

A Spirit-Filled Response to Those Who Reject Your Love

Have you ever experienced this, where you've shared the gospel with someone and they brushed you off?

They made fun of you

They kindly said that it wasn't for them

They said they'd think about it later

What do you do?

When you've shared your faith with someone and they refuse to listen, it can be extremely uncomfortable and disappointing.

But your response in that situation may determine whether or not there will be an open door at a later time.

I believe that every believer bears a grave responsibility to share the gospel with as many people as they can in their lifetime, but the response of the listener isn't our responsibility, it's God's.

To be sure, there are methods often used that turn off people to the gospel and close a potentially widely open door, but ultimately, someone's decision to receive or reject Christ isn't our responsibility.

If you have shared the gospel with someone, and they rejected you, understand that you did not fail.

Successfully sharing the gospel isn't dependent on "the sale."

In fact, we are not "selling" something at all. The gospel isn't a product that someone may find useful in their life. The gospel is far more serious than that and it is God's desire that everyone receive Him, because rejection of Him ends badly. Very badly!

So, what should our response be when someone won't listen to the gospel?

The answer is simple:

Prayer!

In fact, prayer should sandwich sharing the gospel.

We should always earnestly pray before and after we've shared the gospel with someone, regardless of the outcome; but especially when someone won't listen.

When someone rejects the gospel, their heart is hard, and the enemy is preventing them from hearing the truth that will set them free.

And this is a great battle.

The battle for someone's soul is a spiritual battle between heaven and hell, a battle to plunder hell and populate heaven.

Below is a printable I made based on something I learned from a Billy Graham Crusade I participated in back in 1991.

On this form, you write down 5 names—be sure not to avoid names of people that you feel are not likely to get saved. Imagine how much glory God would receive if that person got saved!

You know whom I'm talking about. We all have that person in our life.

Write these names down on both sides of the paper, and then cut along the dotted line. Put one list in your Bible and the other list next to your bed.

This way, you'll remember to pray for these 5 people twice each day!



To download this Salvation Prayer Card, click on this link.
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Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her hero. Together they live in the country with their 2 active boys where she enjoys fruity candles and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. She holds an Associate's of Practical Theology and is passionate about discipling and encouraging women. Her passion for writing led her to author a number of books. She is the author of *A Little R & R* where she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. She can also be found at these other places on a regular basis. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

This Comforting Addiction Is Dragging Believers to Early Deaths

I thought we were good together, and then you do this to me. You seemed to be there every time I needed you. I thought you made my life better and that we were the perfect team.

You listened when I cried, and your tangible presence comforted me in a way I thought none other could. But you made me feel better, if only for a few minutes, and that's all I cared about at the time.

Companion

You were my companion in the good times and bad. If I was lonely, you were right there with me. It didn't matter that I

didn't know who to call because you were there. You soothed whatever pain I felt.

When I was tired, you were the one that give me the pick-me-up. You made me feel as though I had energy to go on, even if for just a few more minutes. I just knew life was better with you.

Protector

You protected me to make sure no men would get close and take advantage of me. I knew with you by my side, I was always safe.

Even in good times, you made everything better. Just one look at you, and I knew soon I would be satisfied and feel I had celebrated in the best way possible.

Comforter

When I was ready to blow my top, you were there, soothing me. Just one whiff of you, and I knew all my problems were gone. You calmed me and made the anger go away. And if it came back, you were there to help me again. You always did your job.

Stress would overwhelm me, and I would run straight to you. You were the best at making me forget about everything and just focus on my needs and wants in the moment. You seemed to take care of them with just one delicious taste, and then another and another.

You comforted me in a tangible way. If the boss yelled at me, I could just eat brownies made with you and all my frustration would vanish, even if it was just for a moment.

If I had a decision that didn't seem to have a solution, I could go through the drive-in and order a huge ice cream sundae, and all of a sudden, I didn't have to make a decision. I just felt the world went away for a minute or two or three.

And when others I thought loved me failed me, turned to someone else, rejected me by ignoring me or not touching me or not speaking to me, you were always there, making it not seem to matter so much. You stepped in and made it feel like you were all I would ever need.

Deceiver

Now I learn with all we've been through, you have not had my best interests at heart. You have been deceiving me. As a matter of fact, you had planned a course for my demise, destruction and even eventual death.

Why would you do that to me? What did I ever do to you? You were my everything. My comforter, companion, protector, lover and friend.

I heard the doctor. I know you've been trying to kill me. And for once, I look at you and do not want you in my life any more.

Because you see, I'm choosing life (Deut. 30:10-20). I'm deciding that I'm more than a cookie or a piece of my favorite cake. I'm worth more than the best ice cream I can buy and the most decadent brownie ever made.

Killer

So this is it. We've had a long journey together and it's been downhill all the way. You no longer are in control of me.

All my life, you've been slowly destroying me, and I have been letting you.

You are not a comfort. You make me extremely uncomfortable.

You are no friend. You seek to harm me.

You do not help me have energy. You spike my energy for a minute and then, I crash and burn.

You do not give me peace when I am angry. You only help me stuff my anger to the point that impacts every part of my life.

You do not solve my stress. You add pounds to my body, which increases my stress and taxes my heart.

You do not protect me. You are the one thing that is systematically destroying me, leaving me vulnerable to every disease imaginable.

Good-Bye Forever

This is good-bye. You are no longer my friend. I see you for the monster you are.

Sugar, you are no lover. You are out of my life for good. Oh, and don't try coming back. I will not change my mind. The locks have been changed, and I'm not giving you the key to my heart anymore.

I know now that I've been putting you above God in my life, above my own desire to live. I will not do that any longer. God is my comforter, companion, protector. No substance can provide for me the way He can. I see you for what you are, a tool of the devil (John 10:10) in my life.

I am finally free of you and believe me, nothing tastes as good as freedom feels. Nothing!

I can finally say with confidence, "'All things are lawful to me,' but not all things are helpful. 'All things are lawful for me,' but I will not be brought under the power of anything" (1 Cor. 6:12).

Are You a Sugar Addict?

If you don't know my story, I've lost more than 260 pounds. The main thing I did was to stop eating sugar and flour. My mission is to help you break free of food bondages,

strongholds and addictions and straight into the arms of the true lover of our souls, Jesus.

Teresa Shields Parker is a wife, mother, business owner, life group leader, speaker and author of *Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds and Stopped Trying to Earn God's Favor* and *Sweet Grace Study Guide: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Overcome Sugar Addiction and Sweet Freedom*. Get a free chapter of her memoir on her blog at [Teresa Shields](#) . Connect with her there or on her Facebook page or Twitter.

Helpful Methods to Spot Suicidal Tendencies in Your Teen

Teen suicides have been on my mind again. They're far too prevalent. Young people choose, for a variety of reasons, to end their lives. It's a permanent decision they think is a solution. If they're thinking at all.

If you've heard me speak, you probably know I'm also concerned for what I call:

- **Intellectual suicide** – They give up thinking and studying because so much feels irrelevant and overwhelming. Trying and failing is too painful.
- **Social suicide** – They give up on people and relationships because people can't be trusted and can be mean. They've been rejected and hurt too often.
- **Emotional suicide** – They give up feeling because there's so much suffering and pain in the world and their world. Their heart hurts too often and too deep.

- **Spiritual suicide** – They give up on God because Christians and the church have disappointed them. They may not have a proper biblical view of the God of the Bible. Having faith and hope doesn't seem possible any more.
- **Physical suicide** – Death that may begin with self-harm and other unhealthy decisions.

Parents, teachers, pastors, friends and community leaders who know teenagers can prevent suicide. How? We can help them process pain well. We can guard their hearts and minds to prevent pain. We can ask better questions. We can answer their questions. We can share our feelings. We can accept their feelings. We can guide them toward truth. We can invest. We can.

Preventing suicide starts with knowing teenagers.

- What do they believe? Why?
- How do they feel? Why?
- What are their dreams? Why?
- What concerns them? Why?
- What are they passionate about? Why?
- What problems would they like to help solve? Why?
- What talents and gifts do they have that will help them meet other people's needs?
- What needs do they have that they wish someone would help them with?
- Who would they love to be friends with?
- Who do they think is supportive?
- Do they know how to ask for help?

Every type of suicide is preventable. We must invest.

Knowing teens starts with knowing children. We must pay attention to our children. What ticks them off and turns them on? What are their dreams? Who do they wish they could become? Do they know what's realistic? How to change what frustrates

them? How to change their attitudes toward the things they can't change? How to find support? How to ask for help?

If we don't care about our children, but think we can wait until they're preteens and teens, we can't. If we don't start asking questions until they're older, they'll resent our apathy and absence and not help us parent them well. They may not let us know them.

Beliefs that drive young people to suicide often creep up. They start as small issues for small children. They look like minor frustrations. If not dealt with, these small issues grow as children grow. Pay attention to the intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual areas. What do they need?

Teens will have fewer problems when we parent well when they're children and they'll have more confidence solving the problems they do have. We can be available to answer their questions. We can be available to help them process their feelings. We can model wisdom before them. We can.

Let's parent and teach to prevent intellectual suicide, social suicide, emotional suicide and spiritual suicide. This can prevent physical suicide. What will you do today? {eo}

Dr. Kathy Koch is the author of *Screens & Teens: Connecting with Our Kids in A Wireless World*.

The All-Important Secret to Discerning God's Will

When you think of the perils of living in Montana, you imagine blizzards, hypothermia, or *Glacier Park's Night of the*

Grizzlies. But there is a subtler danger that occurs in the spring.

No lines.

Snow and muck and plows work against the roads for weeks on end, until one day everything melts, and we find there are no longer demarcations. Just yesterday, I was merging onto a highway and thought, *Oh my word, I guess I'll just make up my own lane and hope I'm in the right place.*

A sure sign of spring in Montana is a paint-stripping truck making its way slowly down the roads. God bless that road crew.

And thank God for the security of lines—bold, bright, thick ones.

Because I don't want to live all over the place with a bunch of other people who are living all over the place. So I look to the Bible, which is God's version of a paint truck after a Montana winter.

Do not lie.

Do not take what's not yours.

Do not sleep with someone who's not your spouse.

Do not kill anybody, with sword or tongue.

Rest and worship at the end of the week.

Put all your hope in the one and only God.

Be kind.

Only say words that build.

Don't store up treasures on earth.

Give thanks in all circumstances.

Do good.

Feed the hungry.

Pray always.

Sing to the Lord.

If you feel like you're living on a highway with no markings, with a dread that any time now you're going to crash, what you need is the bright, wide yellow of God's word painted as fresh and unmistakable borders for your life.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105).

I pray you will open your Bible and welcome the do's and don'ts. May God clearly show you right from wrong and make obvious to you the lane that leads straight to the good life.
{eoa}

Christy Fitzwater is the author of *A Study of Psalm 25: Seven Actions to Take When Life Gets Hard*. She is a blogger, pastor's wife and mom of two teenagers and resides in Montana. Visit for more information about her ministry.

A Simple Way to Obey One of the Hardest Commands in the Bible

Do you find it uncomfortable to share your faith?

Maybe the idea of telling someone about Jesus intimidates you.

Maybe your natural introverted side makes it hard for you to take the first step.

Whatever the reason, if you find it hard to share your faith, then you need to read on.

While I realize that some reading this will respond by saying that Jesus said that if we are ashamed of Him before men, He'd be ashamed of us before the Father (Matt. 10:32, Mark 8:38, Luke 9:26), I believe that for many people, the difficulty of sharing their faith is less about shame and more about method.

While there are many methods to share our faith, there are some that are effective and some that are not at all.

In fact, I'd go so far to say that some methods of sharing our faith are so ineffective that one could hardly even refer to them as "sharing our faith."

I will be writing more about this in the next post, but first I think we need to understand why it is even necessary to share our faith.

The why is so important, because I firmly believe that when we understand the why, we're already halfway there.

And I do believe that this generation of believers have been so indoctrinated with humanism, and are so void of true biblical doctrine, that they don't even understand why sharing our faith is so important.

But when we understand that Christianity is not as inclusive as we think, the urgency to share our faith begins to grow exponentially.

3 Reasons to Share Your Faith

1. Hell is real.

There was a time when this truth is what drove people to share

their faith. The reality of hell, and the seriousness of what the Bible says about hell, drove people to plead with friends and family to accept Christ so as to escape its horrors.

But we are more cultured now.

Demons and the devil are cartoon characters, and hell is as fictional as Harry Potter.

Satan's strategy of deception has worked.

He has succeeded in removing the reality that there is a literal afterlife, an eternal, excruciating, and incomprehensible torment from which its prisoners can't ever escape.

And when Christians are not very convinced that such a place exists, they do not feel compelled to rescue people.

But we must come back to the question asked a couple of weeks ago: If we talk about salvation, what are people being saved from?

If we are unsure of even that most elementary question, then suddenly the foundations of what we believe in are unstable, and the enemy is free to move in with his next deception:

All religions essentially lead to God.

If all religions lead to God, then 90 percent of the Bible is irrelevant at best and utter nonsense at worst, because the Old Testament is filled with examples of Israel conquering pagan nations and commands to destroy their pagan altars, while the New Testament commands us over and over again to go and preach the gospel.

However, when we expose Satan's strategy of deception and become convinced of a literal hell and the exclusivity of the gospel—meaning that only those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will escape hell and enjoy eternity

in heaven—we suddenly become acutely aware of the dire need to share our faith with any and all who will listen.

2. The Bible commands us.

Throughout the New Testament we are commanded to share our faith, starting with Jesus' command to His 12 disciples (Matt. 10) and then His 70 disciples (Luke 10). In Mark 16, He commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

Sharing our faith is not optional for believer, it is an essential element to the Christian way of life.

Peter said that it is God's will that none perish, but how will people escape hell if they are not warned ahead of time of what awaits them on the other side of eternity?

3. It strengthens our faith.

In 1994, I had a crisis of faith. Having grown up in the church, I unquestionably believed everything I was taught and knew all of the pat answers for every question.

But suddenly being thrust on my own far from my family and home church, in a very toxic situation, I was no longer convinced of anything. Truth be told, I even wondered God was real and if Christianity was a valid religion.

One day, out of desperation, I sat down on my bedroom floor, with my Bible and all of the theological books I had surrounding me, and I cried out "God! I need you to show me in the Bible that You are who You say You are. I need to know beyond any shadow of any doubt that this life I'm living right now has meaning and validity!"

I spent hours reading and researching, and God answered my prayer. All of the theological things I had begun to doubt, one by one, were put to rest in my heart.

But now I no longer parroted what I had heard, the answers

came from my heart—a heart that was deeply convinced on its own, because I now knew what I believed and why!

This crisis of faith was single-handedly the most pivotal moment of my Christian walk.

The Bible doesn't just command us to share our faith as an effort to rescue people from Satan's destruction, but also because sharing our faith forces us to examine what we believe and why.

One of the best ways to become convinced about a matter is being put in a situation where we are forced to defend our position.

When someone throws an argument at us that causes us to realize that we are just repeating talking points, without any real convincing data, we are forced to admit that it's time to hit the books and really learn what the Bible says.

It is not admitting defeat or failure to say to someone, "I don't know the answer to your question, but I promise I will go research it and let you know when I find the answer."

But be sure to follow through on that.

Doing this will not only cause you to earn respect, it will also solidify your faith in a way nothing else will.

Now we know why we share our faith; in the next post, we will discover the best ways to do it. {eoa}

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together they live with their two active boys where she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her best-selling book *The Missional Handbook*. At *A Little R & R* she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at *Missional Call* where she

shares her passion for local and global missions. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

Launch Your War Room With These 10 Spiritual Warfare Scriptures

Are you thinking of finally creating a war room?

I am sure you're wondering what you need to get started. Wondering what verses to put on your wall to help encourage your heart and prepare you spiritually for your day.

God's Word is powerful and it helps to lay a strong foundation in our spirit so that when we encounter that cranky person,

That road-rager

That micro-managing boss

That gossiping co-worker

That nit-picky neighbor

We are able to reach out and grasp God's grace more easily and extend it more freely.

Here are 10 Powerful Verses to Begin Your War Room

Colossians 3:12-15 – "So embrace, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, a spirit of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and longsuffering. Bear with one another and forgive one another. If anyone has a quarrel against anyone, even as Christ forgave you, so you must do. And above all these things, embrace love, which is the bond of perfection. Let the peace of God, to which also you are called in one body, rule

in your hearts. And be thankful.”

1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Isaiah 41:10 – “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

John 14:27 – “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

Philippians 4:13 – “I can do all things because of Christ who strengthens me.”

Psalms 37:4 – “Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”

1 Peter 5:7 – “Cast all your care upon Him, because He cares for you.”

Galatians 5:22-23 – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control; against such there is no law.

Psalms 27:1 – “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom will I be afraid?”

Matthew 5:6 – “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her Bosnian hero. Together they live with their two active boys, where she enjoys fruity candles, good coffee and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. Her passion for writing led her to author her

best-selling book The Missional Handbook. At A Little R & R she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. You can also find her at Missional Call where she shares her passion for local and global missions. You can follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

Dispel Darkness With These Simple Words

I really did think he would cry when I said, “Lowe’s. I want to go to Lowe’s for my birthday.”

He had himself all set to endure someplace like Dress Barn for our annual shopping date. But I had my heart set on new bedside lamps for our bedroom, so to Lowe’s we went.

Light is the theme of the season. A kind friend gave Matt a generous gift card to a sports store for Christmas. He came home with a tactical flashlight, which I have been tempted to hide. Have you seen tactical flashlights?

1100 lumens.

You don’t know, do you? You just cannot possibly know how bright 1100 lumens is.

“Look out the window,” he hollers from upstairs. I look out to see our entire backyard lit up from the upstairs bathroom window.

“Honey, our neighbors are going to call the police,” I say.

Can we get back to my lovely new lighting in the bedroom? Two gooseneck lamps with ivory shades and soft-light, 60-watt

bulbs. Don't tell my dad, but I've been turning those on in the evening, even when we're not in the room. If we do go upstairs for some reason –oh, so nice.

Warm light.

"I think this is my mom's secret to a cozy house," I told Matt. "She has soft lighting all over the place." Lamps on timers. Flameless candles that she turns on at sundown with a remote control. Everywhere, a soft glow.

Peaceful. Cozy. Inviting.

It just makes sense, then, that Jesus says to his followers, "You are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14).

Now lighting ranges from 60 gentle watts all the way to 1100 blinding, what-was-he-thinking lumens. I suppose the world needs both at one time or another.

But since I'm a girl and this is my blog, I say what the world needs most often is a steady, soft lighting that makes people feel good inside and want to sit down under the lamp and read a book while sipping a favorite beverage. That kind of light.

And surely you have enough Jesus in you to bring 60 watts to your little area of the world. You don't have to go all tactical on your people to bring something good to their souls.

You could just smile and say, "Are you OK? How can I pray for you today?" You could give a hug even or leave an encouraging sticky note on a person's desk. Because ambient lighting can transform a place and send rays into weary hearts.

Christy Fitzwater is the author of *A Study of Psalm 25: Seven Actions to Take When Life Gets Hard*. She is a blogger, pastor's wife and mom of two teenagers and resides in Montana. Visit for more information about her ministry.

The Often-Unappreciated Key to Turning Your Goals Into Successes

There is one major key to success in all areas of life, whether we are believers in Christ or not. This key is one we don't like, so we don't see it when it's right before our eyes. Before I tell you what it is, let me tell you what it is not. It's not taking the easy way out because success that really matters to us will cost us something.

Herein lies the rub. We love the words "free," "easy," "no money down," "no payments for a year," "eat all you want and never diet." We want something for nothing. And weight loss is no different. We want someone to give us a magic pill or a secret we haven't discovered yet so that we can magically drop 50 pounds overnight. And we want that secret to cost us nothing.

Investment Equals Commitment

When I began weight-loss coaching, I was shocked at an answer God gave me. I asked Him, "Should I charge for coaching and if so, what should I charge and why?" His answer was rather puzzling to me. He said, "No investment. No commitment." So as always when I don't understand His answer, I asked, "What does that mean?"

Immediately He dropped the "knowing" into my heart. The first video in my #KickWeight program is titled, "Commitment." It is the No. 1 ingredient we all need for success in any endeavor. Commitment is what gets us through the hard times. Commitment holds marriages and families together. It keeps us pursuing

our degree well past the time we wanted to give up and throw in the towel. Commitment drives us to train for a big race. And commitment is the key ingredient to lose weight and sustain it with a healthy lifestyle.

Investment of time or money keeps us committed to finishing what we started. If we enroll in a college algebra course and find it is tough, and the first month, we are making an F, we have a choice. We can drop out, lose our money and not have an F on our transcript or we can buckle down, study and get something for the money invested.

Those who invested \$1,000 for that course will likely put all their efforts towards making at least a C. Those who invested \$50 (if there even is a college algebra course for that price) will drop out and forfeit the money. Little or no investment means there never really was a commitment to finish to begin with. They wanted an easy, passing grade to get that required course out of their way.

Failure Versus Success

Many times, if we start something and fail even the least bit, we immediately stop. We are not committed to go through the tough stuff to get the prize at the end, whether it's getting a good grade, reaching a 40-year anniversary mark, completing a marathon or watching the numbers go down on the scale.

When the scale shows a few pounds gained, we give up and say, "I'll never amount to anything. I'll always be a fat blob." Our focus is on the immediate defeat rather than the great lessons we can learn along the journey.

Failure is a great teacher. When we fail, it's not a time to give up and quit. It's a time to figure out why we went off-course. Why did I eat that cake? Was I tired? Bored? Lonely? Angry? Overwhelmed? Wanting to celebrate? What could I do next time instead of eating what I have decided I won't eat?

The commitment level we have will help us want to dissect the situation and get to the core root of the problem. If we can't do that ourselves, we need to go to the Christian weight-loss coach who can help us think through what's going on and how we might be able to change the way we are attacking our issues.

Letting Go

I am so grateful for the mentors in my life. Recently, I scheduled a time with one of my mentors just to check in. He always has words of wisdom for me. Here's some I've been chewing on: "What got you where you are today will not necessarily get you to the next level. It might actually keep you trapped and not allow you to move to that next level."

Many of us wallow in what has become a comfortable place. Although it offers some sense of familiarity, we will never move from that place to where God wants to take us unless we step out of where we are.

"Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

We have to let go of what seems like it's always gotten us through, but the payment for getting us through has cost our bodies dearly. We have to step out of where we are to get to where we want to go. We have to let go.

Commitment Matters

Commitment takes an investment of some sort. The more we invest in what we want, the more we will commit. So, if we wonder why we aren't anywhere near obtaining the goal we are after, it may be because we have invested very little. Very little time. Very little patience. Very little money. Very little of what is really valuable to us. We want something for nothing.

When I weighed 430 pounds and began my weight-loss journey in earnest, I got out of almost everything I was doing and focused on the goal of changing my entire life. I knew enough to know that I could not continue doing what I'd always done and expect to get different results. I had to allow space in my life for change.

I invested in myself through doctors, trainers, coaches, mentors, nutritionists, counselors, a coaching group, a gym membership. I had to approach change as though I really meant it. In the past I had invested thousands of dollars in get-thin-quick programs. They worked as long as I was in them, but I had not committed to a total lifestyle change and they hadn't promised it.

Are You All In?

The change started within me. It started with my 100 percent commitment to transform with God's help for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health. After losing 260 pounds, I'm still committed to follow God on this total health journey because I am His and He is mine.

What are you will to pay for the price of your health? Will it take requiring you to pay \$497/month to get personal coaching from me to up the level of your commitment? I could do that and I have been asked to do just that. But believe it or not, this is not about the money. It's about the message. It's about what it will take to complete the transformation process.

I've priced my groups so I can afford to spend the time I need to help you on your journey. It's much less than the price I mentioned. But to succeed, you do need to grab hold of the first principle of commitment. Commitment is the key to your success, your health and your life.

Teresa Shields Parker is a wife, mother, business owner, life group leader, speaker and author of *Sweet Grace: How I Lost*

250 Pounds and Stopped Trying to Earn God's Favor *and* Sweet Grace Study Guide: Practical Steps to Lose Weight and Overcome Sugar Addiction and Sweet Freedom. *Get a free chapter of her memoir on her blog at Teresa Shields . Connect with her there or on her Facebook page or Twitter.*

The Prophetic Power of Praying in Tongues

Many years ago, while washing the breakfast dishes, I was praying in tongues. I'm not sure how long I had been praying in the Spirit; I only know that I found myself leaning against the kitchen wall and I heard myself say aloud to the Lord, "An orphanage?"

Oftentimes when we speak in tongues, we pray into existence things that are hidden from our natural understanding. As it says in 1 Corinthians 14:2, "For he who speaks in an unknown tongue does not speak to men, but to God. For no one understands him, although in the spirit, he speaks mysteries." This word mysteries (Strong's G3466 – *mystērion*) means "hidden thing, secret or mystery."

In regards to the opening testimony, the Spirit of God was revealing His plans for my husband and me that neither of us knew about. He was about to send us to Guatemala as full-time missionaries, and one of His assignments for us was to start an orphanage.

I fully believe that the Lord desires us to know His plans and purposes for us, and speaking in tongues reveals His will to us and prays them into existence.

Also, as we surrender our human tongues to the Holy Spirit, He discloses secrets that are necessary to know in order to minister to people effectively.

Case in point: I was ministering to a couple in another country. The woman was a follower of Jesus Christ and was believing for a miracle for her husband. He had lost his mind, and no one could figure out why.

As I began to speak in my heavenly language, the Holy Spirit gave me the following vision and exposed the stronghold. I saw a row of empty clothes hangers hanging from a poll. I then saw a communist ring on his finger. I told them what I saw and asked if it witnessed with them. It did.

They were unequally yoked. She was a believer in Christ, and actively involved in the things of the Lord, and he was a communist. But when their situation was discovered, they lost their dry cleaning business. The financial pressure was more than he could bear, and he lost his mind.

In the natural I had no way of knowing about this situation, but by this supernatural gift of communication (tongues) with the Holy Spirit the secret stronghold was exposed and the steps to his healing were known. He was to renounce communism and give his life to Christ.

The gift of tongues is so powerful, and it's an entrance that leads to the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. I pray you receive this gift today. {eoa}

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What This Biblical Prophetess Can Teach You About Your Crushing Trials

What do you do when life throws you a tragic curveball? How do you pick up the shattered pieces of your life when the one thing you've prepared for and dreamed about suddenly slips through your fingers as wind-driven sand? How do you recover when your vision is clouded by pain and your life plunges into despondency and despair? What do you do when a lifelong dream is suddenly taken away from you without warning and through no fault of your own?

As women, we all have faced some type of crisis, whether it's a failed marriage, children on drugs, breast cancer or other illness, loss of a job, wrong choices or as in Anna's case, the sudden death of a husband. Crisis can be defined as "a stage in a sequence of events at which the trend of all future events, especially for better or for worse, is determined; turning point; a dramatic emotional or circumstantial upheaval in a person's life" that leads to a "decisive change." The way to overcome every unforeseen crisis is found in the one who is the overcomer: Jesus. Jesus tells us in John 16:33b, "In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." This Scripture speaks to the providential care of the Lord. Providence comes from two Latin words: *pro*, which means "before," and *video*, which means "to see." You can have confidence in Jesus' ability to see what is ahead in your life and arrange provision and power to overcome. How do you access this overcoming power?

My one answer is hope. I'm not referring to wishful thinking. I believe hope is a person, and His name is Jesus. Jesus is hope. He provides hope. Hope is an expectation and confidence to see God's goodness in life's difficult situations. Hope is

the anchor of your soul when life is hard to navigate.

When the storms and tribulations of life come crashing in upon you, you can be anchored in Christ and His promise to cause all things to work together for your good. Romans 8:28 says, "We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." The word know means "to see; to perceive, notice, discern, discover; understand." I believe Anna's perception and understanding, based on her personal experience with God, prepared her to walk through this hardship. She had already discovered God was working things together for her good.

God has promised to release His power and wisdom to overcome difficult and seemingly hopeless seasons in your life. Taking hold of this promise from God creates confidence and perseverance instead of anxiety and fear of the future. When you have a purpose and destiny in God, you can be assured that God will cause trauma, tragedies and disappointments to work together for your good. I am not saying that God causes these traumatic things to happen, but He will use them to get the best out of your life.

God is very intentional about your growth. The correct response to crisis produces perseverance, character and hope. You must know that surely there is a hope and your future will not be cut off! You will survive. {eoa}

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