

*The Lions and the Bride*

*A Love Story*

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## ***Dedication***

*I dedicate this book first of all to my magnificent and faithful Jesus, my King, to the beautiful Holy Spirit, and to my wonderful “Papa God.” Also, with much love, I dedicate the work to my four little flowers, Eric and Angier, my son and daughter, and to Jacinda and Crystal, my spiritual children, who were all part of the experiences described during this wonderful time period. Furthermore, I wish to thank Pastor Benny Hinn, my teacher, and his ministry team for being such a blessing to me. They have given me the life-changing, life-saving lessons I needed in order to receive the fullness of what God had for me. And I am so thankful that Pastor Benny has spent his life on his knees, so that people like me could get the help they needed.*



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## *Chapter 1*

# *The Child Within*

*“I love them that love me; and those  
that seek me early shall find me.  
Hearken unto me, O ye children: for  
blessed are they that keep my ways”  
(Proverbs 8; 17,32)*

I was raised in a typical, traditional, non-charismatic church. As a child, my personal relationship with God was very private. My parents taught me to accept the truth of God, to love the Lord with a pure heart, and to give my life and my best to Him. I innocently accepted everything they offered. As a child, I had very little to repent of, but I did learn right from wrong. The terms “saved” and “born-again” were never used with me. I loved the Lord, and I knew I belonged to Him, but I grew up knowing very little about Him. I listened to all the stories and movies I could to learn. I said my prayers. I did everything I could think of as a child to please Him. That’s all, I think, the Lord was expecting out of me. As I grew and matured into adolescence and adulthood, I was not getting all I needed to mature spiritually. I needed to grow in understanding in the promises of God,

in weapons of spiritual warfare, in my spiritual rights, and in knowledge of the works of the Holy Spirit. I became spiritually dwarfed. I was a seed that had been only partly watered, and never grew into the fullness for which I was created. I give my church credit for imparting what it had, but I felt I needed more. Because I was awkward, and did not speak the language that others more well-versed did, I was frequently told that I was walking in darkness and not saved. There is a difference between being saved and being well educated in the Lord. How I managed a lifetime to cling to the Lord, in spite of how little I knew, is a miracle in itself, and a testimony to the grace of God. I never seemed to understand much about God's ways. I just knew that I loved Him and that He loved me. It was His love that carried me, and inspired me, when I had nothing else to cling to. I was a small child, and accepted the faith that my parents imparted unto me. I was very devoted and wanted to stay as close to my Lord as possible. I would volunteer to help at church, just so I could stay in the sanctuary and feel His peace. There were many pleasant moments in my childhood, but there were also some very hurtful moments as well. And as a child, who was a little too sensitive, I took these experiences to heart, and would eventually need healing in these areas.

My early education in this church taught me to love the Lord and follow His ways, to repent when I offended Him, to be truly sorry for what I had done, and to be faithful to Him, even if it meant I had to die for my faith.

The seed had been planted in me, and I needed to grow from that point on. In my adult life, I read my Bible on my own, attended services, and tried to understand the different viewpoints of various churches where I worshipped. The first Pentecostal service I ever attended was very new and different to me. People there automatically assumed that I was not saved, because I seemed confused. Later, another pastor asked me if I knew the Lord, and I said yes. He then asked me how I knew I was saved. I wasn't sure what kind of response he was looking for, because I thought that was something between the Lord and the person. I wasn't raised to answer questions like this. It turned out that I was supposed to quote a particular Bible verse to him, to convince him the Word was in me, but because I didn't get the procedure right, he questioned my salvation. As I studied what it meant to be "saved," from scripture, it described the response of the heart, and the faith, that was the basic fabric of my life. I had accepted all this my whole life, but had never been taught the terminology and language that went along with it. Another church told me unless I could remember the actual day I was saved, that I wasn't saved at all. This frustrated me, because I couldn't remember back that far. I was then told that I needed to ask God for the date, so I could prove to myself that I was saved. I was told just because you go to church does not mean you're saved. This was discouraging. It made me feel that I should just stay home and not attend church, since it didn't

prove anything. Yet, another church I attended also questioned me because I was so naïve about everything.

After adulthood, I found myself divorced, and a young mother of two children. I was alone with no one to really help me. I was burdened down with many responsibilities. Time flew quickly as I worked, and worked, and worked, and my children grew. One of my heartaches was that the world was raising my children instead of me, because it had the best hours of the day with them, as I was absent, trying to make a living. I felt I had failed myself in life, and failed my children. Every day was a struggle, and this went on for over 20 years. My children had problems as they grew, and this intensified my heartache, because I could not spend the time I wanted with them, to help them. But the Lord was still my comfort... I would dwell sometimes on the passage from Isaiah 54:4-8, where it says, “Fear not, for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth...For thy Maker is thine husband: the Lord of hosts is his name: and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall He be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and as a wife of youth, when you were refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.” I was also a wife of youth, who was also forsaken and grieved in spirit, and the Lord was all I had. For years I dwelled on this promise, and asked my Lord

to help my children where I couldn't, or had failed somehow.

One day, after I was praying for my children, I came across a dress that I wore when I was a little girl. It was a special memory to me, because when my daughter got to the right age, she wore it also, and looked so pretty in it. Many years had past for both of us, and it was a time when my daughter needed prayer. I found it tucked away, so I brought it out and hung it up in front of where I prayed. I would not take it down until my prayers were answered, and my daughter came back to me. A year went by, and the dress was getting rather dusty, so I had it dry cleaned. There were other accessories that went with it and I hand-washed them. Since the day was a sunny one, I put them out on a drying rack in the sun to dry. I came out later to retrieve them, and a feeling of sadness came over me. I thought of all the years I had tried to belong to the Lord, and how my salvation was denied by others, because they believed my church and faith were wrong, and didn't count. I thought of all the criticism against the church of my youth, and what must have seemed like all the wasted years belonging to the "wrong church." Everything that was in my heart all those years, as a result, didn't count either because those in the "right churches" said I could not have been "saved." As these thoughts passed through my mind, I picked up the dress and was straightening it out to remove any wrinkles,

when the Lord spoke to me. “You were seven,” He said to me, “ you were seven.” This was the age when I had been taught about the Lord, and I was old enough to understand and make a decision, and I accepted Him in my heart. And that day, He accepted me back. We belonged to each other that day. No, I couldn’t remember like adults do, how I turned from a life of sin and repented. At seven years old, I was an innocent, fragile child with a loving heart who sincerely said her prayers of repentance as she had been taught. In the years ahead, others would not recognize my worth as a child of God, and my salvation, because of denominational differences. However, there was a very special Person who **did** recognize that day and took me to Himself. It would not count to them, but it counted to Him. His confirmation meant so much to me. He was true to His word, that once you are His, no one can take you out of His hand. And really, it is no one’s right to deny the salvation of another, if it is truly birthed of God. It doesn’t matter what denomination one belongs to, if any, or how much that person fumbles, or falls, in life, or how uneducated they seem to be in the Word. The Lord takes each person to Himself just the way they are. I was considered ignorant of the scripture, because I could not quote it, but the *spirit* of the scripture was alive in my heart. There were times in my life that I forgot, or didn’t think about certain instructions in scripture, and because of that I got in trouble. But, as soon as I found again the truth on each particular issue, I immediately recognized it as truth, and turned back

again to the correct path. Just as a child wanders from his parent's instructions, but runs back, many times I wandered also, but I always knew Who to run back to. I was God's child and I am so glad I was, and still am. No one can take Him away from me.

The Lord had become my husband in my adult years. But, at the same time, there was a child within me that had been suppressed and saddened over time. That child had not been nurtured properly, so she could fulfill her true potential in this world. She also had been hurt at times, and needed to heal. She was like a small flower seedling that had not been watered properly, and was struggling to stay alive, as life became tougher and tougher. She did not know how to handle life's problems well. She was not sophisticated enough. She didn't know how much the Lord she loved was ready and willing to help her. Her ignorance was hurting her.

One day, early in 1994, I had a dream. In it, I was walking in a deep, dark dungeon somewhere. It looked like a prison that had been abandoned and was no longer being used. As I walked down different corridors, I finally came to a large, locked, steel door. It was cold in there. As the guide that was with me opened the door for me, I saw a curled up, abandoned, desolate, hopeless 4-5 year-old child, all dressed in black with her face turned toward the wall. I recognized her, and gently spoke, "Marianne." She looked up at me in quiet surprise, and responded, "*I'm* Marianne," as if she was so surprised

that anyone would know who she was, or even care. It was so sad, but at this moment, I had reached her, and was ready to help her know she was loved too. As I was ready to start the process of healing my inner child, it was, unknown to me, in God's plan to help me do it. I would not have to do this alone.

## Chapter 2

# *The Man of My Dreams*

*“How precious also are your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with you.” (Psalm 139: 17-18)*

It is a little hard to describe what I felt back in 1994, as I started back to school. The moment had arrived that I had waited 20 years for. My original date of graduation from college was supposed to be 1972, but was delayed because I had my firstborn, Eric. I went back to finish my senior year, and graduated finally in 1977, when my second child, my daughter Angier, was born. With an unsuccessful marriage, I was now a single mother of two children, and had spent most of those years alone, working and providing for my children. I did not always have the best jobs, because I was limited by childcare expenses and arrangements. As I realized there were serious family responsibilities that had to take priority over any dreams to return to school, and finish my professional training, I had to set aside my educational aspirations. The years had been hard, but blessed, because I always had what I needed, no matter

how little I earned. But deep inside me, I wanted something for myself. I was willing to make the sacrifice of time and money, to finally achieve the self-improvement that would bring better job opportunities and a sense of personal fulfillment. I had always loved to learn, and would study anything in print I could get my hands on. I saw others go back to school, and go on to better things, and I had wanted to do the same. I was constantly taking courses to keep up with my field, while I waited for my chance to return full-time. However, what I was to discover that 20 years does make a difference. I was about to attend graduate school, and find out it wasn't what I thought, or wanted. I can remember one night before my return to school, looking up at the stars, and telling the Lord all my hopes and dreams and asking for guidance. The Lord answered me with a dream, which at the time, I didn't have the wisdom to interpret. This was not typical for me, because I was usually very keen on what my dreams meant, and good at interpreting them. This was an exception.

In the dream, I could feel, and see, a huge snake coming at my head and brushing up against my face. It must have been at least a foot in diameter, and about 20-30 feet long. I was aware of its passing as it brushed my hair back, and it moved against my head. I thought the Lord was telling me I had done something wrong, but it was actually a warning of what was to come. I was going to experience the greatest spiritual attack of my

life, and I wasn't prepared. The snake was going to kill me.

In the summer of 1994, I had a dream in which I saw a very quiet, thoughtful man with wavy, dark hair, wearing a white shirt and dark pants, standing, and just looking at me. He looked like a businessman, and had his sleeves rolled up as if he had been at work, or was about to get to work. His deep, full and very sympathetic, tender eyes almost looked lonely as he gazed at me. His full cheeks made him look child-like and younger, if it weren't for the mustache he had. He was standing in front of a plain, white wall. Whoever he was, I felt when I saw him that he was someone I had known and waited for all my life. I just wondered who he was. He was familiar in some way. He had such a kind, innocent face. I thought at first, the Lord was about to bring someone new into my life, and I might be remarried, or at least have a wonderful companion. I would keep alert as I went shopping, or go to church, or school, and I could feel my hopes go up a few times, when I saw someone who looked similar to him. I talked about the man of my dreams to friends at school, and they were so intrigued, that they found themselves looking around for me as well. One time, they found a good look-alike. But the real man of my dreams never appeared. My mind was usually on my studies, which went well, but I kept wondering at times how great it would be if he really existed somewhere.

On April 5, 1995, I had another dream in which my “friend”, dressed in an olive green suit this time, was helping me move my mother, who was in reality living with me, out of my house into a new place. I only saw the back of him in the dream, but I immediately knew it was him. Later that year, the dream came true, as I had to move my mother back to Virginia, as she was needing more care than I could provide.

I worked at school during the rest of the spring, summer and fall. I then had to take a course for which I didn't have all the requirements. This course was so hard, I thought I wasn't going to make it. I did well on the first test, but failed the second, and it scared me. It was past the deadline to drop the course, and I was getting deeper and deeper over my head. One night, I came home after a bad day and cried myself to sleep. By this time, the spiritual attack that had been predicted had occurred, and I was trying to deal with many things. I was also trying hard at this time to finish my course. I was concerned about not being able to finish school, and having to just leave. If I were not to pass this course the first time around, I would not get a second chance and get my degree. Then all my efforts would be for nothing. I prayed and cried myself to sleep, thinking how hopeless things looked. That night in October 1995, I dreamed I felt my friend close beside me, at my side. He was wearing a green and brown sweater, and fit into the college look this time. My greatest impression was that he had a nice, large chest I could rest my head on as

I cried. To rest my head against him was so comforting, and when I woke up, I felt better. But, even though he made me feel better, the course got even harder. I wanted to drop the course, but it was too late. I was told that only something similar to a documented, medical emergency could get me out of it. In November 1995, that is what happened. My son, Eric, had a seizure for the first time in his life, and I spent the next month in hospitals and doctor's offices, trying to determine why. Needless to say, I missed all my classes, which put me even further behind. The school granted me a medical leave of absence, and gave me an incomplete for the semester, with the opportunity to make up the course within the following semester. That "emergency" seemed to be no accident. While all the testing was in progress for Eric, again I had a dream. This time my "friend" was working in a surgery recovery room in a hospital. He was so interesting. This time, he was dressed up as a doctor. I was coming up an escalator, and I saw him from a distance, and ran over to him. When I got closer, I realized he was standing over Eric, who had just come out of "surgery." He had me look up at the sign overhead, which said "Recovery." At this point, I felt the greatest sense of peace and assurance that my Eric was going to be OK. My friend was so shy and gentle. He then asked if he could take Eric to a movie. He wanted to be a part of Eric's life too, and wanted to be close to both of us. In the dream, I was working in the "receiving" area of the hospital, which was very symbolic. When I awoke, I told Eric about the dream,

who immediately threw away his seizure pills, believing in his healing as I did. He has never needed those pills since!!! God had performed divine surgery on Eric, and I, as well as Eric, was on the receiving end of mercy!!! My friend was becoming a very special friend now. He was part of saving my son's life, and creating circumstances which gave me the extra time I needed to study, and finally pass the course, which I did, with a B.

As Christmas time approached, I had a dream in which I could see myself dressed in spring colors, mainly pastel blue and pink, with my hair shorter. I thought to myself, maybe this was how I looked to my special friend. I had forgotten the dream until one day at Christmas time, I decided to cut my hair and remembered the dream. The dream focused on my friend seeing me in the "spring" of my life, even though in worldly terms, I was now in my 40's. I decided my special friend must be some kind of angel that God had provided to help me through school. But part of me wanted him to be more than that. I had a secret wish that someday he would come to meet me in real life, and I would have the chance to express my gratitude to this wonderful person for being so good to me. I wanted him to be real, so I could get to know him better. Unknowingly, I prayed with my children that Christmas for the Lord to bless those who were going to turn out to be my enemies. I was so trusting, I didn't know that matters would get worse, and things were the opposite of what I thought.

The following January, 1996, I was focusing on trying to deal with the spiritual attack, and trying to study to makeup the coursework, as well as finish up my degree. Again, I had a dream. This time, I was walking by a church with a statue of Jesus in front of it. As I was almost past the site, I noticed out of the corner of my eye that the all white statue had dark hair. So, I turned to look. The statue was now wiggling around to get free, and became alive!!! Jesus was very happy and smiling at me!! I was so happy to see Him, and He was so happy to see me. He was so beautiful! He was so glorious! He was so majestic! He was so awesome! And most of all, He was so free!! And now I felt so free too!! We were happy and free together, and all we wanted to do is celebrate! Jesus was not a statue anymore to me. He was real and He loved me. When I woke up from the dream, I realized that not once, during the encounter, did it ever occur to me that I had ever been unhappy or hurt. I had total amnesia toward pain. I figured that must be what heaven is all about. All you see is Jesus, and all pain is forgotten. You can't even remember that you *used* to have pain, and then it went away, because even the *memory* of pain would detract from the glory and the joy of the Lord's presence. At this point in my life, it no longer mattered if I was being spiritually attacked, or if I finished school, or if I ever got a better job, or if I even got some deadly disease. I had seen the Lord I loved!!!!!! I didn't need anything else!!

The following Valentine's Day was very special to me. I met my special friend again in a dream. This time his hair was shorter, and, at first, I almost didn't recognize him, because he had no mustache now. We were sitting in a Pentecostal church that I had never in real life been in, but associated it with a particular pastor from my past. We were sitting on the same pew toward the middle of the church on the right, as one came in. He was sitting at the edge of the pew close to the aisle, and I was sitting beside him. This time he decided to wear black pants, with a silver/black vest and a short sleeved white shirt. He dressed up just for me. And I had dressed up just for him. He smiled. I smiled. We talked. Then he looked at me so seriously and entreatingly, and wanted to know if I was ready to "go forward to the altar." He looked so hopeful. I suddenly felt scared. I cannot say why, but it was like he was asking me to do something I didn't understand. The altar may have meant marriage. The altar to me also meant sacrifice, and death, and physical harm. What was he asking me to do? What was going to happen to me up there? Was I going to get hurt? Scared, I hesitated. The dream ended. I felt terrible. I had missed something important.

It was now March 1, 1996, and in my next dream, I found myself in a gift shop flooded with water. There were several rooms with shelves and presents on all the shelves. All the presents, or gifts, were wrapped in

pretty bows and pretty paper of different colors, and were high up out of the water. They were all there for me. All the gifts were nice, but what was most noticeable was the fact that I was up to my waist in water. As I looked around, my friend's head popped up out of the water in sort of a whimsical, happy way, and he drew closer to me. He was up to his neck. He was trying to tell me that the water was not up as high as it should be. It was only to my waist. The water was a symbol of the spirit, and I was only half full, or covered. The gifts were for me when I became completely filled or covered with the "water." I was not getting the point yet. But my friend did not give up on me. He returned in two weeks. His visits were becoming more frequent as my personal trials became more intense.

On March 15, 1996, my special friend came to me again. He was earnestly entreating me, but ever so gently. He was so sensitive and sweet to me. I had come to deeply love my friend. I knew he loved me too. We were like two innocent children, except that he seemed to understand the most, and was there to help me. I did not understand who he was, but I knew that I could never have anyone like him, ever. In the dream, I somehow entered into an already started conversation between us. I was telling him that I got "cold feet", that maybe I wasn't ready yet. He then told me that I *have* to be ready, and that he had waited a long time for me. If I wasn't ready, then he couldn't take me. He looked longingly at me. My refusal appeared to crush and

grieve him, and he started to turn away. In my own confusion, heartache and desperation, I weakly cried out to him, gently touching his arm, entreating him, “please don’t leave me...” Still hurt, but out of love and faithfulness, he submitted, and turned back to me, and stayed. It was as if in pain he turned away, but that he loved and needed me so badly, that he was willing to be hurt just to stay with me. In my heart, I could not understand why I was refusing someone I had grown to love so dearly. I knew I could not go on without him. He was part of me. I did not understand myself. I did not understand him. He wanted something from me that was bigger than I was.

Again, two weeks went by and it was April 3, 1996 and I had two more dreams. In the first, I saw my graduation. There was water everywhere, the whole area was flooded but it was possible to walk through it. I was going to successfully graduate, which was wonderful, but the second dream meant more to me. In it, there were three boats all tied together, traveling across deep water. The first boat had a small motor in it, with a driver whose identity was unknown to me, but I assumed he was an angel. The first boat was pulling the other two boats, and all three boats were crossing deep water together in a row, and headed toward a shoreline, which was in view. My special friend was in the second boat with *his* small child, which was about 2 years old, and I was in the third boat with *my* small child, which was also about 2 years old. We traveled by dangerous areas

where there were undercurrents, where I had lost myself and my child before. This time they were deeper, but we passed over, and passed by, the dangerous areas safely. While still in deep water, my friend, for some reason, stood up in his boat, and his boat tipped over. I couldn't imagine why he would do that, since the consequences were obvious. He and his child fell out of their boat and into the deep water. Since the three boats were tied together and still moving, my boat pulled up to where he was in the water. I reached out to him, and gently took his hand. He then contently held onto me with one hand, and held onto his child with the other. He had such a sweet, trusting look on his face. He was happy that I had rescued him and his little child. I then told him not to climb into my boat because it might tip over too. I told him to just hold onto me. He seemed content to do just that. I held his hand as we were pulled toward more shallow, safe waters. The dream ended as we approached the shallow waters. The children were about 2 years old, which was the age of our relationship. They also represented the innocence in us. There was something very different about our relationship now. It had matured. *I* was now helping *him*. At first, I did not understand why my friend would stand up and fall out of his boat, but then I realized later he did it on purpose. He did not want to be in *front* of me anymore. He wanted to take my place in the deep water, and be by my *side*. He did not want to lead me, and have me follow. He wanted us to go through the deep water together, hand in hand as partners. We were now a team,

inseparable, united, brought together by my problems, not his. We loved each other, and were there for each other. We were bonded together, and the bond between us would last forever.

Finally, on July 21, 1996, Eric's birthday, and after I had completed my degree, I had my last dream of my special friend. I had gone with a group to a wooded region, where people may be considered different from others. I was performing various tasks, such as cooking and caring for my mother. My special friend was waiting for me to finish what I was doing. I was waiting for him, also. He was standing close by, and just watching me. Someone in the group then said that I was special to God, because I had such deep love and feelings for others. My friend seemed to be in agreement. These feelings then rose up in me and I almost cried. I felt so much love there, and the spiritual communion present meant so much to me during a time of great personal crisis.

During this special time of special dreams, I had nine dreams about my mysterious, sweet friend I had named John, and right in the center of those dreams was that beautiful dream about my Lord Jesus. At the time, I didn't know who my friend was, but deeply believed he was someone the Lord had given me to get through difficult times. What I didn't know in the summer of 1996, my friend John would not come again to me in my dreams, although once in awhile I would see our

“children” as they grew and played with each other. This is because the Lord was ushering in something new in the spirit for me, which would take me way past dreams. And, in time, I would come to understand the nature and purpose of those dreams.



## Chapter 3

# Pastor Benny

*“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (Isaiah 52:7)*

About a month before my oral defense of my thesis, I was not only under the usual stress students feel, but also battle-fatigued from my spiritual attack, which was still in progress. One morning, I awoke early from a fairly restless night, and turned on the television. At 6:30 am, I found myself watching what I thought was a most peculiar, but intriguing, program. A man named Benny Hinn was on, who talked about the Lord, and was just exuding joy and love. He was the happiest person I thought I'd ever seen on TV. He showed meetings where people were healed by God. I thought to myself, *who* is this? It also seemed like just about everyone who got healed fell down. I thought, *what* is this? Benny Hinn was so excited and happy, he could barely sit still. He was enthusiastic about what the Lord was doing in his crusades. I didn't understand any of the “falling” aspect, but each morning, I would get up and watch, and listen to the teachings, which were really wonderful. I

also liked to start the day out praying with him on the television, which is the way he ended each program. It seemed like he was explaining everything I had always wanted to know, so I continued to tune in. His approach to God was so different from how I had been raised. I never heard of being excited about God before. I was raised to be quiet and reverent, and not to expect much to happen until I reached heaven. I always thought miracles were only in the Bible. But, I was learning the full meaning of the scripture, describing the Lord as “the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.” I decided to become a covenant partner that summer. At first, Benny Hinn was just an interesting man on TV. In time, he became Pastor Benny to me.

In September of 1996, I heard Pastor Benny say that he was going to be taping at the CBN studio in Virginia Beach, Virginia with Pat Robertson. Since my mother used to be a prayer counselor at CBN (she joined the charismatic movement in her latter years), I thought she might like to get away from the nursing home for a day and see this. (Her nursing home was nearby the TV studio.) I also hoped she could get prayed for as well, so I signed up for us to be in the television audience. It was a long day, and Pastor Benny would take breaks here and there. In the meantime, I was trying to care for my mother, giving her things to eat, and her medicine, while we listened. At one point, she was making a mess, because she got yogurt all over her hands. I was trying to wipe her off, then, getting yogurt all over me too. I

was concerned about being a distraction, since we were placed in the front to accommodate my mother's wheelchair. Pastor Benny looked over once, and watched for a moment. But, no one said anything to us, and we enjoyed the program. During one of the sessions, while Pat and Pastor Benny were praying, Pat announced that someone was being healed in the lower part of their legs, that something was causing an inflammation there. This struck a familiar note to me, since I had been suffering from a painful orthopedic condition, which affected my feet and lower part of my legs. I looked around and saw no one responding, and thought to myself, "*I'll take it (the healing).*" I had no experience with being healed before this way, but it seemed so easy, I thought I would claim it, and see what happened next. Once the taping sessions were over, Pastor was very kind, and came over and prayed for my mom before he left, as well as praying for some others. I took her back to the nursing home, then returned to North Carolina.

The next day, I went into K-mart to find some shoes to wear to a job interview. I was dreading this, since the only kind of shoes my feet could bear were orthopedic shoes, with special inserts. However, it would not look good for me to try to dress up for an interview, and have funny looking shoes on that didn't match the rest of what I was wearing. I found one pair of shoes and tried them on. I walked all over the store in them, and they did not hurt my feet!! That was the first time in two years my

feet did not hurt. I was very happy. Getting healed was kind of fun, so I bought an extra pair of “normal” shoes.

In October, 1996, I went to my first Partner’s Conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia. I was completely clueless, and totally unprepared for the meeting, even though I had been listening to the daily program. First of all, I didn’t know any of the songs, and I had not understood yet that the Holy Spirit was a *person* to be experienced. I always imagined Him as a little white bird. Also, during some of the songs, I could smell the fragrance of roses, which I thought was wonderful. Being curious, I started sniffing those around me. I even asked ladies near me if they were wearing perfume with this scent, and I was told “no.” So, I checked to see if I was standing near an air vent where they were pumping in something, but there wasn’t any vent. I still couldn’t determine where the nice smell was coming from. Then, Pastor told everyone at one point to pray in tongues, and I had no idea how to do that. I was feeling a little out of place so much of the time, I just observed. However, I really enjoyed the teachings and took copious notes. At one point during the teaching, Pastor instructed us to pray, “Lord, take out whatever is between you and me and kill it!!” So I did. I also prayed for the Lord to close all doors for me except one, because I felt I wasn’t good at making choices. I then prayed that the Lord would give me the best boss in the world. It did pass through my mind that the *best* boss was the Lord.

Finally, at the end of the conference, there was something called the anointing service, where Pastor prayed for people. As this portion of the service started, I noticed that people were falling on the floor when they went up for prayer, and this scared me. I thought if I fell down, I would get hurt. I was in a long line to go up to the stage, and the closer I got to the stage, the more scared I got. One usher said, as I passed him, to prepare myself, and I didn't know what that meant. I wanted to get out of the line, but was afraid I would look strange doing so. I thought maybe, since this was a healing ministry, to prepare myself, I was to pray for healing. But in my thoughts, I told God that He had already healed my feet and legs the month before at CBN and I wasn't sick anymore. Then, I made a silent joke to the Lord. I thought, I'm not sick with anything unless you consider being fat a disease (I was overweight), then, I guess you could take some weight off!! Finally, when I reached the stage, I looked up at Pastor Benny. He had this fiery, serious look on his face, with his eyebrows all knitted together, which made me think of Moses coming down from the mountain top. That look really did it. I froze. I wanted to leave but I couldn't move, so I closed my eyes and silently prayed...

Pastor was very quiet as he moved along the stage. and the only way one could tell where he was at was to watch him. As he got closer to me, I closed my eyes and waited for it to be over, asking God not to push me down

and hurt me. When he got to me, I felt Pastor Benny's hand gently touch my forehead. Then, something I did not expect happened. I heard what sounded like drapery swishing across the floor to a spot behind him. Pastor Benny paused over me for at least 30 seconds, which seemed like an eternity, and from what I have observed over the years, this type of pause is unusual. During this time, I started to relax, seeing that nothing was going to hurt me. Pastor finally tapped me lightly on the forehead to let me know he was finished. I then turned and left the stage. As I started to walk back to my seat, I began to feel lightheaded. My hair "tingled," which I did not understand, so I sat down. I wondered about what I was to get out of this conference. I looked at all the people on the floor, and wondered what they were doing down there. I knew I had let my fears control me, and I had possibly prayed myself out of a blessing. But, I didn't understand what the blessing was supposed to be. What I also didn't understand, at that moment, was that I had just been blessed beyond my wildest dreams. What I heard behind Pastor was Jesus Himself coming over to minister to me, and the sound I heard was His robe brushing across the floor.

After the service, I went back to my motel room and cried out of confusion. I thought maybe I didn't belong in the conference, because I was so stupid about God that I didn't fit in. Everything seemed so wonderful but it made no sense to me. I even called the partner prayer line, and told them I wanted to quit because I didn't

belong with them. Fortunately, I talked to a very nice lady who comforted me, and said not to worry. I also learned that “smelling roses” could indicate experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit. The next morning, I checked out of my room, and drove back to North Carolina. When I reached home, about 4 hours later, I figured I should eat something because I hadn’t yet that day. So I prepared some soup. About half way through the soup, I realized that I had no appetite and couldn’t finish it, so I put it down. In fact, I had no appetite for the rest of the day. Then I remembered my “joke” prayer at the conference about being overweight, and realized what (and Who) the swishing sound was that I heard. My prayer was being answered. The Lord was helping me to lose weight by simply taking away my appetite, so I wouldn’t eat that much. I also noticed that my hair still tingled. For the next 21 days, I had no appetite, and I dealt with hair that tingled so much it tickled. I was amused and pleased. I went around smiling all the time, and I couldn’t help it. I had lost 19 pounds, which was just the beginning of something the Lord had planned for me.

During the 21 days, I fasted and prayed a lot. I started listening to music tapes put out by the ministry to learn the songs, as well as many teaching tapes by Benny Hinn as I could handle. I was not working yet, so I tried to invest a lot of time in “catching up” to where I should be in the knowledge and understanding of the Lord. As an experienced student, I took careful notes, and kept

them in a notebook, and spent time re-reading them, trying to have the information become a part of me. I had learned more about needing the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and had been praying for it, but had not had any success. I had tried at some local prayer meetings, and nothing had happened. I really didn't understand how to receive that either, mainly because I understood it as some kind of "thing" I was supposed to have, and I didn't understand the true nature of the "thing." So I invested in some tapes specifically on the character of the Holy Spirit and yielding to Him. One day, I was enjoying the tapes and taking notes, and reached a special point. Pastor was describing the personality and behavior of the Holy Spirit, and how sweet, child-like, innocent, faithful, sensitive, and easily grieved He was. I had to stop the tape.....

A stillness came over me as a revelation came into my spirit. I was stunned, dumbfounded. All I could say was, "Oh my *Lord* ...!!!" Pastor was describing, in detail, the personality of my special friend, the "man of my dreams," who had rescued me over and over from myself, and helped me through the greatest difficulty of my life. Suddenly, all the dreams made sense, and what my friend had been trying to tell me. Now, my desire was to obey with a new understanding, and with a new love. I wanted to please and be spiritually united with *Someone* I loved, and knew now it didn't have to be just a dream. It was to be a relationship.

To this day, I appreciate Pastor Benny for being so obedient as to stop that night over a scared, confused partner, and take to time to pray extra for her. He did not speak out loud, so I don't even know what was prayed. I have no idea if he was even aware that he did pause over me, or if he was aware of what I needed spiritually, because I said nothing to him. But the Lord was able to minister to me through Pastor in a special way, because Pastor was a willing, obedient, and selfless vessel. Through all Pastor's teaching tapes and videos, and through that one act of obedience, toward the end of a long anointing service, where I'm sure Pastor was tired, I received a blessing. It was the beginning of a deliverance that would totally change my life. My greatest hope is that, someday, others will be blessed, because I have been as obedient as he was. In the early part of 1996, if someone had asked me who Benny Hinn was, I would have just said that I didn't know. If someone asks me now, I tell them he is Pastor Benny, my teacher. What happened in Virginia Beach, including the taping at the CBN studio, was the beginning of many wonderful experiences in the Lord. I have heard some preachers in local churches try to discourage members from supporting larger television ministries, saying that the TV minister is not there when you need them. That is not true for Pastor Benny. When I was sick, he was there. When I was alone, he was there. When I needed advice and understanding, he was there. When I needed strength, he was there. When I was in trouble, he was there. This is because his

teachings were, and are, with me always and so is his spirit. Just as the Lord's Word is always there for me, Pastor's teachings and revelations are always there for me too. Just as the Lord's spirit dwells within my heart, and I appreciate His personality and character, I also have accepted Pastor's spirit into mine and I appreciate his personality and character as well, and I have allowed his character to influence mine. He has spent many years on his knees so that people like me could get the help they needed. I share his aspirations and dreams, because I know He sincerely loves and serves the Lord with a passion and energy that I want to emulate.

## Chapter 4

# Valentine's Day

*“And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”  
(Ezekiel 37:9)*

In the very beginning, I was also confused about the meaning of the Pentecostal, or charismatic expressions, “experiencing the presence of God,” and “experiencing the power of God.” I had never heard anyone talk like that before in church. This was a new language. To me, the only way to experience the presence of God was to die and go to heaven. Then, I wondered if it meant some physical sensation, as when my hair tingled after Pastor Benny prayed for me. I also wondered if one could feel the presence of God without a physical sensation. No one seemed to have a definition for me. I figured Pastor Benny would know, but trying to reach him in a crowd after a big meeting was too hard. I wasn't sure if the “falling down” I observed others doing after prayer was the presence, or the power, or both. In the beginning, I was so uninformed that I didn't understand what the “power of God” was supposed to do. My ignorance was making me look bad in front of others, and I was becoming awkward and self-conscious. Even though I

was growing in understanding about the Lord's presence and power, and attending more and more of Pastor Benny's meetings, I was sure that there must be many other things I needed to understand as well. So, I was hoping I could find a church where I could learn more about the things of the Lord. I started a search....

While I was at home, I continued to pray to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It seemed to be an elusive experience. I went to several more special prayer meetings in my local area, and still no success. I couldn't figure out what was wrong. Sometimes, the way people ministered to me was spooky, or just not helpful. One time, I was told just to open my mouth and tongues would come forth. It wasn't that easy. I was so dumb. I stood up there at the front with my mouth hanging open, and there was nothing coming out. I was told to speak the words the Spirit was giving me, and I replied I didn't know any words. I did not understand what to do, or not to do. I was getting embarrassed, because it looked like I was resisting God, or had some secret sin that was causing the problem. Finally, I decided not to go up for any more altar calls, because the experience of asking, and not receiving, was getting traumatic. Some overzealous people would try to shake it out of me. I was discouraged, especially after being taught that fasting and prayer draws the Holy Spirit to us. I had just fasted and prayed for 3 weeks and there was nothing yet.

Christmas came and went, and springtime was coming. As Valentine's Day approached, I sat and reflected one day about my special friend. I now knew He was the Holy Spirit, and it was one year ago that he had beckoned me "to the altar." All my altar calls were a mess so far. But, the vivid memory of His loving face gazing into mine, beckoning me to come, was stirring a need in me that created only misery until I could have it met. I loved Him so much, but I felt like I had failed Him. I imagined myself on one side of a huge ravine, and Him on the other. I could not reach Him. The distance was too far, and I didn't know how to get over to His side. I really couldn't take it anymore. I cried. I walked through my house and no one was home. I went to the front door and locked it. I went to my room and locked it too. I called a prayer line and talked to someone who told me just to say anything, just don't speak English, just make noise. I said OK. I got down on my knees and told both God and the devil that I was *not* getting up until I got what I came for. I made the most nonsense noises, but I would not give up. Finally, after about 45 minutes, I finally figured out that my noises were actually English, and I was, to my surprise, repeating the phrase, "holy living water." I would not accept English, and I kept on trying, repeating, out loud, I would not quit until I got what I wanted. I could not give up, because I was now reaching for a person I loved, not a thing. A few moments later, a new language started coming out of me!! I prayed for two hours like that. I was in heaven!! I was so happy. I even kept

asking for new words as I prayed, so I would have a large “vocabulary.” I kept recognizing new words coming to me. I had finally been able to receive what my friend had tried for two years to give me, which was Himself. The relationship we both wanted was now ours. In that first prayer session, He also allowed me to sense a little of what I was saying. I was getting to know my Father in heaven, and tell Him what was in my heart. I found myself saying the word “Papa”, which was so personal, and to this day, when I pray in English, I pray to my “Papa God.” It was so great. On the anniversary of my Valentine Day invitation of the Holy Spirit to come to the altar, I had received His baptism. What a perfect Valentine’s Day present to the both of us!

## Chapter 5

# Preparing to Re-enter Jericho

*“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with his sword drawn on His hand...And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, ‘What does my Lord say to His servant? Then the Commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, ‘Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.’ And the Lord said to Joshua: ‘ See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor.’”  
(Joshua 5:13-15; 6:2)*

In one of Pastor’s teachings, he describes a spiritual progression we all may go through, in order to reach a point where we are ready for the Lord’s anointing to enter our lives. We are then better equipped for service. We all start out “leaving Egypt,” when we become

saved, and we end up in the “wilderness.” This is where we, as the Israelites did, walk by sight. As new believers, we need the strength of signs and wonders to direct us, as we are young and immature in our faith and to the Word. As we depart out of this stage into next, we stop at Gilgal, a place where the visual aids stop, and we need to learn to walk by faith, as the Israelites did. This level brings new challenges, because now we are in the Promised Land of our own experience, which happens to be full of giants. Our relationship with God is changing, and He is expecting more from us. At the next step, or “Bethel,” just as Jacob wrestled with God all night to obtain his blessing, we also wrestle with God here. The only way to win the blessing is to allow our flesh to die, and submit totally to God. We then proceed to Jericho, which is a place of battle, of spiritual warfare, and you don’t leave until you learn to win. You may not leave either, if you don’t know there is something else ahead, which is the Jordan experience, the place where the anointing enters your life, and helps you in future battles. Some aspects of traditional religion have brought people at best to Jericho, without telling them how to win, with many churches leaving their flock in the wilderness, or at Gilgal or Bethel. This has left many believers unable to handle to giants in their own Promised Lands. They then spend much of their time wandering without direction, and possibly end back out in the wilderness. It is the Lord’s will that His people have victory in their lives, but it is also His will that they be developed properly, so that they can. He

cannot anoint people that are not equipped. I had fallen into this category. Back in the early 1970's, the Lord told me in a dream that the walls of Jericho were falling in my life. What a beautiful message, but I did so little with it. I had met a certain challenge, and could have proceeded onto the Jordan experience, but I had never been taught about the anointing, nor did it ever occur to me that God would want to use me for anything. I had spent the last 25 years of my life at Jericho, which had given me a case of spiritual battle fatigue. The emotional toll was high, since there was no anointing experience to help with the battles. Sometimes I would win, and sometimes I would lose, just because I was tired of battles. For anyone who has ever gotten this far, the fights get harder and harder, because the enemy does not want you to progress. Pastor Benny was the first to teach me about the anointing, and to help me realize where I was. I could not turn back, or things would get worse. The battles would continue to come. I had to keep going, and reach for what the Lord had for me, so I could have the victories I needed in my life.

Toward the end of November, 1996, I had lost 15 of the 19 pounds I was to lose, and felt better. And why not? Everything was actually easy, at the time, because the Lord was helping me. I felt special and pampered, and even bought myself some new clothes. The plans were to drive to Atlanta to the crusade, but at this time, the transmission on my car was going bad, and the drive was a seven hour trip. But, I was in such high spirits that

I threatened the devil not to bother my car, or my transmission, or I would get out and hitch-hike to the crusade! I prayed over my car, hopped in, and took off. I actually made it there and back in a car that no longer knew where first gear was. I was off on my next adventure!

I arrived the night before the crusade so I could attend the prayer service conducted by Pastor Dave Palmquist. I had a room at the Best Western and met many people in the hotel, and especially on my floor, that were to attend the crusade. It was a wonderful place and time of fellowship. Many of us stayed up after the prayer time, and talked, and became friends. Finally, it was bedtime, so we split up and went to our own rooms. The next morning, I awoke, and found no water in the bathroom. I checked with others who said they were out of water too. The main water line in downtown Atlanta had broken that morning, and water was everywhere in the streets. I walked a couple of blocks to buy a bottle of water, so I could go back and brush my teeth. I also bought some baby powder, since I wasn't sure when I would be able to take a bath. While I was out, I met a crippled man in a green jacket named Lee, who was begging for money outside of Woolworth's. I gave him some money and bought him lunch too. I had an extra pass to the crusade, so I invited him to come as my guest, and he expressed a willingness to come. He had been paralyzed and in a wheelchair for about 17 years. He had been hurt as a young teenager by a stray bullet,

which had hit him as he played basketball. He was now in his 30's. I told him when it was time to get in line, I would come back to get him.

When I went back to the hotel, I sat on the edge of the bed and looked at the bathroom. I had checked. Still no water. I did not want to go to the crusade dirty. Some of the others on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor with me told me they were going home, since there was no telling how long it would take to fix the water problem. I was really annoyed. I had gotten my shoes wet walking in the street and I didn't have any other shoes to wear. I thought to myself, what would Benny Hinn say about this? And so I guessed, he'd probably say the enemy messed up the water, so people couldn't come to the crusade. So, again, I thought, what would *he* do? Then I thought, *I know!!* Something just came all over me. I had this wild attitude where I thought I was Moses or something, ready to hit the rock with my staff. I ran into the bathroom, pointed at the bathtub faucet, and declared, "Let there be *water!!*" That was the craziest thing I ever did in my life, so I was glad no one was looking. I then snickered to myself and reached over to the faucet and flipped the handle. Guess what...water came out!! That blew my mind!! It was a little muddy, but I didn't care. I thought to myself, just calm down, they probably just turned the water back on. Whatever the reason, I was happy I had water. During the bath, I wished I could wash my hair, but didn't want to use the muddy water. Then I thought to myself, why not? I

pointed to the faucet again and declared, “Let there be *clear* water!!” I flipped the handle again and *clear water* came out. I just about jumped out of the tub. I thought to myself, this is really wild, but I am going to enjoy this, so I went ahead and washed my hair. I couldn’t have been happier.

As I left the room, and got on the elevator to go downstairs to get Lee, I met some covenant partners on the elevator. So I said, “I’m sure glad they turned the water back on.” They looked at me and said, “There is no water.” I replied, “Have you checked lately? I have water in my room now.” They replied back, “We just checked a few minutes ago.” This blew my mind again, but I said nothing. I did wonder a lot, though. I had water in my room but they didn’t. In the natural, that made no sense. But my spirit was learning about an awesome God. When I went to pick up Lee, he said he could not come with me, because he had to go pick up his young child (?). He had not mentioned his child before. I couldn’t even imagine him having a young child since he had been paralyzed and in a wheelchair for over 17 years. So, I encouraged him to bring his child with him, and go to the wheelchair entrance. I never did see him again, and I did check the wheelchair section before the meeting started. I felt a little disappointed, because I wanted to see him healed. I hope even now that he is well. But, as I think back in time, for a moment, at the *end* of the last service, I thought I saw someone that looked like Lee, who wore a green jacket

and had a small child standing beside him, that stood up out of his wheelchair. I didn't see any small children in that set of rows before the service. Lee and his little child was a vague reminder of the Holy Spirit and His little child. It made me wonder....He was such a blessing to me.

This was my first crusade and it was so awesome! The music was so wonderful and I was meeting all sorts of people. Pastor Dave was coming around and praying for people, and he was such a blessing and comfort to so many. I was so amazed at all the healings. During one session, I got to sit up front. While people were still standing and singing, Pastor Benny started to swing his arms around, and people were just falling all over the place. I figured nothing was going to happen to me, so I just closed my eyes and kept singing. All of a sudden, I ended up in my chair along with everyone in my row. I thought, well, what do you know about that! I'm finally getting the hang of it, whatever it is. In another session, I was in the very back of the stadium, and watched while Pastor called out to a witch somewhere in the audience, named Alice, to come down. He knew her name. I watched as he commanded the devil to come out of her. It took three commands, and on the third, I actually felt the thing fly out of her, and come straight for me. At about 5 inches from my face, it bounced right off, and went upwards toward the ceiling. The impact just about knocked me off my feet. I thought to myself, now I understand what it means to be "covered by the blood."

The devil could come up to my face, but it could not enter me. That was awesome! Toward the end of the last service, Pastor Benny called up all those who wanted to serve God. He told us to hold up our hands, and we would feel a tingling in our hands as a confirmation. When he prayed, people around me said they felt this sensation, but I didn't feel anything. I was worried that I had not been "chosen." I left feeling a little disillusioned. I was already forgetting the experience with the water faucet, and the witch spirit. I asked one of the ministers afterwards what it meant if I did *not* feel a tingling in my hand. They didn't know.

As I was driving home from Atlanta, all gloomy about not being "chosen," the Lord suddenly spoke to me, saying, "What do you need signs and wonders for? You're supposed to be walking by *faith* by now!! Get to work!! You already promised you'd serve me!! I almost ran off the road. I felt embarrassed and chastised, but it was true. At one time in my life, back in the early 1970's, he had told me I was at the Jericho "step" in my progress. I was now backsliding back into the wilderness. I was just wandering around in His kingdom, and I needed to straighten up.

At home, I continued my usual daily activities, including prayer for all those I had met in school at North Carolina State University. There is a real need for the Lord on college campuses today, and the needs of the school were still on my heart. I kept personal friends

and contacts especially in mind, and felt frustrated, because hardly any one I knew seemed to take time for the Lord, or have any interest to do so. After about a year in discouragement, I told the Lord, “I don’t know how you are going to do it. The people at North Carolina State just won’t come to you. The only way it will work is if you come to them.” I then continued to place my prayer requests in His hands. Finally, on January 27, 1997, I had two dreams in which Pastor Benny showed up. In the first dream, He showed me a long, deep tunnel, under very deep water, that I had to travel through to reach what God had for me. He also showed me a symbolic withdrawing of blood with a large needle and syringe. It was being taken from me for some purpose, and it injured me. Blood was being drawn out of my muscle (source of strength) instead of my vein (normal site). It was all very painful. This was to come to pass second. In the second dream, which came to pass first, and was more positive, I got a phone call from Pastor Benny in which he was trying to tell me something he did not understand. I was so surprised, I just exclaimed “What?!” because I didn’t grasp it either. Four days later, on his “This is Your Day” program, Pastor Benny announced that he did not understand why, but the Holy Spirit just informed him to postpone his plans to go to Washington, DC and go to North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC! Pastor Benny seemed puzzled. I just about jumped out of my wits. I was so excited, I ran out of my house and jumped up and down in my driveway and praised the Lord. The Lord had

answered my prayer that He come to NC State University!! Isn't God good??? I'm sure there were prayers by other people as well, but it did my spirit good to know that the Lord had said "yes" to a need I had prayed about.

Close to the time of the Raleigh crusade, I was working and thinking about how the Lord blessed me by helping me to lose some weight. I figured I should "get the hint" and try to lose some more weight on my own. So, I had tried to go to the doctor, and go on a diet, but nothing he gave me was working. I learned to hate carrots and celery, and I was miserable. I kept canceling appointments, because I didn't want to pay the doctor to tell me I hadn't accomplished anything yet. Finally one day, I was musing about the experience in Virginia Beach, and had the most stupid thought. I told the Lord that, maybe if Benny Hinn came around again, he could "zap" me like he did the first time. I immediately caught myself, saying, "Lord, I'm so sorry, it wasn't him. It was you, so why don't you just zap me yourself!! I don't need him. I need you!!" I didn't put much more thought into this until I went into the kitchen and noticed my appetite was missing again. What I didn't realize at the time was that the Lord had just put me on a 40 day fast, which was the first of several. He was just waiting for me to ask, and acknowledge that it was Him, not a man, that was helping me. He was putting me to work!

The Raleigh crusade occurred during the first week of my fast. The night before the crusade, Pastor Dave lead the prayer meeting and afterwards, I went up to talk to him. In a somewhat whimsical way, I had hoped that he remembered me from the Atlanta crusade, which was a little silly, since he meets thousands of people each time. I think that at the time, I felt the need to belong to something positive, to be friends with those whose work for the Lord I admired. Understandably, he didn't remember me, which was part of my lesson that night. As I left the room, I was thinking he had forgotten who I was, when the Lord spoke, saying, "You should be doing the same thing!!" The focus of my fast was to forget who I was, and what I wanted, and only focus on the Lord, and what He wanted. Also, during the crusade services that week, I was trying to decide how much of an offering I would give out of a certain account I had. I had some temporary work, but nothing permanent yet. I decided 10 % of the account might be OK, when the Lord spoke and said, "No, I want the *whole thing!*" Startled, I submitted. I was being tested.... I obeyed, but had the hardest time writing when I went up to the stage, because I was physically shaking as I signed my envelope. My handwriting was illegible. I was surprised at what I was doing, because it wasn't me. I think I was in a state of shock at the time, and it took the Holy Spirit to carry me up there, and return me back to my seat.

One day, as I was returning from work and still on my fast, the Lord told me to go around NC State

University for seven days and pray. My first thought was that He was kidding, but He wasn't, and I apologized again. I knew what He meant. In the battle of Jericho, God's people circled the city once a day for six days and on the seventh, they went around it seven times. My initial response of surprise was triggered by the large size of the campus. However, I did obey. By now, the temperature was in the 90's outside, and I was going to be walking around the campus after fasting for 30 days, and the seventh day would take about 12 hours. This gave a new meaning to the concept of having died to one's flesh, because by the end of the last day, I was literally holding onto things (walls, benches, trees, etc.) in my path, in order to make it around the campus. Some friends, who knew what I was doing, helped to make my path wider. They asked me to go around their building too, so their building could be prayed for also. I drank a lot of water. I had all day, so I just prayed and talked to the Holy Spirit. As I walked around the more scenic parts of the campus, I was reminded how much I was missing when I was tied up in a building all day. I also thought of all my friends, who were still working away inside their buildings. It seemed like I found myself in a different world.

It was so beautiful outside, even if it was a hot day. The peace, and the beauty, and the solitude were incredible. With each turn, as I would go through a particular wooded section, I would walk over a bridge and pass over a brook. I noticed that on one side of the

bridge, the water was still, and looked kind of green and dull. On the other side of the bridge, however, there was a drop, and the water flowed down over some rocks and to a lower level. The water on the lower level was more clear, and prettier, and sparkled. I told God that I wanted my spiritual life to be like the water on the lower level. Because, if I was inactive in my spiritual life, I would become stagnant, like the upper level water. But, if I was willing to run into a few rocks and keep moving, then my spirit would be clean and clear. In an odd way, it seemed like the only way to keep one's spirit fresh is to be willing to fall down, or be brought down, and knocked against some rocks, or hardships. It was a paradox. The only way to go up was to go down. As the day got longer, I depended on Him more. My thoughts about life became less, and turned more to trying to complete the course that was ahead of me. I was getting physically weaker, and I told my Lord that I was depending on Him more and more to get me through this. Twelve hours later, when I completed my last turn of the main campus, I literally crawled into the front seat of my car and just sat there for a few moments. With the Lord's help, I made it around that huge campus seven times on the last day. Relieved, I started my car to go home, and then all feelings hit me at once. All the faces of those I had been praying for came to my mind. I thought of all those I knew did not care about the Lord, or were actually antagonistic toward Him. All the lost, empty lives of people were on my heart. From my heart, I cried out unto the Lord, "don't let what I've done be

for nothing!!!” The burden of so many lost was weighing on me. I started to cry. I wanted the sacrifice to bring forth fruit.

I was so glad that Pastor Benny listened to, and obeyed, the Holy Spirit, because the crusade at Raleigh did bless many people. I have been told that since that time, that the local preachers who come to visit the campus have remarked that the “ground is softer” now than it used to be, and the students and even some teachers are more receptive to the message of salvation than they used to be. I’ve also been told by one of the ministers there, that there was now a practice of walking and praying, like I had done, although no one really knew who I was. When Pastor Benny spoke at NC State, he predicted that there would be a revival there, that would spread to other schools. This was what I had been praying for, and still do. It has meant so much to me that the Lord joins people, sometimes unknowingly to each other, in a grander plan than any could imagine. And it is such a blessing to be part of that plan. My hope has been that both the Raleigh crusade and my seven day walk were both seeds for a great harvest.

The Partner’s Conference in Atlanta was at the very end (last few days) of my 40 day fast. By this time, I had lost about 40 more pounds, and I was totally fascinated with what the Lord was doing. I felt very secure and taken care of by the Lord. Again, I felt pampered, loved and special. I was on “cloud nine,” and

wide open for anything. It seemed like something always happened at these events Pastor had, so I was curious as to what was to be next. Again, Pastor's teachings were absolutely great, and I ate up everything he said. I wrote it all down too. This time Pastor Dave recognized me, and told me he had been trying to contact me because of some letters I had written him. I had been confused about some things, and he was kind enough to try to reach me to help. I told Pastor Dave all about the 40 day fast, and how the Lord had helped me and taught me things. And, as conferences go, this one was not going to conclude without something unusual happening to me.

At one of his services, Pastor Benny announced that the next morning service would be a deliverance service. At first, I thought this sounded kind of "neat," until I happened to talk to some spooky lady afterward who thought she was an expert at this. She stared at me and said that I had to be delivered from the spirit of fear. Then, she decided that I also had the spirit of TERROR!!!! That made my brain flip out of place. She made me feel like I was in the twilight zone somewhere, so I got up and left. I went back up to my room, so I could discuss this with the Holy Spirit. I told Him having demons cast out of someone sounded ghastly and scary, and recalled how people can even throw up during the process. I didn't want to throw up in front of people. It was not very ladylike. He replied it *can* be ghastly and scary, when we go through other human beings for our deliverance. I asked if there was something wrong with

me in this way, and He said, not really, that I just let people and things influence me more than I should. When I asked if Pastor Benny should pray for me, He replied, “Don’t go to man for *anything*. If you need something, come straight to *me*!! You belong to the Lord, *not* man!” This shook me up. He wasn’t putting down prayer by Pastor, but defining His relationship with me, which was to be a direct line of communication. So, I asked what was wrong with me, and He explained that my fear of falling was related to my fear of heights. I knew this was true, because I had trouble in the see-through elevators, and looking down from my room, which happened to be on the 35<sup>th</sup> floor, to the foyer below, or to the street below. So naturally, I asked next what I should do about it. I was told to go get in the elevator. I thought, Oh, dear, *that* thing...So far, every time I got in it, I would face the door, so I wouldn’t have to look out the glass side, and see how far I was above the ground. I also gripped the railing inside so I wouldn’t “fall” somehow. You see, this elevator had a special feature. Because there were so many floors in the hotel, this particular elevator only serviced floors 28-40. It flew like lightning past the first 2/3 of the floors, and did not slow down until it got to the floor designated. To me, it was a nightmare. So, I obediently got in the elevator, which was conveniently empty, and asked what to do next. The Holy Spirit said to mash the button for the ground floor. I froze. He then reminded me that He was *not* the spirit of fear but of love, so just mash the button!! I closed my eyes and hit the thing.

Whoaa!!! I went plummeting to the ground floor in what seemed like milliseconds! When I got there, my hands had gripped the railing so hard, my hands had turned red. My heart was beating fast. When I got my breath, I asked, “now what?” The answer, “mash the *top* floor button!!” I thought, He’s got to be kidding....” *Mash the button!!*” OK, so I hit the thing, and off I went. I kept my eyes closed. I went so fast, I figured I now knew what the Rapture was going to feel like. When I got to the top, I felt like I had been on the wildest ride of my life, but it was not over. I was now told to look out the glass window and do the whole thing again. I did, and you know what, it actually got to be fun. My imagination went wild as I looked out the window of the elevator. I found myself repeatedly mashing the top button, going all the way up to the top, and then mashing the ground floor button, and going down again. After a couple of times, I let go of the railing and was flapping my arms like a bird, because I was having fun in the elevator. In retrospect, I wonder what I must have looked like to anyone possibly looking on from the outside, flapping my arms like a bird, going up and down repeatedly in the see-through elevator. It was interesting that no one during those moments stopped the elevator to get on also, because that would have messed things up for me. I was having fun getting delivered from my fear of heights, because the Holy Spirit was helping me. He was teaching me that when God is involved directly, it is easy, not hard. And things can get harder, sometimes, when we look to others to

help us get to God. After my last trip to the ground floor, I got off the elevator, so much in my own world, that I actually wandered into the wrong room. It never occurred to me that out of about 1000 people, I was the only white person there. Some sweet person noticed me, saw my name tag, and told me I belonged across the hall with Pastor Benny. So, I moved over to the other room so see what would happen next.

At the next morning service, Pastor preached on where demons come from, and how they act, etc. He then got to the point in the service where the anointing came, and the Holy Spirit moved. People that needed help, and had wanted prayer, fell to the floor so that they could be identified and ministered to. Pastor Benny said for the prayer warriors to come and pray for the people. So people started moving around. I never had been labeled a prayer warrior before, but I really liked the title, so I thought I would do my best and be helpful. I had just gotten help, and I wanted everyone else to get help too. I watched Pastor Steve Hill for awhile, and learned what to do from him. Then, I figured that looked easy enough. As I walked around the room, I went over to one lady people were trying to help, and she said she was now better. But I knew in my spirit it was not true, that the spirit that oppressed her was lying. So, I approached her and said to the spirit, "you're lying, get out." I touched her forehead, and the next thing I knew she fell to the ground. I thought to myself, gee, this deliverance stuff is really neat. Then, I walked over to a

Chinese man who was already out on the floor, who had no one to pray for him. I told the Holy Spirit, I wasn't sure if I was doing things right, so I wanted Him to help me, since He was better at things than I was. He said, "OK." and to place my one hand on the man's head and the other on his stomach. I started praying. After a few moments, I could actually feel little puffs of something coming out of those two areas. They felt like little balls of cotton hitting the palms of my hand. I thought, gee, demons are little and weak, not big and strong. I counted 8 little puffs come out of him. Afterwards, he was able to get up, and he was smiling. He seemed to feel better. Since neither of us spoke the other's language, we just bowed a lot to each other and smiled. To me, that was actually kind of fun. I thought the Holy Spirit had neat ways of delivering people. Although, I think I've become partial to elevators. Maybe that was why the Holy Spirit made people fall down. Maybe they were being delivered, which was a good thing. So, I was still learning.

My last lesson for the fast was to come at its end. 40 days were up at midnight, the last night of the conference. In great anticipation, I had ordered a refrigerator for my room, and had stuffed all the food that I had paid for with my conference fee, but could not eat yet into it, waiting for the midnight hour. I studied the contents, trying to decide what I would eat first. So at midnight, I picked out a great, *big roast beef sandwich!!!!* Bad move...even though it tasted really

good. About two hours later, I awoke with the worst leg cramps I'd ever had. It was really painful. I whined to the Holy Spirit and asked why, and He just said, "orange juice and bananas." At 2-3 am, I was forced into a menu change. I had one banana in my room so I ate that. The next morning, I checked out of the hotel and headed back for North Carolina. I kept my regular food in a cooler I had brought just for this occasion, but stopped by a local store, and picked up some orange juice and bananas, so I could just have that on the way home. There were no more problems that day. The next day, I assumed everything was OK, and went back to the regular food. Bad move...in two days, I gained 15 pounds of fluid. More misery...I whined again. Again, I was told "orange juice and bananas!!" I replied, I thought He just meant for one day...(?) I was afflicted because I was doing God's thinking for Him, and putting my own interpretation on His instructions. I should have listened, and obeyed, and stayed on orange juice and bananas, until he told me otherwise. He had more wisdom than I did, and I should have been careful to follow what he said. It later occurred to me that the food I ate had a lot of salt in it, which made me swell. Orange juice and bananas are low in sodium and high in potassium, which can be lost during a fast. I had to restore the potassium I had lost, and return my body naturally, and slowly, to its more normal state. So, even though I had learned on this fast to forget myself, to make sacrifices for the good of others, to learn to give up everything at one command, to depend on God alone for

my deliverance and needs, and to walk and stand in awe of the power of God, my last lesson was to pay attention, and obey Him to the letter, and not go off on my own path, and not to do God's thinking for Him. I thought after this experience, that somehow I had made it to the mountaintop, that I had experienced all that one could experience to prepare myself to serve Him. I didn't know that I had only made it to the first little bump on the side of the mountain, and that it was still a long way to the top. He was about to take me deeper and higher.

Needless to say, I continued to go to Pastor Benny's crusades and conferences, and was having a wonderful time. I was awestruck at all the miracles, and all the personal blessings, the Lord was bestowing upon me. The fellowship was unequaled. I was making new friends of such a grand quality that surpassed any relationship I had out in the "world." The music and worship was heavenly, and the teachings were full of meaning and new revelation for me. In my past, I had known how to say prayers and mean them, but never knew how to pray and worship well. Everything coming into my spirit was a blessing, and I was starting to grow step by step. It was an exciting new life for me.

Then one day, I was driving home and reflecting on how wonderful the Lord was, when I suddenly became uneasy. There was something within me, almost a heaviness, that started to weigh me down in my

emotions. I felt myself becoming less cheerful and carefree, and more and more serious. What was wrong? I continued to drive home, and the closer I got to my driveway, the more heavily burdened I felt. I managed to get from my car to the front door, and then from the front door to about the middle of my living room. *Suddenly*, like lightening, I was struck to my knees!! And as I felt the force on me, I immediately cried out loud in grief from my spirit. I fell to the floor and wept bitterly. The Lord sternly spoke to me, “You want to feel my *joy*, but you do not want to feel my *pain!!!!*” I wept in remorse. I didn’t understand, but knew the Lord saw something wrong in my inner self and was pointing it out to me. I honestly didn’t know there was something wrong with me. I felt so deeply sorry before God that, somehow, I was not giving God the full devotion due Him. Somehow, I had missed a serious component of my relationship with Him. Genuine remorse overwhelmed me, and I prayed that the Lord would teach me how to fix this flaw within myself. He wanted me to understand that to be “one” with Him was to experience *both* His joy *and* His pain. I needed balance. And the Lord was faithful. He heard my prayer.

## Chapter 6

### *What next?*

*“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye.” (Psalm 32: 8)*

During the initial period as a new covenant partner with Pastor Benny, I had been seeking a new church home. I was looking for a charismatic or Pentecostal church, where I could grow, and learn at home like I did when I went away at Pastor’s meetings. At one point, I had remembered the church setting from my Valentine’s Day dream, and decided to try there. In the dream, I automatically associated it with a particular pastor, even though I didn’t recognize the interior of the room. It could have been because it was the only Pentecostal church I had ever been in. I had attended this pastor’s church before, but it was in a smaller building in a different location, and I had stayed about 6 months there. At the time, they had purchased the land and were raising money for a new building. I never went inside the new one, because I had left before it was built, but had driven by it many times. So I figured if I was to start looking, I might try there first. When I went in for the first time, it all looked familiar. The interior room beams, the way the pews were arranged, the color of the

room, and where the doors were positioned, all matched the setting in my dream. I felt like this was a comfortable place to start. The pastor was a very good one, and he had the loyalty and devotion of his congregation, and was nice to me. Eventually, there would be some theological ideas I did not agree with, and I would leave, but these issues did not cause any problems at any time. I just recognized that I would be moving on toward a church more in line with what I believed, and what Pastor Benny had taught. In the meantime, I did benefit from attending this church, and enjoyed taking notes during good teachings and sermons. The people were nice to me, and I made friends. I also occasionally slipped out and visited other places to benefit from them too. At one point, during a general prayer service, one of the deacons came over to me and prayed, “Lord, anoint her,” which surprised me, because in this church, women usually occupied a more support role, not a leadership one.

On April 23, 1997, about a week after the Raleigh crusade, and during the 40 day fast, I had a dream. A giant white tiger with incredibly beautiful, plush fur was following me around; he was very calm and tame. I was not “afraid” in the typical sense, but I was a little on the cautious side, because he was so huge. There was a lot of wild, raw power there, even though it was tame. I was in the basement of a school (symbolically, at the lower level of some learning experience in my life). When I began to go upstairs (symbolically, making

progress), it followed me. I turned to it and fed it what I had, to be sure it wouldn't get hungry (maybe for me), although it showed no evidence of intent to hurt me. I was aware of how powerful it was. I admired its power, and beauty, and its deep plush fur, but I also had feared it, or respected it, because I was aware of what would happen if it went out of control. This dream caused a conflict in me, because I had to deal with the issue of what to do if I really had "power" in my life. It was what every believer wants and prays for, but it also brought responsibility with it. I knew if I (my flesh, my ego) released the "tiger" in my life, it would be destructive. If the Lord released the tiger, it would serve Him. I felt that until the tiger was released in my life, that I was living in disobedience to God, which grieved me, because I was not serving Him properly yet. I wanted the tiger released, so that it would serve God, but the fear I had, was that somehow my flesh, or ego, would get in the way and ruin everything. There would be bad fruit produced, instead of good fruit. I needed the assurance that God controlled both the expression of my flesh, and the release of the "tiger." Putting it another way, I wanted the anointing in my life, but I wanted to know that I was also ready to handle the responsibility. I didn't want to be someone who went out of control, and out of God's will, and mishandled power. I think that is why I felt I needed to stay near Pastor Benny's services. I wanted the experience of being in an atmosphere where it is the Lord that controls when and how things happen. Pastor Benny also seemed to handle his responsibility

well, and I wanted to learn from him. I was really praying that the Lord would purify my heart and release the tiger.

On May 14, 1997, about a week before the Atlanta Conference, and still during the fast, I was in church with my son, Eric, in my special pew seat that matched the one in the Valentine's Day dream. I didn't get to sit here too often, because it was a good spot, and usually someone got the seat first. But this time, I managed to get it. During the praise and worship period, I stood and lifted my hands, and sang, and prayed, and went off in my own world, like I usually did, as I listened to the music. Suddenly, I felt a nail pierce my right hand, like a bolt of electricity. It spun in a circular fashion, as if it were being drilled into and through me. I felt shocked and grasped my right hand, which had gone numb, with my left, not knowing what to do. I sat down, dumbfounded. I don't remember much of the rest of the service, except the impression that Christ was still being crucified 2000 years after his death, and much of it occurred in churches. This was a very rough message. I felt hurt and grieved inside of myself. My heart hurt.

On June 22, 1997, I attended a minister friend's church that afternoon, who felt moved to pray that the Lord anoint my hands. When she prayed for me, the Lord touched me, and I fell back to the floor. There was a hot burning on my arms, which lasted awhile. Later on that evening, I went straight to my regular church and

took a seat in the back. My arms were still burning, and a 2 inch blood-red line had appeared on my wrist. It looked like a cut, and it stayed there for about 30 minutes before it disappeared. A sense of peace came over me, because I thought of how blood covenants were done in the past between people. They would cut their wrists and then rest their wrists against each other, to mingle their blood. Somewhere in my spirit, I felt the Lord was demonstrating the blood covenant between us, and he was acknowledging that He knew I was willing to die for Him, as He died for me. I didn't realize it yet, but the Lord knew I was ready to make some special sacrifices just for Him, because of this bond we had. This was such a precious moment, and would be a source of strength for me later.

At this time, there were also some very serious issues, some dealing with life and death itself, that were occurring in my life. These were very stressful times. I was feeling the enemy's attack on many levels, and even my family was in danger of physical and spiritual harm. There was an unusual sign developing, as well, from the Lord that I began to take as a signal, that I should fast and pray about something. Usually the fasts were short ones. I didn't always know what the problem was, but in time I would find out. The signal was a far-away, rumbling noise, as if one could hear a thunderstorm off in the distance, and I could hear it coming closer. Sometimes it got so loud, I could not hear people talking around me. Usually, the louder it was, the more

imminent the situation was that was going to occur. I thought maybe my worldly ears were closing, so I could hear the Lord better. Sometimes my hands or feet would sting, although it was always tolerable. I could, at times, sense a pressure change in my head, that reminded me of the changes that occur up in an airplane, or down in underwater tunnels as one travels through them. I remembered the dream from back in January, in which Pastor Benny showed blood being pulled from me in a painful fashion from my muscles (source of physical strength), and how I was traveling under very deep water through a tunnel to get to a destination far away. He was showing me that I would be making painful sacrifices, and that I would be put under much pressure and going deeper. I took the very deep water to mean trouble, and as I thought back to the “nail” though my right hand and the “cut” on my wrist, I knew these were confirmations of what Pastor Benny was trying to tell me in my dream.

On July 1, 1997, the Lord was leading me to fast again. As with most fasts, I wasn't sure how long it would last, but would just continue until I felt it “break.” So far, each fast brought personal blessings in times of great difficulties, and each fast was also easy, because the Lord was doing it all for me. It was a time of great building up in the Lord, where I felt invincible and strong because He was with me. In some ways, one could say He was pampering me. However, the Lord was about to lead me into some experiences to remind me what it would be like if I were on my own strength. I

loved my life now. It was so exciting, and at the time, I thought that my pampering would last forever, which it didn't. During the first week of this particular fast, I was starting to make my own rules, which was a mistake. I would start taking occasional teaspoons of food, and by the end of the first week, I noticed I was "slipping" more and more. I asked the Holy Spirit, "Can I eat at all?" But, I did not wait for His answer, but heard instead, "stay in ketosis," which came right out of my own mind, and was a very comfortable, convenient answer. I was very happy with this conclusion, and agreed wholeheartedly. The result was that I started eating one fourth a portion of meat from one meal a day. I decided I would try to stop eating when I heard a "no" signal, which actually occurred way before I *did* stop eating. For ten days on this "fast," I would nibble small amounts of food at night, when the Holy Spirit really said "no, no." I had turned a fast into a diet. Because I did not see any evidence in my *visible* environment of a crisis or need for which to fast, I was becoming slack in my commitment. I came to realize that I was only fooling myself, hoping that the Holy Spirit would approve of cheating, when He didn't. The Lord lifted His hand to show me how weak I was when I was left on my own strength. I realized I was a complete failure at everything, unless He was there helping me. I repented of having cheated on my fast. I told the Lord that I needed Him completely. I depended on Him totally, because without Him, I would be a failure. I needed His help constantly. I was not self-sufficient, and I had no

self-control at all. The Lord was my only source of control.

On July 11<sup>th</sup>, the Lord showed me the reason for the fast, and immediately I became ashamed before Him, because I had cheated. A dear friend was in trouble, having mental problems, and tried to commit suicide. I realized that my disobedience/weakness could affect the Lord's ability to use me to pray for other people. There were salvation, deliverance, life and death issues, and victories to pray for. These could be adversely affected if I disobeyed the Lord and broke my fast. I asked the Lord to control me completely.

The Lord was faithful. He stepped right in and helped me. He continued to remind me who was strong, and who was weak. He even allowed a certain "temptation" the very next day and He had some fun with me doing it. (We have to remember that the Lord is so awesome, and so capable, that problem solving is fun and easy to Him.) So, on the second day of my fast, I was determined to do a better job, until I walked in and saw a large deli sheet cake on the kitchen counter. The icing looked out of this world. It was nice and thick. Left on my own strength again, my flesh began to cheat. So, I looked around and didn't see anyone, and figured the coast was clear. I tried to remove the usually flimsy, plastic lid and it wouldn't come off!! I pulled, and pulled, and struggled, but it wouldn't budge! These lids were usually so flimsy that if you slightly bump them

they fall right off, and this thing was really stuck!! I beat on the lid. I even got out a knife and tried to pry it loose, but it still wouldn't come off. Then the thought came to me, "Holy Spirit, *you're* doing this!!" Reply, "yes." *He* was holding the lid down so I couldn't get into the cake. He knew I was going to be tempted, weaken and give in on my own strength. The Lord delivered me from the temptation, as His word promised, and proved to me again that He was my only source of control. He also lightened my burdens by helping me laugh, at times, that were otherwise serious and stressful. By the way, my daughter Angier came right in afterwards, and easily flipped off the flimsy lid and had herself a piece of cake!

The Lord was bringing me through the valleys of my life, at this time, by showing me there were the high points as well, and showing me His protection. My new friend, the Holy Spirit, let His presence be known frequently during this painful period and more will be written of this. It was fascinating to me that the Holy Spirit was a real Person, and not something that stayed far away in heaven. He was more than a breeze, or a light that comes and goes, or some nebulous concept. He was someone I could visualize while I talked to Him. I could almost imagine the expression on His face as He watched me do or say certain things. I could visualize His face, as He revealed Himself to me in my dreams. This helped me in the same way that viewing faces in a family photograph brings comfort. He had presented Himself to me in a way that I could relate to. He was

personal. I could imagine Him walking around the house with me, and going outside with me, or sitting on the edge of my bed while I slept. One day, on July 13, 1997, while fasting, as we “walked around together,” I was telling Him I loved Him, but I was a little confused about who He was, and who Jesus was, and who the Father was. I was never sure who I was really supposed to be talking to. My limited mind was trying to figure out how to pray, and how to set my priorities. I knew I had been taught that there were three persons in one God (not that there were three Gods, as some claim, who do not understand the Trinity). It seemed hard for me to decide *Who* I was supposed to focus on. I was concerned that my new relationship with the Holy Spirit caused me to focus on Him too much. As I was musing over all this, the Holy Spirit spoke to me, “I didn’t die for you. Jesus did.” He was helping me set priorities. I prayed that I would receive wisdom and understanding about the nature of, and my relationship with, the Trinity. Within two weeks, my prayer would be answered.

The fast, which lasted 30 days, was necessary to give me the peace I needed at the time, and showed the Lord’s wisdom. I continued to go through many heart-breaking experiences, and especially painful was anything that might hurt my family. This was the first time I had placed a label or description on a fast, but I ended up calling it my “back to reality fast.” It was not as easy as it was the first few times, when the Lord was

carrying me fully. I was hit in the face with my own humanity. I found that on my own strength, or by my own decision, that it was impossible to go on a perfect fast. I might be only partially successful. I would frequently sneak in a few teaspoons of food here and there. There were some good days, however, where I was successful. I also was more obedient this time, when the fast was over, to just drink orange juice and eat bananas until the Holy Spirit directed otherwise. It was an incredible relief to my system. Incidentally, it could be mentioned here that it had been a year since I had graduated, and had not gotten a permanent job yet. I only worked occasionally, but the Lord was faithfully providing for me, as I continued to seek Him. As I compared this fast with the first 40 day fast, I could see how if God is in total control, things turn out perfectly. If God lifts His hands and turns over part of the control to me, there would be an imperfect result. I felt deeply humbled this time. But, I also realized that the Lord loved me for what was in my heart, and not how well I kept my fast. He loved me in my imperfections. I loved Him in my dependency. I realized how little I could really do for Him. In fact, I couldn't do anything for Him unless He helped me.



## Chapter 7

# *Entering into the Mystery of the Bride*

*“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”  
(Revelation 19:7)*

It says in Matthew 7:7, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” It also says in Jeremiah 33:3, “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.” I was on a quest to really seek the Lord, and to know him better than I ever had before. I had so many questions, and there was so much I wanted and needed to know. I would not be happy until I did. On August 2, 1997, again, I had a dream. The Godhead had given me a vision, in answer to my request on July 13<sup>th</sup>, and my continued longing to understand the nature of the Trinity better. The vision was a revelation that was more than I could have imagined or hoped for.

In it, I, at first, was standing alone, when suddenly I felt the hot breath of a huge, wild lion coming up on my left, right next to my neck. His voice rumbled. I was so terrified that my breathing stopped, I went numb all over my body. I was totally paralyzed, and I could have easily believed that the very blood in my body stopped flowing. His head was gigantic. His shoulders and muscles were powerful. His mane was huge, with its hair brushing up against my face. I thought I was “lunch,” and I was going to die. Finally, my eyes were able to move and able to perceive other images around me. Off further to my left, and up on a small mound, was a second lion walking back and forth. I could not see his face. There was something like a haze in front of it. But, I could tell he was observing me intently, never taking his eyes off of me. This second lion was of average size, and was about ten feet from me. He continued to walk back and forth and watch me. My eyes then turned to my right to ten feet on the other side of me, and I could then perceive a third lion. This one was more delicate and slender, and was standing upright on his hind legs, like a human would. I saw myself standing in front of him in a beautiful, white bridal gown, adorned with big, beautiful white roses, which were attached to, and all over, the entire skirt of the dress. His right paw, or “hand” was touching my forehead, and pushing just a little, so that my head tilted back in a submissive way. I saw to the left of him a very large and ferocious looking bear, who was also frozen, as I was. The left hand of the lion was raised to him. I then noticed that the first large

lion was also watching me intently, and looked very intelligently at me. He could look right through me. I was then aware that he was communicating with the other two lions in a silent fashion. No words were spoken among the three lions, but they were all of one mind, and all thoughts were shared and instantaneous, and all about me. I was beginning to realize that the tremendous power that had originally terrified me was protecting me from the bear, which had tried to attack me. However, it became defenseless, and frozen by the power as well. I also noticed that the huge, powerful lion was on the *right* side of the second lion. The third, slender lion was on the *right* side of the huge lion and so was I. My other self, dressed in the bridal gown, was directly under the hand of the third lion. As I observed, I was looking at the back of the third lion, who was standing in front of and facing the bride, Marianne. I could see my face, but not his. In fact, the only face I saw was that of the first, or huge lion. So the flow of things was this: to the *right* of the second lion with the hidden face in the highest position was the huge, most powerful lion, and to the *right* of him was the third lion and myself. The only thing to the left of anything else was the bear, who was my enemy. I then realized I was in the presence of the Holy Trinity, and that I was being shown my relationship to each one of them, as well as their relationship to each other. The most powerful lion, who initiated and mediated all the communication, was the glorious Lion of Judah, my Jesus, the King of Kings. The lion up on the mound in the highest physical

position was God the Father, who was keeping me in His watch and His care. The third, and most delicate lion was the gentle, but powerful, Holy Spirit, who was guiding me and touching my mind, and directing my act of submission. My beautiful, white bridal gown adorned me with the righteousness and purity of God, something I did not earn, but was given to me to wear. I had been made the bride of the Lion of Judah!!!! It was so glorious!! The intense communication between the three lions demonstrated their deep and united love, concern, and possession of me. The incredible power, which had originally terrified me, was actually protecting me from my enemy, the bear, representing the devil, who was totally powerless in their presence. I also learned, by reflecting on the vision, how there can be one God, but three persons. All three lions were made out of the same “lion material” but each was unique in his physical position, appearance, and relationship to me. So is the Trinity. Each person of the Trinity is made of the same God “substance”, which is the *only* true divine substance, and each has His own “position” with me as well. Each was functioning in a different capacity. God the Father was in the highest, most directive position, and very watchful and concerned. He was also the one most physically distant from me. Jesus had been given all the power in heaven and earth, and was the first one to move toward me. And, true to the Word, His face was the only one I could see and should seek. The Holy Spirit was the one who administered the actual touch to my mind and spirit, and lifted His hand against the

enemy. The flow, which was always to the right side, and true to scripture, was from the Father, to the Son, to the Holy Spirit, to me, as the bride. Just as all lions had the same “lion substance” but were three distinct entities, so does the Godhead all possess the same true, and only, divine God “substance” and are distinct entities as well. The oneness of God describes the *substance* and therefore the *essence* of God, not the *number* of persons which possess that substance. It was such a powerful revelation for me. And, it was a life-changing experience to be in the presence of such unlimited, raw power, which only sought to protect and care for me.

With the concept of the Trinity being one of the great mysteries of God, and in some cases a point of division for some denominations, it was such a moving experience to understand such a “mighty thing.” It shows how much the Godhead wants to be a revelation to mankind, and *not* remain a mystery. Just as the scripture from Jeremiah promised, if we would only call unto the Lord, we would be shown great and mighty things. God does not want to be a mystery. God wants to be personal and intimate with us. Because of my desire to be more intimate with the Lord, I was granted a great desire of my heart, to know Him better. God’s message of desire toward me was so definite. It was *not* important who I was, and what I looked like to others. It was *not* important who I was, and what I looked like to the enemy. It was *not* important who I was, and what I looked like to even myself. It was *only* important who I

was, and what I looked like to God alone. And if I see myself only as God sees me, then I am totally free. There is no way to describe the tremendous strength this vision has given me during times of trial. When it looked like all was against me, and all was wrong, and it “appeared” that God had abandoned me, I would always think back on this vision, and know for sure that His incredible power was on my side, and I would have the victory. He had shown me how He had made me His beautiful, precious bride, and how protected I was, as long as I was submissive. And I was not beautiful on my own. As the Lord says so wonderfully, and beautifully in scripture, “Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love: and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou became mine. Then I washed thee with water: yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badger’s skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus, wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey and oil; and thou wast exceedingly beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the

heathen for thy beauty; for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.” (Ezekiel 16:8-14) It is also so awesome how God bestowed His comeliness (beauty) upon me, and put an entire kingdom within in me, through the death and blood of Jesus. And nothing will wash that blood off of me. It will be on there forevermore. My heart belongs to my magnificent bridegroom!!!!!! And He loves me so much!!!!!!

The vision of the three lions, and the need for supernatural vision in the church, is so close to God’s heart. But people tend to think of this need as only meaning “this *little* much,” instead of meaning “*all this* much.” The Lord cannot pour out revival on a body of believers that limit what He wants to do. If they believe that spiritual vision only means to have a nice ideal or goal to work toward, which can be good in itself, instead of a true, visual encounter with God, then that is all that is going to happen. Spiritual vision can be expanded to also include seeing with our spiritual eyes the glory of God. If people believe that the only time they will encounter Jesus face to face is after they are dead, then that is all that is going to happen. The prophet Joel prophesied that while still living in the fleshly body, believers would have visions of God (Joel 2:28). In Luke 6:38, it says that how ever we measure out things will predict how much is returned to us. If we only have a small measure of faith, then only what is defined by that measure of faith will be returned to us. If we

believe God will part the Red Sea for us, then He will. If we believe He will heal us and deliver us, then He will, but it will be in His timing. But if we believe that He will not heal us, or deliver us, or part the Red Sea for us, or come to us in a vision or dream, as prophesied on Joel, then He won't. Only faith on our part activates the promises of God for us. God's Word is always true and all promises are available to us. But if we refuse to accept them, then we will not get them fulfilled in our lives. What believers need is a "no limits on God" kind of faith, the kind of faith that will believe for what the world thinks is the wildest, most impossible things. This kind of faith excites God into action. The lukewarm, wavering, weak faith gets us nowhere.

The coming revival is *not* coming in order to just inspire us to repent (although that is part of it), get emotional, cry a few tears, and then settle in to be nice people and live nice quiet lives. The coming, or really current, outpouring of the Holy Spirit is to electrocute us into action. The Lord cannot use people who are poor, but well meaning, witnesses. He will not use wimpy people that might say prayers once a week on Sunday, who are sitting around waiting for God to do some kind of vague thing, but have no idea what God wants of them. These are the ones who are waiting for everyone else to do something, and they want to just sit back and be on the receiving end. These people will be left out. He needs people who know Him well, that *want* to stand in His presence, that have such a passionate fire to know Him

that they will tear down everything, and give up everything in their path to get to see Him face to face. Because, it is that face to face encounter with the King of glory that enflames us with His fire, and stamps His love on our heart, and really makes us His. It is the vision that rivets us in our position. Looking deep into His eyes, there is a revelation of His attributes and personality. In His presence, there is understanding, and there are no more questions. We become eye witnesses to His glory and love, and it pours out of us to others.

Recall the beautiful vision of Jesus from earlier. Jesus is our beautiful bridegroom. And our prayer closet is the bridal chamber. We need to approach Him in complete love and abandonment, as we enter into the chamber of prayer each time we pray. We will be transformed by His presence each time we gaze into His gorgeous face. As we enter in, we turn our back to the world. With our hearts, we shut the door to be alone with His Majesty. As we step into His presence, we lose our identity and become one with Him, because He shares Himself with us, and who He is overpowers us. We become lost in Him. And as we turn to go back into the world after prayer, we are no longer ourselves. And on our countenance is the glory and love that comes with intimacy with the Beloved. We have been transformed. We now see the world through His eyes of love and compassion.

When people come forward to the altar, their manner should reflect their intimacy with Him. Some people come and recite the only memorized scripture passage they know. Some come forward and beg. Others force themselves to cry, to show others how hard they are praying, and to impress God the only way they know how. This is sad. The tears are not sincere and with feeling. Some come with unbelief in their heart, not sure what to do to get God to help them. Others can't pray at all, and expect the minister to do everything. The behavior reflects the condition of the heart, and their relationship with Jesus. True intimacy will be evidenced by the love and tenderness with which one approaches the throne. It will be reflected by the glow and joy on the person's countenance. The person will feel total liberty in expressing all their feelings and supplications. Even when there is pain in the person's life, there will be a total surrender, and a trusting placement of that pain on the altar for the Lord to take away.

When we speak to the Lord in prayer, we are happy and trusting, and we tell Him how beautiful and wonderful He is, and how happy we are to be with Him. Our God is the most excellent, most High God!! He is so awesome! He is so powerful!!! He is our most Exquisite Majesty!!! Above all things, He is the love of our lives!!!! He is there for us in all our trials and afflictions. It is this truth that gives us strength and inspiration. And it is this truth that carried me forward in the things that were to come next.

Soon after the dream of the three lions, my trials intensified. I was losing everything. But, I told the Lord that it was my covenant with Him that He could have everything that I was, and that I had. I told Him to take everything He wished, but do not take Himself from me. And if I were to lose my children as well, to please be sure that they were saved first by His mercy. I wanted them to belong to Him. They were all I had left at this point to offer Him. Other things had already vanished out of my life. I still couldn't even find a job at this point. I was his true bride, and we were one flesh. One flesh feels the same joy and the same pain. That is the covenant between us, and is written in our hearts, where no one can touch it. So I said, "Your Majesty, I still have you. You are still my Lion of Judah, and I am still your bride. Your blood is my blood and your pain is my pain. I love you." The circumstances at this time made it look like God had abandoned me, but I knew the Word says that Lord would never leave me, or forsake me. The devil even came to me in a dream and told me that he would win. Annoyed, I rebuked him and said, "You can't talk to me that way. I am redeemed!!!" With that, he backed off and left. The Word of God says that the Lord will set the captives free, and will deliver them from their bondages. No matter how hurt and abandoned I felt, I believed that there was a battle going on in the spiritual realm. And the Lord would win in His own way. I felt humbled once again. I told the Lord that even though my enemy, at least in the visible world,

appeared to have destroyed me, I asked Him to remember His bride when He won His victory, and lift me up to Him, not to the world. In a way, I may have wanted, at that time, to be lifted up to the world by the Lord, so that the world would see His faithfulness to me, and to what was just and fair. But then, I felt, maybe, I should have asked to be lifted up to Him first, and not be concerned with what the world would think. I asked for forgiveness. I told the Lord that I still wanted to feel His love and His presence. I asked Him to lift me up to Himself, and work a work in me. I prayed for wisdom and understanding. I prayed for blessings as He saw fit. I prayed for an anointing on my spirit to glorify Him, and only Him. I prayed that God would show me how my losses, all defeats in the physical realm, fit into the divine scheme of things. I prayed that the Lord would teach me His plan and will for me, so that I could be obedient to it. I prayed the Lord would help me to die to the flesh, so that my spirit would touch Him better. I wanted to be useful to the Lord. So far, I did not feel very useful and wanted that to change. I needed understanding and wisdom more than anything from the Lord. I didn't understand repeated defeat in the physical realm, but I did understand I needed to stay nailed to the cross until I really died. Only then I could come off. I asked the Lord, knowing it might be painful, to speed things up and help me die!! I did not want anything between Him and myself.

A week after the lion dream, there was an attack on my health. From later comparing my symptoms to someone else who had the same problems on the same night, I was having a gall bladder attack, which could have been serious. But the Lord was allowing this experience to strengthen me. I woke up with severe stabbing, stomach pain and severe vomiting. I was so weak. I didn't even have the strength to call out for help in my own home. I asked the Lord to help me. His answer: "pray." I replied I was too weak to pray. I was too weak to even speak. Answer: "pray." I replied I was in too much pain to pray. I needed someone to help me. Answer: "Remember how you were hurt before the Raleigh crusade and you fought for your healing, and you were healed that day?" I replied, "I need help, Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, please help me." Answer: "Physician, heal thyself." I finally obeyed, because the pain was increasing, and so was the violence of the vomiting. With all that was in me, I remembered what Pastor Benny taught about spiritual warfare, and I started rebuking the spirit of sickness and infirmity in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, and prayed in between vomit episodes into the toilet. I continued to cast out all devils in Jesus name, by the authority of the power of His blood covenant with me. I claimed healing in the name of my Lord, Jesus Christ, whose name was above all names, to whom devils must bow. I continued to vomit even more. I told the devil I was going to vomit him into the toilet!!!! I cried out to my Jesus, my King, my Savior, my healer, my husband, my Lion of Judah. I

claimed my healing and ordered all devils to leave and never come back. I told the devil they may have gotten in by accident, but they were leaving on purpose!!!! I continued to vomit and fold in half from the pain. I continued to praise, thank, and worship the Lord, for He is a faithful God, and keeps His promises of healing and in all things. I praised Him for bringing me from glory to glory!!! The vomiting and the pain stopped within 15-20 minutes!!!! I was overjoyed!!! I then fell asleep for a few hours. Three hours later there was a counterattack (isn't that like the devil?) I repeated my prayers. And just to defy my attacker, I went into the kitchen and drank some milk and toast, and put lots of butter on the toast. I continued to stand on my healing. Three hours after that, I could feel another attack coming on, so I defied the devil again, and ran into the kitchen, and ate a nice piece of meat with lots of fat on it, something which would be a bad idea during a gall bladder attack. I was learning to fight, and I was starting to enjoy myself. I thought, "Lord, you might just make a real woman out of me yet!" Each counterattack, and there were a few, was met with great resolve on my part that it not succeed. I wasn't giving up my healing, and I didn't care what the symptoms were. By the next morning, the attacks disappeared, and I even stopped by an emergency room to confirm that I was now OK. All tests came back negative. It was now Sunday morning, and I showed up for church just in time. I then found out about another lady who experienced the same attack the same night, and had been admitted into the hospital for

gall bladder surgery. She could have been me. I was so grateful that God gave me Pastor Benny, who taught me about how I could claim the promises of God in my life, which included those for healing, and have victories I did not know I could have before. When I was growing up, I had learned to just accept sickness when it came along, and maybe go to the doctor if it persisted. But, all healing was through the doctor only, and if he couldn't help, then I would just have to accept whatever it was. I never prayed for healing. Now, I had learned I did not have to be sick, and that the Lord will step in when the doctors can't help, or are not available. I had also started to learn, and put into practice, the principles of spiritual warfare, and how to stand on the Word. As the bride of Christ, I was learning how special I was, and how I could rely on my Lord and husband to take care of me, and protect me, from harmful things. I was also learning that my Lord wanted to share his authority with me, and by *exercising* this authority, I could have more victory in my life. I was also learning how to call on Him, have a better relationship with Him, share His virtues He would bestow on me, and produce fruit for Him in my life.

However, the learning process was just that, a process. There were going to be times of defeat in the physical realm, as well as times of victory. I was still to learn that some things were easier than others. It seemed that when the situation only involved the devil and myself, I could win quicker. When it involved other people, and what was on their mind and in their will,

then things got harder. I learned I could rebuke the devil. I learned I could not rebuke “flesh.” I also did not understand God’s timing yet. It seemed I would stand on the promises, and things would still go wrong, and defeat seemed to prevail. I was trying to understand if I was interpreting the promises in their proper context, or if I was way off in what I was asking for. When I thought of all the tribulations that the apostle Paul had, I felt I shouldn’t complain, but it also seemed he was suffering for the sake of the gospel. In some ways, I wasn’t sure why there were problems, or if I fit into the same category as Paul. I wasn’t preaching the gospel, but I was always trying to do the right thing, and hopefully I was in line with scripture. I was a bride very much in love, but I was also an inexperienced, naive bride, and needed to learn more before I could truly please the Love of my life. He once told me “Feel my pain,” and I wondered if, when I was injured, my own pain was interfering from focusing in on Him. I felt very lonely and wanted more of Him. My life was becoming more and more empty, as I either gave up things for Him or they were just lost anyhow.

One day, on August 24, 1997, I was sitting in church and thinking about a sales job I had accepted that just “was not me.” I had accepted it, thinking that since the door opened, that I was supposed to walk through it. I was new to this particular church, and still seeking out a church that was like Pastor Benny’s ministry. At the moment, I wasn’t sure if this church would do, and if I

was going to fit in. The sermon was being given, but I wasn't listening. In my mind, I was talking to my Lord. I said, "Lord, I don't seem to fit in anywhere." Answer: "You don't belong to the world. You belong to me." I said, "My job takes up too much of my time. I'm so tired. 8 hours a day is too much. I can't be with you." Answer: "Your time belongs to me." I said, "I don't know what I'm supposed to do to serve you." Answer: "Submit, just submit." I said, "What do I do then?" Answer: "Be my bride." I said, "What about money to live on?" Answer: "I'll provide, just submit." I said, "Lord, I'm incompetent. I have no talents to serve you." Answer: "Just submit." I asked, "What do I do for a living?" Answer: "Be my bride." I said, "I asked for you to close all doors except one. Then the sales job came open. Is there a reason? Do you want me to learn something from this? Is this the open door?" Answer: "The *only* open door is *me*. Sell *Me*....." In obedience, I quit the sales job.

The next day, I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. I could hardly stand. I fell to my knees and was led to pray for hours. I cried a lot and didn't know why. My Lord was leading me on a path of faith. I had no idea what He wanted outside of being His bride. I noted that all true Christians are brides as well, and still can function and/or minister in some specific way to serve the Lord. I was restless. I wanted my Lord to give me some kind of "job" with Him. Others were actively doing things in His service, and I wasn't doing anything.

I felt left out. I continued to go to Pastor Benny's meetings, and buy his books and tapes, and study them. I would go to all the meetings, and become so enraptured with being in the presence of the Lord, and seeing others in service to Him. Then I would come home to just sit in a pew and do nothing. I didn't understand that my Lord was trying to get me to just become quiet in Him, and start looking around, and watch. Usually in scripture, when someone was called into ministry, they were either told to go somewhere and say something, or to do something specific. My Lord would tell me to go somewhere, and not to do anything or say anything! I was confused. Also, being quite naïve in the things of the Lord, I also didn't understand the "charismatic language," and at times I would look very ignorant to the point that people would sometimes assume that I was newly saved, and shouldn't be allowed to do anything around the church until I "matured." So, I ended up getting left out of things, and feeling more useless as a result. I felt isolated and wanted to retreat, and spend more time with my Lord. I thought maybe since I wasn't grown enough in Him, He didn't want me to do anything yet. I wanted to experience more and more of His love. One day, I noticed some of my note cards in the Song of Solomon. As I looked down to read some of the passages, it reminded me of how I felt about my Lord. It described someone who could not sleep, and wandered around the city looking for her beloved. I cried. That's how I felt. It seemed that others, who already had so many other close human relationships,

were describing experiences with my Lord that I wanted. I had no other deep, satisfying human relationships at the time, and I lacked the experiences with my Lord as well. I would lie awake, and tell my Lord I needed Him more, that He was all I had. I longed for Him. What I didn't understand was that others had divided their time up, and could only give the Lord a portion of their time. I was spending all my days with Him, not realizing that I was receiving more than I thought. What was being stirred in me was *not* the result of physical sensations, or temporary experiences during the services. What was happening in me was the deepening of my passion for the One I loved. I longed for Him. There was a sense of almost desperate abandonment taking place. He was all I thought of. I was being consumed with the need to have more and more of Him. Every time it seemed He denied me of something others seemed to be experiencing, the craving for Him would intensify. I wanted it too. What the Lord was doing was increasing my desire for Him, by making me stay many times just out of His reach. When others would get immediate gratification of their desires, they would cease to seek more. It was easy for them. There was rarely an immediate gratification of my desire. It would build and build until I couldn't stand it anymore. I would weep for Him. Then I would cry out, and sometimes He would continue to be silent toward me. Then other times, He would come in like my knight in shining armor, and do something so incredible, it would take me ages to calm down. That would only make me want more. Then

there would be another long period of “denial,” followed by another cry out to Him, and finally another response. I never took His presence for granted. While others claimed they “felt” things so easily, experiencing His presence was for me a rare and precious moment. I cherished it. The anticipation of when I could experience Him again in a special way would build, and the uncertainty of when it would occur would be on my mind constantly. At times, I would be so hopeful and full of excitement. And at other times, I would be so lonely, and depressed, and discouraged, because it seemed like it had been so long. I would wonder if I had done something wrong. I would repent of things I did not understand, just to woo Him back to me. I was empty without Him. Sometimes, I would pine away, watching others who seemed to be receiving His attention, when I was being denied. I would go to my prayer closet and complain to Him that I needed His attention too. I didn’t mind others being blessed, but I wanted to be blessed too. I was impatient. I wanted Him all the time, and felt weak during the dry periods. But Lord wanted me to accept the dry periods in faith and just pray. All he ever asked me to do was pray. He did not want me in a position which was recognized by others. He wanted me in the cleft of the rock with Him. I was to be a “nobody,” but I was to be *His* “nobody.” That assignment certainly helped to kill my flesh, because I wanted to be of service. I didn’t want others to think that I was a “do nothing,” or that I didn’t care enough to serve, or that the Lord did not think I was fit

for service in some way. However, that is how I was viewed. I was not recognized as one with leadership in the church, because I performed no visible service. This assignment did much to humble me.

During this humbling process, my Lord was starting to restore to me things the enemy had taken. I dealt with private things within myself and asked for healing. I was led on other fast and prayer periods during this time, sometimes for 3 days, or as long as 30-40 days. I wanted to be a bride without spot or wrinkle. I wanted to be better for Him. The more I ached for His presence, the closer I was drawn to His cross. At one point during one of the services at church, I could almost see Him hanging on the cross for me. I could feel Him touch my heart. I could sense Him whispering my name. I started to cry. As I stood there bound on my own cross, I just looked up and said "Jesus." I asked Him to help me. I continued to ask how I could do more for Him. By now it was October, 1997 and in my personal time, I was occasionally led back to the Song of Solomon, especially the passage where He says (4:12), "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring, shut up, a fountain sealed. A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. Awake, oh north wind and come south, blow upon my garden that the spices may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden and eat His pleasant fruits." My Lord knew I loved flowers and other beautiful things. He knew I loved romantic poetry. This is why He led me to this passage. It was a love

conversation between us, and I cherished it. Again, I had no talents, no skills, no services to offer my Master. All I had was my love. I asked Him to come into the garden of my spirit, and dwell with me. I wanted His indwelling to cause my hidden spices, all the fragrances of my desire, and my well of living waters, to flow out as a love offering in His presence. But because of my desire to do more, I constantly asked if He would increase His use of me. I wanted a wonderful crown to cast at His feet someday to show my gratitude. I didn't want to come before Him empty-handed. He finally showed me a vision (October 5, 1997) of what represented my house, and how he was going to work through my physical realm. It was a beautiful gift to be answered like this.

My house was (and is) rectangular shaped. What I saw was essentially a floor plan with the front door open and the side door open. The only thing visible was a substance flowing in through the side door, and flowing out the front door. The substance filled my house also, and the size of my house remained constant. The "capacity" of my house was fixed, and so the amount needed to keep it full would remain constant as well. But all other substance (excess) would flow in through the side door and out the front. As I watched, I commented, "Lord, I don't see myself in the picture." Answer: "You're not *in* the picture." What my Lord meant was that I was only to be an *observer* of what He was doing. He was doing everything. I would see God's

blessings flow into my home, and then back out to others. My needs would remain constant, and all excess would go to the kingdom of God. I would always be provided for. I felt blessed at this, that he would allow me to see Him bless others with resources that came into my home. It would all happen perfectly, because it would be Him doing it, not me. I would just get to watch and be amazed.

Along with this beautiful vision of service to my Lord, came an extra dream (October 21, 1997) about a gentle, happy, carefree lion, that jumped up on me like a puppy, and wanted to romp and play. I was amused, and laughed and enjoyed this. The Holy Spirit had come to visit me, and fellowship with me, and share His joy. Although He was a very powerful person, and He was God, He was reminding me also of our child-like relationship, and His innocent love for me. We were so happy to see each other. But at the conclusion of this sweet visit, He gave me a message about a “Song of Tonah,” which was to become my song. I didn’t understand what this meant, although it was made clear to me immediately that the name Tonah was really the name Jonah. I always remembered Jonah as the prophet who disobeyed God and got in trouble. I wondered what Jonah had to do with me, and why the name Tonah had been used. As I look back, I should have reflected more upon what this encoded message meant. Scripture instructs us to meditate on the Word day and night, but I had been neglectful on this point. Tonah was a mixture

of the words “tone” and “Jonah.” Outside of the musical connotation of the word tone, which is consistent with the message that there was to be a “song,” the root definitions of the word “tone” reveal definitions of: “tension, the act of stretching, to be resilient, to strengthen, to soften in appearance, to mellow, to blend or harmonize.” It could also describe a mood, or a style of speaking, or writing. What I didn’t know was that the Song of Tonah would describe the next few years of my life. It described how my vessel would be transformed and “toned” into a useful vessel by the divine potter’s hand in the land of Nineveh.

## *Chapter 8*

# *The War in the Wilderness*

*“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you, but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. (1 Peter 4:12-13)*

In Pastor Benny’s Atlanta, 1997, conference, he had taught us on the topic “Biblical Training for Ministry.” In it, he referred us to 2 Timothy 1:8-9, “Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord...but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel, according to the power of God, who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose...” He pointed us to Proverbs 24: 27 where the Lord instructs us to prepare before building. Pastor taught that every new dimension needs a new revelation, that we need to “clean the wicks of our lamps, and add oil to them,” if we were to adapt to each successive move of the Spirit. We could not operate properly unless we were prepared, and there may be

suffering involved. And most of us tend to jump in, and try to serve the Lord without being prepared, either out of ignorance or impatience. Just as Jeremiah 18: 1-6 points out, we all start out as marred vessels and God needs to transform our vessels into good vessels. We need to be purified. So, as Pastor taught, vessels are first destroyed and flattened and remade. The process is not easy. We are “dug, separated, washed (in the Word), soaked, smitten, investigated for bubbles, centered, stretched and pulled apart to see how far we can go, molded, set aside to harden (we feel forgotten), then put into the fire (trials, sufferings for the gospel) to give us endurance and make us long lasting. Only then are we used to see if we are fit. And *if* we are finally fit, it is *still* not over. The only reason for ministry is to direct others to Jesus, and in order to lead others, it is necessary to have been there already ourselves. Their lives and souls are in our hands. So, change is a process and God might have to wrestle with us, just as He did with Jacob, in order to get us to submit and depend on Him. God does not want independence. He wants dependence on Him. Pastor Benny continued to refer us to Deuteronomy 8:2, where God tries the heart, to Jeremiah 17:10, where God searches the heart, and to Proverbs 21:2, where God ponders the heart. God puts us through many tests to test the heart, and He doesn't quit. We are called, but it is our choice to be used.

Pastor Benny gave us 10 tests that God uses to prepare us. Without going into all the details that Pastor

went into, they will be summarized here: (1) the “time test” to develop our faith. For example, Abraham had to wait 25 years before Isaac was born. The purpose of the time test is to wait for Isaac, and not end up with an Ishmael instead, (2) the “Word test” to develop character, wisdom, and humility in us. God allows circumstances that seem to contradict His Word, to see if we will continue to believe Him, (3) the “servant’s test,” to develop faithfulness to others. Because if we can’t be faithful to a man that He has placed over us, then we can’t be faithful to God, (4) the “*wilderness test*,” to teach the ways of the Spirit. Here the world comes out of you, and you are stripped of everything, (5) the “patience test,” to teach us how to yield and wait. For example, Noah waited 100 years for the flood to show up, (6) “frustration,” to make us re-examine our spiritual priorities, especially when it appears that God is not keeping His promises. We must not look at the seen, but the unseen. (7) “discouragement,” to teach us how to focus on the call of God, not our own feelings. For example Elijah at one point wanted to die. God told him to get back to work. (8) “*warfare*,” (when the devil shows up), to help us develop our spiritual muscles. And, since the devil attacks us where we are weak, we need to fix our weaknesses! (9) to test our “vision,” to see if we can hold onto what He shows us and (10) the test of our “ability to be promoted” by God. We must not promote ourselves. At this point, I could add one more test of my own: (11) test of the ability to do what you’re being told, and to follow directions, or you will make

things hard on yourself!!! Because for the next several years, I seemed to get hit with all 11 tests!!!! Although I had been tested before up to this point in my life, usually it was one or two tests at a time, but not all 11 of them at once. I was about to be stretched, and toned, and mellowed, and toughened, and softened, and made resilient. I was on the potter's wheel, and my little vessel was going through all kinds of changes. Because, even though my heart was very sincere and devoted to the Lord, I was still very naïve, inexperienced and undeveloped, as compared to where He needed me. I also had weaknesses that needed to be fixed. I had learned a lot so far, but needed to learn more. My Lord had been faithful, however, in building and strengthening me up to this point. I had all the wonderful teachings of Pastor Benny, as well as life experiences, involving lessons of victory, as well as defeat. And He gave me so many beautiful visions and dreams and promises to hold onto, and most of all, He gave me my precious, sweet friend, the Holy Spirit, to guide and teach me.

In the Fall of 1997, I was eagerly knocking on heaven's door again. I wanted to serve my Lord. So the first thing my Lord did was to give me a job back out in the world!! This puzzled me, since it seemed that this was the opposite of what I had asked for. The job was a blessing, however, and a place of stability when all the tests came into my personal life. In the time ahead, I would experience grief and heartbreak from witnessing

slander, tremendous condemnation from many sides of myself, and others, verbal and emotional abuse toward myself and God, intense treachery, physical violence, extreme hypocrisy, exalted as righteousness and truth by the most ungodly, dishonesty in all forms, total injustice, greed enough to be willing to lie and kill for, deception of those I cared about, who were misled and hurt as a result, the “putting to death” of someone I loved dearly, and general viciousness. I had asked my Lord to enlarge my heart to contain more of Him, and the first thing He seemed to do was to break it. He allowed me to feel the pain that He feels when people rebel, and sin against Him and others. If only people could understand that even though the Master’s physical, historical suffering and death event occurred 2000 years ago, that the pain he felt then, and now, comes from sin even today. To man, “time” implies that once something happens in physical history, that it is over. But, time is only an artifact of this physical world. In the spirit, the chronology of the physical can become a continuum, because time there is not as we know it in the physical. When Jesus hung on the cross, He felt the pain from the sin we will commit tomorrow, and next week, and next year. Christ still suffers today, and will continue to do so as long as people continue to crucify Him directly, as well as crucifying Him as He dwells in others. People continue to throw Jesus back up on the cross, and nail Him anew with their selfish, sinful behavior. They continue to only care about their own opinions, and needs, and ways, and not that of God’s, to the point of

idolizing themselves in their own minds. They arrogantly, of course, assume that God *only* would agree with them. They are right, and everyone else is wrong. In the heart of God, the spiritual crucifixion won't really be over until sin is destroyed on this earth. The heart of God grieves for this world. His beautiful Spirit weeps. Of all the sins in this society, idol worship is the worst, and it is everywhere. Man has become god in his own mind, which falsely justifies all his behavior. And man does not want to be responsible for the consequences of his sin, because he refuses to admit he *has* sin. His behavior is based on his own "truth" which is convenient for him, but it is out of line with the real truth of God. These are the times when scripture states that "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matthew 24:12), and in 2 Timothy 3:13, it states, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

When my Lord told me that my song would become the "Song Of Tonah," He was telling me that the world, the church included, in parts, had become a Nineveh and needed to be purged. There are, of course, many faithful believers and wonderful Christians in this world who are faithful to the true God, but deception and falsehood has crept in everywhere. This world will soon be purged by a most powerful move of the Holy Spirit that has never been seen before, not to entertain us with sign and wonders, but to bring sinful man to his knees, as well as bring strength to the faithful. And He will start with His

church. Jesus is coming for a perfect church, without spot or wrinkle, and He, in His holiness, will not tolerate anything that would compromise His standards. He cannot have those that, in name represent Him, be a reproach and a dishonor to Him. He is depending on believers to bring others to Him, and they cannot be successful if they lack the purity and holiness to represent Him. God loves the whole world, and desires that none perish. There are now many marred vessels in the world trying to witness, but they are counterproductive, or ineffective. He needs worthy vessels to reach the world. The marred vessels in the church will undergo the necessary purging, to execute the death of their fleshly nature. When they are fit, *then* they will be released to be proper witnesses to the rest of the world. So, when trials come, believers need not blame the devil for things, but need to begin to repent, thank God, and submit to Him for their purification. If we do not crucify our own flesh, God will do it for us.

When the tests come, it is necessary to pay attention to what the Word of God says in each situation, and to care enough to follow instructions to the letter. It is not time for personal opinion. God is *not* interested in *your* opinion. He is interested in *His* opinion, and until you line up with His will, you will be miserable. As I think back over the past few years, it seemed like there was one shock after another to my spirit. He showed me everything He did *not* want me to be, and everything he did *not* want me to do. He told me there would be pain

and persecution, and to bury my face in prayer, and not look up until it was over. He did not tell me how long it would take. Month, after month, after month went by, and there seemed to be no resolution to the things I prayed for. Sometimes, I collapsed in grief and wept. I became discouraged and frustrated. I prayed uncontrollably in my spirit for hours at times because the Holy Spirit was grieving with me, and through me, and I had submitted my heart to Him. Sometimes, I did well, and sometimes I stumbled and had to get back up, because if I didn't, the result would be devastating. I was so weary, and the pain of every situation pierced an already sensitive heart. All strength had been pulled out of me, just as Pastor Benny's dream had predicted. My Lord showed me the presence of the demons responsible for the situations. In one case, one appeared to me, and tried to attack me with a knife. I cried out to God. What had given it so much force was that the flesh of others had opened to door to it, and had welcomed it. So, it had permission to stay around, even though I had prayed against it. About every spiritual need I had, my Lord told me I had to wait, but my time would come. He was preparing me. I was on the potter's wheel in the middle of Nineveh. Nineveh was a cruel, ungodly place. And Nineveh was also a Jericho. At the start, I was confused, because my Lord was stern to me, warning me not to disobey. I would never intentionally disobey my Lord, so I didn't understand. But if I had properly heeded the warning that the "Song of Tonah" would become my song, it would have been a sufficient hint as to what was

about to happen, and “where” in the spirit realm He was sending me. Within a month, I had been submerged into the very realm He had prepared me for, and warned me about. In the visible world, everything looked normal and well on the surface, but things were not well in the spiritual. At first, I wanted to leave the situation, because it was so awful. But the Lord expected me to stay and fight, and not to disobey. I was not to fight on my own strength, but to stand firm and not budge, and put everything in His hands. I was to say nothing, and do nothing. My battle position was on my knees, and my face was to the ground, and if I were to look up and neglect this, I would get hit with something. I was expected to suffer injury with patience, and turn and show love when I saw hate. I saw injury all around me. I ached when I saw those in need denied, or ignored. It was so hard to remain silent. I struggled. I cried out in my spirit against the injustice I witnessed, and my Lord was there for me. He came with reassurance at times, and I was so blessed and refreshed with His presence. I stood on His promises. He would start showing me things that were to come, so I would be prepared. Still, when they came, it was still a shock. I waited, and waited, and waited. My Lord continued to reassure me that He was with me. At the times when the injury to my spirit was the worst, His peace would come rushing in and comfort me. At those times, I was so much at peace, that I would have been unable to even force myself to get upset. I cannot explain adequately what I went through. If I did not deny my *own* needs, I would

drive another nail into His hands, by going in my own direction. I can only say that I was pulled out of my own pain into the pain of others. My Lord allowed me to feel part of the pain He feels when those He loves are hurt or mistreated, and also the pain that sin (including my own) causes Him. As said before, it seems to crucify Him all over again. My heart was broken repeatedly. And it seemed with each severe heartbreak, my beautiful Holy Spirit would come and be with me, and bring the most gorgeous fragrance of roses, or beautiful, exotic, spicy perfume with Him. Once, He filled me with the awareness of warm olive oil as I ached and prayed for a loved one who wasn't saved yet. Sometimes, my children could detect a fragrance in the home. Jesus appeared twice in my home, once to my son, and once to me, but just for a moment, to let us know He was there. Another time, Jesus was rushing toward me in a dream to let me know how eager He was to be with me. He was not the suffering, hurt Jesus from the cross. He was the big, strong, resurrected Jesus, and He was focused on protecting me! It was breathtaking! I was so deeply happy. One time, He even manifested at my workplace where another person (an unbeliever) commented that there was a wonderful fragrance in the room. (They thought maybe it was my herbal teabag, but I knew better. I stuck my nose right up to the bag and there was no smell.) What my precious Lord was teaching me was that if I were to experience the greatest joy, I would have to be willing to experience the greatest pain. When His

beautiful reassurance came, it was so incredible He made everything worth it. My Lord was deepening me.

Because of my weak, human nature, it was so tempting, during this time of trials to seek consolation from others. But, I was told to keep silent. My Lord had told me once, when I was at the end of my first 40 day fast with Him in Atlanta, that I was to go to no man for anything. If I wanted something, I had to go straight to Him. He was so strict with me. I was His private possession. He knew the situation better than anyone, and knew that the ones I would tend to go to first, would end up dealing treacherously with me, and hurt me. He knew how sensitive and trusting I was. I had asked for wisdom, and scripture does say that holding one's peace is an act of wisdom. (Job 13:5) By restricting me, He was protecting me. There were times, I tried to confide in someone, thinking the Lord couldn't possibly mean them too, and then found out that was a mistake. I should have listened. I had to repent before my Lord for disobeying Him. I felt so isolated from everything and everyone. I felt so fragile. I could easily be broken and hurt by anything. I clung to the Lord, the only One I could trust. I had started out into this situation with a 30 day fast, and hoped I was prepared, but I still wasn't totally. There was no way. That is why He told me to come to Him.

Shortly after entering into this new arena, I had heard a sermon about a "baptism of fire," which was

supposed to be somehow different from the original baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was supposed to strengthen me. For two hours, I prayed for this special anointing, with no success. I then fell asleep. About 3 am, I awoke, and felt like my body was comparable to sands in a bucket, and the sands were being poured out. I could feel each grain as it moved. A giant wave was traveling throughout my entire body. It almost felt like a huge whale was swimming around inside of me, bumping around, pulling my body with it. Maybe a better description would have been that it was like a lion moving around and establishing His territory. I don't know if in reality, I was twisting around in my bed, but it felt like it. All I could think of was that the Lord had answered my prayer for an anointing to serve Him, and all I could do was marvel. It was such a strange, but incredible, experience. I had told Him I wanted to completely submit to Him, and it was as if, in response, the Holy Spirit was moving around, and all through, my physical body to claim it for Himself. I expressed my appreciation over and over, thanking Jesus repeatedly. In the dream of the three lions, I was under total control of, and in submission to, the Holy Spirit. But this was no dream. It had been my passionate desire to surrender totally to God, and my prayers were being answered. I was now under the total physical control of a very powerful Holy Force within me, and I could only submit. The gentle, child-like, sweet Holy Spirit I had come to know, was now revealing His more powerful side. He had withheld that aspect until now, when I was

comfortable with the love aspect of our relationship. Otherwise, I would have been frightened. But now, my whole self was in His hands. Later on in the day, actually that evening, I attended a revival service at a nearby church, ministered by a friend / evangelist I knew from the church I went to. I responded to a general altar call, and prayed earnestly for my Lord to strengthen me, because I sensed that challenges were coming that I didn't understand. My arms began to burn. As I prayed, I sensed a numbness that started in my feet and went all the way up my body. I struggled to my feet while this was starting to happen, trying to make it stop. But I soon found myself, standing frozen in place at the front of the church, shaking uncontrollably, but gently, all over. There was nothing I could do but shake for about 10 minutes. The minister told everyone else to get in line for prayer, that the presence of God was there. To me, this was a reinforcement of my experience during the night. But this experience occurred without anyone laying hands on me, or praying for me. God, alone, was in this and was imparting to me the fire I asked for. It was impressed on me that there was *no* way I was to go through trials alone. He was going to be with me in *all* His power, because I was His. It is so important to make this point here: the same loving, powerful and extremely intimate God who had invaded my life will invade anyone's. These things were not happening to me, because *I* was special. They happened because *God* is special. *He* was the acting force. *I* was the recipient. I was incapable of anything on my own. The more

fragile and weak we are, the stronger and more protective He is on our behalf. I was very weak and would have died without His help.

Many of the longer fasting and prayer periods mentioned in earlier chapters occurred at this time. The beautiful reassurances mentioned here did not occur right away. And, in the beginning, before the “Tonah” prophesy was clarified, I did not understand my circumstances at all. I hope to shed some light on some wrong teachings, because I hope to help others who have been misled the same way. I thought of all the years I was a very ignorant believer, who suffered many defeats. I was led to believe it was “God’s will,” or that God just didn’t care, or that all rewards were in heaven, not on earth. The defeats were my “cross,” and I was supposed to accept them, because there was nothing that could be done about them. God was far away, and not personal, and He only spoke to the specially called, like Moses, not to ordinary man. I had to repent constantly, because if I committed a sin before I died, I could not go to heaven. As consequence, there was a lack of true joy, and was one of the reasons I went seeking in that direction, when I realized how I could have more from the Lord. Naturally, the last thing I would want was more pain. But, despite these wrong teachings, which would normally push someone away, deep inside, I loved Him anyway. This was the work of the Holy Spirit in my life, to keep my heart receptive, and hungry, for the eventual truths that would clarify everything. The

Lord showed me once, when I was a child, a picture of myself in a field full of yellow flowers. He said I was His, and all the flowers belonged to me. There was another vision of a tall bright figure that, in my child's mind, was an angel standing at the foot of my bed, right before a tragedy occurred in my life to give reassurance. As I grew up, however, the memory of these visions was clouded, and suppressed, by all the ignorance and deadness that surrounded me. I was fortunate that my parents were good to me, and faithful believers, and taught me to pray, and love Jesus. However, they had been taught the same way, and could only pass onto me what they had. Despite this, they did pass onto me a special lesson: one of unchallenging, sincere devotion toward the Lord when nothing makes sense.

In the few years prior to this time of trials, my Lord had graciously stepped into my life to help me catch up with Him. Everything he did for me was an act of mercy up to this point, but He wasn't finished. The devil knew this too. He came in to take away my peace, and the first thing he did was to tempt me to dwell on my past, and how empty it had been. He told me that I had engaged in a one-side love affair with God, that my love for God all those years was never returned, because I was not worthy, and He didn't really care about me. If God had really cared about me, He would have put me in a more nurturing environment, and given me the victories I needed. The devil said that God was very stern, and too hard to please, that I should fear the Lord, because of His

wrath and power to destroy me, that God shows favoritism, and that for most of my life, there was none toward me. God was the reason I had little joy and victory in my life, because He had denied me things I truly needed. God was just sending me into more trials, because He didn't care if I suffered. He told me I had come to the Lord, and that God had turned His back on me. Betrayal and injury was just my pre-ordained destiny. My prayers for my children weren't answered yet, because my needs were not as important as the needs of others. He told me that my need for acceptance and love were being denied, and I was being subjected to humiliation, because God cared about other people, who were mean, more than me. The devil was opening old wounds. I struggled because circumstances indicated he was right. He wanted me to remember all past pain to "protect" myself against current and future pain. It is a natural human (and animal) sense of self-preservation that causes us to recall, and learn, from past experiences. Our minds will alert us to similarities between current situations and past negative, painful experiences. Memory of how pain occurred before can be a useful defensive mechanism against future harm. But when the memory of pain blocks joy, then it is not the helpful device it should be. The devil was tempting me to walk away from Nineveh because it was painful there, and reminded me of past negative experiences. I really struggled. I wondered why God would force me into something awful, when I needed to be loved, and treated well, and nurtured. It seemed like I was getting ripped

apart instead. In the meantime, I had been warned in a dream, that unless I stayed on my knees, that by December 22, 1997, something would happen to my children and I would never see them again. This added to my stress. I felt like I was in bondage to all this pressure. I felt so oppressed by the circumstances. I was so sad. Nothing made sense to me, but deep inside me, I would not give up.

Then I recalled my January, 1996 dream about Jesus. I remembered His gorgeous, radiant smile. I remembered how there was no pain in His presence, only joy. He wouldn't have bothered coming to me if He didn't care about me! Deliverance was mine, but it was also based on knowing my rights in Him. So, deliverance couldn't really occur until I understood His Word, and His promises better, and learned how to accept deliverance. I understood somewhat His part, but not my part. I thought He was supposed to do everything, because He was the only one with any power. I didn't understand I had power too, because He lived in me. This was the "white tiger" that I had seen following me. It was the power that my Lord had given me to be victorious, and I needed to learn how to release it into my life. I struggled with this conflict between despair and hope for about two days, and I was so miserable. I finally cried, and prayed before my Lord. I did not want to feel this way. I needed him, and I couldn't be useful to Him if I was like this. I wanted the joy to come back that I felt in my "Jesus dream." Recalling and believing in the dream

gave it back to me. I remembered how Pastor taught us to hold onto the visions God had given us. I believed in my vision that Jesus gave me. I held onto the vision of the beautiful white tiger within me. I was to be God's little house through which many beautiful blessings would flow out, and reach others. The whole field of yellow flowers belonged to me. All the dreams about my friendship with my sweet friend and helper, the Holy Spirit, were mine forever. All the gifts I needed, and I saw, in the flooded gift shop, belonged to me too. The vision of the three lions was mine. I was God's precious possession. I was His beautiful bride, and He was protecting me. I actively rejected what the devil was saying to me. He was lying to me and trying to take away what God wanted for me. So the devil lost again and I won!!

It didn't occur to me, until later, that I had been fasting this week. Pastor Benny had taught us that when we fast, that the devil shows up to ruin everything, and tempt us, but then the Holy Spirit also shows to help us. The devil had been trying to keep me from prayer. The Holy Spirit helped me remember my dreams and visions for strength. It was already December 7, 1997 and I thought about my children, and the warning dream. I knew that especially my daughter, Angier was under stress. I pushed all this distraction aside, and focused on praying for my children. My night prayers before my Lord became intense. I wept before God. I told Him I had done everything I could, and still nothing. I could

obtain no help from anyone, and I was all alone in this. My children were all I had in this life to offer Him. I told the Lord He was the only One who could help my children. I cried and placed it in His hands. I was out of strength to the point where I couldn't go on unless He helped me. I collapsed before Him and just wept..... Finally, when I experienced a sense of release, I finished my prayers and involved myself in a quiet activity. In a little while, Angier, my daughter, came into my room to ask a favor. She then stopped and asked, "Mom, what's that sweet smell?" I looked at her, and told her I didn't know what she meant, because I didn't notice anything. She replied, "It smells real sweet in here, like pancake syrup." Jacinda walked in and said she "felt" something, but didn't smell anything. Then Eric walked in to complain about the girls tying up the washing machine and I questioned him. He continued to talk about the washing machine. I finally said, "Eric, just answer my question. Do you smell anything in here?" Eric finally replied, "Oh, you mean that smell of roses? I noticed it when I first walked in here." That was what I needed to hear. I then told them that this was the Holy Spirit giving them an invitation, and that they were experiencing the tangible presence of God. I told them all that the Lord would be contacting each of them in a special way, and when it came, they needed to say "yes." (Crystal was in another room and did not come in.) God's word was true. It says that God hears the cry of the righteous.

God was faithful. The very next night, Angier and a friend were in a revival service with me, and a prophetic word went forth as an “invitation” to come forward, to put all past behind, and come to the altar. One was to bring all pain, mistakes, and burdens. Just come and receive forgiveness and love. Choose heaven. The whole service came to a stop. The Word was confirmed by a second invitation. Angier and her friend were in the back of the room, debating who the word was for. Neither responded. Later, that night, I had to explain what happened to the both of them. The next night, her friend did not return, but Angier did, and responded to the next altar call, and was gloriously set free of many burdens in her life. Later on, Eric reported his vision of the Lord in his bedroom. Jacinda had a vision of beautiful light in hers. And Crystal felt the Holy Spirit caressing her face, and could sense Him sitting beside her, in a Sunday morning service. She also responded to an altar call for salvation. None of the children ever experienced harm or disappeared out of my life. The December 22, 1997 deadline had been met by God Himself!! After that, the devil told me he would get them all back. He knew, as well as I did, that my children had been part of the world, and had been heavily influenced by it. That’s where all their friends were. I stood firm. I responded that nothing he could do would last. If he tried to take my children back, he was going to have a fight on his hands, and I would win again!! My God promised in His Word that my household would be saved!!

Right after that Christmas, I noticed that I was gaining weight back I had lost during fasting periods. This problem was to be a continual struggle with me, and only when the Lord stepped in, would I feel the relief of a normal weight. This was also going to be a continual humbling point for me, because I could never be proud that I was in control of my flesh, as long as I was left on my own strength. I would see myself fail over, and over, in this area. There were other situations in my personal life where trials persisted. These were not the casual challenges of daily life. They were much more serious. Right before Christmas, I was deeply hurt about some things that had occurred. The Holy Spirit dealt with me immediately about becoming angry about things that others did. I submitted. Then again, another insult occurred. For the next several weeks, the fragrances continued to come at times, and I began to associate them with some hurt that just did happen, or one that was about to happen. One of the times, I was at the Miami Partner's Conference with Pastor that following January, 1998. At the time, I had a bad cold, and could not smell a thing normally. But during one of the meetings, I could smell a wonderful man's cologne at two different moments. It had a wonderful powdery quality. Immediately, I checked the only man beside me. It wasn't him. Then, it suddenly occurred to me that I detected the fragrance without even inhaling. I also noticed that my sinus problem had completely disappeared. I was healed of my cold! When I returned

from Miami, I noticed another refreshing fragrance, while in church with my children and a young friend of theirs. The young friend, Nikki, later testified that her baby boy, Justin, had been healed in that service of a high fever and an ear infection. There were several other experiences with fragrances that were also blessings. Toward the end of that month (January 20, 1998), I had another dream. I saw the “children” from the April, 1996 dream. The Holy Spirit’s little boy child was playing with my little girl child. They were so cute. They were about 3 ½ - 4 years old now. The little boy looked just like his “dad.” The children had been playing in the mud, having a glorious time. It was only four days later (January 24, 1998), when I awoke one morning, aware that Jesus was standing next to me, at the head of my bed. He then disappeared. I didn’t find out until later that Eric had awakened, also to witness Jesus walking through his room, who vanished straight into, and through, the wall, and was headed for the rest of the house! Jesus, my King, was actively guarding my home and claiming it as His! He was making His presence and protection known in an awesome way, because of what was to come. The devil was to come and pull these “lambs” back into the world.

It seemed in those days, that one incident after another kept me on my knees. I felt like I may not have been a “powerful” person of prayer, but my efforts were sincere, and whatever I said to the Lord, I meant. I could only offer to Him my best, and wanted to please Him.

On January 31, 1998, I had a dream of two snakes in my path. They were asleep, and did not see me coming. One was black, and seemed to be a male. The other was a silver tone, and seemed to have smaller snakes under her. I prayed that the Lord would reveal who these snakes were to me, so I could be careful. Within 3 days, I was “bit” by someone the first one represented, as I experienced a humiliating insult, and within two months, the second “snake” bit. This second snake did much greater damage because of its influence over the smaller snakes. Both “snakes” bit me with a true vengeance in real life, with the second one being absolutely relentless in its efforts to oppress me. I am, of course, describing deceived people, who were acting under this force against me. As in the dream, because their eyes were closed, they were “blind,” in the spiritual sense, and did not understand how they were being used against me. The snakes were, of course, not the people themselves. People were only flesh. But the demonic spirits that deceived and influenced them were the snakes. At one point, I spoke back to one of them, and told them how mean they were. This was a mistake, because they then just attacked me more intensely. One day, I was trying to pray in my car. I finally started to cry, because the situation was so miserable. I felt so hurt and helpless. Then, my Lord helped me recall the story of Queen Esther. He told me to cast off my garments of guilt and condemnation from the world, and approach Him with my royal garments. I loved my Lord. He was trying to encourage me. I thought about how the scripture says to

bless those that persecute us, so at one point, I did something special for one of the people. I wanted to please my Lord with an act of obedience. There were times, however, that I felt like I was the only one in the whole world going through this sort of thing. I did not realize that there were many others close to me experiencing the same hurts. In time, I would come to know this, and be ready to help them with an understanding heart.

The trials and the sense of isolation worsened. It was becoming difficult to hide. I really did not want to be in this nasty arena. I visited a friend's prayer group one afternoon (February 21, 1998), and was told by several concerned people there that I was surrounded by devils, and I needed to get away from whatever was hurting me. Part of my inner self agreed with them. Part of my inner self continued to be troubled. I went from there to an evening service elsewhere. What did the Lord really want me to do? I cried in my car on the way to the next service. I asked the Lord to either fix what was wrong, or deliver me from it. My prayers were answered in the next service. Someone, who had a prophetic gift, was ministering there, and that night, there was a word for me. The Lord told me that he had come to reassure me. He knew that I had been troubled about many things, that I was to seek Him like I never had before, and that He did not want my heart to be troubled. He said things would continue to appear to be going all wrong, but that He was going to move out on my behalf. He instructed

me then to hide my face in prayer and seeking His face. He reminded me of the lady who the accusers brought before Him. He said “Did I not write in the sand? Didn’t I say unto them, who has not sin, cast the first stone?” He continued to say, “Many of them has tried to cast stones, and many things has moved...But, my daughter, the end is over. I shall begin to call out and I shall move in this situation. Thy will see a move as thy never have before.” He then warned me not to blurt out my feelings, but to hearken unto Him, and to hold my peace. He told me I could not handle the situation with my own hands (some people don’t want peace), and that I would have to place it in His. If I would do this, I would see “miracle after miracle” form in those situations which troubled me. He promised He would bring deliverance. He then made a comment about “re-fusion, re-fusion.” He said this twice, once for each snake. It was as if I had been blown apart in my spirit into a million pieces, and He was going to put me back (or fuse me back) together again. When I left the service that night, I was so happy. To me, the Lord had promised to “stick up” for me. I liked the fact that He was on my side and was going to deliver me from the snakes. However, at this time, the identity of the second one had not been revealed to me yet. And, I was still too trusting to be that suspicious of anyone to try to guess.

On February 26, 1998, I heard Pat Robertson on TV announce a national time of fasting for the nation. I decided to participate for a couple of reasons. One, to

me the nation was in bad shape spiritually, if what was around me was any indication of what it was like nationally. I also had asked the Lord to help me obey Him, and also to subdue my flesh. I recalled that Pastor Benny had said to never settle for partial victory, or the devil will counterattack. So I asked the Lord for total victory in my self, my family, my neighborhood, my city, NC State University, which was still on my heart after the seven day walk, and in my country. I also recalled a dream the Lord gave me where I saw myself about 15-20 years ago, and thought about many lost years due to a difficult and heavily burdened life. I asked the Lord to finish restoring to me everything the devil had taken from me, and to lift off all oppression. I wanted him to “redeem the time.” (Ephesians 5: 16) I also recalled that the devil tends to show up during fasting to challenge us. But, I also remembered that the Holy Spirit is there too. So, I decided at this time, that I would review some of Pastor Benny’s tapes on fasting and prayer. I wanted to do a good job. The very next day, I experienced the most beautiful fragrance at work. I knew in my spirit that God had starting dealing with the first deceived person from the snake dream. I was so grateful.

I continued to go to work, go to regular church, and attend extra revival services around town. I read more of Pastor Benny’s books, and watched a lot of his crusade videos. I also watched Pastor’s program on TV before I went to work each day. I was really grateful to the Lord

for introducing me to Pastor Benny's ministry. Although my circumstances were still discouraging, my Lord had told me it would look like everything was still wrong, but, in fact, it was really being worked on by Him. On the surface, nothing made much sense. On March 13, 1998, I attended a local revival where a lady was the minister. She also had a word of encouragement for me. I was told that the Lord, in time, would help me understand what I was going through. The Lord had opened the windows of heaven over me. To the Lord, I was like a little bird, like a canary, who was singing so happily and flying around my cage. I was having such a good time, I didn't even want to go into the cage to rest. The door was open, and I was free to go in, but I was enjoying myself, and my freedom, so much that I continued to just sing away. The assurance was repeated that God would handle all my concerns and burdens. I reflected on this message. The Lord knew my life was full of sad things, but my heart was still happy with Him. Also, I experienced much joy when I was with Pastor Benny. But, I wondered why He had made me a little bird, instead of a nice, strong eagle. Other people in the room were given messages about how they were going to be used in many ways, and how anointed they were, or would be. I was not told God would use me. So, in some ways, the message to me was reassuring, and in other ways, I felt left out, because I did not seem to be like anyone else in the room. Maybe little birds weren't used for much in the kingdom. As I was reading the Word one day, I came upon Jeremiah 3:13-15, "Only

acknowledge thine iniquity that thou hast transgressed against the Lord, and hast scattered thy ways...And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” I repented of anything I could think of, asking forgiveness, and then trusted the Lord to provide the right pastor for me. I was still looking. I wanted someone like Pastor Benny (or Pastor Dave, who had always taken time with me when I came to the prayer meetings) to be my pastor. At the time, I was still looking around for my first real church, one that could fill the spiritual needs of myself and my family. At the time, my children were becoming disinterested in church. I was trying to search out one that had young people their ages that they could fellowship with. I also wanted one that was good with “lambs.” And, I also clung to the words from Isaiah 61:7, “for your shame, ye shall have double, and for confusion, they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be unto them.”

Toward the end of March, 1998, I was still on the fast introduced by Pat Robertson. I hadn't eaten anything in a month by then but, since the Lord was my strength, I felt fine. And spiritually, I really was off in a different world. When one is on an extended fast of this sort, one's perspective changes on things, and is a lot more in tune to what is going on in the spirit realm. Stress and strife is avoided because, if no other reason, it takes too much energy to get involved. The human spirit

becomes much more sensitive and receptive and calm. About his time, I attended a social affair. One night, an incident occurred where someone disrespected the Lord in their speech, trying to be humorous, more out of ignorance than anything else. It went right through me like a knife. I tended to withdraw myself, and, in doing this, I drew attention to myself. I was then severely criticized as being an intolerant disturbance, and someone who had somehow “sinned.” I found this even more repulsive. So, I withdrew further as some, who enjoyed the humor, were trying to force me into admitting that I was wrong to disagree with the one who had made these disrespectful remarks. I remembered how the Lord had told me to hold my peace during difficult situations, and I was not doing a perfect job, but trying my best. Getting rid of people who annoyed me was like getting gum out of my hair. They wouldn’t get the point. They finally left me to myself. I hoped this was just an odd moment. I was glad to leave there, though.

Pastor Benny once said that once you receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, that you will have a wilderness experience, in which the devil comes against you. More attacks occurred around me in my personal life, most of them behind my back, some right to my face. Certain individuals in my life were relentless. It was as if something possessed them, and they were just driven to it. There were not only incidents that had predicted by the snake dream, there were other ongoing

situations that were constantly challenging me. My heart was being pulled in all directions. I wondered how long these wilderness experiences were supposed to last, because I was being hurt over and over, and there wasn't anything I could do to defend myself. The Lord had told me to do nothing and say nothing. It does say in the word to "resist the devil and he will flee." (James 4:7) And, I wondered if the wilderness experience could be repeated during each time of fasting, because I had just completed my second 40 day fast. I had told the Lord that my fast had not been perfect at times, but I had done my best. I persisted in spite of weak moments until the end. I offered my best to Him: my heart, my tears, my love, my praise, and even my honor, in order to obey Him. Even my offerings at church were given without asking for anything back. I just gave because I loved Him. The Lord knew I was very sensitive and easily hurt, and knew it was hard for me to hold this all in. At one point, I just wanted one person to talk to confidentially, and, in a moment, forgot about the restrictions my Lord had placed on me. I "blurted" (that's the Lord's word for it) to one person I thought I could trust. It turned out to be a mistake, because that person was as bad as the others. This made me more miserable, and after that, I never said another word again. I was learning. The Lord had tried to protect me by essentially warning me that, at this time in my life, He was all I had, and the only One I could trust. After that, I never spoke again, no matter what happened. The desire for the love and comfort of human companionship

and understanding just died in me. My whole world became my bedroom and the Lord.

I continued to seek my Lord. I dwelled upon the words from Psalm 24: 3-6, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek Him...” I asked my Lord to purify my heart, not according to my own standards, but according to His. Especially close to my heart at this time were scriptures, which described how my Lord had set apart, and sanctified, those He loved for a special purpose. These gave me great strength, and I share them here for others. In Psalm 27:5, it says, “For in the time of trouble, He shall hide me in His pavilion, in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me, He shall set me up on a rock.” In Psalm 31:20, it says, “Thou shall hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man, thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.” This one helped me because of the condemnation I had to endure. I included Pastor Benny’s favorite, with Psalm 91:1, “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” And finally my favorite, in the Song of Solomon 2:14, it says, “O my dove, that art in the cleft of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice: for sweet is thy

voice, and thy countenance is comely.” This last passage was very special to me. My Lord had described me as just a little bird who was to hide its face and seek Him. Here, the little dove was just as weak and hidden as I was, yet my Lord, in His word, describes how precious the little dove is to Him. I accepted the possibility that one does not have to be a big, strong eagle to serve or please the Lord. There is a “place” in God’s plan for “little birds.”

In the days ahead, the situation with the first deceived person was starting to resolve, and my Lord showed me, in dreams, that this person and I were to become friends. As I wondered during church, one day, how this could come about, my Holy Spirit whispered, “Choose to forget.” And so I had to obey. It was such a blessing to finally see something positive evolve in a spiritual realm, where there was still so much to pray about. And I was still praying for a permanent church home, so that was still on my mind too. One day, as I was reading Joy Dawson’s book “Intercession,” I came to the chapter, “Waiting on the Lord.” The Holy Spirit then spoke and said I didn’t wait too well. I wondered what He meant, and what I had done wrong this time. So, He led me to Ezekiel 3:22-27. I started to notice similarities between experiences of Ezekiel and mine. It stated, “the hand of the Lord was upon me.” I recalled the dream of the three lions, where the hand of the Holy Spirit was upon my forehead. It said, “then the spirit entered into me.” I thought of my Baptism of the Holy

Spirit and the two 40 day fasts, along with some other fasts, where I felt like the Holy Spirit was controlling me, and helping me. It said, “Go shut thyself within thine house.” I was told to hide myself in my bedroom. It said, “they shall put bands upon thee and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them.” This described how I was treated and ostracized socially. It said, “I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb.” I had been told to hold my peace, not to even speak. It said, “thou shalt not be a reprover; they are a rebellious house.” This certainly described the circle of people I had been introduced to. They certainly were not interested in, or respected, anything I could have said. It finally said, “But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth and thou shall say unto them, Thus, saith the Lord God.” This part was not true of my situation yet, and at the time, I wondered if it indicated a future mission for my Lord. This was something to ponder on.

Within 6 months, My Lord would speak again of what he wanted of me. I needed to be very attentive to every desire of the Lord for me. If He was going to use me finally in some way, I wanted to please Him and do well for Him. I needed to learn to “wait on the Lord.” That night, I repented for not waiting properly, and asked for forgiveness. I wanted another chance. I also asked for more wisdom, and understanding, of the Lord’s perfect will in all situations I would find myself in. I realized that the Lord was willing to trust me, and I

did not want to let Him down again. I prayed especially for the Lord to help me “hold my peace” in situations that hurt me. I prayed from Psalm 141:3, “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth. Keep the door of my lips.” Soon after, this would be tested, because I was going to be openly criticized and humiliated again. In the spirit, I had been shown how this relationship would be healed. In the natural, it was not so yet. I relied on what God had showed me, and trusted in Him, and said nothing. One day at work, I was reflecting about the different churches I had visited, and how I would finally find a church that would meet my (and my children’s) needs. Suddenly, the Lord spoke, “I’m not sending you anywhere to have your needs met. I’m sending you out to work for me!!” I was so shook up, I almost dropped what I had in my hands. This was a rebuke. I had only been thinking of my own needs, not those of my Lord. I had been selfish. I could feel myself immediately humbled before my Lord. I was underestimating what the Lord wanted to do with me, and I felt embarrassed. I had no right to limit Him. I understood the Valentine’s Day dream of 1996. The Holy Spirit, when He asked if I was ready to go forth to the altar, was really asking me to perform acts of sacrificial love for Him. I wanted to cry. I was being asked to sacrifice my own needs, and my own heart (my children), and focus only on the needs of others. Deep down, I knew in that dream that it was self-sacrifice that He wanted, which is what made me really hesitate, and miss my chance with Him. I would have to trust in the Lord, and He (not any particular

church) would help with the needs of my children. He was denying me anything in the visible world that I could look to, in order to fulfill my needs. Everything had to be based on faith in Him only.

It says in Psalms 119:30-32, "I have chosen the way of truth; Your judgments I have laid before me. I cling to your testimonies; O Lord, do not put me to shame! I will run the course of thy commandments, For you shall enlarge my heart." It also says in Isaiah 54:2. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitation: spare not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes..." So by May, 1998, I was praying for the Lord to enlarge my heart. I wanted to energetically "run the course" of the Lord's commandments. I wanted to prepare myself to receive more of my Lord. I wanted to observe my Lord's law, and will, with my whole heart. I asked how I could do this in a way most pleasing to Him, and He responded, "When you sow, sow for the needs of others, not yourself, so they can reap their harvest too." My Lord was so good to me. He immediately gave me three individuals to sow for: one was a visiting minister, one was a minister suffering religious persecution in Cuba, and one was another minister whose young child had a serious physical affliction, and needed healing. I was so excited. My Lord had promised me "miracle after miracle," if I would seek the living waters, as I had ever sought them before. I hoped that "sowing for others" was part of my growth in the spirit. I realized that the

miracles might not come from above, but from Jesus within me, as I allowed my Lord to enlarge my heart. I also started to pray that my Lord forgive the iniquity of any people who hurt me, and render mercy, not punishment. I also took into my heart the Lord's promise in Ezekiel 36: 9-11, where it described how He would till and sow me, and multiply the fruit of my tree, and the increase of my field. He promised to build the ruined places, and plant that was desolate. I recalled how He had promised to "fuse" me back together after I had been hurt before. Certainly in my spirit, there were desolate spots created by emotional harm. In His promise, He was going to replant those areas and multiply me, so I would have more than I had before. I was very comforted.

On May 24, 1998 and on June 21, 1998, there were two dreams linked to each other. In the first one, I was in a room with lots of junk and people everywhere, and I recalled a sermon where we were told to rid ourselves of "junk" that obstructs the anointing. I asked my Lord to help me remove all this. The second dream showed me in a large room where I was living and working. I had been cleaning out this large room, and now the clutter was gone. It had high ceilings, and one wall was a giant glass picture window overlooking the city. Directly in front of the window was a cathedral, which I was planning to decorate better than it had ever been before. Someone came in, and was pleased at the appearance of the room, as I was. I seemed to be at or near the top of a

tall building, because I could see the top of the roof of the cathedral. The large room represented my spirit and my life. The clutter was gone, and the only thing left in the room was a desk, where I was working on the plans for the cathedral. The ceiling was high and the room in the building was high up, because my aspirations were high. The large picture window gave me a vision of the city, with the cathedral (God's house) as a central focus. My desire was to bring beauty and glory to the house of God. The next morning, I found that the relationship with the first person was being healed. The Lord had performed a miracle, just as He promised.

The battle was not over, however, because within a week, the person affected by the second snake attacked me. Since the Word says to resist the devil and he will flee, that's what I did. Then, I quietly went about my business. I held my peace!!! The other person was irritated, but I didn't care. I had been obedient. I did wonder what was going to happen next though, because this person did not want to let go, until I was driven off somewhere. The next morning (June 28, 1998), I went to a service where there was a prophesy anonymously spoken out to the church, which seemed to apply to me. So it will be related as being spoken to me, because it was obviously for some specific person in the room. In it, the Lord stated that He had brought me out from Egypt into the Promised Land. The Lord was with me. Let my heart not be troubled. He would prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies. (He said this

twice. Again, once for each snake.) He would make me “fat.” I was to hide my face in prayer. He would anoint my hands as I went to other nations. People would be healed. I needed to stand by those over me. The next morning after that, I turned on the TV to watch Pastor Benny, who also had a message for someone in a battle. It came from Jeremiah 1:19, which said, “And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.” I accepted this for me. I was so deeply appreciative for these words of encouragement. It seemed like what ever I needed from My Lord, the answer was always right there for me.

There was still a lot of work to get me where I needed to be. I started to finally get the revelation why the Holy Spirit’s sleeves were rolled up, in my first dream of Him, as if He was getting ready to do some work. As He looked at me lovingly, He knew He had His work cut out for Him!!! It seemed He always had to straighten out my thinking. I was so dumb so many times. How could my level of understanding even come close to that of God’s? He was infinitely patient and longsuffering with me. It was just a week later, when I was musing about the prophesy from the previous week, that I missed the point again. I considered the comment about being delivered. Then I thought about the “snake pit” I seemed to be in. I said to Him, “I thought deliverance is *leaving* Egypt. What am I doing back in Egypt?” No answer, at first. Later on that day, He

responded, “You’re not *in* Egypt. You’re in the land of the *giants!!!*” I got the point this time. There were times I had the impression that the Holy Spirit thought I was a cross between some struggling saint and a social mishap. The situations went from one extreme to another, but He stuck with me through all of it. It was obvious that He loved me. I was (and still am) so grateful that God is love.



## Chapter 9

# *The Song of Jonah*

*“And should I not pity Nineveh, that  
great city ....who cannot discern between  
their right hand and their left hand?”  
(Jonah 4:11)*

In July, 1998, I attended a revival where a minister with a prophetic anointing approached me several times. It had been weighing on my heart for months why the Lord had told me that He was going to perform “miracle after miracle,” and all this time later, so little had apparently been done. I didn’t understand the Lord’s timing. I didn’t understand what was taking so long. Originally, I had assumed that He was going to fix everything that first night back in February, and after that everything would be fine. I had become weary and battle-fatigued. I was confused, and wondered what I had done wrong to make Him delay everything. I was not an “expert” yet on “waiting on the Lord,” and needed some advice. So, the first night I was approached and blessed with a message. I was again told that He knew I was troubled with many questions and I still needed to wait. He planned on building me “for many days hence,” and that He knew what I needed. And because He had a lot to say to me, He was going to come in the

still of the night, in a dream, and visit me. And then He would show me step by step and deal with me. He knew I was holding in a lot and would “feel to speak” with Him. He concluded, “Hold thy space, saith the Lord. Hold thy space.” Again, he said the message twice, as He had done before. He was telling me not to leave the situation I was in.

The next night, I was approached with a second message, which completely dumb-founded me, and contained hidden messages which, only through the help of the Holy Spirit, could I have ever deciphered. Only the main meaning will be covered here. It was spoken, “Am I not the Lord thy God who has come even this night to reassure thee as I’ve spoken to you in times past, saith the Lord? I say unto thee this night, satisfy your goings. I say unto thee, Hold not back. I say unto thee, go forth. And not look back, saith the Lord. I say unto thee, now go unto them which I’ve told thee up from last night. But I say unto thee, go another way, and as I told the prophet of Nineveh...To go one way and come back another. Did he not get in trouble? Surely, He got in trouble!! I say unto thee, because he disobeyed!! I say unto thee this night, go forth my daughter. I say, I will satisfy your goings, and thou will be stronger...And I shall abide and go forth before thee. And I shall even come unto thee in the stillness of the night.” I stood there frozen, for a moment. Even though it had been mentioned before this point in this book that the Jonah message was to be mine, this was for clarity and

continuity for the reader. *This* was actually the moment when the revelation had hit *me* for the first time, where I had been sent in the spiritual realm, and why, and what was going to happen next, based on either my obedience or disobedience. I had forgotten about the “Song of Tonah” until now. Here I was, thinking I was in some preparation phase, waiting on the Lord for an “assignment,” when actually I was right in the middle of one! I was stunned at the magnitude of what He was telling me on all levels. I was already in Nineveh, which was also a Jericho, and the outcome depended on me. He was putting a great responsibility on my shoulders.

Again, the third night came and there was an anonymous message for someone where “everything is going against you.” This sounded like it at least included me, so I listened. He said there was a situation in the bottom of my heart for many nights. He said it would be as nothing if I would turn it all over to Him. The message continued, “He would bring it all to a finish. Wait on Him. He will use you mighty. He will use you mighty. He will send you to the utter parts of the world...” Again, there was a phrase that was said two times, to let me know the message was for me. As He spoke, I also perceived the same fragrance of men’s cologne that had the powdery quality that I detected in Miami. This was also a confirmation. I was reflecting deeply on this, because I had been sensing that someday in the future, that I might be leaving home, and the children that were my heart and my burden. The Lord

had a plan for the Nineveh / Jericho that I was in, and it would be something I could barely fathom as possible.

Two nights later, I was approached again. It was spoken to me, “Am I not the Lord thy God who’s come even this night, my daughter, to say unto thee many things, my daughter. That I say unto thee...I’ve said in times past that the time is not at hand. But I say unto thee this night, my daughter, the time is approaching---close. That thy will go to fulfill that which thy heart desires to do. I say unto thee that thy purposes in thy heart many things that thy desires to do. But I say unto thee, the time is not at hand. I say unto thee, the time is close. My daughter, I say unto thee, hearken unto that which I say unto thee. For many days, that the time will become the need. Thy will know when the time comes, because I will even speak to thee. I will speak to thee in the stillness of the night. As thou begin to read my word, I will talk to thee. Then thy will know that I am the Lord thy God. Do not trouble thyself any longer about these things, my daughter. I say unto thee. I will give thee because I love thee. I desire to fulfill these things in your life. And I say unto thee, my daughter, am I not the Lord thy God who loves thee with all my heart and all my strength within me? Says the Lord, am I not the Lord thy God? I say unto thee, strengthen thyself now in prayer and in fasting. And I will show thee. I say unto thee, do these things and I will show thee that I am the Lord thy God. Who shall lead thee and who shall love thee, and shall carry thee...And all

things will be for thy good.” When this was spoken to me, I had just begun what ended up being another 40 day fast. I was about a week into it when this was spoken to me to pray and fast. I was fasting unto the Lord, because I ached for His presence and His touch, and He was indicating to me, now, that this was in line with what He wanted of me. Within another week, I dreamt of my wonderful Jesus walking quickly toward me!! He was *rushing* to be with me!! What a strong and beautiful stride He had! I loved Him so much!! Everything I had been through, every heartache and emotional injury that I had to bear was worth it, because it brought me closer to the One I loved. And he wasn’t just *coming* to me. He was *rushing* to be with me. It was *so* exciting! I was drawing nigh unto my Beloved, and He was drawing nigh unto me. In James 4:8, it promises, “Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” But, especially in Isaiah 58:10, it says, “Then you shalt call and the Lord shall answer. Thou shalt cry and He shall say, Here I am.” The one thing I wanted more than anything in life was happening to me. I don’t know how to put it into words. He had promised He would never leave or forsake me in my trials. He knew how weak and unskilled I was, and He was at my side to help me every step of the way. And over many months to come, He did as He said. He would wake me up in the middle of the night and have me read His word, and give me one revelation after another. He was teaching me.

And before this last fast was over, He showed me how He had brought me into different levels of truth. In my first fast, He showed me my authority over the demons out in the world. In the second, He showed me the “snakes” and the flesh around me in my environment, and that, if I stand firm in Him, I have authority over them too. In the last fast, He took me even deeper. He honestly, but gently, cut out things in myself that had to go, so I could be closer to and more sensitive to Him. At one point, I calculated how many days I had spent fasting in just the past year, and found it came to be equivalent to six months without food. I was awe-struck. That would have been impossible on my own power. I felt such a sense of worship that He did this through me, because it was His strength, not mine, that made this possible. My heart was so full of gratitude.

Within a month after the last fast, my Lord opened my eyes spiritually to what was going on around me in Nineveh. He had allowed me to experience many levels of pain, so that I would feel compassion for those around me that were going through trials also. I was very aware of the depth, and the type, of sins that created this atmosphere. But, it was the Lord’s will that I not only show compassion for those that were harmed, but also pity and pray for mercy for those that were guilty. This was asking much of me, because as I tried to help, I got hurt even more. But by now, I could not be moved. I loved my Lord, and everything was focused on obeying

Him. Problems increased around me, and even involved my family. It was at this point where the leading spirit, the demon of spiritual blindness, came and tried to attack me with a knife. I kept falling at its feet, but managed to keep out of its way, as it swung the knife at me. Wondering why I was so weak against it, it was made known to me that the “flesh” of others, in ignorance and self-deception, had given it permission to stay, which made the fight harder. And as the problems increased, prayer for strength increased, and I cried out to the Lord, and the fragrances and reassurances kept coming. It never occurred to me before that spiritual battle could be so bittersweet. Things were going to get worse, when I didn’t think they could.

By the end of October, 1998, I was coming to the end of yet another 40 day fast. As I prepared to go off to my regular church one evening, I stopped, and stood in my driveway for a moment, and just looked up. I thought about all the previous fast and prayer periods of the past few years. Each fast had brought an attack, either at some time early in the fast, or sometimes later, or sometimes through the whole thing. I thought about when I did somewhat well, and when I made mistakes. I was now on day 38, with 2 days to go. Then, I broke down in tears, saying “O Holy Spirit, please help me pass the test! Help me *make* it.” I continued to stand there for a few more moments and just cry, because it meant so much to me that I would pass any test that came. I felt so much depended on it. I felt so burdened.

Finally, I got in my car and went onto the evening service. As praise and worship started that night, I joined in. I placed my burdens at His feet and forgot about them, as I prayed. As usual, I just closed my eyes and went off in my own world, thinking about my Lord. When, suddenly, standing there, I could smell nothing but the intense fragrance of what seemed that of a thousand roses. The fragrance hit my brain, and filled my lungs with intoxicating strength. I was stunned. I cried out quietly, "Jesus," as I recognized His presence, and could gather any strength to speak. I was also confused at the strength of this visit, and so I prayed harder to please Him. The fragrance was not just a whiff, as it had been in the past. It was constant and overwhelming. I almost collapsed. Suddenly, Jesus grabbed both my wrists, lifting me up to Himself, and prevented my collapse. He was standing directly in front of me, and He was blowing this fragrant air directly into my lungs. It went straight to my brain. That's why I could not breathe anything else but that. He had my both hands in His. As my arms were raised up, my hands and legs went numb, and my hands suddenly curled up and froze into a claw-like shape--both of them. My lips went numb as well. I was like this for about 20-30 minutes. It lasted all the way through the end of praise and worship, through the greeting, the offering, church announcements and the beginning of the sermon. I knew I was conspicuous, standing there frozen like a scarecrow, but all I could do was submit. I was standing in this humble position before my Jesus who was

holding me up. After a little while, I was finally able to move my legs some, and I was able to sit down. I wanted to be alone with the Lord, which far surpassed anything going on around me. I was finally able to get up and go outside the church, and be alone with Him. A deep sense of peace had come over me. In a way, it felt like He was telling me I had passed any tests, and He was pleased. I was so happy. I felt He had come to bless and reward me. At the time, I didn't know it, but there were also going to be some events in the near future that were going to just about kill me. And Jesus was also letting me know how much He knew these things would hurt me. He led me to a journal article written by a medical doctor, describing the physical aspects of the crucifixion. In one of the illustrations, it showed a picture of the wrist after the nail had penetrated it. It caused a nerve and muscle spasm, and the hand would contract into a claw-like shape, just like my hands did. He was warning me about what was to come.

At first, I was aware of friends being hurt around me, and I shared their pain with them. Then I was attacked again. Then, someone I loved deeply was harmed, and died because of what was done to them. This was followed by another attack. I cried out in my weakness to the Lord, "When will all this be over?" Then, right after Christmas, the word of the Lord came to me, through a servant of the Lord, which I will record here, "I say unto thee my daughter, the burden and load has been so great at times that thou hast not seen which

way to turn, but I say unto thee... These things seemed to have pressed thee, and pressed thee against a wall. Thou seemest to see no way out, but I say unto thee, my daughter, am I not the Lord thy God, that has cometh even this night to reassure thee that I am the Lord thy God? Did I not promise thee? Have I not fulfilled these things? Have I not given thee the strengths that I promised thee, says the Lord? (He was talking about the fragrances, the visitations) Haven't these strengthenings gone forth, saith the Lord? Even I say unto thee, am I not the Lord thy God, who knows thee? I say unto thee many other things. It seems you can do nothing with it, but I say unto thee, trouble thyself no longer. I say unto thee. I come unto thee this night to give thee a word, a sure word that I'm with thee. I'm here this night to strengthen thee. I'm here to give thee a word's word, that thy should not stagger at my promises any longer, says the Lord. Thou shall *speake* it, and thou shall see it come to pass. I say unto thee, *speake* it. I say unto thee and it will come to pass. Thy will not stagger at my promises. And I say unto thee, thou *will* speak. Thy will *not* speak as a natural woman, but thou shall speak as a spiritual woman. I say unto thee, when I speak from this night forth, thy will not speak natural ways, but thy will speak spiritual ways. Am I not the Lord thy God who has come to reassure you that I love thee, and I've come to strengthen thee? I've come to encourage thee my daughter. Am I not the Lord thy God who has spoken, and surely I will bring it to pass, says the Lord."

The Lord had very high standards, but His love was even higher. Even though I had weakened under the pain and “staggered” some, He was also forgiving, and recognized what I had gone through, trying to be obedient to Him. My heart was breaking over the things that broke *His* heart as well. It seemed like I was on a spiritual battlefield, and everyone seemed to be dying. I had seen things in the spirit that I wished I had never seen. As I looked around, I saw missing or hurt people. No matter how much I wanted to comfort others, it was not enough. I realized how much I loved those around me, and how much I felt their pain. It really hurts when one sees others walk away from God, because they feel they “can’t take it anymore,” or when people actively rebel and reject God’s love, just to hurt Him, and to hurt those around them, who do care about the Lord. These souls were weighing on my heart. After ten months of telling me to hold my peace, He had finally given me permission to speak. I had gone so long not being allowed to speak, and I gotten to the point where things were so far beyond my understanding compared to His, that I didn’t really know what to say anymore. Then, one more grievous incident occurred that hurt me deeply. It was as if a knife went straight through my flesh, and my heart, to my bones. The battle had reached a climax, and everyone on both sides was losing. It was time. I handled it properly according to the word, then I went into my prayer closet. I remembered what He said about Queen Esther. I was His beautiful bride, His precious possession. I put on my crown. I put on my royal

garments, and went and stood before my King. I spoke what was on my heart. I spoke for what was right, and on behalf of all who had been hurt. I understood that mercy was available always to those who err, but I also requested mercy and deliverance for the victims of all situations, both known and unknown to me. It was time for the snakes to go. That night, my prayer was answered. Deliverance came to Nineveh. The walls of Jericho had fallen. And I would never turn back, but go forward, from here on. Because, my King walked before me.

## *Chapter 10*

# *Getting the Vision Back*

*“Where there is no vision, the people perish...”  
(Proverbs 29:18)*

It promises in Joel 2:28 , that in the last days the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh. The evidence of this in a person’s life would be the ability to prophesy, to dream dreams, to have visions. We are in the last days now, but where is this evidence of the Holy Spirit in our lives? According to the passages earlier in chapter 2, this evidence follows repentance and deliverance. We need to re-evaluate our own personal brand of repentance, and be sure that it sincerely lines up with God’s expectations. If we are sincere, and believe in God’s promises, then deliverance and the outpouring of the spirit should occur in our lives. It is our prophesied right and privilege. The Holy Spirit has come to restore what God had meant for us to have from the very beginning. Spiritual vision was our original birthright in the Garden of Eden.

When Adam was first created and walked with God in the garden in Genesis 3, he knew Him as Elohim (plural), the same Elohim (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) that created the heavens and earth, and Jehovah

(the existing One). It says God spoke to him in an audible voice and there is every reason to believe that Adam saw God with his eyes. At this time, Adam was pure and without sin, and Jesus states in the beatitudes in Matt 5:8, that the pure in heart shall see God. So Adam was in the daily presence of God. His relationship was personal and intimate. The nature of Elohim, and who Elohim was, was no mystery to him. The Lord (Jehovah, the Everlasting ONE) God (Elohim, plural) was his creator and Adam was the first child of God. So Adam had a vision and a revelation of who God (Elohim, the Trinity) was. But when he took his eyes off God and who God was, and looked upon the forbidden tree, he was expelled from the garden and from the perfect presence and revelation of God. Things didn't stop there, though, because there was a promise of a Savior.

But the presence of Elohim was revealed all through the Old Testament (all the way through Malachi, not just in the creation story) through occasional visions of a few, but mostly through the revealed word of God. People could no longer, as a rule, see God face to face, but could only imagine what God looked like through His Word and through His mighty acts and works, as in the parting of the Red Sea. When the ten commandments were given in Exodus 20, God said, "I am the Lord (Jehovah, the existing One) thy God (Elohim, plural), who brought you out of Egypt, and you should no other gods (plural, small caps) before me." The Trinity was

still asserting itself as the only one divinity that existed but was still pluralistic in nature. Here the people were told not to worship false gods, or those that did not exist, but were fabricated by man. In the second commandment, Elohim continues to state that “thou should not make any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is heaven above (which is only the true God or the angels) or that is in the earth beneath (created objects).” Here the people were told not to worship (1) created things that did exist in heaven or, earth, or (2) the true creator God but in a false way. We see one reason he added this is found in Exodus 32:8, where the Lord condemns the golden calf, which was being created by man while God was actually giving the commandments to Moses. “They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them, they have made them a molten calf and have worshipped it and sacrificed thereunto, and said these be thy gods O Israel, which have brought thee up out of Egypt.” The people were well aware that the powerful Elohim (plural) had delivered them out of Egypt, because they were eye witnesses, but they had sinned by daring to restrict an Almighty God, by turning God, the Everlasting ONE into one small calf, but keeping the pluralistic concept of Elohim, by saying the calf represented the “gods.” They limited the identity of God to what their minds could imagine, and what their hands could produce.

Once Adam fell, the visions of who God was became more and more limited to just a few. God visited

Abraham in Gen 17:1-3. In verse 1, God is Lord (Jehovah, the existing One) and in Verse 3, God is Elohim (the Trinity). In genesis 18, 3 men visit Abraham, and Abraham addresses them (all three) in the singular , “My Lord (Adonai).

Gideon (Judges 6:22-23) saw the angel of the Lord in verse 22 and then the angel is identified as the Lord Jehovah, the existing One in verse 23. Gideon spoke and said, “Alas, I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!” So Gideon was having a vision of who God was.

Abraham, Moses, Gideon, Isaiah, Obediah, Daniel, Ezechiel, and some others all had vision of the true nature of God. They saw with their own physical eyes. In the New Testament, after Jesus had left, Paul and Peter, and John on the isle of Patmos all had visions given them. But again, they were just a handful of men. And this was never God’s original intention when He made Adam. The intent was to be personal and intimate, as a parent would be with children. Any parent wants visual contact with their children. Part of man’s theology during both the Old and New Testament was to make God a mystery. Sin had already put a veil between man and God, but the leadership was making it worse. The leaders promoted God as a legalist, especially in the Old Testament. God was unapproachable, unless one went through the Pharasees. A man made wall was being set up, in addition to the one created by sin, which was already bad enough. And in the New Testament, many

went in two opposite directions, some claiming the legalistic approach to righteousness. Here God was mean and demanding. Others threw the law out the window, claimed they were only saved by grace, and became lax in their attitude to sin. Here God was easy and a “pushover.” Man started to break the second commandment by making God into man’s image and putting God into a shoebox. Limiting God to an image limits one’s vision of who He is.

But God was faithful in spite of man’s efforts to distance people from their God, and He promised in Num 12:6, “Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream.” God was faithful, because He knew and taught in Proverbs 29:18, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” And God provided the prophets in the Old Testament who spoke by the Holy Spirit, and the direct gift of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, to bring vision and revelation to God’s people, so that they would *not* perish. The Hebrew word for “vision” here really does mean a supernatural experience, not an intellectual concept. But much of history is sad, because many times there was *not* someone to receive and relay a vision to lead the people. It says in 1 Sam 3:1, “And the word of the Lord was precious in those days: there was no open vision.” In Isaiah, it states that “the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed.” What was being said was that when we have no vision, the meaning of

the words of God in scripture can be hidden from our understanding. Jeremiah 23:14 and 23:16 explains some of this sad history: that false prophets arose to speak false visions out of their own hearts, and not out of the mouth of God. This made things worse. People not only lacked vision of their own, but were being misled by false prophets. God became more and more of a mystery to the people of God, who suffered, because they *felt* that distance, and that alienation from God. As scripture states (Hosea 4:6), God's people were being destroyed for lack of knowledge. They did **not** have the vision and understanding to accompany the word of God that was written and read to them.

Then Jesus came. People got to see once again God face to face. Jesus came to not just teach us, but to show us who Elohim was, ie. who He was, and who the Father was, and who the Holy Spirit was. The Holy Spirit was sent to show who Jesus was even further, and to bring fresh revelation to a spiritually suffering, starving people. In the Old Testament, the pluralistic term, Elohim, was used constantly throughout, all the way through Malachi. But only in the New Testament, when Jesus came, could we really get a revelation, through Jesus, as to the nature of the three persons of Elohim. In fact, once the New Testament starts, the term Elohim is no longer used, because the separate identities of each person of the Trinity is used instead, and each one is mentioned by name. It was awesome. Man now could see Jesus face to face, just as Adam had, and see the

nature of Elohim reflected in the very nature of Jesus. This vision of God was different. Instead of terror striking the heart, as in Isaiah, as he exclaimed, “Oh woe is me, I am undone!!” (Isaiah 6:5), because he was in the presence of God, and he was aware of his sin, Jesus came to bring a different vision. In the Old Testament, a vision of God many times was experienced with fear and trembling, because one’s sin was exposed during the experience. Now with Jesus, the vision of God was returned to that of liberty, freedom, and boldness, as in the time of Adam, because our sins were forgiven, and covered by the love and blood of Jesus. The veil, the wall, was gone again between God and man. Jesus took it down. At least it was this way while Jesus was here, and for a few hundred years afterwards. Jesus was both the Word and the tangible vision. The early church, therefore, had both the vision and the nearness of God’s Word. The Word brought information, and the vision gave revelation *of* the Word.

In the 2000 years since Jesus came, and sent the Holy Spirit, a darkness set in again, as the church strayed once more against the second commandment, and again made God into an unapproachable God, one that is mysterious and not understandable. Blind faith was recommended, but this only ended in failure. God had torn down the veil; and the church, including the one today, put the veil back up. For centuries, there was nothing. At some time later, the Word was rediscovered. The condition of the church had regressed back to the

time of Samuel, where it was said, “and the word of God was precious in those days: there was no open vision.” What has yet to happen in the church today as a body, is to have the Word and the vision both back together again, as in the time of Adam, and in the time of Jesus.

God has given us His Word, and that is always with us, and will always be precious. But He also gave us Jesus, the true, physically tangible vision of who God is. What has happened to God’s people, being able to truly seek and see the face of God, and have a true vision of who God is, like Moses did, and Gideon did and Abraham did, as the early disciples did? God has always wanted us to have both the vision and the Word. He wanted us to have **all** of Him. Think of what it is like to read a letter from someone we love. Yes, it is precious. But oh, when we get to see them face to face!! It is so much better!!

It is the vision that instills the power, and the passionate devotion, and the true worship of God’s people. Vision is riveting. It is convicting. It focuses us. It makes us an eye witness to the truth. It drives us past what the world thinks is rational or logical, because then we are stepping way out in authority, because we know, that we know, that we know God, and His will. We become eye witnesses as the early prophets, and the disciples did. We are not going on second hand information, or the revelation of someone else. The revelation is ours!!! Once we have a God given vision

of who God is, we can fearlessly walk into hell, grab what is ours, and walk right back again. It is the fire of revival. It is the passion and the driving force, and once we have that, nothing will stop us. Because we know, that we know, that we know. We know, because we saw the vision with our own eyes.

We need to get our vision back. It is truly possible to seek God's face and find Him. We need to get a vision of who He is. It **is** possible to see Him face to face. Don't let anyone tell you, who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and walking upright before Him, that you are not holy enough. You are the righteousness of God!!! We must strive for that. I am telling you that when God tells us "to seek His face," it is **not** just a poetic expression. It is a real commandment. God's desire to be intimate with each of you is so strong, that if you earnestly sought, with your whole heart, a vision of who God really was, He would walk right into your bedroom, right into your home, and grab you, and lift you unto the presence and glory of Himself. God is more eager for us to have the vision than we are. Look at the history of God relating to His people throughout scripture. The Lord just showed up. He split the Red Sea. He was a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. He didn't wait to be sought after, or prayed down. I have heard people say, I wish Jesus would appear to me. I am telling you that it not only is possible to have a tangible vision of God, I am telling you that it is His commandment that you seek this in your life. Once you

become face to face with God, as Abraham did, as Gideon did, as Isaiah and Ezekiel did, as the disciples did, there will be **no** question who HE is, and YOU are, and what His will is for you in *any* situation. He wants to talk face to face with each one of us. Take Him out of the shoebox. Do not make Him into an object of limited size, like the golden calf. Don't turn a big, loving, all-powerful Elohim into a bunch of little, weak uncaring gods. Give Him the chance to *really* walk into your life, and take you past you wildest dreams. Let Him "blow your mind." The vision is *not meant for just a select few*. It never was. It is our birthright in Christ. He wants us to come that close to Him. Don't deny yourself something that is yours, because you have been taught not to believe, or you are afraid. Our spiritual vision was lost for a long time through sin. But Jesus died to have our rights restored. It is now time to open our hearts, and receive back all that Jesus died for.

## *Chapter 11*

# *Embracing the Cross*

*“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.” (Philippians 3:10)*

I once wondered what my greatest fear would be, if fear was allowed by the Spirit of God. I finally concluded that, on the day when I would stand before my Lord, in all His beauty and wonder and glory, I would have to reply to His question, “Where were you when I needed you most?” My greatest fear would be to look deep into the eyes of Love itself and say, “I was busy” or “I don’t know.” The disappointment that I would see on His face wouldn’t begin to compare with the crushing sense of brokenness felt, as I broke the heart of the One I loved. He would forgive me with His abundant mercy, and grant me entrance into heaven with the garment of salvation, but there would be no crown of glory for me to cast back at His feet in adoration, as others glorified and worshipped the Lord.

I am hungry for the presence of God like I've never been before. These are the end times and there is so little time left. There are so many still out there lost, as I come to church and pray, and worship, and find myself secure in His love. But what about the others still out there? What about their security? What do I have to offer others? What do I say? How do I approach people I do not know and, in a brief encounter (which may be all I have), tell them of things so eternal and significant, that they feel the conviction I feel. How do you put eternity into a few sentences? The vastness of God, and the smallness of myself, is such a contrast, I sometimes feel stunned, and do not know how to begin. All I know is that, if I do not completely abandon myself to God's will, I will be useless to Him. What I want to look at here is the giving up, the utter consecration, the utter surrender of oneself in deeper ways we have not known before. The Lord calls us to seek His face, to hear His voice, to come to Him, to give up everything and follow Him, to cast all our cares on Him, to pick up our crosses and follow Him. How do we do that? How many of us really give Jesus that kind of time every day?

To utterly give up your entire existence to Him means your entire day, all your needs, all your opinions, all your time. We live in the world which pulls at us. Even our church time pulls at us. We are in the assembly and worship one way. But there is the need to be alone with Him and worship Him in a way that is so personal, so exposed. Because it is this kind of worship

that He loves the most. He can mold us, and chastise us, and teach us, and love us all He wants to, without any interference from others. We can just lay before Him, and tell Him all our feelings, and He just sits and listens. We are the bride. He is the groom. He loves us. Our heart is our tabernacle, our temple, where we worship and love Him. We need to go inward to the Holy of Holies, and consecrate ourselves in a deeper way. We need to lay aside even spiritual needs. Trust that He will provide whatever is good. This means becoming so lost in the beautiful presence of God, that prayer requests are actually forgotten. Troubles disappear, and you can't remember them. Because all these things take away from being in His presence. You can't even put your own needs first as you pray, because it would seem like idol worship to put even your own spiritual wants before knowing Him. Abandonment means not even being *aware* of one's own spiritual needs. The believer even forgets who he is. He forgets his past, his present, his future hopes and dreams. Because all is idol worship, if it takes any time away at all from the focused, offering of our undivided love for Him.

Consecration to God involves self-denial, and will result in some temporal, personal suffering. But, it is only the part of you that is flesh that will experience this. At the same time, there will be a tremendous liberation in your spirit, if you will just submit to Him. There will be times when His love is so sweet and close, you can reach out and touch Him. There will be times when

these blessings are not so real. There will be times when you are placed on the cross. There will be times when you need to place yourself there. Because, in order to know true joy, we have to share His pain and be willing to be hurt, as our own selfish needs are denied. The cross is the death of your self, your flesh, who you are in this world. As you give up everything your “self” wants, and abandon your “self” to the will of God, you then become the living sacrifice, the broken and contrite heart that God requires. As long as we focus on ourselves, we cannot focus on Him. As long as we neglect to crucify the flesh, there is no union with God. Because perfect union with God is just God, with the God within us, and nothing else. Perfect union with God brings revelation, life and truth. As revelation comes, the personality of Jesus will start to become part of your personality and your life. You will find yourself saying and doing things the real you would not think of. This is because as you learn to loose yourself in Jesus more and more, you become more and more like Him. After a while, you really do forget who you are, and you stand amazed at what God is doing through you. You can take no credit, because it was not you who did it, and all you can do is fall down and worship Him.

Embracing the cross involves more than the private consecration of your heart to Jesus. It also means being sensitive to those around you who are suffering on their crosses. Because, it says in scripture that we are to see Jesus in our fellow man, and when they suffer, He

suffers. There is no way to love the Lord without loving our fellow man. If we cannot look at our hurting neighbor, and see Jesus hurting as well, then we are not true believers. Furthermore, embracing the cross also means being sensitive to our own present and future sins, because each one is a nail through His hands. We must learn to care more about what hurts Jesus, than what hurts ourselves. He wants to share His heart with us. Therefore, we must *not* ignore Him, nor be lukewarm. We must be passionate in our devotion to Him, as He is toward us.

On July 6, 1999, I had a dream about the Lord, which conveys this message better than I can. It is my burden to present it here. In the dream, I saw that it was close to the time of the crucifixion. I saw Him in his long robe, kneeling on the small path leading to Calvary, and I was trying different things to help Jesus feel comforted. He sweetly rejected my attempts. Helpless, I just stood there. He continued to kneel, facing Calvary. The path then changed into a modern highway, and Jesus became a lonely figure kneeling on the side of the road. He was taking on all our present day sins, as well as those we haven't committed yet. Suddenly, a large vehicle drove by at very great speed, and the wind from its passing almost knocked Jesus over. Other traffic flew by. He was now covered with dust, but he continued to kneel. It was Jesus, Himself, on the side of the road, someone any of us would want to meet in person. Yet no one stopped. They just flew by and ignored Him.

They didn't notice. Or, if they did notice, they didn't care. Jesus was treated with indifference, or apathy.

In the Book of Revelation (3:14-22), there is a message to the church in Laodicea, which also describes the church today: “ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. Knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see (the need for spiritual vision). As many as I love, I rebuke and chastise; be zealous, therefore, and repent.”

Jesus is kneeling on the side of *our* road. Will we stop and care, or will we not care, and just pass by? Are we lukewarm toward Him? There is not only Jesus Himself that is on our path, but our fellow man, in whom His spirit resides. Do we face our present and future sins with carelessness? Are we blind to our own faults? Do we assume that since we are “covered by the blood,” we don't need to try that hard to avoid sin? Do we take our time repenting, or even worse, do we deny, or justify our sins? If so, we are guilty of crucifying Him afresh. We need to learn to just stop and care. We need to crucify,

and purify, our own hearts and stop piercing His. We should not look away from evil and harm being done to others. This is spiritual cowardice. If we *allow* the evil, by refusing to stop and care and take action, then we are guilty too. And all we have done is thrown dust all over a lonely, suffering figure, kneeling by the side of the road. We must learn to forget ourselves and think only of Him.

Embrace the cross and you will embrace His heart. Become His possession. Climb on the cross, and share His heart, and *know* the love He has for you. Know the beauty of sacrificial love. Become a living sacrifice for Him. Don't do the artificial thing and just "think" about the sufferings of Christ as a historical event. This is not embracing the cross. Don't just *think* about how Jesus forgave others who hurt and tortured Him. *Forgive* others who hurt you. Don't just think on the meekness of Jesus, as He endured and submitted to judgment by others. Do the same as He did. Do we forget ourselves and help the oppressed, heal the brokenhearted, and feed the poor, as Jesus did? Do we raise those that are bowed down, or do we have time for them? Do we *endure* judgment by others when they come against us? Or do we assert ourselves, and insist we are right and have to win? Jesus already won the battle for you. Don't speak when you want to assert yourself and your opinions. Seek God's opinion. If you are asserting yourself, you're *not* carrying your cross. Hold your peace, and be still, and see God enter and speak to the situation for

you. Always submit to God's way in handling everything. We tend to want to think for ourselves and solve our own problems. And all we do is get in God's way of doing His best. God is the only One who knows all the truth about any situation.

Allow Him to possess you. The Lord is very jealous over anyone who has utterly abandoned himself to Him. He promises to come when they call out to Him. He hears the cry of the righteous and delivers them from all their troubles. It is the fire, the passion, of the cross that brings God closer to us. And it is our love that drives us to embrace the cross to begin with. It is a constant process of drawing closer, and closer, to the only One that matters.

Allow your spirit to become passive before the beauty and love of the Lord. And as He lifts you upward toward Himself, He will purify you. The more you passively submit to the Lord, the quicker you will draw to Him. His greatest passion is to love you. And, as you melt and become nothing before Him, the sweet fragrance of your living sacrifice will rise before His throne of grace and honor Him. As you annihilate, and forget, your "self," you will enter into the true worship, presence and glory of God.

## *Chapter 12*

# *The Final Promise*

*“...and lo, I am with you always,  
even to the end of the age.”  
(Matthew 28:20)*

For the past two years, there has been a special “something” in my kitchen that has been the most tangible evidence that the Lord is a “God at hand, ...and not a God afar off.” (Jeremiah 23:23) It is collecting dust, but I will not remove it, because it is a precious gift. It is a comfort every time I look at it. And I want to share the experience, and the simple story behind it to give hope and strength to others.

In the spring of 1998, around Valentine’s Day, Jacinda came home with a pretty pink rose someone at school had given her. I didn’t have any spare vases, so we unwrapped an empty soft drink bottle, and put the rose in it along, with just a little water. As I have a cluttered kitchen, we looked for a place to put it. I had a picture of Jesus I had saved from a relative’s funeral. We placed the rose along side of the picture, and thought it would brighten up the kitchen for at least most of the

week, since roses don't last very long. Usually, all the petals fall off and they end up in the trash. Time passed, and everyone in the house forgot about it. Jacinda was busy in school, and I was busy at work. I was doing the minimum to keep the kitchen straight. (The others didn't pay much attention to anything in the kitchen, except the refrigerator.) Several months went by, and one Saturday morning there, we all were in the kitchen, and we actually noticed the rose still sitting there. It was completely intact. Not one petal or leaf had fallen off. We were all fascinated with it. My son, Eric, was the first one to notice the verse at the bottom of the picture from John 11:25, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even if he die, shall live." We all concluded that even though the rose was supposed to be dead, it was perfectly preserved, and had the appearance of a live flower. The only difference was that it had turned a yellow color. To us, even though the rose died, it lived. To us, our Lord had worked a little miracle, just to let us know He was around. After that, it was just a blessing to come into the kitchen and look at the rose that "didn't die." It has now been two years. It still has all its petals and leaves and the original water from two years ago. The water never evaporated. Once a year, I test the stem of the rose. It is still moist and flexible. It should be dry as a bone. So, water is still going up the stem, nurturing the leaves and petals and keeping them from falling off. It makes me so happy when I come into my kitchen each morning and I look up at my rose, which has now been put in a special, safe place on a

cabinet. It is a constant reminder of my “Rose of Sharon” who came to stay in my home, to bless and inspire everyone who comes in.

Trust God and love Him...Through all my trials, my Lord never left me once. He promised He would be with me always, and He is keeping His promise. This promise is for all that believe in Him. I do not worry about what I see in the visible world, because I know in the invisible, there is a beautiful Lion of Judah who protects me, and provides for me. I am His beautiful bride, His precious possession. I do not fear any cross, because it is there that I find His love the greatest. I would embrace a thousand crosses just for Him, because I know it would be like casting a thousand roses at His feet. And these would be roses that would never die!



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