there is the practice of witchcraft, delving in the occult, idolatry, lusts, abominations and abhorring the things that are holy.

No matter how the spirit of infirmity affects a person, we have Jesus Christ. Every sin, iniquity, transgression, every sickness, disease, or infirmity was nailed to the cross. Jesus Christ shed His blood to redeem all mankind from sin. The consequence of sin is natural and spiritual death. He placed all of us in right standing with God. This justification has declared that we are not guilty. The redemptive work of grace that God has extended to us through Jesus Christ means we are delivered.

Luke 13:12 says that Jesus saw the woman with the spirit of infirmity. What does that mean to you and me? It means Jesus, who was in the synagogue teaching on the Sabbath, stopped what he was doing to look at this woman. It means we have a God who pays attention to us no matter where we are. Whatever we're doing and whatever condition we're in, He is compassionate and cares for us. He thinks about us and seeks us out.

Psalm 40:5 (New Living Translation)— O LORD my God, you have performed many wonders for us. Your plans for us are too numerous to list. You have no equal. If I tried to recite all your wonderful deeds, I would never come to the end of them.

Now He, Jesus Christ, is seated at the right hand of the Father forever making intercession for us. But He has given us the Holy Spirit who is our comforter, helper and enabler in the earth. And His word is still true that He never leaves or forsakes us. He is moved with compassion, lovingkindness, and faithfulness toward us.

The scripture says that God draws near to those who have a humble and receptive spirit, and those who retain a reverence for His word.

Isaiah 66:2—For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Ezekiel 34:11—For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

He is drawn to those whose heart is upright toward him and who desire to see His power and strength operate in their life. He even comes to try (observe and consider) us.

2Chronicles 16:9— For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.

Psalm 11:4— The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

God's presence is with those who fear him and desire to obey His word. And He responds to our cry for His help.

Psalm 34:15— The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

Luke 7:13— And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

1Peter 3:12— For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers:

He loves when we know how to yield to His presence. God knows all about us, where we are and what we are doing.

Proverbs 5:21—For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD,

and he pondereth all his goings.

Proverbs 15:3—The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

God does not forget His covenant promises. He declares that He will never fail, foresake or abandon us.

Deuteronomy 4:31— For the LORD thy God is a merciful God; he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.

His holy presence will always be with us.

Deuteronomy 31:6— Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

It pleases God to make us His people. We are His children, sons and daughters.

1Samuel 12:22— For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

1Kings 6:13— And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

God accepts those who accept His grace. He accepts those who reverence and obey holiness and righteousness.

Acts 10:35— But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

2Corinthians 5:9— Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

Ephesians 1:6— To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Luke 13:12—And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him.

Not only will God watch over us, He draws us to him by His Spirit. Sometimes when He unctions us by the Holy Spirit to spend time with Him, we fail to yield. We tend to allow our immediate needs, the cares of the world and our busy schedules exclude God out of our lives. But He still woos us with His love, faithfulness and longsuffering. His presence hovers over us and protects us even when we try to navigate the storms of life alone.

God calls us His sheep and He is our great shepherd.

John 10:3— *To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*

1Samuel 3:4— That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

Isaiah 43:1—But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob,

and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

Jesus calls us His friends and helps us to know all things that He has heard of the father.

John 15:15— Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

He deals with us individually and holds us by our hand. In other words, by the Holy Spirit, He will personally lead and guide us with truth, revelation, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

Isaiah 42:6— I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

He cares for us and is a promise keeper. We are able to experience His covenant promises that demonstrate His love, faithfulness, care and mercy.

1Peter 5:7— Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. The faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

Psalm 34:20— He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

The Lord keeps you. He will not slumber (forget, ignore or abandon) and loves with an everlasting love.

Psalm 121:3— He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Jeremiah 31:3— The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

God will change dead (impossible) situations and circumstances. We are able to declare that the things that are not, can exist through faith.

Romans 4:17—As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

After Jesus saw the woman and called her to Himself, then He speaks to her.

Luke 13:12— ...and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

When Jesus calls you to Himself, He speaks by the Holy Spirit. He also speaks through the scriptures—the revelation received when we read, remember, and declare His covenant promises over our life. The Lord has something for those who are inclined to observe, listen and maintain a

receptive heart. The scriptures or unction of the Holy Spirit will always give a charge or instruction. It will be the answer to your problem to announce or state the solution.

The scriptures always convey His judgment. It gives certification or an assignment concerning any matter. God's power, grace, mercy, compassion, and faithfulness will intervene in your behalf to manifest the evidence of deliverance.

Then Jesus laid hands on the woman with the infirmity.

Luke 13:13— And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

Jesus intervenes in this woman's life by the anointing or power of the Holy Spirit. Today, this same anointing and power operates through pastors and other ministerial leaders who are yielded to the flow of the Spirit of God. The laying of hands is an impartation of anointing that is prescribed to break off every yoke of bondage. The anointing destroys anything that distracts or captivates. It removes barriers, to your mental, physical, spiritual health and well-being.

The laying of hands deposits the will of God (His plan, purpose and destiny) into your life. It will provoke and challenge you to desire a lifestyle that is pleasing to God. This action is also a spiritual seal, to cover, lock and protect your prophetic destiny. This is what has been spoken over your life or deposited in your spirit man.

The anointing relieves us from distresses. It alleviates the stresses and cares of the world so we can abide in the peace that comes only from God. It is an enduring peace that surpasses understanding. Then our hearts and minds can be quiet and still. The anointing will enable us to rest in the finished work of the cross of Jesus Christ. We have been delivered from sickness, disease, and infirmity. We are also delivered from poverty of the mind, heart, soul and spirit and every yoke of bondage. Everything that satan tries to place in our lives has been defeated by the Blood of Jesus.

When Jesus laid hands on the woman, she was instantly healed.

Luke 13:13— ...and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

As we allow God to touch us through the sovereign power of His Holy Spirit, or through ministerial leaders, He is able to change, heal and deliver us from anything. It is not impossible for deliverance to occur abruptly or instantaneously.

We are to glorify God when He intervenes in our life.

Luke 13:13— ...she was made straight, and glorified God.

When you glorify God it can protect, even cause you to be immune from any yoke of bondage. When you glorify God, you approach him with thanksgiving, praise and worship. Thank Him, praise and worship Him to magnifying who He is. Magnify His character, nature and virtue. Glorify Him with accolades of His magnificience. Acknowledge Him for His loftiness, His fame, and His loving favor. He is your object of pride. Boast of His onmiscience (He is all-knowing). He is omnipotent (all-powerful). He is omnipresent (all-in-all, everywhere). Honor and esteem Him highly, to respect His authority, to take pleasure and joy in knowing that He is your Lord and Saviour. Bless and adore Him. Celebrate and reverence your God. And worship Him using all of His holy names. Declare His strength, might, command, and rule. He has all dominion, sovereignty, and unconditional authority. His superiority, lordship, and mastery are matchless. You glorify God when you place your faith, confidence, hope and trust in Him.

I have taken the Bible I use for study and highlighted every word that describes the name, character or nature of God in the Book of Psalms. So before and after prayer, or spending time to read or study the scriptures, I speak out each name or word aloud to praise Him. It is a great way to welcome a greater measure of His presence into time devoted to Him.

It is important to develop a personal relationship with God the Father, through His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, your helper and teacher. As you commune and fellowship with God through prayer and the scripures, you become a partaker of His divine nature. Your ears become a point of access for faith. As you place your expectations on the covenant promises found in the scriptures you will want to listen to and be taught the Word of God.

What you see is access for perception, observation and the sharpening of discernment. You learn to seek out, observe and consider the truth you find in the Word of God. Acceptance of admonition, correction and reproof is the result of embracing the truth. Your heart and mind is a point of access for what you think and feel. So learn to say what God says about you and every facet of your life.

The Book of Psalms 119 describes the scriptures as laws, precepts, statutes and commandments. The Holy Spirit will enable you to learn and obey each one. You have open book access to the instructions you need to guide your life. Whatever question comes to mind, God has provided His answers. The solutions for any test, trial or tribulation are available to you. Everytime you open the Word of God—the Bible—it is full of eternal treasures. They are nuggets for wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. It is your source of counsel, strength, comfort and peace. If you have never read the Bible, try it. I believe you will like and begin to love it. If you read it, do so more often until you learn to study it effectively. And if you



Lord of Hosts

My everlasting Lord and Father Preserver of all men and beast I yield unto Your glorious power Abiding in Your strength and peace

Most holy, sovereign, righteous King To utter Your praise is my delight Lift up my head again to sing My shield, my buckler, path of light

King of glory, counselor, saviour Eternal fortress, great redeemer Near to me, alpha omega Joyful refuge, You're my healer

Your strength perfected in my weakness
My fear is cast out by Your love
My peace is resting in Your presence
Lighting on me like a dove

Lord of Hosts, I worship You Oh Lord of Hosts, I worship You

Waiting for You

God's precious, only Son The true and living Holy One Extends His loving hand To boy, girl, woman and man Saying, "Come to a life anew Here I am waiting for you."

God's precious, only Son The true and living Holy One Extends His loving hand To take you to a joyful land Saying, "Come to a life anew Here I am waiting for you."

God's precious, only Son
The true and living Holy One
Wants to turn your life around
Mind, soul, body, spirit, safe and sound
Saying, "Come to a life anew
Here I am waiting for you."

God's precious, only Son The true and living Holy One The only way to see His face Is turning to His saving grace Saying, "Come to a life anew Here I am waiting for you."

So Is God's Spirit

Gentle winds carry the seed of life To birds, it helps bear up their flight Pushing clouds from place to place A little breeze to refresh a face So is God's Spirit, to renew your life So is God's Spirit, erasing all strife.

Mighty winds uproot and tear down Clearing a path, whirling round and round Pushing with vengeance from place to place Moving things without leaving a trace So is God's Spirit tearing down strongholds So is God's Spirit mighty and bold.

Oh Lord, That I Might Be

Oh Lord, that I might be a city on a hill not hidden
That I might be a signet and a sign of Your glory
That I might be a signpost to direct others to You
That I might be an information booth for those who inquire of Your grace
That I might be a lamp to illuminate the pathway to You
That I might be a light to those walking in darkness
That I might be a lane, street, avenue, boulevard, freeway and expressway leading to Your truth

That I might be a canal, brook and stream to Your river of life, Your living waters

Oh Lord, that I might be all that You created me to be for You.

Confessing the Lord Jesus Christ as Your Saviour

If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour you can do so now. Say the following and mean it from your heart.

Father, your Word says that sin separates us from you. But when Jesus Christ was put on the cross, He bore the sin of the world. The shedding of His blood was the perfect sacrifice necessary to redeem all mankind from the consequences of sin and that sacrifice brought us into right relationship with you. So now, I confess that I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus died for all my sin. I repent of my sin. I renounce and am willing to forsake a life of sin. I ask you to forgive me. I believe in my heart that you have removed sin far from me and put it on the cross. I believe that by your power, you raised Jesus from the dead and He is now Lord over sin and death. As I give my heart to Jesus, I confess Him as my Lord and that I am a new creature. Old things have passed away and all things are become new. Each day, I will place my hope, trust, needs and expectations in You in the name of Jesus.

When you receive Jesus, you have accepted what He has done for you on the cross. You are redeemed and have become a child of God for all eternity.

As many as received him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name. —John 1:12

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Christine Brooks Martin is the bestselling author of prayerbooks, devotionals and inspirational books. Her titles focus on the power of prayer, to evangelize the message of Jesus Christ and help others develop and deepen their relationship with God. Her motto is, "Lord may I share the knowledge of your grace with people I will never see, in places where my feet will never tread." Martin serves in her church administratively as a media assistant. Through her publishing company, Areli MediaWorks, she assists independent authors with publishing Christian literature.

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In His Love and Service,

~ Christine ~

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