

How One Woman's Weight-Loss Journey Became a Total Life Transformation

Why can't I do what I want to do? It happens with everything from losing weight to getting a degree to saving money.

I feel like it's that Romans 7:19 conundrum raising its head again. "For the good I desire to do, I do not do, but the evil I do not want is what I do."

However, I'm realizing it's probably not that at all.

I'm Just Lazy

Many times when this happens, it is simply because I'm just too lazy to do what it really takes to save money, get a degree or lose weight. I don't want to do the hard work it takes to change something I'm doing now to obtain what I wish I had.

If we want something different to happen, we have to change something. It won't just magically happen. As Christians, we often use prayer as a crystal ball.

We want God to make things happen without any work on our part. Friends, the money won't appear in your bank account by itself. Getting a degree is going to take some effort. Losing weight is not easy. It has to be intentional.

Intentional Focus

"Intentional" means to do something deliberately or on purpose. It's not something that happens by chance. It is calculated, conscious, willful, preconceived, predetermined, premeditated, prearranged and thought-out in advance.

Now pair that with the word “focus,” which essentially means the center of attention, focal point, kingpin or bedrock.

To intentionally focus on something means that one thing is the calculated, well thought-out, deliberate center of our attention. For us to do what we are telling ourselves to do, it must be something we don't just want, but something our sights are firmly fixed on. It's at the top of our to-want list and at the top of our to-do list.

Motivation Is Key

Many people make decisions to lose weight, but they have no motivation for the work it will take to do what they think they want. They want to do it as long as it is easy.

When they find out it is going to take them actually thinking about what they want and being intentional about doing the work, they no longer want in. They were never motivated for the type of time investment it takes to change habits that have taken them a lifetime to develop.

Motivation is a major key for losing weight. Motivation comes before intention. They go hand in hand, along with total commitment, to the entire process. This means we have to have a really big reason for wanting to lose weight.

'I Want to Look Better'

One of the main motivations to losing weight is to look better. I've found this motivation doesn't last long when faced with something really tempting. Those with this motivation want to look better in order to feel better, but when tempted they think they will feel better if they just eat that piece of cake.

Many, especially those who suffer with sugar addiction, binge eating or overeating, cannot just stop with one piece.

One piece is too many, and 10,000 is never enough. For me, and

others with sugar addiction, I must abstain from foods made with flour and sugar. They taste too good to me, and then, I need more. Then my addiction has been triggered, and it will take me months to get back on track.

How I Gained Peace

To live in peace with myself and keep my addiction at bay, I chose not to start in the first place. It's been over seven years since I've had a traditional dessert. I abstain from processed sugar and pretty much all sugars, except fruit.

Today, I no longer crave the rich decadent desserts I thought I couldn't live without. I don't even have a desire for them. Just thinking about eating something like that makes me sick.

This is a huge change from where I was for most of my adult life. I lived to eat those things. Instead, I eat strawberries, apples, oranges, peaches and other fruits.

Why I Decided to Change

My motivation for change was simple. I didn't want to cause myself to die sooner because of my poor food choices. It would have been extremely selfish of me to continue to stuff myself with the types of death-giving foods when I could actually have a chance of living longer if I abstained.

I would have taken myself from my family before it was my time to go. I didn't want that to happen. My major motivation was that I wanted to live.

I wanted to be present for my children and hopefully one day meet future grandchildren. I wanted to fulfill the destiny God has on my life. I wanted to write books. I wanted to be the woman I knew God called me to be.

God's Desire

More than anything, I knew that God wanted to change me. I

didn't know at the time that God wanted to take me on a total transformation journey—body, soul and spirit. Romans 12:2 (MSG) sums up the process. “Fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out.”

To be honest, I thought I only needed to change the outside of me. Oh, how wrong I was. God's transformation process has touched every single part of me. I've changed mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

All of that occurred at the same time I was working on changing physically by losing over 250 pounds. It all happened because I was allowing God to transform me rather than me trying to make it happen.

I Needed a Coach

During the journey, I encountered many obstacles that in the past would have simply stopped me in my tracks. This time, though, I was working with a coach who had been there.

Without the guidance of my coach, I would have never been successful. Even if I had lost the weight, by now I would have gained every ounce back plus more if I hadn't stayed connected to my coach. That is a truth I rarely say out loud. However, I know it to be true with every fiber of my being because it was my *modus operandi* for years before then.

My coach is my life insurance. He speaks truth into my life and challenges me at that deep core level where motivation meets intention. The same will be true for the coach you choose. To be successful on your journey, you need a long-term commitment to a coach.

Looking Forward

Many I have coached have had a hard time looking anywhere but at the mess they made of their lives. They're looking backward. I did too, for a long time. I discovered, though, that there's nothing to be gained from mourning what I did to

myself.

The only place I'm looking now is forward. Even though I've lost 250 pounds, my main motivation right now is to live a better life tomorrow than I have lived today. If I do that, it will be enough.

I have goals for the next five years and the next. I'm not stopping. I'm committed. I'm focused. I'm being intentional.

What Are Your Goals?

What about you? What are your goals? What is your motivation? Who will be your coach? {eoa}

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Why You Have God's Unmerited Favor on Your Life

The story of the birth of Jesus continues in Luke 1:28-30 (NASB): "And coming in, he said to her, 'Greetings, favored

one! The Lord is with you.' But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.'"

The angel Gabriel comes down to earth and appears to a young virgin girl named Mary to deliver an astounding message from God in heaven. The message he has to give is so amazing, even the greeting itself is perplexing to the young girl. And it's this greeting that we are going to look at today.

How would you react if the angel Gabriel suddenly appeared to you and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you"? And while you are trying to absorb what is happening, he speaks again and says, "Do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God." I would venture to guess that most would be speechless.

Maybe you have not had Gabriel or any other angel appear to you, but did you know that you do have the unmerited favor of God upon you? This unmerited favor is called grace. And it is a free gift given to those who will simply believe and receive.

The Greek word for "grace" is *charis*. And the Greek word for "gift" is *charisma*. The root meaning of the word "grace" is "gift."

It says in Ephesians 2:8-9 (AMPC), "For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favor) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the gift of God; Not because of works [not the fulfillment of the Law's demands], lest any man should boast. [It is not the result of what anyone can possibly do, so no one can pride himself in it or take glory to himself.]"

This unmerited favor of God upon your life is what Christmas

is all about. This is why God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to earth. To gift to you His grace that was purchased for you by the redemptive work of Jesus at Calvary.

God tells us in John 3:16, "For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life."

You can receive this unmerited favor today. Let's pray. {eo}

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Anne Graham Lotz: Mark Galli and 'Christianity Today' Have Gone Off-Message

"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord'" (Luke 2:10-11, NASB).

On Dec. 20, Mark Galli, the editor-in-chief of *Christianity Today* magazine who is scheduled to retire on Jan. 3, 2020,

dropped a bombshell into the evangelical community. He published an editorial titled, "Trump Should Be Removed From Office." His reasoning was that, in his judgment, while the president has apparently committed no crimes, he is morally unfit to lead. Subsequently, I have received inquiries from a wide variety of people interested in my comments on the editorial. God seems to have put a burden on my heart to respond.

My father, Billy Graham, was the founder of *Christianity Today*. My grandfather, L. Nelson Bell, was the first editor. If I were sitting tonight at the kitchen table in my father's house and this controversy came up, I know exactly what both men would say: *Mark Galli and Christianity Today have gone off-message.*

Just before Christmas—and every day of the year, for that matter—the message of evangelicals is one I read this morning from the Gospel of Luke (1:78-79), that because of God's tender mercy, the sunrise has come—the promise of a new day—and His name is Jesus. He is the light of the world who has come to shine upon those who sit in the darkness of despair, suffering, hopelessness, hate, fear and loneliness, to guide our feet into the way of peace. Peace with God and peace with each other. He has come to give us life. And love. And hope. It's the same message the angels announced at the very first Christmas in Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased" (Luke 2:14). {eoa}

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3 Truths You Must Embrace to Exercise Your Life-Giving Authority in Christ

You and I are living in the most intense time in human history. It's no time to cower in fear or even to allow darkness and evil to prevail—it's a time to use the authority God has given us!

In Luke 10:19 Jesus told us, "Look, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. And nothing shall by any means hurt you."

Now, I've known about my authority in Christ for a while; I just don't always remember to use it! Has that happened to you? Sometimes I just allow things to go on that I shouldn't instead of using the authority Jesus gave me.

I believe there are three things we must be aware of in order to use this authority Jesus has given us:

—We have to know what it is.

—We have to know it belongs to us.

—We have to know how to use it.

What Authority Is

The authority that Jesus is talking about in Luke 10:19 is not brute-force power. It's delegated power, much like a policeman possesses. When a policeman steps out in front of traffic and holds up his hand to stop it, he's not stopping cars and trucks with his own brute strength—he's stopping them with the

delegated authority that comes from wearing the uniform. He's backed by the law.

That's the authority you have in Christ. You're not stopping the forces of darkness (sickness, fear, evil, lack) with your own strength—you're stopping them with the delegated authority given to you by God in Christ. You're backed by all the power of God.

How amazing is that—God Almighty Himself is the power behind your authority? Ephesians 6:10b says, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of *His* might" (author's emphasis). That means you can step out in front of the devil, hold up your hand and say no, backed by the power of God's might.

Authority Belongs to Us

The Bible says that you are the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27). Jesus is the head; we are the body—and His authority is perpetuated through the body. When Jesus rose from the dead, He transferred His authority on earth to His body, the church. In God's mind, when Christ was raised, we were raised

Ephesians 2:6 (NLT) says that God "raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus." Both the head and the body are seated there, next to God, in the place of power and authority. That means you are seated there! You are seated in the power position, and you are His heir (Rom. 8:17). That means that everything that's His—including His authority—now belongs to you.

How to Use Authority

The door to exercising your authority in Christ hinges on Ephesians 1:20 and Ephesians 2:6, the verses that say we are seated with God in Christ. I encourage you to meditate on those until you fully grasp the revelation that you are seated with Him, and *you* are the one He moves through.

Then when adversity arises, use your authority by speaking out what His Word says, using the name of Jesus. For example, you could say, “Sickness, I command you to leave my body in Jesus’ name according to 1 Peter 2:24—by His stripes, I am healed!” The authority is in the name.

It’s like using the name of the president of a company—that name can get things done. It’s the same in the spirit realm, except that the name of Jesus is higher and carries more weight than *any other name* (Phil. 2:9).

Think about that! When you use the name of Jesus, believing that you’re seated with Him at the right hand of God, you are backed by all the power in heaven! Every knee must bow to that name (Phil. 2:10).

Jesus made it very clear that His name is the key to all authority: “You call Me Teacher and Lord. You speak accurately, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet” (John 13:13-14, MEV).

In Acts 3, when Peter and John encountered a lame man at the Gate Beautiful, they said, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6b), and he did! It wasn’t their own anointing or power that raised the man; it was the authority in the name of Jesus. That same authority belongs to us; using the name of Jesus is how we exercise it! {eoa}

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Your Phil. 3:13 Message for the New Year

As I was preparing for work one morning, I dropped a hand mirror, and it went crashing to the floor. The pieces were everywhere. When I stooped down to pick them up, the phrase “seven years” immediately went through my head.

Now, I’m not a person who believes in luck, good or bad. The phrase probably came to mind because it’s one I’ve heard all my life—“seven years of bad luck.” But instead of finishing it, I heard a still small voice say, “Don’t look back,” then “Press on!”

I knew that sweet voice was the voice of the Lord. I also knew exactly what He was saying to me.

Unless you are looking into a mirror that is large enough to see only a small part of your face, you can normally see only your reflection, looking ahead, but also what is behind you. If you focus on the things behind, even though you’re facing the other direction, you are no longer looking forward.

I had been going through a very difficult time in my life and still wanted to hold on to some things that were virtually gone. The Father was telling me that it was time to let them all go, to mark the date, to build an altar, if you will. He showed me that looking back is very dangerous.

When the children of Israel left Egypt, they kept looking back. Many times, they complained that they had it better where they came from. Their former life of making bricks to build another’s kingdom seemed better than taking their own ground, even though they were headed for a land flowing with

milk and honey, a place of freedom.

In spite of all God did for them on their journey to Canaan, regardless of the times He proved Himself over and over, they still looked back, searching for what they once had. Most of them ended up dying in the wilderness.

The Morton Salt girl (Lot's wife) was the same way. She and her husband were raising their daughters in Sodom, a land of lust and perversion. Surely she and her daughters were safe. In fact, when two angels came to visit their house, the men in the town demanded that Lot send them out so the men could have their way with them! (See Gen. 19:4-5.)

To spare the angels, Lot, in desperation, offered his own precious daughters (see v. 6-8). Yet when he and his family were given the chance to get out of Sodom (vv. 15-16), Lot's wife couldn't bear to leave. Even though she was told not to look back, she did—and it cost her her life (vv. 17, 26).

I can remember instances in my life in which I experienced problems as a result of looking back. On more than one occasion, I have looked back for just an instant while walking or running. The moment I turned around again, I ran smack into a wall or door.

I've done it while driving too. I thought the person in front of me had already accelerated and looked back for one reason or another. The sickening sound of a crunch made me realize the person had *not* taken off as I had thought he had.

When I was reflecting on all this, God brought to my remembrance the Scripture about pressing on. In this verse, Paul says, "forgetting those things which are behind" (Phil.3:13b). You can't get more specific than that. The Word also says that Jesus "set [His] face like a flint" (Is. 50:7b) toward the cross. He didn't look back. There was temporary death followed by eternal life for all.

I encourage you as we near the close of 2019 and look toward a new year, to begin looking forward to today. Our Father can help you forget “those things which are behind,” And what He has ahead for you is more wonderful than you can imagine (see Jer. 29:11).

Prayer Power for the Week of Dec. 22, 2019

This week in prayer, as we celebrate Christmas and look toward the new year, repent of past sins and failures, close the door on them and press on to what God has for you in 2020. Ask Him to reveal His goals for you this coming year and direct you toward them. Continue to pray for our nation and its allies. Pray that our leaders would seek God’s will and wisdom, and heed wise counsel, especially as it’s a crucial election year. Remember the needy and those suffering great loss. Ask the Lord how you can be a blessing. Read: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Jeremiah 29:11, Philippians 3:13. {eoa}

Powerful Prophetic Insights for Today From Joseph’s Dramatic Story

Many of us can relate to the biblical story of Joseph. “There’s something alluring about a story for all of us, and especially one with so much drama as [his],” says business mentor and author Linda Fields. She adds, “I think another reason we love it is because we all feel like we’ve been in a

pit.”

But Fields sees something even more insightful in this popular story, she says on *The Linda Fields Show* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “Getting revelation is what we’re talking about, getting counsel from the throne room. I really felt like the Lord wanted us to identify with Joseph’s story and the trajectory of his life to get ready to entertain [the idea of] how to receive revelation.”

Fields has, she says, five P’s about how to bring impact on your life, all based on the story of Joseph. The first is the word “promise,” she explains. As a young man, Joseph received a promise and a dream from God. “When we have a dream, there’s an opportunity to embrace it, steward it, interpret it, unpack it, that you don’t necessarily have to take God up on,” Fields says. “And I’m big on stewardship: stewarding a dream through a prophetic call. ... Joseph didn’t just have a dream; he received a dream into his DNA.”

To learn more about Joseph and receiving revelation from God, listen to this podcast.

Why Jesus Brings True Joy to the World

The gifts are wrapped and tagged. Cookies are baked and decorated. I’ve watched Christmas made-for-TV movies until even *I’ve* had enough ... and that’s saying something!

Yes, I’m one of *those* people. You know, the ones who play Christmas carols in July and put up their tree before

Thanksgiving. There's just something contagious about the joy of Christmas.

Apart from the Christmas season, we don't use the word *joy* very much. We speak more often of happiness. But happiness is changeable. It depends on our circumstances.

True joy wells up from a source greater than us and our circumstances. And one of the greatest, purest joys comes from the reason for Christmas.

Now in the glow of the Christmas tree lights, I'm thinking again of the reason for the season. "Joy to the World" is streaming while I type. As I listen to the words written by Isaac Watts, I'm reminded of who the baby in the manger really is.

He is the *Lord*, the one who created heaven and earth. He is the *King*. Because He created our world, He has the right to rule over it ... and us.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come/ Let earth receive her King;

*Let every heart prepare Him room/ And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing/ And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.*

He is the *Savior*, the one who conquered sin and death to live and reign for eternity.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns/ Let men their songs employ;

*While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains/ Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy/ Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

He is the *source of blessing*. In every corner of the world where sin lurks and sorrow results, His blessings will flow,

all because God became man.

No more let sins and sorrows grow/ Nor thorns infest the ground;

He comes to make His blessings flow/ Far as the curse is found,

Far as the curse is found/ Far as, far as the curse is found.

His nature is the essence of *truth*. Even though we may not always like what He says, it is always true. We don't deserve the salvation He provides, but by His grace He offers us His righteousness so we can stand before our holy God. And He does it because of His great love for us.

He rules the world with truth and grace/ And makes the nations prove

The glories of His righteousness/ And wonders of His love,

And wonders of His love/ And wonders, and wonders of His love.

Jesus is Lord, King and Savior. He is truth and grace, righteousness and love. He is the reason for our joy!

Will you join me in singing for joy this Christmas? {eoa}

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This article originally appeared at [.](#)

For more ideas on the celebration of Christmas, check out the Charisma e-book, A December to Remember, available at [this link](#) for just \$.

Did You Know There's Warfare in Your Celebration?

For national holidays, there are fireworks and patriotic songs. For birthdays, there are flaming candles mounted atop delicious cake. For anniversaries, we have opulent rings and festive parties.

But it doesn't stop there. From flowers to parades to balloons to dancing, we have to be honest and admit we love to celebrate life's special moments. When the occasion calls for it, the invitations are sent, and the people gather to enjoy the moment together.

In culture today it can seem as if special moments have become commercialized by businesses hoping to capitalize on an opportunity. But the reason the opportunity is present is because celebrating is important for the human soul.

It's only natural, and basically imprinted on our DNA. But as important as the big moments of life can be, as followers of Jesus, we have the opportunity to celebrate and rejoice in our everyday because of who our God is and what He's done.

Like children who count their half-birthdays or the mathematically challenged who finally solve the algebra equation correctly, we too can enjoy the seemingly smaller milestones along the journey. Yes, the destination remains our focus and is worthy of recognition, but that doesn't keep us from enjoying the steps toward that destination in our everyday.

"This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Ps. 118:24).

In God's relationship with the young nation of Israel, He gave them several instructions as to how they could live a prosperous life. Instead of solely focusing on how they could yield the biggest harvests in a planting season or raise the strongest livestock, He set the foundation for the fullness He was offering to a people who would feel the persuasive pressure of an ungodly culture and the challenge to break forth and maintain a promise.

While the Israelites were still in the land of Egypt, the Lord gave the following instructions to Moses and Aaron: "From now on, this month will be the first month of the year for you.

"This is a day to remember. Each year, from generation to generation, you must celebrate it as a special festival to the Lord. This is a law for all time" (Ex. 12:1-2, 14, NLT).

Before they were even to step foot on the pathway to the promised land, the Lord called done what they had only dreamed of and commanded them to celebrate what they had yet to see.

After generations of living in a foreign land, countless prayers of freedom from slavery and promises seemingly going unfulfilled, everything changed. What began as just another normal day in a strange week of events became the launching point to a longing fulfilled, not just for the Israelites or Moses, but also for God. Once more, the Lord displayed His faithful nature and His character.

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He spoken, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19, MEV).

In a great display of power and mercy, God's actions began to fulfill His promise to Abraham, already knowing that the Israelites would panic in the discomfort of Pharaoh's pursuit as they faced the Red Sea, would complain when faced with

daily manna and would cower in fear and see themselves as orphaned grasshoppers when facing the promised land. Despite their current circumstance and geographic location, despite what was to come (including the fact that the generation that left Egypt would not enter the promised land because of their unbelief and disobedience), the Lord instructed the people to celebrate as if they were completely free and living in the promise.

“Celebrate this Festival of Unleavened Bread, for it will remind you that I brought your forces out of the land of Egypt on this very day. This festival will be a permanent law for you; celebrate this day from generation to generation.

“Remember, these instructions are a permanent law that you and your descendants must observe forever. When you enter the land the Lord has promised to give you, you will continue to observe this ceremony. Then your children will ask, ‘What does this ceremony mean?’ And you will reply, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord for He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt.’

“The whole community of Israel must celebrate this Passover festival” (, 24-27a, 47, NLT).

Our life today is not too different from the times in which the Israelites lived, looking to God to fulfill their need despite their own perceived weakness and obvious lack. There were going to be challenges, and they were going to face trials, but the Lord wanted them to continue to remember what He had done and in whom they were placing their trust to fulfill the word that had been spoken.

God’s instructions to celebrate were not just about gathering with others and feeling good but were accompanied by commands to establish a legacy of His great faithfulness. By reminiscing the stories of old of the Lord’s great feats, the Israelites would set the framework of expectation for the next

generation. This simple act would help anchor God's people in His nature as gracious, the one who is slow to anger and abounding in love. It would also provide understanding that celebrating, simply reminiscing with tangible action, was a key part of walking in relationship with God, thinking on what He has done, is doing and what He will do.

Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth (Deut. 11:18-21, NKJV).

As the one who was, who is and who is to come, God is very present and intertwined in the details of our day-to-day. In our times of celebrating milestones, whether big or small, we are putting before our eyes the truth of what our great God has done and engaging in the expected hope of what is to come.

God is a joyful God of celebration who encourages us to celebrate and take joy in what He's doing. He is the one who has a feast prepared for us at the end of the age, even though we have yet to achieve the unity and godliness accessible to us as His children. Because of who God is, we can be joyful and rejoice when the full manifestation of a promise is seen. But there's also opportunity to rejoice and celebrate the beginning of the answer by the gift of faith we've been given.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

The goal may be a home, marriage, children, retirement, ministry or even a business, but we can rejoice in the truth

that God is with us in our not-quite-there-yet moments and that His goodness and glory are just as readily available now as they were centuries ago. Yes, we want to see the fullness—and if we stay steady and trust Him, we will!—but God is constantly working and providing for us. And because His goodness and mercy are following us all the days of our lives, there is also much to celebrate in the simple moments of life as well.

When we remember His goodness and His past deeds, we add joy to the journey. Our eyes are opened to see what He's doing in our present situation. In every scenario, we receive greater freedom to see His handiwork in our lives and the lives of our loved ones. Once more, hope can arise to help us stay steady despite what we may see. We are reminded that we have His power on the inside to be like our Father, who rejoices to see the work begin, even in its smallest form.

So when the pressures of life increase, and the enemy heaves accusations upon us, we can remember we have an alternative. In the face of unexpected diagnoses, mounting bills or strained family relationships, we have a way to keep our mind fixed on Christ. We can celebrate what God has already done—the miracles of healing, the unexpected financial blessings and the reconciliation of relationships—and ask Him in those moments to help us see. Like Bartimaeus, we too can cry out, “Son of David have mercy on me! I want to see” (see Mark 10:46-52).

And in those moments, our eyes can be opened to see that He is the one who is faithful and true when everything else feels as unstable and temporary as it actually is. He is the one who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

The God who sees no obstacles, who knows no impossibilities, is working in our lives. And He is for us. He is victorious and all-powerful, kind and strong. And His work in our lives—regardless of how big or small we think it is, compared

to the ultimate destination—is worth celebrating!

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”
(Phil. 4:4).

What recent “small” moments of God’s work in your life can you celebrate today? {eoa}

Fia Curley served on the NightWatch at IHOPKC for many years, participating in prayer, worship and intercession from midnight to 6 a.m. Currently attending college in New York, 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.

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How You Can Reduce Your Stress This Christmas Season

When we think of Christmas, we often think of the stress involved. As women, what can we do about stress, particularly at this time of year?

Psychologist and life coach Dr. Barbara Lowe has some words of wisdom, and she shares them on *Dr. Barbara’s Whole Life Podcast* on the Charisma Podcast Network. “You need to be taking care of yourself,” she says. “Often as women, we are caretakers, or we put ourselves in that role. ... But sometimes

we're so busy watering everyone else's garden that our own garden is dry, that our own garden is not taken care of; it's wilting. And you are the one, my friend, who needs to water your own garden.

"Some of you are in caretaking positions, you're a pastor or a nurse or a teacher or a high-powered executive, but you're still taking care of everyone," Lowe says. "Take time also to take care of you! God wants you to water your own garden; you need to do some self-care."

But what does this look like? Lowe discusses the basics including sleep, proper nutrition and limiting alcohol use. But she also suggests another healthy suggestion: saying no.

"The holidays do require doing more: We're visiting more, we're on the go more. Some of us are cooking more, wrapping presents—it can stretch us financially. And so I do want to encourage you that you can be all—but not all at once. ... We need to pick and choose where we're going to invest. It's OK just to be OK in some areas!

Lowe adds, "It's impossible to be an excellent cook, an excellent decorator, an excellent mom, an excellent friend, an excellent employee. In all circumstances, we have to learn to compromise. Sometimes, we need to take the foot off the gas here, so we can turn in this [other] direction. We've got to—and I'm giving you permission."

For more of Dr. Barbara's tips on surviving the holidays with less stress and struggle, listen to this podcast.

How You Can Avoid Spiritual Suicide

Compromise is spiritual suicide, and this is how our enemy, Satan—and his demon, the spirit of death—come after us to steal, kill and destroy our eternal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we compromise, we lower or weaken our standards. And for Christians, God's Word, the Holy Bible, is our standard. It's God's book of rules and regulations for how we are to live life on this earth. It teaches us spiritual boundaries for healthy living in spirit, soul (mind and emotions) and with our physical bodies as well. When we obey His Word, we walk in His blessings; and when we choose not to obey, we walk in consequences for our willful disobedience.

Let's face it: In these last days, God's people are being pressured by a lost society to compromise His ways. But as disciples of Christ, should we allow society to dictate our beliefs and convictions? What does the Bible have to say to us concerning compromise?

"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, it is sin" (James 4:17).

And why do many of God's people compromise, lower or weaken their standards today? Because they are fearful of what might happen if they take a stand for God's righteousness. What are some of the things they fear? They fear they might lose their position, their title, their job, finances, possessions, popularity, friends, and the list goes on and on. But according to the Bible, we are not to fear these earthly matters, but the eternal ones that do matter.

"For if we go on willfully *and* deliberately sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains

a sacrifice [to atone] for our sins [that is, no further offering to anticipate], but a kind of awful *and* terrifying expectation of [divine] judgment and the fury of a fire *and* burning wrath which will consume the adversaries [those who put themselves in opposition to God]" (Heb. 10:26-27, AMP).

Have we taken the time to weigh the outcome of compromise? Do we really want to put ourselves in opposition to our God? What happens when we do?

"Anyone who has ignored *and* set aside the Law of Moses is put to death without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses. How much greater punishment do you think he will deserve who has rejected *and* trampled under foot the Son of God, and has considered unclean *and* common the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and has insulted the Spirit of grace [who imparts the unmerited favor and blessing of God]? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine [retribution and the deliverance of justice rest with Me], I will repay [the wrongdoer].' And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a fearful *and* terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God [incurring His judgment and wrath]" (Heb. 10:28-31).

As I write in my latest work, *Conquering the Spirit of Death*, we are created to be more than conquerors and to win every battle we face; not only battles against physical death, but also spiritual death that comes to us by the way of compromise.

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37). {eoa}

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

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