

WINTER/SPRING 2018

ignite

A Publication of New Hope Ministries

YOU ARE NOT
ALONE

Psalm 34: 17-20 NLT

The Lord hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles.

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

The righteous person faces many troubles, but the Lord comes to the rescue each time.

For the Lord protects the bones of the righteous; not one of them is broken!

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Do you have a testimony or article you'd like to submit for consideration in future issues of the NHM Magazine? Email your draft to frontdesk@newhopenaples.com

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A Word From Pastor Grant

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
John 14:6

I'm excited about this issue of *Ignite* magazine and the amazing testimonies from members of our *New Hope Ministries* family. You'll be encouraged as you read about the worldly tribulations, troubles, and pressures that these Christians have walked through victoriously through their personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the only way of access into the presence of God. Jesus came from the Father; He was and is the only begotten Son of God. He was born with no sin in Him, and chose to live a sinless life of perfect obedience unto His Father's will. Jesus is the only man who proved Himself worthy to be called the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. Jesus never knew any sin, yet He became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

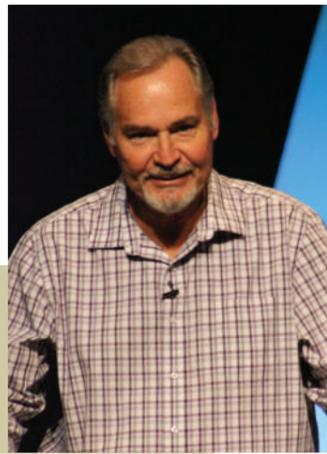
Jesus died *with* our sin and *for* our sin, according to God's perfect plan of redemption, and then on the third day His heavenly Father raised Him from the

dead. Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God in all honor, glory and power; whosoever shall call upon His name shall be saved.

There is only one way to receive forgiveness of sins and become a child of God, and that is to believe in Jesus Christ, but each of us has our own personal journey of faith through this present world. We each have our personal journey of life. Jesus said in John 16:33, "*In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!*"

The Greek word that is translated "tribulation" literally means *pressure*; however, the Greek word translated "good cheer" literally means *to have courage*. Praise God, we can meet all the opposition and pressures of this present world without fear because Jesus has overcome the world for us.

Ye are of God, little children and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.
I John 4:4



Grant Thigpen is the founder and senior pastor of *New Hope Ministries*. He and Susan were married in 1972, and they have one son, Stephen. Grant graduated from Rhema Bible Training Center in 1980, and *New Hope Ministries* began, as a home Bible study, in 1982. He founded the New Hope School of Ministries in 1990 from which many pastors, teachers, and ministries have emerged. Pastor Grant focuses on the development of the Christian in practical application of living by faith. His desire is to see the body of Christ develop into its full potential so that the world will see the glory of God manifested through a victorious church.

EASTER
WEEKEND @ NEW HOPE

SEDER DINNER* FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 6:00PM
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SUNDAY SERVICES, APRIL 1, 6:30AM/9:00AM/11:00AM

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Clothed With Joy

by Faye Sentovich

Living day after day with an addict pretty much forces you to become an enabler. After all, someone has to keep the roof over your head, food on the table, and the utilities paid. The addict continues to be irresponsible, yet reaps the benefits of someone else being responsible. I learned this the hard way: married to an addict for fifteen years.

I was a naive, twenty-six year old when I met Jeff through friends at church. He was a preacher's kid, fresh out of a Christian drug rehab program. Having had absolutely no experience with drugs or anyone with an addiction, I assumed he was cured. Although I was counseled not to pursue this relationship, I moved forward anyway. As the wedding day approached, God gave me warning signs, but in my stubbornness and tenacity I proceeded, ignoring wise counsel and God's prompting.

Within two weeks of our wedding, I, who had *never* had a swallow of alcohol, and had *never* touched any kind of illegal substance or drug, discovered I was married to a full-blown cocaine addict and alcoholic. As with most addicts, Jeff was a master at manipulation, and accomplished at making up elaborate stories to cover his tracks. How could he look me in the eyes and swear he was telling the truth?

Always chasing a dream and promising he would change, caused us to make many poor decisions. We had moved to Georgia in 1986, shortly after getting married, but after almost a year, we had yet to find a church that was right for us. Prior to moving, I had attended church every week of my life, unless I was sick. I desperately missed singing and worshipping, and had been asking God to show me what church to attend. In 1987 we moved to Naples, but to do so I had to give up a job that I *really* liked. However, in His grace and mercy, the Lord provided me with an even better job, that I absolutely *loved*, and we began attending *New Hope Ministries*. I joined the choir and was soon asked to be part of the praise team. Worship was my life preserver, my shelter from the storm of life that raged all around me. No matter what was going on at home, when I was in God's presence, the weight lifted and I was free.

Jeff, in his addiction, always blamed others for his circumstances. No matter the problem, it was always someone else's fault. Most often I was the one to blame. If he blew his entire paycheck on Friday night, he would say it was my fault, because I made it too miserable for him to be at home. If he came home drunk

or high and I confronted him, he would scream and yell at me until I backed off. If I went to bed and ignored him when he came home drunk or high, he would wake me to tell me that he'd done so much cocaine he was afraid he'd die in his sleep. Of course, he would promptly pass out and I would lie awake intermittently checking to see if he was still breathing.

I did not believe that divorce was an option for us. The marriage had been a very poor choice, but I felt that I could not give up on Jeff. Everyone else in his life thought he was a lost cause, and I didn't want to be yet another. For more than a decade I prayed, I fasted, and I believed God would set Jeff free.

In 1999 things went from bad to dangerous, and I knew it was no longer safe for me to stay. I mentioned to a friend that I was looking for a new job and she suggested I apply with her company to become a flight attendant. Are you kidding? I'd wanted to do that since I was a teenager! I applied, was accepted, trained and became a flight attendant. Jeff and I were both excited about the prospect of being able to travel, and I was happy that it would keep me away from home *a lot*. I was based in Washington, D.C., and was able to stay with my cousin who lives just outside the city. The job of my dreams was *horrible*. I got air sick on the first flight I worked, and every time the phone rang with a flight assignment, I had an anxiety attack. I prayed, "How can this be?! Lord, why did you open the door for this if I'm going to be even more miserable than being at home?" A few days later the why became very clear.

On Sunday afternoon, a week after my first flight, I called home and a *madman* answered the phone. Jeff screamed at me, threw the phone against the wall, and hung up on me. I was thousands of miles away, yet I was still to blame for whatever had driven him to get high this time. I called repeatedly and each time he would yell at me, then hang up. On the final call Jeff said, "I may as well hang myself." When I told him not to say things like that, he replied, "Too late, it's already in motion." He had threatened suicide many times before, but when he uttered those words, I *knew* he was serious. I started praying. I called Sherry Raulerson and she went to our house and prayed with him. He assured her that he was fine, so she went to church and asked the choir to pray for him.

I continued to call, but Jeff stopped answering the phone. I called my neighbors who told me the cars were there, but the house was quiet and dark. I gave them permission to call the sheriff to go check on him.

An hour passed before I tried to call the neighbor again. No answer. I called Sherry. No answer. I knew something was very wrong. More time passed. My cousin and her husband arrived home and as I finished telling them what had been happening, I received a call from a Collier County Sheriff's deputy. After asking me a barrage of questions, I finally had to ask, "Did you find him?" "Yes," he said. Silence filled the room. "Is he OK?" "No, ma'am. He is deceased. You need to come home."

The next two weeks were spent making arrangements, clearing out a house, giving up my beloved pets, and trying to understand why. What had driven Jeff to such despair? God gave me peace beyond any human comprehension. I realized that Jeff was finally free. Truly free. No longer trapped by the torment that had raged inside of his body and mind.

I was free too. What a mixture of relief and *guilt*. How could I say that his death had given me freedom? How selfish and wrong must I be to even allow such a thought? This certainly was *not* how I had expected God to answer fifteen years of prayers for his freedom from addiction. I cannot give an answer as to *why* God allowed this, but I do know that He did not want me to live with guilt and shame for Jeff's choices, whether in life or in death.

Within three months I quit the flight attendant job (it never got any better for me) and moved back to Naples. God is so merciful and forgiving. He provides for us emotionally as well as physically. After so many years in an emotionally abusive relationship, I no longer knew who Faye was. I knew who I had become in order to cope and keep my sanity, but where was the happy, hopeful girl who had been full of dreams?

God knew it would take time for me to see myself as He does and to learn that joy, unlike happiness, is not dependent on my circumstances. He has always been faithful and His love has never failed me. He has turned my mourning into dancing and clothed me with joy (see Psalm 30:11 NLT).

Five years later, Mitch Sentovich, a man I had known for nearly twenty years, returned to NHM after attending another church for ten years. Throughout those twenty years, I had watched him maintain his walk with the Lord and be consistent in his faith. I

knew this was a man I could trust. A man who would be the spiritual leader in his home; a great father, even to his former step sons; generous, compassionate, faithful, kindhearted yet wounded. We began to spend more and more time together and began dating in the spring of 2007. We dated three years before he was ready to propose marriage.

One day Mitch e-mailed me a photo of an engagement ring. No message, just the photo. I was at work and when I looked at the photo, I called my co-worker over. She looked at it and said, "What does this mean?" I said, "I have no idea." I began laughing so hard that I cried, and nearly fell out of my chair. The whole office was asking me questions, but I had no answers. I replied to his e-mail saying:

And.....????

Coming soon to a finger near you!

You've got to be the most romantic guy I know.

It's beautiful. Do you need to know my size?

He responded: I SENT THAT BY MISTAKE

One week later, Mitch took me out for dinner. The waiter offered me a small, covered china bowl. Inside was a ring, nestled in a red rose. Mitch *officially* proposed and told me he had been to visit my parents that day to ask for their blessing. We were married eleven days later, on the balcony of a beachfront hotel suite, just before sunset.

Mitch and I both know that God brought us together. We strengthen each other's weakness and compliment each other's strengths. I, who was childless, was given the opportunity to help Mitch raise his son, Jared, now a college freshman. In addition to volunteering at New Hope, we also partner with and support three amazing ministries: Pastor Wilmer Godoy in Honduras, BigLife Ministries, based here in Naples, and Child Evangelism Fellowship.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up.

But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

Ecclesiastes 4: 9-10 (NIV)

Faye Sentovich has been a worship leader since she was twelve years old. She is a 1992 graduate of the New Hope School of Ministries, and has held leadership roles in the women's ministry, youth, and children's departments. Faye has been the editor, typographer, and design/production coordinator of Ignite since January, 2014.



Keep His Word in Your Heart

by Jesse Barrett

In August of 2012, my grandmother, Joyce Sells (Mina as I called her), was given news from her doctor that would change her world and point of view from that moment on: she had dementia. The news was devastating to her; she couldn't understand how anyone would think she could have dementia.

I was very close with my grandmother; I lived with her before and after she received the diagnosis. Being around her made me never lose my faith in God. Even in the latter years of dementia, when she couldn't remember how to turn on the TV, she always knew the Bible. She would never stop talking about how great our God is, and how He would still do great things in her life, as well as in the lives of her children and grandchildren. The Bible says in Isaiah that God's Word will never return void, but it will prosper and produce fruit. My grandmother was a true testament to that verse.

Pastor Grant once said, "Those who hide God's Word in their hearts and keep it will be blessed, even in the midst of tribulation." That was something Mina believed. I remember she would always wake up early in the morning and have what she called "an appointment with the King." She would pray, read her Bible, journal about what the Lord was doing in her life, and what her heart's desires were. Recently, I found one of her devotionals written shortly after the diagnosis of dementia. In it she said, "God's promise to me, due to my new circumstances, is that He is rejoicing over me. His power, glory and love will never fail."

From 2012 to 2017 my grandmother declined rapidly. She came close to burning the house down, and

on several separate occasions almost flooded it. Watching her mental faculties decline so much in a short amount of time was difficult for me. In May of 2017, she took up a new residence at a nursing home here in Naples. Most people would find that discouraging, but not Mina. She was excited when she saw there was a piano in the dining hall, and loved to go sit and play hymns and worship songs she had learned as a child. She played the songs from memory, and would correct us if we sang the wrong lyrics. To me, this was Mina's way of throwing the dementia back in the devil's face. Dementia might prevent her from remembering how to do simple, everyday things, but this attack could never take what was most precious to her: the memory of her Lord, Jesus Christ.

Mina passed away on October 16, 2017. Later, Pastor Grant told me, "I want to be sad for her passing, but I just can't. I know she's dancing in heaven, and enjoying being in the presence of her Lord and Savior."

I believe James 1:12 sums up Mina's experience here on Earth: *God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him* (NLT).

This is my *authentic disclosure*.

Jesse Barrett has attended *New Hope Ministries* for the majority of his life. He has been on staff since 2013, and was named NHM's Media Director in 2015. Jesse oversees all print and digital media, including the church Facebook page, website and *Ignite* magazine. He and his wife, Abbi, will graduate from the New Hope School of Ministries in May.



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THE
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Hosted by Danielle Justice and Jesse Barrett. Each week they will discuss Pastor Grant's recent message, play some games and just have fun. Of course, while enjoying a cup of coffee.

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Survivor's Guilt

by Dawn Matthews

When I was in my forties, I read a book that spoke about survivor's guilt. I had never heard the term, although I recognized it as something I had suffered with for most of my life. Survivor's guilt is defined as what one feels after surviving something tragic, which another person did not survive. Kind of like the recent Las Vegas shootings.

I was only twelve when my fifteen-year-old sister, Denise, and I missed our school bus and were walking to school on a country road that had no sidewalks. It had been raining, and the shoulder was muddy, so we were walking in the road against traffic. Denise was wearing a new pair of shoes she had just bought with her very first paycheck. I was teasing her about how her shoes might get muddy if a car came and we had to get out of the road. She said "I'll just jump to the other side."

I asked, "Well, what if there are cars coming both ways?"

"Then I'll just jump in the middle."

Those were the last words my sister ever spoke. The next thing I knew, books were flying and when I looked up, Denise was lying across the bumper of a car that was still going down the road. It turned out that a teacher from my school was also running late that morning. She was in a hurry and was passing another car when she hit my sister.

That day changed my life. For years I had nightmares, and would break out in a terrible skin rash whenever I heard a car horn or siren. It took a long time before I was able to recall that the teacher had honked her horn, which gave Denise time to push me out of the way, but caused her to slip.

We weren't raised in the church; therefore, my mother didn't know how to give me the spiritual help I needed. Instead, she had me put on tranquilizers.

I spent years feeling guilty about missing the bus, and for teasing Denise about her shoes. I even felt guilty if I had fun on my birthday. You see, I was born on Denise's third birthday, so it was a special day that we had always shared. I felt it should have been me who died, instead of her. She was the pretty one, the popular one, the one who would have done something wonderful with her life, while I was making all the wrong decisions in mine. I chose the wrong relationships, drugs, and alcohol. I did not deserve to be alive. However, someone thought that I did.

No matter how hard I tried to destroy my life, He didn't let me. He was always there to protect me even when I didn't know Him. I'm talking about God! I met Him almost twenty years ago, and my life began to change. First went the drugs, then the bad relation-

ships. (I now have a wonderful husband.) Then the cigarettes and alcohol went. I was finally able to realize that I have nothing to feel guilty about. I had been a twelve-year-old little girl, walking to school, goofing around with my sister, when the accident occurred.

I'm not going to lie, this is something I still have a hard time talking about. Some of my good friends have never heard my story, and while I was writing this I cried a lot. This is the first time I have ever written it down. But, when I was asked to share my story, I knew I had to. It's hard, it's painful, and it's embarrassing. However, sharing my story has helped me heal and I'm hoping it will help others who are suffering from survivor's guilt before they go down that same destructive path on which I lived too long. Forty years is a long time to beat yourself up over anything.

I have no way of knowing if my sister would have made good decisions in her life, but it is something I no longer question. I am a survivor! I am not guilty!

As I was writing my testimony, the Serenity Prayer kept coming to mind: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen!



Dawn Matthews has been attending *New Hope Ministries* for five years and is currently attending the New Hope School of Ministries. She is the proud grandmother of three, and great-grandmother to a new baby girl. Dawn teaches the three and four year old girls during the Wednesday evening service.

Your journey from mourning to joy.

GRIEF SHARE

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Seventeen Ways to Pray for Your Husband

As wives, perhaps one of the most important things we have the opportunity to do is to pray for our husbands. No one knows them as closely as we do, and this offers a unique chance to come before the Lord and ask Him to guide and protect them in a powerful way.

Still, sometimes it's difficult to know where to start or how to focus our prayers, and so, following is a list of seventeen prayer topics. You can pray through the whole list at once, or pray for specific aspects on different days of the week or month. Even if your husband does not yet know the Lord, you can pray these prayers for him, trusting that the Lord hears you and He loves your husband even more than you do.

1. Show him Your great love (Jeremiah 29:11)

Father, I pray that my husband will be motivated and excited to spend time with You, praying and reading the Bible. Give him a discerning heart to know Your great love for him and the great plans You have for him and our family. Plans for good and not for disaster, to give him a future and a hope.

2. Give him godly friends (Hebrews 10:24)

Lord, surround my husband with close friends who are also pursuing Christ, that they may think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.

3. Let him find favor (Psalm 90:17)

Father, may your favor be upon my husband. Show him your approval and make his efforts successful. Increase his favor with his employer, friends, co-workers, and acquaintances.

4. Give him satisfaction in his work (Ecclesiastes 2:24)

Lord, give my husband satisfaction in his work and breakthrough any difficult situations at his place of employment.

5. Protect him (Jude 1:24, 2 Cor. 10:5, 1 Cor. 2:16)

Lord, give my husband the mind of Christ and Godly wisdom. Help him to take captive every thought not in obedience to Your Word, protect him from pride and rebellion and teach him to obey Christ.

6. Let him confess and repent from his sin (1 John 1:9)

Father, help my husband to recognize sin in his life, and be quick to confess, repent and turn away from that sin.

7. Help him lead our family well (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Lord, help my husband to carry the mantle of leadership in our family with joy, grace, and wisdom. Help him trust in You with all his heart, not depending on his own understanding, but seeking You in all he does, so he will know what path our family should take.

8. Give him love for our children (1 John 3:1)

Lord, show my husband the specific needs of every child in our home, and enable him to always respond to those needs with love and affection.

9. Provide for him (Philippians 4:19)

Father, I ask you to provide for my husband in every area and circumstance of his life.

10. Help him share the gospel (Mark 16:15)

Lord, give my husband the courage and opportunity to share the gospel lovingly with unbelieving friends and family members.

11. Increase his desire to pray (James 5:16)

Lord, Your Word teaches us how to pray, and tells us the earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. Increase my husband's desire to spend time in prayer. Teach him to hear Your voice.

12. Increase intimacy between us (Song of Songs)

Father, I pray that You would increase the intimacy between me and my husband and that we would both rejoice in a deeper intimacy together. Help us to seek out opportunities to spend uninterrupted time together.

13. Let him see jewels (Proverbs 31:10-31)

Father, help my husband to see me, through eyes of love, attraction, and affection, more precious than rubies.

14. Give us unity (Ephesians 4:2)

Lord, give us unity in decisions and choices that have to be made. Enable us to see eye-to-eye in difficult circumstances. Help us to live together in perfect unity by being humble, gentle and patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of Your love. Help us to make every effort to be united in the Spirit. Bind us together with peace.

15. Increase our love (1 Thessalonians 3:12)

Lord, increase my husband's love for me, and my love for my husband. As our love for one another grows, let it overflow to those around us.

16. Let him feel safe (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Father, show me what I can do to make my husband feel safe and encouraged in my presence. Let my words lift him up, never tear him down. Help me to always encourage and be a support to him.

17. Show him Your will for his life (Romans 12:2)

Lord, open the eyes of my husband's heart to understand Your Word, so that he won't be conformed to this world, but will be transformed by the renewing of his mind, so he may know Your good, acceptable and perfect will for his life. Show me how I may help him fulfill his calling in the Kingdom of God.

Forgotten?

by Charissa McGraw

He sees me. Those three words don't sound like much, but they are significant because, sometimes I feel as if I am not seen. I feel forgotten.

David says it well in Psalm 31:12 (my paraphrase) *I'm forgotten like a dead man, my soul is broken.* Forgotten...such a strange word. It means to cease or fail to remember. To neglect unintentionally. The very essence of the word is unintentional, but how many times do we take being forgotten as a personal offense? All the time. Like someone chose to forget you or me. But that's not even what the word means.

At times I have cried out in frustration, "LORD! Why have you forgotten me?" But that is physically impossible. How could any father forget the child He loves? I mean seriously? How could our Father forget a child He loves?

He couldn't. He wouldn't. And any seeming neglect isn't because He doesn't care. It's because He's a good Father. A good Father who won't spoil His children with over indulgence. A good Father who sees the needs and meets them before we can ask. A good Father is what He is.

Psalm 33:18-21: *Behold the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine. Our soul waiteth for the Lord: He is our help and our shield. For our hearts shall rejoice in him because we have trusted in his holy name.*

Because His eye is on me...I know I can't be forgotten.



At the age of eighteen, Charissa McGraw became a full-time missionary with Child Evangelism Fellowship in the Orlando area. She returned to Naples in 2015, and in 2017 felt led by the Holy Spirit to resign from CEF. She is a 2017 graduate of the New Hope School of Ministries. Charissa has a passion to encourage others in their Christian faith and relationship with the Lord.

**SPRING
FORWARD
SUNDAY, MARCH 11**

STAFF Spotlight

Kion Brooks, our church administrator since 2015, brought to *New Hope Ministries* the experience he gained working in human resources at the Marco Island Marriott, and later as the Human Resources Manager for the Waldorf-Astoria in Naples.

As *New Hope's* administrator, Kion is responsible for the stewardship of church finances, management of our facilities and leadership of our incredible church staff, all directed toward *New Hope's* mission statement: *Equipping people to serve God, family, church, community and the world.* Kion desires to see each person focus intentionally on trusting God and using their individual gifts to build the Kingdom of God here on earth. As we trust God with all our hearts, and not lean on our own understanding, as we acknowledge Him in all our ways He will direct our path (see Proverbs 3:5-6).

Kion attended college in the Bahamas, studying hotel management. Hurricanes that travel through the Bahama Islands do not always have a happy ending, but for Kion, one particular hurricane blew in a surprise. Forced to evacuate to the school restaurant with the wind and rain blowing around them, Kion met another hotel management student, Asha. The two of them sat and talked for hours and quickly became friends. Romance blossomed and, in 2008 they married. They now have a nine-year-old daughter, Kayla, and a four-year-old son, Benjamin (Benji).

Kion was born and raised in San Fernando, Trinidad. He comes from a musical family and has always been fascinated by the drums. When attending church as a toddler, his mother would turn a chair around in front of him and hand him two pencils. He would watch the drummer and copy what he saw. By the time he was five or six years old, he was playing drums in the church orchestra. In the 1980s Kion traveled throughout the US and Canada with his parents, who were members of a singing group called The Revival Voices.

In addition to being on staff, Kion volunteers as a drummer with the NHM band. Music is, and always has been, an integral part of his life. He uses music when he needs to retreat, recharge, or renew, and always wants to use the gift he's been given in ways that honor God.





Can you find

a nest___, four feathers___, a woodpecker___, two black birds___, six sunflower seed shells___, three kernels of corn___, four bird houses___, four sticks___, a blue snake___, two butterflies___, a green snake___, a pink snake___, two sunflowers___, a mushroom___, two acorns___, and three eggs___?



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God Is Moving in India

by Katie Collins

March 26, 2017, was a day I'll never forget. If you had asked me prior to that day if I'd ever go to India, I would've laughed at you. It's not that I hadn't ever thought about the people or cared about their circumstances, but they were *those* people, *over there*, and I felt that all I could do was pray for them.

The day started out as a pretty normal Sunday; I went to church and taught my class of two-year-old children. I was thankful for a great message from Pastor Grant and a powerful worship service, but I was worn down and tired from dealing with some personal stresses in my life. In my car on the way home, I felt the Lord's presence with me, so I poured out my heart to Him. I asked for His will to be done in those stressful situations and in my life. The Lord answered my prayer almost immediately. He spoke to my heart that I should work with children and orphans. I didn't know where God wanted me to go, so I continued to pray, and over the next few days the Lord kept showing me India. At first I thought I must have misunderstood, but once I accepted the idea in my heart He transformed my mind and heart about India. He gave me an overwhelming love for the people there.

We serve an awesome God. He is mighty and powerful, loving and gentle. He cares about the smallest details of our lives, and when we ask Him to guide us, His plans are so much better than ours. Using people in my life whom I trust the most, the Lord guided me to Rahab's Rope, the awesome organization I now work with.

Rahab's Rope works with women and children who are at risk or have been trafficked into the sex trade. The women and children we serve have been through some of the worst conditions imaginable, yet they are loving, amazing human beings. I'm so thankful to know them and help them by giving love, care, compassion, and support. Our organization has three areas of ministry: prevention (education and awareness programs), direct intervention (programs that rescue, educate and rehabilitate), and restoration (providing emotional, physical and spiritual care). Our vision is to see lives transformed. Our mission is to give hope and opportunity.

Three short months after my prayer, I flew to India. I stayed for five months and my life has been totally changed. God revealed to me that the women I now help are the orphans, as most of them have no home to return to. I experienced so many things while I was there, it would be impossible to share them all in this article. What you need to know the most is: God is moving in India.



In India, there's a lot of persecution against anyone who isn't Hindu; the current leadership wants everyone to be Hindu by 2020. Of course, this cannot happen, but they are trying. They've kicked out hundreds of Christian non-government organizations (NGOs) over the last five years and I have to be very careful not to say what I'm doing there. Anyone who attempts to convert someone will be sent to jail. According to my visa, I'm a tourist; there are words such as *volunteer* and *NGO* that we are *never* to use in India, for our own protection and for the people we help.

I am so excited to return to India from February through November of 2018, to share the love of Jesus with the people and be a voice to the voiceless. Your thoughts, prayers and financial support are an integral part of my mission and the impact we will have on the women and children we serve. I cannot thank you enough for partnering with me in prayer and, should you choose to give financial support, an account has been set up at gofundme.com/katiesmissiontoindia.

I would love to share more of what we are doing in India, but due to the sensitive nature of the ministry, I cannot go into details in print. However, if you'd like more information, please contact me via email at grammaslilbob@hotmail.com and I would be happy to share more about the ministry.

Katie Collins has attended *New Hope Ministries* since Pastor Grant dedicated her as a baby. From 2009 to 2017 Katie taught the 11:00am two-year-old class. From 2011 to 2012, she served in the youth group and from 2012 to 2015, she volunteered as the 9:00am coordinator for children's classes. When she heard God's call to the mission field, Katie gave up her job with the Collier County Supervisor of Elections, where she had worked for nearly ten years.



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Night to Shine 2018

by Lori Stresen-Reuter

I am a Tim Tebow fan. I love me some Tim Tebow! This spring, my husband, Steve, surprised me with Mets tickets to go see Tim play baseball. He got tickets right beside the dugout, so, it was me, a glass wall, and Tim Tebow. Steve watched the game and I watched Tim. I'm sure Tim was happy that the glass wall was between us.

After posting on Facebook about my exciting day, a friend gently told me that maybe I should be more considerate of my husband when posting about my affection for Tim. I told her, "Steve's totally okay with my relationship with Tim. He really is." While most ladies appreciate receiving birthday gifts of clothes or jewelry from their husbands, I loved receiving a huge, framed, autographed photo of Tim Tebow kneeling during a football game. And what did my son's best friend give me for my birthday? A Tebow football jersey.

So, in December of 2016, when I heard *New Hope Ministries* needed volunteers to help with their first *Night to Shine*, which is sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation, I jumped out of my seat and was the first to sign-up. Not only was I drawn to *Night to Shine* because of Tim Tebow, but also because of my love for charitable organizations, events, and individuals with special needs.

Night to Shine is an unforgettable prom-night experience centered on God's love for people with special needs, ages fourteen and older. Every guest of *Night to Shine* enters this free-of-charge event on a red carpet, complete with a warm welcome from a friendly crowd and paparazzi. Once inside, guests receive the royal treatment, including hair and makeup stations, shoe shining stations, limousine rides, corsages and boutonnieres. They are each honored with a catered dinner, prom favors, and, of course, a dance floor. All of this leads up to the moment when every guest is crowned king or queen of the prom.

While the *Night to Shine* guests are having the time of their lives, their parents or caregivers are in a sepa-

rate room, being pampered and showered with love. In this "respite room" they receive a manicure (if they choose) and a catered dinner while being entertained by talented local musicians. There is also a raffle with an opportunity to win gift cards. These amazing individuals are able to relax and enjoy the evening while bonding and sharing experiences with others whom they have much in common.

When *Night to Shine* launched in 2015, forty-four host churches and fifteen-thousand volunteers worked together to honor more than seven-thousand kings and queens of the prom. In February 2017, three-hundred-seventy-five host churches and one-hundred-fifty thousand volunteers came together to celebrate seventy-five thousand honored guests with special needs. *Night to Shine* 2018 is expected to take place simultaneously in over five-hundred locations in all fifty states and on six continents on February 9, 2018. Although the statistics are incredible, it's not about the numbers. Above everything else, the goal of *Night to Shine* is to share God's love with people with special needs, while giving Him all the glory.

Last year at *New Hope Ministries'* first *Night to Shine* event, we honored one-hundred-twenty-five guests and as many parents and caregivers. We were blessed to have more than two-hundred volunteers. It was truly a night I will always remember.

Night to Shine is a night for guests to shine, churches to shine, volunteers to shine, and most importantly, for Christ to shine.



Lori Stresen-Reuter, and her husband, Steve, began attending *New Hope Ministries* in 1990. They have three sons, and two grandsons. Lori serves as co-chairman for NHM's 2018 *Night to Shine* event, and she and Steve host NHM first-time guests in the Hospitality Room. Lori also volunteers with several worthy causes in Naples.

The Power of Words

by Jessica Madera

Words have the power to inspire, the power to encourage and uplift. I love words, especially big fancy million dollar ones. Words also have the power to cause unspeakable pain. On February 9, 2017, as I waited for the ultrasound results from the doctor, I heard five words that left me at a loss for any words: "I can't see a heartbeat."

For millions of women fertility and childbirth remain a dream. I never expected to be among this statistic. *Where was God?* was a most basic and childlike question that I asked over and over again. I knew deep within that He was there; however, that "deep within" wouldn't rise to the surface for some time.

My husband, Angel, and I are among those who have nothing medically wrong with us, yet can't get pregnant. Well, after lots of hormones and doctor visits, we finally got pregnant and received the good news on December 30, 2016. That elation turned to heartache just nine short weeks later. What happened? We did everything – including prayer – that we were supposed to do.

I was angry, and I kept hearing words that weren't making it any better. I refused to accept the words "God has a plan" or "Maybe you should adopt" or "At least you know you can get pregnant." There were also conversations that kept my husband completely out of the equation, as if he hadn't suffered along with me. In fact, those words felt like a punch to the stomach. They were empty words from people who didn't know what to say. I cringed and wished every time that they had simply kept their mouths shut.

Then, the dialogue started to change. The more I shared my pain, which isn't easy when you keep hearing from people who want you to be "happy" or "get over it and move on" (I made them feel uncomfortable, and they just wanted me to get back to my old self), the more I started to hear from others who had been in similar shoes to the style I was now forced to wear. Others knew that I'd never be the same. They were family, friends, colleagues, and strangers who shared their stories of answered prayers that ended in despair.

I started to breathe again. It had felt like I'd stopped breathing; so much so that I have a playlist on my phone called "Songs to Help Me Breathe." A particular verse came back to my memory, as God had given it to me when I was sitting in the doctor's room alone after hearing those five words I never want to hear again. It was from Isaiah 41:13: *For the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.* Those words began to comfort me. I continued researching, looking for verses and articles from a Christian perspective that addressed my pain specifically. I found Focus on the Family to be an excellent

source. They provided all sorts of resources for the woman, her husband, and her family and friends. Others shared their testimonies of infertility and miscarriage. Finally, I could call it what it was and not try to make others feel better. In July, I even got the chance to speak to others about my pain in the context of finding joy in the journey. Hilarious, right? God's sense of humor. However, that was cleansing, and it's what I want to do from here on out – talk about it. I want us to start using words that address this very terrible and very real experience for millions of Christian women every year.

I don't know how or when God plans to give us our children, but I do know we will have them. I will continue to stand on His words, particularly the ones He keeps giving me lately: *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing* (James 1:2-4). I've begun to replace the words anger and hurt with hope and joy.

Jessica Madera has attended *New Hope Ministries* since the fall of 2007, after returning to her hometown of Naples. She enjoys volunteering at NHM in hospitality, ushering, and teaching in the Heart2Heart Women's Ministry and the New Hope School of Ministries. In 2010, Jessica met her husband, Angel, in Puerto Rico, and they recently celebrated their fifth anniversary.



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The Seed of Sin

by Pastor Heath Jarvis

On the afternoon of August 10, 2015, I received an emergency text message to call my parents. I was working on a fun project with Jesse Barrett, but paused so I could make the phone call to my mother. I'll never forget the horror I felt when I heard what she had to say: my younger brother, Joshua, had shot and killed himself.

When we first heard of Josh's death, we thought it might have been an accident. After all, no one in the family was aware of any emotional instability, any depression, or any other problems in Josh's life. He had a great career as an air traffic controller for Anchorage Control Center. He had a beautiful home, and lived in one of the prettiest and most majestic places on earth. His coworkers greatly liked him, and he was well-respected at work. He was making plans for the future, and thinking about building a cabin. Nothing pointed towards the possibility that he would ever purposefully take his own life. It wasn't until we got to Alaska that we discovered from Josh's friends what really had happened: Josh had been in a relationship with a married woman.

When I heard this, I was stunned. Josh, who had been fairly introverted all of his life, had finally worked up enough nerve to start a relationship with a woman. The problem is, she was married. As it turned out, their affair had brought her marriage to the brink of divorce. She had to make a decision, and she chose to try to save her marriage. When she told Josh she was going to call off their relationship, he was devastated. Within a few days of that last conversation with her, he lay down in his bed and shot himself in the chest.

Seeing this part of the story come to light brought to my remembrance a passage from James: *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death* (see James 1:14-15).

Sin starts as a small seed, which is simply a thought. At this point, the thought can either be received or rebuked. The seed, if not rebuked and cast out, has the opportunity to be planted in our hearts and take root. Once it has been conceived in our heart, sin is birthed, whether it has been acted upon or not. When the sin is full-grown (when it is no longer simply sin that is in our heart, but has now turned into action), that sin brings forth death.

It's important to understand that sin does not have to be acted upon to be sin. In Matthew 5, Jesus said that if a man looks upon a woman with lust in his heart, he is guilty of adultery. He said if a man looks upon another with hatred in his heart, he is guilty of murder. Knowing this characteristic of sin is what

makes the work of the cross all the more powerful. Every sin we have ever committed, every sin we are committing, and every sin we will ever commit, has been paid for by Jesus' completed work at Calvary. Not just the sins we act upon, but even the sinful thoughts we allow to take root in our heart.

Now, when the sinful thoughts in our heart progress to the point that we act upon them, sin has become "full-grown," and the verse above in James says that sin brings forth death. Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Notice that the wage of sin is death, but the gift of God is life. A wage is something you earn; a gift is something that someone else earned for you. Your sin earns you death, but God's gift is not something you can earn – it is something that Jesus earned for you, and what He earned for you is eternal life.

So, sin is a seed. It starts as a thought, and if not rebuked, takes root in our hearts. If allowed to grow, it matures into action, and that action brings death. Since we understand that sin is a seed, we must also understand that all seed reproduces after its kind (see Genesis 1:12). In other words, sin produces sin. For example, if you tell a lie, in order to perpetuate that lie you will probably have to craft other lies to cover up the first lie. Later on, you may have to come up with more lies to cover the lies you've already gotten yourself into. Sooner or later, your whole life can become a lie because you've had to continually craft more lies to cover the lies that covered the first lie. Sin begets sin.

In a similar fashion, I can see now how my brother's sin produced more sin. One of his first sins was not trusting God to bring him the woman He had for him, in order to settle down and start a family. He didn't have the faith or the patience to wait for God to bring him what God wanted him to have (see Hebrews 6:12), and of course, that which is not of faith is sin. Later, he allowed his loneliness and desire for a relationship to lure him to enter into a sinful relationship with a married woman. Not only was he in sin, but he was causing someone else to sin as well. Finally, when she decided to fix her marriage, he must have thought this was the only chance he would ever have to love someone, so out of loneliness and despair, he took his own life. Just as James 1:15 said it would, sin produced death.

This has been, by far, the worst tragedy I've ever had to deal with in my life. I sat my children down a few weeks after Josh's death and explained to them everything I've explained in this article. Sin is not something you want to play with, because it produces after its kind. Sin doesn't start out as sin – it starts out as a simple thought. But when that thought is not

taken captive, it is conceived in the heart, and that's when it becomes sin. If it is allowed to continue to live in our hearts, it gives birth to action, and most often results in giving birth to more sin. Ultimately, that sin produces death.

We don't have to allow any sinful seed to take root. Instead, we can do as God's Word says: *Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ* (see 2 Corinthians 10:5).

God's Word wouldn't tell us to do something unless it was possible for us to do it. Our response is to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Our response is to cast down every imagination that is contrary to the knowledge of God. Don't allow any sinful seed to take root. If my brother's death can teach us anything, it can teach us the danger of allowing the seed of sin to take root, to grow, to mature, and to ultimately cause death.

Finally, be encouraged with this. As much as we can permit the seed of sin to take root in our hearts and ultimately cause death, we can also permit the seed of the Word of God to take root in our hearts, producing a faith that is the victory that overcomes any obstacle we face in life. *This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith* (see 1 John 5:4).

Pastor Heath Jarvis attended World Harvest Bible College in Columbus, Ohio and entered full-time ministry in 1993. He became the Worship Pastor at *New Hope Ministries* in 2012. Along with writing and producing music, Heath has also written two books on biblical finance. Heath and his wife, Louise, have two children.



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Business Spotlight Say What Fishing Charters

With more than fifteen years of fishing the Gulf of Mexico, Captain Alex Garland, owner/operator of *Say What Charters*, looks forward to fishing with all levels of fishermen, from the seasoned to the novice. The Gulf of Mexico is home to what he enjoys best: great weather, beautiful waters, and most of all great fishing.



Say What Charters concentrates on the southeastern Gulf of Mexico from as close to shore as a few miles, to as far out as forty miles. This vast range opens possible catches of great game fish such as tarpon, sea trout, snook, permit, and cobia in the near shore areas, with the excitement of barracuda, snapper, gag grouper, red grouper, scamp grouper, shark, large amberjack, and the mighty Goliath grouper, which can weigh up to 600 pounds, off shore.

With so many species and such great underwater habitats, those who have fished the Gulf of Mexico continue to come back year after year. The action on most days is constant and rarely is there time to get bored. Captain Alex invites you to adventure onto the Gulf, so you can experience the enjoyment first hand and understand why others return.

With safety in mind and fun at hand, Captain Alex and his wife, Juana, have spent many days searching the Gulf for new areas to fish and practicing new techniques to accomplish the goal of catching fish. He has a great passion for fishing and by the age of seven, knew the Lord had put him on this earth to fish. As a child he could be found at the Rose Marina washing charter boats or taking in all the fishing knowledge.

Captain Alex carries many Coast Guard related qualifications, is a member of the North Atlantic Charter Boat Operators Association, the Coastal Conservation Association, and the Marco Island Charter Captains Association. He also actively participates in government activities and meetings pertaining to Gulf of Mexico fisheries. Captain Alex is also a faithful sponsor of the annual NHM Fishing Banquet.

Say What Charters is located at 951 Bald Eagle Drive, Marco Island, Florida, in the slip Captain Alex dreamed of and worked hard for. He knows none of his success would be possible without Jesus Christ as his Savior.

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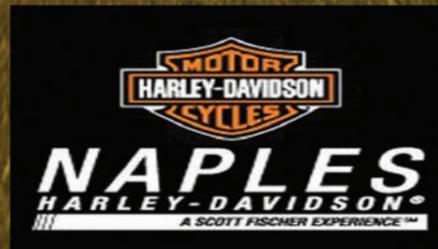
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