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# UNVEILED LIVING

DIGITAL MAGAZINE  
SPRING 2024

## APOLUTRÓSIS | REDEMPTION

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*Unveiled Living*  
**MISSION**

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[www.unveiledliving.org](http://www.unveiledliving.org)





We believe vulnerability and hilarity  
go hand in hand.


We believe we need each other and  
there's no shame in sharing our stories.

We believe together in tragedy or  
triumph, we can remove the veil we hide  
behind and live in the freedom that God  
has given us.

When we deeply connect with other  
women, we discover that we are not alone  
in our journey. Through our shared  
experiences, we become stronger when we  
stand together in Christ. Living in the  
authenticity God has called and  
created us to live,

*Unveiled.*



The cover features a collage of vintage-style elements: a torn paper background with various textures and colors (beige, cream, light brown). There are several dried flowers and leaves scattered around, including a large red flower in the top right, a yellow daisy-like flower in the bottom left, and a smaller red flower in the bottom right. A piece of paper with handwritten text is on the right side. A small rectangular piece of paper is at the top center, and another is at the bottom center. A postage stamp is visible in the bottom left corner.

# SPRING EDITION

Tracee L. Padilla  
Editor-in-Chief

Tracee and Edwin Padilla &  
Janice Conyers  
Creative Design

Tracee Padilla & Janice Conyers  
Content Editor

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Margarita Beck

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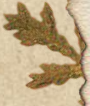
Janice Conyers

## **Movie Review - The Blind**

Janice Conyers

## **Ugly or Beautiful**

Kids Korner - Michelle Balts



# From the Editor

Dear Reader,

Apolutrosis is more than a word - it's a whisper of hope, a promise of freedom woven into the very fabric of our faith journey. It's a Greek term found in the New Testament, meaning 'release by payment,' and it speaks volumes about the transformative power of God's redemptive power.

Imagine this: a life once shackled by mistakes, doubts, and heartaches, now set free by the precious ransom paid through Christ's sacrifice. That's the essence of apolutrosis - a beautiful reminder that in Jesus, we find our true liberation and a fresh start every single day.

At Unveiled Living, we're not just about words on a page. We're a community of women who love Jesus fiercely, who wrestle with real-life challenges, and who embrace the messy, beautiful journey of faith. Our mission echoes the words of 2 Corinthians 3:16-19, where the veil is lifted as we turn to the Lord, revealing His freedom and transformming us into reflections of His glory.

Through the pages of this edition, we invite you to experience the raw, unfiltered beauty of God's redeeming love. It's in this uncovering that we find the courage to be vulnerable, the strength to face our struggles, and the joy of living authentically in His grace.

Welcome, dear friend, to a space where faith meets real life, where stories of redemption resonate with the beats of our hearts, and where we journey together towards the light of His love.

With love and anticipation,

*Tracee Padilla*

Editor-in-Chief, Unveiled Living E-Mag





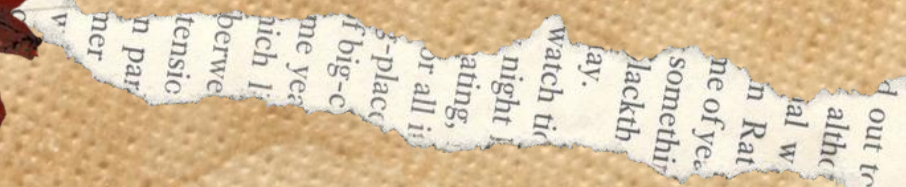
# emag

## Come on in!

Welcome to the vibrant world of Unveiled Living's digital magazine, where each page is a journey waiting to unfold! Whether you're embarking on your first read or returning for another inspiring adventure, our emag offers an interactive and fun experience. Dive into captivating articles, click on embedded website links, immerse yourself in engaging videos, and seamlessly download PDFs to enjoy at your leisure.

Navigate effortlessly through our content with the convenient 'Table of Contents' feature, which means you'll lose your place. And for ultimate convenience, feel free to download the entire magazine as a PDF to access anytime, anywhere.

Don't keep this Emag to yourself—share the joy with your friends and family, spreading the gift of Unveiled Living Emag far and wide!



# OUTSTRETCHED

HANDS

BY MARGARITA BECK







Matthew 14:22-32

*....And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him....”*

*Matthew 14:31 KJV*

# I'm not a very good swimmer.

*I should have known better than to try to swim from the lake shore out to the diving board.*

*For a while I feared that the other swimmers would continue to ignore the screams of my 13-year-old sister-in-law, who was aware of my plight. A man finally took her seriously and looked to see where she was pointing.*





*He swam to where I was and he reached out to grasp my thrashing hands. I couldn't see him, but as his outstretched hand touched mine, I stopped struggling. I knew I could do nothing at that moment to save myself. I had to have complete faith in someone I didn't know or couldn't even see.*

*Years later I reflected back on that incident as I once more floundered, this time in the Sea of Life. Another hand was reaching out to me. Could I put my trust in the outstretched hand of Jesus? I had to. There was no other way. Again I could do nothing to save myself. I could only stop thrashing and struggling and allow Jesus to take me by the hand.*

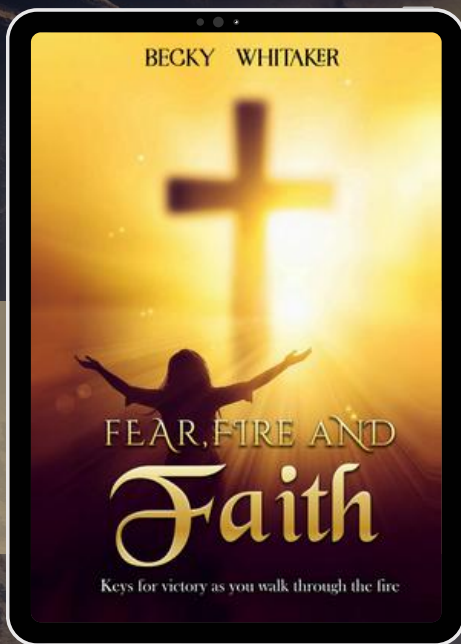
*Dear Lord, thank You for reaching out to save me. Forgive me for taking so long, too long, to realize that You have been there all the time, waiting with outstretched hands.*

*Amen.*

*Margarita Beck, Tracee's Aunt, is a retired Ordained Minister who spent her life invested in the lives of others through ministry, missions, and teaching. She lives in Nashville with her husband, Jim, having recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary.*

*New*

# FEAR, FIRE AND FAITH



*Keys for Victory as You  
Walk Through Fire*

*by Becky Whitaker*

Click here for [amazon](#) | [summary](#)

# SAVEONE

**SAVEONE MINISTRY - FEATURED WRITER**

**BY SHEILA HARPER**

*“She chose life! She chose life! She chose life!”*

These were the words I saw as they came across the small screen in my hand, and I knew the weight lifted, the liberation achieved, the bullet dodged by those words.

Wendi was new to our staff. She had recently completed the SaveOne Bible study for women and found great healing from the aftermath of her abortion. Immediately Wendi registered for the next training we had available. She then started being open about her story at the church where she served as a staff pastor. Men, women, and families began attending her SaveOne Bible studies, and it wasn't long until I saw the incredible gift God had sent to us. Within months she was on our staff and applying to be a SaveOne missionary associate.



When I received an email from a distraught mom telling me about her daughter scheduled for an abortion, I felt the Holy Spirit prompt me to have Wendi reach out to them. She did, and when the daughter wouldn't respond, Wendi wrote her story of choosing abortion and the gut-wrenching pain and sorrow she experienced afterward, in a simple email.

And then we waited.

Wendi checked with the mom a couple of times with no response. Then suddenly, we got the message: SHE CHOSE LIFE! We live for, pray for, and seek these moments at SaveOne. Instances like this happen repeatedly. We exist to help men, women, and families recover after abortion. It is our philosophy and driving force at SaveOne; when we help those who know the truth tell that truth, they become a powerful force

Revelation 12:11 assures us when we tell our stories, we become more powerful than the enemy! This scripture is how I know abortion recovery is the key to making abortion unthinkable even before it becomes illegal in all 50 states.

When abortion was made legal through all nine months of pregnancy in 1973, our country was propelled down a path that did not improve any sphere of our society. Instead, this law placed mothers and fathers as Supreme authority, inserting themselves into God's role. God is the only Sovereign who should make life-and-death decisions for another human being. When God formed us, He placed within us a nature to protect, nurture, and preserve life. When we choose abortion, we go against the nature God placed within us. We were never created to choose death for our children.

No man or woman dreams of the day they can grow up and have an abortion. So, when we find ourselves standing in the aftermath, we apply our usual coping skills, which do not work in this situation. God did not place within us the spiritual, mental, or emotional capacity to deal with the circumstances after abortion. That's because we were never created to choose abortion. We then get caught in a vicious cycle trying to deal with this situation on a human level when the only cure is a Divine intervention from our merciful and just Creator.

I know this firsthand because I had an abortion on March 29, 1985. That moment was by far the most regrettable mistake of my life. I knew on the day of the abortion I had made a terrible mistake,

but I had no idea how horrible my life would become.

Shortly after, I started having nightmares. I began using drugs and alcohol to numb my conscience. I became reliant on drugs and alcohol to get through each day. The bars in my city became my refuge. I had a hard time holding a job, and within 18 months, I was suicidal. When I attempted suicide, the Lord miraculously and in His deep love for me, saved me. You can read the entire story in my book Survivor. I tried many times and through many ways to die. I hated myself. I had no idea how I would recover. The God I once knew as a youth, I believed, would never accept me back.

But then...seven years after my abortion, driving through Chattanooga, TN, I heard a commercial on the radio. A local pregnancy center was advertising a Bible study for people who had chosen abortion and were suffering afterward. I remember that moment as though angels were singing above my car, and a light shone from heaven. I couldn't believe there were enough people like me; they had to form a class.

I made three appointments with the pregnancy center to start the class and stood them up all three times. I could not fathom how a "class" could help me. I was only looking at the problem from my



*“I know this firsthand because I had an abortion on March 29, 1985. That moment was by far the most regrettable mistake of my life.....I hated myself. I had no idea how I would recover. The God I once knew as a youth, I believed, would never accept me back.”*



limited human understanding. Finally, on my fourth appointment, I attended the class, and on that first night, I knew something was different. Every person attending was telling my story.

They each spoke of the nightmares, the suicidal thoughts and attempts, the substance abuse, and the lack of believing God could ever love them. I was amazed at the realization that others had the same symptoms I had for seven years. That was when I comprehended there indeed was something sinister and far-reaching to the aftermath of an abortion. The choice of abortion is so much more cruel and cuts so much deeper than other sinful choices.

The people leading this class showed me how God's Word could help me grieve the loss of my daughter, recognize God's true character, show me how Jesus' death on the cross was enough to forgive my sin, and help me deal with the guilt, shame, and other aftereffects hounding me. This liberation was a beautiful discovery. I had no idea such freedom was available for someone like me.

I attended weekly like clockwork. I wanted what the leaders had to give, and as soon as I graduated from the class with this newfound freedom, I was determined to give back to the center that helped me. I took their training and became a faithful volunteer. My husband,

Jack, and I started attending their events and became loyal donors. Before long, I started teaching these same abortion recovery classes and did so for several years.

When Jack's job transferred us to Nashville, I assumed my time in the LIFE movement was over. I could go to Nashville, and no one had to know about the old Sheila and all of her sordid past.

But God had another plan.

We became involved in a large church. Soon after, I was convicted knowing, the fact that one out of every three women of child-bearing age in that church had experienced abortion. Which means one out of every three men had lost fatherhood. I thought about the two sets of grandparents attached to each of those children. When we look at 65 million abortions happening during the tenure of Roe, that's a lot of hurting people attached to EACH of those children who lost their lives. These are men, women, and families sitting in our churches each week.

I approached my pastor, who let me start immediately, teaching the same study I completed for my recovery. On the very first night, ten people came! That is a large class for such a challenging subject. One of the women present on that first night said,



Tell your story...

“IF I COULD SAVE ONE UNBORN BABY, I WOULD BE WILLING TO TELL MY STORY.”

When I heard those words, I realized that someone had said that exact phrase in all the classes I taught in Chattanooga. I started praying about this phrase because I knew God was showing me something. I would attend the class weekly and tell the participants what I believed God was showing me. Eventually, I knew I was to start a nonprofit organization. One of the women said, "Well, it has to be called SAVEONE because that's what we'll be doing!"

It all was clear then. The words of Revelation 12:11 rang heavy in my ears, "We overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of our testimony..." Jesus showed us when we tell our stories of the horrors of abortion and then His miraculous healing, we can overcome the enemy working in other's lives. We would save children's lives and save men and women from living through the horrific circumstances faced after abortion.

We formed our first board from the people present in that first class, and in 2000 we received our 501c3 nonprofit status. The weight of what was happening was real. I knew God would be asking me to do some hard things. I knew and had experienced the incredible spiritual warfare surrounding this subject. I knew I would have to have a word, a promise, something to hang on to in the hard times. I sought the only One I knew could give me that word, and He, in His infinite wisdom, turned that moment into a promise I needed to make to Him.

out of the discussion, the woman is left vulnerable, making a decision she was never created to make.

We've raised an entire generation of men to believe they cannot speak to this issue, focusing on the problem instead of the fact that the child created is just as much his as hers. Men have been shouted into submission and silence. We have countless stories of men who, in their grief and sorrow, told us of how they believed they weren't supposed to say anything to protect their child. It was her body and her choice.

#### The promise:

We will go wherever, speak to whomever, and do whatever it takes to get the job done.

The job you may ask? To see abortion become unthinkable even before it becomes illegal in all 50 states. And I believe I will see this outcome fulfilled in my lifetime.

It wasn't long before God led me to write my first book, *SaveOne- The Women's Study*. I wrote this book for women because in 2002 when the book was first published, I had fallen prey to the belief that abortion was only a woman's issue. Making this all about women was ingenious for the pro-abortion side of this debate. The abortion advocates knew how powerful a man's voice is in a woman's life. If they can shut the men

When we started offering the study for women at our church, the women came out of the class and were open about their experiences. They wanted others to find the same freedom they discovered. Then a man asked if he could attend the next women's Bible study. I was floored; I had never considered the men's plight in this decision.

At that moment, I remembered the promise, "I will do whatever it takes..." If that means helping this man in front of me, then the Holy Spirit will have to work it out. He came to the class, bringing his wife, who was not a part of his abortion experience, and the outcome was

beautiful. Timothy and Kristy are now on staff at SaveOne (Team), as our international liaisons.

I offered the women's study the next semester, and another man asked to go through the class. That was when I knew God was bringing these men in front of me for a reason. He then gave me and Jack, SaveOne - The Men's Study to write, and we started helping men and women

Imagine my surprise when the same scenario played out as grandparents, siblings of aborted children, and family members grieving a loved one's abortion started asking to go through the class. He then gave me, SaveOne - The Ripple Effect to write, and we began helping men, women, and families recover after abortion. Through each of these instances, the realization came to me that this issue is not just a woman's issue but a family crisis for our generation.

Jack and I now travel almost every weekend sharing this message in different churches. Through every bit of these last two decades, we have tried to stay the course. Sure, we get caught up sometimes, enraged by what we see, but in those times, we remember the One who holds the keys, who has the answers. As all eyes have turned to politics, we have focused on the local church.

The local church is where the real power is held. The local church is what Jesus is coming back for. The local church is where we must discuss this subject responsible for so many ailments of our society. When we look at the fact that when men, women, and families come to us, they're dealing with...

1. Depression
2. Substance Abuse
3. Pornography Addictions
4. Anger that is out of control
5. An inability to sustain a relationship

And these are just a few of the symptoms we see. When we look at the ailments of our society, what do we see? Anti-depressants are prescribed at an all-time high. We have a waiting lists for drug rehabs. The pronography industry is a multi-billion-dollar business. Domestic violence is on the rise. Our divorce rate is still extremely high.

Often, as the Church, we treat the symptom instead of digging down to find the root of the problem. Many times, that root is a past abortion.

Since our inception in 2000, we have grown to over 400 chapters in 28 nations. The books have been translated into 23 languages. We did not grow to this size because of our marketing skills but because of the need.

We need and would love for you to join us. Please help us build this army of truth-tellers who are no longer willing to be silent about the aftermath of abortion. You will be building your church in the process and making America blessed by God.



**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE  
ABOUT SAVEONE OR NEED ASSISTANCE,  
PLEASE CONTACT  
INFO@SAVEONE.ORG**

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# Providing Restoration & Healing to Survivors Through God's Grace

SaveOne is a life-saving and life-changing ministry dedicated to helping men, women, and loved ones recover spiritually, mentally, and emotionally after the choice of abortion. Our mission grows every year, allowing us to continue to share the hope of Jesus. SaveOne offers:



## BOOKS & WRITTEN RESOURCES

to help those suffering as they navigate their healing journey.



## ONLINE STUDIES & STAFF

to walk with those who need help as they heal.



## LOCAL CHAPTER MEETINGS

where those with the same experiences and feelings can walk down the path of healing together.



### 6.4 PEOPLE

ON AVERAGE START ONE OF OUR STUDIES EVERY SINGLE DAY.



Sheila Harper  
Founder & President

You are not alone.  
There is hope.  
SaveOne can help.

Contact us today.

SaveOne.org



# SAVEONE

Helping men, women, and families recover after an abortion.

# UNVEILED LIVING STORIES

Welcome to our new non-fiction section, where real-life stories, inspiring journeys, and insightful reflections come together to inspire, encourage, and empower you.

If you are interested in submitting a short story for potential approval (1500 words or less), email us at [connect@unveiledliving.org](mailto:connect@unveiledliving.org)



TRACEE PADILLA

# FROM BROKENNESS TO BEAUTY

SARAH'S JOURNEY OF GOD'S REDEMPTION



# IN THE QUAIN TOWN OF MAPLEWOOD,

nestled amidst the gentle rustle of maple trees and the comforting hum of close-knit community life, Sarah's journey of redemption began. As a divorced mom grappling with the weight of single parenthood, she found herself navigating a maze of emotions, doubts, and longing for a sense of purpose and belonging.

The breakup of her marriage had left Sarah feeling adrift, like a ship without a compass, lost in a sea of uncertainty. She had once believed in the power of love to conquer all, pouring her heart and soul into her relationship, only to watch it crumble under the weight of unmet expectations and broken promises.

As she adjusted to life as a single parent, Sarah often found herself questioning her worth and value. The constant demands of raising her children, managing a household, and juggling work responsibilities left her exhausted and overwhelmed. In the

quiet moments of the night, when the world around her seemed to pause, Sarah's heart echoed with pain, sadness, and the wonder of how she could go on.

One day, a new coworker named Emily joined Sarah's team at work. There was something different about Emily—a sense of peace and joy that seemed to radiate from within. Intrigued, Sarah struck up a conversation with Emily during a lunch break, and soon they became friends.

Through their conversations, Sarah discovered that Emily was active in her church and had a deep faith in God. Despite Sarah's initial reluctance, Emily gently encouraged her to visit the church and experience the love and acceptance she had found there.

Reluctantly, Sarah agreed to attend a Sunday service with Emily. As she entered the church, she felt a mixture of apprehension and curiosity. The worship music filled the sanctuary, and Sarah found herself moved by the lyrics and the sincerity of the worshipers around her.

During the sermon, the pastor spoke about God's unconditional love and His desire to heal and restore broken lives. Tears welled up in Sarah's eyes as she felt a stirring in her heart—a glimmer of hope that maybe, just maybe, God still cared for her and had a plan for her life.

One scripture that spoke directly to Sarah's heart during this time was from Isaiah 43:1-3a (NIV):

"But now, this is what the Lord says—He who created you, Jacob, He who formed you, Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.'"

This passage became a source of comfort and strength for Sarah, reminding her that God was with her through every trial and challenge. It reassured her that she was not alone, and that God's love and protection surrounded her like a shield.

After the service, Emily introduced Sarah to some members of the church, and they welcomed her with open arms. Sarah felt a sense of belonging and acceptance that she hadn't experienced in a long time. She started attending church regularly, soaking in the messages of hope and grace, and slowly opening her heart to the possibility of redemption.

Through the support and prayers of her new church family, Sarah began to heal from the wounds of her past. She attended counseling sessions to work through her struggles and insecurities, and she dove into studying the Bible, seeking answers and reassurance of God's love.

One Sunday, during a time of prayer and reflection, Sarah felt a deep sense of peace wash over her. It was as if God was whispering to her heart, assuring her of His love and presence. In that moment, Sarah surrendered her fears and doubts, accepting the love of Jesus and embracing her identity as a beloved child of God.

Her journey of healing and redemption was far from over, but Sarah had found a newfound

strength and hope in her faith. She learned to love herself as God loved her—flaws and all. She found purpose in serving others and sharing her story of God's faithfulness and redemption.

As Sarah continued to grow in her relationship with God, she discovered the power of forgiveness—both receiving it from God and extending it to others. She reached out to those who had hurt her in the past, offering forgiveness and seeking peace in her relationships.

Sarah's journey of redemption also included moments of testing and growth. She faced challenges and setbacks along the way, but she never wavered in her faith. She learned to lean on God's strength in times of weakness, and to trust in His promises even when circumstances seemed uncertain.

Today, Sarah's journey of redemption continues, filled with moments of joy, growth, and deepening faith. She has found a supportive community of believers who walk alongside her, encouraging her to keep pressing forward in her faith journey. Sarah's

story serves as a beacon of hope and inspiration to others, a testament to God's faithfulness and the transformative power of His love.

In the quaint town of Maplewood, amidst the whispering maple trees and the gentle rhythm of community life, Sarah's story reminds us that no matter how lost or broken we may feel, God's love has the power to heal, restore, and redeem every broken piece of our lives.



Tracee Padilla is the Founder and Visionary behind Unveiled Living. She and her husband, Edwin, live in the outskirts of Ocean Isle Beach, NC.

*by Theresa Miller*

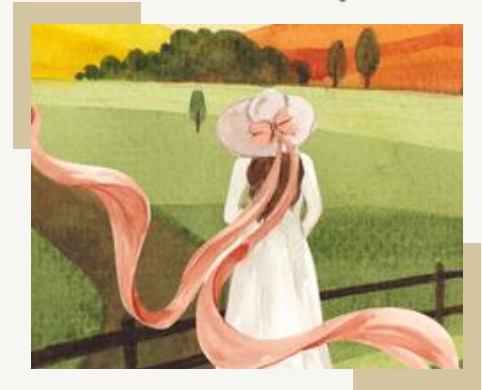
# *When You Set Your Hope on Grace*



I Peter 1:13 NIV ——— God's Grace

A writer once told me a good story is always about relationships coming together, breaking apart, and coming together again.

Man and woman were created in relationship with God, that relationship was broken by sin, and the climax of redemption reconciles us to God once again.



This is the greatest story ever written... where every longing and desire is ultimately fulfilled by the tender, loving grace of God.

The novels I gravitate toward are those that reflect this redemptive value. They are the books that draw me into near despair, feeling the beloved protagonist entering a point of no return. Then somehow the author pulls off unexpected reconciliation in the end. Oh, sweet grace. My heart forgets the despair and sings the praises of hope's redemption.

But what about the pain and suffering of this present chapter? What about the love we long for, either yet to come or desperate to return? What about this enduring in-between state we reside in? Where do we set our ever-shifting hope?

In a world where we encounter loss, disappointment, and deferred hope, 1 Peter 1:13 (NIV) reminds us, "Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming."

Life is fragile. In one breath we're here, in the next we're gone. We never know when we'll take our last breath. However, we gain consolation in the acceptance that it will come and when it does, grace will carry us through. It's like the epilogue of the story—the happily ever after.



When we set our hope on grace, we are no longer consumed by the stealthy hope of this world, but embraced by the steady hope of eternity. This is what we look forward to with readiness and expectation.

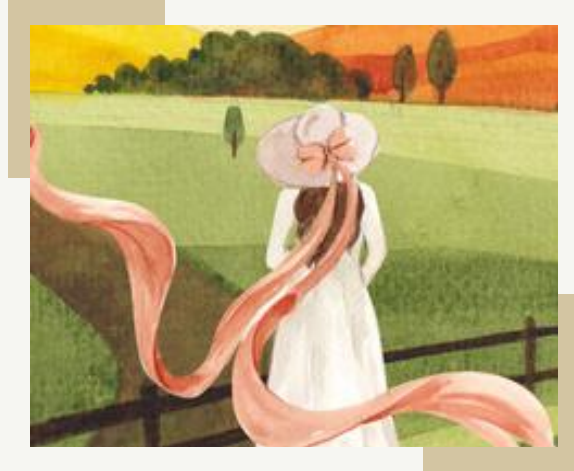
Does your hope feel unsteady? Here are 5 reasons to set your hope on grace.

### **God's Grace.....**

- 🍃 Offers you a future ~ Jeremiah 29:11
- 🍃 Reconciles your deepest longing ~ 2 Corinthians 5:18
- 🍃 Is sufficient for you ~ 2 Corinthians 12:9
- 🍃 Is everlasting ~ John 3:16
- 🍃 Is a sure foundation ~ Isaiah 26:16



Our stories linger in the tension of life's brokenness, but God has written redemption into the resolution of our stories. He has reconciled us to Himself and will fulfill the longings of our aching hearts. We have a part in this, too. We can snatch the pen and ride our floundering hopes to the dismal end or we can surrender the pen to God. When we set our hope on His grace, we can ultimately trust the Author with the storyline.



Dear sister, God's grace is sufficient not only for your yesterday and your today; God's grace is sufficient for your tomorrow!

When life feels fragile and hope deferred, set your hope on the grace that is coming for you at Jesus' return. The story isn't over. You are in this fight for a reason. Even in the messy muck, you have purpose right where you are. You are loved and powerful by God's grace alone. Let His light shine through you to pierce the darkness. You may not see it yet, but God knows the reward awaiting when you set your hope on grace.

Whatever you are facing now, consider how setting your hope on grace strengthens your character for the greatest story ever written.



About Theresa Miller: Theresa is a transplant from the wooded East to the wide open spaces of Wyoming in the West, where she now calls home. Nestled near the Big Horn Mountains, she first enjoys being a wife to Rob and a mom to her four teenagers. Weaving words has been the creative outlet she has explored since childhood, bringing clarity to life's complexities. Theresa currently serves in women's ministries in her church and community as a Bible teacher, MOPS Mentor, and speaker. In addition, she is a COMPEL member, Bible Study Writing Focus Group Leader, and Challenge winner. You can find Theresa encouraging women to dig deeper to reach higher in their faith and calling on Instagram, Facebook, Substack, and through her professional and sister websites. See Facebook [page here](#).





Dear Amazing Readers,

We are bursting with gratitude for each and every one of you! Your unwavering support has brought us to this incredible moment, and we're thrilled to share some exciting news with you.

Unveiled Living is embarking on a new chapter, one filled with boundless potential and endless opportunities to help ignite women, like you, to discover the true freedom He has called to life, living life unveiled.

But to truly soar to new heights, we need a little extra sparkle - and that's where you come in.

If you've been blessed by the ministry of Unveiled Living and feel called to join us on this journey as we shine the love of Jesus to our amazing 1000+ readers, we invite you to seize this golden opportunity. Your generosity can make an extraordinary impact. By making a donation today, you not only support Unveiled Living's ongoing mission but also help accelerate the process of securing our 501(c)(3) Non-Profit status - with the goal of achieving this status by the end of 2024!

Every contribution, no matter the size, is a beacon of hope and a testament to the power of community. Together, we can continue to shine brightly, spreading the message of Jesus far and wide.

From the depths of our hearts, we thank you for being the incredible community that you are. Your support is truly priceless.

With boundless love and immeasurable gratitude,

Tracee and the Unveiled Living Team

[Yes, I want to support Unveiled Living!](#)



# THE POWER OF *Surrender*



**BY JESSICA LOCKLEAR THOMPSON**



'... SINCE YOU HAVE HEARD ABOUT JESUS AND HAVE LEARNED THE TRUTH THAT COMES FROM HIM, THROW OFF YOUR OLD SINFUL NATURE AND YOUR FORMER WAY OF LIFE, WHICH IS CORRUPTED BY LUST AND DECEPTION. INSTEAD, LET THE SPIRIT RENEW YOUR THOUGHTS AND ATTITUDES. PUT ON YOUR NEW NATURE, CREATED TO BE LIKE GOD—TRULY RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY.' EPHESIANS 4:20-24

I know there are numerous directions we can take to talk about redemption. My personal view of redemption is frequently thinking of all the ways God has made me new in Him. He has so lovingly removed His hand of grace over my life at times to show me the person I really am without

Him. I've always been the type of person who acknowledges where I was in those moments, who I became and where I ended up. It's in those memories I am always filled with such gratitude to the Lord for all that He has picked me out of. Especially when He didn't have to. I was the one who made

my decisions and put myself where I was, the flesh and the enemy only ever results in one thing, destruction. You see, a loving Father will let you wallow in your mess for as long as need until you come to the realization of your need for Him. He will never force us to follow Him, but He will in His sovereignty allow us to experience things that reveal our true nature, our corrupted flesh that's led by lust and deception.

I was that person; I remember those moments. I remember the night I finally surrendered after He allowed me to follow my own ways for a solid year. I know it doesn't happen this way for everybody but within 3 months of that rock bottom moment He did miracle after miracle in my life and gave me back all I had tried to mess up and more. Not because I was good, not because I deserved it. Trust me, I did not and still understand I do not deserve all that He has chosen to give to me.

He turned all my messes into miracles. That's not just a cliché. I am living proof. God is not only love but He is justice. He gives grace but He's also sovereign. His ways will always be higher than ours and His thoughts will always be higher. But once we realize that when He chastens us and when He convicts us, He is trying to redeem us, the ugliness of those seasons is highlighted with beauty.

I looked up the word redeem, and several definitions popped up but the ones I liked best were these.

**TO FREE WHAT DISTRESSES OR HARMS.  
TO CHANGE FOR THE BETTER, RESTORE,  
REPAIR.**



My whole life has been an open book of His redemptive power. I will never get tired of telling people that when they truly surrender, He will change you for the better, repair and restore you. A lot of people like to only talk about God's love but to me without His chastening and His sovereignty how would we truly know His love? To understand that He doesn't have to do anything for us but He chooses to, that's love. Now I can confidently say I have been made righteous through Christ. I am set apart and every day I am trying to be holy as He is holy. Redemption brings righteousness, and according to Ephesians, righteousness and holiness should be the goal.

Desiring to be a reflection of our Father.



Jessica Locklear Thompson resides by the ocean in North Carolina, advocating holy living in a morally challenged world. Married for 15 years, she prioritizes building a healthy marriage. In 2012, her sons Malachi & Elijah were born, destined for Kingdom service. With over 15 years in the salon industry, she used each haircut to share Jesus. Now, she speaks monthly at NMBCS chapel and hosts the podcast Rescued & Restored. Despite leaving the salon in October 2023, she remains active as a Bridal Hair & Makeup Artist and collaborates with her husband's company, Sand & Sawdust, remaining open to divine opportunities.



HOPESTYLE & CO STORE



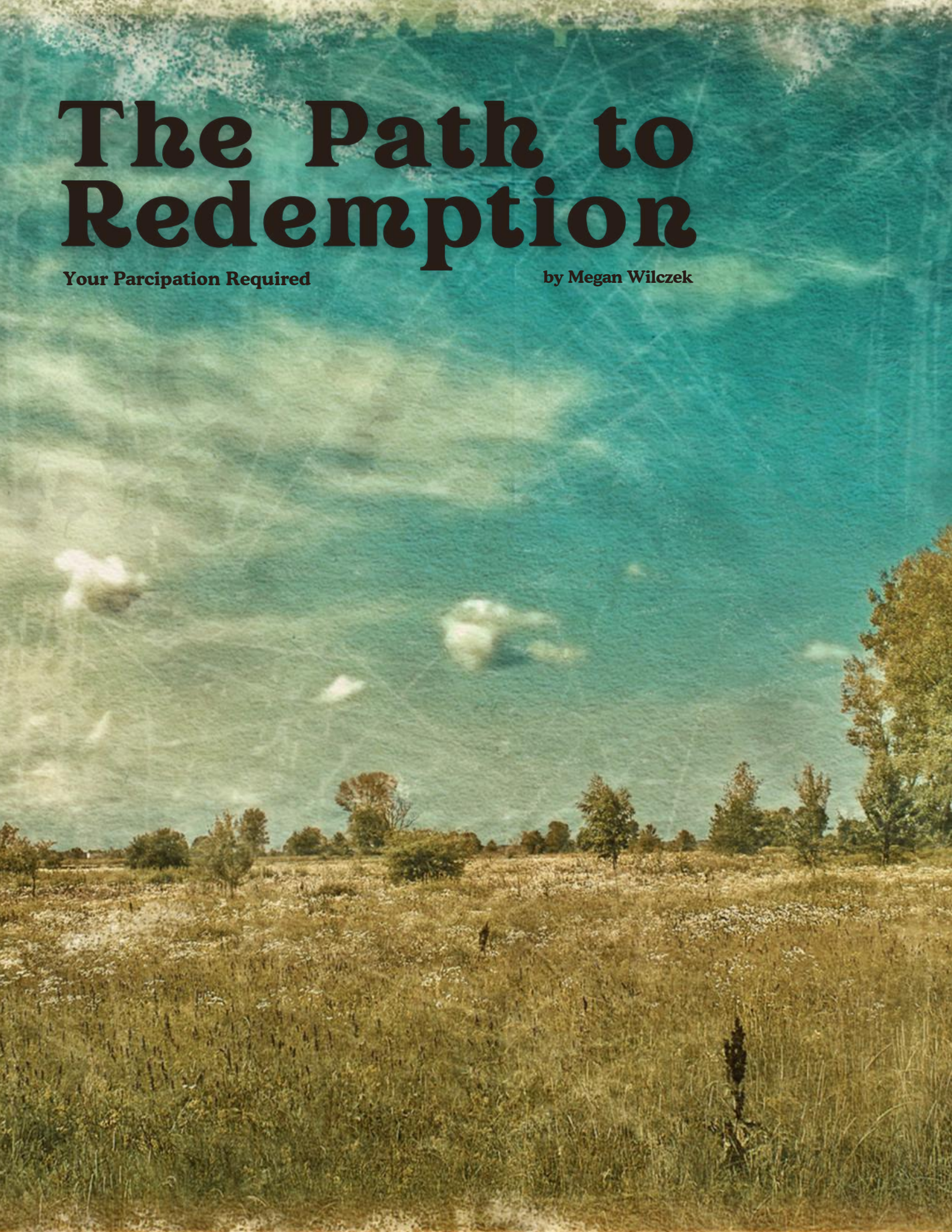
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Thank you, in advance, for supporting this ministry!

# The Path to Redemption

Your Participation Required

by Megan Wilczek



**Jesus came to earth and died to pay our ransom,** leading to our release from bondage. Jesus provided us each with a release, but we each get to choose whether we stay where we are stuck or walk out with Jesus in freedom. Our redemption requires our participation. Jesus did what we are incapable of doing for ourselves, but we still have a role to play in our redemption stories.

What is that role?

In Ephesians 4:21-24 Paul reminds us, “Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.”

**Apolutrosis:**  
A release effected by  
the payment of  
ransom (redemption,  
deliverance,  
liberation)





## Step 1.

It is a personal choice whether we embrace Jesus and the sacrifice He made for us. While God has made Himself available to all, He will not force Himself upon anyone.

## Step 2.

It is up to us to allow the Holy Spirit to work through us. The voice of God is gentle and quiet, not pushy and loud. We can choose to live a lifestyle that drowns out God's voice, or we can choose to silence the world's noise and listen to the Holy Spirit with intentionality.



## Step 3.

Action on our part is required. We can begin by choosing Jesus. We can hear the conviction of the Holy Spirit. But still, we choose our everyday actions. The more we act against the Holy Spirit's voice, the further we stifle that voice. Redemption is not a passive process; it requires our active participation. We still need to choose to turn away from sin and walk the other path God has laid out for us each day.





Living in the space between two extremes is hard. It's tempting to swing to one side of the spectrum or the other and camp out there permanently. On one side is the fact that it is God who changes our hearts. On the other end of the spectrum is that we are responsible for the change in our lives. The paradox is that both are true, and God calls us to find balance by walking with Him one step at a time, using His strength but offering our cooperation in the process of sanctification.

No matter how hard we try, transformation doesn't happen overnight, but looking back on the past month, year, or more, do you see progressive change? Or are you exactly the same as when you first became a Christian?

Paul gives us another call to action in Ephesians 4:30-32: "And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption (apolutrosis). Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."

Megan, a native of rural Wisconsin, is a passionate advocate for mental health and trauma recovery. With a background in psychology and crisis counseling, she is currently pursuing a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling. She is the creator of the Jordan Crossings Blog, dedicated to empowering trauma survivors and educating Christians on ministry to the hurting. Megan is married to a firefighter and recently adopted their two foster children.

<https://www.jordancrossings.org>



**Renee's battle** with self-hatred led her on a desperate pursuit of acceptance and love, culminating in a heroin and alcohol addiction by the time she was a Senior in High School. "I was a slave to something I couldn't stop," she recalls, reaching a breaking point.

But here's Renee's Story—a true revelation of how God can turn a life around. What the enemy meant for evil, God transforms for good.

if you've ever looked at the backside of a beautiful tapestry, you'll find nothing but loose, random threads and knots that seem chaotic. Yet, when you turn it around, a breathtaking image

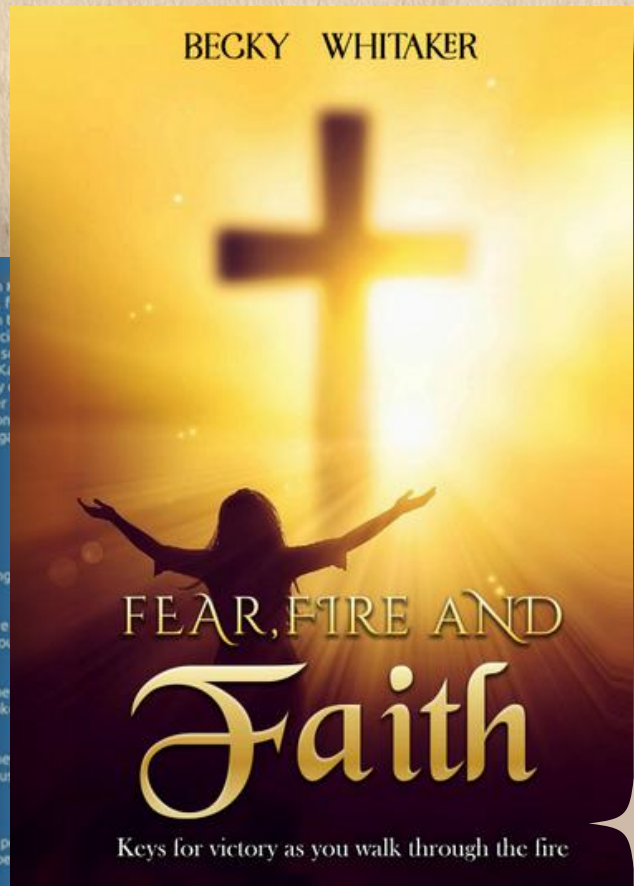
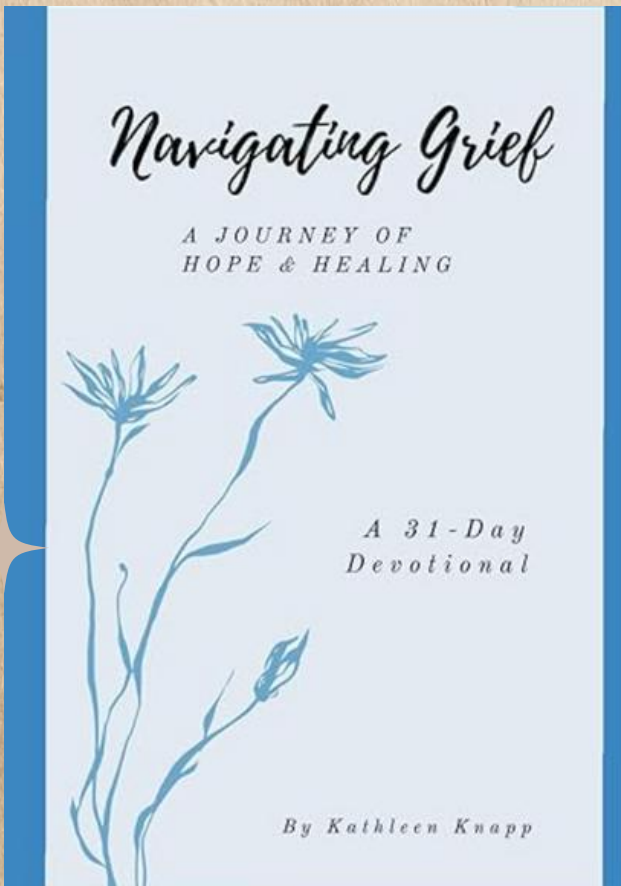
bursts forth, full of color and texture, crafted by a skilled weaver.

Just like atpestry, our lives have a front and back. In this Tapestry series, we spotlight stories like Renee's, where women like you and me share their difficult, challenging, and something painful seasons. Through their journeys, we unveiled the tender, skilled touch of the Master, weaving their paths into the divine plan He designed for each of us.

God always has a way of turning our ashes into something beautiful. That is the power of apolutrosis - God redemptive love for us.

## SUPPORT

# OUR WRITER'S



by Carmen Chase

# THE ALBUM

*memory*

*book*





## "IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME"

Edith was having second thoughts. She stared hard at the low shelf in her closet, weighing out the risk of losing her balance against the knowing in her heart. In the shadows at the far end, a thick, familiar photo album called to her.

Someone today needs to SEE, not just HEAR your story.

Grabbing the left handle of her walker with her right hand, Edith bent her eighty-something torso down and grasped the worn, padded cover. With a short grunt, she hefted the album to a solid landing on her walker shelf. Whew! Success.

It's been a long time.

The wind-up watch on her wrist assured her she had a good 20 minutes before her Bible study guests arrived. She cleared a space beside her Bible and half-empty coffee cup. Lifting the front cover, the first few pages erased decades, pulling her back to the early years.

Three little faces stared up at her from a center photo. All boys. Their sister was chattering off camera somewhere ...a talker from birth, her daddy said. The exhaustion of mothering 4 kids so close in age swept past her like a whisper. She wasn't alone. Just lonely. Her husband Dudee would retreat to the peace and quiet of his fishing boat on the lake. But her?

That was BEFORE.

She glanced up at the black and white wedding photo on the side table across the room. She was only 16. Her stylish suit and lovely corsage hid the secret life already stirring in her womb.

Of course they had to get married. Thankfully, they were in love. But she could see now what she couldn't fully know then: her great escape.

Escape from him.

Even now, Edith's pulse quickened a bit at the memories. The nighttime terror of wishing to be invisible when he came home. The panic of holding her breath in a cornfield, hoping he wouldn't find her. Hoping he wouldn't go after her mother or sisters either.

It wasn't nearly so bad in the daytime. Before the evening bar visits poured alcohol in his veins. When father-turned-monster.

Getting married plucked her out of his reach. Sadly, it also took her away from her mom. And then he took mom away for good.

He'd never have done it sober. But, like so many nights before, the booze twisted his mind and fed his fury. In just moments, her mother's spirit was violently cut free.

Photo: Edith with her father, Raymond



.....THE SECRET LIFE ALREADY STIRRING IN HER WOMB.

Edith could still feel the weight of people's glances at the grocery store in her rural Wisconsin town.

There's that poor Larson girl. So sad what happened to her mom. Her dad's gonna be in prison a long time. The shock and ache and grief had no place to go. So she buried it.

That was BEFORE.

Edith turned a few pages to the right. Ah. "Surprise" daughter number two. The boys were teenagers by then. That was rough. The oldest seemed to wear through girlfriends as fast as the next son wore through her nerves. She didn't turn to alcohol.

At least, not like him. For her & Dudee, alcohol was just a ticket to a good time. But cigarettes...*well*.

A few more page turns and she found them. Their faces grinned beside her and Dudee, evidence of the fun they were all having. What could be better? The daughters—best friends by day, and the parents—bar buddies by night...dancing and drinking...you know, *living it up*.

Edith shook her head in grateful wonder as she absorbed the images, keenly aware of how vulnerable and ignorant they were in those days. And how blind they were to the signs of history threatening to repeat itself. Link by link, alcohol was fashioning a chain that started to manifest itself in ugly ways.

That was BEFORE.

A photo at the bottom corner seemed to light Edith from the inside.

New friends then, old friends now.

The faces smiling back at her from the page surfaced memories of late nights praying and singing in her living room packed with folks hungry to know Jesus. She was hungry to know Jesus! This couple took her and Dudee under their wings, teaching them how to study the Bible and how to be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

That was AFTER.

Edith recalled that miraculous week like she'd done in years since, marveling at the complete trajectory shift in their whole family. Her oldest son found Christ first.

Sickly and weak from allergy to prescribed medication, his life treacherously hung in the balance. But one night's visit to a nearby church sent him home a changed young man. His gaunt face radiated a joy and love that was so uncharacteristic. It sparked a curiosity that sent the rest of the family into a row of worn pews, listening to the same evangelist a second and third night.





Tears of salvation flowed heavy. Then tears of being filled with the Holy Spirit flowed even more. The evidence was there on the countenances of the faces Edith found on the next page.

*That was AFTER.*

Some evidence couldn't be captured on film or printed on Kodak paper. Loneliness lost its sting. How could she feel anything but joy when Jesus was there with her? Laundry, dishes, cooking—busy household chores were suddenly opportunities to pray in the Spirit and talk to her Savior. Dudee quit his several-cigarette-packs-per-day habit one day at work. Edith quit within the year.

And they both quit going to bars. Prayer gatherings, lingering into the wee hours of the morning - where new and old friends came to get saved, miraculously healed, delivered from oppression and filled with the Holy Spirit - was their new nighttime excitement. And it was *fun*.

*That was AFTER.*



Just a few pages left. A smile tugged the corners of her mouth at her youngest daughter in an olive green junior bridesmaids dress.

*So seventies.*

The full wedding party was all lined up, their young smiles innocent of all the joys and challenges life would throw their way. Her two oldest sons, both Bible school students, stood with their bride and bride-to-be. Both would pastor churches.

Her two teens - the youngest boy and oldest girl - looked right at home on that church platform, despite the formal attire. Why wouldn't they? At that time, they spent their nights and weekends singing and playing at all the local churches, using their innate gift of music to share the powerful hope of the Gospel.

*That was AFTER.*

Edith heard the upstairs doorbell, and knew her daughter would be sending the arrival downstairs. She quickly paged her way toward the end of the album.

*There.*

The photo revealed an older man, simply dressed in a powder blue dress shirt and dark tie. The white corsage at his left shoulder invited well-wishers of the day to shake his hand and offer their congratulations at his grandson's nuptials. Edith stood at his side in blue satin, her ribbon-dressed corsage anchoring the lace front of her blouse as she smiled for the snapshot.

Photo: Edith

Edith's eyes drifted to the evidence she had been hunting.

There, frozen in time, were the clasped hands of father and daughter. If photos had soundtracks, this one would sing a tender melody of forgiveness that soaked through years of separation and intense hidden pain. No one could know what it took for her to stand that close to him. After everything he had done. After everything he had taken from her.

*But this was AFTER.*

After God healed her broken heart. After God showed great mercy and kindness to her. After God forgave her.

Edith's heart swelled with gratitude to God for the *AFTER*.

After the Holy Spirit dug deep to expose generations of hurt and brokenness and abuse. After she and Dudee intentionally broke chains of depravity forged by generations of willful disobedience and ignorance.

Christ paid an excruciating price to buy her and her family back from the Enemy of Souls. And because He did, she had album upon album of *AFTER* photos.

In the next hour, she would show her photos to tell her story. Then they would talk and study the scriptures the Holy Spirit had pointed out to her that morning. Maybe someone today will want to experience the peace of salvation or the joy of



Photo: Edith and Carmen Chase

being filled with the Holy Spirit or the freedom that comes from breaking generational curses.

Footsteps creaked on the carpeted stairs, and Edith smiled. She made a mental note to take a photo of her group today. Perhaps today will mark that moment for someone else. That unseen moment where *BEFORE* gives way to *AFTER*.



Carmen Chase cherishes memories of playing board games and making Norwegian lefse with her grandmother, Edith, now a citizen in heaven. Edith's weekly Bible study is still in full swing, lead now by her oldest daughter. Carmen and her husband, Jimmy, are staff pastors in coastal North Carolina.

SUMMER 2024 EDITION

# UNVEILED

## LIVING



### *Mosaic Journeys*

FROM THE HEART: INSPIRING STORIES BY  
UNVEILED LIVING WRITERS

# BETRAYED BY A FRIEND BUT REDEEMED

*by Kathleen Knapp*

I opened my email from my friend and read words in disbelief. Instead of a cheery letter full of news, she wrote to me of hurt, betrayal, and actions she felt I had taken against our friendship.

She spoke of other friends who agreed with her as they gossiped behind my back. Tears blurred the writing as I continued to read, struggling against the lump in my throat. Her words pierced my heart like an arrow as I felt the pain of rejection. As I absorbed her words, I became defensive at the perceived injustice of her allegations. My hands began to shake with anger as I read her list of accusations.

In my anger, I furiously wrote a four-page reply clarifying and justifying my perspective of the misunderstanding.

Thankfully, I never sent it.

Instead, I took it to God in prayer. It wasn't easy to forgive, but the wounds healed. Over time our relationship was restored. Only by the grace of God can we forgive others who have hurt us. Jesus forgave me for so much, so who am I to withhold forgiveness?

Her words of betrayal felt like a violation of trust that blindsided me. My heart, crushed by her words of treachery, experienced grief over the lost relationship.

I was emotionally devastated. My anger was my defense against the hurt.

We've all been there.

It may be a friend, neighbour, family member, co-worker, or even a spouse who broke your trust and betrayed you. It leaves a hole in your heart. Grief and sadness over the broken relationship make it difficult to trust anyone again.

Jesus understands. He was betrayed too. By one of his closest friends, one he trusted and treated as a brother. One who became a traitor.

As Jesus and his disciples were enjoying a Passover feast in Jerusalem, Jesus upsets everyone at the dinner when he said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." (John 13:2) Then continues to identify his betrayer. "It is he to whom I will give this

**“A NEW COMMANDEMENT I GIVE TO YOU, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER; JUST AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, YOU ALSO ARE TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.” JOHN 13:34**

morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.” (John 13:26) “Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.” (Matthew 26:25)

In the confused aftermath of Jesus' statement, He stares into the eyes of Judas and quietly says: “Whatever you are going to do, do it quickly”.(John 13:27) I suspect there were tears in his eyes and sorrow in his voice when he said this. His heart was broken. Jesus was God, but he was fully human too. He would have been devastated by the broken trust of His friend.

**Jesus knew.** He knew Judas would conspire with the chief priests to have him arrested, tried, tortured, and eventually killed. Not only was Jesus betrayed by one of his closest friends, but there was a larger conspiracy against him. (Matthew 26:14-16)

**Jesus knew.** But did Judas fully know what he was doing as he conspired against his master, brother, and friend? What was the motive behind Judas's betrayal? Was he motivated by greed? (John 12:4-6) Was he tempted by Satan? (John 13:27 and Luke 22:3) Whatever the motive, God used Judas and his betrayal to fulfill the prophecies about Jesus being sold for thirty pieces of silver. (Zech. 11:12)

**Jesus knew.** He knew what was to come. He loved humanity enough to suffer the humiliation of the conspiracy and betrayal to follow through with God's plan of redemption. Jesus trusted God to fulfill the prophecies of generations to save the lost and reunite us with the Father. Jesus also forecasts scripture's fulfillment, predicting his death as the Messiah (John 13:18).

**Jesus knew.** He knew his death was coming. After Judas leaves the upper room, Jesus spends time with the remaining disciples, giving them further instructions for when he will no longer be with them. He foretells what will come after his death, teaches them, and a new commandment is declared: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”(John 13:34)

**Jesus knew.** He knew that Judas's betrayal was leading to His death and resurrection. He knew the cruel and painful death He would experience to fulfill the prophecies of the Messiah and become our redeemer.

**Jesus knew.** He knew that Judas, soldiers, and the Chief Priests would come to arrest him in the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus stood facing the crowd and allowed Judas to approach him as a friend. Then as he looked him in the eye, Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. (Matthew 26:47-50)

**JESUS KNEW! AND HE SHOWED UP ANYWAY.  
HE LOVES US THAT MUCH!**

Wow, the courage Jesus had to follow through with God's plan when He knew the torture and pain of what was to come! He knew he would suffer and die for our sins, to rise again to be seated at the right hand of God, to bring us into a right relationship with God the Father once again. Despite being betrayed by Judas, Jesus was still faithfully obedient to complete the will of his Father and fulfilled his mission on the cross. Through grace and mercy, Jesus forgave his betrayer. Instead of being angry, Jesus loves and forgives. He redeems.

**Even when we betray him, we are redeemed. We are redeemed by his sacrifice and emboldened by his example to love and forgive those who have betrayed us. Let us follow his example to forgive instead of react in anger and to redeem our relationships in love.**



**About Kathleen Knapp:** Kathleen lives in western Canada with her husband. She is the mother of 3 children. She shares her heartfelt experiences as a parent raising and releasing children with special needs. Through her personal experiences she shows understanding and compassion for parents struggling, feeling isolated, and losing faith. She is recently retired and enjoy new hobbies such as photography, painting, piano, line dancing and playing pickle ball. You can visit Kathleen's website at: [www.kathleenknappwriter.com](http://www.kathleenknappwriter.com)

31 Day Devotional

# NAVIGATING GRIEF



“Where is God in the deepest pit of grief?”

Are you feeling stuck in grief, longing for wholeness, and wondering where to turn?

Navigating Grief is a 31 Day Devotional that guides you to the spiritual healing your broken heart desires.

Through relatable bible verses and personal stories, this interactive devotional encourages you to hope again and believe for healing.

“We can lament in the rain, or dance in the puddles.”

KathleenKnappWriter.com

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BY JANICE CONYERS

A FATHER'S CHOICE  
A MOTHER'S LOVE  
AND A SON'S REUNION

A STORY OF GOD'S REDEEMPTIVE LOVE



There are many stories I could tell you revealing truth and beauty of God's redemption but at this moment, only one rises above them all. It is a story that takes place in 1969 of a frightened, unwed teenaged girl who found herself 19, pregnant, and feeling alone.

Not having many of the typical pregnancy symptoms during her pregnancy, she didn't realize she was pregnant until nearly halfway through her 7th month. She hadn't gained much weight and had not received any prenatal care. As soon as her father discovered her condition, she was sent to live with her aunt in Florida. She began to make plans to stay in Florida, to keep the baby and support herself. One March morning she went into labor and as she progressed throughout the day, her father arrived at the hospital. He told his daughter he had arranged for the baby to be adopted and that was that.

Times were different back then. Her father had all the power and authority in the situation. She was confused, angry, and felt completely helpless. The medical staff administered medication to help her stay calm and progress with labor. When the baby was born, she only heard its cries. She longed to see it, hold it, if only for a minute before she feared she would never again receive the chance. She wasn't allowed. Tears ran down her face as the hospital staff took the baby away.

Soon after, she was getting settled into her hospital room. Visiting hours were over and she was all alone except for the nurse attending to her needs. "Did anyone tell you what you had, darling?" the nurse asked her. "No," she responded. "You had a beautiful, healthy baby boy with blonde hair and the brightest blue eyes," she described with compassion, "He went to a good, local Christian family that own some local shoe stores in town. He'll be well looked after, honey. Don't you worry." The nurse comforted the girl as together they cried tears of sadness. ("God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Matthew 5:4; "Carry one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ," Galatians 6:2).



---

As the girl tried to find her new normal and work through the agonizing pain of her grief, she realized she couldn't stay in Florida any longer. Every time she was out in public and heard a baby cry, she couldn't help but wonder if that was her baby boy. The pain was too much. She married the first man that would help her escape this prison, and they found themselves moving to Illinois.

As her life and marriage progressed, her arms still longed for the baby she'd grieved. She prayed and cried out to God. She and her husband tried many times to get pregnant and failed, but through those tough years of disappointment, she continued to remain faithful in her prayers. She knew God would answer in His timing. ("The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; He rescues those whose spirits are crushed." Psalms 34:18; "Never stop praying." I Thessalonians 5:17).

Years later, the couple had built a business and were in a good place with it. Since they were not having any success getting pregnant on their own, they decided to consult an infertility specialist, and after 4 failed attempts, it was confirmed they were pregnant with twins. She was so happy.

A few months into this pregnancy, it was decided she would go on a business trip with her husband. She was still nervous about a miscarriage and so they agreed she could have some bed rest and relax while on the trip with him. At the hotel in the middle of the night, the fire alarm went off. As the patrons of the hotel rapidly made their way down the unlit staircase, she lost her footing and fell down the stairs. She lost her twins.

Still longing for a baby, and after 5 failed cycles with the infertility specialist, she researched adoption. It took the span of 20 years from when she first gave birth, to the time she finally held a baby in her arms, but God was faithful. They adopted a beautiful, healthy baby boy with the brightest red hair and the cutest smile. However, through it all, their marriage had taken a toll. A few years after the adoption, she and her husband divorced, and she moved to Colorado with her son in tow.

There, she reconnected with her high school sweetheart, and they married a few years later. He raised her son as his own and loved them both deeply, and they loved him. Things were finally looking up. She felt she had finally caught a break in life until a routine colonoscopy revealed she had cancer.

# She answered the phone, and after just a few short questions, she knew this was her son!



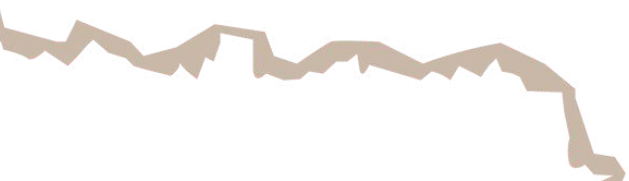
After a few rounds of treatment, the latest scans showed she was in remission. She and her husband celebrated by going to dinner that night. He complained of a bad headache but went to dinner and celebrated with his wife. A few short weeks later, he died at the age of 52 from a brain tumor. She found herself deeply grieving once again. (“Give your burdens to the Lord, and He will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.” Psalms 55:22; “Now a true widow, a woman who has placed her hope in God. She prays night and day, asking God for his help. I Timothy 5:5).

She remained faithful in her walk with the Lord. She threw herself into life, and she lived it to the fullest. She immersed herself with her son and his activities, which allowed her to become a Boy Scout Den mother. She enjoyed spending time with these kids and leaders. They proved to be a welcomed source of community and support for her and her son. (“Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.” James 1:27).

She loved the Colorado outdoor scenes and activities, she went to church and taught her son the ways of the Lord, His goodness, unfailing love, compassion, and provision. She didn’t let anything hold her back. If there was something she didn’t know, she researched and learned all she could about it. She had built a community of friends and support in Colorado. It was home. Eventually, her son graduated high school, went to college, and met a girl whom he married. Her son and his wife lived close, so she had all she needed, or so she thought.

One day in November of 2019, she received an email from someone she didn’t know asking if she’d ever given a son up for adoption. Mind you, once she had left Florida, she never spoke of it again as the pain was too much to bear. Even her brother didn’t know she’d been pregnant, and her mother and father had since passed on. She responded to the email and was open to having a phone conversation the following day.

She answered the phone, and after just a few short questions, she knew this was her son! This was him! The one she’d always longed to hold, and the one she’d



never been able to! She had resolved that she may never meet him this side of heaven, but God's redemptive beauty reconnected them that day.

This amazing woman of God, I get to call my mother-in-love, Gaylia Renee Harrell. The son she gave birth to is my husband, William Conyers. As William's birth story unfolded through Gaylia's story, I am forever grateful to God. His hand can be seen more deeply in both William and Gaylia's lives as they were separated and rejoined 50 years later.

William, our 2 kids, and I decided we'd like to meet Gaylia in person, so we flew to Colorado for Christmas in 2019. As Covid shut the world down just 4 months later, we were able to continue to build a relationship. She was so excited to learn she had 2 grandkids, and they lovingly called her Grammie. We were able to spend the next 42 months with her before she passed. God is so loving and compassionate, and cares about the desires of our heart! He knew that Gaylia and William were resolved to having never met this side of heaven, but God had other plans and through reconnection, God was able to redeem, in multiple ways, ALL that was lost. ("In His kindness God called you to share in His eternal glory by means of Jesus Christ. So, after you have suffered a little while, He will RESTORE, SUPPORT, and STRENGTHEN you, and HE will place you on a FIRM foundation." I Peter 5:10).



About Janice Conyers:

Janice resides in New Hampshire with her husband, William, and their dog Mia. She is a proud mamma of two adult children, Jonathan, and Lydia, and new mom-in-law to Michael. Janice has an eclectic background that includes expatriation in Japan, and reflects her diverse interests, skills, and experiences. She is crazy about Jesus, worship, writing, glamping, event management, cooking, and traveling. She is often referred to as "Jan-of-all-trades" by her colleagues and friends.

In addition to being an office and event manager with 20+ years' experience, Janice is a budding writer and is working on getting her first book published and launching a lifestyle [blog/website](#). She is passionate about furthering God's kingdom by creating meaningful experiences through events, and inspiring readers with engaging and informative content. Janice is also the Connections Manager at Unveiled Living.

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A J O U R N E Y O F T R U S T A N D H E A L I N G

# From Despair to Redemption

BY TIFFANY THOMPSON SNYDER



In the tapestry of our lives, woven with twists, turns, and unexpected upheavals, we often find ourselves stumbling, sometimes even obstructing our own paths. Over the past few weeks, I've encountered various events and moments where I allowed doubts to overshadow my trust in God's intricate plans.

Life is a rollercoaster of highs and lows, victories and defeats. Yet, amidst these seasons, it's crucial to recognize that God's strength surpasses our weaknesses, and He orchestrates every detail for our ultimate good. True trust resides in acknowledging this truth amid life's fluctuations.

Recently, I found myself navigating a season of profound defeat and depression, feeling lost in a fog of despair. As mentors wisely reminded me, healing is a gradual process—we cannot rush it any more than we can consume an entire elephant in one sitting. We are complex beings, akin to onions with layers to be peeled away, one at a time.

In my journey, I've felt like both wounded and the overwhelmed, grappling with pain and reflection. But it's through these moments, amidst the tears and turmoil, that true healing begins to unfold. One pivotal moment stands out: a desperate cry to our Heavenly Father, surrendering the burden of trying to handle it all alone. In that instant, my heart shifted, tears flowed, and I felt a transformative presence, reminding me of His sovereignty.

I cannot presume to know the season you're currently in, but I sense a collective call to redemption echoing through our struggles. Don't be disheartened by the cries, tears, or irrational fears.

Keep pressing forward, for in doing so, you'll discover a new clarity of vision and perspective—a redemptive narrative emerging from the ashes of pain.

Until we meet again, soldier on, for the promise of better days ahead beckons us onward.



About Tiffany Thompson Snyder ~ Tiffany is a warrior that stands beside you in your darkest seasons. Having walked through some dark trials in her life, surviving a past abusive marriage, struggled through the loss of a child, finding herself at a Teen Challenge over 15 years ago, God turned her life around. She learned how to deal with abuse, loss, depression, anxiety and trust issues and saw God do miracle after miracle in her life to get her to where she is now.

She is a single mom and has a son, Salem, who lights up her world. She lives in the greater Nashville, TN area.

Tiffany is a regular contributor and works behind the scenes in assisting Unveiled Living on many different levels.

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BY TRICIA CLARK

# WHEN GRIEF

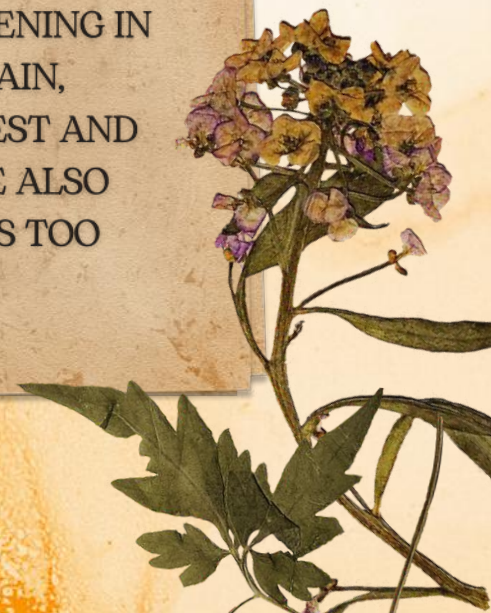

MEETS TANGIBLE LOVE

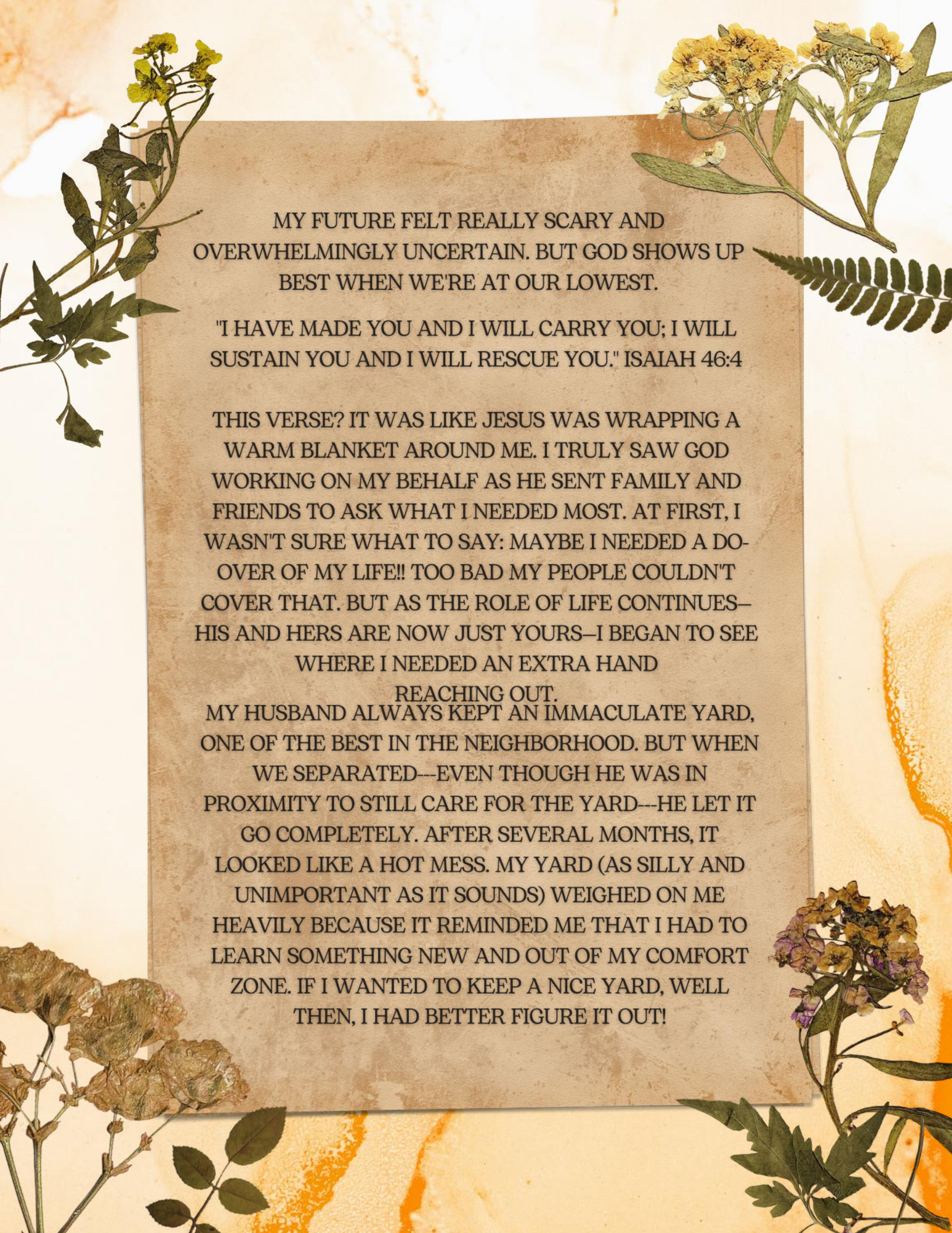




THERE WAS NO DEATH.  
NO NEED FOR CASSEROLES.  
THERE WASN'T EVEN A FUNERAL TO PLAN,  
YET I WAS FEELING THE GRIEF OF  
AN OVERWHELMING LOSS.  
LOSS FOR WHAT HAD BEEN.  
LOSS FOR WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN.  
LOSS FOR WHAT WILL NEVER BE AGAIN.

KNOWING HOW TO COMFORT SOMEONE WHEN THERE HAS BEEN A PHYSICAL DEATH MAKES SENSE TO OUR NATURAL INSTINCT. YOU KNOW THEY WILL NEED A LOT OF LOVE AND SUPPORT DURING THE HEALING PROCESS. BUT WHEN THERE HAS BEEN A DEATH OF A RELATIONSHIP, THEIR PAIN IS NOT AS OBVIOUS. WHEN THERE HAS BEEN A DEATH, WE UNDERSTAND THE DEPTH OF GRIEF THIS LOSS WILL BRING. BUT WHEN THE LOSS COMES FROM A BROKEN RELATIONSHIP, WE DON'T GIVE THE ONE GRIEVING THE SAME PLACE VALUE, EVEN THOUGH THE DEATH OF A RELATIONSHIP HOLDS A PARALYZING WEIGHT AS IT STANDS IN ITS OWN CATEGORY. I KNOW THIS BECAUSE I'M CURRENTLY WALKING THROUGH THAT KIND OF SEASON. AND IF THIS IS YOUR SEASON, I UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE DEPTHS OF YOUR SOUL: SORROW, PAIN, HEARTACHE, AND HOPELESSNESS ARE HONEST AND RAW FEELINGS, AND I SEE YOU. BUT I HAVE ALSO FELT GOD'S ARMS PICK ME UP WHEN I WAS TOO TERRIFIED TO STAND ON MY OWN TWO FEET.



The background features a light beige, textured paper with various pressed botanical elements. In the top left, there are yellow flowers on a green stem. In the top right, there are more yellow flowers and a green fern frond. In the bottom left, there are dried, brownish flowers. In the bottom right, there are purple and yellow flowers on a green stem. The text is centered on the paper.



MY FUTURE FELT REALLY SCARY AND  
OVERWHELMINGLY UNCERTAIN. BUT GOD SHOWS UP  
BEST WHEN WE'RE AT OUR LOWEST.

"I HAVE MADE YOU AND I WILL CARRY YOU; I WILL  
SUSTAIN YOU AND I WILL RESCUE YOU." ISAIAH 46:4

THIS VERSE? IT WAS LIKE JESUS WAS WRAPPING A  
WARM BLANKET AROUND ME. I TRULY SAW GOD  
WORKING ON MY BEHALF AS HE SENT FAMILY AND  
FRIENDS TO ASK WHAT I NEEDED MOST. AT FIRST, I  
WASN'T SURE WHAT TO SAY: MAYBE I NEEDED A DO-  
OVER OF MY LIFE!! TOO BAD MY PEOPLE COULDN'T  
COVER THAT. BUT AS THE ROLE OF LIFE CONTINUES—  
HIS AND HERS ARE NOW JUST YOURS—I BEGAN TO SEE  
WHERE I NEEDED AN EXTRA HAND

REACHING OUT.



MY HUSBAND ALWAYS KEPT AN IMMACULATE YARD,  
ONE OF THE BEST IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD. BUT WHEN  
WE SEPARATED—EVEN THOUGH HE WAS IN  
PROXIMITY TO STILL CARE FOR THE YARD—HE LET IT  
GO COMPLETELY. AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS, IT  
LOOKED LIKE A HOT MESS. MY YARD (AS SILLY AND  
UNIMPORTANT AS IT SOUNDS) WEIGHED ON ME  
HEAVILY BECAUSE IT REMINDED ME THAT I HAD TO  
LEARN SOMETHING NEW AND OUT OF MY COMFORT  
ZONE. IF I WANTED TO KEEP A NICE YARD, WELL  
THEN, I HAD BETTER FIGURE IT OUT!

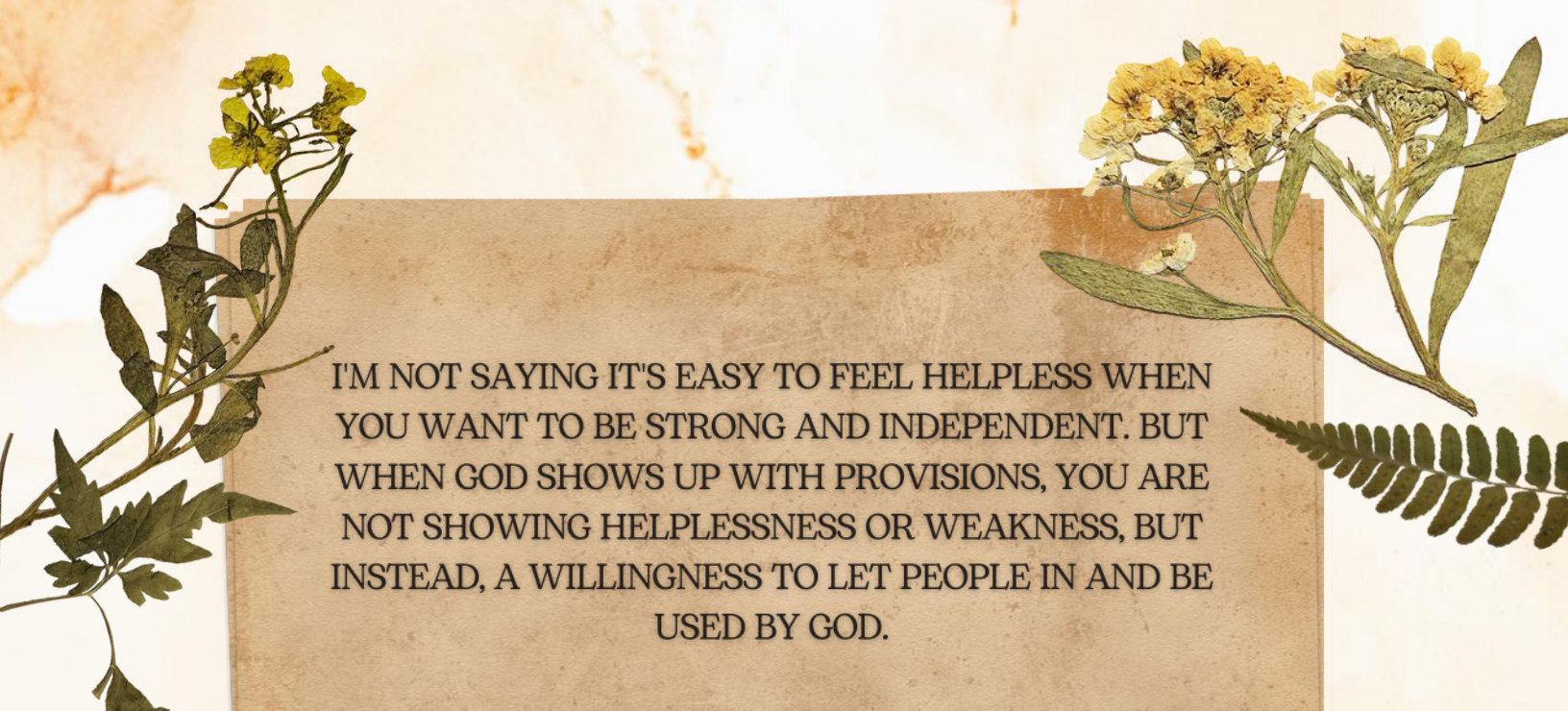


THAT'S WHEN GOD STEPPED IN AND PROVIDED ME  
WITH ONE OF THE MOST PRECIOUS COUPLES FROM  
MY CHURCH.

I HUMBLY TOLD THEM ABOUT OUR YARD SITUATION.  
WITHOUT HESITATION, THEY SAID, "WE'LL BE THERE  
TO TAKE CARE OF IT."

THEN, THERE WAS THE ATTIC—A LIFETIME OF  
CHRISTMAS DECOR AND CHILDHOOD TREASURES.  
HOW COULD I POSSIBLY BE STRONG ENOUGH TO  
STAND ON AN UNSTEADY LADDER AND HIKE MYSELF  
UP, THEN PULL OUT ALL THE HEAVY STORAGE  
CONTAINERS WHILE LOWERING THEM TO THE  
GROUND? AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK WITHOUT THE  
STRENGTH OF A MAN. YET, I REFUSED TO LOWER  
MYSELF TO ASK MY HUSBAND FOR HELP! SO, GOD  
GRACIOUSLY PROVIDED ANOTHER PRECIOUS FAMILY  
TO STEP IN, CRAWL UP IN MY HOT FLORIDA ATTIC,  
AND SAFELY PLACE IT ALL AT MY FINGERTIPS ON THE  
GARAGE FLOOR. THEN, I COULD SORT THROUGH IT A  
LITTLE AT A TIME WHEN I FOUND GOD'S HANDS AND  
FEET WERE AT WORK. BUT IF I HADN'T BEEN BRAVE  
(AND HUMBLE ENOUGH) TO SAY WHAT I NEEDED,  
THEY WOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN HOW TO HELP,  
TAKING AWAY GOD'S OPPORTUNITY TO ALLOW THEM  
TO BE A BLESSING.



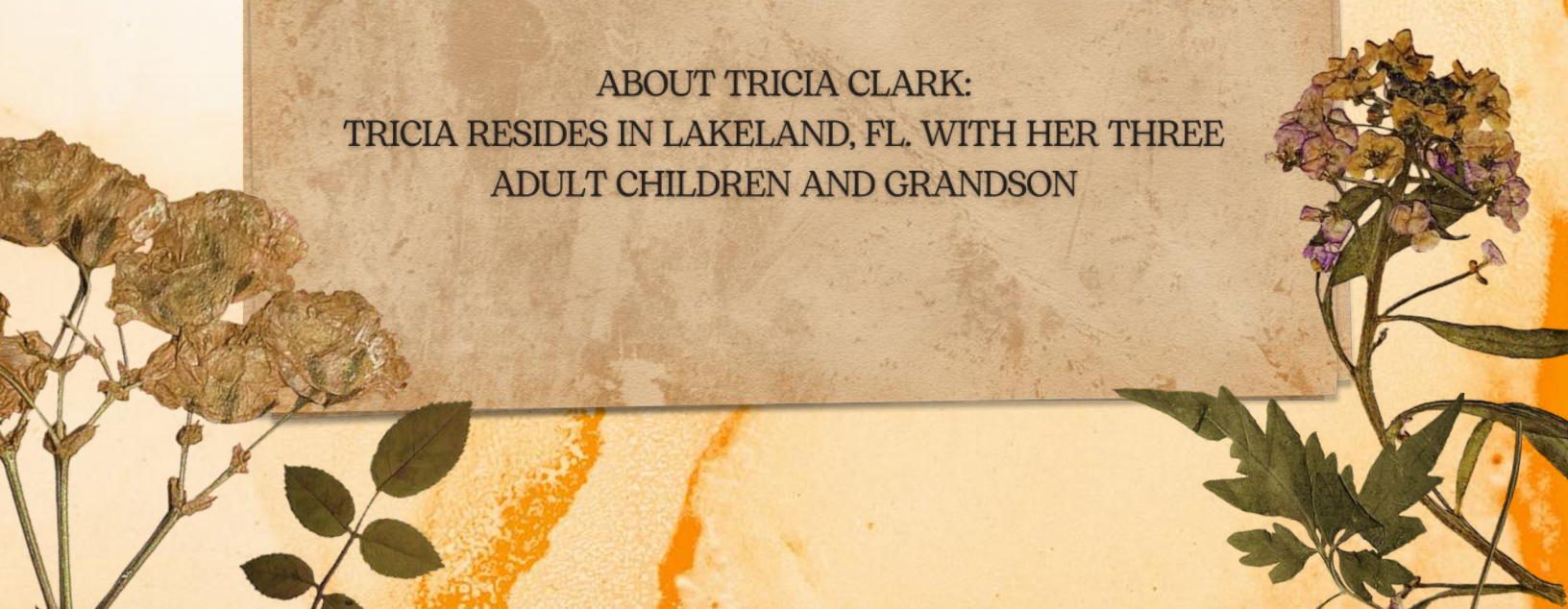


I'M NOT SAYING IT'S EASY TO FEEL HELPLESS WHEN YOU WANT TO BE STRONG AND INDEPENDENT. BUT WHEN GOD SHOWS UP WITH PROVISIONS, YOU ARE NOT SHOWING HELPLESSNESS OR WEAKNESS, BUT INSTEAD, A WILLINGNESS TO LET PEOPLE IN AND BE USED BY GOD.

IN YOUR SEASON OF GRIEF, EMBRACE THE LOVE OF OTHERS WITHOUT SHAME OR EMBARRASSMENT. IT WILL CLEANSE YOUR SOUL AND GROW YOU IN WAYS YOU WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE. YOU WILL ALSO HAVE MORE COMPASSION AND SENSITIVITY FOR THE NEXT PERSON WALKING THROUGH GRIEF WITHOUT DEATH.

"I CONSIDER THAT OUR PRESENT SUFFERINGS ARE NOT WORTH COMPARING WITH THE GLORY THAT WILL BE REVEALED IN US." ROMANS 8:18

ABOUT TRICIA CLARK:  
TRICIA RESIDES IN LAKELAND, FL. WITH HER THREE ADULT CHILDREN AND GRANDSON





# WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

by Janice Conyers

If you are anything like me, it's Spring-Cleaning time! Since moving to New England, I still have trouble adjusting to the craziness of the season changes. March and April can still bring in some wet, heavy snow, windy storms, and the mercury in the thermometer skips around like a hyper Jack Russel puppy on Ice Cream Day. I spread out my spring-cleaning tasks on crazy weather days like this so I can fully enjoy the beautiful days when they do come around!

One of my spring-cleaning tasks include cleaning out my pantry, cupboards, and freezers. I throw out everything that is expired, donate unwanted items that aren't, and organize what's left. When organizing what's left, I always follow the "FIFO" rule. (I'm a certified food manager and previously owned a catering business, so let me explain....) FIFO stands for "First In, First Out"; in other words, place food items back in your pantry in chronological order, placing the first to expire at the front where you (and helpers!) are most likely to grab it.

When doing this, I take note of the items that are most near their expiration dates and put menus together where I can use them quickly. The recipe to follow is one of my go-to's for this challenge. It is a very versatile recipe in which several items can be substituted depending on what you have on hand, which is one of the reasons I love it!

The way it is written, this recipe is Keto and Paleo friendly, and Gluten Free. It is also freezable, so if you are like me and recently cooking for two again (Newly Empty Nester, here!), fix the whole recipe and freeze half for up to 3 months (don't forget to label it!).

When you make this recipe, we want to see it!! Snap and post a pix on our social media pages via Facebook or Instagram.

Tag us:  
#whatsfordinner @unveiledlivingministry

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 ½ - 3 pounds leftover chicken (cubed or shredded, rotisserie), even canned chicken works here (2-3 cans, 12.5oz each)
- 1 - 16oz jar of salsa: I use Green Verde Salsa here, but you can use traditional, red salsa. Choose your heat; mild, medium, or mild.
- 1 - 15oz of beans, rinsed and drained; I used Great Northern because that's what I had to use up, but you can use any. Don't worry about this amount of beans in your chili; there aren't enough to raise the carb count per serving. If you don't care about your carb count, feel free to add another can if you wish.
- 1 - 10oz Rotel diced tomatoes w/ Green Chilis; if you don't have this, substitute 1 - 15oz can diced tomatoes and 1 - 5oz can of diced green chilis.
- 1 - 10 to 12oz bag frozen riced cauliflower
- 1 - 10 to 12oz bag frozen diced seasoning blend; if you don't have frozen seasoning blend you can use fresh; (onions, peppers, celery).
- 1 - 8oz Cream Cheese; I use 1/3 less fat, but you can use full fat.
- 1 ½ Cups Frozen, Diced Okra (this is necessary as it will add thickness and creaminess to your chili, not to mention the nutritional benefits!)
- 3 Cups Broth; I used Vegetable stock, however you can use beef, chicken, or veggie stock or broth here. You can also use bone broth powder to make 3 cups of liquid.
- 1 tsp Salt; I use Mineral Salt for the flavor and health benefits, but you can use Kosher salt, or Iodized Table Salt in the same quantities.
- 2 tsp Ground Cumin
- 1 tsp Chili Powder
- 1 tsp Onion Powder or Minced Onion
- 1 tsp Garlic Powder or Granulated Garlic; I rough chopped 3-4 cloves to use up some fresh garlic for this recipe.

Optional: Toppings for Chili – shredded cheese, hot sauce, sour cream or Greek yogurt, tortilla chips, sliced green onions, chopped white onion, chopped bell peppers.

# CHICKEN VERDE CHILI

*For the love of Chili!*

## DIRECTIONS

1. Put the cream cheese, okra, all the spices (and/or garlic cloves if using), and 2 cups of the broth/stock into the blender and blend the green out of it! I mean it! Keep blending until ALL the green bits from the okra are gone.
2. Place chicken, salsa, beans, tomatoes, chilis (if using), cauliflower rice, 1 cup of the broth/stock, and seasoning blend (either fresh or frozen) in the bottom of a large crock pot.
2. Place chicken, salsa, beans, tomatoes, chilis (if using), cauliflower rice, 1 cup of the broth/stock, and seasoning blend (either fresh or frozen) in the bottom of a large crock pot.
3. To the crockpot, add your blended concoction and stir to combine. Cook on low 6-8 hours.

\*To cook in an Electric Pressure Cooker: Add everything to the cooker as directed above. Seal and cook on high pressure for 25 minutes with natural pressure release.





# MOVIE REVIEW

[ FREE POPCORN AND  
DRINKS ]

by Janice Conyers





# THE BLIND

The Blind is a beautiful story of Redemption told through the journey of Phil and Kay Robertson's (of *Duck Dynasty*) testimony. It is a powerful movie that shows how faith can transform lives and heal broken relationships. The film follows the remarkable story of Phil and Kay Robertson, the founders of the Duck Dynasty empire, who overcame their struggles with alcoholism, infidelity, and violence by embracing Christianity. Through flashbacks and narrative footage, the film reveals how Phil and Kay's conversion not only saved their marriage and family, but also inspired millions of fans around the world. The Blind is a testament to the grace and mercy of God, and a reminder that everyone deserves a second chance.

When Phil kicked Kay and the boys out, she had a community of support, and even though it was a community of one to start, it grew. Jan was more than just a friend and sister-in-law to Kay; she was a lifeline. She saw the potential in Kay and encouraged her to seek God's help and guidance. She also provided practical assistance, such as helping to

offer food and shelter for Kay and the boys when they needed it the most. Jan was a true example of Christian love and service, and she never gave up on Kay, even when Phil was still resisting the gospel. Jan was the one who arranged for Phil to meet the preacher who eventually baptized him and changed his life forever.

When Phil was baptized, I believed he finally realized he didn't need to go at it alone as he had been doing, that God was there to help support and guide him. From the time Phil got baptized, he quit drinking, smoking, and sleeping around. He was a new man. He became the leader and head of his household. He began to invest his time in his boys, his wife, and Christ.

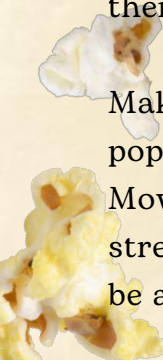
Phil's story is an example of how Christ, faith, and Redemption can transform a person's life. Baptism is not just a ritual or a symbol. It is a sacrament that connects us to the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is a public declaration of our faith and commitment to Christ. It is a celebration of our new birth and new life in the Spirit. Quoting from the movie, Phil said it best, **"You have to come to the end of yourself to find the beginning of God"**.



## FAMILY MOVIE & POPCORN NIGHT!

If you are like us, we carry on the traditional Family Movie Pizza and Popcorn Night. In fact, when we moved to Japan, our counselor advised us to think about our family traditions and which ones we could continue in our new environment. This was one of them for sure! Even though we had to think of the different ways to order pizza in Japanese or order a movie on our long-distance VPN, we did it!

I prefer to make my own air popped popcorn, and I've learned that I love using melted coconut oil on my popcorn vs. butter. It is SO much tastier and healthier! I'm sharing one of my DIY popcorn seasonings (because I don't want the added sugars in the over the counter has added in them, so I make my own).



Make a batch of this yummy air popped popcorn and stream *The Blind* for Family Movie Night tonight!! Available for streaming on Apple TV and YouTube (may be available on other streaming apps).



Janice resides in New Hampshire with her husband, William, and their dog Mia. She is a proud mamma of two adult children, Jonathan, and Lydia, and new mom-in-law to Michael. Janice has an eclectic background that includes expatriation in Japan, and reflects her diverse interests, skills, and experiences. She is crazy about Jesus, worship, writing, glamping, event management, cooking, and traveling. She is often referred to as "Jan-of-all-trades" by her colleagues and friends.

In addition to being an office and event manager with 20+ years' experience, Janice is a budding writer and is working on getting her first book published and launching a lifestyle blog/website. She is passionate about furthering God's kingdom by creating meaningful experiences through events, and inspiring readers with engaging and informative content. Janice is also the Connections Manager at Unveiled Living.

### Ranch Popcorn Seasoning

- 4 Cups air popped popcorn
- 1 Cup melted Coconut Oil or Butter
- 1/2 tsp Dried Dill
- 1/2 tsp Dried Chives
- 1/2 tsp Garlic Powder (or Granulated Garlic)
- 1/2 tsp Onion Powder (or Granulated Onion)
- 1/4 tsp Salt (Mineral, Kosher, or Iodized salt)
- 1/4 tsp Black Pepper

Mix all ingredients in a bowl and melt Coconut Oil or Butter prior to popping popcorn. Using an air popper, pop your corn. Once popped, and while hot, drizzle half of the melted oil or butter over popcorn and sprinkle evenly with seasonings. Toss to coat. Repeat with remaining seasonings and oil or butter. Serve.

Since I don't like to make up this seasoning mix every time I make popcorn, I like to quadruple this recipe and keep some in a recycled spice shaker for the next time. Enjoy!



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everyday struggles

infused with joy and  
a whole lot of Jesus.

*unplugged*

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# KIDS KORNER

STORIES TO LEAD KIDS CLOSER TO GOD



## UGLY OR BEAUTIFUL

BY MICHELLE A. BALTS


Let's meander several steps to a nearby countryside to see what was happening some time ago as the season was changing to summer.

Our story begins when a mother duck was warming her nest while sitting on her six pretty eggs, I mean five. You see, there were five white eggs, yet she noticed that the other one was much larger than the rest and was a very displeasing grey color. But she didn't let it completely distract her because she was so proud of herself for having laid her first eggs.

Soon her ducklings cracked their way into their mother's world, the five white eggs, that is. It wasn't until days later that the other egg finally hatched with all the neighboring ducks questioning if it were a turkey. To the mother duck's surprise, she saw an oversized bird emerge to which all she could say was, "Large and strong."

The five ducklings followed in their mother's web steps and clearly noticed that the large and strong one, in their opinion, was quite ugly indeed. They would even at times bite him. This made the odd-looking duck feel like he had done something wrong and more uncomfortable as he heard other ducks make unkind remarks about his appearance. Yet he was comforted when his mother said of him, "Although he isn't handsome as the other ducklings, he can swim better and is strong." But this reassurance didn't last long as he also began to feel that even his mother was turning against him.

Another thing that was different about him was that he couldn't fly like all the other ducklings. He found himself hiding among the ferns while all the other ducks flew in midair while hearing hunters nearby. It was at this time that a cat and a hen discovered him and quickly informed their master who was an older woman that they had found a creature who called itself a duckling which could neither lay eggs nor purr. He was then welcomed and stayed with them for three weeks.



But he found himself wanting to be outdoors in the fresh air and water once again. So, he departed and began enjoying his newfound freedom when the season changed to winter. Every morning became colder and the water became icy and slippery. It was then that a man crossed the river and saw the duckling and picked it up and took it to his children. They were overjoyed at their new pet and thoroughly enjoyed playing with him much more than he did. But at least they were kind to him.

Once winter had passed the large and strong one became aware that his body had grown bigger and his wings stronger. It was at this time that he saw something pink in the distance and thought that he would fly toward it. He discovered it was only apple blossoms growing nearby. It was then that he observed beautiful birds walking slowly into the water,

floating quietly together. He decided to follow them saying to himself, "Although I'm an ugly duckling I have nothing to lose." So, he went toward them to the water. He swam after them as quickly as he could. Some of the younger birds swam toward him with cries of welcome. He bowed his head and saw reflected in the water a white shape with a longneck and a golden bill. No longer did he see a dull grey body with an awkward neck. Instead, he gazed upon a beautiful white swan! Now he could be truly happy because he had finally discovered who he really was.

When did the Large and Strong One or the Ugly Duckling as he's called in the original tale recognizes who he really was? When he saw his reflection in the water. And when will we know who we really are? When we know and believe the love our Creator God has for each one of us. We'll start to see ourselves from His mirror. Where is that? It's His words to us in the true Holy Bible. He tells us what He sent His Son, Jesus, to do for us and who we become when we give Him our hearts.

Because the Ugly Duckling grew up among other ducklings his main way of knowing how he saw himself came from the opinions of his step siblings, his adoptive mother, and other ducks nearby. Let's look at the word opinion. Did you notice that it has the word "pin" in it? Maybe you've seen the online bulletin board with pictures that can be pinned on Pinterest boards or maybe you have an actual bulletin board above your desk in your bedroom with pictures of what you want to be or do. The problem with relying on the opinions of others is that they may or may not be true.

We can see that as long as the Large and Strong One thought he was a duck he tried to act like a duck. Yet as much as he tried to fit in with the other ducklings he was never fully accepted. But when he found where he belonged he saw who he actually was. We, too, can find where we belong and know who we actually are.

How can that happen?

When we believe in our hearts on the name of Creator God's Son, Christ, and that He died on the cross for us and rose from the dead three days later. In that moment we are in Christ, who is God's Son, Jesus, and we become a new creation, old things pass away, and all things become new. And these words from Creator God become real in our lives that say, The Father has delivered us to Himself, out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in Whom we have our redemption through His blood, which means the forgiveness of our sins. I know that's a lot to take in, but we simply choose to believe it.

We are redeemed which means that we were bought with the precious blood of Christ Jesus. Through Him we believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him. And so, your faith and hope are in God. We can choose to change what we think about ourselves and instead believe what our Creator God thinks of us. When we believe the thoughts

He has toward us we'll agree with Him when He says, "For I know the thoughts and plans that I have for you, thoughts for good and peace and not for evil, to give you hope and a future" in your final outcome. (Jeremiah 29:11)

*God made  
you beautiful.*

About Michelle Balts:

Michelle is the sister of Tracee, friend, school teacher with over 30+ years of teaching in the Christian School Sector and having spent the past 13 years homeschooling her daughter. She has been married 22 years. In her spare time, she enjoys sewing, quilting, hand-stitching, drawing, painting, and walking on the beach.

She is a deep lover of the Word of God and has been on a continual pursuit of spiritual growth in her life that beautifully seeps into everything she does.

She is very creative storyteller and a regular contributor for our Kids Corner - writing stories specifically for our kids to help them grow in their faith and walk with God.



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