Maneuvering

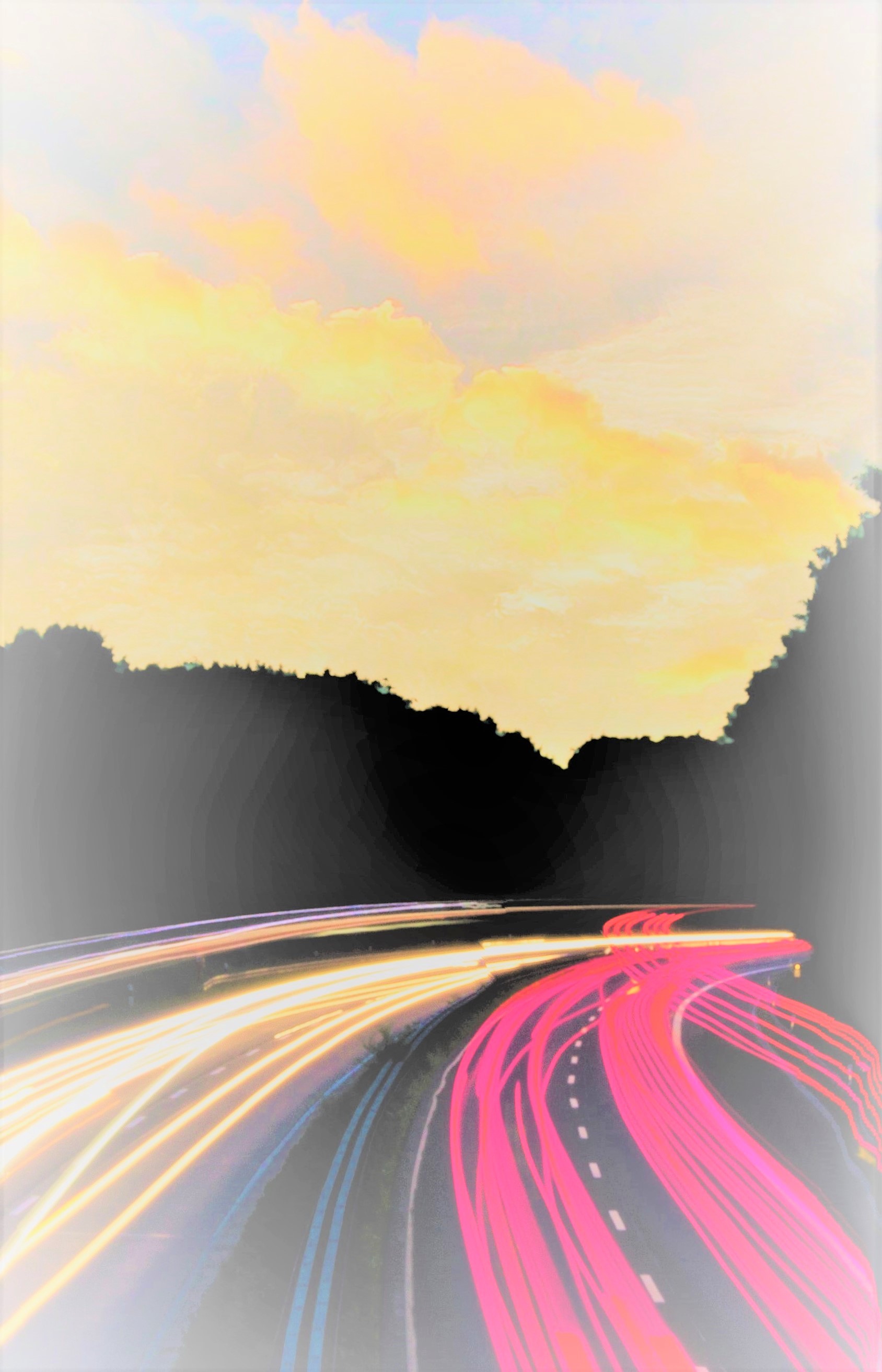
**PROBLEMS POP-UP**

**on the**

**ROAD OF LIFE**

***Onward into Your Destiny***

**Nancy L Harry**



on the

Road of Life

Onward into Your Destiny

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Problems Pop-Up on the Road of Life

Onward into Your Destiny

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**Introduction**

We live in a world where problems seem to be the norm. They can overwhelm us and cause us to feel like we are drowning in the sea of life. Setbacks or failures may cause us to feel like giving up. Discover how they lead us forward.

At times, it may seem easier to focus on the heartaches of the past. But now is the time to go onward into your destiny.

Breath in the air of a productive life as you maneuver your way through the good and bad times, on the road of life.

By the time you finish this short book, I hope you find yourself viewing life from God’s per-spective. His way brings a new day. He offers us fullness of life, newness of life, and best of all, eternal life.



***Chapter 1***

Tumbling Through Life



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sunny, warm day motivated me to make the trip to the town of Mount Dora. A weathered worn bench beckoned me. Hues of cool blues colored the huge lake, sparkling with dancing light. A variety of shiny boats criss-crossed the lake, while fishermen anxiously hoped to catch the big one.

Unexpectedly and quickly the soft breeze intensified into a strong wind. I became fas-cinated with the birds flying above the rippling water.

The birds frantically flapped their wings, as they flew into the wind. All that striving, yet they never moved closer to their destination. As tiredness overtook them and the flapping of wings slowed, they were blown backwards. One did a nosedive for the water, but not for fish. He struggled to gain control of his wings. Finally, the constant flapping began once again.

The birds flying in the direction of the wind barely flapped their wings. They spread them out and seemed to float, as the wind carried them along. There was no struggle, no striving, no plummeting.

Do you find yourself struggling like the birds that flew against the wind? Do you work hard, yet your destination still eludes you? Do you begin to weaken as you watch your life take nose dives?

Do you feel overwhelmed and stressed? Have you wondered how to handle the problems that come your way? Do you start plummeting under the pressure, only to strive harder to keep your head above water?



Or, are you more like the birds flying with the wind? These birds were not struggling. They were just “going with the flow.” Do you go with the flow? Do you speed forward at an acceler-ated rate without even trying? Are you at peace and at rest, as you glide and soar above the trouble going on beside you and below you?

The birds gliding above the turmoil remind-ed me of the higher ways of God. The birds struggling against the wind reminded me of our ways, which can often lead to all sorts of prob-lems. The wind seemed to say, follow the lead-ing of the Holy Spirit.

Why should we continue to struggle, plum-met, and tread water, determined to go our own way? The ability to rise above the problems emerges as we go with the flow of the Holy Spirit. Find peace and rest by soaring above the problems that pass through our lives.

“May God give you more and more grace and peace as you grow in your knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord.” 2 Peter 1:2 NLT

**Not a Straight Road**

Negative events and thoughts can hinder our move forward and keep us stuck in the past, while our destinations, desires and goals keep waiting.

Has the thought, “I might as well give up and quit trying,” been entertained? What if a toddler sat down and gave up, thinking it was impossi-ble to actually walk without falling? The toddler would cripple himself for the rest of his life, with this response. He never would accomplish or enjoy all he could have.

I would like to live in a world that is always honkey-dory, meaning very good. Nevertheless, it is better to face reality: the ups and downs, the bad times and good times. We travel a road through life that is filled with bumps and pot-holes, twists and turns.

At times, life doesn’t go the way we thought or hoped it would. It is easy to let disappoint-ment, anger or offense set in. But it is true that it is possible to learn and grow from these experiences.

**Taking a Tumble**

Tumbling through life, being tossed this way and that way, I wondered why life had to be so difficult. I tired of hoping for a future or a dream that never seemed to come. One problem tumbled on top of another. Have you had those days when you felt like everything was going wrong? I came to the place when I asked, “Is this all there is?”

Encouragement bloomed in my heart as I read:

“The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” Psalm 34:17-18

I found hope in God! At those times, we need to remind ourselves that we can depend on Him to be there for us. Jesus said, “With God all things are possible,” Matthew 19:26. He wants to take care of the impossible for us. Ask according to His will, trust Him, and thank Him for the answers. Then we will see His power move in us and for us.

Troubles are not supposed to defeat us. We are to prevail over them:

“This is the victory that has over-come the world, even our faith. Who is it that over-comes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.” 1 John 5:4-5

You and God make a majority.

***Chapter 2***

A Trip to Heaven



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y instructor related her experience of the day she went to heaven. The deep love and joy of God’s presence filled her with awe. But disappointment soon set in, as He told her she would be returning to her life on earth; He still needed her there. She didn’t want to leave Him, but He insisted.

Her heart broke to be separated from her Lord. For eight years, she was in the throes of depression. She couldn’t be consoled. One day a friend told her, “God did that for you.” Those few words healed her broken, aching heart; Jesus had left heaven for her. Now she had left heaven for Him.

**God did That**

Jesus is part of the Godhead and dwells in heaven with the One we refer to as God the Father (Genesis 1:26, John 1:1-4,14).

God never meant for people to die. Yet, He had to punish sin to be just; He is holy and cannot allow sin to dwell in Heaven. God gave mankind more than enough time to realize that he could not fix himself. In time, He sent the answer to remove our weaknesses.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Jesus came as a sinless lamb for the slaughter. He was put to death as a common criminal, even though He was sinless and inno-cent of any crime. He allowed this to happen, so He could redeem mankind from their state of sin. Sins are the things we do that lack love for God, others or ourselves.

Jesus provided the answer, as He hung on a cross spilling out His life’s blood. He was judged in our place and took the punishment we deserved. He suffered to provide the miracle that would make the forgiveness that we needed for our sins possible.



**Forgiveness is key**

Forgiveness comes through God’s Son. He is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).

When Jesus came, He brought His Father’s compassion and love for all to see. It was a beacon on dry land, shining its light on all mankind.



It is hard to even fathom what it must have been like for a holy member of God to relinquish His glory and position in heaven, to walk as part of His very own creation. And worse, to be re-jected by them. Yet, He still choose to surrender His life and take the punishment for our sins, on Himself.

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the right-eousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

**The Good News**

This is the wonderful good news. Our sins are exchanged for the righteousness that be-longed to Jesus. This happens when we accept what He did for us, and believe in Him as our Lord and Savior.

“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9

He conquered death when He rose from the grave. He is now back in heaven, in all His previous glory. Paul wrote, “Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us” Romans 8:34.

Sin and death will not be able to hold us either. Even though the physical body event-ually dies, our spirit will receive an eternal body that will no longer grow weak, old or sick. Fellowship and joy with a loving God will last forever.

God asks us to believe in His Son, the One who is the beginner and finisher of our faith. Jesus gives us life, with blessings and promises for the taking.

There is a joy that comes from knowing God and who we are in Him.

***Chapter 3***

Defensive Covering



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n enemy roams around like a lion seeking who he can devour. That enemy is called Satan or the devil. He does not want to see us serve the Lord. He does not want us to fulfill our destiny.

He is jealous over the fact that we were created in the image of God. So, he wars against us, finding the back roads into our lives. He wants to discourage us and pull us down. Vigilance is needed:

“For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:12 NLT

The devil “was a murderer from the begin-ning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him.…he is a liar and the father of lies” John 8:44. He is a thief that “comes only to steal and kill and destroy” John 10:10. He is a deceiver: “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light” 2 Corinthians 11:14.

This is the tempter who tries to cause us to fall. In the spiritual realm, he is the bully bent on harassing and tormenting us. Just as bullies often have their little pack of supporters, the devil has his as well. They are called demons or devils. They are all fallen angels.

Satan is the one who is our enemy. He wants to deceive and destroy us and steal from us everything God wants to give us. He aims to destroy our character and our opportunities to become all God wants us to be. He aspires to destroy our relationship with God, starting his quest with Adam and Eve.

**The Winning Side**

We are not defenseless. We have every-thing we need to fight the devil and win. Those going into battle wear armor, which is defensive coverings, to receive protection from the attacks of their enemy. God’s armor protects us from the attacks of our spiritual enemies.

“Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.” Ephesians 6:11

We actually clothe ourselves with His character. Paul said, “clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ” Romans 13:14. The armor is symbolic for saying, “Put on Christ.”

God gave us all the armor we need. The full armor of God becomes part of our lives twenty-four hours a day, as we walk with the Lord:

We stand our ground, being dressed with the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteous-ness, with feet fitted for readiness that comes from the gospel of peace, having the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is God's Word, followed by prayer (See Ephesians 6:13-18).

We stand firm against whatever is thrown at us, maintaining the position we have in Jesus. We don’t allow temptation to draw us away from God. And, we stand in the security of knowing the love that He has for us.

The greatest threat to Satan is people just like Jesus. And we grow up to be just like Him, with the Holy Spirit's power. Holler all you like at the enemy. But it will not even affect him, if you are not like Jesus. Holiness threatens him and people like Jesus threaten him.

Do you have your armor on? Truth, right-eousness, peace, faith, salvation, and His Word deep in your heart? All these things God freely gives us. Prayer keeps us close to Him.

**The Good Fight**

Paul wrote, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” 2 Timothy 4:7. Pastor David Hess of Christ Com-munity Church in Camp Hill, PA said:

“It’s only a good fight if you win it. And God has placed you in the midst of a battle that He says you are going to win.”

James, who was the half-brother of Jesus, said, “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial, because having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him” James 1:12. Satan tempts us to pull us down. God tests us to lift us up.

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.” Ephesians 6:10

Depend on Him to be your strength; His power is at work in you. You don't have to fear the enemy’s plans against you, because God has His own plans for you:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11

He is a good God. All through His Word, He makes known His desire to bless us. He offers peace, joy, strength, and many more blessings. Plus, He has a plan and a purpose for every one of us.



Destiny is not a matter of chance

but of choice.

***Chapter 4***

Problems Pop Up



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xcitement filled my heart when our church started a program for home groups for women. The desire to lead Bible studies in my home had consumed my thoughts for a long time. At first, I didn’t think of doing more than being a participant. I thought all the problems in my personal life needed to be resolved first.

I waited for the perfect time to step in to the place I felt God wanted me to be. However, time and again, as soon as one problem was solved, new ones popped up. So, certain activities con-tinued to stay stuck on the back burner.

With the Holy Spirit continuing to prompt me, I finally decided to have a women's study group. Unexpectedly, I received a call. Would I be the hostess so another woman, who wasn't able to use her home, could lead the group? Initially, I felt disappointed, but I found myself receiving comfort from her prayers. I also wit-nessed more of the power of the Holy Spirit, as He worked through her. God does love to bless.

It turned out to be a time of growing for me. This arrangement worked out nicely for a while. Yet, God was tugging at my heart to do more. Soon I felt like a race horse anxiously waiting to break forth into that winning run. Determined, I decided not to put the desire God placed in my heart on the back burner again.

I was anointed for Women's Ministry the following year. Conditions in my life were not perfect. Yet, a sense of peace filled me.

**Without Warning**

Without warning, going to work became an effort. Getting out of bed became an effort. Just moving became an effort. I'd pray and ask God why living had to be so hard.

I became incapable of continuing to lead the Bible study group. All I could think about was being able to get through work, so I could go home and crawl into bed. Darkness pressed in on me. The weight of it was hardly bearable.

I felt myself sinking into an unrelenting dark hole. One special lady was not willing to let me stay in that place. She prayed *for* me and *with* me. She was an encouragement to me in so many ways. Thankfully, I found out that I suffer-ed from clinical depression. I learned that being depressed or feeling down, and clinical depress-ion are two very different things.

Clinical depression is a physical problem that affects the brain, which is also an organ. The symptoms result from a chemical imbal-ance in the chemicals that the brain produces. You cannot talk yourself out of it or be talked out of. It is devastating and debilitating. Treatment or a direct miracle from God is needed.

It is the same as when any organ in the body stops working properly and begins to cause symptoms. For example, if the pancreas or kidneys do not work correctly, a person does not try to talk himself out of the symptoms, but seeks treatment.

**Strength to Endure**

God gives us strength to endure and con-quer the trials of life. When we think we can’t, He can! When we feel weak, He is strong. Paul wrote, “I can do all this through him who gives me strength” Philippians 4:13. Nothing is too hard for us when we stay connected to the Lord.

James wrote: “Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise” James 5:13. David encouraged the people to turn to God in prayer: “The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles” Psalm 34:17.

Prayer is so important. God hears our pray-ers. Our world is temporary, but His blessings will last forever. He is the God who cares for us and the One who intervenes for us.

Do you hear the Lord saying: “Be still and listen with your heart, for I am great and I am good? This is a small world compared to my greatness. See the vastness of my universe, so you don't get bogged down with the little-ness of problems that arise.

Prayer takes you to great heights and prayer solves many problems. Spend your time with me in my presence. From here, view your world.”

**Life can Be Tough**

The results were in. I hoped for the best as I waited in the sterile room. Instead I heard those fateful words, “You have cancer.” Yet, my trust was in God as my healer and in His purpose for my life. My hope was rooted in knowing God wanted me here a little while longer.

Even when I felt too weak to go on, I looked to Him for strength to see me through. I pictured myself reaching my hand up to hold His. And, when I felt too weak to even envision lifting my hand, I knew He was reaching down to hold mine. He was, and is, and always will be my rock and my strength.



“For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.” Isaiah 41:13

I envisioned my friends praying for me, see-ing myself resting behind their shields of faith. This was a vision my pastor told me to hold on to. And, it was so comforting.

My bout with cancer was definitely not a fun experience. But it definitely was a wake-up call. I researched how our bodies are affected by foods and stress. People close to me became more important than the busyness of everyday life.

Today, I am still praising and thanking the Lord for His loving kindness. Whether I stayed here or had gone to be with Him, I knew He would always have His arms of love wrapped tightly around me. For that, I will always be grateful.

**Good Things**

Sometimes, I hear people using God as a scapegoat, instead of looking to Him for hope, help and comfort. They blame Him when some-thing goes wrong in their life or when something bad happens.

Some people ask, “If God loves me, why did He let me suffer so?” Certainly, many situations are tragic and painful. And loss may feel unbearable. But He does want good things for us.

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting sha-dows.” James 1:17

The bad things you may experience are not what God desires for you as His child. It is not His best for you. He is not to blame for things that go wrong.

* The decisions of others can affect us.
* Our own choices may affect us in a nega-tive way.
* Satan’s influence may be working under-cover.
* Time and chance happen to us all.

So, be sure not to fall into the trap of letting troubling situations separate you from God.

Run to Him, not from Him.

It is possible for God to change a situation. At other times, we can depend on Him for the strength and endurance to weather the storm. Peter said, “Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you” 1 Peter 5:7 NLT.

Focusing on problems or worrying about future problems that we think might pop up, only drains our energy. An avid basketball player told me that she sees herself placing what is troubling her into a basketball and bouncing it up to God.



Worry will not overwhelm us when the Lord is our focus. Giving Him control of the situation relieves our worrying. Jesus will see us through. He is our place of rest and our shelter from the storms. The writer of this Psalm wrote:

“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” Psalm 91:1-2

**Light in the Darkness**

No matter what you go through, remember that trying times will pass. They are not here to stay. The light in the darkness is the love of God.

***Chapter 5***

Blessings in Disguise



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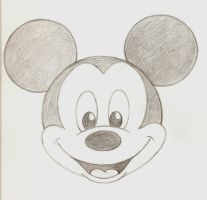
ailures, mistakes, or setbacks often turn out to be blessings in disguise. Understand them in the context of a problem that needs to be overcome or solved. I heard it said: “Great people are ordinary people who never quit.”

A sign hangs on the wall at my daughter’s workplace that says: “The difference between trying and triumph is a little *oomph*.”

**Loved to Write**

A love for writing inspired this man to write a series of fairy tales. Unfortunately, more sat on the shelf then sold. He finally landed a job with a newspaper. Not too long after starting his new position, the paper's editor fired him, claiming he did not have any good ideas to contribute. The editor also said he had a habit of doodling too much. Plus, the editor didn't hesitate to tell him that he also did not have any talent.

Who was he? Walt Disney! His doodling led to the creation of Mickey Mouse. Donald Duck, Goofy, Pluto and all the gang followed! He went on to build the most famous theme parks in the world. Also impressive was that he won worldwide acclaim, as he became the winner of forty-five academy awards.



**Failure upon Failure**

Teachers called this little boy slow and too stupid to learn. All he had was three months of schooling, but his mother would not be dis-couraged and taught him herself. By the age of ten, he was reading on a college level. He went on to build a chemistry lab in his basement. Here, he went through hundreds of failures before perfecting his invention – the light bulb! Of course, it was Thomas Edison!

He went on to create and develop more than 1300 inventions. Eventually he held 1093 pat-ents. However, there are two success stories here: a mother who wouldn't give up on her son and a boy willing to learn, even when faced with overwhelming difficulties.

**No Future at All**

This man was said to have no future at all. He came from a poor family and had little en-couragement to succeed. He failed many times in business endeavors. He experienced defeat when he ran for the Legislature.

He suffered a nervous breakdown. Then he was defeated when he ran for the Senate and again when he ran for the Vice Presidency. In total, he lost twenty-three elections while win-ning only three.

His greatest victory came in 1860, when he was elected President of the United States. Abraham Lincoln became one of the nation's greatest presidents. Even though he had more failures than most, he was never really de-feated. Why? because he never stopped trying. He was a man with perseverance and deter-mination.

**Never Stop Trying**

People are remembered, more often, for what they accomplished, rather than for their mistakes or failures. What did these people have in common?

* They had an idea, a goal, or a vision.
* They took chances again and again.
* They learned from their mistakes.
* They saw their failures as setbacks and looked for ways to solve them.
* They took their failures in stride and kept on trying.

There is no need to fear failure. It will only prevent achieving. Sometimes you just have to hang in there and not be so quick to give up! The basketball player LeBron James said:

“You have to accept failure to get better.”

These examples show us that a failure or a mistake does not make one stupid or a loser. So, be careful of labels. Failure or a mistake is an action, not an identity. If you slip up, it means you are human. You can always recover. And you can start over anytime.

I often wondered why I liked collecting colorful rubber balls. Their many colors shine through their home in my large glass fishbowl. In time, the Lord answered my question. My ball collection was to be a reminder to me: A rubber ball will always bounce back – and I could too.

Believe that good things are on the way. The very best is before you. Doors go both ways. The Lord may let a single door close, so He can open the double doors. Even though some things may leave your life, there are double doors for everything you need.

***Chapter 6***

Jesus Understands



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ake a look at what Isaiah prophesied about Jesus, the One who came as our Savior:

“He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.” Isaiah 53:3

When we think about the Lord’s suffering, do we only see Him hanging on the cross as payment for our sins? If so, then questions may pop up. For instance, “How can He possibly understand what I’m going through or feeling?” I’m glad you asked, because I want to tell you.

**Have you lost a loved one?**

History tells us Jesus lost His earthly father at an early age. As the oldest, He probably had the responsibility of helping to raise His half brothers and sisters.

Then He received the news that John the Baptist had been beheaded. John was His cousin and they were only six months apart. John had prepared the way for Jesus’ ministry. How did Jesus react to this news? He wanted to go off and be alone. But despite His pain, His love for the people drew Him to minister to their needs:

“When Jesus heard what had hap-pened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.” Matthew 14:13-14

**Have you felt unappreciated?**

Ten men with leprosy called out to Jesus, as he was going into a village. He told them to go and show themselves to the priests. And, “As they went, they were cleansed.”

Priests had to give people with this disease the ok to be let back into the village, but only if they were healed.

“One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?”” Luke 17:14-18

Imagine that! Only one out of those ten men came back to say, “Thank you.”

Matthew recounted for us one time that Jesus visited His hometown. He taught in their synagogue, amazing the people at His wisdom and miraculous powers. But those who knew Him or His family took offense at Him. Jesus responded by saying, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home” Matthew 13:57. Even those in His home-town didn’t appreciate Him.

**Have people told lies about you?**

The Sanhedrin, the Jewish supreme court of His day, had nothing against Jesus that would qualify Him for the death penalty. So, they found people to lie about Him. Mark tells us about this:

“The chief priests and the whole Sanhe-drin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.” Mark 14:55-56

**Have you felt misunderstood?**

As Jesus traveled with His disciples “He asked them, “Who do people say I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah” Mark 8:27-29. Peter knew who Jesus was, but most of the people didn’t.

**Has someone made fun of you?**

“The soldiers led Jesus away into the pal-ace (that is, the Praetorium) and called to-gether the whole company of soldiers. They put a purple robe on Him, then twisted to-gether a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to Him, “Hail, king of the Jews! …Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe.” Mark 15:16-20

Can’t you hear them making fun of Him; "Some king – look at you now!" On top of that, they pretended to worship Him, not realizing He really was a King.

**Have you been betrayed by a close friend?**

“When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.” Mark 14:17-18.

He was referring to Judas Iscariot, who agreed to turn Him over to the chief priests. Judas was one of the disciples Jesus hand-picked. He ate with Him and listened to His teachings. He even was chosen to be the ministries treasurer. Yet, he betrayed Jesus for a little more financial gain.

**Have you suffered physical abuse?**

We know Jesus went about teaching and healing the sick. We know He never sinned. But look what happened to Him anyway. The San-hedrin and High Priest accused Him of blas-phemy, because He agreed with their question that He was the Messiah.

“Then some began to spit at him; they blind-folded him, struck him with their fists, and said, “Prophesy!” And the guards took him and beat him.” Mark 14:65

Later, He was sent to Pilate. Pilate didn’t believe that Jesus committed a crime, but:

“Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate…had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. The soldiers led Jesus away… Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him.…Then they led him out to crucify him.” Mark 15:15-16, 19-20

**Have you felt rejected by someone you loved?**

The disciples fled, deserting Jesus, when He was arrested. These men had been at His side day after day. They were part of His min-istry and most likely His best friends.

Look at what Mark had to say, as Jesus was crucified:

“At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, *“Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?”* (which means My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).” Mark 15:33-34

In that moment, as Jesus carried the weight of the sins of this world, He felt abandoned by His heavenly Father. For the first time in His life, He went to the depths of human anguish and loneliness crying out, “Where are you God?” Yet, He did it all, so we could be accepted.

**He Understands**

Jesus does understand what we feel. He understands what we go through or have gone through. He felt the pain we feel. He walked among us and suffered with us, qualifying to become our High Priest. Now we can approach God’s throne with confidence, to find help in our time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16).

“Because Jesus lives forever, he has a per-manent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” Hebrews 7:24-25



You can never get so low

That it is too low for God.

***Chapter 7***

God is for You



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turned on the radio as the traffic slowed. Chuck Swindoll was talking about the nursery rhyme Humpty Dumpty on his program *Insight for Living*.

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.



Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

All the king’s horses, and all the king’s men couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty together again.

This is his version of the ending: “Christ came to our wall, to pick up our fall.” The Psalmist told us this:

“The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. The Lord up-holds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.” Psalm 145:13-14

He wants to lift you up from whatever is weighing you down, whether problems, sadness or despair. David wrote:

“But you, LORD, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the LORD, and he answers me from his holy mountain.” Psalm 3:3-4

It’s time to put aside the heartaches, the offences, the bitterness and turn to Him. He is full of love, grace and mercy. He loves you so. He is not against you. He is here for you. Let Him tend to the hurting places in your heart, in your body. He cares about you. Rejoice. He brings life and He brought it more abundantly.

**A Vast Army**

There is an account of a servant of the Lord who received a word from God for a particular king. This king was about to go into battle against a mighty army. Think of this army that was coming against God's people, as the many problems we may face. Listen to what the Lord said:

“Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God’s. …You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the LORD will give you… Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.” 2 Chronicles 20:15,17

We need to face our problems, but we do not have to do it alone. God is greater than any problem we face. The Lord never leaves us or forsake us. Sometimes He delivers us. Other times, He stands with us as we go through them. Paul said: “If God is for us, who can be against us?” Romans 8:31.

**Life May Wobble**

As my son was going through some difficult times, it occurred to me that life is a bit like the jumping beans I played with as a child. I gave him this advice:

Life is like jumping beans;

it may wobble and turn upside down,

but eventually it turns right side up again

It is important not to leave God out,

no matter which way it wobbles.

**Lemonade**

Problems are small in comparison to God’s greatness. See them through His eyes. When we belong to God, He takes those things meant for harm and turns them around for good: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” Romans 8:28. I call this scripture the one where God takes lemons and makes lemonade.

I often wondered what good came from my marriage that was filled with abuse and bitter-ness. Years had passed since the divorce, when my mother said to me, “Something good did come from it.” I looked at her in disbelief. How could she say that?

I remembered the hurt, frustration and sad-ness. She looked me straight in the eyes and said “You have three beautiful children.” And in her motherly wisdom she was so, so right.

**I AM WHO I AM**

“Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?”

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” Exodus 3:13-14.

This name of God, expresses His charac-teristics of dependability, eternal stability and faithfulness. He desires the full trust of His people. He is God of the present. Our lives exist in the present. He cares about what happens in our lives now, even in the smallest matters.

Jesus asked His disciples why they doubted Him. He expected them to trust Him, to believe Him. And we should too. He can help us do what we might think is the impossible. Those that do not know Jesus suffer alone. But we have a God we can trust to always be with us.

After Jesus rose from the grave, He walked on the earth another forty days. Jesus was quite forceful with His disciple Thomas, as He showed Him the injuries from His death on the cross. He said to him, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe” John 20:27.

God loves us: He helps us, cares about us, guides and comforts us. He forgave us and pours out His mercy, grace and favor. He has the answers we need. We can trust Him to be with us during the good times and bad times.

The Lord is saying, Come higher in your thinking with me. Do not be small minded. Trust in what I can do and in what I can bring to pass.

**Good Gifts**

Jesus told us, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” John 10:10. He also said, “If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” Matthew 7:11.

Paul wrote:

“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all— how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things.”

Romans 8:32

The Lord’s love causes us to receive so much more than we could ever give.

The greatest power in the whole

universe is on your side.

***Chapter 8***

Joy Amidst Trials



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“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let persever-ance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4

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thought this must be a mistake when I first read this scripture; joy when you face trials? My first response was, “Is he kidding?” Then I realized – the joy is not because of the pro-blems, but because of the character we build as we prevail.

Lifting weights create resistance for our muscles, to help them grow stronger and faster. Our character is like a muscle that also grows stronger and quicker with resistance. Difficulties cause us to use our character muscles.

Best of all, we have someone greater than the problem to help us. God is on our side. We have the opportunity to use our faith to believe in Him and what He can do. So why stay in a mopey mood. Decide to get up, dust yourself off and keep on moving forward.

**Comfort**

The bumps and potholes in our lives also equip us to help others. They fill us with the com-passion of God.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

**Problems or Challenges**

I do not like to think of problems as bene-ficial, because I don’t want any. I do not like the negative thoughts or the feelings that often come with trying times. Yet, I need to remember they can help build character and I can depend on God for help.

I concluded that life is a series of surprises and challenges. At times, it was not what I expected or what I wanted it to be. I decided to view problems as a challenge or as an oppor-tunity to solve a dilemma. It helps to soften the shock every time a problem comes my way. Most importantly, I seek God for solutions and answers.

Did you know that trouble is the preparation for the victories of God? How can we have a victory without something to overcome? How can we have a miracle if there is no problem?

Do you know what happens to good people when bad things happen to them? They become better people. Bitterness, anger and unforgive-ness will only cause more hurt. Choose to be better, rather than bitter.

You don’t have to let the cares of this world overwhelm and crush you. It is not what you go through, but where you are going that matters most. Keep your focus on Jesus. Count on Him to make a way, as you live your life by His side.

“Oh, my people, I long for you. When will you see me as a father that loves you and wants to care for you? Let this be a new day. Come and rejoice in me. Let me cover you with my love. Let me saturate you with my kisses.

Let my blessings overflow. Come, par-take of all I offer you. Yes, it is a new day. Come and walk with me. Not behind me, not ahead of me, but beside me. Do not waver, hold my hand; I will be your strength.

Let me pour out my healing balm; absorb it. Let it reach into the deep, hurting places. It’s a new day. Come and rejoice in me. Now is the time. Do not hold back. Come with me into this new day and see that I am God.”

**Always Loved**

Paul stresses that no trial and no problem can separate us from the love of Jesus. We will come out on top with Him:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or perse-cution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” Romans 8:35, 37

No matter what happens, never lose hope: “And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us” Romans 5:5.

**Find Joy**

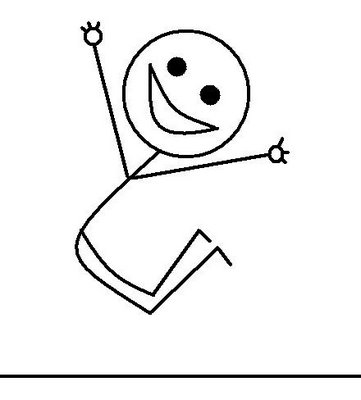
We can find joy in God’s presence. “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” Philippians 4:4.

Re – joice means joy again and again. I learned joy is not dependent on what is taking place or happening at the moment. It comes from knowing God will always be there, helping me over, through or under whatever obstacles come my way.

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” Romans 12:12

Find joy in the deep love He has for you. It is stronger than any trouble, than any bad thought, or negative memory.

Little children delight in jumping for joy. They will just beam. Be full of joy like little children. Delight in the simple things. Smile, laugh, clap, jump, dance. Let’s be the Lord’s happy children.



The Lord is saying: “Rejoice in the day I have made; every day is my day. Appreciate the beauty of my creation. Let it delight you, as I delight in you. I am God, the One who loves you. Look to me and all will be well in the end. Sing forth my praises. Rejoice in song. Come and worship me, for I am your God, the Almighty One.”

***Chapter 9***

On to Victory



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he Lord expects us to have victory in all areas our lives. Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” John 10:10. Yet, sometimes there are attitudes, thoughts or walls that we build up in our minds that tend to hold us back or slow us down. Could it be, that at times, we are our own worst enemy?

**Giants in Life**

Watch out for fear. It could cause paralysis to set in – an inability to move forward. It could also cause a person to become ineffective or powerless.

Are there any hints of bitterness, resent-ment or unforgiveness? How about the ten-dency to flee or give up? Apathy or indifference may cause something to stay in our lives and overcome us.

Being overzealous may motivate a person to take advantage of premature opportunities. This could lead to negative experiences, which then come to be expected. Temper zeal with wisdom. Be prepared – that is still a good motto.

Who are you listening to? Do the words of others fill you with self-doubt or feelings of infer-iority, rather than uplifting and encouraging you? Thoughts of condemnation could even cause a person to stop trying.

What about you? How do you use your words? Do they build others up or tear them down? Are they gentle and kind or mean and rude?

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Ephesians 4:29

Do you habitually think:

* Nothing is working for me? – Yet, God is working on your behalf.
* Odds are against me? – When God is for you.
* Everything is my fault? – When you are the righteousness of God through Jesus.

What are the giants in your life? Do not continue going around the same old tree for forty years. You cannot avoid facing feelings and tests. The enemy wants you taken out. God wants you to make it. Overcoming sets the stage for your success. And the Holy Spirit will help you.

**Air Pockets**

I have experienced the sensation of falling that results when a plane hits air pockets and drops for just a few seconds before leveling out again. This sensation causes fear and feelings of helplessness in some passengers. I asked my brother, a captain for a major airline, how he handled air pockets. He said he thinks of them as bumps in a road.

As problems arise in your life, do you view them with fear or helplessness, or as another bump on the road to your destination?

The Lord spoke to my heart saying, “Tell my people of my love for them, that I wait for them to come to me. I am not blind that I cannot see and I am not dumb that I cannot hear all that goes on in the lives of those I love. So, come to me and be at peace. I draw you with my love that is never ending, never burdensome. Experience my glory and my joy.”

Find comfort in your loving, heavenly Father when times of stress come your way. Strength comes from Him. He loves you. And, He waits for you to talk with Him.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

**In a Hurry**

It is a busy world that we live in today. My daughter stopped by to drop off a manual for me. I asked her if she was coming in. She answered no; she was running late for another errand. I would have liked her to stay a little while.

Do you take your prayers to God and just drop them off? How about your praises? Do you just drop them off too? Is He asking you to stay a little while? Pastor Robert Morris, of Gateway Church in TX, mentioned during his series on *Living in* *His Presence,* that God told him to “stop having ‘drive-thru’ quiet times.”

Jesus said:

“Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.” Revelation 3:20 NLT

Normally, we would not be in a hurry and rush off right away, when we meet with a friend. We would take time to talk and enjoy each other’s company. This is what God expects too, when we come to meet with Him in prayer.

Heidi Baker, a missionary and the CEO of *Iris Global*, was interviewed by Sid Roth, on his television program *It’s Supernatural.* She said:

“We are worried about not being connected to the internet. How much more should we be concerned about not being connected to God.”

We get so busy running here and there. Don’t you get tired? I do. It is time to rest with the Lord for a while. Sing praises to Him, talk with Him and just be with Him, relaxing in His presence.

Do you hear the Lord saying, “I am yours and you are mine? Fill me with your singing. Praise my name, for I am good. I will never leave you. I am with you always. Speak to me. Come to me. Don’t stay away. Don’t let anything interfere. I have what you need. I'm your heavenly Father. I am your King. I am your God. Be refreshed in my presence.”

**A Vision from God**

In Deborah Oxendine’s book, *Come Sup with Me*, she speaks of a vision God gave her:

She saw a table stretched out across hea-ven “with no end in sight,” as she put it. It was covered in a brilliant, sparkling white tablecloth. She watched Jesus take His place at the head of the table. He said, “This is the table I told you I would prepare for you in the presence of your enemies.”

A royal banquet lined the table. Yet, all she could see was the brilliant white tablecloth. Jesus said, “It can only be seen with the eyes of your spirit…. It’s all here, everything you could ever want or need…. It’s all here: healing, de-liverance, finances, grace, strength. …every-thing is waiting for you.…All you have to do is sit down and partake of it.”

He explained to her that people come in and out to drop off their prayers and praises, but they do not bother to stay. If they would stay a while, they could take their needs and their requests right off the table. They would not have to wait for an answer, because they could take what they needed with them.

When, oh when, will we understand the deep love God has for us? Are you too busy to stay for a while with Him? He is the One who will meet all your needs. He is the One who will surround you with all His love. He longs for your presence. You are free to go and dine with Him. He invites you to come. Will you?

**Walk Closer**

God will always be with those who call out to Him. He is calling His people into a closer walk with Him. Know Him as Abba Father, the One who cares. We become so burdened down with the cares of this world. Yet, He waits for us to give our cares to Him. He is dependable. I would rather let Him deal with the drama, wouldn’t you?

When will we realize how much He loves us? All He does is for our benefit. Turn towards Him that He may bring you out of your life of burdens and set you in a new realm of peace and happiness. See all that He does and know that He is the Great I AM.

Faith is not in ourselves or in others, but in a loving God. Know He will do the things He promised to do. Our money is printed with the words: *In God we trust*. Let’s not make the mistake of leaving Him out of our lives.

***Chapter 10***

A New Day



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here was a time when I focused on the problems and disappointments in my life, instead of giving them to the Lord. I wallowed in pity, feeling sorry for myself. I focused on my own misery. “Woe is me” became my signature phrase.

I thought and spoke negatively about my life. Did you know that it has been found that negative thoughts will cause chemical reactions in the body that takes hours to work out of our system? No wonder I felt so bad, when I resided in a negative mood.

One day my young son said to me, “Mom, all you ever say is ‘Woe is me’ and I'm tired of hearing it.” Listening to him say it back to me made me realize how it really sounded. And, I was reinforcing the negative in my life by speak-ing that way. At that very moment, I decided that “Woe is me” would no longer be part of my vocabulary.

I can gratefully announce that things began to change for the better. But the process re-quired a brand-new attitude on my part. It in-volved giving God my past and trusting Him with my future.

**Do Not Get Stuck**

One of the important things I came to under-stand was that my past did not have to destroy my future. And your past does not have to destroy yours either. So, be careful not to get stuck in the past by dragging past failures and hurtful memories into today and tomorrow. It is time to get in the race and stop looking at what is behind.

Jesus died to forgive our past and to restore our future. Out with the old and in with the new. “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!” Isaiah 43:18-19. See each day as a new beginning.

The Lord is saying, “Come to me now and hear what I have to say. Tomorrow is a new day. A bright day, a sad day; which will it be? You decide. Call upon me and I will hear. Ignore me and I will be silent. I listen for those who love me that I may speak into their lives.”

Even though all things are not well here; all is well in God’s presence. Stay by His side. See things from His perspective. Remember, you are not alone. And, He can turn even the bad times into lemonade and use them for good.

An article in our local newspaper told how a fire in a synagogue destroyed its sanctuary, hundreds of prayer books, and sacred ritual items. On top of that, the building became un-stable.

The many helpful blessings coming from the community and other churches, led the Rabbi to state that a “new life chapter begins after loss, but only if we choose it.”

In some ways, their loss had already be-come a blessing, as the community came to-gether on their behalf.

**Step by Step**

We are headed for the victory! “Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed” Proverbs 16:3 NLT. Desire His best. Dream and become all you can be. He takes us forward step by step.

Look to Him for His guidance and watch Him work in your life. Problems solved or erased by miracles leave us thankful and elated.

Reach your destiny. This is God’s plan for you. He wants you to reach it and He will help you to achieve it. Continue to walk with the Lord and do not look back. Move forward with Him. Soar above the problems. Look past those things that trouble you and see the glorious future that is in store for you.

The Lord placed in you gifts and talents. You are filled with potential. Ask the Lord to guide you, then follow the desires and the passion of your heart to find your purpose and move into your destiny.

**Faithful Love**

“The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithful-ness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, “The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!” Lamentations 3:22-24 NLT

Put everything in God’s hand,

then God’s hand will be in everything.

“May the grace of the Lord

Jesus Christ, and the love of God,

and the fellowship of the

Holy Spirit be with you all.”

2 Corinthians 13:14

**About the Author**

Nancy L. Harry’s mission is three-fold:

* to carry the message of God's love and the impact it has on our daily lives.
* to prepare us for Christ’s return.
* to offer helpful suggestions as we make our way through difficult times.

She encourages others with Scripture and experiences from her own Christian walk, as they continue in their walk with the Lord.

Her heart’s desire is to see healing—phys-ically, emotionally and spiritually—manifested in the body of Christ.

Her prayer is for everyone to be rooted in love, and have the power to understand and know Christ’s deep love.

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