



The journey that
led to
heaven
and back again

LYNN HARDY

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Some of the names of the individuals mentioned in this book have been changed to protect their privacy and identity. The events recorded herein are accurate, and have been represented as they occurred to the best of the author's recollection and ability.

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The journey described within these pages may not have been possible without the continued support of my husband, Tony. He not only supported me financially so that I could seek my own path, but his calm, peaceful personality gave me an emotional security that allowed me to grow in confidence and independence.

Many times parents and our upbringing are things that we must overcome. I have come to realize that parents are just people with flaws, some more than others. Without the spiritual guidance of my mom, I doubt my journey would have been the same. I thank God for the wisdom she has imparted over the years.

Prologue

This book is dedicated solely to my journey with God, which has been filled with miracles straight from the Book of Acts, the fifth book of the New Testament in the *Bible*. In any journey, it's not the destination. Rather, it is how we get there that makes us who we are. This is why I have included the detours that were dead ends and the times when I "missed it" – not understanding what God was trying to tell me.

I tried to keep the book true to my heart at the time the events actually took place. In my earlier years I wasn't very "spiritual." I had no vocabulary to describe many of the things I was experiencing. I've written these stories that way, very secular. Everything was new, unexpected, and quite unusual. As I grew with God, some of my speech patterns changed as I learned new terms for events that were happening.

Also, as I began, I wasn't happy that God had instructed me to write this book. I didn't think it was time. About halfway in, I embraced the fact that He knew what He was doing, even if I couldn't make sense of it.

To fully comprehend God's abundant grace, it may be necessary to be aware of a few basic details about my past. I hesitate to say too much for fear of a lawsuit. This, however, is what I *can* tell you:

My younger years were filled with much pain – emotional abuse mixed with minor physical abuse. For me, it was just "life" as I knew it.

Although many people had it much worse than I, suffice it to say, my upbringing left me struggling with low self-esteem.

A true journey begins when you are in the darkest depths, at rock bottom, without a clue as to where to begin. This is where I found God's miraculous grace.

Angels & Demons

The Gift of Discernment

As a teenager I was very devout. My greatest desire was to be used as an instrument of God. Unfortunately, I didn't have a relationship with Jesus; I wasn't dependent on the grace provided by Him. I was self-righteous and full of pride.

"I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't curse, and I most certainly don't have sex before I'm married," I told anyone and everyone at the time. It was a very old-fashioned notion, out of style, but I didn't care. I was living my life for God. I wanted to be the best Christian I could in order to stay in His good graces.

By my senior year in high school I already had a steady boyfriend, and things began to get pretty physical. "If you aren't careful," Mom had warned me, "the situation will get out of control before you know it."

I heeded her advice and laid down the law with John. "When I walk down the aisle," I told him, "I intend to wear white for a reason. We can't be alone in your room anymore."

He said he was good with my choice.

A couple of weeks later, we were at the river with friends. When John and I snuck off for some privacy, the make-out session got hot and heavy. We had swimsuits on, so we were protected... Right?

Before I knew it, my swimsuit was being pushed aside. Something began to feel, different –

really different. “What are you doing?” I demanded. “What’s going on?”

John shuttered and the feeling stopped before I could finish the last sentence. Apparently, a guy’s first time doesn’t last long. I pushed him off me, jumping up. “How could you? You promised you wouldn’t!”

“But you were ready,” he insisted. “Your body wanted it.” He came close to comfort me.

I pushed him away, tears streaming from my eyes. “But I *didn’t* want it! You swore you’d wait!” Long, fast strides carried me from the meadow towards the road. As my feet hit the pavement, John was beside me, holding my arm, “Let me drive you home? It’s too far to walk.”

“Fine,” I said, jerking my arm from his grasp.

I sobbed the entire ride back. When John pulled into my driveway I opened the door and bolted for the safety of my house. Once in the bathroom I noticed a pink stain on the toilet tissue that made it impossible to deny what had happened.

My virginity, my most prized and protected possession, was taken from me. Guilt assaulted me. It was obviously my fault for agreeing to be alone with him and for putting myself in that position. It didn’t matter that we had discussed the issue of going too far, that I had made my wishes perfectly clear and trusted him to do what we agreed was right. I had also been warned and failed to take the proper precautions. But John obviously shared responsibility here, too.

“Date-rape” is the term they would invent a few years later to explain a violation of this sort. I don’t think a name really makes any difference. It was what it was – a horrifying betrayal by someone who said he loved me.

Unaware of God's grace, I felt I was no longer of any use to God for I had failed Him. That night I cried myself to sleep. The next morning I packed a pair of pants, two shirts, a change of underwear, and all the money I had into my school backpack.

Instead of taking the bus home, I walked west, hoping a serial killer would pick me up. "If I can't work for God, I might as well be dead." Hollywood Boulevard is where the hookers hang out. I figured I would become one, if I made it that far.

I stopped down the road from the small-town school at the only store within miles of the remote location. I was filling up my water bottle when John pulled up in his VW Bug. "What are you doing here?" I demanded.

"You didn't seem too good when I dropped you off last night," he said. "You weren't waiting for me at the school like you usually do. For some unexplainable reason, I just *knew* you'd be here." dismissing the weird coincidence he couldn't explain logically. "Where are you going?"

"I can't go home." I shrugged. "I'm heading west."

"You could come to my house. My mom will let you stay with us. Then we can head to the Grand Canyon," he said. "I hear they put you up in an apartment if they hire you, so we would have a place to stay while we made some money for college."

My heart leapt with a small ray of hope. I rationalized that if I married John then everything would be okay. I would still have only slept with one man, my husband, and after I was married I could serve God.

I went with John back to his place.

At eleven o'clock that night, my mom showed up at John's house. She refused to leave unless I talked to her. "I don't care what you've done, or what's happened," she said. "I won't talk to you about it unless you want me to. Just come home so you can finish school."

A month or so later I walked down the aisle to get my high school diploma. John moved my bags from my mom's car to his and we headed for the Grand Canyon. The night I graduated, I not only left my family I left God.

More than a year later, in the darkness of a little studio apartment John and I shared, we lay next to each other on the full-sized bed. We talked about church camp the year before, recalling the story Pastor Rex told us our first day:

William was my best friend all throughout seminary school. I was very impressed by his dedication. Every night he said his prayers without fail. Every night he asked God to see an angel. William said he had done this since he was a small boy and he would continue to ask God until He revealed an angel to him.

Just before I left for camp, William called me, pretty shaken up. "Rex, don't ever, I mean *ever* ask God to see an angel unless you're really serious, man."

"What happened?" I asked.

"Last night, I was saying my prayers in bed while my wife Chrissy was finishing up the dishes. I put forth the request for God to reveal my guardian angel to me, just as I always do. All of a sudden, at the foot of my bed, stood this tall glowing figure. He was so tall that the eight-foot ceiling cut him off at the shoulders. His head was outside the room!

“The angel’s garments were bright, so white and pure – I felt every sinful thought, every misdeed, I had ever committed. I felt like the worst piece of filth that walked this earth.

“Then he knelt. I have to tell you, man, when his face came into the room the power radiating from him caused me to lose complete control of my bodily functions, right there in my bed!

“I will never forget the beauty in his face; it brought tears to my eyes just to look at him.”

“Was it worth it, William? All those prayers? All those years?”

“It was worth the soiled bed. God is good. He hears our prayers, even if it takes Him a while to answer them. But you really have to tell people: Don’t ever ask to see an angel unless you are ready to SEE an angel!”

Now we know why angels always said: “Fear not” when they appear to people in the Bible. Apparently, they are pretty intimidating to behold.

John and I chuckled at this story before he rolled over to go to sleep. I lay there, thinking how awesome it is that God sends angels to watch over us (even if I wasn’t exactly on speaking terms with the Big Guy at the moment). As I contemplated this, I began to become aware of a presence, a powerful being that radiated peace: He was pacing up and down the hallway outside the bedroom.

Sleep slowed my brain as I was comforted by the strength of my heavenly guard. In a millisecond, the powerful presence of peace slipped away, disappearing. My eyes flew open. Black inky shapes began to appear all around the room. I was frozen, unable to move as fear, like nothing else I’ve ever felt, struck my heart.

It took an insane amount of effort to roll my head so I could look at the door. It will take too long to unlock the deadbolt, I thought, rolling my head the other direction to look toward the window. Locked! I'll just jump through it... In my panicked state, the fact that we were on the second story didn't much matter to me.

It took all the power of my will just to move my arm. The fingers of my left hand grazed John's back. He sat straight up in bed, looking around with wide eyes.

"What is it? What's going on?" he demanded.

His terror broke the hold the demons had over me. I remembered what I learned in Sunday school: Through Christ, we have victory.

"In the name of Jesus, I command..." My voice came to a halt as the room cleared of the inky shapes. I sensed the powerful presence of peace in the hallway once more.

"What was that?" John asked.

"I don't know..." At the time, I was unable, or perhaps unwilling, to recognize what had happened.

Years later I learned that God gives some people the gift of discernment. The 21st Century King James Version (KJ21) says it best:

1 Corinthians 12

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit thereby:

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits;

It is my humble opinion that mediums and fortune- tellers have the gift of discernment. They choose to use it for personal gain instead of God's work.

Romans 11:29 (KJ21) tells us:

29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

This verse clearly states that once God gives us a gift it is ours, even if we chose not to use it to glorify Him. Shouldn't being able to see into the spiritual realm make someone a believer?

You would think an experience like this would have sent me running back to God. It didn't. At college the next year, I told a group of Christians that they were weak for needing the Bible – I knew right from wrong without needing a book to tell me what to do.

A Vision from God

My twin sister Bobbi walked down the aisle three years later. It was a bittersweet occasion for me; I was a bridesmaid and I longed to be a bride.

I wore a promise ring on my right hand. It was a small gold ring with entwined hearts. A promise ring is often given to a woman to keep her happy when she is looking for a commitment. It means, “I promise to ask you to marry me – someday.” John and I had continued living together, but he never proposed.

My mom and I drove to Las Vegas together for Bobbi’s wedding. It allowed us to mend the bridge I had burned when I left home and never looked back. We often spoke on the phone afterwards.

“I don’t care if you sleep with a hundred men, dear,” mom said, “Just don’t marry the wrong man for the wrong reason.”

Her acceptance allowed me to break up with John and go my own way. In college, a couple of years later, I met and married my husband Tony. His loving support helped me establish a sense of self-worth. Spiritually speaking, well, he wasn’t. He believed that God was somewhere up there and we were down here – there was no reason to mix the two.

A couple years after we were married, my mom Gloria and my step-dad Pops came for a visit to the first home we owned in Eagle, Idaho. Tony knew Pops was an assistant pastor at his church. “It’s fine if they visit, but please ask them not to bring

their Bible,” asserted Tony. “I don’t want to be preached at in my own home.”

When I was pregnant with my first daughter, Ashley, I decided I wanted our kids raised with the knowledge of God. At dinner I asked Tony what he thought.

“I was raised Catholic, didn’t hurt me,” he agreed.

“Well, Honey, if I am going to teach my kids about God, I would like to renew my relationship with him. I know God wasn’t a part of my life when we met, so I understand if you don’t want me to go down that road again.”

Tony sighed, “I have no problem with you knowing God, but if you start acting like your mother, I’ll divorce you.”

I smiled – there was no chance of that happening any time soon. Mom wouldn’t watch certain shows because of the content, wouldn’t drink more than one beer, and always found numerous reasons to praise God every day. My life was just fine the way it was. Getting to know God didn’t mean it would change, did it?

Later that night, I knelt at the end of my bed and folded my hands like I did when I was a small girl. “God, I’m sorry I’ve been gone for so long. Please forgive me for ignoring you. Forgive me for denying your Son. Help me to know Him, and You, better. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Soon after this, the pregnancy had some complications: Pre-term labor forced me onto bed rest. God didn’t enter my mind again for several months. The stress of trying to keep the baby inside me, long enough to deliver her safely kept me totally occupied.

Ashley continued to be a challenge after coming into this world in 2001. Every time I fed her, she

would cry unless I rocked her for twenty to thirty minutes. It took a couple of months to develop a system that left me with exactly a half-hour of free time every afternoon.

Before I opened the Bible that Mom gave me, I did as she instructed, I prayed: “Holy Spirit, please grant me wisdom. Help me to know Jesus better.”

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – I read the accounts of their time with Jesus. I fell in love with the man who was God. Jesus wasn’t at all who I thought He was. He wasn’t harsh and strict. He had a sense of humor and so much kindness. I was eager to go to bed each night, just so I could spend some time with Him and talk to Him about what I had read.

I remember telling Him, “I know I messed up pretty bad, but if there is anything I can do, if You have any use at all for me in this life, just let me know. No matter how small the task, I will do whatever you need.”

Two months later when I said goodnight to my Savior and rolled over to go to sleep when a vivid dream overtook me:

I was walking across these rolling hills, striding with great purpose. Evidentially, there was somewhere I needed to be. A fence was on my left; to the right were all rolling hills. After a while, a large swath of mud blocked my path. The swampy ground stretched farther than I could see.

Thinking it would take too long to go around, I tried crossing it, for I could see solid ground on the other side. The mud was only ankle deep at first, but by the time I was halfway there, it crept up past my shins. I struggled with each step and began to sweat. Looking toward the fence, I noticed someone in a robe.

Was that a tiny old man? I squinted, taking another labored step. I could surely use some help, I thought, looking back toward the fence.

It wasn't an old man just a young boy with light brown, unruly curls. His cheeks were full as he smiled, chuckling a little.

What help could he be? I looked down at the mud, resuming my struggle. When I glanced up again, the boy was standing before me. I noticed his feet hadn't sunk into the mire!

"Lord!" I gasped, dropping to my knees. Out of respect my forehead instantly met the ground; mud flooded my face and clogged my nostrils. I couldn't breathe and didn't care if I ever could again.

As His hand touched my shoulder I stood up. In the blink of an eye we were transported to the other side of the vast, muddy swamp.

I was instantly awake. It didn't feel like I had been asleep. The next morning, I called my mom and told her what had happened.

"Was that the Holy Spirit? Why did I call him Lord...?" I asked her in rapid-fire succession. "Everyone knows Jesus has a beard."

"The Word says the sheep knows the Shepherd," said Mom. "Whoever it was, it sounds like He was part of the Trinity."

Many nights I pondered this vision: Who was that? Was it really a vision from God? I was mystified. It was such a mystery that the experience would completely escape me for many years to come until the time when the person's identity was eventually revealed.

My First Healing

Out of all my family members, I have a unique reaction to stressful or interesting situations: Most often I become eerily calm; I observe and then act. One night as I prayed, my hands and forearms were tingling, like they had fallen asleep. To wake them up I tried shaking them out, but the pins and needles still troubled me.

For a week, every time I prayed, my arms and hands would tingle. I tried an experiment:

I prayed and then I stopped. The sensation came and went.

I prayed sitting up in bed. Yep, still there.

I prayed when I was on the toilet. Even there!

The next time I talked to my mom, I mentioned it to her. “That’s the power of the Holy Spirit,” she said. “When He is resting on your hands it usually means He wants to use you to do something.”

“Awesome! Maybe He will heal Tony,” I said. “He has this old injury in his ankle that has been bothering him. If God heals it then Tony will know God cares about him!”

As was my practice, the next night I said my prayers silently so I wouldn’t disturb Tony. The tingling returned.

Unsure what to do, I remembered what my mom had taught me as a small girl: “In everything, praise Jesus.” I tried to whisper, “Jesus, I praise you.”

As I uttered the name “Jesus,” the tingling cascaded from my head to my toes. It was like an unseen force caressed every ounce of my being. The word came out breathy, like the whisper to a lover, “Je-es-sus.”

I tried again. As I said “Jesus,” the power poured over my body again, building in intensity. I whispered His name into the night over and over again, reveling in the feeling. I felt like I could walk straight up a wall, and that if I jumped off a roof, I would float down to earth.

I couldn’t take any more. In my mind I asked, *what do you want me to do?*

A picture appeared in my head. I raised my hands and put them on my neck as I was shown.

Power hit me. It was like a bolt of lightning running down my entire body. *Snlick*. Something between a snap and a clicking noise came from inside my nose. At that moment I knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt, God had healed my deviated septum!

The Holy Spirit brought to my mind a doctor visit I had a little more than a year ago:

After a CT scan, I was told I had a deviated septum and surgery was recommended.

“No way I’m letting them stick something up my nose!” I said on the way home. “I was so nervous for that test I was trembling.” Referring to the scan, I said, “the picture was probably blurry, that’s all.”

Early the next morning, Tony came into the house covered in grass. Usually I would be close to the HEPA filter trying to breathe while he mowed. Today, I slept through it.

God had healed my allergies, too!

At dinner, I was bubbling over with excitement. Tony was unconvinced, "It's just mind over matter, that's all."

"But last week I couldn't breathe when you mowed the grass. Now I'm fine!" I protested.

He shrugged, "And you have been taking allergy shots for over a year. They have finally kicked in."

"I didn't take shots for cats, remember? I didn't want to have three shots. Today I was able to pet the barn cats and even hold them. I didn't even snifle!"

He remained unconvinced.

On Monday I drove to work along the normal route. The world of fragrance opened up before me. "There's one scent and there's another," I said out loud, though I was alone in the car. "Two smells at the same time, how is that even possible?"

Before now, chocolate didn't have much flavor, and peanut butter tasted like dirt. I absolutely hated the two together. Now, peanut butter was delicious in all its nutty goodness; chocolate was fantastic. And I loved them together.

A couple of days later, a show on National Public Radio talked about how a deviated septum ruins your sense of smell. Your sense of smell determines, largely, what food tastes like. Also, a deviated septum will cause chronic sinus infections, which also plagued me nearly every month.

God made it quite apparent that I HAD a deviated septum and that now I was healed!

A week after the healing, I pulled up to a neighbor's house to pick up my daughter. My eyes began itching and my nose started to run.

“Satan, take your hands off me,” I whispered intently. “I am healed of allergies by the mighty hand of God!”

Two seconds later, my nose was dry and my eyes were fine.

Over the next few years this issue arose a couple more times, but today I’m completely free of allergies, and at long last, my husband can buy me flowers on Mother’s Day!

The Audible Voice of God

In the early summer of 2001, I lay in bed, praying as I always did, “Dear God, I thank you so much for...”

A loud voice that sounded like it came from everywhere and nowhere interrupted my prayer and said, “I bless you.”

I didn’t look around, wondering what was going on. I sat up and said, “Lord!”

I don’t know how I knew it was the voice of the Shepherd; I just *knew* without a question it was the Lord Jesus.

Then He continued, “Miraculously.”

Wow, I thought, You are going to give me another miracle – maybe You will heal Tony this time.

Obviously I was missing the point. He added, “Financially.”

My thoughts stuttered to a stop. You, God, want to do something with money?

A scene flashed before my eyes, something I had never dreamed of or even remotely wanted:

I was standing in front of a line of microphones, some were labeled, NBC, ABC, FOX.

People were behind me but I do not remember who they were. Half a dozen cameras were poised, ready to record whatever I said.

The next morning I woke with a burning question on my mind: Is the notion that God

might bless someone financially actually supported by the Bible?

My relationship with my Heavenly Father was very new; I had not yet learned to seek answers from His Word. To complicate things further, my husband didn't want to attend church, except on Christmas. I didn't want to alienate Tony or create a wedge between us by going to church without him

I sought answers through the only avenue open to me; I turned on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN). I had been watching the evangelist Benny Hinn and Pastor Kenneth Copeland lately, but they were not on yet. I watched TBN until they were. Not only that day, but also all week every single minister on the network relayed the same message: God wants to bless you financially.

Through the next several months I learned of God's kindness and mercy. He wanted His people to be blessed.

God's Blessing

The Lottery or the Book?

I was convinced that God was going to bless me, miraculously, financially. The vision of the cameras could only mean one thing...surely I was going to win the lottery!

The lottery became a weekly ritual. I never missed a week. Every Wednesday I would buy a ticket. On Thursday I would check the numbers.

While I waited, I began to edit my book, "Prophecy of the Flame." I had finished writing this 183,000-word novel just before Ashley was born.

In the back of my mind, I wondered, could God's blessing be this book? But it had sorcery and romance in it. Could God still use it? I prayed often about God's will for this book. He showed me how it would be used to demonstrate a type of "Pilgrim's Progress" to this generation. I hesitate to say more and spoil the story.

After Sarah was born, I submitted to every publisher who would take a book without an agent. Every three months or so I would receive a "Not at this time..." form letter.

My husband encouraged me to follow my dream. He handed over his bonus to fund the editing and production of my manuscript. Over the next few years I worked with "Prophecy of the Flame," learning about self-publishing.

Unsure what to do, I kept on the only way I knew how. I bought a ticket every week. I read the Bible and I watched TBN waiting for God to do something.

Get Your House in Order

As I changed my six-month-old daughter's diaper, in the quietness of my heart, I heard, "Get your house in order." I *knew* the voice was from God.

I'm probably winning the lottery tomorrow. The news crews may be on their way, I thought, as I started working on the laundry.

While in the shower I heard it again, "Get your house in order." I looked around as I got dressed and saw my house was in a slight state of disarray. With a six-month-old baby, is it any wonder? I began to clean.

All week long I heard, "Get your house in order." Over and over again, I would hear the voice. I noticed the floor needed to be vacuumed; the blinds needed dusting, and so much more. Spring-cleaning had come to the Hardy home, just a bit late. To this day, my house has never been more spotless!

Finally, one morning, after I put the baby down for a nap, I reconciled the fact that I hadn't won the lottery the night before, even though my house was sparkling. What was the Holy Spirit trying to tell me? I wondered. Throughout the summer, I had been studying with the ministers on TBN. I had learned that God gives wisdom through His Word.

I brought out my Bible and prayed, "God grant me wisdom." The book opened to a random page that I read:

ANGELS BELIEVE IN YOU

Ephesians 5:21–25 Amplified Bible (AMP)

21 Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).

22 Wives, be subject (be submissive and adapt yourselves) to your own husbands as [a service] to the Lord.

23 For the husband is head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the church, Himself the Savior of [His] body.

24 As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her...

I had not yet shared God's revelation with Tony! Every night I planned who I would help with the financial blessing, never even thinking of my husband and how he would feel. I sighed, okay, Lord, if that is what you want, I'll do it, I thought, not looking forward to telling Tony about more God stuff.

It went about as well as can be expected. Tony said, "Oh, sweetheart, you have such a vivid imagination. After all, didn't you write an entire book before Ashley was born?"

That night, I prayed, "Lord, speak to Tony so he will see You know and care for him, so that he won't deny the blessing is from You when it comes."

I prayed the same prayer, night after night. After more than two months, my prayers were answered.

Tony Hears from God

The Significance of 313

One day in September of 2001, Tony came home very excited, “I’ve got something to tell you. It is really weird, but it doesn’t have anything to do with that God thing.”

Tony ate at Jack in the Box for lunch quite often because it was close to work (yes, I know, so very unhealthy...). Three times this week he received the same number on his receipt, 313.

Tony knows math – he’s an engineer. He said the odds of getting the same number twice in the same month was like being struck by lightning. Getting the numbers *three* times in the same week was like being struck by lightning nine times. “But it has nothing to do with that God thing,” he was quick to point out.

Mom, my spiritual advisor, explained: “Tony heard from God three times, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

I consulted some friends of ours. Cheryl said, “God is a Trinity, three, and God is all... one, and God is three – 313. But there’s more.... The numbers add up to seven – God’s number of perfection!” Seven is the number of completeness and perfection, both spiritual and physical: After seven days the world was complete and perfect. The seventh day is also the Lord’s Sabbath, set aside for the faithful to feel spiritually closer to Him.

Cheryl's husband Jeff said, "I don't see God in every tree and every flower like my wife, but if Tony is waiting to hear from God, what more does he want, a bolt of lightning?"

It was Jeff who finally convinced Tony – he'd take the numbers, ready to say that God was responsible for giving it to him.

God vs. “Survivor”

Have you seen “Survivor”? It was one of the first reality TV shows to become super popular? I was a huge fan – never missed an episode. This might not sound impressive today, but thirteen years ago there was no TIVO, no DVR. If you weren’t going to be there when the show aired, you had to set up the VCR to record a program at the exact time it was on.

One particular week I was really looking forward to the upcoming episode. Something big was going to happen and I planned on being right there, front and center.

“You aren’t going to watch it,” said the Holy Spirit.

“What do you mean I’m not going to see it?” I asked. “That’s just plain silly. I have DISH network. Heck, even if I didn’t, I would go to one of the bars in town to watch it.”

Thursday night, just before seven, my big-screen TV went black. No picture, no sound, nothing. It would take me half an hour to drive into town, by then the show would be mostly over. I completely missed “Survivor”!

I shrugged it off. It was just one night. They will recap next week. It will be like I didn’t miss anything.

I called a repairman. He examined the TV and said he needed to order a part. It would be Friday before he could fix the television. Every bar I tried had another agenda... most had sports events on. I missed “Survivor” again!

What? I thought. I AM in control of my own fate. Next week the TV will be fixed and I will

watch “Survivor” no matter what, even if I have to buy a TV!

The repairman fixed the TV on Friday. The next Thursday I waited eagerly for evening to come. At seven o’clock sharp, I flipped on the boob tube. Nothing. There was fuzz, but no picture.

My husband had been working outside. The satellite dish was on the barn with the cable running underground to the house. Somehow Tony forgot about this and cut the line clean in half.

“Okay, okay already. You are the God over all my life – including “Survivor!” I capitulated. To this day, that season of “Survivor” is the only one I’ve failed to watch.

Demons

The Name & the Blood

It was a year since God had spoken to me. Ashley was a year and a half when the gift of discernment became active once again.

I glanced at the mirror as I walked from my bedroom. A dark shape caught my eye. Thinking it was my husband I turned around. Tony wasn't there. The room was empty.

This happened a couple more times with other mirrors in the house before I mentioned it to Mom. "Dear, it seems you have a demon problem. Do you know about the Blood?"

"The what?" I asked.

Turns out Pops used to be in the deliverance ministry years ago, she said. A "deliverance ministry" is what they call people who take care of all types of demonic issues – deliverance as in setting free those who are held captive by demons.

Patiently, Mom explained the correlation between Passover and the cross: "God sent the Angel of Death to Egypt, allowing him to take the life of the firstborn of every household. Moses told the Israelites to take a lamb, without blemish, into their house for three days – to feed it and take care of it. At the end of the three days, they sacrificed the lamb, putting the blood on the doorposts. Death could not trespass the homes of the Israelites where the blood was placed. The Jewish nation still celebrates Passover on this day every year.

“Christ is often referred to as ‘The Lamb of God.’ He was perfect, without sin. Christ died as the perfect sacrifice – once and forever for all mankind. He died on Passover. Three days later He rose, having conquered death and the grave with the keys to Hell and power over the Earth.”

There are two parts to taking authority and stopping an attack of the enemy. After offering me the Biblical scripture that was solid ground to stand on, she continued with basic instructions on how to use them, “All you have to do is say, ‘In the name of Jesus, I cast you out,’ and demons will flee. You can cast them into the dry places, if you want. It can be difficult for them to return from there.”

“What’s a dry place?” I asked.

“Dry places are temporal dwelling places for demon spirits,” Mom explained, citing the book of Matthew.

Matthew 12:23

43 But when the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it roams through dry [arid] places in search of rest, but it does not find any.

With this information in hand, I began the spiritual warfare necessary to secure my home.

I glanced up from drying myself off after my shower. A dark shape hovered behind me. “In the name of Jesus, I cast you into the dry places.” Poof! It was gone.

My eyes fluttered open early one morning. A tall, cloaked figure stood beside my bed. “In Jesus’ name...” It disappeared before I could even get to the part where I cast it into dry places.

A sigh escaped me as I rolled over, going back to sleep. Casting out demons had become second nature; I dealt with half a dozen demons in a few

weeks. With the Name, they were easy to get rid of.

“How’s it going with the demon problem?” Mom asked in one of our daily conversations.

“Good. Now they are leaving before I can cast them into the dry places. I just wish they would stay gone for a bit longer,” I said.

“Have you been pleading the blood over your home each morning?”

“Plead the blood? What’s that?” I asked.

“Think of it like a lawyer before a judge,” Mom told me. “He is pleading his case, saying, because of this, this, and this, my client is not guilty. That is what you are doing. You are making your statement against every demon in the spirit realm. They can’t touch you because of the blood Jesus shed on the cross. Each day you should plead the blood over your home. This will keep Satan from interfering with you.”

Later I discovered how the story of Job also ties into this protection we have with the blood (I have paraphrased the relevant portion):

Satan was in Heaven and God said, “Hey, Satan, what have you been up to.”

Satan says, “Oh, I’ve been here and there, doing this and that.”

God replies, “Have you seen how much my servant Job loves me?”

“Of course he loves you!” Satan scoffs. “You protect all he has. I can’t touch his money, his kids, his health, or his work... even those he works with are protected!” Satan said this because Job was known for doing sacrifices often. After every feast he would perform a sacrifice for fear that one of his kids had sinned.

As Satan isn’t all-knowing like God, he didn’t realize it was fear that motivated Job, not faith. God is truth, so of course he corrected Satan.

“Can’t you see? He’s not protected at all. Do as you will, but don’t touch his body.”

The important lesson I learned from Job is this: as long as we accept the sacrifice of Christ and apply the protection of the blood in faith, not fear, Satan cannot touch us.

Thereafter I would offer this prayer when I woke each morning: “God, I thank you for the blood of Jesus which protects my health, my finances, my family, the work of my hands, and all my areas of influence.”

Demons steered clear of me for more than a year.

One side note:

It has become a pet peeve of mine, how Hollywood portrays demons as strong and mighty in movies such as “Constantine,” “The Exorcist,” and recently “The Mortal Instrument,” and “The Quiet Ones.” Christ actually took their might from them. Now *we* are the ones with the power, through Him.

I suppose they have to make it look difficult. If demons were portrayed accurately, it would be a five-minute movie. The hero would walk into the room and say, “In Jesus’ name, I cast you out.” The battle would be over.

God, My Marriage, and Intimacy

“Don’t do it,” the small, quiet voice of the Holy Spirit warned me.

Surely Tony will want to know about this, I thought.

No matter what the topic, how harmless it seemed, if the Holy Spirit warned me, Tony would always blow up and we would fight for hours, if not days.

Other times the Spirit would whisper, “Tell Tony what you learned today.”

Are you sure? I’d ask. He gets awful upset if I talk about God too much.

“Talk to Tony,” He would reassure me. Sure enough, Tony and I would have a great discussion, even if it were about God!

I learned to listen to the voice of the Spirit. But things still weren’t easy. Many days I would cry on my mom’s shoulder. I wanted to share my spiritual journey with the man I loved; the Holy Spirit said “no” far more often than “yes.”

Some nights the loneliness was too much to bear. I would go to the bathroom so Tony wouldn’t hear me cry. There was this one time...

We had been to a marriage counselor before Ashley was born, but we were still having issues. Tony and I had... let’s just call it a difference of opinion. He believed that porn was a natural and healthy way for a man to relieve stress.

From my point of view, it involved naked women, sex, and lying to cover it up. It felt to me like a violation of the marriage vow of monogamy.

When I would catch him “relieving his stress,” Tony’s way of dealing with the situation was to ignore me for weeks, sometimes months.

A year after I had Ashley, all the extra weight was gone. I was a young woman in my early thirties. Not beautiful, but pretty enough that I was used to men noticing me. It was emotional torture when the only man in my life refused to even look at me.

“I don’t have a problem,” Tony told me. “It is you that’s screwed up. Everyone does it.”

“That’s not fair! I told you the night we met that I had issues earlier in life, that I wouldn’t date a guy who watched porn,” I argued, “You went home and threw out your magazine collection you’d had since the ‘80s.”

“Now I’m choosing to do it again,” he said.

Tears streamed from my eyes, “So you are choosing to watch porn and lie to me about it, knowing how much it will hurt me when I find out? You want to hurt me?”

He was silent the rest of the way home. Tony climbed into bed, rolling over, putting his back to me. It had been almost two months since our fight. It had been two months since Tony even gave me a kiss or a hug. Forget about sex. He wasn’t interested in anything – and I do mean *anything*.

Obviously he still wasn’t over the last fight. I lay there, tears streaming down my face. My heart was crushed. The pain was so great it was hard to breathe.

“Lord, I am a woman, I need the affection of my husband,” my thoughts cried out.

A few seconds later, Tony rolled over toward me. It was one of the most passionate, most loving nights in our early years.

This showed me that God is there for us, in all things. Afterwards, I handed Tony over to God. If things got bad, I'd pray, "God, he's your son, do something!"

Fighting a Demonic Attachment

Anointing Your Home

Two years after God spoke to me, in the spring of 2003, I was placed on bed rest again for pre-term labor. Ashley was two years old. Unlike most kids, she didn't go through the terrible twos. She always did what I asked. Everyone thought she was the most delightful child. For this reason, my neighbors would help keep her entertained while I was laid up and unable to get around.

"Mom, did I have an imaginary friend when I was Ashley's age?" I asked.

"No, but your sister Cheryl did," she replied. "Does Ashley have a new friend?"

"She does," I informed her. "She calls him Lilo. It's really odd. She doesn't just play with her friend; she gets into fights with him. She will yell, 'No, Lilo! Stop it! No, Lilo. St-o-o-op!' over and over."

"Dear Heart, I think a demon is trying to attach itself to Ashley."

"What! How can a demon attach itself to someone?" I asked. Mom explained how there were three levels to demon problems:

- Depression or Attachment – when they are familiar to you.
- Oppression – where they interfere in your life.

- Possession – when they are inside a person and are able to take control of their body.

“Often demons try to form an attachment to young children by posing as someone familiar,” Mom told me. “When I was there last, wasn’t one of Ashley’s favorite shows ‘Lilo and Stitch?’”

“It was.”

“Since Ashley likes Lilo, she will be open to a demon who looks like her. Have you been pleading the blood lately?” Mom asked.

“I’ve been at the hospital to stop the labor so many times that I’ve been too tired to remember,” I admitted.

“Now that the demon is comfortable in your home, you have some work to do,” she informed me. “Anointing your windows and doors with oil will declare to the spirit world that your home is holy, and that they cannot trespass it.”

Scriptures in both Mark and James shows how anointed oil affects demons:

Mark 6:13 (AMP)

¹³ And they drove out many unclean spirits and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

James 5:14 (AMP)

¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? He should call in the church elders (the spiritual guides). And they should pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Lord’s name.

In Exodus the word of God shows how anointed oil can be applied to objects to declare them holy:

Exodus 40:9 (AMP)

⁹ You shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and shall consecrate it and all its furniture, and it shall be holy.

Jesus has made us kings and priests. To make oil holy, all we have to do is pray and ask God to anoint the oil in Jesus' name.

I poured a little bit of plain canola oil in the cap of the bottle. Mom and I prayed over the oil before I walked to each door and window saying, "I anoint this window in the name of Jesus, by the power of the blood and the authority of the word of God. Thank you, Father, that no evil may enter."

Ashley no longer fought with Lilo at the house after that day. However, she still argued with her in the car and in the grocery stores. I noticed she always talked with Lilo after returning from Amy's house. Although she was a few years older than Ashley, Amy often invited my daughter over to play.

Thank God for telephones! Mom was only a phone call away. "Ashley really enjoys playing with Amy, but I've noticed she always comes home with Lilo after being at their house," I told her.

"It is time to give the angels charge over her when she is away from you," she told me.

There are many verses that tell us about angels. The following are some that reveal their duty to us:

Psalms 91:9–11 (NIV)

⁹ If you say, "The LORD is my refuge,"
and you make the Most High your dwelling,
¹⁰ no harm will overtake you,
no disaster will come near your tent.

- ¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;
¹² they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

Hebrews 1:14

- ¹⁴ Are not the angels all ministering spirits (servants) sent
out in the service [of God for the assistance] of those who
are to inherit salvation?

**The Word also shows us that through Jesus
we can appeal as He did for God to direct his
angels:**

Matthew 26:53

- ⁵³ Do you suppose that I cannot appeal to My Father, and
He will immediately provide me with more than twelve
legions [more than 80,000] of angels?

Colossians 2:9–10 (AMP)

- ⁹ For in Him the whole fullness of Deity (the Godhead)
continues to dwell in bodily form [giving complete
expression of the divine nature].
¹⁰ And you are in Him, made full *and* having come to
fullness of life [in Christ you too are filled with the
Godhead—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and reach full
spiritual stature]. And He is the Head of all rule and
authority [of every angelic principality and power].

1 Peter 3:22 (AMP)

- ²² [And He] has now entered into heaven and is at the right
hand of God, with [all] angels and authorities and powers
made subservient to Him.

**When you add to these scriptures what Jesus
told his disciples, our authority is obvious:**

John 14: 12–14 (NIV)

ANGELS BELIEVE IN YOU

¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

John 16: 24–27 (AMP)

²⁴ Up to this time you have not asked a [single] thing in My Name [as presenting all that I AM]; but now ask *and* keep on asking and you will receive, so that your joy (gladness, delight) may be full *and* complete.

²⁵ I have told you these things in parables (veiled language, allegories, dark sayings); the hour is now coming when I shall no longer speak to you in figures of speech, but I shall tell you about the Father in plain words *and* openly (without reserve).

²⁶ At that time you will ask (pray) in My Name; and I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf [for it will be unnecessary].

²⁷ For the Father Himself [tenderly] loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came out from the Father.

Through Jesus, we can ask God to command his angels concerning us. Armed with this wisdom, I prayed over Ashley every morning:

“Dear God, I thank You for Your word which is always accurate and true. I ask that You send your angels to stand guard over Ashley, to guard her and protect her in mind, body, and spirit. I thank You that no evil can come near her in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

We never heard from Lilo again.

A few months later, I discovered why Lilo came from Amy’s house:

Jeremy was Amy’s older brother. He wasn’t like most teenage boys; Jeremy was gentle. He’d helped raise his two younger sisters. Sometimes Jeremy would babysit for us. One afternoon as I

was driving him home, we got on the topic of dreams.

"I've been having this disturbing dream, over and over again," he confessed. "There is this dark shadow which follows me around. It will trip me and I will break my arm. It closes doors and I'll be trapped. It causes arguments and problems with my friends and family. The worst part is that I can't wake up from the dream. I struggle and struggle to be free. Finally, in a panic, I call out 'Jesus, help me' and I wake up."

"It sounds like a demon problem," I tell him. "Are you a Christian?"

When he nods, I relay the information I got from Mom, informing him of the power available through the Name and the Blood.

Jeremy smiles, "That's it? That's all I have to do to be free?"

"I would recommend reading the scriptures, so you see the words for yourself, but yes. That's it."

It was a good long while before demons were bold enough to trouble me again. It was a good thing, too. I delivered Sarah Jane, my youngest daughter into the world in September of that year. With a newborn and a two-year-old, my plate was full.

Bigger can be Better!

Every time I played the Powerball, the Holy Spirit would whisper, “No, bigger.”

At first this was difficult for me. Having too much money seemed like a hassle. If I had enough to take care of my family and myself that would perfect.

It took some prayer and some one-on-one time with the Lord to realize that the more money I had, the more people I could help. “Don’t limit the Lord.”

I waited to purchase a ticket until it became a record-breaking jackpot by the end of 2003. Month after month, I watched the lottery wondering how big the Lord wanted it to be. Month after month I heard, “bigger.”

Despite the tutoring I received in listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit, I still “missed it” when He tried to save me from one of the most painful experiences of my life.

A Warning from the Holy Spirit

What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

Between my experience surrounding “Survivor” and the work I did on my marriage, you would think I was pretty good at listening to the Holy Spirit. Listening, perhaps, however following through is not always as easy.

While on bed rest with my second child, I had watched a reality show series called “The Swan.” People were nominated for complete makeover transformations. Teeth were reconstructed or whitened, noses were fixed, eyebrows were sculpted, and a workout routine was devised. Often, these makeovers included breast augmentation.

Tony came in during one of the shows. “You know,” I remarked, “that doesn’t look too bad. If we had enough money, I might like to get bigger boobs someday.”

In 2005 Tony got a sizable bonus from work. “Look, we have enough money to get your boobs done,” he proclaimed.

What I had meant was that when God blessed us and I could have a nanny to take care of the kids and a housekeeper to help while I recovered, then I would be willing. I tried to get out of the situation, “Your bonus is only a few thousand dollars. I’m sure it costs more than that!”

Tony checked with a guy at work whose wife had the procedure. Rick recommended his doctor in Salt Lake City. He did the best work and was half the price of the local doctors. Even with the hotel bill, the surgery was well within our range.

At this point we had been married ten years. If Tony wanted new toys, at least he wanted them on me. The appointment was set and a hotel room booked.

The doctor went over the procedure then gave us a moment alone before the surgery. Tony asked, "You're okay with doing this, right?"

"Don't do it," said the small voice of the Spirit.

"I'll be fine. I'm not afraid of going under. If I wake up in Heaven all the better," I reasoned.

"Don't do it," He persisted.

Tony would have a fit if I made us go home after coming all this way. He would never forgive me.

"Happy Anniversary, Honey," I said, smiling at my husband.

Before the surgery I had consulted many women who had breast augmentation. All of them said that I was going to love the results. Many said their only regret was not going a little bigger. Not one of them mentioned the pain and discomfort of the recovery period.

The truth about my breast augmentation:

- The implants were inserted under the pectoral muscles for a more realistic look and feel. Also, they wouldn't sag over time – I will forever have 19-year-old looking boobs.
- When I lay down at night, I could feel the implants tearing the newly healed muscles. Pillows surrounded me as I slept, sitting up

with my arms elevated so that the incision wouldn't hurt. I slept like this for a month.

- Painkillers were a necessity for at least three weeks. Due to the amount of Percocets I had to take to rest comfortably, my body became intolerant to the prescription narcotic and my pain medication options are now limited.
- Upper body strength was never my strong suit. The pectoral muscles were so weakened that it took more than six months before I could close the hatch on my SUV.

If I hadn't done this for my husband, I would have been pissed at every woman I had talked to about breast augmentation. Not one had warned me about the weeks of painful recovery. Instead, they said how much I would love the results. But beauty was not worth that amount of pain. For my husband, and for my marriage, it may have been, if what I experienced would be the sum total of the procedure's side effects. However, this discomfort wasn't what the Holy Spirit had been warning me about...

Demonic Attack

Tony always wanted a Rottweiler. Research on the web told us German Rottweilers were somewhat smaller, but more temperamental than American Rotties. Before I left to visit my mom for a month, I picked out a pup and gave it to Tony for his birthday.

We named her Yin – intending on naming the male we hoped to get Yang. She slept beside Tony on the floor in a box, and later on a pillow. Yin had her own couch – a little loveseat – and her own blanket.

Yin was the sweetest dog. When Ashley was a year old, I would block both of them in the dining room using the chairs so I could cook dinner. I would tell Yin, “Sit...Stay.” She would sigh and lay down. Ashley would crawl all over her.

Yin’s big brown eyes pleaded with me, “Do I have to?”

“Stay,” I would reaffirm. She put her head down and sighed again. When I came back into the room, Ashley was teething on her ear. Yin patiently endured.

When Yin was eight years old, Tony was asked to go to Washington, D.C., for two years. We prepared to drive our pop-up tent from Boise to the East Coast. Taking two full-sized Rottweilers with us, Yin and Gretta her daughter, would be a fun, five-day adventure, crossing most of the United States of America.

Yin had not been getting around well as of late. We had her on glucosamine, but it didn’t

seem to be helping. For the first time in her life, Yin growled at the kids! I brought her in for a checkup with our vet before the big move.

X-rays showed an old injury to her hips had gotten dramatically worse. It wasn't dysplasia. A neighbor had hit her with a bat when she had chased their chicken off our driveway back to their coop.

The vet said surgery might help, but there was a chance it wouldn't. Also, there was no time for Yin to recover before the trip. We were told it would be a great kindness to end her life now: the pain of the journey would be unbearable and East Coast weather would only further antagonize the injury. Tony had already accepted the temporary assignment. There was no way to delay the move and not endanger Tony's job.

Almost every year we had taken Yin to Grandma Kemp's place for the Fourth of July Rodeo. This would be her last trip to Grangeville, Idaho. We were going to lay her to rest in the doggie graveyard that took up a corner of the property. Tony wanted Yin there, with the rest of the family.

We left the kids with a friend and traveled north to Grangeville. It was early enough that the town's vet was still in the office. Tony put Yin's favorite blanket on top of the cold metal table, then lifted her up. He hugged her neck, putting his face close to her ear as the vet gave the injection. Tony whispered soothingly to her until she breathed her last breath.

Wrapped in her blanket, we placed Yin in the grave. Tears were streaming down Tony's face. It was the first time I had ever seen him cry. The tears became sobs as we covered our beloved Yin with the damp dark earth.

Later that night, Tony snored softly beside me in the upstairs room at Grandma's cabin. I looked up at the ceiling. A giant bat swooped down towards me. My heart racing, I dove under the covers, pulling them over my head.

Wait a minute. There's no such thing as giant bats, I thought. It's nothing but a stupid demon!

"In the name of Jesus, I cast you out of this house," I whispered fiercely, trying not to wake my husband. "I plead the Blood over this house."

It had been such an emotional day I had forgotten to take care of business when we came in. Knowing the house was now secure I rolled over and went to sleep.

The Holy Spirit's Warning

The Danger I Couldn't See

The movers the company hired had delivered our boxes to each room in the rented townhouse in Virginia, not far from Washington, D.C. It was still quite a bit of work unpacking and setting everything in its place.

Sarah Jane, now almost three, crawled on top of me to snuggle as I rested on the couch. Yin's daughter Gretta trotted up to me for some affection. I wrapped my right arm under her neck, reaching around to pat her back.

With a sigh, Gretta decided to lie down. She was close enough to the couch that I couldn't get my arm free. I was pinned in place by the weight of Sarah Jane.

"Aaah!" I screamed, as fiery pain tore through my inflamed shoulder.

Even a month later, my shoulder still hurt every time I used it. It ached horribly with every approaching storm front. A CT scan would show a tear in the rotator cuff, and I discovered that the pectoral muscles involved in the breast augmentation are the same muscles that run through the rotator cuff. The Holy Spirit had tried to warn me about this. The plastic surgeon had mentioned that my chest muscles would be weakened, but omitted the fact that the procedure might lead to a painful tear or even a frozen shoulder.

"The physical therapy you'll need following rotator cuff surgery is considered to be among the most painful of any rehabilitation therapy," the

orthopedic specialist would later say.

Unfortunately, he didn't tell me this until *after* I went under the knife. Otherwise I might have declined surgery to repair the torn muscle.

After the surgery, my right arm had very little movement from the elbow to the shoulder. Over a six-month period, the physical therapist and I would gradually coax my arm into normal movement, inch by painful inch. Many days I would lay on the couch, unwilling to move, knowing the pain I would feel if I did.

Guilt condemned me: If I had listened to the Holy Spirit, none of this would have happened. I sought God's help with a repentant heart, asking Him to heal my shoulder, as He had healed my deviated septum and allergies without my even asking.

I continued with the physical therapy twice/three times a week. As I knelt before the Lord, patiently waiting on an answer, the small quiet voice of the Spirit said, "I will heal you when the blessing is manifest in the Earth."

That was good enough for me. It seemed that God wanted the healing of my shoulder to coincide with the blessing. Perhaps this way it would be harder for Tony to deny that it was a genuine miracle and not just a coincidence. I put the matter to rest, dismissing it from my mind. I never brought it to the Lord again.

God's Blessing

Not Winning the Lottery

There is a saying, “Keep your eyes on the prize.” Sometimes it is difficult to know what the true prize is.

I was convinced from Day One that God was going to cause me to win the lottery. I plotted and planned what I would do with the windfall when God blessed me.

My eyes had begun to wander and my thoughts were centered, not on God, but on God's blessing. The real prize was, and still is, the gift of going before the Creator of all we know, the holder of all wisdom, the mighty God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the name of His Son.

Somewhere along the way I forgot that. I got so wrapped up in what I was going to be able to do with all that cash that I stopped seeking what God wanted me to do with it.

In the spring of 2007, during the months I was undergoing physical therapy for the torn rotator cuff, I sought a healing for the injury. This was six years, close to seven years, after God spoke to me.

I spent many hours praying and waiting in silence to hear from God. I finally woke up and turned back to Him. I would love to tell you how or when the change occurred, but I cannot.

Was it the teachings I watched on TV? Did it come from reading my Bible? I can't really say. Somewhere along the way my heart realized

something was missing. Something wasn't right in my life.

I searched for answers every way I knew how. Kenneth Copeland was one of my favorite TBN ministers to watch. I thought of him as a modern day Paul. His knowledge of the word of God was deep, yet he explained it in simple, easy-to-understand terms.

Most importantly, Pastor Copeland relied on God to supply all his needs. He didn't ask for money all the time. On Fridays he would say, "God has instructed me to allow you to sow seed into this ministry. Today is offering day." Then Pastor Copeland would pray over the incoming offerings.

One of Copeland's episodes I watched may have been the only thing that helped to keep me from throwing in the towel, right then and there. On his half-hour broadcast, Ken told a story:

One day I asked Jesus, "Lord, why have You never appeared to me, or even spoken audibly to me? You spoke to Benny Hinn and You visited Oral Roberts when he was in the hospital. It seems most of the people doing great things for You have been visited by You personally. Have I done something wrong?"

Ken said that the quiet voice of the Holy Spirit told him, "God gives what is needful. When the path is going to be difficult and long, He comes so that they will have the faith necessary for the difficulty of the road ahead."

The path has been long indeed. Who knew how much longer it would be? But then, how can I not believe what I heard? How can I not believe when I've seen so much?

Kenneth Copeland also taught me that while babies and young children are hand fed, as you

grow you must learn to feed yourself. What's more, when you come of age, you must go and search for your own food.

How do you know you are finding what God wants you to have? How do you know you are not being misled? A peace settles in your being and you *know*. The following are the passages that brought God's peace to my heart:

1 Chronicles 29:11–13 (NIV)

¹¹ Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power
and the glory and the majesty and the splendor,
for everything in heaven and earth is yours.

Yours, LORD, is the kingdom;
you are exalted as head over all.

¹² Wealth and honor come from you;
you are the ruler of all things.

In your hands are strength and power
to exalt and give strength to all.

¹³ Now, our God, we give you thanks,
and praise your glorious name.

Proverbs 13:22 (NIV)

²² A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's
children,

but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.

Ecclesiastes 2:26 (NIV)

²⁶ To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom,
knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the
task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to
the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a
chasing after the wind.

And this brought tears of joy...

Isaiah 45:3 (AMP)

³ And I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places that you may know that it is I, the Lord, the God of Israel, Who calls you by your name.

God wanted Tony to know that He knows his name!

I got down on my knees and said, “God, take it all. I want You. Only You. You said You are going to bless me, then You bless me. If You need my help then let me know. Have someone tell me to buy a ticket if that is what you want. I will be looking at You, not the lottery.”

It took months to convince my husband to stop buying tickets, but we finally went before the Lord together and stopped playing the Powerball. We waited upon the Lord.

My Heavenly Language

Praying in the Spirit – Speaking in Tongues

When we first moved to the East Coast, I really wanted to find a church to attend. Compared to Boise, Idaho, the area was quite intimidating. I didn't have a clue where to even begin.

A few weeks after our arrival, we took the kids to the park down the street. Ashley and Sarah began playing with another child while Tony and I struck up a conversation with her father.

"Have you found a church yet?" he asked, out of the blue.

"Not yet." Tony shrugged.

"We go to Living Faith. It's not far from here," I said. "They have great programs for the kids."

Only ten minutes from our house, it was Spirit-led and Spirit-filled. Without the distractions of friends and family, we began attending once every few months as a family. I went to the women's Bible study on Wednesdays.

The pastor would occasionally ask the congregation to pray in the Spirit. Many people confuse this with speaking in tongues. The two are quite different.

Praying in the Spirit is praying in 'an unknown tongue.' Some people refer to this as "The Heavenly Language." It is mentioned in several places:

Ephesians 6:18 (AMP)

ANGELS BELIEVE IN YOU

18 Pray at all times (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty.

Jude 1:20–21 (NIV)

20 But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,
21 keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Mark 16:16 (NIV)

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.
17 And these signs shall accompany them that believe: in my name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues;
18 they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

The Book of Acts also mentions praying in the Spirit in Chapter 10:44–46 and Chapter 19:3–6. The gift of tongues, much different from the Heavenly Language (praying in the Spirit), is a spiritual gift mentioned here:

1 Corinthians 12:7–10 (AMP)

7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the [Holy] Spirit [the evidence, the spiritual illumination of the Spirit] for good and profit.
8 To one is given in and through the [Holy] Spirit [the power to speak] a message of wisdom, and to another [the power to express] a word of knowledge and understanding according to the same [Holy] Spirit;
9 To another [wonder-working] faith by the same [Holy] Spirit, to another the extraordinary powers of healing by the one Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles, to another prophetic insight (the gift of interpreting the divine will and purpose); to another the ability to discern and distinguish between [the utterances of true] spirits [and false ones], to another various kinds of [unknown] tongues, to another the ability to interpret [such] tongues.

If you research the book of Corinthians you will see that the church was having an issue of pride. The members were used to demonstrating their holiness by outward acts. They began praying in the Spirit during meetings to get attention and show how holy they were. Later in Corinthians, Paul explains how the gift of the Spirit should be used. I encourage you to read the entire passage of 1 Corinthians 14 to understand the fullness of Paul's instruction. The most essential portions are these:

1 Corinthians 14: 1–28 (AMP)

14 Eagerly pursue and seek to acquire [this] love [make it your aim, your great quest]; and earnestly desire and cultivate the spiritual endowments (gifts), especially that you may prophesy (interpret the divine will and purpose in inspired preaching and teaching).

2 For one who speaks in an [unknown] tongue speaks not to men but to God, for no one understands or catches his meaning, because in the [Holy] Spirit he utters secret truths and hidden things [not obvious to the understanding].

1 Corinthians 14: 13–28 (AMP)

19 Nevertheless, in public worship, I would rather say five words with my understanding and intelligently in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a [strange] tongue (language).

The gift of tongues is not praying in the Spirit. When you pray in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit prays for you:

Romans 8:26–27

26 So too the [Holy] Spirit comes to our aid and bears us up in our weakness; for we do not know what prayer to offer nor how to offer it worthily as we ought, but the Spirit Himself goes to meet our supplication and pleads in our behalf with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance.

27 And He Who searches the hearts of men knows what is in the mind of the [Holy] Spirit [what His intent is], because the Spirit intercedes and pleads [before God] in behalf of the saints according to and in harmony with God's will.

I wanted desperately to give my prayers over to the Holy Spirit. He would know what to say.

“I may not be the smartest guy in the room, but I know where to go to get answers,” Tony was fond of saying. His attitude rubbed off on me. I didn’t know much about the Heavenly language or how to get it, but I knew someone who did.

Kenneth Copeland organized the Southwest Believers’ Convention. It took place every summer in Fort Worth, Texas. This was only half a day’s drive from Mom’s place. She volunteered to watch the kids so I could volunteer at the convention.

It turned out that a woman named Belinda who worshipped at Mom’s church wanted to go to the convention as well. If you have ever driven in Texas, you know what a maze of highways and confusing road signage it is. I thought myself very fortunate that Belinda, a native to the area, would drive us from Mom’s to the convention.

She and I also shared a hotel room to save a few bucks. We arrived in time to sign up as volunteers. I offered to be an usher because even

though surgery had taken place ten months earlier, my right arm still bothered me quite a bit. Urged by the Spirit, I approached a bearded guy in leather chaps who looked like he either rode in on a horse or a Harley.

Rusty was much friendlier than he looked, though. He was one of the head ushers. "Come see me when you report in tomorrow. I will make sure you get assigned to the floor; it is the closest area to the stage," he told me.

The next week was a beautiful time of worship and learning. On Friday, Kenneth Copeland asked for people to come forward if they wanted to receive the Heavenly language. After the pastor prayed for us, we were sent to a room to talk with individual advisors about this gift.

A sweet young woman prayed for me. When she opened her eyes she asked, "Is it possible that you already have your Heavenly language?"

"When I was a teenager," I explained, "we went to a Pentecostal church one summer. They asked if I wanted the gift of tongues. They had me raise my hands while we prayed. We prayed so long that they had to hold my arms up. Finally, one of them said, 'There, she's got it!' But I never used it nor did I even know how."

"When you are quiet before the Lord, do you sometimes hear a word or two that doesn't make any sense?" she probed.

I thought about it a minute then said, "I think so. I hear three sounds quite often: 'Ash, sha, ba.' Are those words?"

She squeezed my hands, "Yes! Then next time you're alone, spend some time praying then ask the Holy Spirit to help free your tongue. Praying in the Spirit is kind of like a rolling stone. Once you get your tongue started, the Holy Spirit will take over. Repeat the words God gave you over and over until you begin praying in the Spirit."

I agreed to give it a try, slightly disappointed that I didn't get to pray in the Spirit right away.

It was more than a week later before I had a quiet moment at home. On my knees, with hands folded, I prayed, as I was accustomed. After I had said my peace I asked the Holy Spirit to loosen my tongue.

I have to say, I felt like a bloomin' idiot sitting there saying, "Ash, sha, ba, ash, sha, ba," over and over again.

Minutes ticked by. "Ash, sha, ba, ash, sha, ba, ash, sha, ba." With a surprising suddenness, words that I didn't even know existed starting flowing out. "Ash, sha, ba callaha buduna..." It was a very... unusual.... experience to have words, which never entered my mind come from my mouth. This went on for a good half an hour.

A couple of years later my sister told me about an online "Dateline" episode, "Speaking in Tongues, the Purest Form of Prayer or Gibberish?" A doctor compared brain scans of praying Buddhist monks and Franciscan nuns with the brain scans of people who were praying in the Spirit. The study showed that the frontal lobe of those praying in the Spirit was mostly dormant while others who were praying in a more traditional way showed normal activity in the frontal lobe. Even those who uttered gibberish showed activity in their frontal lobe. This means that when people were "praying in the Spirit" it wasn't coming from their brain.

I encourage you to watch the "Dateline" episode on YouTube and judge for yourself.

A Demonic Ride

Belinda had volunteered to work at the convention tables where books and CDs were sold: Each of the five speakers had their own table where their merchandise was available. With Belinda busy for most of the event, we didn't get to sit together the entire week.

Preparing for the drive home, she was quite irritable. The week had been so wonderfully saturated in the presence of God, how could she be upset, I wondered?

We started off for home after lunch. Belinda turned off the radio half an hour into the drive as we entered another highway. "They'll find us," she said. "They can hear us if the radio is on."

"Who will find us? I asked."

"THEM!" Her voice rose. "Didn't you see them? They were outside the convention, waiting for me."

"Who was?" I asked, still lost.

"Never mind! We can't talk about them. They'll hear us." She gripped the steering wheel.

"How about one of the CDs we bought." I searched through a bag. "Can they hear us if the radio is off while we play a CD or a cassette tape? Maybe we can listen to some worship music."

"Fine!" Belinda shouted, holding onto the steering wheel with one hand while rummaging through a stack of tapes she kept on the back seat with the other. I sighed with relief as she found one she liked and slammed the tape into the deck.

“Have it your way,” she said as she cranked the music loud enough to vibrate the windows.

Belinda nailed the gas pedal. The little car shook as the needle passed ninety miles an hour. She checked the rear view mirror over and over again.

“Lord, I thank you for sending your angels to stand guard over me, to protect me in mind, body and spirit,” At least at this speed we will be home sooner rather than later, I thought. Reaching over slowly, I eased the volume down a notch.

Music continued to blare as we barreled down the highway. I hoped a cop would stop us – a ticket would be a small price to pay to get the speed under control. An hour passed. Belinda took an exit to a minor highway. The harrowing speed was a bit more frightening on a two-lane highway that twisted and turned up and over hills.

“Didn’t we stay on the big highways all the way to the convention?” I asked.

“They’ll find us,” Belinda insisted. “They are getting closer. I can hear them. Can’t you?”

This was before the days of GPS – getting lost in northeastern Texas is as easy as breathing if you don’t know the area. Initially, I was glad to have a native driving. Now, not so much.

It was more than an hour before Belinda pulled into a gas station. She went in to use the restroom and get something to drink. Now that the music was off, I pulled out my cell phone.

“Dear Heart,” Mom said as she answered the phone, “How far out are you?”

“I’m not sure,” I said. “Belinda got off the highway somewhere north of Dallas. She has been going in all kinds of directions. I’m not sure where we are.” In short, concise sentences, I explained the situation. “I thought Belinda was a Christian? Isn’t it impossible for a Christian to be possessed?”

"They can still be oppressed, which is what this sounds like. You have to take control of this situation. I see only two choices: You can get out and wait for me where you are; I will come get you," she said, as Belinda got back into the car and pulled out of the parking lot.

"Mom, Belinda's back." I said, clueing her in. "We are heading out again. Belinda, which road are we on?" She glared at me. "Mom, I'm not sure what road we are on."

"Listen to me," Mom said calmly, "I know you are used to respecting your elders, but you will have to take authority over this situation. Either read the road signs to me and let Belinda know you expect to be taken by the shortest route back here to my house, or you can tell her you have to pee, and get her to pull over again. I will come get you where ever you are."

"Belinda," I said firmly. "My kids are waiting for me to tuck them in. You need to take me by the shortest route back to Mom's."

"Fine!" She practically spit out the word.

"Mom, there's a sign with numbers, 697. Is that the name of a road?" I asked.

"Are you going east or west?"

"I don't have a clue," I replied. "Now we are coming up to a bigger highway – looks like 69. Belinda turned north."

"You should stay on that highway until you hit 82..." I repeated the directions to Belinda, letting her know that I knew where we should be going.

It was almost midnight when we got back. Belinda threw my stuff out of the car and took off. She never returned to Mom's church and we haven't heard from her since.

When I get to Heaven, I will have to thank my guardian angel. Watching over me is a full-time job.

My Second Healing

The Blessing is Manifest

“Honey, every year you go hunting for a week. It is a vacation for you to get away,” I said one evening. “Since we have that bonus for relocating to the East Coast, I would like a vacation for myself.”

“Where would you go?” he asked.

“I want to walk where Jesus walked. I want to go on a Holy Land tour,” I told him.

“By yourself?”

“Well, I know you probably wouldn’t want to come with me.” He nodded in agreement. “Benny Hinn, a pastor I watch on TBN, takes a group every year. I could go with them.”

“If that’s what you want,” he agreed.

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

This evening we went to a meeting with Benny Hinn. The pastor ministered about God constantly pruning our lives. He removes, or wants us to remove, certain things in our lives so we can continue to grow closer to Him. What God wants to remove from one person’s life may be different than what he wants to remove from another’s. Many times it is people whom God removes from our lives. This is because when God blesses a person, it can overflow to everyone connected to that person.

Next, Benny led us in praise and worship and urged us to pray in the Spirit over and over again

until the power of the Lord fell on the gathering. It felt as if the heavens opened up and a gentle rain descended upon me and then flowed around me.

As is my habit, I put forth my life once more. I prayed, "Lord, if 'Prophecy of the Flame' is not meant to be a book, as I believe it is, then I give it unto You. Remove it from my life. But Lord, I have felt You lead me in this so many times, and You must speak loudly so I will know it is You and it is Your will. You may even have to have Benny himself address me. I wait upon Your answer."

I did not do this lightly. I was prepared, and I told the Lord so, to destroy all 500 books I had just ordered, as well as every scrap of info dealing with this work, to which I had devoted seven years of my life.

When the anointing fell, I began to pray in the heavenly language. Though I know not what I prayed, in my heart and mind I prayed for Joyce, a new friend who had never seen Benny Hinn. She was afraid of large crowds.

I sat down and put my head in my hands and prayed... It was my heart's desire that Joyce experience the hand of the Lord as I had in prior events with Benny Hinn. As I prayed, I also half-listened to Benny.

He said, "Someone with a shoulder injury is being healed."

I brushed it off. "I've already had surgery and therapy."

Benny continued, "A minor injury in the right shoulder."

It felt like a hot poker running from my shoulder to my elbow. I jumped out of my seat.

"That is me, I'm healed!" Later I discovered that everyone seated around me was healed as well. One guy who was deaf in one ear could now hear.

I thought about sitting back down, but a small, quiet voice said, "Go out there and testify."

I thought: I've been to other conventions with my mom. She didn't make it up on stage when her knees were healed. I'll never get up there.

The voice grew stronger, "Go out there and testify."

"It's been a long day," I reasoned.

"GO!" the voice insisted.

I started walking before I knew what I was doing. A man grabbed my arm not long after I got into the isle and asked, "What happened?" As I started telling him, he began dragging me toward the stage. The next thing I knew I was first in line to testify on stage.

First! I looked at the girl behind me. I asked her what God had done. "He healed me of cancer." Quite relieved, I stepped back and let her go before me.

I felt the power of the Spirit as pliable as a rush of fog come directly at me as Benny released the anointing on her. It was so powerful that I had to brace myself so I wouldn't fall as it rushed past me. Part of me thought: it could have been you. That was tremendous power and you missed it.

I rebuked the thought because I am so very glad someone who needed to be freed from cancer received so much of the Spirit's gift.

To this day, I'm not really sure what I said when I went on stage. I do remember, however, the peace and the excitement that raced through me as if I could jump a mile high. When I went back to my seat, I was overwhelmed by God's goodness. He had healed me in His land, on the shores of Galilee.

The thought of it still brings tears to my eyes when I think about it.

As I sat down, a sense of stillness and peace came upon me. A whispering, albeit strong, voice said, “I told you I would heal you when my blessing has manifest in this world.”

There was no way for me to know that my first book had been printed on that day. It was supposed to be printed on the Friday before I left, but the printer ran out of ink. Then on Monday they were having some other type of technical problem. Russ, my printer, had said he’d keep us informed, but we hadn’t heard a thing.

Tony received the first self-published copy of “Prophecy of the Flame” the next morning via overnight express mail. That meant the first book had been printed the day before; the same day I was healed.

At the time it didn’t register what day this occurred: I was in Israel on an *aliya* (Hebrew for rising up, as in a spiritual pilgrimage to Jerusalem). I looked on a calendar when I got home: November 7, 2007 – 7 years after God spoke.

God gave Tony numbers 313 – these numbers add up to seven and God gave them three times 7 – 7 – 7: November **7** – 200**7** – **7** years after God spoke.

Demons in the Holy Land

Almost Missed It

Traveling with the tour group was an experience I will never forget. For seven days a dedicated bus rode fifty of us to holy sites that began in Galilee and continued to Jerusalem.

Our Jewish tour guide was very knowledgeable about the New Testament. She never said, "This is where..." But instead would say, "We *think* this is where such-and-such happened based on ..."

We were fortunate to have a woman who could sing gospel as sweetly as any professional. This made it fun to worship the Lord as we traveled. The driver gave us time to investigate each site. Sometimes we would pray together; sometimes we would split up and go our own separate way.

There was a young woman in the group named Marni who was from some foreign country and who caught my attention. When we would worship and pray at different sites, Marni would begin to laugh, sort of. While holding her hands up in praise, she would breathe out sharply through her mouth repeating "heee, heee, heee," over and over. Two women in their mid-fifties would flock to her, petting her and mumbling over her. Many times she would collapse, lying on the ground, still making the noise.

When this happened, the Holy Spirit rose up in me, "This is wrong!" He would say, or "It's not right!" It took three urgings of the Spirit for me to make a move.

The next time we got on the bus I sat next to the singer. "I don't suppose you know anything about demon possession?" I asked her.

On the way to our next location several of us in the group discussed Marni and her condition. Each had noticed the predicament, but only one gentleman was willing to take action.

Max was a retired police officer who had cast demons out of people before. He was a real sweetheart. We discussed Marni. Max wasn't sure what the problem was, but he was willing to accompany me so I could investigate the situation further – he didn't want me going alone.

By this time we had finally reached Jerusalem. Max and I walked the few blocks to the hotel where Marni was staying. We prayed together then began to search. She was in the dining hall. "Hi, I'm Lynn and this is Max. Don't we ride the same bus?"

"I think we do," replied the bleached blonde twenty-something year old. "I'm Marni."

"Marni, if you aren't busy, could we perhaps talk for a bit?" I asked.

The three of us found a cozy spot in the lobby with a couch and two chairs. "You have an interesting way of worshiping," I began.

"It is the way it is done in my home church," she replied.

"Have you taken the Lord Jesus as your savior?" I asked.

"Yes, several years ago."

"And have you received the Holy Spirit?"

"Yes."

"May I inquire as to how it happened?"

"The pastor of my church prayed for me. The Holy Spirit come inside," she struggled for words, speaking in slightly broken English, motioning with a circular motion on her chest. "When I pray,

it... builds, and I laugh, like all others do in my church."

"It sounds very odd to our ears..." I hedged toward the topic.

"It is normal in my town," she shrugged.

Urged by the Spirit, I laid it all on the table.

"The reason we came is because we are concerned that demons might be involved."

Her eyes widened. "Are they?"

I looked to Max, "So far, I don't see any signs."

"Me either," I agreed. "But they can hide."

Marni, do you mind if I ask you a few questions?"

"Not at all. I would like to know if a bad spirit is here."

"Have you ever done drugs?"

"No."

"Are you a product of rape?" I had to explain the words a bit. Much to her credit, she was not offended. Marni just shook her head. "Have you ever been raped?" Again, she said no.

I turned to Max: "Those are the only ways I know of to become possessed without inviting a demon inside." He agreed.

"Marni, would you pray with us?" I asked. She agreed and we joined hands.

"Dear God, we lift Marni up before you. We ask that you grant us wisdom. Help us help your child in Jesus' name. Amen."

I took a few minutes, waited for the guiding of the Spirit. Marni began to cry. "I have felt people looking at me more and more each day. Is this why? No one but those two awful women will sit with me on the bus. I don't wish to talk to them."

"Those women aren't with you?" I asked.

"No. And when I pray," Marni said, "They disturb the power of the Spirit."

In my mind, I reviewed the scenes where the Holy Spirit gave his warning. The women were

there, each time. It wasn't Marni, it was them! If it was a demon, they shouldn't be touching and petting her. They are interfering with the Holy Spirit's work!

"Marni, I am so very sorry. I feel I owe you an apology. The Holy Spirit warned me that something was wrong with the situation. Because the way you express your worship, I assumed the thing that was wrong was you, that you had a demon."

She wiped her eyes, "Do not worry. This is not the first time my worship has been misunderstood. I volunteered at Benny's crusade in Europe. His people questioned me as you have. They also found nothing."

I shook my head, tears coming to my own eyes. "But this isn't all I've done. It is my fault that you feel alienated. I have talked to several groups on the bus about the possibility of you having a demon. You have come here seeking fellowship and I have caused you to be rejected."

Her eyes welled up again. "This is why no one talks to me?"

I nodded. "I am so very sorry. If it is okay with you, first thing tomorrow I will talk to everyone I have spoken with and let them know that this is the way they worship in your town. That you do not have a demon."

"You would do this for me?" she asked.

"It is the very least I can do."

"Thank you," she said, as we both wiped our eyes.

I felt like I had a new friend as we hugged goodbye. Max and I went back to our hotel. Unfortunately, the Indian restaurant, the most famous one in Israel, has closed by the time we returned. We grabbed a quick snack of fruit in the lobby and headed back to our rooms.

The next day I did as promised, approaching many people at breakfast. As we boarded the bus, the Holy Spirit urged me to sit right behind the two women who have been bothering Marni. They always sat in the front seat.

“Do you have a minute?” I asked from behind them.

They turned around. “Of course.”

I have always been respectful of my elders, especially in the church. But as they turned around, the Holy Spirit gave me discernment. Their smiles looked odd, and their features seemed slightly misaligned.

“You need to stay away from Marni,” I said.

“We are helping her,” they insisted.

The Spirit welled up so strong inside me that my voice came out loud and harsh, “Do not touch her again. It is not your place. You WILL leave her be!”

They ducked their heads, hiding their eyes.

“We will do what you say.”

I gave a firm nod. They turned and faced the front. The two stayed as far as possible from both Marni and me for the rest of the tour.

The Western Wall

The bus took us to Lion's Gate, also called St. Stephen's Gate, which is a portal into the Old City of Jerusalem. The stone was ancient; each piece was hand carved and therefore unique. The ramparts were jagged teeth on the top of the wall.

The road to the gates was broad. The gate itself was much smaller; one car might fit through it. Inside, shops lined the narrow path towering above us like the walls of a deep canyon.

Finally, I thought, a chance to shop for souvenirs!

On the flight into Israel, one of the passengers warned me, "Save your money for Jerusalem. Things are much cheaper there."

I dashed into one tiny shop and then the next as the group lumbered through the city. The streets twisted and turned winding into the city. We emerged from the shadows of the narrow streets into a courtyard. The guide encouraged us to take a break and buy lunch from one of the many vendors selling food.

When we continued, I came up beside the singer. "This city is amazing. Every inch is crammed with buildings," I remarked, as I spotted a narrow alley barely big enough for a bicycle.

Marni looked slightly annoyed by my presence. Until then she had been very friendly. "You know where we are, don't you?" she asked impertinently.

"In the Old City of Jerusalem," I replied.

"We are walking the Via Dolorosa, the path Jesus walked carrying the cross."

My mouth dropped open. "Oh," I whispered, backing away to give her space.

“Lord, forgive me for thinking more about ‘stuff’ than about You. This trip has been to grow closer to You and here, in one of the most important moments, I’m shopping!” As we continued, I tried to recall every detail I could about what occurred in this place thousands of years ago.

The path opened up to a broad area with black screens blocking the view. Soldiers with machine guns guarded a metal detector and conveyor belt with X-ray equipment. A large white metal sign had what I assumed was Hebrew on the top with pictures of knives and guns within a red circle and a bar running through it. An English translation in plain sight was also unnecessary.

“Oh, Lord, it would serve me right, but please don’t let them get confiscated. I just bought decorative daggers!” I prayed.

Digging through my bag, I approached the guard by the metal detector. “I purchased these on the way here. I had no idea we would be coming through security,” I explained.

The guard looked over the small blades. He called to another soldier and handed him the bag. I was ushered through the metal detector. To my surprise, the second guard handed the bag of souvenirs back to me once I was past the checkpoint.

Our guide informed us that we would have twenty minutes at the Western Wall, which is the only remaining wall of the Temple. The Western Wall was built as part of the expansion of the second Jewish Temple, in approximately 20 BCE. It is often referred to as the Wailing Wall. This is a misnomer imposed by non-Jewish people who misunderstood the distinctive style of Jewish prayer, and thought it was wailing.

The size of the stones was impressive. Those on the bottom were almost five-feet-high. The blocks became smaller the higher up they were stacked. Throngs of people stood between the wall and me. Others in my group were trying to inch their way closer.

God can hear us anywhere, I thought. I wasn't sure I understood why the faithful came all this way to pray before a stonewall. Did people really think that God needed prayers written down on paper and stuffed into cracks on a wall to hear them better?

Nevertheless, I had twenty minutes before we moved on. Urged by the Holy Spirit, I bowed my head and closed my eyes to pray. The faint sounds of my heavenly language echoed in my mind.

I opened my mouth and my newly acquired language poured out. In my mind, I worshiped and praised God for his goodness and the lessons I had learned on this trip. I felt strongly that I should take a step forward.

Minutes before, when I closed my eyes, there was little room between me and the crowd trying to draw itself closer to the Western Wall. Personally, I had no real desire to get any closer to the landmark wall. But at this moment it wasn't about what I wanted – I didn't even think about it. Without hesitation, I took a step forward.

Seconds passed. Again, the urge to move forward rises inside me like a gentle wave. Confidently, I stepped forward. I stepped forward over and over again as the Spirit guided me.

The voice of our guide reached my ears as she called for our group. I opened my eyes.

Immediately before me was the Western Wall. Not one person stood between the Temple's historic outer wall and me.

As I took my place with the group, the Spirit urged me to keep praying. I whispered the heavenly language under my breath as we proceeded to the presentation room where they

showed a film about the ruins they are uncovering.

The Holy Spirit continued to flow around me as we moved to the steps of the Temple. Our group was allowed to walk into the bathing area, which was newly uncovered. It was where anyone, including the Lord, Himself, would have had to wash before they were allowed inside the Temple.

The singer of our group wanted to give a sermon she had prepared on the steps of the Temple. The peace and power of the Holy Spirit caressed me. I knew it wasn't time to stop yet.

I walked around behind a seven-foot stone, taking a seat, so I wouldn't disturb the group. I'm not sure how much time passed as I sat there on a small broken stone, my eyes closed, enraptured with the Spirit of God. The power began to build, the words started to come faster and louder.

The last few words came out in a triumphant shout. Mumbled, "Hallelujah," "Amen," "Praise the Lord," caused me to open my eyes. Half a dozen people had gathered around me. So enthralled by the Spirit, I hadn't heard them approach.

I took a seat next to the singer as we reloaded onto the bus. "Why does everyone pray at the wall of the Temple?" I asked.

She shook her head in disbelief, chuckling a bit. "It's here, in First Kings," she said, pulling out her Bible.

1 Kings 8:41–43

41 "As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name— 42 for they will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when they come and pray toward this temple, 43 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.

“This is why everyone prays facing the last wall of the Temple,” she tells me.

I’m not sure what the Holy Spirit said that day, but He knows my heart. I am glad I let Him speak for me.

Demon Possession

Act When God Tells You To

Ashley's school was only half a mile from our townhouse. Sarah and I would walk to get her in the afternoon, unless it was raining. A few months into our second year, Sarah found a playmate one day while we awaited school's dismissal. Billy had a sister, Abby, who was a few years older than Ashley.

I often volunteered to get Billy and Abby from school when their mom Charlotte wasn't feeling well. One afternoon I walked Abby to the door to see if she could come over for a while and play with Ashley.

When I stepped into Charlotte's home, my sinuses were instantly clogged. My eyes itched something fierce. Billy appeared beside her. It was all I could do not to take a step backward: His teeth looked pointed, his eyes hollow, his head misshapen.

Wow, what was that? I thought, as I took Abby and Ashley to our house to play for a while. Maybe I'm coming down with the cold she has.

An hour later, I was fine. Over the next few weeks, I started paying attention. My senses were assaulted each time I visited Charlotte.

"Mom, something weird is happening." I filled in my spiritual mentor on the details.

"You said she has a slew of health issues?" asked Mom.

I nodded, though she couldn't see it. "Kidney problems, a wrist that won't heal, and half a dozen other things beyond me to describe."

"It sounds like a demonic attack."

After school a few days later, I asked Charlotte if she had time to talk. I knew she was a Christian, but I had no idea if she believed that we have an enemy here on Earth who does all he can to torture us.

First I shared my experiences with angels and demons, including the demonic attachment that had plagued Ashley. Then I told her about Satan and how he brought one-third of his angels to Earth.

Revelation 12:3–5

3 Then another ominous sign (wonder) was seen in heaven: Behold, a huge, fiery-red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven kingly crowns (diadems) upon his heads.

4 His tail swept [across the sky] and dragged down a third of the stars and flung them to the earth. And the dragon stationed himself in front of the woman who was about to be delivered, so that he might devour her child as soon as she brought it forth.

5 And she brought forth a male Child, One Who is destined to shepherd (rule) all the nations with an iron staff (scepter), and her Child was caught up to God and to His throne.

It was difficult to approach the topic. I thought she would either be insulted or think I was a few eggs shy of a dozen.

Overcoming my hesitancy, I plunged forward, “I believe the health issues plaguing you, as well as Billy’s autistic traits, may be a demonic attack.”

“I was raped, that was how I got pregnant with Billy. The pregnancy felt... off. Could that have anything to do with the demons?” she asked.

“Yes. Rape is one way to become possessed.”

“So Billy’s violent behavior may be caused by a demon?” she asked, taking this much better than I thought she would. “Can you get rid of it?”

“Christ gives us power over them, so yes, I should be able to help you.” The Holy Spirit urged me to take action. I hadn’t read about how to do this, and wanted to talk to Pops first.

“Let me prepare some scriptures.” I told Charlotte. “Maybe we can meet again next week?”

Next week never came. It seemed like one crisis after the next kept her occupied. Our stint on the East Coast came to an end and our family left for Boise. I never had another opportunity to meet with Charlotte.

I beat myself up about this quite a bit. There I was, the Holy Spirit was backing me. And I wanted to go and ‘study.’

The plain truth is that I was alone and scared. I knew there wasn’t just one demon harassing her and her son. It is not uncommon for the spirits to leap into the one who is trying to get them out. I’ve been told that it is always best to have someone there to pray. After all, Jesus sent out the disciples two by two and Pops had a team he worked with. I was hoping to find a Christian in the area who would walk me through my first exorcism.

What I should have been thinking is that God is all I need. I should have followed the Holy Spirit. Now, because of my inaction, Charlotte and her son were still under the thumb of the enemy.

It took more than a year for Him to get me over the condemnation I was feeling. A Bible story helped me, but for the life of me, I can’t recall the chapter or verse. What I remember of the story is this: a prophet was complaining to God. God told the prophet, “Don’t you know that I have a

thousand others who I could call upon to do this task?”

After reading this story, I prayed and asked God to send someone to help Charlotte. I have complete faith that God can send another to fix what I missed.

God's Blessing

Prophecy of the Flame?

The production cost of self-publishing a 200,000- word manuscript wasn't feasible. A critical look at the storyline revealed that, like Christopher Paolini's "Eragon" series, I had a natural break after the first major battle where I could end the story and pick up with a second book. I added a short closing chapter and changed the name to "Prophecy of the Flame: Book One - Love's Dawning" and rushed to print.

I was on the way to the airport to drop off my husband when we decided to stop for lunch. My bladder was begging for attention, but CiCi's Pizza didn't open for twenty minutes. My husband suggested I try the videogame store next door. While they didn't have a bathroom, I passed the time chatting with the store manager.

It was October 2007 and I was just beginning the arduous task of setting up book signings. As usual, I mentioned my soon-to-be-released book. The manager, JR, was so enthusiastic about the concept of the book that he arranged a signing at his videogame store. He even let me have the books delivered to his store to save on shipping.

God had healed me when the first copy of "Prophecy of the Flame" rolled off the printing press. Blessed with the peace and confidence that came from my faith in God, I was certain He would cause this book to be noticed by one of the Big Five publishers in the United States. Not unlike Christopher Paolini, I imagined that within

a year or two my book would be picked up and it would take off. There might even be a movie!

Paolini's book "Eragon" had been self-published, too. After selling 6,000 books in one year, an agent signed him. A year later, he was signed to a publishing company. Today he is a *New York Times* bestselling author.

I sold thirteen books at my first bookstore signing. At the videogame store I sold another fifteen. While these numbers aren't great, I wasn't discouraged in the least because I knew God was on my side.

During the signing at the videogame store, I spent most of my time talking with the manager, J.R. He kept telling me that my book was "the ultimate RPG-ers (role-playing video gamers) book." We spent the next couple months discussing different concepts for a hypothetical game based on the "Prophecy of the Flame" series.

Three months later, I was dumbfounded when I realized J.R. was more than a store manager. J.R. Bontrager earned two bachelor's degrees in two years. He had been studying the videogame industry for several years. Most importantly, J.R. had independent investors ready to fund Hippocrit games and wanted to launch the company with "Prophecy of the Flame," the live action videogame. We began contract negotiations in March of 2008.

It was J.R. who first mentioned renaissance fairs. I signed up for several fairs that spring. John, one of the vendors at the North Carolina Renaissance Festival, read my book and suggested I do a signing at a "Con."

As soon as I went on my computer, I googled ConCarolina. Turns out it was a revamped Star

Trek convention. Even The Klingons would be there!

John was a friend of ConCarolina's director. He got me a last-minute booth, right next to the guest author's table where the traditional authors would be published.

Life seemed to be taking off at the speed of light. With a videogame in the works, I made arrangements to go to my first Con.

The price for a convention table was a little steep so I decided to bring a friend who could sell her jewelry from my table in order to share expenses – after all, I only had one book and it didn't take up that much space.

At the convention I enlisted my usual book-signing techniques:

- I never sat unless I was signing.
- I approached people as they walked past and handed them my flyer.
- I introduced myself and let them know I was doing a signing.

Well into the day, I approached a group of normal looking people, flyer in hand, "Hi, I'm Lynn Hardy. Do you happen..." was as far as I got in my spiel. The group shook their heads vigorously, backing away. Surprised, I shrugged off the reaction – it was the first time anyone seemed offended by my mild approach.

A few minutes later I approached a pretty blonde, flyer in hand. "Hi, I'm Lynn Hardy. I'm doing a book signing..." Again, I got the same type of reaction as she thrust out her hands, hustling to the far side of the room to join the others who had shunned me.

Eventually a table was set up right next to mine with its own assortment of books. I tried making conversation with the guy doing the work, but he wasn't very talkative. He even refused to tell me what he did for a living!

When the event coordinator came by, I learned that the people who had avoided me were traditionally published authors. The close-mouthed fellow next to me was the husband of one of those authors. It seemed that they didn't want to associate with a self-published author, such as myself.

On the last day of this three-day convention, the guest of honor, a very prolific and well-known author, sat down at the table next to me in order to do his own book signing. Absolutely no fans were to be found.

Bored, he picked up one of my books and asked me who published it. I told him that I had started my own publishing company. He tossed it on the table dismissively, "You're not published – no one is paying you to write, you are paying yourself."

I nodded my head, agreeing with him, practicing the biblical principle, "be hard to offend." It was still slow, so we began chatting. As an icon of science fiction, he let me in on some of the proper ways of getting published:

- Find an agent if you can.
- Have them submit you to publishing companies (usually takes 1–2 years).
- Attend conventions and get to know agents, publishers, and other authors in order to find sponsors.

About this time, it occurred to me that I hadn't returned my room keys to checkout. I politely excused myself. My long legs stretched out as I raced to the reception desk. Before entering the convention, I waited for a moment at the door to catch my breath.

I strode calmly toward my table, as the author hurriedly put my book back down. He turned to me and proclaimed, "You have a typo in your first paragraph."

I nodded my head in agreement. "I'm mortified by this book. I paid an editor \$1,800, and it's still loaded with typos."

This led to a half-hour lecture on how, as an author, we are responsible for our own work. I picked up the first edition of the teen version of my book and opened it to the first page. "I feel the same way; it is, after all, my name on the cover. I have already corrected that mistake and many others."

He read the first paragraph to make sure I had caught the error ("he" instead of "the"), then looked at me and said, "You should submit your book to my publisher; they publish a lot of stuff along these lines." Another older gentleman would later introduce me to his publisher at WorldCon, the biggest gathering of science fiction and fantasy publishers in the nation.

The close-mouthed gentleman who had set up the table snapped a picture of the moment. He picked up his cell phone, "You need to get over here right now," he told the person on the other end of the line.

Hanging up the phone, Bill introduced himself, handing me a business card. He had started his own publishing company in order to publish his wife's next series. She had gained a

readership with a traditional publisher then decided to cut out the middleman.

“I have been very impressed with you this week. Many people have come by looking for the next book in the series,” he explained. “I was planning on signing you with my company, but with his referral, you will go much farther than I can take you.”

One of the blonde women who had avoided me showed up. Bill introduced me to Heidi, giving her a breakdown of what had happened with the famous author. Heidi was an agent. She immediately offered to represent my book. My heart thudded in my chest. Adrenaline raced through me the entire trip home.

A little research showed that WorldCon was taking place in Denver, Colorado, the same week we would be traveling through on the way back to Boise, Idaho.

At this convention, I met with the owner of one of the biggest publishers of science fiction and fantasy in the nation. She asked to see my manuscript. I sent it along with a nice query letter. Surely this is God’s miraculous financial blessing, isn’t it?

Angels & Demons

The True Power

Michelle, a good friend of mine, had her first child in the spring of 2008. In between book signings, my girls and I traveled to LaGrande, Oregon, to welcome James into the world. Ashley and Sarah shared a twin bed in the same room where I slept. As both of the girls talked in their sleep, earplugs helped block out the world so I could get a good night's rest.

At two in the morning I reset the earplugs into place after a brief trip to the bathroom. On the edge of sleep, I heard a noise like pots and pans banging together.

I wondered who could be doing the dishes at this time of night, as I looked toward the door past the foot of my bed.

A rolling black mass writhed and squirmed on the other side of a white haze. *Demons! You have got to be kidding me.* I sighed, irritated at the interruption to my nightly rest.

"I..." The word came out in a hideous, guttural, growling voice like something from "The Exorcist." It took me some time to get the next word out, feeling as if an elephant was sitting on my chest, "...command..." It seemed like seconds passed before I could get out the remaining, "...you."

"In the name of Jesus." The pressure eased, but my voice was still like something from a horror flick.

"I plead the Blood." Poof! My voice returned to normal. The room was clear, and the white mist and black shapes were gone.

I bolted upright in bed. "What was that?" I patted my arms and chest, "I'm awake, right?" Nodding, I answered my own question. Looking at the clock, I knew I'd have to wait a few hours before I called Mom and Pops.

First chance I had later that morning I recounted the strange midnight visit to Pops, "What in the world was wrong with my voice? I've never had a demon do that to me before."

"Demons may be thousands of years old, but they aren't all-knowing," he said. "At one time didn't Michelle talk to a spirit guide and use tarot cards?"

"Yes, she did."

"They probably thought you were an easy mark," he explained. "From your description, most likely there was a hoard of demons trying to enter you. You are filled with the Holy Spirit, so they couldn't get past your throat. They were on your chest and resting on your voice box, which is why you had a hard time speaking."

"The flight to Boise with two small kids, along with the three-and-a-half-hour drive to Michelle's house, was exhausting," I admitted. "I haven't said so much as a single word of prayer since I got here."

Pops chuckled. "You know, the Holy Spirit gave you discernment to hear your angel battling those demons with his sword. The angel was the white mist you saw."

"God is good to me," I said, meaning every word. I will never forget what I learned:

- There was no power in "I command you."
- Jesus' name frees us from the enemy.

- The enemy cannot stand against the Blood! He will flee.

Proof that Angels Believe in You

We moved from Washington, D.C., to Boise, Idaho, the summer after my oldest daughter completed the first grade. After Tony dropped me off at WorldCon, he stopped and picked up the newest addition to the Hardy family: a Maine Coon kitten we named Nova.

Four months later, on a windy November morning, we woke to a house that was freezing cold. We had forgotten to lock the front door the night before and a strong gust of wind must have blown it wide open.

“Nova! Nova!” Ashley and Sarah called as we walked around the house. Their cute and furry, orange and white kitten was nowhere to be found.

We walked door to door, asking if anyone had seen our seven-month-old pet. For two days we searched, but to no avail. When I tucked my kids into bed, both of them were in tears, worrying for the tiny furball.

“She must be lost! How will she find her way back? Will she get hurt out there?” They hammered me with questions.

“Do you remember the story of Daniel and the lion’s den?” I asked.

“He didn’t get eaten,” replied Ashley, who was seven years old.

“That’s right. God sent angels to shut the mouths of the lions and keep him safe.” Sarah, my six-year-old nodded as I continued, “The Bible says to be careful how you treat strangers; there

are angels walking among us in disguise. Well, if God can send angels to close the mouths of lions, He can certainly send angels to bring Nova home to us. I bet He could even send an angel disguised as a cat to bring her home!"

The girls agreed, laughing, at the thought of an angel cat. "Let's pray and let God to take care of this."

We joined hands, closing our eyes. "Dear God, we thank You for Your Word that is always accurate and true. We thank You for sending angels to watch over us. Nova is ours; she is our property. We thank You mighty God for sending Your angels to bring her back to us safe and sound. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen."

Nova didn't return the next day. Ashley and Sarah Jane were remarkably calm when I tucked them into bed. I reminded them that God's angels were on the job; Nova was safe and on her way home. They smiled, "No one is bigger than God!"

Around two in the morning a tiny "meow" jerked me out of a dead sleep. I raced up the stairs and threw open the front door. There on the steps sat an orange cat looking nothing like my little lost kitten.

An orange tabby we never saw before or since turned and leapt down the stairs. Up jumped Nova and walked straight into the house! I shook my head, wondering if that was an angel cat or just a cat controlled by an angel.

Ashley came bouncing in the door from school that day. "Look what I found! It was buried in the slushy snow! Can I keep it?"

She handed me a metal plate with holes in the two top corners where a tattered red ribbon was tied. Metal wire hung down from several holes in the bottom with little beads attached to the ends.

Inscribed in Ashley's found treasure were the words, "Angels believe in you."

"We had better keep this. The angels watching over us have sent us a message." It is this same metal plate that is used on the cover design of this book.

Tony's Spiritual Progress

During our visit to the East Coast, I had become accustomed to going to church once every month or two as a family. While we prepared for the trip home, I asked God, "Where am I going to find a Spirit-led church in Boise, Idaho? It will be too far to travel to the church in Eagle."

Usually when I watched Kenneth Copeland's segments about the Southwest Believers' Convention I would fast-forward through the testimony portion. This particular day I watched it.

A convention goer in her fifties commented, "My husband and I have wanted to come to this event for a few years. Unfortunately, our budget never allowed us to take the trip. Our church, Calvary Chapel, in Boise, Idaho, sent us here to check out your program. We are excited to bring back the videos and let them know what a wonderful week of fellowship and worship this has been."

Calvary Chapel in Boise sent one of their families to the Believers' Convention? It sounded like a church I should check out.

Calvary Chapel was one of the largest churches in Boise. As it turned out, Sarah Jane would attend their pre-school while I went to some of their Bible studies and we went to the services as a family once every few months.

I felt like the girls needed a little more God than they were getting. "Honey, Ashley and Sarah are at a critical age where they are learning so

much. I think it is important that we take them to church more."

"What do you mean?" Tony asked. "We go all the time!"

"Once every month or two isn't 'all the time,'" I told him. "While it is a lot more than just at Christmas and Easter, ~~but~~ the girls need to learn about Jesus. Unless you want to teach them, I will take them to Sunday school as often as I can."

"I just need to know what to tell them when they ask: 'Dad is too tired to go to church or Dad is too busy to go to church?' I will tell them whatever you want."

Tony sighed. "Pastor Bob talks like a normal guy, not like a preacher. I don't mind going to Calvary Chapel. Let me know when you want to go and I'll be ready."

My heart soared. We were going to church!

Several months later, as we drove north for the Fourth of July, I asked Tony. "I know you were raised Catholic, but were you ever baptized?"

"Sure, as a baby. I went through the confirmation classes as a kid," Tony informed me.

"So you know why Jesus died on the cross?"

"To tell the truth, I slept through most of the classes," he shrugged.

"God gave us the Ten Commandments, knowing no one could fulfill them," I said. "The purpose of the Big Ten was to show people that they could not get to Heaven on their own. That's why he also gave the Jewish people a way to be forgiven for sin through a sacrifice of an animal. This was a foreshadowing of what Jesus would do. Jesus was and is perfect. He had no sin in Him and lived a life without sin: He did what no one else could. Death had no right to touch him because He was without sin. Yet He chose to be sacrificed for us – this is why Jesus is called 'the Lamb of God.'"

“Jesus took our place. Not only our death by going to Hell in our place, but for enduring the punishment we deserved that He took upon himself. If we accept Him as Lord, then we are redeemed from all sin.” I asked, “Did you ever take Jesus as your Lord and Savior?”

“What are you talking about?” Tony was confused. “I’ve never heard anyone say that you have to take Jesus as Lord. Because I know Jesus is the Son of God, I get to go to Heaven.”

“Even demons know that Jesus is the Son of God; they tremble at the mention of His name. It isn’t enough to know who He is” I said, “you must accept Him as Lord. The word lord means owner. Your landlord is the owner of the land.” I explained. “In order to go to Heaven, the only thing you have to do is take Jesus as your Lord and try to do what He wants.”

“I don’t know where you are getting this. Pastor Bob has never said anything about Jesus as our Lord.” Tony was getting pretty irritated. “I know you do the praying thing. Why don’t you pray and ask God to have Bob preach on it. Then I will believe it.”

“Okay, I will,” I said, dropping the matter.

I knew Pastor Bob tried to set aside time to listen and be led by God. It wasn’t the next week or the week after, but a few months later Bob preached on Jesus as Lord.

Tony was pretty shocked. He is not one to jump blindly into things like I am. Tony listened and learned at church for more than a year. Finally, one day I broached the topic again.

“I talked to God on the forty-five minute drive from Boise to Parma. I have taken Jesus as my Lord,” Tony told me. It wasn’t one of those emotional conversions. Tony is too logical. But after more than ten years, Tony has finally become a Christian!

God's Blessing

Wrong Again

I communicated with the famous aforementioned author via email while I waited to hear from the traditional publisher. He helped me get a contract with a nice advance from J.R. at Hippocrit Games.

I sent an email inquiry to my agent Heidi periodically. For six months I heard nothing from either the publisher or Heidi, who had submitted my book to the largest publisher in the nation. An answer finally came.

“The same publisher my book was submitted to,” said Heidi, “and who accepted my self-published children’s book several months ago notified me that their marketing department bounced my book because I had ‘saturated the market’ with my 7,000 book sales. If they won’t publish *my* book because it is self-published,” she said, “they aren’t going to publish yours. I’m sorry, but I can’t help you.”

The following month, which had been seven months after I submitted my novel directly to the owner of the other publisher, I attended SpoCon in Seattle. One author I met there, James Glass, had eight books with the publisher I was waiting to hear from. He told me that the company was struggling to stay afloat, and weren’t printing anything that wasn’t written by a best-selling author. His ninth book had been accepted more than a year ago, but he said they still hadn’t printed it.

It wasn't a huge shock when I got the nice "not at this time" letter a couple months later.

Remember the video game company? In the summer of 2009, shortly after I heard from the publisher, J.R. called. He said his independent investors were freaked out by the changes the Obama administration might implement, so they pulled out. The game was a bust.

It had been a year and a half since my first book rolled off the press and where was I? With only a handful of bookstores and one renaissance fair close to Boise, I had done only one book signing in over a year. Even though I had gotten the attention of the industry, the book had gone nowhere.

"God, I really don't know what to do next," I prayed. "I'll just wait until You open a door for me."

Refocusing on God

Recapping the last several years of my life:

- 2001 – God says, “I bless you, miraculously, financially.”
- 2001-2006 – I focus on the lottery (never winning)
- 2005 – Every publisher in the nation rejects “Prophecy of the Flame.”
- 2007 – God says, “I will heal you when your blessing is manifest in the earth.”
- 2007 – God heals me on the shores of Galilee on the day my first self-published book is also printed.
- 2008 – I sign a contract for a video game. An agent submits “Prophecy of the Flame” to one company and it is on the desk of the owner of one of the largest publishers of fantasy books in the nation.
- 2009 – The agent drops me; the publishers all reject the book, and the video game company goes under.

A relevant passage in the New Testament I read sometime in 2001 comes to mind:

Romans 4:3

3 For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed in (trusted in) God, and it was credited to his account as righteousness (right living and right standing with God).

At the time I remember thinking, *didn't God also talk with Abraham?* Of course he trusted and believed in God, after all, how hard would it be when you actually SPEAK with God?

It had been eight years since God spoke to me. Truthfully, at this moment, it was all I could do to hold on to the faith in what I heard. It was not nearly as easy as I thought it would be, not by half.

Eight years and I am back to square one, or perhaps even farther back than that. Traditional publishing was off the table. I felt as if I was certifiably insane to keep on believing. I heard Him! How could I not?

At a loss for what to do, I put my book aside. I focused on God and my family. "Lord, Your blessing will come when it comes. Until then I will enjoy the life You have given me."

While I waited on God, I began reading "Good Morning, Holy Spirit" by Benny Hinn. This book helped me grow closer to the third member of the Trinity: When we accept Jesus as Lord, the Bible tells us that He sends the Comforter, Councilor, and Guide that is the Holy Spirit to be one with our spirit. When our spirit merges with the Holy Spirit, a new being is born in our spirit; just like when two things come together in the physical world, a new person is born. This is why Jesus said, "Unless a man is born again, he cannot know the Kingdom of God."

This was a great time in my life. A simple time. A time of praise and worship. A time to learn to focus on the family and on God at the same time: It would also be a much-needed sabbatical.

Agape Assistance

In the fall of 2009, I was summoned for jury duty for the first time. The officers showed us to a large room with tables and chairs where we were told to wait after we checked in. Taking my laptop from the black carrying case, I was happy to have some time to veg while I played a video game.

An older woman with short blond hair approached me. "Is it okay if I sit here?" she asked.

"Sure."

After we introduced ourselves, Eva asked, "Are you an author?"

"I self-published a book a couple of years ago." My brow crinkled in puzzlement. "I guess some people might call me an author. What made you think I am an author?"

"I don't know, I just felt you had that look about you," she told me.

Throughout the day we discussed the pros and cons of publishing versus self-publishing. We also talked about our families. The recession had hit hard. Eva's daughter was struggling to hold onto her house. Eva was toying with the idea of writing a book so she could donate the funds to help her daughter.

I wasn't chosen to be a juror, but I serendipitously found what God wanted me to. Many families across the U.S. were hit hard by the first recession since the '80s. My heart broke for them. Every child deserved a warm bed, even if the family may have made some unwise investment decisions. And after all, helping families had always been what I wanted to do with the blessing.

I followed the leading of the Holy Spirit. Agape, pronounced uh-ga pei, is a Greek word that means the God type of love. It seemed like a suitable name; after all, it was God's blessing that would be helping people.

A minor miracle allowed Agape Assistance to become a 501(c) 3 nonprofit in 2010: A patient IRS agent helped me fill out the paperwork, line by line that was necessary to become an official nonprofit with the US government. When a request was sent for additional information, I called the officer who had been assigned to my case. He walked me through the necessary documents.

It wasn't until 2016 that I would be able to accept God's original intention in creating Agape Assistance. I learned that the 501(c)3 system was created with the Johnson Amendment in 1954 as a way to verify that organizations were tax exempted and to keep them from interfering with politics after Johnson nearly lost the election when pastors across the nation came out against him. In recent years, they have been adding many things that cannot be said, limiting Biblical teachings. This is unacceptable. Agape Assistance Association was intended to do God's work according to what He tells us to do. I changed Agape Assistance Association into Agape Assistance Church for the following reasons:

- A minister (my dad) was willing to help establish Agape Assistance Church.
- All churches are automatically tax exempted
- All donations to any "church" can be deducted just like donations to a 501(c)3
- According to the constitution, the government has no control over what a church can or cannot say. (they can only lose their place on the 501(c)3 list)

God Hears Your Prayers

Someone Needs My Snow Boots

“Good morning, Lord, I thank you for this day,” I said, climbing out of bed. “God, I thank You for the blood of Jesus which protects my health, my family, my possessions, the works of my hands and all my areas of influence. I ask that You anoint my feet so they will stay on Your path, anoint my hands so they may do Your work, and anoint my ears so that I can hear You so that I may walk according to Your will and not my own.”

Kenneth Copeland was on TV and kept me company while I readied my kids for school. With a good three inches of snow covering the ground, I fished their boots out of the closet. Today was also the perfect day to try out those new boots Aunt Becky had given me.

As much as I wanted them, it only snowed in Boise a couple times a year and I could never justify buying myself the brown leather insulated boots with rubber soles. My forest green Sorels worked just fine, even if they were a bit clunky.

At Thanksgiving, Aunt Becky pulled those boots out of her closet. “These are a little too big. If they fit, you’re welcome to take them home.” It was like God read my heart and gave me an early Christmas present.

Worship music filled the cab of the Yukon SUV on the way to the Calvary Chapel food pantry. With the kids in school all day I would need to distribute the bread by myself. It took an

hour to fill the plastic tubs and fifteen minutes to unload them at the church. My feet were nice and warm the entire time.

On the way home I noticed a woman sitting on the uncovered bench, waiting for the bus. I wondered how far she had to walk to get to the bus stop, as I got close to her.

The light caught me. The car in front of me kept me from turning. I looked at her feet and realized she didn't have boots on and must have been freezing.

She looked about my size. I nodded, knowing it was the leading of the Holy Spirit. My snow boots would fit her and she's the one who really needs them.

"You're right," I said aloud, pulling into the parking lot of the Auto Zone behind the bus stop. "I don't *really* need two pairs of boots. I didn't even have to walk very far if I didn't want to..."

"Lord, help me," I prayed, getting out of my car. "Give me the right words to say."

"Excuse me, but may I ask, what size shoe do you wear?" I asked.

"Eight and a half." She looked puzzled. "Why?"

"This may seem a little odd, but God told me you needed a pair of warm boots," I said.

"I really do. All I have are these," she replied, as she pointed to her sneakers.

"As it happens I have an extra pair of boots, size eight and a half," I said with a smile.

"That would be really great. Would you like my address or phone number so you can drop them off?" she asked.

"I can give them to you now, if you have a minute," I replied. "Would you mind coming to my car?"

She sat in the passenger's seat as I began to unlace the boots. "This is the first time I've worn them, so they are practically new," I told her.

"How will you get to your house without shoes?" she asked.

"God told me you really needed these shoes. I don't live far from here," I said as I handed her the first shoe. "I can park really close to the door and the socks I'm wearing are thick enough, so I can make it inside before my feet get too cold."

Tears gathered in her eyes. "My car broke down. That's why I had to walk to the bus. I can't get it fixed until my next paycheck," she said. "This morning when I prayed, I told God how abandoned and alone I felt."

I patted her arm, wishing I could do more. "God hears your prayers. You are not alone. He loves you. He sent me to give these to you so you would know that He cares about you."

Her tears overflowed. She nodded, putting the boot on. "It fits," she sounded slightly amazed. "He *does* care, doesn't He?"

"Yes, He loves you as much as He loves Jesus." I took off the last boot, handing it to her.

She laced up the second boot, hustling out to get to the bus that was pulling up.

"Lord, I wish it could have been more than just a pair of hand-me-down boots," I said, knowing that some day it would be.

Family Prayers

As we drove home from church one day, the girls began to sing, "What can wash away our sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make us whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." Hearing those words sung in tune by a five- and an eight-year-old... is there anything sweeter? I smiled to myself. Surely Tony's heart was being softened?

Some weeks later, when we got into the car, my praise CD was still in. I listened to it with the girls quite often. They knew most of the songs. They sang along; Tony didn't seem to mind. We listened to praise music the entire way to church and back.

One day when I got home from a convention, Ashley asked me to pray with her. "Daddy was here, why didn't you ask him?"

"You are the one who knows how to pray," she answered. "You always do it at dinner, not Dad."

That evening I talked with Tony. "Honey, Ashley doesn't think you know how to pray because I always say grace at dinner."

Soon after, the Hardy family developed a new tradition. Daddy prayed at dinner unless he forgot. Then whoever remembered got to lead the family in prayer.

God is moving Tony closer, one small step at a time.

God's Blessing

"Prophecy of the Flame - Audiobook One"

In 2010, I redesigned the cover for "Prophecy of the Flame – Book One" and used the video game advance to pay for a professional edit for both Book One and Book Two. In March, I released the second edition of "Prophecy of the Flame – Book One." "Book Two" was released three months later.

"Prophecy of the Flame – Book One" became a #1 Amazon Kindle bestseller three months after Book Two was released. This title was added to the top of all future books.

At my first book signing in Idaho, someone suggested I should have a booth at Fandemonium, the only local Science Fiction convention in Idaho at that time. My history of past conventions got me a last-minute table at the event.

It was here that I met Joe Smith. He read half of Book One in two days, and told me, "It's so much better than "Twilight." I know it is going to be a huge success."

Joe had a small following in the convention world, but mostly at Anime conventions. The word anime, pronounced "ah-knee-may," is the abbreviation for animation. In Japan, the word is used to refer to all animation. Outside of Japan, it has become the catch-all term for animation from Japan.

With Joe's advice and help, I began to attend Anime conventions. He said he had always

wanted to produce audiobooks, so together we assembled a group of voice actors who donated their time and talent. Joe and I co-produced “Prophecy of the Flame.” It was a full cast audiobook where each character has a unique voice.

For more than a week in a local studio, we worked arduous, fifteen-hour days. Thankfully, the studio and production time of Zaney Studios and John Cazan was donated to our effort.

To make a long story short, Joe was so enthusiastic about the book and Agape Assistance that I thought he was help sent by God to be a blessing to the series. I was very wrong.

I won’t go into all the unpleasant details, as I don’t want in any way to devalue all the hard work donated by so many volunteers who helped make the audiobook for Agape Assistance.

Suffice it to say, but due to an unfortunate interaction between us, I was forced to permanently sever ties with Joe, I offered to buy out the contract for the production of the audiobook, which would have entitled him to a portion of the sales, but he declined my offer.

I have since donated “Prophecy of the Flame, Audiobook One” to Agape Assistance in its entirety. It is only available when a donation is made to the charity. This was the intended purpose in making the audiobook, after all, and as an added benefit it released me from any further dealings with my former colleague.

My Third Healing

In October of 2008, I suffered a minor stroke. My primary physician referred me to a neurologist. Many tests later, I was diagnosed with degenerative bone disease.

I was told my disc at the C5 vertebra was bulging slightly on the left side. My muscle structure was so weak that any physical exercise would cause the muscles in my neck to tense and pull the vertebra further out of place. As a result, when the disc impinged on my nervous system it would cause mind-numbing exhaustion and a severe lack of coordination.

Why was my muscular structure so weak? I had seven major medical issues in the last seven years.

- 2001 – Bed rest for 3½ months
- 2002 – Broken ankle
- 2003 – Bed rest for 3½ months
- 2003 – C-section
- 2006 – Elective breast augmentation that weakened my surrounding muscles
- 2007 – Torn rotator cuff surgery; extensive PT
- 2008 – Gallbladder removed

Every time I recovered enough to try and exercise, something else would occur. If it wasn't one thing, it was something else. Now this.

The bulging disc was incredibly debilitating. I couldn't go out to more than three stores without becoming so mind-numb that driving home was a little risky. My legs would turn to lead and my mind would be mush. In the final days of production for the audiobook, it was all I could do to sit in the studio and try and listen.

"God, if You intend for me to make a movie out of "Prophecy of the Flame" I will need to be on set for filming." I prayed as I drove home on the last day of taping. "I won't be able to handle the long days required for a movie project with my neck like this. If You want my book to be a movie, You will have to heal me again."

Though I had been healed twice, my faith was not in a place where I felt it was sufficient. Because of past experiences, I knew where I could go to increase my faith. I knew that if I could get to the Southwest Believer's Convention and attend healing school, the power of God would be there and I would be healed.

"Church for a week is not a vacation." Tony responded when I asked about going this summer, "We should spend that money taking the kids to Disneyland." Obedient to my husband, I began making reservations.

A few weeks later I was having lunch with my daughter Ashley, who was nine. "Mom, I want to learn that language you know."

"What language?" I asked as we ordered sushi.

"You know, the one that you talk to God with, the one that only He knows." She explained.

"Oh, you mean the Heavenly language?"

"Yes, that's it."

I smiled a little sheepishly. "I got that gift a long time ago, back when I was in high school. To

tell you the truth, I don't know much about it. I just use it." Her lips turned down with her obvious disappointment. "But you know what? I do know where we could go to learn more about it."

Briefly I described the week long convention I had been yearning to attend. Ashley was very excited about attending the Superkid Academy that is free to all kids during the Southwest Believer's Convention. Later that night I asked Tony about it.

"We don't have the money for both Disneyland and this other thing. I'm sure the kids would rather go the theme park." Was his response.

I broke the news to Ashley the next day. "I'm sorry, Love Bug. We can't do both. Maybe we can go next year."

"Mom," Ashley said, "God is more important than Disneyland. I would rather go to the church thing and learn about the Heavenly language."

Tony couldn't argue with Ashley's logic. My mom flew for your usual yearly visit that summer, but instead of flying back, we drove to her house so we could take my car to the convention.

It was great seeing Rusty again. I didn't get to volunteer; taking care of two kids and my mom was more work than ushering ever was. By the end of the week, Mom and the girls were exhausted. They didn't have the energy to go to Gloria Copeland's healing school. I wasn't going to miss it.

Worship was uplifting, downright awe-inspiring. When Gloria gave the healing scripture she explained why God wants everyone to be healed. Right now, today.

I didn't feel a thing. No pressure, not noise, no tingling nothing. But I knew I was healed.

Gloria said, "If you couldn't do something, do it now, in faith, knowing that you have been healed."

The quiet voice of the Spirit whispered. "Go out and run around the bottom of this arena."

"There are camera's recording this." I thought. "I'm not going to run around like a crazy women."

Another pastor stepped up beside Gloria. "If you couldn't run, go out and run right now."

My head popped up. "Okay, okay, you don't have to tell me a third time." I thought.

For the last several years, I could run about five steps before the muscles in my neck would begin to bunch up from pain. I jogged around the entire arena. It felt wonderful!

Again, the Holy Spirit told me to go out and testify. He didn't have to tell me twice. I was standing in line when a woman came down from the stage. "I've never done this before, but I think I need to know what happened to you."

I told her my story. A short while later I gave my testimony on the stage at the Southwest Believer's Convention.

Tony flew out that day. We visited his family in Houston. I played at the beach with my kids in the warm gulf waters. By the end of the day I was tired, but my brain was still sharp and my body worked just fine.

God is good!

God's Blessing

"Prophecy of the Flame," the Movie

In November of 2009, I met Thomas Addison, a successful Boise businessman while doing a book signing at a craft show. Over the next several months as we worked together he learned about Agape Assistance and offered to host the Agape Assistance website for free.

"Would you be willing to donate your proceeds from a movie based on your books to the charity?" Tommy asked me.

"Absolutely."

"I've always wanted to produce a fantasy movie like "Lord of the Rings." I have a friend, Charles Cameron, who is a director. I'm sure I can get him on board," Tommy told me. "With the proceeds going to the charity, I'm sure I can get the investor we need."

Working with Tommy was great; I felt we really connected. He said I would be working closely with the director to create a screenplay based on "Prophecy of the Flame."

The director was finishing up another project, and it was six months before any progress would be made. Tommy and I met for lunch.

"Charles has finally had time to look at your book. The characters are so powerful in the beginning that he feels there isn't much room for growth throughout the story, and he's having a problem developing a plot line from it." Tommy was straight with me, which I really appreciated.

“Only a small portion of character development comes from their powers, most of it is emotional growth; the romance triangle fuels character development,” I explained, not in the least offended. “Prophecy of the Flame” does for “Lord of the Rings” what “Twilight” did for vampires, I said. “The fantasy world is brought to an easy-to-comprehend contemporary level and is only meant to serve as a backdrop for a suspenseful love triangle. This makes the movie more appealing to women who were first introduced to fantasy with the Potter series.”

It would be several more months before progress was made with the movie.

Angel or Demon in Disguise

A Seed Falls on Rocky Ground

From 2010 to 2011 I worked on the audiobook. Joe Smith talked with convention heads and got me into various anime conventions. While I was there, I helped to persuade some of the voice actors to donate their skills for the audiobook for Agape Assistance.

Andrayia Finn sold handmade jewelry from a booth at a local fair where I had a book signing. She created a crown for my costume in exchange for a book. The style of her work was something that could have sold at an anime convention. She was eager to join me at SNAFU Con in Reno.

The eight-hour drive to Reno, Nevada, passed quickly as Andrayia and I chatted. She told me she had a sixth sense for things and often could sense the presence of spirits. I shared my own spiritual journey with her.

Whenever I mentioned God, it was apparent that she was agnostic. “If you’re uncomfortable talking about God or Jesus, I’d be happy to talk about other things,” I offered.

“No, it’s okay. You don’t talk about it like other Christians I’ve met,” she insisted. “You talk about God and Jesus so plainly that it’s easy to understand. Besides, you don’t make me feel bad for the choice I’ve made.”

In the Job-like style of my “Demons – The Name and the Blood” chapter, I related the stories about Adam and Eve, Satan’s rebellion, as well as

Job. I told her about the gift of discernment, which is a gift from God. Andrayia had quite a bit to think about by the time we reached the hotel.

Over dinner one evening, I told Andrayia about Passover, and why Jesus died for us. We were returning to our rooms at the end of this discussion. A set of four elevators was located in a short hall with a mirror at one end. The elevators were the only way out of the hall.

There was a slender dark haired man of average height and build who seemed to be waiting for the next elevator. Engaged in the sensitive topic of why people call Jesus "Lord," we hung back at the entrance to the hallway. I glanced at the stranger who seemed to not want to meet my eyes. He would turn toward the glass doors every time I looked at him.

The third or fourth time I looked in his direction, my whole body turned with a start. "Andrayia, he's gone."

"Where did he go?" she asked, startled by the man's disappearance.

"Maybe there's a door in the corner," I suggested. We searched the entire end of the hallway. The only way out was the elevators and they hadn't opened yet.

"That is downright freaky," Andrayia said. "He was right here. He didn't pass us."

"There is only one question," I told her. "Was he an angel or a demon in disguise?"

That night Andrayia invited Jesus to be the Lord of her life. She was so excited to learn more about Jesus and the Bible. When we returned home, I bought her a Bible of her own.

Three weeks later, Andrayia told me she had made a mistake. She couldn't believe in God or

Jesus, it was just too much. None of her other friends or her husband were Christians.

Have you heard the parable about seed sown on different types of soil? In Matthew Chapter 13, Jesus reveals the meaning of this parable to his disciples:

One of the types of soil upon which seed is cast is rocky ground.

Matthew 13:20

20 As for what was sown on thin (rocky) soil, this is he who hears the Word and at once welcomes and accepts it with joy;

21 Yet it has no real root in him, but is temporary (inconstant, lasts but a little while); and when affliction or trouble or persecution comes on account of the Word, at once he is caused to stumble [he is repelled and begins to distrust and desert Him Whom he ought to trust and obey] and he falls away.

Never before in my life have I seen a parable come to life. This was definitely a case of seed sown on rocky ground. I have prayed often that God would send another Christian into Andrayia's life so she would have a second chance. Perhaps the ground would be a little less rocky.

Demons by Choice

You Don't See Anything, Do You?

Sarah Jane was invited to a birthday party in 2011 at Chuck E. Cheese. The parents hung out as the kids ran around from game to game. We herded the children to the counter where dozens of tickets were cashed in for prizes.

"You are Sarah's mom?" a woman asked me.

"Yes, I'm Lynn," I said, extending my hand.

"I'm Tonya," she smiled. "I was hoping you would come. I've heard about your books."

"Oh, do you like Harry Potter-type stuff?" I asked.

"I *love* that series!" Tonya exclaimed, as eager kids pushed us forward.

I fished a business card out of my purse. "If you contact me at my website, I would be happy to send you a PDF for a review copy."

"I was hoping I could buy a book from you," she insisted, "if you would sign it for me."

We met again as we were dropping our kids off at school the next day and I gave her a signed copy of "Prophecy of the Flame." A couple of days later we met for lunch at Raedean's, a restaurant near the school.

Tonya's story came out in a series of bombshells: She had been raped by a Deacon at the same church where her father served as its Assistant Pastor. Later, when the church allowed the convicted rapist to return to the service, Tonya left the church and God.

The topic of angels and demons came up. I shared my experiences with her. She seemed intrigued by this more than anything else.

"You don't see anything in me, do you?" Tonya asked.

I glanced up from my plate as she spoke. I noticed that her teeth seemed pointed, jagged, and discolored. Earlier they looked a little crooked, but nothing like this! I looked away quickly trying not to stare, "No, nothing." I replied.

My eyes were drawn to her mouth each time as she continued speaking. I jerked my gaze away over and over again. With her dad a pastor of a church, how could I possibly tell her that she had monster-like teeth?

When I got home, I consulted with my mom, "Was that discernment?" I asked. "Was the Holy Spirit trying to tell me Tonya had a demon?"

"Pops claims discernment can take many forms," Mom said. "It is usually different with each case."

Bolstered by the confirmation of my suspicions, I was ready when I talked to Tonya the next day. She gave me a great lead-in as she declared, "I have a hard time keeping friends. I am very honest about my feelings and don't hold back, even if it may offend someone. Anything less would be lying."

"Tonya, I'm happy to hear you say that." I said, "Because I've been feeling quite guilty about our conversation yesterday. There was something I wanted to say, but I was afraid you'd be offended."

"I almost never get offended," she chuckled. "I can't wait to hear what you were afraid to say."

"When you asked me if I saw anything in you, I lied. From that moment on, every time you spoke, you looked like you had monster teeth, all

jagged and spiked.” I was relieved to ask, “Is it possible that you have a demon?”

“Oh, yes, I do. I invited him in,” she told me. “He tells me things and makes me feel important. I like having him around.”

No one is immune from the wiles of the enemy. A pastor’s daughter was demon-possessed by choice. God gives us free will; it is up to us how we use it.

Tonya also had some unfortunate medical challenges. In the time we were friends, she was placed on disability because of migraines, stomach issues, and various other things. During the winter, I drove her son to class to help out.

We talked over coffee one day. I told her that the urging of the Holy Spirit couldn’t be denied. “Tonya, the Lord is speaking so clearly to me that I have to tell you: He says that your health issues are caused by the demon in your home. If you want,” I offered, “I will pray and rebuke the demon so you can be healed. You can be whole.”

“I have everything I want right now,” she said. “As a little girl, all I wanted when I grew up was to be able to stay home and watch TV all day long,” she confessed. “Now, that’s what I do. Why would I want to get rid of the one who gave me what I wanted?”

“If you ever change your mind,” I told her, “I want you to know that no matter what you’ve done, Jesus loves you. He has been and will be waiting for you. All you have to do is ask and He will be right there to help.”

Tonya developed a migraine and had to leave within minutes. Mom would later tell me that this is a trick demons will use when people who are strong in the Lord are around. They make the

situation as unpleasant as possible for the person under their thumb.

I never saw Tonya again. Her family moved when a rental opened up outside the school district. I pray that God will keep sending Christians into her life and give her another chance. Perhaps she will tire of the havoc they wreak on her body.

Angels - Our Helpers

My First Fast

It was 2012 and I still hadn't heard from the director. I was supposed to be working on the screenplay with him, wasn't I? God continued urging me to learn more about screenplays.

Life, the Universe & Everything (LTUE) is a science fiction convention in Provo, Utah. They had a panel on screenplays. It was only six hours from Boise so I used some of the earnings from Book Two of the "Prophecy of the Flame" series to attend.

A few weeks earlier, Pastor Bob gave a sermon on fasting. Fasting is not meant to be a sacrifice in order to get something from God; Jesus was the only sacrifice we would ever need. Putting bodily needs aside, fasting is really meant to help us focus on God, in order to better hear Him.

In college I was diagnosed with hypoglycemia. On more than one occasion I passed out from low blood sugar. I knew Tony would never want me to fast, but he wasn't going to the convention, was he?

I allowed myself only milk and juice. The first night in my hotel room, I almost passed out. Lying in bed, I prayed. "Lord, I'm only doing this so I can hear from you better. If you don't want me to fast, let me know. If you do want me to fast, you are going to have to help me get through the next three days."

The hotel offered a great breakfast buffet – free to all guests. I walked right past the daily spreads of food and got three cartons of milk. My stomach didn’t even growl.

I broke my fast the night I left, satisfied that I had grown closer to God through the weekend. I learned a lot at the convention. The information helped me take the next step and begin writing a screenplay for Book One. On the trip home I learned even more:

In February of that year, I had driven to Phoenix, Arizona, to do a book signing in their renaissance fair. A huge snowstorm plowed into Nevada as we drove through. A ball of ice collected on the end of our windshield wiper blade. We had to pull over every ten to twenty minutes to pound it so we could see through the snow.

Before I left for the LTUE convention, I put new blades on the car. On the way out of Salt Lake City, snow dropped thick and fast from the sky. I popped the car into four-wheel drive. Traveling 35 miles per hour on the highway, I peered through the storm, watching for other cars.

Ice balled up on the end of my wiper blade so fast I couldn’t see a thing in less than a minute. No way would I be able to stop in the middle of the highway and pound the blade – it would be too dangerous.

“I thank you God that your angels keep my windshield clear,” I proclaimed.

The next swipe of the blade cleared all the snow. My angel held the blade down until I cleared the storm. The ice never did ball up on the blade again.

Angels are ministering spirits sent to help us. When the need is real, when we are in danger, they come to our aid.

God's Blessing

A Publishing Company

My journey as a self-published author had been full of detours and potholes. At one point I had listed my book with a Christian publisher. The publisher was also an author whose books were selling incredibly well on Amazon. He promised to show me how to get my book the visibility it needed.

Unfortunately, the help was sporadic at best. Every request I put forth was met with obvious reluctance as if he really didn't have time to get my book out there. However, I took what limited information I did receive and forged ahead with my own techniques.

"Prophecy of the Flame" eventually became #1 on Amazon Kindle. When tax time came, I asked the publisher for my royalties that by then were long overdue. What I received was a lump sum. Neither an accounting for the number of sales, nor the itemized sums as they pertained to each of the two books were given to me.

This was an issue. All the proceeds from Book One were going to Agape Assistance. Book Two sales were to be used to produce the next book in the series. When I expressed my dissatisfaction, the publisher became very angry. He told me, "The amount I'm receiving for this work isn't worth the little I make! You are so demanding and difficult to work with, that is why no one in the publishing industry wants to work with you."

God granted me favor with an Amazon employee I talked to on the phone who told me the total number of physical books I had sold. But it didn't match up to the figures the publisher had paid me, which likely explains why the remaining books were destroyed and not returned to me.

"Perhaps you missed a few book sales?" I asked the publisher. "I spoke with someone at Amazon and the numbers don't add up to what you said I sold."

He was pissed. "I don't need to steal money from the piddly few books you sold. I'm doing ten times that with my own books." While I never actually accused him of stealing, he was happy to let me out of my contract. In a parting blow, he destroyed the books he had instructed me to send to Amazon for inventory.

As it turns out, his books sold because his "technique" was and still is to make his last name on the cover really large while his first name is almost too small to read. A well-established *New York Times* best-selling author with the same last name writes in the same genre and it appears my former colleague is attempting to ride on the coat tails of an esteemed writer's reputation.

To this day, the disappointment was one of the most difficult I've ever had to overcome. God actually spoke to me, "I bless you, miraculously, financially." Yet, the publisher's unscrupulous behavior, I hear, has bought him a brand new Corvette. As for me, I'm still driving the same car, now more than twenty years old!

Thank God for people who are dedicated to increasing our knowledge about the Word. Creflo Dollar is a minister who really impressed me when I saw him at the Southwest Believers'

Convention. Pastor Dollar gives a lot of Bible to back up what he preaches.

Recently, Pastor Dollar had begun a new series called “Freedom from Legalism.” This message was so different from every other teaching I had ever heard that it seemed too good to be true. I ordered the teaching at his website CrefloDollarMinistries.org so I could dig into them further. Over the next several months, I studied what Pastor Dollar was revealing.

According to this teaching, backed up by dozens of Bible scripture, the Law of Moses is not our moral compass. Because we are born-again through Jesus, we live according to a new and better covenant. We are led and guided by the Holy Spirit, not written laws.

The minister’s message lifted a weight I didn’t realize I was carrying. The guilt that had been lurking in the background melted away. Every time I missed church on Sunday or “missed it” when I was trying to follow God – it was okay, Jesus had me covered.

For years I felt condemned every time I didn’t read my bible; talk to God as often as I thought I should; or missed what he was trying to show me. Had I missed God’s blessing because I was fighting with my husband and was in no mood to listen to the Holy Spirit?

Those feelings melted away. God knew what He was doing when he spoke to me. He knows me better than I know myself. The blessing will come when He is ready. All I had to do was *try*. If I ever failed, Jesus had my back.

Later I would become aware of Creflo Dollar’s many personal controversies. I have learned over the years that pastors and evangelists are just people, like you or me. They are human and they

make mistakes. What matters is this: Does what they are saying line up with the Word of God and the inner witness of the Holy Spirit inside you? Just because they aren't perfect, or even close to it doesn't mean God isn't using them.

Take King David from the Bible: The Lord sought out David because he was a man after His own heart (1 Samuel 13: 14). While David was king of Israel, he committed adultery with a married woman, then had her husband killed on the battlefield (2 Samuel 11). Should we throw out all we have learned from David because of his mistakes? I believe we should learn from them instead.

Although he acted poorly, even the aforementioned Christian publisher could benefit from this revelation. God's grace covered his dishonest practices. This doesn't mean that someday his ways won't have consequences in the natural world...someday.

During this time of study, God began to show me how a publishing company should be run. Not only would it be a successful business, but it would also help authors reach readers and let them decide which books should go to bookstore shelves. Though painful at the time, the experiences with the Christian publisher revealed just how desperately authors needed help.

"Prophecy of the Flame" had received some interest from several different producers while I waited for the screenplay. Because I hadn't heard anything, I dove in and wrote my own screenplay. Although it only took three months to write it, I never sent it to anyone – nothing had really "happened." No matter how many doors seemed to open, they just didn't go anywhere.

“Lord, I don’t have time to create both a publishing company and make a movie,” I prayed. Which do you want me to do?”

I had worked with the owner of a small publishing company in Boise, Borderline Publishing. She was a devout Christian and I respected her honesty in business. I had joined Resilient Publishing, the company I published my books under, with Borderline in 2011. Humbly, I tried to help to structure her company as well marketing her books on the Internet.

Meanwhile, I finished writing my own screenplay for “Prophecy of the Flame” and I still hadn’t heard from the director.

Early one morning, I received a call from the owner. “Lynn, I have to be honest with you. I have a family medical situation. Borderline is making money, but not enough. I have to go back to work fulltime,” she informed me. “Either I am going to declare bankruptcy on Borderline or give the company to you. Do you want it?”

“I’m not sure; I will need to think about this a bit,” I said, meaning that I would need to pray about it.

“Let me know soon,” she said adding, “each time in the two weeks I prayed about this, God told me to give the company to Lynn. So if you want it, it’s yours, free and clear.”

The Holy Spirit reminded me of the prayer I had said nearly six months earlier. “I’ll take it.” I declared. “Draw up the paperwork and I will have my attorney look it over.”

Around that time, I finally received the screenplay from Charles. It was very well written; even a great story, however just not *my* story. The characters’ names were the same and they had some of the traits. But Charles’ screenplay was an action movie, not a romance.

I contacted Tommy and Charles and let them know I was going in a different direction. The

LYNN HARDY

direction God told me to go. When He opens a door, I maintain, it is a door no man can shut.

God Provides

This is God's Company

Borderline's old owner was faithful to what God told her to do. She had the note against the company dismissed, so there was no debt. When we signed the contract, Borderline Publishing came with the computers, a desk, a couple of bookshelves, books in inventory, and even incidentals like a stapler, pens, and paper clips.

The company had researched the route to bookstore shelves. She offered to train me for two weeks in the systems she created. Gratefully, I accepted. Most of it was pretty logical and easy to comprehend. Organization has never been my strong suit – having the office already ordered was a real blessing. QuickBooks' accounting software would be my biggest challenge.

In college, I had dropped my accounting class. The debit and credit logic was not something I wanted to focus on. I didn't even balance my own checkbook!

My first week alone, I made several appointments at different accounting firms. Each one had a different price. The lowest bid came in at \$150 per month.

I turned down the praise music as I drove to the office the next morning. "Lord, this is your company. You gave it to me. I need an accountant I can afford, I can't do this alone."

That same week, I placed an ad on Craigslist for submission editors. It was necessary to have several on staff. Every submission to the company

would be read by someone familiar with that genre in order for authors to receive authoritative feedback on their manuscript.

One of the responders to the ad lived in Boise. Craig Johnson came by the office for an interview. It wasn't a typical interview. We talked about a variety of subjects.

The Holy Spirit urged me to be open about the company. I told Craig how I came to be the new owner of this business. When I told him of my QuickBooks learning curve, he said, "My degree is in accounting. I specialize in small business start-ups." He said he was in between jobs and came in because my "ad sounded interesting. I love books," he added, "and I would be happy to help you, pro-bono if you'd like."

Thank you, God! An accountant walked straight into my office. The next night, I prayed, "Lord, this is truly Your company. Please don't let me ruin it. Don't let me go in a wrong direction, and waste valuable time. Holy Spirit, speak strongly to me!"

The Angel on my Shoulder

“Prophecy of the Flame – Book Three”

The alarm blasted the local radio station jabber into the room. I bounced out of bed and hit the ground running. A click of the remote brought Creflo Dollar to the boob tube while I readied myself in the bathroom.

There was so much to do to get the publishing company into shape. My list was long:

- Learn the system Borderline had developed for submitting books for bookshelves in Barnes and Noble.
- Calculate royalties for the first time.
- Design a private online group for our authors to walk them through the online marketing that every author, even traditionally published authors, need.
- Find a new name and design a logo.
- Find a designer and have our new website designed.
- Train new submissions editors.

If it was raining, I would leave work at three in the afternoon to pick up my kids, work from my home computer for a couple of hours, cook dinner, go back to my computer and work for a few more hours until my brain was numb. I would crash on the sofa for a short time before bed. On

nice days, the only change was that I arrived home in time to make dinner then work from home for a few hours. On weekends I was really able to focus on Borderline – ten to twelve hours straight!

A knot began to form above my left shoulder blade. The chiropractor worked on it for several weeks, but it just got worse. “This may be something that needs a physical therapist,” she told me, handing over a prescription.

“I don’t have time for physical therapy,” I thought.

That night, I spoke to God. “Look, you healed my neck. What the heck is wrong with my shoulder? You gave me this company, how am I supposed to run it like this?”

The Holy Spirit brought the argument my husband and I had a few nights ago to my mind:

“The house needs some serious attention,” Tony had said, “It seems like all you do is work on a company which isn’t making any money.”

“Honey,” I said, trying not to sound as offended as I felt. “This is a start-up company. It’s going to take some effort to get it into shape.”

“But not everything has to be done right now, does it?” he argued. “You are the boss. It can wait, can’t it?”

“Yes, I’m the boss. I’m the one who needs to make sure everything is done right. It’s all up to me.” I tried to reassure him: “This won’t last forever. Soon I’ll have things set up and it will be easier.” But Tony rolled over in a huff, not at all happy with my answers.

The quiet voice of the Spirit said, “I didn’t give you this company so it could ruin your family. Is

this your company or mine? Are you going to trust Me with it?"

"It is Your company, Lord," I said, tearing up. "Forgive me for thinking it was all up to me."

At that moment, the knot above my shoulder blade unwound. And within the next twenty-four hours, the tension in my shoulder dissolved completely. No physical therapy needed.

The next month settled into a much easier rhythm. I worked until three, picked up the kids, helped them with their homework, did housework, and made dinner. I would work at the computer for an hour or so afterwards. Weekends were family time. Soccer games, church, and whatever needed to be done.

God had my back.

Several fans contacted me over the next few months – I had promised to release Book Three of the series last summer. The manuscript was already half done. I had written the first book in the evenings when I worked full time. With most of the new system designed, I could squeeze in a couple hours a night. I would have the book finished in a couple of months.

Pain caused by the knot in my shoulder returned with a vengeance. I went to the Lord right away. The Spirit didn't waste a moment as He whispered, "Did I tell you it was time to work on Book Three?"

"No, Lord, you didn't," I responded. "I will put it aside until You tell me it's time."

The knot eased immediately.

You know, many people believe they have an angel on their shoulder, whispering to them, telling them what to do. My angel is a big buff dude who grips my shoulder in an iron vise if I start to go the wrong direction. God does answer prayers, just not exactly the way we foresee it.

Resilient Publishing

Kate Decker and I were introduced to each other through a fan of “Prophecy of the Flame.” Over the years we have become close friends, though we have never actually met. She has always told anyone who would listen that a successful publishing company should be run differently from the traditional format.

A trade, or traditional publisher, only signs books they feel readers will like. Typically these titles are placed on the bookstore shelves for six to nine months. More than seventy-five percent of the books are never sold, are returned to the publisher, and destroyed.

Once an author has signed a contract the trade publisher decides what the title of the book should be, what the cover will look like, and in most cases will remove what they don’t like and even add chunks of material written by an editor. Unless the author is someone of note, they have little say in the matter.

Royalties for traditionally published authors are small – seven to fourteen percent. However, advances are sometimes given to authors by a trade publisher. The publisher will then print enough books for sales that will cover the advance. Unless the title flies off the shelves, one printing may end up being the *only* printing of an author’s book. If the books do not sell well, the publisher will not want the next book in the series, nor will any other publisher. The rights for the first book in the series remains with the trade

publisher who has already ceased printing any more copies.

As a self-published author, I realized that there was a glass ceiling. Even though “Prophecy of the Flame” was a #1 Amazon Kindle Bestseller, I couldn’t get it on bookstore shelves. Kate and I had the same basic concept for a publishing company: Not a self-publishing company, but a mixture of the two.

Resilient Publishing allows authors to retain control of their work. We suggest and advise authors, but they remain in control. While authors will cover the production costs of their books, we guide them through the process and recommend reputable ways to produce a quality product. This allows us to give authors unheard of royalties: 75% of bound (physical) books and 65% of ebooks.

Research has shown that online marketing techniques change rapidly. A book on how to publish online is only partially effective by the time it hits the shelf. This is why we not only show our authors how to connect with readers and how to get reviews, but we keep authors updated on the latest techniques.

Once an author has developed a readership, measured by Amazon Kindle sales and a blog or Facebook following, we invest in them. Likewise, the process to submit books for nationwide distribution is done at no cost to the author. (Other self-publishing companies charge \$5,000–10,000 for doing this in a format that is almost guaranteed to fail.) Resilient Publishing creates a marketing strategy for each book that is submitted for distribution to the bookstore shelves, detailing each submission in a step-by-

step process (a costly procedure) and works with the author to ensure the best chance of success.

Bouncing my ideas off Kate has been a blessing I could not have foreseen. She was listed in *Who's Who in America 2001* for Marketing and PR, with much of her marketing expertise from working for some of the largest publishing companies in the nation. Her know-how was enlisted to craft distribution submissions and press releases for Resilient Publishing, and her efforts and insights have been extremely helpful.

"You must find a new name for your company," she suggested. " 'Borderline' is it good or is it bad? It's borderline. Much too ambiguous."

I wholeheartedly agreed with her.

After much deliberation, we decided to stick with Resilient Publishing. Every book, no matter how successful, comes under fire. Take the Harry Potter series: millions love it, yet there are those who take exception to it. For an author to be successful, they simply must be resilient! We will teach them how.

Now, I would love to be able to tell you that this last year has seen droves of authors flock to the company; that it took off with a bang. Unfortunately, this was a year of lessons learned.

In March, we signed an author who looked like she had great potential. We gave her the first-ever sponsorship advance – our company paid for a top of the line edit that would be recouped through royalties, and we set up marketing before the book was released. This author, who shall remain nameless, committed a breach of contract – signing the book we invested in over to another company without even offering to cover one penny of our expenses. With the legal action and the

expenses of the new startup, plus the advance, we broke even this year – just barely.

In October, when it was really hitting the fan with that author, I stepped back and said, “This is Your company, God. I have the plan set according to what You have told me. I won’t deviate again with any more advances. I know now that our contract gives authors too much control for that type of thing.

“Bring me the right authors. The ones that want to learn, that want to work at their own speed, the ones You will help succeed.”

This company will be what God wants it to be. No more, no less. Are we a “Christian” publisher? By no means. Stories can be used for entertainment and even give good moral lessons without being centered on God.

Our logo is a statue of a man, carving himself out of a hunk of rock with a gold hammer and chisel. I think of God as the hammer and our company as the chisel. I fully trust that Resilient authors will succeed according to God’s plan when they bring their books to Resilient Publishing.



God Grants Me a Vision

The Thousand Year Reign

With a fledgling business there was always much to do and the pace often affected my sleep. I tried to entertain myself in the middle of the night by exploring new story concepts. This is, after all, how I developed the story line for “Prophecy of the Flame”: I would relive past dreams as I tried to get to sleep, extend the story, figure out how it could have started, and fill in the fragments that were missing.

In October of 2013, I had a conversation with the Lord as I lay in bed, trying to sleep. “Lord, I am tired of thinking about worldly, ungodly things each night. I want to think about things that are of God.

“I know You can’t show me when the rapture will happen or when You will return to Earth, but You could show me what it will be like for the Thousand Year Reign, couldn’t You?”

Many years ago I had studied the Book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible, with the help of Jack Van Impe’s “Prophecy Bible.” Dr. Van Impe is known as the “Walking Bible” and one of the world’s foremost prophetic scholars. The “Prophecy Bible” breaks down the symbolism in Revelation so that it can be easily understood.

The Book of Revelation tells about the Thousand Year Reign:

4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

For the next two weeks, each night when I went to bed, information would flood into my mind. Not only pictures, but knowledge of how and why things were done. It was incredibly entertaining, but was it really what it is going to be like?

“Lord,” I said as I lay down, “You know I’ve a great imagination. I’ve written, what, three books now? Is this really from You? I don’t want to be fooling myself if this isn’t of God, if it is just me making stuff up.”

Mom called a few days later. “Lynn, a couple of days ago I had the strangest dream. I just can’t shake it,” she told me. “I think I am meant to tell you about it.”

“Lord knows I’ve shared my dreams with you, heck, you even helped edit a book based on them.” I smiled to myself. “Fire away, I’ve got some time.”

“I was with Barbara (her best friend) and Pops. We were in this place that was totally destroyed. All the buildings were rubble. People were starving. They were struggling to find enough clean water to drink.

Pops said, 'Everything is gone. I can't believe we've lost so much.'

'We still have each other.' I patted his arm to comfort him.

One scene haunts me every night. I can see it so vividly:

A little boy covered with filth and grime pulled a wagon filled with six loaves of bread. He was so thin that his bones were nearly visible.

A bigger boy came up to him to take his bread.

'No, that isn't yours,' I told him. The bigger boy nodded and went his own way.

A short distance away, Barbara was praying and someone was being healed. She collapsed, passing out.

I ran to her and scooped her up like I would a small child. Turning to Pops I said, 'We have to get her back.'

We turned and started walking away.

"That is when I woke up. What do you think it means?" Mom asked.

"I'm not sure." I thought for a minute. "Could it be linked to the evangelist stuff you are doing now? How devastated was it? Where were you? The United States or a third world country?"

"The destruction was widespread. I can't say for sure where we were," she says, unable to offer much information.

A scene flashes into my mind. The scene I had been ignoring every night when I went to bed:

The world lies in ruins. Humans dig through rubble looking for food, water, and anything that may be of use.

“Great, everything is destroyed. I get it. How about after that?” I ask the Holy Spirit. “What is it like fifty years after Christ returns?”

“Mom, your dream was about the Thousand Year Reign after Christ returns,” I explained. “I asked God to show me what it would be like: this was the part I didn’t want to see.

“You know how I love end-of-the-world movies, “Day of the Dead,” “World War Z,” “Zombie Land,” “Underworld,” and all types of scary shows. But it’s different when you know it is *real*, that people will suffer. It wasn’t relaxing at all so I kept asking the Holy Spirit to move on to other things, fast-forwarding, if you will, through the devastation part.”

“God has been showing you what it will be like when Christ returns?” she asked.

“Yep,” a chuckle escaped me. “A few nights back I asked him if what I was seeing was from Him or if it was my fertile imagination. Mom,” I said, “God sent you that dream to confirm that the visions I’ve been having are from Him!”

She was very interested in what I had been shown. Perhaps I would blog about it. After writing three fantasy books no one will believe this is real, I thought. They’ll think that it’s just more fiction from Lynn Hardy and dismiss the idea. Besides, do people really want to know about the Thousand Year Reign?

If you do want to know about it, subscribe to my blog at ToHeavenAndBackAgain.com. I’m not sure how or when God wants me to release this information, but if you subscribe, then you will be kept in the loop.

My First Vision - Revealed!

A few people have mentioned a book to me called “Heaven is for Real” by Todd Burpo with Lynn Vincent. I finally gave the bestseller a read. The story is about a three-and-a-half-year-old boy who travels to Heaven after undergoing an emergency operation from which he isn’t expected to survive.

Two things convinced me that his story might be true:

- My little brother Danny is a Baptist minister and a Bible scholar who knows both Greek and Hebrew. He was extremely impressed by the boy’s description of The Throne Room of Heaven. According to Danny, it was biblically accurate.
- Todd Burpo himself is a pastor, and some of what his son Colton Burpo learned about Heaven contradicted his father’s religion.

The movie based on this book was released on April 16, 2014. Todd Burpo was interviewed on “TheBlaze” shortly after the film’s debut. He told the audience that he heard about Akiane Kramarik on a CNN documentary in 2006: This young girl was raised in an atheist home. One day

at the age of three, she told her parents that she has seen God, the Father in Heaven.

Likewise, in 2005, on “The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson,” Akiane said that she had a vision about meeting God who taught her everything about art. By the age of eight, Akiana was considered to be the only known binary genius in both realist painting and poetry. It was at this age that she had painted a professional quality picture of Jesus.

After hearing her complete story, Todd informed listeners in his recent interview that he pulled up a picture of Jesus, expecting his son to give a list of things that were wrong with it as he did with every other likeness of the Son of God. Instead, Colton stood perfectly still, totally spacing out. To get his attention, he had to ask his son again. Colton Burpo told his dad that Akiana’s painting was right; it was just what Jesus looked like. In fact, to date this is the only picture of Jesus that Colton has ever said was right.

During our yearly hunting trip to Grangeville, I finished reading the “Heaven is for Real” book at a little coffee shop. With their free WiFi, Google helped me find akiane.com. I told the waitress and several other customers about the book and showed them the picture painted by a little girl who lived right here in Idaho.

When I returned home, I scoured Akiane’s website for pictures of Heaven. They were arranged according to the age of the artist, beginning when she was six. A click of the mouse on a small thumbnail would bring up a larger version of a picture with a description next to it.

My eyes skimmed over Akiane’s work at age ten. One was of a boy in what looked like a white nightshirt. As the picture loaded, my breath caught in my throat. It was the boy I had seen in

my vision so long ago (See Jesus Introduces Himself). The face was a little bit leaner, but it was unmistakably him.

I looked at the title, wondering who it was. Next to the picture it read, “Jesus, The Missing Years.” Tears flooded my eyes.

Lord... you came to me at such a young age, I thought, knowing the Holy Spirit would bring my words to Him. You actually came to me! I put my head down on the desk and sobbed.

It took me more than twenty minutes to get my emotions under control so I could look at the picture again. Tears flooded my eyes once more. Another twenty minutes passed before I could look at the picture without my eyes welling up. To this day, I get misty-eyed just looking at it.

The next day I downloaded the Kindle version of “Akiane: Her Life, Her Art, Her Poetry.” The beauty of God’s love can be seen in the words of her story. At the end of the book are pictures of her paintings with descriptions.

I shook my head at the lack of quality control provided by her publisher. The capitols were:

JSUTEISNYA

How could a publisher miss such obvious mistakes! The strangeness of that title remained on my mind all day. When I got quiet, the Holy Spirit brought to my remembrance what Akiane revealed in her book: God tells her what lines to capitalize and even what punctuation to use for her poetry.

“Maybe the capital letters in the title mean something!” My Kindle was in my hand minutes later. Examining the letters, J-E-S-U-S jumped right out at me. That left I-A-N-T-Y.

One of the games I love to play is Scrabble. My family won't play with me anymore. They say, "You know too many words." Try as I might, I could not find a word with the rest of the letters.

"Holy Spirit, if there is a message here, I'm not getting it. You are going to have to help me if You want me to understand it," I beseeched Him.

Glancing back at the words, I read it again:

A TINY JESUS

A chuckle escaped me. *A tiny Jesus, indeed!* The picture didn't have anything by which to gauge the size of the Young Prince. However, in my dream, Jesus was on a fence. From his size, I guessed he was seven or eight. Now that I know he was closer to twelve... A tiny Jesus he was! At that moment, I felt God winking at me.

I was so focused on figuring out who it was in this vision, the meaning of it never occurred to me until I began writing this book:

I was determined in what I wanted from life, but life had gotten a little muddy. I kept plowing through, sure that I could make it all okay again. In reality, I was stuck, not getting anywhere because I was in a life without God.

The moment I gave my life to Him, He showed up and pulled me out of that mud, setting me back on the path He had meant for me to take all along.

Tony's Miracle

The girls and I traveled to Oklahoma for Thanksgiving, 2013. For the first time in twenty-six years, our mom had all five of her kids with her at the same time. It was, to say the least, an interesting holiday.

Tony had work obligations and couldn't get away. He figured it would be a great time to finish remodeling the house and to tackle a few extra projects as well.

My hubby put us on a plane at six in the morning one Saturday. The lights flickered as we sat down in our assigned seats. The pilot announced that they were having issues with the electrical system and asked us to disembark while they fixed it. The plane finally left Boise at ten.

The delay in our departure caused us to arrive in Dallas around eleven that night. I dialed Tony's number as soon as we got to the baggage claim. A woman answered.

"Jessica? Did I dial your number by mistake?" I looked at my phone. "This stupid iPhone must be acting up again. I meant to call Tony."

"This is Tony's phone," Jessica, my next-door neighbor, told me. "I just stopped by to get Tony's wallet and phone for him."

"Where's Tony?" I asked.

"He's at the hospital. He cut his hand on the table saw," she informed me.

"I'll check and see if we can get our tickets changed. Will you keep me informed and let me

know what's going on? I asked." She agreed to keep in touch. I hung up, searching for our luggage.

"What's wrong, Mom?" Ashley, now twelve, asked.

"Daddy cut his hand on the table saw," I said without thinking.

Tears welled up in her eyes. "Is Daddy going to be okay?"

"He'll be fine," I reassured her. "He's at the hospital right now where the doctors can fix his hand."

"Can we go home so we can take care of him?" Ashley asked.

"Let's go find out," I said, pulling my suitcase off the conveyor belt.

"You mean we have to go home?" whined Sarah Jane. "But we just got here!"

The airlines wanted nearly \$3,000 to change our flights. Tony insisted that we stay – the doctor bills were going to be enough to cope with, we didn't need to spend an extra three grand for a flight home, he said. He went in for surgery a couple hours later.

That was the beginning of a very long night.

My brother Danny was driving out to Oklahoma with his wife and four kids from Phoenix. Just past the Texas border, the air shocks on their Navigator went out. The SUV was riding on its rear axle. Every time the car hit a bump it would fishtail.

Danny said they were having fun with it until they hit a freak snowstorm. It caught them an hour outside Amarillo, Texas. Nikki, his wife, counted six separate car pileups off the side of the road. Danny said she cried the last fifteen miles into Amarillo. When I got to Mom's

Saturday night, I learned that they would be stranded in Amarillo until Monday.

At four in the morning the surgeon called. Dr. Judd gave me the gruesome details. "I would have taken his middle finger if Tony would have signed the release." The doctor explained that the saw cut through the bone – the finger was only holding on by the skin and the vein, and some of the bone was missing. "I had planned on screwing it back together," he said, "but there wasn't enough bone to work with. I pinned it together the best I could. Depending on how the physical therapy goes, we may still have to amputate it."

The next day I talked with Tony. He had been so out of it that he didn't remember anything Dr. Judd told him after the surgery. I filled him in on the details then added, "The way I see it you have two choices:

You can do exactly what the doctor says and hopefully you will get enough use out of your finger that he won't have to amputate it. Or," I reminded him, "You know God has healed me three times. You also know that Mom and Pops are evangelists. They prayed for a local man who had Parkinson's so bad that he couldn't walk. The next night he helped take the offering. He's still fine today and this was over a year ago. You could ask Mom and Pops to pray for you and trust God to heal you."

Tony said he'd think about it. A couple hours later he asked us to pray for him. We did. Mom, Pops, Bobbi, our kids, and I joined hands and asked God to re-grow the bone Tony needed. We thanked Him for healing Tony so that he would have full use of his left hand, including the middle finger.

Later that night, we were gathered for a family dinner. I noticed Bobbi looked great in her pink angora sweater... almost too good. Had her husband given in and forked over the big bucks for a bit of plastic surgery? Even after all I'd gone through? Before I could ask about it, Tony called.

"The weirdest thing is happening," he said. "Every time I ask God to heal my hand, it burns like it's on fire!"

"That's God healing your hand! That's exactly what it felt like when he healed my rotator cuff," I told him.

The whole family rejoiced, celebrating God's goodness. I completely forgot about Bobbi's new figure until the next morning. When I saw the Perfect Shape push-up bra by Victoria's Secret on a satin chair, I shook my head. All that pain and expense I endured and her figure was just as good as mine after a trip to Victoria's! Little wonder the Holy Spirit warned me against surgery.

I tried to enjoy the rest of the holiday. Though God had Tony's healing taken care of, I can't say I wasn't still worried about him. My husband hadn't even been sick for more than three days in a row. How was he going to manage with only one hand for six days?

I coordinated with neighbors and friends to bring him dinner. I also called him at night for the first few days so he would wake up and take his pain medicine. I shouldn't have worried at all. Tony is the most resourceful man I know. By Day Five, he was managing on his own.

My first night back in Boise, Tony tossed and turned even though it was midnight by the time we got into bed. "Are you in pain," I asked.

“Not too much,” he replied. “It’s not the pain keeping me awake. Every time I close my eyes, I relive the accident.”

“I say prayers at night when I have trouble sleeping. Would you like me to pray with you and ask God to help?” I asked.

“That would be great.”

“Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for bringing us home safely today and we thank you for healing Tony’s finger. Your word states that it is vain to rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat – for You grant sleep to those You love. (Psalms 127:2) God we know that You love us as You love Jesus. We thank you, Father, for comforting Tony and letting him sleep. Let his mind be occupied with good things, with the wisdom of God concerning his ideas about perpetual energy or any other inventions he is working on. In Jesus’ name we ask this. Amen.”

“Thank you, Sweetheart.” Tony squeezed my hand then rolled over. Within five minutes he was snoring softly.

The next day we went to see Dr. Judd. “Are you a Christian?” I asked. “I hope you don’t mind me asking, but I was just wondering if you believe in miracles, if you believe that God heals people.”

“I don’t mind,” he smiled. “I am a Christian, and I do believe in God’s ability to heal people.”

I shared with him that we were completely convinced that Tony has been completely healed and will have full use of his hand.

“I can tell you, I saw what was left of his finger. Modern science is not advanced enough to repair it. If Tony gets full use out of his middle finger,” he said, “it *will* be a miracle from God.”

As we walked to the car, I told my husband, “You heard him. It isn’t mind over matter, it’s

God.” I paused, listening to the Holy Spirit. “You know, I think you may need to examine the Word of God to see why you are healed. It will increase your faith in what God is doing.”

Tony agreed to begin studying God’s word on healing. Later that week I dusted off a book I’d had for quite a while, “And Jesus Healed Them All” by Gloria Copeland. If Tony couldn’t get to Healing School, this would have to do.

We read half a dozen pages or so of the small book the first night. Tony would pause and ask if something was unclear to him. I would elaborate or explain it in more detail.

“What do you think so far, Hon?” I asked him.

“They talk about healing, but it is from sickness and disease, not from stupidity,” Tony grumbled. “Does God heal when it’s your own stupid fault?”

“Hmmm. I know there are Bible stories where God heals from accidents,” I said, “but they aren’t coming to me at the moment. Let me think about it.” The Holy Spirit reminded me of something. “You know that God healed my torn rotator cuff. Did you know that God told me not to go through with the breast augmentation?” I asked.

“The Holy Spirit warned me when we were discussing it, just before I went under. But I was afraid of how mad you’d be if we turned around and went home after going all the way to Salt Lake City.

“Because of that surgery, my rotator cuff was weakened and it tore. I disobeyed God, yet He healed me. Isn’t that worse than being stupid?”

Danny called the next day. When I told him what was going on he said, “Tell Tony not to worry, God does heal stupid people. I know two

stories right off the top of my head where people were healed from accidents,” he said.

“When he was still called Saul, Paul was blinded when Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus. The Lord sent a Christian to pray and lay hands on him so that he would be healed,” he said, quoting yet another example of the Lord’s mercy. “Also, Paul was preaching late one night. One of the young men was sitting in the window and he fell asleep. The man fell three stories and died from the fall. Paul prayed for the man and he was revived.” (Acts 20: 8–11)

That night I relayed these stories to Tony, then added, “Nothing is more stupid than falling asleep during a sermon, except maybe falling asleep in a window with no screen on it during a sermon. That has got to be the stupidest accident ever. And God healed *him* when Paul prayed,” I reassured my husband. “As we read this book, just remember it applies to stupid accidents, too.”

Soon there was another evening when Tony was tossing in his sleep something fierce. “My hand really burns,” he told me.

When we joined hands to pray, the Holy Spirit led me strongly: “Satan, I rebuke you. Take your hands off my husband. You leave him alone. Lord, let only Your healing fire be felt. Holy Spirit, I thank you for not bringing any more pain than Tony can deal with as you heal his hand. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.”

“That was really weird,” Tony said. “When you said that stuff, all the fire left.” He snapped with his good hand, “Just like that, it was gone. Then a few seconds later it came back, just warm, not on fire like it was before.”

Tony has continued to work hard, doing exactly what his physical therapist told him to do. The exercises are painful, but he persevered.

“We do our best and trust God to do the rest,” I reassured him, “Keep going. You will have full use of your hand before long.”

Three months later, Tony could make a tight fist. This was something the surgeon was certain my husband would never be able to do. Praise God!

To Heaven and Back Again

After returning home from the Thanksgiving holiday, I was busy the first few days taking care of Tony. When I finally headed back to the office and attempted to start my computer, it displayed the blue screen of death. I took it to the shop; the diagnosis wasn't good. A power surge had damaged my C-drive and I was told I would need a new computer.

Calculating royalties for my authors would have to wait, as shopping for a new office computer could not. Once purchased, it took another week just to get it set up. Then, I tried to get back to calculating royalties...

I opened QuickBooks 2012. A message said, "not a compatible version for this operating system." Stupid Windows 8!. It would take another \$300 to update my software! Not something that was in my budget, thanks to an author who was in breach of contract.

I made some calls: The Windows people would give me a new activation code for my copy of Windows 7, but, they warned that I would need the drivers to go with it. I called Gateway. They refused to give me the drivers I needed.

To be honest I had a complete meltdown. A crying-screaming-throwing-things MELT DOWN! Now I was never going to get to my authors' royalty checks by Christmas!

In truth, it wasn't just the computer. It was LIFE. First it was the betrayal by an author, and then it was Tony's hand. The house still looked

like a construction zone and now my computer was giving me grief. It was just too much.

I returned the computer and ordered one from Dell with Windows 7 already installed. While I waited for its arrival, I was at home taking a forced sabbatical. Free of distractions, I spent a lot of time with the Lord.

My body sunk into the mattress as the warmth of the covers surrounded me. Nightly prayers turned into a conversation, a bit one-sided, but I fully trusted the Holy Spirit to lead me. I silently pondered the recent wisdom given through various teaching and testimonies, especially what I had been reading about people who have traveled to Heaven.

In these conversations, two thoughts occurred:

Lord, many people who have gone to Heaven and returned have tried to reveal your glory, grace, and love to the world. All the accounts I have read say "I am not a writer, but..." or something to that effect. People have always told me that when I write I have a way of bringing a story to life, of taking them with me to another world. How great would it be if I were to go to Heaven so that I could take people with me to Heaven through my writing – led and guided by Your Spirit, of course?

And then, "God, Your Word says that You are not a respecter of persons – meaning that what You do for one, You will do for another because You see each of us as You see Your perfect son, Jesus. I know of two people You took to Heaven and returned to Earth and who were not close to death. You have fully convinced me that their accounts are true. Since You took them, I know You can take me to Heaven and back to Earth."

The Holy Spirit fell heavily upon me, my hands tingled almost all the way to my shoulders – even my feet tingled. He encouraged me to speak in faith, “I thank You God for taking me to Heaven and back again so that I can write of Your glory, Your grace, and Your great love.”

The Holy Spirit brought to my remembrance the reason I didn’t start the blog about the visions. “Lord, you know I had a hard time believing that you were showing me the Thousand Year Reign – likely due to my previous work on fiction books. For this reason, I thank You that as I return, my face will shine with Your glory, as did Moses’. This will give witness to the world that I am Your ambassador, a witness to what you have for us in Heaven, that I have been *To Heaven and Back Again*. I ask this in Jesus’ name, amen.”

I knew from past experience that God doesn’t honor a request if it has the potential to cause discord in a marriage. My husband Tony is a logical man. Some of those in my close spiritual family have come to lovingly refer to him as “Doubting Tony,” after the Biblical character Doubting Thomas, who was very practical and not one to be drawn to flights of fancy.

After all, it was Thomas who famously said, “Unless I see in his hands the marks made by the nails and put my finger into the nail prints, and put my hand into His side, I will never believe it (that Jesus has risen).” (John 20:25 AMP)

Once I explained to my husband the wisdom that led me to ask God to take me to Heaven, he said, “I don’t see any reason why God shouldn’t take you too.”

“But, Honey, our lives will not be the same if I go before the world, glowing with the glory of God,

telling people I am writing a book about Heaven. Are you okay with that?" I asked.

"How could I not be?" He squeezed my hand.

My heart soared. "I'm going to Heaven!" I squealed.

A few days later, the Holy Spirit told me I would need a website for people to visit. Taking a leap of faith, I did as I was told and created a place online, more like a blog, which people could follow for updates as chapters were completed. And so it was: ToHeavenAndBackAgain.com

While I prayed, I asked God what to do next. During or after each prayer time, I was led over and over again to read "Close Encounters of a God Kind" by Christian minister Jesse Duplantis. He was a Christian pastor I had heard speak about his trip to Heaven. He returned to Earth in time for his engagement at a friend's church. The entire congregation gasped when he appeared. Until that moment, Jesse was unaware that his face was shining with the glory of God.

Every time I prayed, it felt as though I should read Jesse's book. Yet my thoughts were conflicted: "I don't want to be influenced by what someone else reports, Lord. I want to see Heaven for myself."

Over the years I've noticed that if God wants you to do something, He doesn't give up until the opportunity has passed. When the thought persisted for a couple of weeks, I finally realized that God had a purpose in having me read that book. I searched for "Close Encounters of a God Kind."

I got a little choked up, tears in my eyes threatened to overflow when Jesse described Jesus. It always amazes me when people meet God and Jesus that they see fit to argue with Him

in person. I was getting a grip on myself when I read the part where Jesus tells Jesse, “Everyone looks for the signs when they ought to look for My witness.”

A ball of emotion welled up in my chest and tears ran down my cheeks. The Holy Spirit whispered, “That’s you.”

“Oh my gosh... I didn’t know,” I whispered. “I didn’t mean to ask for so much.” The thought caused me to sob in earnest. “Lord, how can it be that I should have this honor? I am no one, not a preacher, not a teacher, or even a Bible scholar. I am just a normal woman...”

The soft voice of the Spirit spoke words I will never forget. “Were not each of the disciples Jesus chose just men – fishermen, even a tax collector? God uses small things...”

It was more than half an hour before I could stop the tears long enough to continue reading Jesse’s account. He said he felt what Jesus meant was that people should look at the witness of Jesus’ life on Earth instead of looking for signs of the times. I am not totally convinced that the minister knows exactly what Jesus was referring to. As He said, “...for My witness,” not “at my witness.” We look “for” something that is to come; we look “at” something that has already happened. If Jesus had meant that we should look “at” the witness of His walk, wouldn’t He have said “at My witness” instead of “for My witness”?

Personal experience has taught me that where God is leading you can be hard to determine. It would be an honor above all honors to be His witness. If that is not His will, I don’t want it – The Lord knows what is best because He knows the full plan.

I prayed, "Lord, I trust that You will correct me strongly and loudly if this is not Your will, but until then, I cannot help but to stand in faith, waiting for You to take me 'To Heaven and Back Again.' "

More than a month had passed since I asked God to bring me to Heaven. I have I prayed several nights in a row, the Holy Spirit said, "next weekend." I hoped it meant I would be going to Heaven, but I waited on God to see what He wanted.

Saturday morning came and I was a little disappointed to wake in my own bed. That night, my daughter Ashley had an accident playing soccer. Tony had to carry her off the field and, even seated, she cried uncontrollably. The Holy Spirit whispered, "It is broken."

We rushed Ashley to the emergency room. On the way there she said every bump felt like a stabbing pain.

"Pray that her ankle isn't broken," Tony told me.

After I dropped her and Tony off at the ER, I called my mom. "Mom, I don't know what to do," I admitted. "When the thought came that Ashley's leg was broken, I told Tony that 'it was broken,' but now he wants me to pray that it's not! How can I ask God to heal something when I have declared that it is so?"

"Just pray with me," she said. "Father, we come to you in Jesus' name and rebuke the works said about Ashley's ankle – it is not broken, it is whole. We thank you God for healing this ankle so that she can walk and play."

Tony called about fifteen minutes later. Ashley had stopped crying. The X-rays were inconclusive. The doctor told Ashley to try and stand, which

she was able to do. Her ankle wasn't broken. By the next morning she could walk on it normally. Praise God! Now I know why the Holy Spirit said, "next weekend."

Though it all fit together, I have to tell You, I was still struggling. "Lord, You know my heart. I wasn't trying to 'help' You. I wanted to tell the world about Your grace and Your love. Please grant me wisdom. Let me know if I am in error or encourage my faith. After thirteen years, and thinking it was Your path to blessing six times, it is hard not to think I am in error once again."

The next morning I was watching Creflo Dollar. He quoted 1 Corinthians 2:7:

⁷But rather what we are setting forth is a wisdom of God once hidden [from the human understanding] and now revealed to us by God—[that wisdom] which God devised *and* decreed before the ages for our glorification [to lift us into the glory of His presence].

I was greatly encouraged. I felt that God granted me wisdom to lift me into the glory of His presence – literally. And now, rather than after death.

Kate Decker called to see what I was up to. It had been several weeks since we had spoken. The Holy Spirit encouraged me to tell her what was going on. I didn't really want to. Kate is a Quaker. She is very humble and doesn't presume to know the mind of God. I was worried about what she might think of this radical divine inspiration.

I had shared much of my experiences with Kate, so I just updated her on the latest going-to-Heaven mission.

I swear I could hear her smile through the phone when she said, "I can't think of a better person for the job."

"I can think of several," I replied. "How about a daughter of a pastor who already has a

following? Or an evangelist with a devoted following.”

“Do you remember the verse, God likes to use simple things...?” she asked reassuringly.

“I guess ‘simple’ is a good word. I don’t have so much as a college degree,” I said.

“I didn’t mean that kind of simple,” Kate chided me. “Your faith is simple. It is not complicated. It is just straight faith in God.”

“That’s true. I just love the Lord. It makes me want to do whatever He needs, not what I want.”

“Exactly!” she said. “And from what I know of your life, it seems to me that this may be what God has been grooming you for all these years.”

“From her lips to your ears, Lord,” I prayed. “Let it be so.”

Following His Instructions

Writing this Book

I wrote this book under duress. I didn't want to write this book. But God is always right. I will do what He says, even when it doesn't make sense to me. It is His world; I'm just living in it.

For a long time God has been telling me that I would need to write a book about my journey with Him. I figured I would, someday, after the blessing He spoke of was manifest. That way people would know how I came to be so financially blessed by God.

After all that had happened in November and December of 2013, I decided to focus more on doing what God wanted, one day at a time. Step by tiny step. This led me to do the following:

1. Complete royalties for my authors
2. Send out W9s for Resilient Publishing
3. Create the blog:
ToHeavenAndBackAgain.com and record my journey there.

After that weekend when my daughter's ankle was healed, I said, "What now, God?"

The Big Guy asked me to do something I really, really didn't want to do. "Write the book about being blessed miraculously, financially. Call it: "Angels Believe in You – The Journey that Led to Heaven and Back Again."

This made absolutely no sense to me. Who would possibly want to read a book about me?

“But God,” I argued, “people will think I’m crazy. I have no proof. The blessing is not fully apparent yet.”

“All my prophets, did they not write down what I said before it was there to see? Some of them were dead and long gone before what they wrote came to pass thousands of years later.”

“Yes, Lord,” tears clouded my eyes. “I will do it. I just don’t see the logic; I don’t see how it can possibly be a good thing. But because You told me to, I will do it.”

As I write these words, I have no idea what is next. I know I will publish this book on Kindle. I know what the cover will look like. After that, it’s up to God. One step at a time.

Final Words

There are two items which God strongly impressed upon me in 2016:

First Word

Freely you have received; freely give. (Matt. 10:8 NIV)

Most people only apply this verse to what is mentioned directly before it.

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.

This is the inspired word of God. There is purpose in every aspect, every nuance of what is said. In this case, we must also examine what is not being said: it doesn't say, "freely heal, freely raise the dead, freely cleanse, freely cast out." This would have clearly defined what we should do freely.

Instead we have Jesus giving instruction and direction, revealing their calling, and empowering those whom He has set on a task. Then He adds the parameters: you did nothing to earn this power, this authority, it is mine and I give it freely to you. You do the same. What I have given to you, give it away for free.

This reminded me of the woman preacher I saw on television. She gave a word about this back in 2015, "God is raising up the unknown to

give away for free what His anointed are charging for."

Directly after God kept me awake until 4 AM giving me the amazing revelation that led me to write "*Why Doesn't God Speak to Me?*" He said, "How much are you willing to hear from me? To receive from me?"

Instantly I reply, "You have given me glimpses of the price I may have to pay, and I am now ready and willing. I give it all to you... Should the price be my very life."

The quiet voice of the Holy Spirit continued, "Then implement the revelation I gave to you in a clearly miraculous way. Give all that I have given you away for free." (Fullness of this revelation found in "*Why Doesn't God Speak to You?*")

"I am God, aren't I?" I asked. "Ever since You spoke to me about going to Heaven, I am putting your revelations on my website for free. And I will never charge for a prayer or appearance."

"But you are charging for your books."

The words cause a mild panic. I couldn't stop my thoughts, "Those are my biography... Everyone charges for a composed biography. And I paid for the top of the line edit on those, not to mention having the covers designed. Surely I am able to charge for the final polished project I invested money and years of time into creating."

He asked, "What makes these books worth buying? Why do you have a product to sell?"

I knew better than to say, "Because I am able to write in a way that seems to appeal to people." The word tells us that He knew us before we were formed in the womb, He designed me with the gift to write. Instead I thought, "Because I have had an interesting journey that may help others."

Gently He prodded, "And what did you do to deserve those 'interesting' experiences?"

A part of me wanted to say "I fell in love with Jesus with my whole heart." But I know many people who love Him as I do and they haven't been blessed with some of wonderful experiences I have been given. My soul sighed as I am forced to admitted, "Nothing. I am no one. I abandoned You. And You chose to reveal who You are to me. I messed up time and time again, and You sent miracle after miracle to encourage me... These books wouldn't exist without You." Deep inside peace welled up confirming I was on the right track.

Despite the hours of deep revelation God had just brought to me, petulant, whiny thoughts burst forth, "But all the big evangelist and even smaller pastors have made millions, if not billions, off of their books! Why did you have to reveal this to me? Why do I have to do it for free?"

"To who much is given, much is required. You now know the fullness of your calling."

I'm reminded that less than an hour ago I had said I would do anything He asked. Another soul-sigh, "I put my faith in You to provide. As soon as I can write this up and upload the revised book, they are all yours."

This is why all books associated with "God stuff" are now free. Indeed, I said I would give ALL so all books that I have not co-authored are FREE. Right now the printed version on Amazon is listed at the lowest allowed price which gives zero royalties (I receive nothing for the sale of it). When I have enough income to print in mass quantiles, I will offer it on my website absolutely FREE.

WARNING: God has said that when I begin moving in the signs, wonders, and miracles, it will

be a warning shot to all those called by God who have been given revelation from Him about His word. If you want to receive the outpouring of His glory, then it is time to come up to a new level of trust. If you do not have the faith necessary to give all the insight, all the knowledge, all the experiences God in His grace has given you away for free and trust Him to take care of the cost of being on TV, then step back until you do. The disciples didn't charge for a single word they said, written or otherwise. They trusted in God and so should you. People do not need to give you a seed of blank amount to receive their breakthrough. Give them the information and trust God to tell them what to send. Stand back and be amazed that they will send exactly what God told you they would.

This is the way it should be done.

Second Word

If we have sown [the seed of] spiritual good among you, [is it too] much if we reap from your material benefits?... [On the same principle] the Lord directed that those who publish the good news (the Gospel) should live (get their maintenance) by the Gospel. (Corinthians 9:11 & 14 AMPC)

Let him who receives instruction in the Word [of God] share all good things with his teacher [contributing to his support]. Do not be deceived *and* deluded *and* misled; God will not allow Himself to be sneered at (scorned, disdained, or mocked by mere pretensions or professions, or by His precepts being set aside.) [He inevitably deludes himself who attempts to delude God.] For whatever a man sows, that *and* that only is what he will reap. (Galatians 6:6 AMPC)

If through this book you have received spiritual insight, information you didn't have before, peace, hope, or encouragement, then I pray that you will ask God what you should give in return. May the Holy Spirit guide you in deciding what you have received is worth.

God has instructed me to include 3 ways in this book in which you can give back:

1. Send what God tells you to:

Lynn Hardy
P.O. Box 234
Star, Idaho 83669

2. Paypal – If you have an account, do the following:
 - a. Click on “Send Money”
 - b. Type in this email address:
 - c. Type in the amount God tells you to give
 - d. Under “Special Instructions” type:
Lynn Hardy
3. Visit [LynnHardy\(period or dot\)com](mailto:LynnHardy(period or dot)com) and click on the books link. There will be options there that will take you to paypal where you can use a credit card to give without an account.

May God bless you and keep you, in whatever you decide.

Epilogue

Adding up the Numbers

A few weeks back, I was lying in bed, talking to the Lord. Out of the blue He said, “I didn’t give those numbers in vain.” Suddenly, the relevance of His message came into clear focus:

- 2014 is 13 years after God first spoke to me. He gave me 3 miracles in those 13 years – 313
- 3 months after God told me about “To Heaven and Back Again,” I published this book. It contains 13 stories about angels and demons – 7 of those stories are about angels.
- November 7, 2007, God healed my torn rotator cuff as the first copy of “Prophecy of the Flame” rolled off the presses: $3+1+3$ adds up to 7.
- The founding of Resilient Publishing marks the seventh time I thought, “This is God’s blessing.”
- Writing this book is the 7th thing God instructed me to do.

God said that He gave 313 to Tony three times. He was very clear: all the numbers given to Tony would be used. Are there more signs with 313 still to come?

I will keep you updated on Facebook and in my blog.

Links

Have a question about God or kids? Go straight to my source: AskMomQandA.blogspot.com

Lynn Hardy – LynnHardy.com

“To Heaven and Back Again” the blog –
ToHeavenAndBackAgain.com

Unfortunately, I am unable to recommend any religious leaders because of the products they are selling. God has been very clear: to do this would be adding to what they will be judged for. I will only recommend products and people who come up to this higher standard which God has set.

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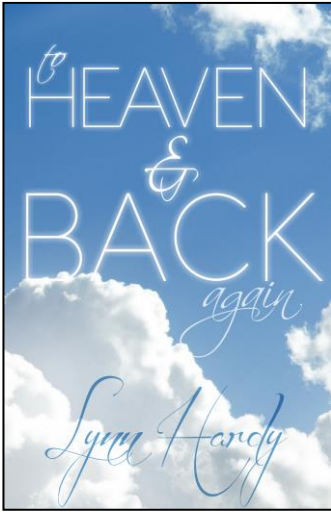
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Other Books by Lynn Hardy



To Heaven and Back Again

Chapter One

May 4, 2013

My eyes close as I softly whisper my nightly ritual, “Father I thank you for this wonderful day and for the gift of Your Son, Jesus. I thank You for the life He lived and the life He gave for us. I plead the blood of Jesus over my body, my home, my possessions, and the works of my hand. I thank You that this is a barrier that no evil can transgress.”

I continue my prayers silently in my head chatting with my Heavenly Father for a short while before asking God what I should be doing this week and petitioning Him once again to let me know if it was not His will for me to go to

Heaven and back again. As it has happened regularly since November 2013, my hands begin to tingle all the way up to my elbows as if they are falling asleep. This is not the first time I've had this sensation when I pray: when God healed my deviated septum my hands tingle in much the same way.

While I wait for an answer a thought springs into my mind: In 2001, in a vision, I fell to my knees and called a young boy Lord. On Akiane Kramarik's website, I recognized this young boy who appeared to me in one of her paintings, "Jeshua - The Missing Years." The portrait depicted Jesus at the age of fourteen. Her book "Akiane - Her Life, Her Art, Her Poetry" tells how everything she wrote was inspired by God even words that she capitalized.

(Read the entire story of God's many miracles that have taken place in author Lynn Hardy's life in her own book "Angels Believe in You: The Journey that Led to Heaven and Back Again.")

On her website, the description of Akiane's "Jeshua" painting says: "During one of his meditations, Jesus is talking with his Father in Heaven about the new earth, where only joy and peace would reign."

"Hmmm," I think to myself, "lately I've heard pastors quote the Bible over and over, telling us that it says 'as Jesus was in this world so are we.' Well, since Jesus went to heaven in a meditation, perhaps that is why my forearms tingle every time I ask God about going to Heaven and back again.

"Lord, I pray if this is Your will, I trust You to help me do this."

There is a game I used to play with my kids when they were little called "I'm sleeping." I would relax my body completely and no matter what they did I would remain asleep. They would try

and pick up my arms or move my head, yet I was completely unresponsive. I use this technique now, relaxing my entire body as I often do when I am trying to get to sleep.

With my muscles limp, I think very clearly, “I thank You God for taking me to Heaven and back again.” I concentrate on God, focusing my mind on Him. The tingling in my hands and arms increase as I continue to think about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit and repeat these words.

I begin to experiment, saying the words out loud. My mind wanders for a minute; the tingling ebbs. When I focus on God again, it starts to build again. Past experience along with a medical study shows us that the brain is inactive when we pray in the heavenly language. I let the Holy Spirit take charge of my mouth. Words flow out as I keep my thoughts focused on one of the members of the Trinity. The tingling increases from my elbows to my head and even extends to my feet!

The words slow as my chest begins to feel heavy. It is a long time in between breaths. “Has my body forgotten how to breathe?” I reject the panic that begins to creep in for I trust God completely. I encourage my body to remain relaxed. It takes a while to become accustomed to this slower, more sedate type of breathing, but eventually it begins to feel normal. My body and mind are at peace and I don’t feel tired in the least! Quite the opposite, I feel more energetic than when I was laying down.

Without warning, an invisible, intangible part of my being in my lower abdomen tries to lift out of me; the muscles in my right thigh spasm. On occasion, when you are on the verge of sleep, do all your muscles ever involuntarily contract? Or is that just something that happens to me? It is not

unlike that, but it seems to be limited to the muscles around my right thigh.

“Lord, if that isn’t You, please do not let it happen again,” I think, knowing I had already pled the blood so it had to be Him.

I continue concentrating on the members of the Trinity and repeating the phrase over and over again in my mind. The tugging sensation comes again, stronger this time with the spasm now encompassing my whole lower body. I focus and try to will my muscles to relax. The frequency of the spasms and tugging sensation increases along with the intensity, relaxing after each incident becomes second nature. The next pull feels like part of me is being lifted several feet into the air and will break away. A spasm causes my shoulder blades to pinch and my back to arch off the bed. My body relaxes almost before it settles back onto the mattress.

My bladder becomes insistent on being emptied. “I peed like a racehorse not too long before I started praying,” I think. “I shouldn’t have to go again!” When the sense of urgency fails to dissipate, I go to the bathroom to end the distraction. To my surprise, I empty an almost full bladder. When I return to bed I glance at the clock: 2 A.M. I realize that I have been praying for at least three hours!

As I begin to think the same phrase over and over, “I accept that whatever happens, I am in God’s hands,” the muscle spasms lessen and the tugging becomes a slow, even pull. The small, quiet voice of the Holy Spirit says, “Not tonight, but keep doing this until it is time.”

I believe it won’t be long now!

May 11, 2014

On Thursday night, Tony and my eldest daughter Ashley left for a soccer tournament in Couer D'Alene, Idaho. My youngest child Sarah had a game here in town so she and I stayed behind. With Tony gone, Sarah has the rare opportunity to sleep with me. The next morning I gently rub her shoulder, trying to roust her from my bed.

She mumbles, "Mom, can we go to a movie later?"

The pale green numbers on the clock read 10:55 A.M. I smile at the ten-year-old. "If you want to wait we can. But I will need to pray now. So you will have to leave me alone until two o'clock."

"Okay," she rubs her eyes grumpily. "All this talking," she says frowning, "now I'm awake!"

"Do you still want to wait?" I ask, hoping she will. I have been trying to meditate and pray each night, but by the time I crawl in bed, I'm exhausted. What Tony calls "relaxed breathing" rumbles out of me each time I ease my muscles as I prepare for prayer. Soft snores lead to full-fledged, deep dreaming before I can even begin.

"Or do you want to go to lunch and a movie later for Mother's Day?" "Can I have cereal if we wait?" Sarah petitions.

"I don't see why not. We will have a late lunch before the show."

As she stumbles from the room I think to myself, "Lord, this is perfect! My bladder is empty and I haven't drunk anything since last night. Thank You. All I really wanted for Mother's Day is a glimpse of Heaven, just a peek. Now I'm ready to begin!"

My body relaxes with ease. The slow, shallow breaths come naturally. Quickly, my hands

become heavy; they feel hollow instead of tingling. This time, when something tugs at an invisible part inside of me, I remain relaxed.

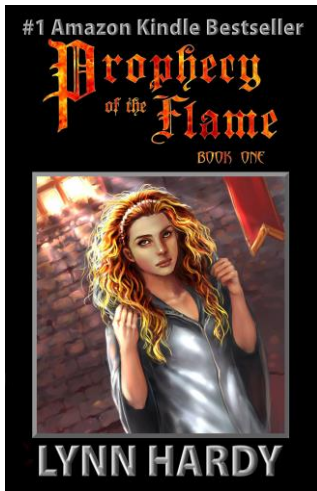
Gentle power surges into my body. Warmth caresses me in gentle waves as I speak in the heavenly language while my mind repeats, “I thank You God for taking me to Heaven and back.”

Suddenly, a bright light, not at all harsh or cold but comforting, consumes my vision though my eyes are closed. “Did the sun finally come out on this overcast day?” I wonder, but the windows are shuttered against the light. I think about how Tony likes to sleep in nearly total blackness, so that in the depth of night if the power has gone out, it is impossible to see your hand in front of your face. My thoughts persist as the light disappears, “And I have the pillow covering my eyes. Even if the sun came out, it wouldn’t be *that* bright through the pillow!”

All this thinking has brought me out of my deep meditation. It is nearly one o’clock. Two hours have passed very quickly.

“Thank you, Lord, for that brief glimpse. Now I know why the Holy Spirit said to keep trying! It seems like there is a lot to learn, one tiny step at a time.”

Coming Soon!



Prophecy of the Flame

by
Lynn Hardy

In a blinding flash of light, five strangers are yanked from this world and thrust into a land of sorcery as they are granted the looks and abilities of the people they were playing. This band of wannabe heroes soon discovers that having the powers they have always dreamed of, does not make life a dream come true. The Crusaders of the Light struggle to form a cohesive band as they blend twentieth century technology with the supernatural powers of this new world, fighting to liberate the kingdom of Cuthburan from the evil horde threatening humanity.

Battle is also waged within Reba, an ordinary housewife who has become the most powerful mage on the planet, as she struggles to remain true to her wedding vows. Drawn against her will to the arms of Prince Alexandros, Reba must choose between a marriage to a handsome prince in a magical world or returning to the husband she left behind.

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