

We Will Pray

Volume 1 Issue 2 Fall 2021

Ignite The Fire Movement
Summit Ministries Newnan Magazine

**Celebrating
National Police
Week**

**Fear Not!
Lessons from a
Hero of Faith**

There are major lessons we can learn from Corrie Ten Boom. Read her story inside

**A Journey to
Purpose**

Discover how yur faith in God can lead you to purpose.

**Is Unity
Necessary for
the Body of
Christ?**

Find out more inside!

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IS UNITY NECESSARY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST?

Apostle Debra Harris

When we communicate to our Heavenly Father, it is powerful and supernatural. He has given the believer an open line of communication to access His help, and we love it. Matthew writes, "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and you shall find, knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asks receives, and he that seeks finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened (Matthew 18:19-20)." Our Heavenly Father wants to communicate with us for all our needs. Our position and status in Him give us an open line of communication. Oh, what a wonderful Savior we have!

As we continue and develop our relationship with Jesus, he offers us available and sure answers to our needs and cares. Matthew writes again, "And all things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive (Matthew 21:22)." Here we go with assurance, according to our faith, we shall (a promise) have what we ask in prayer. Our communication with Father exhibits a supernatural power no one can describe, but it works.

Prayer is powerful and also is a reverent act of worship. We are told how to come before God in Luke's writings, "So He said to them, when you pray, say, 'Our Father which are in heaven, Hallowed be your name.... (Luke 11:2)." Our communication with a holy GOD must be done in a respectful and honorable way. We reverence Him by coming before Him with sinless behavior. We are to be holy as He is holy. John writes, "Now we know that God does not hear sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God and does His will, He hears Him (John 9:31)." Our Worship gives us access and empowers our faith and trust in our Heavenly Father to hear and answer our prayers.

The power of prayer increases when we invite others to pray with us. Two or more prayer partners are always better than one. The scriptures encourage us in so many ways to invite others to pray with us, which gives more power than our individualistic ways. Moses wrote to the children of Israel to join in agreement with prayer. He wrote, "How could one chase a thousand to flight, unless their rock had sold them, and the Lord had surrendered them (Deuteronomy 32:30)?" Matthew writes in the New Testament, "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in Heaven (Matthew 18:19)." These scriptures are reminders to invite others into our prayers for immediate and powerful demonstrations of answers on behalf of God our Father.

What should we ask in prayer? Everything ... anything! Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, encouraging them to always communicate to the Father about all their needs and concerns. He wrote, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made





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COVERED

Pastor Jimmy Patterson

*"He shall cover you with His feathers,
And under His wings you shall take refuge..."
(Psalm 91:4)*

On March 27, 2021, The Newnan Times-Herald reported what happened shortly after midnight at 92 Greenville Street, in our west central Georgia town:

Brandon Hand was watching TV when he heard the tornado alert on his phone. He rounded up his family and immediately convened in the basement where he recalled watching flashes of green light from the exploding transformers nearby. Suddenly, he recalled the sound of "things ripping away" from his home, then he laid over his wife and twin daughters. "Then there was the 'boom' from our chimney falling through our kitchen and then into the basement where we were," Hand said.

The morning light revealed the devastation from the EF4 tornado the night before: destroyed homes, downed trees, and disrupted lives, but Brandon Hand's family was safe. Why? Because he covered them with his body.

That is what God does for us. He shelters us. Like a bird covers her chicks during an imposing threat, God protects us from impending doom (Psalm 91:4).

Forty years ago, Secret Service agent, Tim McCarthy, was shot, shielding President Ronald Reagan from a March 30, 1981, assassination attempt by John Hinckley Jr. Reagan had left a hotel after making a speech and was walking toward his limousine when Hinckley stepped from the crowd and aimed a .22-caliber pistol at the president.

McCarthy stood in the path of the bullet, covering Reagan with his body. He took the round intended for President Reagan in his own chest. The agent was rushed to the hospital in critical condition, but he survived his wound.





Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13). That is what Jesus did for us. "(He) bore our sins in His own body on the tree..." (1 Peter 2:24). The blood Jesus shed on the cross covers us.

God told Noah: "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark and cover it inside and outside with pitch" (Genesis 6:14). The Hebrew word for "pitch" is "kaphar" which means "atonement." The pitch Noah painted on the ark sealed it from the judgement waters.

Jesus atones for us with His shed blood, saving us from the coming judgement. The Lord's blood covers us just like Noah's ark was "covered" with pitch. Are you covered by God? If you are not, by faith (Hebrews 11:7), come "under His wings and you shall take refuge" (Psalm 91:4). He will save you today.

Author Spotlight



For 40 years, Jimmy Dale Patterson has served as a pastor of churches in Texas, Florida, and Georgia. He is a graduate of Howard Payne University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is currently the Minister of Biblical and Theological Research at First Baptist Church of Newnan, Georgia, where he and his wife, Amy, are members. They have two adult sons and one grandchild.

PRAY, PRAY, PRAY!

Minister Tracey Pitts

Persist in your requests.
Receive answers to your requests.
Apply God's Word to your situation.
Yes, to all of His promises!

Pray, saints of God, each and every day.
Pray to our Heavenly Father, and watch Him show you the way.
Each morning that He allows you to open your eyes, and when your feet hit the floor:
Look up to Heaven, and then gently say, "Thank You for waking me, for Your mercy, Your love,
Your favor, and for every opened door."

Ask Jesus to go before you and to protect you, to keep your mind, and to prepare the way.
Didn't you know that your Heavenly Abba loves to hear His children when they pray?
Open your mouth, Saints of the Most High, and make your requests known.
The angels are waiting to hand-deliver your requests to our Father's throne.

There is no prayer too big or too small.
Because of His love for His precious sheep, our Father loves and can handle them all.
You must not be afraid to approach our Heavenly Father to share the things on your heart and mind.
He loves you and will fulfill His promises to you through His Word and will answer you in His perfect time.

Be as persistent as the widow in Luke 18:1-8, and keep your prayers going both night and day.
She was humble, yet resilient, until the unjust judge saw things her way.
Jesus used this parable as an example when teaching His disciples how to be persistent when they pray.
He told them of the widow's determination of not giving up, and this was all He needed to say.

If you are reading this poem and you have not yet given your life to Christ.
Read Romans 10:9-10, these words of salvation will revolutionize your life.
Admit that you are a sinner.
Confess your sins and ask God to forgive you, and you will become a winner.

Then ask Jesus to come and take up residence in your heart.
Ask God to give you a Bible-believing church and you are off to your brand new start.
It will be a life filled with God's mercy, love, and exuberant faith.
And when you close your eyes for the last time on this earth,
You will be happy that you've prayed and said "Yes" to Jesus, YOUR SAVING GRACE.

Pray, Pray, Pray.
That's all that this Christian poet is trying to convey.

P

PERSIST

Persist in your requests

R

RECEIVE

Receive answers to your requests

A

APPLY

Apply God's Word to your situation

Y

YES

Yes, to all His promises

Author Spotlight



Minister Tracey E. Pitts is the wife of Pastor H. Leon Pitts, Jr. They have been happily married for 30 years. She's a dynamic speaker, director, playwright, producer, and talented actor.

Minister Pitts is a 1991 graduate of the University of West Georgia, and she has been a teacher for 30 years.

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The RED PRESSpective

Shattered Glass Part One

Rewa Pressley

It was a tall glass that had been filled with ice cold water. So cold, in fact, that despite the coolness of the day, the glass perspired with condensation.

Taking it back into the kitchen, I held the glass with one hand and attempted to open the refrigerator with the other. Before I could stop it, before I even realized that it was slipping, the glass fell to the floor. Shattered...

What had been left of the water spilled. Shaking my head in frustration at myself, I thought, *I don't drop things like this. What's wrong with me? Maybe I'd underestimated the slipperiness of the glass. Maybe I'd underestimated the security of my grip.*

I looked at the floor. There were so many broken pieces.

Clean-up started with the big pieces. Most of them could be picked up by hand. But it was the small pieces that had me walking cautiously as I swept the entire kitchen. Scattered across the open floor, the small pieces could easily go unseen.

"...I am like a broken vessel." - Psalm 31:12b

I had been so careful; I hadn't lived clumsily. But here I was, surrounded by broken pieces. Weakened by what I thought was a disconnect between my prayers (faith) and my present (sight), life slipped from my grip. *I don't drop things like this. What's wrong with me?* I had once been so self-assured, so self-sufficient. But now nothing was going the way that I had planned. And as my heart's expectations lay shattered, my bottled tears spilled.

I could see the big pieces, their edges now serrated with anger...resentment... loneliness...depression. Surely, I could handle them, though.

But it was the small pieces that I wasn't so sure about. My life was littered with these shards of disappointment that had been born from the genealogy of hopes deferred.

Disconnect begat disbelief: *I can't believe that You didn't...*

Which begat disillusionment: *I thought that You would...*

Which begat discouragement: *I hoped that...*

Which begat dis-ease: *I feel that You should have...*

Which begat discontentment: *I wanted You to...*

Which begat distance: *But I prayed...*





These small pieces were everywhere. I couldn't see them, though, until I felt them. As I walked through church, work, the mall, the bank, the hairdresser's, the grocery store, they were there, cutting deeply with each step. My walk... oh, how it hurt.

I looked at my life. There were so many broken pieces.

*Will anyone notice the cuts? I'm such a bleeding heart. Can I hide the blood?
There's so much of it... The glass was so stained...*

"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart..." – Psalm 34:18a

I had made what I thought was a simple request of God. I don't remember if it escaped my lips or my heart, as a statement or as a question, but I petitioned God to make me a Believer. Yes, a Believer. Now, let me stop you before you start to rejoice at what you may think was a decision for salvation. It was not. It was a decision for faith. Although I had many years of Christianity under my belt, I was not a Believer. I didn't trust God.

But I wanted to.

Don't get me wrong: I trusted God for eternity, just not for every day. But I wanted to. I wanted more. I wanted to mature. I wanted to walk in greater authority and godly confidence. I wanted to experience greater victory and deeper revelation.

But it was in the walk from faith to faith, from the prayer to the promise, that God allowed everything in my life to be tested, everything in my heart to be tried. With each test, with each trial, I struggled to hold it all together.

But I couldn't.

When I had asked to believe, I had also, unknowingly, asked to be broken.

And in that place of frustrated unknowns and doubt, God knew that I was going to interpret His silence as absence. He knew that my world was going to quake. He knew that my heart was going to chill.

And He still allowed me to break under the pressure.

Maybe your faith is lying at your feet as well...indistinguishable among the many fractured pieces of your life. Maybe, in your own strength, you've been holding on too tightly. Maybe you're weakened from trying to force your own plans instead of, by faith, trusting God's. You weren't sure if He'd do it, so you tried to do it all on your own. Now, everything has fallen apart and you're questioning God's trustworthiness.

Friend, give Him the pieces. Your hands may be trembling, but give Him the pieces. You may be looking at Him side-eyed, but give Him the pieces. All of them, regardless of their size or your situation. Clean up is hard. I know; I'm still handing over my pieces, too. You're not His only broken child.

For us to see Him clearly and know Him fully, He'll allow us to drift, to draw us closer. He'll allow us to be tested, to teach us to trust. He'll allow...so that He can prove...

Piece by piece, God is using the brokenness to craft my faith. And He's going to use yours, too.

Because He's El Shaddai

. Because He's God Almighty.

Because He's the All-Sufficient One.

And He is faithful.

PRINCIPLE: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." - Galatians 2:20






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Author Spotlight



Rewa Pressley is a Christian communicator who is passionate about using stories to proclaim the Good News. Her blog, The RED PRESSpective, is designed to encourage and empower women on their journey of faith. She loves meeting new people, sharing new experiences, and traveling to new places. You can find her at theredpresspective.com or on Instagram @theredpresspective

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I Want to Live On!

Sher Harris

I am a diabetic and having to accept that fact was difficult for me. I have been teaching fitness for almost 40 years. I am 70 years old now, and I no longer own or live in the body that I remember. I told myself "My sugar is just a little high." "My numbers are just a little off". What really shocked me is when I noticed my eyesight was blurry, and I was constantly blinking and having to refocus.

Are you there? At the point of not wanting to accept the fact that your lifestyle has created a problem? Our body has been giving us warnings: the blurred vision, frequent urination, dry or itchy skin, tired or thirsty, or feeling hungry a lot. These are signs that we are at risk for diabetes. It's when our blood sugar is higher than normal. It is when we are over 45, don't exercise and are overweight. It is when we are so busy that we aren't paying attention to the warning signs or taking care of ourselves.

We must know our ABC's: our **A1C** (below 7), our **Blood pressure** and our **Cholesterol**. When we are aware of these things, it makes us smart about this disease.

Managing these three things lowers our chances of having a heart attack, a stroke, or other nerve problems. As we age, we **must** become more conscious of our bodies so that we can live a more productive life. Our eating habits **have to** change!



We can no longer eat on the run, or grab and go, or stop in for a quick fried fish sandwich. We must take the time to eat healthier foods with fewer calories.

You will lose weight and feel better if you get out and burn more calories. Get a workout buddy. Someone who wants to live too! Find an exercise regimen and stick to it.

When you find people with whom to share your good and bad, it makes a big difference. Find a local support group, a place to go and fellowship with others. To exhale! To be accountable!

More people in our area are having foot and leg problems, like sores and ulcers. The best way to protect against diabetic complications is taking prescribed medications in a timely manner. We must focus on eating healthier and creating an exercise plan that works for you to combat the swelling of legs, knees, and feet.

At Body by U, we created a chair aerobics program that helps speed blood through the blood vessels of the feet and helps reduce the extra weight in the abdomen. We found that our members responded well to this program, and we watched it restore their confidence.

It's not about what size you wear, but how you wear your size. Confidence and sexiness is a state of mind.

Our goal is to help you make changes from the inside out in a comfortable setting. Embrace your curves and stop hiding them! This is fitness designed with your body in mind, encouraging body positivity and fellowship. Visit us at www.bodybyu.fitness. You are not alone. Let's live together! Amen.





Author Spotlight



Sher Harris is a 40-year fitness veteran and the CEO of Body by U Fitness. She is the author of hundreds of articles locally, online and nationally on various health and fitness topics over the years. She is the publisher and editor of an International christian magazine for well over five years. She published her story in a senior group biography and recently completed her autobiography entitled, *Escaping the Darkness*, recording her journey from divorce, sickness and depression to good health.

A Journey to Purpose

Connie Singleton

Maybe you haven't awakened in the night to the weight of these thoughts, but perhaps like me, you've had occasion to wonder: *What is my purpose? What is God's will for my life?* Perhaps it's a transitional season of your life - graduation from high school or college, a move to a new place or career, a health, financial, family or marital crisis - that has prompted these questions. As you may have learned in school, once our basic needs are met, it is natural for us to try to make sense of our existence.

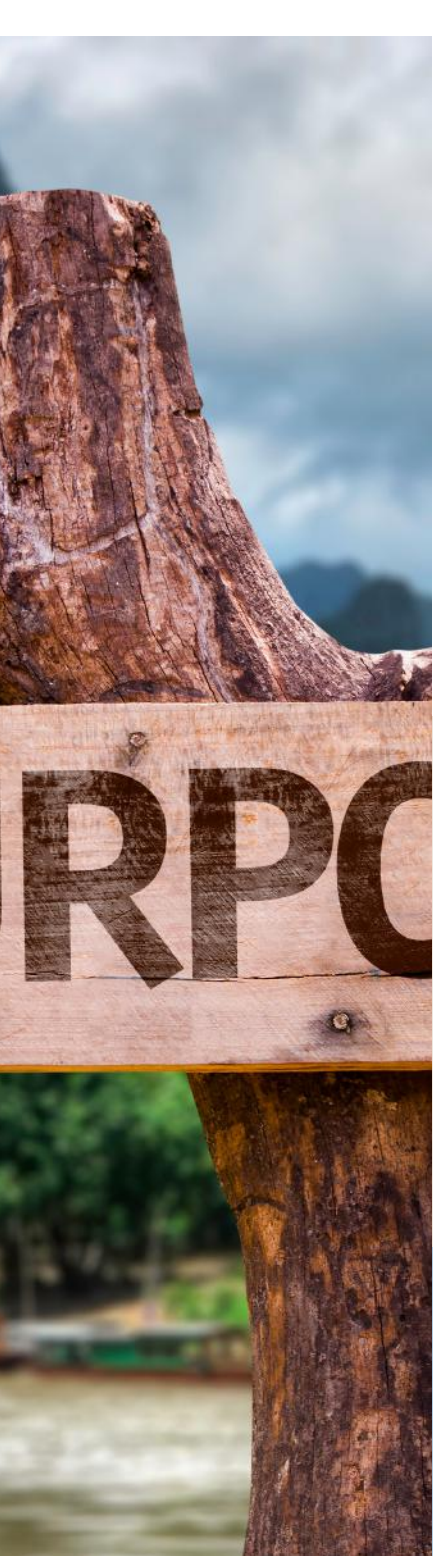
In His Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 6:25-34, Jesus said this:

"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? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" [NIV, 2011].

The key passage to all our questions about life, found here in Jesus' words, is "But seek first His (your Heavenly Father's) kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." In his book, *Just Do Something*, Kevin DeYoung says, "I love to stand in the pulpit and tell people, 'I know exactly what God's will is for your life.'

"At the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by, "I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless, and you took me in."

Mother Teresa



Then I take them to 1 Thessalonians 4:3 (“For this is the will of God, your sanctification.”) Most people are disappointed when they see my point. They want something more concrete than sanctification. But specific step-by-step instruction is not usually how God operates. His way is to show us His holiness, declare us holy in Christ, then exhort us to grow in holiness in daily life. That’s God’s will of desire for you. And that’s His will of direction, too. He wants you to buy a house that will make you holy. If you marry, He wants you to get married so you can be holy. He wants you to have a job that will help you grow in holiness. Count on it: God’s will is always your sanctification. He has set you and me apart that we would grow to be more like Christ.”

So what does seeking holiness in pursuit of God’s will for our purpose look like? It means spending time reading the Bible and applying its principles to our lives, separating ourselves for periods of prayer over matters of concern with our Heavenly Father, and being attentive to promptings in our circumstances that seem urgent, interesting or fortuitous. These foundational disciplines will be the conduit through which God will use our every experience to prepare us for service to Him. Author and missionary J. Oswald Sanders says, “It is my conviction that the answer to our questions will gradually emerge as we engage in the practice of prayer ... Prayer is the means by which our desires can be redirected and aligned with the will of God. If we are willing, He will change and redirect our desires, as the Apostle Paul assures us: ‘It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose’” (Philippians 2:13).

If above all you pursue holiness – not worldly significance or achievement – God will open doors and provide opportunities, kindle your desire to learn and serve, and direct you to the places where your skills, talents and interests intersect and where you will find joy and purpose in living, working and serving. Even your failures can be redeemed and repurposed to bring Him glory and to help you find meaning in life. Remember this: the heart of God always involves loving people and helping them come to know His Son, Jesus. Whatever you do that will have ultimate, eternal meaning will be woven into that ideal. As you go about pursuing excellence in your studies, your career, your marriage, and/or your family, look for ways to love others and help them grow in Christlikeness. In so doing, you will find not only your purpose, but also peace and next steps in your life’s journey.

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Author Spotlight



Connie J. Singleton currently is training for a volunteer position with a local hospice provider. She has worked in healthcare, publishing and education and has co-authored and published a book with an Atlanta-based women's ministry executive. She has written for Newnan-Coweta Magazine and The Newnan Times-Herald, and she especially enjoys sharing the stories of those who find joy in living or life purpose from their hardships.

How We Got Our New Testament Bibles Part One

Pastor Joel Dover

How wonderful it would be if we could take a trip back in time to observe the formation of the Christian Church, to hear the voices of the apostles and the early fathers, and to meet the earliest saints. If this were possible, we would be transported to a time when there were no denominations and where church hierarchy as we know it today simply did not exist. After the death of Christ, about 120 of His followers, including eleven of the original twelve disciples (Judas was deceased), were gathered together in an upper room in Jerusalem. By this time the Lord had already appeared to his followers and they were waiting for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which Jesus had promised them would occur in just a few more days...an event that would greatly empower these brethren to be mighty and bold witnesses of Christ in the regions around them. So it was that on the morning of Pentecost Sunday, the Spirit was poured out upon them; they were baptized with the Holy Spirit just as the Lord had said that they would be in Acts 1:5. What followed was the manifestation of the Spirit by tongues of fire resting upon them; they were speaking in unlearned tongues, and boldly preaching the gospel. At the same time, there were gathered in the streets of Jerusalem many Jews and proselytes of Judaism who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost, which is the Greek name for a Jewish harvest festival known to Jews as the Feast of Weeks. As the people of the nations heard the commotion among the Christians in the upper room, some mocked that they were intoxicated with wine, even though it was only nine in the morning. Others in the streets below were hearing the praises of God in their native languages, even though the disciples who followed Jesus were unlearned men. This miracle was a mighty movement of God, and was both a beginning and an unleashing. It was a beginning in that this marked the birth of the New Testament church. It was an unleashing in the sense that many heard the message of the cross, over 3000 were born again, and the gospel was taken from Jerusalem back into countless villages and cities by those who had been converted. In time, the persecution of Christians in Jerusalem would send subsequent waves of believers into the surrounding areas, and churches began to form in many of the cities and villages all around.





At Jerusalem, the church functioned under the leadership of the apostles with James serving as a leading elder and almost certainly as their first bishop. As far as we know, when the other apostles were not traveling to encourage the new churches in the region, they all worshipped at the Jerusalem church. The Bible is clear that even when persecution became strong so that many believers scattered, the apostles stayed in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). What a joy it must have been to sit under their teaching! The only thing that could have been better than walking with Jesus would have been to walk with the men who walked with Jesus. Imagine being in that congregation on the Lord's Day and hearing about the miracles of the Lord through the teaching of Peter, James, John, and the rest. At least in Jerusalem, the apostles were the means of communicating the truths of Christianity on a weekly basis among members of the Christian community. It is certainly difficult for Christians today to imagine church life apart from the New Testament, but that is exactly the way it was in the beginning. The testimony and teaching of the apostles was the initial means of transmitting the events of the life of Christ and the doctrines of the New Covenant to the people of God. In the beginning, the apostles were their New Testament. At some point as the decades clicked along, it is clear that the apostles saw a need to write down the things that they had seen and heard for the next generation of believers. Early believers were convinced that Christ would return in their lifetimes...but they were getting older, persecution was demanding some of their lives in martyrdom, and the Lord had not yet come. And so, they began to write down their eyewitness accounts of the things that they had seen and heard from the Lord.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the synoptic gospels, which means that they provide a synopsis of the life, ministry, and passion of Jesus. John is called the autoptic gospel and is written less like a synopsis and more as a collection of selective evidence that demonstrates the messiahship of Jesus so that you may read it and be saved (John 20:31). Not long after the gospel writers concluded their works, Luke wrote the book of Acts as a historical account of the formation and life of the early church and its mission endeavors. One of the greatest contributions of Acts is the record of Paul's missionary journeys to the Gentile nations. Outside of Jerusalem were pockets of believers who essentially met as house churches in other parts of Israel and in the Gentile nations. Those men who had been converted on Pentecost Sunday went home and told their families, then friends and neighbors, as did those who resettled after persecution in Jerusalem. Quite organically, the Lord's church had become pockets of independent house churches all over the region. In the early days of the church all of the churches were independent local churches; no denominations, no popes, and no ecclesiastical structure. The churches were friendly towards one another and even cooperated together, such as in the offering that Paul collected from the Gentile churches to bless persecuted saints in Jerusalem. All of the churches recognized the inspiration of the writings of the apostles, and respected the authority of the apostles over the churches, but it was very casual, unorganized, and organic. Among the Gentile churches, the influence of the apostles was just as important as it was in Israel, but their presence was far more rare than in the Jerusalem congregation. The Bible does report that the apostles traveled to the churches in the Gentile regions, and traveling evangelists, prophets, and preachers also did their part to travel and encourage the saints. The church at Antioch, for example, was a frequent stop of the Apostle Peter, and of the traveling prophets. Antioch was the sending church of Paul, John, Mark, Silas, and Barnabas. Peter also had influence at the house of Cornelius, and at Corinth where the Alexandrian orator, Apollos, also had frequented.

The Apostle Paul, of course, was the primary apostle to the Gentiles and started a number of churches in the Gentile nations, even into modern-day Europe. In the early days of the church, Christians had their Hebrew Bibles, the testimony of the cross, and the teaching of the apostles as it was spread...orally at first, and then in writings to the churches. Before the New Testament was completed, the most exciting thing that could happen in the life of a church was a visit from an apostle. If you have ever wondered why believers would flock to a house in droves when an apostle came through, now you know. Believers would come, stay, and listen for many hours while the apostles taught about Jesus.

By the middle of the first century, the first books of the New Testament were being written, and the next best thing than a visit from an apostle to the church was a letter from one, or a copy of a letter shared by a sister church.

Author Spotlight



Joel Dover is the pastor of the Calvary Chapel Church in Newnan, which he started from a small Bible study in 2014. He is the former Dean of Biblical Studies at Calvary Chapel University where he taught Old & New Testament, Hermeneutics, and Theology. Joel earned a Doctor of Ministry with honors from Luther Rice Seminary in 2010, and holds two Master's degrees from Liberty University and a Bachelor's degree from UNC Wilmington.

Joel married his college sweetheart and they have three amazing children. Joel is also a musician and songwriter, and enjoys leading worship, reading, and the great outdoors.



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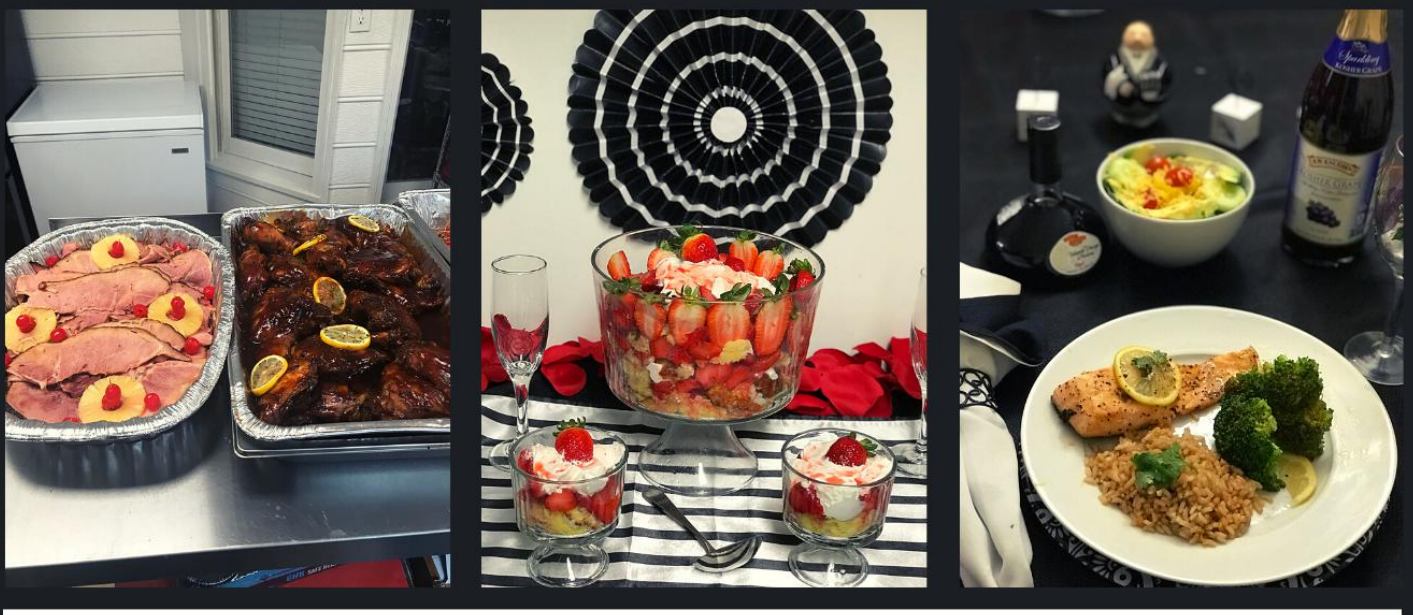


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AS HE IS, SO AM I

Sharon Lee

If you're wondering who I am, wonder no more. I was fashioned by the Creator of the Universe. The Creator who put the sun, moon and stars in place. The same Creator who strategically caused the sun to radiate light all around the globe perfectly, on time, each day, in order for plants, animals and humans to exist. The sun also adds warmth to the earth, just at the right moment, but is held back from causing the earth from becoming a towering inferno, ravishing the very creation He created. This God pays such attention to intricate details. He is amazing! He also caused the moon to serve the earth as the only satellite. About one quarter of the stars are fundamental, but oh such an important detail in this tapestry of perfection. In the history of the universe, there were no stars. The earth was only filled with hydrogen and helium. Stars are a vital component for life to exist. As we know, the Earth orbits the Sun at an ideal distance that causes life to thrive on its surface.

This amazing God took the time to handcraft and fashion all these amazing factors just so that the stage would be set for you and me to live an amazing life of abundance before He sent us from Heaven to Earth. How could I/we not embrace the fact that he handpicked the sperm cell from our earthly father and united it with the egg from our earthly mother with a specific ordained purpose in mind? This life venture will include a plethora of many lessons. There are stories to be told, mouths to be fed, souls to be won, and hands to be held. God, Who is all knowing and rich in lovingkindness and mercy, orchestrated a divine blueprint specifically to help us navigate through life. It's astonishing that He chose us to join in with what He purposed on the earth. He fashioned our life, knowing full well what decisions we would make, good and bad. His love is so all-encompassing that He covered us by saying, "I will cause ALL things to work together for good to those that are called according to my purpose." We win in life if we choose not to quit!

Knowing that you were divinely designed on purpose isn't just a proffer one utters because it's something to say, it's essential for living a victorious life. Our steps are ordered by the Lord (Ps. 37:23) before, during and after conception. "God also created the smith to bloweth the fire of coals, and bringeth forth a weapon for his work; and I have created the Destroyer to wreak havoc. (Is. 54: 16)." Even Satan was created for a purpose. That purpose was to serve us. There are no victories without tests and trials. Being made sturdy, and rich in steadfastness and endurance requires loyalty, training and commitment.





A divine litmus test is required at every step before moving ahead to the next level. He's preparing and training us to reign with Him on the earth. He declared that He's returning for a church without spot or blemish. He's not returning for a defeated, messed up, underachieving church. He's returning for valiant warriors who were created in His own self-image. As He is, so are we in this life (1 John 4:17).

When He created man, He created us with a divine blueprint. He said, "It's imperative that I go away. I will go but I will leave you with a full service, divine helper who will supply you with all the necessities needed to overcome in life. He will help, comfort, heal and teach you all things (John 16:7-8). Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Isn't life more than food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye much more value than they (Matt.6:25-34)?" Taking all these intricate details into account it should cause us to be more aware and ready to embrace how much our steps are ordered and fashioned by the Lord. There are no mistakes in His creation. When the potter molded you and me, He specifically had a vision in mind. When He declared, "It is finished," He meant it.

In the words of Billy Graham, "We may not understand all the intricate patterns of the stars in their courses, but we know that He who created them does, and that just as surely as He guides them, He is charting a safe course for us." How glorious to know that God's intentional love for us is amazing and without bounds!

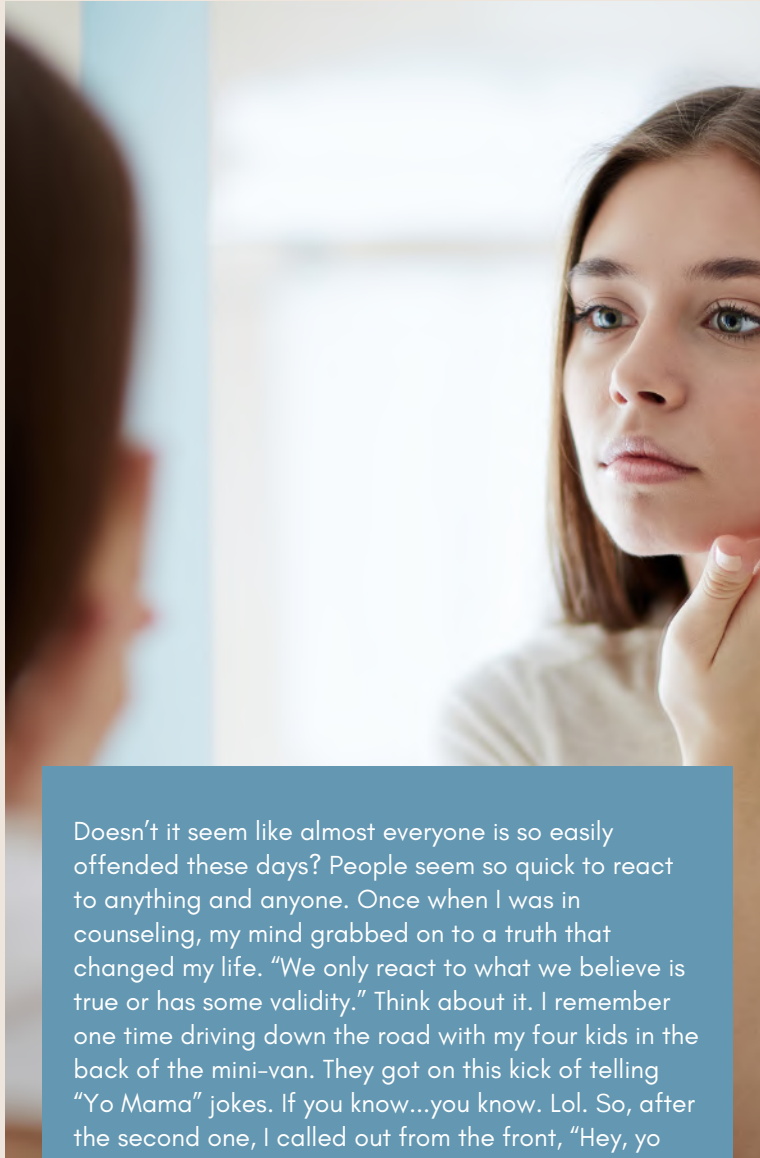
Author Spotlight



Sharon Gains Lee has been an educator, author, and activist for righteous justice for women, children, and Blacks for over 30 years. Her voice has been heard not just in the States but throughout Europe as well. Her straightforward style and Godly security emulates the fact that God created everybody for a divine purpose regardless of race, creed, or color. Her motto is: "Knowing who you are will protect you from life's most tragic encounters without smelling like smoke!"

MISTAKEN IDENTITY VS. TRUE IDENTITY

Rebecca Sandlin



Doesn't it seem like almost everyone is so easily offended these days? People seem so quick to react to anything and anyone. Once when I was in counseling, my mind grabbed on to a truth that changed my life. "We only react to what we believe is true or has some validity." Think about it. I remember one time driving down the road with my four kids in the back of the mini-van. They got on this kick of telling "Yo Mama" jokes. If you know...you know. Lol. So, after the second one, I called out from the front, "Hey, yo mama can hear you!" I didn't take offense to the jokes. In fact, as long as they were just goofing off together and with our family, I was completely fine with it. I laughed along. There was no truth to them. I knew how they felt about me. My identity was not in what they were saying, but in our fun-filled, love-filled relationship with each other.

Today, I feel so many are grasping for an identity. If they are so solid in who they proclaim and perceive to be, then why are so many so personally offended? Let me go ahead and put this out there: there is a big difference between defending your beliefs and being offended. I do believe that you can truly defend without being offended or purposefully offending someone else to support your values. A mistaken identity can truly harbor resentment and cause someone to feel offended over and over.

If you were gifted in this life to know my husband, then you knew there was no question how much he loved me and our children. He lived it. The relationship that we all shared with him is in the legacy that we carry with us today. No one can take that away. Jason texted me love letters all the time. He would surprise me and the girls with flowers and the boys with golfing and fishing trips. He loved picking out a few cards for me when he couldn't choose just one and then he would fill up the space with his own messages. We would cover our bathroom mirror with dry erase messages to each other constantly. Our family is a blended family, and sometimes it took work to choose each other and accept each other with unconditional love.

Sometimes we hit a homerun and sometimes we struck out. Moreso, the relationship that our Papa God offers us is one that can be trusted. I agree though, that it is hard to trust someone you don't know. Your Father God, Creator, has given us a book of love letters that as we take time to get to know Him is filled with personal messages. It takes time to grow a relationship that you can place your trust in. You will never feel that time is wasted with God. Just as we have a Papa God who is crazy about us, we have an enemy that hates our guts.

There were several times in my marriage that we sensed that Satan wanted to pull out all the punches and divide us and destroy us. The strength of who we were together was in the promises of the Victory that had already been won by the blood of Jesus Christ. We knew that Satan wanted us to focus on the situations of discouragement, but we had to keep focused with faith.

The very definition of Faith is trusting in what we can not see, but believing in what we can. What we believed in was that God is Victorious over every circumstance and had purposed us to be together. We reacted to that Truth.

The Bible, your book of love letters, instructions, and warnings and complete promises that have never been broken define that you are a beautiful child of the One True King. You are ROYALTY. Don't you know that if you truly believed that, you would not be so easily offended? You would already know your place. It was evidenced by the Truth in the love letters that you have received; all of the personal messages that you were sent reminded you how seen and loved you are. So, why do some Christians get so easily offended? My guess is that they have bought into some lies, or better named "distractions" from the one who hates them...Satan.

Just as Father God has purposed our lives and even tells us that He is for us, our enemy has a strategic plan to distract us from that Truth that even he believes in. I love memorizing Scripture as a weapon, and my goal is the eighth chapter of Romans. That entire chapter is one of many that should make you feel like NOTHING can destroy you. It turns my worried "what ifs" to confident "even ifs."

How do we keep from getting knocked out? How do we hold on to our identity in our royal line of our Father, the Victorious King? We have to know what we are up against. I believe there is no better way to explain this than through an amazing, beautiful tool that has become a life gift to me. In Priscilla Shirer's book, *Fervent*, she comes right out with it:

"Satan isn't your enemy in an impersonal way; he specifically wants to destroy you!" Every chapter takes a topic and then starts with "If I were your enemy I would," and then it lays out a possible, intentional plan of attack. How brilliant! Sports teams study their opponents and know their strengths and weaknesses to play towards a hopeful victory.

We don't have to hope in a VICTORY that has already been won: in fact, we take the season... EVERY SEASON. We can get on this playing field (battle ground) every day of our life, confidently suit up in the uniform (armor) outlined in Ephesians 6, and execute every play knowing WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS! We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Then why do we struggle? I feel it is because as Shirer teaches in her book, it is personal. It hurts. We carry memory of hurt; we carry fear. We have to learn to take those thoughts captive and send them back to hell from where they came. We must recognize the first play of the enemy:

"If I were your enemy, I would devalue your strength, magnify your insecurities until they dominate how you see yourself- disabling you, disarming you from fighting back, disarming you from feeling free, and disabling you from being who God has created you to be. I'd work hard to ensure that you never realize what God has given you so you'll doubt the power of God within you! (Shirer, 55)"

Don't skip over that. Read it again. Now, read it again. Let that soak in and reflect on how that may have been true in your life. The enemy wants you to suffer from a case of mistaken identity. It makes our defenses a lot weaker. He seriously wants to keep our identity masked. I have caught a few episodes of the "Masked Singer." In that show, there is hidden mystery. Talent is revealed, but identity is not. The costume to conceal the identity is to help you forget who they are, yet when they are revealed, they are truly known and celebrated for their true identity. As long as they are a mystery and truth doesn't come out, then the game of charades and uncertainty continues. You see where I am going with this?

The enemy doesn't want the truth to come out. We are indeed ALIVE, FREE, and EMPOWERED by God's own Spirit to fight against Satan in ways that reminds him that we are fighting from VICTORY

Satan has already been defeated, We are not a mystery; we win with our secure identity in Christ Jesus. The Bible asks again, in Romans 8, if God is for us then who can be against us? This means that Satan's attempts against us are futile. His practiced strategy against us is to conspire to keep us in a state of mourning, grieving over who you wish you were and what you wish you had- or didn't have- instead of realizing who you are and what you do have or from that which you were spared. He wants us exacerbated by insecurity and crippled by self-doubt. Satan doesn't want you praying because fervent prayer keeps us in focus! It keeps our IDENTITY in focus. Fervent prayer reminds us of who we really are and taps into the power that we truly have in Christ Jesus (Shirer, 57).

IF I WAS YOUR ENEMY...

Every morning His mercies are made new. Oh, I pray that our eyes will be so focused and open to fully see and recognize who we TRULY are.

Satan wants us to be distracted because that's when he'll move strategically against us, and when he's moving himself into attack position, he wants us to feel lifeless, disengaged, and brainwashed into believing that we have nothing to offer (Shirer 57). This is why he works overtime to keep us focused on everything that could possibly offend us and not on the WORD OF GOD that can free us.

If that is Satan's strategy against us, does God provide for us any tools even though He's the ultimate VICTOR and calls us VICTORIOUS? Completely.

Our Papa God doesn't leave us to guess our way through the battle. He has equipped us with Scripture, VIP access through prayer, and the armor of God. What I am about to share with you in the next few paragraphs about these aforementioned strategies is very much inspired by Shirer's book. She does such a fantastic job of helping us understand these truths.

Scripture is the written proof of what God has done for us and what He's created us, called us, and empowered us into becoming. Prayer is our opportunity to cooperate with Him and to let these truths saturate into our core so we can access them, engage them, and draw down their power into every experience of our lives.

Prayer also energizes a HOLY CONFIDENCE that helps us receive and believe our absolute unmistakable identity. If we will truly call out our identity in Christ Jesus and believe in the power and access that it gives us, then we will give our enemy a heads up that we are standing on our God-given truth so we will NOT be subject to Satan's attempts to devalue us. If we choose not to embrace this truth and only be offended, that this is probably going to be what happens:

We will devalue our real strength. We may hate our bodies, highlight our weaknesses, cringe with insecurities, and constantly view ourselves as less than everything God created.

Furthermore, if we believe Satan's lies, we won't and can't feel equipped or entitled to stand up against him. We will feel weak and may adopt a victim mentality or make others a victim. Satan will wedge himself between our true identity and our practical reality so that he can short circuit our effectiveness in every role in life. He will dim the very light in all the relationships where God has placed us to influence others with His grace and His love.

We need our Creator's truth over us as our real identity to be our constant unbroken focus. If we want to be ready for Satan's attempts to knock us down, then this truth must be first in our hearts and minds. The armor of God described in Ephesians 6 is a command from the Lord. He knows we face a battle and he tells us to put on each piece with prayer. Unless we center ourselves with the belt of truth, we will chase any feeling and become easily offended or distracted. We surely won't be ready for what is coming. This truth isn't something you have to ask for; you already have this; ask him to remind you of who you already are.

Your opinion of yourself and the opinion others have of you is not your identity. Your identity is in the very truth that God designed you with purpose, value, and love.

Pray with me:

Papa God, help me seek to walk in the honor, compassion, and integrity of who I truly am in You. Help me aim to please You because I know that You love me and you want to replace my fears, anxiety, frustration, tears, disappointments, and uncertain feelings with Your peace that passes my understanding. Help me desire to trust you more by seeking Your Word and accessing my VIP status through prayer. Thank you for understanding that I will fall short, and be ready to forgive my repentant heart. In Jesus' most HOLY name I pray these things, Amen.

Fervent, by Priscilla Shirer Lifeway Christian Resource, 2017.

Author Spotlight



Rebecca Sandlin is a mom of four. She serves on the Praise and Worship Team at Go Church in Newnan, GA. She has been an educator in the Coweta County School System for 19 years. Her favorite scripture is Ephesians 3:19-21.



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SURRENDERING TO THE WILL OF GOD

Angela Rhembert

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 3:14

Surrendering is a necessary, yet uneasy, part of Christianity. While it's comfortable in the spiritual sense, it can be quite difficult in the flesh. Surrendering calls our bluffs; it asks us to truly yield what we've tried to hold on to, keep close, and control. To a nonbeliever and sometimes even to us Believers, it can be downright scary. We have our own ideas about how we want things to work out, so we want to handle it ourselves. Even with the unease, surrendering brings Christians into an earnest union with Christ — we envelop ourselves in our faith, allowing our tensions to relax and our minds to ease. In so doing, we find comfort and peace in trusting our Savior with our battles. We've relinquished worry, doubt, and compulsion in exchange for tranquility, stillness, and serenity. We've turned it all over to God, and what a peace it is!

As the world endeavors to return to some sense of normalcy from the constraints of Covid-19, heightened hostility due to political and social unrest, or most recently, criticism of teachers' instruction, we as Christians must surrender ourselves to God. It is only through sacrificial love that we are able to live out His covenant -- to love our neighbors as ourselves. Loving so generously entails decentering the self and surrendering the ego in order to embrace an equilibrium with one another. Unfortunately, this encompassing level of love is happening too rarely, setting people on edge and resulting in conflict and violence. If we would become more obedient in this directive, the world would surely be a more peaceful place, brotherhood would replace acrimony, and God's will would be paramount.



We must remain steadfast in our faith.

More personally, as a teacher I believe in the nobility of the profession. Hence, I know that no one enters the teaching profession without a focus or a vision. No teacher embarks upon his/her career with the intent to be mediocre and sustain inefficacy. Each of us has felt an inner calling, a divine compulsion, a supernatural nudge to expend our God-given capacities, talents, and gifts to nurture the lives of children, His most precious people. All too often, however, the challenges, complications, and bureaucracy in education cause people to settle into complacency with the idea to "just get through this year." What a humdrum way to approach life and a divine mission of influence for someone who has been anointed and designed to influence the future by impacting young lives every day! Ironically, the passion that we have that compels us to pour our hearts in completely is the same passion that can become the enemy, draining the energy that was once so vivacious and tenacious. Again, we must surrender. We must surrender the natural urge to throw in the towel and give less than our best. We must surrender the natural temptation to give up the fight and let our lights be extinguished. We surrender the battle to our Heavenly Father who wants to see us heed our calling and prosper.

In fulfilling our mission and realizing our heavenly goal, we must remain steadfast in our faith. As Philippians 1:6 tells us, we have to be confident that he who began a good work in [us] will carry it on to completion. This scripture reassures us that come what may, we are still well-equipped and able to satisfy the purpose for which we have been called. As we pray and trust, we must not grow weary. We have to lean on God's working behind the scenes to carry us through. We know that He has not and will not abandon us. As Christians, we know that trials come, the really tough ones to those of us who are the strongest; therefore, it is imperative that we hold fast to the Word of God knowing that faith like a grain of mustard seed will move a mountain and nothing will be impossible. Consequently, we must never lose sight of the purpose bestowed upon us and surrender anything that binds us.

The bottom line is always serving God with all that we have in the best ways that we can. Therefore, we are compelled to surrender negativity, discouragement, and frustration at all costs. We must pray unceasingly for our students, for each other, and for the world in which we live. We must let our lights shine in order to sustain our missions and serve unyieldingly. Isaiah 40:31 tells us that our strength will be renewed, we will soar on wings like eagles, we will run and not be weary, and we will walk and not faint. In this we MUST trust as we embark upon a new year filled with promise and abundant opportunities to make great strides in the lives of our students. Because our mission field is ordained by God, we know that His hand is upon us as we go about our work. It is our duty to stay strong through prayer that each of us is renewed each day, surrendering whatever impedes or limits our compassion and service. Through our faith, camaraderie, and devotion, we are immeasurably able to complete our life's work of helping God's children become the best people they can be.

Author Spotlight



Angela Rhembert, a native of Atlanta, GA attributes her faith and relationship with Christ to her grandparents. A large portion of her youth was spent with them in Sparta, GA. She's been married to her husband for 24 years.

Together they have one son who's a high-school senior with ambitions of playing college baseball. She's been an educator for 20 years, but sees every year as an opportunity for her to improve.



FEAR NOT!
LESSONS FROM
A HERO OF FAITH



BY: MARTY HOHMANN
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THE KEY TO A TRUE MOVEMENT OF GOD

Pastor Tim Riordan

Technology is useful, and creativity, planning, and organizational systems are important to success in ministry. Many churches, however, have accepted these important resources as the source of spiritual effectiveness and the cause of lasting fruit. This belief is far from true. Christians want their churches to grow, and we want our country and world to be impacted by the gospel. We probably all agree that every wholesome method available ought to be employed in our efforts to spread the gospel. However, one key method is needed, though in a sense, it's not a method at all.

God moves in response to the prayers of His people—more of a relationship than a method. We know that truth from our own experiences and through the teaching of God's Word. He told Israel if they would pray and seek His face, He would forgive their sin and heal their land (2 Chron 7:14). Pentecost came not in response to organization or from the creative efforts of the Church but in response to prayer and the will of God.

Sadly, we have accepted growth in numbers as spiritual success. We have embraced emotional experiences as if they are, by themselves, evidence of a visitation from God. A growing church and emotional fervor can be a counterfeit to a supernatural, life changing encounter with the Almighty.





As we look across the landscape of our country today, we see a people who are desperate for a movement of God, and a movement of God is almost always preceded by prayer. R. A. Torey wrote, "There have been revivals without much preaching; there have been revivals with absolutely no organization; but there has never been a mighty revival without mighty praying."

None of us would deny that our country needs a great revival; however, people who don't know the Lord can't be revived. Ephesians 2 reminds us that before we came to know Jesus, we were dead in our sins. We can't experience new life or times of spiritual refreshment (revival) until we have life in the first place. Revival is an experience of the followers of Jesus. Since our country needs a revival, the Church must be revived!

So, how will revival come? How will our nation experience times of spiritual refreshment, personal renewal, and blessings from Almighty God? It will come in response to the Church of Jesus seeking the face of God as never before, repenting of sin with broken hearts, worshipping Almighty God with submissive spirits, and interceding for our country with an expectation of God moving in response to our prayers.

For our nation to be healed, the Church must pray. We must seek the face of God with the realization that our fellow Americans are dependent upon our faithfulness on our knees. As we pray, hearts will be broken and souls will be saved. As we pray, the Church will be united, and the power of God will be unleashed upon the world.

One famous quote attributed to Dwight L. Moody, though it was first born in the heart of his friend, Henry Varley, has spoken to the hearts of followers of Jesus for decades: "The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him. By God's help, I aim to be that man." The same could be said for the Church. The world has yet to see what God can do through a Church, the body of Christ, who is fully consecrated to Him. By God's grace and with His help, may we be that Church.

Author Spotlight



Dr. Tim Riordan serves as the Lead Pastor of SonRise Baptist Church in Newnan, Georgia, and has received degrees from the University of Georgia, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Tim is an award-winning, bestselling author and has written several books including *Songs from the Heart: Meeting with God in the Psalms* and *Wisdom Speaks: Life Lessons from Proverbs*. He and his wife Sandra have six children and four grandchildren.

FEAR NOT! LESSONS FROM A HERO OF FAITH

Marty Hohmann

The late Corrie ten Boom is one of my heroes of the faith. In fact, whenever I have the opportunity to share my testimony, it is always peppered with lessons learned from this dear woman.

*If you don't know of whom I speak, I urge you to read a copy of her 1971 book, *The Hiding Place*, or watch the movie of the same name on just about any streaming service. Cornelia ten Boom, or Corrie as she is known worldwide, was one of the leaders of the Dutch resistance during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands. She, her father, Casper, and her sister, Betsy, along with other family members, hid within their home and helped more than 800 Jews escape extermination. As a Believer, she knew that she could do no other than to help save her fellow man.*

She was imprisoned in the Ravensbruck Concentration Camp in Germany. Her sister and her father both died in captivity, but Corrie was released due to a clerical error. Exactly one week after her release, all of the women her age were sent to the gas chamber. She went on to teach the world about the love of Jesus and the gift of forgiveness.

The following is a letter written by her in 1974, which she begins: "The world is deathly ill. It is dying. The Great Physician has already signed the death certificate. Yet there is still great work for Christians to do."

If those words were true then, they are even more true today. The world is on fire. Yet the work of the Believer is just beginning, and we are never to shrink in fear from the task at hand. Be encouraged by the words that follow.





My sister, Betsy, and I were in the Nazi concentration camp at Ravensbruck because we committed the crime of loving Jews. Seven hundred of us from Holland, France, Russia, Poland and Belgium were herded into a room built for 200. As far as I knew, Betsy and I were the only two representatives of Heaven in that room.

We may have been the Lord's only representatives in that place of hatred, yet because of our presence there, things changed. Jesus said, "In the world you shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." We too, are to be overcomers - bringing the light of Jesus into a world filled with darkness and hate.

There are some among us teaching there will be no tribulation, that the Christians will be able to escape all this. These are the false teachers that Jesus was warning us to expect in the latter days. Most of them have little knowledge of what is already going on across the world. I have been in countries where the saints are already suffering terrible persecution.

In China, the Christians were told, "Don't worry, before the tribulation comes you will be translated - raptured." Then came a terrible persecution. Millions of Christians were tortured to death. Later I heard a Bishop from China say, sadly, "We have failed. We should have made the people strong for persecution, rather than telling them Jesus would come first. Tell the people how to be strong in times of persecution, how to stand when the tribulation comes - to stand and not faint."

I feel I have a divine mandate to go and tell the people of this world that it is possible to be strong in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in training for the tribulation, but more than 60 percent of the Body of Christ across the world has already entered into the tribulation. There is no way to escape it. We are next.

Since I have already gone through prison for Jesus' sake, and since I met the Bishop in China, now every time I read a good Bible text I think, "Hey, I can use that in the time of tribulation." Then I write it down and learn it by heart.

When I was in the concentration camp, a camp where only 20 percent of the women came out alive, we tried to cheer each other up by saying, "Nothing could be any worse than today." But we would find the next day was even worse. During this time a Bible verse that I had committed to memory gave me great hope and joy. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part evil is spoken of, but on your part, He is glorified" (1 Peter 3:14). I found myself saying, "Hallelujah! Because I am suffering, Jesus is glorified!"

In America, the churches sing, "Let the congregation escape tribulation," but in China and Africa, the tribulation has already arrived. This last year alone more than 200,000 Christians were martyred in Africa. Now things like that never get into the newspapers because they cause bad political relations. But I know. I have been there. We need to think about that when we sit down in our nice houses with our nice clothes to eat our steak dinners. Many, many members of the Body of Christ are being tortured to death at this very moment, yet we continue right on as though we are all going to escape the tribulation.

Each of us needs our own personal Pentecost.

Several years ago, I was in Africa in a nation where a new government had come into power. The first night I was there some of the Christians were commanded to come to the police station to register. When they arrived, they were arrested and that same night they were executed. The next day the same thing happened with other Christians. The third day it was the same. All the Christians in the district were being systematically murdered. The fourth day, I was to speak in a little church. The people came, but they were filled with fear and tension. All during the service they were looking at each other, their eyes asking, *Will this one I am sitting beside be the next one killed? Will I be the next one?*

The room was hot and stuffy with insects that came through the screenless windows and swirled around the naked bulbs over the bare wooden benches. I told them a story out of my childhood. "When I was a little girl," I said, "I went to my father and said, 'Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ.' "Tell me," said Father, "When you take a train trip to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?"

"No, Daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train."

"That is right," my father said, "and so it is with God's strength. Our Father in Heaven knows when you will need the strength to be a martyr for Jesus Christ. He will supply all you need - just in time..."

My African friends were nodding and smiling. Suddenly a spirit of joy descended upon that church and the people began singing, "In the sweet, by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore." Later that week, half the congregation of that church was executed. I heard later that the other half was killed some months ago.

But I must tell you something. I was so happy that the Lord used me to encourage these people, for unlike many of their leaders, I had the word of God. I had been to the Bible and discovered that Jesus said He had not only overcome the world, but to all those who remained faithful to the end, He would give a crown of life.

How can we get ready for the persecution? First, we need to feed on the Word of God, digest it, make it a part of our being. This will mean disciplined Bible study each day as we not only memorize long passages of scripture, but also put the principles to work in our lives. Next, we need to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Not just the Jesus of yesterday, the Jesus of history, but the life-changing Jesus of today who is still alive and sitting at the right hand of God.

We must be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is no optional command of the Bible; it is absolutely necessary. Those earthly disciples could never have stood up under the persecution of the Jews and Romans had they not waited for Pentecost. Each of us needs our own personal Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. **WE WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO STAND IN THE TRIBULATION WITHOUT IT.**



...HE SHALL GIVE A CROWN OF LIFE

In the coming persecution we must be ready to help each other and encourage each other. But we must not wait until the tribulation comes before starting. The fruit of the Spirit should be the dominant force of every Christian's life. Many are fearful of the coming tribulation; they want to run. I, too, am a little bit afraid when I think that after all my eighty years, including the horrible Nazi concentration camp, that I might have to go through the tribulation also. But then I read the Bible and I am glad.

When I am weak, then I shall be strong, the Bible says. Betsy and I were prisoners for the Lord; we were so weak, but we got power because the Holy Spirit was on us. That mighty inner strengthening of the Holy Spirit helped us through. No, you will not be strong in yourself when the tribulation comes. Rather, you will be strong in the power of Him who will not forsake you. For 76 years I have known the Lord Jesus and not once has He ever left me or let me down.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him", (Job 13:15) for I know that to all who overcome, He shall give the crown of life. Hallelujah!



Author Spotlight



Marty Hohmann is a wife, mother, businesswoman, lifelong journalist and intercessory prayer warrior. Though she has served in many roles, she believes her mission is to be a truth-teller in these last days and to proclaim the goodness of God to all who will listen. Her primary message for the days in which we are living is that we are to be discerners of the truth and be willing to lose it all for the cause of Christ.

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Kelly Staple, Kelly Nicole Digital

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Emmanuel Brooks
Amber Harris
Cheryl Moore

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***All Prayer Rallies will be held at
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