



**31 DAYS OF TESTIMONY & DEVOTION**

# South Pacific Women Empowered

**Real Life Stories and God's Word  
Transforming Women's Lives**

**Julie Stott**

**31 DAYS**  
*OF*  
***TESTIMONY & DEVOTION***

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# Dedication

This book is dedicated to all generations of women.

My prayer is you will be inspired to live through God's Word and Spirit.





## INTRODUCTION

*SOUTH PACIFIC WOMEN EMPOWERED is a movement birthed out of...*

### **My Testimony**

I am excited to share with you the many amazing things God is doing in women in the South Pacific. My husband and I pastored a church in the USA for twelve years before God led us to the South Pacific region. Our church sat in an abundant harvest

field of many nationalities, which led us to start churches in Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese—in addition with our two regular Sunday morning English services.

The many nations of the world were in Orange County, California’s “backyard,” our very own community. We began to reach out to the poor, broken, and lost. This opened more doors for my dear husband to be invited to their homelands to share the gospel, and this is where his heart became “undone.” He shares his story of people who hid their faith to meet together because it was against the law to openly proclaim their faith in Jesus. He preached in secret-hiding places, where people fell on their faces before God, crying out to Him to make them “better servants” with tears.

From that moment on, my husband and I realized there’s a real global hunger and thirst to know God. My husband left this nation completely undone inside with a great desire to go to people who are desperate to see God’s love for them at all costs. Years later, we were asked to join FMI (Foursquare Missions International), as a Regional Coordinator of the Asia/South Pacific. We knew God was preparing our hearts for this assignment and accepted the unknown journey to reach the unreached.

In preparation, we sent our VISA applications to New Zealand, but at the invitation of the National Leader of Australia we decided to base our family in Sydney. Our goal was to have an excellent flight connection to travel to the many islands that make up the South Pacific. In the past 16 years, we’ve seen an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the GREAT COMMISSION is happening (Matthew 28:19-20). Not knowing what we were assigned to do, we’ve been a part of the end-time harvest

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and now have grown Foursquare to sixteen nations in the South Pacific. We celebrate with all the national leaders that help shape these beautiful island nations with the gospel. We believe *partnership*, encouragement and the power of the Holy Spirit is the reason we have any success. In Acts 1:8 it says, “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*”







WEEK 1

## **My Story** | Julie Stott

In the first years of moving to the South Pacific region with two teenagers, I knew God called me to reach broken women who had lost their identity. I felt passionate in this, even though in my own life I suffered a loss of identity. I admit to you, though I knew that God called us to go to a people from different cultures, and yet I still suffered from my own insecurities. I was still full of joy in the journey, knowing God

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entrusted us with this assignment, but I struggled in my new home with where I fit in this plan of God. It took three years to accept and overcome things inside of me. All the while my dear husband never allowed anything to stop him in what he knew to be God's plan for our lives. No opposition, no negative words or no obstacle will steer him from his goal to reach millions of souls. I admire his bold strength and godly identity. I want to be more like him. God is shaping me into His unique vessel of use, molding my life to be what He has called in His divine plan to reach souls for "His name's sake."

# House Of Prayer

*And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer.'"*

Matthew 21:13

Our little Lighthouse Church was in need of something fresh, as all of us realized we were just going through life busy and trying to maintain. We can fall in a trap by building our own traditions and worshiping God out of what we know to do rather than through the direction of the Holy Spirit. Jerry and I longed for a fresh move of God in our own lives and within our church, and God did just that. We wanted to see it continue in our church, so we held one-hour prayer meetings every Monday night. Picking the most difficult night of the week, it became a sacrificial offering for us and for our church. We told the church we were going to be there every Monday night from 7pm-8pm to worship, intercede, and pray. With no personal agenda, we prayerfully created twelve prayer banners to remind us of the areas of prayer we wanted to focus on. It encouraged intimate prayer time with our Father God. We created another banner that we placed right over the pulpit, which said, "MY house shall be called a house of prayer."

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These were our beginning years of a fresh move of God that birthed a real healing revival in the church. As missionaries, we believe that God will do miracles in the mission field throughout the South Pacific region, and we have seen a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit as we have ministered to others there.

It starts with repentance from old traditions, and the removal of ash from dead embers in our lives to light a fresh fire to burn again for Jesus. God wants us to take care of our vessels daily by removing anything that stands in our way of prayer, so that our prayers are received by our heavenly Father. If we want to see our prayers answered, take time to know the Father God, and worship at His footstool. Give God your ALL and dedicate your life as a house of prayer.

Only a few of our church members attended the Monday night prayer meeting, but it grew into over a hundred people of all ages. God used it to touch our community and family members, and we had healings, miracles, breakthroughs in marriages, finances, and even our youth wanted to bask in the presence of God. It was so powerful that people had a hard time driving home because of the “Presence of God” within their own vessel. These were amazing times that grew the church. People heard the stories of the great miracles that were taking place, and it was all because of prayer. Some people were just driving past our church, when God spoke to them to stop and go in for prayer. We truly became a Lighthouse and beacon of hope in our community.

Today, if you need a fresh touch, take a moment and ask God to cleanse out the ash in your heart. Ask Him to put a fresh touch of fire in you again and to allow your vessel to be God’s house of prayer. As the Aussies would say, “Clean out the rubbish,

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mate!” So now take the time and pray to your heavenly Father with a humble heart. Get ready for 31 days of inspiring testimonies and God’s Word, I know you will never be the same, and you’ll be singing in the Potter’s hands.

Julie Stott

South Pacific

### Prayer

*Lord, here I am. I am coming before You now with a cleansed heart because of the blood of Jesus. I repent from my ways and my traditions. I dedicate my vessel to become a house of prayer, so that You may dwell in me all the more. Jesus, rule and reign in my life. I worship You and ask that You would take out all the rubbish in my life. Thank You for touching me now with Your presence and power. Bring Your revival once again and may You touch many lives with Your miracles! Bring a fresh move in our homes, churches, communities, and in the nations. Amen.*



## God's Love

*In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!*

**Romans 8:37-39**

I got a phone call at around 8:00 p.m. from my cousin's sister telling me her brother was very ill with diabetes and had gone into a deep coma. The next morning, I left immediately and traveled two hours to the Mt. Hagen Hospital in Papua New Guinea. When I arrived, his condition remained the same and God led me to pray, anointing him with oil and rebuking the spirit of infirmity in his body. Praise God, the next day he came out of the coma and fully recovered!

During this same time, my sister called me to share with me about her son who was very ill with stomach problems. He had TB of the abdomen, which made his stomach tight and swollen. The doctor recommended for him to follow up with a medical exam and treatments. When I heard this, I traveled to my nephew's home. Applying the anointing oil I commanded, "...*spirit of infirmity to get out!*" My nephew



received healing by the power of God. Miraculously in both situations, both of them were healed and today are serving God!

There's a beautiful picture of God's love that overcomes sickness and death. He uses us in our communities and families to touch the lives around us with the power of God. His anointing is at work in us and through us. The revelation of God's love filled the hearts of these two teenagers to serve the body of Christ. We are more than conquerors, and neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!

**Salome Tipitap**

**Papua New Guinea**

## Prayer

*Lord, Your love is higher and is deeper than any other. It creates power to heal and restore lives. Use my life, and anoint my hands and words to bring forth miracles today. I am more than a conqueror, and nothing will be able to separate me from Your love. You are for me and with me always. Amen.*

## Don't Be Afraid

*I have called you back from the ends of the earth, saying, "You are my servant." For I have chosen you and will not throw you away. Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*

Isaiah 41:9-10

I grew up consciously living through the reality of God's promise of help, strength and His mighty hand upon my life. I believe that His calling upon one's life starts early on in life and He makes sure that this happens, and it materializes one day through His loving hands, tender mercies, help and guidance. I want to share my testimony, which I believe God used as points of establishing my faith and direction for my life. As with everyone else who is called by the Lord, He was preparing me.

In the Philippines where I was born, I remember when I was around 6-years old when my parents had a horrendous disagreement one evening that led to shouting, throwing of things at each other and physical violence. My uncle escorted my elder brother and me out of the house and into the garden so that we wouldn't see and

hear this happening. Yet, we still heard all the banging and all the unpleasant sounds; and I remember I was so worried, scared and felt helpless.

At this very young age, my knowledge of God was limited. My Sunday school was the only place of some understanding of God, and seeing my mother praying before meals and before going to bed. So on this day, I remember lifting my head up to the dark sky without prompting from anyone, closing my eyes and asking God to help us. In this darkness, brightness appeared. I believe God was looking down on us and was helping us. It reminds me of King David's words, "*Look up to the hills from where our help comes from*" (Psalm 121:1). My parents became quiet at that time I prayed, and I've never experienced a repeat of their violent encounters again.

I arrived from the Philippines to Australia in 1980. We were born again in 1981, and God called us to ministry for His kingdom. We praise Him for His hand in our lives, as He continues to guide, protect, defend, encourage and direct us daily. Be inspired to know that God is always there in the dark times, and leads you into His precious LIGHT, Jesus!

Marion Tan

Australia

## Prayer

*Lord, I will not be afraid and I will look to You. Thank You for being with me throughout my life. Your brightness shines in every dark place! I believe You protect us and our help comes from You alone. You have taken*

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*my fears, and You have given me a hope and a future. You are my help, and strength. Your mighty hand is upon my life. You will hold me up with Your victorious right hand and I put my trust in You. Amen.*



# God Is With Me

*Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you.*

*He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you.*

Deuteronomy 31:8

Mother's Day week, this was one of the hardest weeks for me as a mother. Our little Clara Joy, who was five years old at the time, had been sick for over a month. We made three trips to the Fijian doctors in one week. On our third trip, we were sent to the hospital by ambulance because her illness had developed into pneumonia. She also developed a severe rash from her first course of antibiotics. With the antibiotic allergies, it was difficult to treat her pneumonia. To make matters worse, she began vomiting. She was so sick and weak that she didn't talk for two days, but just lay there. It was scary and heartbreaking.

Being in an unfamiliar place with circumstances completely out of my control, words cannot describe how badly I wished we were "home." But God was there with us in the midst of this difficulty. He surrounded us with amazing people, many of whom we had only met two months prior; and they had our backs completely. They fasted and poured out their hearts in prayer for our little girl. They babysat and entertained

our older daughter, Allison. They cooked meals for us, brought us juice, sat with us, cried with us, called every hospital and major pharmacy in the country to find the right medications for our girl. God's love and presence were evident and tangible for our family that week. Best of all, Clara's health drastically improved and she came home on Mother's Day! I could not have asked for a better gift!

The Lord called my family to go and make disciples in Fiji. As we followed God's call to the Great Commission by faith, He showed us His faithfulness that surely He is with us and will not fail us. After Jesus' resurrection, He told His disciples, *"I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age..."* (Matthew 28:19-20). Even in the midst of heartbreaking difficulties and uncertainties, God was with us, continues to be with us, and He will be the same for you!

Danielle Bickley

Fiji

## Prayer

*Lord, I will follow Your call to the Great Commission by faith, I have seen Your faithfulness and I know that You are with me and will not fail me. I may feel lonely, abandoned, forsaken, afraid and discouraged, but I know You have gone ahead of me. You never leave me abandoned. I have received the perfect peace that only comes from You. Amen.*

## My Frame Was Not Hidden

*My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.  
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;  
in your book were written, every one of them,  
the days that were formed for me,  
when as yet there was none of them.*

Psalm 139:15-16

When I was thirteen, I was molested, and I didn't share it with anyone for a year. When I finally told my parents, it was a very healing thing for me because they believed me. They comforted me without making me feel like it was my fault, because it wasn't my fault. Letting this come into the light freed me up to tell others so they would not feel alone, and it would hopefully give them the courage to speak out.

The truth is we are not what others tell us we are. We are not what others treat us like or do to us to show us what they think we are. We are not just what we look like, and



we are not the jobs that we hold. We are not even what we think of ourselves! Did you know that?

We are so very much more! We have value. We have worth, and it has nothing to do with these outward things. Our worth is found in the fact that God created us in His image, just like he created men. Our worth is found in the fact that God values us! God sees our worth and has created a unique destiny for each of us that no one else could ever fulfill. No one else! We don't have to be embarrassed about being a woman. It isn't a bad thing; it's a very good thing! It is something God designed the world to need! In fact, the world is not complete without women! You are necessary to the world!

Throughout the Bible, God speaks His love for us over and over and over again. While we were still sinners, He sacrificed His only Son to block out our sins and now reunite us in a right relationship with God. God formed us while we were still unborn. He cares for us like sparrows, but cares for us immeasurably more. He's given us personalities and gifts that can never be taken away, and the list goes on and on.

So let us allow God to speak into those places in our lives that have been damaged by what someone has said about us, or what someone has done to us. Let's not believe the lies about ourselves anymore. Let's allow our hearts to believe the truth about who we are and our worth by listening to what God says about us, because His opinion is the most important anyway!

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Is there something damaging in your past that needs to be brought to the light? Please find a godly safe person that will believe you, so they can pray with you and help you begin your healing process.

Dawn Vail

USA

### Prayer

*Lord, You fashioned me in my mother's womb and You know me well. I put my life in Your hands, to allow You to shape me into Your child. I belong to You, my Creator and Friend. I confess to You my shame and ask You to restore me. Expose all darkness within Your light! You formed me and You care for me. Amen.*



## Trust God and Do Good

*Trust in the Lord and do good, dwell in the land, and feed on*

*His faithfulness...*

Psalm 37:3

God didn't create us to worry about helping ourselves all the time. He wants us to sow good seed by reaching out to help others. Doing "good" brings great satisfaction, because it feels great to make a difference. It also opens the door for God to bless us in a greater way.

In the second year of our marriage (1982), we had our firstborn daughter, Blessie. When she was just three months old, we lived in a small room with very minimal furniture, a mat to sleep on the cement floor, a bucket to draw water from the well, a basin to wash clothes, one clay pot, one spoon, a few plates, and two cups. We didn't have much and our family income was \$6.00 a month. Everyday I just boiled a handful of rice with lots of water and a pinch of salt. My stove had three stones and I would have to find firewood in the nearby bushes.

One day my husband agreed to travel to Trincomalee, a town east of Sri Lanka, to hold an outreach-special rally to start a church. At first he was very reluctant to go,

because he didn't have money for the bus fare and he didn't have any money to leave me so I could have food for the week while he travelled. We had believed in God to provide, so I released him to do God's will. He preached the gospel in order to fulfill the vision we had seen for churches to get planted in Sri Lanka. We had no promise of support from anyone, but not having money did not hinder us from moving forward. Instead, this made us more courageous by believing in God to provide.

We always have a heart to sow good seed and to honor our commitment without thinking about our own difficulty. We prayed intensely late into the night asking God to provide for our needs. It was past ten that night, when there was a knock on our door. My husband opened the door and saw a friend in front of him. He said, "Leslie, I was trying to sleep and I could not fall asleep. I sat up on my bed to pray and felt led to pray for you and your family. As I began to pray for you, I sensed that you needed money and that's why I came." God is Good and He is Faithful! The provision came and I was happy to release my husband to go. He was happy to leave knowing that my daughter and I would have food during the time he was away. As a result, a church was planted in that city and is still thriving today.

You and I need to trust God to bring the right blessings into our lives. While you're waiting for His perfect timing, get busy helping others. You'll actually feel relieved when you aren't thinking about yourself all the time. Trust God and get busy doing the good things you know to do. He'll faithfully bless you and meet your needs. I told God I don't want to live a selfish or self-centered life. I asked God to help me trust Him to bring the right blessings into my life while I'm busy doing good for everyone, including my husband's family who lived with us during that time. He had placed them in my life for a purpose. As a result, Leslie's father got saved. His brother

who was an alcoholic got saved and transformed, and all of his brother's family was saved, too!

Many of us spend far too much time trying to figure out how we can get blessings for ourselves. People sometimes spend their entire lives trying to accomplish what they think is important, never trusting God or letting Him lead them. In the end, this leaves them depressed and unfulfilled. Today, if you have any needs, try to step out in God and believe He will provide in that area. Take time to give back to others even out of your own needs, for this will create blessings in and through your life. God will transform you, and depression will be gone because you trusted God alone.

Belen B. Keegel

Sri Lanka

## Prayer

*Lord, many times I see the difficulties in this life, knowing they may become my obstacle or my opportunity for You to do something great in my life. I want to live in faith, believing You will take care of me and others. God, please use my life! Amen.*



## Love God

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

1 John 2:15-17

The value of time is a notion often forgotten and taken for granted, and many neglect to realize the short time we are given here on earth. I am a freshman in high school now, and I see the importance of using the time I have to grow to my fullest potential. Over the past two years, I have been on four mission trips around the world, challenging me to go out of my comfort zone, and speak out about my faith. As I returned from each trip I struggled with being able to hold onto what I had learned and felt. This realization brought me to question my own faith, and look deeper into my intentions for loving God. I then found a quote while reading the backs of books in my school library, “A great woman saint of Sufism, was seen running through the streets of her hometown, Basra, carrying a torch in one hand and a bucket of water in the other. When someone asked her what she was doing, she answered, ‘I am



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*going to take this bucket of water and pour it on the flames of hell, and then I am going to use this torch to burn down the gates of paradise so that people will not love God for want of heaven or fear of hell, but because He is God.*” This divine encounter showed me how simple it can be to devote myself to God and live for His glory.

There is a subconscious decision made within each of us, determining why we love God. In times of struggle, trials, anguish, peace, or miracles, we have a choice to make. We can either give into the world or give into our faith. This realization is birthed out of hopelessness and isolation, but it can give us a reason to rise and live in faith rather than fear. Where do your intentions for the betterment of your life lie? Is it the fear of God’s power? Or is it the love of God?

Allow God to show you how to run with a torch in one hand and the bucket of water in the other hand, to pour out flames to LOVE GOD for WHO HE IS! It reminds me of one of the most famous scriptures in the Bible, a Psalm of David that says, *“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want”* (Psalms 23:1). David clearly reveals to us that God is everything we need and everything we want in this life. If we all learn to trust God and see that HE is “God,” then we will be content in the life promised on this Earth. His LOVE will take you through anything, and it will allow you to live in His fullest potential in every challenging moment. Give into FAITH rather than fear!

Olivia Gonzalez

USA

## Prayer

*Lord, You are teaching me to live in FAITH rather than in my fears. I realize YOU are all I need to live in my fullest potential. You are my Shepherd, I shall not want. I choose to live in Your LOVE. You are my God and I LOVE YOU. May I continue to serve You in this world and show others this beautiful kind of LOVE revealed in all situations. You are GOD. Amen.*





## WEEK 2

### **My Identity Broken & Restored** | Julie Stott

Years have shaped me, fired me, glazed me, and now I'm ready to sing in the Potter's hands. In my low times as we traveled from nation to nation, many times, God was pushing me out of my comfort zones. I felt a fire of the Holy Spirit and grace with God's great compassion of unconditional LOVE. Throughout the journey I have had prophetic words spoken over me, pulled out of the crowd saying, I am called to be in

a ministry separate from my husband. Leslie Keegel confirmed these prophetic words, and I remembered he asked my husband if he could release me basically to be all God wanted me to be.

I would hear these words, ponder them, but walk away as if this was impossible for me to believe. I allowed the insecurity, and I believed that I wasn't as valuable or worthy of such things. I suffered pain inside rooted from my childhood. It is a miracle that I am where I am today in God. I'm sharing my story with you because I know this may also be another woman's similar story in her loss of identity. God restored me, showing me a beautiful vision of my life being knitted together in my mother's womb by His choice, and not because a young 18-year-old girl conceived me out of wedlock. God told me, "You are my creation and I put a treasure in your mother's womb." Wow! I'm in midlife, and God restored a broken place in my identity.

My godly identity is born out of God's love, through the transformation of Christ and the fire of the Holy Spirit. In my story, there's the dirt mixed with water that God formed into soft clay. The Master Potter took His gentle hands, and began molding and shaping me from my life's pain into His unique vessel of use.

## A Vision Of Jesus

*And in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.*

Revelation 1:13-14

My daughter had a vision of Jesus when she was only two years old. I was driving past our church, which was on the left and our apartment building that was on the right side of the road. She was in the back seat looking out of the car window and shouted, “Look Mommy, there’s Jesus!” I looked up and the sun was beaming through the clouds and it was majestic. I did not see Jesus, but she described Him to me in detail through a babies eyes. She said, “Mommy, His skin is milky bright white. His eyes are like blue pools of fire. His hair has every color of brown from dark to light with gold strands blended throughout. He is wearing a white dress as bright as the sun with a red ribbon belt and He is smiling at me.” I asked her, “What else do you see?” She told me, “I see tall grass with white on top and I see green grass.” Through the front window of our car she saw pretty purple mountains.

The funny thing is, all I could see was buildings on the right and left. I did not see what she saw, but I knew it was a future glimpse into God's kingdom of our future calling and revelation of Jesus' love.

In the book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible, we hear John's description of his vision of Jesus. John gives a prophetic word about the final days of earth and the future when Jesus is revealed to His church. My daughter had a vision I couldn't see with my natural eyes. She describes Jesus very similarly to what John saw in his vision, "*His face was like the sun shining in its strength*" (Rev. 1:16). I believe this was a vision of the future for us as a family, the revelation of Jesus, the great end-time harvest we are all called to. It revealed our resting place, the provision of God in rich green pastures under care of the Great Shepherd Jesus, and the mountain of the Lord where our help comes from. My baby girl is all grown up now with four babies of her own. Let us all continue to serve the Lord of the Harvest, following Jesus and lifting our eyes upward to the Lord daily.

Julie Stott  
South Pacific

## Prayer

*Lord, I follow You, my Jesus, for this end-time harvest is ripe. I trust You, my Shepherd, to provide all my needs. I shall not want, for You make me lie down in green pastures (Ps. 23:1-2). I lift my eyes up to Mt. Zion, and You will answer me from Your holy mountain (Ps. 3:4). Increase my faith like a child, so I may see You, Jesus. Amen.*

## Walk in the Light

*This, in essence, is the message we heard from Christ and are passing on to you: God is light, pure light; there's not a trace of darkness in him.*

*If we claim that we experience a shared life with him and continue to stumble around in the dark, we're obviously lying through our teeth—we're not living what we claim. But if we walk in the light, God himself being the light, we also experience a shared life with one another, as the sacrificed blood of Jesus, God's Son, purges all our sin.*

1 John 1:5-7

This passage has been a life verse for me. It has also been the verse that my husband and I have applied to our marriage. The reason I find this verse so meaningful is that it provides a criteria for measuring how well I am doing with relationships. We are challenged to walk in the light of God, with nothing hidden from Him. As we walk in the light, God has called us to love each other as He loves us. We know that Christ loved us so much that He laid down His life for us, and He died so we could have life and a relationship with Him. This was no easy thing to do, and we also are called to lay down our lives as He did, and walk in the light.



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I am reminded in this passage that if I say I am in relationship with Jesus, and that I am learning to know Him more deeply, each day walking in the light with Him in a more intimate way, 24/7, then I need to be asking myself some questions about my other relationships.

Am I easily offended? Do I quickly and freely forgive? Are the words I speak life giving? Do I encourage others? How is my attitude when I am asked to do something that is not on my 'preferred' list? Do I ask God to make me aware of those around me who are hurting? Am I quick to reach out to them with support? Am I willing to lovingly and gently correct my friends and family when they need to be redirected into truth? Am I willing to invest in others who are different than myself? How am I doing at managing my emotions towards others? These are just a few of the questions I ask myself.

The answers to these questions would be "horribly" or "not at all," in my own efforts and strength. But when I turn to Jesus and ask Him to love through me, speak through me, and act through me, I do a much better job of walking in His light. The Holy Spirit enables me to walk in the light, seek forgiveness, admit when I'm wrong, and care about others as much as I care about myself. I'd like to challenge you to walk in the light with me, knowing that as we do, we will be transformed, and God will transform the world around us at the same time.

Joyce Butron  
Singapore

## Prayer

*Lord, there is so much inside of me that I feel the need to check my attitude. Help me be the loving person You created me to be and to show others this beautiful love that You so sacrificially gave to all. I want to be light, Your LIGHT, in a dark world. May my life truly be this illumination, transforming the darkest of hearts. May my life be filled to overflowing with Your Holy Spirit, touching and empowering others in YOU. Amen.*



## Teach Me Lord to Wait

*But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*

Isaiah 40:31

During a particularly difficult time in my family's journey, I began to feel so weary. Disability and chronic illness have a way of wearing us down; and in one season I reached a fatigue that I had never felt before or since. In 2018, at my annual disability meeting for my then twelve-year-old son, I was told he had been put on a list for those who would require full-time residential government care by eighteen, and I felt crushed by the burden of how to keep this from happening. Around the same time my youngest was given another life-threatening diagnosis and I felt like the journey was stretching me out of shape. The lyrics of an old chorus, based on Isaiah 40:26-31, seemed to play on repeat in my heart:

*“They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not get weary; they shall walk and not faint. Teach me Lord, teach me Lord to wait.”*

The desperate needs around me made me feel more like a flightless chicken than a soaring eagle; and I postured myself at Jesus' feet, longing for Him to teach me how to wait better. I asked Him to show me what this waiting looked like. I figured I must be doing it wrong. I mean, I knew God was able to change the circumstances for my babies in an instant, and I trusted that He had it all under His care, but I was so tired! I was desperate to work out how to wait better so that I could be soaring above the chaos rather than drowning under it. I needed clarity. Was I supposed to wait patiently, just expecting God to give me strength as I did, or was I supposed to ask, ask and keep on asking? You know the kind of waiting our children do so well – to make it abundantly clear that they want something.

I explored the Word of God and looked up the original word for “wait” used in Isaiah 40:31 and found treasure, which continues to help me face this ongoing journey with my babies every day. QAVAH, translated “wait,” has two meanings: one figurative and one literal. The figurative meaning is to linger, eagerly looking for; but the literal, where I found my treasure, means to bind together like in forming a rope. The context for this is strength, which frames the foundation of the verse. We can read Isaiah 40:31 as they who bind all the aspects of their lives into God, like threads which are twisted in a heavy duty rope, shall exchange their small capacity for the power to rise to each challenge with soaring wings like an eagle.

Rope formed through repetitive binding has dormant strength until it is put under pressure. As stress is applied, the fibers pull together revealing the hidden strength. Interestingly, rope of different fibers is more vulnerable to breakage, but strong rope has consistent high quality fibers and can lift great weight. Proverbs 13:12 acknowledges that hope deferred makes the heart sick, so we know that waiting isn't

just a passive state, rather an active state of focus, being saturated in God's Word, and exchanging the mindsets that wear us out for the promises of God over every aspect of our circumstances.

Pastor Alese Plichta

Australia

## Prayer

*Lord, You are so kind in how You enable us to bind each aspect of our lives into You. You remain true to Your promises and help us come and exchange our weakness for the strength that only comes from weaving You into our situations. Day by day as we wait on You, we learn to soar above anything that we face. Our situations are not hidden from You; You see them all. You never grow weary, but in our times of pressure we see Your strength come into action in our lives. And for that we are grateful.  
Amen.*



## You Formed Me

*For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works;  
my soul knows it very well.*

Psalm 139:13-14

I was born to a beautiful single mom of four girls, who worked hard to provide and tried her best to teach us right from wrong. I grew up in a religious home and knew of God, but it was not until I was twelve that I entered into a relationship with Jesus. My mom suffered much pain in her life and had a tough upbringing with 13 brothers and sisters. Her husband left her and remarried her cousin. Her eldest daughter passed away from cancer at the age of 20. Two years before my sister passed away, my 45 year old mom was surprised when she found out she was pregnant once again... that was me! She was not married, and although I know she loved me, it seemed impossible for her to raise me. My mom and dad were heavy drinkers, and financially they were not in a place to care for another daughter. They decided adoption would be the best choice. I don't know much about my dad, but I heard



that he was a good man. Sadly, he also passed away when I was very young from liver failure caused by drinking.

The day I was born was bitter sweet. The doctors said I was a “miracle baby,” and that I survived on the barley from the beer my mom drank. I was born healthy with no alcohol syndrome, which was a BIG MIRACLE and great evidence of God’s loving involvement in my life even while in my mother’s womb (Psalm 139:13). A plan was made that I was to be adopted by my aunt and uncle, and I am happy to say God’s plans are not always ours! My sister, led by God, was able to convince my mom that giving me away was not an option, and that if she kept me she would step in and help raise me. My mom agreed to keep me, and although my sister, Ramona, was only with me for two years of my life, she was the instrument God used to direct my steps.

My life as a young girl was not easy, but as I look back I can see God was making every crooked place straight. My sister was introduced to Jesus by a co-worker whose assignment was to be at her job for two weeks. Do you think that was a coincidence? God used the obedience of this co-worker to share Christ during those two weeks. My sister was led to the Lord, and in turn she led me to Jesus. At the age of 13, I was called into ministry at a youth camp. Throughout the years, I continued to see God’s strong, loving hand on me.

In my twenties, I was given the opportunity to follow my calling, and was asked to be a youth pastor at Angelus Temple. This was not the norm - first of all because I was female, second I was single, and third I would be ministering to young people who were heavily involved with gangs in the Los Angeles area. During my time

ministering to these precious kids, I saw many come to Jesus and freed from the gang life, which was another TRUE MIRACLE from heaven!

I am thankful to know a God who leads, guides, and directs our paths. Even when we were hidden in our mother's womb...He was already working on us, knitting us together for His purposes!

Jackie Fernandez

USA

## Prayer

*Lord, I thank You that I was in Your thoughts before I was even conceived. You planned my life, chose to create me in my mothers womb, and You ordained my every step. I want my life to bring You all praise and to bring this truth of His LOVE to each and every one. Amen.*



## The Race

*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize?*

*Run in such a way that you may win.*

1 Corinthians 9:24

Recently, my father and mother went to watch me run in a Cross Country Districts Race. My parents told me that I was naturally gifted in running, because in the last three years I came in first in my school races which qualified me to race against 15 other schools in the region. In this year's Districts race, I won first place in my age group competing against 53 other ten-year-olds. This was a little unexpected, because in the previous years, Districts had been much more challenging than the smaller scale race held within the local school grounds. Not only that, I had been the smallest ten-year-old competing. Seriously. Despite the obvious challenges and possibly even the disadvantage of my height, I managed to reach the finish line by a long run!

After the excitement died down, my mother began to ask me how I did it? What was different this year than the one before? My story: I got to witness a friend compete in the 8-9 year old girl's race, and she won her race by a long shot. I saw her getting her photo taken and everyone congratulating her and receiving a blue ribbon around her

neck with the 1st place gold medallion. So I decided to run in my race. I faced moments where I felt like stopping, but I just kept envisioning that necklace hanging proudly around my neck. I had the prize in my eye, or mental picture, which gave me an extra push to keep on going! And as I passed up one of my competitors, I would kindly encourage them and say, “You’re doing great! Keep going.” They also responded back to me the same. My mother took pictures of me running the race with my red-face and looking tired, but I noticed in all of the photos I ran with a big smile on my face.

If only we could learn a few things from this simple story, and surprisingly turn to the Word for how we should be running in such a way. We’re running to win. We’re running to finish. We need to run with endurance and perseverance. Run well. Run with a prize in our eye, Jesus. Why are we running, metaphorically speaking, in our own lives? Who or what may we be running for, other than the One and Only? Do we run for money? Fame? Pleasure? I know these all may be areas we all prove weak at times, but my hope is that we quickly get back on track.

Behold our beautiful Prize, smile, and keep on going knowing that it’s all for Him, and it is so totally worth it! This race called life is just a blip in comparison to the infinite eternity that we will spend with Him, and oh how we want to run well! Run in such a way that only brings us closer to Him. He is our goal, our treasure, and our prize. No matter the pain, heartache, or sorrow we go through, there is always beauty in the hardship. He is always there, cheering us on just as any loving Father would. But He’s unlike any Father we can compare Him to.

## 31 Days of Testimony & Devotion

Hebrews 12:1-2 (AMP) says, *“Therefore then, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who have borne testimony to the Truth], let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance (unnecessary weight) and that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us, looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher [bringing it to maturity and perfection]. He, for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

Sienna Fiorenza, & her mother Jocelyn Fiorenza

Australia

### Prayer

*Lord, please help me in the good fight to finish the race. Help me to keep the faith even when I grow weary. May I encourage others to continue to run with endurance so we all may receive the prize. I love You Lord and thank You for giving me this beautiful life through Your precious blood. I will keep the course of the race that is set before me, looking away from all that will distract, and I will look to Jesus who is my leader, source, and finisher of my faith. Amen.*



## You Know My Name

*Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;*

*I will protect him, because he knows my name.*

*When he calls to me, I will answer him;*

*I will be with him in trouble;*

*I will rescue him and honor him.*

*With long life I will satisfy him*

*and show him my salvation.*

**Psalm 91:14-16**

My life was turned upside down in 2014 when I was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma - which is cancer within the bone marrow. This type of cancer was not curable, but treatable as the doctors informed us. After my diagnosis, my husband and I contacted family and friends to pray for a miracle from God. I treasured the Word of God and allowed it to anchor me in a place of believing. As I was reading the Bible a passage leaped out off of the page from Psalm 91:16, *"I will give you a long life."* God reminded me He had given me that verse to hold on to when I had a heart attack in 2003. I knew God wanted to heal me because what had been diagnosed



incurable was made whole. There have been many attacks on my health, but this verse keeps my spirit and faith alive. We know what God does is done in perfection.

We know His NAME and trust God through every part of the journey. Jesus is our helper, healer, deliverer, redeemer, comforter, and we can declare His NAME over our sickness, depression, grief, or any other hard times we may face. There's power in the name of Jesus. Take your prayers to another level and believe He will do it! There are great servants of faith, who will not allow defeat in their journey. God is perfect and wants to perfect us in our faith. Don't give up and allow yourself to become a victim of your situation. Take another leap of faith and choose to believe what He says. LOVE and POWER is in the name of JESUS! Just speak His name and pray the Word of God over yourself.

Nancy Stone

Puerto Rico

## Prayer

*Lord, I hold fast to Your love. You'll deliver and protect me because I know Your name. When I call to You, I know You'll answer me on the day of trouble. You will rescue me and honor me with a long life! You will satisfy me and show me Your salvation. Amen.*

## Life Will Follow

*As a man thinks, his life will follow...*

Proverbs 23:7

I came to know the Lord as a young adult in a divided home. I was very attracted to God's plan for a family and was hungry for the wholeness that I didn't find anywhere else. I learned that Jesus Christ was the same yesterday, today and forever! I was so excited that I could count on Him and that He would never change, because most of my experience with people had disappointed me. I learned that God could use hardship in our lives to produce a harvest of righteousness, and peace, and I experienced hope for the first time. I realized that when I seek God in the midst of a trial that beautiful things happen as I gradually give up my control to God. I see weakness and hardships as an opportunity for God to demonstrate His power and love, and bring me closer to the fulfillment of "His Calling" on my life.

The theme I have seen throughout my life is this: God allows my biggest struggles or inadequacies to become an opportunity for His power to turn them into strength for His glory. Here is an example of how God did this in my life.

As a child, I had a learning disability and was unable to learn or read like the other children. This led to many other problems, such as not having many friends, a lack of confidence, and I was failing at school. Out of one of my biggest obstacles, God led me to start praying His Word in a personalized way, by inserting the names of my friends and family into the Word of God. As I proclaimed it out loud, I saw God answer my prayers. I think this happened because as I was praying, my mind renewed. God was transforming my mind.

I was able to learn and retain information for the first time. I started seeing myself and my circumstances from a “godly perspective” and my life began to follow! Over time this same girl with a learning disability that only graduated from high school by cheating and wasn’t able to get a college degree ended up publishing a book called *Activating God’s Power*. Since publishing this personalized book, an overwhelming amount of testimonies have flooded in. The Word of God became a powerful tool for others going through tough times. It’s so beautiful how God can use the weakest part of our lives and with His power make something amazing out of it. I am so grateful that as I implement godly principles in my life, God unlocks all of His promises to further His kingdom.

Michelle Leslie

USA

## Prayer

*Lord, You are amazing! You can take my life and transform it into something I never thought was possible. Your word renews my mind. I*

### 31 Days of Testimony & Devotion

*believe in all of Your promises. Take any weakness or struggle and turn it around for Your glory! Use it as an opportunity to demonstrate Your power and love. May You fulfill the calling on my life to produce a harvest of righteousness and peace for others. Amen.*





## WEEK 3

### **Following God's Will** | Julie Stott

I'm one who is not fond of hidden agendas of any kind or people who flaunt their gifts and titles in this life. I live with a man who knows who he is in God, what he has been given by God to do, and he lives through godly confidence to follow God's will. He chooses godly identity in every situation or circumstance of life. He knows who God is and what God will do if we just believe who we are in Christ Jesus.

### 31 Days of Testimony & Devotion

My desire is for all of us to know we carry in us Christ Jesus and we can follow God's will because WE CARRY THE POWER OF GOD! I believe we are to *position ourselves for the miracles of GOD* in our everyday life. We encourage others to *live in the Word and the Spirit* in our South Pacific Women Empowered ministry. I am following God's desire planted deep inside to reach broken lives.

God's beautiful treasure is an EMPOWERED WOMAN. I hope you hear God's heart in this GREAT COMMISSION to go into the world and preach this GOOD NEWS to the POOR in spirit. The Holy Spirit speaks to her, *to awaken and to unveil her face*. She is to arise like Queen Esther and is called *to deliver those held captive by the enemy of our souls*. Women are called to live out their godly identity with their husbands, children, and communities to bring about a life-changing transformation through Jesus Christ.

The restoration process is already in motion since the fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden. God called out to Adam and Eve as they were hiding in shame from their disobedience because they listened to the serpent, the devil, who is the enemy of our souls. God drew Adam and Eve back to Himself, and seeing they felt ashamed in their nakedness. The first act of LOVE and RESTORATION is when God put the devil in his place, by clothing Adam and Eve with animal skin (Gen. 3:21). The first sacrifice of the flesh as we know is from this covering. The animal died to cover their nakedness, their shame. At this moment everything was changed from eternal life to a temporal being, causing human life on this earth now to face death in the natural. In this life we now would be temporal in our day-to-day survival.

### *31 Days of Testimony & Devotion*

Before this broken place, LOVE was perfect in them. They had the garden to enjoy, and lacking in nothing, even God's creation served them in harmony, enjoying all the fruits of God's goodness. I never understood all the reenactment of animal sacrifice, but today I do because it is all about remembering where we have come from, where God meets us, how Jesus clothes us and where He is taking us. GOD is the RESTORATION and LIFE forever!





## A Crown

*Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

**James 1:12**

One morning, my four-year-old granddaughter jumped up on my bed with a big smile on her face and said, “Grandma, you have a crown.” Still trying to wake up, I said, “I have a crown?” She giggled, and with a strong confidence told me that her husband, Jesus, said, “You have a crown. I have a crown, and grandpa has a crown...” And she mentioned how other family members have crowns, too. I love how God is reminding us of our true HOPE in this life, and that morning it came through my precious granddaughter.

No matter what trial you face, as you put your trust in God, you will receive victory through Christ Jesus. You will be one step closer to eternity, as you live your life serving the King of kings and Lord of lords. You’ll share in all the promises of the kingdom of God. He crowns you with beauty and everlasting life. If you love Him, there will be a beautiful crown placed on your head. Jesus is your crown of

righteousness. *“For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?”* (1 Thessalonians 2:19). We are all waiting for our King Jesus, and the crown of everlasting life. Keep your eyes on the Lord for He is coming again!

Julie Stott  
South Pacific

## Prayer

*Lord, I am here in the place of understanding that You love me and crown me with everlasting life. You are preparing me as a beautiful bride to embrace You, and when You call out to me, “Come away my beloved,” I will be made complete in You and be adorned in Your love! I ask You to preserve me under trial, so that I may be approved and receive the crown of everlasting life, which You have promised to those who love You. I love You and thank You for being my King! Amen.*

## Find Me

*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all of your heart.*

**Jeremiah 29:11-13**

I love this portion of the Scripture because it is just as relevant today for God's people as it was when Jeremiah wrote it. I believe we all feel, at one time or another, as if we are in a place of exile, but we can be assured that we have God's promises. God says, "I will never leave you or forsake you..." Many times I have taken courage and encouraged myself in the Lord. I know Joseph's life has taught me lessons of wisdom, patience, contentment, forgiveness, generosity, peace, endurance, grace and mercy. Even though Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, accused wrongly and punished without cause, he never stopped trusting God because he knew God was with him.

We are never without God and He loves us! God protected Joseph. The beautiful part of his story of being treated unfairly is that God placed Joseph second to the king - showing him favor, honor and blessing! Even when he was face to face with his

brothers, Joseph made no retaliation, and chose not to expose their sins against them, and refused to punish them. Often in our lives when people wrong us, to justify ourselves, we want to expose them to their wrongs and punish them. We might even pray God's punishment for them. Although in Romans 12:19-21, God teaches us not to avenge ourselves because God is the one who will repay and vengeance is His. He says, *"If your enemy is hungry feed him, and if he is thirsty give him a drink..."*

God wants us to forgive and love those who have hurt us. And Romans 12:21 warns us, "DON'T BE OVERCOME BY EVIL, BUT OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD." Jesus is the empowerment we have to be this kind of person. I know what kind of person God wants me to be when I am face to face with those who've mistreated me, and I never want to be overcome by evil. The Word of God says, *"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God forgave you"* (Ephesians 4:31-32).

God gives us peace, hope, love, forgiveness, mercy and grace. I KNOW THAT IS WHAT GOD WANTS ME TO GIVE TO OTHERS. It is all about God's UNCONDITIONAL LOVE, made as an offering to us by His very own Son! Jesus freed us from all bitterness, wrath, anger, vengeance, by nailing it to the cross and cleansing us by His blood. We all have forgiveness for our sins, so if you need to forgive someone who has hurt you, allow the Holy Spirit to come in and guide you to become free from these hurts. Be an overcomer like Joseph and God will bless you!

Maureen Banton

Australia

## Prayer

*Lord, there are times I don't allow my hurts to heal. I may choose to hold onto my hurts without realizing it, and they begin to take root in my heart, growing bitterness, wrath and anger, and then turning into a weed of vengeance. I want to display Your sweet unconditional love, the kind offered on the cross taking all of our sin and hurt away. YOU died so we all would be free to forgive. I pray for those who have hurt me and I forgive those who've treated me unfairly. Today, I want to bless those who don't always treat me right. Forgive me. Amen.*



## Waiting Room

*Be still before the Lord; wait patiently for Him.*

**Psalm 37:7**

I was always told as a young child, “Don’t get pregnant!” Who would have thought I would ever have a hard time conceiving a child? Well, I was one of those who had a difficult time conceiving.

I married a man with a child, so we became a blended family instantly. I was a wife and a mother all in the same day when I said, “I do.” No one ever told me about blended families when I was growing up and never had I thought I would marry someone with a child. We all have this idea as a little girl that we would marry Prince Charming and live happily ever after. I have to be honest. My dream of being married did not include marrying someone with a child or being one of those women that had a hard time getting pregnant. I am so thankful that I became a Christian at the age of 22, because I would not have known how to be a wife, a mother, or endure nine years of infertility.

After being married for three years, my husband and I decided it was time to have a child of our own, so within three months of trying I was pregnant with Rebekah. We



wanted more kids and I had prayed and asked God if we were going to have another child, and God said “yes,” but he didn’t tell us when. This was the hardest journey, for me mostly, because every month for those 7-9 years I waited patiently for the news that I would be pregnant.

The Scripture says, “Be still,” and that’s what I needed to do in my time of waiting for my precious new baby girl to come into this world and be a part of our family. Did I ever question God during those years of waiting? Of course I did, many times. I even thought at times of my past sins and because of those past sins I am being punished for them now. Many lies of the enemy can come in and make you feel ashamed, guilty, and just not good enough for God’s blessings. It was during these moments that I had to learn to “BE STILL” and know that God was orchestrating my life, and to keep trusting HIM for the provision of another child.

If any one of you is in the waiting room, may I encourage you to “BE STILL” and know that God knows what HE is doing. You can trust HIM and KNOW that His plans for your life are so much better than yours. Use this time in the waiting room to grow deeper in your understanding of who God is, and to see this waiting period as a time of learning how to trust Him more.

Lisa Kai  
USA

## Prayer

*Lord, I choose to BE STILL and know You are God in my life, even in my waiting. I want to learn to trust You and have faith in this unknown*

**31 Days of Testimony & Devotion**

*place. Thank You for speaking truth to my mind and reminding me of Your great LOVE. I believe You will work in my weaknesses. Amen.*



# Thorns

*So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testing we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.*

Hebrews 4:14-16

About a year after having my third child, I was feeling very tired and overwhelmed with the task of being a mom of three. I remember flopping myself on my bed one night after a long hard day with my children, feeling rather defeated, and wondering if I had what it took to be the good mother I desired to be. I expected myself to be great all of the time! I cried out to God and asked Him to show me what He thought of me in the midst of all the chaos I was feeling around me. I didn't think much of myself at the moment and was feeling like a huge failure. While lying in my bed with tears rolling down my face, I saw a picture of this beautiful, fresh, white rose that had drops of dew and had an innocent glow about it. I said Lord, "What does that mean?" He gently whispered, "That's how I see you." I burst into tears and said, "But

Lord, all I see are the thorns!” A lot of times all I do see are the “negative” things about myself and I know I’m not alone in this. I surely wasn’t feeling beautiful or innocent at that moment, but instead I felt unlovable. I seemed to get stuck focusing on the negative things, my shortcomings and my failures. I was focusing on lies and not truth!

For years I would even tell people, “God loves you, God doesn’t see what you see.” Yet, I didn’t believe it for myself. Why is that? Sometimes, this can be a common problem for a long time believer. All the knowledge we have about Christ becomes just that...knowledge. In these times our hearts need to be re-awakened and stirred up again. You may, like myself, be stuck on the “thorns” of your past: past mistakes, past shame, past hurts. But God wants us to forget our past and remember that because of Christ, our past is exactly that...the past!

After seeing the beauty of the white rose that the Lord showed me, I asked Him, “How much do you love me?” Immediately I saw Him wearing a crown of thorns on the cross, broken, beaten and suffering. Jesus was more bruised than I could imagine, so I cried all the more because He suffered greatly for me! I said, “Lord, that’s ugly and horrible, but you did that all for me. It’s hard for me to see.” But I needed to see the raw truth. Then quickly He reminded me that this is not Him any longer. That has passed, and all of the flesh and bloodied brokenness is buried and defeated. We overcome by the blood of Jesus. He’s alive, radiant and more beautiful than we could dream. He is the King of kings shining in all splendor and majesty. He is clothing us in white radiance. We are crucified with Christ, made pure in the sight of God our Father. No longer do we need to be weighed down by all of our sin and shame, but

can walk with our heads held high in the presence of God! I believe we all need to be reminded of this TRUTH:

**Romans 5:1-11**

*Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. When we were helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.*

Come into remembrance once again of His great love for us individually. Remember that we are the joy set before Him. We will fail, daily, but His mercies are new every morning. He takes every mistake and turns it into a message. Every trial He turns into a testimony. How incredible is that? So the next time you're feeling weak,

defeated, not good enough, remember to see what He sees. Remember that you weren't meant to, because no one is "good enough" except Christ alone. There is something that keeps us humble and connected with Him in our failings. His love captivates me, and I know He loves us through it all. He is strong in our weakness.

Jocelyn Fiorenza

Australia

## Prayer

*Lord, may I be reminded today and every day to see the glowing, fragrant, pure, white rose instead of focusing on the thorns in my life. I want to see me through Your eyes. Yes, there may be tiny thorns in beauty, but who can resist the LOVE so freely given that I might see how valuable I am to YOU. Your thorns have crowned me with everlasting life forevermore. I am Your princess and I crown You my King! I will choose to see myself through Your eyes and believe Your words. Amen.*

## A Good Life

*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**

After going through a difficult break-up with my ex-boyfriend, I told God, “I don’t ever want to get married. It’s just you and me LORD, and I am content being single for the rest of my life because relationships are complicated and too hard for me. But, if you decide to bring someone into my life, these are the things I want in a husband: 1) Faithful, 2) Loving, 3) Decisive, 4) Strong faith, 5) A leader.” Then I fell asleep.

That night, God gave me a dream. I was walking in a green garden setting, and I was following Corey (my husband now) as he was shaking people’s hands and was wearing a white suit. I woke up the next morning wondering why I was dreaming about him. We were friends and contacted one another for our mutual friend who was dying of AIDS. Corey would ask me to bring our friend to church and we would keep one another posted on his condition.



### 31 Days of Testimony & Devotion

That year in December, our friend went home to be with the LORD, so Corey did Randy's memorial service for hundreds of his friends in the gay community. At the end of the month, Corey asked me out on a "date." We had coffee and dessert and after six weeks of dating, Corey asked me to marry him. We were engaged for three months and then got married in a beautiful garden called Foster Gardens in Honolulu, Hawaii.

A week before we got married, God brought back to memory the dream I had of Corey. It was His way of communicating His love and care for me as I struggled with disappointment in my broken relationship and wanting to protect my heart by vowing never to engage in a relationship again. I could only see what was in front of me, and yet God knew the whole story of my life and He had an amazing plan for my life with my husband. I am so grateful God is all-knowing, wise, and a loving God. He knew this life He had planned for me was going to far surpass my own thoughts or feelings of what I thought would be "a good life" with someone else. His promises kept me hoping, moving forward and He continues to help me to trust Him completely in every area of my life!

*You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast because he trusts in You.*

Isaiah 26:3

Lisa Grinder  
USA

## Prayer

*Lord, my life is predestined. I trust in You for the plans that surpass my own thoughts or feelings of what I thought would be “a good life.” Thank You for keeping all Your promises. My help comes from You and I completely trust You with my life! Amen.*



## Overcame by the Blood

*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;  
and they loved not their lives unto the death.*

**Revelation 12:11**

As a young child I loved God and was christened by the Bishop of Singapore in the Church of England. I experienced Sunday school, missionaries, hymns, prayer books and stained glass windows. I was confirmed, went to youth group, took part in Bible studies, and prayed, but I had never repented and I had no testimony. When I was about 26, my life began to fall apart as I made very bad decisions and choices. I was very selfish and it was all about me, as Frank Sinatra sang “*I did it My Way.*” Until one day, when I suddenly woke with a deep fear and sinking feeling. I no longer had any assurance of the presence of God and I felt totally alone. Everything around me was gray, and the color of life had literally drained out of the trees and everything else. There was no life anywhere. It was as if I was in “no man’s land.” I was in turmoil with no peace, and I was desperate.

Then like the prodigal son, “I came to the end of myself.” I sat down at the window and began to search my Bible. It fell open to Mark 3:28, *“All sins will be forgiven the sons of men...”* As I turned and looked out of my window, the sunlight and shadows formed an enormous cross! God was speaking to me, and I realized that I had *never* been to the cross of Jesus Christ. I knew *all about* Him, but I did not *know* (yada - Hebrew) Him as Savior, friend, and Lord. I asked Him to forgive *all* my sin, and I laid it *all* down at the foot of the cross in repentance. In the spirit I walked to that cross and laid the burden down. What joy filled my heart! Right then and there I had an assurance and a testimony that has never left me and will last into eternity. Praise the Lord!

God is calling us to Himself, to dwell in His presence forever! You know God is offering us peace, the kind the world cannot give you. May He change our hearts, as we draw nearer to the cross and make Jesus the Savior over our lives. He allows us to come to the end of ourselves, so we can begin anew in the Life of Jesus. The Holy Spirit touches each one of us to lead us in the things God has prepared ahead of time for us to walk in.

Georgina Hamilton

Australia

## Prayer

*Lord, I find myself at a loss of words, as I approach Your presence with this heart of humility. Looking at the cross, my heart sees the truth and I desire You to be my Savior forever. I don't want to live this life alone,*

**31 Days of Testimony & Devotion**

*doing it “my way...” I truly want to do it YOUR WAY! You are my Savior, friend and LORD!! Amen.*



## Plans to Give You Hope

*“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

A couple days after my daughter’s wedding, I arrived at the airport to fly back home. I was following my husband through the airport when I slipped on the slick, polished floor. My leg twisted and snapped bringing me quickly to the floor. The airport medics could not locate a stretcher, so they put me in a wheelchair. When my arm grazed the wheelchair, I told them, “I think my arm is broken too.” One medic rolled his eyes at me as if I was a hypochondriac, and then pushed me into a room where they questioned me about the fall as they examined my leg and told me that my leg was not broken. They wanted me to board the plane and get medical care after my flight. They asked me to stand up, even though I insisted that my leg was broken. Hesitantly, I stood up and something popped in my leg. Quickly sitting back down, I was in shock and I felt the Holy Spirit guiding me to trust what I knew in my heart and to leave the airport in an ambulance.



I was taken to the hospital for x-rays, and I saw four people gather to review the x-rays, which confirmed to me that it was bad. Another radiologist came in to move my limbs and hold them for additional x-rays before I was rolled back into the emergency room. The doctor told me they had called an arm surgeon because my capitellum was broken off, partially crushed, and I would need surgery. I was in disbelief.

Shortly after, the doctor came back and told me that I needed to have an intramedullary rod and screws placed in my lower leg since my tibia and fibula were broken as well. I was transferred by ambulance to another hospital, and the next morning I had two major surgeries back to back. I stayed in the hospital for a week, and I was devastated, in extreme pain, in a wheelchair, and crying a lot. The last few years of my life had been very difficult, and some of my relationships were in a sad state. I told my husband that I felt like giving up, so he laid his head in my lap, crying and begging me not to give up. He promised to take care of me.

My husband flew back home and I was transported in a wheelchair van to a nursing facility, until I was strong enough to fly home. Initially, I was very angry that I had to go to the nursing facility, which was dirty and reminded me of a rundown nursing home. However, I was grateful that my daughter came to see me every day after work, and brought me food, clothes, and shoes, as all my belongings flew back home without me. My heart began to soften as each day went by, and I talked and laughed with the employees who cared for me. One caregiver spoke with me about how she had been through Hurricane Katrina and was forced to relocate. She shared that she was raising a teenage daughter and wanted to know how to keep her on the right path, as she didn't have much time to spend with her. God gave me words of

encouragement for her and allowed me to share my faith with her. I had my daughter buy Starbucks gift cards to thank some of the staff when I was leaving. I gave this woman two gift cards and told her to take her daughter out for a mother-daughter date, and she began crying and hugged me saying she would miss me. God allowed me to develop relationships and show love to others even though I was not happy to be there. God brought many blessings to me through this tragedy, as I surrendered my will to His.

Three of my siblings drove from another city to visit me, and it meant so much to laugh and spend time with them. God also brought a childhood friend from another state back into my life. She came to visit me and we shared our faith with each other about how God had brought each of us back to Him. Through this experience, God changed my heart as I trusted in Him, and I had faith that there was a reason this happened. I knew it was bigger than me, or my pain, and I believe that God used this event to heal and restore those relationships.

God works miracles in everyday life and moves us along the path that He has chosen for us, if we are willing to follow Him. Tragedy can destroy you if you let it, or you can choose to see God's hand in it. Sweet surrender to God allows us to not let fear and devastation over a tragedy consume us. The following verse helped me put my trust in God in every way. John 16:33 says, *"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."*

Gina Dunn  
USA

## Prayer

*Lord, I know You are there, speaking through the Holy Spirit to guide me in every area of my life. I believe You go with me into the unknown territory, and You restore me. You show me through others how much I am loved in those difficult times. You speak to me saying “peace” in my times of trouble. I continue to trust You and thank You for strengthening me, healing me, and giving me a HOPE and a FUTURE! Amen.*



## WEEK 4

### **Jesus Overcomes Death** | Julie Stott

My moment of RESTORATION in God took place at a Catholic Church in Arizona. I was 15 years old, a broken little girl from a broken home life. My father received custody of all five of us children in my parents' terrible divorce. It was painful for all of us not to have a mother living with us and caring for us. I was the eldest and during that time the youngest of my siblings was just a baby. My dad worked full-time which left us on our own for most of the day. I don't want to give

every detail about my painful childhood, but only to share with you how God touched my life.

I was like every other teenage girl going to school and hanging out with friends. One evening I was out at a park with my friends, and my boyfriend who was 18 years old. My boyfriend encouraged us to take a walk alone without the rest of the group, and was sharing with me he could be arrested for being with me. I was the most innocent, naive person and I didn't get it. This night would change the rest of my life forever. He started being aggressive with me and forced himself against my will under a tree in the park in front of the onlookers in the car, our friends. I experienced emotional shock along with physical pain. In the moment of this violation, I felt something spiritually being taken from me. The purity of God as a young woman stolen forever! No one in this world could ever give this back to me. I never even knew what this was until awakened by evil. I cried all the way home, as he shared openly with his friends with pride what he did to me. I am sorry to share this ugly part of my life, but this is a part of my testimony.

I was still in shock the next day when I went to school, and I felt like life was moving in slow motion and thought everyone was staring at me as I walked by them. Soon the gossip spread and eventually reached the ears of the principal. They pulled me out of class to the head office without my parents' consent and set me up with a social worker to provide me with professional counseling. My immune system from that terrible situation started to go down, and I became sick with asthma, sores in my mouth and ovarian problems. I was rushed to the hospital with horrible pain in my abdomen, and the doctors told my parents I needed surgery. When my grandmother

found out what happened to me, she took me into her home to get rest until the surgery was scheduled.

While I was staying with her, I was missing school because I was bedridden. One day my grandmother told me to get up and get ready for church. I was raised Catholic and was not aware of church services held on a Tuesday night. She was a faithful Catholic and lived right across the street from her church. She had never attended a Tuesday night prayer meeting before, but she heard they prayed over those who had physical problems.

We went in and sat in the back row. The church was full of people with hands lifted up during the worship songs. I thought it was weird and said, “stick-um up!” remembering an old western movie. The music filled the room, and the band had a man playing guitar and leading, a woman back-up vocalist who was a professional opera singer, and a little old woman, to my surprise, was playing a stringed instrument made out of a tin bucket with a broomstick with strings creating the bass sound. They were passionately praising God in singing, “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus...no turning back, no turning back.”

After the praise and worship time, they passed a microphone around to the people who had a testimony of healing. A woman shared her story of being healed of a brain tumor. A man shouted, “Praise God! My back is healed!” We heard many more healing testimonials that evening. A man of God, and a layman of the church, shared his story about arriving home after work, the power of God hitting him, and how he witnessed his two-year-old daughter begin speaking in tongues. He then said God called him to lay hands on the sick. He asked if anyone needed healing and invited

### 31 Days of *Testimony & Devotion*

them to come to the front and sit in the “hot-seat,” a chair for prayer. Before I knew it, my grandmother jerked me out of the pew and dragged me to the front of the church. I was so shy, and uncomfortable, but I still plopped down into the “hot-seat.”

## Cry Of Distress

*But as for me, my prayer is to You, O Lord, at an acceptable time;*

*O God, in the greatness of Your lovingkindness,*

*Answer me with Your saving truth.*

*Deliver me from the mire and do not let me sink;*

*May I be delivered from my foes and from the deep waters.*

*May the flood of water not overflow me*

*Nor the deep swallow me up,*

*Nor the pit shut its mouth on me.*

*Answer me, O Lord, for Your lovingkindness is good;*

*According to the greatness of Your compassion, turn to me,*

*And do not hide Your face from Your servant,*

*For I am in distress; answer me quickly.*

*Oh draw near to my soul and redeem it;*

*Ransom me because of my enemies!*

**Psalm 69:13-18**



### 31 Days of Testimony & Devotion

There's so much anxiety, sorrow, and pain in people's lives. In the mission field, I have traveled to many places, been in different parts of this world, and experienced different cultures and people groups. God's plan is to touch the lives of all people, especially the poor and those who suffer physically. It seems there is a belief system in most places to accept their hopeless condition, but there is great HOPE through faith in Jesus! We watch the daily news and see the wars and Ebola crisis. We live in a time where there are more negative things to focus on, which creates a feeling of hopelessness. If we are not careful, we can choose to live through the negative emotions of hopelessness. Keep your eyes on Jesus who is our HOPE and future. God sent hope through His Son. If we trust in God He gives HOPE in the cry of our heart. I choose to believe God is the "Answer!" Let us choose to look up and not down, and believe in the lovingkindness of God.

The enemy is behind all of those terrible things that touch our lives because of sin. Instead of letting the enemy bring you down, we can overcome through choosing to *take it all to the Lord in prayer*. It is important to know where to go when the anxiety, sorrow, and pain begin to overwhelm us! We have a Deliverer and He is full of compassion in our time of distress. If we do not choose to find our hope and answer in God, it's easy to sink downward into deep depression. This is a playground for the devil where he can torment you. Look up and see Jesus' face, because He is the only one who can redeem. We can ask Him to draw near to our weary souls. I love the word of GOD, because it speaks HOPE and answers to our every need. We choose this day to walk in step with God, and accept His great compassion and lovingkindness!

Julie Stott  
South Pacific

## Prayer

*Lord, You are the one I cry out to in my distress! It can be easy to give in to the negative emotions that begin to overwhelm me, as I see this world's suffering. Yet, I choose to turn my eyes toward You, my HOPE. I offer my prayer to You, God, and thank You that no matter what goes on around me or what happens to me, You will take all my anxiety and all of my negative thoughts. Jesus, I choose to look at You, today. Amen.*



## Seek First

*Seek FIRST the Kingdom of God and His righteousness,  
and all these things will be added to you.*

Matthew 6:33

I love the meaning of the word *righteousness*, which is the conformity of the heart and life to God's divine law. This includes all we call justice, honesty, virtue and holy affections. When I was young, I had ideas of what life should look like for me. What I would do, who I would be, and I wanted to be able to take care of myself. My dad had always said, "When I make a lot of money then we will..." He never made a lot of money. Just after I graduated from high school, I went to Alaska to be at a cousin's wedding. I was invited to stay and go to Bible college there, but I had already enrolled in a college. I wanted to be a horse veterinarian, and my life was planned out. I was challenged to pray and ask the Lord about it, so I did.

I was struggling during this time in my life, and I was making poor decisions. I was doing things that I knew were wrong. I had been disappointed and hurt, and I had disappointed myself. I knew God and I loved Him, but my life was in turmoil. My stomach was a mess and I knew I wanted to get right with God, so I told my

boyfriend the night before I left for Alaska that I was going to get right with God again and He laughed. As I prayed and asked the Lord what I should do, He gave me Matthew 6:33. God was telling me that if I'd put His ways first, He would take care of me.

God reassured me that all the things I was concerned about in my life would work out and all my needs would be taken care of. I said "Yes" to the Lord and agreed to stay and do a semester of Bible college. I knew I needed God's Word in my life, so I would know how to follow His plans. I completed one year of Bible school and God did so much in my life at that time, just being in His Word changes you. He healed me physically and emotionally. He gave me some of the best friends in my life at that time. He opened a door for me, through a lady who attended school, to work as a bookkeeper.

His Word gave me a foundation on which to stand firm. After Alaska, I went to YWAM (Youth With A Mission), hoping to travel and do missions work; but God did not open that door to me at that time. He continued to show me more of who He is in my life. Though I knew God had sown a desire inside of me for missions, when I returned home to my family in Texas, God brought a wonderful husband to me. We began our family and shortly after moved to San Antonio. We then started our own business, and I found myself doing the bookkeeping for our construction company. I have been doing this for 35 years and work with my husband. As a couple we have supported the Kingdom of God, by giving and going to the missionfield. I have been blessed and overflowing in God's blessings, therefore I can be a blessing to others.

God promised He would take care of me if I put Him first, and He always has. His promises are true and He has blessed me beyond anything I could have ever imagined. He has blessed us so we, in turn, can be a blessing. I have learned a life of faith and trust in Him. It has not always been easy, but God was there and He has always been good! Seek Him and let Him prove to you His goodness! You will find Him when you seek Him with your whole heart!

Monica Dorazio  
USA

## Prayer

*Lord, I seek You for You are faithful and true! Take care of my plans and may they be aligned in Your will for my life. You are blessing and can do more than I could ever imagine. I recommit myself to all of who You ARE and I put my TRUST in You now and forever. Use my life to reach the harvest field of souls that need to know how much You care. I seek Your kingdom FIRST. Amen.*



## Perfect Timing

*For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, "The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth."*

1 Kings 17:14

As an artist, God is teaching and showing me how to wait for His perfect timing. I love abstract painting, using the beautiful colors and textures, and the freedom to customize my work. I enjoy creating paintings for homes and businesses. I wanted to take what God has given me and give something back that would make a difference in someone else's life, and display God's love. I decided to use some of the profits to bless others who are less fortunate.

Asking God to whom He wanted me to give, I noticed all of the homeless living on the streets of California. I wondered how they ended up on the streets in Orange County, California. I noticed homeless living under freeways, bus benches and parks, so decided to buy sleeping bags to give to those in need because it can get cold at night. One day, having an extra sleeping bag in my car, I noticed a homeless man pushing a cart. As I was driving by him, I pulled ahead and waited for a sign to give



it to him, and I prayed that my “sign from God” would be that he didn’t cross the street. And he didn’t.

My car was in an exit-lane giving me little time to pull over and give the sleeping bag to the homeless man. I yelled out my car window, “Do you want a sleeping bag?” Another person in a car whistled at the homeless man to get his attention and finally he saw me. The homeless man said, “Yes! Thank you.” So I gave him the sleeping bag and a bottle of water. Later in the day, after finishing all my errands, I saw him on another street, pushing his cart with the sleeping bag, confirming of God’s PERFECT TIMING. God showed me that He uses us when we listen to Him, and He allows us to be His hands and feet.

The next day, I put in a job submission for my paintings and had to wait for an answer. I was hoping to get my work displayed in a business, and while waiting, God used the lesson of the homeless man to believe in PERFECT TIMING. I cast my worry and anxiety on the Lord, and the owner called and said, YES!

God’s perfect timing! I’ve gone through things in life wanting the answer quickly. God tells me NOT to worry about anything, but instead to TRUST in His perfect timing! When the answer comes, it will come with ease and be in His perfect time.

Tanya Lozano

USA

## Prayer

*Lord, You are teaching me to give, while I wait and to believe in Your perfect timing in my life. I need to be patient even when it is not going my way. You're perfect in all of Your ways, oh, Lord. Use my everyday experiences for an opportunity to see Your miracles. You desire to bless me with the desires of my heart, as I seek Your kingdom first, and allow Your will to be made perfect in my life. Amen.*



## Spirit Speaking

*...Do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.*

Matthew 10:19-20

My life has been through many difficult things, but I have always been strengthened by God. Now He uses me to help others in their difficult times. Recently, I had to do both secular and Christian counseling. The secular counseling has been mostly to those who have experienced significant trauma, and I was at first at a loss as to how I could help people undergoing such difficult situations without bringing Christ into the picture. Frankly, I didn't have any idea what I could say that would comfort them without talking about Jesus! Then I remembered the verse above. Before the sessions, I began to submit myself to God and ask the Holy Spirit to fill me not only with His words but also with His presence, so that His love would flow through me. Even though I could not speak the gospel with words, I could walk into those sessions and expect the Holy Spirit within me to pour out of my being to meet their needs.

Amazing things began to happen. When I opened my mouth, wisdom would pour out. I wasn't just giving "answers," I was speaking by the Holy Spirit right into their souls. The response amazed me, and in several instances, their whole countenances were transformed. You could see and hear hope rise up within them. Some of the time, they even asked about God, which opened the ethical door for me to talk about Him. Although, even when they didn't ask about God, I believe that the Holy Spirit touched them in such a way that a spiritual door was cracked for them to walk through. I didn't plan what I would say, and I couldn't remember what I said afterward. I just know that at that moment, the Holy Spirit took over and "spoke through me" bringing His comfort and peace.

When you are in a situation that leaves you at a loss as of what to say or how to act or how to react, trust the Holy Spirit who dwells within you to do your talking for you, and you will be amazed at the empowerment that He will bestow upon you!

Brooke Highlander  
Papua New Guinea

## Prayer

*Lord, my life belongs to You alone. I remember how You've been with me in every difficult time, strengthening and filling me with new hope. You have encouraged me to be all You want me to be. I believe in Your words and desire for others to know You. Thank You for using my life and continuing to use me to help others to see where their "answers" come from. Amen.*

## Above Anything Else

*But watch out! Don't let your heart be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.*

Luke 21:34

If there is one encouragement that comes to my mind, it is to be in love with the Lord above anything else, and more than anyone else! In general, we are taken or driven by all the needs around us, and we tend to put aside our own relationship with our first love, Jesus. We may be engaged in studies, working, married, mothers, ministers, etc.

Whatever our occupation is, we have different hats and it seems that a lot of our doing is service based. Also, we may give all our time to our emotions, our physical strength or to our connections of people. Little by little, we lose ourselves, or better said, we lose sight of “who we truly are in God.” So here are a couple of verses that could refresh your heart:

**31 Days of Testimony & Devotion**

*I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.*

**Jeremiah 31:3**

*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit, fruit that will last...*

**John 15:16**

*I no longer call you my servants, because a servant does not know his master's business.*

*Instead, I have called you friends...*

**John 15:15**

I'm reminded how "the cares of this life," responsibilities, and super activism can draw us away from our relationship with God. This can easily happen even in our Christian circles, and we ought to remember we are not indispensable. Yet, we need to discern when we should step into a situation because the Holy Spirit prompts us to do so. There's a fine line between loving with words and with actions! We also need to know to be still... and acknowledge that HE is GOD. Be encouraged to know how much God desires a relationship with you and love Him above all.

**Martine Lucero**

**France**

## Prayer

*Lord, thank You for reminding me how important You are in my life. You call me friend. I want the Holy Spirit to help me discern when I need to draw near again to be still to know YOU. Out of Your divine presence, I believe You will strengthen me to serve others better with renewed joy. May Your words be my actions throughout my life, loving others to know Your great love. I cast all my cares on You today. Amen.*





## God Is My Portion

*O Lord, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup;*

*You maintain my lot.*

*The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;*

*Yes, I have a good inheritance.*

Psalm 16:5-6

I was born into a Christian home and was raised by godly parents who were very loving and sacrificial. I gave my life to Jesus when I was nine years old, and have developed a close walk with Him ever since. I met my husband, Theo, when I was 15 years old, and God brought us together in marriage in 1983, in spite of the many struggles before and after marriage that almost broke our relationship apart. Though he was brought up in a Christian home and attended church regularly, Theo did not have a relationship with the Lord. As a result, his life was worldly. Though I went through many struggles caused by this, I turned to God, my strength.

My constant prayer on my knees brought Theo to come to know the Lord personally in 1984, when he had an accident that brought him to a close relationship with the

Lord. The Lord did a supernatural work in our marriage and blessed us with three amazing children.

However, life's storms did not stop. Theo was unequally yoked in a business partnership, and his friend who was the managing partner declared bankruptcy on us. This led to a great financial loss, including selling our newly built house. We spent nearly a year and a half designing and building our home. However, we knew the Lord wanted us to sell and settle the loans caused by the business friend, so we obeyed. Having two little boys with a newly born baby girl, we had great financial struggles in managing with the single income. However, this was our training ground to depend on God for our provision. We learned to pray over the food we purchased every day. One particular day when we were almost out of milk powder for our daughter, we prayed, placing our hands on the almost empty tin, and it lasted until our next salary came through.

It was during this time we met Pastor Leslie and Belen Keegel, and we joined the Foursquare church in Nugegoda. We began to grow spiritually in leaps and bounds. Though it was years of financial struggles and anxieties, I learned to depend on God in all situations. God continued to work in our lives through these trials as we started holding on to Him in desperation. God provided a general manager position for Theo, and blessed us financially. My faith and trust in the Lord grew day by day as I saw Theo seeking the Lord, and the Lord supernaturally settled all the loans.

When the Lord takes something from you, He always has another plan. He gave us another home, and this was an absolute miracle. This home was a house that we rented soon after we got married. Our bid was RS 300,000 less than the offer our

landlord had from a neighbor, but the owner of this house chose to sell the house to us incurring a loss of RS 300,000. This is the miracle of God and His provision!

A prophecy of a man of God who encouraged us through our challenges in 1990 was that the Lord will take us into a country that had two islands and was volcanic. This man also described this nation's flag in details mentioning the four stars on it. This prophecy came to pass in 1998, when we applied to New Zealand due to the changes in the company Theo was working in as a General Manager. When the papers came through from the New Zealand embassy, we noticed the New Zealand Flag with four stars on the letterhead, which was confirmation to us that the Lord was taking us there according to the prophecy.

We arrived in New Zealand in 2001, and stayed in a motel for a couple months. Though we applied for many jobs, we did not find any, and the discouragement was so great that we considered returning to Sri Lanka. But one morning we prayed together as a family holding hands and said, "Lord, if you want us to stay here, we want you to bring a man of God into the motel today to confirm to us that we are here by your promise." The Lord confirmed this to us by bringing a man of God that very evening. This was the continued love and assurance of God in my life.

Soon after this, the Lord gave me a job as a receptionist at a doctor's clinic, even without an interview or an application. The Lord truly is my Shepherd! Later, God divinely led me to study for a year at Auckland University, with a miraculous grant that helped me get back into teaching. God continued to lead Theo and me, supernaturally providing for our every need. The Lord then opened a door for us to

start a connect group in our home, which then became the first Foursquare church in New Zealand.

Today, my husband and I serve as pastors in the All Nation City Church, and I also support my husband's role as the National Leader of Foursquare Churches in New Zealand. I am amazed at God's leading and His guidance that we have experienced in every step of our lives. My wish is for our children (in our family and church) and grandchildren to walk in the same path of faith, experiencing the abundant life that God has for them individually and as families.

Manju Nayagam

New Zealand

## Prayer

*Lord, You are my pathmaker, provider, and strength. I trust in You to care for ALL my needs, even during the times it seems things are not working out according as planned. You teach my heart to lean into You alone for every detail of my life. I put ALL of my heart and mind into what YOU SAY. I will follow Your plans and YOU will always make a way, leading me to that place You have chosen for me to enjoy. All of Your promises are there. Amen.*

## For His Name's Sake

*And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.*

*But many who are first will be last, and the last first.*

Matthew 19:29-30

When we left for Peru, we had to leave two of our daughters back in Germany, and only the youngest one went with us. Our two daughters had just started their studies for their careers, and they knew that the Lord wanted them to stay in Germany. After a few months in Peru, we got a call from our oldest daughter letting us know that our second daughter had been in an accident. She was riding on the passenger side and another car hit them from her side. The police told us that it was a miracle that she was alive, with only minor cuts on her head and a slight concussion.

At the time of the accident, we asked God what shall we do? Shall one or all of us travel to Germany? There was no extra money for us to go, and the doctors told us it was urgent. Our previous church in Germany that we pastored stepped in and took our role by helping our other daughter to go back and forth to the hospital to take care of her sister, because she didn't have a car. Another family stepped in and took

our precious daughter into their home after her release from the hospital for some still needed recovery time. She stayed two weeks until she was ready to return to her studies.

Through it all, we saw God's faithfulness! He is with us and with all of our daughters. I believe, *"...everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life."*

When we were living far away, others took our role and played fathers and mothers to our two daughters. We were so grateful to our former church that took such good care of our kids. God is faithful! When we put our life in God's hands and our families in God's hands – they are saved.

Ulrike Otremba  
Colombia

## Prayer

*Lord, thank You that in my life, when I have no control, or it is not easy to be there in times of crisis, You are faithful. I have given my life up to follow You and I know Your promises remain. I believe in Your words that I'll receive a hundredfold and inherit eternal life. Take care of every area of my life, my family and the church. Amen.*



## WEEK 5

### **New Life** | Julie Stott

My eyes closed as the man of God began to speak God's authority over my sickness. I felt heat go through my body, and I saw flashes of bright light appear in both eyes, still shut. I felt God's hands inside my body pressing on my lungs, and it felt warm, spongy and soft. I opened my eyes, shouted, "Jesus loves me, He is real!" In that moment I encountered heaven, and the revelation of God's LOVE! I was also



physically healed! I was hungry and thirsty to know God, and that night they gave me the New Testament Good News Bible to read.

I will never be the same again because this is my new LIFE. My nakedness is clothed and I receive God's covering on all my shame. It all came from the cross of Jesus! No longer would the image of the cross be mystical, hanging on the church wall with Jesus wearing a crown of thorns, drippings of red paint from His wounds, with nail-pierced hands and feet. Instead, I experienced the ultimate LOVE and RESTORATION.

My covering came out of this flesh offering for humanity. I was drawn to God's ULTIMATE LOVE through Jesus. The Power of God that raised Christ from death to LIFE has raised me up out of spiritual death into true LIFE. Not only did I receive healing in my body, but I was also born again of the Spirit. I felt on fire to share with everyone about JESUS! I am addicted to Jesus!! I want everyone to have this HOPE.

I share this story because we all can be an overcomer *by the word of our testimony and by the blood of the Lamb*, Jesus. God gave us a NEW COVERING in Jesus. We now have LIFE forever! After this decaying body dies, my last breath will inhale heaven's ETERNAL breath. Death has no sting!

# He Restores My Soul

*He restores my soul.*

*He leads me in paths of righteousness*

*for his name's sake.*

Psalm 23:3

Driving through Papua New Guinea is never a leisurely sightseeing tour. The roads are rough with holes that can swallow you whole, and they are littered with carcasses of cars that failed to make it out alive, picked clean by vultures that lie in wait. Then there are the robbers, or “rascals” as they are called, ready to pounce anytime day or night. They can emerge suddenly from the tall grasslands like locusts upon the crops. Yet, the people are beautiful and wonderful testimonies of God’s grace. I never tire of seeing their faces and embracing their genuine love.

As I entered a church, leaving the cool breeze, I was moved by their presence. I read Psalm 23 and then told a personal story, and no doubt was inspired by the cars left on the side of the road I had just traveled. “*He restores my soul,*” I reminded the people, repeating the scripture. I went on to share of my hobby of restoring old, beaten up cars to the way they originally looked. “I love to see an old, worthless car come alive, made

beautiful once again.” I went on to say, “I saw this car once and I had to have it. Friends, even my wife, asked why—it was such a worthless piece of junk. But I saw what it could become and how the manufacturer built the car originally.

“The motor was a powerful V8, the interior was beautiful, and it was flawless inside and out. However, after neglect, abuse, and poor maintenance, I bought it and put my hands on every single part of it making it the way it was originally designed to be. The restored car was so beautiful, and it seemed I was the envy of everyone who saw me driving. Over and over people would say, “That is the car of my dreams.” I could sense the Lord was moving through my words. The transition from cars to people was seamless.

“The Lord wants to restore your soul. He wants to put His hands on every part of your mind, emotions, and will. Where you have been robbed, hurt, abused, He will restore hope and joy and love.”

As I continued, the sound began. It was the wailing of deep pain being released to God. Every one of the women in that church began to howl, pulling their dresses over their heads as if to make their moment with God private. It was as if the Lord had gathered these ladies into one big, corporate hug whispering to them, “I see your *worth*. I see your *value*. I am restoring you.” Jesus swept in and delivered them that day. It was a miracle of the restored soul.

ASK God to put His hands on every part of your mind, emotions, and will. He will restore you the way He originally designed you to be. Allow God’s miracle to take place in every area of your life. God is your hope and joy and love!

Jerry Stott  
South Pacific FMI

## Prayer

*Lord, I am not worthless and I am alive in You. You have placed Your loving hands on me, healing me, and setting me free from the lies of the enemy of my soul. You restore my soul. Take every part of me, renew me, and replace the things that are broken. Transform me daily into the person You designed me to be, and may I reflect Your image. Amen.*



## Total Surrender

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, his flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel.*

Isaiah 43:2-3

2015 was going to be my best year ever! Not only was I married to the most wonderful, loving, God fearing man and had just traveled our dream trip through Europe together, but also I was excitedly expecting the arrival of our first baby. Our lives felt amazing and everything was going perfectly... or so we thought.

On the 5th of April 2015, I was 5 days overdue when I arrived to the hospital in active labor. It was the morning of Easter Sunday and I still remember that day so vividly in my mind. We were going to meet our little son, and after nine months of planning, we couldn't wait to take our precious boy home. Sadly, our baby's heartbeat could not be found, and we were told that he had passed away. That day our world was shaken beyond measure. No words could express the sadness, anger, and hurt we felt that day in the labor room.

Our precious little boy, Elijah Samuel, was born at 5:25 pm on Easter Sunday. Although the room was silent on his arrival with tears all around, it was, and still is, one of the most amazing and monumental days in my life. In my arms, I saw the most beautiful boy with his perfectly formed hands and feet and gorgeous skin. He looked just like his dad but with my rosy cheeks, and he looked like he was just in a peaceful sleep.

The next few months would be both the longest and shortest three months all at once. The shortest because so much happened. During this time we had our first baby, laid our baby to rest, had moved houses, unpacked and settled into our new house, and quickly had to learn to go back to living the way we were before. However, it was also the longest three months as well. We had endless days of longing for our baby, numerous hours of wishing that we could turn the clock back on our wasted minutes of playing everything that happened on that special Sunday in our minds over and over again. We had to take a million steps back from our perfect Plan A and try to work on a Plan B, which basically involved surviving every second until we found ourselves again.

This was also a time where faith was lost, and we were so angry with God. We struggled with why this had happened to us, because we are faithful Christian people living our life for Him. Though we were angry with God, we still clung to Him. In His presence we started to feel inner peace and a deep love that only our God could give us. We didn't know why it happened or where our journey was taking us. We definitely didn't know what the future held, but we knew who held our future. In our brokenness and despair we held tighter to our God and His promises for our lives.

God slowly started to melt our ANGER and desolate hearts, and began to restore hope and purpose for living. These are some of the important lessons we learned through the loss of our boy:

- 1. God loves you completely and unconditionally** – Just like I loved baby Elijah and wanted the best for him, so does God for us and so much more. Holding him in my arms I felt an overwhelming love come over me. That’s how the God who created us feels about us.
- 2. Always be thankful** – It is easy to think that our bad situations are the worst and no one else is going through something as bad, but we need to be thankful for what we are given. I realized that I should be thankful that I was able to become pregnant, because many others struggle with infertility. Even at my lowest points in life, I should be thankful for what he has entrusted me and blessed me with.
- 3. Always be kind to others** – The love and thoughtfulness shown to us during this time helped us heal along the way. There are many other people going through a hopeless situation, and kindness is so important to help them press on. You won’t always know what to say, but just being there for each other speaks volumes.
- 4. We might never find the answers we are looking for** – After a long two months of waiting for the post-mortem results for baby Elijah, the result showed that there was no reason for him to die, because he was a perfect little boy. We got no answers. However, we have learned that sometimes in life you never get answers, and sometimes we just have to walk forward in trust.



Philippians 4:6-7 says, *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

5. **Live your life with intention** – God values you. God loves you, and He wants to do something amazing in each one of your lives. We aren't just created to be on this earth living each day so it can pass away. We are created with intention. God formed us and knows everything about us, including every single strand of hair on our heads. God created Elijah and He knew him more than we did. He knew the plans He had for him right from the start. Jeremiah 29:11 says,

*“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.”*

6. **Live for HIS will in our lives** – I believe this is the most important lesson. Over the past few years, we have seen God work mightily in our lives; and since Elijah, we have gone through two more pregnancies, and welcomed two sons, Zachary and Riley, into our lives. We had our lives perfectly planned, or so we thought. But we learned that when God is in control, sometimes things might not make sense. We need to trust God and trust in Him completely. God is right there by your side and working through your pain to bring His perfect will into play.

For me, it was the loss of my baby and the brokenness and tremendous pain that changed my world. For you, it might be a different situation, but the pain is still the same. If you are feeling lost and confused, I want to remind you that we have a Father that loves you and wants the best for you. God has a *deep unconditional love*

for us and it breaks His heart to see us in this pain. We live in a cruel and broken world, but God is waiting by your side to restore what you have lost. He will bring hope to those that feel helpless and He will mend broken hearts one piece at a time. If only we would trust Him, and trust HIS perfect will for us.

Loss is never something you get over; instead, it is something you have to learn to live with. Your life is forever changed. But this time, you live life with the knowledge that when your last day comes there will be a happy and smiley face waiting for you with open arms on the other side. I know that God's plans for Elijah were heavenly and more amazing than any plan that I could have ever wanted for him. And I know that God formed him perfectly in my womb, every intricate part of him and every hair on his head. He was fearfully and wonderfully made, and God wrote down every day that was ordained for him. As his mum, it makes my heart so happy to know that the first thing he saw when he opened his eyes was the face of God.

God was there for me throughout this whole time, and continues to be by my side when I find myself in situations of pain, hurt and hopelessness. When I surrendered totally to HIS will for my life, I saw my situation change as my faith and heart were restored. Have you surrendered your life totally to Him?

Michelle Singh

New Zealand

## Prayer

*Lord, You are with me through all of the loss and painful times in my life!*

*You continue to walk by my side, even when I find myself in situations of*

### 31 Days of Testimony & Devotion

*pain, hurt, and hopelessness. I see my situation through the eyes of faith and my heart knows You will restore me once again. I surrender totally to YOUR will for my life, even if I cannot make sense of it all. Amen.*

# Faithful

*Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes I will help you. I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*

**Isaiah 41:10**

In loving memory of our precious daughter, Melina Iturra...

I will be 82 on January 26, which happens to be Australia Day. The day of my birth, God prophetically sealed my future ministry call to Australia. My twin brother and I were born in Olympia Washington two months early. It was a miracle that we survived, which confirms to me that nothing can stop God's plan for our lives!

I chose to attend Life Bible College because I knew God called me to ministry. I met my Australian husband while in school, and we finished Life Bible College in 1958. My husband, Pastor Don Baker, our first daughter and I moved to Sydney, Australia to plant a church. In the years that followed we had four other children. Our church began to experience an amazing move of God with many miracles and salvations. We've experienced many blessings, testing, and challenges. I have never known the Lord to forsake us because He proved to be faithful no matter what came our way.

I want to share with you the reality of God's faithfulness. Our beautiful daughter, Melina, our fourth child, was an anointed, prophetic worship leader who truly loved Jesus. Over two years ago, she died suddenly of cardiac arrest at age 47 while working out at the gym. This day brought great shock to me, her husband, her three children, other family members and our friends. We all went through a time of grief and trusting in God's love. As a mum, with the loss of a child, I found Jesus' love and comfort as He strengthened me daily. Once again, God's perfect love proved faithful.

Though I have faced many hard moments, it's still very hard to accept that we will not see Melina again in this life. I know she is in heaven rejoicing and worshiping in the presence of our Lord. I praise God for all my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren as they're all serving the Lord, to this very day!

If there's a place of brokenness and grief from losses in your own life, there is a faithful God who understands you. He gives you rest in His loving arms. We can reach out to God and ask Him to bring an assurance of His love, comfort and strength. All God wants from us is to trust Him and know He will see us through.

I love God with all my heart and have given my life as a minister for over 60 years, so others too will know my God is faithful. I declare today that God is faithful to every heart and to every family who puts their trust in Him! Trust God and know how much He loves each one of us. He is there and will be there in your most difficult times, testing and challenges. Again, trust God!

**Minta Baker**

**Australia**

## Prayer

*Lord, I believe You are truly a faithful God. I choose not to be fearful or dismayed. I completely trust Your plan and purpose for my life and I declare that nothing can stop Your plan for my life! Thank You that You strengthen me, help me and uphold me with Your right hand. Amen.*





*My dear friend,*

*You have read some of my story of life broken, restored and fashioned in the Potter's hands. Our God, who is our Father, the Creator will form a new beautiful vessel containing His precious treasures of life through Jesus out of "your story." You'll be EMPOWERED to live through godly identity. The Holy Spirit is a part of this LIFE and empowerment, and He will fill you up and overflow to others. There's life in you! And you'll experience a higher level of anointing as you pray and press into God. He has a divine plan to unfold*



*in your life. I hope these stories of women touch your heart and I pray you'll be encouraged to see yourself as God sees you. You are called to be a part of the Body of Christ and God has assigned all of us to be a vital part of the end-time harvest. Get ready for more miracles and breakthroughs! If you don't know Jesus, please give your heart to Him and confess that "Jesus is Lord" of every area of your life. Take the time and confess your sins and acknowledge there's only one way to the forgiveness of sins through Jesus who paid the price, and His blood has completely cleansed you and made you whiter than the snow. Accept Jesus into your heart and allow Him to live in you. Now walk in the promise of eternal life. Nothing you've done is too big for God's LOVE to cover. He takes all our shame away! Nothing is too BIG!!*

*In Christ LOVE,*

*Julie Stott*

*SPWE*

You have read stories from all over the world and from different walks of life - women from all ages, and even a younger generation who believe in the future of

**WOMEN EMPOWERED!**

I pray they have touched your heart and transformed your mind in God's precious TRUTH. He loves you and wants to do something amazing in your life. Pray and ask God to show you how He's been moving in your life.



















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