

# Your Bold Move From Broken to Breakthrough

Breakthrough.

It may look different to different women.

But the fervent expressing of our desire often looks the same.

We pray about it. Long for it. We weep and even travail. As we wait, we feel weariness creeping closer, saying we're too distant from the promises of God.

We read our choice Bible verse and pray again.

All is silent. And still we wait.

We think that if we could just break into that place God has prepared and planned for us, life would be better, all would be the way it is supposed to be.

Then the accuser comes to remind us of all we've done and failed to do, tallying our faults as the reason why breakthrough seems to have been delayed. Our minds wander as we begin to wonder if we've missed something we were supposed to do or say. We begin to extrapolate what God must've meant when He highlighted the promises of His Word to us.

The more time passes, the more impossible things seem. A year ago, it would've been hard for God's promises and plan to come to pass, but now we're sure it would take 15 miracles to bring a turnaround.

In this life, there are moments that make us feel like we're stuck in a holding pattern, waiting in futility during a season of delay. But for women of God, the state of our current circumstances doesn't determine our future—God does. Those moments of our lives when we place ourselves in the

hands of our mighty God are never wasted. Yes, we must live in reality, but living in reality means having a firm grasp on truth, knowing that God's ability far exceeds the most impossible situations we could ever face.

We see this throughout Scripture.

The Word of God is filled with encouraging stories and comforting words that help us make it through life's daily challenges, but each book is also filled with the raw power of a God who acts on behalf of women who wait for Him.

As women secure in covenant relationship with God and filled by His Spirit, we can have unwavering confidence in the power of God to bring about His promises for our lives.

*But as it is written, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him? Likewise, no one knows the things of God, except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God (1 Cor. 2:9-12).*

In the midst of our times of waiting, the same one who raised Christ from the dead draws us back into truth, refreshing our souls. We're reminded that the One who dwells within is greater than what we face in this life. He points to His track record of faithfulness, steadying our souls, calming us inside.

From before time God has performed the miraculous.

*Bringing order into chaos? Yes.*

*Making something out of nothing? Absolutely.*

*Bringing about life despite death? Repeatedly.*

*Empowering regular people to do amazing things? Daily.*

God's area of expertise is doing the miraculous in impossible situations as He shows forth His power, strength and glory.

## **God's Faithfulness, Not Sarah's Faith**

It's possible that no one knew this truth better than Sarah. The barren wife of Abraham, she was transformed into the mother of many nations because of the sheer power God applied within her to bring about His promise to her.

Despite Sarah's barren state and the age of her body, despite her failed attempts to work around what God had planned by involving her servant Hagar, and despite her own laughter at what seemed like an impossible promise from God, Sarah's life tells the story of the strength and faithfulness of Almighty God. Reading through her story, we can hear the Spirit of God whisper to us, asking us the same critical question: Is anything too hard for the Lord?

*The Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time that God had spoken to him (Gen. 21:1-2).*

Through her life, we see the God who has no problem speaking about what He has prepared for us, even when we've yet to arrive at, accomplish or achieve what we think needs to be done to "earn" our promises from Him. He is also perfectly comfortable making a commitment and following through before we even feel prepared to engage in what He has planned.

*By faith Sarah herself also received the ability to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised (Heb. 11:11).*

## **Jesus' Faithfulness, Not the Disciples'**

God's power coupled with His generosity is seen in the most unlikely times. Right before Jesus heads off to die on a cross, the disciples are arguing about who is greater. The greatest one of all points to Himself and reminds them of what greatness really looks like. And while knowing that He is about to be completely forsaken by those closest to Him, Jesus begins to talk about what He has prepared for them.

*"You are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I appoint to you a kingdom as My Father has appointed one to Me, so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:28-30).*

Even though Peter would deny Him, Judas would betray Him, and everyone who proclaimed to love and appreciate Him would desert Him, Jesus did not hesitate to speak of all He had planned for them. He willingly declared what He had committed to bring about despite the disciples' forthcoming abandonment.

Passage after passage, verse after verse, the Holy Spirit reveals that the God we read about is far greater, kinder and more powerful than the God we've been pleading with for breakthrough.

Ever so gently, He shows us that we not only discount God, but we discount ourselves, thinking breakthrough would come easier to the qualified. Thankfully, God Almighty is powerful enough to transform us, renewing our minds through His Word.

## **Our God: Passionate for Our Breakthrough**

As we open ourselves to truth, we hear the whispers of His Spirit reminding us of how the Lord longs to be good to us. But that it's time to give up. It's time to give up our way of awaiting the manifestations of His promises and the fruition

of His plan.

He gently points out the doubt, the feelings of shame, unworthiness, fear and wrong thought patterns that try to get in our way of receiving what the Lord is so eager to give us. The things we're doing in an effort to receive His goodness are put under His penetrating light of inspection.

As the Lord shines His light of truth on our hearts, our motivations, thoughts, emotions and secret desires are exposed, revealed for what they are. In these moments of complete honesty and revelation, we see those areas in our lives in which we don't quite believe God is more passionate about our breakthrough than we are.

We're surprised to find that it's still hard to fathom God displaying His power in our lives just because it's what He wants to do even though we're women who doubt, question, grow weary, mutter and complain, and craft our own plans, complete with timetables and a color-coordinated task list.

## **God: The Answer to Heart Health**

But more than just answering our prayers, God cares about the health of our hearts in the process. He knows our willingness to push through trials and hardship but calls us to rest in Him, His timing and His ways.

The One dwelling within has a clear view of the areas in the heart where doubt resides, and He has an overwhelming desire for us to enter into every promise He has for us with a free heart that does not judge the weak places within as greater than the power and possibilities of God. Instead, He desires we see His power to not only bring about His promises around us, but to marvel at His transformative ability within as He dismantles strongholds in our thinking, equips us for the greater and finishes what He's started.

It's in this place that the Spirit of God urges us to fully

accept what's been done to allow us to run into breakthrough, fully free of the weight we've grown comfortable carrying for so long.

In His kindness, He desires to free us from our penchant for self-imposed timeouts when we've messed up and feel we need to distance ourselves from God in a kind of self-punishment. He calls to us to stop the flurry of activity as we try to earn enough badges and points to justify an answer from Him. He wants us to know that attempts to fix a smile on our faces and ignore the pain or even being stoic and unfeeling under a façade of composure and what we deem as good or worthwhile behavior doesn't hasten the day of breakthrough for us.

Instead, our all-knowing Helper calls us to gaze upon God, to remember His power, His track record of faithfulness and to know Him as He is—able, generous and kind—a God who uses those quiet moments we disdain to work within us.

When it seems as if nothing is happening, He is busy working cultivating faith, hope and love within, giving us His joy as He ushers us into the good things He has prepared for us.

When we're tempted to believe it's too late, we're too weak, what we want is too big or that God is distant, our great Comforter and Counselor reminds us of all Jesus taught about His Father, His power and His extravagant generosity.

Instead of pushing ahead, He urges us to surrender to truth.

The God who is the same yesterday, today and forever is still as powerful as when He parted the Red Sea, provided for the hungry, healed the masses and triumphed over the enemy.

He *is* the God of the breakthrough. {eoa}

**Fia Curley** serves on the NightWatch at IHOPKC, participating in prayer, worship and intercession from midnight to 6 a.m. She enjoys blending her passion for prayer, worship and

*journalism as she labors with the Lord to see His goodness revealed to families, government leaders and immigrants from non-Christian nations.*

*This article originally appeared at .*

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## **Your Divine Deliverance From the Overwhelming Pain of an Orphaned Spirit**

Many people are suffering from an orphaned spirit. But what is it? People with an orphaned spirit usually have a lifelong wrestle with feelings of depression, rejection and low self-esteem. They find it difficult to believe that they can truly be loved by anyone, including God. They are often manipulative and problematic, and suffer from addictions, and failing relationships, and fear getting close to others because they might be rejected, so they reject the other person first. And they struggle to believe God's promises are for them, and wrestle to receive them for themselves.

Does this sound familiar? Do you struggle with these very same problems as described above? If so, you are not alone. Many of God's people have come from painful backgrounds, and don't understand what's wrong in life. Oftentimes, the reason for their suffering is that they are living with an orphaned spirit.

You do not have to be physically orphaned to suffer from an orphaned spirit. Perhaps, you never knew your earthly father, because either he was nonexistent within the family unit, or maybe he was there physically, but not there emotionally.

Perhaps, your mother or father or both abandoned the family. Maybe they were very abusive or uncaring to you. Regardless of the situation, the pain was and is very real and controls your daily life and hinders your ability to be happy again.

I was recently ministering in a church, and from the moment I walked in, I could sense an orphaned spirit. As I was sharing our son's amazing testimony about how we raised him from the dead, and by faith, believed and received a new heart, lungs, kidneys and a new brain for him from the goodness of our God, the Lord gave me this underlying message in the midst of this very powerful testimony about being set free from an orphaned spirit. Our son was orphaned from the time of conception inside of his birth mother's womb. She truly did not want him and tried to end his life via abortion attempts but could not succeed. We received him when he was just one day old; we gave him a name, loved and cared for him, and fought to adopt him, and after many years, his adoption was complete. Our son is no longer orphaned, nor does he have an orphaned spirit.

When I gave the altar call almost half, if not more, of the congregation came forward. It was an amazing moment to witness so many of God's people take the initial steps to freedom from an orphaned spirit.

And for those of you that have suffered a difficult past, and have struggled for many years because of it, there is hope and freedom from an orphaned spirit. His name is Jesus. And He gave all He had for you because He loves you and wants you. And fought the enemy, Satan, to purchase you with His blood and adopt you into His family.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of slavery again to fear. But you have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint-heirs with

Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him" (Rom. 8;14-17).

As I have said to many of the children in our children's home over the years, "You can't go back into the past and change what has happened, but you can overcome the bondage of the stronghold it has over you. It's like an old, worn-out shoe that you need to remove and throw it away in the trash, and not pick it out of the garbage and wear again. Throw it away, and now walk in the authority that Jesus gave to you to overcome all hurts, past and present."

Let's pray.

*Father God,*

*I come before You with this great hurt from my past, and I give it to You. I choose to walk away from it, and never turn back to it. The truth of my past hurts, and I call upon Your healing balm of Gilead to heal these emotional wounds. And I know I need to do one more thing—forgive. And so by faith, not by feelings, I forgive the person or persons that have so wounded me. And I forgive them because Your Word tells me to do so. In obedience to You, I forgive and I not only forgive, but I release (name of person or persons) from my bitterness and from my revenge. And because I forgive and release (name of person or persons) from my bitterness and revenge, I am now forgiven of my own sins and free from the bondage of the past. Thank You, Father God, for accepting me into Your family.*

*In Jesus' name, I pray, amen. {eoa}*

**Becky Dvorak** is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of DARE to Believe, Greater Than Magic and The Healing Creed. Visit her at .

*This article originally appeared at .*

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# Billy Graham, Stephen Hawking and 'I Can Only Imagine'

Billy Graham died two weeks ago. Stephen Hawking died Wednesday. And this week, *I Can Only Imagine* releases in movie theaters.

What do these three events have in common?

Billy Graham was a well-known evangelist who spent his life sharing the gospel. His message was that God loves you and sent His Son to die for your sins to restore your relationship with Him. Rev. Graham was known as a gifted communicator, a "pastor to presidents" and a man of integrity. His biggest fear was that He would do something to bring disrepute to the gospel of Christ.

Stephen Hawking was a brilliant and well-known professor of theoretical physics. He spent his life studying the mysteries of the universe. His other claim to fame was being the longest survivor of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. A diagnosis of ALS generally leads to death within several years. But Professor Hawking defied conventional medical knowledge and lived with ALS for more than 50 years.

Though both these men were exceptional in their own ways, their most significant difference was in the area of faith. Rev. Graham knew beyond any doubt that he was a child of God, redeemed by Jesus Christ. As he approached death, he confidently expected to be ushered into the presence of the God of creation.

Dr. Hawking was equally certain that there is *no* God. Of

course, no one can know another person's heart, but we do know what he said. In his words, "I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven or afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark."

Which brings me to the movie releasing this week: *I Can Only Imagine*, a story of redemption, forgiveness and transformation. The movie's title, taken from the song written by Bart Millard (profiled in the film), refers to the anticipated response of believers when they stand before God in the afterlife.

I can only imagine.

I can only imagine the joy Billy Graham experienced when he first stood before his heavenly Father and heard the words, "Well done, you good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:21b).

And I can only imagine the horror Dr. Hawking experienced the moment he realized that, for all his brilliance, he got it wrong. There is an afterlife for both believers and unbelievers. And he will be face to face with the Creator of the universe as His enemy.

Because, you see, there is no neutral position before God. The Bible tells us "we were [God's] enemies" before we were reconciled to Him in Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:10). And Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me" (Matt. 12:30).

Please, please, please don't fool yourself into thinking anyone can be neutral about their relationship with God. Choose Him and know a peace that passes all understanding now, and a certainty of eternity with Him later—a certainty you won't have to imagine. {eoa}

**Ava Pennington** is a writer, speaker and Bible teacher. She writes for nationally circulated magazines and is published in 32 anthologies, including 25 *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books.

*She also authored Daily Reflections on the Names of God: A Devotional, endorsed by Kay Arthur. Learn more at .*

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## **Anne Graham Lotz: The Surprising Gift God Gave After My Father's Death**

“He makes me lie down ...” (Ps. 23:2a).

Following the death of John the Baptist, Jesus knew His disciples needed quiet time to process what had taken place. He knew how difficult it was to minister to others while their own hearts were breaking. So He invited them to come away by themselves and get some rest (Mark 6:31).

I, too, have heard the Lord whisper that same invitation to me in a unique way following my father's move to heaven and the swirl of events that were triggered by it. I received the call about my father at 7:40 a.m. ET on Feb. 21. On Friday, Feb. 23, my son drove me four hours to The Cove in western North Carolina, where some of my family was gathering. My two daughters, their spouses and my three granddaughters followed.

Early the next morning, we rode in a motorcade escorting Daddy from The Cove to the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte. Then my son drove me three hours back to my home. Tuesday, I drove back to Charlotte in order to be on the plane early the next morning as family members accompanied Daddy to Washington, D.C. We traveled by motorcade to the nation's Capitol, where Daddy was laid in honor in the Rotunda. Following a brief,

meaningful ceremony, I stood for over 90 minutes greeting Cabinet officials, senators and congressmen who came to show their respect and offer their condolences.

That afternoon, I stood for three hours to speak to anyone who came into the Rotunda, from U.S. Supreme Court Justice Gorsuch and Justice Alito to people whose identities I'll never know but whose tears flowed freely with mine. That night, I went to the White House as the guest of the president and first lady for a private family dinner. The next morning, I traveled once again by motorcade to the Capitol as Daddy was removed by an honor guard. Next, we escorted him to the plane for what would be his last flight and the return trip to Charlotte. He was taken once again by motorcade back to the library.

That night, I attended a dinner for about 200 extended family members and also sat in on a program briefing for the funeral service. Early the next morning, I found myself once again in a motorcade that took me to the library to await the beginning of the noon-time service. Following the service, I stood in line to speak to people until no one else was left to greet in the tent. At 3:30 p.m., a processional was formed, and we walked with Daddy to the gravesite where, after a brief service, he was finally laid to rest. I returned to the hotel, and the next morning, drove the three hours back home.

To say I was beyond exhaustion physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually would not come close to describing my state of being. But the Lord knew I was poised to plunge into frantic activity in order to catch up on two weeks of work that had been paused. He knew that while I needed rest, quiet and isolation, I wouldn't take it unless I was forced to do so. So Sunday afternoon, I became ill. I assumed it was just total exhaustion or the effects of the icy wind under the funeral tent, but later in the week, I was diagnosed with the worst strain of the flu. For the past eight days, I have been forced to lie down. To do nothing but rest. By myself. I know the Lord who is my Shepherd is the One who has made me lie

down.

In my fevered state, I have only been able to process a small portion of what I've experienced. Yet some things are clear. I do know that my father's life—and death—promoted the gospel, exalted Jesus Christ and glorified God. I do know that in the three weeks since word of my father's homegoing was made public, the gospel has been proclaimed worldwide over and over in every conceivable way by individuals, news media, ministries, entertainers, talk shows, churches ... and then the end will come. (Matt. 24:14)

On a personal level, I also know I couldn't have made it through all of the above without your prayers! You, God's people, have carried me through, not just somehow, but triumphantly. Thank you with all my heart!

I also know, after I have rested a while and recuperated from this illness, that there is one thing I will do: "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. 3:14).  
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## **Hit Your Supernatural Restart Button**

Jesus says that the thief, the devil, comes to steal, to kill and to destroy (see John 10:10a). And a couple of weapons that Satan uses against us are sickness and disease. That's right, sickness and disease steal joy, finances and the future from us. They not only kill the human body, but they also kill hopes and dreams. They cause such havoc upon relationships that close relationships are often destroyed by the stress of it all. They also destroy such things in our lives such as our

witness of a loving and faithful God, and a peaceful state of mind. This is the reality of so many lives afflicted by sickness and disease, but we do not have to remain in the devil's realm of chaos.

Jesus continues to speak to us in John 10:10b, “I came that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” We have a choice to make. Either we choose to stay in the realm of suffering with Satan, or we choose to believe the words of Jesus, and align ourselves with the power of the Holy Spirit. And I encourage you to choose the latter and learn to believe and have faith to heal for yourself or for someone you care about.

I witness over and over again that healing is like pressing the “restart” button to life. Just this weekend I was ministering in Zanesville, Ohio, and so many received their healings. By their faith, they hit this refresh button of faith, and their lives are beginning over again without sickness and disease and all the pain and suffering they bring.

One husband and wife stood in front of me, desiring to hit this refresh button of faith for their healing, and they did. They received the astounding miracles from God they desired. The husband had suffered a stroke that left his left side paralyzed and his left eye completely blind. In an instant, this man's eye was opened, and he cried out, “I can see again!” He and his wife were jumping for joy when he cried out again that the paralysis is completely gone. This man was loosed from the heavy burden Satan had put upon him, and all that the enemy had stolen from him was restored.

What are you waiting for? Hit that restart button with your faith for healing and allow the healing power of the Lord to refresh, restore and restart your life once again for the glory of the Lord. Amen! {eoa}

**Becky Dvorak** is a prophetic healing evangelist and the author of *DARE to Believe*, *Greater Than Magic* and *The Healing Creed*. Visit her at .

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## **One Woman's Deliverance From the Prison of Life as a Child Abuser**

I was at the end of my rope. My anger toward my 2-year-old daughter, Darcy, was getting worse. "Oh, God," I prayed again and again, "deliver me from this anger right now! I'm afraid I'm going to kill Darcy in one of my rages." But each prayer seemed like it bounced off the ceiling because nothing ever changed.

Whenever I tried to figure out what caused my anger, I concluded, "It's Larry's fault!" My husband, Larry, worked as a policeman and real estate agent, had a flying hobby, and he was never home. I hated him. "If he would just stay home and help me, I wouldn't be acting like this." It was easy to blame him.

During one particularly angry day when I'd hurt Darcy again by kicking her, I remembered Larry had left his off-duty service revolver in the top dresser drawer. It seemed to call to me and I thought, "I must take my life, otherwise I'm going to kill Darcy." But then the Spirit whispered, "But what will people think of Jesus if they hear that Kathy Miller has taken her life?" Only the thought of smudging Jesus' reputation made me not use that gun that day, even though I had no hope of

deliverance.

But God was faithful. A few months later, God began the healing and deliverance process. God didn't answer my prayer for an instantaneous deliverance, but little by little over the following year, He revealed to me in many different ways the reasons for my out-of-control anger and how to lay hold of His help.

One major step was the morning I confessed my sinful struggle to the women in the neighborhood Bible study I led. They held me accountable and prayed for me. I saw the truth of James 5:16 in action: "Confess your faults to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much."

At God's prompting, I also made a choice to love Larry even though I didn't feel any love at all for him. Love is a choice for another person's highest good. With that truth came the knowledge Larry wasn't responsible for my happiness. Even if he never changed, I could receive God's help to be the contented woman He wanted me to be.

I also learned disciplinary techniques. Instead of trying to motivate obedience with an angry voice, I consistently gave my daughter meaningful consequences. It became evident anger is not an effective disciplinary tool. My patience increased.

Not only did I become a patient mom, God also healed our marriage. Today, Darcy is a 43-year-old wonderful wife and mother of two. She calls me her best friend. Larry and I will soon reach our 50th wedding anniversary. We love being with each other and ministering to others side by side.

There is always hope with our great God, even for child abusers. {eoa}

**Kathy Collard Miller** is a wife of one (for almost 50 years), mom of two, grandmother of two, speaker, author and lay

*counselor. She and Larry live in Southern California. Her newest book is her story of God's deliverance over being an abusive mom and about God's healing of their marriage: No More Anger: Hope for an Out-of-Control Mom. Kathy has shared her story world-wide and on The 700 Club.*

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her life?" Only the thought of smudging Jesus' reputation made me not use that gun that day, even though I had no hope of deliverance.

But God was faithful. A few months later, God began the healing and deliverance process. God didn't answer my prayer for an instantaneous deliverance, but little by little over the following year, He revealed to me in many different ways the reasons for my out-of-control anger and how to lay hold of His help.

One major step was the morning I confessed my sinful struggle to the women in the neighborhood Bible study I led. They held me accountable and prayed for me. I saw the truth of James 5:16 in action: "Confess your faults to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much."

At God's prompting, I also made a choice to love Larry even though I didn't feel any love at all for him. Love is a choice for another person's highest good. With that truth came the knowledge Larry wasn't responsible for my happiness. Even if he never changed, I could receive God's help to be the contented woman He wanted me to be.

I also learned disciplinary techniques. Instead of trying to motivate obedience with an angry voice, I consistently gave my daughter meaningful consequences. It became evident anger is not an effective disciplinary tool. My patience increased.

Not only did I become a patient mom, God also healed our marriage. Today, Darcy is a 43-year-old wonderful wife and mother of two. She calls me her best friend. Larry and I will soon reach our 50th wedding anniversary. We love being with each other and ministering to others side by side.

There is always hope with our great God, even for child abusers. {eoa}

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## **3 Dynamic Reasons to Share Your Faith**

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, 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 (, 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, 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 has been so indoctrinated with humanism and is so void of true biblical doctrine that its members 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 very 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.**

All 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 16:15, 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 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 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 that 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 solidify your faith in a way nothing else will. {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, and 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 +.

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## **Healthy Snacks to Help Your Family Make Positive Food Choices**

Over 100 million Americans suffer from chronic, painful, expensive and often debilitating diseases. One of the dominant causes of chronic diseases in our country is the poor quality of the foods we consume. The average American ingests up to 10 pounds of chemical additives and a staggering 150 pounds of sugar each year. We eat food-like substances packaged in colorful and enticing boxes and bags. These so-called foods are frequently inexpensive as well as quick and easy to

prepare. However, the true cost of a steady diet of super-processed, prepackaged foods will eventually show up in chronically poor health.

I have spent several years studying healthy eating lifestyles and what type of plan to follow to best avoid food-related illnesses. Recently, I taught a Bible study, *The Daniel Plan*, which focused on consuming whole, unprocessed foods. The plan encouraged you to begin with a two-week fast from wheat, sugar and dairy products. Being the teacher, I wanted to lead by example, and I encouraged my family to go along with the changes I was making in my personal eating plan.

I asked each of my three children to tell me their favorite snack food, which turned out to be crunchy, fat-laden potato chips; super-sweet sugar cookies; and salty, over-processed pretzels. At that moment, I realized my children were junk food junkies who preferred salty or sugar-laden snacks. They balked at the idea of giving up the familiar food they were used to eating.

One of my daughters asked, "If we went on this fast, what would we eat?" I came up empty-handed. It was difficult to think of healthy snacks that could replace the unhealthy ones; yet give the same delicious satisfaction. I needed to provide nutritious, yet delicious, snacks which my skeptical family would find to be great substitutes to the usual processed foods. That afternoon, I went to work in my kitchen and made the following nutritious snack foods: healthy, homemade granola; sweet and tangy dehydrated strawberries and mangoes; refreshing fruit smoothies from frozen strawberries, raspberries and blackberries; crunchy dark chocolate-covered nuts, seeds and currants; and delicious chocolate chip cookies made with almond flour.

The next day, my experiments were put to the test when my youngest daughter needed to grab a quick breakfast. She skeptically ate a slice of dried mango but ended up coming

back for more. My treats were tested again when my middle child packed her lunch. She took two almond cookies and some dehydrated strawberries. My treats were a success!

These delicious snacks were the answer I needed. I was enthralled by how much our variety of food choices expanded when I got creative and brainstormed in the kitchen. The benefit our family has received is tremendous. I have lost weight, and my craving for carbohydrates has stopped. Making healthy eating choices has a positive effect on the whole family. Seeing my family choosing healthy foods gave me the encouragement I needed to continue on this path.

I hope the following nutritious snack recipes get you excited about making healthy treats for your family too. Enjoy a large variety of delicious foods, and the payoff will be many more years of better health without food-related illness.

## **Recipes**

### **Granny Sue's Granola**

8 cups oats

1 cup almonds

1 cup pecans

1 cup walnuts

1/2 cup sunflower seeds

1/3 cup sesame seeds

1/3 cup pumpkin seeds

3/4 cup coconut or olive oil

1/2 – 2/3 cup of honey

Combine all ingredients. Pour into two large greased baking

pans. Bake at 325 degrees for 18-20 minutes, take out, and stir. Cook for another 18-20 minutes, stir, and add the following ingredients: 1-2 cups of dried fruit: berries, dates, apricots, raisins or craisens.

Cook for 10 more minutes. Store granola in two quart Mason jars. Put one on the kitchen counter and the other in the refrigerator.

### **Dehydrated Fruit**

A food dehydrator is a terrific investment when beginning to change to a healthier style of eating. Simply cut your fruit into similar-size slices. Place on dehydrator trays and turn on for the length of time indicated by your dehydrator's instructions. If the fruit is in different sizes, the small pieces will get overdone and the large pieces will not be completely dried. Store dried fruit in Mason jars.

### **Frozen Berries**

Either pick or purchase your berries. Rinse with water and drain in a colander. Place berries on an ungreased cookie sheet. Make sure the berries do not touch. Place in freezer several hours until frozen. Place frozen berries in Mason jars and put back in the freezer. Since the berries are frozen individually, you can take as much or as little out of the jar as you need when making your fruit smoothie.

### **Berry Smoothie**

1 cup coconut or almond milk

1 cup frozen berries

1 tsp coconut oil

Stevia to sweeten

1 cup ice

Protein smoothie: add 1/2 cup of nuts (almond, pecan, walnut) or 2 Tbsp. of almond butter.

Green smoothie: add 1/2 cup of spinach or kale.

### **Dark Chocolate-Covered Nuts, Seeds and Currants**

Melt 1-2 bars of dark chocolate (more than 70% cocoa, which is healthy and low in sugar). Add a mixture of nuts, seeds and currants until coated. Drop by tablespoons onto a sheet of wax paper. As the mixture cools, the nut clusters will harden.

### **Dark Chocolate Chip Pecan Cookies**

3 cups of almond flour (Could substitute 1 cup with coconut flour)

1/4 tsp salt

1 tsp baking soda

1/4 cup of coconut or olive oil

1 tsp of stevia for baking

1/4 cup of maple syrup

1 egg

1 tsp vanilla

1/2 cup dark chocolate >70% cocoa

1/2 cup pecans, almonds or walnuts (optional)

Combine dry ingredients. In a separate bowl, mix oil, stevia, syrup, eggs and vanilla with a hand mixer. Slowly add dry ingredients. Mix by hand when adding chocolate chips and nuts. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 minutes. {eoa}

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*She has published three books, Scripture Yoga, a No. 1 Amazon best-selling yoga book; Yoga for Beginners which ranked No. 3; and 7 Steps to Get Off Sugar and Carbohydrates. She published two sets of Christian Yoga Card Decks, "How to Receive God's Peace" and "Fruit of the Spirit" and two Christian Yoga DVDs, God's Mighty Angels and What the Bible Says About Prayer. Her two digital products, Eat to Live with a Low-Carbohydrate, Low-Glycemic, Anti-Inflammatory Diet, and How to Prevent, Improve and Reverse Alzheimer's and Dementia are great resources for attaining optimal health. Susan blogs and provides healthy menus, recipes and corresponding grocery lists at . You can find out more about Susan at .*