

Vegetable Garden Faith

and a

Corvette

By

Scott Russell

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my father: Your devotion to Jesus and simple straight faith has touched more people than you may ever know this side of eternity. You are a humble hero in the faith.

I love you!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the many people who God has used on our journey to encourage and bless. There are too many to mention each of you individually. May God strengthen and keep you in all you do and return His divine favor on your lives.

Jesus Loves You!

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ISBN 978-1-105-18840-4

Contents

	<i>Introduction</i>	4
Chapter One:	<i>A Snap Shot Of Our Lives</i>	6
Chapter Two:	<i>Curses Can Be Blessings</i>	21
Chapter Three:	<i>Unusual Small Events</i>	32
Chapter Four:	<i>Transition</i>	38
Chapter Five:	<i>Those Who God Used To Encourage</i>	46
Chapter Six:	<i>Healing Started</i>	48
Chapter Seven:	<i>Measuring Progress</i>	52
Chapter Eight:	<i>Spirit and Soul</i>	64
Chapter Nine:	<i>Florida</i>	78
Chapter Ten:	<i>Pure Love</i>	87
Chapter Eleven:	<i>The Natural Way</i>	101
Chapter Twelve:	<i>Maintaining Freedom</i>	108
Chapter Thirteen:	<i>Resting In God</i>	116
Chapter Fourteen:	<i>Marriage and Family</i>	120

Chapter Fifteen:	<i>The Children</i>	124
Chapter Sixteen:	<i>Complaining</i>	127
Chapter Seventeen:	<i>So Many Questions</i>	131
Chapter Eighteen:	<i>The End Is the Beginning</i>	140

Foreword

By John Lyon

We all have the option to build possessions for this life that will decay and wither or store up treasures that have an eternal consequence. In Scott's story, not only I have had the great privilege of witnessing his way of life – *a life practicing faith every day or even a faith practicing life every day* – but also his thirst to store treasures that will benefit others in their journey. He will undoubtedly not see all the harvest, but has spent years sowing seeds that will blossom into healthy vibrant channels for God to work His purpose.

As is often the case in the Christian Kingdom, meetings are not coincidental and neither was ours. I was over in Boston during a weekend – over the years I had spent many a weekend travelling on business and bearing the pleasure of one large city that looked not dissimilar to another. I was jetlagged but used to the feeling and woke up late on the Sunday morning - my first thought was it is Sunday, I want to rest and worship⁶ – so quickly showering and dressing, went to the lobby to ask times and directions to the local fellowship of believers. The response was clear - *No Sir, there is not a church within ten blocks of here and at 11.15 am, you would just about make the final hymn.*

I was dejected walking back to the elevator and pressed the button to what I thought was the correct floor. The elevator door opened at floor two – one floor beneath my intended destination – and there was the sound of a familiar chorus coming from a room with an open door. Before I knew it, I was in the middle of a service that felt warm and genuine and at the end of the service was left with an Aussie and a family that seemed to fill half the room – that was my first meeting with Scott some six years ago.

Since that time although separated by the pond, we meet when we can, but more so share fellowship by phone or email. Many of the things Scott introduces in this book I can testify to in terms of accuracy and truth, but that is not the reason for this introduction or this book. The reason is firstly to glorify our God, but secondly to be both a practical guide and a source of inspiration to others coming up in the faith, to be able to tie in scripture with both battling and victorious Christian living in a very practical sense. There are few manuscripts that deal with the practical aspects of this essential part of the Christian faith.

Scott allowed me to review an early draft and I believe there is no better review than to try to see if the words live and inspire – so I gave the draft to a young man who has both a thirst for the faith journey but also searches for real examples so he can be encouraged as he moves higher on his own personal mission.

He concludes *I have read the book from start to finish, I couldn't really stop, I found it to be literally a rollercoaster of emotion, making me laugh, think, cringe, worry, happy, at peace, shocked, saddened, ultimately smile and feel encouraged. I had a sense of recognition with what was being said. When I read and looked at the examples it reminded me of times when I have been in need over the past few months and asked God for help...*

If you are after a theoretical textbook, this book is not for you, but rather if you need encouragement, instruction and examples of overcoming in the Christian life, read on, enjoy, be edified and know you belong to a kingdom that has a cost but also the ultimate reward of an inheritance that surpasses anything our earthly lives can offer or even imagine.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to demonstrate through personal examples that despite how insurmountable the challenges in your life appear that there is a way through it with God. I might be showing my age, but I remember as a kid trying to tune those TV antennas. Someone would walk around the room until we told them to stop because the reception was fixed and the picture could be viewed clearly. But somehow they would always move, and a fuzzy picture would return. My desire is that this book shows you how to move from rabbit ear spiritual antennas to the direct feed from heaven for life. I totally believe we are all born winners with a purpose, but often we never bother to find that purpose and more so we often fail to live like winners while the mud of life sucks us into a stuck position

I will touch on how many live out of the soul or feelings they experience in life rather than pushing past it and walking by the spirit. The Bible clearly separates the soul and the spirit and although this is not a book about such it does reflect on it to provide you with an understanding. There is a huge lack of teaching in this area, which results in believers in Jesus often falling into the trap of running their life through feelings rather than following their faith. Often doing such only brings confusion when life tries to bury us with fears, troubles or uncertainty. I will talk about how to walk by the Spirit and overcome this stumbling block no matter what is going on, in or around your life. Change is possible. You're

never too old, too young, too hurt, too depressed or too confused. There is no time limit on turning to Jesus to help find your way.

I was recently challenged again in myself to write and made many excuses as to why I could not. The next morning a man called and said, "Scott I was in the shower and felt God told me you were supposed to write a book and then God proceeded to give me the plan how," So here is what came out of that. Not the shower, but the challenge to write. This is how Jesus truly became the lover of our soul. A person we could no longer draw a breath without, a person who was real and walking with us and a consciousness of that spirit was born within us. Jesus the lover of my soul!

CHAPTER ONE

A SNAP SHOT OF OUR LIVES

“And in the beginning, God said, let there be light”

Starting my Spiritual Journey of bringing people closer to Christ was an inherent calling within me. To begin, I was raised in a minister’s home in Australia that truly was a Christian home. Throughout my childhood, I have fond memories of my parents helping people in many different walks of life – from biker gangs to Satanists, businessmen to families – they seemed to have gravitated towards my parents for help knowingly or often by happenstance. Regardless, at one time or another, they ended up on doorstep of our lives. Despite the devotion my parents had to assisting those seeking spiritual guidance, they were always able to balance family priorities with ministering. So I never had a time where I felt ignore and rebellious and ran from God. Instead, our Christian life was embraced daily on a knowing that Jesus never fails us.

I fondly recall my father sharing with me ways to avoid temptation particularly in my teen years, so I could humbly remain on the chosen path. One time in particular I remember him telling me, “Son, never take your first drink and you never have to worry about becoming an alcoholic.” It was smart advice that to this day I have followed. I never raised a glass of alcohol to my lips, and witnessing the destruction it has made of many people’s lives, I’m glad I heeded his good advice to this day. Along these lines, drugs

also fell into this same category. My parents were the ones called by God to pick up the broken pieces of the many lives destroyed by these manmade vices—by what the world said was OK to depend upon instead of seeking solace in a higher power.

I deeply respect my father for what he has taught me. He is a man of admirable faith and is the longest standing minister in the city where he labors. And in over 50 years of ministry has seen every possible scenario of self-induced human suffering you can imagine. Thousands of people have been positively affected by my parents in ways small and large. I believe people listened to them because they honestly “practiced what they preached” and were consistent in how they lived their life. There was no duplicitous behavior - what they were at home they were in public.

They loved the unlovable, the lost, and the hopeless, and I saw Jesus through them and was raised in a happy home of love. I understand that his life is quite different from many others, but I believe like my parents, I too was called forward to follow this path of ministering to those in need. From a very early age, I surrendered my life to Jesus and never looked back.

Of course, I still made mistakes, and still do, I’m human, and I have to deal with sin and temptation like everyone else. However, underlying it all, there was never a day where I refused Jesus in my life. How could I? I witnessed the miracles He provided to those suffering nearly every day.

As a child I remember going to meetings held by my parents and seeing people enter the room walking with a cane and leaving with it proudly held over their shoulder. I also recall an elderly Chinese woman come in with a withered hand and be healed. I remember miracle provisions given to my parents. Incredible miracles continuously unfolded around me, and I feel privileged to have seen them at such an early age. This was not a religion of rules. Rather, it was a daily relationship with Jesus.

Being raised in this environment was infectious.

I've seen disheartened people daily who kept showing up ask for help because they became slaves to money, careers, drugs, alcohol, abuse – everything you can think of but sooner or later – usually when they hit rock bottom, they knew deep down what they needed was healing – what they needed was Jesus.

In witnessing remarkable changes that people experienced after coming to follow Jesus, I never even considered a life other than devoting myself to do the same, and helping people as my parents have for so many years.

By way of formal education, I did not attend a seminary or “cemetery” as my father jokingly called them. My father told me the story of picking up a hitchhiker one day who turned out to be a professor at a seminary. Ironically, he did not believe in God. Many a good man has thought seminary would serve them well only to find out it drained the life right out of them. So rather, I studied

in many ministry training classes my father held, and completed a video Bible school; but early on as important as the word of God was I knew that I must always walk an intimacy with Jesus and everything would flow from that knowing.

I wasn't the only child in my family to follow this path. I have one sister who along with her long-time husband, also a son of a preacher, are both ministers in a city called Townsville in Australia. She always lived a deep relationship with Jesus as well, and has gone on to various ministry positions with her husband.

For me, I married my best friend Lara in 1990 and now many years later have seven children, six boys: Nathan, Daniel, Joshua, Joel, David, and Benjamin; and one girl, Bethany-Anne. Lara also grew up in a religious family, but came into a personal relationship with Jesus when a friend brought her to my father's church. She too embraced Jesus and never looked back. His loving arms touched her and brought fulfillment into her life.

Together, Lara and I started our spiritual journey, and found many creative ways to finance our mission travels. We did so because we were being groomed to take over my father's church. During this time we travelled extensively, and during these travels we were learning for ourselves first-hand, the miracles that can be worked into one's life.

One young Japanese girl we introduced to Jesus later returned to Japan, but could not find a church that was flowing in Christ. They

all had their religious dogma and wanted to pound those teachings into anyone who walked through the door. She reached out to us, so Lara and I flew to Japan to help her find some true believers.

When you seek, you find. Upon arriving in Japan, we met a man named Sam Benedict in Nara, Japan, who helped us on our mission, which later led to many trips to Japan helping to lead people to Jesus.

We ministered in homeless churches and worked with a man referred to by residents as the “Billy Graham of Japan”, Dr. Paul Ariga. We took teams of young people to Japan to teach new followers about Jesus. We would go onto the streets during New Year’s with a group of Japanese in Kobe, another large city in Japan, and sing and rejoice in the Lord so others would hear and learn. Nearly a million people would walk past us on the way to the temple, which in Japanese New Year tradition would provide them a fresh start for another year. But lost and hurting, as so they appeared, while they filed past us, we would try to reach out to as many as possible.

Another missionary journey brought us to South Africa. We went into downtown Johannesburg, where Caucasians weren’t typically found. I remember standing on a flower pot speaking to people about Jesus. A man came from the crowd and asked for prayer. He was a murderer who had confessed his crime and been forgiven by

the government during an amnesty. But his soul was in torment, and in reaching out to us, he surrendered his life to Jesus.

Our missions in South Africa took us to remote townships and homelands - ministering however and wherever we could; praying for people and fellowshiping with those who were seeking Jesus, as we travelled through Zambia and into Zimbabwe.

Next we moved onto China where we smuggled Bibles into Beijing. Understand that at the time it was not an open country to where Bibles were easily accessible to people. While catching a train from Beijing, our bags were put through an X-ray scan, which were packed with Bibles. We just prayed. I half expected to see someone run out of the little X-ray room and arrest us, but it never happened. Thank God. On the return trip home we still had the Bibles, so I removed them from Lara's bag and filled mine knowing the bags would again be X-rayed. And yet again, we were safe. While in China, we declined to meet with what was then the underground church as we felt it may draw unwanted attention that we did not wish to have on the local Christians. So we distributed the Bibles, scattering them throughout the city. Our taxi driver actually got fined for speeding, so we gave him a Bible with the money for the fine tucked away on the page with John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

Our journey didn't end there. The Philippines was next and was probably the hardest on both Lara and me. During one such trip, Lara was 5 months pregnant. She was amazing, but it was difficult to say the least. Her feet swelled from the heat and we were sleeping on a school room floor. Not the best of accommodations. On one side, the school room had four-foot tall palm walls, and on the other side lived a cow that as you might imagine was quite noisy. She never complained but thank God that trip was short as we were only there for a conference to train church leaders. In tow with us was our oldest son Nathan who was a baby at the time, and considering we always went to remote areas, it was always a challenge to resist culture shock. Admittedly, the first night there, Lara and I were questioning God as to why we were here AGAIN? But deep down we knew we must trust in our chosen path and forge ahead with the knowing that Jesus would reveal the answers, in His time, not ours.

We have so many stories from the Philippines but I will just mention a few to provide the reader with context for which to understand our journey.

While in the Philippines, we trained youth ministers, preached, met hundreds of people with whom we prayed and came to love these wonderful Pilipino people. I had food poisoning twice while on these trips. It was "hell on earth" given the comforts of home one becomes accustomed to having (like indoor plumbing). I remember

at around 3:00 am, sitting on the edge of a camp stretcher, and said “Jesus, please wake someone to pray for me.”

Later I found out that my father woke at that exact same time and prayed. I was healed at 3:00 am, in the Philippines feeling as if I were dying but instead finally slept the rest of the night in peace.

It was in the Philippines we learned the hard way, what sacrifice in missions can be like.

One trip, we travelled all night on a boat and the pastor accompanying us did not wish to leave the boat with us as it was dark and he was concerned about kidnap ransoms. So we remained on the boat, and in the middle of the night had many unwelcome visitors. Imagine waking up and seeing your wife sleeping on a bench across from you, with others sleeping scattered around the room, and on the floor around them all were literally thousands of cockroaches. It was like the floor was moving. I saw them climbing onto Lara’s bench and thought they were probably on mine as well. I was so tired I just prayed and went back to sleep. But then I was awoken by the noise of a man trying to get to us through the locked glass door. Obviously I never opened the door as a man who was cleaning the room indicated I should not. I never knew what the man wanted and never bothered to find out.

Another time, I was asked to drive up a goat track road to bring people to a wedding. The back of the jeep was packed full of people, and as I drove down one hill to get up another, I thought

there is no way we will ever get back given these steep road conditions, and sure enough we did not. On the return trip, the steering snapped when we hit a rock and we were stuck in the middle of nowhere for hours. We tried everything we could think of and prayed heavily. Then suddenly a man appeared out of the jungle (can you imagine?) and climbed under the truck, pulled the broken part off and left. He was back in not more than an hour with it repaired and reinstalled it. Minutes later, we were praising Jesus as we finally safely drove out of there.

Whether we were crossing cable bridges, six-inch wide coconut lumber bridges, or walking for what seemed like hours up some remote mountain to a small church, these missions were all in preparation for our coming to the United States.

Before that however, we very nearly moved to Singapore by the invitation of a church that had about 2,000 members all less than 30 years of age. We were challenged by their enthusiasm as we realized they are not ashamed to follow Jesus with great passion. But we realized that it was not for us as God had other plans. There were other countries we ministered in to include Malaysia, the United States, and New Zealand and were lining up to head into North African nations with a ministry we had done a lot of work with when God interrupted it all.

I kept seeing an advertisement to obtain your Green card or residency in the USA. We had ministered in the U.S previously but

had no desire, at the time, to live there. We were getting ready to take the church over from my father in Australia, and by this time had established a small mission's organization reaching into Africa and Asia. But the ad kept popping up; so I submitted an application through what is called the "Green card lottery", we received a letter back saying we had the right to apply. We had a man in our church that worked for the U.S. State Department, and he informed us that unless we planned to live in the United States that we should forget it. So we did!

I threw the letter in a drawer and forgot about it until four weeks later I received a telephone call from a man who I had absolutely no prior dealings with, essentially he was a stranger. Come to find out, this man belonged to a religious cult and in the past had come around our group shouting out at us in an effort to disturb our preaching, usually at times when we were singing with a group on the street. Understand we had nothing to do with each other so to the reasons why he was calling me at my house was a mystery. I suppose God knew I needed a shock to wake up. This man went on to informed me he was surfing the internet and stumbled upon my name that said I had a Green card. He could not tell me where he found that information but went on to rebuke me for not following through with getting it.

The entire conversation was quite strange, that when I hung up, I thought "God that had to be You." So I sent in the application and was selected in the next round to apply.

I will admit, I fought this idea the whole way and when they handed me the visa and asked if I had any questions I said to the man, “Why am I doing this I don’t want to live in the USA?” He probably thought I was crazy, perhaps I was.

But I couldn’t help but wonder why would God interrupt our lives at that time? We sure did not know then but we knew we had to come and find out as to the reasons why. It took us just under a year to remove ourselves from the ministry positions we were in and we left for the U.S.

Upon arriving in San Francisco, in only three days, we burned through a third of our money heading for Washington, DC. We had ministered in a church there in the past, where an Australian friend was involved. We were getting scared as we had not only ourselves but our children to care for. To give the reader some perspective, we had sold a small business we had in Australia, and invested the funds with a highly-recommended Christian man who successfully lost all our money, and then disappeared. We decided to let it go rather than spend our lives chasing him down. So needless to say, we were at the end of our financial rope.

I had thought I was a man of faith who knew how to trust Jesus; but arriving in the U.S., migrating to a country with your family without money and no real end point was terrifying. The fear was only slightly out weighted by the desire to serve God. So you can

imagine as we started to ask God many questions not all were answered.

“God, why” was repeated often.

To add to this, at the time, the church in Australia was struggling and my parents were asking the same “why” questions.

They never pressured us to return but did say on a number of occasions to us: why would God bring you to the U.S. at the expense of the church back home. The church was struggling with the change of us leaving and our hearts hurt from afar. But we knew we had to be here, although we never did come up with a reason that satisfied those asking why, but we knew God had a plan and we were in it for the long haul.

Eventually, God started to show us how much we followed Him but really did not believe in what He wanted to show us. You see, in prayer we saw the U.S. crying out for Jesus—thousands, millions of people wanting a faith that worked and were looking, we felt, toward Jesus. I will admit that I could not believe the American culture could ever want such a spiritual intervention. So God had to deal with me straight away to help me believe that this was why me and Lara and our children were here.

It was through prayer back in 2000 that I saw what I believe to be the collapse of the US currency (greed), and how at that time I started to witness people reaching out for a true connection to God.

I was hearing stories from them of how they were growing tired of the false “Gods” of this world that had failed them. They were tired of slaving for the almighty dollar and addictions, and wanted a real connection with Jesus who would help change their lives.

In the Lord’s Prayer where Jesus said, “Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us” started to take on a whole new meaning for us. Our lack of belief was something God intended to change within us as we began to walk an assurance of Jesus’ love, and what He wants for our lives. We know He supernaturally brought us to the U.S. at a time full of great pain, confusion and mistrust of government, big business and even the Church (organized religion). Yet we have had a wonderful life here so far, despite the human challenges and struggles we have faced. Whatever you may believe in, we know for certain our lives took a new direction, and there is no way to return to what we were before coming here. We too have grown spiritually in our connection to Jesus.

Before leaving Australia, a man who did not know us nor where we were going, stepped essentially out of nowhere and delivered a prophetic word to our lives saying in part: *“For such a time as that ahead of you is that I have plucked you out and caused you to go; that you might learn the wisdom and might learn the ways of different nations. Even to bear the stirring of different nations, and sound the alarm in the ears of other people who are still asleep and have not woken up to what will come their way. The voice of the Lord shall be a prophetic voice in that hour; and you will bring*

an announcement to one nation and then to another and God will slip you out of one nation and into another and the voice of the Lord shall cause great men to prepare the house of the Lord and to prepare for the harvest, as well as for the safe keeping of the house of God. A day of trouble lies ahead and when it breaks open it will be swift. But you will learn how to move even swifter says the Lord. I will show you how to come into a country and come out of it unharmed. And I will give you favor and protection in those days, and I will take care of you and I will make you as a man for as a voice to a side of a world that will be in trouble and in great distress. The house of the Lord will be alarmed and will be able to prepare because you will speak of the rumblings that you have heard that others have not heard by way of distance—they will not hear what you hear, but you will hear not only because you are in their midst, you will have a discerning eye to see political situations and upheavals rise up; and the mind of the Lord will be upon you to understand what to do with that time. Great wisdom awaits you as you take a step into the future. Do not be alarmed woman of God, for what I have called you both to do shall bring safety to many and I will cause you to be safe, that I might secure others in a day of trouble. I will watch over you. I will provide for you and I will keep you. Have I not worked miracles on your behalf already? Yes miracles await your journey—miracles of provision, miracles of housing, miracles of keeping, miraculous provision from God to transport you from one place to another in great safety. Let your hearts be at peace unto God who has called you out for many to hear your voice.”

So with that I humbly submit our journey in America to you, and encourage you to read and understand we are a pair of ordinary people with ordinary fears who met with Jesus in a fresh way and

were forever changed. Jesus loves America, Jesus loves you, and as missionaries to the U.S. I can say this is a great nation that God desires to draw to Himself.

What man means for evil God can turn for good. God is in control.

CHAPTER TWO

CURSES CAN BE BLESSINGS

Here we were in the Boston area after many years on our faith journey with seven children and a wonderful expectation for the future. We were yard sale hopping on a great sunny New England day and here I was driving away from a yard sale having bought a corvette. Did I want a car, no! Was I looking or had I even given a car a thought prior to this yard sale? No!

I tried to drive away but felt compelled that I was supposed to buy it. I had no idea if it was even a good price but that inner prompting that we had spent so many years learning to listen to, that small voice within, that prompting of what I understood to be the Holy Spirit, was prompting me to buy it. Little did I know that Corvette was to provide for us provision in Gods daily plan for our lives.

A man turned up rather suddenly one day when I was outside with the car, and pulled a roll of bills out of his pocket and he wanted the car then and there. I had been trying to sell it but this was an abrupt surprise. Minutes later he was driving away and the Corvette had been sold for a profit. But then a week later he called and said it was an impulse buy and he wanted his money back. He explained that if I took it back I could keep a good portion of the money. As I listened to him on the phone I felt that I should not react, but to politely hang up and call him back. This would allow me the time to think and steer clear of the emotion. When I called him back later

that day he explained he was prepared to pay me a considerable amount of money to take repossession of the car. So I agreed, on the condition it was in the same condition as when it left my driveway and later he returned with the car and gave me cash the amount of profit that I made on the car anyway. I did not haggle or negotiate aside from complaining about a scratch. God had just sent the car out for a week and returned it giving me the profit.

It was an unusual story but I had spent years learning to understand God is creative in how He provides for us. I was not in the car business and had no intention of ever being so, but this car just fell in my lap. I really wondered where to go from here and was looking forward to seeing the car gone. A few weeks later the car sold to an overseas buyer and a truck came and picked it up. Off it went never to be seen again. God definitely adds interest to life if you can keep the right attitude and see that behind what could seem like a curse is often a blessing.

Some people carry that over to the extreme, and say that God makes them sick or is oppressing them. I won't even go into that other than to say, they obviously don't know Jesus as a spiritual provider but rather view their life from a religious dogma perspective. In other words, they can't see beyond the hurt but rather stay mired in the problem.

Many times we have found ourselves in situations that we could not see God present at the time and for sure would rather be in

circumstances that were easier. Let's face it I love comfort like anyone else, and man is a creature of comfort so we generally take the path of least resistance—the proverbial easy road.

Speaking of comfort, beginning our journey in Boston we discovered freezing temperatures and snow. These are not really something Australians have to deal with on a regular basis. We grew up in the colder part of Australia, but had never experienced the cold of New England. Really it was a whole new way of doing things and this one day our car decided the cold was too much. So here we were stranded in downtown Boston with a broken down car, freezing temperatures and in need of tools of some type to get this old car of ours running again.

I have to admit I was not amused at all as it was dark, cold, miserable and the car decided to stop at the most inconvenient time. I wandered into a store to ask if they had some tools I could borrow, and to my surprise met the store owner who became a real God connection. He was a Jewish man and it was through the car breaking down we met. This man opened his office to my family. You see every day we had been driving into Boston to stand on the Boston Common and pray publically. We would remain there for hours as a family singing and simply praying. Not necessarily to touch people but rather to find Gods heart in what we were doing and we wanted to be in the middle of where He showed us it would happen. We did this for at least six weeks nearly every day. Being that winter was just so cold most people paid us little if any heed

and rushed past. There was one time we just forgot where we were and had a great time worshipping God. It was not like we made a huge fanfare spectacle of ourselves. We were just doing what we knew how to do. This one day, when we opened our eyes (literally), there stood a small crowd of about five to six people standing there watching us. It was as if they were mesmerized by what they were witnessing. We stood there looking at them they stood there looking at us, then I spoke to one of them for a few minutes and we left. I like to think God touched them in some small way and on that cold winter's afternoon a small piece of heaven arrived on the Boston Common. We return there many days and stood out on the common in the freezing temperatures. Honestly, some days it was a real struggle to keep the right attitude. So back to the car breaking down, in these wintery conditions, there was nowhere easy to sit out of the cold, but this kind store owner opened his premises to us. Following this one particular event, me and my family spent many a good times sitting in his office praying and talking together. Now he did not pray with us, but was a God sent individual. It was this man who years later would give us a rent free house in a very affluent part of Boston. The crisis of our car breaking down opened a wonderful door of blessings. Sure it was a struggle to see the good when the car stopped, but God had His plan. We have started to understand that what the devil means for evil God turns for good if we keep the right attitude and trust the lover of our soul Jesus Christ.

Paul and Silas in Acts 16 prayed for a slave girl who had a spirit of divination or fortunetelling. She brought her masters a good source of income and that stopped when the girl was set free from the demon. They helped a girl terribly oppressed by the devil and as a reward were beaten and locked in prison. In the middle of what could have been misery they were singing and praying when to top off what was already a disaster an earthquake happened. Picture it, whipped, locked in jail for a good deed, locked down in some dark hole and then an earthquake shakes the foundations of the prison where you are held. It would have seemed like God was even shaking your world, personally I would call that a bad day. Paul and Silas were so relaxed in the knowledge of God's will for their lives the same day they saved the jailer's life and ended up leading his family to a knowledge of Christ and having their wounds washed. They even ate dinner at the jailer's house. It really is true that if you can keep your eyes on Jesus and look through a situation to Jesus you will pass through to what God has for you. Sometimes dire situations are thrust upon us, things outside our control happen, but rest assure if you keep your eyes on Jesus it will work out.

That old car had come from a miracle itself. On arriving in the US we stayed in Washington, DC, but really felt God wanted us in Boston. We did not know anybody in Boston and we were feeling very frustrated that life was taking many turns we never expected. We had been raised in an understanding of faith that really God was changing. He was taking it to a personal relational level. In frustration one Friday Lara said we should just get in the car and

drive to Boston. I thought it was a great idea only we never had a car. It was the following Monday we were given a car by a total stranger. He owned a dealership and as I walked through his lot past many different cars I thought, “wow this is the one”, as I saw beautiful modern automobiles. To my surprise he walked right in between the nice cars to this old Chevy. It had patchy paint and even some surface rust on the panels. Really, I must have looked so ungrateful. I thanked him but was so out there I had to fix my attitude as to why God would give us such an old clunker.

The whole scenario was humorous in a way. It would not be much later that God made the way for us to live in the Boston Ritz Carlton for a prolonged two month stay. I remember driving that old Chevy up to the door to unload the family and bags. You can imagine what must have gone through the minds of the upper class to see what looked like the Beverley Hillbillies arrive. We even drove down the interstate with a full sized refrigerator on the roof of that car. Maybe you saw us and had a good laugh. Anyway the car was a blessing and although it looked like a clunker it seemed to only ever break down when we had someone to meet. It was a tool not just a car.

We had started to understand that what you are prepared to accept, you will get. Jesus said in Matthew 9 when talking to blind men, “Let it be done according to your faith.” If your faith wants to burn candles for light, then candles you will have. But if you say it is not in lust to use the lights I will believe God for the electric bill. That

may sound weird but I once heard of a couple who were burning candles as they were scared to trust for the electric bill.

I had grown up seeing my parents live trusting in Jesus Christ. My father worked as an associate pastor for a church and at one time the church people did what they seem to do so well and became critical of him taking a wage. My father without telling anyone declined to take wages from that point. My earliest memories of trusting Jesus were formed watching my parents lay what little money we had on the table and we would pray over it. Then we would give it away and when we came home there would be money under the door or in the mailbox. One time my father had to pay the rent and was approximately \$88 short. He decided to go to the real estate office anyway and while reaching into his coat felt something inside. Without his knowing, someone had pinned \$88 in small bills inside his coat. Turns out, it was a man who thought it would be a funny joke to do this but God knew the truth and so did we.

Not unlike most mothers, my own carried the responsibility of washing and feeding our family of four. At times the pressure would really grind on her. There were times she felt she could not even afford to buy us an ice cream cone, and Jesus always seemed to minister to her in some special way. This one day my mother was down the back of the house doing the washing and complaining to God that she had run out of soap. She said something like “when Len worked for the airlines they paid his wages but working for you

God we can't even wash our clothes." While she was going at it with God, there was a knock on the door and a man handed my father a full size bottle of soap for washing clothes. He took it dumbfounded and walked it to "mum" at the back of the house where she broke down in gratitude. They looked for that man immediately afterwards, but he was nowhere to be found. That truly is a God of love. Many times we expect a lightning bolt for our attitude but He gives us love instead. He just needs us to be honest, as He can work with that. It may sound unusual to one who does not walk such paths, but surely without such small miracles we would all be in real trouble.

So to watch my parents was one thing but when my turn came that was something quite different. Lara and I decided early on we would never sleep in the car or miss a meal and God took us to that level and built from there. To be honest I thought I was a man of faith, and stepping out when our world fell away around us I realized how little I really had at the time. Like many, we mistake a system of religion or friends for faith. But God wants to push past that and take care of us.

October 1999 was our first day in Boston and Lara and I arrived with our two only sons at the time, Nathan and Daniel. We arrived at about 10:00 am allowing plenty of time for God to help us find somewhere to stay. It was the Columbus Day holiday and hotels were full in the city. Especially the ones our faith level was at, meaning what we felt we could afford and expected God to bring

us the money to pay for it. We could probably have checked into a five-star hotel, but there was no way we felt secure that God would pay for it so we never even looked at this option. We wandered all around Boston without a clue as to where to go. We followed our faith instincts, and wherever our steering wheel took us is where we went. Honestly it was a horrible feeling of not belonging or fitting anywhere. There were no friends to call, no family to seek out—we were truly on our own. Instead we sat in a mall until closing time at 6pm and thought that something would happen but nothing did. I guess at that time as we were so new to this way of life we presumed God would bring someone to us and we could just wait for it. Although that is possible and does happen I think with relationship with God comes the ability to hear what to do and where to go. Sure there are times to wait and this was one, but our sitting idle was probably coming from despair and frustration and God was ever so gently trying to help us that I for one never pushed past the self pity to see His hand. I walked out feeling almost depressed, like I was failing my family wondering why did it not happen like we had become accustomed to being told it should, like you may read in a book that the saving grace will miraculously show up when needed.. However, if you let your mind run freely, it reacts like a wild bull. It sure can be hard to get back in the paddock. I got up to walk out of the mall but instead felt compelled to stay right up until closing at 6:00 pm on the dot. So reluctantly we did.

Then back to the car we went, wandering aimlessly. Our faith was faltering and at about 10:00 pm we decided to pull into a church parking lot, and sleep in the car behind it. We were tired of having hotels tell us we are full. We were tired of crying kids and being crammed up in that old clunker. After driving into the parking lot we just could not bring ourselves to remain there and started to drive back out of the church driveway which was very long. Right then a car came the other way and stopped, and we ended up talking. It was the youth leader, who told us he had visitors at his house from out of town and had never been to the church at that time of night but something compelled him to go to the church. If we had of walked out of the mall earlier we would have missed him. He called his pastor to ask if we could stay the night in the church apartment and was told by the pastor to get rid of us as we were not part of their denomination. He was honest with us, but just could not do it. He drove us to the hotel where he spent part of his honeymoon and to our surprise paid for the room. God was starting to do amazing things for us, that we took the time to notice. We are still many years' later friends with that man and his family.

That night, I fell into that hotel room bed and wanted that to be a much needed, very long night of rest. My faith was so much in its infancy stage at this point that instead of being thankful to God and resting in the knowledge He had us covered I immediately began to worry where we would be tomorrow night. We went back the next morning to that church to thank the man and see if he was

someone God had us to connect with in some way. After all, our meeting was miraculous, but he made it very obvious he did not wish to get friendly probably thinking we were looking for another night, I'm not really sure, we just quietly left. God had already planned the accommodation for the next few days and thankfully we walked almost right into it. Again someone we met by divine appointment paid for the next three nights at the hotel. God was showing us He is in control and that he had us covered as we walk His will.

The path of a relationship with Jesus takes many twists and turns and like any relationship it requires work and trust. Not just a mental assent but a deep trust that is built by an assurance that God is in control (a point I can't emphasize enough and one that I will repeatedly make throughout this book), and as we walk His plan for life we will overcome the obstacles we face along the way.

CHAPTER THREE

UNUSUAL SMALL EVENTS

Sleep can be so wonderful. After you have slept on an uncomfortable bed for many nights you almost loath going to bed. Such had been our bed for quite a while. We had tried boards under it for support, tried turning the mattress, you name it, but nothing seemed to help. Someone had offered to buy us a new bed, but we knew they were not in a financial position to do this so we never took them up on their offer. Lara and I feel pretty strongly that we do not exist at other people's expense. If we knew it was hurting them in any way we would avoid or stop it immediately. For example early on in our move to the U.S. a church paid us a small stipend each month until we requested they stop. We knew they were struggling and did not have the funds as they were going into debt to help us and we could not in good conscience take their money while their financial struggles continued. Certainly to give in sacrifice is Godly, but not in pain. I am reminded of Mark 12 of the widow who gave a penny and Jesus said she gave more than all the rich who made a display of their giving, all because she gave out of her lack, while others gave out of abundance. Sacrificial giving is derived from God and in our travels most who gave did it as a sacrifice. But to accept when you know it is potentially burying the person is something we are not comfortable with continuing. The purposes for this way of thinking will be made clear as you continue to read our story.

No doubt, our bodies sure wanted that new bed to provide comfort. We had not been telling our need to people, rather, we tell God and believe He will tell the right people. To hint, manipulate, or ask can hardly be a good way to do things and we have tried to avoid this at all costs. Many times we have not wanted to meet people or talk with someone until we know in our hearts that our motives are right. But a lady came to us and told us she felt embarrassed to ask, but she wanted to know if we needed a new bed. She was a bed saleslady at one time and had bought this bed brand new and was not able to use it. Her situation had changed and it was in her way in her home. God once again showed us He was concerned with even the small details of our life. A good night's sleep came again to the Russell house, and oh the bliss of it.

Years earlier we had seen another unusual miracle with a bed. The store keeper lost his temper started to shout and it all went from there. It was another time we needed a new bed. We had seen a small mattress retailer near our house but every time we passed by it was closed. Finally one day, it was open, and I went in to see what we could get. The owner was a little impatient, but quite nice asking what I wanted in a bed. I explained how much we had (as we actually had the cash to pay for it) and he showed me two beds from which to choose. We came too agreed on a bed, and I told him I would go to the bank get the cash and come back in 15 minutes.

Fifteen minutes later I walked back into the store, with the cash and out of nowhere he raised his voice and almost yelling saying, “You want a bed, take a bed.” He repeated that until I chose a bed and he helped me carry it out and put it on our van. We drove off down the road with a free bed, wondering what just happened. The store owner knew we went to get the money, but he never wanted it. God had done something surprising, yet again, and to this day I have no idea what went on while we were gone. God was interested in the small details of our lives. I would like to say I knew God was doing something, however, in all reality we were just buying a bed from a mattress store.

The miracles kept coming, and the Brazilian barbeque was next. Our new friend Jean had been involved with religious systems, but was seeking a pure faith and trust in God. He was drawn to the freshness of what Jesus was doing in our lives and we met many times for prayer. I found during these times business owners appreciated a faith life as they are usually the ones who have had to pay a price to be where they are and when at times they seemed like failures, they were able by some miracle to survive. But this Brazilian man owned a few businesses and one was a restaurant that sold pizza and BBQ. It was one day he called me to his office and told me I was to use his restaurant as if I was an owner. He said I was to never pay, and that I and my family could eat as much and as often as we wanted. What an amazing offer! Lara and I took our children there many times always making sure we never took advantage of the blessing. But many times, it was what fed our

family when the cupboard was bare. It was an incredible time of God's provision walking ahead of us. From time to time, I would check in with him to make sure he was still OK with his offer but he was a man of his word who continued to bless us and made it clear he never saw it as a burden. For about four years this continued until he sold the restaurant. This man was himself being drawn into a deeper understanding and consciousness of God in his life.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 6 – “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”

I am convinced over many years of living this way that God will never let you miss a meal. Of course you may not always have a five course meal, but there will be days you will. One needs to be grateful in all things as they are a blessing that comes as you rest in God and the knowledge He loves you and is providing for you in unusual and creative ways.

Another business owner who rented those kiddies moon bounces continues to be part of our life. Once, he dropped off one of his bounces for our kids to play with and never charged us. We never presumed to ask him for such a thing, but he would always offer.

Jesus is so interested in meeting the needs of every member of your family. I have found that as you bless others not out of a motive to get anything from them, but out of a genuine love and care to see them reach the best God wants for them, then they will always show their appreciation in small and large ways. Even if they don't, no matter what, remember never to do it to get anything in return. Your reward came as you saw God use you to help and encourage them on their path in life – no matter how large or small. I always remind myself Jesus is my provider not a man, and if I start to see a man as my provider I will pull away from that man until I feel my heart is honorable and I can serve them in purity and sincerity.

Our moon bounce man friend I believe just enjoyed the encouragement and fellowship. We were a way of talking about Jesus minus the religion that had offended and hurt him so many times. But one day this man came and asked for prayer. His life despite owning his own business was a financial mess. He was ready to throw in the towel and leave the country to return to his homeland. So we prayed together and asked for a miracle and how that miracle came was indeed amazing to all involved.

The moon bounce business turned into a pizza business. He had been working nights in a pizza shop and one day out of nowhere his boss decided to close the restaurant as his wife had become ill. He offered to work managing the restaurant for him, but the decision was to close it and focus on the family health. Then out of nowhere, the owner approached him and wanted to give him the

restaurant that he had owned for many years that was well-established and successful. You read it correctly; I said *gave it to him*. Overnight he went from a pizza maker to owner. He had his miracle and we sat together eating pizza in his new pizza shop. Again, God provided food for us in an unusual way. Neither of us ever expected such a thing but God knew all along how much He wanted to bless if we would just get out of His way and let Jesus do what He does best and that is take care of us.

A relationship with Jesus where He is becoming your daily dependence is an amazing and wonderful experience.

Lara and I have travelled the world, been to remote parts of Africa and Asia, New Zealand, Australia and the U.S. encouraging people in their faith in Jesus. We have done caving, abseiling, motor cross, scuba diving, rock climbing, skiing, snowboarding—and the list goes on and on. However, never was there a thrill like trusting Jesus with our life. It is a thrill that the more you give it the greater security it brings you while providing greater fulfillment. Funny thing, though, it is a walk the religious never understand and the non believers give respect to as they say we are living what we believe.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRANSITION

Our lives continued on the same path. God was redefining everything. Teaching and showing us how much He cares for every detail of life.

We were back living in Virginia and going through a time of financial distress. We had three children at this time and Lara was pregnant with Joel, our fourth son. Some of the people around us were good folks who really cared, but just could not understand what we were doing and as a result we seemed to be in a bit of a wilderness as far as connecting to people. Our needs stacked up as finances just seemed to stop. It was at this time Lara stood in line at a fast food restaurant. She was using our last few dollars with some coupons to get the kids a treat. We figured there was no point in holding onto the last few dollars anyway. As she was getting closer in the line, the lady in front of her for no apparent reason turned around and handed her a \$20 bill. We had been in a real test of our faith and endurance.

During this time, the pastor of the church that we were attending wanted Lara and I to be under his authority so that he could direct what we do. In the church world control is a huge issue where many men with good intentions try to manipulate people to live their lives how they see fit. It is a rare thing to meet a pastor who is content to encourage you in your own journey and not ultimately

try to change what you are doing; such was the case in this church. Because we remained independent and would not come under his authority to direct us, we were told people were giving money for us to the pastor, but the pastor would not release it to us. Money or the use of it is an easy way to control and manipulate people. You see when you appear to have nothing some men will try and take advantage of that to get you to follow their direction. If you do as they want the money from them flows if you do not they do not give. Many people never reach Gods' best because they have a misconception that they need the money. Of course we all need money, but the source is not man, but rather Jesus. If you ever look to man there will always be a problem as nothing is forever when it comes to men. Also more often than not in the church world they will only give to you if there is something in it for them in return. It should not be this way but in reality it is. I guess some think a gift gives them the right to tell you their opinions and directions.

To have nothing and to not be able to see a solution when in a tight spot really is chaos to the natural status quo of our lives. As a father sometimes I would struggle with not being able to provide my kids with more. They never complained or felt they were missing out but it sure had been a struggle for me many times. I often wondered if it was ever possible to get comfortable enough with trusting God that these concerns were not an issue. Many years later I was to start understanding that my expectations were often superimposed by a society that expects a certain standard. For example, people think all children must have a bedroom of their own and suffer if

they don't. It was years later we would live in a ten bedroom home and our kids most nights all slept in the one room anyway as they were such great friends.

We continued to be in a tight financial spot and fought moment by moment to control the thoughts of fear from overwhelming us. It is funny that in such times you want to buy your children things they are not even asking for. I guess life, or the devil, has a way of trying to remind us of our frailty and lack. You start thinking everyone else has it so should we, and have to stop that thinking from getting hold of us.

But here we were giving the kids some fast food and God had provided an extra \$20 from a total stranger.

Lara later that day was walking in the mall for exercise and there in front of her was \$5 bill. So we had \$25 and headed straight to the grocery store to get some of the essentials we needed. Walking through the store one of my sons came and handed me another \$20 he found. So we had \$45, and it brought enough food to carry us through until there was a financial release. It may not sound like much, but it is a fortune when you have nothing.

Jesus was taking care of us.

Questions can be raised like, "Why God? Why do we have to go without when others are prospering and never giving a thought to how to pay to put gas in their car or food on the table?"

In the Bible, Jeremiah raised some similar questions. In chapter 12 Jeremiah re-affirms Gods ways are righteous, and I believe he did that as really he was questioning in his own life why he struggles when the wicked prosper. Jeremiah says, “God let’s talk about your judgments.” Honestly many times I have been like Jeremiah delicately putting some questions to God. I don’t want to complain, but feel sometimes I need to wrestle in myself and get to the point of saying yet again, “God you know what you are doing.” Or as Jeremiah put it *righteous are you ob God.*

I do know that in the middle of these trials God does amazing things although sometimes it seems like dribbles from a tap when we feel we need a bucket load. However, in the end I am reminded of what God answers Jeremiah saying. “If you have run with footmen, and they wore you out, then how can you compete with horses? And if you trusted in the land of peace, then how will you do in the swelling of Jordan?”

Or in our terms: If these daily needs wear you out, how will you do with the greater things for your life? If you trusted in easy times, how will you do when things are not going your way in adversity?

God knows it is a battle for us to walk paths of dependency on Him, but He also knows that as we keep our eyes on Him that He will take care of us in amazing ways. Sure we could have complained about the situation, but God was at work building our character to hold the calling and purposes of God for our lives. Its

times like these we react one of two ways. They either drive us to Jesus or from Jesus. We can hold onto Jesus and believe He will help us; or we run, get angry at God because things did not come out exactly as we wanted. Most begin this process by the circumstances which expose us as to how far we actually are from Jesus. Of course we always think we are doing well until the circumstance threatens to bury us. Looking objectively it would be fair to say initially most do pull away a bit and struggle with self-pity, fear, and depression. Then we draw aside and draw near to Jesus. Others continue in their misery like a spoiled child demanding their way. Oddly enough you will learn God does not respond to our tantrums. So we will either be driven to a closer walk with Jesus or throw our hands in the air and say what is better I forget God and take matters into my own hands. As if we are somehow trying to pay God back for the situation and not acting how we demand. For me, I connect and draw closer by walking and talking to Jesus and in extreme times, try to do this more until peace arrives and I can go home with it. The peace of the Holy Spirit brings me comfort then I thrive on and live out of that for as long as I can, continuing to move on and draw aside until the release comes.

Trust me there are so many things that confront us. I remember the first time I realized I probably could not even see the poverty line let alone live above it. You feel like you do not matter to the world. After all in a materialistic society it is the people without money

who are worthless. To feel worthless to the world is a horrible feeling, but is overpowered when you realize your value to Jesus.

Personally I would rather be of value to Jesus than the world. Yes it was another unpleasant area that God changed. And no longer was our self worth to be derived from what we had or could buy. This may sound odd, but try living without for any length of time. It was in this time I realized how much well-intentioned people destroy poor people's self-worth. As people, we love to feel the pleasure of helping and can be pure in intent, but rarely give thought to the self-esteem of the people we are helping.

Food ministries can easily steal a man's self-worth for example. In my opinion the best would be a food bank supermarket with their own money. People can go in and shop like a regular supermarket and at the register checkout with that money. Then people are able to build their self-esteem. They can see they are part of normal society and not of a lesser class. Build a man in his manhood and he will act like a man.

We did not attend regular food banks as we felt we walk this way by choice and it would be wrong to take welfare from others who are in real need. While in Virginia we did help a lady who ran a food bank ministry. Each Saturday we would pray for the people who came in and after would sit and talk with the lady, Carolyn, and ministered many times to her. She would always load us up with groceries and we sure were blessed by that while it lasted. We did

not see ourselves poor as we never missed a meal or slept in the car, but we did learn that pride was something God did not seem interested in massaging. He is interested in self esteem and that is important to any person as it is to God.

There was a short struggle in my life where I had to remind myself the pastor who was acting ungodly was not my source so I refused to get mad at him or cop an attitude. God was able to release me to the point I forgave him and kept my eyes on Jesus. Lara thankfully did not seem to struggle with the thoughts that I did being a man, but as one woman of God said “all men are thinkers and that is their problem.” If you can get hold of that you will be strengthened amazingly on your path of faith.

As I got a hold of the following statement a powerful key was revealed to me by Jesus, one that turned my life around. It became real to me by what we call a “revelation”.

I realized you can't think a miracle, work a miracle, talk a miracle or whine to get a miracle to happen. No fancy prayers or words bring a miracle about and self-pity never brings a miracle to fruition. Fear is a faith killer of miracles because if we listen to fear we do not trust our provider and the lover of our soul Jesus. As we get assurance of who Jesus is in our lives, we know miracles will soon follow.

Jesus knows how we will respond and He is working to stand with us and help us through whatever trial we are facing. Sometimes in

these times of immense pressure I have just wanted to run. Almost feeling like a trapped wild animal that has been used to living its own life and now it has been placed in a cage and fed when the zookeeper feels like it. The zookeeper knows what's best, but for the one in the cage, it sure does not feel like that at times. Of course as you progress in the understanding of how much Jesus really loves you the understanding comes. He has, in fact, taken you out of a cage and released you into the fullness of a life where natural circumstances no longer control and dominate you, but He is in charge and you know that Jesus has you covered.

CHAPTER FIVE

THOSE WHO GOD USED TO ENCOURAGE

I can't exactly explain as to reasons why these folks do what they do other than to say Jesus touched their hearts, and He has His people positioned everywhere. I never grew up doing much with vacations, but God has changed so many areas of our lives. Although my family was a very loving family, we just never took vacations. He has shown the importance the family has to Him and how much He wants us to relax and enjoy the faith life of dependence on Him.

Laying on the beach watching our kids play in the waves and enjoy themselves I was reminded of how much God takes care of our every need; as life comes in waves, there would be stresses and then a few waves later a time of refreshing where Jesus seemed to minister to us in His love as only He can.

It was very rare that we ministered in churches, as that was not something we felt God wanted us to pursue. On arriving in the U.S., a man gave me a list of churches and said to call these that they would have us. As I held the list in my hands I felt the Holy Spirit say inside of me, "I brought you here to be part of the solution, not part of the problem." I immediately threw the list away and settled we would not chase these types of engagements. It was at that time we also felt we were not to send out newsletters making our needs known or even hint at it with people. Regardless,

very occasionally a church would invite us to share our faith; realistically we could go years without such an invitation.

But here we were sharing about miracle Jesus at a church, no less. They really knew nothing of us, but at one of their contemporary or more modern services with music rather than an organ and with people generally more open to receive personal prayer or encouragement, they asked us to join their congregation. Immediately after that service the traditional service was to begin.

There was a couple coming in who had not heard us or seen us, and they asked us over for lunch after services. Turned out they owned a condo on the beach and offered it to us for our family's use. Many times and many years later we continue to stay in that house and the years we don't stay there the couple have blessed us with trips to resorts in other areas. Every time this happens, we are totally amazed at what God does through people. We didn't really know these people very well, nor do they really know us, but they continue to bless us every year for years.

God knew there was no way we could afford vacations but it matters so much to Him that we have a rest and minister to one another as a family that He made a way for us to have a yearly vacation. Every time we are due to leave for vacation we have no finances, but right as we need it somehow from somewhere God provides and we end up sitting on the beach or by the pool hundreds of miles from home.

CHAPTER SIX

HEALING STARTED

We met an 11-year old Brazilian boy who was deaf at birth as a result of his mother having rubella while pregnant. The boy never wanted prayer and I never really expected a lot. We had been sharing with some people the stories of what God had been doing and she brought her son to us and asked for prayer. Really something had changed in my life. I used to pray some nice prayer - it was always genuine not a prayer book prayer, like some praying, but whatever came to mind I voiced. This type of prayer sometimes will see results and sometimes it will not. Honestly, most times we would not see the results we were hoping for in the time frame we wanted. God had been changing how we prayed and taught others about prayer and we were about to understand that.

As Lara and I prayed, our prayer had changed. It was short on words and long in relationship. Hebrews 11:1 talks about faith being an assurance of God and over the years God had been building in Lara and me the assurance that we are in His hands. He gave us a piece of bread when nobody even knew the need. Jesus had done so many wonderful miracles of provision and housing He had become what felt like and indeed is a real friend.

Anyway as we prayed for this boy there was no religious lead prayer. Prayer was not something we thought a lot about, so as to place our words beautifully or make a nicely constructed prayer, we were

stuck. We had tried so many times to pray like that not seeing results, we realized traditional prayers usually are often just show and not coming from a true and clean heart of love for Jesus, nor are helping the person standing in front of you. But as we prayed, we talked to the true lover of our soul, the provider, the helper, the friend who walked daily with us; and from deep inside came an assurance and a simple prayer that restored the boy's hearing.

Amazingly, I was the most shocked person in the room that the boy started to hear. His deaf ear opened and we knew it because we tested his ears and he could hear what we were saying. He responded to the noises and like all of us was in shock with what was happening, but for sure Jesus had worked a miracle.

His mother was not so reserved. She showed her obvious pleasure with what had just happened to her son by praising Jesus with a shout of joy. Others in the room were probably wrestling with if they were going to believe it or not. It was one of those moments you never fully appreciate as it came so gentle, so wonderful and precious. There was no big show, no noise just a precious answer. I think many would have grasped at what all had witnessed if there was hype surrounding this miracle. But there was nothing but a quiet answer to a simple prayer that amazed us all. When this happens, you want time to stop, to hold onto the moment so you can absorb what is happening, but time moves on and you are left astonished at what you just witnessed. Jesus was present and working miracles, and truly it was an amazing time of assurance not

belief. Understand that belief comes out of assurance, but assurance never comes out of belief.

Learn and understand this quickly, and you will overcome any obstacle put on your path. You may ask yourself: “How do you believe in something you have never seen?” I had never prayed and seen a deaf ear open, and can promise you the boy had no belief that he would hear. That miracle came from an assurance that Jesus was my best friend and cared for what I was to do. That is exactly the same when it comes to seeing your daily needs met, such as your provisions and housing.

Jesus saves you from yourself and others and builds an assurance stronger than the fear or the circumstance that you face, to bring you the miracle that you seek. I was someone who grew up in church and had seen many miracles. But now it's flowing from a relationship deep inside from His Holy Spirit linked with my spirit that became the power of Jesus to answer prayers. Now when I said the name Jesus it's as if it went down into my inner most being. Now when I said Jesus was my friend the lover of my soul – who had proven and showed time and time again that he cared for us even down to a piece of bread – it meant something more. No longer was it a name, it was a person who was deep inside my spirit, always.

From that day things changed. A Brazilian radio station in Boston presented us with a unique opportunity. I was invited to be a guest

on a Brazilian pastors program and listeners started to call in for prayer. They were getting healed, and although I could not speak the language you could hear their amazement and often they would call back with a testimony which would be translated for me. That turned into a live prayer program every week day for an hour which extended for nine months. Other pastors invited us onto their radio programs, and one pastor from a small church in Chelsea, Mass., arranged for a live broadcast to an FM station in Caratinga, Brazil. Leveraging the internet, Lara and I would hold live talk shows on the radio in Brazil. The pastor would translate and people were invited to receive prayer. It was a wonderful time of ministry to primarily the Brazilian community in the Boston area. Many miracles flowed on the radio and lives were changed. I would love to take the time to tell of the many healings we witnessed, but for now will just say that it felt as if we prayed for almost every sickness known to mankind.

No matter what the ailment was Jesus answered the prayer. I am sure some people thought it insulting as they would ask for prayer and it would be a short prayer that ran deep. As they say, *still waters run deep* and maybe that is true of Jesus in a life with assurance. Sure we are all on a spiritual journey and have not fully arrived until we are in heaven, but I love knowing He is walking with and ahead of us.

It was as a result of walking these paths we began to see amazing miracle answers to prayer.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MEASURING PROGRESS

Measuring progress in ones spiritual life is something that can be very foolish. Of course we must know we continue on the right path, but how can you measure progress when often it is the adversity that is used to draw us closer. Perhaps I should say that walking on a path of true faith in Jesus you must pass through the adversity. The writer of the 23rd Psalms says, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil, thy rod and thy staff comfort me.”

To get to the place when you do walk through a valley of death, you know the comfort of Jesus walking with you. Yes, there is still natural uncertainty and fear, however you are able to turn it over to God and pass through the valley of death as this is your rite of passage.

This is something that we often forget, but it is very important that we are encouraged to see that when the Bible talks about a ‘valley of death’ it says “pass through” – nothing is forever, and often the pain is only prolonged by our desire to take matters into our own hands, and as a result act in such a way as to try and control circumstances above us and out of our control.

So I would say someone has seen spiritual growth when they have the ability to “rest in God and the knowledge He has me covered,”

when they can see you only pass through valleys and they wait for Jesus to lead them through. While waiting, they must remain in God's way by getting out of His way and not meddling with his unfolding of miracles.

Prior to the Brazilian radio opportunity, we had just returned from crossing the U.S. in a motor home. We had four children at the time the eldest Nathan was seven, Daniel was five, Joshua was two and Joel was just a two-month-old baby. We felt we were to go to San Francisco as God had laid three cities in the U.S. on our hearts: Boston, New York and San Francisco. And we believed each would have a great visitation from God where we would see many people hungry to understand how to walk a relationship with Jesus. Not in religion, but in a fresh faith of relationship with Him. In prayer, Lara and I felt as if God was showing us how people in San Francisco would search for an understanding of Jesus after experiencing a visitation or touch of His Holy Spirit. They would go to churches and be turned away because they were not clean people by church standards. They were transvestites and people fully immersed in the homosexual lifestyle who never gave Jesus a thought until Jesus started to reveal Himself to them enough so that they went searching for Him. We did not feel we were to start a ministry specific to these people, but felt like we were being led to San Francisco to get an understanding of the city for the time of visitation that lay ahead. We had no idea where to go in San Francisco, but believed if we set out Jesus would make a way for us.

Before we even began this journey to San Francisco, we knew it was an unusual step for us and we had no idea when starting what adversities we would face – although always an adventure. We were driving in an old motor home that we were unaware would get such lousy gas mileage. I drove thousands of miles staring at the gas gauge rather than the speedometer. But after enjoying the Grand Canyon, gas was low, and we had no idea how we were going to reach San Francisco other than to know God wanted us there. We knew driving into the park we would need a miracle to get out but how could we just drive past the canyon without seeing it. So here we were in the middle of nowhere with no money for gas and I could see no way to take matters into my own hands.

We jumped or should I say rolled out of bed to get the bus to the canyon edge. It was around 5:00 am and we were not moving very fast. Anyone with kids knows they tend to set your pace many times and because of this we missed the bus. Standing at the bus stop wondering what to do next we met a couple in the same predicament. They had missed the bus and we all stood around killing time talking until the next bus came. Although we knew nothing of each other than the fact we all slept in, these people invited us over for dinner. We had a wonderful time talking and laughing, and as we were leaving they handed us what we needed to get back on the road. We never told them of our situation and never hinted at it. We just had a wonderful time of fellowship. But God had touched their hearts and taken care of our need. I think they thought we may be offended when they gave to us, but they

felt so strongly to give they did it regardless of our reaction. We still enjoy the friendship of this family to this day and watch as God draws them further into a life of dependence in Him.

In a time of natural uncertainty we were starting to be able to relax in the knowledge God had, us covered. It was not to be much further down the road that we were to stop and help a stranded family and they were to be the next group of God sent individuals.

While on our way to San Francisco we drove through Needles California and pulled in to rest and cool down. It was hot. We were hot. The camper was hot. The Mojave being a desert, made things even hotter. So we decided to pull into a parking lot to rest and run our air conditioner for a while. Needless to say some strange events were about to unfold.

We had passed a small empty church on our drive through Needles and a few miles out of town turned around as I mentioned to rest and the church seemed like a good place to park. As we drove up on the parking lot there was a group of people sitting on the stairs outside the church and a woman ran out from the group onto the road gleefully yelling out to us, “What are you doing here?”

Indeed it was very weird. We did not know anyone in Needles or even close to there and there was no way she could see who we were. But oddly enough her family had been stuck behind our camper coming out of the canyon and after staring at the back of our camper for so long they felt we were practically friends. Her

families van had broken down. It was the 4th of July and nothing was open. Now normally we would not pick up strangers but this time we offered to drive them to where they were going. That night we were to drive their family all the way to Visalia, California. They appreciated our help so much they offered to pay the gas and fed us at a nice restaurant. The family owned a gas station in Visalia and when we left the area they filled our tank. We had no idea when we helped these people that they would be so used by God to get us to where we were going. God had a plan all the way along and without having to ask a soul or make any of our needs known God had helped us bring that gas-sucking motor home clear across the United States.

I never realized it until later that God had been working to take care of us before we really even understood the gravity of our situation. How many times has God done that for all of us He has taken care of us and walked us through the valley of death before we even realized it was a valley?

If we had not turned around to rest in Needles we never would have met these folks. Every day living for Jesus involves a choice: to trust him or to do things our way. Can we keep our eyes on Jesus, stay relaxed and know we are doing what He wants so He has us covered?

The Bible tells us to seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto us. I would interpret that to say. If you are

walking what Jesus has for your life, walking under His direction by constantly choosing His paths then everything you need in life will be there when you need it.

It is so easy to walk a religious knowledge of God allowing our relationship with Him to be stunted, maybe making Him nothing more than something that can be added to a lustful self-existent lifestyle of desire and comfort. Comfort and desire can be good if correctly placed. Often we get so used to comfort and desire and like Lara and me when we were taken out of our familiar comforts and our desires did not seem to be fulfilled. We had to learn God's correct order for life as we learnt to seek first His kingdom in our lives.

I mentioned Psalm 23 earlier but let's expand a little on that Psalm 23 says: *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: he leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul: he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies: you anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Amplified Bible)*

The valley of death talked about how this psalm is something we all have to walk through at various times in our lives. If Jesus is your shepherd before you enter the valley you feel Him with you and

have a certainty He will never leave you alone. He is the guide through any storm and that was something we were beginning to fully understand. Even before we enter the valley of death, the knowledge was starting to grow in us that He will lead us beside still waters. Even more than that was the fact, our soul is restored. You see, your soul wants to collapse and hide in the valley, but when your spirit leads your soul by the power of the Holy Spirit then your soul is restored.

Life does not spiral out of control as inside us is the strength of God's purpose for our life and it was beginning to develop. I don't know that there was ever a single moment where all the lights came on in our lives to help us grasp the depth of what we were doing in following this spiritual path. Rather, it was a series of many days, years and events that continually brought greater understanding of a daily faith walk with Jesus and what that involved. One thing we knew is that we were hooked in our youth, despite the struggles of soul. The intimacy and joy of seeing daily miracles was so incredible and wonderful we only ever desired to learn more and obey Jesus in all things.

As time went on, we began to understand how to walk more by the spirit and to rest in the knowledge of God and His faithfulness. It may sound strange, but many times we just thanked God for the privilege of Him calling us to walk this way. As a walk by the spirit is maintained our soul is restored as the Psalm says. Then we are able to relax and enjoy the scenery of life. Regardless of what is

going on around, Jesus has us covered and it becomes wonderful to watch His handiwork.

Well finally, we had made it to San Francisco and our time there was only to be around six weeks. We stayed in the area familiarizing ourselves with the city and just generally prayed, and tried to find the heart of Jesus to show us what to do. We came to find out, in San Francisco that God had indeed weaved a wonderful meadow of provision around us, but it was time for us to return to Boston and we needed a miracle to leave. It came while staying at Half Moon Bay and a group of young men sat on the picnic table playing their guitars. I guess we struck up a two- minute friendship and out of that friendship when they were leaving back to Denmark we ended up with their camper van and belongings they did not want. Like we needed more stuff. And the immediate concern was where to park our new van.

As I talked with the owner of the park we had just moved to I asked permission to park it. I told the man I had just acquired it and did not really want it and he lit up. He was looking for a van exactly as we now had and the next day paid us a good amount of money to buy it from us. As I collected the cash from him Lara packed up our motor home and we immediately began our journey back to Boston. It was an incredible course of events from getting a van for next to nothing, and selling it the next day in a passing conversation. Again, we could see what could have been a valley of

death, but Jesus was our guide to walk us through and take care of us ahead of time.

I have to say we were getting mixed emotions from the people back in Australia. Understandably some saw us as drifters with no real purpose in life and it was hard to say otherwise as men do require something that is tangible to define our identity as providers. Looking back it is easy to piece a story together, but at the time we did not always have huge understanding of what was going on in our lives. You could ask who would wish to live this way and my answer would be, you probably will not walk the same paths as us. Each person is different and individual to Jesus. Our paths will twist and turn in many directions but the end result will be the same. I have always been a strong personality and it just took time to break and allow what God wanted to happen in my life. I wish I could say that process had finished but in actuality it will finish when we enter heaven.

How do you explain that God is working in you and every place you go there is an obvious hand of God at work? My mother always said “don’t expose your roots” and as roots were growing in our lives through the many changes and challenges around us we started to learn how true her words were. I believe many men derive their self worth from what they do. This may be something women find hard to understand, who knows I am a man. However as men, we want to be always doing something that we feel of value so we feel like we are of value too. This was to be something God

was very interested in taking out of my life. He wanted me to understand my value, my dependency and life was to be based entirely in Him and many of the struggles were unpleasant but afterwards there was greater intimacy with Jesus. This may sound unusual, but it was one of the most wonderful times of my life when I began to feel like a spiritual man. Someone with an identity in Jesus and to see His plan unfold in and around my life was humbling as I realized it was Him who made me a man and gave me strength.

I would like to say I understood all of this at the time, but in reality I still had a long way to go and many rough edges to this day are being knocked off. We are on a journey and that journey ends in heaven. People did not understand what our lives were and to be honest we struggled with this concept ourselves at times.

Prior to coming to the U.S. we had been climbing the church ladder and seeing limited but good progress. God had interrupted that plan, brought us to the other side of the world and proceeded to strip us of our self worth, self value, self anything and replaced it with His view of our lives, the value He places on us and His outlook for our present and future. An idea that was quite progressive for us both.

As our level of understanding is increased His ability to show more is increased.

I have a short confession that in no way should give you doubt of my faith, but rather to show the similarities between all of us as at one time or another we all experience insecurities. I had always been one who felt inferior to others I saw as higher up the ladder of life. I never felt as if I was able to communicate on the same level as some of these men. But what I was finding is that within me I was starting to feel like a spiritual man. It is hard to explain entirely, but the stories of faith no longer were about someone else but rather God was making them in me and not out of arrogance, but out of confidence. I felt as if I was starting to understand how much I mattered to God. I guess I had always known I mattered to God and always tried to serve Him. But to realize you have an identity in Christ, which is why He created you, why it is He lets you still breathe, why it is He even notices you – this is an amazing experience that for me only the pain of the path brought about this realization.

When talking about the cost of discipleship Jesus had much to say, but in Luke 14:33, he said *“unless you forsake all you cannot be my disciple.”* The cost of discipleship differs immensely from the cost of being a follower of Jesus. We had to ask ourselves which one we desired to be: a follower or a disciple of Jesus.

For me I started to understand He created me with a purpose but that purpose started to follow after the unquenchable desire for greater intimacy with the one who so obviously was amazingly

interested in every detail of my life and the life of my family. No longer by the grace of God was I to feel inferior to any man.

It was later a man who had everything who was to say to me while living in his home, “How is it I find myself being jealous of you? I have everything and you have nothing, but I am jealous of what you have?” To lay your head on the pillow at night knowing why it is God created you, knowing He knows your name and sees every little part of your life is amazing.

Never sell yourself short for fear of where Jesus may take you.

I wish to emphasize the joy and blessing far outweighs the pain. No matter what path you walk in life there are pain and struggles. But on the path of faith and dependence on Jesus there is always an answer or solution and the immense knowledge Jesus is walking with you and has you covered.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SPIRIT AND SOUL

There is a lot of teaching in regards to the body soul and spirit. Many say we are a spirit we have a soul and we live in a body. I don't want to make this a comprehensive teaching on such but I will give a brief outline as it is important to understand.

One thing the Bible talks about is being dead in sin.

Before we open our lives to a relationship with Jesus Christ our spirit is dead in sin. When our spirit is activated through beginning a relationship with Jesus then we must learn a new way of doing things in order to feel and have fulfillment in what we do.

For many, the soul level which is where our mind, will, and emotions reside is where we live our life from. Some have the saying, "if it feels good, then do it". The soul is like a spoiled child and constantly demands its own way. The soul can never lead the spirit to closeness with God but the spirit must lead the soul and ultimately the natural body to be positioned to do the things Christ wants for our lives. The Bible says walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the lusts of the flesh and when it talks of the flesh it means mans way.

Our flesh or skin or natural carnal desires always dominate our life unless we have learned to walk by the Spirit, by constant surrender

to the Holy Spirit and His way. Then we put to death the deeds of the flesh *Romans 8:12-14* ¹²*So then, brethren, we are debtors, but not to the flesh [we are not obligated to our carnal nature], to live [a life ruled by the standards set up by the dictates] of the flesh.* ¹³*For if you live according to [the dictates of] the flesh, you will surely die. But if through the power of the [Holy] Spirit you are [habitually] putting to death (making extinct, deadening) the [evil] deeds prompted by the body, you shall [really and genuinely] live forever.* ¹⁴*For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (Amplified Bible)*

Starting our journey here in the U.S. we knew a relationship with Jesus, had seen many miracles, and were serving Jesus with what we thought was our whole heart. In reality we never realized how soul, emotion and natural sight orientated we were. It all had to become even more personal to us. It is one thing to see miracles and even experience them from time to time, but it is something totally different when miracles and a need for them is personalized and you depend on daily miracles with a consciousness of that dependence constantly there.

You see miracles have stress. People want to see miracles, but foolishly do not understand a miracle situation is rarely a fun situation to be in for the natural man. For us to start understanding this process was a slow and painful path that if we had only understood what was going on we may have found it a little easier. If we had understood our soul feelings are good but can also be liars, I think some paths would have been much easier as well. We would have expected and understood there would be a reaction in

our lives between the natural and the spiritual paths God was walking us on.

For years after many of the frightening events leading to the amazing miracles we began to see around our lives, I could not think about these events without feeling nauseous in the pit of my stomach. What I had failed to understand sufficiently was that God was changing us from being a natural, soul Christian to a spirit-led individual. Your spirit is what links to heaven, then as the Holy Spirit guides you, if you are spirit-led you will not suffer stress in the same way. You are able to as the Bible says “cast all your cares on Him, as He cares for you”

Stress of soul causes many to run from a faith filled life or a life of total dependence on Christ. Many have a faith of sorts but under pressure collapse in their faith or try to attach to others they see of faith. Any relationship is hard work at times and it is no different with Jesus and walking faith in Him. Jesus is not a fast food God you don't just drive up to the window shout your order, pick it up and move on. He wants a romantic sit down meal with each of us and let's face it, in a busy world of NOW many do not wish to make the time for romance they just want the rush of lust. Many do not wish to expose their heart in a romantic situation with Jesus. They feel awkward being transparent and naked spiritually before Jesus. Maybe they are ashamed or scared of what may come up maybe they have never experienced pure love enough to understand

where Jesus said in John 15:13: “Greater love has no man then to lay down His life for a friend.”

Jesus laid His life down for you and me. He is so romantically in love with you and me that it was a pleasure for Him to die for us. It was the thought of you and I drove Him to stay on that cross unconditionally. We have never experienced this depth of love and struggle to trust Jesus that He won't make our lives miserable with drastic change. This causes many to trust in illicit relationships they can control as the thought of absolute surrender is terrifying.

After all just how much does Jesus love us?

Many think He would do it for others but not me, and that is a lie that exposes our lack of relationship with Jesus.

It is fair to say any faith filled path of dependence decimates our self dependent world. People run because they fail to realize the time of transition from being self-centered to being God-centered which does bring about a volatile reaction in our lives. But that reaction brings about a wonderful new life if we stay on the path of change. During that transition there will be feelings of failure, fear, anxiety and even depression and any that have started these paths realize you can overcome it if you stay focused on Jesus, the lover of your soul.

Really the old you will have days or even weeks that it is feeling like it is being strangled.

To add to this process, well meaning sight-orientated people surface around your life and add to the process of pain as they throw their opinions in to the mix. I really like that saying “opinions are like armpits we all have them and they usually stink.” But these people view you through their soul. Remember, there will be Spirit led individuals God will bring into your life and these people are refreshing like a drink of cold water on a hot day. Such people know better than to judge by outward appearances and see God is at work with a DO NOT DISTURB sign on the door.

If you are anything like me, slowly but surely your spirit starts to lead. Strength comes from inside and your spirit linked with the Holy Spirit leads your soul and natural circumstances. Then what was impossible becomes possible as you rest in the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through you.

This is one reason why what the Bible calls the baptism of the Holy Spirit is vital to a spirit led individuals life. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is the door to the supernatural abilities of God flowing through your life. The religious world has all sorts of opinions, methods and manifestations that relate to this subject. I will only go far enough to say stay separate from that whole argument. Build a relationship with the Holy Spirit and you will never be disappointed. This is the gateway to the supernatural gifts from God.

To walk a spirit led life is constant and ongoing and without constant Holy Spirit intimacy with our spirit, our soul, like a spoiled

child resurfaces in unrighteousness to try and assume control. The Bible warns us by saying “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak”

For example, at one point of our faith journey, Lara and I were led to purchase a development we felt God wanted us to use for His purposes. It was to be a 24 hour/7 day a week center offering new Christian classes and worship. We intended to purchase it through what is called a REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust). God opened many, many doors for us, but I will mention only two examples.

First, the most prominent real estate broker in the city at that time, where the property was located offered to work for us at no cost. His fees were estimated to have been in excess of half a million dollars. We then also needed a specialized attorney with expertise in dealing with and understanding the complexity of REITS. While walking with my children in the city one day, the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart as we passed a man; and He said, “There is your attorney”. After meeting the man at random, and talking together for a brief time, I found out that he was indeed an attorney with the experience we needed. In fact, his company had established REITS many years prior, and further he was the ‘best of the best’ as well as a partner in the firm. As God would have it, I met him the following week in his office where he offered to also provide us with free legal work estimated to be approximately one million dollars, which was necessary for such an ambitious undertaking. Matters were moving right along, when the attorney sent me to find what they call ‘angel investors’. [Angel investors are individuals who provide their own capital for business start-ups, assuming more risk

typically than other investors.] Only he explained that for our case, we would need both *real* Angels as well as angel investors.

Seeing this as a true test of faith in Christ's blessings, from that point on, I made a series of business connections with different financially affluent men around the country. However, despite a well-laid plan, none were prepared to get involved with something so obviously based in extreme faith. As a minister, I never pretended to be an expert in real estate, but it didn't lessen the hard blow reality of their decisions. On the surface, I suppose it is easy to understand why they preferred not to part with their hard earned cash and risk it all on an idea that offered faith as its service with an unknown return on investment. To someone not walking such a Christ-centric path it would appear that faith was a potential liability; but for us it was very exciting in one sense, yet very frightening in another.

We felt as if God had showed us so clearly the direction of our new venture. To this day we know our main purpose as missionaries to America is to help facilitate a move toward the Spirit of God while economic changes were happening. You see during good times or bad when you live in Gods economy He takes care of you. Our mission is complete in this country when we see the fulfillment of these things or receive what we feel is a release from heaven to move on.

The short of it—effectively we were given \$1.5 million in free work and advice, but the men I stood in front of selling my vision to, of which I believed in 100 percent, for one reason or another, did not see it quite the same way. Despite the results, in such an instance I

knew that all is never lost. Lessons were learned, new directions were shown to us, and we continue to serve our mission. I did come to the understanding it can be easy to see where God wants something to go and forget we have to live that in a natural world of fears and uncertainty. We often see something we believe God wants to do, but like most men do not hang around to learn the timing of God.

Timing is something everyone struggles with as our natural man wants everything right now and our ego thinks we can handle it. It is also possible for our ego to write checks our faith can't cash, to get into something that we have no ability to maintain. Jesus said when talking to two blind men needing a miracle in *Matthew 9:29*: "*According to your faith and trust and reliance (on the power invested in Me) be it done to you.*"

Usually we think we trust Jesus a lot more than we actually do. If we cannot enter a new level of faith, and relax and walk with Jesus on it, then it is ultimately something we need to grow into. God is not interested in overwhelming us just so He can get things done. He is never in a hurry as we often are and instead wants to strengthen and build us in faith so that when we arrive we can maintain.

I believe aspects of this vision will come around again, when that time comes, able men will arrive that God has sent who are experts in such fields and joined to the purposes of God, we can all encourage each other in and see fulfillment.

Remember, God rarely works in straight lines.

One part of us craves for the easy straight road but by experience

we find God's road has many twists and turns that are designed to build in us the character to hold the calling of what He has planned for our lives.

Walk your path and stay steadfast in your beliefs and enjoy watching God's handiwork sculpt your life. I can honestly say that after many years of living this truth, Jesus never fails you. But you need to let Him be creative!

After being offered the free work on this venture, I struggled with my soul wanting to sin. Understand the further you get out on the water or in total dependence, the more the cracks in ones character appear that we all deny are there which begin to magnify.

The apostle Paul says "wretched man that I am I do the things I do not want to do." The reality is that we are natural people and live in a natural world. Our natural thoughts and needs surface. Now if our spirit leads then during these times there will not be failure, but truly it can be a battle to stay focused on Jesus and His plan. We must live by the Spirit and prayer, long enough so that it comes to our world.

Our soul wants the sensationalism of a miracle, but a spirit led individual quietly possesses the miracle while being linked with that Holy Spirit channel from heaven. A spirit led person understands he has become one with the Holy Spirit and will walk the Holy Spirit paths for life. That is what the Bible means when Jesus said in *Matthew 19:26*: "*With people this is impossible, but with God **all things are possible***".

You see while starting on these paths I fought daily emotional chaos. I knew a relationship with Jesus, but things were not going my self-centered way. The only reason fear never totally incapacitated me was due to the never ending grace and mercy of God. Adverse situations will either drive us to or from God. You will pray more, fellowship more with Jesus and overcome or run to the soul comforts. Such comforts usually involve some form of lust as that falsely brings immediate superficial relief. For many men sexual areas may try to dominate during this time, or anger, over eating or spending anything that has an element of lust and brings fast relief.

In these times of immense pressure turn to intimacy in the Holy Spirit through union with the Holy Spirit and let your spirit dominate by worshipping God in song, reading the Bible, praying in the Holy Spirit or sitting in a quiet place and talking to Jesus. I personally could not walk any of these paths without the baptism of the Holy Spirit a further experience after salvation. From the baptism of the Holy Spirit intimacy with Him, all strength arrives.

We had been learning to depend on Christ by many and varied encouragements and one of my most precious moments that changed my life happened during one of these times of immense pressure when I drew aside and went for my morning walk to talk with Jesus. In the middle of all the chaos it was as if He came and walked beside me with His arm around me and spoke words that just gave so much strength. I will never forget the intimacy of

walking with Jesus during that time. I can say this I don't remember all the struggles but I sure remember the intimate time with Jesus, where He ministered to my complete being.

During yet another time of feeling in a wilderness of pressure God started to do amazing things. Firstly we had met an older lady, Lucy, who asked us for prayer of healing. She was to become what the ravens were to Elijah in the Bible. Elijah lived by a brook for years and the ravens brought bread and meat for him to eat. Lucy was such a blessing to us for years we would meet her and pray together, the kids would play and she would just enjoy watching. Then when we left she would give the kids an ice cream and we would receive bags of groceries. There was nothing we could do to stop her giving us groceries. God was not interested in our pride he wanted to bless us and Lucy. Many times just what we needed was in those bags and for six years every Thursday night we would all meet. After many years it came to an end when her son married and moved into her home with his new wife.

It was during this time of transitioning that our landlord turned up at our house and for no apparent reason for six months gave us back our rent. Or the total stranger that approached us while at a meeting in Middleboro, Mass., and asked our name then wrote it on a check for \$10,000. We were not ministering in the meeting, but were just a face in the crowd. Not known to this man and his wife at all. It was a prophetic meeting and the speaker asked Lara and I to stand and all he said was whatever God is telling you to do for

this couple do it. God knew what was going on in this couples mind and the minister's word only served to comfort them in some way that what they had in mind was correct. Really I have no idea what transpired in their minds or their reasoning behind doing what they did. I do know we had been praying asking God to help us get a house at the time. It really was amazing to us when the man approached us. He had no idea who we were and did not seem to even care that much. I guess God had touched his heart and he was at a place of being able to obey without question. We were nobody to him but a child of God. They knew nothing of our prayer for a miracle to help with housing. From that money, we were able to rent a home in Malden, a city a few miles north of Boston. It came about when a man in a Brazilian church in Somerville heard of our need and approached us to ask if we were interested in renting his home. We were able because of the generous gift we received and our then four children were in a place to call home. It was in that house two more children would be added to our family, David and Bethany-Anne brought much joy with their separate arrivals.

God had us walking a path of total dependence on Him—a path that is ever increasing as we continue to walk it. For over twelve years we have had no visible means of income but have trusted God in dependence on Him. When in missions many send out newsletters raising funds or travel to churches preaching to get funds. But that was not to be the path for us. In no way do I wish to suggest we are superior in faith to any that do raise funds. I just merely wish to state it was not our lot in life. There have been many

seasons in those twelve years of how God has provided. Mostly it has been through gifts from people but not usually the same people on a regular basis. There have been times we were given things that we were free to sell. I don't want anyone to think we just sat on the sofa and money floated down from heaven. Neither do I wish to take away from the fact it has been miracle provision; provisions that we try very hard not to chase but when God brings the opportunity we try to be open for the unusual. You may recall the Corvette story and understand the random nature of what we call provision around our lives.

Yes many times I have asked my wife if she thought I should seek secular employment and each time we are reminded of the path Jesus has us on and our mission in America. It generally is not a popular thought for some to realize America needs missionaries of its own, but I can't help nor change that ideology. Remember what people don't understand they generally isolate from or persecute, and if we had to raise support for working in America it would be a fulltime job as many see a thousand reasons as to why we would not need it. After all, America is supposed to be rich and everyone thinks anything to do with church in America involves huge amounts of money. Right there is another reason God separated us from the potential appearance of being just another voice in the crowd asking for money.

We met pastors in Australia who boasted of how they came to America to preach with the purpose of getting substantial

honorariums and many did. This way of thinking I cannot see as the heart of Jesus. He is about people not how much money they have or gifts they can bring.

My father always said “You can only talk about what you have earned the right to talk about.” So I do feel it is within my reason to say, Jesus has us covered by His loving hand and He wants to cover you as well. No, you will not be what we are, you will be what God wants you to become. I encourage you walk one step of obedience to Jesus after another and you will love where you end up.

CHAPTER NINE

FLORIDA

It was an unusual step for us to attend a businessmen's conference in Florida but here we were. I have never been much of a conference attendee, I really do not enjoy the impersonal often hyped up atmosphere of such events and this conference only confirmed my reasons. It was a lousy attempt to get their hands into businessmen's pockets. We knew God had brought us to Florida as He helped us to get there by using people to give yet again. We parked our motor home at a private camp ground near Destin and God opened the door for us to minister and pray with the owner of the camp. She was hungry for relationship with the lover of her soul. On leaving the camp ground in Destin the owner for no apparent reason did not charge us. I guess God had touched her with His love and she was thankful to us for the small part we played in that. God was working in amazing ways.

We left thinking why in the world did God bring us to that religious conference and drove to Pensacola looking for some reason for this trip that was of God. Pensacola really turned out to be an amazing piece of our journey. We saw many amazing provisions from heaven and during one we were living in our motor home outside an old Bible school complex. That day while walking with the family and talking with Lara trying to understand the events of our life, a man called out to me from me from a rooftop commenting

on how lovely the day was. He was the manager of a roofing company and was repairing a roof when he called out. So I climbed his ladder to talk with him and found he was a man who at one time walked a relationship with Jesus but currently alcohol had a grip on his life and was destroying him one drink at a time. He was not a drunk but could not sleep at night without alcohol and found he had a dependence on it. God really used Lara and I to minister to Bob and his family, who had been pushed away from the church system as they were not perfect people (as if any are). If Bob and Rita were the only reason to travel a thousand miles, they were worth it, beautiful people with a beautiful singing family.

For the four months we were there, God delivered Bob from his alcohol addiction which at one time had him drinking a fifth of whiskey a day. He was so happy for his new life that he started talking to his friends, some of who were away from a relationship with Jesus. Bob and I spent many hours sitting in his bass boat fishing, but we seldom caught anything. Instead we encouraged each other and had a lot of fellowship and laughs. Bob had experienced church or religion and for one reason or another had been hurt but currently they were struggling to fulfill their destiny in God. To this day Bob remains alcohol free and we still enjoy fellowship where possible.

It was wonderful to watch Jesus form a friendship where we encouraged them and they encouraged Lara and I and blessed us in

many ways. Years later Bob and his family came and lived near Boston for a time and we enjoyed each other's company yet again.

Well before we knew it Bob and his friends who were excited about his new life were asking us to minister in a tent they ran up to Evansville, Indiana to pickup. The tent was setup in Brownsville a nasty area with a lot of hurting people. I remember setting the tent up and watching prostitutes trying to pick up customers right by us. During that time, someone tried to abduct a child in a nearby location and living around us were homeless addicts of all descriptions.

It was a new step of trust in Jesus when we moved our motor home there to stay. We were only there for about two weeks and God took amazing care of us. I want to mention a few highlights especially as it really shows how being spirit led opens many doors to touch many lives.

Steve saw us setting up the tent and when I asked him not to smoke in the tent he left screaming obscenities at me. Turns out Steve called himself an atheist and later I told him God does not believe in atheists. Steve found out we had nothing and were genuine in our desire to help others. He later came and apologized then went back to the tent he called home. Steve was homeless. But he was being drawn back to us, and every time he would come to hear us as much as he cussed and carried on I would lay my hand on his shoulder and pray for him. As soon as I said *amen* he would be

cussing and abusing me but he kept coming for more. One day he asked why it is nothing he says upsets me and I told him you can't hurt a dead man, but he never understood. What I meant was we were laying our lives down daily to live in Jesus and as hard as that was at times, insults did not seem to matter as they were the least of our concerns. The apostle Paul said in *1 Corinthians 15:31*: “[I assure you] by the pride which I have in you in [your fellowship and union with] Christ Jesus our Lord that I die daily [I face death every day and die to self].” (*Amplified Bible*)

Steve finally sat in one of our meetings on his crate. He was being touched and while an ex-prostitute was sharing how she was delivered from prostitution into a relationship with Jesus, he was overcome and yelled out, “How do you get free?” His heart was genuinely calling for help.

A crack addict who was once a respected firefighter and now was wandering homeless sat in the meeting with a pillow under his arm that we had given him. He also was being touched, but thought Steve was being disrespectful and so he jumped up and kicked Steve in the head. After we had settled things down you could see Steve was changing. Instead of always mouthing off, he started to ask serious questions and actually listened to the answers. It was as if he came around wanting prayer and knowing I always laid a hand on him and prayed for him. The best thing about such people was they don't care for well dressed and pretty prayer they don't care what you pray as long as it is real. When we left the area some men

continued to meet with these homeless people to encourage them and they reported to us that Steve had left the street and went back to live his life.

We also had an attempted knifing in the tent from a man who claimed to be a pastor. You name it they came by to visit. During this time Lara and I were super conscious of our children and their safety. Lara was like a lioness, she never got involved in any type of ministry in that place, and her whole undivided attention was dedicated to the care and safety of the children. There was one night she wondered what was for dinner as there were not a lot of choices. When a man came to us and asked if he could buy our dinner. One of the homeless men heard this and went back to his camp and told the others someone else fed us. I don't know how they knew we had nothing as we made a point of never telling people, but I guess the homeless are sharper than we often give them credit for. Well a man in the homeless camp, who was against anything to do with God all of a sudden said that he was going to feed us because we were genuine and were not after people's money. The next day he panhandled for some money in the morning and then went to Wal-Mart, bought some chicken and cooked us a meal. The others from his camp recommended that we didn't feed it to the kids as the hygiene was not good where it was cooked. So the homeless folks enjoyed a hearty meal and the cook did not care, he ate it with them. This man a few days later knocked on our door and handed me a fistful of money he had panhandled

all morning for and wanted to give us. I tried to refuse but God was softening the man and he was really touched by the love of Jesus.

Although each story of a changed life is precious I could go on and on but won't take the time to go into detail as it would turn into another book. I will say from those two weeks working in that tent people started relationships with Jesus and when we left Dan (who we will mention later) continued ministering to the people on the street with a Bible study.

I do want to mention Austrid who was so hurt by life. I have no idea what had transpired in her life but do know, she had rich parents and she was now a crack addict living on the street, suffering abuse from her boyfriend who would beat her if she failed to raise sufficient drug money from panhandling. When talking one day outside the tent I told her Jesus loved her she stopped in complete amazement and said "I never knew He loved me". Her boyfriend worked hard to keep her away from talking to us. His name was Lane and as hard callous and tough as he was he sat and cried on my shoulder one night. Lane was hostile to being anywhere near us and I mean hostile until one night I felt the Holy Spirit directing me to give him about \$7 someone had given for an offering. We never took offerings, but someone left it for us anyway. When I walked up to him, he was hostile until I told him the Holy Spirit told me to give him this offering and to tell him, he will be preaching the gospel one day. His whole world stopped at that moment and he broke down telling me how his mom had

always told him that same thing before she died. Lane who was the toughest of the group sat to the side with me and just cried. I never really saw him again after that except from a distance.

During our time in Pensacola we met Dan, the man I previously mentioned. He was not one of the homeless, but rather a young Christian man in his 20's who had just finished serving as a core man in the US Navy. Over the next few years, we stayed in contact with Dan and he later lived with us for a time. Dan was searching for a greater faith and felt he was not finding it in organized religion. Understandably Dan was tired of opinions about the Bible and wanted to see the miracles and faith of the Bible in action. He was tired of preachers removing the miracles and power out of the Bible to be political and felt you must believe the entire Bible or none.

Lara and I were by no means perfect, but he saw us as a step in the direction he wanted his life and faith to go in. Dan came to live with us for around a year so he could experience firsthand the path we were walking. He felt the pain and the joy of a life of faith with us and inside of him a deposit of faith was planted by the Holy Spirit that grew and continues to grow beautifully, by Gods grace. He later moved to Brazil and is continuing on in his own path of faith. To this day, he remains a good friend and man of faith. The day before we left Pensacola I guess the word got around we were leaving and some of the people we had met, talked with and ministered to began turning up at our motor home with money and

food. In some small way we all helped each other and it was wonderful to feel the love between new friend and believers. It was a real surprise that amazed both Lara and me. We drove up the highway overcome by the goodness of a life in God and with the joy of knowing many lives were changed and new friends were made.

It was in Pensacola we met Marcie a young woman living the same dependence on Christ. It was nothing for Marcie to be sitting at a bus stop late at night somewhere in America with no money waiting for God to take her where she was going and she always got there too. She travelled all over the U.S. helping primarily military families learn to trust Jesus. She would just serve people and they would bless her. Maybe it was minding their children so the parents could have a time together when their marriage may have been struggling. Or if she learned someone was sick she would turn up and do their house chores. Her reputation always went before her and many lives continue to be touched by the love of Jesus through her. To this day Marcie still is in contact with us and lives the same life of faith, although at the time of writing this we just received an invitation to her wedding. She called very excited as she had believed God had shown her who she would marry seven years ago. Marcie never chased him or told him, but just prayed for God's will to be done. This man is who God brought into her life married Marcie and their new journey began.

We don't often meet people like Marcie and Dan who are prepared to walk out on life and serve Jesus in these ways but they are there as once the pull of a heavenly call is in your heart all it takes is constantly saying YES to Jesus and never taking your life back into your own hands.

CHAPTER TEN

PURE LOVE

It has been my experience that when someone is not accustomed to love and then they experience a lot of it, they often get overwhelmed and run.

Living this life of dependence there has been many times we have felt the overwhelming feelings of the love of Jesus. Truly it served to show us that love is the most powerful force known. God reveals His love to us on levels that do not incapacitate or totally overwhelm us. but the more we position ourselves to receive His love the more He pours it out. And there will be days you will just weep or feel like you are going to explode with the vastness of the love touching your life. The love of God, a pure unadulterated love!

Love for many today is associated with lust. They have never felt pure love, mistakenly thinking love is a series of encounters. A love that never changes and is never earned, a love that even when you are making bad choices never changes. A love that even if you spit upon the source, it just stays the same and reaches out to you, saying I LOVE YOU!

Such is the love of Jesus!

There has been many times we have driven off the road totally overcome by the love of God. Something amazing has just

happened and it really overcomes you. It is not always a huge event but many times a series of small. Small events or miracles that we often think God would not be interested in or be thinking about. It is often when these happen; we are overcome by the feeling of how much we matter to God.

The Bible tells us God knows how many hairs are on our heads.

I am quite sure that God is not so bored He resorts to counting hair, I believe it is because He is so interested in our lives and so in love with us that we don't even begin to understand the depth of relationship He wants with us.

I want to go back to mentioning some events that transpired in San Francisco because during this time we were very much new to this type of life. We had seen some amazing things, but maybe you could call us slow learners in the area of trusting God. We knew He would take care of it but were still slow in enjoying what was going on around us. Like when we set off in the motor home to San Francisco it had never occurred to me it may not be a good time. I was so intent on getting through the moment I failed to see the wonderful life God was weaving around me. Yes you could say personally I was struggling to understand why our lives did not unfold the way many preachers had taught it should. It can be easy to listen to some preacher talking wonderful things but conveniently omitting to tell you the struggles they went through to get there.

What I call church faith or a faith based around instant selfish or prideful results, hype, words, emotion, people or pastors is completely different to a real relationship faith in Jesus. It is a struggle to separate the two when you have not identified the boundaries of both in your life.

One day we were walking back to the camper that was parked in an empty church building in Redwood City. We did not know anyone in San Francisco and it was by an act of God we were parked where we were. But regardless we had run out of food and funds to buy anything. Lara was thinking about what to feed the kids for lunch. Peanut butter by itself is not what I would call a good lunch. As we walked a man called out and asked if we wanted food. Now I did not want to say yes, as we did not know him and I did not want to say no, as we did. So I wandered across to talk with him as it turned out he was a baker and gave us many loaves of still warm, top of the shelf bread that he baked that morning. As I stood with the man it became obvious he was hurting and I came to find out he was going through a nasty divorce, (really what divorce is not nasty). I stood and encouraged him and prayed with him for God to help him. God had helped down to a piece of bread. This man had no idea who we were; God had just moved his heart. There could be a lot of reasons why things happen, but after seeing God use people from all walks of life I am convinced there is always more to the story.

For example this man needed encouragement as we needed bread. He helped us and we helped him. There was not any agreement or deal but rather Jesus had prearranged the meeting of two people who could help each other. We walked away amazed and I am confident he walked away blessed from the prayer we prayed together. Maybe he saw for that moment that he mattered to Jesus and God could care about what He was going through.

When God touches a heart those affected often do not identify that it was God. Many, many times Jesus has touched people who have blessed us and in reality we have blessed them in return. Accidental meetings always seem to be arranged to encourage, bless, or strengthen and I am not foolish enough to ignore the divine providence of such occurrences. A life submitted to God is used for His purposes and many God appointments are arranged, we only just need to be open for it to happen. Walking along on my morning prayer I was delicately complaining to God about some needs at home. Sometimes it is a struggle to keep the right attitude, it is not every day we have this level of need but times like these continue to be a reality for us. They always are good times of miracles and the pressure never lasts forever. It is in these pressure times we confirm our mission in a greater way. We used to consider secular employment in such times but began to understand that was not their purpose. If we were to take matters into our own hands we knew greater pain would follow. We have never even considered abandoning our faith. That would be like saying you no longer wish to be with the person you love the most in your whole

life, just because you have limited understanding of a situation. So we use these times to deepen our walk and we wait for God to touch a heart or for provision to arrive and thank you Jesus, it always does.

So here I was explaining to Him how I must take care of my family better when as clear as anything the words came inside of me that said, “Whose family?”

For me to suggest I was more a concerned father than the heavenly father was a crazy notion. I immediately corrected my attitude and asked God to forgive me. But looking down there was a few dollar bills on the path. I laughed as I saw them and walked on saying, “God that is not enough I would need coins as well,” and as I came around a corner there was a bunch of coins lying in the grass. It was amazing to see how much God cared right down to the smallest penny, literally.

I can imagine some people are saying right about now, that pitiable guy he had nothing. And my answer would be those poor folks who may have never seen how much God cares for them. He cares right down to a bottle of milk and a piece of bread and even scattered coins on the ground.

On our faith journey for all these years we have never missed a meal or slept in the car. Yes some paths were hard to our natural man but it was on those paths we saw God in a new way.

For many years God has fed us, housed us, taken care of our health, and taking the time to appreciate His work we often feel overwhelmed with the feeling of how great His love is for us.

The Bible says in *Romans 8:35-37*: *“Who shall ever separate us from Christ's love? Shall suffering and affliction and tribulation? Or calamity and distress? Or persecution or hunger or destitution or peril or sword?”* ³⁶*Even as it is written, For Thy sake we are put to death all the daylong; we are regarded and counted as sheep for the slaughter.* ³⁷*Yet amid all these things we are more than conquerors and gain a surpassing victory through Him Who loved us.* (*Amplified Bible*)

It is an amazing thing to discover how much you matter to God. A love that is not deserved, not earned, not bought. His love for us never changes whether we choose to acknowledge Him or not. You see the Bible also says God is love. Love exists because of God. Love comes from God and is God. If you believe in love you believe in God. We just have to meet with the lover of our soul, Jesus.

As the consciousness of God's love increases in your life many opportunities arise for intimacy with Him. God never forces us to do anything when it is coming from Him it is a choice that He gently tries to lead us into making right. Behind each choice is an opportunity for greater intimacy with Him.

To this point we had been learning God would provide for us, but had not been faced with too many decisions that required

immediate obedience. Until this one month, we had our rent money and two days before it was due we felt so strongly we had to give it away. It was a huge step for us as in two days we would need to see something amazing happen. This way of life does grow on you, as each day passes you walk in a relationship with Jesus that is being cultivated through talking to Him daily and reading what He had to say in the Bible. It is then that you will see the path Jesus has for you. Don't for one minute think you will be following our path. Remember the principles we all learn are the same in any situation, but the lives and circumstances are different. We were so blessed that after giving the rent away the next day I had a meeting with a businessman who I did not really know. As I left his office he called me back and handed me a gift for the amount of our rent. God had us covered and I had not told the man a word of what we had done previously with our rent money

Despite my deep devotion, to this day I still cannot understand God's love. I can give you standard answers, but really at times I cannot comprehend His unconditional compassion. But I continue to see Him and His hands at work. The more that I allow those opportunities for His love to manifest around my life the more I see miracles happen. He loves me no matter what is going on with me. I can be struggling with a poor attitude, struggling with sin—but regardless of feelings His love supersedes the soul level and becomes a spiritual transcendence that can only be grasped through recognizing His love is an absolute truth.

If you have opened your spirit to His love by inviting Him into your life, then from your spirit His love will flow through your whole life causing amazing things to occur. MIRACLES! Miracles no church or man can replicate as they flow from the Jesus in you.

A person walking a pure relationship with Jesus is often viewed as a threat to religious systems as these people don't need the dogmatic system of religion. Sure they need other believers of like mind, but realistically you will look different to others in how your life plays out. In a wonderful way you start to become more comfortable with that idea, as you begin to understand why it is you are on the earth – your purpose. Not to please a man or a system, but to have intimacy with Jesus and that intimacy is different for each one of us. You may never have the same struggles as others, but don't be mistaken, even these challenging times for me and my family were awesome in their own right. They have allowed us to grow deeper in our faith.

You are an individual and as you walk a relationship with Jesus remember that you were not mass produced. You don't have to make drastic changes to your lifestyle or to your appearance to be different. You are already unique, and it's this true unique identity in Jesus which causes you to be amazing and wonderfully different in your own life. It flows out of His spirit in communion with your spirit which then changes your natural and soul feelings of your life. Yes, pause on this thought. It is not an easy concept for people to immediately grasp.

The Bible says that if you draw near to God He will draw near to you.

Over the years, I have helped many people begin their unique path of spirituality, and one question I am often asked is “How do I pray?” Some people grow up with a religious perception of prayer and it never seems to provide them with the comfort or answers they seek. I always tell people to simply talk to Jesus and tell Him what’s in your heart.

For me, I like to walk, and as I walk I tell Jesus about the things around and in my life. In this way you begin to develop a friendship that runs deeper than any you’ve had to date. So much so that as you continue with it, it starts to flow more naturally from your spirit as it links to His Holy Spirit. And that is where answers flow from and peace exists. Follow the peace as you talk to Jesus and you will overcome the obstacles you face. But understand it takes patience and a renewed way of viewing your relationship with Him.

Please keep in mind that each person will have their own unique approach and changes that will occur within them. Whether it is to rid you of an addiction, emotional pain or burdens. So as you read my story, remember your experience will be quite different from my own. I share my own experiences as a guide not a rule as to how to begin your spiritual journey on developing a deeper connection to your higher self—one that is in alignment with your purpose that is derived as a direct agreement within your spirit with Jesus.

One of the naturally huge events that Lara and I did was to give our house away, when we had nothing else. Allow me to explain.

This is not something I'm telling you to do. Again this was our personal spiritual decision. It was an idea that played out in our lives for over three months. During this time, we prayed to make sure it was an opportunity that was coming from God and not some crazy notion in our heads. Yes, even a minister can question his decisions. God is OK with the idea that you want to take your time as He is never in a hurry, and He always knows how long it will take you—even while you question yourself. Nothing you do surprises God, so relax in that knowing.

Back to our story—we owned our home outright. We had worked hard and paid off our mortgage in six years and were debt free! At that time, Lara and I had an office equipment business that I mentioned earlier, and it was part of our plan to get out of debt, so we asked God to help us rid ourselves of a mortgage so we could best serve Him without the burden of financial obligations. Until this point every time we traveled overseas on a mission we had to make sure enough funds were set aside for mortgage payments, wages, etc. As anyone knows who has owned a business, there are always expenses. Fortunately, we never accumulated debt for the business as we always ran it so when it was the right time, we could lock the door, and be free to walk out with minimal disruption to our lives. We were well aware of the call of God to continue on our spiritual journey. We agreed that any extra money God brought

while we owned the business that we would put aside funds to live modestly, while also paying down the mortgage note. We were encouraged as each milestone was reached and when we reached the end, we sold our car which enabled us to pay our house off in its entirety. Yes, of course, there was some sacrifice to be made, but it was well worth it to be free.

Once we reached this point, we had another grand awakening. While living in someone's upstairs room, God began to speak to our spirit about giving our house. It was a hard time when we were learning to be more spirit led than soul and natural orientated in our life. We were fairly new to this walk of life, so we took our time and ultimately felt as if God was saying, " You do not have to give it away but it will mean a lot if you do."

So we sold our home and dispensed most of the profits as we felt God leading us to this action. We retained a small amount of money and applied it for our mission in the U.S.

Now many years later, regardless of struggles, I can say we do not have any regrets. You see the Bible talks clearly about sowing and reaping. I am not a prosperity minister, but I do believe God prospers His people in a whole and complete way. We believe to this day as we put our house in the hands of Jesus that He will return one to us when it is needed. And He has done exactly that!

Our decision was not an investment, but rather an act of trust that to us was very personal and something we do not speak about

much publically. However, we do believe better results will come of our decision. We desire intimacy on all levels with His spirit.

If you remember our previous journey explained, sure, we have been moving from rented house to rented house, but we have seen God do amazing miracles for us at the same time, despite our challenges. It was an opportunity we valued very much. But again please do not cringe in fear at our story. God may never ask this of you, it is just something on our journey we surrendered to Him.

When you start your journey, you begin to see that love starts to be about how well you know the other person. Jesus knows us intimately in such an unselfish way. He is more interested in what is good for us than anything else. I can't stress enough the notion that a relationship with Jesus is based in love. It all began when He paid the price by dying on a cross.

I have heard people complain about why God seems to not like some of the things we do, or the decisions we make. Some of these things we see as pleasure He sees as sin which begs the question: why is that?

Probably the best place to begin is to think of a child.

One of my sons when he was about 2 years old had come into the city and gone into the post office to check the mail with his older brother. I sat in the car and waited but did warn them before going to be careful. As my 2 year old came out of the building he ran

straight out onto the road. I remember the feeling of total helplessness watching it happen before my eyes. As he entered into the traffic a speeding car slammed on its brakes and by a total act of God stopped with its front bumper touching his shirt. My son got such a fright he stood there crying at the top of his voice. We had just witnessed a phenomenal miracle of deliverance.

My 2 year old son did not know any better, his understanding of danger was not there at such a young age. He never thought about what free fun would bring him and by Gods grace he is still with us.

Could this help us understand why God hates what He calls sin? He knows from a different perspective that it will ultimately hurt the child he loves so much. That is: you and me!

We can run through life in what we call freedom without a thought of what is coming down the road. God knows that unless we obey His words ultimately we will suffer pain. The very pain He took for us when He sent His son to die on a cross, paying the price for our mistakes and recklessness – even before we came into existence.

The love of Jesus is totally unselfish.

I wish I could say the same for my love for Jesus but realistically I often come to Him with selfish motives. Like a spoiled child life usually is all about me and what I get out of it. There is a wonderful change that comes in life as you walk intimately with Jesus

particularly as it starts to become about Him and others. You start to take yourself and your ego out of the equation.

As we allow that love to develop in us a greater dimension of life is open to us through the spirit of the living God.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE NATURAL WAY

In my life I had seen many times how God has done amazing things, but probably if I had to describe it I would say it was often 'hit and miss'.

Often prayer is a hit and miss event as it becomes a person trying to reach up into heaven to get something they need. Sometimes they can reach that far and sometimes they cannot. As Lara and I walked this new path of dependence there was a change in our thinking. The Bible tells us to walk by the spirit but learning that is a process.

As our new life was thrust on us in many ways our thinking had to change. We started to understand it is possible to walk in the spirit; meaning you can have such fellowship with Jesus that miracles just flow into the needed situations. That does not mean you are super human but rather that you walk with a super God, and a powerful knowing that He has you covered. Even when you are faithless He remains faithful, as the Bible says.

As an introduction to this teaching, one of our potentially darkest hours came in the first few months of moving to the U.S. We were staying on a Christian campground for a time and our eldest boy Nathan was only about 2 years old. As he ran around with a group of other children an older man hit him in his van. Unlike our other son, the van knocked him over and the front wheel went over his

body. The man was not even aware he had hit a child until a woman stopped him before the second wheel ran his body over. I knew limited first aid, but that knowledge went out the window as emotion took over. I picked up my son and carried him away from the gathering crowd. As I tried to help him I was in shock and really incapacitated mentally as it was overwhelming and a horrible feeling of helplessness took its place. The pattern from his clothes was bruised into his little body and his big blue eyes just looked at me as he cried. He wanted his dad to take away the pain but I was not able to help. But God was there and all I knew to do was to pray. He was rushed to the hospital where we discovered parts of his private areas started to turn black; they found his pelvis was partially cracked. At first they would not believe us he had been run over as they expected far worse injuries on his little body from the pressure of the car wheel. But sure enough they could see the evidence of a trauma and bruised cloths patterns on his skin.

It was a long night in the emergency room, and the next morning we visited the specialist who took another x-ray. God was at work. The crack that was present the night before had gotten smaller. I don't know what God was doing but He had us covered and was answering many prayers from people all over the world who heard and were praying for Nathan. The end result was within a few days Nathan was back to normal and suffered no lasting damage. But in the middle of all that, in what could have been our darkest hour, the grace and love of Jesus prevailed and spared our son. To us it was an introduction to our new way of life. We were to learn that as we

walk by God's spirit, He takes care of us when the trials come. We were where God wanted us and that meant He had us covered. Call it blind faith, call it deep faith—but in our hearts despite the trial of this trauma, we knew. It was so obvious later that Jesus was walking with us well before we ever entered the valley of the shadow of death.

Let's take it another step further. The insurance company would not pay the medical expenses for Nathan informing us that although we thought he was covered by the travel policy we had at the time clearly he was not covered. Then again for reasons I can only say God knows they informed me if I pay another premium they would cover the expenses. When does an insurance company cover an event after it has occurred?

I had not threatened them or argued with them as I was in no state of mind to even try. Jesus was walking us through the valley of the shadow of death, and he delivered us to the other side safely. So the foundation of our daily walk of faith was based in a knowledge God had given us back the life of our son.

Through many challenges, fears and desperate times we knew God was with us. Sure many times it sure did not feel like that, but thankfully we were starting to understand how to walk in communion with the spirit of God in our spirit. We started to understand as we walk in the spirit that no longer do you reach into

heaven on a 'hit and miss' basis, but rather you flow into a miracle as the Holy Spirit abides in us.

There are so many times this has occurred (not the accident but the realization of divine intervention) that it is not possible to write or recollect all the times God has flowed His miracle power into situations and needs around our lives. Our task has been to develop and discipline a life to remain focused on Jesus and build communion with Him.

To shift from a man (woman) of a self centered life is indeed a process and a challenge at times as the world around constantly tries to suck us back into its abyss. Sure there are days the world seems to overcome us on our path, but we can take comfort in the fact that no matter how our soul feels, Jesus said "I will never leave you or forsake you." He is here to stay!

But I must acknowledge my sin, acknowledge my shortfalls to Jesus and surrender them to Him in order to truly get free.

It is so easy to blame everyone else for the circumstances of our life. Our parents, friend, wife, husband, boss, you name it. Truly, we can allow our circumstances to build us or we can build on our circumstances if we take responsibility for our actions. Of course someone may have hurt you, but how we responded may not be Godly or right. Sure we may have felt justified, but at the end of the day it is not what enters into a man that defiles him but what comes out of him.

When we look at whom we are and hand that over to Jesus, we have taken the first step in freedom and walking by the spirit. If we confess our sins, Jesus is faithful and just to forgive us. To take the time to draw aside and tell Him the things in your life that have made you who you are, and place your life in His hands, you will find salvation.

From experience, I can say as people we dress up a situation when confessing to Jesus. But often we fail to really take full responsibility for our actions and until we get to that point we cannot move to the next step on our journey. How many of us wait until dire circumstances to try to make amends in our life? Fortunately for us, we are not judged for this delay to action by Him.

Talk to Jesus and walk with Him back through your life. Really as things are remembered surrender them to Jesus until you feel like He has now taken the ownership of it from you. Every little detail of it, every little action, nothing is too small or too big. If there is something you have buried in your life, something you are ashamed of or regret, the longer you bury it the longer it will control you in some way. The burden grows abundantly. You have the power to stop it when you hand it over to God. The beauty of confession and surrender is that spiritual freedom is waiting for you on the other side. When you are free spiritually you head on to become free in your emotions and natural circumstances in life, and wonderful things unfold. But you have to be receptive to receive it. We must allow Him to clean the inside of us out thoroughly, and

that happens only when you open up your heart and spirit. Take full advantage of His sacrifice for us; do not let it sit in vain. He is waiting for us to come to him, to relinquish our sin, to open our hearts, to ask for his help and guidance. Do not be an idle sheep in the flock. Go to the Sheppard and ask to be led. You will not go astray if you follow wholeheartedly asking Jesus to forgive. He will cover and put the debt for your sin as far from you as the east is from the west.

We understood on our path the freedom that comes from confession and surrender. I can say when we began our journey there were things I had always blamed on others, but as I walked a closer understanding of Jesus in my life He revealed that I must in fact take responsibility for the offenses I had taken, confess them and surrender them to Him. This process lays the foundation for a strong tower of faith and unless one is prepared to do this, you will be faced with manmade religion on man's level with man's results in life and the world sure does not need more religion. We have witnessed what happens of this path.

Understand that as your true path of dependence on Jesus develops, you will look and act differently from what you've known before and people may start to attack your new found faith in many different ways. Usually the religious lead this charge, and unless you are surrendering and transparent before God you will take offense and fail before you even begin. People may say unkind things to you, or misunderstand and misrepresent your actions, but if you

draw your self-worth from the lover of your soul, the One who walks with you through everything, I assure you that you will overcome and win.

You see living dependence on Christ means just that. We could say what God orders He takes care of or pays for or within the vision lays the provision. Traditionally any who walk what man calls faith often turn into professional beggars; always looking to get something from people or sending out letters to ask for support.

Now, I do not wish to condemn or ridicule such as we are all on different paths in our journey. For us we simply felt raising support contradicts trusting Jesus. One man said to me once, “While I am waiting for Jesus I will work my own answer,” and to me he would do well to think about what he just said. Simply put, have intimacy and trust in God’s way not in man’s ways. It is a private thing like any intimate relationship is private. People will see the strength of that relationship, but the strength comes from intimacy not a quick lust of give me my way NOW.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MAINTAINING FREEDOM

A pastor I knew in Australia used to say “most of us are like the rest of us”, so I think I can safely say, nobody likes change.

Sure, we like it if it means we go from rags to riches or we meet the spouse of our dreams. But daily change in our personal lives usually only comes around in thought around New Year’s.

After we have spent time confessing and surrendering, it is important to allow sustained change to remain in our life. We will have a new strength to walk a new path as now our spirit has come alive. We were dead in sin, but now we are alive in Jesus through confession and thanking Him for paying the price for us. To continue on faithfully, we must fertilize the relationship and continue to allow the Holy Spirit to bring about change in our lives.

Some of that change will be relatively easy, but other change will be agonizing at times.

For Lara and me, we had to begin to trust God for our daily needs. This was to become part of our path to sustain the change. We took great effort to not make our needs known as we had to know it was God taking care of us. After all, if it is not God we need to move on and find where we are supposed to be in life. We had to know

God would do it when nobody knew. We had to know He was walking with us in ever increasing sensitivity.

There had been and continues to be many times people have arrived at our home with groceries and we never presume to take that for granted as they always show up at the right time with the right items needed. We have even seen Craigslist supply what we need free of charge right when needed.

Amazingly there was a man named Jimmy who happened upon our life. I don't recall how we connected, but I believe I had need of a dryer part and he sold them. Jimmy sent it from across the country, where I don't know. The wonders of the internet but Jimmy sent it to me for free. For reasons not known to me, he told us he wants to always supply our appliance needs and this man, whom I have never met nor asked for help, sends what we need when we need it. Recently he bought us a brand new clothes dryer. He has "donated" hundreds on parts for our washers and dryers, which were well needed given as we wash clothes for a family of nine. It does not make logical sense that a total stranger asked me to tell him our appliance needs and that he would provide them free of charge. But I can tell you this, as we continue on the path of dependence on Christ He is creative as to how our needs are met.

It could be so easy to become self-dependant again as many fall into the trap of adding Jesus to their life like a badge rather than making Him their life. Opportunities constantly arise to make us think we

can do it our way and it is a constant challenge to remain seated in our soul looking to Jesus for what He wants. Lara and I have walked a path that was created for us and as you walk the path created for you, there will be challenges and opportunities to depend on yourself again rather than on the lover of your soul.

For us we continually need to know we are walking God's perfect will for our lives.

At one time we went back to Australia for a visit. As we could only afford one way tickets we were interested to see if God would bring us back. At that time our visa only allowed us to be away for a maximum of 12 months from the U.S., so if God wanted us back He would have to make a way. The opportunity presented itself many times to take matters into our own hands and find a way to get back, but again we would remind ourselves that we only want to be where God made a way for us to be. We figured if God took us somewhere then we could rest in the knowledge that He would take care of us. Eleven months into our visit, my father's church found they had not paid me money owed from when I worked for them. They immediately paid the money; you guessed it, almost the exact amount we needed to return. We returned to the U.S. knowing God wanted us here and would provide.

It can be a real challenge not to take things into our own hands especially when sometimes there is so much emotion involved. It's

like a free fall. You just have to trust in the wind of the Spirit and know that you will land safely on the ground.

God does and will supply all your needs when you walk in Him, but the problem can be that we have lived such self-centered, lustful lifestyles that it can be hard to understand the difference between what a “need” is and what is a “want”. When we were relatively new to Boston we needed to find a place of our own. We had been staying with some people and as much as we appreciated it, we had to move on. Not having a credit rating in the U.S. made it immediately hard for us to get started. Really we were dependent on God to bring a home to us. Obviously it was a constant thought and underlying pressure that we had to continually hand our lives over to Jesus. Then the day came we were walking on the Boston Common and a lady called out to us commenting on our children. Normally we do not pay that a lot of attention to comments about our kids, but this day we ended up talking with this lady who God had obviously put us in front of for a reason.

From the simple conversation with her we got a new home on the beach, and moved in shortly thereafter. God knew we had to meet her, and orchestrated the arrangement for her to talk to us. We have never seen her again nor even know her name. It was Jesus at work.

To depend on Jesus becomes increasingly important today as there is so much uncertainty in this world that it becomes essential to learn what God has for our lives. It is even more essential to know

that if the world collapsed around you that there is a security in knowing God has you covered. Even when it looks the darkest, most hopeless, you need to remain steadfast in this belief.

To have a spirituality of your own requires a daily effort as we struggle against a society that is based on immediate gratification, promising us a false sense of security derived through material possessions, money, fame and power. But as we see time and time again, people who strive to become self dependent without Jesus in their life always seem to come up against obstacles they cannot get around.

If a man tries to make himself like God without God or to become the ultimate authority, then what happens when something is larger than his finite knowledge or experience?

I personally do not pay a huge amount of attention to the news media as I feel they have made an industry largely of gossip and in my experience I have observed the devil has a big mouth. Usually whatever is screaming at you is not the correct voice to heed to help lead you in the right direction.

When you maintain a daily walk of spirituality it is the thoughts that come from deep within that we must train ourselves to hear. Your head can be full of confusion and fear but from deep within there is a voice that carries peace and the answers you are looking for are found there in those still, quiet moments. To listen to that small still voice requires constant acknowledgement of your need to hear and

obey what God has for your life. God never wishes to destroy your life; on the contrary he who wants to find his life must first lose it.

Those times of extreme pressure can cause a meltdown in stress and fear. Or you can quiet your soul, quiet the craziness flying through your head and find the still small voice of Jesus. For me in those times I try and walk and talk with Jesus. I walk and talk until a peace comes from His spirit speaking and ministering to my spirit.

One month we were short on rent. Not an unfamiliar circumstance, and I could not see where any help would come from and were really asking a lot of questions as to why we found ourselves in this predicament again. As a rule, we try not to be late with our bills, but these things have a way of happening, despite our deep conviction of faith. We have found that as we expressed these feelings to God He usually had it our needs met right when it was needed. This particular month we just were not seeing an answer nor were we hearing answers to our “why” questions. Then, while checking our post office box in Boston, I bumped into a man we had not seen in a very long time. He owned a store in downtown Boston and we had met him once when our car broke down. Remember him? He was the Jewish man that would let us use his office to pray in the winter as long as we did not bring any Christian paraphernalia. On seeing me he immediately exclaimed that he heard we were back in town, and went on to tell us that he had a house that he was going to renovate and thought we might want to live in it –rent free. The answer came in a way that in my wildest

dreams I never would have expected. So me, Lara and our children, moved to Newton into a very nice area and enjoyed the home we were blessed with.

Maintaining the relationship is a daily walk with various tools put in place to help. I find that as I read the Bible many times things are quick to come to me from the pages of the Bible. A passage all of a sudden often just comes alive. Maybe I have read that passage many times before but God uses it to speak to me in a new way. Through His word He helps bring the strength to continue on and to overcome no matter what the natural obstacles may look like.

In addition to the written word of God there are people of God.

Many today tend to lean more on men than on God and this is always something to be cautious of as you begin your journey. If you ever look to men as your source there will be a problem as people come in and out of your life and nothing is forever, except Jesus' love. While moving around we met an older couple that God ultimately led us to encourage on their path of spirituality with Jesus. Lara and I did not know a lot about their financial situation and they were not aware about what we did. They always sat in front of us in the meetings and enjoyed the kids, but we visited them one day at the leading of the spirit of God and talked with them about a concern we had. They were so overjoyed that someone had the courage to talk to them we left feeling like God had used us to change a life for better. A few months later we

started to receive regular financial support in the mail. It was not a large amount, but every time it was as if God sent the funds. For the longest time we never knew who was sending the support. They give it to their church and it was forwarded to us for five years, till this day. We never saw the couple again, as they lived in another part of the country but God had touched their hearts and they were to be the only regular people that believed in us enough to send finances on a regular basis never missing a month. Recently the man passed away and this flow of generosity continues. Although these folks were not our source there was a bond in the spirit of God that kept them faithful to what God had touched their heart to do. I guess they were faithful to give the right amount every month and God seemed to make sure it was never enough that we began to see it as our source. Every month we knew God had sent it and it was just the right amount to help meet a need.

People and relationship are all that God uses if you ever help someone expecting, you will be disappointed, but when you help out of a pure heart to see that person excel then and only then will you be blessed.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

RESTING IN GOD

One winter when we first came to the Boston area our car broke down in the middle of a blizzard. I remember thinking, whose car overheats in a blizzard? I walked into a nearby pizza restaurant to ask for water for the engine, but before I could even ask, a woman appeared from the back of the restaurant and yelled for us to come in to have a pizza on the house. There we all sat in that warm restaurant, safely out from the cold, and enjoyed a meal that was provided to us at no charge by a stranger, no less. Even as faith-based as I am, I couldn't help but quietly think to myself, "why?"

The facts were clear: we had no money and were hungry. But the answer while simple is profoundly true: Jesus had us covered.

Circumstances can change so suddenly, as we all know too well, and if your life is not based entirely in Jesus, then we may miss the blessings He has prepared to provide us—whether we think we need them or not.

We have never become self-sufficient again. There have been many times we have had to hand our lives back to Jesus for His purposes. It is so easy to wander from the right path and start to do things that can seem like a good idea and are not a God idea. Living like this sometimes you do start to take matters into your own hands and try and work a solution. Many times I have had businessmen ask me to partner with them and every time I am reminded we are missionaries to America. Although one could say what would be

wrong with that?

I know if I started down that path it would become my life.

Business is never as simple as it seems when you are getting into it.

I usually reply that I will help you where I can, but not for payment.

Saying, if you decide to make a gift then wonderful, but if not then

wonderful as well. What I do, I do to bless and build men where

possible, that is my challenge in learning to be Christ-like. Because

of this approach I have never been overly involved in business in

the U.S.

I did start a businessmen's fellowship group with some men in

Boston. The Boston Business Journal did an article on us as we

placed billboards on major highways in Boston. Ultimately that

closed when the prominent businessman running it with me

because of business commitments could no longer continue.

So yes, there have been struggles to walk other paths and I do have

to say clearly that there have been many challenges and many times

we could have yielded to this temptation because of fear or

insecurity. If we ever end up walking a business of a different path

we will do it because Jesus is leading us that way not because of

circumstances pressuring us to react. We always try to act in Jesus

not to re-act in self. Probably the hardest times are when we just get

busy with life and forget or fail to draw aside and walk a daily

intimacy with Jesus. Sure He still takes care of us, but it is not the

same as you feel the immense fear or pull of what people would call

a normal life.

To give a greater understanding of this let me give an example.

The winter in New England can be very hard and anyone that has

had to pay the heating bill understands that spring is what I call free weather. We had been heating our house with the use of a wood stove and I was watching the wood pile disappear knowing full well we would not make it through the cold period we were experiencing. Thankfully Lara and I were at a position we could rest in the knowledge that by the time the last stick of wood went in the fire God would have done a miracle. We had made our need known to God and asked for the wood to pretty much come to us as we had no easy way to collect it from far away.

I had been given some furniture that was laying around that we were not using and was suitable to be burned so I ran the chainsaw through it and used it. Ideally I would have loved to not have had to do this but to me I was thankful we still had wood and was convinced we would never run out. I guess I figured God had provided wood as much as I would have liked it to be another way. Well the day we were to run out the phone rang and it was a man telling me he was woken up at 4:00 am and felt God was telling him I needed firewood and he should buy it. He also felt God was telling him to buy it from somewhere local.

Lara and I were amazed although we believed God would take care of us it was an amazing experience to see it happen and in such a dynamic way. That God would wake up someone who did not know our need and tell them to buy the wood and make sure it was from somewhere local.

It was a wonderful warm wood we burned in more ways than one. Every time we went and picked up some wood for the fire it was a great reminder that Jesus walks with us.

It was only weeks before that we were offered another business opportunity and it was quite an attractive one. When a tie like this with firewood arrives it would be easy to look back and wonder what could have been, but I resist letting my mind run in that direction as it is a slippery path to get on. That is what I mean by we could never become self sufficient again. We could go into business and put the mission on a back burner, but I know living this way drives me on and closer to Jesus and what He wants me (us) to do.

I don't know if you ever totally come to terms with this way of life. It has been our experience that as you become comfortable with a certain level of living God comes and moves the marker. Meaning He is interested in our continual growth in faith. To be stationary in faith is not possible. Faith is an alive and active part of any believer's life. If it is not increasing then simply put, it is decreasing. Never can a trust in Jesus stay stationary.

For many it is crisis that draws them to relationship with Jesus and when the crisis passes they file Jesus somewhere in their life and continue on the path that seems best to them. Next time there is a crisis or need, they try to blow the dust off the file cabinet and pull Jesus out, but what they fail to understand is that like any relationship we must cultivate and nurture it through the good and the bad times. It is easy during the good, but in the bad—that is where we show our love in some small way to Jesus when we trust Him and rely on His way.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

My wife and I had walked many paths together of extreme pressure and looking objectively at our lives I can safely say this way of life has not hurt our marriage, but has strengthened it. Lara has her own relationship with Jesus that is able to stand alone, but we come together and flow in the Holy Spirit of unity. Prior to stepping out in this path Lara was one who just followed after what I was doing and was quite happy to do that. But Jesus had the desire for greater intimacy with her as well and anytime there is Holy Spirit intimacy in a marriage then the marriage only grows stronger. A threefold cord is not easily broken, saying that the Bible knows marriage to each other and Jesus only generates strength.

As men it can be easy to take out our inner frustrations on the family around us. I remember I had to stop myself from being snappy with the family. Easy done when you want time to think and the kids are being kids. Lara and I always make sure our communication lines are open and flowing well. Many times we take walks together in the evening so the kids can run while we just talk together about what is going on in our lives. We have found that if the communication suffers then everything suffers. Especially as we often see different parts of the tapestry of life that God is weaving together around us.

Romance really is Gods idea.

He romances us and then as we walk absorbed in Him romance flows into a married relationship. Lara and I had been talking with a man and out of nowhere he produced two tickets for a dinner cruise on the harbor. It was an opportunity for Lara to dress up and for me to wear a suit for her. It was a wonderful night out on the harbor. We met another couple that we spent time talking with and later connected with them in a better way. They became friends with us and we did many things friends do together. Something that is unusual their kids were well behaved and respectful and that matters a lot to us. We visited them at their house and all our kids played together, and when they moved to North Carolina years later we stayed at their house when driving through and just enjoyed one another. But it was a treat for us, a night out without the kids, and sure showed us that God is very much interested in treating us to special things that show He is a romantic God.

God certainly strengthens a relationship based in His laws and living a life of faith, there is no room for a selfish outlook on anything. It becomes about God and what He is doing in your family corporately while on a personal level. Walking a life that is hard for outsiders to understand they throw all sorts of comments and logic at you. One concern was the feeling of security and that our kids would never suffer in this area.

It was early on we began to understand that when we are insecure so are our kids. When we walked scary paths, if we had supernatural comfort and security then our whole family was at rest and the

same. Kids follow the lead of the parents and are the product of their parents. I always try to not get so involved in what is going on around our lives that I become insecure about tomorrow. When those feelings start to surface, and they do try, it is always the right time to draw aside and be with Jesus the lover of your soul.

Jesus will minister to the insecurity and I found that I must stay at rest with Him long enough that I am overtaken with His peace and security.

It was during these times of immense changes and outward pressures we were confronted with the question of having more children. We already had two and wanted more but living such uncertainty it definitely was a thought and a matter of prayer. It could be easy to say we should wait until life was more naturally stable, but as we talked about it, we understood we were by the grace of Jesus never going back to what we were. We loved serving Jesus in fresh and daily faith and knew He would bless any kids we had.

So over the time we started on this path and five more children were added to our family, bringing us to a total of seven. Six boys and a girl and each one of those kids has been born into an atmosphere of faith and miracles that have preceded their coming into the world.

Lara activated the dependence she had learned on Christ during the birth of each child.

1 Timothy 2:15 “But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.”

She took this verse literally by faith and trust in Jesus. Every birth she had no intervention in the labors and deliveries were fast. And although she knew she was having a baby, the pain was bearable and she did so without the use of pain killers. The only exception was our last baby. We did not keep track of a date because of everything that was going on at the time so the due date was uncertain. The midwives felt we should not wait longer than we already had as it may endanger the baby. It was upsetting for Lara as it is the only time she had a birth interfered with, and all agreed she was probably not late but nobody wanted to take the risk.

The night before she was to be at the hospital she had a dream the baby’s heart stopped and she woke up in fear and checked. She could not find a heartbeat and the movement had stopped. She tried everything to wake the baby but nothing worked. As we drove to the hospital we prayed together and told death to leave in Jesus’ name and right as we said that the baby leapt into action and started kicking again. With that in mind we felt God had spared our son but did not wish to take further risk. Lara felt a little disappointed about intervention but when a healthy baby boy was in her arms the pain of childbirth was forgotten.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE CHILDREN

We have watched and been amazed as the kids have grown and developed. Jesus has provided for their every need and we have seen a strong faith develop in them that at times challenges me. As parents we feel our challenge is to equip our kids to be able to stand in their own faith. They one day will make their own decisions and choices and our prayer is that they see the wonderful thrill of a life of faith in Jesus. We never push anything on them, but rather try to lead them to understand for themselves. If a child or person has an understanding as to why something is wrong then the conviction is part of who they are and they will not try and sneak when you are not around.

As parents you have to keep your finger on the family pulse and kids are a great indicator of what is going on in the family. Their honesty and openness can be a great help in situations. Like when faced with a decision that affects us all, we always include the kids and see their responses as indicators. Like my parents, our prayer is that we always keep our priorities right and all our children surpass us in their walk of faith.

Snowboarding has been a wonderful example of this. Our kids developed a love for snowboarding. God continued to amaze us with His creative ways and we were able to take the family snowboarding many times for free. The kids activated their faith

and see they can trust God for things that matter to them and God is intimately interested.

One of our boys believed God would bring him a snowboard of his own but he did not have a lot of money for such. He had said he really felt a particular shop would have one for him and walking out of that shop he was disappointed to have not heard right. The kids have never been materialistic which we are thankful to God for and his main concern was not the snowboard, it was not understanding why he heard wrong.

It was to be a few days later when I stopped at the store just to see and there was his snowboard. It had come from another store and was marked way down to within his budget. He was thrilled and thanked Jesus for the blessing. He had heard right but like all of us missed it with timing. I have found personally it is a lot easier to see *what* God wants than to see *when* He wants it. It was a great opportunity and life lesson for Joshua as we were able to help him understand how to build on this experience.

As a father I thank God for the faith that is rising up in my children. We do not push anything on them, but as they live and constantly see miracles it can only have a positive effect on their little minds as my mind was impacted watching my parents as a child. My parents never really complained in our hearing and we do not make a life of complaining either. Our kids understand despite the challenges we constantly pray together for our miracles. Then

we activate our faith together by watching as the answers come no matter how small. We continue to thank God and pray together.

Something that activated that is scrapping metal.

The boys have taken to selling scrap metal when they find it. The funds they made they use for things like paying gas money to snowboard. So sometimes they pray to get metal and they find it. We like them doing their own little business as it is an opportunity to teach them responsibility and how to act like a man. We have always told our kids there is no such thing as a teenager in the Bible. That is a world term for bad behavior and we endeavor to train them to be boys then big boys then young men then men of faith. When they do wrong we say that is not something a man would do. When you treat them with this respect they respond to it amazingly.

When faced with large decisions we use the kids as a confirmation that what we are doing is right. Never do we as parents push or bulldoze the kids. They understand we have the final say, but we often ask for their thoughts on a decision without placing any responsibility on their shoulders. They may not know what we are considering, but asking them their thoughts on a subject often we are surprised at their insight or understanding. We are guiding them to be individuals of faith who can and do walk their own relationship with Jesus.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

COMPLAINING

When God is in something we have to always adjust how we see life to see it through His eyes. We have found it wisdom to set a guard on our mouths. We try to never criticize or complain as we have found all these human traits do is bring destruction into a situation that can already be a stretch. In the Bible, the children of Israel many times were rebuked by God as they were never satisfied. Like in *Numbers 11:1* “*Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the LORD, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp.*”

To complain never brings life to a situation and always ends up burying us in a hole of self pity and emotion. Many times we have just sang and kept our minds and hearts focused on Jesus not the craziness around us.

A good lesson for us was getting the motor home that we traversed the country in. Before buying it, we were staying in a hotel and had no idea where we would go after checking out. Our thoughts wanted to run wild as we were in a strange city with nowhere to turn. We asked for a late checkout from the hotel and sat in the room praying and singing praises to God, a step away from meltdown. I guess it brought us a little extra time that we felt like we needed. During that time we felt peace return and thought we

should call in connection to our car having been damaged a week earlier. A young driver had backed into the front of our car and damaged it. We were told the insurance company totaled the vehicle and had sent us the money. It was a real surprise, but through that we called the owner of the motor home and went to see him.

The funny events leading up to that are well worth mentioning.

We felt we were to get a motor home and had been introduced to a man with one for sale. We never negotiated, but he immediately gave us a very good price and we had to respond by telling him we actually did not have money but if God wanted us to have it we would get some funds and be back before he sold it elsewhere.

That was exactly what happened in the hotel room and I called him to tell him we had the money. It was not enough but he invited us to sleep in the motor home in his driveway while he wrestled with the idea as to whether to give it to us or not. The man then said he wanted to give us the motor home for free, I never responded as we wanted it to be from his heart not his emotion. We did not want to drive off up the road with him feeling like he was taken advantage of. So invited, we spend probably two nights sleeping in the motor home in his driveway while he wrestled with himself and God.

After a few days he came and said let's get this done as he knew exactly how much money we had but he stood there arguing aloud with God and himself. It went something like this. "I will just give them the motor home. No I know my wife will not be happy."

We stood there in silence and finally he turned and gave us a price that was just over half of what he knew we had. It was worth considerably more but he had made up his mind and we drove out of his driveway the new owners of a miracle motor home. This man was used by God to bless us with a tool that was to help and change many lives. Because of that motor home we ministered to the people we spoke about in Pensacola. We travelled across to San Francisco and touched many lives along the way in state parks and homes we were invited to visit. He never knew us, but God knew him and was interested in blessing him even as He blessed us.

You see when something is from God I believe everyone involved that has an open heart is truly blessed by God.

Sometimes it would be easy to pressure people or try and manipulate a situation, but we believe that if we are in the blessings of God then all involved can be as well. If you move ahead at someone else's expense then it can be hard to say God is helping you in that. God cares for everyone involved whether they know Him or not.

We tried very hard not to complain while sitting in that hotel room that day. We tried very hard not to question God and decided to sing instead to make use our heads to behave. It is a terrible natural feeling to not know where you are going to spend the next night or to have nowhere to go where you can just kick back and rest; but

kick back and rest in Jesus He has it figured out and as you walk through the valley of the death you will stay strong.

The apostle Paul said in *Galatians 2:20*: *“I have been crucified with Christ, and I live; yet no longer I, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith toward the Son of God, the One loving me and giving Himself over on my behalf.”*

To get to the place you can say I have laid down my complaints and expectations and to be able to say “Jesus have your way in me” is an amazing place at which to arrive. The problem is we never arrive. It seems we are always passing through and constantly having to surrender. Sure it is intimate to see the hand of God on a daily basis, but constantly the mud of life around us tries to suck us back.

Keep looking to Jesus. Things do get better, and if you can stop your mouth from running in all sorts of directions then it will be much easier. Just think of it—God is not a puppy dog we cannot snap our fingers and He comes running. He is an all powerful being who reveals Himself to us in measures that we are able to receive without being overwhelmed.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SO MANY QUESTIONS

Many times I have wondered why God had us to walk that path that we are on. There have been days, more for me than Lara, where I wonder about what will be in coming years for us personally. We have some ideas, but honestly I don't have all the answers to those questions but I can trust and know Jesus would never leave us or forsake us. *Hebrews 13:5-6: "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." 6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"(Amplified Bible)*

The U.S. is a society so entrenched in excess that to be part of their culture while struggling financially can be very challenging emotionally. To compare yourself to those around you is a very real danger that always ends in disaster. We ask questions like, "Why are we going without when others seem to be going ahead?" During a time of financial pressure you always feel as if you are the only person in the world with nothing.

It is during these times bad choices can be made like using a credit card that you have no way of ever being able to pay back. There was a time we paid for something on a credit card while in a financial tight position. It became such a stress and we really felt as if God was saying to us not to eat tomorrow's bread today.

We learned to never do that again and live by the rule. Do not eat tomorrow's bread today. The Bible has a lot to say about debt and really you are always in a better position to stay away from debt. Fight the temptation to use a credit card, fight the temptation to make your needs known to those around you. When asked if you have any needs then be free to share, but my advice is don't be the one who initiates the conversation. It is a terrible trap to fall into and will alienate you from people who would normally be a blessing.

Remember if you advertise your needs to those around you then you are making them your source and at the end of the day what will you do when they tire of you or move on and they always do. We had this revealed to us very early on and us losing our finances from the sale of our business was a great introduction to not trusting natural things. I can't say it had been a huge struggle for us not to advertise our needs as we didn't know many people we were in constant contact with. Also we felt as if God challenged us not to be part of the problem but to allow God to use us as part of the solution.

We did have to learn when we had nothing not to look at men hoping they would do something. This can be harder than not advertising your needs as it is a wrestle inside a man's heart. This I personally had to fight a lot with when starting out on this journey of faith and what happened when we came to the Boston area is a good example.

We were learning not to look so much to man for help in desperate times and I became aware a man was watching us and God was obviously touching his heart to do something. He was wrestling in himself and it became obvious. As when he came up to me after a meeting to talk, all was revealed. He started asking questions about us and I got the feeling he was searching for a reason to not give to us. He asked if my wife wanted a job making jewelry. When he just could not put his mind at rest he took me out to his car and handed me a Christmas music CD. It was probably April/May. We had no use for it, but I felt it helped him shift his responsibility away that God was so obviously putting on him. I learned a valuable lesson that day about people. Everyone gets God opportunities to help others, but not everybody uses those opportunities or sees the value of such an opportunity. After all, if God is prompting you to help someone it is money or blessings in the bank for you.

We suffered the pain of waiting while God worked another plan A and ultimately someone did obey God and helped us. I also was learning my expectations should not be in man and in reality when I looked at him and saw God was touching his heart it was wrong for me to put my expectations on that.

One expectation I had that was incorrect was I always liked to think money would just appear in our letter box, but in reality there has only ever been once that we received money in the mail from someone we never knew. Most of the time God seems to give people the opportunity to give and if they refuse to take the

opportunity then God works on someone else and often we have found that while He is working on someone else to give, you feel the pain of the wait.

I don't believe God has a plan B, I believe we are His plan A. Sure He knows if we are going to fail and when we do He then works another plan A. He is not surprised by our decision to not cooperate with Him, but does allow us the opportunity for growth. Many times we have seen a similar pattern.

So many people have made promises and not fulfilled the promise and maybe some of that was because we were learning not to have expectations in man but in God. Sometimes situations do change and people are not able to do what they have promised. There was a time we were contacted by a family and told they wanted to send us a considerable amount of money and before they were able their situation changed through no fault of their own and they could not honor the promise they made at that time. I know they felt terrible and we released them from the commitment they made but it was probably around a year later they re-contacted us and sent it to us. Truly they were Godly people who honor their promise.

We try never to be callous when people make promises, but realistically we have learnt that many make promises out of emotion and they do not live enough in the Holy Spirit to honor what they say. Sometimes maybe our heart is not right before the Holy Spirit and that closes the door of blessing. I don't have all the answers

and sometimes I don't know that it is as simple as I want to make it. Again it hammers home the point that we must always look to Jesus as our provider not any man and constantly check our hearts.

More often than not God uses people that religious systems would discard.

Our van was in need of some repairs that were beyond my immediate ability to pay for. Living this way, you do find yourself learning to fix and reuse things that ordinarily you may not have tried to fix or would not have reused. It is a different way of thinking. But I had my car at the mechanic and needed considerable repairs. The owner of the shop was the mechanic who worked on our van and after completing the job he told me he did not wish to charge me. It truly was a blessing from God. The owner was not a church man, but he had a heart that was hungry for a relationship with Jesus.

If people are being truly touched by Jesus then rest assured they will be used of Jesus to help you on your journey in some way. Then our challenge becomes to make sure our heart is clean and looking to Jesus. It is in the times of immense pressure you have to close your natural brain off and tell it to worship Jesus. That can be really, really hard but is our only way to get through without a complete meltdown.

Romans 8 says ⁵ *Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their*

minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. ⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. ¹² Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵ The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.
(Amplified Bible)

This passage clearly talks about the natural mind being Gods enemy. It says it is impossible for it to receive the things of God if you are in the natural.

I am convinced from many experiences that if you let your mind run in the emotion of the moment you will bring yourself a lot of grief. Personally, I set a guard on my mouth in these times having learned those crazy times, bring crazy talk. I refuse to let my mind run wild with different scenarios. Realistically things are pretty much out of my control anyway so I try and still myself and spend time talking with Jesus about the events surrounding me.

This passage says, “For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.”

The Holy Spirit is the key to every situation that we may face. If there is no relationship with the Holy Spirit of God then of course we will live according to the flesh or natural ways. For our lives as we began the process of learning to walk by the Spirit there were many times we felt the pressure of a natural man devoid of dependence on the Spirit of God communing with our spirit.

Sometimes things can sneak up on you and seem like such a good idea.

We had been living in a huge ten- bedroom home and the owners decided they wanted to use it for a rehabilitation home so we were given short notice and asked to move house. The pressure was on and what may or may not have been God arrived right at that time. We had been helping a lady whose husband had gone to jail and she was going in as well. She asked us if we wanted to take care of her

house while she was incarcerated and we offered to pay rent for the time they were away. Obviously we expected the bank to foreclose or for them to move back in when they got out. Every month for the 12 months they were in prison the rent was a huge struggle. We paid the rent to a relative of theirs. It was as if God was not happy about it, but allowed us to honor our 12- month commitment.

But the month they were both released the money stopped so dramatically. It was hard to understand, but we did begin to realize we were in something that was a *good* idea not a *God* idea. We originally committed to help rent their house while they were in prison and never expected our stay to go beyond that time. Much to our surprise they came out and never wanted to move back in. The money we gave them they were living off rather than now paying the mortgage to the bank.

It was to become one of the hardest and tightest financial times for us, but we had lived this way long enough to understand there was a blockage in the blessing pipe. Lara and I asked God to forgive us for getting into such a situation, but we still had to wait for things to play out.

People that gave money to us during that time did things like saying, "Here is some money please use it specifically for ...". Like Jimmy helped us during that time with a clothes dryer, and had sent some extra cash. He made a point of saying, "Please use the extra to take your kids to the go-carts or do something as a family."

It was a time our wallets were constantly empty and I don't know what God was doing, but I do know He was working in Lara and me, as well in some valuable faith and life lessons.

God's blessings flow when we flow in God's laws and ways, if you step outside of those laws and ways you are on your own. To enter into an agreement can seem like a good idea at the time can later be something that brings a lot of pain to the workings of God in and around your life.

Although our agreement had ended we were not truly free until God moved us to another housing arrangement. I believe God allowed a good amount of time for all involved to change and ask forgiveness for walking a *good* idea rather than a *God* idea We came to understand that we had approached this in the natural not in the Spirit. The natural emotion of trying to help someone in a bad situation caused us to falter and it brought death to the blessing of God on the situation. Had we walked in the Spirit instead of opening my mouth in such a hurry when the pressure was on we would have taken more time to ask God what He thought about what we were about to walk into, and we would also have asked for the detail He wanted to fill in the blanks.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE END IS THE BEGINNING

In all our journeys there have been many wonderful paths where God has held us by the hand as we walked them. One of the things that came through is the great love and strength of the relationship formed with God's children. Many of the stories mentioned in this book relate to people we are still in relationship with and you must now realize Jesus is all about people. Sometimes –all the time— people see things different from you, but with a colorful God, I started to understand perfection is viewed as you see the bride of Christ as a whole. Not a system or a building, but what Jesus calls His bride; a bride that is making herself ready, becoming more like the groom, as we learn to live His ways.

I start to understand that when Jesus comes into a life all of Him is there. He does not send a small part of Himself, but rather his whole self. Jesus lives in a believer who has surrendered His life to Him, all that increases in us is the consciousness of who Jesus is in us, and how we can live to be more like Him.

This side of heaven, we will be guaranteed to make mistakes. Anyone who denies such is only lying to themselves and as a person of faith we should never bury our faults and shortcomings, never fearing people around us and how they may react to our sin as if it is worse than theirs. After all, most see others problems as worse than theirs or they use other's faults to justify their own.

Forget about measuring yourself by man's standards. The problems with man's standards are they change as our moods and experiences change. Live your life through the unchanging standard of the written word of God, the Bible. Read the Bible and learn what Jesus expects from us. Too many today take a man's opinion as the truth; never reading for them self to find out if what they have swallowed (believed) all their life is correct. A very true saying: "Most of us are like the rest of us".

The knowledge and relationship I have with Jesus is progressive and changing every day. Some things remain unchangeable like the written word of God. But as I start to understand that I don't have all the answers, it is incredible where knowledge comes from. Not in a humanistic way but little shots from heaven from all sorts of people.

Jesus loves us all no matter what our appearance, financial status, or faults and sins we've made in our life. I wish to be transparent and will say prior to launching out into this way of life that we were seeing some good doors open inside the church world. But the broader the place of acceptance became inside me there was a pride that was growing. Often to talk with the strange people in life was, at the time, a bother.

You know that unusual one who always seems to be there at the most inconvenient time and wants to talk. I would listen for a short time and move on. But through being broken by Jesus and

remolded, inside of me welled up a true and honest love for people. The heart of Jesus started to shine and show me everyone is of equal value.

My family and I found ourselves being fed by the homeless and sitting in gutters talking with them. I sat and ate lunch with a sultan, the chief of police from UAE, and met billionaires, but no longer did I see men as my promotion. They had nothing to give me as inside there was a new strength of Jesus that carried me and never left. I began to see all men as equal, people with different gifts and talents from God. Some take the time to acknowledge Jesus and others foolishly think they have a greater power over man. The wise ones acknowledge there is a greater power than themselves who wants a relationship with them. Jesus was becoming and still is becoming my *All*.

I had become so interested in people's lives because the Jesus in me loved them. Growing in me was a strong aversion for the things that crush and wound so many. I saw the Jesus of the Bible who I never had to make appointments to see as he always has the time to listen. The modern church likely would have found him a threat to their stronghold in society. Jesus had thousands follow Him and died with hardly a friend in the world. Peter denied Him three times and all His disciples fled. *Matthew 26:56* "*Then all the disciples deserted Him and fled.*" In His ministry years women supported Him as His work was not of this world. He did not take collections or offerings He just gave until his death and ever since. He loved and when they

hated Him He just loved them more. He is our perfect model, a true hero of unselfish proportions. If I can but model myself after a fraction of Him I shall be happy. My natural father is my only natural hero. He always loved me and told me so. Who he was in public he was at home. He was never abusive and deposited in me seeds of faith and desire beyond any man. He is my hero a true man of faith in a faltering world of perversion. I see Jesus as my hero, my Father, and he is always here for you. Jesus is the one that can change the very fiber of who you are and fulfill every natural desire you seek.

There was a lady who we encouraged on her path she was in her sixties and one day she drew me aside and said in 34 years of being a Christian no church would ever allow her to minister in any official or recognized way, she was never invited to do anything. She was so thankful we never looked down on her and encouraged her in Christ-like faith. She was being used of Jesus now instead of a man and started calling people and praying with them on the telephone. She would pray with people she met in supermarkets and stores. We were just guides on her path of discovery assuring her she is wonderful in her lover Jesus' eyes. After all, who am I when I stepped out of the religious systems? Many that we thought cared suddenly scattered, as we were walking an unusual path that some people just do not understand. That has never caused us to abandon our chosen spiritual journey with Jesus.

God uses every one of us. He has a tremendous plan for you, and I sincerely hope you take the time to find Jesus and His plan for your life.

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