

The Breakthrough
INTERCESSOR
Spring 2023

HOPE
Springs
ETERNAL

The Magazine About Prayer

“THE FLOWERS APPEAR
ON THE EARTH, THE
TIME OF SINGING HAS
COME, AND THE VOICE
OF THE TURTLEDOVE IS
HEARD IN OUR LAND.”

-SONG OF SOLOMON 2:12, ESV



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INTERCESSOR

SPRING 2023

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Our Mission...

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

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. (Prayer requests are identified by first name only, and are never sent to intercessors in the same geographic location as the prayer requester.) 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 over 40 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.

The 21-day prayer period was chosen based on the story in Daniel 10. Daniel prayed 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 greatly 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 and joy to pray for you.



Breakthrough's financial statement is available upon your written request to
The Office of Charitable and Regulatory Programs,
P.O. Box 526, Richmond, VA 23218



Love and Obey

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17 NASB). The King James translation makes an even stronger statement: “. . . behold all things have become new.” Those who have truly been born again have passed from death to life by believing in their heart that Jesus was raised from the dead and confessing with their mouth that Jesus is LORD (Romans 10:9,10). This places us in Christ. Then, we are a brand-new person in the inner man. We will have to wait until we are present with the LORD to get our new resurrected body.

Our new creation, unlike everything else in this world, which ages with time, remains the same as the day we were born again. And we owe it all to the fact that Jesus Christ suffered, was crucified, and rose from the dead so that our sins could be forgiven, and we could have life eternal with Him. And His motivation was love, as He proved His love for us while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (John 3:15, Romans 5:18, and 1 Peter 3:18).

So, when we start out each day, we are a new creation in Christ. What a blessing. What should our response be for what He has done for us? “We loved Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19 KJV). And Jesus told us what that love would look like: “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Jesus goes on to say that if we keep His commandments, it is proof of love for Him and He will manifest Himself to us, that is, make His home with us (John 14:24).

The key to living the fruitful, victorious, Spirit-filled Christian life is to obey the commandments that Jesus has given us. What are those? Jesus said that they can be summarized into two commandments: “Love God and love your neighbor” (Matthew 22:36-40). What does that look like practically?

One answer is to walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:5,6). But, you say, that’s not possible—true. But we can progressively improve because with salvation, we were given the Holy Spirit to empower us to be able to obey Jesus’ commandments. Our greatest motivation to succeed is our love for Jesus. If we are in Christ, we love Jesus.

However, when we become a new creature, our sinful nature is still in a battle with our new nature; there’s a war going on over how we will live in Christ. Some old sinful habits will continue to tempt us to sin. It’s in these times of temptation when we have the greatest opportunity to overcome by remembering that if we love Jesus, we will keep his commandments. When tempted, we are prompted by the Spirit not to

give in to the temptation. At that moment, if we remember our motive for not yielding to temptation—our love for Jesus—our chances of experiencing victory after victory are significantly enhanced.

As Donors and Intercessors, it is crucial for us to keep Jesus' commandments because of the commitment we make as intercessors. James tells us that it's through the fervent, effectual prayers of a RIGHTEOUS person that much happens (James 5:16). The Enduring Word commentary has this to say about the word "righteous" in this passage: "This is someone who recognizes the grounds of his righteousness reside in Jesus, and whose personal walk is generally consistent with the righteousness that he has in Jesus." Notice the use of the word GENERALLY. None of us is perfect, nor will be on earth, but we are striving to live like Jesus.

We at Breakthrough are so grateful for your love for Jesus—it's what motivates you to want to pray for others. And what motivates you to donate to Breakthrough to make it possible to pay the bills and provide financially for our staff. We are overwhelmed by your love.

May God continue to bless you as you bless others.

J. Michael Smith, Esq

Chairman of the Board

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. Michael Smith", written in a cursive style.

Prayer for the Coming of Spring

By Peter Marshall

We give Thee thanks for the loveliness of spring with its promise of summer.

Bird and blossom seem to tell us of the possibility of new life for our own souls. This spring day speaks to us of beginning again, of new beauty that can come to reburnish our own barren lives.

O Lord Jesus, may that transformation begin in us now as we sit before Thee—penitent and expectant. Amen.

From *The Prayers of Peter Marshall*. Used with permission.



Christ, the Man

BY LEONARD LESOURD

My church fellowship with the young adult group nudged me into my fourth relationship with Jesus—where I encountered Christ, the Man.

The change in me began when I was asked to do a book review on *The Man Nobody Knows* by Bruce Barton, of Barton, Barton, Durstine and Osborne advertising firm. Reading this book and reporting on it to people of my own age changed my concept of Jesus yet again.

Right at the start Bruce Barton debunked the idea that Jesus was weak and effeminate. Instead, Barton portrayed Him in the carpentry shop, His body lean from a disciplined life, His muscles strong from hard work. “Jesus learned to fell trees in the forest and shape them with an adz [typo is in the book],” Barton wrote. “Often He was seen trudging into the woods with His ax over His shoulder, returning at night-fall with a rough-hewn beam.”

The young Jesus “waxed strong,” as Scripture tells us, taking long walks across a rugged terrain. Rigorous self-discipline prepared Him for that forty-day fast He endured at the start of His ministry, during which time He touched no food. Satan tested Jesus three times, once urging Him to turn stones into bread. Jesus could have done it. His flesh must have been terribly tempted.

The youth who had been a carpenter stayed in the wilderness forty days; a man came out. Men who looked on Him from that hour felt the authority of one who has put his physical and spiritual house in order.

The testing time in the desert helped give Jesus the inner fortitude He needed to face hardship, fatigue, opposition. It prepared Him for that day He entered the Jerusalem Temple, described vividly by Bruce Barton:

The air was filthy with the smell of animals and human beings herded together. Hard-faced priests and money-changers sat behind long tables, exacting the utmost farthing from those who came to buy.

As Jesus faced the sordid reality, His cheeks flushed. Suddenly He strode to the table where the fat money-changer sat, and hurled it violently across the court. He charged onward. He reached the counters where the dove cafes stood; with quick, sure movements the cages were opened and the occupants released. Brushing aside the dealers in front of the cattle pens, He threw down the bars and drove the bellowing animals out into the streets.

Jesus stood flushing and panting, His eyes sweeping scornfully over the faces distorted by anger and greed. “This is my authority,” He cried. “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations,’ but ye have made it a den of robbers.”

Seeing Christ as an outdoor man, a confrontative, courageous man, was extremely important in my Christian walk. Now I could better understand why the men of His time were drawn to Him. And now I was ready for a closer relationship with Him myself.

Christ the Man was no longer the anemic figure on the Sunday school wall. No longer a remote, historical figure. He was much more than a great Teacher. He was alive to me, a Friend I talked and prayed to, a real Person. My life had turned around.

What more did I need?

Always something more, I was to discover. Always growth. If faith isn’t growing, then it’s declining.

Strong as my faith was becoming, I was not spiritually undergirded for the calamity in my personal life that came ten years after my personal experience with the Man Jesus. The breakup of a marriage is devastating. The question I asked then was “Why?”

I had given my life to Christ, had worked hard at being a good Christian. Behind my question was the feeling that all this Christian effort somehow should have made me immune from a personal disaster.

In the period of discouragement that followed, I came face to face with the spirit of evil. Never again will I think of the devil as a comical red-robed figure with a pitchfork. He is subtle and one of his most potent and persuasive tools for the conquest of a human being is self-pity.

When one is falling, the instinct is to reach out for something to hold on to. I did this and found one handle to clutch—my commitment experience kneeling at an altar ten years before. This was still very real to me. And so I knelt once more and sought Him again.

Excerpt from *Strong Men, Weak Men* by Leonard LeSourd. Used with permission.

Not Knowing What To Say

BY JOHNNY WOOTEN



It's the worst time in church for me. My hands get sweaty; I feel like I'm on fire, and the world starts spinning faster and faster. Why? Someone, anyone, whoever is standing up in the pulpit has just asked me to come up and pray. Every time it happens, I feel just like Moses when God asked him to lead Israel out of Egypt. Several times when speaking with God, Moses tried to get out of being Israel's leader by saying he was not worthy of speaking for God. He perceived himself as unacceptable, unprepared, and of no use to God because of his difficulty speaking. That's exactly how I feel when asked to pray with or in front of others.

Romans 8:26-27 states, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints according to God's will" (NET).

It's wonderful to know that the Holy Spirit takes part in my praying. He comes alongside me, taking my jumbled up mess of words and transforming them into an effective prayer heard by my Father. Just like Moses, I have never been good at speaking publicly; I can write better than I speak. When I do have to speak in front of others, especially pray, I know the Holy Spirit is right there with me making sense of it all. All of my stuttering, stammering, and stumbling for words turns into a beautiful song that God loves to hear. Sometimes, in our sinful state, we come to God in prayer thinking He is ashamed of us, that we are unworthy. However, God delights in our fellowship, and prayer brings us into a deeper relationship with Him.

Because our flesh is never perfect in this life, we need forgiveness for our sins, and prayer is how we can have assurance that God hears us in faith as we ask for that forgiveness (Matt. 21:22). So whether it is prayer in private or in front of the church congregation, I know that with help from the Holy Spirit, God hears my prayers, knows exactly what I am praying for, and answers those prayers according to His will (1 John 5:14-15).



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Johnny L. Wooten is currently serving his sentence on the Wainwright Unit in Lovelady, Texas. He has written for *The Breakthrough Intercessor*, *Spotlight on Recovery*, and *The Evening Street Press*. He is also the Unit reporter for the *ECHO Newspaper*.

WAYS TO GIVE

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Photo Credit: Peter Caligiuri

Guarding the Harbor

BY PETER CALIGIURI

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.
Proverbs 4:23 NLT

That Sunday morning, no one, least of all Diane, was ready. At 7:45 A. M., she was still snuggling down under the blankets and thinking of how wonderful it was that her father's job with the Navy had brought their family all the way from Connecticut to Hawaii. The temperature the day before had been in the upper 70's, and compared to snowy southern New England, Hawaii felt like heaven! Then she heard the sound of planes flying over their house, and she sat up. When she looked out the window, she caught a glimpse of a red circle on one of the wings as the formation turned toward the harbor. Immediately the phone began ringing, and she heard the door to her parent's room creak open and her dad's footsteps going into the kitchen to answer. When Diane slipped out of bed and tip-toed to her doorway, she saw her daddy running back into his bedroom and heard her mom yelling for

her and her older brother Don to wake up. Then from the direction of the harbor came the sound of explosions such as she had never heard before, and in a moment, her world was changed. That little girl Diane was my mother, and her dad, my grandfather, was the captain of one of the destroyers at Pearl Harbor. That morning he made it to his ship and engaged the enemy. After the attack, my grandmother, with my mom and her two brothers moved back to Connecticut while my grandfather went out to sea to continue fighting in the war. My grandmother and her children never returned to what they had thought was heaven on earth.

Today, many of us are no more ready for what lies ahead in our spiritual lives than my family was on December 7th, 1941. Just as no one knew that the Japanese planes were coming to attack our fleet that morning, we also can never know what challenges or difficulties await us in the future. Pearl Harbor became the worst military defeat in our history because we left the harbor unguarded. Today's verse tells us that we must also guard the harbor of our hearts, and there is no better way to do that than by prayer. But the kind of prayer that is needed means more than just sitting up in bed and watching out the window as the enemy attacks. Prayer that guards our hearts will supply ammunition for the anti-aircraft guns that protect the harbor and watch God's radar for any enemy incursion of our airspace. That kind of prayer doesn't just fearfully huddle in a corner wondering what to do, but it boldly rushes to battle stations and engages the enemy. Now there are certainly times, even when we pray, that we will still face temporary defeats. But just as the Navy repaired its ships after Pearl Harbor and recruited and trained thousands of seamen and went on to win the war, we can do the same. We can begin that process by getting in contact with our spiritual Naval headquarters and finding out what new orders God has assigned us. Only then can we trust His command as we launch out to sea. Then, even with a war raging on, we can be thankful for His promise that He will be with us through every danger and will lead us on to victory no matter what lies ahead!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Life has a funny way of giving us some unexpected detours and my wife Nancy and I have had more than a few. Today we are getting ready to celebrate 50 wonderful and crazy years together, and we have two sons, six lively grandsons, and one very special granddaughter! I love to write devotionals, poetry, and even a few songs.



Ribbons of Connection

By Kathryn Sadakierski

It was a cool, crisp night making for a refreshing stroll. Naturally, my parents, sister, and I opted to take a walk around the neighborhood that evening in April 2021. An unusually bright shaft of moonlight fell over everything, illuminating our path. Spring felt distant, with a chill in the air (typical in New England, where April Fool's Day flurries are no joke), despite the snow evanescent. Hope for warmer days waited in our hearts like seeds beneath the ground.

Simply seeking some fresh air, we figured our walk would be brief, so we decided to leave our cellphone at home, reasoning it wouldn't be needed when we'd be back so soon. Being outside soothed our spirits, especially during difficult times. My paternal grandfather had passed away days prior amidst the coronavirus pandemic, the sudden sting of loss still fresh. During any season of metamorphosis, maintaining a sense of normalcy can provide comfort. Taking family walks was a regular part of our routine. Through changes, it was even more important to honor constants keeping us together.

When we returned from our walk, we felt better from being under the banner of the sky, among the eternal beauty of the stars. We sat in our backyard, where we had many a conversation threaded with laughter, looking up at the constellations and imagining where the future days would take us. Minutes ticked by, though we barely noticed, unaware of how they would count very soon.

Later, we strode up to the garage, about to let ourselves back into the house. However, upon clicking on the garage remote, the garage door didn't budge. Each of us took turns trying to open it. Perhaps something was block-

ing the door on the inside? Were we standing too close to the door? In spite of our numerous troubleshooting attempts, we remained shivering outside. It was becoming clear that the remote's battery needed to be replaced, though doubts niggled at the backs of our minds. *What if it wasn't the battery? Would we be under the stars all night?*

Rather than leaving at least one door or window unlocked, we'd closed the house up tightly, not realizing how this would come to affect us. After unsuccessfully trying every possible entry, we confirmed that there wasn't an alternate way into the house. We lacked access to the batteries needed for the garage door remote, and to anything we could use to pry open a door or window. Our keys were locked inside the house. For simply a short walk that night, we hadn't imagined how desperately we would require a spare key.

Without a cellphone, there was no way to contact anyone. It being night, we couldn't consult our neighbors for assistance. Every house in the neighborhood was dark, not one light shining in a window. We determined that my dad would walk to the nearby gas station to borrow their phone, but the journey would be treacherous, passing through a busy, dangerous road. Worried and frustrated, I continually revisited if-onlies: *If only I had brought the phone. If only we had gone out earlier, or if one of us had stayed home.* We were always careful. Why had this happened tonight?

Though I felt powerless to change anything, I focused my attention on praying. I felt the briskness of the air and breathed in and out. I placed myself in the present moment instead of thinking about what could've been done or what could happen. There was only the opportunity to find serenity in what couldn't be changed. I didn't have to feel helpless when I knew I could turn to God, who would make all things turn out for the better. While I couldn't unravel this dilemma, God could undo the toughest knots. Human beings are creatures of habit, so it was natural that I wanted to know what to expect, to manage what happened. In this situation where I could only pray, I needed to trust fully in God, putting everything in His hands. Prayer was the most powerful tool I had.

An eternity seemed to pass as we awaited my dad's return from the gas station. I wished I could know what was transpiring out there. Thankfully, by God's grace, he arrived back safely. There had been virtually no traffic on the road, allowing him to reach the gas station without incident. Fortunately, the gas station was open 24/7, despite changing hours during the pandemic. My dad had called the police department, but because of fluctuating policies during the pandemic, they couldn't come to our aid. Instead, they had dispatched the fire department. The irony wasn't lost on us. My paternal grandfather, who had recently passed away, was a firefighter himself.

Before long, glaring lights flashed as the firetruck pulled into the driveway. It seemed almost comical that, after being outside for hours, with midnight approaching, it took the fire captain mere seconds to replace the remote's battery, which opened the garage door more smoothly than ever. Then, we learned that the captain who had helped us was named Chuck. My paternal

grandfather, also a fire captain, was named Stanley, but was dubbed “Chuck.”

There are times when we marvel at past experiences seeming almost too zany to be true. Having become increasingly attuned to the miraculous ways in which God works, I believe that there are no coincidences. Life’s threads of circumstance are impeccably woven together, forming a tapestry enabling us to see God’s intercession in our lives, giving each stitch in time meaning. I hadn’t fathomed what purpose that experience of being locked out would serve, but ultimately, it showed me God brings us special angels to connect us. Now, I am grateful for how God made everything fall into place, imparting His blessings. Seeds of belief are planted in His Heaven-sent messages. Truly, we’re never shut out from God, or from those who have left this life for the next. Love isn’t severed. Ribbons of connection grow stronger in transitions. God is with us through them all.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathryn Sadakierski’s writing has appeared in *Christian Courier*, *Ekstasis Magazine*, *enLIVEN Devotionals*, *Faith Today*, *Unlocked: Daily Devotions for Teens*, and elsewhere. She holds a B.A. and M.S. from Bay Path University. Kathryn is passionate about sharing her love for God through her work, with the goal of inspiring hope.

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God Had My Back

BY DENISE IRVINE

Have you ever experienced “the dark night of the soul,” a time so deep and dark that you felt God had abandoned you? I have. Even though I have been a born-again Christian for 40 years, my feelings tricked me. My situation was painful and desperate, and as things went from bad to worse, I finally cried out to my daughter, Jennie, “I feel like God has abandoned me!” That couldn’t have been further from the truth. In fact, God literally had my back.

Three weeks prior to this, I underwent reverse shoulder replacement surgery. Shortly after surgery, while I was still groggy from the anesthetic, three surgeons came into my room. They gently explained that a pin had dropped into my upper shoulder blade during surgery, which they couldn’t remove. (This “pin” I found out later, was three inches long, pointed on both ends, and the thickness of a nail.)

I was immediately taken for an x-ray and CT scan to determine the exact location of the pin. The surgeons concurred that the pin was nestled in a safe place, and since it would require another major surgery to remove it, they would “keep an eye on it” via x-rays and CT scans. The fear was that it would migrate to a potentially dangerous location.

At my follow-up appointment two weeks later, another x-ray revealed that the pin had not migrated. A CT scan was scheduled for two weeks later, and an appointment was made with a thoracic surgeon.

A week later, I began experiencing a sharp pain in my middle back. The pain became so intense, I finally asked my sister, Deanna, to look at it. She was surprised to see a large lump protruding from my middle back. She took a picture of it to show my other sisters.

My next CT scan appointment was still four days away. Every night, as I writhed in pain, I prayed and prayed for some relief, but none was forthcoming. The pain just kept intensifying. I was really in a dark place. I felt like God was not hearing my prayers.

I then lost power due to high winds. My nerves were so frazzled that I asked Jennie to pick me up to spend the night at her house until the power came back on. (I couldn’t drive because my shoulder was in a sling.) The next morning, Jennie looked at my back and said that the lump had turned black and blue. She took a picture and showed me.

The next day I had the CT scan, and the following day, I met with the thoracic surgeon. He said the scan showed that the pin had migrated to my middle back. He took one look at the lump and scheduled surgery for the next morning.

I have never experienced such pain, not even in childbirth, as I did that night. Deanna said I cried out in anguish repeatedly. Apparently, the pin was trying to work its way out of my body. I couldn't hold a Bible because of the sling, so I asked the Holy Spirit to bring to my remembrance every scripture I had ever memorized. Immediately, scripture after scripture flooded my mind. God's Word sustained me through that awful night.

The next morning, Deanna drove me to the hospital, and the surgeon removed the pin. His assistant took a picture of it and showed me. I couldn't believe my eyes! It was truly a miracle that this sharp, pointed object had worked its way from the top of my shoulder blade to my middle back without puncturing my lungs, heart, or spinal cord. *Thank you, Lord,* I silently prayed.

I felt ashamed that I ever thought God had abandoned me, when all the while He literally had my back, protecting me from potential damage to my organs. I asked His forgiveness for ever doubting His love and care. I also thanked Him for Jennie and Deanna. Their support was my manna.

One thing I learned from this whole experience is that God is faithful... even when I'm not. So even if you feel like your prayers are going unheard, believe me, God hears... and He has your back.

Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: But I will put it into the hand of them that afflicted thee: which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over" (Isaiah 51:22, 23 KJV).



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Denise Irvine has been a Breakthrough intercessor and contributor for 23 years. She and her husband, Alan, have six children, ten grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. They reside in South Lyon, Michigan.

Are you a writer?


*The Intercessor welcomes
submissions!*

Guidelines...

Articles should be 500 to 1,000 words. Poems should be at least 12 lines.

Topic must focus on prayer: an experience or teaching supported in Scripture.

Authors give Breakthrough permission to edit material for length and content.



**Has God taught you about prayer?
Do you want to share your
story of answered prayer?
Do you write poetry about prayer?**

Send in your submissions for
consideration!



Send to...

Email: editor@intercessors.org
Mail: Breakthrough Editor
P.O. Box 121, Lincoln, VA
20160





Time Wasted

BY WENDELL GRISSOM

The time that I've wasted is my biggest regret,
Spent inside a place that I'll never forget,
Sitting inside a small concrete prison cell,
twenty-four hours a day,
Having nothing else to do now but to just sit
and think about all the things I've done:
The crying, the laughing, the hurt, even the fun.

But now it's just me, here all alone,
With all my guilt clearly being shown.
Living behind a wall of emptiness that
I myself allowed to be built,
I'm trapped here in my body, just wishing I could run,
But the chase is now over, 'cause
there's no place I could hide,
'Cause everything's been lost now, including my pride.

With reality setting in, now it just
stares back at me every day,
Constantly slapping me in my face,
I'm scared
Alone
And now I'm stuck in this place.

All the memories of the past I had,
Constantly flashing through my head,
The pain is so obvious, if you'll look closely,
You'll see it, too, from all the tears I've shed.
I ask myself, "Why? Where did I go wrong?"
I guess I was just weak, when I
should have been strong.

As a young man in my teens, I was just living for the moment,
The drugs and all the fun,
Wanting so much to test out these new “wings” I’d grown,
But all of my feelings were lost, afraid to be shown.

As I now look back at my past, it’s so easy to see
The fear that I had was to just simply be “me.”
I’d pretend to be so tough, fast and cool,
When in reality, I only looked like a fool.
But now I’m getting too old for this tiresome game,
Of acting like I’m all hard, with no sense of shame.

It’s time that I change, I now can clearly see,
And try the best that I can, with what life there’s still left inside of me.
What my future will hold, I really don’t know,
But all of these years I’ve wasted
Are now all starting to clearly show.

So all I can do now is just try to live for that day, when I’ll have a new start,
And I believe I’ll really make it, too, ‘cause Jesus now lives inside my heart.

I may be heading toward death’s door,
And it’s kinda scary too, ‘cause I really don’t wanna die,
But now I know that I’ll be safe, even then,
‘Cause Jesus will be there with me also,
He’ll be holding my hand,
And standing right by my side.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

My name is Wendell Arden Grissom. I’m 50 years old, 5’10”, 180 lbs, with black hair. I enjoy reading and writing, motorcycles, hunting and fishing, traveling and family. I’m divorced, no children. I’m a truck driver by trade and have traveled through all 48 of the continental United States. I’m currently on Death Row in Oklahoma. If anyone would care to write to me, I’d welcome all letters.



Christ Changes You

BY ROY BORGES

Life before Christ was a life that I lived selfishly. It was a sinful life that landed me in prison three times, and from behind those prison fences, I felt like a loser. At the bottom of a prison cell, I had nowhere to look but up, and I finally realized that my only hope was in Christ. I was a sinner in need of a Savior, and on December 24, 1989, Christmas Eve, I asked Jesus Christ into my life. Nothing has been the same since.

The moment I put my faith in Christ, God saved me: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16 NKJV). Asking Jesus to be my Lord and Savior was the best thing that ever happened to me. He completely changed me, and I became a new man. It’s a life long journey, but thankfully, God’s Holy Spirit is there to help me overcome my weaknesses daily.

Prison life was hard. Many bad things happened to me in that dark, evil place. To survive, I had to rely on God’s word and on the Lord’s strength. I clung to the word’s of the Apostle Paul who wrote most of the New Testament from prison: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).

I had to keep my eyes off the pain of prison and put my faith in God’s Son, the One who freed me from hell, a fate worse than prison. Abraham and many others show us their faith as they faced challenges in Hebrews 11 but kept right on going as they kept their eyes on the invisible One. Although I was behind prison fences for 31 years, God used that time to make me fruitful. He built my character and taught me many things. I learned to trust Him. God wasn’t interested in my comfort but in developing my inner man.

During my long prison journey, I prayed daily, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways ac-

guidance, I must acknowledge Him in every area of my life. Look at your values and priorities. What is important to you? Make Him a vital part of everything you do; then you will be working to accomplish His purposes.

God gave me the opportunity in prison to write about the experiences that I went through and how He helped me through them. I wrote articles, stories, and plays about them that were published all over the world. God began to use me in prison, and some unbelievable things happened. Without a doubt, the most unbelievable circumstance was when God touched the hearts of three people: a judge, a public defender, and a prosecutor. On January 7, 2021, I was immediately released from Union Correctional Institution as a free man, after serving 31 years in the Florida Prison system. It was unbelievable; I never thought I would get out.

Wherever I go now, I want others to know that what God has done for me He can do for them. My time in prison has shown me that God is faithful and what He has done for me He can do for anyone who believes in His Son Jesus Christ.

God then brought me the joy of my life, “Patty,” and we were married. Now, we are hoping to start a prison ministry. We want to give prisoners my book *101 Short Stories from a Prison Cell*; hopefully they can learn the lessons I wrote about in each story. If you are incarcerated right now, I want to encourage you to trust in the Lord. Let Him direct your steps. He will be faithful to meet all your needs; just keep your eyes on Him and not on the pain of your situation. God will neither fail you nor lead you astray. Get a copy of my book and read about the things that God did for me when I was in prison. Read God’s Word, too, and let Him make a difference in your life, so you will be able to make a difference in the lives of others.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

After over 30 years in prison, Roy’s prayers were answered and he was released in 2021. “God got me out of prison so I could be used out here. I am writing stories and articles. I plan to go to many churches and tell them about the things He did for me in prison and what He is doing now.”



The Joy of the Lord Shall Be Your Strength

BY CATHERINE MARSHALL

For weeks now I have been so discouraged about the quality of my writing that I wonder if I am capable of doing another novel. Is Christy to be the only one?

The new novel I've been working on is set in western Pennsylvania during the 1930s. So far it seems lifeless. The characters aren't real to me yet.

Yesterday was the low point as I struggled to get words on paper. I had a mental picture of myself as a lost, crying sheep at the bottom of a very deep pit. Then with startling clarity these words of Jesus flooded my thinking: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep...whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out; and find pasture" (John 10:7-9, NIV).

How like Jesus to rescue people like me, not because we have done, or are currently doing, one solitary thing to deserve it. I sought Him and last night He reached down and, with His shepherd's crook, physically and spiritually lifted me out of the pit. Today He is comforting me even as He puts renewed strength into me.

It happened through a dream, fragments of which remained in my mind upon awakening.

In the dream I had a basket in my hands decorated around the rim and sides with flowers and leaves. I was having to "redo" the decorations. As I took off the old ones I was surprised to find how easy they were to remove. But there was an even greater surprise: I expected the flowers to be artificial ones, but found them not only real flowers, but surprisingly fresh.

When I awoke there was a joy and a release springing from deep in my spirit and my heart was full of praise.

The message of the dream appeared to be not only my own readiness to begin work on the novel again, but even divine approval of the timing. And the ease with which the bunches of flowers were removed from the basket and the fact that they were fresh, seemed to say, "The task of revision will not be as difficult as you have thought, and you will find the material fresh."

I have long known that my writing is never truly on target unless I feel at some point, while in the process of getting words on paper, that certain hallmark of joy within. The scene I am attempting to write may be quite a serious one, but the touchstone of joy must be there—or else I'm working in my own strength, not His.

It will take a little while to turn around a habit of negative thinking about this book—but Jesus is beginning to do that for me this morning. In fact, He who always gives to us "more abundantly than we could ask or think" has given me a glimpse of His vision for this novel.

I had been realizing the last few days, as I have been doing a quick rereading of the words already written, that I am at the same point in this book I was with *A Man Called Peter* when I received the devastating critique: "You haven't yet gotten inside the man Peter."



It was after I fell into a pit of discouragement over that remark that God told me, “No man’s life has ultimate significance apart from what that man’s life shows about God.” So I re-outlined Peter’s story that way.

Now God is telling me to think of the novel like this: We are living in a time when evil and trouble seem rampant. Every person I know has trouble of some kind.

So I am to separate the strands of the different kinds of trouble in the novel, and see what God’s solution is to each one. For instance, we have:

Economic trouble—I am writing of the Depression times, the 30s.

Emotional depression—Ken, the father, with his conviction that he is a failure.



Ecological trouble—powerful financial interests ignore environmental danger signs.

Natural disaster—the final flood. What is God saying here? To us today?

I'm going to have to listen to the Inner Voice very carefully to “get” all this, but praise God, oh, how I praise Him for this revelation! For He is saying, “Yes, yes, of course I want you to write this book. Yes, yes, it has an important message for our time.”

Oh, thank You, Lord. Thank You for the return of joy to my life!

Excerpt from *A Closer Walk* by Catherine Marshall. Used with permission.

I am now completely cancer free.
-Linda


I am now listed as stable from a critical 29 months on treatments for bone cancer. God is keeping watch over me.
-Margaret

Generational strongholds have broken (trauma, abuse)! Curses and sorcery and demonic oppression have stopped; Jesus set me free. My mother and ex have no power over me or any influence or manipulation or lies. I am protected by the blood of the Lamb.
-Anonymous

Our neighbor & friend just received a report from two doctors that there is no sign of throat cancer after chemo & radiation.
-Jeanne

Thank you for covering me in prayers. I just finished taking the bar exams the other day. I praise the Lord for His favor, provisions, and protection. I finished strong because of the Lord!
-Gala

My financial situation has had a great turnaround.
-Mary



My son Brian
survived cancer
and is healthier
now.
-Rieci


My cellulitis has healed,
and my right foot is healing
well. I will soon have a new
pair of diabetic slippers and
a new pair of orthopedic
shoes. Thank you God.
-Anonymous

On September 6, 2022, Harrison called
me (his mom) and the Lord brought
Harrison home to New York from Cal-
ifornia from Tuesday evening to Friday
morning to reconcile with us.
-Julie

You prayed for me as I was having
chemo treatments for cancer. That was
2016! I am cancer free. Thank you so
much for all your prayers for me!
-Jeanine

Thank you for
praying for our
youngest son. He
had an encounter
with Jesus. He's
been doing better
and is reunited
with his family.
-Debbie

Thank you, dear friends at Break-
through, for your prayers for my son
and wife as they recover from the hur-
ricane. The waters are receding now in
their garage at the rate of either an inch
or half inch per day, and I am grateful
that the waters did not come into the
main part of the house.
-Shirley



I sent a prayer
request for
money I needed.
The lady I used
to work for sent
me \$2,500. God
never fails.
-Clarine

Mark just reached 6 months clean.
Praise God! He was released
from jail early September and just
completed phase one of a 12-18
month program. The best news
is his attitude is so different this
time, and he's taking personal
responsibility more so than ever.
-Anonymous


Our daughter, Caroline, whom
you have prayed for (with us)
for several years, is five months
sober, happy, and has a fulfilling
job. Our relationship is closer
than it has been in years.
-Deborah

My daughter
is married and
serves the Lord!
-Rebecca

My sister's overnight nurse said they tried taking
her off the ventilator, but she wasn't responding
to commands, so they put her back on. When I
arrived, she was awake and off the ventilator!
-Anonymous

My granddaughter, Rachel,
brought her son Jonathan
home from the ICU! Both
are doing well! Thank you
for your prayers!
-Marlys

I recovered from
cancer!
-Carolyn



You prayed for our son James for many years for physical & spiritual healing from a severe traumatic brain injury. God answered these prayers by giving James a love and salvation in Jesus before he passed away on April 3, 2022.
-Gloria

I had submitted a prayer request for my father who was given two to three months to live with congestive heart failure. He had an appointment yesterday, and he has responded very well to new medications. A different doctor told him he is doing very well and that he does not need to worry about dying!
-Carolyn

Aaron had discontinued visiting face to face with his parents in 12-18 months. He reached out last week texting that he was tired of starting over and wanted better. He came unannounced to our home for a visit and didn't reek of marijuana. It's been over 24 months since I've known him to be substance free.
-Lisa

Marisa has obtained a liver, and it was transplanted yesterday. God bless each one of you immensely!
-Maria

Cory got a good report! He doesn't need any more amputation on his feet.
-Anonymous

Spring 2023

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