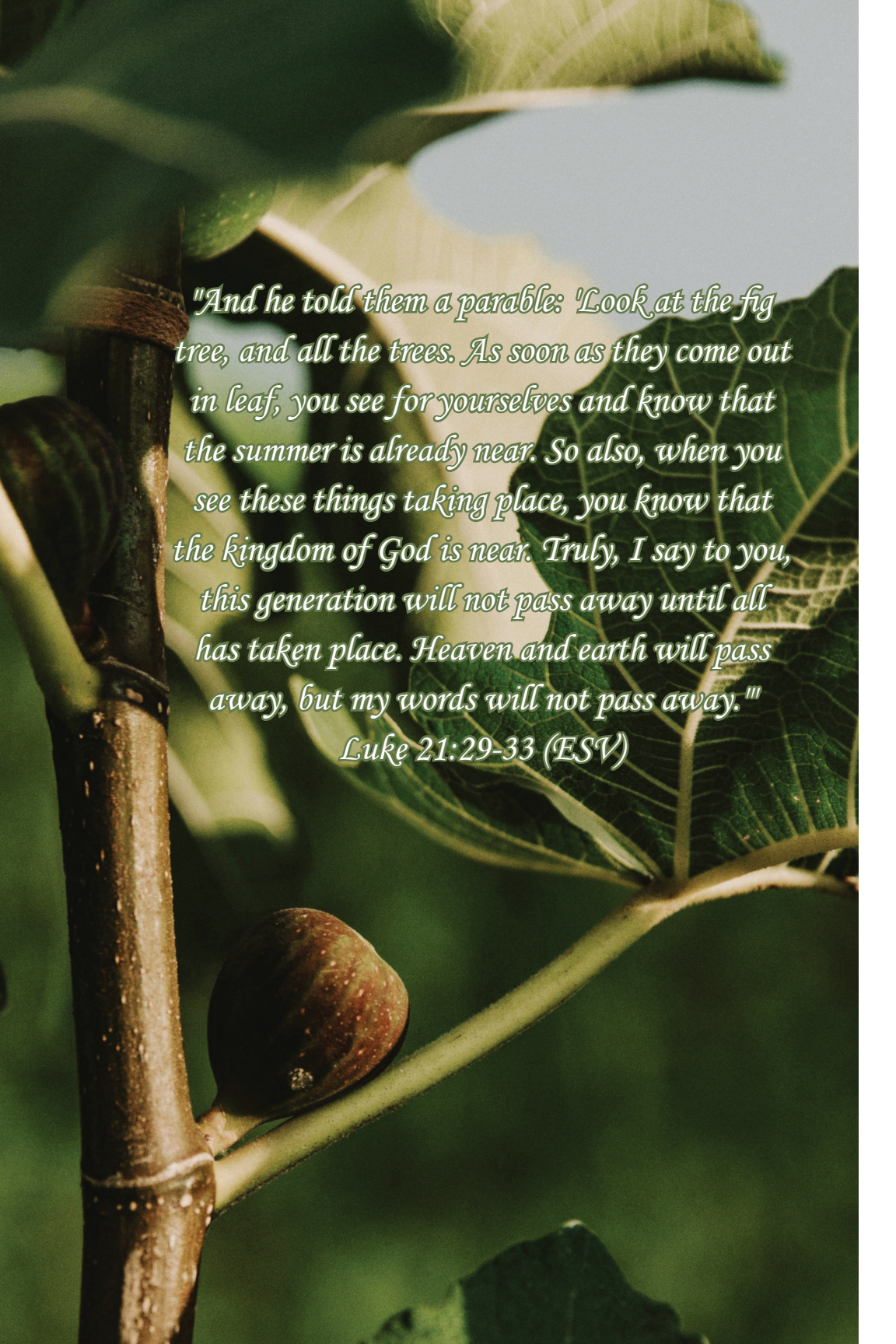




The Breakthrough
INTERCESSOR
Spring/Summer 2025

*The Nearness
of the Kingdom*

The Magazine About Prayer

A close-up photograph of a fig tree branch. A single, dark brown, oval-shaped fig fruit is attached to the branch. Large, green, serrated leaves are visible in the background and foreground, some showing signs of aging or damage. The lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the bark, the fruit, and the leaves.

"And he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.'"

Luke 21:29-33 (ESV)

The Breakthrough
INTERCESSOR

**SPRING/SUMMER
2025**

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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,
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Keeping Yourselves in the Love of God

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

"[K]eep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life." Jude 1:21 (ESV)

Intercessors are especially vulnerable to having their prayers hindered because of their thought life. When you pray for a person that you inwardly despise or think badly of, you are wasting your time. We are motivated to love others because we know they are loved by our Heavenly Father. Therefore, we in turn should want to love them, even if only for our Heavenly Father's sake. He is most pleased when He sees we value what He values. He transfers His values into our individual hearts as we worship Him privately. Are you a worshipper of Him? (John 4:23)

As Jesus hung on the cross, He saw Himself redeeming those very persons attempting to take His life, and forgave them (Luke 23:34). This mark of a true intercessor is borne of being a true worshipper of God. Likewise, Stephen being stoned and moments from death asks the Lord to lay not this sin to their charge (Acts 7:60). Without the love of God abiding in their hearts, those prayers would have been worthless, for we must love those we pray for. If we secretly despise or have not truly forgiven those we pray for, we are wasting our time, for those prayers are already hindered (Ecclesiastes 10:20; Hebrews 12:15).

Our thoughts play a huge part in keeping ourselves in the love of God. Philippians 4:8 (KJV) tells us what we can and cannot think on. This is no joke; disobedience can be fatal, resulting in sickness, failure, and possibly an early trip to Heaven, all because of our thinking:

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

This goes for thoughts we have toward our relatives, government officials, business colleagues, anyone. We must ask the Holy Spirit to help

us to see others the way our Heavenly Father sees them—as greatly beloved. We cannot pray for them and despise them at the same time. Love is our aim and utmost desire. Heartfelt intercession is our task. Will you come up a level and see others through the eyes of love?

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13 (KJV)

I pray you are blessed as you read the articles contained in this edition of *The Breakthrough Intercessor*.

God bless you all,

Brian K. Wells

Chairman of the Board

Forever Stays

BY PETER CALIGIURI

When all around great problems prowl
And life is torn from my control
When wildest storms within me howl
I hear a voice deep in my soul
My Christ is yet the Lord of all
My Christ is yet the Lord of all

Then fiercest winds hush to a calm
And darkest skies end with a dawn
And all the birds begin their song
Of sweetest hope that rests upon
That Christ is still the cornerstone
That Christ is still the cornerstone

There only faith can be my sight
Through sleepless nights
and darkest days
He shows His face by Heaven's light
Though I am small still I will praise
For His great gift forever stays
For His great gift forever stays.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kathleen Fessler is a member of the Fountain Hills Christian Writers Group in Fountain Hills, Arizona. Her articles and poems have appeared in many Christian magazines.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peter and his wife Nancy have been married for 50 years and have two sons, six lively grandsons, and one wonderful granddaughter. He loves to serve in nursing home ministry and write devotionals, poetry, and songs.

A Prayer of Worship

BY KATHLEEN FESSLER

All honor to your name, O Lord.
You deserve our praise,
our voices lift in one accord,
as our hands we raise.

All glory to Your name, O Lord.
Creation shows your power.
We see the moon and stars at night,
your beauty in each flower.

All praise to Your name, O Lord.
You give us life anew.
Basking in Your presence,
we stand in awe of You.

One day You'll come in glory.
The world will then confess
that Jesus is our mighty King
who reigns in righteousness.



One More Prayer for Jenny

BY JEWELL JOHNSON

Alone in the darkness, with tears blinding my eyes as I tried to follow the beam of the headlights on the highway, I came to a decision. "I can't pray another prayer for Jenny," I said.

I was sick of the eating disorder that tormented our oldest daughter, the smell of vomit in our bathroom, the arguments my husband and I had about where to hide the food so Jenny wouldn't devour it on her night binges. I was tired of our younger children complaining, "Mom, my candy is all gone. Who took it?" "Where's the sandwich meat for my lunch? It's not in the refrigerator."

I resented the tension our family experienced at meal-times as we watched Jenny empty every bit of food onto her plate, stuff it into her mouth and rush to the bathroom to purge herself. I wanted to divorce myself from the ugliness of bulimia and the devastation it had created as it raged through our home.

Why should I keep praying for Jenny? Hadn't I called her name in prayer every day for 13 years? Yet nothing changed.

If I quit praying, the pain of seeing our beautiful daughter teetering on the edge of ruin might stop. If I ceased hoping for a miracle, I wouldn't be disappointed again and again. Perhaps if I stopped begging God to heal Jenny, the dark cloud of depression I lived under would miraculously lift.

After that dark night, I prayed for other people, but I never mentioned Jenny's name.

A month later, I made a similar decision. This time it was about a houseplant. A geranium plant stood by the window in the bedroom, the best spot in our house for growing things. I had watered it with rainwater and fertilized it. Yet it refused to flourish. One green stalk with a few sickly yellow leaves struggled to stay alive. It had been that way for months.

"You're not going to grow?" I said to the plant that day. "OK, I'm done pampering you! Out you go!" I picked up the heavy pot and stomped through the house to the garage.

As I tipped the pot, ready to dump the plant into the gar-

bage can, I heard a voice. *So, you're going to throw it out just like you did Jenny?* Jenny? I questioned. *What...what do you mean?*

The voice continued. *You threw Jenny out of your prayers. Don't you know the sickest need more time and patience? The hopeless need more care and prayer.*

Had I heard right? Though the words weren't audible—I heard them in my heart—the message was clear. I *had* abandoned my daughter at her lowest point, when she needed my prayers and support the most.

I sank to the garage steps. Salty tears dripped into the black dirt as I sobbed, "God, I love her so much. I want her to be a whole person. Why, God, didn't You answer my prayers?"

Wiping my eyes, I hoisted the plant into my arms and headed back into the house. At that moment something happened. I determined—I *vowed*—to again pray for Jenny. How long? One month, two months, a year? Now the time didn't matter. My faith was renewed, and I'd pray for her as long as I had breath.

Jenny's recovery came slowly. She suffered from weakness and hair loss. A dentist told her the enamel on her front teeth had become dangerously thin from years of purging.

"If I lose my teeth, I don't want to live!" she declared. I braced for the worst.

This time Jenny turned to the Scriptures. "Mom," she said, "the Bible says God will restore what the locust and cankerworm have devoured. Can I ask God to heal my teeth when I'm the one who ruined them?"

"Healing is a gift," I said. "Yes, you can ask God to heal your teeth." Soon afterward the dentist began treatments to preserve the thinned enamel.

Every day was a struggle as Jenny tried to relearn normal eating patterns. Often, she'd slip back into the old habit of gorging and purging. I stood by, cheering her better days, praying—good days and bad.

With encouragement, tears, and prayers, Jenny worked toward physical, mental, and emotional healing. One day she said, "Things are shaky, Mom, but God and I together, we're going to make it. Just keep praying!"

And what happened to the geranium plant? It stands in our living room—growing, flourishing, and reminding me every day that there are no hopeless cases with God. There are no limits to what He can do as we keep on praying.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jewell Johnson lives in Arizona and is mother to six children and grandmother to nine. Besides writing, she enjoys reading, playing the piano, and quilting.

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A: Only through your support!

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James and Judith Davis

Andrea Doudera

George and Claire Escobar

Chris and Dorcas Sommerhoff



Paul Prays for the Ephesians

BY DR. VANESA M. SCOTT-THOMPSON

In the New Testament there are about thirteen books that are believed to be written by Paul. The majority of these books are letters to various churches. In Ephesians 3:14-21, Paul prays for the Ephesians.

The prayer can be divided into three parts: Paul's prayer posture, Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, and Paul's doxology to end the prayer.

Paul's Prayer Posture

Ephesians 3:14 (NKJV) says, "For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul shares that he kneels in prayer to God the Father. Kneeling can be viewed as a sign of submission and reverence for God. Kneeling is not the only posture for prayer, but it is a posture that Jesus used in Luke 22:41, "And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and he knelt down and prayed."

Please do not feel limited to only kneeling to pray.

Here are some biblical examples of other prayer postures:

- *Lifting hands*: Paul shared in 1 Timothy 2:8, "I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."
- *Lifting up your eyes toward heaven*: Jesus lifts his eyes in John 11:41, "Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, 'Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.'"
- *Lying in the bed*: Psalm 63:6 says, "When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches."
- *Prostrate or Face Down*: In Genesis 17:3, Abram prayed face down. "Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him."
- *Sitting*: David sat and prayed before God. 2 Samuel 7:18 says, "Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: 'Who am I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?'"
- *Standing*: Hannah prayed standing. 1 Samuel 1:26 says, "And she said, 'O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who



stood by you here, praying to the LORD."

I typically pray lifting up my eyes toward heaven, lying in the bed, sitting, or standing.

Paul's Prayer for the Ephesians

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is in verses 15-19: "From whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Paul prays for power from the Holy Spirit, the dwelling of Jesus Christ in our hearts, being established in God's love, and our knowledge of God's love. Although Paul prayed this prayer for the Ephesians, we can also apply it to us. Paul uses words that can be personally directed to every Christian such as "you," "yours," and "saints." Every Christian would benefit from power from the Holy Spirit, Jesus being in our hearts, and being grounded in the love of Jesus.

Paul's Doxology

The prayer ends in a doxology in verses 20-21. A doxology is an expression of praise to God. In this doxology, Paul shares that God is able to do things beyond our minds and according to the power of God. He also acknowledges the glory of God and His everlasting nature.

"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21(NKJV)

Paul's prayer to the Ephesians can be a model for us as we pray. We should consider our prayer posture, what we are praying for, and acknowledge God at the end.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Vanesa Scott-Thompson's writing has been featured in a variety of Christian blogs and magazines. In 2022, she released her inaugural book, entitled *Foundation Basics for New Members: Teacher & Student Manual*. To learn more about her, please visit drvmst.com.

Are you a writer?

The Intercessor welcomes submissions!

Guidelines:

1. Articles should be 500-1,000 words.
2. Poems should be at least 12 lines.
3. Topics must focus on prayer: an experience or teaching supported in Scripture.
4. 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?
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about prayer?

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A Prayer for the Small Ones

BY DR. ANN DAVID

He quietly opened the back screen door, stepped across the tiny threshold, and entered the kitchen where she was busily clearing away the remains of the morning meal.

"Mom," began his quiet young voice, "I just had a prayer answered."

The towel ceased moving, and I turned to look at my son, my eldest child. His slight youthful frame was covered with the typical rumpled plaid shirt and jeans similar to those of other young neighborhood boys. In one hand, he held his favorite rifle, one of many from the barrel in the garage that held a ready arsenal for the many mock battles held on the block. Perched on his short blond hair above slightly askew gold-framed glasses was his pride and joy, a battered old 'Aussie' hat covered with camouflage material and dust. The expression on his handsome face mirrored sobriety and wonder.

Still holding the dishrag in her hand, I looked at the young form and encouraged, "Tell me about it, David."

"Well," he began, "I was outside with all the guys and we were having this battle. You know—we had two sides and everyone had their weapons? We were having a really good time—and then Kevin and Hal and those guys came with their BB guns."

Even though Kevin, Hal, and a couple of brothers, all of whom lived on our block, were several years older than he, they often sought David's compa-



ny. Sometimes they would have night campouts in each other's yards, sometimes they would have rousing games of Risk, and other times they would just "hang around" together during the lazy summer months. David was a young man with a special talent for interacting with all ages, usually functioning as one of the "leaders of the pack." But on this particular day, the real weapons posed a problem. He continued his story.

"We were playing in the alley and our backyard when Kevin and Hal and these guys decided to target practice with the birds in our trees. I told them they shouldn't, but they were excited about having a live target to shoot at. I tried to stop them, Mom, but they just wouldn't listen to me." His brow was furrowed and his eyes overflowed with compassionate concern.

Not wanting to break his narrative, I asked quietly, "What did you do?"

"Well, I knew I couldn't stop them by myself, so I went around the corner of our house—over by the lilac bushes, you know, where no one could see me—and I said a quick prayer."

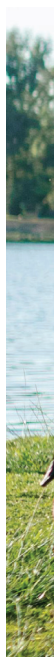
"What did you say?"

"I asked Heavenly Father to protect the birds and to help them. I prayed that the guys wouldn't be able to shoot them."

Leaning against the cabinet, I looked at this young son of mine. At the time of the incident, he couldn't have been more than seven or eight. However, the spirit within that slender body seemed older and wiser, and the atmosphere emanating from the room was that of a sanctuary filled with love and thankfulness.

"And what happened next?" I quietly asked, not wanting to destroy the feelings of the moment.

"Mom, when I came back around the corner of the house, all the birds had flown away. They weren't able to hurt even one bird!"



How can a mother be honored to share such experiences with a spirit, enormous in its size and development, yet enclosed for a time within a small, lanky, awkward body? David's body and spirit together formed a special entity on loan to me for a few short years. During one of these small, precious moments, when his intimate plea for the safety of God's creatures was shared with her, I became the student, and my son David became the teacher of the great principles of faith. Reflected in his actions were the words of the Savior: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matthew 25:40 KJV)

In this experience, he had served as the hands of God, both for the birds he saved and for the mother privileged to learn from his unquestioning faith.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Ann David has music degrees from Oregon and Idaho, and her Doctor of Education is from Brigham Young University. She was awarded to Who's Who Among America's Teachers in 2004-2005. An active member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Ann has published educational work and stories to inspire spiritual readers. She presently lives in Sandy, Utah.





He Still Calls

BY PETER CALIGIURI

*And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.
1 Samuel 3:10 (KJV)*

In the mockingbird's melody
And the rain when it falls
Or alone in night seasons
Behind our four walls

He comes and He speaks
And He knocks at our door
Then calls out our name
Just as He's done before

Then if we will waken
And answer, "My Lord!"
We Your servants are listening."
He has treasures in store!

I once spent two years commuting two hours each way to my job. Since it was so far, I spent the week with friends in one state, while my wife and our two children lived in another. At first, I hardly noticed, but the pressure was taking its toll. Some mornings I would wake up, wondering where I was, and spiritually, I was growing distant from God. Without God's grace and my wife's patience and prayers we would not have made it through. During that time, I often felt as if God were so far away that I could never get back to

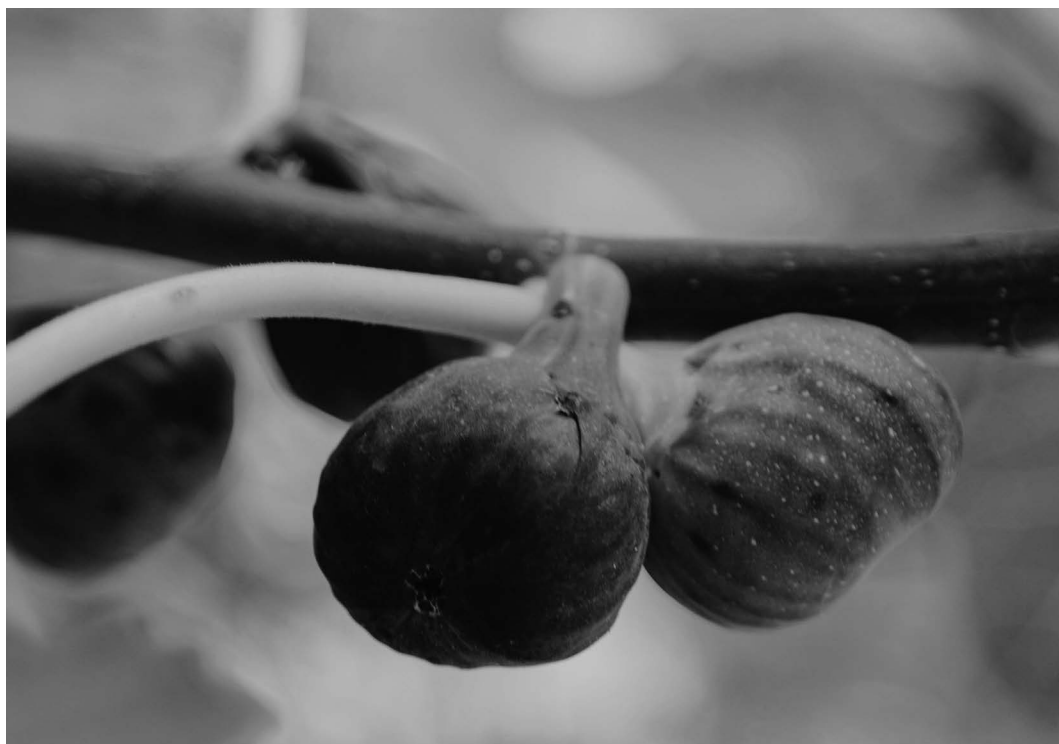
Him. Then one afternoon as I was driving home and listening to a message on Christian radio, my heart was so moved that unexpected tears began to flow down my cheeks. In that moment it felt as if Jesus had just opened the door of my pickup truck and slid into the passenger seat.

Though my situation was different than Samuel's, it is interesting that, like me, Samuel was outwardly fulfilling his duties. But the Bible tells us that in spite of all he was doing right, he still didn't know the Lord. Yet despite him being the unlikeliest of candidates, God chose Samuel to be a prophet. Notice, it doesn't say that "Samuel was praying." Or that "Samuel had some burning desire to hear from God." No, Samuel was sound asleep, and God just came! That should give us all hope, because no matter who we are or what our circumstances are, God can also come for us. When He does, like Samuel, we need to answer and tell Him, "Lord, we are listening. Thank You for remembering me!"



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Life has a funny way of giving us unexpected adventures and detours. My wife, Nancy, and I have shared more than a few over the 50 years we have had together. We have two sons, six lively grandsons, and one very special granddaughter! I love to write about nursing home ministry, as well as devotional articles, poetry, and even a few songs.





Intercessory Challenged?

BY REBECCA S. HARDESTY

“They did it again! I’m so tired of this!” my voice broke. The oatmeal container where I hid my Pomeranian’s food displayed only a couple tablespoons.

“It was full,” I said. “How can I feed my dog?”

Because I discovered the loss after the stores closed, I fed her treats for her evening meal. This happened a few times.

This morning, I hid trash bags and put an index card on top that read, “Thou shalt not steal” (Exodus 20:15 KJV).

The past seven years severely tested me. Monetary hurdles abounded. Prolonged theft from drug addicts depleted me.

“I never know what I will find when I get home,” I told a recovering addict. “They lifted my paper towels, trash bags, toilet paper, hot chocolate mix, almond milk, plastic cups, wipes, and eyeglass cleaner.”

This former trap-house visitor to my neighborhood said, “I know they’re doing it. You should see how they live. It’s disgusting. I’m never returning to that lifestyle.”

Every day, I hope that it will not happen again. But as a precaution, I try to preserve my resources by loading tote bags—containing items they might steal—in my car before I leave. I have done this for years. The number loaded has increased according to the amount swiped. I tried to move away, but God closed that door.

Why must I be the light in this darkness? I wondered.

God’s thoughts are not my thoughts. His ways are higher (Isaiah 55:8-9). What happens when someone picks on this prayer warrior? I solve my problems the way I have repeatedly—I pray.

The Lord showed Ezekiel that he wanted someone to make an appeal for his idolatrous people. What happened when he could not find one?

“The people of the land have used oppression and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge,

and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads" (Ezekiel 22:29-31 KJV).

Either no one cared to intercede or no one saw the necessity. Any intercessor—who has been a casualty of someone's cruelty or has a loved one who has—might hesitate to seek God's mercy for his offenders.

The sacrificing of babies to false gods grieved God. Their bullying people—especially those who could barely provide for or protect themselves—ignited God's fury. Yet his heart ached to restore them. Ezekiel 22 hints at the principle that God stores up resentment against the guilty (Romans 2:5-6).

"His love endures forever" (Psalm 136:1 NIV)—love for the perps and for their prey. He yearns to see all redeemed, yet his justice demands accountability. He had to stop their long-standing abuses for their victims' sake.

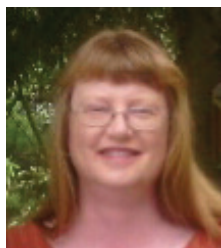
God's outrage toward those who committed crimes against me accumulates too. They may be on the brink of God's punishment. What will happen to them if no one supplicates? My prayers have been about them, but not for them.

Here's a sample of my ongoing complaints to God: "How long will You let this go on? I can't take anymore. You said, 'Vengeance is mine,' so I can't do anything."

But Jesus challenges me to make another kingdom sacrifice: "Pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:28 NIV). Advocate for those who diminished my quality of life? Petitioning for these thieves would not be my highest priority. But it is one of God's.

I told the Lord years ago, "I want to have a heart like yours."

Do I really? Can I see them as lost souls? Jesus' intercession on the cross modeled self-forgetfulness and compassion. Fulfilling His desires leads me to surrender at the cross. The cross forever changed the world. God wants someone to plead for their souls. I will.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Becky Hardesty, a freelance writer, lives in Terra Alta, WV, where she plays the piano for Whitedale Church of the Brethren. Through research and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, she is learning how to use her authority in Christ. Studying, teaching the Bible, and interceding have been major parts of her life for twenty-six years now. She enjoys taking walks with her Pomeranian, Faith Justice.

A Refuge

BY JEWELL JOHNSON

*"God is our refuge and strength[.]"
Psalm 46:1 (NIV)*

When tragedy strikes,
Nothing makes sense.
When I'm thrown off course
By sadness and discord—
I will trust God.

When dark clouds hang low
Promising storms.
When I'm abandoned by friends,
Feel all alone—
I'll cast my care on Him.

When depressing thoughts haunt my mind,
I'm near despair,
Life is empty,
Hope is 'most gone,
I'll whisper His name—

Jesus.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jewell Johnson lives in Arizona and is mother to six children and grandmother to nine. Besides writing, she enjoys reading, playing the piano, and quilting.

Our All-Knowing God

BY ARLENE LILA

*"O Lord, You have searched me and known me."
Psalm 139:1 (NKJV)*

My God, You know me perfectly.
I need not explain when I pray.
Before I even call your name,
You anticipate what I will say.

I bring my needs before You.
Accepting the grace You bestow.
I don't need to beg or show you;
My needs You already know.

I hold up my loved ones before You.
On a narrow road they should go.
You have plans for all of them.
May they follow Your will as they grow.

You see my faltering country.
All that happens here You know.
Place in command those who follow
Your teachings from long ago.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Arlene is a retired professional nurse who belongs to the Christian Writers Group in Fountain Hills, Arizona, where she lives. She enjoys writing articles, devotionals, and poems to encourage Christians in their faith. She also enjoys ministering to residents of a senior center where they have their chapel services. She loves hiking out in the desert.



Disciples in Clay

By Peter Marshall

Mark tells us in his Gospel that Jesus chose [His disciples] "*that they should be with him*" and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils."

Well, they were with Him for three years, in intimacy of fellowship. They walked with Him, they lived with Him. They heard His incomparable parables. They listened to every sermon He ever preached.

They saw with their own eyes each one of His wonderful miracles. They saw the blind receive their sight, the lame throw away their crutches. They saw withered limbs become straight and strong. They even saw the dead raised to newness of life.

All these things they saw and heard. Yet these things did not change these men. For during the last week of Jesus' earthly ministry, they were quarreling among themselves. James and John wanted the chief places in the cabinet of the Kingdom. They were jealous of each other.

They were not very brave. When Jesus was arrested, they all ran away. After He died, they scattered and went underground. They met behind closed doors. No, they were not very brave.

They did not have much faith. Thomas refused to believe that the Master had risen from the dead until he had proof. He even stipulated what that proof had to be.

Of course these three years did something to them and in them. The fuel had been laid on the fire, but it was not lit. The seed had been sown, but it had not germinated.

All the possibilities of change in them had been created, but the changes had not yet happened.

What did change them? Not the crucifixion, not the resurrection, but the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Not until these men were filled with the Holy Ghost were they changed. Not until the Spirit had come upon them in power were they changed, so that cowardice gave place to courage, unbelief became a flaming faith and conviction that nothing on earth could shake, jealousy was swallowed up in brotherly love, self-interest was killed and became a ministry to others, fear was banished, and they were afraid of no man...no threat, no danger.

And therein lies our hope. We have not seen Jesus as they did. We never heard the sound of His voice or saw the sunlight dance on His hair or traced His footprints in the sands of Palestine.

But we have the same opportunity to be changed, because the same Holy Spirit is available to us today. He has been sent into the world to lead us into all truth, to convict us of sin, to be our Helper, our Guide.

This is a day of little faith—of few convictions—a day when men seem to have no great causes and no great passions. So in frustration, in disappointment they are inclined to say, "You can't change human nature." It is true that we cannot change human nature.

But God can.

It is the modern heresy to think that human nature cannot be changed. Human nature must be changed if we are ever to have an end to war, or to correct the wrong situations that make our lives uneasy and our hearts sore.

Now, Christianity, the power of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit of God, is the only force that can change people for good. It is the only power in the world that can change the gears in a man's life from self-will to God's will. It is the only power that can give a man the right motives—to do what God wants him to do.

Nothing else can bring him to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and to want most of all *to be a part of the answer to the world's ills, and not part of the problem.*

But how?

All that is needed is your own sincere desire, your willingness to confess your mistakes and your stubborn selfishness, and to face up to your sins.

When they are acknowledged and you begin to see yourself as God sees you, and when you ask His forgiveness, the miracle has begun.

For forgiveness can be yours—now—right away—and you begin to be a new person from this moment.

When you yourself have begun to be a new person, then there is hope for your own problem, whatever it is—hope for a solution to the strained relations in your office...hope for a better understanding and a discovery of a

new love for your husband or wife, a new spirit in your home and a happiness you had thought was gone forever...hope for a new meaning to your life and a new reason for living hope...hope...hope. Don't give up.

There's still hope.

God hasn't given up yet on His world, which is one world, and could be one world of security, peace and brotherhood instead of two worlds of suspicion and fear. God hasn't given up on this country, which is His latest experiment in human freedom and opportunity.

God hasn't given up on you. He can still do great things for you, in you, and through you.

God is ready and waiting and able. What about you, and me?

We are, after all, like lumps of clay. There are brittle pieces, hard pieces. We have little shape or beauty. But we need not despair. If we are clay, let us remember there is a Potter, and His wheel.

The old gospel song has it right: "Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way. Thou art the Potter, I am the clay; Mould me and make me, after Thy will, While I am waiting, yielded and still."

That's it. We have only to be yielded, that is, willing, surrendered, and He will do the rest. He will make us according to the pattern for which, in His love, He designed us. And it will be good—for our own good—and for His glory.

Do not despair. If you want to be different, you may. You, too, can be changed for the better. Therein lies our hope—and the hope of the world.

We are disciples in clay.

And there is still the skill of the Potter.

Excerpt from *The Best of Peter Marshall*, compiled and edited by Catherine Marshall. Used with permission.

*Theresa Newell
&
Henrienne Allegood*

honor



MICHAEL
SMITH

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

Cesar's condition has improved after he started hemodialysis. The peritoneal dialysis (PD) was not able to cleanse all the toxins—maybe that was why he always felt "odd"—and there was also a medication reaction. However, right now there is no longer itching, and his lesions are already healed. I visited him more than a week ago, and he has bounced back and was already able to cook and be outside. He also had surgery recently where the PD port was taken out from his stomach. He is happy about it because that was causing him pain and discomfort. Thank you so much to all the intercessors who prayed. May the Lord continue to bless you mightily!

-Gala

We've been praying for my friend Paul, who has had a very difficult job. He's been so faithful in it, even winning awards while his heart was breaking. I did not share with him at all that I had been praying for God to get him out of that job, which was even causing physical suffering. I did not share with him that you have been praying for this, either. However, he shared with me out of the blue that he was going to give in his resignation.

-Nina

I am happy to share that my mom is doing well in her recovery from two heart attacks. I know God's healing hands are at work in her life.

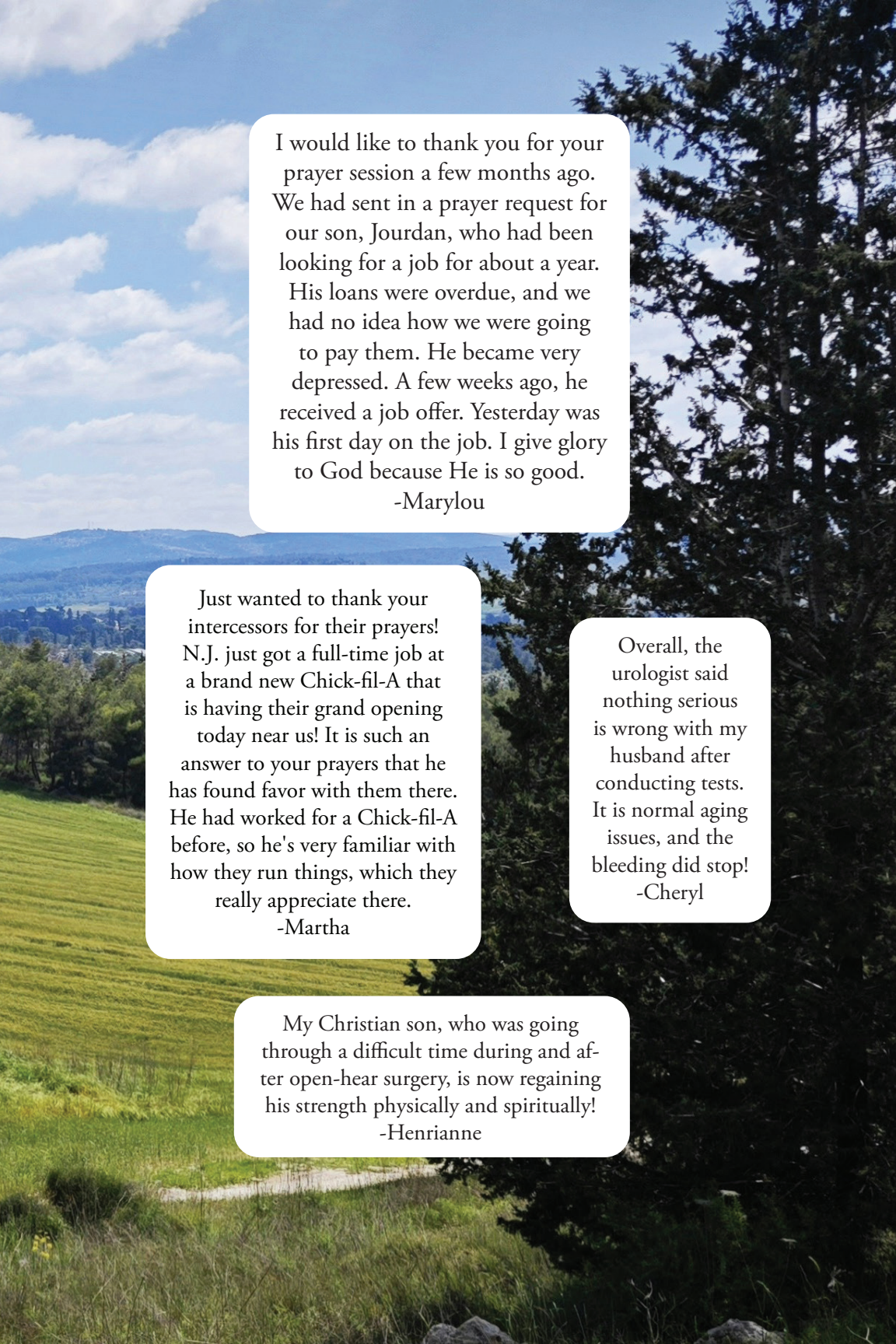
-Cornelius

God has blessed Jeffrey with a good new job, and he is growing in the LORD. He just bought a new Bible! Hallelujah!

-Julie

Thank you for so faithfully serving and praying with me. This has had a huge impact on my life over the years. You are a part of my faith journey that has enabled me to come so far—now I pray that I will finish my race strong in Christ Jesus.

-Anonymous



I would like to thank you for your prayer session a few months ago. We had sent in a prayer request for our son, Jourdan, who had been looking for a job for about a year. His loans were overdue, and we had no idea how we were going to pay them. He became very depressed. A few weeks ago, he received a job offer. Yesterday was his first day on the job. I give glory to God because He is so good.

-Marylou

Just wanted to thank your intercessors for their prayers! N.J. just got a full-time job at a brand new Chick-fil-A that is having their grand opening today near us! It is such an answer to your prayers that he has found favor with them there. He had worked for a Chick-fil-A before, so he's very familiar with how they run things, which they really appreciate there.

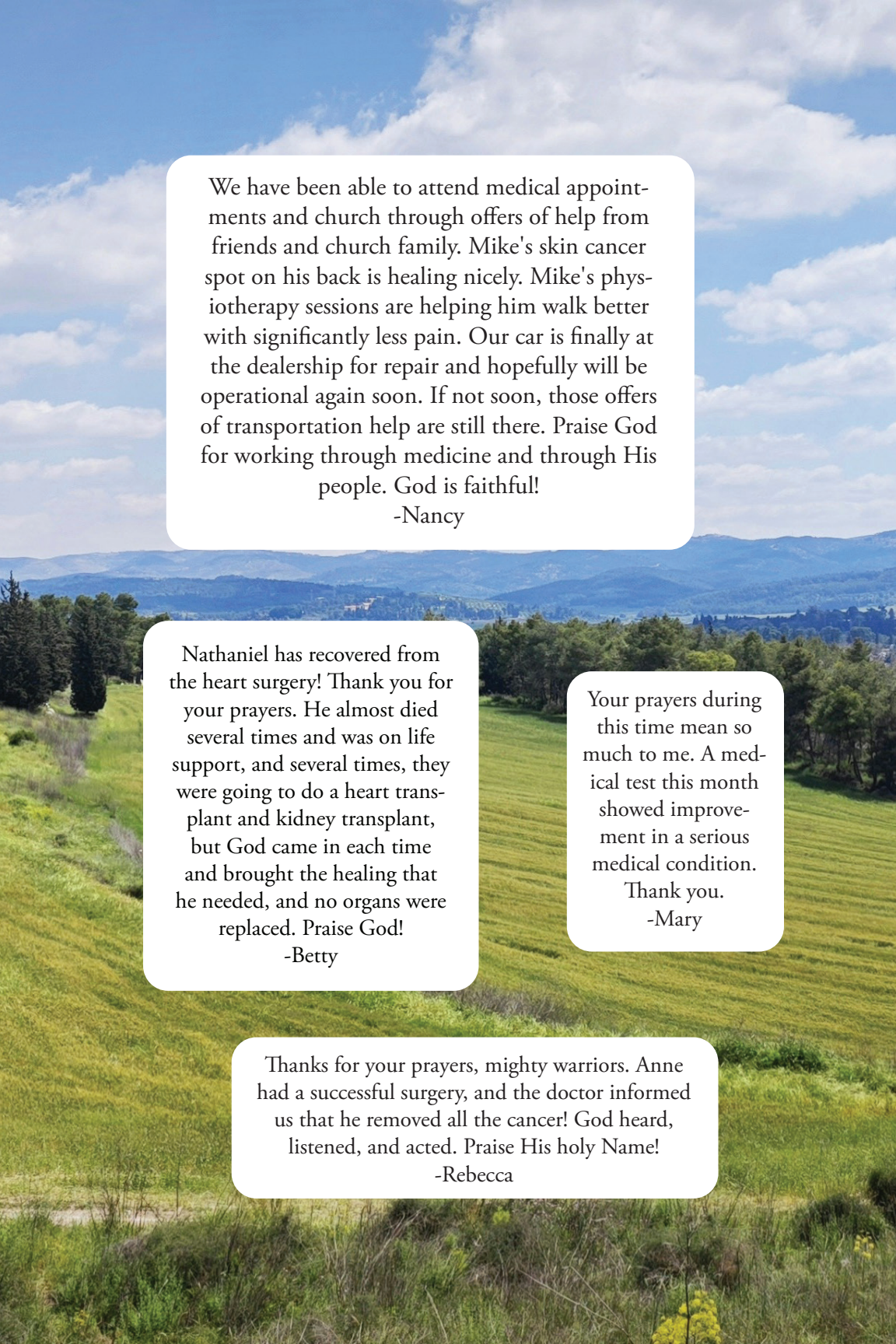
-Martha

Overall, the urologist said nothing serious is wrong with my husband after conducting tests. It is normal aging issues, and the bleeding did stop!

-Cheryl

My Christian son, who was going through a difficult time during and after open-hear surgery, is now regaining his strength physically and spiritually!

-Henrienne



We have been able to attend medical appointments and church through offers of help from friends and church family. Mike's skin cancer spot on his back is healing nicely. Mike's physiotherapy sessions are helping him walk better with significantly less pain. Our car is finally at the dealership for repair and hopefully will be operational again soon. If not soon, those offers of transportation help are still there. Praise God for working through medicine and through His people. God is faithful!

-Nancy

Nathaniel has recovered from the heart surgery! Thank you for your prayers. He almost died several times and was on life support, and several times, they were going to do a heart transplant and kidney transplant, but God came in each time and brought the healing that he needed, and no organs were replaced. Praise God!

-Betty

Your prayers during this time mean so much to me. A medical test this month showed improvement in a serious medical condition.

Thank you.

-Mary

Thanks for your prayers, mighty warriors. Anne had a successful surgery, and the doctor informed us that he removed all the cancer! God heard, listened, and acted. Praise His holy Name!

-Rebecca

I just want to give feedback on the prayer request for Itzel and her husband Daniel. They are busy reconciling and going through healing. Both atheists, but Daniel said he has become aware that he is connected to something powerful and vast and eternal. He is becoming more open to the reality of God's existence. He is asking more and more questions. Specifically he was asking me about what the kingdom of God within means. I believe the Holy Spirit is busy revealing things to him and drawing him in. It's been three years of patient discussions I had with him, and it looks like it's finally starting to pay off, just by honoring him and showing him how I live my life.

-Arend

Lord, thank You for answering our prayers. Today we received support from an addiction specialist for Alenea. You have partnered with me for 8 months and 11 days. Today, we rejoice that Alenea will receive the support to start her recovery from smoking cannabis. Alenea is a child of the most high God. Whom the Father sets free is free indeed.

Thank you so much!! God bless you.

-Selina

Byron is doing much better. We had to testify in court this week, and he was able to handle it.

Thank you for praying!

-Laura

I've had a breakthrough miraculous healing. I am amazed and in awe of God again. Thank you all for what you do! Jesus bless you.

-Lisa

Thank you so much for your prayers! Andy did get all of our back taxes submitted, and it was a miracle. We have had to pay a huge amount of penalties, but God continues to get us through this, so praise His Name! We are so grateful for your prayers.

-Betty

Spring/Summer 2025



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