

# What Can I Do?

a journey from  
the church to the streets

By Janet Fairrington

**M**y name is Janet Fairrington.  
My husband Daryl and I have been the  
Directors of a Gospel Mission for, in  
Oregon for 20 years now. We minister  
to women and children with broken lives  
-some call them life's throwaways, we call  
them precious.

One would probably assume that my husband and I came from the same lifestyle because after all haven't we all heard that to relate to someone we need to have walked in their shoes, or have been through what they have been through? That kind of thinking is why I am writing my story. I do not want anyone to miss out on the awesome blessing of seeing broken lives redeemed, or being a part of the beauty that comes out of ashes because they think they have nothing in common with people who have found themselves homeless and on the streets.

Therefore I would like to share with you my path from the church to the street, and share with you my heart concerning the ministry of rescue along with a personal challenge for all of us.

In 1989 I found myself sitting outside the Rescue Mission watching the people going in and out, my heart aching and asking the Lord,

**“What can I do?”**

After all, I was raised in the church in a Christian home by two parents that loved and served God with all their hearts. I was never abused, never went hungry, always had a warm meal and a clean bed. I had a husband who loved God and loved me, two grown children serving God, plus grandchildren that loved Jesus. I found myself wondering, “What brought me to the door of a homeless shelter?”

Let me take you back to the year 1958 in Downey, California, to a twelve-year-old girl who thought everybody needed to know Jesus.

I was always dragging some kid to church who had problems bigger than I could handle. After all, I was just a kid myself and a new believer that didn't know much about serving God. All I knew was I loved Jesus, and He had the answers for them. I thought if I could just get them to Jesus, He would do the rest, but I ran into an obstacle.

With an ache in my heart, I hesitate at this point, but I must say with all honesty if this journey is to be fully in His Light, the obstacle was the church. I heard statements like,

*“They only come to church  
because they want to go to the activities,”  
or, “They are going to pollute our young people.”*

At one point, two young girls I had brought to church that my Mom had led to the Lord, were told by the leadership of the church that they could not come back. Within a year, both of those girls were dead. I cannot begin to express what entered my heart at that point, only to say there was an ache that went very deep for those who had lost hope and had become the outcasts of society and even the church, there came a resolve to see unloved and unwanted people find the love of Jesus and His saving grace.

I must say I was confused and full of questions because of what I had experienced when we lost my two friends, one to suicide and the other by a drug overdose. My Mom informs me from that time on; as she puts it, I began collecting people that no one else wanted. My motives many times

were in question by other people as to why I was hanging around with all “Those sinners.” I did not know much, but I did know that Jesus says, “Come,” so I kept inviting my friends to church.

At fifteen, I met Sarah, who would become my lifelong friend. She has been in my life and heart for 55 years now. I often joke, “Once I am in your life, you cannot get rid of me even if you want to.” I met Sarah in the choir.

Now I do have to admit; I was not in the choir because I had a good voice, or loved to sing; it was just an easy grade with no homework. Sarah was the songbird. She was a beautiful young girl who at age fourteen became pregnant and was whisked off to a secret place to have her baby.

Sarah had just returned to school when I began to enjoy her company. I invited her to church and before very long one of the boys named Michael became interested in her. Eyebrows were raised, and church leaders were once again in protection mode. I can’t imagine what they would have done if they had known that she had had a child. She began to feel unwanted.

My parents and I were determined there would not be a repeat of what happened with my other two friends. Mom again was faithful and led Sarah to Jesus. Mom and I were a pretty good team in those days. I would bring them in, and she would lead them to Jesus.

Please understand - Mom's approach to protecting me was different. Not running my unsaved friends off, she would just lead them to Jesus and then begin to disciple them. Mom has always believed that what belongs to God is God's. He is the Keeper of our souls. She knew my heart for Jesus; she knew my heart for the lost. Mom understood my motives.

Better yet, however, she knew God's great commission, "Go, therefore, and make disciples..." (Matthew 28:19a.) After Sarah's conversion, she revealed her secret about her child to me and asked that I never tell anyone. I honored her request; I never told a soul.

The only reason I am telling this story now is with her permission and the fact that it is no longer a secret. Sarah has revealed her past to all her family. She and the young man who became

interested in or married for many years until he passed away after a long battle with cancer. They have two sons and three grandchildren.

Many in Sarah's family are serving God, because of her testimony, including her three sisters, their husbands, and children. Her Mother and Father both gave their hearts to Jesus before dying of cancer. Praise be to God; they are now in Heaven with our Lord. Sarah has led many souls to Jesus. After their retirement, they were as active as ever in the service of our God.

What a tragic loss if she too, had been driven out of the church! We often joked, while most of our friends were fighting to get out of the church, we as teenagers were fighting our way in. As I write of these early experiences, I am not writing from a bitter heart against anyone or against the church. I love the family of God, and I believe they are His house, so how can I be angry with anything that belongs totally to My Savior? I believe everything that comes to me comes through His hand. Jesus said to Simon Peter in Luke 22:32-33, "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brothers." Verse

33 says, but he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.” God was doing something deep within my spirit that would take me on a journey through my own wilderness and mountain top experiences that thirty years later would lead me from the church to the streets.

In Exodus 15:22-27 Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea to the wilderness of Shur. They came to Marah, and the waters were bitter. The people complained, and the Lord showed Moses a tree. When he cast that tree into the bitter waters, they became sweet, and the Lord promised to heal them. They then moved on to Elim. My favorite part of the scripture is, “So they camped there by the water...” I love camping out at the water of His Word. God is faithful to keep me moving on. I thank the Lord my God that through the bitter waters of my life, I have learned to camp out at the foot of the Tree the Lord has shown me called the Cross. It has always healed me and made my bitter waters sweet.

I met my husband Daryl when I was very young. I was sixteen; he was twenty. I must say the thing about him that attracted me, besides the fact



that he was cute and rode a motorcycle, was a conversation I overheard. He was telling some of the other guys in the youth group about stopping to help someone whose car was broken down, and while he was helping the man, he was also telling him about Jesus. This has got to be the guy for me, I thought.

Well, eyebrows went up again. Who was this twenty-year-old guy who drove hot rods and motorcycles that was interested in one of our girls? Leadership began to encourage others not to fellowship with Daryl, not to let their kids hang out with him. Evil things were said about him.

However, everyone who really knew Daryl and loved him knew his love for Jesus was real. It just wasn't packaged the way the church thought was acceptable. Daryl has such a pure heart where people are concerned; he was not even aware of the opposition to him. He was just living life, loving it and everyone in it. He still lives his life that way and is an inspiration to me. I was soon to find out Daryl also had a heart for broken people.



Daryl and I were married in 1963. I was sixteen, and he was twenty-one. By 1966 we had two boys. So we began life together with many challenges, hardships, and trials.

When our oldest son John Roy was three months old, he needed to have surgery. That was a frightening experience for a seventeen-year-old Mom. Shortly after John Roy came home from the hospital, Daryl was going to the dairy after milk - he was on his motorcycle and was hit by a car, and his leg was crushed.

When the doctors x-rayed him, they discovered a tumor on the bone. We were told if it was not removed, it could later become cancerous. His tonsils were also infected, so he went into surgery with one doctor at his head and one at his feet. One was removing tonsils while the other was removing part of the ankle support bone.

Years later, when Daryl needed his leg x-rayed again because he had cut it with a chainsaw, it was discovered the bone was there, and there was no sign of a tumor. Did the doctor make a mistake, or did God put it back? I guess we

will know when we get to Heaven. Daryl was on crutches for six months. He supported us by working in a gas station at night on those crutches. He's quite a guy.

During this six-month period, he became gravely ill. The doctors thought he had spinal meningitis. However, the tests came back negative.

When Daryl was back on his feet, he returned to his construction work, then one day, his car was stolen with all of his tools. During this time, we also had six motorcycle-riding sailors who were stationed in Long Beach living in our garage. The neighborhood we lived in had several little boys who I suppose you would call "latch-key kids." Every night when Daryl got home, he would play ball in the back yard with them. After school, the boys would come to the door and ask if Daryl could come out and play. Sunday mornings Daryl would pile ten little boys in our station wagon and off to Sunday School we would go.

I also remember the couple that lived across the street from us who we befriended. They had children and were living together. In my sheltered life, I had never met anyone living in sin. So I made it my mission in life to see them married.

A few months later, they were married in our living room.

All the while, I suffered from blinding migraine headaches to the point that I even considered suicide. One night I found myself standing in the bathroom looking in the mirror with a loaded gun to my head. I could not pull the trigger, because as I stood there gazing into the mirror, my thoughts went to the sleeping baby in the next room. I realized if I pulled the trigger, ended my life and my agony, that it would just be the beginning of a life full of anguish for my child plus all the other people who loved me. I knew deep within my heart that God was not finished with me yet and that He had a plan for my life. However, my first response was to call Mom and Dad for help. They had always been there for me and faithful to take me to Jesus, just like they had taken my friends. But, I had begun a journey in my life that would teach me that Jesus desired an intimate relationship with me personally. It was going to be Him from now on and Me. He wanted to be the One I ran to.

One of the first scriptures The Lord ever gave me was Philippians 1:6, “Being confident of this very

thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

This scripture has been a source of life and hopes to me in many dark hours. It continues to be an encouragement that God is not finished with me yet. He does not give up on us even when we give up on ourselves. This was just the first eighteen months of our married life! It was extremely stressful on a teenage Mom and a young Dad. I began to question, “Where was God in all these trials and tribulations?”

Again I believe God has a purpose in everything that comes to us. In my youth, when things got difficult, I knew to run to my Mom and Dad. They always knew the way to God. Now it was time for me to find my own way to the Lord. No longer was He just the God of my parents but He was now my own personal savior. I must say I really didn’t understand the power of God’s Word at that time in my life. But my journey would bring me to the realization that God’s Word was the most important thing in my life. It would become my food, my health, my strength, my direction. I look back now and wonder how I survived those early times without His Word.

Douglas Eugene was born in 1966, the cutest little redhead you have ever seen. For the next eighteen years, my number one priority was raising my boys. I realized God had given me these two precious sons and I was responsible for raising them to be men of God. All the while, I was saying, “God, I know there is more,” but God reassured me the most important thing I could do was raise men of God. I had such a hunger for God, and I did not know how to satisfy it.

When it was time to start my oldest son John in school, I agonized over whether to put him in public or Christian school. I made myself sick worrying, which would be the right path. I understand a little more now about why the decision was such a battle for me. I realize that being in a Christian school was not only the plan for their lives, but also for mine. My involvement would teach me many needed lessons for future ministry. I spent a lot of time working in the area of fundraising and any other areas of need in my children’s Christian school. So, when both the boys were in school, I went to work for God. “That is how I will get close to Him,” I told myself. Thus began my journey of wrong thinking.

I felt the more I was doing for God, the more spiritual I was. So I got busy for God to earn His approval, always giving, but not taking time to receive. I thought if I went to church and cried a lot, that was all I needed. So, my new mission was to “Work for God,” all the while, having this empty feeling that something was missing. There had to be more; I was hungry for something. Do not get me wrong; I had a great love for Jesus, I just did not know how to truly receive from Him.

So the best way I felt to get close to Him was work, work, work, not understanding it was His Word, Word, Word! The work was already done by Him on the cross. I needed to straighten out my wrong thinking.

In our early twenties, Daryl and I led the choir, taught Sunday School, worked with the youth, and cleaned the church. My girlfriend Sarah and I made it our project to paint the inside of the whole church single-handedly. Sarah and I were ambitious and a little nuts. Daryl and I began to take people into our home.

We always had someone sleeping on the couch in our living room. I remember having a young



man who had been kicked out of his house staying with us. His Mom died shortly after he came to live with us, so he decided to join the military. He was home on leave one weekend and had been out late drinking. He was sleeping soundly on the couch in the living room. My little scamps John and Doug got up early. They thought it would be a funny idea to crumble up donuts and stuff them in Randy's ears while he was sleeping. Then they hid behind the chair and waited for him to wake up. Can you imagine going to bed with clean ears and waking up with donuts coming out of them? Pretty funny. John and Doug thought so too, although I am not so sure Randy was thrilled with the idea. But it did make him think twice about going out drinking since he thought he had stuffed his own ears!

The boys were always a source of joy and brought much laughter into my life. They were like having two comedians in the house, and still, are! The boys are now grown men with grandchildren now. They continue to be one of our greatest sources of joy and laughter.

In the late sixty's and early seventies, God began to move in an awesome way down on the beaches

in Southern California. Young people were getting saved by the hundreds. At the same time, our church was praying for revival; some young hippies started coming to our church. They wore sandals, had long hair, and carried big Bibles.

They not only carried those big Bibles, but they also read them, and they talked about God's Word all the time. They were so excited about God's Word that it was catching. One of the young men began to teach a Friday night Bible study in our church.

Daryl and I began to attend. That little Bible study changed the course of my life forever. I began to study the Word of God and hunger after it more and more. I saw in these young adults what I was hungering after; that very personal, close relationship with God and His Word.

The Bible study grew to be an exciting outreach in the church. The problem was it grew to be almost as large as the Sunday services. Some people were not happy about that, and it became a source of division in the church. This young man had such a pure heart and love for this body of believers. He left the church only because he

could not stand being the focus of this division that had cropped up in the church. He now pastors a church of more than ten thousand people in the same town. He never planned to have a big church; he just loved the Word and began to teach. God did the rest.

During this time I became involved with a women's group that was holding Bible studies Sarah was the Bible study coordinator. The wife of the young man who had been holding Bible studies in our church was the vice president of this club. I was asked to teach a Bible study. I had such a fear of being in front of people that when I was in school, I would rather take an F than get up in front of the class and give a report.

I recall one morning I was due to give one of those dreaded reports, I got up and took the fever thermometer and put it in front of the furnace to make it look as if I had a temperature. That way, my Mom would think I was sick, and I Would not have to go to school.

Unfortunately, I blew the whole end out of the thermometer. I had a hard time explaining that one. But I did get out of school; I also received

that F. So when I was approached to do the study, I thought, “This is out of the question.”

The Holy Spirit began to deal with me. I came to a place where I knew if I said no to Sarah, I would be saying no to the Lord. I kept thinking, “Lord, I am afraid I am not equipped; there are people who know more and can do a better job.”

However, the Holy Spirit just would not let me alone. He knew I would be teaching as many as ten Bible studies a week someday, and was wise not to let me know it at the time. Finally, I knew if I was to continue this walk with the Lord, I had to submit beyond my fears. I said, “yes!” Not willingly, but reluctantly. I began to study for the big day. It felt like doom’s day to me. I don’t even remember what I taught on. I can’t remember much about the study. I do remember the long drive down Florence Avenue; it seemed like an eternity. I think it was all of two miles. All the way I kept thinking of ways I could get out of it, and feeling like, “This isn’t real, this isn’t happening to me.”

Again I asked God, “What are You doing, and why are You making me do this?” Yet, I felt a presence

of the Holy Spirit that was different than I had ever experienced and would not experience again until November of 1998.

As I turned down the street and drew closer to the house where the study was to take place, I noticed cars lined up on both sides of the street. I thought to myself, “Someone must be having a Tupperware party or something.” I was just expecting a small group or at least hoped for a small group anyway. When I walked in the house the large living room and dining areas were full of women. I went into shock.

From that time on, everything was a blur. I do remember I had pages and pages of notes, and I forgot to even look at them. Afterward, everyone came to me and expressed how much they enjoyed the study and how good it was. It made me very uncomfortable; I got out of there as soon as I could. All the way home, I kept thinking, “I can’t believe I lived through that!”

Later I found out the Southern California Bible Study coordinator for the organization was there. They would not tell me this until later, because they thought I would be too nervous, they were

right, one Bible study led to another, before long I was teaching three a week.

Now with me, more was better, so I begin to think I must be really spiritual. I'm teaching three Bible studies now. One night when I was feeling the drain of all these women who were looking to me for their answers, a lady came up and said to me, "I want you to know I think of you as my pastor because I get more out of your teaching here than I do at church."

Well, I went into overload and shut down. I could not deal with their response; I was already in drain mode. That's what happens when you're doing things in your own strength with wrong motives. So into hibernation mode, I went. I had been so busy doing; I had not learned how to "Just be with the Lord." God again had His purpose in this process I was going through.

He was bringing me to a place of complete dependence upon Him. Again His Word to me was, "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:6. I still had so much of my identity wrapped up in

what I was doing for God; I continued in burn-out mode. As I look back, I see a pattern that was developing in my life. It was a cycle of busyness until I became so burnt out I would go into hibernation mode, then depression would come. When the depression came, I would run to the Lord and cry out to Him. At least by this time I was learning where to run. He was faithful to heal me and make my bitter waters sweet as always. I still did not get it. I would go back to my old patterns. I was so busy working for Jesus. I did not have time for Him.

My times of seclusion and depression did get further apart, but only because I was becoming better at managing the world that I was straining very hard to keep in control. I realize now, that kind of control is only an illusion. The more we think we are in control, the more out of control we really are!

Through those years, I did what I could for my kids, what I could for my church, plus from time to time we had children or some young couple who needed help staying in our home. At one time we had a newlywed couple living in the front yard in our camp trailer.

During this time I would become so burnt out I would close all my curtains and stop answering the phone. I would not even go to church. Daryl would faithfully take the kids every Sunday with or without me.

My husband Daryl was from Oregon and always talked of returning there to live. Spring break of 1976, we went to Oregon on vacation to see my husband's parents and to see what the possibility of moving might bring our way.

In the past, when we came to Oregon, we always went to Medford at Christmas time to see Daryl's family. It was always foggy, and I hated it. That spring we went to visit some friends of ours that moved from Southern California to a little town twenty-seven miles from Medford called Rogue River. I fell in love. It was a sleepy little town nestled in a small valley along the Rogue River. The best news, there was no fog!

Before our visit to Rogue River, I had a dream one night of a house. In my dream, I walked into the entry of a big house, and there was a large stairway going up the side wall in the hall to the second floor. On the other side of the entry was the



kitchen and dining room, that also led to the living room. The living room had two big windows side by side with a mountain view. I had forgotten all about that dream.

One Saturday afternoon we decided to look at houses. We followed a realtor up a long driveway past a pasture and up a hill to a house built on the side of the hill. The front was three stories with the garages, a large laundry room, and extra room downstairs. We drove up the hill to the backside of the house where the entry was. We entered on the second floor, which was at ground level, on the back side of the house.

When we went in, we entered a large entryway with the kitchen and dining room on the left and a large staircase on the right. As I walked down the entry that opened up into the living room, there were windows looking out on the mountains. I had a strangely familiar feeling that came over me. I felt as if I had been there before; I felt like I was home.

As we walked around through the dining room into the kitchen, it hit me; this was the kitchen in my dream. This was the house! I was home! We

made an offer on the house that day, and it was accepted. So in 1976, we packed up and moved to Oregon.

Being an only child, my parents did not like the idea, but God again had His plan. Also, God blessed our obedience by bringing Mom and Dad to Oregon in 1990. I was the happiest I had been for years. We lived and worked for the Lord in that little town in rural Oregon with a population of six-hundred people. We had a home I loved and plenty of rooms for lots of kids. Our pastor called it the Fairrington Motel.

Not long after we got settled into our new home, we began to work with the Youth Pastor. We had teenagers in and out of our home on a continual basis. The family joke was, “You never knew who spent the night until breakfast the next morning.” We had dogs, cats, horses, cows, rabbits, and a half-acre garden; plus a revolving refrigerator door with one of John and Doug’s friend’s head stuck in it regularly. The church was in the process of starting a Christian school.

Because of our experience in Christian schools, we were asked to serve on an advisory committee.

That was the beginning of six years of total commitment to young people. It is a wonder our own kids didn't grow up hating us. We were together all the time. We got up together and went to school together.

The majority of the time, I worked in their classroom, then we came home together. Daryl and I were youth sponsors, so we went to youth group together, plus planned and attended all the other youth activities on top of that! Then add into the mix the fact that Daryl and the boys were always very close. He would rather be with his boys than any friends he had. They fished, hunted, rode motorcycles, and anything else they could do together. It is still that way today.

Daryl was the kind of Dad that never said no to his boys if they wanted to go with him; he took them. For example, when John was two and Doug was about three months old, Daryl left one Saturday to do errands. He wanted to take both the boys, so off they went with John at his side, Doug in his infant seat, and the diaper bag in tow.

Hours later they returned with Daryl covered in grease. John looked like he had not had a bath in

a week. Doug was happy as he could be. I asked Daryl where in the world they had been? He replied, “I needed apart from the wrecking yard for my truck. I had to get under one of the trucks in the yard and take the part off myself.” I asked him what he did with the boys while he was under the truck. He said, “I just sat Doug’s infant seat on the ground by the truck, and John kept Doug entertained while I got the part off the truck.”

I told Daryl people probably thought “Look at that poor man, he is probably raising those babes alone and did not have anyone to watch them, so he had to bring them to the wrecking yard with him.” That began a lifelong journey of John on one side of Daryl and Doug on the other, with Mom at home not really wanting to know what they were doing next. What cliff they were hanging off, what river they were going down, what wild animal they were chasing, or being chased by.

Although it did teach me how to intercede for the safety of my husband and boys. We often joked that Daryl and I were so young when we got married and had the kids, that we all just grew up and played together along the way.

I learned a lot from working in the school and youth department in the areas of Junior high and high school. I earned creative discipline, accountability, servanthood, patience, compassion, how to challenge non-achievers to become achievers, and the healthiest word in the English language, no. That word no was the slowest coming of all my lessons. It would take the next ten years.

Remember, I am still a machine gunner, not a sharpshooter yet. I believe it was at this time in my life that I began to have a heart to disciple people. We began to disciple young people. I recall a young man of sixteen by the name of Roland that was in our youth group. He began to spend a lot of time in our home. Our regulars in those days besides our own boys were Roland, Steve, Jake, Keith, and Billy. They were at our house just about as much as they were at their own homes. The boys at that time had all been buddies for about two years.

We had gone on one of our youth mission trips, which consisted of going to a small town for a week. We would camp out and work in one of the church's, painting and doing cleanup during the

morning take the afternoon to canvas the neighborhood for anyone who may want to attend the evening services then hold the evening service. The boys were all on a drama team that ministered at the evening services.

One night Roland had the great idea (he thought) to wait until all the girls and myself, who slept in the loft of the church, were ready for bed. Then the guys would slip up the stairs with water guns and scare the girls. The only problem was the boys were planning their scheme down below in the sanctuary. They were making so much noise and laughing so hard that I overheard them; in fact, you couldn't miss them. So I had the girls get their water guns, (no good youth mission's trip should be without water guns) and I got a baseball bat, (no good youth sponsor should be without a baseball bat.)

We proceeded down to the bottom of the stairs, all the girls were behind me, lined up on the stairs with their water guns, I was in the front on the bottom step, behind the closed door, all of us were waiting eagerly for the boys to open it. Here the boys came giggling all the way, crawling along the floor, water guns loaded. When they finally

got to the other side of the door, you could hear them whispering and arguing who was going to open the door. I could hear my son John saying, “I am not going to open that door. I bet my Mom is on the other side, waiting for us.” I heard Doug say, “We are going to get in trouble guys” all the while there was Steve laying on the floor clutching his stomach, laughing that was Steve’s usual position.

Then I heard someone say, “You do it, Roland, it was your idea.” Finally, they opened the door; all the girls jumped up at once, screaming, and started shooting the guys with their water guns. I jumped up with my bat and started chasing them down the hall, they ran for their lives, yelling, “Help, run guys,” bumping into pews and running over each other. Roland wasn’t moving too fast.

Earlier that day he had been riding Daryl’s motorcycle when he lost control of the bike and landed in the ditch that ran alongside the road, he was sore and scraped up, but he was moving. Many of those young men are in full-time Ministry today and have established churches. Other types of Ministries, including both our sons.

Those were such great times in Rogue River while the boys were growing up. We worked hard and played hard. We took in foster children in those days as well. One of the girls that came to live with us stayed with us until she was fifteen. We adopted Whitney when she was twelve. She now lives in Washington with our children.

There were many children in and out of our home the first twenty-five years of our marriage; we saw a lot of hard things. Children were grieving for their parents, parents grieving for their children. But the hardest thing was when parents cared more about their drugs and alcohol than their children. We saw children living in shacks with dirt floors. They were dirty, cold, hungry, mistreated, and unloved.

Our sons saw a world they didn't know existed and sometimes would rather not find out about. I remember one time we brought some foster children into our home, and one of the girls had a rash all over her arms, I thought she had eczema. When it didn't seem to be improving, but spreading, I took her to the doctor, he told me she had scabies. When I gave him a blank look, he asked me if I knew what scabies was, I told him, "No,



I have never heard of that.” He began to explain that they were little parasites that live under the skin and how they would have to be treated.

When I went home, and the boys found out, they packed up and went to their friend Steve’s house, their comment as they were going out the front door was, “Call us when the bugs are gone.” Later we were introduced for the first time to head lice; the boys headed out the door again, Mom was always shaking up their world. John and Doug liked things clean and orderly, and that rarely describes foster children, but they saw a side of life they would not have seen in their church world. During that time in our lives, they ended up at Steve’s more than once or twice. Steve’s Mom, Lynn and I had become good friends. The boys were either at our home or hers, they were very close and so were Lynn and I.

Due to the fact we lived in town (and I use the word town loosely) the population of Rogue River was five hundred at that time, after a youth activity the young people would all stay the night at our house if they got in really late, (girls upstairs, the boys downstairs). In the morning, we would break out the extra large cereal boxes, and kids

would be standing all over the house eating their breakfast, hanging out until Mom or Dad picked them up the next day.

I remember one night after the traditional water fight (that I must admit I usually started) was over and everyone was settled in, I went downstairs to our room and as I was lying there, I told Daryl “I am a happy woman now that the house is full.” There was no room for another person. All the beds, couches, and floor space were taken. I sighed a sigh of satisfaction and said: “Someday I would like to have a huge house where people could come and stay whenever they needed a home for a while.” A seed was planted in my heart that the Holy Spirit would water through the years.

My life was full of people from all walks of life, and I thought they all needed something from me. I felt like I was on a merry-go-round going nowhere; my heart always hungering for more of God. Looking back now, I realize I was going to the Lord’s banqueting table, but I was doing take-out for everyone that I felt I was responsible for feeding. I was not sitting down and enjoying the beauty of His table myself.

So everyone around me was spiritually fed, but I was always hungry. It is like knowing there is something just beyond your reach that is so awesome, but not knowing how to get there, having too much to do and being responsible for too many people and things to explore the unknown territory.

All the while, knowing it is yours but only seeing the shadow of it. I got such pleasure out of seeing people grow in the Lord. However, it felt like I had made it my personal duty to make sure everyone around me was okay. I was an accomplished juggler.

Here is an example of my juggling act. I was a wife, mother of two boys, and taking in foster kids. (Twenty-four over a twenty-year span.) We were the town hang out for the Church kids. There was a seventeen-year-old boy who was notorious in town for punching the high school Principal that ended up living in our basement. (Daryl brought him home.) I worked at a Christian school. I was cheerleader advisor and transported them to all the games, along with helping transport the team to all their activities. My boys played all sports, so I never missed a game. I was

the girls' counselor, which involved enforcing school discipline.

One of my duties at the school was to check everyone's homework to make sure students were keeping up. I graded, recorded the grades, then sent out the report cards. Naturally, I made it my responsibility that every student achieved to his or her potential. I was yearbook advisor, taught a Sunday school class with Daryl, assisted when needed with the drama team. We were youth sponsors at this time and helped to plan as well as attend every youth activity. I taught women's Bible studies and was active in women's ministry. Who had time for an intimate personal relationship with Jesus?

After all, I was busy working for Him! Little did I know I was on a collision course of His design. My Savior and Lover of my Soul were not interested in my performance. He was interested in ME!!

I had such a longing to see people come to Jesus. But who has time to go out to the highways and byways when you're a professional juggler? Don't get me wrong; I know this was part of God's mas-

ter plan for me. It's just that I had to do it all before I could learn that I didn't have to do it all. You can only juggle for so long; then something is going to fall. Hence-forth began the fall of a juggler and the rise of a woman totally dependent on God with only one job, to seek the Lord with all my heart and soul, to learn when He speaks, show up and get out of the way, then watch the awesome hand of God do what only He can do.

No longer was I drained by service, but I was energized by a personal work of the Holy Spirit in a daily relationship with a personal Lord! The scripture from Matthew 11:30 "For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" was no longer a mystery, it would become a reality. But I wasn't there yet. "Not that I have already attained or am I already perfected; but I press on that I may lay hold of that which Jesus Christ has also laid hold of me." Phil. 3:12

I was in a youth service one night. We were sitting in small groups, when the question was asked, "If you could be anywhere you wanted right now doing anything you desired, where would you be and what would you be doing?" I realized that I was so comfortable in my little

juggling act that I said, “I would be right here doing what I am doing.” I have learned since then that when I get too comfortable where I am, it is time for a change, so get ready. We can’t go with God and stay in the same place forever. If we are to grow, we must be willing to change. It is like a story I heard about sheep. The sheep lay down and eat all the grass around them. When the grass is gone, the sheep do not always have enough sense to get up and move to a more nourishing spot. So they lay there in the same spot and starve to death. The shepherd then comes along and pokes them to get them moving. They do not want to move, but it is necessary for their health and survival.

My little comfortable and ordered world was about to be shaken. We were not people who moved a lot. Our children had lived in the same home until we moved to Oregon. We had been in our home in Rogue River for seven years. That was going to change. In the next eight years, we moved nine times. I hate to move!

Just before we started on the journey of wandering through our own personal wilderness, I was standing in church worshiping. The Lord showed

me a picture of Himself moving rapidly across the sky. The clouds were white and fluffy, the sky a brilliant blue, His robes were flowing behind Him, and there I was hanging onto the hem of His robes flapping in the breeze. He said to me, “Just hang on.” That was a good visual of what my life would be like for the next nine years. Things were not going to progress at the same rapid pace; they were going to change constantly. He also spoke to me at that time by showing me a hallway. I was standing at the end of this long corridor. It had several doors with large door knobs. I reached for one of the knobs, and the Lord said, “Do not touch that door! You are a doorknob grabber. I am a gentleman; if I want you to go through a door, I will open it for you.” The Lord taught me many lessons about grabbing door-knobs through the coming years.

In the early Eighties, the bottom dropped out of construction, and we were struggling financially. We decided to sell our home, pay off all our debts, and start over. On a Friday night after Daryl and I came to an agreement in prayer concerning this decision, we decided to put our home on the market that next day.

Early the next morning, there came a knock on the door; it was about seven A.M. Daryl answered the door. There was a man standing there, and the first words he spoke were, “Would you be interested in selling your house?” No one but the Lord, Daryl and I knew of our decision. He offered us the price we wanted, and two weeks later we moved.

After spending two months with friends, we moved to a beautiful home on five acres in Grants Pass. The day we found the ad in the paper and went to look at the house, I was shocked at the low rent the owner was asking. He could have received twice what he was asking. There were people lined up in the driveway wanting to look at the home. The owner had gone to town, so prospective tenants were making appointments to see the house and then leaving. Daryl and I stayed and waited for the owner to return. We rented the house that day.

It was a lovely Swiss chalet-style home nestled in tall pine trees with horse stalls for our animals, a playhouse for our foster kids, a large family room, and five bedrooms. This made my youngest son, Doug, nervous because, at that time, we only had



enough kids to fill four bedrooms. His first question to me was, “Who are you going to put in the empty bedroom?” I told him, “No one.” I really believed that at the time. God had a different idea.

One summer afternoon, I was home alone, and I got a phone call from child services. They had a temporary emergency placement. They asked if they could bring a nine-month-old boy and a three-year-old girl. Their Mother had left, and their Father had lost his job. He needed a little time to find work and relocate. I told the worker she could bring them to us. While I was waiting for the Lord spoke to my heart concerning the nine-month-old boy. He spoke the name David to me, and He told me He was placing him in my heart. When the worker arrived, she introduced me to David James and his sister Alisa. David stretched out his arms to me like he was coming home to Mom. The worker commented, “He acts as if he knows you.” He and I bonded on the spot. I went and picked his father up once a week and brought him out to the house to visit the children. He lived in town and didn’t have a car, and we lived about nine miles out of town.

On one of those weekly visits, I had the privilege of leading him to Jesus. David and Alisa had been with us for about three months when Daryl and I went on a trip with the youth group. Daryl always drove the bus on these trips. We asked one of the college-age girls in the church to stay with the little ones. We had three foster children at that time, plus our two boys and one of their friends living with us. The three older boys were on the trip with us.

When we were boarding the bus to return home, I again heard the Spirit of the Lord speak to me concerning David. He said, “It is time for David to go home.” My heart gripped me, “But Lord, I don’t want to give him up.” I knew it was time for him to go. When I got home that night, I walked into his room that was fully equipped with everything he needed. I had made one phone call the day he arrived, and by that night, generous people from our church had brought clothes, furniture, playpens, high chairs and much more.

As I watched him sleeping, I thought of his first steps he had taken on my kitchen floor. I thought of how good he smelled after he had been bathed and powdered and how wonderful he felt in his

pajamas when he would cuddle up in my arms before bed. He lay there sleeping on his back with his little fat tummy sticking up. I stood there looking down at him. I put my hand on his stomach and said, “Lord, I can’t let him go. He feels so good and smells so good; I love holding him and loving him.” The Lord again spoke to me, “You want this one to satisfy your flesh when I want to give you hundreds in the Spirit.” “But Lord, I don’t know what kind of life he is going back to.” The Lord spoke again, “Don’t you think I am able to take care of David?” At that time, I felt a peace and a release. “Okay Lord, I can give him back to You.”

The very next day, I got a call from the Children Services worker. “Dad is ready to take the children back,” she said. So that day David and Alisa left our home. I understand now that the Lord used David in my life to work something deep and needed in me. When God brings someone into my life for a season, I give them all God requires and love them with all my heart. But when it is time for them to move on, I can let them go and move on to the next one God has put in my life. Because God had a plan for their lives and mine and for a season, our lives crossed paths;

I thank God for the opportunity to be a part of what God was doing in them.

God had a reason for every one of the moves we made. We were on a journey that would equip us and take us to the streets of Medford, our Promised Land, but first, there was a time of wandering. David was the reason we were in that home in the country outside of Grants Pass, Oregon.

But one day, the owner showed up to let us know that the house was going to be sold. So here comes one of the reasons why God warned me about being a doorknob grabber. I immediately started looking for a place to move. I was reading my Bible and praying one afternoon, and the Spirit of the Lord spoke to my heart. “I am moving your ministry out of the church into the streets.”

Well, I had no idea what that meant. So I thought, “That’s strange,” and forgot about it. I found a house on the Rogue River, all the time feeling a check in my spirit, feeling like I needed to wait. But we went ahead and moved. It was a disaster! When the Lord says wait, I’ve learned to wait because He has something better He wants

to bless us with, or He has a lesson to bless me with. Well, not heeding the warning about grabbing doorknobs, I grabbed the doorknob of that house by the river. We were there twenty-four hours, and the well went dry.

For five weeks, the landlord promised to fix it. It was not the greatest experience in my memory log. A little over a month after we moved we got an offer to caretake a pear orchard in Medford. Our home was provided in exchange for security watch over the property. When we moved to Medford the house in Grants Pass still had not sold. We could have stayed there until the Medford job opportunity opened up and eliminated the disastrous experience we had just been through. I had to apologize to my husband for not listening to the Lord. Because of my disobedience, I packed us up, and Daryl moved us. If we had waited, we could have avoided our dry well disaster. Could that be another lesson? Yes, it could. When your spiritual well is dry, wait on the Lord!

We lived in the pear orchard for about a year. Our eldest son, John, married our precious Jaci, at that time. Daryl chose her when he first met her.

He told the boys, “I don’t care which one of you marry her, just so one of you do. I want her for my daughter-in-law.” Doug stayed in Rogue River with a friend for a few months trying to finish his senior year of school, but he became ill. We missed him, and he missed us, so we moved him to Medford. It was a fifty-four mile round trip to school and back, but Doug made the trip faithfully. One day on the way home, he fell asleep driving home and hit the guardrail in the center of the freeway. He was okay, but the side of my Honda Accord didn’t look too great.

The boys and I had this running joke. When most kids get angry at their parents, they threaten to leave home; not mine. They always told me they would fix me. They would never leave home. I would say that’s okay, and someday when you’re away, we will just move and not tell you.

Well, Doug was away on a drama tour in his senior year, and we moved. He was to be dropped off at home when the bus came through Medford on the way to Rogue River. We left a note on the door, “We have moved.” (I always wanted to do that!) Of course, I was waiting for him in Rogue River when the bus pulled in. He didn’t

know it though because we had bought a different car. When he got off the bus, I could hear the kids saying, “Who’s car is THAT?” Doug said, “It looks like something my Mom would drive.” Boy! Did he know me? It was a big station wagon. We always had a station wagon or a van. You could carry more people in them. When we first moved to Oregon, I had a green Chevy wagon. We came up a month before Daryl to get the boys in school. Daryl had to finish up an apartment complex he was building in Los Angeles.

That first year we lived in Oregon there wasn’t a Christian school in Rogue River so I had to drive the boys thirty miles to a Christian school out in the country by Grants Pass. Every night after school we would take that station wagon up some road in the mountains, usually a bumpy logging road, but we couldn’t get enough green trees and blue sky. When Daryl got to Oregon, I told him the front of the car was making a funny noise. When he checked it, he found that we had broken all the motor mounts out of the car. The only thing holding the motor in was the transmission.

Our next move was to Central Point. When we moved there, I felt like we would not be there

long, so I didn't even unpack. I left a lot of our things in boxes, just unpacking the things we would need. While we were in Central Point, the Lord laid on my heart, the young people in the high school. We were helping out in a youth group in Medford for a while, and we were going to start some team activities. The youth pastor asked me to take one of the teams. I was to choose two team leaders. I went to the youth pastor and asked him if I could choose two young people who were not attending church at that time and had been struggling with their walk with the Lord. I know he thought that was a little unusual. Most of the adult team leaders were choosing kids that were already plugged into the youth group and were leaders. But I was after the unchurched kids, and I believed God had shown me the way.

So I made contact with the two young people the Lord had laid on my heart. I remember that the young man I approached to be a team leader attended the local high school. I went to the school one afternoon and caught him as he was coming out of the gym after wrestling practice. The look on his face was priceless when he saw me. I was not what he expected. So I asked him if he would



consider being team captain. He accepted. His parents were thrilled to have him back in church.

Now, this whole team concept was a great motivator for this young man. He was a competitor that loved to win, so he went to work.

Before long we were running a bus on Wednesday nights to the high school to pick up the whole wrestling team. Our team got up to one hundred kids; seventy-five of them were boys. These were kids who had never been in church. They didn't know it wasn't cool to sit down front and sing all the songs. So the unsaved kids were down front having the time of their lives, and the church kids were hanging out in the back looking at these big athletes like they were crazy. But these boys like to win and who was going to say no to them when they extended an invitation to youth group? In the span of that three month period, over two hundred kids heard the Gospel just on that one team. Daryl and I also had fellowship and Bible study for the young people in our home.

Remember I mentioned when we moved to that house, I felt we wouldn't be there long? Well after three months the landlord told us he had

sold his other home and wanted to move back in this one. So again, I began to look for a house to rent. I looked , and everything I found was already rented. One day I heard the Spirit say to me, “Go home and stop looking.” So I went home and didn’t look any longer. I was getting nervous as time grew short. This was two weeks before we had to move.

The night before we moved, Daryl came home and said, “You know the house I’ve been remodeling? Well, the owner wants us to move into it.” So the next morning we went to get a moving van. The kids started packing their rooms, and when Daryl returned one hour later, we were packed and ready to go. We were getting good at moving by now. We lived in our new home for a year or more. The first day we moved in, I asked the Lord, “Okay, why are we here? What do you have planned?” While living in that home, I had the opportunity to lead the landlord’s wife to the Lord. We also opened our home up to a college-age ministry.

The young woman who a year earlier had been one of my team captains who was not walking with the Lord was now on fire for God and liv-

ing with us. This girl was a people magnet, so we began to have fellowship in our home. It grew really fast! God was doing some awesome things, but sometimes people don't like things they can't control. And one of the ladies in the church decided she didn't like Kari and began to attack her by spreading ugly rumors about her. It hurt Kari and the young people so bad that it killed what God was doing. I began to lose heart and was so burned out. I could hardly function.

Our first grandchild Tanner Ryan was born while we lived in that home. John and Jaci were youth pastors in a small church in Eagle Point and living with us because the church couldn't afford to pay them. Doug was interning under a pastor in Rogue River and living at home. Daryl was finishing up a church in Washington. One day my son Doug came in and found me sitting on the bed staring out into space. He asked me what was wrong, and I said: "I just can't do it anymore." He said, "Mom, you have hit a wall, you are having a meltdown, an emotional recoil. It's okay. Just get in bed and pull the covers over your head and we will take care of everything. You have trained us well." Doug will never know what that did for me. Someone had given me permission

not to take care of them and to be vulnerable, and it was okay to be weak!

Being a grandmother was such a joy. It also gave me something to focus on besides my own burned-out condition. There were as many as ten people living in that house. Tanner was a great distraction for me, but when John and Jaci moved to Coquille to help her father build apartments, I was left to my own thoughts or lack of them by that time. Shortly after John and Jaci's return to Medford, our second grandchild Taneille was born.

Our youngest son Doug met Cheri and fell in love at that time, so I tried to focus on that event to keep from going under. By the way, Daryl picked this daughter-in-law also! Doug and Cheri got married in Los Angeles because that was where Cheri was from and where her family lived. We also dropped our last foster child Whitney, that we had adopted at age twelve, off in Sacramento to live with her birth mother's sister. She had a desire to re-connect with her birth family, and she knew if she had the opportunity, we would support her in that.

So when Daryl and I came home from the wedding, it was just the two of us. I had things to do, so I stayed focused on my responsibilities in an attempt not to cave in. A reception here in Oregon for Doug and Cheri, and the fact that the principal of the school where I was working had just been fired and I was put in charge of the whole school. All of a sudden, I couldn't even cope with the idea of getting up in the morning. But I had ten seniors who had to graduate, and I couldn't let them down, so every morning, I would get up and go to work. (I didn't have the time for a breakdown.) The only thing that kept me from totally losing it was the Word of God.

When my mind was going in a hundred different directions, it would focus me for a moment. At that same time, I totally lost my peace. I had never known a time in my walk with the Lord that I had not had peace, but it would be almost two years before my peace would return. All I could do in my desperation, as I felt I was losing my grip, was to call out to God. I did that day as I stood behind a locked bathroom door, leaning against it as if I could keep the world out. I cried out, "Please don't let me go. I can no longer hold on; I'm too weak." He again was faithful. As

school ended that year, I had hit bottom. Daryl and I were sitting in our living room, and in his concern for me, he asked me what I needed. I told him I was sick of kids, sick of cleaning big houses and sick of taking care of everyone and their kids. I didn't want to take care of anyone I wanted to be taken care of, and I wanted to hide.

He looked at me with a shocked look and said, "Okay, you got it. What do you want to do?" I told him, "Let's give everything away and buy a travel trailer and hit the road." We began to look for a place to park a travel trailer. I was looking in the paper one day, and I ran across an ad that said someone was looking for a caretaker for a mountain hideaway. Boy! I liked that word. Hideaway. So we made a call. It was a ranch owned by Christians. We went up on the weekend to check it out and spent the night. It was a done deal. We were moving to the top of the world, where no one could find us.

We decided to sell everything except the bare essentials, but I couldn't even muster up enough mental energy at that time to deal with a garage sale. So we ended up just giving most of the furniture to the kids. I gave away a lot of kitchen

and decorative items to anyone who wanted them. We took a bed, couch, dining room table, and a few dishes. The rest of the large four bedroom house disappeared piece by piece just like the rest of my world that I had so painstakingly and methodically built and had been carefully juggling for twenty-five years.

Then, up to our sanctuary or hideaway, depending on how you look at it. I now see it as a hideaway that God made a sanctuary. So many times, the reason God leads us out ends up being something other than what we thought it would be, and it's certainly not in our timing. I am so glad He gives us a glance but withholds the full picture until we are ready.

When I was hiding out on the mountain, burnt out, not caring if I ever saw another person, if I had known I would end up Director of a homeless shelter living with between twenty-five and forty women and children at one time, (yes, we also live at the shelter), I probably would have run off into the woods, screaming, never to be seen again.

But, when God had completed His work in me to prepare me for this assignment, it seemed like

the most logical thing to do! Just the next step in our lives.

I look upon that mountain retreat as my healing place now. My world had been so noisy and full. I didn't know how to be still, much less deal with being alone. I couldn't remember the last time I was alone in a house. I have often heard the phrase, "The silence was deafening." While living on that mountain, I experienced the quiet screaming at me. Then I began to realize the noise was coming from inside me! It was as if I had stored it in my soul, and it was coming out my pores. The first two months, I thought I was going to lose my mind from quiet. But as time went on, I made friends with it and began to take in the silence and let it cleanse out the noise. My time with the Lord became clearer- His voice was no longer muffled as it had been at times. My spiritual attention span was expanding.

One day I was sitting out in front of the cabin under a very large tree. I had been reading my Bible for a while when I began to hear a strange noise. I looked around, trying to locate the source of the sound. I returned to my Bible, again I heard the sound. It appeared it was coming from the grass



beside me. I looked down but didn't see anything. A third time I returned to my reading.

Finally, I put down my Bible and began just to sit and listen. The sound was getting really loud! I looked down at the grass again, this time not just looking at the surface, but looking more intently. All of a sudden, I was aware that the grass was moving. What I had been hearing was a bug crawling through the grass.

Now I am sure in my lifetime I had been sitting on the grass somewhere where a bug was passing by, but I had never actually heard one before. As I zeroed in on the sounds around me, I could hear a concert in the grass, trees, and sky. These sounds in my busy world I had never heard before, not that I hadn't had the opportunity, I had just never gotten quiet enough to hear what had always been there, much like my Savior's voice. It had been there all the time; not just when I made time to listen. Psalms 62:1 says, "TRULY my soul silently waits for God; From Him comes my salvation..." When the boys were in grade school, we would all go to see the Wilderness Family movies, and I would wish I could live out in a wilderness like the family in the movie. Well, I was getting that

opportunity. We were at forty-five hundred feet in elevation on top of a mountain on an eighty-acre ranch.

The cabin sat beside a lake with a creek running alongside the cabin. On the other side of the cabin was a pond. We had no phone, no T.V., no heat except a wood stove. What electricity we had was spring fed through a pipe four-hundred feet down the mountain to a pelatin wheel by the pond which turned a generator. In the winter the spring would freeze, and Daryl would take our four-by-four vehicle up the mountain in the ice and snow on a one lane jeep trail so steep if you didn't make it the first time you would slide back down and need to try again.

Needless to say, I made one trip up the trail with him. From that time on electricity lost its value to me, kerosene and candles became better friends. We cooked on a wood stove and heated our bath water on the stove. Later we did put in a propane-run hot water heater.

It was beautiful and tranquil up there. We soon acquired two horses, four dogs, and a family of seven raccoons that lived under the cabin. The

raccoons loved the dog food, and before we moved down the mountain, we had them eating out of our hands. The dogs got into the bad habit of going out hunting for animals that the mountain lions had killed. They would bring them home. The only problem was the mountain lions would follow the dogs back to the cabin. More than once, we ended up with a mountain lion in our front yard.

Our oldest son, John, was up one night visiting. He went out to get something from his car after dark and found himself face to face with one of the lions. I am not sure who turned and ran fastest, John or the lion.

One of the most enjoyable activities for me was swimming in the lake during the summer. We moved to the mountain in June, so summer was in full bloom. I was swimming one afternoon, and the horses had followed me down to the lake shore. The dogs were coming out of the woods on the other side of the lake. All four of them were aware of me splashing around in the middle of the lake. So they all decided to join me. There were two horses swimming toward me on one side, and two dogs coming toward me on the

other side. The only thing going through my mind was, “Can I out swim them?” If not, my tombstone would read, “She was trampled by horses in the middle of a lake.” No one would believe that, not even me! I began to scream at them and splash water, and soon they all returned to the shore.

One of the dogs favorite past times was chasing bears. My older grandchildren have wonderful memories of that time. Don’t ever think if you move from a four bedroom home into a one-room cabin that company will stop coming. The ranch was thirty-seven miles out of town and nine miles up a one-lane logging road. Our nearest neighbor was eight miles away. Not a place you would just drop by to see Mom and Dad.

So when the kids came, they just all came together and stayed longer. That way we would end up with kids on the couches and on the floor and hanging from nails on the wall. John and Doug revert back to teenage boys when they get together. So they would be on a bed on the floor so they could talk and giggle all night. The boy’s wives and Daryl and I would end up throwing things at them trying to get them to be quiet and go to

sleep, but we all would end up laughing most of the night because the guys were so funny when they got going, and for some reason the later it got the funnier they seemed.

There was a lodge on the property that the owners wanted to make available to churches but had a hard time agreeing on the logistics of everything involved. It had been closed up for a long time, so Daryl and I cleaned it up and got it ready for use. Our son Doug brought his youth group up a few times, and we did retreats for them. John and Doug brought their families up for Thanksgiving, and we had dinner in the lodge. The stove was an old, army wood cooking stove. We cooked the whole dinner on the wood stove right down to homemade bread. It was the best Thanksgiving we ever had. The food was incredible. I had fixed up accommodations for the boys and family in the lodge - but later that night here they all came. They didn't want to stay in the lodge by themselves. So back to the floor, couches, and the nails on the wall. I felt like the Waltons.

Now let us talk about the subject of snow, which I always thought I loved, being from Southern California. The first time I saw snow actually fall-

ing, I was thirty years old. I thought the greatest thing would be to live where snow fell and stayed on the ground all winter. I was wrong. After three feet of snow or more for five months, I had had enough! I thought I would never be warm again. The trips down the mountain were miserable, to say the least. I can't believe Daryl drove it every day to work. About the time Daryl and I had just about had enough of the wilderness family experience, we got a call from Mom and Dad. They were finally talking about moving to Oregon to be near us.

So we moved down the mountain, leaving our furniture behind for the new people who were moving into the cabin. We bought the travel trailer that Mom and Dad were selling, and we also purchased their truck. We moved into the travel trailer while we looked for property that we could buy with Mom and Dad and put two mobiles on. Dad was disabled, so we qualified for a special program that allowed us to put two dwellings on one piece of property. So we began to look.

Again the Lord spoke to my heart to go home and wait. Mom and Dad came up to help us look. We

really didn't find anything in the area we were interested in. We wanted to stay in the country, and we were not really city dwellers at this point. Mom was open to the country as long as she didn't have to go up any dirt roads, and she wanted a fenced in yard to keep the critters out. Dad wanted a view. They left to go back to Southern California without any success. So I waited as the Lord told me to. (Maybe I am learning by now.)

I had been helping one of the pastors in the community we were now living in to organize what they referred to as a helps ministry. We provided food, clothing, and spiritual support to people in need. One day I went into Medford, which was about eight miles away to do some shopping. To this day, I don't know how, but I ended up in front of the Medford Gospel Mission. I sat there looking at the faces of the people. My heart aching, wanting to go in, but wondering, "What can I do?" So I left with a heavy heart.

The next time I came to town I found myself again parked in front of the Medford Gospel Mission trying to get up enough nerve to go in and ask if there was something I could do to help.

But the Spirit of God spoke to me and said, “Follow your husband in.” I thought, “That’s strange.” Why would my husband go in there?” But I knew it was a word from the Lord, so I went home.

Two weeks later Daryl came home from work and said, “I’ll be a little late Thursday. They need a board member at the Gospel Mission, and I’ve been asked to come and interview.” Well, my jaw dropped! I didn’t know why I was surprised—when God speaks, he brings it to pass. As soon as Daryl got on the board, he began to volunteer me for everything that came up.

One day I went to the grocery store in the little town where we were living and also looking for property. The store owner asked me what we had been doing lately. I explained to him we had been looking for a place to buy. He told me his son was thinking about selling his place and told me where it was. It was a place Daryl, and I had passed several times and pointed it out as a place “Just like we needed.” It already had one mobile on it with a lot of property in the back for another one - plenty of room for horses. All fenced in and a paved road. Plus a great view of the valley. And it was in our price range! We called Mom and Dad, and Dad also remembered the place. He



had turned around in the drive and commented to Mom, “That’s the place I would like to have.”

But of course, it didn’t have a for sale sign, so no one pursued it. We were all in agreement as to the purchase of the property. We knew it had been opened up by the Lord. Dad, Mom, Daryl and I bought it. So now Daryl and I needed to buy a mobile.

One evening Daryl and I were sitting in the R.V. park outside by our travel trailer at the picnic table discussing what kind of mobile we were looking for. I told Daryl my ideal floor plan when a neighbor walked up to us and asked us if we knew of anyone that was looking to buy a used repossessed mobile. We told him we might like to look at it. When we walked in, it was exactly the floor plan Daryl, and I had been discussing at the picnic table. So we bought it and moved it on the land with Mom and Dad. We owned the property for twelve years. I had learned the value of the lessons I had learned from burning myself out. I knew my limits, and I knew my source. I knew the value of quiet time and a personal relationship with the Lord. My number one priority was my relationship with the Lord, then being obedi-

ent to what He was leading me to do. But now I was going to learn to wait and the difference between serving and serving with a pure heart!

When Mom and Dad moved to Oregon, I had been helping out at the men's mission for about six months. I started out helping with mailing in the office. At that time the Assistant Director's wife was working in the clothing room, which involved sorting through everything that came in and putting it away, then twice a week opening the room up for people in need to come in and get clothes and household items. She had been doing it for a long time and was burned out. I asked my friend Sandy if she would be interested in helping me. Sandy and I had worked together, setting up the helps ministry at our church.

So in 1989, we began working in the clothing room. We had no idea what we were getting into. You would be surprised at what people bring to a mission. Bags of trash, things they don't want to pay the local dump to take care of, blankets the cats and dogs have used for beds, even bags of blankets the children have wet on or even thrown up on; clothes with lice in them, items of clothing that have been out in the rain and then just

stuffed in a bag, broken furniture, tables with broken legs and on and on. Our biggest problem was what to do with people's trash. But on the other hand, people are extremely generous, bringing lovely things for the mission and the people we minister to.

During that time, when I saw women and children in need coming in each week, God was planting and watering something deep in my heart. There was a homeless lady that hung around the mission that I got aquatinted with that began to help me sort the clothes. She was very faithful. By that time, Mom and Dad, Daryl and I were settled into our homes in the Applegate Valley. It was our first Thanksgiving in our new home. We invited the homeless lady that had been helping her husband and me to have Thanksgiving dinner with us. Daryl went into town and picked them up and also took them back after dinner.

The clothing ministry began to be too much. Mom had started helping me, and she just doesn't know when to quit, (sounds like me) but one of the men at the Mission, who had been doing the heavy lifting for us left, and we couldn't continue so we resigned. I wanted so much to be a part of

the street ministry, but I just didn't know where or how, so I just hid in the helps ministry at the church, working the midnight to six A.M. shift on the prayer line at the church twice a week. I felt so very unfulfilled, though. My heart was now at the Mission and with the homeless people. If you are not ministering where your heart is, you are not content.

The Mission Director decided it was time to enlarge the women's facility. They began to make plans. When it was time to open the new women's shelter, the search for a Director began. Daryl and I recommended a friend of ours who was a single woman. Jane became the Director. She was there for eighteen months, which seems to be the average length of time a director stays at a women's shelter. Jane asked me to come and work at the front desk for her. I was in heaven. I loved the women. It was so exciting about being a part of women's lives. But Jane was struggling.

There was so much to do, and she was so hard on everyone that tried to help her that no one lasted. Before very long, she was doing it all. The cleaning, cooking, laundry, sorting donations. The only thing she wasn't doing was answering the

phone. She became so consumed with the building there wasn't time to minister to the women. She was burned out after three months, and I was miserable. This was not what I expected to see at the mission. Jane was short and strict with the women. She shared with me later she was so busy maintaining the building she didn't have anything left for the ladies. I was so grieved. I told her I just couldn't be a part of what she was doing, and I quit. That was a mistake, and I knew it. I was sick in my heart that I had walked away from the most meaningful thing in my life. The thing that fulfilled me, my destiny. I had given up the church ministry to work at the mission as a volunteer. Now I had walked away from the mission.

For the next year and a half, I found disobedience to be a desolate place. The one glimmer in my life was the short time I was involved with an adoption counseling service and a ministry that helped unwed moms. The Lord placed me there long enough to be an instrument in placing a baby in the home of some dear pastor friends of ours that had been disappointed several times in their attempts to adopt. God did what He does so well, and in a short time, they had a child.

But my heart ached for the women staying at the mission. God began to work something so deep in my spirit and so out of my comfort zone not to mention above anything I could ask or imagine that I really didn't have a clue where the pieces of the puzzle were leading. I was driving into town one day: I always enjoyed the drive through the country, it took me about twenty minutes, so it was always a great time to pray. As I came into town, I began to be burdened for the lost, and the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me and said, "If you want to reach people for Me you have to be where they are." I hated Medford. But I said, "Lord if that's what it takes, change my heart." Guess what? He did! But it didn't happen overnight.

During this time, I still had no contact with the mission, but Daryl was still on the board. I had come to the conclusion that God was finished with me. I had lived out my usefulness and been put out to pasture. And the thing that was burning in my heart that had been there since I was a young girl would never come to pass. I refer to it as the death of a vision. But there has to be a death before there can be a resurrection. My pastor says it is not that someone HAS to die; it is that someone GETS to die. Well, it was my turn.

So now I had passed the burnout phase of my life and moved right along to the death phase. It doesn't sound very exciting when I put it that way, but as I look back, it is exciting to know when I was at my lowest points God was doing the biggest work in me.

I was sitting in church one Sunday, in the back row. I was normally not a back row sitter, but I guess it was a real sign of what I was feeling. Part of the body, but yet distant, not having a place in the midst of the church. It seemed like a lonely place at the time, but necessary as I look back. It was a fulfillment of the word the Lord had given me when He said, "I am taking your ministry out of the church and into the streets."

My life was so embedded in the church; it took something drastic working in me to cut me loose and looking out beyond my world as it had always been.

As I am sitting in that service going through all of these emotions, the guest speaker stopped and looked at me as he began to speak right to me. I was shocked: I have been in a lot of services in my lifetime where the minister had a word from

the Lord for someone, but never for me. I was the one who always had to learn it the hard way, and then I would hear it in church or get the book.

The minister told me, “You feel like your ministry is finished, your life is over, but you have miles to go for God. You haven’t even begun yet. Hundreds will come and feed from you. Don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t accomplish what is before you. This thing that will come to pass is God.” Well, all I heard was, “Hundreds will come and feed from you.” (All I could think of at that time was, I hate to cook! That kind of shows you where my mind had landed.) I remembered when I was at one of my lowest points up on the mountain the Lord kept taking me back to Isaiah 54:1-3:

“Sing, O barren, you who have not borne!

Break forth into singing, and cry aloud.

You who have not labored with child!

For more are the children of the desolate than  
the children of the married woman,” says the Lord.”

Now for the part I didn’t like; verse 2 says, “Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwelling: Do not spare; lengthen your cords, and your descendants will



inherit the nation.” Keep in mind the first time I heard this; I was hiding from people and ministry. I find it amazing how God comes to us in the darkest hour.

When we feel worthless and diminished, He gives us a glimpse of His greatness. What an awesome thing to realize God speaks to us in the deep valleys and our weaknesses to grow our faith and reveal His mercies and grace.

Abraham and Sarah were barren when God told Abraham he would be the father of nations. Moses had a problem speaking and had fled Egypt for his life when God sent him back as the instrument to set His people free. Joseph was a young man when God put a vision in his heart. Then He took him from a pit to a prison to a palace to save His people. It looked like Esther, and her people would be destroyed, but God used her to save His people. Then He gave all that the enemy possessed into her hands. People, if you are in your darkest hour look up for God is on His way with your destiny in His hands, to bring glory out of your pain - just as He brought glory through His own pain.

So here I sat in my desolate place, thinking, “I am finished.” And God is saying, “Hundreds are going to come and feed from me.” I am thinking, “Oh, just what I wanted to do. Be a sort of short order cook.”

When God is about to do something big, He reveals it to us, and just like the disciples, we try to fit it into our perception of things and truly our ways are not Gods ways.

In Luke 18:31-34 Jesus took the twelve aside and told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him, insult Him, spit on Him, flog Him, and kill Him. On the third day, He will rise again. The disciples did not understand, and the saying was hidden from them, and they did not know what He was talking about.”

In Luke 24:5-8. When the women went to the tomb, the two men standing there asked them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen! Remember how He told you while He was still with you in Galilee,

the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again? Then they remembered His words.”

What an awesome thing to find yourself standing before an open door that is above and beyond anything you could ask or imagine and then remember His words. Later as I began to walk through that open door, I too would remember His words, and those words would give me the assurance I needed that I was where I was by His design.

A few months later, Jane resigned. That is when Rick and Sandy became the new Directors. Sandy and Rick were never comfortable in the role. Few ladies were using the services at the mission. They had hired an Assistant named Candy and were going to take a vacation. They asked me if I would come and stay at the Mission with Candy and help out while they were gone. I was able to accept because Daryl was in Portland helping the church where our son was youth pastoring build a new sanctuary. Daryl loves building churches. He has built several and hopes to build more in the future. So this freed me to go and stay two weeks at the Mission.

When I got there, we only had a handful of ladies staying; however, within forty-eight hours, it was full. There had never been that many there before. Women were coming through the door, saying, “Something just told me I had to come here.” One woman was under the bridge with her boyfriend getting ready to smoke dope. She said something told her to “Put it down and go to the Mission.” She, along with many others, received the Lord that week!

The Lord also delivered her from drugs, and she went back to her home and children. Candy and I had planned on working separate eight-hour shifts, but we were so excited about what we were seeing God do we were working each other’s shifts, also, afraid we were going to miss something.

We were using my van to take ladies to appointments, and then after hours, we would stay up until after midnight just talking about the goodness of the Lord. Then up again at five in the morning. This went on for two weeks. We were full of energy and ready to go. When I went home, it caught up with me; Candy had a week’s vacation. I think we both slept for two days!

The last night at the Mission I was in my room packing to go home when I began to feel sad that I was leaving because it had been the most exciting fulfilling two weeks of my life. I had never seen so many people receive Jesus before or witnessed the Spirit of the Lord move with such intensity.

And now, again, I was having to walk away and die to what was growing so big in my spirit, but God's timing is always perfect. As I sat on the end of my bed weeping from deep within my heart grieving for the women and their broken burned out lives, I felt like Nehemiah weeping over Jerusalem. But what could I do?

I didn't feel at that time I had a ministry or a calling. The enemy had convinced me I was finished, out to pasture. I cried out to the Lord, "What is my ministry?" and a voice from deep within my grieving spirit said, "Your ministry is to life's throwaways."

I picked up my Bible and opened it to John 4:34-38

v.34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.

v.35 “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!”

v.36 “And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

v.37 “For in this the saying is true: “One sows and another reaps’.

v.38 “I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

The Spirit of the Lord withheld from me the full understanding of what this scripture meant. But when I read it, I began to weep from deeper in my Spirit that I have ever experienced before, and the Spirit of the Lord filled the room. I had no understanding of what had truly taken place, but I knew I had been with Jesus and felt His anointing like I never had before.

I knew my spirit and will have submitted to His master plan, and that was all I needed to know for now. I just had to

let it lay for God to resurrect and reveal in His timing. So I went back to my personal waiting room, not knowing what God had in store for me at the Mission.

One day I got a call from Sandy. They needed someone to work the front desk and answer phones at the Mission. I began to work a couple of mornings a week, and that expanded into eight hours a day, five days a week. I loved it. I loved the women. I also loved being a volunteer. I could leave at the end of the day and leave all the problems to the Directors. Sandy began to give me more responsibility. She asked Candy to teach me how to use a computer.

All we had at the time was Candy's laptop hooked up to an old monitor. The laptop was an old DOS program that was a real experience for someone who didn't even know how to turn a computer on! I thought I would never get the hang of it, but Candy told me she was confident I would learn. I asked her where she got confidence because I sure didn't have it. She said from the mere fact I wouldn't give up. I was determined I was going to conquer it. It wasn't going to conquer me!

Sandy began to feel the need for a procedure's manual for the Mission. So she would feed me information and I would put it in the computer. Sandy was really struggling at that time. She just didn't feel comfortable as Director. It began to take its toll on her. There were nights when we only had one or two ladies staying at the mission. It was hard for all of us because we were all sure God had awesome things in store for the Medford Gospel Mission, Women's and Children's Center.

Here we sat in this six thousand square foot building - with a large dorm and day room, a living room large enough for eight couches and three large chairs, a dining room that seats fifty, a commercial size kitchen, six family units, a laundry room, clothing room, storage room, three offices, and private areas for ten Resident Discipleship ladies. I will explain later what a Resident Disciple is. But anyway you get the picture.

God had provided an awesome tool for reaching ladies and to be an instrument for healing, and then provided it debt free! Sometimes we have a vision burning in our spirits, and we have a decision to make. Are we going to walk by sight or by



faith? I continued volunteering at the Mission for a year. At one point, it became very hard for me, and I wanted to quit again, but the Lord put in my heart that I was here to serve Sandy. The Lord was dealing not with my serving heart, but with my servant's heart. He was also looking for a pure heart. I was to serve Sandy with a pure heart. That was the job the Lord had assigned to me. That was the job I was to do.

Sandy began to spend less time in the Mission. She would spend hours in her house next door. Then it got to the point that she wouldn't come in all day. Then finally all week! Just before Thanksgiving in 1997, I came to work, and Sandy was standing in the kitchen with her husband. I thought, "This is great! Sandy is here today." But as I approached them, I could tell something was wrong. Then Sandy looked at me and said: "We have resigned as Directors." I was shocked! All sorts of things were going through my mind. But my main thought was, "Well, I must also be finished. The new Directors will want to hire their own staff." I was okay with that. I had loved the ministry of the Mission, but God must have something else for me. I asked them when they were leaving, she said at first they had told our

Executive Director they were leaving that day, but they called him back and told him they would stay until December 31st. It was a very sad day.

Sandy was so burnt out and needed time to heal. Her husband was wise and relieved her of her responsibilities. So he and I did our best to keep things going. Daryl was working in Portland at that time. He was remodeling the church where our son Doug was associate pastor. He had made plans to come home for Thanksgiving and then go back for a couple of weeks to finish up the project. That Tuesday night before Thanksgiving, I went to bed early. The Holy Spirit woke me up in the middle of the night and said: "Write down the plan." So I got up and began to write.

The Lord gave me a complete detailed plan for operating the Mission and a complete plan for a discipleship program. It was a simple and effective way to deal with every aspect of the daily operations right down to the cleaning and dealing with donations. Even a schedule and the number of employees needed to realistically cover all the bases, and prevent employees from getting burnt out. When I was finished writing, I said to myself, "I need to show this to Sandy and Rick.

But then I thought, “Oh no, they have resigned. What do I do with this plan?” At that moment, the Spirit of the Lord filled the room. It almost felt like a thick fog, but it couldn’t be seen with the eye only in my spirit. I have experienced the presence of the Lord, but never like that! I later realized it was the anointing of the Holy Spirit for what lay ahead.

I was beginning to realize that the Lord had given me this plan because He wanted me to be the one to use it. I began to argue with the Lord. “I can’t do this. I am not as young as Sandy. I couldn’t possibly do everything that needs to be done, or physically keep up the building. I don’t want what happened to Jane and Sandy to happen to me. I don’t want all that responsibility.”

But all the time my flesh was arguing, my spirit was rising up within me. I felt this excitement and anticipation well up inside. I remember the Holy Spirit’s words when I first sat in front of the Mission wanting to go in. “Follow your husband in.” I thought, “Daryl will never go for this.

Why would he give up his home, his horses and a lot of other things he has worked so hard for

to go live in the slums of Medford in a homeless shelter for women and children?” So I said to the Lord, “If this is you, put it on my husband.”

Then I went back to bed and slept like a baby. Because whatever happened now was on Daryl and not me. (Sometimes submitting to your husband can really be fun.) I thought I was off the hook, but I forgot about two things, Daryl’s servant’s heart, and that God is even bigger than our husbands, ladies. Daryl arrived home the next evening.

We were sitting in the living room talking when Daryl began to talk about a conversation he and Doug had on the way home. (Doug, Cheri, and the kids had come down for Thanksgiving also.) He began to tell me how he had always felt that we would end up as Directors of the Mission but had never said anything to me because he knew I didn’t think I was equipped to handle it.

Although he had always felt like I was the one that should be there, it was just a matter of God’s timing and that Doug had agreed with him. I then said, “Well, I have something to tell you. Sandy and Rick have resigned as Directors as of

December 31st.” He looked at me and said, “Are you ready?” I said yes, “Are you?” I then told him what had happened the night before. We called my Mom and Dad. Dad was on the Mission board, and moving into town would also directly affect them. Their response was they also had felt for a long time that Daryl and I would end up at the Mission. We also spoke to our eldest son. Again, everyone was all in agreement. So Daryl phoned the Executive Director. Daryl asked him if he would consider us for the position. He said

He never dreamed we would even want the job, but as far as he was concerned, we had the job. He said he had been lying awake at night wondering what he was going to do. He would present it at the next board meeting. Daryl asked him if he would like to have a resume’. He said that wasn’t necessary, it wasn’t like they didn’t know us. Daryl had been on the board, and I had been volunteering for eight years at this point.

He did say, however, that it would be nice to have a letter on file explaining how we ended up in the rescue ministry. As I thought about it, I really didn’t know. We had never been homeless or gone hungry done drugs or drank alcohol. I

began to just write about our life as husband and wife. Then for the first time, I saw the thread woven through our lives of who we were and who we had become. I looked at our long journey from the church to the streets of Medford, Oregon.

Most people who end up in a homeless shelter feel their life is over. We knew ours was just beginning. After all, we had worked hard all of our lives to end up in the slums of Medford in a homeless shelter. We were thrilled we had finally arrived at the unknown destination that God had been preparing for us, while at the same time preparing us all along the way for it.

When the dust settled, and reality hit, I was overwhelmed with the responsibility of what was before me. How was I going to make it work? It was just Daryl and I that would be walking through those doors! I knew it required someone twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. But the Lord again was faithful.

He took me to First Chronicles 22, where David prays for his son Solomon and gives him provision, advice and a promise. He speaks of wisdom and understanding given by God. He will

also prosper him. He is told to be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be dismayed. Then he begins to speak of provision, and among the provision, he says there are workmen with you in abundance, and I must say from day one God had always brought the help when I needed it.

Verse eighteen says, “Is not the Lord your God with you? And has He not given you rest on every side?” ‘For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before the Lord and before His people.’ I have found this to be true. You would think to deal with hardcore drug addicts, criminals, street people, and the mentally ill that this place would be pretty rowdy and chaotic.

However, it is quite the opposite; it is quiet and restful. When the ladies walk into the Mission, they comment on how peaceful it is. That is God’s gift to all of us. We experience no fighting, no violence, and no arguing amongst the women. At times we have as many as twenty-five single women in the dorm. I tell them it is a miracle of the Lord that we can have that many women live in one room, and everyone come out alive. But the “Land is subdued before the Lord.”

Now, in verse nineteen, the Lord gave me my assignment in all of this when He says, “Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God.” So that is what I do. I seek God, get out of the way and watch His awesome works of taking broken lives and making them new. Then I join in what He is doing. It makes ministry a joy, not a burden.

The next two weeks were a little strained at the Mission. I felt Sandy was a little uneasy with me. I loved her very much and knew what she was going through. My husband suggested that I take the last two weeks off. So I did. I then realized it was needed. I had a lot to do to get moved into the Mission, and ready to take over on January 1, 1998. Sandy and Rick were living in the house on the Mission property. There was a two bedroom apartment with an office attached to the front of the Mission, that had access directly into the shelter. We chose to live there because of the accessibility to the shelter. In case of emergency, it is nice not to have to come across the parking lot in the cold of winter, but just step out of the apartment into the shelter. So that is what we did on New Year’s Day.



## THE STREETS OF MEDFORD

On that January morning, as we stepped out in the hall that leads to the lobby of the shelter where we were to meet Sandy and Rick for prayer and for them to hand over the keys plus for them to give Daryl some maintenance tips, I felt a little, or should I say, very intimidated. So when I stepped out into the hall and heard the door shut behind me, I found myself saying, “Okay Lord, I’ll do what I can do. I’ll show up and get out of the way. It is all up to You.” We spent that first-day moving furniture and getting things ready for the ladies who would check in at 4:30. Being New Years Day the custom at that time was the shelter was closed all day, so we stayed busy. Our custom now is to have an open house at the Mission on New Year’s Day.

By that evening, I was aware that everyone knew there were new Directors. It’s amazing how fast news travels on the streets. I remember a homeless man was killed in an abandoned house a couple of blocks away and half the ladies in the shelter knew who had committed the murder before the police found out, and they had told me before the police even left the scene of the crime.

After the investigation, it turned out they were right! Now the word was out on the streets, “The nice lady at the Mission is the new Director, let’s go see what we can get away with.” So come they did. In two days we were full, and try me they did. I felt like I spent the first months asking more people to leave than I checked in. But I knew, just like with children, if I didn’t set boundaries and let them know who was in charge, and that it wasn’t them, I would not be here for the long haul.

It sounds harsh, but after five years here as Director, I have learned that people who are out of control but want to change, appreciate boundaries, order, and accountability. But some do not desire to change, and they don’t like boundaries, like the lady who slashed the tires on my van when she was asked to leave for threatening one of the ladies.

The first time I encountered this concept in ministry was at the Christian School. If I could win a young person over by love and acceptance, I could apply tough love and turn them around from a student who was always in trouble and failing to a disciplined honor student. The same principles apply here at the Mission because if we didn’t

learn discipline as a child, we need to learn it as an adult if we want to walk with God and participate in life. I must say I was a little nervous when I first started my journey here. I was eager to disciple women, and the Lord had given me a plan for a discipleship program. But I thought a three-month program was a good idea. But I soon learned that in three months you haven't even begun the journey with these ladies.

As I am writing this, I hear the voice of a lady I have a five-year history with. She has been in and out of the Mission for six years. She is just now getting her life together enough to start participating in life again.

At one time she was an office manager for a government agency, but drugs took over, and she has been on the streets off and on for over ten years. But God is able and faithful. She comes here five mornings a week to volunteer because she is grateful for the support she has received from the Gospel Mission. Since those early days, I have come to realize that these women need at least a year to heal and learn of the Lord before they are ready to be out on their own again.

Our discipleship program consists of the ladies living and working here at the Mission. They have Bible classes five days a week with assignments, including journaling each day. The journals are read by me, and then we meet once a week one on one to talk about and pray over their entries.

We also work with them on education needs and computer classes so they will have a market-able job skill when they leave here. We have had great successes and great failures. But each lady that shows a desire to grow in the Lord is given the same opportunity. Some make it, and some don't. Some just are not willing to let go of the past and move on.

Our biggest successes are with women who are not from this town and not connected here. The pull and temptations are not there for them. God is so amazing. So many times, we have ladies getting off the bus coming from all directions. Their story is the same. "I don't know why I am here. I just felt I was supposed to come here." I am sitting in my office now looking across the lobby into the other office, and there sits one of those ladies the Lord brought here four and a half years ago.

Gayla got off a bus from Eastern Oregon in the middle of the night. We didn't have a night person at that time so she couldn't get in. The police picked her up and took her to a coffee shop that was open all night. There was a group of people there from a local church who the Lord spoke to concerning Gayla. They bought her dinner and took her to a nice motel here in town.

The next morning she walked through our doors. She did not want to be here with all these "Jesus freaks" as she put it. Four days later, she was saved and delivered from a twenty-eight-year drug addiction that included meth, coke, crank, and heroin plus the life of crime that inevitably goes with the life of drug addiction. I asked her to join our discipleship program.

She admits now that she said yes because she knew she wouldn't have to worry about having a roof over her head. But that's okay; God is faithful when we are as stubborn as donkeys to hold out a carrot to keep us moving in His direction. While Gayla was here at the Mission, she found the key to the abundant life in Jesus, and she fell in love with Him! She completed her program here and got a job with a drug prevention com-

pany. We all got a big kick out of that. She had an apartment with a Christian friend, a lady who also had completed our program.

Due to people moving on, as they often do in this ministry, I found myself in need of help. I had a room I could offer Gayla for free rent, so she moved in to assist me in some of the duties here at the Mission. That was over two years ago. Gayla is now the Assistant Director and teaches classes on how to stay clean and sober, all Bible-based. She does not teach a twelve-step program. She teaches a one-step process. Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I think of her as my little Paul.

As with Paul, all she knows is Jesus and Him crucified. She is more in love with Him every day. She knows the goodness of God. Gayla is a blessing to me and all the ladies she comes into contact with. Next, I have Sabrina. She is our food manager. She came to us from Northern Oregon. Revolving in and out of prison for years because of drugs and stealing cars, she says she would get out of prison, steal a car to get to the next town, get caught and end up in jail again. She also graduated from our Discipleship program. She was very timid and didn't like to be in front of people.

She has since learned to play the guitar and sings like a songbird. She leads worship for us and also teaches a class on scripture memorization. She has been an employee for a year and a half.

Then there is Lindsay. She came to us from Portland. She had been in jail also because of drugs. She is a beautiful and intelligent girl who was so lonely and confused that she would steal just to get caught for the human contact it would bring. God miraculously delivered her from drugs.

After completing the discipleship program, she spent one and one-half years at an orphanage in Mexico taking care of abandoned handicapped children. Then she attended a Bible school. She has now returned and is Resource Manager for the Mission. She also teaches a Bible study class. God is Awesome.

All of the employees that help run the Mission and minister to the women are former clients that God has set free and raised up here in this ministry. We have Discipleship graduates that are office managers, apartment managers, drug counselors, run halfway houses for women, and are directors of other shelters in town. God is

using the Medford Gospel Mission to raise up women to minister to women. We see miracles of His hand every day. Some are pretty shocking for a church girl like me.

My son Doug refers to us as “lifers”. This is one of those stories. Gail came through our door one day very timid and beat down. She had a hard time even looking at me.

As I was doing an intake with her, I was asking the normal in-take questions, one of which was, “Do you have any weapons?” She looked up at me and said, “I have a loaded gun in my car. I am from North Dakota, and along the way, I pulled out into the woods to kill myself. I picked up the gun to shoot myself in the head, and it fired before I got it to my head. It missed me and went through the car door.

So I just kept driving until I ran out of money and gas and that’s why I am here.” She brought the gun to me, wrapped in a stocking cap and handed it to me. I led her to Jesus that day. She stayed with us for six months. When she left, she was healed, sane, and serving Jesus.



At one time we had a lady here who's boyfriend had just been killed. We later found out his killer was also staying here at the same time. She is now serving time for murder. Sometimes the negative gets overwhelming, but the Lord reminded me one day that we are planting a garden.

When you plant your beautiful flowers, you plant them in the dirt. There is more dirt than flowers, but when you go out to enjoy your garden, you focus on the flowers and enjoy them. You don't think about the dirt; it's just a necessary part of the garden. I have a plaque that hangs above my desk that says, "Welcome to my garden." But I also have one hanging in the other office that says, "Everyone here makes us happy - some by entering! - some by leaving!" Either one applies on any given day.

Some weeks are harder than others, but God is so faithful to broken people. Elaine, a woman on our discipleship program, came to me very upset. She said she needed to speak with me. When we sat down, I did not expect to hear what I was about to hear. Three months earlier, a woman named Mary, that was also on the discipleship program came to me to report three of her rings

were missing. One her sister had given her, and it was engraved inside. It meant a lot to her.

Now here was Elaine sitting before me, one of the most trusted women on the program confessing she had taken the rings. Elaine's past was a long history of theft as with most of the women who come to us. She was broken and grieved because of her actions and the attempt to cover her sin for so long. She was confessing three months after she had taken the rings. This had been eating at her, and she was ready to deal with any consequences. There truly was a potential for disaster. The relationship that had developed between Elaine and the other women on the discipleship program could be damaged beyond repair. But God is bigger than our potential disasters.

Mary, who had her rings stolen came to me throughout the day to tell me the Lord was dealing with her concerning forgiveness. God was setting her up for what was ahead.

Mary knew something was bothering Elaine. We had been talking about grace, mercy, truth, and justice in our classes. The more we talked about these subjects, the more miserable Elaine got. So

when she confessed to me, I began to pray about how to handle this. What a great opportunity to teach grace, mercy, truth, and justice. I believe the Lord showed me three areas that needed to be addressed.

First, as sisters in the Lord who faithfully attended the church next door, I felt it should be addressed by their pastoral covering. So I called the pastor and made arrangements for Elaine to meet with him for counsel, and then they called Mary over, and Elaine confessed to her. The pastor then ministered to the girls. He told Elaine to come back to the Mission, and submit to my decision in this matter.

We discussed the broken trust here at the Mission. Elaine's consequences would be, one-month suspension from the program and loss of all privileges. She would still be required to attend her morning class and do all her homework assignments. She was to do community service next door at the church and make restitution to me for buying back the rings.

Yes, the biggest miracle of all was when Elaine went to the pawn shop to see if the rings were

there. Two of them were there but one-third one had been sold which was puzzling to me because when I prayed about the rings, I felt an assurance from the Lord that they would be at the shop when Elaine went to pick them up. But again the Lord had an awesome plan. His ways are truly higher than ours. As we sat discussing all aspects of what was taking place, Mary told us the story about the third ring. The ring was given to her when she was not walking with the Lord and in a relationship with a woman. When she renewed her commitment to God, He spoke to her heart to get rid of the ring. She instead traded it for another one.

The Lord had been dealing with her concerning this ring, but she was still holding on to it. Which brought us to the third way this was being addressed. The legal issue. Mary decided not to prosecute and to forgive restitution for the third ring. She realized that it was also God's grace working and disciplining her.

The pawn shop had taken the engraving out of the ring Mary's sister had given her. So I had grace, mercy, truth, and justice engraved inside. She was thrilled because she had learned to for-

give at a level she had never experienced. Elaine learned that honesty truly is rewarded and experienced mercy in a tangible way that she will never forget. Instead of two enemies, I have two women who are committed to seeing and being a part of the awesome things God is doing in and through each other.

There are so many opportunities for ministry here, so many open hearts. These ladies are very hungry for the love of Jesus. We don't speak much about the devil or hell. They know plenty about that. They live hell every day under the influence and attacks of the enemy. What they don't know is that Jesus loves them, and God is good. We sing a song regularly that is called "God Is Good, All The Time." They learn He has a hope and a future for them. They are unloved and used up. They hear that someone unconditionally loves them and is preparing a permanent home for them, that He died for their sins and they are forgiven and washed clean if only they will believe. That is what they didn't know. Hell, they know. Heaven has been unknown until the now.

What woman doesn't want to be accepted and loved unconditionally? We had over one hun-

dred decisions for Christ last year! People ask me what keeps me going, “How do you deal with the devastation of lives that you see every day?” Those one hundred decisions are my answer!

Gayla, Sabreina, Lindsay they are my inspiration and my joy. When there are babies in the nursery, there is life in the house. Through our Discipleship Program, we call House of Esther we are able to take them through the nursery to the toddler realm in grade school then into high school and watch them graduate and become mature Christian women grounded and standing firm ready to go out as the disciples did and make more disciples. It is our pleasure and joy to equip them for what God is calling them to do. So often I have people say to me, “I would like to help, but I don’t know what to say to “those people.” But the body of Christ needs to know that “those people” are us! They are the orphaned babies just looking for a home and someone to love them, someone to take them in and keep them warm.

After being Director of the Mission for five years, I now know that we see souls saved and lives changed every week because the heart of God is here. Not because we are here, but because the

broken hearted and captive, those that are prisoners and those that mourn come through these doors. So He is faithful to be waiting to give them beauty for ashes the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. And then we get to watch them become trees of righteousness a planting of the Lord and Glorify His name.

We are next door to a wonderful church with a loving pastor that has been so good to our ladies. He even loaned his car to a lady staying in our shelter with her handicapped child. She needed to take her daughter to Portland for surgery. Not many people would turn their keys over to a stranger at a homeless shelter! Joann and Lucy stayed with us for six months. Joann had been taking care of her daughter unassisted for twelve years. Joann was so mentally and physically drained she couldn't even make herself go out of her apartment to pay her rent, so she lost her home. Joann received the Lord while she was here. She decided to break off an unhealthy relationship and move to California.

Six months later, she called to thank us for bringing her to Jesus and to let us know she got

plugged into a church and also met an evangelist. They were recently married and are serving God together. From a homeless shelter to an evangelist's wife! How's that for above and beyond anything we can imagine?

I often tell the ladies if Jesus was walking down our street on Sunday morning He would walk by the church and come straight here just because they are here. I believe that Jesus always went where the people needed Him the most.

One day as I pulled into our side parking space on the back side of the Mission, and as I looked down the long tall side of the building about ninety feet long, Isaiah 54:2-3 came back to me.

*“Enlarge the place of your tent,  
and let them stretch out the curtains  
of your dwellings; do not spare;  
lengthen your cords, and strengthen  
your stakes. For you shall expand to the  
right and to the left, and your descendants  
will inherit the nations, and make the desolate  
cities inhabited.”*



This was the house God had planted in my heart that night in Rogue River as all those young people lay sleeping on the beds, couches, and floors. But as usual, God had done above anything I could ask or imagine!

## THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION (WHAT CAN I DO?)

It has been my desire in the process of writing my simple story not to relate as a writer writing a book because obviously, I am not a writer. I am just a lay person in the church much like you, who has a heart for broken people and found myself wondering what I could do. It is also my desire to relate how the Lord uses the everyday events of our lives to prepare us for His plans and His purpose.

And when we are in this process, we don't always recognize it. We think, "This is just my life, and it makes no sense." But take heart because just as Jeremiah 29:11 says "For I know the thoughts I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

So don't give up, keep seeking God on the mountain tops and in the valley let His Word transform you. Then those things in the past that have been your weaknesses and failures He will redeem and make them tools in your toolbox to be used to turn and heal your brothers and sisters. I am

amazed that God uses my weaknesses more than my strengths. But my desire is for Him to be glorified. So that brings us back to the question, “What can I do?”

The first thing you can do is pray for those that are on the front line. I can feel the prayers of the faithful. I feel the hedge they build on their knees between the enemy and me.

Then, to remember we exist on your donations. We are not subsidized by the state or the government in any way. It is all up to the open hearts of people like you who wish to give. We use all the same items in our home that you use in yours. But also remember that if it is no longer in usable shape, we can’t use it either. When clothes are brought to us torn and tattered, I don’t pass them on to the ladies.

The Lord always gives us His best, so we are to do the same. They have torn and tattered, let’s bless them the way the Lord blesses us! If you could see the countenance change on the ladies when they come downstairs to start the day in a pretty outfit, your heart would be touched, and it would bring tears to your eyes. There are always things

that your local Mission needs; there are always projects that need to be done. So call them if you are inclined to want to get involved and serve.

Also, if you have a testimony of God's saving Grace and power of deliverance that you are feeling led to share, contact the Mission in your area. We also have ladies who are musicians come and give workshops for our staff and discipleship ladies. It is awesome to see these ladies learn to play the guitar, then go on to lead worship at devotions and in our services. We do not suggest that you ever give money to or take someone on the streets home with you. Buy them a meal and take them to the nearest shelter. They will be given food, shelter, clothes, assisted in finding jobs, and housing.

If their desire is really for help, they will accept your offer for assistance. "But" you might be saying at this point, "What if there is no shelter or this type of ministry in my community? or "I just don't feel called in that direction." Nehemiah had a burden for the remnant in Judah. Even though he had not experienced their hardship, he had a vision and a goal to be achieved.

After analyzing the problem, he decided on a direction and took action. Then he motivated others to share his vision of becoming actively involved. All of our gifts and callings are not the same. But we are all called to serve, and we all live in a hurting world! I believe we are to serve where we are.

So look around.

Where are you?

Are you in school?

Are you in the workforce?

Are you a stay at home, Mom?

Do you work in an office or in the service industry where you are in and out of peoples homes all day?

Are you in contact with children, adults, senior citizens, or the disabled?

John 4 says, "The fields are white and ripe for harvest." What is in your field? Someone once asked me, "Why do you see so many people come to the Lord?" My answer is, "I just ask them if they want to receive Jesus." You would be surprised at how many people will say yes. Watch where God is leading and just join in. I remember an old song that says, "With one hand reach out

to Jesus with the other bring a friend.” Sounds simple, doesn’t it? What are we doing with our hands? Are we using them to tear down or bring up life?

Look around you; there are opportunities to serve by getting involved in peoples lives. I know of a couple who became aware that their neighbor had cancer, and her husband had just left her. Her electricity had been shut off, so this couple collected enough money from concerned people to turn it back on.

Later that day, the water company came to shut off her water. As this concerned neighbor watched the truck drive away, she said: “I can’t just sit here and watch this happen.” She grabbed her purse and began to run down the street after the truck yelling, “Stop! Stop!” Oh, by the way, the lady chasing the truck was seventy-five years old. When she got his attention, he stopped. She paid the bill and made him turn the water back on. (Good job, Mom.) Now the door has been opened for Mom and Dad to share the Lord and pray with this lady as the Lord gives opportunity, while my parents keep an open ear to her needs. I believe in my heart because of Mom and Dad’s

willingness to get involved in their neighbors' life in this way that someday they will lead her to Jesus, and we will see her in Heaven!

Another friend lives in an apartment building. She looks for young Moms she can come alongside, maybe even offer to watch their kids for an hour to give them a break. Another just goes to the hospitals and visits lonely patients or drops by the nursery to rock drug babies into a peaceful sleep. We can pick someone up for church that needs a ride. Invite the person at church that seems to stand back from everyone over to your house for dinner.

How about the friend your kids bring home from school. Do they know Jesus? What is happening in their home life? God has brought them to your home for a reason. God has placed that person at work next to you for a purpose.

Do not be afraid to get involved in peoples lives where you are and use the tools you have in your hand. Reach out and bring them to Jesus. It will be the most fun you have ever had in your life. You don't have to beat them over the head with the Gospel. I love the saying, "Preach the Gos-

pel at all times when necessary, use words.” Ask the Holy Spirit to make you aware of the needs around you and to give you creative ideas for meeting those needs. Now go out and have some fun.

Right now you may be saying, “Wait just a minute I may have the heart and the tools to serve, but I don’t feel like I am equipped to put what I have into action. How do I get past the fear? I need help.”

Look around, find someone who has the same heart and is already doing what God is working in you, and then start hanging out with them. Before I was Director of the Mission, I dug through bags of clothes looking for something that people in need could use. I didn’t start as the Director at the Mission. I just started using my hands where there was a need.

Hanging out with people who had a heart to serve the homeless and learning from them. It is called being disciplined. We, as believers should always find ourselves discipling or being disciplined. The most important priority of this process is much like the early disciples they just hung out with



Jesus. So hang out with Jesus and find someone to hang out with that is going in the direction the Lord is telling you to go.

God has also put in our hearts a vision for a storehouse ministry. It has become a concern of mine as our government is pushing for support for faith-based programs for the poor. When government money comes into programs, a hook that ends in control also comes in. There is a faith-based organization here in town that years ago decided to accept government money.

Through the years, they have lost their freedom to share the Gospel. They can't even put a tract in their food boxes, or they lose their funding. I believe we are a nation dependent on welfare because we as the church have dropped the ball concerning the needy. Therefore I would like to present a simple plan for those with heart and vision to consider. It is the principal of the storehouse.

In Malachi chapter three it says,

*“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me!*

*But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’*

*In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse,*

*for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation.  
Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there  
may be food in My house and try me now in this.”  
Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you  
the windows of heaven and pour out for you such  
blessing that there will not be room enough to  
receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for  
your sakes so that he will not destroy your  
ground; and all nations will call you blessed,  
for you will be a delightful land,”  
says the Lord of hosts.*

First of all, church, be faithful in your tithes and offerings so the storehouses of this nation will be full. And God will pour out a blessing.

**I would like to present three ways to disperse  
His blessings:**

1. Each church has a storehouse to disperse the blessing God pours out by taking care of the needy in your congregation and community.
2. A community of churches banding together and creating one large storehouse for all participating churches in the community. Possibly in one of the larger churches that could facilitate a

large enough room. Then the community churches could draw from the storehouse to minister to their people, rather than sending individuals in need to the storehouse.

Each church has an opportunity to minister one on one to the needy while drawing from a resource that many are contributing to.

3. If every church in the community committed to serving the needy could place a food donation barrel in their lobby and every Sunday before church, each person would pick up one can of food when they pick up their Bible, the needy could be well fed. The filled barrels could then be distributed to either their church storehouse or the church community storehouse. If a storehouse has not been established in your church or community, then take the food items to the local shelter in your community.

In closing, I would like to leave you with  
Corinthians 8:8-15 and 9:6-15 because I believe  
God always confirms vision with His Word:

*I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the  
sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.  
For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He  
became poor, that you through His poverty  
might become rich.*

*And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage  
not only to be doing what you began and were  
desiring to do a year ago, but now you also must  
complete the doing of it; that as there was a  
readiness to desire it, so there also may be  
completely out of what you have.*

*For if there is first a willing mind,  
it is accepted according to what one has,  
and not according to what he does not have.*

*For I do not mean that others should be  
eased and you burdened; but by an equality,  
that now at this time your abundance  
may supply their lack, that their abundance  
also may supply your lack—that there may*

*be equality. As it is written, “He who gathered  
much had nothing left over, and he who  
gathered little had no lack.*

*But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also  
reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully  
will also reap bountifully.*

*So let each one give as  
he purposes in his heart,  
not grudgingly or of  
necessity; for God  
loves a cheerful giver.*

*And God is able to make all grace abound toward  
you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all  
things, may have an abundance for every good work.*

*As it is written:*

*“He has dispersed abroad,  
He has given to the poor;  
His righteousness  
endures forever.”*

*Now may He who supplies seed to the sower,  
and bread for food, supply and multiply the  
seed you have sown and increase the fruits of*

*your righteousness, while you are enriched  
in everything for all liberality, which causes  
thanksgiving to God, while, through the proof  
of this ministry, they glorify God for the  
obedience of your confession to the gospel  
of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with  
them and all men, and by their prayer for you,  
who long for you because of the exceeding grace  
of God in you. Thanks be to God for  
His indescribable gift!*

If the scripture speaks to your heart in a special way and the Holy Spirit gives you understanding, it is our hope that you would put your faith to action and step out and apply some of these elements of the storehouse message or whatever God is calling you to do.

But church, let us be faithful to take care of and love societies orphaned souls, and we will see God glorified by feeding our nation and souls come to Jesus because of your commitment and love.

In the Name of Jesus,  
Thank You,  
- Janet

## DEDICATED TO:

- To those who have a heart for Jesus and broken people with a desire to serve.
- Mom and Dad for my foundation
- My boys John and Doug for letting me grow up with them
- My husband Daryl who always has encouraged me to walk boldly through the scary places
- My dear friend Linda who has spent many hours at the computer and has walked with me through this process. She knows more about me now than she probably wants to know
- And thanks to Ricky Russ Jr. for relentlessly bugging me to do this and then for all of his efforts to make it happen

I love you all,

- Janet

