

LEADINGHEARTS

EMPOWERING CHRISTIAN WOMEN FOR LEADERSHIP

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♥ A MIRACLE STORY
HITS THE BIG SCREEN
BREAKTHROUGH

♥ **PLUMB**
BEAUTIFULLY
BROKEN

♥ RELEASE YOUR
INNER CREATIVE

♥ WHEN GOD CALLS
THE HEART
TO REST



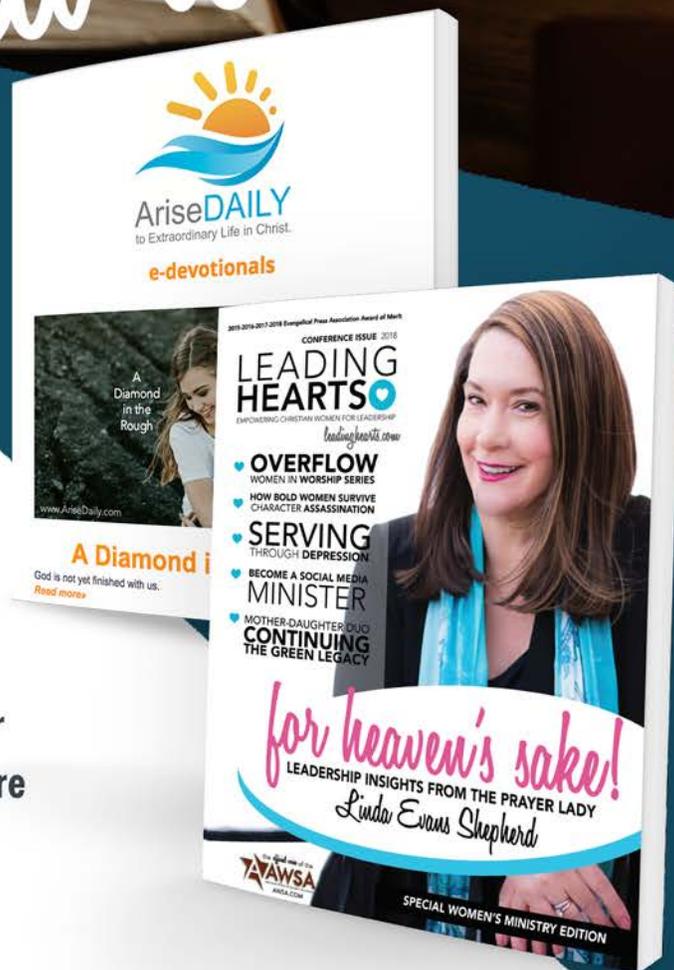
Reclaim
your **HAPPY** space.

WITH BETH DUEWEL & RHONDA RHEA



inspired to live.
equipped to lead.

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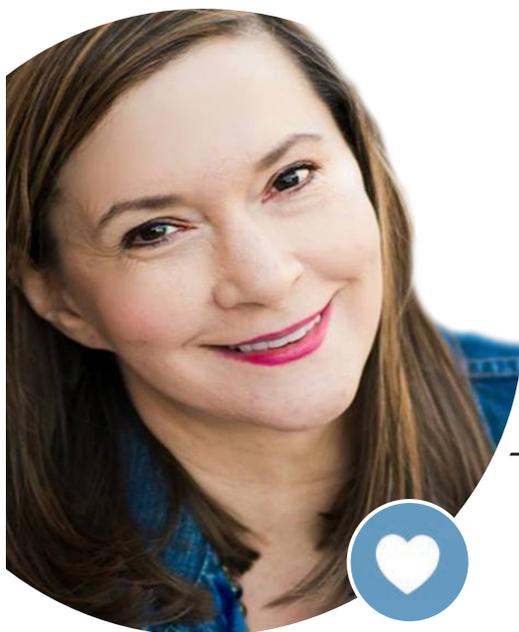


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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Linda Evans Shepherd



dare to dream
into your purpose

GOT A PURPOSE? Ask God to show you something you could do if fear stepped out of your way.

Queen Esther found herself facing such a challenge. She'd risen above her difficult childhood and won a kingdom-wide beauty pageant to accept a role of a lifetime, a royal marriage to King Xerxes himself.

The marriage had been a happy one until her husband fell under the spell of Haman, a nobleman with an evil intent. Haman convinced Xerxes to make a decree that on a certain day, the people of King Xerxes' kingdom could exterminate and enslave the Jews, Esther's people.

Esther was heartbroken, but what could she do to stop the slaughter? If Esther tried to speak up, she'd have to waltz uninvited into the king's court. That was a crime for which she could be executed. But why bother? The King's decree was irreversible.

Her uncle, Mordecai, sent Esther a message:

"If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"

After Mordecai's words, and much prayer, Esther began to envision that she would speak up. She decided to confront the king and sent her uncle word of her plan explaining, "If I perish, I perish."

In mustered courage, Esther was given the opportunity to tell the king of her people's plight. He was horrified at her news and soon made a new decree

that granted the Jews of his kingdom the right to gather and stand for their life and to slay anyone who would assault or enslave or steal from them.

The day of the anticipated attack came, then went, without incident. Esther had saved her people.

Maybe, like Esther, you are at a crossroads, contemplating a decision for purpose. It's time to consider your dream, the things you've imagine doing for the Kingdom; like maybe running for a political office or your school board, teaching school, writing a book, studying law, volunteering at a church, starting a ministry or even telling your friends and family about Jesus.

What if it's worth the risk? What if you aren't obedient and God should raise up another, ensuring that your chance for purpose should perish?

Pray, then move forward to deliver God's message of purpose on the platform God is giving you. Do it so people will live and not die.

In this issue, we the contributors are each sharing with you our word of the year. I have three words: vision, purpose and courage because I believe they go together. For purpose needs vision, for without vision the people perish (Proverbs 29:18).

So pray into God's vision for you, then invite God into your journey so He himself can supply you with His courage.

It's time for you to arise, Esther! Raise your voice to deliver the message only you can give. In Jesus' name.

Love,

LINDA EVANS SHEPHERD
PUBLISHER, LEADING HEARTS MAGAZINE 

LEADING HEARTS

EMPOWERING CHRISTIAN WOMEN FOR LEADERSHIP

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Leading Hearts magazine for Christian Women is published bimonthly by Right to the Heart Ministries 2019.

ISSN 2380-5455

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MANUSCRIPTS | Writers guidelines are available at leadinghearts.com.

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MEMBER | 2015-2016-2017-2018 Evangelical Press Association Award of Merit Winner — Christian Ministry Digital Publication

Photos courtesy of: Joy Elban, Max Pixel, Pexels, Pixabay, (Unsplash: Sarah Cervantes, Sarah Comeau, Priscilla Du Preez, Eye for Ebony, Halannah Halilah, Court Prather, John Mark Smith, David Yanutama).

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WANTED
TO WRITE
FOR TV OR FILM?



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- Linda Evans Shepherd

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Bragging!

FIVE
WINS
IN A
ROW!

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Reclaim
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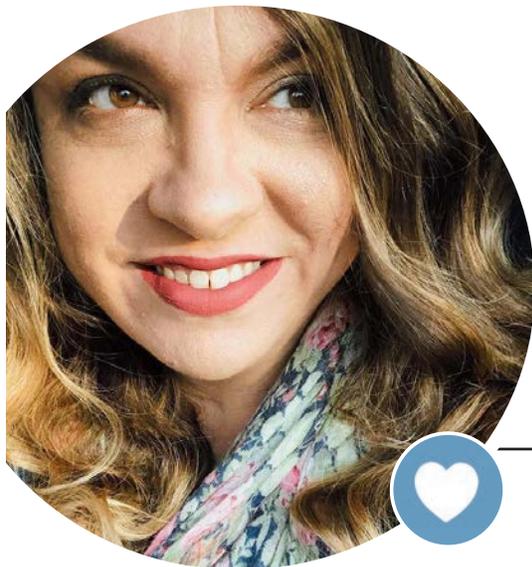
WITH BETH DUEWEL & RHONDA RHEA

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EVANGELICAL PRESS
**AWARD
OF MERIT**

2015
2016
2017
2018
2019





FROM THE EDITOR
amber weigand-buckley

is God waiting on you?

THE FUNNY THING ABOUT LEADERSHIP IS THAT IT TAKES FAR LESS FAITH TO TALK ABOUT YOUR CALL THAN IT DOES TO WALK OUT YOUR CALL. WHY?

Because you have to put feet to your faith before you can allow God to SHOW UP and perform the MIRACULOUS.

Joshua and the Israelite priests leading their people into the Promise Land knew that if they followed God's direction, they were going to hit the Jordan River (Joshua 1:1-9). It didn't take a genius to realize that when they hit the water, they didn't have the necessary provisions — no boats or life jackets.

All they had was faith that when they got there, God would show up — and He did.

The first act of faith for these leaders was putting their feet into the waters of the Red Sea. As they stepped out, God held the waters back so His people could cross on dry land.

Many of us get caught up in the pray-about-it mentality. We're waiting for God to show up before we step out to do what we know He has already called us to do. We are concerned with the details, like where are we going to get the resources to do X, Y or Z. If God has given YOU a VISION, He's going to give YOU the PROVISION!

The priests didn't know what was going to happen when they dipped their toes in the Jordan River. The

simply stepped out in faith. As they did, they found out God's greater game plan.

Six years ago, Linda approached me about helping her start a magazine to empower women in Christian leadership. Without a budget to fall back on, there was definitely some doubt in the mix. I felt peace, however, knowing that God was going to supply in the most unexpected places.

During this time God has multiplied the workers. He has not only sustained us, but has blessed us with accolades. We just celebrated receiving our fifth consecutive Award of Merit from the Evangelical Press Association! How incredible is that!

I encourage you, in your calling, to embrace not only WORDS of faith, but also the MOVEMENT of faith. God may not show you all the details up front. If you are caught in waiting-on-God mode, ask yourself if you are the one keeping God waiting.

Faith happens when we move forward in God's vision, even when we are unsure where the next step will land.

I hope this edition of Leading Hearts will help you not only cling to some WORDS to stir your faith and steer your call in the months to come. As you STEP OUT in faith and put your feet to work, I guarantee you'll see the mountains move and the oceans part — because God SHOWS UP.

Love,

AMBER WEIGAND-BUCKLEY
EDITOR, LEADING HEARTS MAGAZINE

Fix Her Upper

Reclaim Your

HAPPY
Space

Beth Duetwel
& Rhonda Rhea

WWW.FIXHERUPPER.COM



It's good for us to be reminded often that we have a choice.
We can choose to trust our God of joy and to depend on
Him to renovate our happy.

DOES YOUR HAPPY EVER NEED A RENO?

All of us can sometimes put our happy spaces in weird places. People get caught up, for instance, in the thread count of their sheets.

Thread count. If it's not Egyptian cotton in a thread count impressive enough to require a greater number of stacks of cash in the bank than the count of the threads in the sheets, suddenly that bed is just not a happy place. It's all about the thread count. The math is not uncomplicated.

The two of us, Beth and Rhonda, maintain that everyone is getting a little too caught up in the thread count, when shouldn't the crumb count be a bigger deal? We were talking about it the other day and discovered that we don't really like the idea of snacking in bed — mostly because we don't like the idea of sheets that are too ... how can we put it ... exfoliat-ey. But then later we decided the fact that we're not bed-snackers might actually be more about the other fact that neither of our husbands are big into exfoliation either.

Just so you know that neither of us are legalistic about the topic, everything changes at the sofa. Pick a home. Rhonda or Beth. Doesn't matter. Because

when it comes to either one of those sofas, a little lean to the left or the right and, let the exfoliation begin.

We don't really mean to be this way. Neither of us is even sure what kind of crumbs are stuffed between the cushions of our respective couches. But wouldn't it be interesting if we pooled our sofas, as it were, turned them upside down, and gave them each a good shake. Think it would make a casserole of some kind? A "crumb cake," perhaps? One more pin for the Pinterest board, right? Double-DIY that!

Reclaiming our happy space in life does not have to be this kind of complicated. Or crummy. Or crumb-y. We lean just one way. Into/on Christ. We allow Him to do in us what we're powerless to do for ourselves.

There's a wonderful paraphrase of Colossians 2:6-7. "And now just as you trusted Christ to save you, trust him, too, for each day's problems; live in vital union with him. Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him. See that you go on growing in the Lord, and become strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught. Let your lives overflow with joy and thanksgiving for all he has done" (TLB).

A giddy, bubbly happy all the time kind of joy? A grin that's perpetually on fleek? Not sure that should

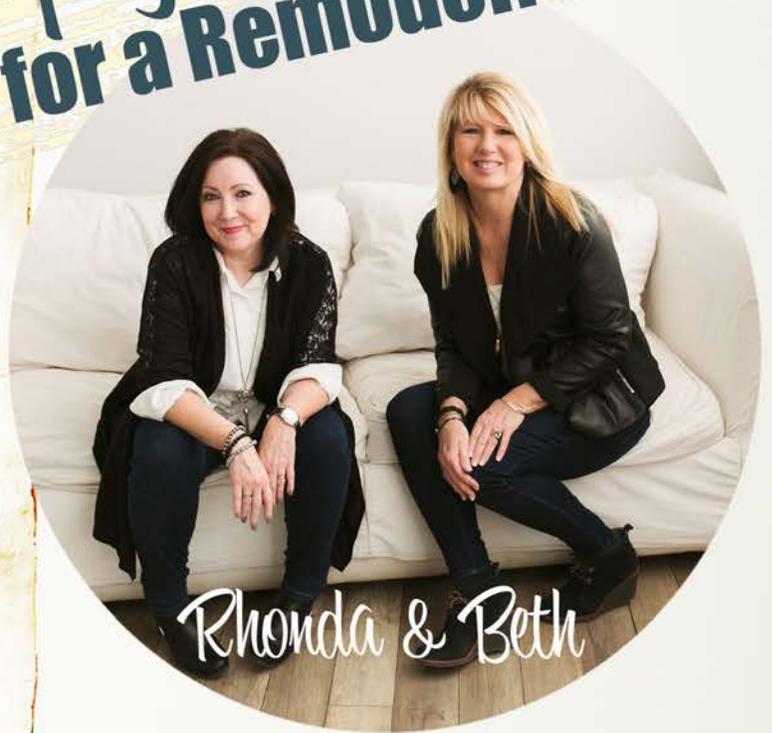
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A New Release from Rhonda Rhea & Beth Duetwel—

Is your happy space screaming for a remodel?

The joy of the Lord is your strength.
So...are you feeling a little wimpy?
Does your happy need a remodel?
It's time to reclaim your joy!



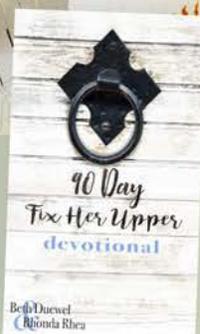
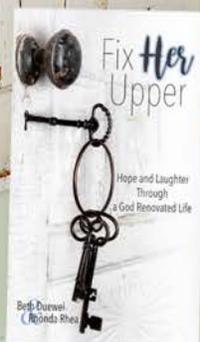
Rhonda & Beth

"You'll fall off your chair laughing while finding
tips for a reno-job on your life."
—Carole Kent,
national speaker and author

Fix Her Upper

Reclaim Your
HAPPY Space

Beth Duetwel
Rhonda Rhea



*"You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is
fullness of joy." (Psalm 16:11 ESV)*

You were not created for a slog-through-it,
just-make-the-best-of-it existence.
Not a tolerate it, bear with it kind of thing.
No, you were created to live it!
Live it to its glorious full, fuller, fullest!

Get your happy back!

From the authors who brought you *Fix Her Upper: Hope and Laughter through a God Renovated Life* and the *90 Day Fix Her Upper Devotional*—Rhonda Rhea and Beth Duetwel—enjoy some laughs as you take on a God-powered biblical reno of your innermost happy.

Available for order on Amazon
and at boldvisionbooks.com.

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ever be our goal. But joy in Jesus, our Bread of Life? Oh yes. It's the happy that goes deep and influences every part of our being, no matter what's happening around us.

Life-happy is not a DIY. It's never about becoming a fix-yourself-upper. It's ever and always about allowing the Lord, who renovates and reclaims so perfectly, to do a makeover from the inside out. He can take our crummy "before" and reveal a glorious, God-empowered "happily ever after."

It's good for us to be reminded often that we have a choice. We can choose to trust our God of joy and to depend on Him to renovate our happy. Or we can choose to squirm and balk and wriggle out of the work He wants to do in us. Let's face it. Some days we'll choose well. Other days? They're going to be rough. Cracker-crumb-bed-sheets kind of rough.

Our God gives grace. For the good days and the rough ones. Life is full of every kind of happy at that place of grace. It's a place where we rest in His presence. Ahhhh, it's the sweetest rest. It's there that the happiest space is ours again. Reclaimed.

The psalmist said, "You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forever" (Psalm 16:11 ESV). Happy space? It's in His presence. It's a happy-glow that lights up life right there.

O Lord, we praise You and thank You that You are our God of all joy, and that Your presence changes everything! May we fully rest in You and glow with a new happy. Every day. Because You are the one who reclaims.

By the way, could we add here that it's not a glow that happens because you sat on either one of our couch-foliators. No, it's more of a soul glow. And that really is the happiest of spaces. *JH*





by karen porter
WWW.KARENPORTER.COM



leadership is not for winnys

NOR FOR ANYONE WHO IS TRYING TO MAKE A NAME FOR HERSELF OR MAKE A FORTUNE.

Instead, being a leader involves serving and nudging others to do their best.

My husband and I own a group of small businesses. We work hard, and we try to incorporate the

qualities of a good leader as we work with our employees, associates and the freelancers we hire. Recently, he and I began attending a mastermind group composed of other small business owners. The meetings are stunning and mind-opening. After each meeting we are encouraged and challenged to integrate better leadership into our day-to-day work.

Each business person in our mastermind group

INTHELEAD

owns a business extremely different from the other businesses. We work in areas related to writing, speaking and publishing, but the other owners have businesses that range from sales, service, environmental management, logistics and the custom rebuilding of high-end collector cars and boats. What a mix! Yet we found common ground because (1) *we are all believers and follow Jesus with all our hearts while we are running our businesses, and (2) we all want to be better leaders.*

What I've learned in these meetings has surprised and confronted me. I thought I knew a lot about leadership because I have led for years, and I've read many books on the topic. Some of what I learned in our group sent me back to the basics, and some of these new skills have taken me to a new level of thinking.

For example, I know communication is important, but one member of our group told us how he intentionally schedules phone calls to employees each month. These calls are less about the employee's job performance and more about the person's life.

I realized that I almost always communicate with remote employees and freelancers by email and almost always about business. The next day I called a person who is a strategic part of our team and simply talked. Now I understand why this kind of communication is so valuable — for the employee and for me.

Another example is how we can redefine our image of a successful leader and take our leadership to a new level as we follow Jesus. Let's look at some of those traits and attitudes we should redefine. I'll start with some characteristics that are strong in my life.

First. I am a hard worker. I'm not sure if I inherited a hard-work DNA marker from my industrious father or if by bent of personality, I am a worker bee. I love work. It satisfies me, and I love the feeling of a job is well done. I've considered this worker trait to be an asset, and if I'm honest and truthful, I admit a

source of pride. But through the conversations in our mastermind group, I discovered that the opposite of hard worker isn't lazy as I thought — the opposite is availability. Do I work so hard that I am unavailable? As leaders we must redefine our leadership by asking the question: Am I considered a hard worker or am I considered available?

Second. I would like for our businesses to be profitable. Of course, I do. And I'm sure you want to be financially successful and responsible too, whether you are working for profit or managing a budget. When I consider the opposite of making money, my internal antonym is "poor." But in God's economy and in the realm of good leadership, the opposite of getting rich is being generous. Why do I want to have money? Is the answer that I want what money can buy or because I want to be a generous giver?

Now it's your turn to redefine successful leadership. Try your hand at the list below. I would love to hear your answers in the exercise below. Email me at kaeporter@gmail.com.

And remember, this kind of leadership is not for wimps!

We think leadership is:

God's definition is:

Hard Work

Availability

Rich

Generous

Capable

Smart

Celebrated

Powerful

Ambitious

Popular

BASED ON THE IMPOSSIBLE TRUE STORY



CHRISSY
METZ



JOSH
LUCAS



TOPHER
GRACE



MIKE
COLTER



MARCEL
RUIZ



AND
DENNIS
HAYSBERT



FROM THE PRODUCER OF MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN

BREAKTHROUGH

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH PASTOR JASON NOBLE



Pastor Jason Noble with Michael and Joyce Ellis

BREAKTHROUGH THE MOVIE IS BASED ON "THE IMPOSSIBLE" BOOK, WRITTEN BY JOYCE

SMITH. The story documents the real life death of her son John, and the miracle of God that brought him back to life.

Leading Hearts Magazine sat down to learn more of the inspirational story of the Smith family, through their pastor and friend, Jason Noble.

On a winter day in January, Joyce Smith received the kind of phone call that every mother fears. Her 14-year-old son, John, and two of his friends had fallen through an icy lake. John was under the ice for 15 minutes before his body was found by an emergency search and rescue worker.

When the desperate mother arrived at the hospital she found that while the medical personnel had been doing their best for over 40 minutes, her son's

heart was not responding. With what appeared to be tragedy, and in the middle of the critical care room with all medical staff listening, Joyce Smith did the only thing she knew to do at that moment ... she cried out to God for the restoration and life of her son!

Pastor Jason was by the family's side from those first moments at the hospital. When he walked into John's room, Joyce shared the doctor's grim report. John was considered to be brain dead. If John was to make it through the night, he would not be the John they had known before.

We live in a time when many people simply don't believe in the power of prayer, much less in a God that does miracles. Where do you go when you are given no earthly reason for hope? What steps can we take to move forward in faith, believing in God even when we don't see our desired outcome? As followers of Christ, we embrace stories of miracles and of heroes in the faith that have seen the miraculous come to pass. The question is, how do we live in that kind of faith today?

Pastor Jason says there are some important things to remember as we face life's tragic moments. Having witnessed John's journey, as well as a mother's profound faith in God to do the impossible, Jason shares great insights with our *Leading Hearts* audience.

Have an Eternity Mindset

"Perhaps we don't always see more miracles because we're not positioned for them. We walk in and see the dire situation. We hear what the doctors

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say will happen, and because of the devastation of the moment we buy into it.

It was determined early on that we would not report what the doctors were saying; we would speak life over John, not death. Some may ask well isn't that just a prosperity kind of teaching? No. When you study healings in the Bible, there is always a human conduit. Someone is speaking that healing out and praying for it. We have to pray in spite of what the outcome may be.

Let's say John had died in spite of our prayer. In reality, death is going to happen to each of us. Even for John Smith, healing at that moment in the hospital would only be a temporary thing. And if John had died in the hospital, we still need to maintain that healing occurs in that moment as he steps into eternity with a new body. We need to pray for healing with an eternity mindset. We pray trusting God not knowing the outcome."

Build Before the Storm

"Joyce taught me a very important aspect of the faith-filled life. You need to build up your faith and prayer life before the storm ever hits. Without knowing what was to come, Joyce had spent months studying Scripture, learning to pray and drawing near to God. When tragedy happens, you have a split second where you internally make a choice what to do. Joyce made





the decision very quickly between, 'okay, they say my son is going to die', and, 'okay! I will put this all into practice and pray.'

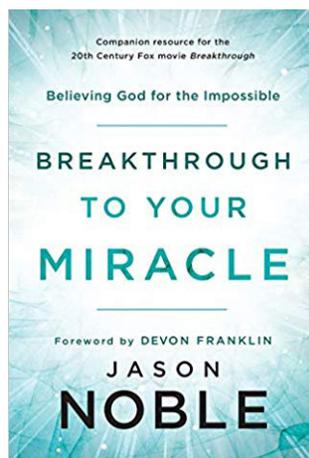
"I think that's the key. You don't build as the storm is raging. You build before the storm happens so that your foundation is set when difficulty comes. You react by turning to God in prayer."

Keep Your Eyes Wide Open

"We may be looking at our situation and thinking where is God? He's not answering my prayers. I encourage people to go back and look at all the small things God has done while you are waiting for the BIG answer. So many times, God works in small pieces and ways that all come together in this big tapestry of miracles. Faith helps us look at that and realize what He is doing. So keep that heart of gratitude, and your eyes wide open, while you are in the waiting.

Ask for More Rope

"When our children, or a situation needs intercession, it's critical that we hang on. If you need more rope to hang onto, ask God for more rope and hold on. Witnessing Joyce's story, I can tell you the first miracle she encountered was incredible! I mean, when she walked into a room, prayed, and literally saw her son be brought back to life ... that was just the beginning. There were so many more miracles that had to happen, even to the point of where we are at now, in telling the story on a movie screen!"

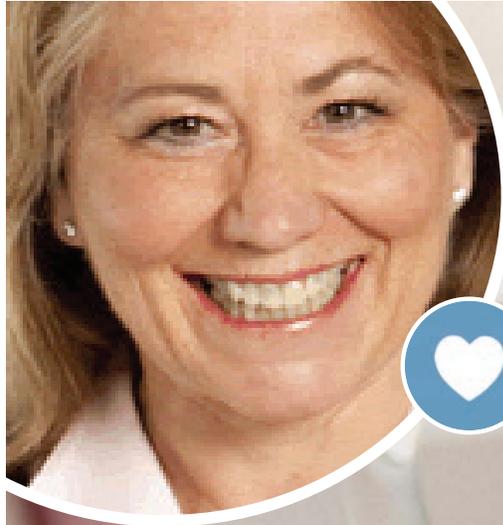


Pastor Jason is a motivational speaker and continues to share the message that God does the impossible. He has written a companion resource for BREAKTHROUGH the movie called *Breakthrough to Your Miracle* — *Believing God for the Impossible.* *JH*



by *lisa burrus*
PROFILE CONTRIBUTOR





by *pam farrel*
WWW.LOVE-WISE.COM

take action

LADY BOSS

WHEN I SELECT A NEW WORD OF THE YEAR, I LOOK FOR REPEATING WORDS GOD IMPRESSES ON MY HEART in the study of God's Word and how He sends words that will inspire, enrich and improve my life across my life path.

As my year began, I realized a major writing project I have been trying to get to for the past three years had still not been completed. Sure, I had reasonable excuses: we remodeled our home to get it on the market, we downsized 95 percent, sold the home, moved to our extended family's vineyard, worked the vineyard so we could really capture the John 15 passage of "I am the vine," we bought a live-aboard boat, then moved on to the boat so we could be nearer Bill's 90-year-old parents who require many hours per week of caregiving — all while carrying on our writing, traveling, speaking, coaching ministry of Love-Wise. Yes, life was busy, but in my heart of hearts I felt compelled to finish the project I had been carrying in my mind and heart for so long.

The Reflection

To better center my heart, I did a review of praise and gratitude to thank God for ALL he HAD accomplished in our lives the past three years. In my bullet journal, I keep track of my prayers and praises. As I pondered my praises, I did realize God had accomplished much more than it even looked possible given our heavy family responsibility. I asked myself, "How did I get so much done in the middle of a whirlwind of life?" God reminded me of the study of the Proverbs 31 woman I had done for my book *7 Simple Skills for Every Woman: Success in Keeping It All Together*. While I recognize this description of a godly woman was penned as a tribute and likely covered the accomplishments of

her lifetime, while studying the passage, one VITAL trait consistently popped off the page: The girl took ACTION! She didn't just hope, dream, wish or plan. She got stuff DONE! Let's look at this famous passage together, quoted from the ESV. (I have emphasized the actions and verbs.)

The Reality

- ¹⁰ *An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.*
- ¹¹ *The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.*
- ¹² *She DOES him good, and not harm, all the days of her life.*
- ¹³ *She SEEKS wool and flax, and WORKS with willing hands.*
- ¹⁴ *She is like the ships of the merchant; she BRINGS her food from afar.*
- ¹⁵ *She RISES while it is yet night and PROVIDES food for her household and portions for her maidens.*
- ¹⁶ *She CONSIDERS a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.*
- ¹⁷ *She DRESSES herself with strength and MAKES her arms strong.*
- ¹⁸ *She PERCEIVES that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night.*
- ¹⁹ *She PUTS her hands to the distaff, and her hands HOLD the spindle.*
- ²⁰ *She OPENS her hand to the poor and REACHES OUT her hands to the needy.*
- ²¹ *She is NOT AFRAID of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet.*
- ²² *She MAKES bed coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple.*
- ²³ *Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.*
- ²⁴ *She MAKES linen garments and sells them; she DELIVERS sashes to the merchant.*

-continued on p. 21-

Challenging times require HOPE.



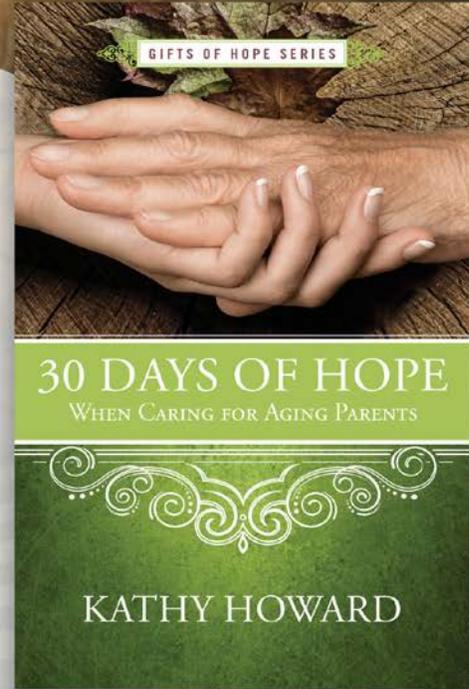
"Kathy Howard provides humor, humility, and hope in her book, *30 Days of Hope When Caring for Aging Parents*. The prayers, verses, and personal vignettes are the tools the author uses to move the tender and tired reader from a feeling of temporary defeat to eternal victory. If you are caring for your parents or in-laws, you will find encouragement to continue on and persevere in the difficult moments."

—Amazon Review

KathyHoward

unshakeable faith for life

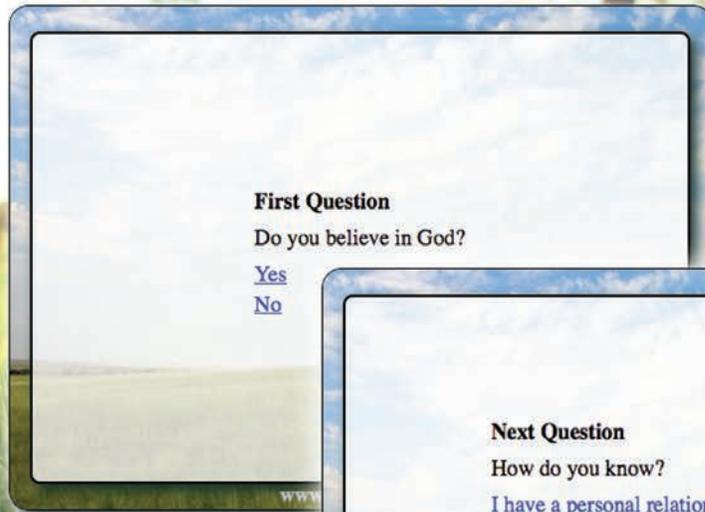
www.kathyhoward.com



How Well Do You **KNOW** God?

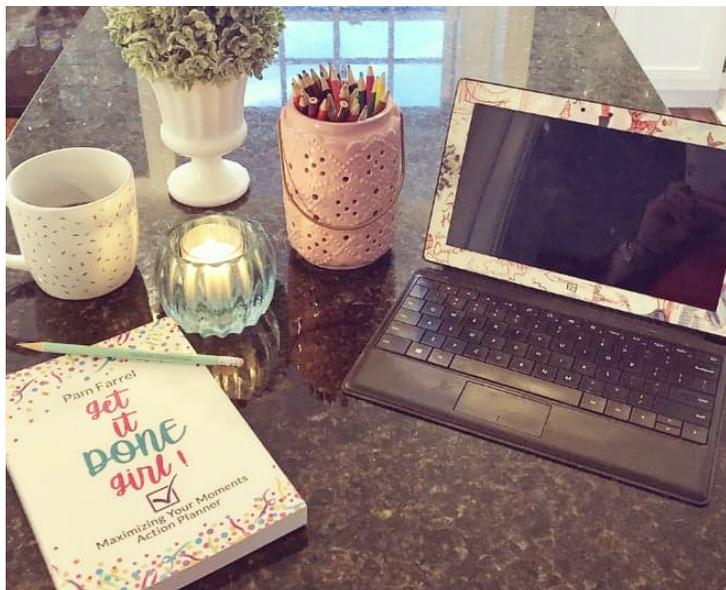
To take the full quiz, click [HERE](#).

Put this gospel presentation on your own webpage. Details on site.



GodTest.com

-continued from p. 19-



²⁵ *Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she LAUGHS at the time to come.*

²⁶ *She OPENS her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.*

²⁷ *She LOOKS well to the ways of her household and DOES NOT EAT the bread of idleness.*

THE RESULT

And what is the positive outcome of her proactive action plan?

²⁸ *Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.*

²⁹ *“Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.”*

³⁰ *Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.*

³¹ *Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.*

Several years ago, when I wrote *10 Secrets of Living Smart Savvy and Strong*, I had my creative director, Jan, create a weekly to-do sheet based on the VERBS of my life. This action-based planning system helped me continue to set goals and accomplish dreams even in the middle of a strenuous set of life transitions. I decided that if this action sheet helped me, and it was helping women who picked one up at my speaking events, then what could I do to better help women around the world take action to achieve their hopes and dreams? *Wouldn't it be nice to have a 52-week action planner based on Proverbs 31? So Jan and I created*

the *Get It Done Girl: Maximize Your Moments Action Planner*. And I decided ACTION would be my world of the year too.

About this same time, our friends Julie and Greg Gorman invited us to listen to the launch of their new marriage ministry and one of them said, “It is action not intention that creates success.” I felt like they had spoken my motto for the year of ACTION into my heart.

I created a **Your Best Year Ever!** set of worksheets many years ago so women or couples could have a way to weave their **Word of the Year** and intentionally process it throughout their life. (Available at www.Love-Wise.com.) I set about to select my verse of the year and add in my song, scent, art and clarifying question that would help make forward movement in my life:

Word of the Year: Action

Verse of the Year: “Arise, for it is your task, and we are with you; be strong and DO it” (Ezra 1:4, ESV). “So Ezra got up...” (Ezra 10:5, CEB).

Motto of the Year: Action, not just intention, produces success.

Song of the Year: “Hold On” by Toby Mac

Scent: Cedar and Cypress essential oils to symbolize the strength I would need.

Symbol/Art of the Year: I selected a carabiner because as I studied the meaning of the verse, the phrase “we are with you” is a picture of a group of supporters bonding to your life to make you stronger so you can do the hard things to obey God. As I looked at the responsibilities and tasks in the year ahead, it looked like a very steep mountain, so I bought a carabiner, the very vital connector that mountain climbers use to help each other up a steep cliff. I attached one to my purse, and I will be giving them to my key prayer partners and practical support team as a reminder that it takes a team.

Clarifying question of the year: *What action should I take next to move up this mountain of life?*

I have been selecting a *Word of the Year* and a verse each year for 40 years! I have seen the positive and powerful fruit of allowing God to focus your heart and life. I believe this process of *Word of the Year* works because of the power in Jesus, the *Living Word*, and the Bible, God's *Word* that makes all the difference! *JH*



by *kathy howard*
WWW.KATHYHOWARD.ORG

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a large, vibrant red rose. The hand is positioned in the foreground, with the rose held gently in the palm. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the rose and the hand's fingers.

caring for caregivers

VOICES PENETRATED THE HEAVY SHROUD OF SLEEP. I CHECKED MY PHONE. TWO O’CLOCK IN THE MORNING. I COULD HEAR THE ANXIETY IN MOM AND DAD’S CONVERSATION, BUT I COULDN’T MAKE OUT THE WORDS.

I threw back the covers and stumbled across the hall to their room. Dad lay on the floor beside the bed. I managed to get him sitting, but no matter how much I tried, I could not get him off the floor and back in the bed.

My husband Wayne was stirring in the other room, so I called for help. Together we got Dad up and settled back in bed. Thankfully, Dad only suffered a few bumps and bruises. But his fall dramatically reminded me I can’t care for my parents without help.

No one prepared me to care for my aging parents. And yet, here I am, struggling to navigate the family role-reversal.

The parents who cared for me, now need my care. And I am just one of millions of women caring for aging parents.

According to an article by Renee Stepler, 23% of American adults aged 45 to 64 cares for an aging member of the family. And the majority of these caregivers are women.

Caregivers fill our church pews on Sunday morning. They attend our women's events and Bible study groups. They live next door. Whether these women care for their parents full-time, part-time, or share the responsibility with a sibling or healthcare professionals, they long for community and need help and support.

Caregivers Need Care

Before I became a caregiver, I had no idea what caregivers need. Then the summer our youngest child graduated from high school, my father-in-law moved in. We totally skipped the empty nest phase. When the last young birdie flew out, one old birdie flew in.

Wayne's dad lived with us for five years before he passed away. Although his mind remained relatively sound, he experienced a host of serious health issues that required an ongoing combination of surgeries, hospital care, inpatient rehab, and at-home physical and occupational therapy.

At the same time, my own parents' condition began to deteriorate. Mom's dementia worsened and Dad was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease. My brother lived much farther away than I, so I regularly make the 8-hour round trip to their home every couple of weeks. After more than a year of minor emergencies, hospital stays, and a lot of time on the road my parents' situation grew desperate. Finally, after months of resisting, they agreed to move.

Now, Mom and Dad are settled in their new home one mile away from my brother Gary. They have round the clock help and Gary, who is a nurse, is an integral part of their daily lives. I regularly fly in to visit and to offer relief for my brother and sister-in-law. "I regularly fly in to visit and to offer relief for my brother and sister-in-law, because the caregiver needs care too."

3 Ways to Help the Caregivers in Your Spheres of Influence:

There is nothing easy about caring for aging parents. No matter how much we love them, the task often demands more than the caregiver has to give – physically, emotionally, spiritually, and relationally. God can and will supply everything caregivers lack, but He often chooses to work through other people to meet those needs.

Many are willing to help but are simply not sure how. My personal experience has given me some insight on how ministry leaders and friends can offer practical help to those in our lives who care for family members at any level.

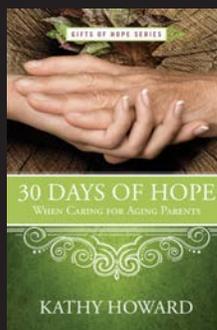
1. Ask – Every time a friend asks me about my mom and dad my spirits lift. The simple act of asking shows concern for my parents and love for me. I feel less alone in the journey. If someone you know or minister to cares for a parent, periodically ask how their parents are doing. And ask how you can pray for them and their parents specifically.

2. Offer – So often we say, "Let me know if I can do anything!" And although we are sincere, the offer is too general. Instead, offer specific practical help. Before we moved my parents, my friend Kayleen offered to make the trip with me from Texas to Tennessee to unpack the boxes and get the house ready for them. Although this offer was huge, our help does not have to be this big to go a long way in providing comfort and relief to the caregiver. Just be specific and practical.

3. Encourage – Caregiving is an emotional and spiritual journey. Caregivers need a shoulder to cry on, someone to pray with, and someone to laugh with. Bring her coffee and chocolate. Text her a link to a devotional that encouraged you. Send her flowers.

Although we can't change the circumstances for the caregiver, we can ease her burden by extending practical care and loving concern for her.

Kathy Howard is author of 30 Days of Hope When Caring for Aging Parents. read a review on p. 43.





plumb
authentically me



It's important to accept that yes, we are broken and flawed, but at the end of the day our identity is not found in our mistakes.

MANY IN THE BUSINESS SEEM TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO KEEP THEM TRENDY AND IN THE SPOTLIGHT.

Recording artist and author Plumb has stayed true to herself since her debut in 1996. Her most recent release, "Beautifully Broken," is just the latest example in her authenticity.

"My records have been a response to what I have been going through at the time. I've learned that what is always relevant is honesty," she says. "So, if you're just being truthful in what you like musically or telling a story that really happened, then that's relevant."

Every artistic decision is weighted. If she adds an instrument, she asks herself if she is adding it because it appeared in a recent Billboard article, or is she doing it for authenticity? She's intentional with staying honest and true with her fans as well. Plumb believes "Beautifully Broken" is her most honest and vulnerable to date.

Authenticity through the years

"I'm at a place in marriage — with three children — and I turned 40 since the last record came out. It was like a veil lifted," she says. "It's my first living, breathing record because I'm still going through what I was writing about. It's the first record that I've made for myself and fans."

She notes other records have been made for herself and the fans, but fans didn't connect as well as with this project.

"This is what I'm going through. It's not resolved. It's brokenness. I came in contact with some of my own demons and some of my own brokenness that I didn't know was there. Or I thought it was healed and gone. Or it's just not something that I've ever struggled with or experienced."

In her honesty, she reveals that the record stems from being out on the road the longest she's ever been. Following the release of two consecutive successful albums, *Need You Now* and *Exhale*, Plumb toured with Big Daddy Weave in 2016 and performed in 120 cities.

"That just really impacted me in a beautiful way. I saw some of my mess that I either wasn't aware of or thought that I had bounced back from and I hadn't quite yet," she says. "It was like, 'Wow! I'm gonna write about that!' So that's where I'm at."

Authenticity stretched beyond the art

Plumb's artistry isn't the only thing she's honest about either. Being a mother to two tweens and a teen has humbled her, and she realized the importance extending grace to others and herself.

-continued on p. 27-

BOOK FUN MAGAZINE

Where Book Fun Begins

BOOKFUNMAGAZINE.COM



BOOK FUN MAGAZINE

January 2014
Happy New Year!!!

Book of the Month
Rebellion
Dancing
Sharon Jaynes Interview
Gift of Prayer Journaling
Redeemer
Ready to Jump in?
Christmas Journey
Ace Collins Interview
Kathi Masias
Colorado
Crossroads Star Parker
GB 4 Time
Cougar part 2
Guyana
Leadership
Instant Gratification
Kelly Klepfer Recipe
Linda Clare
Quiet Time
Grace
C.N. Bring
Tattooed
Blood Roots
Davis Bunn Interview
New Bloggers List



BOOK FUN MAGAZINE

December 2013

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Rebellion
Dancing
Sharon Jaynes Interview
Gift of Prayer Journaling
Redeemer
Ready to Jump in?
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Kathi Masias
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Linda Clare
Quiet Time
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Tattooed
Blood Roots
Davis Bunn Interview
New Bloggers List



BOOK FUN MAGAZINE

November 2013

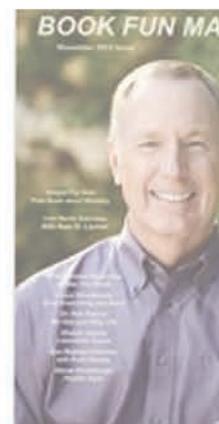
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BOOK FUN MAGAZINE

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BOOK FUN MAGAZINE

September 2013

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Plumb remembers the days before marrying and having children when she said, “Oh, I’ll never do that.” She sees it’s different when you come to that stage in life and realize that you might have been wrong.

“It’s been really humbling and makes you really appreciate grace for every time that you’ve been wrong, and someone hasn’t punched you in the face for it. You become really thankful for that,” she says. “I think it’s made me more gracious as I watch people with children younger than mine. I find myself saying, ‘You know what, just hang in there because I’m not judging you. You’re going to have your moments.’”

She adds that watching parents with older children also keeps her accountable. Seeing divisions in families or turmoil faced from tough circumstances helps her to be intentional to love and embrace her children.

Reflecting on her latest release, Plumb reminds us that even though we might all be broken, that is not our identity. “It’s important to accept that yes, we are broken and flawed, but at the end of day our identity is not found in our mistakes. Those aren’t who we are. Who we are is God’s children; that alone makes us beautiful,” she says. “We need to hear human stories and songs about people going through these battles with brokenness so we can say ‘I’ve been through the same,’ and feel the hope of not being alone.”

Article by Jenn Taylor as interviewed by Amber Weigand-Buckley 



by jenn taylor
PROFILE CONTRIBUTOR



INTERNATIONAL SPEAKER &
BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF OVER 30 BOOKS
-Linda Evans Shepherd-

*"I'd love the opportunity
to share the life-changing
power of prayer with you!"*

-Linda



"Thank you for speaking at our conference,
Linda. My heart is forever changed."
—Conferee, Warner Robins, GA

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the big question

Q: Does Satan pose a threat to ordinary Christians?



with *cynthia l. simmons*
WWW.CLSIMMONS.COM

WHAT A RELEVANT QUESTION.

I believe we are seeing more spiritual warfare today than ever before. However, I chose the word “confident” for 2019 because we have no need to fear the devil or his minions.

First, let’s talk about Satan’s character and goals. Once an anointed cherub, Satan allowed his beauty to corrupt him. “You (Satan) said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high’ (Isaiah 14:13, ESV). When God expelled him from heaven, Satan took a third of the angels with him as allies. Despite knowing God’s power and authority, Satan wanted to usurp God’s place, and today, he opposes everyone loyal to the Creator. That means war. For example, years ago, I co-led a Bible class for ladies. My friend taught a month and then she handed off the class to me for a month. The moment my turn came to take over teaching, negative thoughts bombarded my mind. “What makes you think you can do this? You are too stupid to teach.” Wow! Such attacks undercut my

confidence until I realized the devil intended to stop me from sharing truth, and I prayed for strength.

Second, our enemy possesses incredible power—but less than God’s. In the Book of Job, the devil appeared before the throne proposing a test of Job’s loyalty. Once God approved, Satan sent armies to destroy Job’s livestock, fire to consume his sheep and a windstorm to kill all his children. That means he can command the elements as well as influence people to carry out his plans. Several years back, the devil turned his attention to my husband, Ray, who serves as a teaching elder at our church. Satan attacked Ray’s brain with an infection, encephalitis, which can kill and cripple. He was sick five days before doctors diagnosed him, and all that time the virus destroyed brain cells. Church members worried they would never hear Ray teach again because the infection was severe. However, the pastor called a special prayer meeting, and people all over the world prayed. Despite a damaged area in his brain, Ray can function today as if he were never sick. His recovery ranks in the top three percent of people who suffered the same disease. God healed him.

Third, as you can see from my stories, God provides the means and authority to oppose our enemy. “The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4, ESV). If we put on the armor of God, pray, and stand against the evil one, he will have to run.

In summary, any believer who wants to follow God should, “Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Be confident you can defeat the enemy because we stand with God. *CLH*



COURAGE ON THE COURT by penelope carlevato

WWW.PENELOPECARLEVATO.COM



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL IS A CAPTIVATING GAME, ESPECIALLY AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL.

We had the opportunity to watch an amazing coach for the six years we lived in Knoxville, Tennessee. The University of Tennessee women's basketball

coach, Pat Summitt, began her career playing two-on-two with her brothers on the farm, advanced to play in high school and college, and then played on the women's U.S. Olympic team in 1976.

At the age of 22, she became the head coach for the Lady Vols at the University of Tennessee. Her nearly four-decade coaching career totaled winning 1,098 games, eight National Championship titles, induction into the Basketball Hall of Fame, and among many other prestigious awards, she was the first women's college basketball coach to grace the cover of *Sports Illustrated*.

She worked hard and expected her players to have the same strong work ethic. It was always electrifying to attend a game, as Coach Summitt intensified the sport with her enthusiasm and definite coaching style. But off the court, she always had time for her players, whether it was writing letters of encouragement to new recruits, having the team to her home for dinner, or attending church with several players or coaches.

Pat Summitt lived a life of discipline, hard work and courage as she battled major obstacles in the sports world. She loved basketball, and she loved Jesus. When she was diagnosed with early-onset dementia at the age of 59, Summitt courageously continued working with her assistant coaches and used her gifts to encourage her players to always give their best to the game and to life. Summitt said God gave her "certain work to do" and she never stopped. She believed that her Alzheimer's gave her room to do more, rather than limit her. Only five years after she was diagnosed, Summitt died at the age of 64.

She touched thousands of lives, not only on the basketball court, but across America and the world.

“Have I not commanded you?
Be strong and courageous.
Do not be afraid; do not be
discouraged, for the LORD
your God will be with you
wherever you go.”

—Joshua 1:9

She was a great mentor and influencer. Each time I watched her in action on the basketball court, I was impressed with her firm commitment to do what she had been born to do. Her principles reached out to women, young and old, and encouraged many to be courageous and push beyond what they thought they were capable of achieving. Hard work and integrity were the hallmarks of her coaching style. She wanted her girls to succeed, not only on the basketball court and life, but also in the classroom. The players were required to attend all classes, and they had to sit in the first two rows. She was a leader who left a legacy that influenced impacted many. Her faith in Christ and her courageous spirit were evident in every area of her life.

Whenever we reach out and encourage a friend to take a step of faith or invite someone to eat at our dining room table, we are leaving a legacy. My hope is that we would be the true friend and always point them to Jesus. Let's have courage on the court of our lives.

“Whatever it is that you desire to do in life, have the courage and the commitment to do it, and to do it to your absolute best.” —Pat Summitt

When we lived in Knoxville, Pat Summitt was a consistent feature in our local newspaper. She was a mother figure to many of her players, which included feeding them around her dinner table. One of the recipes she always served at her home was printed in the Knoxville Sentinel and has become one of our favorite side dishes. It's a big hit at potluck events. I think sharing this recipe is a beautiful way to recognize and honor the amazing woman of courage that Pat Summitt was.



Pat Summitt's Jalapeno-Corn Casserole

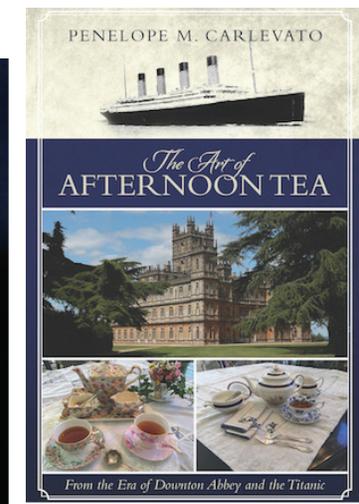
4 cans of white shoepeg corn, drained. (Use yellow or white corn if shoepeg not available.)

1 stick of margarine. (I use butter.)

1 8-ounce package of cream cheese.

1 tablespoon jalapeno slices, or to taste.

Preheat oven to 350° F. Drain corn and place in an 8" X 8" baking dish. Melt butter and cream cheese together and pour over the corn. Stir together while adding jalapeno slices. (You can add a little jalapeno juice to the mix if you like.) Bake for 40 to 45 minutes. *LH*



Find great recipes
like this in

Penelope's book:

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by edie melson
WWW.EDIEMELSON.COM

a word that fills my
outline presence with God





He went on to impress how my life needed to be full of Him — His Spirit, His Word, His calling. He showed me that when I fill up on Him, then I'm protected from filling up on things that stress out my days.

SOMETIMES, ONLINE INTERACTIONS CAN SEEM LIKE AN ENDEAVOR WITHOUT

BOUNDARIES. And I'm a person who appreciates boundaries. With them, I'm not hampered by limitations; instead, I find they give my life definition. Choosing a word of the year helps me let God define my year before it even begins.

No, this isn't a post about New Year's resolutions. I gave those up a long time ago. Instead, I choose a word of the year.

I'm not searching for any old word, I'm searching for *my* word. So I go to God in prayer, asking Him to show me, in one word, what my next year's journey will encompass. I look for this word in His Scripture, in things people say to me, and in the things I'm experiencing. Through the years He's given me some surprising words, but they've all helped me grow closer to Him.

This year's word is no different. The word He led me to for 2019 is FULL and it's already proved to be a year full of discovery, insight and purpose. And it's helped me connect with Him and with others in a deeper and more meaningful way.

It's a word fraught with meaning for me personally. When I first felt drawn to this word, it seemed to be all about what I shouldn't do and had a negative connotation.

I've always struggled with filling my schedule too full of things that seem fun ... or important ... or

necessary — all without asking God. And that was definitely part of what He had to share with me.

But it turned out there were layers to this word I didn't expect.

He went on to impress how my life needed to be full of Him — His Spirit, His Word, His calling. He showed me that when I fill up on Him, then I'm protected from filling up on things that stress out my days. With this, my word had begun to move from negative to positive.

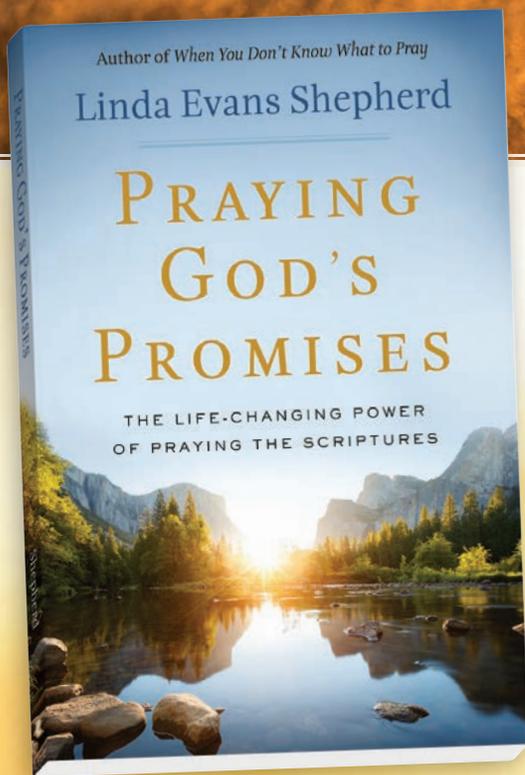
I saw that when I'm God-full, I am protected in all my interactions. I was less inclined to react with hurt and anger to the things and people I came into contact with. This proved incredibly important as my online interactions have continued to grow. I've had amazing God moments with people who are unexpected, and come away enriched as God weaves our stories together in unexpected ways.

I thought those things made for a full application for one four-letter word, but God had even more for me. He went on to show me that I needed to exchange some "fulls" for others.

I learned I needed to switch my focus to being more prayerful and more thankful. This has allowed me to deal with things that are stressful and situations that make me fearful in a more fruitful way.

As the days and months speed by, I find I'm continuing to look for applications to exemplify this word in my online interactions. Like the unfolding flowers of spring, God is opening my eyes to what it means to fill my social media feeds and blogs with the fullness of Him.

God's Word Is Powerful. Pray It.



In this inspiring book, Linda Evans Shepherd reveals that God's will is not a mystery—it's clearly laid out in his Word through his many promises. Through stories, practical application, examples of prayers, and guided reflection, she leads you toward a more powerful prayer life!

GotToPray.com



RELEASING CREATIVE POWER by karen whiting WWW.KARENWHITING.COM



SCRIPTURES EMPOWER US IN MANY WAYS. For me, Ephesians 3:16 is my life verse that always reminds me that God pours out treasures from His power.

We first encounter God's power in Genesis 1. The power to create and be creative is our first glimpse into God's abilities and unlimited imagination. It is that power I pray for and that power I have received.

Scientists study creativity, trying to find it in the human mind when it really flows from God. So, how do we tap into creativity and use it?

First, some basics. One cannot create high fashion without first learning to sew and understand fabrics. In any area where I wanted to be creative, from puppetry to writing, I studied the basics.

Rejoice in failure. The process of being creative includes practice and trial and error. Be willing — and

*"I pray that from the treasures of his glory he will empower you with inner strength by his Spirit
—Ephesians 3:16, CJB*

ready — to fail and observe what did and did not work. That will help you become more creative.

Schedule time to be creative. That also includes the secret power of rest. We need to let our mind rest and empty it of problems and negative thoughts and comments. Then we have room to be creative.

For me, there's nothing more inspiring than a blank canvas or page. It's an invitation to fill it. I can dream and start anything and then see what sticks or what beckons me to continue.

Problems need solutions. When we view them as challenges and puzzles to solve, we approach them more creatively. Instead of complaining or dwelling on the obstacle, we look for ideas that will fix the difficulty or provide something new in place of a problem.

Take a walk in a zoo or garden. Look at what God made. Look at the humorous creations and be amazed by the intricacies. Let creation inspire your imagination.

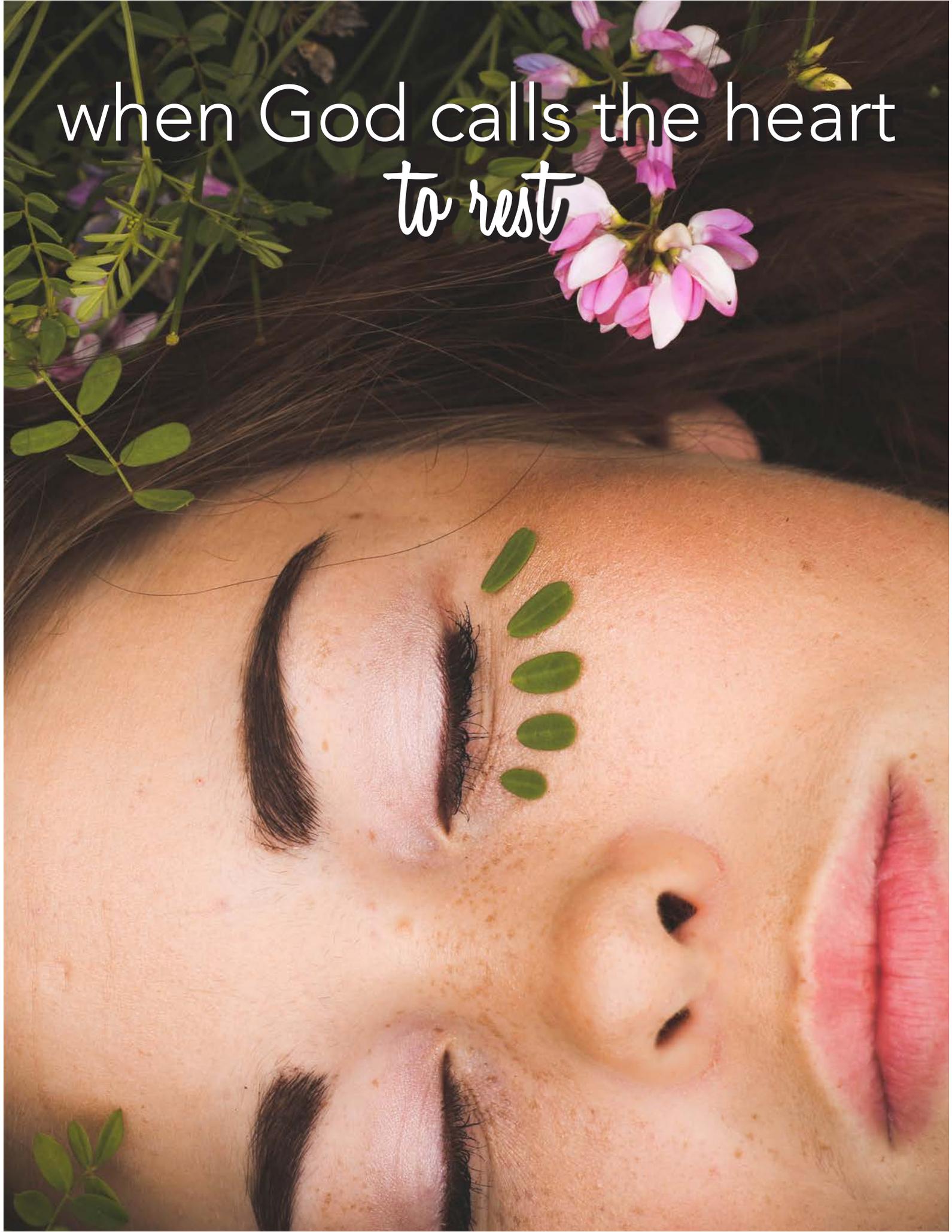
Prayer releases God's creative power. I like to have someone give me a theme or problem to pray about.

I pray until God nudges me to open my mind. Then ideas pour out. It's a brainstorm from God. I write the ideas out and then reflect on which ones to try.

Getting together with other creatives is a huge blessing, a time when ideas run wild. We capture the best and laugh at the most absurd. Mostly, it's a time to encourage and celebrate creativity.

Take the risk, and open your mind to ideas, thoughts and nudges from God. Pray Ephesians 3:16 when you want to be empowered with God's creative powers. Let that creativity start from your innermost being, the inner fibers of your soul that God wove.

when God calls the heart
to rest



ONE OF THE THINGS I LOVE ABOUT VISITING THE SET FOR THE TELEVISION SERIES

When Calls the Heart is that the setting is so peaceful and restful. My co-author, Brian Bird (executive producer and co-creator of the show), our publicist and I usually go out to Hope Valley several times while we're in Vancouver. I love that I can wander around the town. It's so serene looking out at the pond and the church. There's a quiet stillness about it that refreshes me. I love to sit in the church and let the cares of the day drain away.

Rest isn't something I do a lot of — my busy schedule often gets in the way. Sometimes I feel as if my to-do list stretches from North Carolina to Kansas, and I'm constantly adding items to the list. Does that sound familiar to any of you?

Shucks, sometimes I suspect we all treat the word *rest* as if it were a bad word. Our lives whirl each day like a merry-go-round that keeps going faster and faster — and we can't get off.

But eventually, we pay the price for countless action-packed days. Our pushed-to-the-limit bodies become sick, or we don't have time for our families, or we snap at those we love. And often God keeps getting pushed farther and farther away because we don't have time for Him.

So, knowing my crazy schedule and my seeming inability to say no when asked to do something, I had to laugh when God answered my prayers for a word for this year and the one He sent was *rest*.

Here are some things that He's teaching me that might be helpful for you as well:

- **Exhaustion keeps us from being optimal.** We can accomplish so much more when our bodies are rested. I'm a writer, and when I'm too tired,

the ideas and words don't flow. Getting some rest makes a huge difference.

- **We have to be intentional about making time for rest.** It doesn't just happen. So I've started adding "rest time" to my to-do list just as if it was another important appointment or commitment. That 30 minutes of reading, a short nap or heading outdoors into the sunshine often gives me the oomph I need to finish the afternoon workload.
- **Nothing is more restful than spending time with God.** Our deck is surrounded on three sides by woods, and I love to go out there where I'm surrounded by His creation to have my devotions. I'll start with some praise music, and then I read my Bible and pray. Then comes my favorite part — the "be still" time where I say, "Lord, I'm going to just sit here and be still. I want to hear from you." Now I have to tell you that it took me about six weeks of remedial be-still time before I learned to shut my mind off and to actually be still, but oh my, the precious moments that have come from that time are beyond my ability to describe.

Matthew 11:28 says,

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Friends, do you need rest today? The best place to start is with Jesus. *SH*

by michelle s. cox
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by *saundra dalton-smith*
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God
will
restore

OVER THE PAST MONTH, I'VE WITNESSED DEVASTATION COME INTO THE LIVES OF MANY AROUND ME. TORNADOS stormed through the south leaving a wake of pain and loss. Fire completely consumed the possession of a local family, leaving them clinging to the memories of the past and uncertain about the future. Flood waters swept through, carrying away hope in its path.

What these situations have in common is a feeling of having portions of your life consumed by circumstances beyond your control. They



leave you looking back at all those years invested in building and planning with a longing to get back what has been taken from you. I empathize with those walking through this pain because I have experienced it. The circumstances may not be the same, but the feeling of emptiness, grief and hopelessness are understood. I have stared at areas of my life languishing from the attack of the “creeping locust, the stripping locust and the gnawing locust” (Joel 2:25, NASB) and wondered how God could ever restore these years. How can He give back what appears to be forever lost?

One interesting fact about locusts is their innate ability to not only destroy the current year’s crop; they can completely eviscerate the land by eating up all the buds and sprouts, thus making it impossible for the land to recover. After the locusts are done, there is no viable sign of life left in the situation. All that is left is the debris of what once was and now is no more.

Have these feeling ever been a part of your story? Are there seasons in your life when you were surrounded by loss? In the midst of the questions and the despair, God promises something that sounds impossible. “I will restore the years the swarming locust has eaten.” It sounds impossible because it not simply a promise about the future, but one which stretches our faith to believe God can redeem the time. It’s a promise beyond recovery of the fruit you once had in your possession, but the recovery of what did not bloom in your life during that season because of the deep wounding you experienced. God’s promise of restoration does not erase the loss, but rather returns to you what you were unable to receive during your time of mourning.

What are the most painful years of your life? It’s normal to resist thinking of these times to avoid awakening the pain, but the restoration of these years requires your willingness to revisit them. Return to the place where the locusts consumed the blessings in your life and left you with bitterness, fear and doubt. Return with the promise that God will restore the years.

God restores your JOY

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me (Psalm 51:12, NIV).

God restores your STRENGTH

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you (1 Peter 5:10, ESV).

God restores your HEALTH

“But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,” declares the LORD (Jeremiah 30:17, NIV).

God restores your VISION

Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he opened his eyes, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly (Mark 8:25, NIV).

God restores your FINANCES

After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before (Job 42:10, NIV).

God restore yours SOUL

He restores my soul (Psalm 23:3, ESV).

God restores your WOUNDS

Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds (Hosea 6:1, NIV).

God restores your RELATIONSHIP

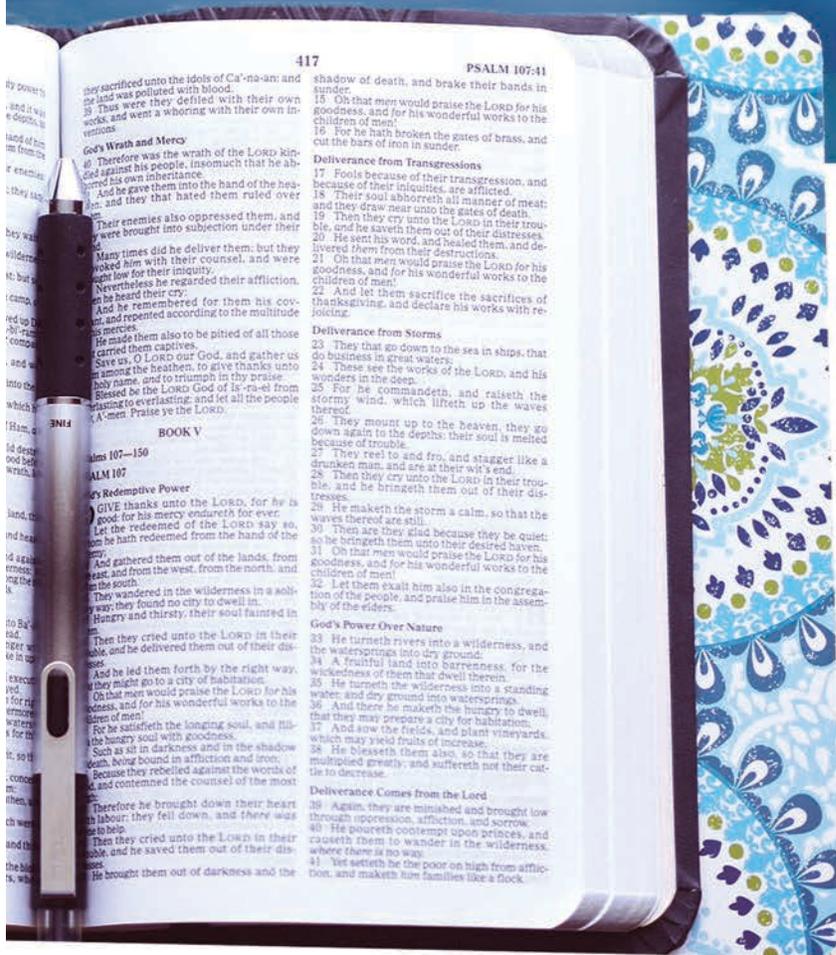
Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored! (Lamentations 5:21, NIV).



"Arise, Shine..."

the glory of the LORD rises upon you."

-Isaiah 60:1 (niv)



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IT WAS A NIGHT TO REMEMBER; I'D JUST WITNESSED THE

WORLD PREMIER of the stage play based on my novel, *The Potluck Club*, which I'd written with Eva Marie Everson. I'd flown from Denver to Dallas to meet the cast and to see the show, a performance that did not disappoint. The stellar cast made the characters live and breathe, just as Eva and I had first imagined them. It was a thrill to witness the audience's laughter and tears and participate in their standing ovation.

That night, when I put my head on my hotel room pillow, I could still feel the thrill of the evening, but I could also feel my heart sink. A family member was going through a rough patch and I was flying home to put my beloved dog under a surgeon's knife. So, mixed with my feelings of joy, I also felt feelings of dread, grief, and extreme fear of the future. My heart pounded and my eyes stared into the darkness surrounding me.

"My goodness," I told the Lord, "I've never felt so many swirling emotions at once. It's like I have an emotion tornado roaring through my heart."

Sleep wouldn't come — until I heard His quiet voice still the storm. "What if I've got it," He simply said.

"Got it?"

"All of it."

My heart stopped pounding and I sighed in relief.

Of course! God not only had my joy, He had my dread, grief and fear, not to mention my future. No matter what happened next, He would be there and He would see me through.

"Thank you, Lord," I whispered as I fell into a deep sleep.

It was a peaceful sleep that wouldn't have come as long as I rotated through my fears. But as soon as I remembered that God had my life in His hand, I no longer needed to worry. I was not the one who had to figure out the "what next" to any of my looming problems. That was God's job.

The next morning, I flew home, and within twenty-four hours, my dog was recovering from surgery, my family member was recovering from his dilemma and I was still experiencing amazing peace because I knew God was on the move. He had it. He had it all.

So no matter what fears we face, we do not need to behave as though we are facing them alone. It's like Joshua 1:9 explains, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

When we remember that God is in our boat that we can know no storm will ever overtake us. No squall will ever destroy us. No wave will ever capsize us. We can be at peace.

So take courage, simply agree with God out loud: You've got it Lord, You've got all of it. LH



BOOKSTOREAD



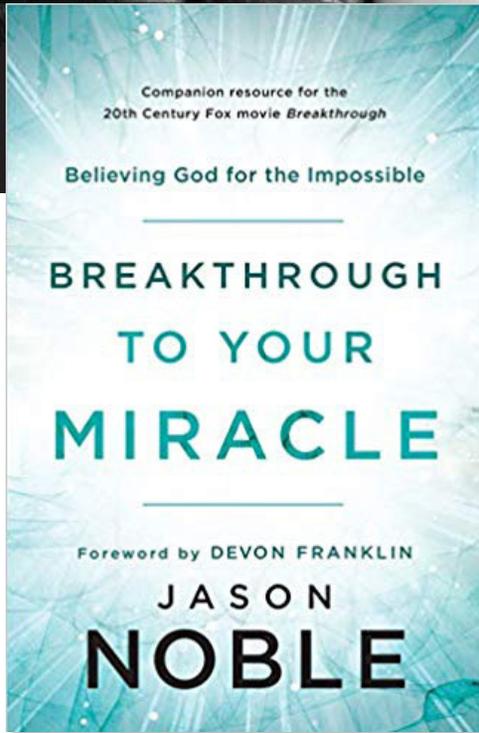
FIX-HER-UPPER: RECLAIM YOUR HAPPY by Beth Duwel & Rhonda Rhea

“Kick back in your real-life mess and enjoy this fun reminder that The Master Builder is constantly remaking us.”

—Anita Renfroe, comedian and author

If you are feeling rundown, overlooked, and in desperate need of someone to help you see your potential, my friends Beth and Rhonda have a message for you.

—Glynnis Whitwer, author, *Doing Busy Better*; executive director of communications, *Proverbs 31 Ministries*

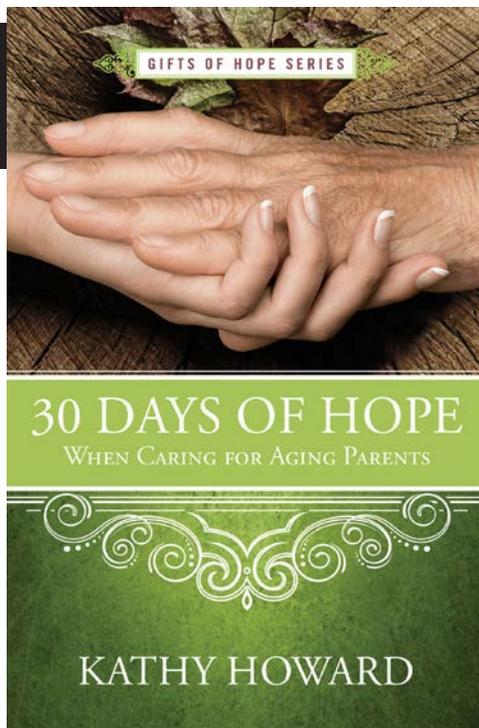


BREAKTHROUGH TO YOUR MIRACLE by Jason Noble

Pastor Noble writes, “It turns out that people who receive miracles don’t just receive miracles; they position themselves to receive miracles. ... I wrote this book to help you know how to position yourself, so you can break through to your miracle.” I appreciate that Pastor Noble is true to the Bible and acknowledges that sometimes the outcome is not what we hope for.

The book includes a suggested prayer at the end of each chapter as well as a “Position Yourself” section that asks readers questions and encourages them to take action. There are also group discussion questions for small groups.

This is a much-needed resource that offers hope even when the outcome may not be what we think we want. I will be ordering several copies of the book to give to friends. —K. Roberts, Amazon Reviewer



30 DAYS OF HOPE: by Kathy Howard

I was given this book in exchange for a review. However, I am currently purchasing two now as gifts because of the impact it is having on me.

At first I assumed this book would be another book about understanding your aging parents. However, I was pleasantly pleased to find that this book deals with my heart in the midst of dealing with my reality. This book addresses real emotional issues I deal with, including issues that have existed between your parents and you previously. It does not assume that everything between your parents and you is perfect. It has also been helpful to know that other people experience similar things as I have and I do.

It is practical and points you to the Lord, growing your relationship with Him as you work daily to take care of others. Beautifully done.

—Susan C. Bohannon, Amazon Reviewer

by heather van allen
LH STAFF REVIEWER



MUSICREVIEWS



FRANCESCA BATTISTELLI *Own It*

After a long wait, singer/songwriter Francesca Battistelli released *Own It* (October 26, 2018), her fourth studio album, through Curb / Word Entertainment.

Own It starts off with the empowering track “The Breakup Song,” which adamantly bans fear, setting the tone for this confidence-steeped 10-track album. She brings the strong, mature vocals and upbeat, delightfully quirky, always optimistic pop style fans love about her music to the long-awaited project. Softening the mood toward the end of the album is the worshipful and deeply restorative “Defender” (featuring Steffany Gretzinger).

“These songs are so empowering,” Francesca says. “What they represent to me is my desire to own my identity in Christ, to kick fear out of my life, to own the present moment and not live in the past or even the future. I don’t want to walk in half of what God has for me. I want to walk in all of it. I want to own it! And I want that for everyone who listens too.”

One listen, and you’ll want to *Own It*, too.



PLANETSHAKERS

Rain Pt. 1 Cat

Globally renowned praise band Planetshakers released *Rain Part 1* (January 18, 2019), a 4-track EP recorded in Melbourne, Australia, at Planetshakers Church. The live session, led by Planetshakers' worship leaders Sam Evans, Aimee Evans, Joth Hunt, BJ Pridham, Rudy Nikkerud, Chelsi Nikkerud, and more, features over 27 minutes of music that will pull you right into the presence of God.

"We feel that just as rain is formed naturally by the sun's heat evaporating water, that our prayers, praise and

worship have been reaching heaven all this time," says Planetshakers Church senior pastors Russell and Sam Evans.

Planetshakers is skilled at putting together live session recordings that capture the infectious authenticity of worship in congregational settings and delivering that same experience of pressing into God into the living room, prayer closet, kitchen – anywhere. *Rain Part 1* is no exception. Following close behind this installment is *Rain Part 2* (released April 12, 2019).



NATASHA OWENS

Warrior

Singer/songwriter Natasha Owens' third full-length album *Warrior* (released March 29, 2019) comes on the scene as a project the artist describes as "more pop-driven than anything I've ever done before."

Vocally and instrumentally, *Warrior* is a full-force sonic explosion, full of high-energy, fast-paced tracks that instantly boost the mood. Slowing down the pulse a bit at times are mellow selections, such as "Just Love" and "Surrender."

Lyrically, the album is encouraging and faith-building, reminding us of the strength and confidence that comes through knowing God. It declares that we can overcome with His help, no matter the trials we face.

"I want to show people that they can make it too," Natasha says. "Being a warrior means that my wounds have healed, but I still have the scars to prove it. The scars remind me that I don't have to worry about the next battle because I know God will be standing with me."



by rhonda rhea
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live,
love,
laugh,
snort

THIS YEAR. IT'S A GREAT ONE TO MATURE IN THE AREA OF UNDERSTANDING MORE ABOUT HAPPINESS.

Wouldn't "matur-er-happy" be a great word of the year? You know, if it were actually a word?

I convince myself I'm pretty mature. And then I see somebody run into a door while texting and it all suddenly becomes very clear. Because, let me tell you, I can laugh for a good twenty minutes. Mercilessly. Not just a little, under-the-breath chortle either. No, I'm talking about laughing so hard that no real sound comes out — just those weird, wheezy throat-squeaks. Then tears. Then snorting. That kind of laughter.

Videos of people stumbling? Don't even get me started because I can laugh until I nearly pull something. Like a muscle or a spleen or whatever. Which, ironically, might mean that I fare worse than the people I'm watching stumble.

So now that I've owned up to my immature laughter, I might as well go ahead and confess that I also laugh at my own jokes. Uproariously. If I say something I think is funny and you don't laugh, just be ready for me to repeat it with a rising level of volume and obnoxiousness. I have a lot of stamina. You will laugh.

We're told that "a joyful heart is good medicine" (Proverbs 17:22, HCSB) and, not that we needed it to, but science backs it up. I've heard that joyful-hearted laughter can boost immunities, decrease pain, reduce heart disease and help with weight and sleeping issues. Wow, why aren't we taking more of this medicine?

In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He kicked off His teaching with the Beatitudes, His beautiful list of "blesseds." The word translated "blessed"

here is from the Greek, "makarios," and it means contented, blissful ... "happy." But then we look at those Beatitudes and see that "poor in spirit" and "mournful" top the list. It's a list that takes us all the way to "persecuted."

It's pretty clear that I'm not the best at deciding what should make us smile, but at first glance, this list doesn't seem any too joy-inducing to me. In His day, these words of Jesus were groundbreaking. He changed the way people thought about joy. And though it's been studied from every direction since, the concept is still revolutionary.

Outside of Christ, people generally understand happiness to be all wrapped up in their ability to do whatever they want, whenever they want. They think it's mostly about having things and money and power. But Jesus taught from that mount — and by His life — that we're called to think differently.

"Makarios" refers to a happiness that doesn't depend on circumstances. The first two Beatitudes, "blessed are the poor in spirit" and "blessed are those who mourn" (Matthew 5:3-4, ESV), usher us into this new way of thinking. It's the gospel way of thinking.

Real happiness doesn't happen until we come to grips with the fact that our soul is utterly impoverished apart from Christ and until we deeply mourn over our sin. Embracing the gospel causes us to look at every single one of those Beatitudes in an entirely new light.

Paul said in Philippians 2:5, "Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus" (HCSB).

I'm praying that I really will mature there — no stumbling. That I will think more like Jesus and look more like Jesus and be more like Jesus. I'm praying it will spill over into how I share His gospel and love on His people. And that He will be my joy. And that it will morph into all kinds of laughter. Even the wheezy-snorty kind. *LH*



the hardest thing
to do is surrender

by *jennifer slattery*
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IF GOD WERE CALLING ME TO A TEMPORARY FAST, I COULD

DO IT. Give up sugar? Ice cream? Television and technology? Though it wouldn't be easy, I'd manage. But this, what God is currently calling me to surrender, indefinitely, will take my most earnest prayers and every ounce of strength I possess. This thing cuts to the core of my hopes and dreams, triggers insecurities and fear and ultimately, reveals where my heart truly lies.

So what is this thing that God calls me, persistently, to relinquish?

Control.

My agenda. My time and my to-do list. Whatever I'm striving for that keeps me from saying, at each moment, "Not my will, but Yours, Lord Jesus, be done."

When I'm sitting with my Bible, reading of His love and care, meditating on all He's done for me, surrender comes easily. Or perhaps I should say, easier. "Take everything, Lord. And help me to obey You. Help me to give up everything to follow after You."

But then the day begins, and pricks of selfishness weaken my resolve and hinder my obedience.

My prayers sound more like complaints and long-winded requests than commitments to my Savior.

This is my greatest, most fervent and frequent battle — the battle against self, saturated in pride and selfishness.

But Christ calls me to love — not with the conditional, temporary, convenient love our world offers, but the kind He demonstrated when He stripped himself of all His heavenly glory, took on flesh, and died in my selfish, prideful place.

For, though He was God, He "did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in

human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:6-8).

This, Scripture says, is the same attitude I am to have.

Often, my prayers are centered on me—on what God wants me to do or not do, on how I wish things would turn out. And each time, God answers, but not in the way I expect. I'm looking ahead to countless external things. And though I'm certain He cares deeply about every one of my concerns, His focus often narrows on something of utmost importance, something that enables great ministry to occur and true love to flow, and that's my heart.

If I want to be used by God and touch lives for eternity, to avoid the dangerous pitfalls of sin, my life must be touched first by the transforming power of God, the God who shows me how to love, to surrender, and to give all of myself no matter the cost.

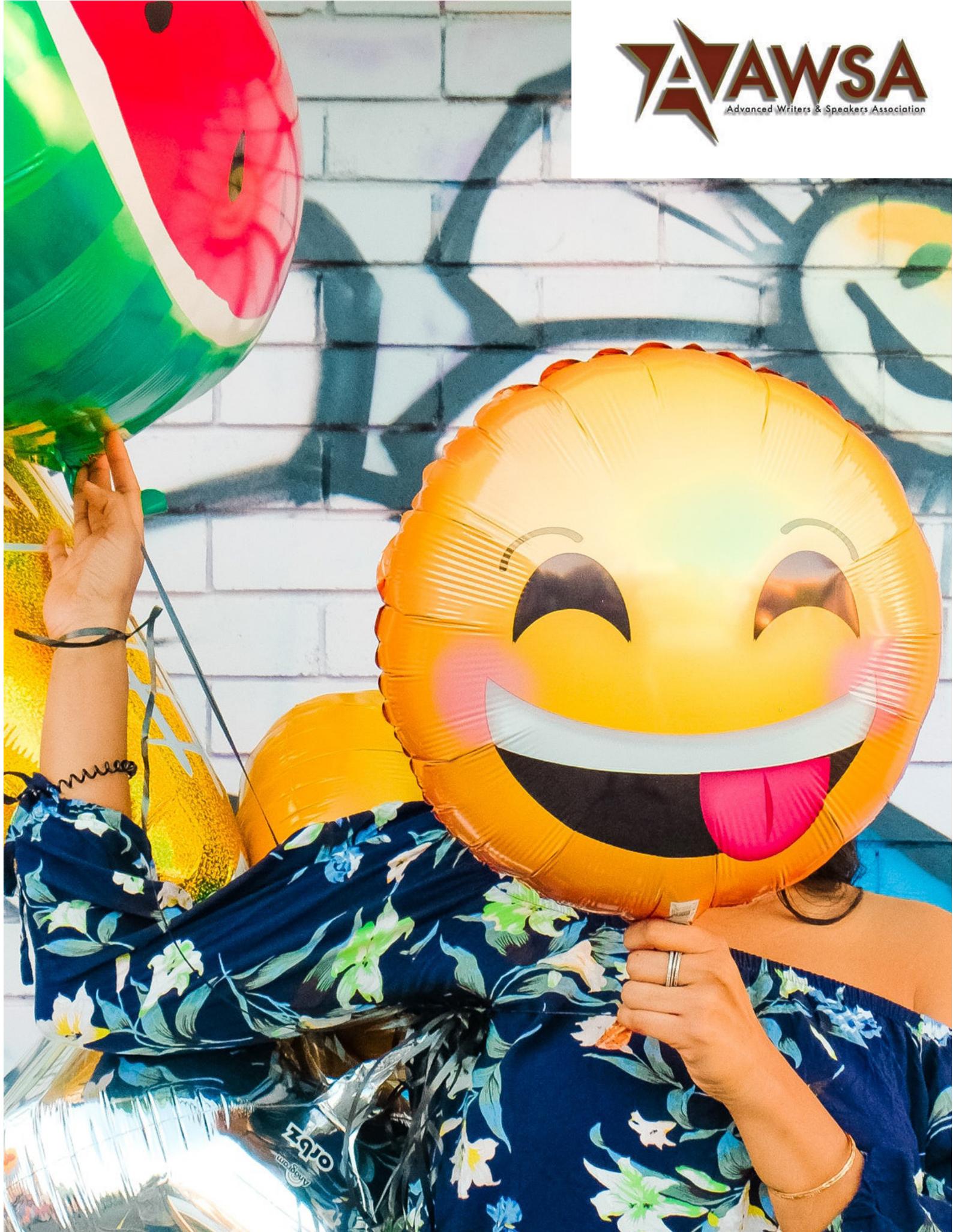
Even if it means surrendering everything I hold dear.

In Romans 12:1, Paul urges us to "offer [our] bodies as living sacrifices." In other words, to live sacrificially for Christ, not just today, or when it's urgent or convenient, but always. To put God's agenda above our own.

This is the call. The first step to greatness, and it begins with a quiet, yet desperate plea, "Change me, Lord. Help me. Do whatever you need to within me to make me pliable in Your hands, a cleansed and open vessel always and ready to do Your will and Your will only."

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20, NASB). *LN*

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^ columns

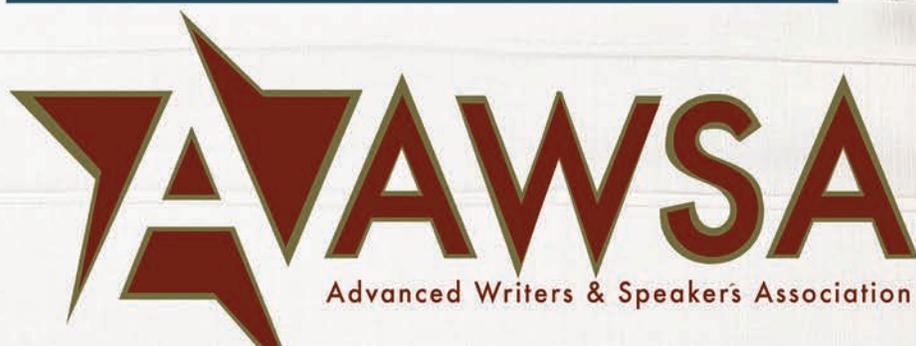
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