

# city lights

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JOURNEY

This issue of Main Street's *City Lights* is the second online edition since its inception in 1994 as *The Fellowship*

**Spring 2016**

**Theme: Journey**

*"For the LORD your God has blessed you in all that you have done; He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have not lacked a thing."*

—Deuteronomy 2:7 (NASB)

**Cover Photo:**

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**Interior Photos**

Vicki Andersen, Dorothy Catlin, David Crain, Josh Felix, Sharmila Felix, James Herod, Marsha McLaren, Carolyn Roper, Leah Whitling, and Taylee Winder

**Staff**

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Assistant Editor. . . . . Sharmila Felix  
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**Guest Writers**

Vicki Andersen, Scott Gilchrist, Jessica Griggs,  
Georgia Herod, Carolyn Roper,  
Leah Whitling, and Taylee Winder

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*City Lights*, the bi-annual online devotional journal of Main Street Church in Brigham City, Utah, is dedicated to the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:14-16 who called us to let our lights "*shine before men in such a way that they may see and glorify our Father who is in heaven.*"

Our words and creative expressions, besides glorifying God, should also encourage our readers. Therefore, all contributions must reveal our Christ-like love to all men, be biblically based, and focused on a stated theme for each issue.

*City Lights* ministers within the Statement of Faith and is an extension of the Core Values of Main Street Church (<http://www.msbc.org/statfaith.htm>).

To receive a copy of our Writer's Guidelines, please send an email request. As the editor of *City Lights*, I reserve the right to suggest changes or to disallow publication altogether.



**The theme for our Fall 2016 issue:**

***Sharing Your God Story***

*"... He sent him away with the words, 'Go back home and tell them all what wonderful things God has done for you.' So the man went away and told the marvellous story of what Jesus had done for him, all over the town."* —Luke 8:39

Contact: Diane Kulkarni, [dinahwriting09@gmail.com](mailto:dinahwriting09@gmail.com)  
or 435-723-8486.

"The true story of every person in this world is not the story you see, the external story. The true story of each person is the journey of his or her heart."

—John Eldredge, *The Sacred Romance: Drawing Closer to the Heart of God*

*Editor's Note:* A long-time member of our church, Bob Ebeling, finished his earthly journey on 21 March at the age of 89. He contributed so much to our community and to Main Street Church, but the last thirty years were overshadowed by the January 1986, Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster. The following is an interview I did with Bob for the January 1997 issue of *The Fellowship*.

## HANDS HELD TO THE FIRE

*By Bob Ebeling-- Main Street Church*

Bob Ebeling says that he and Job have a lot in common: tremendous loss, tragedy on a grand scale and not always knowing the will of God.

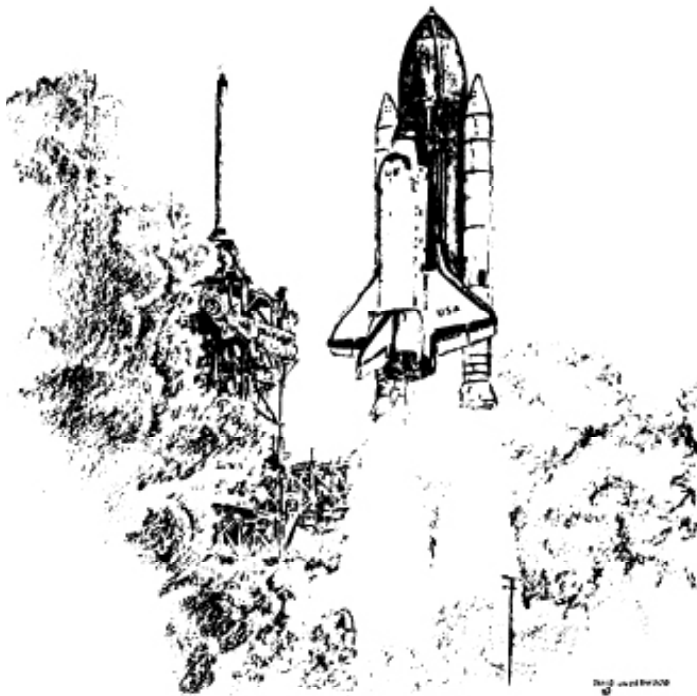
"I know what God's wrath is," Bob said. "After a whole string of untimely deaths in my family--some from cancer, a grandchild in a drowning, and my son to suicide--I saw God holding my hands to the fire! I took all of it very personally."

Bob looks back over his 70 years and measures such events and their impact. "I was always aware of God," he said. "My mom was Catholic and my dad a Lutheran and I went to parochial school. I picked up more religion when praying for my hide in the Philippine foxholes during World War II. During that time I even went to Jewish services-- covering all my bases, you know."

Bob married Darlene in 1949. She was a Christian who took him to the Baptist church, to see Billy Graham, and any other services she found. "I didn't come to Christ, however until about 7 years after my son died in 1975," Bob said.

"I remember that in 1978 I saw my first picture of the earth taken from the moon. It was so beautiful--I saw for the first time that God had deliberately created us. At the same time, I heard a story about the Big Bang Theory, similar to a strong wind blows through a junk yard, and when it stops, bang! You have a 747."

"After I was born again, I found Job 24:12 that describes forgiveness. It became my anchor through the hard times to come.



The groans of the dying rise from the city and the souls of the wounded cry out for help. But God charges no one with wrongdoing.

Bob's Christian life began with submission to Christ and to God's will. "My pastor, Ed Boer, Marv Anderson, Darlene, and others were praying for me without end. They had made it clear that by making this decision I couldn't hold anything back. Some things just had to go, like my lifestyle, my language, even my membership in the fraternal organizations."

Bob's greatest trial came nearly three years later when the Space Shuttle, Challenger, blew up in January of 1986. "I was a program manager on the Shuttle program at my company, involved in every launch. "I'd always prayed for each of the 25 launches," Bob said. "You've got to give God the credit for their success because even with all the work we do, they don't haphazardly happen."

But because of the cold temperatures in Florida, Bob knew the Challenger launch was different. "I organized a meeting of 'the minds' to discuss the cold weather impact on sensitive seals. I called Florida management to inform them of our concerns and they had an all-night teleconference with upper management."

"I was sure as death that we shouldn't launch that morning. But the political pressures were too great. There were 14 of us altogether who voted not to launch that night, but we were overruled. We tried everything we could to prevent that launch."

The next morning in a special, large meeting room over 50 people were watching the launch on the big screen TV. I was praying, "MAKE US WRONG, LORD!" the Challenger lifted off the pad, and I was grateful, but in a few seconds, it blew up in front of all of us."

"A stunned silence fell on the room. People walked out. I was so bitter, I couldn't even look at the man who had overruled us. I felt that all of us, especially the astronauts had been violated. And I knew I was guilty—I hadn't been able to convince the ones that mattered."

A few weeks later, after struggling with intense emotions, Bob realized he had to forgive the people. "I called for a meeting with the one who had made the final decision to launch. We both knew it was time to talk," Bob said. They made their peace, but Bob could no longer work as an engineer. He took an early retirement.

During this time, Bob spiralled down into a psychological nightmare and was eventually diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome—"as if I'd been at war." He was so angry, he couldn't sleep, reliving everything again and again, looking for any way he could have prevented it. However, he said, "I always came up empty, not having had enough clout."

Last January, the 10th anniversary of the Challenger disaster, Bob gave an interview to Leslie Stahl for *60 Minutes*. She had come with a camera crew to Brigham City, sat in on a Living Hope Church service, visited other areas where Bob was active, such as the Bird Refuge, and did extensive interviews with Bob, Darlene, and their daughter, Leslie Curley. "Leslie also talked with CBS because she had been involved with the Challenger," Bob said.

*"...and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God"* Hebrews 12:1-3 (ESV).

"I only did that interview to try and explain to the astronaut's families that we had done everything we could that night. I also wanted to publicly apologize to them and to my country," Bob said.

Last December 3rd, nearly a year after the *60 Minutes* program was aired, one of the CBS staff members called Bob to advise him that the Challenger commander, Dick Scobee's wife had called CBS to ask for Bob's telephone number. "She told CBS that she wanted to pass on her thoughts of forgiveness," Bob said. But he has never received her call.

"I know that God has forgiven me, but forgiving myself is still a struggle. Being forgiven by the astronaut's families would mean a lot," Bob said.

Throughout all their trials as a family, Darlene sees God drawing her closer to Himself. "I can tell you that without God it would have been very bleak. I've experienced the comfort and assurance of Jesus in the midst of a lot of pain," she said. The passage that's meant the most is Philippians 4:4-7:

*"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, 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."*

"This passage has been with me for a long time, getting me through the dark and sad days. I know that God hears. He's Someone you can really turn to," Darlene said. "Watching someone you love going through an ordeal is difficult, but I prayed for Bob the whole time."

You can hear the last interview he gave for National Public Radio's focus on the 30th Challenger anniversary: <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/01/28/464744781/30-years-after-disaster-challenger-engineer-still-blames-himself>



## *The “Goodness” of Atheists*

*By Jim Catlin, pastoring at Main Street Church*

I've been listening to a lot of atheists recently. They are indignant about something that I think I have been party to. At least indirectly.

Those of us who affirm the existence of God claim that those who deny his existence have no basis for morality. Our reasoning is that God is the only one who can define “good” and “evil.” So a life without God is a life untethered from morality.

But atheists are vocal about having a "sense" of right and wrong. It is self-generated and keenly subjective. They don't need a "god" to tell them that it is wrong to murder, for instance. And as they look about their lives, they find many other reasons to assert that they routinely honor good over evil. They are moral despite our claims.

So I am beginning to understand their indignation at being told by us that you need a god to tell you what is right and wrong. I get it.

But here's the rub. The track record of mankind's self-generated ethics has included the horrific. And this by the moral unity of its society. Any generation, it seems, is easily swayed by ambitious demagogues and swelling cultural consensus. Like gravity they pull our ethics into the dark side and we find ourselves increasingly calling “*evil good, and good evil*” (Isaiah 5:20).

Slavery was once moral. Now it is not.

The mistreatment and extermination of Jews was once moral. Now it is not.

The confiscation of Native American tribal lands of was once moral. Now it is not.

Abortion was once immoral. Now it is not.

On and on it goes. The ugly facts of history demonstrate the worst of self-determined ethics and its ever shifting sands. And from our perch in the present, we look down on our ancestors with disgusted disdain thinking ourselves so evolved.

But we have no reason to believe that our own generation is immune from the same kind of errors. It is a blindness. The book of Judges paints a horrific picture of a culture where “*everyone did what was right in their own eyes*” (Judges 21:25).

So, this then is the REAL reason, my atheist friends, for our need of a transcendent morality from God. It is anchored against the flow of potentially horrific ethics that naturally ebb and flow through mankind's wandering. Our ancestors chose poorly and probably so will we. The glaring lesson of history is that “choosing poorly” feels the same as “choosing wisely.”

In contrast, God's sense of right and wrong is interwoven with His enduring desire for our best. As our Creator, He knows us so well (read Psalm 139) that those things that lead to our best are not a mystery. Morality, when received from God, is simply that which is in concert with His love for His creation.

And the King will answer them, “*Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me.*” Matthew 25:40 ESV

# Sample Meditation: Journey



*“For the LORD your God has blessed you in all that you have done; He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have not lacked a thing”*

—Deuteronomy 2:7 (NASB).

*“Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.”*

—Westminster Shorter Catechism

*The Lord God has told us what is right and what He demands: ‘See that justice is done, let mercy be your first concern, and humbly obey your God’”* —Micah 6:7 (CEV).

*“God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things which should be changed and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.”*

—Reinhold Niebuhr

*“I have loved you just as the Father has loved Me. You must go on living in My love. If you keep My commandments you will live in My love just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love. I have told you this so that you can share My joy, and that your happiness may be complete. This is My commandment: that you love each other as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this—that a man should lay down his life for his friends”* —John 15:9-13 (Phillips).

*“What is my vision of God’s purpose for me? Whatever it may be, His purpose is for me to depend on Him and on His power now. . . . What He desires for me is that I see ‘Him walking on the sea’ with no shore, no success, nor goal in sight, but simply having the absolute certainty that everything is all right because I see ‘Him walking on the sea’ (Mark 6:49). It is the process, not the outcome, that is glorifying to God.”* —Oswald Chambers

*“It is the duty of every Christian to be Christ to his neighbor.”*

— Martin Luther

*“This is what the Lord says: ‘Stop at the crossroads and look around. Ask for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls’”* —Jeremiah 6:16 (NLT).

*“With the goodness of God to desire our highest welfare, the wisdom of God to plan it, and the power of God to achieve it, what do we lack? Surely we are the most favored of all creatures.”* —A.W. Tozer

*“Lord, I am willing  
To receive what You give.  
To lack what You withhold.  
To relinquish what You take,  
To suffer what You inflict,  
To be what you require.”*

—Jerry Bridges

*“Recognizing the right of the Master Potter to shape our lives according to His design is a humbling experience. You have to be humble before God, know that He is God, and know that only He can make your life really count for His glory before you will be willing to accept His shaping. For Christians, it means accepting our weakness, our earthiness, our mistakes, and letting the Master Potter have His way, tough as it may sometimes seem.”* —Dale Evans Rogers

*“I waited patiently and expectantly for the Lord; and He inclined to me and heard my cry. He brought me up out of a horrible pit [of tumult and of destruction], out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock, steadying my footsteps and establishing my path. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; many will see and fear [with great reverence] and will trust confidently in the Lord”* —Psalm 40:1-3 (Amplified).

*“Through the discipline of waiting, we can develop the quieter virtues—submission, humility, patience, joyful endurance, persistence in well-doing—virtues that take the longest to learn. What do we do when God seems to withhold our heart’s desire? He is able to help us to love and trust Him enough to accept the delay with joy and to see it as an opportunity to develop these virtues—and to praise Him.”*

—David Roper, *Our Daily Bread*, 1/26/14

*“And this is eternal life, to know You, the only true God, and Him whom You have sent—Jesus Christ. . . . Now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world and I am returning to You. Holy Father, keep the men You gave me by Your power that they may be one, as We are one. . . . I am not praying that You will take them out of the world but that You will keep them from the evil one. They are no more the sons of the world than I am—make them holy by the truth; for Your word is the truth. I have sent them to the world just as You sent me to the world, and I consecrate Myself for their sakes that they may be made holy by the truth. I am not praying only for these men but for all those who will believe in Me through their message, that they may all be one. . . . Father, I want those whom You have given Me to be with Me where I am; I want them to see that glory which You have made Mine”*  
—Excerpts from John 17 (Phillips).

*“Our spiritual life is God’s affair, because. . . it is really produced by His steady attention, and our humble and self-forgetful response to it. It consists in being drawn, at His pace and in His way, to the place where He wants us to be; not the place we fancied ourselves.”* —Evelyn Underhill

*“HE IS NO FOOL WHO GIVES WHAT HE CANNOT KEEP,  
TO GAIN WHAT HE CANNOT LOSE.”* — Jim Elliot



# A Journey for the Soles and the Soul<sup>1</sup>

By Guest Writer: Georgia Herod -- Liberty, Missouri

“Beginnings are very hard to trace. A thought that seems to stray into our minds like a lost puppy may actually be a nudge from God's Spirit. A cry that rises from deep within and finds articulation in our minds can be the beginning of a path that will take a lifetime to follow.” –Malcolm Smith, *How I Learned to Meditate*

Walk 500 miles, a million steps, 40 days? Crazy! Where did that idea come from?

**F**or my husband James and me, it all began in 2011 with a movie: *The Way*, directed by Emilio Estavez, son of Martin Sheen, both of whom have roles in the film. The plot line follows four pilgrims who choose to walk El Camino de Santiago (The Way of St. James). They walk 500 miles from St. Jean Pied de Port in France to Santiago in northwestern Spain. From the opening scenes, we were caught up in the adventure. A few weeks later, we watched it again with our family, and when it ended, James said, “I want to do that.” And so our journey began.

In April-May 2014, James walked the entire 500 miles in 40 days. Upon his return, amidst hugs and kisses and tears at the airport, he said, “You have to go. We have to go back.” Thus began my adventure.

In late March 2015, I began training. My then daily two-to-three mile walks became five-to-six, with an occasional eight or ten miles, while I carried about ten pounds in my backpack. I was pushing for endurance and distance.

At some point, we decided we'd walk only the first segment of Camino Frances, 178.9 miles, averaging 13.8 miles daily. My longest training walk had been eleven miles—on level, smooth terrain, with only a few hills. How different the walkways would be in Spain.

Because I experience lower back pain, as well as problems with my feet, I had concerns about being able to do such a strenuous trek. As months passed, I began to question myself: *Who do I think I am to try this? Why am I doing this? What if I fail? What if I'm a burden to James and Mike and Linda, friends who were going to walk with us?*

What if I couldn't keep up? Fear and anxiety washed over me, causing me to vacillate in my decision.

Then resolve settled over me. I knew I wanted to make a pilgrimage, not just take a long walk. I wanted to make “a journey with a hallowed purpose,” drawing near to Abba Father in a focused way. I knew I wouldn't be the same when I returned home, a thought both unsettling and appealing.



James, Georgia, Linda and Mike

When James resigned from his last fulltime pastorate in 2005 and we moved to Liberty, Missouri, I knew it would bring many changes. I didn't know how I was going to make the adjustments. I was afraid and anxious then too.

One thing is certain: I wanted to live this season of my life intentionally and purposefully to the glory of God and for the good of others.

While I didn't know how it was all going to fit, I sensed

that walking the Camino was part of God's plan to repurpose my life, to move me into a deeper, more intimate relationship with Him. I wanted to make space for what mattered most—my soul.

Nearly all who've walked and written about Camino have said, “Every Camino begins with the first step out your front door.” That step began on September 7 for our foursome. Plane, train, and bus took us to St. Jean Pied de Port, where we slept restlessly on the floor mat of a taekwondo dojo. We set out the next morning in the cool, pre-dawn hour for our first day of walking. With hearts pumping blood, adrenaline, and anxiety at top speed, we faced a mountain.

We had discussed before we left home that we'd send my pack by taxi to the albergue (pilgrim hostel) where we planned to stay each night. However, that hadn't happened—so I was carrying my twelve-pound pack.

The first day is a brutal 15.6 mile climb (4757 feet) over the Pyrenees Mountains, crossing from France into Spain. We had probably gone about three miles when James took several items from my pack and stuffed them in his. But shortly before the halfway mark, I knew I had to stop. I didn't want to cry, nor did I want to be mad because James hadn't sent my pack ahead. But I did both!

We stopped at a strategically located café, where I collapsed into a chair under an umbrella while James went to get water and a croissant (light, flaky, buttery and beautiful—this became a daily mid-morning treat for the rest of the trip). When he came back, he shared the refreshments and announced that a taxi would be there in about half an hour to take me and a Chinese man to our destination.

“No, I want to do this,” I protested. James quickly said, “It will be better for all of us if you take the taxi.” My companions stood around me and prayed. When they turned to leave without me, tears wet my cheeks. All my earlier doubts about my ability to do this came flooding in. I had failed. I was humbled.

As I awaited the taxi, I sat before the Lord, Who gently assured me that there was no shame, no failure. “You are here to walk the Camino with Me, not just climb a mountain.” I cried out for God's strength, physically and emotionally.

A few days later, Psalm 84:5 (NIV) encouraged me:  
*“Blessed are those whose strength is in You, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.”*

It took James and our friends nearly ten hours to climb the mountain. In the days ahead, we encountered others who had taken eleven to thirteen hours. I gave thanks again for that taxi.

After the mountain and for the next twelve days, life took on a bare simplicity. Everything we owned we wore or carried on our backs or in our hands. Each day was similar: set out before dawn, walk for a couple of hours, stop for café con leche (and fresh squeezed orange juice for me) and croissant, sandwich, or frittata; refill the water bottles and use the toilet; head out again—step, step, step—and arrive at a village or town for another rest stop before trekking to our destination for the day.

We had no agenda, commitments, or duties; we had no grand ambitions; we had only minimal needs: food, a bed, a shower.



All that is really necessary for the journey outward is a willingness to put one foot in front of the other, enjoying the beauty of God's creation, meeting people of all ages, from all over the world, all walking for their own reasons. Every pilgrim had a story—and openly shared as we walked or visited at meals.

That outer simplicity gave freedom for the journey inward, including the opportunity to experience divine appointments along the way. Maria (in her 50s), from Venice, was walking Camino for the third time. She said, “I walk when I need to think. I have issues.” I joined her in laughing as I said, “Don't we all!”

Anna and Jannusz, from Canada, had been to Lourdes, the Holy Land, and Fatima, and were now walking Camino in hopes that God would heal the estranged relationship with their adult daughter. What a privilege to share their tears and pray with them.

Irene, from the Denver area, at first said she was walking because she was in the midst of a life change. At one point she was ready to quit, but a few days later when we saw her, she said, “I'm walking out of obedience. God told me to finish.”

Barb from Chicago said she was hungering spiritually. Johannes, a 30+ British actor, was looking for something new; Simon, also in his early 30s, an information tech from Singapore, was taking a break, entertaining new career options. Annalise, a beautiful Eurasian, who celebrated her 29th birthday while walking, was enroute to India to study under a yoga instructor.

Simplicity and solitude were unexpected gifts of walking the Camino. They made possible opportunities to maximize daily appointments with God. One day as we were headed out for a fifteen-mile trek on a rocky, ascending trail, I recalled that Jerusalem is about fifteen miles from Jericho, both uphill and rocky. If the disciples



and Jesus kept a similar pace, they might make the distance in about six hours—about the length of our journey for the day. I imagined them walking along, Jesus teaching, opening their hearts to understand when He said, “*I am the Way (the Camino), the Truth, and the Life.*”

The rhythm of walking for hours and miles became natural. We walked on tree-shaded, well-worn paths, lanes covered in gravel, concrete sidewalks and streets, up and down hills, across valleys, through vineyards and orchards, alongside beautiful gardens, fields of sunflowers, or acres of vegetables. Like our daily lives, some days were easy as a “walk in the park”; other days were hard with large slippery, jagged rocks or loose gravel underfoot. Walking sticks became my “rod and staff,” giving me stability when the path was uneven or very rocky, helping me gain a foothold at other times.

For over a decade, simplicity and solitude have been desires of my heart. Little did I know that walking the Camino would bring those desires “from deep within and [find] articulation in my mind.” I knew it was “the beginning of a path that will take my lifetime to follow.”

The late Dallas Willard, theologian and professor, said, “You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.” I had experienced “the unhurried life” on the Camino, and I wanted to pursue that path at home. But . . . what would that look like?



Camino de Santiago image

Using Eugene Peterson’s pattern for being an “unhurried pastor,”<sup>2</sup> I began to define clearly what I longed for in this season of my life.

- *I want to be a woman who prays. I want to rest in the presence of God “so that I can be reflective and responsive and relaxed” in the presence of others--especially those close to me.*
- *I want to be a woman who reads and studies--who is able to see God all around, who makes connections between God’s Word and the culture.*

- *I want to be a woman who has time to be with women in “leisurely, unhurried conversations so that I can understand and come alongside them in their spiritual journey—bear their doubts and difficulties and share their desires and delights.”*

- *I want to have time to drop everything and read or write or walk or serve—wonder or wander.*

- *I want to be a woman of worship, solitude, silence, stillness, a woman of undivided heart, a woman who takes her “everyday, ordinary life--sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking around life--and places it before God as an offering” (Rom. 12:1-2, MSG).*

I want to be an unhurried woman.

That means change from the inside out—it means simplifying, decluttering (literally and figuratively). It will take God’s strength; it will take resolve. I have to be intentional. It means “a long obedience in the same direction.”<sup>3</sup>

Tomas, a young pilgrim in the documentary, *Walking the Camino*<sup>1</sup>, says, “The Camino is an intermission in the real camino—Life.” My intermission was over. But leaving Burgos and returning home wasn’t the end of my Camino. Jesus calls me to follow Him, to walk with Him through my everyday life—that is pilgrimage. It will last a lifetime. Buen Camino!

<sup>1</sup>[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/06/movies/walking-the-camino-a-documentary-by-lydia-b-smith.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/06/movies/walking-the-camino-a-documentary-by-lydia-b-smith.html?_r=0)

<sup>2</sup>Adapted from Eugene Peterson’s *The Pastor: A Memoir* (278).

<sup>3</sup>Theme of Eugene Peterson’s book on discipleship by that same title.

**Georgia Herod** has not only taken the Camino challenge, but also is broadening her interest in writing and editing. A Bible teacher and inspirational speaker, she enjoys traveling, cooking, reading, mentoring other women, and being “Granna” to her six grans! She continues to walk--and may head back to Spain to complete another 200 miles in the next year or so.

“The route of the Christian is never clearly laid out beforehand. Like Matthew the tax collector, the disciple is simply called out. He is not immediately told where he is going, but he knows the One who has called and promises to walk with him. Consequently the journey, although never easy, is joyous and fruitful.” –Lyle W. Dorsett, *A Passion for God: The Spiritual Journey of A. W. Tozer*

# Once Amok

by Guest Writer: Taylee Winder-Layton, Utah

By definition the word ‘Journey’ is an act of traveling from one place to another. The words strikes action into play, confirming that we will not remain in the same place from which we began.

Abigail Dodds said it well in her recent article, *Developing our Second Bests*, “If we’re the same at the end as we were at the beginning, something’s run amok. God is in the business of transforming us. . . .” And while Dodds is speaking in light of motherhood, I can confirm that statement to be very much applicable for all our seasons on the journey with God—if we’re the same at the end as we were when He called us, something’s gone amok.

When I was first delivered from the bondage of sin, I overflowed with the goodness of Christ’s grace. His Word of Truth permeated my heart and very being. I couldn’t get enough of Jesus, and I was astounded at the freedom He offered. I was ready to storm the gates of hell, proclaiming the gospel to everyone, opening myself up to wherever God would have me. For the first time I knew God was for me and with me, and my soul was refreshed.

The reality that no one explained, or could have for that matter, is that ultimately I would come down from the mountain-top grandeur into the valley low, where I would be met with the process of sanctification while living in a world that is oversaturated with minds that have been blinded from seeing the light of the gospel.

When I was 23 years old I had an abortion. Without going into the details of that particular event, I want to begin at the point when God convicted me of it, which was over a year’s time after having given my life to Christ.

I was sitting around a large make-up of tables at the women’s summer Bible study at Main Street Church in Brigham City—many of you reading this article will recall the morning. I don’t remember the study, but the topic of discussion had come to that of abortion and as the conversation unfurled, the Spirit convicted me and I knew “it was time.”

My heart began to pound in my chest, and the more I resisted His instruction the more persistent the conviction came. . . until the room went silent.

Across the room sat my mom and sister, neither had heard or knew of the double life I once led; one geared towards outwardly pleasing my family, and one geared toward fueling my desires for power and prestige at whatever cost. The choices I made apart from those who loved me most were kept a secret, and I had never intended to share it with anyone, let alone them.

Jesus said that those who follow after Him will no more walk in darkness, but the light of life. And so it was on that perfectly ordained Tuesday morning, with my mother and sister sitting across from me, that I shared all that had been hidden in darkness. And it was from that moment that God made clear that walking in His light of life allowed not even the shadows to remain.

Promptly after the study I went home (we were living with my parents at the time) and I shared my story with my dad. And then that evening I told my husband.

A week later I was baptized.

There are many details to the happenings of that particular week, and the waters of baptism were where the Lord led me for final understanding of what it was He had been doing. It is where I put the bookmark of being “Born-Again”—having been put to death and then raised to new life in Christ Jesus.

*“We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”* Romans 6:4

This event early on in my walk was pivotal in shaping me for the journey ahead. It constructed a foundation built on the truth of who Jesus is and why He came—to seek and save the lost, to change a person from the inside out. God knew that those things needed to be exposed and pruned in order for His goodness to flow and produce fruit for His

glory, so as to clear a path for the work that needed doing.

The outcome of what Christ does in us is hated by the devil, and it will prove to create spiritual warfare until the day of glory. Part of his scheme in relation to my past choices was making me question that the Lord of grace would completely forgive my sins, and being an infant in faith, I believed him. But that was a lie. And so it was that Christ took me, convicted me of my sin by bringing it to light, creating in me a heart of repentance, and then bathing me with His righteousness, casting out all doubt.

God is in the business of transforming me, a process that is and continues to be painful at times, but overall sweet and welcomed. Once I tasted and saw His goodness worked out, it was all I ever wanted in life. In Him I am a new creation, the old has passed away and the new has been brought forth. He has been faithful to go ahead of me in all circumstances, assuring I lack nothing on this journey.



Taylee Winder

“Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in Him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you’re on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute!”

Don’t fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God’s wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It’s wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life” (Philippians 4:4-7 MSG).

I am a servant of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the wife of a God-fearing man, and a mother to our beautiful daughter and son. The moments of the everyday bring me most joy: early morning conversations with my husband over a freshly brewed cup of coffee, watching my children learn and grow, singing, photography, and baking. I am one to appreciate rich conversation and fellowship over a delicious curry dish, a good belly laugh, going for evening walks, and being washed over by the Word from which all blessings flow.

I truly count all that I was prior to Christ a loss, and now walk forward with my eyes on Christ, continually reminding myself that this is not my home.

I am simply an ordinary person serving an extraordinary God. And as for all the details of where I am from and what I have done, those are best talked about over something sweet to eat and hot to drink.

*“With all my heart I praise the Lord, and with all that I am I praise His holy name! With all my heart I praise the Lord! I will never forget how kind He has been. The Lord forgives our sins, heals us when we are sick, and protects us from death. His kindness and love are a crown on our heads. Each day that we live, He provides for our needs and gives us the strength of a young eagle.” –Psalm 103:2-5 (CEV)*



# Remember Me

By Dorothy Catlin, Main Street Church

The road to Emmaus must have seemed long for those two travelers, bearing a burden of loss, sorrow and confusion. Their hopes for the future, their sense of purpose, all

evaporated in a single day of obscene suffering. Jesus was dead, there was no doubt. Struggling to make sense of it, their conversation probably ran in circles. And what about those women who had claimed He was risen from the grave? How could such a thing be possible? Even if the tomb was empty, where was His body?

The gospel of Luke recounts how Jesus himself approached them as they walked, matching His pace to theirs. Hearing their troubled discussion, He asked what they were talking about. Not recognizing Him, and shocked that anyone could be ignorant of such recent events, their tale came tumbling out. *“We were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.”* There it was, bald disappointment mingled with shame: How could we have been so wrong?

*“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!”* Walking together through the long afternoon, their sore hearts were eased as they listened to him explain how all of scripture spoke of him, from Moses through all the prophets. They began to understand how it had been necessary for the Christ to suffer. They really had been wrong—not about who it was they’d followed, but about how His glory would be revealed.

It was evening by the time they reached the village. Hungry for more of this Man’s conversation, they urged Him to stay on. Reclining at the table with them, He

took the bread, blessed it, and broke it. Something about his manner seemed oddly familiar. As He offered the broken bread, recognition came flooding in. Those hands breaking bread... His voice of blessing... broken pieces offered.

*“Remember Me.”*

Before they could utter a word, He vanished. Joy and hope burst upon them—He was alive! They’d walked and talked with Him, and received bread from His hands! They had to go back and tell the others!

As they urgently retraced their steps, memories of another evening only a few nights before suddenly came into focus. They had reclined at a similar table, an intimate Passover gathering of close friends. Tasting the bitter herbs, the salty water, the sweet wine, they had recounted the Exodus story.

The mood had been somber that night, as Jesus had told them *“I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:”* What? Before He suffers what? It had made no sense at the time, but now they remembered how He’d taken the unleavened bread, given thanks, and broken it. Giving each one a fragment, He’d said, *“This is My body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.”*<sup>4</sup> They’d eaten, not really understanding, unaware of the tragedy the next few hours would bring.

*“Remember Me.”*

The taste of that shared bread still lingered in their mouths.

Memories unfolded of yet another evening. A countless hungry crowd, expectantly sat on the ground. *“You give them something to eat!”*<sup>5</sup> He had said. Dumbfounded, they’d brought out two fish and a handful of small loaves—futile crumbs offered against such overwhelming need. But Jesus had taken them, looked to heaven in blessing, and broken them. How those fragments of bread had multiplied as He gave and kept giving; the twelve came,

and kept coming, receiving broken bread from His hands to set before the hungry ones until each and every belly was satisfied.

*“Remember Me.”*

They could still feel the weight of those twelve baskets filled with broken leftovers.

Arriving breathless in Jerusalem, they found the rest of the disciples already rejoicing—the Lord had truly arisen, and had appeared to Simon Peter. As the Emmaus travelers began to recount how He had walked along the road with them, and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread, Jesus himself stood in their midst. Not a ghost or an illusion, but the Lord Himself; still bearing the marks of crucifixion, He was alive.

He said, *“All things which are written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”*<sup>6</sup> He then *“opened their minds to understand the scriptures.”*<sup>7</sup> Everything they had ever read from the holy book suddenly breathed new significance. Memories of the three years they’d spent with Him now yielded deep understanding of God’s promises fulfilled in Christ.

When they’d been awash in an overwhelming sea of human need, He broke the bread and it was enough. *“I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger. If anyone eats of this bread he shall live forever.”*<sup>8</sup>

*“Remember Me.”*

When they’d been plagued by unnamed fears, clinging to loved ones as disaster loomed, he broke the bread to nourish both body and soul, breathing fulfillment into the Passover celebration. *“This is My body which is given for you; this cup is the new covenant in my blood.”*<sup>9</sup>

*“Remember Me.”*

When they were numbed by grief, confused by unexpected loss, and the road ahead seemed like a pointless path back to where they’d come from, he met them on the way. *“I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”*<sup>10</sup>

*“Remember Me.”*

The night before his death, walking to Gethsemane, he had told them, *“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.”*<sup>11</sup>

And so it was. They remembered. And so must we.

*“Remember Me.”*



Forever with the Lord. Photo: Shannila Felix, 2015

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
because He has anointed Me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor”*  
—Luke 4:18-19 (ESV)

Luke 24:21; <sup>2</sup>Luke 24:25; <sup>3</sup>Luke 22:15; <sup>4</sup>Luke 22:19; <sup>5</sup>Mark 6:37;  
<sup>6</sup>Luke 24:27; <sup>7</sup>Luke 24:31; <sup>8</sup>John 6:51; <sup>9</sup>John 6:58; <sup>10</sup>John 14:3;  
<sup>11</sup>John 16:7

“God found Gideon in a hole. He found Joseph in a prison. He found Daniel in a lion’s den. He has a curious habit of showing up in the midst of trouble, not the absence. Where the world sees failure, God sees future. Next time you feel unqualified to be used by God remember this, He tends to recruit from the pit, not the pedestal.” –Jon Acuff

*“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.” 1 John 3:16*

## *Saved by God’s Grace and Mercy*

*By Zak Kelleher, Main Street Church*

For over 20 years, since I was 15, my life was characterized by a lot of selfish acts, bitterness, anger, jealousy, hate, and self-medicating. Money, alcohol, drugs, and sex were most important, and I always felt like I was right and everyone else was wrong. I listened to heavy metal music and didn’t want anything to do with any kind of church or God.

When I first became aware that I needed Jesus was when my wife, Rochelle and I took a marriage class at Main Street Church. The instructors, Patti and Jeff Glover, showed us a movie that explained what to do if our marriage was failing, which mine was, big time.

“Pray to God and ask Him to enter into your marriage,” the film’s narrator said. I came home during the lunch break and prayed. That was when I was first willing to accept God’s intervention. Bob Holder and Jim and Dorothy Catlin helped me as I began going to church and reading the Bible.

At one point, I realized that I couldn’t do it on my own anymore. There had to be a power greater than myself out there somewhere. I saw what a mess I was in and how stubborn I was being. I was afraid that my marriage was almost over and that I was going to lose my family. And if I lost my family, I worried that I’d end up back on drugs and alcohol. My hope was that by taking the class and praying, that God would fix me, my marriage, and my family.

While watching God improve my marriage and my life, I realized that I was being saved by His grace and mercy.

Rochelle and I started to get along, becoming more intimate with each other. I developed a relationship with my kids and my relationship with others changed. Unhealthy people were leaving my life and God-fearing people were entering. I now have a new hope. I’m not as selfish, bitter, angry, jealous, or as hateful as I’d been before. I no longer self-medicate, nor do I have the cravings to do so. I listen to K-Love radio now rather than the music I used to listen to before. I have fallen in love with God and His Word and also enjoy being in a relationship with Him.

Like the Apostle Paul, I believe that *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20*

**Zak Kelleher**, 37, lives in Brigham City, Utah with his wife Rochelle and three beautiful kids. Zak is glad he’s come to the Lord and says he can’t begin to express how God has changed his life.



*Day of Decision.* Photo: Sharmila Felix 2015

“If you know that God loves you, you should never question a directive from Him.”

–Henry Blackaby

# Writing Out Scripture -- 2004

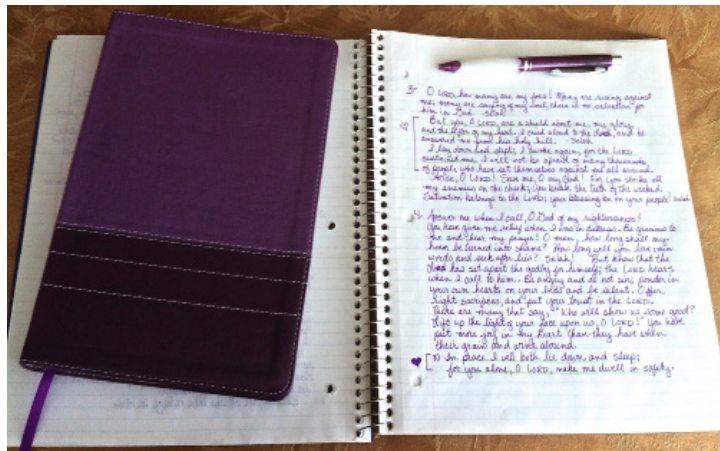
By Guest Writer: Pastor Scott Gilchrist, Southwest Bible Church—Beaverton, Oregon

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**“O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day.”** –Psalm 119:97

Last Friday as I put down my pencil at the conclusion of copying out Psalm 150, I found myself rejoicing in God’s Word once more. It was a memorable day for me because it marked the conclusion of copying out the Bible. I had purposefully saved Psalm 150 for my concluding page, because it seems such a fitting closure to the book of worship and this project of copying out the Scripture has definitely been a labor of love and worship.

Thirty some years ago, as a young college student, I was just beginning to discover the joys of serious Bible study. I had given myself to repeated readings of the book of Romans and it was yielding up such exciting truth from God that I was almost overwhelmed.



Beginning in the Psalms. Photo: Vicki Andersen, 2016.

I was so excited about first-hand personal interaction with Romans that I decided to copy it out by hand. As I did so I learned so much, saw things I hadn’t seen before, understood connections between verses and just generally found it a very helpful and beneficial exercise.

After that experience, I tended to make copying out Scripture a part of my devotional habit. When I took up another book of the Bible, I would, after reading it many times, make a handwritten copy. This somewhat mechanical discipline would slow me down and give me time to mull over and meditate upon what God was saying.

Sometime after experiencing the benefit of this simple exercise, I read in Deuteronomy where God had actually prescribed this method of interaction with His word for the kings of Israel. I was pleasantly surprised to read that, “When he sits on the throne of His kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll” (Deuteronomy 17:18).

God went on to explain some of the benefits of this that included:

- Learning to fear the Lord
- Becoming more careful to obey the Lord
- Being protected from pride
- Keeping one from wandering away from the Lord, “turning aside... to the right or the left.”

Reading this in God’s Word (Deuteronomy 17:18-20) not only confirmed the value of this exercise that I had already been enjoying, but it also motivated me to perhaps someday

complete the entire New Testament. Years later I did just that. I started over and used a consistent format and tried to keep my copy neat enough to be readable.

When I completed the New Testament, I was motivated to begin the Old. I began in Genesis 1 and about five years later, one week ago, finished with great joy in my heart as I penned the

concluding words to the last psalm.

*“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!”*

I can only say amen! The joy in my heart was born, not so much from finishing the project, but because of the joy, the personal joy, in the process. In fact, a certain melancholy came over me as the project drew to a close. I was sad that it was over! But that morning I was reminded that I still have plenty of paper and there is nothing to stop me from continuing to copy portions or all of the Holy Scriptures in the future.

That morning I turned to the nineteenth psalm and spent the remainder of my devotional time praising the Lord for the perfection, beauty, and value of His word. Indeed, “*The Law of the Lord is perfect,*” and it does “*restore the soul.*” God has given us a gold mine in the Holy Scripture.

He promises great blessings to His children who abide in it. In fact, there is no habit more central to experiencing God’s blessing and personally getting to know Him than spending

time on a regular and consistent basis in His Word. If you have never tried hand copying His Word, why not give it a try? You may find, as I have, that it is a very valuable way to “*meditate day and night*” and “*delight in the Law of the Lord.*”

**Scott Gilchrist** has been the Senior Pastor at Southwest Bible Church in Beaverton, Oregon for 36 years. He studies the Word, memorizes the Word, and teaches on a weekly basis at church and Downtown Bible Class. He’s been known to say things like “splash around in it,” “mull it over,” “ransack it,” “read it 50 times,” and “the Bible is your lifeline to God Himself.”

Scott is an Oregon native, having grown up in Silverton. After

Scott’s parents brutally told him he was not professional baseball player material, he headed off to Portland State University and received a degree in Business Administration and his M.Div. from Western Conservative Baptist Seminary.

Scott believed in Jesus Christ as his Savior as a young child, but became passionate about the Gospel while in college. He began to attend SWBible (then known as Progress Bible Church) as a student, and it was during this time that he met his wife, Kristi. They were on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ in Salt Lake City before returning to Beaverton in 1979.

Scott is a self-proclaimed “rough carpenter” and enjoys working in his cluttered woodshop, making this and that and the occasional guitar. He and Kristi have five grown children (all of them are married; and eight grandchildren).



*“Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”* John 15:5

### ***ABIDE: The 30 Day Challenge***

*By Scott Gilchrist*

Each of the 30 Scriptures below take ten minutes or less to copy out. Why not commit to spending ten minutes each day listening to God's voice as you simply copy these texts out of your Bible?

*Don't hurry. . . . Abide. . . . Enjoy!*

Pray like the psalmist in Ps. 119:18: "*Open my eyes.*" Then copy and enjoy.

Psalm 1	John 3:14-21
Romans 3:21-28	Acts 20:17-28
Col. 3:12-17	Psalm 119:97-104
Lam. 3:19-32	Deut. 17:14-20
I John 1:5-2:2	II Cor 5:14-21
John 15:1-8	Rev 5:9-14
Job 38:1-11	I Cor 1:18-25
Matthew 7:1-8	Acts 4:8-13
James 1:19-27	Luke 18:1-8
Isaiah 53:1-6	Psalm 19:1-6
Isaiah 53:7-12	Psalm 19:7-14
Romans 5:1-11	I Peter 4:10-16
Proverbs 3:1-12	Heb 10:17-25
Luke 15:1-10	Phil 2:5-11
Genesis 1:1-8	Rev. 22:16-21



# *God Called Me to Himself: The Miracle Of My Redemption*

By Guest Writer: Leah Whitling — Albuquerque, New Mexico

For me, baptism is a symbol and an affirmation of my commitment to Jesus Christ. The water of baptism is like rebirth. I have been reborn a new creation, and I belong to Jesus. He is and always will be my Lord and Savior whose blood was shed to save me. With His death He washed away all my sins and with His resurrection He gave me life eternal. I was baptized on October 18, 2015.

But I'm getting ahead of my story.

August 13, 2015 was the first day of school for Albuquerque Public Schools, and it was a day I will never forget because it was the day I was saved.

Early that morning, I was looking out of my laundry door toward the street and noticed a strange car parked on the street between my driveway and my neighbor's driveway. Its tinted windows were closed so I couldn't see the occupant. I am wary when it comes to strange vehicles in a neighborhood full of kids, so I stepped out of my door and started walking toward the car.

Suddenly its window opened and I heard a familiar voice calling out, "Hi Leah. How are you doing"?

"Just the person I wanted to talk to," I answered. "I understand that you know everything there is to know about selling houses, and I want to sell mine and get the heck out of Dodge!"

I had been very unhappy for several years and in counseling for serious anger issues and depression stemming from disappointing life events and being estranged from my children. While I would never take my own life, I had reached such a low point that I was saying "What's the point of living?" and had considered leaving New Mexico. There were too many memories here.

The strange car dude in the car was actually my former next door neighbor, Jim. He was waiting for the return of the current neighbor to retrieve a package that was mistakenly delivered to that address. Jim said he would be glad to discuss the possible sale of my home, but needed to deliver the package first. "I'll come back after that," he said.

Around noon, when Jim returned, we spoke about my house and the possibility of selling it versus renting it. We chatted about various other things when suddenly he asked me how things had gone with my son. He knew about our "falling out," so I said, "There's no hope of reconciliation, Jim, and now my oldest daughter is estranged as well. I'm not certain why."

Jim looked directly at me and said, "God has forgiven you, Leah. Why can't you forgive your children"?

"Well, I thought I had forgiven them, but maybe not, since I am still so angry."

"Leah you are a really wonderful woman, and I hate to see you in so much pain," he said. "You need to surrender everything to God. He loves you and wants you to be happy." And for some reason, he began to cry.

Stunned, I said, "Please don't do that, Jim. Please don't. I can't bear it. I've been down this road before and walked away. God won't forgive me."

"He has already forgiven you, so you need to surrender to Him."

I don't remember much after that, except that Jim offered me a Bible Study Fellowship tract, which he had in his car, entitled *Am I Sure?* He wrote his phone number on the back and left. Feeling numb, I put the tract on my counter and forgot about it.

That night I was reading a novel when suddenly I felt the need to get out of bed and onto my knees. This act itself was inspired by God, because I had not knelt to pray since I was a small child. I'd been too proud to kneel.

In tears, I began, "God, I think I need Your help, because I have managed to make a mess of everything. And I'm not even sure You can forgive the sins I have committed. I walked away from You and didn't even think about You for years. Can I just surrender everything to You? Please forgive me. I need You in my life."

I began sobbing like a child, and in the blink of an eye, I felt the anger that I'd carried around like heavy baggage lifted away from me. I felt free and unburdened with such a joy in my heart that I thought it would burst.

From that moment I was in awe of God's love for me and so thankful to Him. And at the same time, I physically felt lighter, like I'd been transformed. The old me was gone, and I knew my life was going to be very different. What God had done for me was awesome. Our God is so gracious! I wanted everyone to know what He had done and to rejoice with me. Yes, I had wandered away from God for a very long time, and yet time, distance, and a sinful life didn't stop my Father from calling me to Himself.

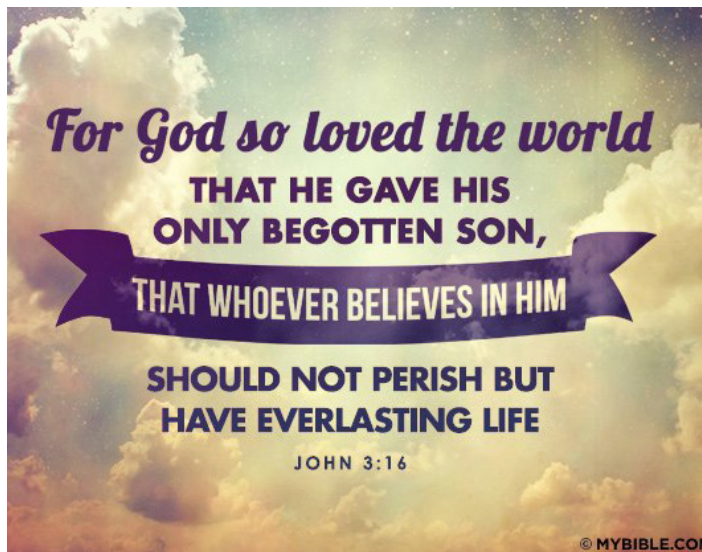
It took me two days to summon the courage to call Jim. He

had no idea of my transformation or that I had been crying non-stop for almost a full day. Since he didn't answer, I left a very unusual message on his voice mail. I'd been crying so much I wasn't sure I could get the words out, but I wanted him to know what had happened.

“Jim, God used you to deliver His message to me. Your words and your tears broke my heart, and that allowed God to come back in. He lifted me out of the pit that was my despair for so long, and gave me life in Him. I just wanted you to know that. And I also know that God led you to me because that package you retrieved should not have been sent here. You were meant to be God’s messenger. I just wanted to thank you.”

I received a call shortly after I left this message. Jim invited me to come for dinner that evening at his and his wife, Dawn’s home. He told me that he’d been shocked to hear my message. “I can see the change in you, Leah! You’re glowing!”

I replied, "Now what? I've not been to church in years and don't know where to even start." He told me that it was essential that I find a Bible-teaching church. “You need to be in fellowship with other Christians.”



## Give Thanks

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever.  
Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story for He will not forsake them ever.

The Lord gave me life today through His blessed sacrifice.  
He holds me close inside His arms so for me this will suffice.

He fills my heart with love and joy that flows into this world of pain.  
His faithfulness endures for all with eternal life to gain.

The following Sunday, I attended Jim and Dawn’s church, Albuquerque First Baptist. I went alone. The sermon was about all the murder and mayhem cast upon the captors of the Hebrews in the book of Judges. I thought "Oh no! What have I gotten myself into? Real fire and brimstone?"

Fortunately, I gave the church another chance. The second week I was invited to attend a Bible study called Glory (I later renamed this group "The Glory Girls"). I fell in love with these older ladies and have been blessed to call them and this church my home.

The Lord also spoke to my heart about being baptized, and so on October 18, 2015, I took the plunge and became a child of God and was adopted into His family forever. This is my story and the miracle of my redemption. I couldn't be happier. I know that someday I will be reconciled with my children. With God ALL things are possible—just look at me.

**Leah M. Whitting** is a retired nurse who spent her entire career caring for patients in hospital settings. Her story resulted from 35+ years of wandering away from God and His plan for her life. She never realized how forgiving He is.

## God's Love

The Lord grants to us this beautiful day to love and to live in His own precious way.  
He asks only of us that we know and believe for then in return eternal life we receive.

The Lord reaches out His own mighty arm to lend us protection from all Satan's harm.  
He loves and forgives us when 'er we fall and hears us our prayers whenever we call.

So heed the words of Him who will come. Be ready and watchful and be not like some who care little now but later will sorrow –for who knows but the Lord, it could be tomorrow.



The Lord is my shepherd;  
I have all that I need.  
He lets me rest in green meadows;  
He leads me beside peaceful streams.  
He renews my strength.  
He guides me along right paths,  
bringing honor to His name.  
Even when I walk  
through the darkest valley,  
I will not be afraid,  
for you are close beside me.  
Your rod and your staff  
protect and comfort me.  
You prepare a feast for me  
in the presence of my enemies.  
You honor me by anointing my head with oil.  
My cup overflows with blessings.  
Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

# Morning by Morning --The Blessing Box

By Guest Writer, Carolyn Roper–Boise, ID

It was 1996 and summer time. Brian and Jill drove their family from their home on the Olympic Peninsula to our home in Boise for some anticipated family togetherness and fun. The trip was long, hot and arduous, especially in a mini-van with three kids six and under. David and I were delighted when the van rolled up in the early evening and our three grandchildren tumbled out of the car, a bit ruffled and a lot weary and ready to stretch their legs. Greetings and hugs were passed around and the bags were lugged in. Then Brian and a very tired and not-too-sparkly Sarah, who was six at the time, headed with me for a look around our backyard.

I was feeling a bit sorry for Sarah since she was hot, tired and travel-worn from having been trapped in the van all day with two undoubtedly squirmy younger siblings.

Just then, and before I could do much coddling,

Brian (our son who is a basketball coach) called out in an upbeat voice, “Sarah, how’s your attitude?” In what might be called a droopy reply, Sarah answered with the memorized script, “Boy, am I enthusiastic.” Then the even more upbeat, insistent question came again, “Sarah, how’s your attitude?” And now from Sarah a more emphatic answer, “BOY, AM I ENTHUSIASTIC!”

I can often identify with that travel-worn six-year old. I tumble out of bed in the morning and head for my coffee, my prayer chair, and my time with the Lord. Often my thoughts start going in a sagging direction. Things like the cares of my world, the desire for other things, and the lure of what I don’t have pull me down. Possibly my temperament tugs me in the wrong direction. But that is not an excuse to stay down.

I remember our friend, Howard Hendricks, telling of a man who was asked how he was doing. The man answered, “I am doing all right, under the circumstances.” The

questioner’s reply was “What in the world are you doing under there?” Of course, a lifting-up is always a gift from God, another evidence of His grace as we seek His face. And the timing is His.

These days I am using a box as an aid to starting my day with an enthusiastic outlook. Some time ago, a friend gave me a gift in a beautiful, colorful box. I kept this lovely box and in it I put three smaller boxes, each of which I marked.



Carolyn’s Boxes. Photo: Carolyn Roper, 2016.

One is my *Mystery Box*, one is my *Offering Box* and one is my *Blessing Box*. I take a small piece of paper and write what might come to mind, date it and put it in the appropriate box after talking to my Father about each item.

In my *Mystery Box* I put theological paradoxes or personal things I just don’t understand in my life or the life of a friend. God’s thoughts are higher than my thoughts and some

things are a mystery to me. I am comfortable with that. I am not supposed to be able to figure out everything.

However, I like what a friend calls Umbrella Theology. All of these mysteries are under the umbrella of His love. A God of covenant love is the God Scripture shows me from Genesis to Revelation and especially in the Cross—sacrificial love at its zenith.

In my *Offering Box* I put my attitudes or actions that are not consistent with a Jesus life. These are attitudes I want to offer Him in exchange for thinking His thoughts, in following in His footsteps. Again, by His grace. I might write down situations that are beyond my strength but ones I am called to enter into and give it my all. I might mention my brokenness as an offering. In essence, I offer Him my heart and life as He shows me in what ways He desires me to follow Him.

My two boxes mentioned above are “sometimes” boxes. I

use them when the Lord nudges me in that direction. But for months now I have used my *Blessing Box* each morning before I do more praying or reading. It's my "first-thing-to-think-box." I take a small note pad, or a slip of paper and write down things I am grateful for, gifts a good God has given me. As I write, I pray and thank God for these things, simple and profound gifts I might overlook were I not intentional about noticing them. When done, I put the small papers in the box.

I might thank Him for my window that looks out on the gathering light, the eraser on my pencil (I make a lot of mistakes!), the ability to walk, the Costco Express (friends who often call and ask me if I need something as they head that way), the steam coming off my morning coffee, my many books (especially those that are "old friends"), my faithful and loving husband in the next room, the gift of a new day to "serve the Lord with gladness." Wow! Even in my writing and certainly in my praying, I am humbled and grateful. Boy, am I enthusiastic!!!

This is not to say there are not times of profound sadness in my life and the lives of friends I care about deeply. However, I am learning it is not either/or (either sadness or joy) but it is both/and. Even in the extremes of loss and disappointment there will be gifts along the way to notice and acknowledge as blessings from God.

Our friends Rob and Teresa Zaklan are living reminders to me of this both/and truth. Rob is a pastor friend who is on hospice care at home and growing weaker rapidly. The Zaklans have four sons, three still at home and the youngest is twelve. Teresa has, by God's grace she says, determined to be aware of the blessings along this way of sadness and letting go of her beloved husband. She and Rob have set small goals, and looked for God's blessings as they move through this difficult journey together. Some are things any of us might take for granted or even grumble about along the way.

One blessing she noted on their Caringbridge page describes the frigid night Teresa and the boys were able to bundle Rob up and somehow get him into their van to take a drive and see the Christmas lights together. Teresa knows now is the time, even in the midst of their sadness, to notice the blessings God is giving them. What good memories these dear ones are making.

You may not want a *Blessing Box*. There is no magic in the box. It just works for me. The box is a tool that gives me a way to remember first thing each morning to rejoice in

God's faithfulness as I both recount to Him and to myself my many blessings of the day and the blessings of many yesterdays.

When I hear God asking me, "Carolyn, how's your attitude?" I know I have the opportunity to be enthusiastic about the day as each morning, first thing, "I count my many blessings, name them one by one." Not random blessings mind you, but the blessings a loving God has graciously provided. Boy, am I enthusiastic!

*A word about Sarah*—Sarah is in her 20s now, and is doing well as she finishes up an intensive one-year nursing program in Pittsburg. She is an enthusiastic hard worker with a great attitude. She and her husband Brad make a terrific pair.

**Carolyn Roper** partners with her husband David in the work of Idaho Mountain Ministries, a ministry of clergy care to pastors and pastors' wives which the Ropers launched in 1995. Previously Carolyn was Pastor of Women's Ministries at Cole Community Church in Boise, Idaho where David was lead pastor. There she wrote numerous Bible studies which are still available. Currently she writes and sends out thoughts on email called *Morning by Morning*. Carolyn's desire is to see others move closer to the God who so loves them as they listen to His word and talk with Him. She says spending time each morning reflecting on God's Word is like chocolate to her. Spending time with David, spending time with their three sons and their families, and spending time in mutual mentoring relationships with other women, especially pastors' wives, are her priorities and her joy. She also loves to read, to laugh, to watch football and to welcome guests into her home.

"In the past, I always thought of gratitude as a spontaneous response to the awareness of gifts received, but now I realize that gratitude can also be lived as a discipline. The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy."

— Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Return of the Prodigal Son*

*“For the LORD your God has blessed you in all that you have done; He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have not lacked a thing.” –Deuteronomy 2:7 (NASB)*

## Out of My Wilderness

*By Pam Apodaca, Main Street Church*

Before I begin my short story, I will provide a little history. I married in 1970 and was divorced in 1981. I was employed at Thiokol and was what I considered a free spirit. Drinking alcohol was my first choice of all my activities. Wherever I went, my cooler went with me. The bar where I chose to drink was my second home.

Being conscious of my body, I chose to work out every workday morning from 5:00 to 6:00 a.m. at the Brigham City Community Hospital. This is where I met Joe Reyes. He also worked at Thiokol and I had seen him at work several times. He was kind and friendly, always smiling.

As my alcoholism progressed, I began to stay out later and drink longer. I cannot imagine how I looked or smelled each morning when I showed up to work out (YUCK). Joe never judged or frowned, but I did see concern in his eyes. What I do vividly remember is Joe saying “I am praying for you, sister. . . . God cares what happens to you, Pam.”

Naturally, my response was a shrug and my thoughts were not kind. I really did not believe or want to believe that there was a God. If there was a God, why did my mom suffer and die of cancer? I finally quit working out and only saw Joe occasionally at work. But Joe never gave up letting me know he was always praying for me. What a guy!

In 1990, I came to the end of myself. I got sober with the help of AA. Although still sober in 1995, I was so unhappy and depressed with my life. I began attending First Baptist Church in Brigham and accepted the Lord in December 1995. In July 1996, I began attending Victory First Assembly of God night services. The first night I attended, I walked into the sanctuary and saw Joe Reyes and his wife, Angie. Well, you all know how quiet and reserved I am (NOT).

I ran up the aisle and yelled, “Joe, look it’s me, Pam, and your prayers worked. I’m saved!” He looked and laughed and we hugged. I was crying and laughing and jumping up and down.

This is not the end of this little tale. When I walked into the church that first night, I met the usher, and his name was Jack Apodaca—my future husband. We were married by Joe Reyes in 1998. God hears prayer, He really does! Never give up on anyone, keep praying.

Joe prayed for me from 1980 until he saw me walk into church in 1996. Meanwhile, God was at work in my life during those years of wandering in my wilderness, hearing and answering Joe’s prayers. I am so grateful that God has been with me these last 21 years *“and I have not lacked a thing.”*

**Pam Apodaca** lives in Corinne, Utah with her husband Jack. They enjoy gardening and spending time with the grandchildren.

**Grace does not depend on what we have done for God but rather what God has done for us. Ask people what they must do to get to heaven and most reply, Be good. Jesus' stories contradict that answer. All we must do is cry, Help!**

[howtopraythescriptures.com](http://howtopraythescriptures.com)

Philip Yancey



*Safe!* Photo: David Crain, Hawaii, 2010.

*“You were in serious trouble, but you prayed to the Lord, and He rescued you.” Psalm 107:6*

## The Journey of a Lifetime

By Guest Writer, Vicki Andersen--Provo, Utah

Even as a little child, I had a keen awareness of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. My earliest memories include lessons heard at the LDS church and in my home about what was required in order to live with Heavenly Father. I don't remember a time when I wasn't anxious about whether or not I'd make it to heaven after this life. Therefore, every day was a futile exercise in trying to prove myself worthy of such a destination. I was constantly aware of the high stakes game of mortal life that carried with it eternal consequences.

As I walked through each day, I wondered if my steps were bringing me closer to His love and acceptance, or distancing me from Him. The road signs leading to eternal life with God had been laid out for me since birth: *Baptism, Temple Marriage, Genealogy, Tithing, Word of Wisdom*, and more. Admonitions abounded and promised blessings awaited those who were obedient. "Follow the Prophet, and he will lead you to life eternal and exaltation. Follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before. Do not waver or leave the path."

Rewards in the afterlife were predicated on taking the necessary steps in mortality, so it was imperative to hold fast to Mormon doctrine, the "Iron Rod." I held on with a white-knuckled grip and prayed for

On the Way. Photo: Dorothy Catlin, Zion National Park, 2016



strength. I was so concerned about what would happen in the next life, I was willing to give up this life prematurely so as not to jeopardize eternity. A shorter mortality meant less time to make grievous mistakes. Guilt was a constant companion. After arguing with my sister, I'd imagine I had just caused more drops of blood to fall during Christ's suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane.

When I was angry over the abuse by my parents, I was sure that God was unhappy with me for being upset! I wanted to walk with God, but was so ashamed of the things that were happening in my home, I knew He wouldn't want to be anywhere near me.

I tried to follow the road signs that seemed to point the way to God and His heavenly home. I knew that in order to live with Him, I'd have to be morally clean as "no unclean thing can enter the Kingdom of God." But how could I possibly manage that when I had no power to stop the abuse that happened behind closed doors?

Other road signs pointing to heaven were *Perfection* and *Obedience*, leaving me to question how I could perfectly obey

parents who were diametrically opposed to each other in what they were asking of me? How could I obey God when He commanded me to obey my parents? What should I obey and what should I ignore?

These particular signs were more problematic than helpful. They led me through murky waters and swirling mists of darkness. But I kept walking in hope for a better path ahead.

Attaining the goal of marrying a returned missionary in the temple was a giant leap on the road to exaltation. Surely the hardest part of my journey to God's presence was behind me! Childhood trauma would take a backseat to the life of promise that awaited as I worked to create an eternal family of my own. I hoped I'd eventually reach my final destination as I followed the signs marked *Church Service* and *Sacrifice*. No obstacle was too big or hurdle too tall to keep me away from God...except for continuing shame and a sense of worthlessness. No matter how hard I tried, I never felt I was as good as everyone else.

Then life's journey changed again when divorce became a reality. But just as before, I knew the only constant was

God. The only one I could trust was God. The only one I needed to please was God. Family and friends were judging and shunning, but I was still right with God--and I had the LDS temple recommend to prove it! The road ahead was tumultuous and bleak at best. But I kept trudging forward, trusting that God would eventually shine a light and open a way for me to know His will concerning my future.

And that's exactly what He did! Not only did He open a new road, it was headed in the opposite direction! It's a road that points to a life free from debilitating guilt, shame, and self-recrimination. A road lit with the bright hope of Christ. A road I travel with Jesus as my constant companion. A road I could never have imagined, and one I would never have considered had God Himself not plucked me off my Mormon path and placed me on this new one with the bidding to follow Him.

It's been a little over a year since that life-altering day...a year of ups and downs and upside-downs! But by holding tight to His love and grace, I eventually land back on my feet.

My journey to and with Christ is far from over. My heart sings with joy and gratitude for the invitation to walk with Him rather than searching in the dark for Him. And though I don't know what the immediate future holds, I'm secure in the knowledge that eternity with my Savior and King awaits when this mortal sojourn ends. Until then, I'll just keep taking one step at a time.

**Vicki Andersen** was born in Mesa, Arizona as a fifth-generation Mormon and the oldest of nine siblings in a blended family. She attended BYU for three semesters prior to marriage and motherhood. With the exception of a couple of years in Las Vegas, she remained in Utah and raised a family of five sons, four of whom are married and have provided her with 11 grandchildren in less than four years.

God led her back to college when all her boys were in school fulltime. A Master's degree in Elementary Education and an Early Childhood Endorsement have given her the ability to support herself by teaching Kindergarten for the last 13 years. Little children, music, quilting, and writing are her passions. Walking with God according to His will is her lifelong quest!

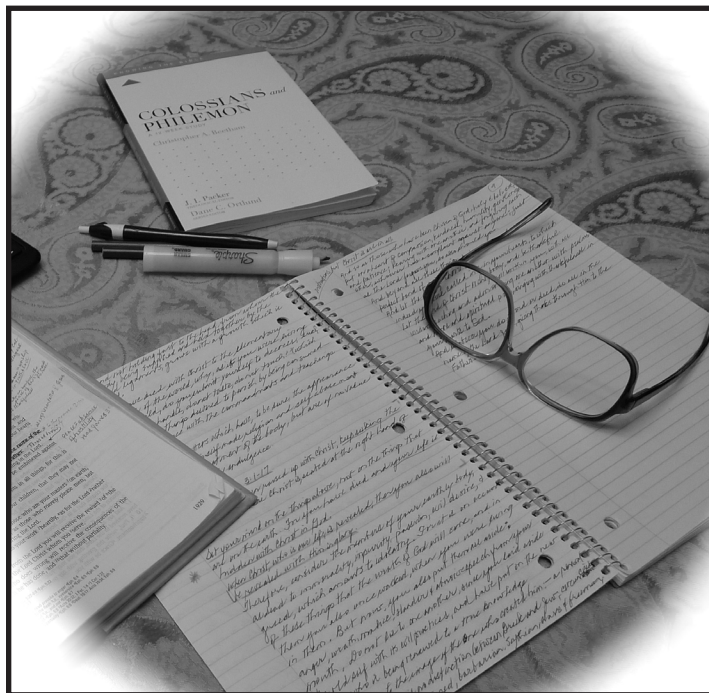


*Determination.* Photo: Marsha McLaren, 2016

*“Those who stand firm during testing are blessed. They are tried and true. They will receive the life God has promised to those who love Him as their reward” – James 1:12 (CEB).*



“A pilgrimage is a ritual journey with a hallowed purpose. Every step along the way has meaning. The pilgrim knows that life-giving challenges will emerge. A pilgrimage is not a vacation; it is a transformational journey during which significant change takes place. New insights are given. Deeper understanding is attained. New and old places in the heart are visited. Blessings are received and healing takes place. On return from the pilgrimage, life is seen with different eyes. Nothing will ever be quite the same again.”  
 (www.illuminatedjourneys.com/take\_a\_pilgrimage.htm)



The Word is My Lamp. Photo: Diane Kulkarni, 2016

*“Every morning lean thine arms awhile upon the windowsill of heaven and gaze upon thy Lord. Then with the vision in thy heart, turn strong to meet thy day.”*

—Author Unknown

## *The Pilgrimage Table*

By Diane Kulkarni, Main Street Church

Bruce Feiler, the author and narrator of the PBS television series, *Sacred Journeys*, says that although attendance and membership in organized religion are down, “pilgrimage is surging. A U.N. report from this fall said that 330 million people a year go on a pilgrimage, that’s a million people a day.”

Feiler noted that people who embark on pilgrimages are often in periods of transition in their lives, when they open themselves up to someone or something higher. They are saying, “I’m not just going to accept, doubt, question. I’m going to get off my sofa and go myself and decide myself what I am going to believe.”

Twenty years ago, my husband and I traveled to Israel for a 10-day tour, not listed as a pilgrimage, but a visit to the traditional places described in the Bible. On that journey, God met me in a personal way that changed my whole life—He revealed Himself. As All-Sufficient Love.

I often revisit those days of revelation in Israel in the context of what life is like for me now, with advancing age and annoying health issues. Although I won’t be taking a walking pilgrimage like those on *Sacred Journeys*, I know I won’t miss out on “a transformational journey during which significant change takes place.”

I do not need to “go out” in order to meet Him in a life-changing way along the path. Jesus invited me to take His yoke and learn from Him when I first came into relationship with Him in 1965. He knew exactly where I was and what I needed most: rest, peace with God, and soul restoration.

In the relationship He initiated, He continues to instruct me every morning as I sit at my kitchen table after breakfast, relishing the pilgrimage I began over half a century ago. Like David says in Psalm 5:3, I approach this time in anticipation. *“In the morning, O LORD, Thou wilt hear my voice; in the morning I will order my prayer to Thee and eagerly watch.”* God continues to teach me how to wait on Him and listen to His words so that I am able to accomplish what He plans for me. Day by day, I come away from my table refreshed and empowered, rejoicing in having been one of the many chosen to go and bear fruit that will remain, to love others, and to abide in Him while retaining His words in my heart.

By opening my Bible and taking up my pen to inscribe discovery details in my journal, I interact with biblical pilgrims and strangers along the same road. What they said and did in mundane and extraordinary circumstances relate to me. Their instructions are mine and God’s promises to them belong to me. So that I also might be transformed, I closely observe what happened when Jesus encountered individuals very like myself and changed their lives. For instance, when He asked the invalid of 38 years if he wanted to get well, I knew He was speaking to me and I said, “Yes!”

One Sunday morning in 1988, just after I graduated with a degree in English and had begun work in the university’s Writing Center helping students with their writing assignments, my Sunday School teacher asked a pertinent question. “How can we live a godly life in an ungodly world?” The passage in Romans 12:1-2 leaped into my mind:

*Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

At the same time, I envisioned various puzzle pieces of my life experiences coming together to form a perfect whole with the act of writing at its center. I was excited! I’d learned during many years of inductive Bible study prior to returning to college, and later through completing the

rigors of the English discipline, as well as my training as a writing tutor, that in order to understand anything, I had to write about what I was reading, adding what I already knew and what I needed to find out so that I could follow the direction God was leading me.

In this instance, I went home from church eager to get busy and explore, anticipating His guidance about the Romans passage which He had so specifically given me. From the text, His instructions were

- to present my whole being as a sacrifice of worship to God on a daily basis
- to submit my mind to the Holy Spirit for His renewal, which would lead to transformation
- and to resist being conformed to the world so that the will of God would be revealed in my life.

Within a few hours, those simple instructions with the promise grew into a project, a book entitled *Writing as Meditation: a way of thinking about the Bible* that I worked on for the next ten years. What God showed me during the writing process was revolutionary, and it was not just for myself; it needed to be shared with others who had been called to a fruitful life in Jesus.

Months went by and rejection letters piled up showing me that there wasn’t a market for a book like mine. Perhaps my approach was too academic or I hadn’t been clear in my how-to instructions. I decided to condense the 140,000 words into two magazine articles about the power of writing to discover in God’s presence. “Reflective Writing and Bible Study” was published by *Discipleship Journal* in 1997. “Receptive Meditation” was not.

Questions plagued me. If God had indeed given me such a unique idea and kept me preoccupied with it for so many years, then why was it not producing fruit? Why was it sitting on the shelf?

The project mirrored my life back then, for I thought of myself as having missed my calling as a Christian. I had dedicated my life as a missionary in 1967, but because of my circumstances, I couldn’t be “out there” doing what I expected a missionary would do. I truly believed that somehow I had missed God’s will: I had replaced “what should have been” with a pathetic “what was.”

My disappointment over this fueled a lack of understanding that set me on my perceived “dusty shelf” of neglect and missed opportunities. Resentment and blaming others for being “stuck” led to the enemy gaining ground in my life and the erection of a stronghold I was unaware existed but was all too evident in my attitudes.

When God faced me with the reality that I had been blaming Him for everything that had happened from childhood onwards—with unforgiveness at its core—I was so ashamed. There was nothing else to do but surrender, because only He could deliver me. And He did. The inner noise and control of that stronghold disappeared when I yielded my total being into His hands.

Within a few months, I realized something quite opposite had actually been true. God had not set me on a dusty forgotten shelf but in His carefully prepared niche to be taken out for His purposes according to His timing. In His grace I was truly “His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works,” the perfect plan for Diane, which He had “prepared beforehand” for me.

Accepting that truth opened my eyes to the fact that *Writing as Meditation* had not been a missed publishing opportunity, but rather His special gift to draw me closer to Himself, to deepen our relationship, improve our dialogue over His Word, and to demonstrate the fulfillment of His salvation promise found in Revelation 3:20:

*Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.*

On that singular night, when I found myself impoverished and bereft before Him, I heard Jesus knocking and opened the door of my heart. He entered my life, having already prepared an eternal feast that to this day draws me back again and again to my Pilgrimage Table where “new and old places in the heart are visited. Blessings are received and healing takes place. Nothing will ever be quite the same again.”



Mamatha. Photo: Sharmila Felix, 2015

“To Him who loves us and has set us free from our sins through His own blood, who has made us a kingdom of priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and power for timeless ages, amen.

See, He is coming in the clouds and every eye shall see Him, even those who pierced Him, and His coming will mean bitter sorrow to every tribe upon the earth. So let it be! ‘I am Alpha and Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘Who is and Who was and Who is coming, the Almighty.’” –Revelation 1:5-8 (PHILLIPS)

*“The disciples came up and asked, ‘Why do you tell stories?’ [Jesus] replied, ‘You’ve been given insight into God’s kingdom. You know how it works. Not everybody has this gift, this insight; it hasn’t been given to them. Whenever someone has a ready heart for this, the insights and understandings flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity disappears. That’s why I tell stories, to create readiness, to nudge the people toward receptive insight.’” –Matt. 13:10–14 *The Message**

## ***Storytelling as a Solution***

*By Guest Writer, Jessica Griggs*

Stories illuminate and invigorate. Their words motivate and inspire others, bring them to tears, and at the same time, instill hope in the heart and a longing to experience emotion of that depth and magnitude themselves. Stories aren’t just about facts; rather, they’re about real experiences presented in such a way that transports the reader to another world of view

### *Exposure Essential to Recovery*

To heal from trauma, we must expose the raw pain in our lives, even when it feels like we’re gambling with our souls. If we don’t, that pain becomes vice-like, latching onto us and transforming into festering wounds of violence. Trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) require exposure for recovery. History reveals that hurting people hurt others.

Storytelling is one method of creative expression to put that hurt, pain, and the struggle of humanity onto the page and out in the open. It helps us heal. We place our story into the hands of another; we no longer shoulder it alone. Telling our story helps us straighten out the tangles of our memories.

### *The Healing Power of Storytelling*

Often when writing about trauma, the tension of a safe environment mixed with hostile memories unlocks the story and, as flood gates open, ideas spring forth. Try sitting outside to write. The peaceful, relaxing, natural environment creates a “safe place” for your body, mind, and spirit to enter the hostile world of pain. Once you let your guard down, the mind can open up. Only then, can the unspeakable horrors be coaxed out into the open. At first, they’re like a scared animal and require patience and time, but with perseverance and repetition, they come more willingly.

In Psalms, we learn much about David through his writings, which often grew out of his own pain. That’s what we must do—learn to tell our story and share it with others.

In doing so, we will learn, grow, and move forward with our lives. Also, writing helps us make connections about our own lives. It helps reveal motives, assumptions, and sequences of events we may not have realized before. Writing and storytelling are great unveiling acts. Writing about trauma will help us see God’s faithfulness through it all.

This therapeutic practice will help us recall the facts and not exaggerate them. We are then reminded that others suffer too. We see life as a balance between hope and despair, joy and loss, and love and pain.

Trauma sufferers need to tell their stories. They learn they can define their story, rather than let it define them. We need to listen well and embody the ministry of presence.

**Jessica Griggs** is in the process of writing a book about her journey through healing. Her family’s story will cover at least five different books, not all written by her, and at least one book will be published by the time this article is. Griggs firmly believes storytelling is a solution to living a healed and whole life. Scripture quotations from *THE MESSAGE*. Copyright by Eugene H. Peterson 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers.

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**Editor’s Note:** Consider sharing your testimony or sanctification journey story in the October 2016 issue of *City Lights*. Submit your writing, artwork and/or photography by 20 September to [dinahwriting09@gmail.com](mailto:dinahwriting09@gmail.com). A free “Writing Your God Story” workshop will be held at the church in late August for those who are interested in discovering more about their relationship with Almighty God and writing about it. At the end of the workshop, you’ll have a rough draft to take home for revision. To reserve a place, contact Diane at 435-723-8486 or [dinahwriting09@gmail.com](mailto:dinahwriting09@gmail.com).