

# GOD STORIES

Book 7

And More

**Because HE LIVES,  
We can face tomorrow!**

**Dr. Gayle & Myrna Brogdon**

# GOD STORIES

*“...we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done.” Psalm 78:4*



**Book 7: GOD STORIES And More... Because HE LIVES, we can face tomorrow** are true and inspiring stories written by ordinary people that highlight an extraordinary God and what He has done in, for, and through their lives. By sharing these stories, the reader is reminded of the depth of God’s love and the importance of knowing Him intimately.

You may recall your own amazing encounters with God that left a lasting impact or find yourself passionately desiring to know God more and have a real personal relationship with Him every day.

In addition, interspersed in this booklet are biblical principles and encouraging messages on how to daily live out our walk with Jesus Christ.

**30-DAY DEVOTIONAL:** This booklet may also be used as a 30-day devotional. As you read the stories designated for each day, ask the Lord, “What do you want to reveal to me? In what way(s) may I apply to my life the message(s) and/or the scripture passage(s)? Then pray and do what He shows you.

Our prayer is that everyone who reads this booklet will draw closer to the Lord Jesus Christ and for those who don’t know Jesus Christ as Savior, we pray you will.

Walking with Jesus,

*Gayle & Myrna*

Dr. Gayle & Myrna Brogdon

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<https://www.god-stories.com/books>

## DAY 1: GETTING THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

*“Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, ‘Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.’” Acts 27:31*



**Ron Corzine**  
**Ft. Worth, Texas**

Life is not fair. You will have problems, difficulties, and hurts that will make you better or bitter. You will either grow up or give up.

Either you'll become who God wants you to be or your heart will become hard. You have to decide how you are going to respond to the tough times in your life. How will you handle it?

When you go through those difficult times, what happens to you is not nearly as important as what happens in you. That's what you take into eternity — not the circumstances but your character.

In Acts 27, we learn ways you shouldn't respond in trials:

**1. Don't drift.** *“The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along”* (Acts 27:15 NIV). The ship carrying Paul and other prisoners to Rome was in the middle of the Mediterranean and hadn't seen the sun for 14 days, so they couldn't get any bearings, and they started to drift.

When they face difficulty, some people start drifting through life. They have no goal, purpose, ambition, or dream for their life. Today, we call this “coasting.” The problem with coasting is that you're headed downhill. Life is not a coast. Life's tough. Don't lose your ambition or your dream just because life gets hard.

**2. Don't discard.** *“We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard”* (Acts 27:18 NIV). The men in charge needed to lighten the ship, so they threw the cargo overboard, then the tackle and the food. They were discarding things they needed because the storm was so tough.

When you get in a storm and the stress gets unbearable, you tend to start abandoning values and relationships you would not let go of in better times. You say, “I'm giving up on my marriage. I'm giving up on my dream to go to college.”

God says, “Stay with the ship!” For example, have you done that in your marriage? Have you said, “Divorce is not an option for us; we're going to make it work”? If you haven't, you'll always be tempted to walk out. If you don't throw away the key, you'll never develop the character God wants you to have.

God can change situations and personalities. He can change you. I've learned from personal experience that it is never God's will to run from a difficult situation. God wants you to learn, grow, and develop, and He is there with you all the time.

**3. Don't despair.** *"We finally gave up all hope of being saved"* (Acts 27:20b NIV). After 14 days in total darkness and after giving up their cargo, tackle, and food, the passengers finally give up hope. But they'd forgotten one thing: Even in a storm, God is in control. He hasn't left you. You may not feel Him, but if you feel far from God, guess who moved?

God is with you in the storm, and He'll help you through it. He is testing you to see if you'll trust Him.

## **RIISING OUT OF THE ASHES**

*"The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you or forsake you. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged."* Deuteronomy 31:8

Where does one start when they're thinking about rising out of the ashes?

I have farmed in South Texas for 40 years with 4 direct hit hurricanes, numerous droughts, floods, low prices, and many more obstacles. Not a year goes by that I don't have an opportunity to feel defeated and fearful.

No matter what we face as Christians in literal storms or spiritual storms, the more we prepare for the storm ahead of time, the better we will usually fare riding out our storm. In the natural, we nail plywood, clean out ditches, tie things down for the wind that is coming and in the spiritual we get strong in the Word, establish a relationship with Jesus so we can trust Him in the waves trying to drown us. The battle ground is always in your mind so you get strong before the storm so you won't waver.

I Samuel 30 the Amalekites had raided David's town, burned it to the ground and took all the families captive. As his men were ready to stone him, David encouraged himself in the Lord and won a major victory.



**Lynn Johnson**  
**Lyford, Texas**

**I've got  
your back...**

Deuteronomy 31:8

Don't stay defeated and discouraged in your fight. If no one else will help, know that God will fight with you or for you and will either pull you through your storm OR will calm your storm.

## **DAY 2: GOD HEARS AND ANSWERS PRAYER**

*“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:15*



**Virginia Rauch  
Bluffton, Indiana**

Back in 1992 my colon shut down, causing me excruciating pain. In the hospital they could not find what was causing this and let me suffer it out for a week before doing exploratory surgery to find the problem. They did not do MRI and Ultra Sound testing like they do today.

During surgery they found that my bowel had twisted like a garden hose, causing blockage and pain. Surgery was done to remove 18 inches of the twisted colon. All seemed to be going well and I was finally sent home.

After a week I experienced the same pain again and back to the hospital I went. This time they found that adhesions from the recent surgery had quickly grown and this time was strangling my colon. Once again surgery was done to remove the adhesions.

During the 30 total days of being in the hospital, there was a time when I could no longer feel God's presence with me. I was in deep despair and my praying family gathered around me fearing that I may not make it. I could not pray or read the Bible and felt like God had left me and I was all alone.



**Doyle and Jane Frauhiger  
Bluffton, Indiana**

Then our minister, Doyle Frauhiger, and his dear wife, Jane, came to visit me. Sitting beside me he took my hands and prayed for me, with my husband at my side. After that the Spirit of God once again came over me and I could pray and feel the presence of God. It was then that I began to heal and was finally able to come home. That was 22 years ago and still to this

day, I have not had any more problems with my colon. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gifts of healing through the power of prayer.

James 5 says, "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much and the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up." That is what Jesus did for me through my adversity.

\* \* \* \*

## BENEFITS OF RESURRECTION!

The Bible is full of commands. But do you know which one is the most common?

**Don't be afraid.** You'll find it 365 times in Scripture—including several times in the Easter story. "Don't be afraid" were the first words the angel told those who showed up at the tomb on Easter morning. They were also the first words Jesus spoke after the resurrection. It's no wonder why it's a common theme in the Bible and the Easter story: Fear is humanity's most common problem.



**Ron Corzine**  
**Ft. Worth, Texas**

You might not think you're a fearful person. But you rarely realize how many of your decisions are based on fear, such as the fear of what people think of you and the fear of failure.

But Easter brings good news! Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, you can now live free from being controlled by fear.

The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, "[Jesus] included everyone in his death so that everyone could also be included in his life, a resurrection life, a far better life than people ever lived on their own" When you live according to the resurrection of Christ, the Bible says you're living a better life, a life free from fear. There are many truths about the resurrection that will set you free.

**First, we need to acknowledge that Jesus is the TRUTH and tells the truth.** Throughout history many people have claimed to be God or the Messiah—but only one proved it. The Bible says, "[Jesus] was declared to be God's Son with great power by rising from the dead" (Romans 1:4 NCV).

Without the resurrection, you couldn't trust anything Jesus said. But you can trust what Jesus says about God, heaven, and everything else He taught because He rose from the dead just like He said He would. When you understand Jesus tells the truth and that you can trust what He says, it becomes easier to let go and rise above your fears.

**Second, you know death isn't the end.** Until Jesus rose from the dead, you didn't know if there was life after death, because there was no proof. Jesus changed that. The Bible tells us, "God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, and we know that God will also raise us with Jesus" (2 Corinthians 4:14 NCV). You don't need to fear death, because Jesus' resurrection shows us that death isn't the end of the story. It's really the beginning of your eternal life in God's presence.

Learning to live without fear will transform your life now!

## DAY 3: BECAUSE HE LIVES

*“Because I live, you will live also.” John 14:19*

Bill and Gloria Gaither wrote this beautiful heartfelt song “Because He Lives” over 50 years ago. It remains still a favorite of so many today. Like many powerful songs that touch us deeply, these lyrics were written through personal pain, hardship, and difficulty. We all will have our moments of frustration, anxiety, and anguish. While we may not know what tomorrow holds, we can know who holds our tomorrow. Because He lives our hope, and our future is in God’s hands! Dear friends, stand firm in the assurance that we can all face uncertain days **BECAUSE HE LIVES!**

### Because He Lives

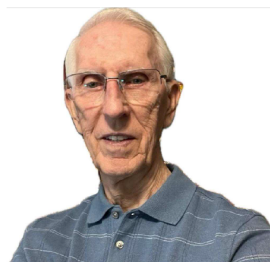
The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of eight staves of music with lyrics underneath. Chord symbols are placed above the notes. The score includes a repeat sign at the beginning and a 3-measure repeat at the end.

God sent His Son they called Him Je - sus, He came to  
hold a new-born ba - by, And feel the  
love heal, and for - give: He lived and died to buy my  
pride, and joy He gives: But great - er still the calm as -  
par - don, An emp - ty grave is there to prove my Sa - viour  
sur - ance, This child can face un - cer - tain days be - cause He  
lives Be - cause He lives I can face to - mor - row, Be - cause He  
lives all fear is gone; Be - cause I know He holds the  
fu - ture, And life is worth the liv - ing just be - cause He lives.  
2)How sweet to lives.

## DAY 4: WHEN THINGS AREN'T GOING RIGHT (FOR ME)

*"Trust in the LORD and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do It . . ." Psalm 37:1-6*

In 1996, our missionary organization changed leadership and direction. Instead of allowing the missionary to follow God's call, we were told to stop what we were doing to reach the lost and learn a new way to reach the lost. A model for doing missions from the other side of the world was imposed on our Latin American context and missionaries. It became evident that one could either work with their model or pack it up and go home.



**Joe Powell  
Pryor, Oklahoma**

Many did leave the field. Some of us tried to leave the field. My wife and I even packed trunks to send to the States with volunteer missionaries that were coming to work in projects that we had going and were to finish. We were reassigned in the new organization as leaders of a low-income population segment team.

I was mad, disappointed, depressed, disillusioned, and confused to mention a few emotions. Those are not good characteristics for a leader. It was in that condition, that our Mission Board sent us to Richmond, Virginia for training. We did it and learned what they wanted, but I came back to the field still wanting to do missions my way.

One morning sometime after coming back from training, I read Psalm 37:1-7 in my morning devotional time.

*"Trust in the LORD and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do It . . . Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him;"*



That passage changed my attitudes and emotions and once again put joy in me and into serving God. Nothing changed in the organization, but God's Word led me to trust in the Lord, to do good in many areas of ministry, and delight that I was doing God's will and not mine. God's Word took me from the pit of despair to retirement and by doing it His Way!



## DAY 5: RISING UP TO SEE OTHERS THE JESUS WAY

*“Lift up your eyes and look on the fields,  
for they are white already to harvest.” John 4:35*



**Gayle and Myrna Brogdon**  
Los Fresnos, Texas

For four years (1980-1984) I worked part time as an adjunct professor at the University of Texas at Brownsville supervising student teachers. One day in May 1984 I was in a classroom supervising a student teacher and the thought came: “If I went back to teaching, I’d have to get all these classroom resource materials, because I have none. What am I saying? I don’t ever want to go back teaching in the public schools! NEVER!!!”

When I arrived home that afternoon, the local superintendent was in our home looking at Gayle’s collection of antique clocks. Out of the blue, he asked, “Myrna, I’d like you to teach in our district.”

I smiled thinking, “NO WAY”, but I sweetly and politely replied, “I’ll think (pray) about it.” After he left, I shared with Gayle the strange thoughts I had while supervising the student teacher earlier that day and now a superintendent comes to my home asking me to apply.

Gayle laughed and said, “I asked God to put you back into teaching.”

“WHAT?? That’s not fair. How many times did you pray?” I asked.

Still smiling, Gayle replied, “ONE. It only takes one for God to answer.”

Upset, I prayed. I was having trouble submitting to what Gayle wanted. A month later, the superintendent returned to our house saying, “Myrna, I now have two positions and you can have either one.” Now what superintendent goes to someone’s home and asks two different times to apply for a job. NONE! But this one did. It was so obvious that God was showing what He wanted.



**Alfredo Mayorga**  
Lawrenceville, Georgia

“Lord, I hear You. I will submit to You and Gayle and look at the schools as a mission field...to see others the Jesus way!”

As a result, God opened amazing doors that 1984-85 school year as I taught the fifth grade! Alfredo Mayorga (who was one of my 5<sup>th</sup> graders) went to church with us on Wednesday nights and 40 years later we still stay in contact. Therefore, we mailed him Books 1-5: GOD STORIES And More booklets and pray for God to touch and bless his life.

## **DAY 6: RISING FROM REJECTION**

*“For a righteous man may fall seven times. And rise again.” Proverbs 24:16*

Many years ago, I was a young adult in my twenties. I had been attending a new church. I started to get involved in serving in one of the ministries. Things were going well and I enjoyed being in fellowship with others my age. We met weekly, prayed and studied the Bible. At some point, leadership made a decision that abruptly ended my involvement. I did not understand then nor do I know to this day why the change was made. It was my first time to experience rejection from a spiritual authority. It stung! To be honest, it really derailed me. I was really hurt. I finally spoke to my leader and shared my feelings. They were incredibly gracious and apologized for causing me hurt. To say I was gun-shy after that event is putting it mildly.



**Leigh Aten**  
**Brownsville, Texas**

One day, I attended a group that met at someone's home. I met a lady who would later become a dear friend! She understood the pain that I had experienced and my hesitancy to begin serving again. She ministered to me and helped me heal. I know God has placed her in my life to show compassion, understanding and wisdom.

I have since served in many areas of ministry. I wish I could say that I never experienced rejection, anger or disappointment while serving. That is not reality, though. People are imperfect. Jesus is the only perfect One! Luke 17 promises that offenses will come and woe to him through whom they come. God deals with all of our hearts! I thank God that He comes to bind up the brokenhearted. He restores our souls.



## **DAY 7: GOD DOES MORE BEHIND US THAN IN FRONT OF US!**

*“For He shall give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.” Ps.91:11*



**Maria Elena Rivera**  
San Antonio, Texas

Psalms 91 is a powerful prayer of protection and safety we have abiding in His presence. I have been praying this psalm daily for me and my family for over a year.

Recently, I went to the post office and as I was backing out of the parking space, I hit a SUV. I was being extra careful and checking the back right side where the traffic was coming from. Since there were no cars coming, I proceeded to move, not realizing that an SUV had stopped right behind me. Of course, I hit it (my fault). The impact was loud, so the driver of the SUV got out and went to assess the damage. I also got down and quickly apologized. I could tell by her

countenance that she was angry but at the same time she just kept looking at her car. She was apparently looking (and touching) for damage to her vehicle, so I did the same thing. I realized there was no damage to either car. She on the other hand kept trying to find something wrong but couldn't. It was obvious her anger had subsided and was replaced by confusion. When the look of confusion disappeared from her face she finally said, “well I guess there was no damage after all,” and walked away.

**PRAISE GOD!** Don't underestimate the power of HIS word. I believe God supernaturally worked on my behalf and gave me unmerited favor.

### **LESSON LEARNED**

I was at ER all night (several years ago). Why?



**Myrna Brogdon**  
Los Fresnos, Texas

Having turned off the lights to head to the bedroom and knowing the way so well, I walked across our den in total darkness to turn on the hall light. I misjudged the distance and fell hard into a glass cabinet shattering it. My piercing screams woke my hubby, Gayle. He found me in the midst of enormous spiked glass shards. Carefully, but quickly he helped me up and out of the broken glass. Since I'm on blood thinner, the deep cut to the bone in the knuckle of my index finger bled

profusely. Six hours and 9 stitches later, I made it to our bedroom.

**LESSON LEARNED:** Walking in the light is better than walking in darkness...both in the natural and the spiritual.

## DAY 8: ONE MISSION TRIP CHANGED MY LIFE

*“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose for those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28*

After I broke my leg on a mission trip to Guatemala, the flight attendant ushered me to a first-class seat with room for my cast, a free upgrade: just the beginning of the blessings! Back in Ohio, I sat in my living room, unable to drive to work. “God, now what?” I thought about mission team members who spoke only English: preparing refreshments or crafts was about all they could do. With a little Spanish, they could be more effective!

God’s answer: “Sit down and write a book.” What a sense of humor—I was sitting down! Scooting to the table, I opened my laptop and began SPANISH FOR MISSION TRIPS. He guided me so gently, showing me some things I had never thought of while teaching Spanish. After several weeks, I finished creating mission-trip conversations, useful vocabulary, grammar, exercises, and a little culture. But God wasn’t finished. He said in my spirit, “You don’t have church construction.” He was right. My remaining problem: my laptop couldn’t create the columns I needed for a bilingual dictionary.



**Carol Schwarz**  
Harlingen, Texas

Then God provided solutions for the following six weeks: friends from church invited me to move in and teach their son Spanish I, so he could take Spanish II when school started. My heavenly Father also found a family to rent my house. Finally, I was able to move to Texas, which I knew was God’s will. I wanted to learn about mission opportunities on the Mexican border, so friends suggested Harlingen’s The Way of the Cross (located in the Texas Rio Grande Valley).

When volunteers there wanted to learn Spanish, I retrieved the manuscript pages; we prayed that I could create my dictionary. Then, one man called a friend who invited me to his business. Billy’s computer could create columns! Prayers answered! He invited me to type the dictionary at his office. I was teaching, so time was limited. Also, friends and I found a studio and recorded the conversations and vocabulary for accompanying audio tapes. Billy prepared to duplicate the tapes, but technical problems made them useless. So, he built a sound studio, and we started over! Your friendship grew into a happy marriage, indicating two truths: instead of praying for a spouse, pray for someone to help you do what God calls you to do, and trust God to love you and to turn a disaster into many blessings. (Rom. 8:28)

## DAY 9: A RELUCTANT NEIGHBOR

*“Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3:17*



**Norma Powell  
Pryor, Oklahoma**

Last Spring, I was excited about planting a garden. I planted tomatoes, peppers, squash in pots and placed them on my back patio, planted okra, and cherry tomatoes in a flower bed on the side of our house. Since we were new in the neighborhood, I wanted to get to know my next-door neighbor. God is always working around us and one day He started working hard to get me to help my neighbor.

My next-door neighbor had noticed what I had planted and thought that I might be able to help her revive a plant that her daughter had planted at school for a Mother’s Day gift. She wanted her thirteen-year-old daughter to know that she liked the gift and it was important to keep the plant alive. I first thought that I was too busy to help. She asked again if I would help her so I reluctantly said that I would. When she brought the plant to show me, it was already wilted, the soil was hard as a rock and it needed water. I didn’t really think it would live.

We replanted the petunia in a larger pot and added new potting soil and watered it really good. I didn’t know if we had replanted it in time or not to revive it. She took it home and, in a few days, she came bounding across the lawn to show me that the plant was responding to our tender loving care. A few weeks later it bloomed and again she was excited. She was determined to learn how to care for the plant. She found a place on her porch where it got plenty of sunshine to grow just like the petunia. She was faithful to keep it watered and our friendship has grown.

God used that experience to help me meet my neighbor, even when I was reluctant to help, but it turned out a blessing. I learned again that, whatever you do, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father.

“And whatsoever ye  
do in word or  
deed, do all in the  
name of the Lord  
Jesus, giving thanks  
to God and the  
Father by him.”  
Colossians 3:17 KJV

## DAY 10: LORD, HEAR MY CRY!

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.”*

*Proverbs 3:5*

My daughter and her husband went from their home in San Antonio to Dallas for Thanksgiving with his family. Ruth, my daughter, called to tell me they were having a wonderful time, in spite of feeling quite ill. Ruth has been Type I Diabetic for 40 years. The day after Thanksgiving, my daughter went to the emergency room with Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS). This, after two years of extremely hard health issues. Several hospitalizations, near amputation of her foot, debilitating neuropathy, and now this. How much could my precious daughter endure? She was taken directly to ICU in Dallas where she was brought back from the threshold of death at least 5 times. She was in ICU for eight weeks. Soon after, she was transferred to San Antonio, Texas via ambulance. She is now in an acute care facility, still on oxygen, gradually regaining muscle strength with therapy and gradually learning how to catch her breath when her oxygen levels drop. She has been hospitalized 13 weeks at this point.



**Neida Ruth Soto-Grantland  
Brownsville, Texas**

Here is what God did in this: I have been a Christian for 67 of my 76 years. Yet, this evil attack on my peace, sent me to a place of despair. I could not sleep, could not have joy, could not give thanks. Three weeks ago, I was driving into the HEB parking lot. As I turned in, a primal almost animal-like cry rose up out of my chest. Tears flowed out of my eyes as if someone had opened a faucet. I cried “God! You just HAVE to save my daughter! I have trusted you yet I see no change! I am begging you to heal my daughter! PLEASE! LET HER LIVE! I regained my composure, went in and did my grocery shopping. My heart had opened wide and I finally let the Lord see and hear my pain. Shortly after that, we started to see my daughter gain strength. At this point one lung is healed and the other will be as well. I just know it!!

It is so easy to say that we trust God when all is good. When things look hopeless, it takes a *conscious choice* to trust no matter what we see.



## DAY 11: FAILING IS NOT SO BAD



**Ron Corzine**  
**Ft. Worth, Texas**

God loves to turn crucifixions into resurrections. And things that you think are absolutely hopeless, that no way could possibly ever work out, God loves to turn that around. How does God take a minus and turn it into a plus? How does He take the negative things in our lives that are bad or unpleasant and use them for good? The way God turns a minus into a plus is He makes a cross out of it.

I've been thinking about how God loves to turn crucifixions into resurrections, I thought it would be good to talk about failure and how God uses failure in our lives to make us more effective as individuals. We learn far more from failure than we do from success. Personally, I really haven't learned a whole lot from success, but I've learned a lot from failure. Those who know me have heard me say many times, that I've tried more things in church that didn't work than that did. I possibly could write a best-selling book entitled – 500 Ways How To Not Grow a Church. If you don't want to call it failure, just call it getting an education. This being my approach to failure it makes me one educated preacher. Seriously, we really do (or should) learn from our failures.

God's love and care for us don't exempt us from getting an education through failure. We must face the fact that we will fail and make mistakes in our lifetime. God does that for many different reasons. He has allowed for failure. In fact, He included it in the equation for life and living.

Many times you may feel like Job in Job 17:11 where he says "My days are past, my plans are shattered and so are the desires of my heart." Have you ever felt like that? Life isn't a chain of unbroken victories. We all have failures. We all have mistakes and downtimes. There's a predictable pattern that you find in your life and that is that at times you will have a defeat and then disappointment, then discouragement, then depression ("What's the use?" You become apathetic.) Then comes despair ("Why even go on serving or trying?"). You must learn how to deal with failure without letting it devastate you.

Maybe you've recently felt like all your endeavors have brought you nothing but failure. It's time to realize that failure can bring us to a place of triumph and victory.

Remember it looked pretty bleak and hopeless on the night before resurrection morning. Defeat can quickly turn into victory and gloom can quickly be replaced with joy. Have you settled for defeat and failure? Why? We serve a risen and victorious Savior. Because He lives, we live also. Because He is victorious, we too are victorious. It is all about the right perspective. How is yours?

## DAY 12: LEARNING AND GROWING!

*“Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth:  
Unite my heart to fear thy name.” Psalms 86:11*

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;  
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. Psalm 32:8*

As a young Christian when God would show me something in my life that He wanted changed, I would berate myself and get very discouraged that I had missed the mark and felt I had deeply disappointed the Lord. Of course, I'd repent and then do it, but it was always hard to receive the spiritual instruction.

After years of reacting with this negative attitude, one day the Lord said, “Myrna, you don't expect your children to make their bed when they're too small to do so, right?”

“You're right, Lord!” I wondered where He was going with this.

He continued with this analogy, “Yet when you knew they were older and ready, you showed them and they did it. It's the same for you. I show you when you are spiritually ready to live out my Word in a particular area! I know it's the right time and that with my help you can do it.”

That encouraging revelation changed my perspective and life drastically from that day till now. I rose up from my negative reaction to the Lord's instruction to a heart of gratitude that God with His marvelous love is shaping my desires to align with His. I'm still **“Learning and Growing!”**



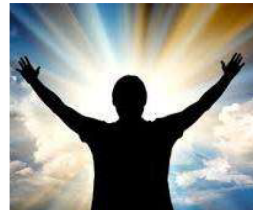
**Myrna Brogdon**  
Los Fresnos, Texas

## CALL OUT!

Throughout the Bible it says to call out to God in times of trouble.

Examples:

- “Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Psalm 50:15).
- “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jeremiah 33:3).
- “The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles” (Psalm 34:17).



If you're experiencing troubles, **CALL OUT** to God. He hears you!



## DAY 13: OUR DESIRES ARE IN THE HEART OF GOD

*"Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4*



**Bobby and Lynn Crow**  
**Missionaries**  
**CD. Victoria, Tam. Mexico**

In the early years of our ministry here in Mexico I (Lynn) had a desire but had no money. I had decided to decorate our bedroom in our rental home when we moved to Mexico but money was very tight and so I saved until I had enough for some simple changes that would be fresh, bright and cheap. I wanted the room to be melon color and beige. So, I bought material and made curtains. Then I found a melon color bedspread and bought that. Now for wall decorations. I found two frames in melon color; boy was I excited. An idea came to me to look at greeting cards to see if I could find a card with a scripture on it but the card would have to be beige and melon color. Can you believe it? The first place I looked for cards **THERE WAS THE CARD!** Beautiful card in melon and beige and with a scripture. So, I bought it and continued to look for the 2<sup>nd</sup>. card that would go in the matching frame. But I never could find another card. So here is my newly decorated room but with both frames on the wall, but one frame was empty.

For over 6 months, every time we were in the States, I would look for another card but never found one. I keep suggesting to the Lord that there was a match to my card and I sure would love to receive it or buy it, to complete my decorations. Another few months went by and Bobby had to make a trip to the border. He returned and brought in mail. He handed me an envelope from my niece who had never written me before (or never wrote me again). I opened the envelope excited to get mail in a foreign country and to hear from family. When

I pulled out the card, there it was, **MY MATCHING CARD!** Yes, the exact size, melon color and beige and with a different scripture on front. After shouting and dancing around for a while I read the card. God not only brought me good news from family, but He gave me the desires of my heart when my niece (led by God) found the only match to my card! **THIS IS THE LOVE OF A FATHER!**



\* \* \* \*

## DAY 14: WORLD CITIZEN

*“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.” Ephesians 2:19*  
*“...our citizenship is in heaven.” Philippians 3:20*

Since retiring from public education, I have had the privilege of visiting over fifty countries on five different continents. Some of my traveling has been for fun: riding elephants in Thailand, climbing Machu Picchu in Peru, and going on a safari in Nepal are among my many experiences. I have also had the opportunity to teach English at a Christian school in Mexico, serve as a school administrator in Albania, and fill various roles at a Christian school in Bangladesh. These experiences have allowed me to rub elbows with believers who, as God's people, share my citizenship in heaven. My brothers and sisters in Christ might speak a different language, look differently, and might have different customs, but we all love and serve the same Lord Jesus. Our bond is inseparable as we are citizens of the same heavenly realm.



**Tim Snyder**  
Bangladesh  
Olmito, Texas

Regardless of whether you like to travel or not, the world is a small place and getting smaller all the time. Our brothers and sisters in Christ, our fellow citizens of heaven, come in all sizes, shapes and colors. The common bond we share, Christ, is more important than our differences, our politics, or what passport we carry. I feel blessed that while my earthly citizenship will one day end, my heavenly citizenship is eternal.

## MY TESTIMONY

*“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13*

I praise the Lord for the healing that is taking place in my body. After 15 months of pain, loss of strength and flexibility, 4 hospitalizations and many tests, scans and medications I am seeing progress of great changes in my body. I prayed for the Lord to lead me to the right doctors, to give them wisdom and the correct medications. Yesterday I went for my 3rd infusion and my lab results in everything were within the range. My CK levels which indicate inflammation were at 3,900. Today they are at 26. High CK levels cause inflammation which kills cells in the muscles, damages kidneys and the liver. I encourage you to seek God's wisdom in everything and trust Him so that you may receive your healing,



**Liz Avitia**  
Brownsville, Texas

## DAY 15: RISING OUT OF ADDICTION

*"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36*



**Jacob Plattner**  
Searcy, Arkansas

Hatred is described as an intense feeling of dislike, aversion, or hostility toward someone or something. Why did I hate something so much that I claimed did not exist? A common question that I asked myself before my conversion. I was an avid atheist, I hated the church, I was 19 or so when I first started “repenting.” But my public devotion was only a cover up to get my friends and family off my back. Instead of doing what Christians “should” be doing in church, I had spent most of my time in church cleaning cocaine residue out of my nose from the night before. I was the perfect epitome of a hypocrite.

I was 13 when I first fell in love. She gave me security and an escape from the reality that surrounded me. Her name was cocaine. Little did I know I would spend the next 7 years of my life wrapped around her finger. I was very good at hiding my relationship with her along with smoking, drinking, sex, and all the other attributes that usually come with a bohemian lifestyle. Of course, I had consequences. I spent time in alternative schools, behavior programs, jail, and endured many lectures from my elders trying tirelessly to steer me on the right path. But, a true victim of addiction will never change his ways without a spiritual experience that cannot be explained by secular comprehension.

My admission to Capstone Treatment Center was the final turning point of my life. It took a few weeks in the program until I finally decided to attempt to get sober. I was unsure of what my purpose was and out of ultimate desperation, I uttered a prayer asking God to take over my life. Almost immediately, He did. I discovered my calling to help young men with addiction.

After I was released, I was transferred to spend my summer at Patton Sober Living in Dallas, Texas before my fall semester at Harding University. I was eventually offered a job there in which I declined unless I felt a calling away from Harding. Not even 30 minutes later, I received news that I had an outstanding warrant in Indiana that could not be expunged. I was facing several months which would ultimately prohibit me from attending school in the fall. I turned myself in and entered the hearing after spending 4 days in an isolated

cell. I was sentenced 15 days, which was the exact time I needed in order to make it to the first day of class.

I am now in my second semester at Harding University 14 months sober. I got baptized on September 24, 2023 at Highway Church of Christ in Judsonia, Arkansas. I have dedicated my life toward helping others like me, broken young men in the grips of addiction. I am extremely blessed to witness God's grace around me every single day. Even though during my earlier lifestyle decisions/actions were taken and people were hurt, but due to God's grace I was able to change my life.

### **DAY 16: SHARE GOD'S LOVE OVER A \$5 MEAL**

*"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink..." Matthew 25:35*

I live close to the bridge bordering USA/Mexico and I often go across to Mexico to shop. I always take something to share like Christian tracts, bibles, toys, clothes, and school supplies.

Recently my neighbor and I made a quick trip to Mexico to buy pet medicine and did not pack anything to give out. It was around four in the afternoon and we were on our way back when a young teenage boy approached us and asked for money to buy food. I ignored his plea and walked on. He followed us and again he repeated his request. I suddenly stopped and told him I would buy him a meal at the Taco Stand across the street. He agreed. [sometimes they just want the money.] I ordered three tacos and a soft drink.



**Maria Ellwood**  
**Santa Maria, Texas**

While his order was being prepared, I asked if he attended church and he said, "sometimes". I told him about God's love for him and salvation through Jesus Christ.

His meal was served. I prayed for him, for the food and the person who prepared it. He thanked me and said, "God bless you." As I walked away this bible verse came to mind:

"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink...Matthew 25:35. I thank the Lord for the opportunity to share God's love over a \$5.00 meal.

\* \* \* \*

## **DAY 17: IT JUST TAKES ONE!**

*“But Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” Matthew 19:26*



**Yvette Perez**  
**Kingsville, Texas**

In 2012, the lower Rio Grande Valley area was saturated with newly certified teachers, and some districts from Brownsville to McAllen, Texas had frozen employment. As a late bloomer, I had decided to pursue my graduate degree and graduated, but I knew that it was finally time to tackle my first year of teaching. Although I am not originally from deep south Texas, I had fallen in love with a special school district known for exceptional students, academic success, and I had learned that many of the schools had prayer groups at each of their campuses. I knew that THIS was where the Lord was leading me.

My professor mentor mentioned that many of the graduates from our College of Education were being forced to commute and make a daily two-hour round trip. I greatly valued my mentor’s advice as he cautioned me to apply to as many districts as possible. He asked me to seek employment in McAllen, a city a little over an hour away. I listened and understood his concern, but I boldly told him that Jesus loved me and that I would get a job at the district of my choice. My heart was set and I believed.

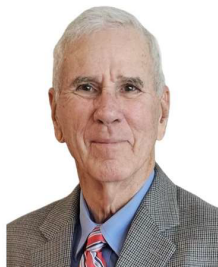
Two weeks before school began, my mentor summoned me to his office and asked me if I had any prospects. I told him that I had none. He said time was running out and that I may have to miss a school year, and I told him again that I believed that God would make a way for me. He smiled as if he felt bad for me. I walked away trying to remain strong, and ran into a teacher from my dream district who always said she appreciated my help. When she saw my face, she asked me what was wrong. I explained the entire story. She gave me a hug and returned to her class but said, over her shoulder, that she was going to make a phone call.

Within two hours, I was sitting in the principal’s office at the elementary school I would be blessed to serve for four years and remained in the school district of my heart for eleven years teaching middle school science until we decided it was time for our family to move. Proudly, I was named Elementary Teacher of the Year in 2016, a true honor. I cherish the years I served the community, my church, and the most amazing students. What amazes me even now, is that the Lord showed me that with Him, all things are possible. I love my mentor dearly and still seek his advice. He still smiles when I remind him that it only took ONE application, because there is only ONE God. I will serve Him forever.

## DAY 18: DEVASTATING NEWS...? STAND FIRM!

*“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.  
Do everything in love.” 1 Corinthians 16:13-14*

Recently a storm hit with howling winds and torrential rain hammering against our solidly built home. We knew our house would stand having successfully gone through many storms and hurricanes in previous years. Even though this storm seemed it would never end, by morning it was gone with the wet ground as evidence it had once been there. Our house had stood firm. Our lives are like this house. Throughout our lives many storms will hit and reveal the strength of our faith. Will we get blown away and fall? Or will we stand firm on the Word of God, trusting the Lord to bring us through it?



**Gayle Brogdon  
Los Fresnos, TX**

Jesus told a story of the wise and foolish builders to stress the importance of obedience to His words (Matthew 7:24-27) and how to handle the storms of life. He said,

*“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” Matthew 7:24-27*

What storm or devastating news has hit your life recently?

- A son or daughter living an unrighteous lifestyle?
- A life-threatening health prognosis for you or a loved one?
- Dealing with a difficult or broken relationship?
- A financial crisis?
- Death of someone you love?

What will you do? Obedience to Christ does not eliminate the tempests of life, but it does determine whether we fall or stand in the storm. **Stand firm in faith.** This storm will soon pass.

**Stand Firm**  
*in faith*

## DAY 19: MENDIN FENCIN

*“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*



**Al and Kathy Carroll  
Brookshire, Texas**

forgave him, I went. The owner yelled angrily and spewed obscenities. So, I left, knowing I had forgiven the man and had tried to make amends even though I never got paid for that job.

At that time, I had no jobs and no income. Then out of nowhere, I received several unexpected jobs nearby in a countryside area. I knew the Lord had provided that income that greatly exceeded the amount I had lost from the last job where I didn't get paid. God had worked everything out for good (Romans 8:28). Plus, I was able to add a new skill. Some of the jobs included mending fences, which I had never done before, but quickly learned how and liked it more than what I had been doing. So, I put MENDIN FENCIN on my truck as my business sign.

I realized that name, MENDIN FENCIN, is so perfect. Not only am I now MENDIN FENCIN in the natural for a living, but I have also done MENDIN FENCIN in my heart spiritually to clear any unforgiveness of years gone by.

What about you? Do you need MENDIN FENCIN in your heart, today?

A large check from a recent home remodeling job I did was returned due to insufficient funds. So, I (Al) tried to approach the owner, a former marine, about it, but the inebriated owner began cursing obscenities while at the same time trying to punch me in the nose. When I leaned as far backward as I could to avoid the blow, the 400 lb. owner missed and fell to the ground, ending up in the hospital.

Feeling an urging from the Holy Spirit to go to the hospital to tell the owner I



\* \* \* \*

## DAY 20: A MERRY HEART!

*“A merry heart does good like medicine.” Proverbs 17:22*

In 2015, we were at our San Marcos, Texas condo and I (Myrna) was feeling cooped up. I asked Gayle if he wanted to spend the day driving around the Hill Country to towns we'd never seen. He asked which town and I excitedly replied “Marble Falls”.



**Gayle and Myrna Brogdon**  
Los Fresnos, Texas



Gayle gave me a deadpan look with a small smirk and said, “Why Marble Falls? Did you lose something there?”

Gayle's one-liners always catch me off guard and keep me laughing. During our 60 years of marriage his witty sense of humor has been like medicine, just as Proverbs 17:22 says, “A merry heart does good like medicine.”

## MY PARKING LOT ANGEL

I had finished my grocery shopping for the week and the bag boy was putting the bags into the trunk of my car. We were standing there when suddenly a truck began roaring through the parking lot, driving erratically, bumping into cars. It was coming closer to us, then suddenly it crashed into the next car to where I was standing. I was **caught in between** the two vehicles. The neighboring car ran over my foot, then bounced off. My sandals had tire marks on them!



**Sandy Green**  
Harlingen, Texas

The Police came and the EMS. I did go to clinic to have x-rays made and miraculously I had no broken bones or injuries...not even my foot that had been run over!! I was just dazed and sore. The truck continued its random ride and finally was stopped at a curb. Mystery solved. A dad had left his young son in the truck while he ran into the store. I guess the kid thought it was time for an adventure.

♪Angels watching over me my Lord♪ Matthew 18:10



## **DAY 21: RISING UP PAIN FREE!**

*“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:15*



**Myrna Brogdon**  
**Los Fresnos, Texas**

**SHARP EXCRUCIATING BACK PAIN!** My health had drastically declined from Nov. 2022 to Dec. 10, 2023. Upon reflecting, all the physical health attacks started when God began calling us to serve Him in a new way. It seemed like the enemy was trying to hinder God’s work and calling.

On a July 2022 morning God put in my heart to invite the Indiana women from the church we attended to come to small group breakfasts at our condo plus have each attendee share a God story of something God did in, for, or through them. At the last breakfast on Nov. 2022, I cooked from 3am until the ladies arrived at 9am. Severe sharp back pain hit and I couldn’t get out of my chair or walk without assistance, but we all still shared our God Stories that day. Even though I was still in pain, we flew home to Texas three days later.

Still in pain at home, Gayle and I realized our adult children and grandchildren hadn’t heard our God Stories; so, we compiled them into a book called, “**GOD STORIES And More**” as family Christmas gifts. Then Gayle said, “We’re NOT finished, but this book is an answer to our Nov. 2022 prayer, “Lord, how can we reach people who haven’t received Christ as their Savior?” The Lord made it known He was calling us to serve Him through **GOD STORIES**. Thus, in 2023 **GOD STORIES And More** booklets (English/Spanish) were created to reach out to others with the love of Jesus Christ.

I had gone to the doctor and after numerous tests, and pain meds, I still had the severe pain. Nothing helped. We had a Dec. 9, 2023 **GOD STORIES** Christmas Celebration in our home and afterwards the tables and chairs were put up in the garage. The next morning, I walked into the garage behind Gayle and without noticing where I was walking, I tripped over the chairs falling extremely hard on my right side where the excruciating back pain had been for over a year. I thought this is not good. Will I be worse off now? There was no pain. None at all. Days later there was still no pain.

The next week I went to the doctor’s appointment that had already been scheduled. I told the PA what happened and that there was no more pain showing her by twisting from side to side. Astonished, yet very pleased, she quickly remarked, “God gave you an adjustment.”

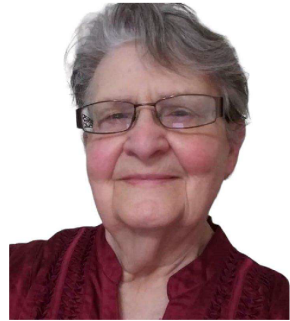
Thank You, Lord, for raising me up pain free!

## DAY 22: WHEN I WAS MADE IN SECRET

*“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts,<sup>[a]</sup> God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.” Psalm 139:13-18*

I hadn't been home very long after giving birth to a beautiful little baby. She was our third child. We had two boys already so it was such a joy to have a little girl. But the voice in my head said "what are you doing having babies for? You know you should never have been born." I thought about those words: You know you should never have been born.

When I was in high school, I was looking for my birth certificate in my mom's hope chest. I found it, but then I found their marriage certificate and saw they had lied about when they had gotten married. But at that moment it didn't bother me because they did get married and were still together and they had wanted me.



**Bonnie Brynteson  
Warroad, Minnesota**

Later that day I told my mom what I had found so we talked. She said that they had to get permission from both sides of the family in order to get married and they also were seniors in high school. This also meant they had to keep it a secret. My dad's mother, Grandma Nelson, said she would bless them only if they promised to bring me to the church and have me dedicated to the Lord when I was born. I will always call my grandmother a real Christian because she would share with me scripture when I was very young. I “Found Jesus” at a young age and loved reading the Bible.

Now here I was married, starting a family and we were pastoring a church out on the prairies of South Dakota. I believe the spirit of God led me to read Psalm 139:13-18 during that time. This was God's answer to that voice that was not mine. "You (God) formed me...I was not hidden from you when I was made in secret...You wrote me in your book with future plans...Your thoughts were precious towards me and you were with me when I was born (when I woke up).”

Joy filled my heart one day when the thought came to me, I was at my mom and dad's wedding!

## DAY 23: STILL USEFUL!

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5 & 6*



**Tim Snyder**  
**Chittagong, Bangladesh**  
**Olmito, Texas**

I have been told that there are three stages of a good retirement; the go-go years, the slow-go years, and the no-go years. I retired from public education after thirty-one years of service and was looking forward to my go-go years of retirement. At fifty-two, I felt like I still had some gas in my tank and could be of some service to God's kingdom. However, God's plan was not as easy as going from point A to point B.

As I was finishing my paperwork for retirement, my wife, Ludi, and I got involved with some mission agencies in Central America. The primary one that we got involved with was in the beautiful country of Nicaragua. The Americans involved in the ministry were desperate for some additional help as they were only in the country part-time. Details were agreed to and promises were made. As I officially retired, everything was headed in a positive direction.

Within six months, everything crashed as the details we agreed to unraveled very quickly. Ludi and I had been at a point where we were ready to buy a home in Nicaragua and spend a great deal of our time in the “Land of Lakes and Volcanoes.” We had also come to the point that the national staff had become like family to us. The disruption of it all left me quite disoriented and discouraged. I might expect this from the world, but not my fellow believers in Christ.



Feeling bewildered I went to my all-time favorite scripture. Though I was very hurt, I trusted in the Lord and did not lean on my own understanding. I was disappointed and disillusioned, but God was with me through it all. He has allowed me to do the things I love doing during my go-go years of retirement, travel all over the USA and the world, and eventually led me to get involved with another ministry, Teach Beyond, which has opened doors for me to serve Him in several countries and schools around the world. While what happened in

Nicaragua left me discouraged, I kept my trust in Him. And He never disappoints when we give Him our trust.

## DAY 24: IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

*"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*

Several years ago, I had an embolic stroke. To prevent a 2nd (more severe) stroke, my neurologist suggested that I take a 325mg aspirin; add B12, Folic Acid, & Omega 3 supplements to my daily routine, & lose 70+ pounds via daily exercise & a nutritional diet.

Even though I followed my doctor's suggestions faithfully for 9 months, I had another, more devastating, stroke. I suffered many cumulative losses; including: employment, cognitive ability, independence, and stability. These losses led to substantial grief & one of its many stages: depression.

Following a professional's evaluation, the final diagnosis revealed suicidal depression. Only one absolute remained intact, my faith in Jesus.

I don't think I would have ever committed suicide, but all I thought about was death, as if it was knocking incessantly at my door. "Why didn't I die, Lord? Why didn't You take me home? Please, God, let me die tonight." Every morning, I woke up mourning the fact that I was still alive.

Overnight my cognitive ability went from that of an overachiever, striving to reach 200%, down to a mere 3%. I couldn't even add 2 plus 3. I couldn't reach even 100% perfection, let alone 200%.

God created the brain with an awesome ability to rewire. During my time of recovery, He began to reconnect dendrites, neurons, synapses, etc. to once dormant areas of my brain, which were able to take over the functions that I had lost. Little-by-little, HOPE began to rise up. Instead of pushing beyond God's grace-filled standard of 100%, I found myself thrilled and satisfied with my new normal: 80%!

While navigating many struggles post stroke, I walked into a new life. NO more STRESS! Now I am able to live within God's grace instead of trying to reach beyond it. I love my new life! My life is actually better post stroke than before my first one. I can now confidently say, there is LIFE after a stroke, and ... "IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE!"

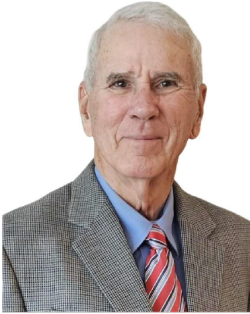


**Debbie Diehl  
Harlingen, Texas**



## **DAY 25: YOU ARE MADE TO FLY!**

*“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” Isaiah 40: 31*



**Gayle Brogdon**  
**Los Fresnos, Texas**

A farmer saw a baby eagle that had fallen out of the nest. He decided that the safest place to put the baby eagle was in the pen with the chickens.

Each day the baby eagle would walk into the chicken yard and see the chickens pecking and scratching at the ground. Seeing this, the eagle decided that he must be a chicken and this must be what all chickens do so he began pecking and scratching the ground also.

One day as the baby eagle was walking around pecking and scratching the ground, he heard a voice say to him, “What do you think you are doing?”

The baby eagle said, “I am a chicken and I am pecking and scratching for food like the rest of the chickens.”

Sitting on a large tree limb overlooking the chicken pen was a fully-grown, beautiful adult eagle. Speaking in a loud voice to the young eagle he said, “You are not a chicken so you should not be scratching and pecking at the dirt like one. You are an eagle and you are a majestic bird made to fly and soar high in the sky.”

The young eagle responded and said, “I do not know how to fly, but I want to learn.”

The big eagle said, “I will teach you. I want you to move to the very end of the chicken pen, and then run as fast as you can, flap your wings and jump up towards the sky.” So, the little eagle backed up and ran as fast as he could, flapping his wings and jumped towards the sky but he fell into the dirt. The big eagle, sitting on the tree limb, hollered down to the small eagle to get up and try again. After several tries, the little eagle was getting discouraged, but the big eagle would not let him quit. “Try again, get up and try again.”

Finally, as the young eagle was running as fast as he could run, flapping his wings he jumped up towards the sky, and he was able to fly out of the chicken pen. He was so excited that he was finally able to fly in the sky as an eagle. He could soar on the currents of the wind high above the ground, utilizing his God given abilities to complete his role here on earth.



If the adult eagle had not seen the plight of the young eagle, he would still be living in a chicken pen, scratching and pecking the ground like a chicken. Someone recognized that just because he lived with chickens and acted like one, he was not a chicken. His physical characteristics and abilities were much different than that of a chicken but because he knew no difference, he acted just like one even though he had the potential to accomplish so much more. Someone had to see his abilities and help him be what God intended him to be: an eagle and not a chicken. (Author unknown)

Daily God calls Christians to be eagles in their lives with Him . . . not to say and do like the world does, but to live as a Christian and soar high, looking down from the vantage point of the eagle to see the field as a mission field -- to reach out to others with the love of Jesus Christ and encourage them to fly, too. You are made to fly!

## **RISE AND REFRESH**

*“The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.” Proverbs 11:25*

Last year, we had a few rough patches. We lost two family members, experienced a few financial setbacks and had some challenging relationships. Through it all, God has been faithful! He knows exactly what we need! Even when others forget, dismiss or ignore, God does not forget our labor of love. He is so gracious to send us refreshing!

We recently took a trip out of town. While on our trip, a couple reached out to us to see if we had time to visit with them. We had not seen this couple for five years! Before that, they had owned the franchise that my husband worked for. Every year, they took us on an all-expense paid vacation. They intentionally showed their appreciation through words of affirmation, gifts and quality time! Even though five years had passed, we picked right up from where we left off. We exchanged news of our lives over a beautiful dinner. The gratitude and love they lavished on us was unexpected and filled us up! We said our goodbyes and drove away with such joy, love and gratitude. It was a divine appointment!



**Leigh Aten**  
**Brownsville, Texas**

I am reminded of the scripture in Psalms 8:4, “what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” God really used them to refresh our weary souls!

## DAY 26: MY JOURNEY WITH GOD

*“Repent and turn to God, performing deeds worthy of repentance.” Acts 26:20*



**Esteban Saldivar**  
Brownsville, Texas

When I was 29 years old, I thought I was okay with God. On the contrary, I still went out with my so-called friends and slowly distanced myself from Him.

My closest relationship with God started when I got into trouble for hanging out with the wrong crowd. My so-called friends turned their backs on me and I fell into a trap. It felt like my world had ended. The only true friend I could fall on was my Lord Jesus Christ. Everything I had learned about Him along the way came into play during this time. I turned my focus away from my problem and turned to God and everything fell into place. I got to experience a relationship with Him like I had never experienced before. Focusing on Him now turned out to be the best time of my life. I placed my problems on the cross and focused on my relationship with Christ. “He then made my paths straight.” Proverbs 3:6

As a result, I learned how to read the Bible. I started attending a men’s prayer group that supported my walk with God and also served in His ministry. I was “performing deeds worthy of repentance” (Acts 26:20). It was such an honor and privilege. I had never experienced God like this. He assured me everything was going to be okay by trusting in Him and experiencing His presence. I realized who my true friend is and since then I have a deeper relationship with my Savior and defender, Jesus Christ.

\* \* \* \*



## DAY 27: RISING UP FROM FEAR

*“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” 1 John 4:18.*

When I reached seventy, I wondered what gifts did God have for me? How did He want to use me?

Every evening I read the Bible and prayed. Then one evening, as I read the Bible, I began memorizing the chapter. Soon I realized God gave me a gift to memorize His word. The verses became so real and personal to me. It was as if God was speaking to me, and I was blessed.

While talking to a lady at church, I mentioned how I enjoyed memorizing scripture, and she asked if I would share something with the people at church for a Sunday evening service. Oh My! I thought. It scared me so much, but I felt like this is something I could do for the Lord. Perhaps the Lord is talking to me, so I said, yes, I would do it. She told me to let her know when I was ready.

The lady told the pastor about my memorizing scripture and he gave the OK for me to recite something. Perhaps it would be an encouragement to others to memorize Bible verses, too. I memorized Psalm 139:1-18, 23, 24. Soon I was ready and the Sunday evening came. I was nervous and afraid. I kept thinking about the verse in 1 John 4:18 that says, “...perfect love casts out fear”. How I prayed and prayed that God would use me and open up my mouth, talk through me, and help me not to be afraid.

Then the Sunday evening came and it was time for me to recite the verses from Psalm 139. As I opened my mouth to speak, I realized that all the people in the pews looked like gray cloudy poles. I could not see their faces, and suddenly I was no longer afraid. God had worked a miracle, and God brought the words flowing from my mouth. Praise God! He answered all my prayers. How I love Him!

After church, one person told me that he followed along in his Bible and every verse was word for word. I just said, Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord! To Him be the Glory.



**Anita Butler**  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

God's perfect love  
casts out all fear



## **DAY 28: HOW DO I FORGIVE?**

*"Never stop praying, especially for others." Ephesians 6:18a*



**Jan Faught  
Kerrville, Texas**

Yea! It was almost time to retire. After living in the mountains of New Mexico for 10 years where the winters were cold, we were ready to move to the Valley of Texas where it was warm all year. Oh, sandals and capris!

We bought our older white frame dream home on five acres in Harlingen, Texas a year before our retirement date. Every other month we would take a long weekend from work and pull a trailer load of furniture and other household items to the Valley.

One month before our retirement date our yard man, who had taken care of our yard for a year, called to say that our house had been broken into. He boarded up the doors for us. When we arrived, it was evident that our appliances, household furniture and keepsakes had been stolen.

I was so angry about what had been stolen from us and sad about the keepsakes that were taken. Neighbors had seen nothing so police had no lead of suspects. I fussed and fumed daily about the fact that someone had no respect for our property and would steal from us.

I had been asking God to show me how I could turn loose of my anger and hurt. A few months went by and I was still angry and still praying for God's help. One Sunday in church the congregation was repeating the Lord's Prayer as we did each week. As we repeated the phrase, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" I thought of my trespassers. God said to me, "You can pray for them. You can pray that they will come to know Jesus' love and forgiveness."

All these 20 years later when God brings this to my mind occasionally, I still pray that they have found or will find Jesus' love and forgiveness.

## **DAY 29: DON'T GIVE UP – LOOK UP!**

*"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isaiah 65:24.*

The parable in Luke 8:1-8 (read) is a parable of contrast. It is saying God is not like that judge who wouldn't give in, who wouldn't answer until the persistence came through.

Then Jesus told the disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up." *Luke 18:1*. That's what Jesus wants to say to us: Pray and

don't give up. Don't give up, but rather Look up.

I find this story really humorous. There are two different characters -- a powerful judge and a powerless widow. Amazingly, Jesus often chose a rascal to make a point.

In verse 2 we have the description of the judge. He says "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men." This guy didn't seem to care about people.

Along comes this widow in distress. We don't know what her problem was. In those days, if you were a woman, especially a widow, you didn't have any rights.

But this woman was no pushover. She had a problem and she goes to this difficult judge. He wouldn't give her what she wanted. In vs. 4 and 5, we read "For some time he refused, but finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice.'"

I imagine the disciples find this humorous, seeing this impotent widow intimidating this prestigious judge. She had no weapon but her persistence. She becomes a nuisance by badgering him. Finally, he meets his match and, exhausted, he gives in. He says, "Because she keeps bothering me, I'll see that she gets justice so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming." She keeps asking, and finally, just for peace and quiet, he says I will give in. I have felt like that at times as a father and husband.

But is this really how you've got to treat God -- wear Him down with your prayers, keep praying until finally, God says, "For peace and quiet, just to get you off my back I will answer the prayer"? NO!

This is a comparison by contrast. He says "If a heartless judge will help out, how much more can we count on God who loves us to help us out?" v. 7 "Will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off? I tell you He will see that they get their justice and quickly."

The story's point is that God is eager to answer your prayers. You don't have to beg, borrow, badger, pester Him. He's saying, "I'm not like that judge, I'm eager to answer your prayers."



**Ron Corzine**  
**Ft. Worth, Texas**

## DAY 30: ARE YOU A PENNY PICKER-UPPER?

*"...the kindness of God leads you to repentance..." Romans 2:4*



**Myrna Brogdon**  
Los Fresnos, Texas

They weigh down our wallets, rattle around in our vacuum cleaners and are summarily dismissed by most vending machines. You never have enough when you need them, yet their value is so inconsequential that store clerks leave bowls of them by the checkout counter completely unguarded. Still, when the glint of a grubby one on the sidewalk catches our eye, what do we do? Do we stop and pick it up or pass on by?

I pondered this and reflected that years ago as a non-Christian I used to be that grubby penny at the school where I taught.

My world was falling apart due to marriage problems, sickly babies, and almost drowning financially. Angry and hurting inside, I was very difficult to be around. Co-workers avoided me. Yes, I was that grimy penny on the school hallways that educators sometimes noticed, but passed on by. I felt worthless and of no value.

But Betty Thompson, an authentic Christian on campus, noticed. She saw the glint of a grubby penny (my hurting heart) and stopped and picked me up. Betty saw value in me and loved me with the love of Christ by being my friend. She and another colleague prayed daily for God to touch my life and that I would completely surrender my life to Jesus Christ.

Daily she reached out to me with kindness...a smile, encouraging and caring words and acts of kindness. God used this kindness to draw me to Him that led me to repentance. (Rom. 2:4) And I became born again and on-fire for Christ -- a bright, shiny, new penny.

Maybe you know someone who may feel like a grubby penny? God may use you and your kindness to help him/her receive Christ as his/her Savior... thus a bright, shiny, new one. Will you be a "Penny Picker-Upper"?



## **DO YOU WANT JESUS CHRIST TO BE YOUR SAVIOR AND LORD?**

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

Here is a simple prayer to earnestly pray from your heart if you have not yet given your life to Jesus Christ and want to invite Him into yours:

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. I believe that He died for my sins and that You, God raised Him to life. I repent of my sins and ask forgiveness. I choose now to turn from my sins and every part of my life that does not please You. I give myself to You. I want to trust Jesus Christ as my Savior and follow Him as Lord, from this day forward. Guide my life and help me to do Your will. Come reign in my heart, fill me with Your love and Your life, and help me to become a person who is truly loving—a person like You. Live in me and love through me. The Bible says if I confess with my mouth that “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in my heart that God raised Him from the dead, I will be saved (Rom. 10:9). I believe with my heart and I confess with my mouth that Jesus is the Lord and Savior of my life. Thank You, God. In Jesus name. Amen.

If you have prayed this prayer in earnest, you can also know that the angels in heaven are rejoicing because of your commitment to follow Christ. May God Bless You.

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9*



## THANK YOU!

*“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”*

*Proverbs 27:17*

Above all, words can never fully express our heart full of love and gratitude towards You, Jesus Christ, for Who You are, what You've done for and are doing in and through ordinary people ALL for Your Honor and Glory!

We thank each of the Christians who shared in **Book 7: GOD STORIES And More... Because HE LIVES, we can face tomorrow** encouraging messages and their personal stories of what the Lord Jesus Christ did in, through and for them.

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With Christ's love,

*Gayle & Myrna*

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