

THE **BREAKTHROUGH**
WINTER 2012 **INTERCESSOR**

Breaking through
pain into
NEW JOY!

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT PRAYER

When God uses our prayers
to save lives | p. 6

What do you pray when all you
feel is anger and pain? | p. 24





LEAD ME

TRACY L. JUDY

Alone in a crowd,
Whispering out loud,
Isolation drawing near,
Love rejected – embracing fear
Knees bent towards the ground
To seek the only Love I've found
God, do you hear my prayer
As it drifts in the air?

I try to ask in Your will
While my life sits so still
Which path will You lead me down?
Out of prison?
Away from this town?
I pray and seek Your ways
To follow You all my days
Lord, take me by my hand
Guide me to Your promised land

THE BREAKTHROUGH INTERCESSOR

Bringing together anonymously those needing prayer and Christians willing to pray for them; calling, equipping and encouraging people for this work.

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Leonard LeSourd

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our mission

Breakthrough Intercessory Prayer Ministry is here for anyone who wants prayer. Prayer requests may be sent to us by mail, phone, email, fax, or through our website. Your prayer request is sent anonymously to six of our nearly 4,000 intercessors around the world who agree to pray for 21 days for each request they receive. You will have your own prayer team of dedicated intercessors holding your needs up before the Lord. People often report an increased sense of peace during the prayer period. As you read this magazine, you will learn about many prayers that have been answered.

Catherine Marshall was given the inspiration for Breakthrough 30 years ago. She was a best-selling Christian author who became concerned about the many prayer requests sent to her by her readers. At the same time, other readers were writing to tell her that they longed to be used by God but had no idea what they could do. God gave Catherine the vision of matching these two groups of people: those with prayer needs and those Christians who wanted to be part of a ministry. Thus Catherine and her husband, Leonard LeSourd, began the Breakthrough ministry.

Prayer requests are identified by first name only and are never sent to intercessors in the same geographic location as the prayer requester. The 21-day prayer period was arrived at based on the story in Daniel Chapter 10. Daniel was praying for three weeks before the angel of the Lord was able to come and help him. The angel had been detained by spiritual forces from the first day of Daniel's prayer. Our intercessors may receive scriptural insights from God for the prayer requester. Those messages, in the form of Scripture verses, are sent to the office and then forwarded to the person requesting prayer. In turn,

prayer requesters send their answers to prayer to the staff which are then forwarded to the intercessors as encouragement for their faithfulness in praying.

We want to hear from you. Pray about becoming one of our intercessors. It is a small expenditure of time compared to how it will impact your life and change the lives of others. As you read this magazine, think of your own stories of answered prayer that you would like to share. Our editorial committee will consider them for publication in The Breakthrough Intercessor. Remember also to send us your prayer requests. It is our privilege to pray for you.



joy. peace. rest

It's the end of the fall season and beginning of winter here in Lincoln, Virginia. The golden, yellow leaves on the trees are falling and the forest is preparing for another winter. For us Christians, it's a time to reflect on the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Merry Christmas! Our God gave us the greatest gift that we could possibly want: the forgiveness of our sins and the promise of everlasting life!

I am grateful for winter to give me respite from the activities of spring, summer and fall in order to reflect on my life and how blessed I am to be loved by family, fulfilled with relationships and satisfied with opportunities to make a difference in the world. I realize that we have many prayer partners all over the world that may not experience a change of seasons like we have in the state of Virginia. I do think we each have an ebb and flow of energy like the tide from month to month that allows us to catch our breath and reorganize our lives. My prayer for each one of you is that you continue to press on through the cares of the world and find joy and peace in whatever the Lord directs you to do. "Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the Lord." Psalm 31:24.



We continue to work diligently at the Catherine Marshall Center to quickly and efficiently process and assign your prayer requests. Our staff is always on call to pray over your requests and "stand in the gap" for those issues in your life that you share with us. If you have a Facebook page, we encourage you to "like" us so that your friends will learn about us and be encouraged to become an intercessor.

Our financial needs remain a necessary concern as we struggle to pay bills, upgrade our equipment, manage our small staff and keep things running smoothly. But, we are confident that as we remain true to our mission, Isaiah 58:11 will be manifested in our lives and God will meet our needs.

The Lord will guide you always, He will satisfy your needs in a sun scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

Thomas E. Myers

Tom Myers
Breakthrough Chairman



No experience Required

by Christine Howard

"No experience needed... Will train."

This bright, bold, and red-lettered caption at the top of the flyer said it all...perfectly defining me.

A month old in my faith as a follower of Jesus, I felt a gnawing to do something for my Savior. But what? Then my youth pastor announced domestic and foreign positions for service. So, I signed up for every team, assured to be selected for at least one.

Being on my way to El Salvador for three months to a leper and typhoid colony wasn't exactly what I had envisioned. Suddenly my vibrato waned and I admitted I was in over my head. Not raised in a church, 17, a babe in the faith, and with only four training sessions, I was incredibly unprepared.

But the Intern Mission Board was satisfied with my finely honed Christianese answers. I am a very quick learner and four years on a highschool

debate team blessed me with poise under pressure.

"Yes, I've seriously prayed about this or that and do know God's leading," etc. To be candid, I had prayed, the best I could base on what I knew of prayer. But the concept of speaking to the Almighty still seemed surreal. That mercifully, wondrously was soon to change in the jungles of Meanguerita, my summer home and El Salvador's colony for deadly diseases.

During the first week, I saw more mangled, mutilated, and dying people than I could describe or forget. I was a pest to our senior nurse, Katherine, whose serenity never faltered and hands were always easily extended to every body racked by hideous ailment or injury. She was 30, worked triage in Boston, and had spent four months in Vietnam. Enough said. But it was the calmness of her words, uttered with resolve and unquestioning faith that

pierced my mind with the deepest desire I've ever known: to pray like she did.

When an 11 year old girl in labor staggered into our clinic, Katherine embraced the child as she gently lowered her onto a pallet. She began her exam, explaining each step, and offering the sweetest prayers I've ever heard. What I saw was something so wrong - a baby having a baby. But Katherine saw a child of God who needed to know her Heavenly Father.

As Mia was born to Evalina late that evening, heaven gained another citizen. Evalina surrendered to the words of Romans and the steadfast prayers spoken in love and by the power of the Name of Jesus.

A week later, the El Salvadorian Coast Guard deposited 20 wounded soldiers at our colony from the latest coup d'état violence. Our team wasn't prepared for this, but all looked to Katherine. Her inner peace

and expansive prayers soared above our limitations. Katherine's prior military service provided her with the knowledge of how to relate to these broken men, assure them of our care, and offer them the comfort that God the Father extended. During the seven weeks of rehabilitation, each soldier accepted Jesus as his Savior.

Late one evening, one of the men had a severe setback while I was on duty. Fumbling with what to tell him, his trembling hand took mine and asked me not to worry about his body, but pray like Katherine for his soul. But therein was the problem; I didn't know how to intercede like Katherine. So I said I'd go get Katherine. But the young man had other ideas.

The tremors in his hand increased pressure on mine and forced me to my knees. He insisted I pray now! But what was I supposed to say? Oh, I'd watched with laser beam intensity the way Katherine lifted others to the

Through the example of Katherine's prayers and knowledge of the Word I'd gone through in my own spiritual "boot camp," I found immeasurable joy in interceding for others and laying my own requests and praises before the Father.

Lord. But there was nothing out of the ordinary in what she said. That was my stumbling block. She spoke to the Father with all the authority of one who knew the mind of God, who claimed His power, who wandered through His limitless resources with a familiarity I yearned for. Then it came to me.

As I began to recite a variety of Scripture to the young man, I did so inserting his name in each verse and ending it with, "in the Name of Jesus, we ask that this be in your will."

Even in the poor lighting, I could see vital blood pooling on the floor and I knew this man would be our first loss. But I also knew that this man had received Jesus as Savior and needed the dying grace God gives. The more I prayed in the Word and the Name of Jesus, the more I sensed the presence of Jesus engulfing the fledgling faith of two new believers.

Though I desperately wanted to leave and get help, I knew the matters of eternity were more important than the temporal issues of earthly life. As my voice grew in intensity, I was unaware of the five team members who had entered, some beginning work on Xavier while others joined me on the cold, stone floor in prayer.

Pre-dawn found our team rejoicing at the divine healing that had taken place in this young soldier's body. Not only were his vital signs perfectly

stable, but he was holding down food and water, despite extensive internal injuries. The Great Physician had not done a repair job, but a full replacement work.

When summer ended, I found myself completely confident to enter the throne room on behalf of others. Through the example of Katherine's prayers and knowledge of the Word I'd gone through in my own spiritual "boot camp," I found immeasurable joy in interceding for others as well as laying my own requests and praises before the Father.

The photo journal Katherine made for me sits to this day in my nightstand with her inscription as a reminder of the power found only in prayer.

"There is nothing magical, but rather marvelous in prayer. We are sharing our heart with the Lover of our souls and He is anxious and elated to hear from His children. Never neglect meeting with God, for He is always fighting for you."

Christine is a widow, mother, educator, assistant administrator, and freelance author. Christine's passion is writing from personal experience what God has blessed her with, through trials or triumphs.



Be a Winner

by Roy A. Borges

Everyone inevitably faces troubles in this life. Jesus said, "In this life you will have troubles." (John 16:33) The question is not when will they come? But how will I respond to them when they do?

A life full of troubles has taught me that I only have two ways to respond to the inevitable giants I face. I can either take care of them with my own understanding or I can turn them over to God.

Israel's journey to the Promised Land is a tragic story of how God's people dealt with the giants from their own understanding. It's a dramatic lesson for how we should always trust God.

God promised them a land "flowing with milk and honey." (Exodus 3:7) But when the spies returned with reports of giants and walled cities, the people were afraid and began to

complain. They focused on the negatives instead of God's direction and promises. (Numbers 13-14)

Discontent, discomfort, and disappointment are the attitudes that lead to grumbling about God and the circumstances. They led the Israelites into rebellion and separation from God. The Israelites forgot what they knew about God's character and made their decision on the basis of their own understanding.

Only Joshua and Caleb trusted the Lord. They told the people, "The Lord is with us, do not fear them." (Numbers 14:9) But the people refused to listen. They were on the cusp of the ultimate blessings. They had witnessed the miracles in Egypt and their feet walked on the dry bottom of the Red Sea.

God's faithfulness protected them, fed them, and fulfilled every promise.



When life is filled with troubles and the inevitable giants confront me, finding happiness in a prison cell may seem impossible.

Why did they stop trusting God? FEAR! They were afraid. They dwelt on that fear and believed victory was impossible. Consequently, they lost the blessings and were condemned to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. What short memories. What disappointing faithlessness!

The obstinate cell mate, the abusive guard, the disingenuous classifications officer, the complacent chaplain, the condemning Christian brother, the envious unbeliever are just a few of the inevitable giants I face behind the razor-wire fences. I learned that when I tried to solve my problems by my own understanding, I failed miserably. But when I turned them over to God, the results turned out for my good and I had peace.

For example, when I went to breakfast this morning, someone went into my cell and stole my battery operated electric razor and coffee out of my locker. I was angry when I discovered them missing.

It didn't take much detective work

to discover who the thief was. I told him I knew he stole my razor, but he denied it. I looked at him sternly. I knew he was lying.

Here again I faced a situation where I had to choose if I would handle it with my own understanding. But I knew God wanted me to trust Him. If I handled it my way it wouldn't turn out well and I'd have to suffer the consequences. Later that day I went back to the inmate and told him, "I forgive you."

He said, "I didn't take your coffee."

I smiled and thought, "I never told him any coffee was stolen." "I forgive you," I repeated. I decided God could handle it a lot better than I could.

When life is filled with troubles and the inevitable giants confront me, finding happiness in a prison cell may seem impossible.

But the Bible says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." (Psalm 37:23) If God is ordering my steps, that means He has me right

where He wants me. I don't have to understand everything to be happy. What I need is the same attitude the apostle Paul had when he wrote from a prison cell, "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice." (Philippians 4:4)

Paul knew happiness was a choice. When I rejoice in the midst of my difficulties, I give God praise despite the circumstances. Not everything I do may work out the way I want it to. But I know when I am walking in step with God, I will win in the end. (Romans 8:28) That's the kind of trust that comes from a heart that does not lean on its own understanding but believes in God's promises. That kind of trust chooses to be happy no matter what happens. The Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, but in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Life is a challenge. There will always be giants to overcome, rivers to

cross and mountains to climb. We all go through troubles in life's journey that we do not understand. But God has a history of directing people and making them winners in the game of life. Joshua and Caleb trusted the Lord. They knew He was directing their steps and did not insist on understanding everything. They were winners.

I don't know how the future will turn out but overcoming the inevitable giants in my life gives my faith meaning. When you trust God with the future you will have peace. You can choose to be happy; and even from behind the razor-wire fences, you can enjoy the journey and be a winner.

Roy's stories have appeared in many Christian publications. He won AMY Foundation awards in 1998, 2002 and 2003. Roy's book "Faith and Love Behind Prison Fences" was published in 2002.





Cries that Reach Heaven

by Lisa Stillwell

"God, are you listening?" I called from the depths of my soul.

"Where are You? If You aren't going to answer my prayers, maybe there isn't a God. Take this hurt from my heart," I begged.

This was my cry in my early twenties. I had endured a hurtful back-

ground of physical and sexual abuse. I grew up thinking everything was okay and my life was just fine. When my daughter was born, the trauma began to manifest itself in a thousand different ways.

I started having flashbacks of the abuse. I was horrified. I had pushed

the memories so far from my mind that the experience no longer existed to me. I had no recollection of what happened. Every time a new memory would come, I would try to put the puzzle together.

"What happened to me?" I thought. How can somebody automatically forget something this big? I felt like I was crazy. I did not see a light at the end of the tunnel.

Every time I was ready to put the past behind me, another memory would come. Once I had a new memory, it would take me several weeks to get back on track. I went to counseling and was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The counselor told me that I had to get all my memories back in order to be healed. I was constantly in a trap, looking at the past, digging things up, and trying to make sense of what I now believe God wanted me to leave alone.

I vividly remember my daughter kicking around in her crib, staring at the mobile above her head, and laughing. She recognized Mama and Daddy with sweet chuckles every time we would hide behind her crib to play peek-a-boo. Then, out of nowhere, all the hurt would come rushing back to me like water over a dam.

"How can someone hurt something so innocent?" I asked. "Where were you, Lord, when all this was taking place? I cried out to You, but they never stopped hurting me. Why didn't You make them stop?"

"Why?" I screamed.

I didn't want to live anymore. If this is how things were going to be, then maybe God didn't exist? At this

point, I sank lower than I have ever sunk in my life. I had always believed in God since I was a little girl, and now I was open to the idea that this loving God did not exist because my prayers went unanswered. This was the emptiest feeling I had ever experienced in my life. I had no hope at all.

For years, like many victims of physical and sexual abuse, I silently blamed God for something that was not His fault. Rather, it was sin that caused others to hurt me. God was there the whole time. He tried shouting into deaf ears. He tried telling them to change their ways, but they were too busy with selfish pleasures. God was drying my eyes and helping me sleep well at night. Most importantly, God was there helping me forget the memories because they were not worth remembering.

The secular world tried to tell me to remember the past, but one day Jesus spoke to my heart and told me something different.

"Forget about it," He said gently.

From that moment on, I knew I couldn't remember what happened because this was God's way of protecting me. He loved me enough that He didn't want me to remember anything bad. He had taken all those horrible memories and buried them deep in His awesome sea of forgetfulness and grace. God took the pieces of the puzzle and destroyed them, never to be put back together again.

Lisa is a writer from Kinston, North Carolina. She is also actively involved with Breakthrough's intercessor and support team. She has been a Breakthrough intercessor since July.

Why

I

Memorize

Scripture

by Arlene Lila

Like having a cell phone within reach and ready to use at an instant, I put memorized Bible verses in my brain for immediate use. God's Word is precious to me. I want to have access to His thoughts at any given moment. People ask me why I have been memorizing Scripture for so many years. There are several reasons why it is crucial to me.

- *Our heavenly Father admonishes me to hide His Word in my heart.*

In the words of the Bible, God tells us to spend time meditating on His Word. "This Book of the Law must be ever on your lips; you must keep it in mind day and night so that you may diligently observe all that is written in it." (Joshua 1:8, NEB) I take this as a command, not merely a suggestion.

As we read in the Psalms, we see that King David took God's Word seriously. He said, "Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Psalm 119:11, KJV) I cannot think of a better way to spend allotted time than hiding God's Word in my heart. I always find time to do this. After all, aren't we asked to be diligent?

- *To bring comfort to others.*

My best friend in childhood was Delores. For the eight years of grade school, we were very close. But after graduation, we attended different highschools. A Christmas card would arrive in the mail over the next twenty years, but nothing more.

When a letter came from Delores, I was saddened when she told me she had suffered from severe depression for years. Comforting verses I had memorized came to mind. In a letter, I included a verse from the Psalms: "O my soul, why be so gloomy and discouraged? Trust in God! I shall again praise Him for His wondrous

help; He will make me smile again, for He is my God!" (Psalm 43:5, LB)

In the many letters between us that would follow, I always wrote a comforting verse. She later said that she read them over and over.

Months after we began to correspond, a blood clot formed in her leg and lodged in her heart. I would miss her, but had the wonderful memories of our childhood.

Two months passed and I received a phone call from her husband. He said that he was cleaning out Delores' things from her closet and bedside table and found that she had saved all my letters. "They must have meant a lot to her," he said.

It was God's Word that made her save those letters. I know that now. If I had not memorized those verses, I would not have written them. She did have the comfort of them, however, during the last few months of her life.

- *It gives comfort in witnessing.*

On an airline trip, I sat next to a young woman who wanted to talk. She told me about living with her boyfriend. I asked her, "What do you think about that?"

"Oh I think it's wonderful to know you can get along before marriage," she said.

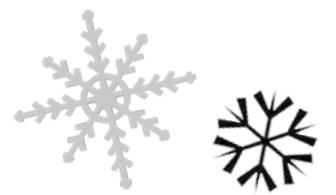
After a long pause, she asked, "What do you think about it?"

"I hate it because God hates it." I answered.

"How do you know God hates it?"



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“Because it says so in the Bible.”

“I read the whole Bible and there is no place where it says you can’t live together,” she retorted.

I pointed out to her that the Bible does say a lot about it; whenever you see the word “fornication.” Her mouth dropped open as if I’d told her she had cancer. “Read about it in the book of Ephesians,” I suggested. “It’s in chapter five.”

The young lady had many more questions after that; and by the time we landed, she affirmed that she was going to “get right with God.”

• *Teaching others.*

If you teach a Sunday school class, memorizing verses helps answer student’s questions without having to take time to look them up. For instance, if your pupil asks, “Where in the Bible does it say I shouldn’t smoke?” You can say that the Living Bible says it this way, “I can do anything I want if Christ has not said no. But some things are not good for me. Even if I am allowed to do them, I will refuse to if it gets such a grip on me that I cannot easily stop when I want to.” (1 Corinthians 6:12) Memorizing

answers saves time and keeps the attention of the pupil.

There are many ways I find time to memorize. I wait in a doctor’s office and in long lines to make purchases. I can use the driving time in the car on many occasions. For many years, I used the time under the dryer at the beauty shop. In 30 minutes, I can review fifteen verses. Diligence always finds time.

It is exciting to know the promise God gave us as a reward if we memorize Scripture. “... Then you will prosper and be successful in all you do.” (Joshua 1:8b, NEV) What a promise! How can I not take seriously the hiding of God’s word in my heart?

Arlene is a widow, mother to four, and grandmother to four. She lives in Fountain Hills, Arizona and belongs to her town’s Christian Writer’s Club. Her joy is giving encouragement to her Christian brothers and sisters through writing! She has been published in Lutheran Digest, Believer Life, and Country Woman.



Q How can Breakthrough maintain a network of nearly 4,000 intercessors who pray faithfully and individually for each request they receive?

A nswer:

Only through your partnership.

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my Father's care

by Jean Roach



"Dad, I need you to pray for me."
"What do you want me to pray for?"

"I can't tell you."

I had a very serious situation in my life that I couldn't stop worrying about. It was causing me so much anxiety that I couldn't sleep at night. I knew if I told my dad, it would upset him also.

"The Lord knows all the details," I assured him. "I just want you to pray for something very important. Call it my special intention."

When we said goodbye, I hung up the telephone and spoke out loud to the Lord, "That's it! I'm not going to worry about this one more minute. I gave it to my dad. Let him worry about it!"

Sometime the next week I called home to say hello.

"Well, did you get your wish?" my dad wanted to know. He sounded anxious.

"What wish? What do you mean?" I had no idea what he was talking

about.

"Last week when you called, you asked me to pray for a special intention – something very important."

"What was it?" I asked, searching my memory bank, straining to recall our last conversation.

"I don't know! You wouldn't tell me! But I've been praying about it every night and I just wondered if you got it."

I quickly turned the mouthpiece of the telephone away from my mouth so my dad wouldn't hear me laugh as bits and pieces of our last conversation flashed through my mind. As I remembered asking him to pray for something that was causing me great anxiety, it dawned on me that I really had let go of whatever it was. I had not thought about it again. Whatever it was must have worked out; I couldn't remember.

Finally I said, "Dad, I have peace about it, but keep on praying."

This time when we hung up, I felt like the Lord was standing in my



kitchen laughing along with me.

“You got me,” I admitted out loud. “I can’t remember why I was so worried.”

Words formed in my heart, “See why I tell you not to worry? Your special intention had you so worried just a few days ago that you couldn’t sleep. Today, you can’t even remember what it was.”

“What was it?” I really wanted to know. I knew that it had been something big and serious.

“Don’t you worry about what it was,” the Lord seemed to speak to my heart. “See how you trust your dad? See how you have faith that he will take care of whatever you ask him? You give him your concern and then you let go. You never think of it again. That’s how I want you to trust Me.”

I remembered Jesus teaching, “So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’ All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.” (Matthew 6:31-

34, NAB)

It’s easy to say, “Don’t worry.” But how is that possible? How do we let go of fear and anxiety?

Scripture tells us how: “Cast all your cares on Him because He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)

I’ve had a lot of practice casting my cares on Him. When I was a young, single mom of three small children, it began as a daily discipline that carried me through some very difficult years. Every morning I got up and began my day with my Father in Heaven.

I had three things:

1) My quiet place. Usually the living room couch or a lawn chair out on the driveway – the place with the least distractions. “Rising very early before dawn He (Jesus) left and went off to a deserted place where He prayed.” (Mark 1:35)

2) My Bible. “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and training in holiness so that the man of God may be fully competent and equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16)

3) My journal. Keeping a journal helped me focus. It also helped me remember my prayer requests and the Scriptures and direction the Lord gave

during those quiet times. “Write down the vision clearly upon the tablets so that one can read it readily.” (Habakkuk 2:2)

I began each entry with “Father, I come in Jesus’ name. I need You.” Then I asked Jesus and the Holy Spirit to be with us. Next, I began thanking Him for all of His blessings and help. I listed everything he had done the day before. I wrote in detail so I wouldn’t forget how He hears every prayer and watches over us so closely. After that, I listed all of my cares and concerns for the day again, in detail. All prayers are not answered right away so I continued to list them until they were.

I prayed for my children and their friends, calling each by name. On the bottom line I always wrote, “Father I ask you to order my day to Your good pleasure.”

It was only after I had put everything on paper that I was able to let it go and let the peace of God settle over me. I knew that whatever interruption or circumstance I encountered that day had been allowed or arranged by the One who loves me unconditionally.

Then I opened my Bible and read until God spoke to me through His Word. It was through this quiet time

of writing and reading the Scriptures that I experienced the friendship of God and learned of His goodness, faithfulness, and power. Nothing is too difficult for Him.

The interesting thing is that now, almost 40 years later, this discipline has become a way of life for me. I still have the same routine at the beginning of each day. I have learned how worry and fear can creep back into my life if I don’t take the time to talk to my heavenly Father and cast all my cares on Him.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

Jean lives in Florida and has five grandchildren. She has been involved in intercessory prayer groups for 35 years. This is an excerpt from her book, Live Your Intercession!, that will be published in January 2013.





Pastor Ken

by ST Mann

I was looking for a new church. Julie, one of my son's old friends, invited me to hers. She told me, "It's a brand new church, just a few months old. It already has about 60 attendees, and it's growing pretty fast! The pastor is young...and just a regular guy."

A couple weeks passed before I decided to check out the church. It didn't look like much – it was a just a plain vanilla colored commercial looking building, with no parking lot. I had to park four or five blocks away, then squeeze in among about 250

other attendees. Folding chairs. Concrete floor. A rented metal building shared with a dog-training business. The pastor stood on a low plywood platform, obviously hand-made.

I never got a good look at Pastor Ken, given the dense crowd, the flat floor, and the low stage, but I could tell from his mannerisms and plain vocabulary that he was indeed 'just a regular guy.' Someone who could probably be trusted. Someone you might see at the gym. Or at the market. Or at a concert.

In contrast to the very unexceptional setting, the worship service was organized and uplifting. The message was good – I liked what Pastor Ken said, and the way he said it; he was earnest, humble and repentant. The music was particularly good for a new church in a room with zero acoustics. I put a detailed personal prayer request in the collection plate, and went on about my day.

A few weeks later, before I visited the 'new church' again, I found myself at the city market at an outdoor concert featuring a number of local Christian groups. The crowd was jammed in and overflowing. Some were sitting on lawn chairs, but most were standing.

I wandered for a few minutes looking for a good place to stand. I stopped to chat with someone I had never spoken with before; the dad of one of the kids I coached. Just a moment or two later, a friend of the dad bumped into us in the dense crowd, and said hello. I didn't recognize the newcomer at first, but the voice sounded familiar as he spoke to the dad. When he introduced himself to me, I realized who it was. Ken. It was the Pastor.

But my amusement with the 'chance encounter' turned to disappointment when the Pastor said – "it's good to see you again!"

I thought 'again? AGAIN!!' The apparent 'pat line' made me instantly skeptical, almost angry. I thought 'used-car salesman!' I thought 'politician!' Say anything to sell the clunker or get the vote!

I replied politely to Pastor Ken "but... we have never met."

Pastor Ken thought for a moment and responded "but didn't you visit our church? And fill out a prayer request?"

Ah! He had my interest again. I said, "Yes! I did... a few weeks ago!"

Seeming to go back into his memory for a moment, Pastor Ken said slowly, deliberately, "I remember praying for your request....I feel as if I already know you."

I am the Good Shepherd and I know My sheep.

Somewhere along the line I had gotten the very jaded impression that typical pastors, in the interest of 'executive time management,' took their collection of prayer requests, stacked them all together, waved one hand briefly over the pile, and said, 'Most gracious heavenly Father, take care of these for me. You know more about them than I do; besides, I am late for my appointment at the country club.'

The detailed prayer request I left in the offering plate on my first visit to the new church? Well, it remains unanswered. But another earlier prayer had been answered instead – I found a church home!

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them...and they follow Me...

John 10:14, John 10:27

ST is a 50's vintage sojourner for Jesus and founder of a prison ministry. He lives on a farm in the Canadian Rockies, and has written dozens of inspirational true short stories based on his own experiences, as well as other works.





PRAY through the PAIN

by Bree Normandin

In 2001, I experienced one of the worst things imaginable. I lost my mother to suicide and my life was never the same.

Like many families that experience suicide, my family had difficulty coping with the situation. The funeral was a horrible experience. Two very distraught relatives decided to chastise me in public during their eulogies. They clearly stated that they believed my mother's suicide was my fault. I was the worst daughter in the world.

The service was unbearable. The preacher officiating at the funeral was called in at the last minute. He delivered a hell, fire, and brimstone message followed by an altar call. I deeply resented the message because I felt that it was a direct condemnation of my mother's choice to take her life.

Anger engulfed me. Instead of remaining numb and unable to pray, I railed against God. I took every opportunity to tell God just how I felt and often used some of the most shameful language in my intense sorrow and anger. I began crying whenever I was alone and the tears were like

liquid rage as they poured down my face. I had been silent and apathetic for so long, but the injustice of everything surrounding my mother's death finally goaded me into engaging God.

When I started talking to God, I looked for every reason I could find to discredit Him. I read books for and against Christianity. In retrospect, I'm not sure if I intended to prove to myself that my mother wasn't in hell, or if I was trying to prove that God didn't exist.

My search lasted an entire year, and as it became more fervent, every question I asked in my mind to God was met with an answer. Questions I shared with no living person were answered through books and other people's divine insight. I couldn't explain this. God had to be real because He was talking back to me.

At first, I thought it was a coincidence. But after answers continued to come, my anger began to decrease. I continued asking questions; I couldn't stop. Before long I realized I had been praying without acknowledging what I was doing. Not long after, I discov-

ered that I thrived on this activity and I began to actively seek out my Heavenly Father by going to church as well as listening to preachers on television. I was hungry to learn more about God for the first time in my life.

My life was still a mess. I had a non-believing husband who was threatened by my new relationship with God. He actively attacked me and tried to prevent me from going to church and reading God's Word. These types of attacks would usually have affected me negatively, but my growing relationship with God began to be a shield against them.

Looking back, I recognize that God used the worst thing imaginable to teach me to pray, and to draw me nearer to Him. Losing my mother to suicide was horrible and having my own family blame me for her death was almost unbearable. During that time, I lost everyone but gained a precious relationship with God.

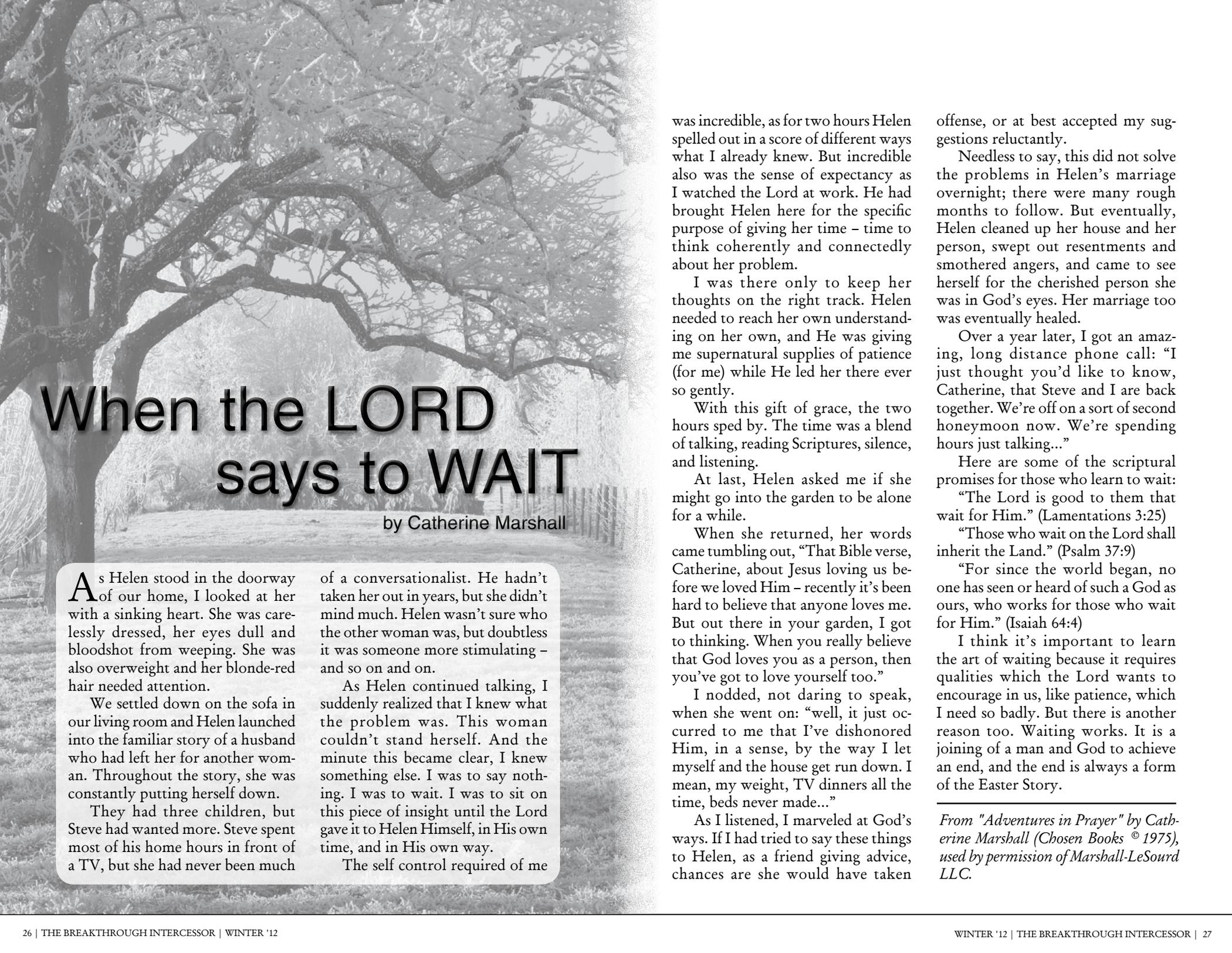
I don't have set times to pray. There is no schedule. I talk to God constantly about everything. I ask Him questions, thank him, and stay

in constant conversation. One of my favorite verses is 1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing." I don't live that out of piety or resolution but because I have no other option for survival.

The truth of the matter is that none of us really have any other option. We might think we do or be distracted, but it's an illusion. Prayer isn't a routine, it's communion with God. Like everyone else, I get busy and there are times when I don't take time to pray, but it doesn't take long for me to begin feeling the effects of my forgetfulness. When situations force me to depend totally on God, I discover the blessings it brings. Experiencing distance from my Creator causes painfulness and longing that quickly bring me to my knees once again.

Bree is a freelance writer and resides in Bear Creek, North Carolina. She maintains an online resource for writers at www.blackfeathers.com





When the LORD says to WAIT

by Catherine Marshall

As Helen stood in the doorway of our home, I looked at her with a sinking heart. She was carelessly dressed, her eyes dull and bloodshot from weeping. She was also overweight and her blonde-red hair needed attention.

We settled down on the sofa in our living room and Helen launched into the familiar story of a husband who had left her for another woman. Throughout the story, she was constantly putting herself down.

They had three children, but Steve had wanted more. Steve spent most of his home hours in front of a TV, but she had never been much

of a conversationalist. He hadn't taken her out in years, but she didn't mind much. Helen wasn't sure who the other woman was, but doubtless it was someone more stimulating – and so on and on.

As Helen continued talking, I suddenly realized that I knew what the problem was. This woman couldn't stand herself. And the minute this became clear, I knew something else. I was to say nothing. I was to wait. I was to sit on this piece of insight until the Lord gave it to Helen Himself, in His own time, and in His own way.

The self control required of me

was incredible, as for two hours Helen spelled out in a score of different ways what I already knew. But incredible also was the sense of expectancy as I watched the Lord at work. He had brought Helen here for the specific purpose of giving her time – time to think coherently and connectedly about her problem.

I was there only to keep her thoughts on the right track. Helen needed to reach her own understanding on her own, and He was giving me supernatural supplies of patience (for me) while He led her there ever so gently.

With this gift of grace, the two hours sped by. The time was a blend of talking, reading Scriptures, silence, and listening.

At last, Helen asked me if she might go into the garden to be alone for a while.

When she returned, her words came tumbling out, "That Bible verse, Catherine, about Jesus loving us before we loved Him – recently it's been hard to believe that anyone loves me. But out there in your garden, I got to thinking. When you really believe that God loves you as a person, then you've got to love yourself too."

I nodded, not daring to speak, when she went on: "well, it just occurred to me that I've dishonored Him, in a sense, by the way I let myself and the house get run down. I mean, my weight, TV dinners all the time, beds never made..."

As I listened, I marveled at God's ways. If I had tried to say these things to Helen, as a friend giving advice, chances are she would have taken

offense, or at best accepted my suggestions reluctantly.

Needless to say, this did not solve the problems in Helen's marriage overnight; there were many rough months to follow. But eventually, Helen cleaned up her house and her person, swept out resentments and smothered angers, and came to see herself for the cherished person she was in God's eyes. Her marriage too was eventually healed.

Over a year later, I got an amazing, long distance phone call: "I just thought you'd like to know, Catherine, that Steve and I are back together. We're off on a sort of second honeymoon now. We're spending hours just talking..."

Here are some of the scriptural promises for those who learn to wait:

"The Lord is good to them that wait for Him." (Lamentations 3:25)

"Those who wait on the Lord shall inherit the Land." (Psalm 37:9)

"For since the world began, no one has seen or heard of such a God as ours, who works for those who wait for Him." (Isaiah 64:4)

I think it's important to learn the art of waiting because it requires qualities which the Lord wants to encourage in us, like patience, which I need so badly. But there is another reason too. Waiting works. It is a joining of a man and God to achieve an end, and the end is always a form of the Easter Story.

From "Adventures in Prayer" by Catherine Marshall (Chosen Books © 1975), used by permission of Marshall-LeSourd LLC.

A Cookie from God

by Philip E. Myers

At first glance, you would think that he was Marilyn Monroe's love child with Robert Redford. The sparkle in his eyes actually outshines the blonde good looks. Thirty year old Glenn was the sort of fellow movie studios dream of finding and turning into the next screen heartthrob. Nevertheless, I met him in the meanest, nastiest jail in the country, the Los Angeles County Jail.

The only filming going on there is by the surveillance cameras in the corridors. Endless complaints of beatings of inmates by deputies led the Federal courts to appoint the ACLU as monitor of conditions in the jail and to the installation of cameras.

I was the welcome committee and dorm greeter in a unit housing 90 inmates. Twice Glenn's age, it was my first time in jail. Figuring out how to make the best of a bad situation took all my corporate CEO skills. It was an odd, new world for me; but I decided to try to raise the tone in the dorm a bit by formalizing an orientation process for new arrivals.

As it turned out, Glenn didn't need much orientation. It was his sixth visit in a decade. Dorm 5100 is a cement block, windowless room 75' x 90'. For two and a half hours on Saturday evenings, people got to go to the roof for fresh air. Otherwise, one determines day and night simply by which fluorescent ceiling lights the deputies choose to turn on. There are

no tanning beds, no fashion stylists, no gift bags. The Hollywood aspect of the dorm is the Hollywood of drug addiction, street prostitution, and abandoned dreams.

When Glenn first flashed that Hollywood smile, it was instantly apparent that his problem with the law was not shoving a member of the paparazzi. He was missing half his teeth and those that remained were a mosaic of rot, chipping and discoloration. Glenn's smile was a quick announcement of prolonged drug addiction. Despite the first impression that the gods had blessed him, it was apparent that there was a different reality. Something had gone terribly wrong.

However, Glenn was engaging and intriguing. I felt an odd kinship, partly because my own theoretically charmed gifts had led me to the same cement block room. I wanted to know his story. We struck up a friendship in the 10 days he was there.

Out tumbled the basics - the alcoholism of both parents and the horror



of the death of his father, killed in a police shootout in the family driveway, when Glenn was 10. Through his teens, his mother and her new husband had routinely beaten him and gotten him high. He was working at age 14 to support the family. He always associated maternal closeness to being hurt and drugged. By the time he was 18, he had found a girl he loved and eventually asked her to marry him. On the day that he was to give her an engagement ring, she dumped him and ran off with his best friend.

He left New York to find his way in the Golden State, with Hollywood his new home. His looks opened many doors. However, there were always drugs behind each one, especially crystal meth. He ended up homeless on the streets much of the time when not in sickly relationships that always included drugs by the ton.

Glenn went out the door of the Los Angeles County Jail to a rehab facility for a six-month stay. However, it was in Hollywood. Two weeks later, he walked out and started his drug use again. Two months later, he was back in Los Angeles County Jail, coming down from an especially nasty drug run of six weeks. As he put it, he was emotionally exhausted. While he slowly righted himself, we talked more and more. It was clear that he realized he could not go on living the same way. He responded well to our talks and to the friendship of a non-addict, paternal figure.

Still, I was very worried. He experienced great anxiety, depression and

a host of physical ailments. Recurring lung, liver and kidney pains were genuinely alarming. He needed proper medical care, but the jail clinic was grossly inadequate to the task. The attitude of the deputies towards the urgency of the situation was nicely summed up by one who asked coldly, "Is he dead yet?"

After he filed two written complaints and was a squeaky wheel about his need for a doctor, the meanest, nastiest deputy simply announced that Glenn was being disruptive and had to go to "the hole." "The hole" was a "death row" type dungeon area for disciplinary problems.

Off went Glenn for three hellish nights, a retaliation for his simply requesting appropriate medical care. I was incensed and managed to arrange for a County Ombudsman to review the case. The last thing Glenn needed was yet another gross injustice that would simply reinforce his need to cover his pain with drugs.

A couple days after Glenn's return to the dorm from "the hole," it was time for the weekly delivery of items from the jail store. For the first time, Glenn had no money to buy anything except a candy treat for \$1.15. He felt abandoned by everyone on the outside, including the parents who had supplied him drugs as a way to involve him in their degeneracy. To add insult to injury, the store did not deliver his candy treat.

He sat on my bunk, dejected, watching many others carry off sacks of chips, candy bars, soups, and end-

less goodies to supplement the miserable jail diet. I mixed up a little cocoa with water to give him at least a small taste of chocolate.

It was disheartening to see him suffer another indignity, no matter how small. I had watched him actually making real progress in recovering his life. In the previous month, he started to talk about going to college and finding a wife, escaping the cesspool of Hollywood and the despair of the homelessness. He concluded that his Mom and Dad, freed of their earthly afflictions, were now his guardian angels. I saw him drawn towards healthy people, becoming aware of the negative patterns of his life. It looked as if he was ready to succeed in a drug treatment program once released from jail.

To see his distress as life tossed him a reminder of his lowly circumstances was heart breaking. Glenn started to voice his annoyance and anger at being in jail and at the awful people who hoarded their treats and cared nothing for others around them. I heard him effectively commenting on his entire history as the small candy deprivation became emblematic of everything that had ever gone wrong.

Literally, in midsentence of his complaint, an inmate who had also received nothing from the store appeared and popped a chocolate chip cookie into Glenn's mouth. It was left over from lunch and was one of Glenn's favorite treats.

Exactly what Glenn was complaining "never happened" had just hap-

pened. We were both dumbfounded and burst out laughing.

"Well, that certainly shut me up!" he said. "I feel like my Mom and Dad just made a point."

His guardian angels had come through with perfect timing. Glenn's old knee jerk negative assumptions were clearly wrong. Life sometimes supplies a chocolate chip cookie at exactly the right instant.

He dipped it in his bit of chocolate, beamed with joy and said, "OK, I get it! My needs can be met."

I watched his emotional exhaustion turn to exhilaration.

God provided just the right lesson at just the right moment, and in the simplest way. We agreed that for the rest of his life, any time he was inclined to whine or lament his bad fortune, he would draw on this moment and recall how God made a point.

For the first time since I met Glenn four and a half months earlier I was sure he would be fine. A very simple gift from someone who had nothing but a cookie to give had said it all. God provides, and even the smallest kindness can be of enormous effect. I watched the 23rd Psalm in action before my eyes. He truly does restore my soul!

Philip, a former attorney, has spent time while incarcerated in California helping fellow inmates spiritually and emotionally. He has written six novellas while in prison, and is deeply committed to advocating for prison reform.

Answers to Prayer

FAITHFULNESS

Great answer to prayer! Bob's former employer called him, and asked him to return to work and increased his wages by \$2 per hour. Breathrough has been such a blessing from the Lord.

Theresa

PRAISE REPORT

Thank you for praying! I was offered a job today. Thank you for praying and to God be all the glory!

Bruce

RECONCILIATION

During the prayer period for my son, he was given a promotion at work and his sister (who was also being prayed for!) was able to witness to him.

Janell

GOD'S HAND

After my mom's passing, I am thankful that God's hand was in every detail, that my mom did not suffer, and that I was able to be at her bedside when she passed.

Melinda

NO CANCER

Thank you for your prayers for my daughter-in-law, Carrie. She had surgery to have a mass removed from her ovary, and no cancer was found. Praise God!

Janet

THANKSGIVING

God has delivered Ben from a boss who bullied him, and from a dishonest company that exploited him. We continue to trust that God opens doors for Ben!

Deirdre

HEALING

I had oral surgery to help save a tooth, but a lump developed after the surgery and remained for about three months. The dentist said another surgery would be necessary if it did not go away. After praying this would not be necessary, the lump went away in about two weeks. No sign of it at all! Praise the Lord!

Beverly

MEMORIALS

Janice Erickson
in memory of
Baby Josephine (10 months), Travis
Lee Suggs, and Elliott T. Suggs
*

Janice Erickson
in honor of
Mr. and Mrs. Lear W. Poarch, Sr.,
Mr. and Mrs. Lear W. Poarch, Jr.,
Mrs. and Mrs. Fred Parker, Rev. and
Mrs. Hankins Parker
*

Denny Packard
in honor of
Larry and Jamie Garber
*

Jill Sabota
in memory of
Heddy Coulter
*

Robert and Linda Wolf
in memory of
Louise
*

We welcome gifts in honor of loved ones.



GOD IS GOOD!

When you began praying for us, my husband and I were at a place where we thought our marriage was ending. Then God moved my heart so I could see where my responsibility was. Over the last month, we have seen so many changes in both of us. We have been able to see where we have failed each other, and repent of that and move forward to become better. On the last day of praying for us, my husband sent me a text to say he loved me and that he couldn't wait for the rest of our lives together. God is so good! Thank you for praying!

Deborah

GOOD HEALTH

Thank you for praying for Tom. I had asked for prayer of healing from his prostate cancer. He had surgery and is now back to good health and able to enjoy spending time with his grandchildren.

Jo

GRACE AND MERCY

Thank you for praying for my son, Seth. He has gotten a job in a restaurant and a neighbor has been talking to him about Jesus. Seth is seeing grace and mercy being poured out in his life.

Donna

HEALTHY BABY

I had asked for prayer for Abigail, who was seven months pregnant and having high blood pressure and contractions. She had already lost one baby. Two weeks later, she safely gave birth to a healthy baby. Thanks be to God and to the prayer team at Breakthrough!

Sarah

MIRACLE MAN

I had sent an urgent request for Dan, who had fallen from a second story window and badly hurt, with six bone fractures and damaged lungs. His complete healing has earned him the title "miracle man" and he has returned to his job as a construction manager. All praise and thanksgiving to our merciful God and abundant gratitude to all who prayed.

Bobbie

GOD'S WILL

I am beginning to see God's will for my life. Thank you for praying.

Yasmin

HEALING

I requested prayer for my roommate, Anna, who was on life support and near death. The Lord touched and healed her! She is home now and doing great.

Karen

PERSISTENT PRAYER

PRAISE GOD, we have received an answer to prayer! My husband's employment now provides health insurance and it is better and less expensive than it was last year. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your persistent prayers. May God bless you!

Christine

Answers to Prayer are edited for publication.

DELIVERANCE

My sister and brother-in-law are no longer separated! Prayers are being answered over their finances. They are also seeking God's will for their lives. Praise the Lord!

Kim

Oh, give thanks unto the Lord; call upon His name; make known His deeds among the people... talk ye of all His wondrous works.

Psalm 105:1-2

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in PRAYER, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. // Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in PRAYER. // Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by PRAYER and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. // Devote yourselves to PRAYER, being watchful and thankful. // I always thank my God as I remember you in my PRAYERS.

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Winter 2012



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