

The Breakthrough
INTERCESSOR
Spring/Summer 2026

The Land of Israel's King

The Magazine About Prayer



*"I rejoiced with those
who said to me, 'Let us
go to the house of the
LORD.'"*

~Psalm 122:1 (NIV)

The Breakthrough
INTERCESSOR

**SPRING/SUMMER
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<i>Managing Editor</i>	Brian K. Wells
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<i>Editorial Committee</i>	Jami Dittmeier Anna Lorrig

Contact

<i>Office Address</i>	P.O. Box 121 Lincoln, VA 20160
<i>Phone</i>	(540) 338-5522
<i>Prayer Fax Line</i>	(540) 338-1934
<i>Email</i>	breakthrough@ intercessors.org

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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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Exercising Your Authority Over Evil Spirits

God loves to minister to the needs of His people, and when He uses us to do it sometimes it involves our need to exercise authority over evil spirits. The Bible says Jesus delivered Mary Magdalene of seven devils. But by far she wasn't the only one. Jesus healed and delivered other women of evil spirits, and let's not forget about the man from Gadara, out of whom Jesus cast out a legion of demons. We must not skip or gloss over these passages, for in them contain the key to change the many situations for which we are called to pray.

Jesus exercised authority over evil spirits while ministering to others. And this authority, using His name, He has given to us, His church.

"And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils." Luke 8:2 (KJV)

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name....Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Luke 10:17, 19-20 (KJV)

When an evil spirit is present, counseling and/or medicating the person with the problem can only help so much. What is needed is for the evil spirit to be told to go, to be cast out. Evil spirits do not leave voluntarily, they must be forced out, using the Name of Jesus. This is the key to our spiritual authority. If a believer does not boldly declare by faith for a spirit to leave, that evil spirit will simply not budge. When you discern that a person's problem is due to the presence of an evil spirit, the spirit must be dealt with using spiritual force. Mary Magdalene had seven evil spirits. The Gadarian Demoniak had a legion, which is many, many more. Don't let the devil simply laugh at you and hinder your prayers like he did to the seven sons of Sceva! (Acts 19:14-16)

Be bold. Obtain answers to prayer for those you pray for. To command an evil spirit to leave, you first must know that evil spirits are subject to you. Jesus said so! We read it above. You must establish

this truth in your heart by meditating on the scriptures above, and asking God to make them real to you, keeping your hearts pure before Him. Then speak boldly! It may take patience on your part before seeing any results, but don't give up. Be resilient, God is on your side.

Below is a sample prayer you can pray, in forcefully evicting an evil spirit:

Heavenly Father, in Jesus' Name, I thank you that you have given me power and authority over the evil spirit driving Kevin (name whomever you are praying for) to want to commit suicide. Now you spirit bringing suicidal thoughts to Kevin, I bind your Strong Man, and I bind you, and I command you to go, now! You leave him now, in Jesus' Name. I cancel and loose your assignments against him. You come out of him now, in the Mighty Name of Jesus!

And remember, there is no time and space in the Spirit, so you can pray this prayer in your living room, and it will affect Kevin in another country. Be bold and expecting!

Thank you for being a part of this ministry. I pray you are blessed and inspired as you read the articles contained in this edition of *The Intercessor*. Thank you for remembering us in your prayers, and for all your financial support!

God bless you all,

Brian K. Wells

Chairman



For World-neighborliness

BY PETER MARSHALL

Our Father, with so much bitterness abroad in the world—this poor bleeding world, stumbling from blunder to blunder, hollow with graves, hard with hate—may we who own the name of Christ, shed abroad Thy love.

We pray for a broader vision of the needs of all mankind, and a deeper compassion to fill those needs; for a planting of the seeds of concern for all humanity in our hearts; for a tapping of the wells of generosity.

Help us to live together as people who have been forgiven a great debt.

Help us to be gentle, walking softly with one another.

Help us to be understanding, lest we shall add to the world's sorrow or cause to flow one needless tear.

Help us to stand for what is right, not because it may yield dividends later, but because it is right now.

Help us to be as anxious that the rights of others shall be recognized as we are that our own shall be established.

Help us to be as eager to forgive others as we are to seek forgiveness.

Help us to know no barriers of creed or race, that our love may be like Thine—a love that sees all men as Thy children and our brothers.

God, help us all to be ministers of mercy and ambassadors of kindness for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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



Let's Pray About This

BY JOHN L. HOH, JR.

I am sure that you, like myself, have spoken with someone who is experiencing some trauma or turmoil in life. It is part of our Christian character to listen, to sympathize, to empathize, and to offer hope to our Christian brothers and sisters.

I would be pretty confident in saying that you have likely said to that person, "I will keep you in my prayers." I know I have. Sadly, we might include that person in our prayers for a day, maybe even a week. I get it. Life does go on.

I was blessed to have Rev. James Sonnemann as my shepherd in Milwaukee. I liked his approach and have tried to emulate it. I won't say I have been 100% successful. But I do try.

I have had the privilege and blessing to have this shepherd take time to listen to me when I was struggling. He usually gave sound advice. I am sure he also prayed for me when I did not know it.

Before we would depart

from each other after these visits, Pastor would say, "Why don't we pray about this now?" Not, "I will keep you in my prayers," but "Let's pray about this now."

To me this was a comfort. We both, together, brought these concerns and trials before our Lord. We trusted that the Lord, who saw no price too great to pay for our souls, would guide us in those trying times. The promise of prayer was not just a hope but a reality. The prayers were immediate.

"...Pastor would say, 'Why don't we pray about this now?' Not, 'I will keep you in my prayers,' but 'Let's pray about this now.'"

It also was a comfort that I did not have to rely on my pastor. He, too, relied on God's power! He is only a shepherd, not the Good Shepherd. The pastor is leading by example.

As I said earlier, I have tried to make that a pattern in my life. Once I spoke with my former pastor dealing with a health issue. Even though we spoke over the phone, I asked him, "Can we pray about this?" He expressed a hearty, "Thank you," when I finished.

I encourage everyone to say to a fellow Christian whom you know is going through rough patches to say, "Let's pray about this." You can still end with, "I will keep you in my prayers."

As a final thought, consider keeping a prayer notebook with you. Ask if you can write your brother or sister's name in order to keep praying for them in your daily prayer life.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John L. Hoh, Jr. is a seminary-trained freelance writer. He has published several religious books, including the *To Hymn* series of devotions based on hymns, *Pondering on the Parables* series, and *Meditations on the Miracles* series.

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

A: Only through your support!

Ways
to
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Crackers for Jesus

BY ZOE M. HICKS

I had my hospital rounds all planned. The head chaplain had trained me (a volunteer in the pastoral care department) to check in with those patients who had no religious preference. These patients would not be visited by pastors, so I offered company.

I had carefully arranged my visits so that I saw all of the patients on one wing before proceeding to the next. I would start on the top floor of the first wing and work my way down. After visiting all patients on all floors on that wing, I would move on.

On my most recent visit to the hospital, I was tired, but felt I could get through my list without too much stress and then get home and grab a nap.

I finished my first two wings with no unusual requests or difficulties. Heading to the third wing, I worked my way down to the last floor on my list.

Just two more patients, I thought. I knocked on Mr. Thomas' door and poked my head in.

"Mr. Thomas," I said. "I am with the pastoral care team here at the hospital. We like to check in with our newly admitted patients to see how your day is going and if there is anything we can do for you or anything you need."

Mr. Thomas was standing up beside his bed. He must have been 6'5" with a hefty build. His hospital gown covered his large belly.

"Well," he said, "I would like some crackers."

"Crackers," I echoed. "What kind of crackers?"

"You know, the kind with peanut butter in the middle."

"Oh, that kind," I said. "Let me see what I can do."

Crackers. The only way I am going to be able to get Mr. Thomas crackers is to interrupt my visitation schedule and go down to the cafeteria. I don't feel like doing that. Besides, the cafeteria might be closed by now and might not have peanut butter crackers. I just want to get home.

A verse instantly popped into my head: *"Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."* Matthew 25:40 (NKJV)

My attitude and energy level immediately changed. *Thank you, Lord, that I get to go and get crackers for you today. What an honor and privilege. There is nowhere I wouldn't go to get you the crackers you want.*

I left Mr. Thomas' room and headed down to the cafeteria on the first

floor. Entering through the secondary entrance, I saw a vending machine with snacks. Reviewing the options, I found just what I was looking for—peanut butter crackers! A quick purchase sent me back to Mr. Thomas' room.

I waited until he emerged from his restroom and then handed him the crackers.

"Here you are, Mr. Thomas," I said. "Is there anything else I can get you? Would you like me to pray for you?"

"Thank you. Yes, you can pray for me."

I asked God to heal Mr. Thomas completely and give his medical team wisdom. I prayed for the medicines, procedures, and therapies that would help him get well to be prescribed. I thanked God for His care of Mr. Thomas and prayed for his protection from all evil. Wishing him a speedy recovery, I slipped out.

As I heard him tearing the cellophane to get into the package, I prayed a prayer of my own.

Thank you, Jesus, that I got to bring you crackers today. Help me to remember that in meeting a patient's need, I am serving you.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zoe Hicks is a retired attorney, author, and speaker living with her husband on St. Simons Island, GA. She has written seven inspirational books and taught Bible studies for years. She enjoys walking on the beach, baking, traveling, playing bridge, and great seafood. Her books and blog posts can be found at zoe Hicks.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.



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about prayer?
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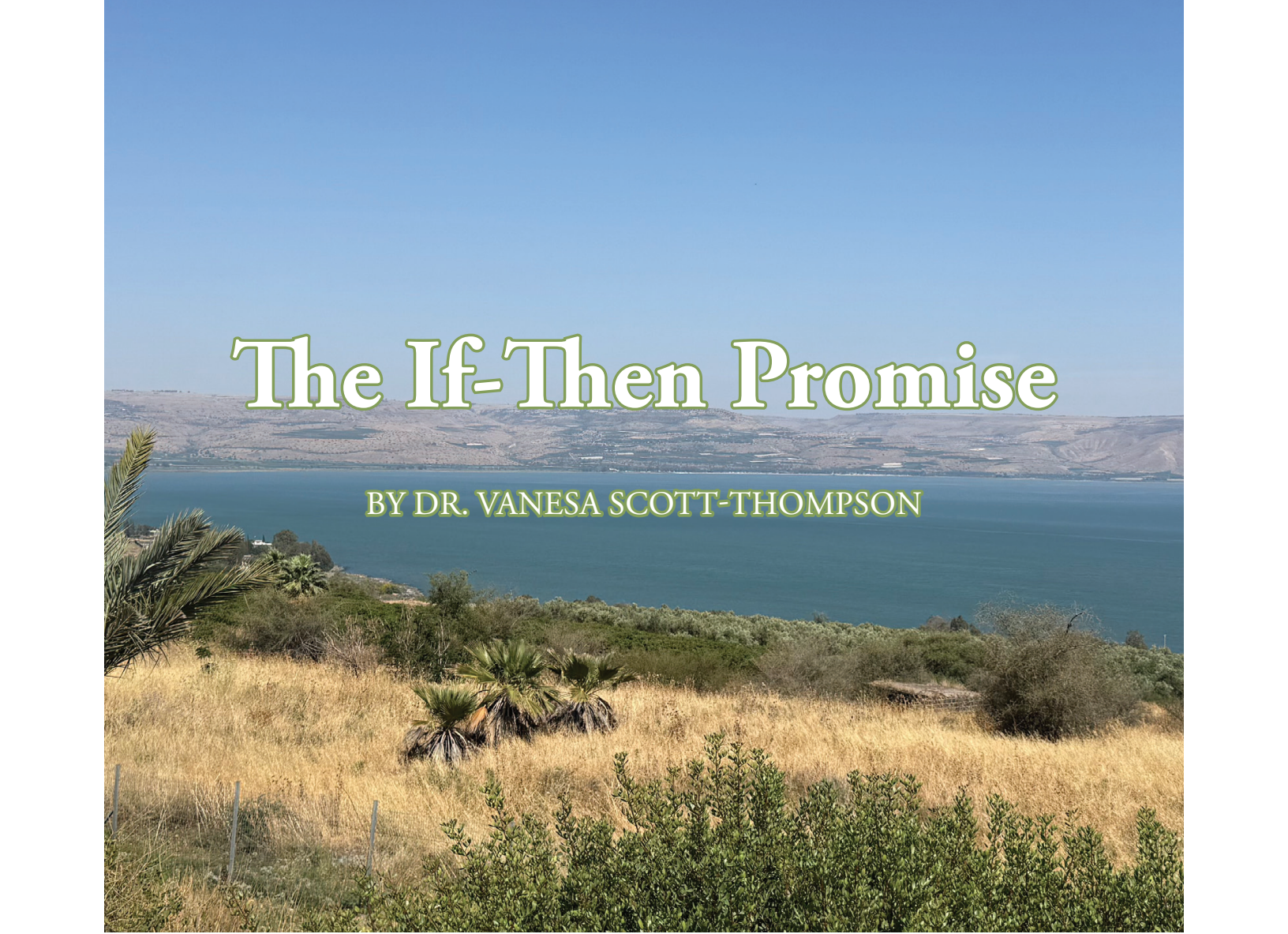
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P.O. Box 121

Lincoln, VA

20160



The If-Then Promise

BY DR. VANESA SCOTT-THOMPSON

"If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NIV)

This scripture is an if-then statement. An if-then statement begins with a condition and follows with a promise. The condition is what must take place first and the promise is what follows. In this scripture, God presents a conditional promise to His people. He tells them that if they do certain actions, then He will respond to them with restoration and healing.

This verse occurs after the temple built by King Solomon was dedicated. God is speaking to His people and explaining what they should do when they fall into sin or when the land experiences hardship. Even though this was spoken to Israel, the principle still teaches us something important about how we are to respond in prayer and God's character.

God gives us several actions in this if-then statement. These actions describe what His people must do before He responds.

If my people, who are called by my name will...

- *Humble themselves:* Humility means recognizing that we are not in control and that we need God. When we humble ourselves, we acknowledge that God's wisdom, direction, and authority are greater than our own. Humbling ourselves is the first step because pride often prevents us from seeing our need for and dependence on God.
- *Pray:* Prayer is our direct communication with God. It is not only asking Him for help, but also listening and aligning our hearts with His will. Through prayer we bring our concerns, our communities, and our world before Him. Prayer reminds us that change can only come from God.
- *Seek His face:* Seeking God's face means pursuing a deeper relationship with Him. It goes beyond asking for blessings and instead focuses on knowing God personally. When we seek His face, we are intentionally looking for His guidance, His presence, and His direction in our lives. We are asking God what He wants rather than simply telling Him what we want.
- *Turn from their wicked ways:* Turning from wicked ways means genuine repentance. It is not just acknowledging that something is wrong but making the decision to change our actions. Repentance involves turning away from sin and choosing to follow God's ways instead. This step requires an admission that something needs to change and then a willingness to change.

Then...

After these actions comes God's response:

- *I will hear from heaven:* When God says He will hear from heaven, it means He acknowledges the prayers of His people. It assures us that God is attentive and responsive when His people sincerely turn to Him.
- *Forgive their sin:* Forgiveness addresses the root problem, which is sin. When God forgives, He removes the barrier that separates us from Him. Forgiveness restores our relationship with God and opens the door for renewal.
- *Heal their land:* Healing the land represents restoration. When God heals, He brings renewal. Healing can affect communities, nations, and the conditions people are living in.

Today, there is so much happening in our nation and around the world. We see polarization, wars, economic challenges, and rising tensions in many areas of society. Over the past year, I have prayed for my local municipality, my state, our nation, and our world more than I ever have before because of everything that is happening.

I also notice that many people on social media have strong commentary about current events. While discussion and awareness are important, this scripture reminds Christians that our first response should be prayer. Our faith directs us to go to God first rather than relying only on opinions, debates, or arguments.

As believers, we are called to respond differently. Therefore, I encourage all of us to follow the pattern laid out in 2 Chronicles 7:14. Let us humble ourselves, pray, seek God's face, and turn from our wicked ways. When God's people respond in this way, God promises to hear from heaven, forgive our sin, and bring healing to our land.



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.

Power for the Test

BY PETER CALIGIURI

While my faith was slowly dying
Under the tramp of hurried feet
With chaos in my calendar
Troubles lurking down the street

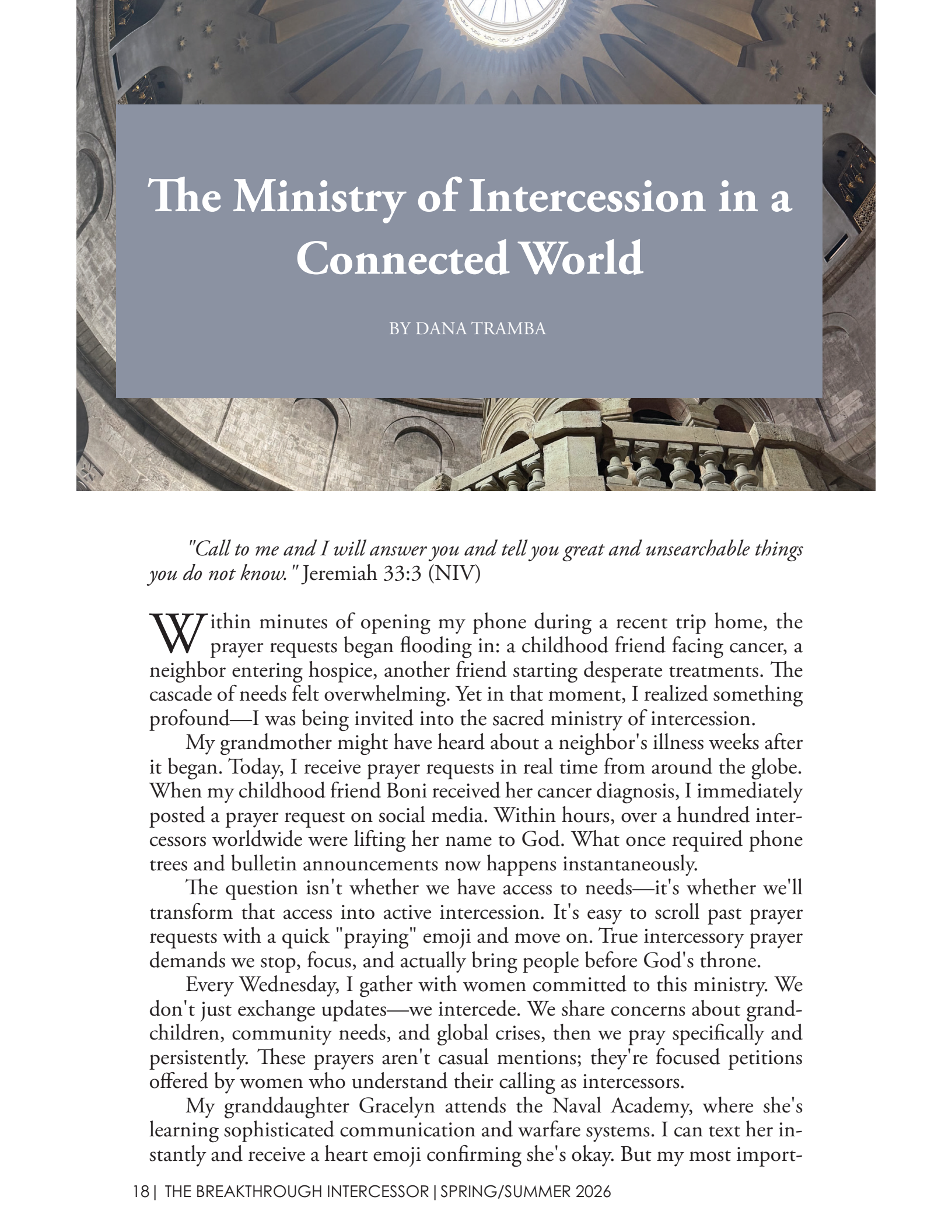
Then I heard a lark start singing
From her favorite place to rest
In our tree out in the backyard
Where she safely builds her nest

And I prayed for I remembered
That like her I've been blessed
God strengthened me beneath His wings
Then gave His power for the test



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.



The Ministry of Intercession in a Connected World

BY DANA TRAMBA

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." Jeremiah 33:3 (NIV)

Within minutes of opening my phone during a recent trip home, the prayer requests began flooding in: a childhood friend facing cancer, a neighbor entering hospice, another friend starting desperate treatments. The cascade of needs felt overwhelming. Yet in that moment, I realized something profound—I was being invited into the sacred ministry of intercession.

My grandmother might have heard about a neighbor's illness weeks after it began. Today, I receive prayer requests in real time from around the globe. When my childhood friend Boni received her cancer diagnosis, I immediately posted a prayer request on social media. Within hours, over a hundred intercessors worldwide were lifting her name to God. What once required phone trees and bulletin announcements now happens instantaneously.

The question isn't whether we have access to needs—it's whether we'll transform that access into active intercession. It's easy to scroll past prayer requests with a quick "praying" emoji and move on. True intercessory prayer demands we stop, focus, and actually bring people before God's throne.

Every Wednesday, I gather with women committed to this ministry. We don't just exchange updates—we intercede. We share concerns about grandchildren, community needs, and global crises, then we pray specifically and persistently. These prayers aren't casual mentions; they're focused petitions offered by women who understand their calling as intercessors.

My granddaughter Gracelyn attends the Naval Academy, where she's learning sophisticated communication and warfare systems. I can text her instantly and receive a heart emoji confirming she's okay. But my most import-

ant communication about Gracelyn doesn't go to her—it goes to God on her behalf. When she faces exam pressure, leadership challenges, or uncertainty about her future, my intercession becomes a spiritual covering she may not even realize surrounds her.

Intercessory prayer carries weight. When I learned about multiple friends facing life-threatening illnesses in a single afternoon, I felt the burden of their suffering. This is the cost of being an intercessor—we carry others' pain into God's presence. We stand in the gap, advocating for those who may be too weak, too overwhelmed, or too distant from God to pray for themselves.

But intercession also brings extraordinary blessings. There's profound intimacy in presenting someone else's needs to God. When I pray for friends battling cancer, I'm participating in divine work that transcends my small sphere of influence. I'm joining my prayers with countless others, creating a chorus of intercession that rises to heaven's throne.

The Apostle Paul understood this power. Throughout his letters, he repeatedly asked believers to intercede for him—for boldness in preaching, for protection, for open doors. Even in imprisonment, Paul recognized he wasn't alone because intercessors were standing in the gap.

"This is the cost of being an intercessor — we carry others' pain into God's presence. We stand in the gap, advocating for those who may be too weak, too overwhelmed, or too distant from God to pray for themselves."

Here's the beautiful paradox: while technology enables us to learn about needs instantly, the ministry of intercession itself requires nothing but faith and access to God. My prayer line to heaven needs no Wi-Fi, no passwords, no signal strength. It never drops calls, never sends me to voicemail, and operates 24/7 without service interruptions.

My grandmother Viola, who never touched a smartphone, was as effective an intercessor as I am today, perhaps more so, because she had fewer distractions. God's communication system remains unchanged: "Call to me and I will answer you."

When I pray for Gracelyn as she prepares for military service, I'm not

just asking God to keep her safe. I'm interceding for her spiritual formation, her character development, her ability to lead with integrity. I'm asking God to position her where He wants her and to surround her with His presence, whether she's walking through Bancroft Hall or standing watch on future naval vessels.

Not everyone is called to preach, teach, or lead public ministries. But every believer is called to intercede. This is the ministry accessible to the bed-ridden saint, the busy parent, and the retiree with limited mobility. Intercession has no age limit, requires no formal training, and holds no application process. You simply need a burden for others and faith that God hears.

As I navigate retirement years far from my Kansas hometown, I've discovered my most important ministry: intercession. Through social media, I stay connected with friends from 1966 who shared nearly two decades of life in our small town. I celebrate their joys, but I also battle their illnesses and challenges in prayer. This is sacred work.

Every day presents opportunities for intercession. When friends post about challenges, when news reports break our hearts, when family members face uncertainty, these aren't just information updates. They're invitations to ministry.

God's hotline never requires updating, never needs technical support, and never faces service interruptions. The same God who heard my grandmother's prayers—offered without any telephone—hears mine through the most advanced communication system ever created: direct access to heaven's throne.

In a world of constantly changing technology, we possess something unchanging: the privilege of intercession. The question isn't whether you have the ability to intercede. The question is: will you use God's hotline today? Who is He calling you to bring before His throne?

Your ministry of intercession may be the most important work you do today—and it requires only that you answer when He calls.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dana Tramba is an intercessor for Breakthrough living in Edmond, Oklahoma, and author of *Making Peace With the Pieces of My Life* and *Amazing Grace: A Journey of Faith, Family, and the Grace That Bridges Every Generation*.



Build, Expand, and Extend Your Prayer Habit

BY JACQUELINE BROY

Building

As a new believer, I knew prayer was important, but a question lingered in my mind—how do I pray? God heard my silent query and sent the answer in a devotional message on building a daily prayer habit. All I needed was my hand.

Using the fingers as visual reminders, the devotion gave examples of specific points to pray Monday through Friday. Since the thumb is closest to the body, pray for your family on Monday. On Tuesday, the pointer finger reminds you to pray for those in your life who point the way to God and challenge you to go forward in the faith. The tallest finger stands as an indicator to pray for those in authority on Wednesday. Generally, the ring finger is the weakest in strength, therefore pray for those in need on Thursday. Lastly, pray for yourself on Friday. This simple formula laid the foundational bricks to make daily prayer a habit for me.

During those prayer-building years, I fell in love with handcrafting jewelry using gemstones. Inspired by these geological wonders, I decided to use five from my stash to represent my five daily prayers. When my husband built a low bookshelf for me, I placed my quiet time chair near a narrow end, a perfect place to line up my stones to one side like beads on an abacus. When the traditional work week begins and progresses, I slide a stone to the opposite side and begin the day's prayer. After Friday's prayer, I slide all the stones back to the other side to be ready for Monday.

My daily prayer regimen was now ingrained, but Holy Spirit pushed for more. He spoke to my heart about the need to include Sunday and Saturday and what to pray. I added two more stones. Now on Sundays I pray for the Church body and on Saturdays, I pray for Israel and taking communion.



Expanding

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests." Ephesians 6:18 (NIV)

Once I built a solid foundation in praying habitually, the Holy Spirit challenged me to broaden my scope of prayer. Sometimes on a Monday, He may impress a specific family member on my mind for prayer coverage or a church family member. On Saturdays, when I pray for Israel, another nation might be included. Try taking one of the seven points and expanding it to cover seven days. For example, people who point the way in your life. You could pray for seven people who have guided you on your faith walk. Or pray for seven aspects of one person's life—their physical, spiritual and emotional well-being, their family, ministry, finances and their mentors. Maybe you feel prompted to pray for seven nations or for some of the major groups in a society: arts and entertainment, business, education, family, government, media and religion. Any one of these can be further divided into seven points for prayer. The breadth and depth of topics for your prayer agenda are endless.

Extending

"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)

When I was a young child, I recited the *Now I lay me down to sleep* prayer before climbing into bed. Teaching children to pray using their hand can be an introductory lesson in learning how to pray and how to pray for others. It opens the door for an intimate time when children can share what is on their hearts. Showing a child how to pray is also an opportunity for a parent or grandparent to be a model for a youngster who is unsure of how to talk to God. Use the Hand Prayer poem to pray nightly before bed. Recite the prayer and then return to the focus of the day's prayer. Ask your child who they are praying for and why. This gives them an opportunity to have ownership of their conversations with God. Then let them lead the prayer or you begin and then encourage shy ones to join in.

Whether you are a novice or veteran pray-er, or someone who wants to pass on a prayer discipline, allow the Holy Spirit to help you build, expand or extend your prayer practices that will affect your life and those around you. Let the Holy Spirit be your partner as you walk this new avenue in intercession.

My Hand Prayer *By Jacqueline Broy*

I pray for my family, the people that I love. (Thumb)
I pray for my pastor who preaches the Word of God. (Pointer)
I pray for my leaders and those who protect our land. (Tall)
I pray for the weak to get well and for the strength to stand. (Ring)
This is my last finger. (Baby) So now I'll pray for me.
Lord, help me to love like You do. Let others see You in me. Amen.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacqueline "Jacki" Broy has contributed articles and devotions to Knitted Together by God, Christian Devotions Ministries and The Breakthrough Intercessor. She ministers with the intercessory and prophetic teams at her church. To find more of Jacki's work and her monthly blog, visit www.jacquelinebroy.com.

Therapy at the Beach

BY S.T. MANN

What an *awesome* time at the beach the other day! My third week of an afternoon knee-deep in the chilly waters of the Black Sea, walking parallel to the shore line—"therapy" for cartilage damage in my knee.

Despite being very early springtime, the air temperature was perfect, in the low 60s. Swimming trunks and long-sleeve sweatshirt. Bright sun. And the beach was still quiet this time of year—no one else on the beach. Just me, prayerfully singing praise music to the waves!

"Praise ye the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!"

I also offered up a prayer: "Heavenly Father, put folks in my path for whom I might be an encouragement..."

Soon, I noted a solitary woman in the distance, up on the dry sand—maybe 10m from the edge of the chilly water, maybe 60m from me—approaching very slowly on a course parallel to mine. Drifting....

The Boss whispered softly to my heart: "Her!"

"Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'" Isaiah 30:21 (NIV)

She was alone, wearing clunky shorts (even by my standards) and an old orange sweatshirt. Mid-40s, hair in disarray...packing some extra weight. *Not* thinking happy thoughts. Children...husband...employment...health—who knows? Could be anything. Could be everything....

"Her???" I replied. I thought, "Nah—the wind is 'playing tricks' with my well-documented 'hearing issues.' I mean, I am 'off duty' tending to my knee...waaay too busy enjoying the sunshine, solitude, knee therapy, and singing to the waves..."

"You heard Me! What part of 'HER' do you not understand?"

"Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him! ... How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you." Isaiah 30:18, 19b (NIV)

The sad, solitary woman saw me change my course—no longer parallel with the waterline, but now coming up out of the water, on a diagonal directly toward her course; our paths would soon intersect. She showed no fear, no interest, no hesitation. She did not alter her course, nor did she change her gloomy facial expression. I continued walking, stopping when only a meter from her! I gently raised my arm horizontally toward her...chest high. Fist closed. Gently looking into her eyes. Compassion. And a slight nod. She understood, and she bumped my fist with hers!

Not a word had been spoken, yet she rewarded me with one of the best smiles I have seen in a long, long time! She was reminded by this stranger who had been wading in the chilly waves that she was in fact a human being with value, and she was not alone! Perhaps realizing 'the Man Upstairs' is never...*ever*...more than a whisper away!

And a third whisper to my own soul—"Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21, 23; Luke 19:17)

Then we each resumed our journeys—me resuming my 'knee therapy' back in the chilly waves. My knee is responding very nicely by the way!

"...Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you." Jeremiah 7:23 (NIV)

"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:35 (NKJV)

"What is desired in a man is kindness..." Proverbs 19:22a (NKJV)

"He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge..." Psalm 144:2 (NIV)





Forward, Like Gideon!

By Catherine Marshall

This morning, Len and I dragged ourselves out of bed at 6:00 a.m. for our morning prayer time. After the long drive from Evergreen Farm in Virginia to southern Florida, I'm exhausted. Our suitcases are still packed. But there's a meeting of our church committee on Christian education this afternoon that Len insists we attend.

I'm fighting off resentment as well as fatigue. I want to get back to my writing. Meetings drain me. Bore me. Len wants us to teach a class on the Holy Spirit this winter to a group that is resistant to what is happening across the country today, frightened by the excesses of some of the "Jesus people," by speaking in tongues and so on. Len looks at this class as an adventure. I'm full of doubts as to whether we can handle it.

Is it coincidence that I have been reading the Book of Judges? Today it was the story of Gideon. Such fascinating reading! So jam-packed full of truths and insights!

For instance, Gideon certainly had no idea that he was anyone special in God's sight or in man's. He lived at a low point in Israel's history when the people had forsaken Jehovah and were worshipping idols.

Yet God sent an angel to Gideon with the message, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of [fearless] courage" Judges 6:12 (Amplified).

There's immense humor in this greeting. For "the mighty man of courage" was at that moment hiding out in a winepress for fear of the Midianites.

And his reaction to the angel's appearance was doubt and confusion. "If the Lord is with us, why is all this befallen us?" (v. 13).

The answer was a strange one. The angel did not rebuke Gideon for answering back with unbelief. Instead, he repeated, "Go in this your might, and you shall save Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?" (v. 14).

Again Gideon sounds like anything but a hero. He replies, in effect, "Who, me? Save Israel? Surely you must be kidding. My clan is the poorest

in Israel and I'm the least in my father's house, the youngest son, the one everyone picks on."

The Lord's answer is, "Surely, I will be with you, and you shall smite the Midianites as one man" (v. 16).

Only after the angel disappears does Gideon seem to realize that he has actually been in the presence of an angel. His reaction to this, characteristically, is downbeat all the way. He might have been thrilled and begun praising God. Instead, he says, "Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face!" (v. 22).

Never on God's side, however, is there anything but patient understanding of Gideon's doubt and unbelief. "Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall not die" (v. 23).

Then begins a series of clear-cut instructions from the Lord. First, Gideon is to tear down two idols.

The "mighty man of courage" obeys, but does it at night because he's so scared of his own clan, even of his father and brothers.

In fact, his father sticks up for him before the townspeople.

But Gideon is full of doubt still. Only after elaborate further signs and reassurances from Jehovah will he consent to take command of the Israelite forces. And then the point of the story becomes clear: it is God's strength and His alone that delivers us. For God persuades Gideon to reduce his warriors from 22,000 to 300. And it is this small army that routs the Midianites.

The clear message for today that I receive from this reading is that God is going to show me that I can rely on Him alone—for physical strength as for every other need. So thank You, Lord, for the meeting I will go to this afternoon, hence no nap today. Thank You for the challenge of teaching a class on the Holy Spirit. Full speed ahead, O Gideon!

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

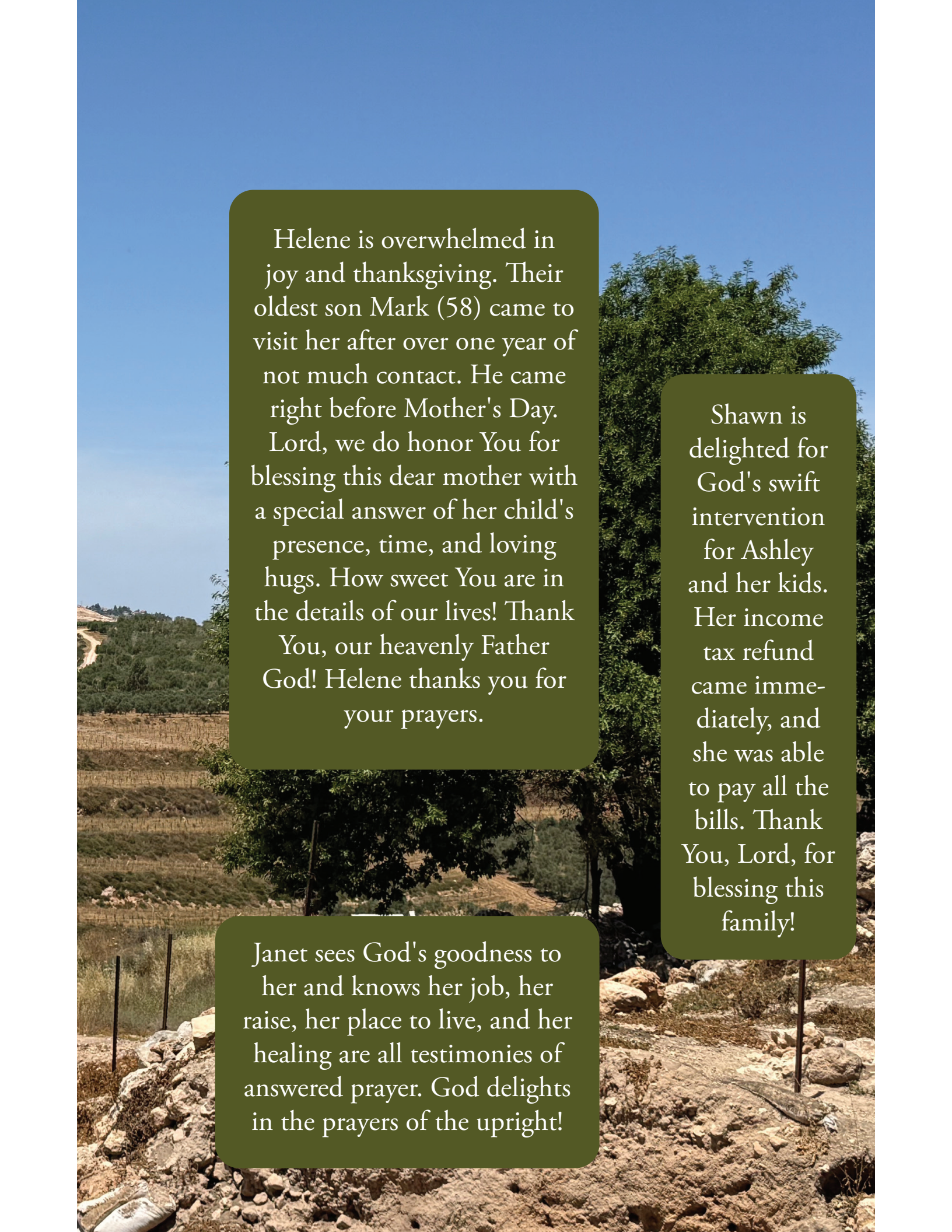
ANSWERS TO PRAYER

Jane is excited to testify that her son Brian (45) was able to divorce his abusive wife who tried to kill him. The Lord has favored and blessed him and given him an incredible job after being out of work for nine months. Thank You, faithful Yeshua, our provider Jireh!

Wow, glory to God! The dentist paid Teresa's bill. She testifies this is a miracle, and we agree. We praise El Roi, the God who sees.

Lisa returned to say thank you. She traveled safely to Italy. In recent weeks the Lord has given her opportunity to reach and fill the pulpit at three different churches. She states it well—"It's quite wonderful!" Go forth, Lisa, and fulfill your God-given calling and destiny! It is wonderful in our sight also!

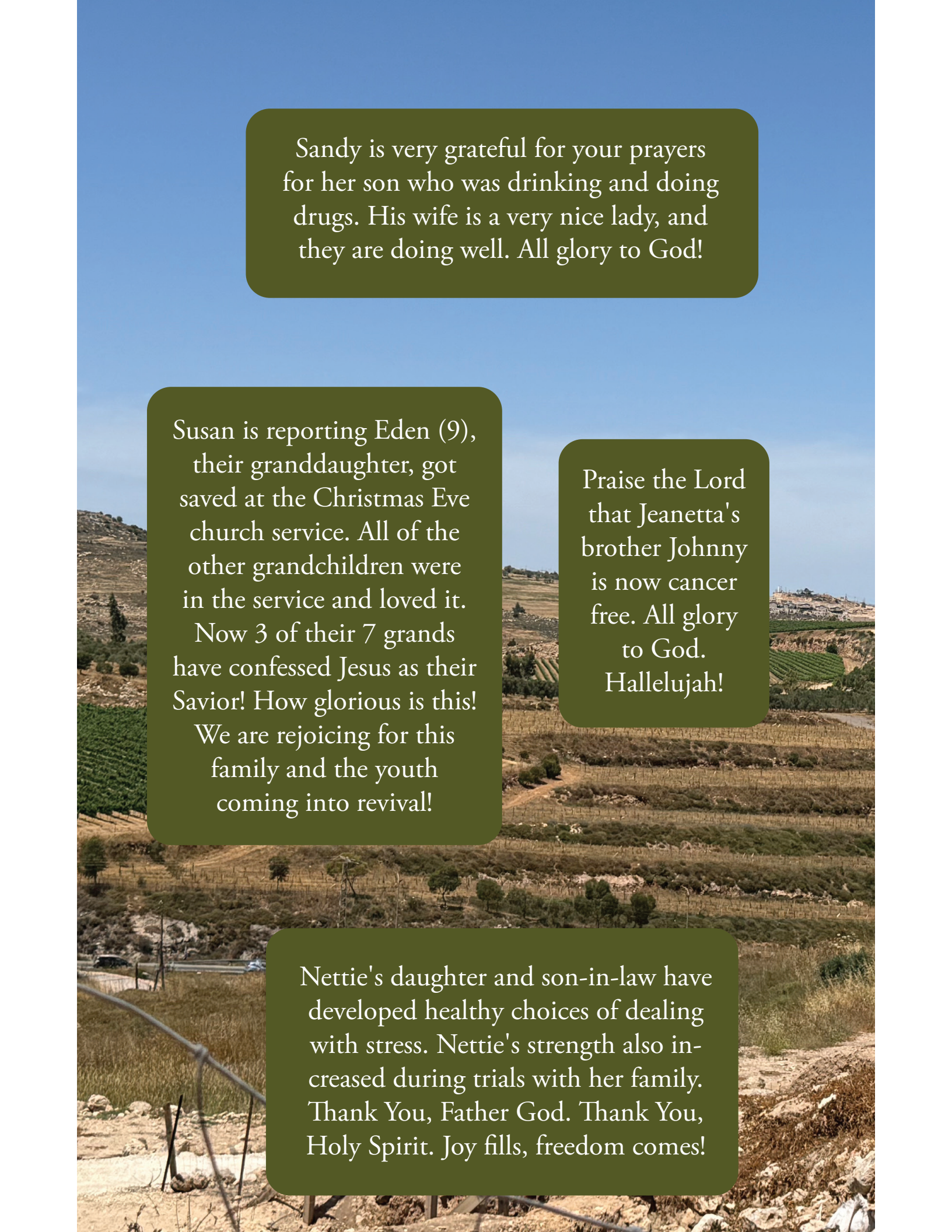
Esther praises God that her daughter Dorothy and son-in-law Josh are receiving counseling for their marital problems. To her amazement and gratefulness, they seem to be making progress.



Helene is overwhelmed in joy and thanksgiving. Their oldest son Mark (58) came to visit her after over one year of not much contact. He came right before Mother's Day. Lord, we do honor You for blessing this dear mother with a special answer of her child's presence, time, and loving hugs. How sweet You are in the details of our lives! Thank You, our heavenly Father God! Helene thanks you for your prayers.

Shawn is delighted for God's swift intervention for Ashley and her kids. Her income tax refund came immediately, and she was able to pay all the bills. Thank You, Lord, for blessing this family!

Janet sees God's goodness to her and knows her job, her raise, her place to live, and her healing are all testimonies of answered prayer. God delights in the prayers of the upright!

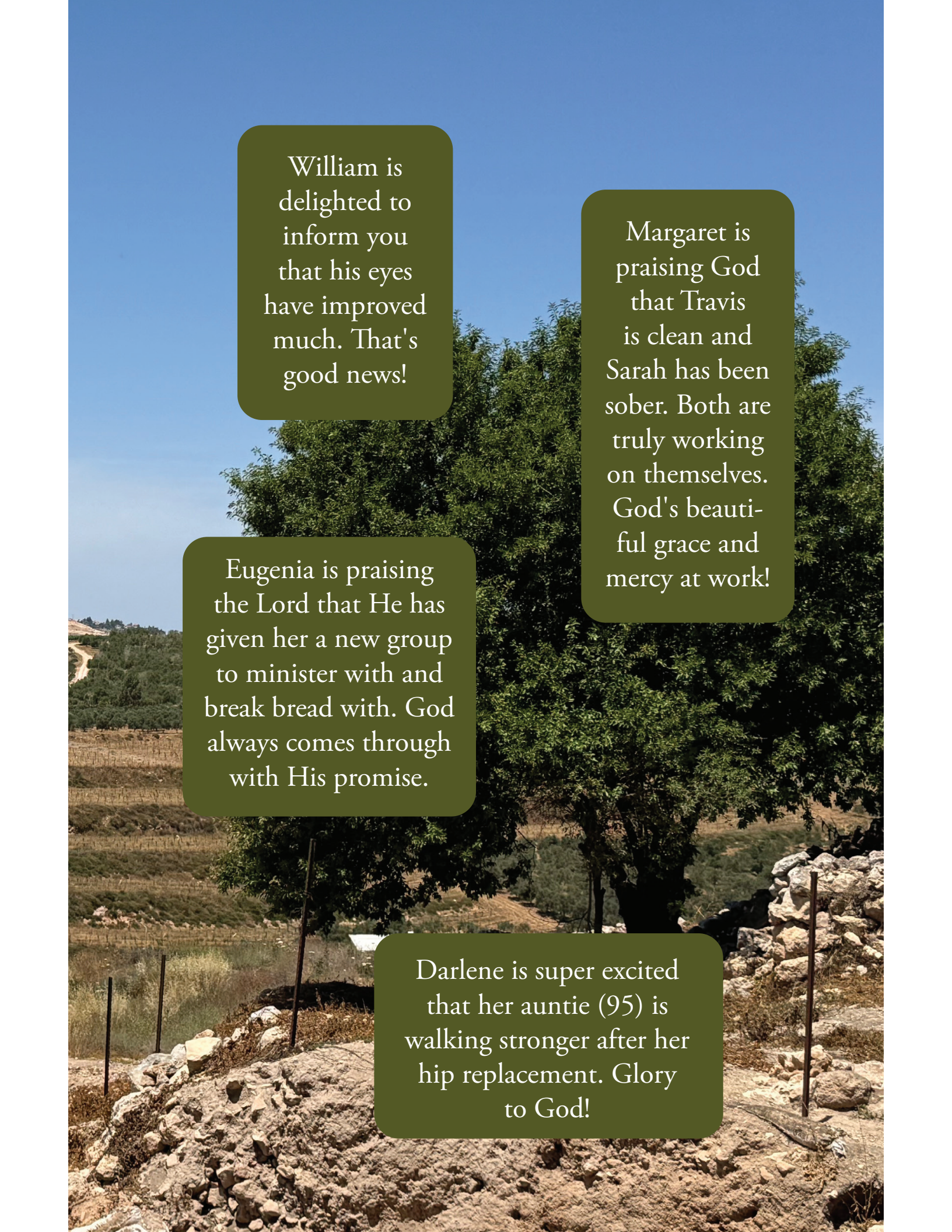


Sandy is very grateful for your prayers for her son who was drinking and doing drugs. His wife is a very nice lady, and they are doing well. All glory to God!

Susan is reporting Eden (9), their granddaughter, got saved at the Christmas Eve church service. All of the other grandchildren were in the service and loved it. Now 3 of their 7 grands have confessed Jesus as their Savior! How glorious is this! We are rejoicing for this family and the youth coming into revival!

Praise the Lord that Jeanetta's brother Johnny is now cancer free. All glory to God. Hallelujah!

Nettie's daughter and son-in-law have developed healthy choices of dealing with stress. Nettie's strength also increased during trials with her family. Thank You, Father God. Thank You, Holy Spirit. Joy fills, freedom comes!



William is
delighted to
inform you
that his eyes
have improved
much. That's
good news!

Margaret is
praising God
that Travis
is clean and
Sarah has been
sober. Both are
truly working
on themselves.
God's beauti-
ful grace and
mercy at work!

Eugenia is praising
the Lord that He has
given her a new group
to minister with and
break bread with. God
always comes through
with His promise.

Darlene is super excited
that her auntie (95) is
walking stronger after her
hip replacement. Glory
to God!



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