

Gates of Restoration

This Is Your Season Ministries

“A Testimony”

The transforming power of the “Love of God”



Marlee Saliture

Gates of Restoration

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this book to the “Spiritual Mothers” who have greatly influenced my Christian life journey. Each woman is unique in their gifting’s, abilities, and relationship with Jesus. Yet, they all have one thing in common. They all have in some way been touched by the “Love of God”. This love would be the driving force to heart transformation, and the ability to see every success and failure through the eyes of the crucified life of their savior “Jesus Christ”. Their decision to surrender all to Christ’s love would pave the way for me, my husband, and my children to walk through the “Gates of Restoration.”

The first woman is my mom, who her grandkids lovingly call “Mimi”. My mom is probably one of the most courageous women I have ever known. At the age of 24, she was left with 2 young children abandoned by her husband who had chosen a life of adultery, drugs, and alcohol. The devastation of this season put her in a very dark state of depression. The depression was so bad she had to seek treatment in a Psychiatric Hospital, and give my sister and I to my grandmother while she recovered. While in this hospital alone, isolated, and hopeless my mom prayed this prayer. “Lord if you are real, please reveal yourself to me”.

Jesus heard her prayer and answered it in a very real encounter of His love. This encounter would send my mom on a journey of learning how to trust God. I was a young teen and my mother prayed another prayer that would profoundly impact my life. “Lord I give you my daughter... I trust you with her.” Thank you, Mom. The Lord received your prayers for me with gladness, and I know the relationship I have with the Lord today is because you prayed.

The second, woman is Doreen. I was in my early 20's. Newly married and running from God. God strategically put this on fire, uncompromising, Jesus loving woman in my path. She would become my boss at work. She loved me, she encouraged me, and I could not understand why? Ultimately, she invited my husband and I to a crusade, where we both surrendered our lives to Christ. She has stood with my family in prayer for over 25 years. Thank you, dear sister.

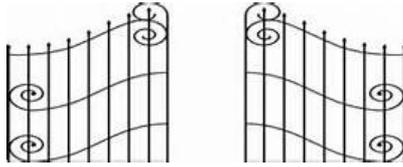
The third, woman is Marnie. The scripture in Titus 2 tells the older women to train up the younger women. I had so much to learn. She taught me how to pray for my husband, she taught me how to trust God. For over 10 years she encouraged me with “Special” scripture notes that would arrive in the mail weekly. Those notes were life-giving and heart transforming. I love and

miss you. I know you are enjoying your beloved Jesus in your eternal home in heaven.

The last woman is certainly not the least. In fact, her influence for Christ in my life has brought transformation and restoration for me and my family in ways I would have never imagined. Dolores Dotson founder of “This is Your Season Ministries.” I want to thank you for introducing me to a real understanding of “The Love of God”. When I met you over 12 years ago, I had no idea how your example of “Pursuing Jesus” would transform my life in Him. You have loved me unconditionally, you have challenged me, and you have taught me how to seek Jesus and His presence at any cost. Thank you for all the sacrifices that you have made on my behalf. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

In addition, without the accountability, prayers, and support of the following women nothing in the pages of the book you are about to read would have been possible. To each one of you thank you!!!!

Kristen, Vikki, Bertha, Cheryl, Julie, Lisa, Tami, Sonya, Melissa, Lori, Mom Marilyn, Mom Joyce.



Gates of Restoration

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Open the Gates

My Child, "I am with you in all your weakness, your fears and when you tremble! I am with you and will demonstrate, validate, exhibit, and manifest myself for the glory of my gospel"! Your place is to INVITE Me in through worship, applauding WHO I AM over every situation!!! Is there ANYTHING too hard for me? You open wide the gate for Me to enter, through your "determination not to know anything except Me and My Cross"!! Through our intimacy, you are able to throw down all that exalts itself before Me!

So today, allow My presence to be welcomed in and change the atmosphere by WORSHIPPING in your weakness, applauding Me through your fears, and allowing My Spirit to TRIUMPH over your trembling! Your worship PURIFIES the atmosphere so that I can REVEAL Myself to those around you!! YOU ARE The Song! Sing and sing and sing My Verdict from the courtroom! Raise the Banner of My Names HIGH over the "dead bones", dormant seeds, and pervasive darkness and I WILL COME!! I will come and not tarry!! Precious one, you are interceding in greatest power in your worship of Me! I am waiting for "the Gates to be opened that I might come in"!

Mighty in strength! Mighty in power!

*Fill, fill, fill to overflowing our garden with worship,
worship that has been hewn, keen
and I WILL COME and do battle!*

1 Corinthians 2.3-5, Ps 24.7-10

Inspired by the Holy Spirit: written by Cheryl Estes

Introduction

“Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, and I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter.” Psalms 118:19&20

I spent most of my early years as a Christian putting God in a box that I had created for him. The box consisted of all the things God could do for me. If I needed provision for a late bill I had to pay, then my attention would be turned to the God box. If I became sick or knew someone who was in need of healing, I would turn from my whirlwind of activities and go to the box for healing. I only allowed God to participate in the areas of my life that did not hinder the plans or goals I had determined for myself. Now if you had known me back then you would have thought by all outward appearances I was the example of the perfect Christian. I rarely missed a Sunday Service, I served in several ministries, I attended Bible studies, I taught Bible studies. However, at the very core of my soul, I was miserable. I struggled with depression, anxiety, and fear that at times were so horrendous I could not leave the house without the help of medication. My soul (mind, will, & emotions) were so fragmented and frayed that I turned back to alcohol in my early Christian walk to numb the pain. My marriage was strained and at the brink of divorce. I had a veneer of

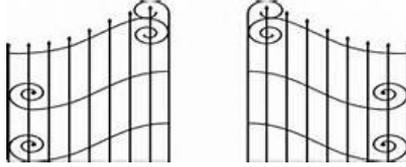
peace and tranquility, but I was so full of rage that I was like a volcano ready to erupt. Now don't get me wrong I loved the Lord and I had heard many messages in the church that He had died for my freedom and complete restoration. The only problem was that I did not understand that there were Gates (a place in my heart) that I had not yet opened to the "Love of God." However, there were many gates (a place in my heart) that had been opened up to dark influences of fear, rejection, insecurity, worthlessness, defilement, confusion, un-forgiveness & bitterness. ***The definition of a gate is- a point of entryIn order for the Lord to come into these dark gates in my heart, there would have to be a response to Jesus who was knocking at the gate (a place in my heart). I now had a choice to respond to the "Voice at the gate". It was the "King of Glory" beckoning me to open my heart to Him completely. "Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in" Psalm 24:7. Jesus wanted me to find the gate that opened up to a path that would lead to my freedom and abundant life in Him. The book of Matthew chapter 7 tells us this" Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."***

This is a message of my personal journey of how the Lord showed me the narrow gate that leads to life. First, the Lord purposely revealed His love to me in a very real face to face encounter of His manifest presence. *The definition of a manifest is – to show plainly, beyond question or doubt.* The Lord then led me to many gates in my heart. At the entrance of each gate in my heart, the Lord gave me a choice of whether or not to invite Him in or to continue to let dark influences rule those gates... The Lord simply beckoned me with His love and grace to open the gates to Him. Jesus desires that all of us enter the gates of restoration that lead to life, because the word says that the Lord wants His people to *“Love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with our entire mind.”*
Matthew 22: 37

However, after accepting Christ, many times we as Christians have lives that still look like our old nature and sadly we are still living defeated lives full of anguish and misery. This breaks the heart of the Lord because He paid such a great price for our freedom. I really do not fully understand why the Lord has been so gracious to me. He has delivered me from so much! I really do not know if I can write it all in this book. I do not pretend to be a theologian. I am a housewife who is hopelessly in love with Jesus. Every day I get up with one passion and that is to know Him more, love Him more, and obey Him more.

It is my hope that this message will encourage you to open the gates of your heart to the undeniable love of Jesus Christ.

“There is a Gate where water flows. A Gate where my love is known. Trust me child for you will see the place that I have prepared for thee. Now take my hand and walk with me. Open the Gate that will set you free”
“He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” **John 7:38**



Chapter 1 ***“Radical Love”***

Gate #1 - “Intimacy” ***An encounter with Love***

“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9

In **1Corinthians 2:9** God clearly tells us that we cannot comprehend the depth of what God has prepared for us. However, sadly we settle for less. We stay stuck in our mind (thoughts in our head), will (what I think I want), and emotions (how I feel). We never fully embrace the abundance of God and who He is, because we never truly embrace God Himself.

The word of God clearly tells us that *“Jesus came that we may have life, and have it more abundantly” John 10:10.*

There is not one thing abundant about constant feelings of turmoil, fear, depression, hopelessness, unworthiness, and rejection. However, these are deep matters of the heart. In my early days as a young Christian, I read the scripture about “*abundant life*” with a more carnal point of view. A carnal point of view is motivated by the “Flesh”. A carnal point view is one that revolves around self. Therefore, I believed that God was my personal “Santa Claus”. I made my list of all the things I wanted God to give me. i.e., a husband, a child, a car, a house, a good job, etc. . . . None of these were bad things to pray for; unfortunately, these things became my entire focus in life, not God. The things and success became my idols. **The definition of an idol is a “false god”**. Now the pursuit of my idols became my passion. Somewhere deep inside I deceived myself. I believed that the pursuit of these outward things would fill the deep emptiness inside my heart. However, the word of God is clear about what pursuits The Lord rewards. “*...and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*” **Hebrews 11:6** The **word seek means to pursue**. I went to church, I served in several ministries, but Jesus was not my pursuit, He was my hobby on the weekends. Sadly, I really believed I was totally sold out for Jesus back then. Gods infinite mercy He had graciously answered my “Santa Clause” prayers. God had given me a husband, 4 children, a dream home, and a high profile corporate job. The epitome of the

American dream. I was living the good life!!! But why did I feel so empty? Why was there a groaning in my belly that would not go away? Why was I so discontent? Why was I still in bondage to thoughts of depression, hopelessness, and rejection? Why was I in so much turmoil and fear?

I thought.” All these outside things; the husband, the kids, the job, the ministries I believed could bring contentment to my heart, yet I was not content. I had embraced religion (a form of godliness) that brought no power to my situations. The Bible describes that kind of deception in **2 Timothy 3:5**. “*Having a form of godliness but denying its power.*” In my desperateness, I prayed a prayer that for once did not revolve around outward gain. I prayed” Lord I am so empty. Please fill me!

Little did I know that the simple prayer I prayed would lead me to a gate (a place in my heart). The gate would lead to a path that would change my heart forever.



“The Encounter”

It was in the spring of 2004. I remember how sunny it was that day. I was praising God for his goodness as I drove to finish some errands. Two days prior to that day God had done a miracle right before my eyes. I was so grateful for His goodness, and all I could do was say thank you, thank you, thank you, Jesus!! The miracle took place in our home. My son and I were in the game room on the second floor of our home. My husband had opened all the windows that morning to let in the cool spring breeze. I sat at my desk cutting coupons as my then 3 yr. old son played by the window with his dump truck. I turned my back to my son to grab another stack of coupons. All of the sudden with my back to the windows I heard the window screen “snap”. I quickly turned around toward the area where my son was playing. However, to my sheer terror, all I could see were my 3yr. old son’s feet. My son was falling headfirst towards a concrete driveway and there was nothing I could do about it. Fear and anguish gripped my heart as I could not bring myself to look out the window he had just fallen from. I was terrified by what I might see. I ran down the stairs to rescue my son.

I had fleeting thoughts of his limp body dead on the driveway, and then maybe alive but mangled for life. “No! Jesus!” I screamed. “Jesus! Help! Jesus!”. I finally made my way out the back door and through the back gate towards the driveway. I looked. To my utter amazement my 3 yr. old son was completely fine. Earlier that morning my husband had done something very out of sequence from his daily routine. He had placed our garbage can under our game room window. My son fell directly into the trash can. To make circumstances more favorable for my son's survival; my husband had filled the trash can the night before with bubble wrap, tissue, and butcher paper from a package he had received that day. I called my husband. He insisted I rush my son to the hospital. Honestly, I struggled to do what my husband was asking, because my son looked perfectly normal. The doctor's evaluated my son. The entire emergency room staff said, “This is a miracle”. The doctor stated “The trashcan could not have prevented a head injury, broken bones or far worse.” I knew in my heart that divine intervention was involved, and the Lord had sent His heavenly angels to carry my son gently into the trash can to safety that day. (*“He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways, in their hands, they shall bear you up...Psalm 91*).

My son after falling from a two story window



In my heart, I did not feel there would ever be anything more miraculous than God supernaturally saving my precious son. However, I was unknowingly about to have an encounter with Jesus that would miraculously transform me, my family, and my circle of influence.

It was now two days after my son's miraculous survival from the fall out of the window. I had been reminiscing about the entire event while driving. My thoughts were interrupted by the ringing of my cell phone. I looked to see who was calling and noticed it was an acquaintance from a church we were attending at the time. I answered her call. On the other end, the woman responded: "Hi Friend!" "Do you have a minute?" I said, "Sure what's up?" I just wanted to invite you to a women's conference on Saturday, at the elementary school by your house. She indicated that the women's meeting was not affiliated with the church we attended but was being hosted by a ministry called "This is Your Season". I told her that I was appreciative of the invitation and would pray about going. I hung up the phone, and I had the distinct impression that I was to attend this "Women's Conference!"

Saturday Morning arrived and it was time to head off to the Women's Conference.

The thought crossed my mind, "A women's conference in an elementary school?" How odd. I

thought. “All of the women’s conferences I had attended in the past were either in large church settings or retreat centers nestled in the woods”. Oh no! I sighed! What have I gotten myself into? I pressed through all the thoughts and made my way into the school lunchroom where the conference was being held. When I entered the room there were about 25 women in the room all seated at lunch tables?

The leader of the conference got up and introduced herself. She asked us to stand in worship to the Lord. We all stood and we began to worship from music that came from a small CD player at the front of the room. The music started and within minutes of worship, the most amazing thing began to happen. The little cafeteria became “Holy Ground”. The presence of God filled the room. The only way I can describe the atmosphere in the room was a distinct presence of “Radical Love”. **The meaning of the word Radical is: extreme, impartial, revolutionary.** This love crossed every traditional, doctrinal boundary that had formed my limited understanding of what true love really was. I mean this love literally overtook me like lava coming out of the earth.

Have you ever seen a volcano erupting? Hot lava that was once deep beneath the surface of the earth now begins to bubble out of the surface of the earth, as the lava erupts and begins to overflow onto the ground

below consuming everything in its path. The lava is not prejudiced. The lava does not care what is in its path; old cars, new cars, old houses, new houses, etc. The objects in the lava's path will be consumed. That day I was consumed by this “Radical Love” of God. All of the good, bad, and ugly parts of my heart were completely covered in this Love. **“For our God is a consuming fire” Hebrews 12:29.** God’s Love had erupted and began to flow over me like lava. There was no way to escape this substance called “Love”. For the first time in my life, I was experiencing a tangible encounter with the “Love of God”.

I began to weep! I then felt every part of my being filled with the joy of the Lord. I took my shoes off and began to dance like a bird just freed from her cage. The Lord's presence was so tangible that I just wanted to grab His hand and dance with Him. So much Love! The Lord spoke over me personally!! He whispered words to me. Words of affirmation, adoration, and acceptance. I had been in church for years and had never encountered this manifest presence of God and His love. I was absolutely overwhelmed by this Love.

Jesus had seen my emptiness and brokenness. He was now answering my prayer for more of Him. The word does promise that if we seek Him we will never hunger or thirst. John 6:35. I did not realize how empty I really was until I encountered His unconditional love. I was

like the Samaritan Woman at the well in **John chapter 4:13** *“Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink the water I give them will never thirst.”* I had read that scripture so many times, but now I really understood what Jesus meant. If I would seek Him and His presence I would be filled. I knew what it was to seek and be filled by the counterfeit; the pursuit of my fleshly desires. The Samaritan woman had tried to fill her emptiness with five husbands. I had tried to fill my emptiness with a big house, a new car, a prestigious corporate job, and religious works at a church. I really thought I was in there with Jesus. Oh, how mistaken I was.



“Radical Love” changes the heart

Before my encounter with “Radical Love”, I was under the influence of a false teaching called prosperity. Unfortunately, I had no idea how deceived I was in my heart. The Lord led me to my journals I had written back in 2002. Almost every page revolved around how God was going to financially bless me. I was naming and claiming my blessings. All the verses I was

quoting in my time with the Lord were about all the goodies I was going to receive because I was obedient to tithe or give above the tithe. Now please understand I am a firm believer in tithing it is a commandment of God. My husband and I do our best to be faithful in our tithes and offerings. We appreciate every blessing that the Lord has so abundantly given to us. However, what the Lord uncovered in my heart after my face to face encounter with Him was not pretty. The Lord showed me that I was seeking His hand but not seeking His face. He showed me that He was not my first love, but things were the object of my affection. The Lord gave me the most practical illustration of this. {"Daughter" remembers when you were in high school? Yes, Lord!" Do you remember as a young person your girlfriends would pretend to have feelings for a particular young man in order to get rides to various events or have dinner bought because you did not have any money?" Yes, Lord. The young man was not the object of your affection, but the benefits you could get from the young man was your desire. Daughter," I am the Lord your God and I want you to love Me the way scripture encourages you to love Me}. **Matthew 22:37** "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with your entire mind.*"

The day that "Radical Love" consumed my heart I began to have a clearer understanding of how the Lord

wants to be loved. I was now able to see my wicked heart through the eyes of Jesus. I was like Gomer in the book of Hosea. Gomer was not satisfied with her husband Hosea. She had an adulterous heart and gave her affections to men that were not her husband. I had given my heart over too much affection, but none of them were for the Lord. I was deceived in believing that love was the pursuit of self - gratification. Gomer is a reflection of where my heart was toward God. *“For she said...” I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink.” Hosea 2:5.*



“Love Unconditional”

Radical or extreme, impartial, revolutionary love is not a love most of us understand. Jesus love has no conditions. The natural love that most of us encounter or give every day has conditions attached to it. However, Jesus puts no boundaries on the Love He has for you. You cannot earn this Love, work for this Love, or be good enough for this Love. *(“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest*

anyone should boast”) Ephesians 2:8-9. His Love is for the good, the bad, the ugly, the depraved, the liar, the cheater, the murderer, the prostitute, the incarcerated, the poor, the rich, and the desperate.

Earlier in my testimony, I explained how I had embraced religion and not the person of Jesus Christ. Please understand I was a Christian at the time and very much believed I was walking in close intimacy with God. However, I was very deceived. I had a form of godliness but there was no true inward transformation.

In the verses preceding **2 Timothy 3:5** Paul describes the true heart condition of the believers in the last days. *“For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.”* I would have never guessed that these things were hidden in my heart, but dear friend when I encountered “Radical Love” there was no denying the filth that was in my heart. However, the Lord did not condemn me or recoil from me. No! He embraced me and affirmed me as if I was the purest person He had ever met. I now wanted to be obedient to God’s Word and walkout a “Holy

Lifestyle”. For the first time, I understood the reason God wanted me to be set apart for His Glory. *“Just as He chose me in Him before the foundation of the world, that I should be holy and without blame before Him in love”... Ephesians 1:4.* I now wanted to love God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with my entire mind. I also wanted to love others. You see before my encounter with “Radical Love” I was working for God’s love and approval. However, that was a law mentality. Jesus gave us freedom from the law. According to *Romans 7:6* *“But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.”* I wanted to please Jesus now out of my love for Him not because I felt I owed Him something. Jesus was so amazing, and I had completely given my heart to Him. Knowing the love of God was the first gate of my heart the Lord led me through. On the other side of the gate was a path that I would need to walk on in order to restore my heart to Him.

In Acts chapter 9, Saul who later was named Paul by Jesus was on a path. However, Saul was deceived in his heart. Saul believed that his religious acts reconciled him to God. Out of the Lord's infinite mercy, He revealed His love to Saul on a path that was leading him to destruction. On that path, his eyes were opened to the truth. That was the day Saul's heart was

changed forever. *"Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once, and he arose and was baptized."* **Acts 9:18** the love of God that consumed me 10 years ago loves all people. Jesus love is perfect and without accusation. Cry out to Jesus! Tell Him the truth you are empty, broken, sinful, and in need of His love. Be honest and candid. Stop hiding behind some religious pretense. Face it! Declare it! You need this "Radical Love". God gives grace to the humble and resists the proud! Pride says I've got this! I am all good!

Humility says. "No, I don't! HE IS ALL GOOD!! I promise you my friend if you will just humble yourself. Tell Jesus that you need to be consumed by His love. I am destitute!! Jesus will not turn away your cries. I know because His Word declares it!

"He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; He will not despise their plea" Psalm 102:17.

Study Questions
Chapter 1

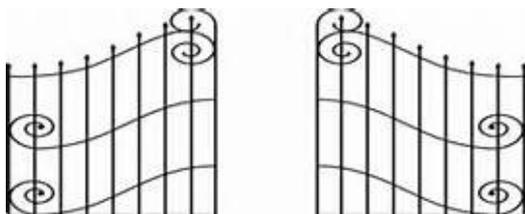
1. How does God describe love in the Bible?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

2. After reading 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 can you truthfully say that this is how people closest to you would describe you?

3. Choose one attribute of Biblical love from this passage that you struggle to walk in. Take a moment to pray. Ask the Lord to take this struggle and transform your heart in this area of weakness.

Prayer: Dear Lord I admit that I have need of a face to face encounter with” Radical Love”. I am broken, tired, and in desperate need of your presence. I want to love you completely, and I want to love others completely. Amen



Chapter 2 *“Enter the Throne Room and Pray”*

Gate 2 - “Intimacy” through Prayer

“Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” Hebrews 4:16

I believe that prayer has been the most important entry gate of my heart for my personal restoration. I have come to realize over the past seven years that prayer is not about changing my outside circumstances, but it is changing how I respond to those circumstances. Prayer is about changing me and my intimate relationship with God. Before my encounter with “Radical Love,” I did not trust God. My childhood had been filled with promises that were never met. My father who I adored and trusted as a young girl gave himself over to a lifestyle of alcohol and drug abuse. He also betrayed my love and trust for him with acts of sexual abuse. Therefore, I gave very little attention to

prayer and more attention to the works of my own hands. That was safe, comfortable, and did not require me to trust the Lord with my intimate thoughts and struggles.

However, my love for Christ beckoned me to come close to Him and lay my concerns and burdens at His feet in prayer. Fortunately, the Lord led me to a ministry that had laid its complete foundation upon prayer. During one of our prayer meetings the Lord showed me that I had been given the gift of “intercession”. **The definition of intercession is: “one who intervenes” by praying to God on behalf of others.** Prayer had become a lifestyle for me. I began to see miraculous answers to my prayers.

I want to clarify something! It was not because of the “gift of intercession” that my prayers were answered, but it was because I prayed. I see so many Christians who back away from prayer because of insecurities or excuses. We are all called to pray. Jesus himself spent most of His ministry on earth praying to the Father. One of the biblical examples of Jesus prayer life is found in **Matthew 14:23-25**. Jesus has just miraculously fed five thousand people with a little boy’s lunch. However, He does not boast about the miracle He has just performed, but Jesus chooses to go up a mountain called” Mt. Arbel” to pray to the Father.

Jesus understood that without humble prayer to the Father there would not have been a miracle.

“Matthew 14:23 “And when He sent the multitudes away. He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray”.

In addition, as I grew in my prayer life the Lord began to reveal another very key principle in prayer. He showed me a truth that had never occurred to me. I had never thought about it up to this point.

The Lord had prayers He needed me to pray. My prayers were no longer going to be all about me. My prayers could no longer be about my problems, my issues, or my needs only. The Lord wanted my prayer life to be more intimate with Him. The Lord wanted to know what my concerns were, and He wanted me to know what His heart concerns were.

Many of my most intimate times with the Lord have been in prayer. I want to share with you a recent excerpt from my personal journal. In my daily time of prayer and worship, I asked the Lord this question, ***“What is on your heart today Lord?”*** He immediately answered, *“Daughter Tell my children I answer prayer! Prayer moves My heart! Esther saved a nation because of her prayers to Me (Esther 5-10). Abraham saved Lot and his family because of his prayers to Me (Genesis 18:22-33), Moses stopped My hand of*

judgment upon the Israelites because of his prayers to Me (Exodus32:12-14). Pray! Pray! Tell them to pray! The enemy is lying to them! Many of My children have given up. They do not believe I will act on their prayers, but I will. Tell them I am a covenant God and I will not turn away their cries. Tell them to forgive Me. Many of my children are holding an offense toward me because they have not seen their prayers answered yet. It does not look as if I will answer, but I will! Tell them to trust in My perfect plan, even though my answer does not look like theirs. Tell them I Am faithful. ! Oh, daughter! Tell My children I love them with an everlasting love.”

In reading this plea from God the Father it is easy to see prayer as an intimate exchange. The Lord wants to answer our personal prayers and He needs us to pray His personal prayers. It is hard to conceive that ordinary people like you and me can influence the eternal life course of a person, a church, a city, and a nation with our prayers, but please understand how biblical this principle is.

A good biblical example of the influence of a person who prays is found in **Numbers 14:11-20**. The children of Israel are complaining about the provisions of God. The Israelites become so rebellious and irreverent that they provoke God to wrath.

God tells Moses He is done with this kind of dishonor and has chosen to bring His judgment upon the children of Israel. However, in verse 13 Moses begins to **intercede** (to stand in the gap through prayer) on behalf of the Israelites by reminding God of His own promises to the children of Israel. In verse 18 Moses continues his intercession for the Israelites by reminding God of His character. *“The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression...”*.

In verse 20 we see the influence of Moses intercession to God. *“Then the Lord said: “I have pardoned according to your word...”*.

Wow! That is pretty powerful. God pardoned an entire nations sin and decided not to destroy the Israelites because of one man’s prayer. It is easy to see why the enemy is working so hard to deceive God’s children. The enemy wants God’s children to into believe prayer is useless and has little or no value. One of the biggest reasons for the enemy’s assault against prayer is “Prayer is effective”. *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” James 5:16 (NIV)*

The enemy understands a very key biblical principle that we as Christians have not truly embraced. God who is the creator of all things is looking for ordinary

people who love Him to cry out for the Father's heart to be manifested on earth.

The following are several personal testimonies of how God brought restoration to others by one simple act - PRAYER.



“It Is Finished”

*“So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, **“It is finished!”** And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. **John 19:30***

One of the greatest schemes of Satan is to derail God's children by deceiving them into believing that God is not interested in answering their prayers. Unfortunately, I was one of those who had been deceived by the enemies' lies. I would spend most of my time praying but I did not really believe that my prayers were going to be answered. The Lord had to show me that my unbelief was out of my distrust of God. Many times in my early days of prayer I would be praying for my family. I remember one time, in particular, I had been praying for my older son. He was involved with many things during that time that was wrong and was bringing much distress to his life. I was fervent in my

prayers and many times had sealed my prayers to the Lord with these words “In Jesus name”!

However, one day after praying for my older son, he came home from school. He had gotten in trouble at school which was occurring a lot back then. Out of my frustration, I began to tell him all the ways he was ruining his life. I ranted and raved bringing up every mistake I could think of. To my surprise, my son agreed with me. Oh, victory! I thought. I am finally getting somewhere with this hard-headed child of mine. The following morning in my quiet time with the Lord, I realized God was not thrilled with my so-called victory. The Lord spoke to my heart these words:

{“Daughter, the words you are speaking to your son are lining up with the enemies plans for your son to destroy him.” Your prayers are bringing life, but your words are bringing death”.}

Ouch! That was like a Holy bullet right between the eyes. I then thought about the scripture that says; *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit”*. **Proverbs 18:21**

Essentially, the Lord was showing me that after I had prayed for my son I did not believe the Lord had already answered my prayer. In the book of Psalms, we are truly able to see God’s heart toward prayer. He not only hears our prayers but He will not ignore them.

He will have mercy on our requests. *“But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer” Psalm 66:19.* I had doubted God instead of trusting that God would turn my son around. Oh! I had so much to learn, but God was so gracious to me. He wanted me to understand that my prayers were making a difference. He wanted me to trust Him and not doubt Him.

One day during a weekly prayer meeting for our community Pastors, leaders, and schools a group of us were praying. On that particular day, our prayer focus was on the youth of our community. At that time my oldest son was a youth in the community High school. On this day my son was on my heart as we cried out to God for our cities youth. Suddenly, the Lord showed me a **vision** (*an instrument God uses to communicate supernatural revelation*).

I perceived to be the vision to be “Throne Room” of Heaven. I found myself standing in the throne room looking over Jesus' shoulder. I could not see the face of Jesus; however, I somehow knew I was next to Him.

Suddenly, a loud voice thundered from the throne of God. “It is finished”! I felt as if all of heaven shook as those words permeated the air. Then I looked down and there at the foot of Jesus Throne was my son with his knees bowed down before the Lord Jesus. My son had the most beautiful crown on his head. I knew exactly

what the Lord meant by declaring the words “It is finished” over my son. My son would eventually surrender his life to the Lord and fulfill the God-given plans the Lord had for his life! I felt so humbled and honored. The Lord graciously gave me that precious vision to bring encouragement to me in that broken season. I have never doubted my son’s eternal purposes would be full filled since that day. However, it would be 7 long years until my son would surrender to the “Love of God”. The journey would be difficult for him to finally bow his knee to Jesus. The battle for his soul was real and intense. My son was deeply bound to many strongholds: gambling, alcohol, drugs, etc. He had spent time in jail. He had nearly missed a prison stay, but for the grace of God prevailed and the authorities let him go with no charges. In that season Jesus was teaching me how to be a “Watchman” (A person who keeps watching, guard) over a soul in prayer. In Isaiah 62:6 God is showing the role of the watchman and how we must never be silent in our pursuit of answered prayer” *I have set watchmen on your walls of Jerusalem, they shall never hold their peace day or night.... You who make mention of the Lord, do not keep silent and give Him no rest till He establishes.....”*

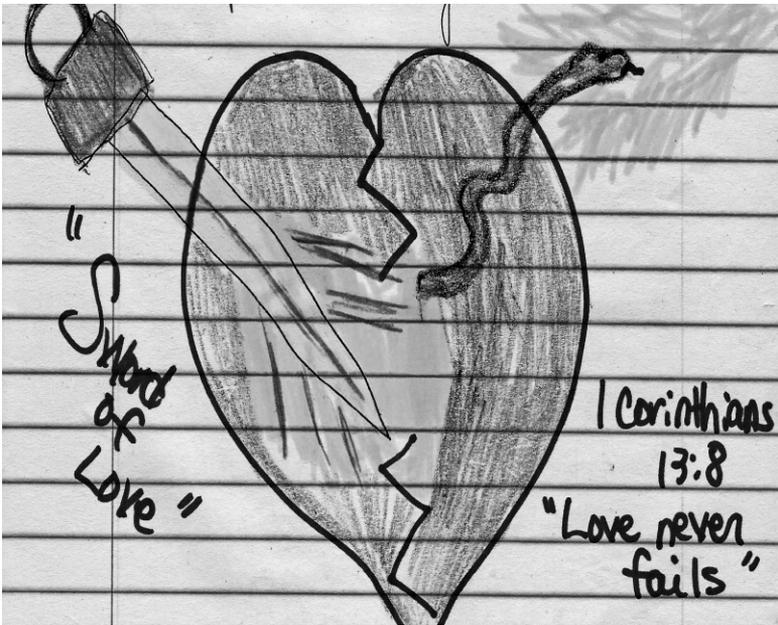
I had to determine to stay in position as a watchman. I took this scripture literally by never keeping silent. I decided that storming the gates of heaven with my

prayers would make a difference in my son's life. Eventually, in God's perfect timing my prayers were answered. In February 2014 the Lord gave me another vision of my son. The following is the account of what the vision showed me about my son; (It was early in the morning and my husband and I were listening to praise music in our bedroom. Suddenly, the Spirit of the Lord filled the room and the Lord began to speak intently to my heart, "IT IS FINISHED." The presence of the Lord was so strong that I fell to my kneesthen I was given a Vision of my son laying in his bed asleep. A bright light was coming from an object that was headed straight for my son. The object was a "Flaming Sword". The Flaming Sword went right into my son's heart and I perceived the sword to be a representation of the Lord's pure love. The flaming sword pierced my son's heart, and something amazing began to happen. Everything that was dark, every generational curse, and every dark deed began to recoil from his heart in an image that was snakelike. Then the Lord whispered these final words" *Love never fails" 1 Corinthians 13:8.*

It would be a few short days after that vision that my son would be visited by the Lord. My son woke up completely changed by the "Love of God". He surrendered his life to Christ and has been pursuing Him ever since. He has a passion for young people and

a testimony of the transforming power of the “Love of God.”

The picture I drew of my son’s heart after the Lord gave me the vision.



Study Questions

Chapter 2

Remember: Prayer is a “Gate of Restoration” for you, your family, and those whom God has given you to pray for!!

Determine to believe “It is finished” as you persevere in your prayers to God!

1. What do you feel is your greatest hindrance to pray?

Here are some of the excuses I often hear:

- I do not have time.
- I do not have the gift of prayer.
- I tried prayer and it did not work.

Determine today to no longer allow these excuses to keep you from the greatest privilege you have!!
(Prayer) *“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” James 5:16*



“Surrender”

*“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do well to those who hate you, **and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.**”*
Matthew 5:44

I will never forget the day I heard the Lord speak to my heart {“*Pray for those who spitefully use you Daughter! I want you to go and pray for your dad.*”} I want you to go to your father’s house and pray for him}. Now, this was quite a request from the Lord. I began to argue with God as to why this was not a good idea. I reminded the Lord of all the terrible things my father had done to me as a child. In addition, I reminded him that my father was not in his right mind. The Lord assured me that I would be fine and insisted I go and pray for my dad. It had been four long years since I had seen my dad. I had last seen him at my grandmother’s funeral she had died from a massive heart attack. Many of the relatives who attended the funeral were sure my father was a contributor to my grandmother’s death, because of the mental illness he suffered from. My grandmother had been the brunt of many of my father’s outbursts of rage and irrational

behavior. The last thing I wanted to do was obey God by going to pray for my father. However, with feelings of fear and dread, I got in the car and drove to my father's house. After arriving at my father's house I pulled into the driveway and parked. Oh, Lord!! Why are you asking me to do this? This is so hard.

The Lord spoke to my heart, *"Daughter, I am keeping a covenant (**a promise**) I made to your grandmother. I want your father to come to know me. I have brought you here to battle in prayer for your father's soul. You do not need to get out of your car. I want you to pray. Pray daughter Pray!*

Suddenly, while sitting in the driveway of my father's home the Spirit of Lord fell upon me. A groaning and travailing (*to labor in pain, to toil in prayer*) **Romans 8:26&27**. Came deep from within me and tears of compassion filled my eyes as I prayed for my father's soul. I prayed for about a half hour in the driveway. Just as quickly as the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me the Spirit lifted. I knew that it was finished. God wanted me to be obedient to pray. The God-given assignment had been accomplished, and a quiet peace filled my heart.

Unfortunately, there had been no immediate change in my father's heart. In fact, he had gotten much worse. My communication with my father was strained

at best. Many of my efforts to communicate with my father by phone were brief and always ended with my father erupting into a rage. He would then use terrible language and hang the phone up. After many of these episodes, I determined it was best for me to stop pursuing a relationship with my dad.

However, seven years later a distinct shift began to occur in my relationship with my father. One morning, as I was seeking the Lord I sensed a strong presence of God. The Lord led me to open my Bible to read the Ten Commandments. I argued with the Lord in my mind. I proceeded to tell the Lord that I already knew the Ten Commandments. “Daughter”, the Lord spoke with persistence. “Read them”. I decided it was best for me to obey the Lord. I flipped the pages of my bible and began to read the Ten Commandments. As I read the commandments the Lord brought to my attention the fifth commandment. “*Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God gives thee.*” **Exodus 20:12**. While reading the 10 commandments; the Lord spoke to my heart these words” {*Daughter, I want you to honor your father. I want you to pursue a relationship with him*}. Immediately, I began to argue with the Lord. I began to tell Him all the reasons why this was a bad idea. I explained to the Lord that I could not bear more abusive behavior from my father. I also told the Lord I had not seen him in seven years and I had no idea

where he was. “The Lord gently whispered to my heart “Call your aunt”. I could not refuse the Lords gentle and loving request. I knew I must obey Him. I was determined to do what the Lord was asking me to do, but my emotions were fighting the decision to obey. I called my aunt later that day, and what our conversation revealed was unbelievable. She told me that my father had been in a convalescent facility. She told me that my father had given his heart to Jesus two years prior. She told me my father spoke of my sister and me often. She encouraged me to come and see my father. I arranged a meeting time with my aunt to visit my father later that week.

I arrived early to the convalescent home on the day I was to meet my aunt. I walked through the doors of the retirement facility where my father now made his home. My aunt was in the lobby waiting for me. I greeted my aunt with a hug and she walked me down to the room where my father was waiting. I was very nervous as I entered his room. I had thoughts of what he would do when he saw me. Would he lash out with words of criticism and anger? I was surprised, I did not encounter an angry harsh man. In fact, when I saw my father sitting on his bed, he looked like an innocent child. His countenance was that of a man full of love and peace. He smiled from ear to ear when he saw me. He told me he loved me and how much he missed me. He asked about my sister and her family. He was

absolutely different from the father I had grown up with. I began to cry as forgiveness flooded my heart!! I knew the Lord had changed his heart. My father spoke about God, and he shared that he attended the little church service they held at the convalescent home on Sundays. He also told me that he had joined the choir. I was absolutely overwhelmed by what I was encountering. My father had literally been transformed by the “Love of God”. As I left home after my visit with my father. I began to thank the Lord in my heart!! I was so full of Joy!!

Here is an entry from my personal journal dated 6/20/10:

{“Lord thank you!! I give you praise and glory. I went to visit my dad for Father’s Day. To my surprise Lord, he was not in his room sleeping as normal. I found him. He was with some of the other patients who had gathered for a small church service in the cafeteria. There he was Lord with his hymnal open singing “Washed in the Blood”.....the joy on his face was indescribable. Thank you, Lord, for answering my prayer.}

My relationship with my father was completely restored and I enjoyed a loving relationship with him until his death in 2011.

I am so grateful that I obeyed the voice of the Lord that fall afternoon. Prayer truly does change things.

Study Questions
Chapter 2

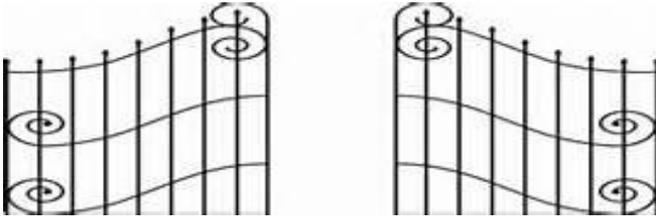
Do you have someone in your life that has deeply hurt you, abused you, or falsely accused you?

The Lord is looking for Christians that will lay their hurts aside and join with Him to pray His perfect will of freedom and reconciliation to the Lord for them. He desires to bring restoration to your heart where there is hurt and pain. ***However, the gate to restoring your heart will require forgiveness.**

“But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that you’re Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.” Mark 11:25 (NLT)

Dear Lord;

I have been deeply hurt by _____. Help me to walk out forgiveness by faith. I want to obey you Lord and pray for _____. I do not want the unforgiveness in my heart to hinder my prayers as the word says that it will. Holy Spirit lead and guide me as I pray for _____.



Chapter 3 **“Stop Religion”**

Gate 3 – “Relationship” Path of Freedom

“As the father “loved me, I also have loved you; abide in My Love.” John 15:9

Stop!!! I shouted to my son. “Don’t you see the sign” I shouted.” However, even with all my efforts to get my son to heed to the stop sign he still ran it. Fortunately, there were no oncoming cars in the other lanes or we could have found ourselves in a bad or fatal accident. Sadly, there are many false teachings that focus on doing works for God. I believe there is a deep cry coming from heaven. The cry is from Jesus himself and His voice is saying ”Stop Religion” before the lie of working for my love separates those who are in desperate need of it. Religion focuses on my abilities, my good works, to obtain right standing with God. The gate of religion in my heart had truly come

to separate me from the love of God. Separation from God's love will only lead to problems in every area of life. For me as a young adult (love deprivation) caused me to search for fulfillment with addictions, promiscuity, and outward appearance. This gate in my heart had many chains around it and each one had a name. Shame, guilt, and condemnation were just a few. My past had been so wounded with the lie that all love had to be earned. I became very religious in how I approached God. This was a place of bondage that left me with a lie. I could never measure up or be good enough to be accepted by God. The truth is that no amount of good works could have saved me from being eternally separated from God. *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works so that no one can boast" Ephesians 2:8&9.*

JESUS clearly demonstrated this radical love for sinners in two of my favorite stories in the bible.

"Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him." And a certain woman who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities Mary called Magdalene, out of who had come seven demons. Luke 8:1&2

Jesus is a lover of sinners. One of His most loyal disciples is a woman who was once bound with evil spirits. Religion could have never saved her from this terrible place of bondage. A person bound with evil spirits could never be good enough or work their way into heaven. But this precious woman Mary Magdalene was touched by the love & compassion of Jesus Christ.

The following scripture in **Matthew 7:8** describes the gate of my heart called religion. *"You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."* I worked very hard at looking religious in front of others. I even tried to hide behind my religious acts to please God. I had no clue how to be transparent with God or others because if you really knew how messed up I was inside you might leave me or reject me. Oh! How deceived I was. I was like the Pharisees who honored God with their outward actions but their hearts were far from Him.

Religion is more concerned about what good deeds and works a person can do for God rather developing intimacy in the presence of God. **The definition of intimacy is: familiar or to know.** When I first became a Christian I had no clue what an intimate relationship with Jesus looked like. So, I just did what I had always done my whole life. I worked. There was plenty of work to be done at the church I attended.

Therefore, I jumped right into every serving opportunity there was. Unfortunately, this became my primary focus, instead of truly developing intimacy with the Lord. My background of abuse and rejection drove me to work for God to cover my heart full of rejection and shame. I now was just continuing a pattern I had developed in the world. I found my worth in what I could put my hands too. Instead of embracing the unconditional love God had for me. However, Jesus himself taught that an intimate love relationship with Him through **abiding** is the key to knowing him and bearing fruit for His kingdom.

“Abide in Me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.” **John 15:4**

The word abides means: to remain, to dwell. Therefore, spending time with the Lord in His presence is essential. For example, it would be very hard to have a friend if you never took the time to develop a relationship with that person. A friend is someone you can be completely transparent with, without fear of being judged. A true friend knows you. The great parts and the parts you would rather no one ever saw. A true friend knows your dreams, your hopes, your struggles, and your inner-most heart. Jesus did not die for you on a cross to have religion steal you from Him. No! Jesus died for you so you could come close to Him as a friend

comes close to a friend. In return, he wants to call you friend. He wants to disclose to you His innermost heart.

*“No longer do I call you servants, for **a servant, does not know what his master is doing**; but I have called you friends.” **John 15:15.***

Jesus desires that you and I would be the kind of friend that would lay our life down for Him as He did for us. An intimate relationship with Jesus rooted in “love” is what should drive our vision for ministry. Relationship should be our sole motivation for serving Him.

The following from my journal 2014

Intimate Exchange (Jesus a true friend)

*“Lord I am struggling with the same sin. I want to please you in this area but I am struggling. *Daughter, Your heart has been crushed. A hurt heart responds with hurt. Let me pour my unconditional love into your heart. Receive daughter for today I am pouring, pouring, pouring.....I want you to stop working for Me.....no more depending on selfComplete dependence on My grace and blood that is sufficient to cover all your sin. I laid My life down for you. I am your friend.*”*

“Greater love has no one than this than to lay down one's life for his friends.” John 15:13

Journal Entry: 1/1/2014

“The Cross My Victory”

Oh the cross is where I must stay; to see the love you
shed for me

For if I go too far awaymy heart! My heart! Could
go astray

Oh the cross is where I must stay, to see the love you
shed for me

For every drop of blood is like the sea; engulfing all my
depravity.

Oh the cross is where I must stay, to see the love you
shed for me

Wash over me crimson flow, for I desire to be white as
snow

Oh the cross is where I must stay, to see the love you
shed for me

Oh, the cross! My victory!

“For God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Galatians 6:14

Study Questions

Chapter 3

In my own personal journey with the Lord I had to recognize that I had walked separated from the Lord, because of the many hurts of my past. The Lord wanted to heal the broken places of my heart, so that I could come close. **(Psalm 147:3)**

What about you? Have childhood wounds contributed to who you are today?

What are some of the negative emotions that you struggle with: anger, fear, shame, guilt, rejection, jealousy, worthlessness?

I really struggled with trying to live up to a religious standard I put on myself. I realized that I had real emotions that were dominating my thinking. I needed healing. John 15:4 tells me that I must only abide in Him, and then I can bear fruit. So, that means I come to Jesus with all my ugly, my secrets, my failings, my hidden sin in honest confession. There and only there can I be reconciled back to “Abiding”? (1 John 1:9)

1. Read John chapter 15. The word “Abide “means to **stay or to remain**. Please list any hurts that may have

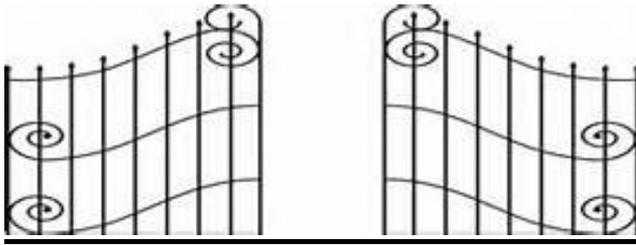
separated you from the vine and have caused you not to have an “Abiding Relationship” with Him. (Be real)?

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.” **John 15:4**

Dear Lord I confess I have been trying to bear fruit without you. I come to you asking for your forgiveness. Here are some things I have been holding in my heart: _____

Prayer:

Teach me how to abide in you through your word and time spent alone with you. Help me to make this my highest priority. Amen.



Chapter 4

"Trust the Lord"

Gate 4 -"Unquestioning" Belief

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto my own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Proverbs 3: 5-6

Webster's dictionary says that **TRUST** implies instinctive unquestioning belief in and reliance upon something. Trust is the confidence we have in a person because they have shown themselves trustworthy over a period of time.

Unquestioning belief and confidence in the Lord was another gate to my restoration. The Lord wanted to bring restoration to every broken area of my life; however, it would require me to trust Him with my entire heart.

I would no longer be able to lean on my own ways of doing things, but I would have to take Gods word at face value and trust the Lord enough to obey what He said to do.

There are several key principles that will encourage you to trust God more.

God blesses those who trust Him.

First, let's look at the life of Abraham. He was asked by God to bring a sacrifice. In Genesis Chapter 22: "The Lord asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son whom Abraham loves." Abraham obeyed the Lord, but just before Abraham was about to slay his son God provided a sacrifice. The Lord did not require Abraham to actually sacrifice his son. God will test our love for Him by asking us to release things we love to Him. He wants us to love and trust Him in every area of our life. The Lord blessed Abraham's trust in Him. Here is the promise that God made to Abraham because He trusted and then obeyed the Lord.

*"Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and **have not withheld** your son, your only son. **"Blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your***

descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.”

Genesis 22: 15-17

God’s desire is for us to be completely restored to Him.

Remember it was God’s original plan for us to depend completely on Him to have all of our needs met. Before the fall, Adam and Eve never worried or were anxious about where their next meal was coming from. Adam and Eve had complete trust in the Lord for all of their needs to be satisfied. What do you think would have happen if Abraham had not obeyed God completely? He could have rationalized the command from God and brought His own sacrifice and laid it on the altar. Genesis 22: 16 clearly tells us that because Abraham completely obeyed God He blessed Abraham.

The Lord reminded me of a circumstance in my own life that would require complete trust in Him. I was working for a company in Texas. I was enjoying a lot of success by the world's standards. I had a very prominent position where I oversaw over 300 employees. I made a significant amount of money and had all the company perks. I can honestly say at that time in my life. I loved my job. However, I also loved the Lord and had a great desire to line up my life where He could be glorified completely. While on vacation one summer God began to speak with me very clearly about His plans for my life. He led me to read my

Bible. While reading my word, He spoke to my heart: *"Daughter I want you to quit your job. I want you to come home and support your husband in his business. I want you to trust me for all the finances. I want to warn you. When you go to your boss and give your resignation they will try to tempt you to stay by offering you a lot of money and other forms of compensation. Daughter, I am your God and I will take care of you."*

I knew I needed to trust God, but at that time it felt like I was sacrificing my own child. I had invested years of hard work and dedication into all the people who worked for me. The truth was I was sacrificing my own children and husband at home. God had much better plans for me, but it would require complete trust on my part. At the time my paycheck was the primary source of income, therefore quitting my job was a huge step of faith.

However, I trusted God with an act of obedience. I gave my notice to my boss. Also, everything God said happened. My trust in God was tested. The company offered me a ridiculous amount of money to stay with the company and not quit. I had no idea how we were going to pay our bills, but with my husband's blessing I walked away from everything and trusted God. The Lord had made a promise to me the day He spoke to my heart. He said, *"Daughter I will take care of you"*.

“Therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will put on” **Matthew 6:25**. The Lord was true to His promise. My husband received a call 2 weeks after I quit my job. He was offered a business venture that increased our income by 2 times what I made every year. God

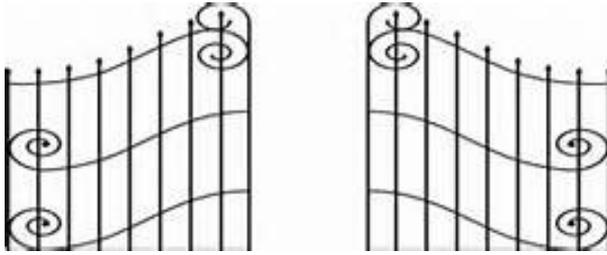
Chapter 4

Study Questions

1. Do you have an unquestioning belief that God will take care of every detail of your life?
2. What has God asked you to surrender?
3. Are you struggling to obey God because of a lack of trust in Him?

Prayer:

Lord, I pray you will increase the faith of the person reading this. I pray you will strengthen them to take the steps to obey you. Remind them that your word says “It impossible to please God without faith”. (Hebrew 11:6)



Chapter 5 **"Obedience at all cost"**

Gate 5 - "Costly Obedience has a Great Reward"

*"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? **To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.**" 1 Samuel 15:22*

In chapter 4 we learned that trust is key to obedience. Trust comes out of a relationship, not religion. The Lord desires a deep and real relationship with His children. However, if we do not understand God's character of love and goodness we will continue to lose the battle between our flesh and our spirit.

I personally had a hard time wrapping my mind around total obedience as a new believer. I could blame my

repeated disobedience to God's word on being a new believer, but I had to come to understand that my struggle with total obedience had to do with my greatest enemy. The enemy called "FLESH". The Flesh is our carnal nature or the nature of Satan. Yes!! That's right our Flesh if not brought into submission to the Spirit of the Lord and His word is in cahoots with Satan. Now that is a scary thought that we live with two natures that are at war with each other every day. We have the nature of God (the) Holy Spirit in us and the nature of Satan (the Flesh) both in a small space called our body. They both want to have full control of your life. However, that is where we come in. Neither one can have total control without the express permission of our will. *"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind (nature of Satan) is enmity against God; for it is not subject (submitted) to the law of God, nor indeed can be". Romans 8:6-7*

As a kid, my dad loved to watch boxing on Saturday nights. I did not really care for it, but I would join him on the couch out of sheer boredom. One punch, two punch, and so on the boxing match would go. The least of the opponents would get so weak from all the blows to the face. I would watch the weaker opponent begin to lose his footing and eventually the stronger boxer would seize the opportunity to administer the final blow. The final blow was the dreaded knockout

punch!! The bell would ring and the officials would rush to the winning boxer. The referee would then raise the winner's hands to signify that he was the champion. I always felt really bad for the boxer who lost. The loser's defeat was always accentuated by the residue from the gaping wounds oozing with blood on his face. The loser would lay on the floor in defeat. The champion would declare his victory by walking around the boxing ring.

I knew that I needed to obey God and His word. However, I was much like the losing opponent in the boxing match. I would start my day in the boxing ring with all the right intentions of defeating my enemy the "flesh" and obeying God's word. Although my intentions were good, the dreaded first blow would always come. A circumstance would present itself. I would then have to choose. I learned that if I was ever going to be victorious in obeying the Lord I was going to have to decide to kill the flesh in me. I would have to die to my fleshly ways and make the Lord's ways a priority. *"Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."*

Galatians 5:24

During this journey of training, I was confronted with many opportunities to choose obedience to God's word. Unfortunately, I was very rebellious. Honestly, I had been that way from early childhood. I found out

later that many victims of abuse are typically very angry inside, and often struggle with rebellion. However, I loved God very much and I wanted to please him.

A heart **motivated by love** responds in ways opposite from our fleshly nature.

I do not think I am alone in saying “the flesh” has ruled more of my days than I would like to admit. I am like Paul who stated, “I do the things I do not want to do and I do the things I do not want to do I do.” However, God has given us the ability to live in victory over our enemy (the carnal nature). **Romans 7:15-21**



Keys to Obedience

First, if we are a true Christian's who have completely surrendered your heart to Jesus. We are not devising plans on how to disobey God every day. Most Christians truly want to live a life victorious and free from the strongholds that disobedience to God will bring. There are many reasons why Christian's disobey God. Ignorance of the word of God because

they do not study the bible, they starve the spirit and feed the flesh; they are seeking the things of the world more than they are seeking holiness. However, I want to share 2twokey ways that God taught me in my journey that hinder His people from being more obedient. Lack of intimacy with God & Fear of man.



“Intimacy”

First, let’s look at intimacy with God as a **key to obedience to Him and His word**. Prior to my encounter with the manifest presence of the Lord, I really struggled to obey God. Now do not get me wrong I do believe it is possible to obey God without ever encountering His manifest presence because the Holy Spirit lives in us and the Bible declares that is enough to overcome sin. However, for me, there was a distinct shift in my desire to do whatever it took to obey God after I encountered God Himself. The Lord’s unconditional love was able to break down the walls of religion I had erected to protect myself from a truly intimate and vulnerable relationship with God.

Our obedience to God and His word should always be motivated by the love He first gave to us. When we love someone we want to spend time with them. We want to do things that make them happy. You get great joy knowing their deepest desires and finding a way to fulfill them. That is what God had in mind when He created us. He wanted you to know Him and love him. He wanted intimacy with His children. My journey of intimacy with the Lord began in a quiet place called the “secret place.” Psalm 31:20 “You shall hide them in secret place of your presence”..... there I would share my deepest concerns, secrets, and real emotions about the different difficulties of my life. The Lord would then share His deepest concerns, secrets, and real emotions about the different difficulties facing His people and how to pray for the concerns of His heart. I would then journal our time together for future reference. He was and still is my closest friend and confident. I trust Him and He trusts me. I do not ever want to hurt him by disobeying Him. Although, I am human and do at times disobey Him. I run to Him in the **“Secret place” (a place where the Lord and I meet) every morning** and He always forgives me. (Psalm 91:1)

My husband and I were experiencing a very difficult season. A business that we had owned for 10 years had failed. The failed business brought devastation, hurt, and shame. The financial downturn was probably the hardest for my children who had been raised in an affluent neighborhood and now we're living in a travel trailer. This was a time of great humbling. During this season God was showing me many of the deep things of my heart. One of the places was the pride of life. The Lord had spoken to my heart that he wanted me to rest in knowing He would take care of me & my family. My husband had gotten a job, and we were able to pay our monthly commitments. However, I decided I needed to go to school and get a medical certificate. I presented the idea to my husband. I told him it would help with the bills, but God showed me that my true motives for getting a medical certificate was very different than that. He reminded me that He had asked me to rest in Him, because He had things in my future he needed me to do for Him. The Lord showed me there was absolutely nothing wrong with getting an education. however, if that is not the Lord's will for my life that is another story. He paid a great price for my life and I am his **bondservant (one bound to service without wages)** to please Him at all cost.

I wrestled with the Lord in prayer over the matter. One morning while in “the secret place with the Lord” I just began to cry out to Him. I told the Lord “I feel like

such a loser”. I am so ashamed of our failures. My husband & I have been humbled beyond belief. “Oh Lord, can’t I just go to school and get a degree?” “I just want to be somebody”. I remember the Lord’s response. Daughter, I will not be angry with you if you choose to go to school, but if you will lay that desire down and obey me you will see I have something far greater prepared for you. Isn’t the Lord amazing! He was not harsh or condemning to me, but kind and gentle as He led me to a much better way He desired me to go. His unconditional love drew me closer, and that was now my motivation to obey Him. It was easy now for me to give all my failures, shame, and disappointment to Him. I no longer needed to cover these inward insecurities with an outward band-aid. I did not need to prove my worth. Jesus had shown me my value in Him. Shame and guilt could no longer keep me from the **“Secret place” (a place where the Lord & I meet)**.

The greatest threat to our obedience to Christ is when we feel ashamed of our failures. Shame drives us to hide our sins and failures. Mercy draws us into the Lord’s presence to hear His perfect will for our lives.

“Oh my God, in you I trust ...Let me not be put to shame.” **Psalm 25:2**

Chapter 5

Study Questions

“Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices; as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.” 1 Samuel 15:22

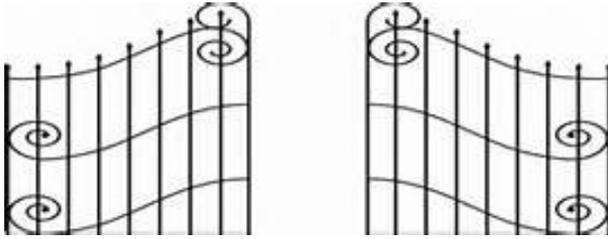
Obedience is defined as – an act of obeying

Obedience is an action. We must move from just knowing what we should do, but actually taking the action to obey. However, this will require faith and trust in the Lord.

Is trusting hard for you?

If so, ask the Lord to help you understand why it is so hard for you to trust Him?

Prayer: Lord you know my desire to obey you and your word, but I am struggling. Help me to trust. Please strengthen me in your unconditional love. Amen



Chapter 6

Repentance & Forgiveness

Gate 6– “Gate of Repentance”

“For Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted, but the sorrow of the world produces death” . 2 Corinthians 7:10

The gate of repentance is by far the most essential doorway to restoration. Repentance is acknowledging our sin before a Holy God. **The meaning of sin is the act of violating God’s will by disobeying His word.** Repentance was not at the top of my list as a priority in my Christian walk. I mentioned earlier in chapter one that I had a distorted view of the love of God. Until the Lord revealed His love to me, I really thought everything in the bible was optional. Did I really have to obey His word? What's the big deal? I'm going to heaven aren't I? Now don't get me wrong I knew that yelling at my kids was wrong and gossiping about a

co-worker in the break-room was not pleasing to God. I always felt bad, but I never really had real Godly sorrow for disobeying the word of God. Therefore, there was no real transformation in this gate of my heart.

Guilt for doing wrong things does not bring me any closer to God. In fact, Guilt is a place of torment and condemnation that kept me from the true freedom Jesus died for me to have. However, I have come to realize through the love of God. “Repentance “is as essential to the Christian walk as taking a bath daily or brushing my teeth. However, did I take the time to sit with the Lord in the morning? Did I ask the Lord to search my heart for any sin or offence I might be harboring in my heart? Before I started my day? *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139:23*

I had to learn how to incorporate daily time in the Lord’s presence. I had plenty of worldly sorrow, but I did not have Godly sorrow which leads to **salvation**. I was the queen of justification. I justified my sin based on my own standards not the standards of a Holy God. Oh, sweet friend, I was purely deceived at this gate of deception in my heart. I am reminded of what the word says in **Galatians 5:19-21** we are told not to walk in

our old nature once we become God's child through salvation. *"Now the works of the flesh are evident which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murder, drunkenness, revelries."*

I want to reiterate, true "**Repentance**" is the key, not perfection. Although, the Lord has set me free from many of the bondages of my past sins, I am still very human, and I sin. The only difference now is that I position myself in the presence of God and ask the Lord to send the precious Holy Spirit to bring Godly sorrow for my sins. I then confess my sin to the Lord and ask Him to put them under His precious blood. Sins put under the blood with true repentance are washed away. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* **1 John 1:9**.

Recently, I found myself separated in a gate in my heart from my beloved savior. Sin had come into the camp and it was doing its usual dirty work *"For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is always before me."* **Psalm 51:3**

A cruel word of accusation had come to tear down my character. I tried to defend myself but helplessly it only escalated the verbal assault.

The words came like a sword headed for the most vulnerable place in my body (my heart). The enemy devising his strategic plan through a willing vessel. His agenda was to bring complete defeat. Kill her with the wounding words or entice her to sin because of the wounding words. The enemy's tactics were working. My heart felt like it was broken to the point of no repair. For the next three days, I struggled.

I knew biblically what I had to do. I had to ask for forgiveness for my part of the verbal altercations, according to **Luke 6:27-26**, although, I did nothing to bring on the wrong words. Oh, how easy it would be to justify a non-biblical response. **I had to choose reconciliation**, from my side of the camp. So, I asked the Lord to forgive me for my wrong response. I then mustered up the courage to ask for forgiveness from the one who had hurt me. *“For when He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him, who judges righteously.”* **1 Peter 2:23**

To the best of my ability, I had tried to bring reconciliation. However, there was a dull pain that seemed to linger in my heart. The next day I skipped my early morning time in the Secret Place with my beloved Jesus. I quickly busied myself with cooking and cleaning projects. I found it hard to connect with the Lord at church that morning during worship

(unusual for me). I honestly could not get out of church fast enough. This was very abnormal for me. Finally, I had to confront this gate in my heart that was keeping me separated from intimacy (a place of freedom where intimate thoughts are exchanged) with the Lord. I cried out to the Lord! Why am I struggling? I have done my part to forgive! I have repented to my accuser! A song was playing in the background from my computer. I heard the words “Intimacy! Intimacy!” as the songwriter worshiped the Lord. Immediately, I felt the Lord’s presence healing my broken heart. The Lord removed every hurtful word of accusation. Hurt was being mended by God’s love and mercy. I clearly heard these words from the Holy Spirit. *“Daughter, The enemy is stealing my people through un-forgiveness. Daughter, I want you to pray for my children. They must repent and forgive if they are to truly know Me.”*

Chapter 6

Study Questions

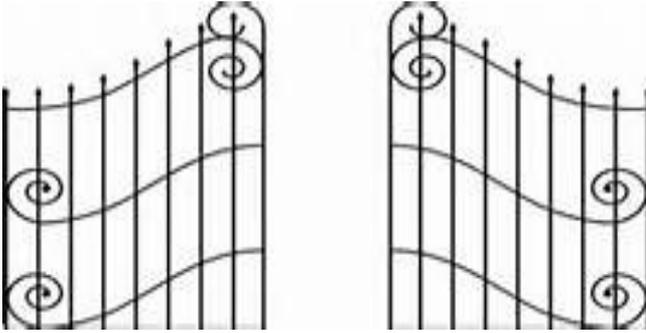
“And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast, saying, “**God , be merciful to me a sinner!**” Luke 18:13

Repentance is the posture our heart should take when we want to receive forgiveness.

Repent means- to turn and go in another direction. What are some things you need to turn from and go into the direction God has for you?

Prayer: Lord help me to turn from _____.

I know that this does not bring you glory. Help me to be like the tax collector. Give me a heart full of humility and repentance. Heal every hurt and broken place in my heart. Amen



Chapter 7 "Entering His Rest"

Gate 7 - Deliverance that Leads to Rest

*"Therefore, since a promise remains of **entering His rest**, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it."* **Hebrews 4:1**

Rest makes up the first four letters of **R**estoration. There is no mistake that rest makes up the beginning letters of the word restoration. Rest is God's ultimate goal for you and your soul. *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"* **Matthew 11:28**. A beautiful promise from the God whose "Love is Unrestrained".

The Lord was knocking on another gate of my heart. Behind this gate of my heart was a path called Deliverance. **Deliverance** means "the process by which a person, believed to be under the control of an evil supernatural entity called a demon, is set free, and delivered from the control of that dark influence. **Oppression** means to burden with cruel or unjust impositions or restraints; subject to a burdensome or harsh exercise of authority or power; to lie heavily upon (the mind, a person, etc.). Earlier in this message, I shared with you that I struggled with fear & depression. A soul that battles these manifestations of the enemy is a tormented soul. My bible says that Jesus my beloved savior came to set the captive free. *"To lose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free."* **Isaiah 58: 6.** However, I was not free from the torment of many strongholds (and some days I wanted to give up. However, I am so grateful I persevered because my savior had ordained my day of justice from those dark influences once and for all.

"The Doorway"

Before I share my testimonies of how the Lord so graciously set me free from a stronghold of fear, a stronghold of rebellion, and a stronghold of depression.

It is important to understand what a stronghold is. A stronghold is a "Fortress". For the Christian who has a spiritual stronghold, it is a "lie that has been planted strategically by the enemy. I want to share a principle that the Lord showed me about how these strongholds occur. There are two principles in the word "A root" and "A doorway". The root is the iniquity of the father. This is the generational sins I did not ask for. These are sins that come through the bloodline of my forefathers. In **Deuteronomy 32: 5-6** Moses says: *"They have corrupted themselves. A perverse and crooked generation. Moses rebukes the Israelites saying, 'Did not the Father in heaven ESTABLISH you'."* The Israelites had given themselves over to iniquity. The definition of iniquity is "Awon", which is a crookedness, perverseness; to bend, to pervert, deviate from the right path. Although their Father in heaven had established Himself as their God, the Israelites chose to leave the path He had chosen for them. The Israelites decided to take a crooked path called "iniquity" or sin. Therefore, they became established in sin or rebellion to God not in repentance and submission to God. This generational sin is still affecting you and me today. Go with me to another scripture in God's word **Exodus 20:5**. *"For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me. Although, you did not commit the sins your ancestors did."* For instance,

in the next few pages, I will be sharing about my deliverance from depression. This iniquity “root” had been passed through my mother’s bloodline. My mother, my grandmother, and my great-grandmother all had depression. The doorway was “un-forgiveness” toward those who had hurt them or rejected them. The Lord showed me that the “Spirit of depression” was able to have a stronghold in my life because I had the same pattern of un-forgiveness in my life. Therefore, I had to be diligent in seeking the Lord and asking God to reveal these roots of un-forgiveness in my heart. Ultimately, I would have to choose to forgive.



“Fear No Evil”

*“There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear involves **torment**. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” 1 John 4:18*

The gate to this part of my heart was fear and it had become a prison that I lived in every day; however to most people I looked perfectly normal.

This gate was one that I desired to open to Jesus (He only comes in when invited); however, this gate was guarded by a dark influence. This dark influence had been given rights to this gate because of the sin and trauma that I experienced as a young child.

As a young child at the age of 5, the unthinkable had begun to occur, my own father was sexually abusing me. I became captive of his lustful desires (iniquity of the father) with no way to defend myself. This experience was terrifying for me as a small child. Therefore, fear literally overtook me (or the dark influence took residence at a gate in my soul). As I grew into an adult fear seemed to be the root of every decision. I was a Christian and had quoted the scripture “*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and of a sound mind.* **2 Timothy 1:7**, however, my life did not reflect that scripture at all. I lived with chronic anxiety. I had become so overtaken with fear, anxiety, and worry that I was unable to drive without being overtaken with panic attacks. I had to take medications just to carry out daily tasks. My heart was being held captive by a dark influence called “fear”.

I had never heard about **deliverance (release from captivity, slavery, oppression, or any restraint)** in the churches I had attended. I had never seen anyone who had been freed from dark influences during my

Christian life to this point. I was very naïve about such things.

However, in my journey of deliverance and healing, God began to reveal to me how many of His children have been oppressed with fear through similar traumatic events in their lives. Today my friend if you are reading this testimony I want you to know that the same Jesus that completely brought deliverance from the spirit of fear to me one early Thursday morning is the same Jesus that wants to set you free. **Perfect love sets the captive free.**

1 Corinthians 13: 8 *“Love never fails”*

Very Important: When God brings freedom and deliverance, it is unique for each one of His children. The following is my journey, and you must understand that our Heavenly Father’s ultimate goal is to bring freedom. However, your journey may not look the same as mine.

John 8:36 *“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”*

TESTIMONY:

It was a typical Thursday. My morning routine was in full swing. I was up early to spend time with the Lord, and then rushing out of my bedroom to get my three

boys up for school, fed the dogs and of course making my husband's lunch for work. Thursday was also the day I attended a women's Bible study. I was running a little behind that day, so I rushed into Bible study a little late. I took a seat up at the front of the sanctuary. Our Pastor's wife was sharing about her recent trip to Mexico where she was ministering to a church. She was sharing about her unique experience regarding the deliverance of people oppressed by evil spirits. She spoke in detail about how God's love was setting them free from many oppressive spirits.

During my leader's time of ministry, something very unusual began to occur within me. I began to become very agitated. I began to fidget. I also felt an intense desire to run out of the sanctuary. In addition, wrong thoughts of evil toward my Pastor's wife began to flood my mind.

I had never experienced such overwhelming emotions and thoughts that I could not control. I quietly cried out to the Lord and asked Him what was happening to me? After a few moments of seeking the Lord in desperation, I heard the Holy Spirit speak to my heart these words. "Daughter, you are in need of deliverance." What? I said to the Lord. How could that be?

In my desperate attempt to understand all that was being communicated to me by the Holy Spirit, I called

out to my Pastor's wife to come over to me. She approached me and asked, "What is wrong?" I could barely get the words out. "I need deliverance". Immediately, she began to pray for me.

What happened next was both shocking and miraculous. I fell to the ground. By the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, my Pastor's wife began to say to me. "Marlee, forgive your father! Forgive your father!" Immediately, I was taken into a vision of me and my father in His bedroom. I was 5 years old in the vision. However, in the vision, Jesus was in the room. In the vision, Jesus began to speak to me.

"Forgive your father, Daughter!" I began to ask the Lord this question, "Why did you let this happen to me, Lord?"

Jesus never answered my question directly. He simply looked at me with His perfect eyes of love. Daughter, forgive your father.

I (the little girl at 5 years old) obeyed the Lord. I heard myself say, "I forgive you, daddy".

Immediately, the spirit of fear that had held me captive for 40 years released its grip on my soul. I was free from fear!

Immediately, following this time of deliverance I felt an indescribable peace. I had finally found rest from the dark influence of fear. I sat in the presence of God for a really long time praising Him and thanking Him for His love for me. I was free and it was all because of Jesus and His perfect love.

Very important: Jesus was never concerned about the dark influence that was guarding the gate of fear in my heart. Jesus never had my leader to command the dark influence to leave. No!

Jesus took the time to take my hand and go back to the place where my father had abused me. There Jesus showed me how He had never left me. He showed me how he was there during this horrible event. His concern was that I understood how much He loved me and that His desire was to bring justice to His little girl. The deliverance was not about the dark influence. The dark influence of fear had no choice (Jesus was on the scene it had to leave). **Philippians 2:10** *“That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under earth!”*

Are you experiencing tormenting fear?

Spend some time seeking the Lord. Ask Him to reveal to you the reason why fear is such a struggle for you, and how you may have given the enemy a place to influence your soul (mind, will, and emotions).

Many times fear is an iniquity passed down from generation to generation. Ask the Lord show you.

FORGIVE all parties involved. Freedom starts with forgiveness.



“Restoration of my Mind”

I was in a season experiencing encounters of deliverance by my loving Jesus. I had no idea of all the dark influences that were hidden in my heart. I then began a journey that lasted a couple of years. The Lord was cleansing His dwelling place in my heart from all demonic influence. The Lord revealed another gate in my heart that was guarded by a dark influence. The demon was called rebellion. As a young person, I had allowed myself to become involved with tarot cards and weekly visits to a psychic. I had a deep thirst for knowledge as a young person and wanted to know my future had a hope, so I found myself involved in these dark activities including reading daily horoscopes.

The Bible warns against engaging in such activities in **Deuteronomy 18:10**. *“There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures up spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who call up the dead. For all who do these things is an abomination to the Lord.”*

During my season of deliverance, the Lord began to bring freedom from these influences. Unfortunately, these activities were rooted in witchcraft and had given an open door to demonic activity in my thought life. However, one morning while worshiping and praying at the altar at church the Lord began to reveal to me that my interaction with darkness had given place to strongholds in my mind. He began to tell me that He wanted to set me free from a “spirit of rebellion”. *“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.”* **1 Samuel 15:23**. I knew I struggled with thoughts of rebellion. Especially toward those who had authority in my life, in particular my husband. However, the Lord set me free that day from a “spirit of rebellion”. The spell that was once over my mind was completely lifted from my mind and thinking. I was now able to freely choose obedience to God’s word without hindrance.

Dear friend, dabbling in any form of witchcraft is dangerous as a believer or non-believer. I would have

never guessed that what seemed harmless had opened my mind to such darkness. If you have partaken of such activities ask for forgiveness. The Lord desires to bring complete deliverance to your soul. Ask the Lord to set you free from these influences once and for all.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, I am so sorry I engaged in activities that are not pleasing to you. I renounce all ties to witchcraft and I freely accept your grace and forgiveness. Cleanse my mind and my soul from all darkness. Amen.



“Tea for Two”

It has been approximately five years ago since depression left me for good! I had struggled with depression for most of my life. After, the birth of my

children the depression became more pronounced. One year after moving from California to Texas I remember depression became so bad that I spent most of my time in bed. I had absolutely no desire to participate in normal activities. At the request of my husband, my mother took me to the doctor, who gave me medication. The depression subsided so that I could care for my family again. However, the depression never really left me. I still lived with the daily stronghold of depression.

One afternoon, I was called by a leader in the prayer ministry I served in. She asked me to come and pray for our Pastor. Our Pastor was still working and needed to go and visit one of His Church members in the hospital. He wanted us to pray that his job would allow him to leave early that day. At the time the ministry had a tea house in town. The tea house was used to sell donated items to raise support for missions, and specialty teas were served throughout the day. My friend and dear intercessor was there finishing up for the afternoon. I decided I would meet her there to pray for our pastor. I arrived at the tea house late in the afternoon. My friend motioned me to come to the dining area to pray. We sat at one of the round tables and held hands to pray. We both began praying for our pastor, but suddenly something amazing began to happen. To my surprise, my friend's prayer focus switched from our pastor to me. My friend began to

declare “It is your mother, yes! It is your mother’s mother, Marlee it is generational.” Marlee the depression is generational. Just then much like other times of deliverance, I fell to the ground. Again, I had no control of this beautiful time of deliverance. My precious friend motioned other women in the ministry to come into the room and begin to worship the Lord. During this time the Lord took me back into a vision of me as a little girl in my childhood home. There I was as a 4-year-old under our dining room table hiding. During that season my mother was experiencing deep depression due to my father's alcohol and drug abuse. The Lord assured me as a small child He was with me and that He wanted me to forgive my mother.

He spoke to me explaining to me that my mother was not able to be there at the time, but that He was there caring for me. Immediately, I had complete peace in the presence of the Lord as He reassured me. I said, “Lord I forgive my mom”. As quickly as I spoke those words the “Spirit of depression” left me. Joy unspeakable filled my heart. I was completely and thoroughly set free from depression. I have not had to take medication for depression since that day. “*Whom the Son sets free is free indeed.*” **John 8:36** That is a promise from God’s Word.

Study Questions

Chapter 7

As I noted in Chapter 6 that in every case of deliverance or healing that the Lord has so lovingly brought to pass, the **key that unlocked the gate to my freedom was “forgiveness”** for those who had wronged me.

If you are struggling with depression, mental illness, fear or strongholds of any kind the Lord desires to bring freedom.

Ask the Lord to search your heart for any unforgiveness that may be residing in it.

*“Bearing with one another and forgiving one another. If anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also **must do.**”* **Colossians 3:13**

Forgiving someone who has harmed you is not easy. Whether the offence was betrayal, wrong words, accusations, or complete rejection. Offences hurt.

However, according to **Colossians 3** we must forgive as Christ has forgiven us.

The word **must** is defined as: a “command”

Repentance is the posture our heart should take when we want to receive forgiveness; forgiveness is the posture our heart takes when we release the individual who has harmed us.

Dear Lord, I desire to be free from _____ . I do not want to allow unforgiveness to stand in the way of my deliverance from these dark influences. Please show me who or what circumstance I need to forgive. Thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness to reveal the hidden things of the heart by the precious Holy Spirit.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind.” **Jeremiah 17:9-10**

In Conclusion

Jesus is standing at the “Gate” of your heart. He is holding a gift in His hand. The gift is wrapped in the most beautiful paper. The inscription on the paper is the word “Love”. The bow the gift is wrapped in is defined as “Pure Gold”. Patiently, lovingly, humbly, Jesus stands at the “Gate” of your heart waiting. Maybe like me you have been running from the pain of abuse. You have tried every relationship to try to fill the deep longing to be loved or maybe you have been struggling with addictions that are holding you captive to defeat, or you have been a Christian for a long time and the best way to describe your life right now is the word “Broken” (having given up all hope; despair). My encouragement to you is the following: Open the “Gate” of your heart to the unconditional love of “Jesus”. Accept the free gift of “Restoration” He is holding in His hand. The price of this gift was very costly. Yet He wants you to know that His death, burial, and resurrection was worth everything He suffered, so that you could freely walk through the “Gates of Restoration”.

“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and a root out of dry

ground. He has no form of comeliness; and when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:1-5

The definition of healed: rebuilt, reconciled, regenerated, repaired, revived, renewed, and **RESTORED.**

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for the punishment you took on my behalf. I turn from a life of sin. I invite you into the gates of my heart. I trust you to lead me through the gates of restoration. Amen