

HIDDEN
Treasures

WOMEN'S DEVOTIONAL



OASIS MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

*T*HIDDEN
Treasures

WOMEN'S DEVOTIONAL

OASIS MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Index

	Acknowledgements	7
	Foreword	9
Day 1	I Will Help Build Your Church	11
	Lorna Halili Parham	
Day 2	I Shall Not Want	13
	Elizabeth Myers	
Day 3	The Lord Will Hold Me Close	15
	Belines Capellan	
Day 4	Knowing God Intimately	17
	G. Collette Kennedy	
Day 5	Not Too Short to Save	19
	Yvette Brown	
Day 6	The Ministry of God's Word	21
	Laura Stanley	
Day 7	Connecting With Others	23
	Jan Hirschi	
Day 8	"And Who Told You That?"	25
	Lorna Halili Parham	
Day 9	Root Rot	27
	Elizabeth Myers	
Day 10	Rejoice in the Lord Always	29
	Shalice Pickering	
Day 11	Why Me?	31
	Denise Cionelo	
Day 12	He Knows Me By Name	33
	Yvette Brown	

Hidden Treasures: Women's Devotional

Copyright © 2020 by Oasis Ministries International Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Day 13	Take Me Higher	35	Day 27	The Power of Christ	63
	Laura Stanley			Jeannie Dale	
Day 14	24/7 Feeding Tube	37	Day 28	Who Told You Your World Is Too Small?	65
	Deborah L. Fritz			Mary Mulder	
Day 15	Way Maker	39	Day 29	Sing to the Lord	67
	Angelita Parr			Jan Hirschi	
Day 16	Not Another Book	41	Day 30	Sweet Dreams	69
	Lorna Halili Parham			Elizabeth Myers	
Day 17	Be Thou My Vision	43	Day 31	Hidden Treasures	71
	Elizabeth Myers			Lorna Halili Parham	
Day 18	God is Faithful	45		About Oasis Ministries International	73
	Leanne Mar				
Day 19	Discerning God's Voice	47			
	Michelle Jones				
Day 20	I Am With You	49			
	Imelda Serohijos				
Day 21	The Gift of a Song	51			
	Mary Mulder				
Day 22	He Knows It All	53			
	Suzanne Mason				
Day 23	The Vascular Surgeon	55			
	Deborah L. Fritz				
Day 24	Pillow Talk	57			
	Lorna Halili Parham				
Day 25	Lord, Who Am I?	59			
	Cynthia Gomez				
Day 26	Life Without Love Is Meaningless	61			
	Maria Luisa Cekanova				

Acknowledgements

Dedicated to my Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ who is the “Ultimate Treasure.” You gave my life a whole new meaning and purpose. I’m grateful to be entrusted with the assignment of compiling the stories for the Hidden Treasures Devotional Book.

To my husband, Dennis Parham, who encouraged me to continue to blossom in the gifting the Lord has given me. Thank you for your full support and for putting up with my English. Your humor has given me plenty of ideas and subjects to write about.

To my kids, Elizabeth and John Myers, whom I interrupted many times so they could check my grammar or proofread my writing. You are both gracious and patient with me.

To my daughter, Elizabeth Myers, thank you for holding me accountable until this project was finished. Thank you for writing the foreword, which fully expressed our vision.

To my parents, Orlando Halili Pacheco (deceased) and Dolores Morales Halili, thank you for raising me and believing in me when I didn’t think I had much to offer this world.

To Mary and Daniel Mulder, thank you for taking the risk and sponsoring me to come to America, a place where I would discover many hidden treasures.

To Jan Hirschi, for offering your time and your patience in editing. What a blessing to work with you and serve the Lord together. You always called me your sister when I was your employee.

Foreword

To Ron Starner, for your support with Oasis Ministries International, and for editing and coaching me through this process of putting together this vision.

To Andrea Sastoque, for coming alongside and offering to help with the graphics and formatting the materials into a hard copy and e-book. You helped me realize there was more to putting together a book than meets the eye.

To all the contributors who, in spite of their hectic schedules, carved out time to submit their writing for the Hidden Treasures Devotional. Like me, you've all discovered how hard it is to keep within the 250-word count, but you all pressed in. Thank you for journeying with me in this uncharted territory. Ladies, you all rock!

To everyone who will read this devotional, we hope and pray that this material will minister to and encourage you. May it help build your faith and walk with the Lord through our individual testimonies and His-story.

To God be the glory for all the great treasures He has bestowed upon our lives.

Lorna Halili Parham
Founder and President
Oasis Ministries International, Inc.

Being in the dark is not fun. Without light to see, it is difficult to make sense of what is going on around us, which can sometimes be scary and make us feel unsafe. What could be lurking in the corners? What are those unfamiliar noises? In the darkness, we feel unsure, alone, and at times, lost.

Yet, in the darkness, God can do His best work. It is when we cannot see clearly in front of us that we learn more about a God who walks with us, speaks to us, and moves in our midst, even when we cannot fully see what is going on.

During this season of being in a global pandemic, an election year, and countless days of quarantine, God has been faithful to meet each one of us where we are at and give specific moments where we have seen who He is a little more clearly.

These lessons learned or moments where we have felt His presence are “treasures” in our lives. And in a time of darkness, looking back on them gives us hope. They remind us of who God is and His presence in our day-to-day living.

It is an honor to compile a collection of these moments and birth this devotional during a time when it seems like Christians and the Church are in the dark. Each woman who has contributed has carefully prayed over what to write and taken the time to prepare her article, in hopes that it will communicate God's character.

It is our prayer that you will be blessed and encouraged through each woman's testimony, and that you may see with greater clarity the goodness and faithfulness of God.

“And I will give you treasures hidden in the darkness — secret riches. I will do this so you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, the one who calls you by name.”

- Isaiah 45:3 (NLT)

Elizabeth Myers

Day 1

I Will Help Build Your Church



“Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.”

(Job 42:3 NASB)

After four years of hard work, I finally got my degree. But I couldn't find a job. There were more degree holders than jobs available. I walked for miles knocking on every office door that might have a job opening, but no luck. I remember standing on a corner on that tropical summer day in the Philippines, wanting to scream in frustration. But then the words, “If you get me out of this country, I will help build your church,” echoed from my lips. What was that? I heard those words before. People in my village uttered the same vows. They promised that if they got a job abroad, they would send money to build the Catholic Church. I just heard myself promising the same thing. God took me up on it. The answer didn't come right away. It took five years in the making. God prepared me and connected me to the right people that ultimately helped me get out of my country to a place I've always dreamed of: America.

As far as helping God build His church, I didn't know what I was talking about. I became a born-again Christian before I came to America. Little did I know that when the Bible mentions church, it means the Body of Christ. God set me up. He didn't want me to help build a church building but to help build the body of believers. Beloved, WE ARE HIS CHURCH. I pray that this devotional book you are holding in your hands right now will serve to glorify God and help build your faith.

Prayer:

Dear God, I didn't know that you would take my prayer seriously. I was promising you something I knew nothing about. But I'm glad you did. You answered me in a way I least expected. The tight situation I was in served as a blessing in disguise. I thought childhood dreams coming true only happened in fairy tales, but you promised that there's an even greater dream that someday will come true - the dream of your soon return. I look forward to seeing you face to face, Amen!

Lorna Halili Parham
Dacula, Georgia

Notes:

Day 2

I Shall Not Want



“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”
(Psalm 23:1 NKJV)

As a child, I grew up memorizing Psalm 23 many times. It's about the Good Shepherd and how He cares for His sheep: “He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.” This is what He promises to do for those who choose to follow Him. But how often have I quoted these verses because they are familiar, instead of letting them settle in my heart?

The Lord used verse one in particular to remind me that He is the Good Shepherd. When the pandemic began, I wasn't sure when I would return to work, so I worried about how my bills would get paid. One day, a friend texted me, asking if she could leave a gift at my house. She dropped off an envelope, and after opening it, I began to weep. Inside was one thousand dollars. The Lord was reminding me that because He cares for me, I don't have to worry about provision.

Though this year has been filled with unknowns, I have learned that the Lord is faithful to His character. Because God is our Shepherd, we need nothing else. We don't have to do anything to secure ourselves because He has already given us everything we need. We can trust Him because of who He is.

How has the Lord remind you of His love and care during this season?

Prayer:

Father God, thank you that you are our Good Shepherd. I thank you that before we even express our needs to you, you already know exactly what we are going to ask for. I pray that we would learn to trust you with our futures and not focus on what is missing in our lives. May you open our eyes to see how you are taking care of us and ministering to us during this year of uncertainty, Amen!

Elizabeth Myers
Dacula, Georgia

Notes:

Day 3

The Lord Will Hold Me Close



“Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close.”

(Psalm 27:10 NLT)

Have you ever been in a situation when something unexpected happens without warning? It happened to me in December 2007. I had just given birth to my oldest daughter, about 2 to 3 weeks before. I was washing dishes. My in-laws and my husband had just finished dinner. Suddenly, my husband told me to sit down because he needed to speak to me. As we walked to the living room, I had a feeling that it would not be good news. My husband started to talk. “Your brother...” I quickly interrupted and asked, “What happened to my brother?” “Your brother is fine,” he said, “but your father had a car accident and did not make it.” My whole body felt very weak. I could not stop crying on my husband’s shoulder. I ran to my room, and began crying out to Jesus. I opened up my Bible, which landed on Psalm chapter 27. I read the whole chapter, but the one verse that jumped out was verse 10. “*Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close.*” This brought so much peace and comfort to my broken heart.

Maybe you have lost a loved one or maybe you have been abandoned. Maybe you have been abused physically, mentally, or emotionally. No matter what you have been through, remember that the Lord will hold you close. Life is a journey, and it takes time to heal.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we love you and we know that all things work together for our good. It may seem that I am alone and abandoned, but help me to believe the truth about Your heart. Please open my eyes to see who I am in you. I cannot accomplish anything without Your grace, in my own strength. Thank you for the good times and bad times, because every day I am seeing your beauty unfolding, and that will bring healing to my heart, Amen!

Belines Capellan
Lawrenceville, Georgia

Notes:

Day 4

Knowing God Intimately



“I am the Lord your God... You shall have no other gods before me.”

(Exodus 20:2a-3 NIV)

There is great joy, peace, and satisfaction to be experienced in knowing God intimately through prayer, worship, and obedience to His Word. A few years ago, God had revealed to me the secret sinful actions of a loved one. I was depressed, angered almost beyond control, and reeling in disbelief. When I confronted my loved one, he lied and denied his sin and even accused me of distrust. He never apologized. I was left believing he felt he was not wrong, he was not sorry, and it could happen again. I felt I was going crazy with such intense emotions coursing through my mind. It was by spending time in deep, intimate, and honest prayer with God that I was able to heal, forgive, and receive His peace and a sound mind.

God is gracious, merciful, and sovereign. He is not domineering. He commands that we have no other gods, not to lord over us with a heavy hand, but rather to draw us near to Him through prayer and studying His Word. He wants to reveal Himself intimately to us, so that we will experience the hidden treasures and riches of peace and hope, that through them we will learn that He is the Lord, our God who delivers.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, my God, I worship you and you alone. Thank you for calling me by name. Please reveal yourself to me in secret places as I draw close in intimate fellowship with you, so that I may know and serve only you, Amen!

G. Collette Kennedy
Monroe, Georgia

Notes:

Day 5
Not Too Short to Save



“Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear”

(Isaiah 59:1 NIV)

The scream just would not stop. Our daughter was gone. She was there the night before singing, “It is well with my soul.” However, she struggled. Why didn’t I see it? The morning our 17-year-old daughter ran away, we had no idea if we would ever see her again. It was months before we heard from her other than just short texts saying she was okay. But was she? We never knew. That very day, I was beyond words. The wailing in our home was almost unbearable. And yet, there was peace in my spirit that I could not explain. While I was taking a shower, these words echoed in my mind, “*My hand is not shortened that it cannot save,*” a phrase I later found came from Isaiah 59.

God gave peace through His Word. He could save my daughter. She had turned from Him and she had fallen into dark places. However, God is able to reach people and places beyond our reach. As the months and years passed, I held onto this word, still hoping, “My hand is not too short to save.” Our daughter has surfaced, but she is still distant. And yet, God’s hand is not too short to save. He can save her and He can save us.

Prayer:

Thank you, God, for bringing your word to our remembrance for our comfort. Thank you that you are there not only for me, but also for the person who is running from you. Thank you for your hand that is not too short, and that you are willing to save each one of us. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen!

Yvette Brown
Avon, Indiana

Notes:

Day 6

The Ministry of God's Word



*“So is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish
what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”*

(Isaiah 55:11 NIV)

After a season of unemployment, we accepted a position on the Island of Oahu. Truly, the driving force was expectancy that God was up to something. I was on the lookout. It was a grueling process to get our young family of 6 to the other side of the world, but we finally secured an apartment among retirees. Accustomed to the loving, established community we left behind, the aversion to children felt hostile. I also had not anticipated the toll such a whirlwind adjustment would take. The aftershocks failed to let up and our family was raw and overwrought. We trudged forward, feeling the atmosphere was thick with resistance. Where was He?

I was full of the word of the Lord, but it began to feel stagnant within me. In spite of weariness, I knew I needed to get that word flowing before discouragement fermented my heart into despair. I happened to meet a young woman drowning in her own painful circumstances. With the promise that His word would accomplish what He set it out to do, I obediently allowed the Voice of Truth to pour from my mouth. As I spoke to her, each word revived my spirit. Scripture after scripture flowed like a soothing balm. We ended our conversation with both our hearts full of His comfort and goodness. Do not grow weary in obedience. Yielding to His Word will bear fruit in any dry place you will sow in.

Prayer:

Thank you, Lord, that you never leave me or forsake me. Thank you that nothing can separate me from your love because You hem me in, behind, and before. You direct my paths. When I don't understand, I can trust you with all of my heart, Amen!

Laura Stanley
Sugar Hill, Georgia

Notes:

Day 7

Connecting With Others



“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders, make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt [wholesome and helpful], so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

(Colossians 4:5-6 NIV)

I am a rancher. Living out in the middle of nowhere in the Utah southwestern desert, a mile from my nearest neighbor and with so many mind-numbing and time-consuming chores, my thoughts would often drift to Bible passages, hymns, and much mental chattering to God. After being directed by the spirit to shut up and listen, I did. People's names popped into my head—some of whom I had never been particularly close. Hmmm.

During that evening's personal Bible study, I was directed to Paul's letters to the Colossians. Conversations? Make the most of every opportunity? What about the names He gave me earlier? So, I began making phone calls (Guaranteed not to spread COVID), taking care to keep all conversations full of grace, wholesome, and helpful. These people told me of their difficulties, their joys, and often, their surprised pleasure to hear from me. A gift from God to each of us. What a blessing!

I challenge you to take time to hear the names of those God has called you to contact.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, Speak to each of us, giving us the names of those You would have us connect with. Give us words of grace seasoned with salt. Help us to do Your will. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, Amen!

Jan Hirschi
Apple Valley, Utah

Notes:

Day 8

“And Who Told You That?”



“They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day... And He said, ‘Who told you that?’”

(Genesis 3:8,11 NAS)

If someone told me that the year 2020 would be a year of less activity and just doing the mundane, I would have said, “No way, Jose!” As it turned out, everything was put to a halt due to COVID-19. Yet, God used this season to give me refresher course on basic spiritual stuff.

My morning usually starts with Bible study and prayer. Lately, my whole routine has taken a turn. Gardening became the priority. During my Bible study, I’d be thinking about my garden. Guilt said, “How could you be thinking about less spiritual matters (the mundane of gardening) rather than the more spiritual stuff (Bible study)? Then I heard a stern Voice saying, “And who told you that?” I didn’t sense He was upset with me, but He was upset with the one who told me this lie. God reminded me that He also planted a garden (Genesis 2:8). It may seem so elementary, yet this moment is so profound. God is always with us even while we’re doing the mundane.

How about you? What mundane things are you doing that, like me, you might have put in the category of “less spiritual”? What lies and deception of the enemy have you entertained, leaving you feeling guilty or condemned? Beloved, experience His nearness as God walks in the garden of your heart and allow Him to turn those mundane moments into spiritual lessons. It’s Him we need to listen to. Never carry a conversation with the snake!

Prayer:

Father, I wouldn't want to miss any conversation with You while walking in the garden of life. Thank You for teaching me that You are also with me when I'm doing mundane things, not just in what seems more spiritual. I thank You for Your presence in my life. God, I need Your help to keep my eyes focused on You and to listen to You. Where You are is where I want to be. In Jesus' Name, Amen!

Lorna Halili Parham
Dacula, Georgia

Notes:

Day 9

Root Rot



“For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.”

(Romans 6:14 NIV)

Offense is like root rot. It hides beneath the surface and slowly eats away from the inside. By the time decaying bacteria creeps to the top where a plant is growing, it may be too late to save it. This reminds me of how offense can work in our hearts. Whenever someone offends me, I find it all too easy to stuff the hurt underneath, where it can linger and grow into bitterness, or even a grudge. I've tried to remind myself to let go and forgive as Jesus would, but it isn't always that easy.

However, holding onto offense and letting it take root in my heart doesn't actually help me get the revenge I want. In fact, it ends up making me feel worse and eating me up inside, like decaying bacteria does in a plant. In Romans 6, Paul says that the reign of sin has died with Christ. Therefore, it no longer has a hold over me. I don't have to give in to sin or let it rule in my heart. The Bible points me to a better way of handling hurt.

We have all been offended by someone. Yet, Christ has forgiven us all, so that we can show that same forgiveness to others. Instead of letting offense take over, we can ask the Lord for help in dealing with our pain. Though the process is not always as simple as it sounds, I have found more freedom in surrendering my hurt to the Lord and letting Him work in my heart.

Prayer:

Lord, if there is anything I am holding onto that might be hindering You from working in my heart, would You remind me how much grace I have been shown through the cross? I thank You that You have forgiven me so that I can forgive others. May Your Word soften my heart and show me the areas that I need to surrender to You, Amen!

Elizabeth Myers
Dacula, Georgia

Notes:

Day 10

Rejoice In the Lord Always



“... for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”
(Nehemiah 8:10 NKJV)

Do you ever have days when the enemy is speaking so loudly you can't shake it? Lately, it seems we are being bombarded with evil every which way we turn. I have to say, as a single mom, fear tries to creep in telling me lies about my future, my abilities, and my security. I hear, "You're too old. You can't raise two children by yourself. You will never make it." Unfortunately for the enemy, my mother planted a seed of faith in me. Hallelujah!

When she was dying, I fell on my face and wept. I remembered her telling me to praise the Lord through the storms. When I did, the Spirit of The Lord came upon me! It was an exceptional experience that will sustain me the rest of my life. God, The Creator of Heaven and Earth, the oceans, and all the creatures on this planet came to give me comfort and peace. I began to laugh with joy that my mom was going to meet Him. But the greatest thing I got from that experience was is the validation that He is faithful to His promises to us, and that He notices us as His children when we call to Him. God wants us to have joy in all of our circumstances.

When you are at your weakest moment, in deep despair in the pit of your gut, PRAISE HIM! Shout it out, sing, dance, whatever you do, lift Him up high! Magnify and exalt Him. King Jesus is worthy of our praise!

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, we praise and glorify Your Holy Name! We proclaim Your victory over this land and over our hearts! Today, let us serve you in joy! Thank you for fighting our battles for us so that all we have to do is praise You! In Jesus' Name, Amen!

Shalice Pickering
Lawrenceville, Georgia

Notes:

Day 11

Why Me?



“If ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth.”

(James 3:14 ASV)

Does it ever seem like everyone else has it better? Difficulties in life always seem to bring out the jealousy in my heart. I didn't even know it was there! When I realized that everyone experiences it, I was so relieved!

My prodigal children bring tears to my eyes every time I pray for them. When other families would show up at church with their adult children, I would become green with envy, not realizing the enemy was using this to keep me from my wonderful and loving Christian friends.

The second reason jealousy is bad is because it maligns the character of our loving heavenly Father. He does not show partiality or favoritism! In fact, He has our best interests in mind. When I see another woman that has something I want, I just pray and ask for the Father's forgiveness for being jealous, and ask Him to give me a love for that person.

James 3:14-16 (ASV) says: *“But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed.”*

Prayer:

Dear Father, please forgive us for being discontent with different aspects of life. Forgive us for allowing Satan to minimize the blessings that You have given us. Give us a love for others that will not allow division in our relationships, Amen!

Denise Lionelo
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Notes:

Day 12

He Knows Me By Name



“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name.’”

(Exodus 33:17 NIV)

I am a Christian. I believe in God. Or so I thought. But, I was struggling. Why did I have to keep suffering this way? I had been abused sexually in different ways since I was thirteen years old. Were the other religions right? Was God just allowing women to be here on earth to create a harem in heaven, paradise, or whatever they call it? Or, was it just me? Did He create me just for just this purpose? Did He even care about me? Did I matter to Him?

As I pondered all of this one day, crying out to God, He met me in a way that I will never forget. The phrase “I know thee by name” came to my mind. As I was contemplating this, I literally had a vision of Jesus before me. It was an image that wasn’t quite clear, but somehow, I knew it was Him. He reached out his hand and touched my face and I heard the phrase again, “Yvette, I know thee by name.” At that moment, my life changed. I no longer questioned God. I cannot even tell how, but I knew that it was not God causing these bad things to happen to me. Yes, there is evil in the world. Sometimes we follow the same patterns in our lives, which lead us into similar situations in which we ask, “Why is this happening to me again?” What I discovered that day was this: HE KNOWS ME BY NAME! Indeed, He knows each of us by name.

Prayer:

Dear God, teach me what it means that You know me by name. Lead me in Your ways, that I may fully grow in the knowledge of You. Just as you say you know me, I want to know you. In Jesus's Name I pray, Amen!

Yvette Brown
Avon, Indiana

Notes:

Day 13

Take Me Higher



“The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.”

(Matthew 13:22 NIV)

“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed”

(Luke 5:16 NIV)

Incredibly, as a stay home mom, I am constantly faced with deadlines, projects, flowcharts, HR requests, financial accounting, and a full range of health care management. I'm vying for the title of Domestic Engineer. I also value maintaining relevance, ranging from current events and politics, to literature and science. But how easy it is to lose our way navigating the heavy haze of it all. God offers a guiding light, but he also calls us higher. It's clear throughout His word we were never intended to abide in the thickness of this world's atmosphere. The Lord showed me a hot air balloon with a full tank of fuel ignited, lifted up into thinner atmosphere to be carried by the wind. He told me not to spare the fuel, but to burn it liberally to be carried into thinner and lighter atmosphere, even up and over mountains. So much symbolism to be evoked.

For my fortieth birthday, I celebrated by fasting in a cabin in the woods by myself. It felt as exhilarating as a hot air balloon ride. I slept a lot of course, but I pondered the terrain of my life. I got a bird's eye view of mountains that challenged me, and I surveyed the contents of my "countryside." Did I need to rotate some crops or let certain fields rest? Most of all, I enjoyed the capacity to bask in the greatness of the Creator's hand on my life.

Prayer:

Lord I thank you for the mandate of rest. Thank You for valuing time and relationship with me. You see me more clearly than I see myself. Help me to be disciplined and to maintain margins in my life, Amen!

Laura Stanley
Sugar Hill, Georgia

Notes:

Day 14

24/7 Feeding Tube



“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

(John 15:7 ESV)

Witnessing the birth of our 7th grandchild brought much joy to our life. However, within a few seconds, I was transformed into a battle driven prayer warrior. Henry was surrounded by 6 medical staff and whisked away to the NICU. Henry would have many hospital and specialist’s visits in the next 4 1/2 years. His diagnosis: Mitochondrial Disease and Ketotic Hypoglycemia (he wears a cute little backpack to provide a 24/7 feed that maintains his blood sugar).

Even as I penned this devotional, Henry was in the ER having his feeding tube replaced. I prayed, “Lord, protect Henry in surgery as aspiration is a reason for concern.” The Great Physician had already scrubbed in for surgery. No anesthesia versed eliminated aspiration. Upon receiving word of a successful surgery, the Lord reminded me we all have access to a 24/7 line of communication with Him. We can be fed 24/7.

In what area of your life do you feel like you need a spiritual 24/7 feeding tube? Maybe you’ve pinched the tube in fear or disappointment. Maybe you’ve pulled the life line out completely, thinking you’re beyond help? The Father desires that you be fed spiritually 24/7. Abide in His Word, seek His face, and obey His voice.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, help us to abide in You. Thank you for Your Word: our daily bread, our living water, and truly our 24/7 Feeding Tube, Amen!

Deborah L. Fritz
Lawrenceville, Georgia

Notes:

Day 15

Way Maker



“A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”
(Proverbs 16:9 NKJV)

My husband’s and my flight back to the Philippines from Australia was cancelled several times due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We tried everything and even contacted the Philippine Embassy to help us get home, but nothing worked. Sadness, anxiety, and disappointment are understatement to describe what we were going through. We could not understand why this was happening to us. However, this hopeless and difficult situation brought our hearts nearer to God. We acknowledged that without Him we could do nothing, so we chose to surrender everything to His will, timing, and purpose.

As we prayed and trusted the Lord, He reminded and encouraged us with His words: *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the LORD”* (Isaiah 55:8-9) and *“be anxious for nothing”* (Philippians 4:6-7). Finally, on June 12, 2020, God miraculously and faithfully provided a way for us to get home safely to the Philippines through a special flight.

I have personally learned that to fully trust the Lord is to give up and surrender everything and allow Him to work in my life according to His will and purpose. Truly, when you trust the Lord, you will never be disappointed. What trials and challenges are you going through? Are you willing to trust the Lord and surrender them to Him?

Prayer:

Father God, You are All-knowing, Almighty and perfect in all Your ways. Help me to trust and surrender all my plans, desires, and decisions unto You. May You direct all my steps according to Your will and purpose. In Jesus' Name I ask and pray, Amen!

Angelita Parr

Calapan, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines

Notes:

Day 16

Not Another Book



“Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”

(John 21:25 NIV)

During my 31 years of being a born-again Christian, I’ve been sensing in my heart that the Lord wanted me to write a book or something similar. So, I obeyed the prompting. With each attempt to write, I found excuses. One of them was “Not another book!” One day, I heard His Voice say, “Lorna, I have done many things in people’s lives. So, even if all of you write just one thing, there’s still not enough books to record them. So, go on... Keep on writing!”

He’s right! I have countless testimonies and miracles to tell the world about this Jesus who knows everything about me. He rescued me from sin and death. He healed and restored my broken heart. He accepted me when I felt rejected. He’s been my constant companion in sickness and in health. He was the defender of my cause during a divorce. He covers my shame and He’s the lifter of my head. The stories of joy and adventure with Him show that Jesus is not a boring God.

Has Jesus done anything in your life? Have you ever felt that your stories wouldn’t make a dent in a bookshelf? Why not join the array of writers who can’t be silent even if they say, “Not another book.” Imagine if the gospel had not been written!

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I marvel when I think about all the miracles You did during Your days here on earth. And yet to this day, You are still in the business of doing many things. I cannot deny the fact that You've made a powerful impact in my life. I ask that You give me the courage to share these testimonies, whether in writing or in verbal form. In Jesus' Name, Amen!

Lorna Halili Parham
Dacula, Georgia

Notes:

Day 17

Be Thou My Vision



Psalm 137:4-5

At the beginning of 2020, I chose a word for the year. The word “clarity” stuck out to me during my devotions, as well as in different sermons, so I felt that the Lord wanted me to hold onto this specific word and learn more of what His vision would look like for my life and ministry.

However, clarity did not stick for very long. As March rolled around, I found myself stepping down from church leadership and walking into unknown territory. Not only was I looking for a new church to call “home,” but I was also trying to figure out my role in ministry. All this happened around the time we began experiencing global shutdown, so in all the confusion and shifting, ministry went to sleep.

I remember asking the Lord, “How can I be of use to you now? Churches are not meeting in person, and I cannot possibly serve others if I’m stuck at home.” During quarantine, He pointed me to Psalm 137:4-5 “*How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill!* (ESV)”

The Lord is reminding me that no matter what strange new land I may find myself in, I need to keep my vision on Him. Just like the old hymn says, “*Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all.*” No church, ministry, or position should take the main focus off of Jesus Christ. Instead asking for His vision, I learned that He is my vision.

Prayer:

Dear God, I know that I have a tendency to take my eyes off of You when life gets hard. Forgive me when I focus on my circumstances or what I need to be doing instead of trusting that You are in control. I ask that You would show me who You are in new ways and teach me to keep my eyes on You. In Your Name I pray, Amen!

Elizabeth Myers
Dacula, Georgia

Notes:

Day 18

God is Faithful



“The LORD is righteous in all His ways and faithful in all He does.”
(Psalm 145:17 NIV)

During this time at home, I have been thinking of the many times in my life that God has shown Himself faithful to me. I realize now that God took care of me when I became an orphan in my teenage years. When I was 19 years old, I was in a car accident. I was put in jail for a week because I was at fault. That Sunday, three men came to share the gospel, and I was saved. One of the three men put up the property bond to bail me out. That man’s act of kindness made me realize how much God loved me and how He was taking care of me.

Over the years, God has been faithful to me in so many ways. He shielded me when I went on a mission trip to a strict country to deliver Bibles. In the rocky seasons of my marriage, He helped me to endure. When I wanted to have children, it took us 5 years and one miscarriage before my first child was born. During those times I held onto Jeremiah 29:11, which gave me hope. Then, 4 years later, my second child came as a surprise. A few years later, God’s faithfulness became even more real to me during the divorce process.

In what seasons of your life has God’s faithfulness appeared more evident to you? He promises to always be with us, never leave us nor forsake us.

Prayer:

Thank you, Father, for Your faithfulness in my life. I know You are there for me, protecting me, leading me, and using me for Your glory. In Jesus' Name, Amen!

Leanne Mar
Lawrenceville, Georgia

Notes:

Day 19

Discerning God's Voice



"Speak, for your servant is listening."
(1 Samuel 3:10 NAS)

Have you ever had trouble recognizing the voice of God? Do you know how to discern the voice of the Lord? God is calling us by name. Are we going to respond? John 10:3-5 says that *"His sheep hear His voice."* We follow Him because we know His voice. God spends time with us not because He has to, but because He wants to. When we spend time with Him, we become familiar with His voice. "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16). "All who are being led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

How do I learn to discern if it's God's voice I'm hearing and not my own or another voice? What does this look like? We learn through spending intimate time with God in prayer, as well as stepping out in faith. There have been times when I thought I heard God, but later determined that it was just myself or some other influence. On the other hand, there have been times when I thought my own intellect was leading me, and then I discovered I was being led by the Holy Spirit. These times of discerning the voice of the Lord have enabled me to clearly know when He is speaking to me.

Prayer:

Father God, I want to be able to recognize Your voice when You speak to me. Please teach me how to discern Your voice from all the other voices, so that I can walk out confident in Your will for me, everyday, in every area of my life, Amen!

Michelle Jones
Lawrenceville, Georgia

Notes:

Day 20

I Am With You



“Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God.”

(Isaiah 41:10 NLT)

During the first couple of months of the pandemic, I was doing fine. My prayer life was unaffected by it. I could hear God so clearly. Suddenly, it seemed like my prayers were not being answered. God reminded me that He hears me, but I needed to be patient and wait for His timing. Our financial situation was getting worse. The small church I was overseeing was in lockdown and we were unable to pay our monthly rent. My niece got sick with corona virus and my family was pressuring me to go home to take care of my mother. However, I couldn’t travel because of the pandemic. My sister started to experience anxiety and insomnia. I felt a war within me roaring, and I began feeling the anxiety and dismay as well. I became complacent and uninterested in prayer and worship. But there was still fire in my spirit and a resolve to turn to God’s Word. I asked Him if Isaiah 41:10 was His Word for me. Indeed, He confirmed it was. God is with me. My soul was encouraged, knowing that I’m His chosen warrior and He is always with me.

How about you? What struggle are you facing right now that leaves you feeling defeated? Don’t allow distress or depression to destroy your relationship with the Lord. God is fighting for you and He will uphold you. In Him, you are victorious. He is always with you.

Prayer:

Lord, I lift up those who are experiencing depression, anxiety, dismay, and even those who doubt Your presence. You are above all troubles in life and You are always with them, Amen!

Imelda Serohijos
Dumaguete, Negros Oriental
Philippines

Notes:

Day 21

The Gift of a Song



“Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God.”

(Psalm 42:5 NIV)

I love to sing! I love to make melodies and harmonies on the piano! A good concert usually has me on the edge of my seat, with eyes wide open, focused, and completely absorbed (Psalm 33:1-3). So why, in this time of a pandemic, has my voice become shallow and my fingers weak? I asked that question as my household had settled into a quiet home and yard routine, and succumbed to discouragement. However, God’s Word reminded me of who He is and who I am, all because of his great love. “Oh, Lord, I am discouraged!” I said, and He asked, “Why?” “There are many reasons, Lord!” I replied” sickness, weakness, death, seclusion, and isolation.” They were realities and fears of many people.

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

The Holy Spirit draws us to Jesus Christ. I KNOW God is true and faithful, but at times I may not feel that truth. One of my “come to Him for rest” habits is printing song lyrics and discovering Scripture references within the lines. During COVID, I needed reminders to listen and respond.

Maybe you too need a nudge. Work on your own songs line by line and pile on the Scripture. Perhaps you too will find God’s joy resurfacing!

Prayer:

Sometimes I shout through my tears, Lord. Take my fear, loneliness, heartache, and discouragement, and let Your light shine in my heart. You are the One to restore Your joy to me. Thank You, in Jesus' Name, Amen!

Mary Mulder
New Era, Michigan

Notes:

Day 22

He Knows It All



“Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O Lord, Thou dost know it all.”

(Psalm 139:4 NASB 1977)

Quarantine has been hard for me. I was crying out to God one day because I wanted to minister to someone. When you have a gift and it's such a part of you, it's very hard when you're not able to use it. My mom had a technical problem that I couldn't fix, so I called customer service. When I found out that the customer service person who was speaking to me was from the Philippines, I told her that one of my good friends was from there. I asked this woman how she was doing and if she had enough food to eat. The woman said they were getting by and that she was the only one of her extended family who still had a job. Her husband was disabled. They had four kids, worked full time, and she did most of the care for her family at home. She also said that she knew about Jesus. I offered to pray for her. After I finished praying, she told me that only God would know that she had been very down and discouraged that day, and she thanked me for encouraging her. This encouraged me because I got to minister to someone one-on-one, even though I was not physically with anyone! God heard my cry and met my need to use my gift.

Is there a need you have that you think God can't meet? Give that need over to Him and trust that He will meet it in His perfect time.

Prayer:

Lord, thank You that You know our deepest needs and You alone can meet them. In our darkest times, let us cry out to You and You alone, trusting that You know what we need. Amen!

Suzanne Mason
Dacula, Georgia

Notes:

Day 23

The Vascular Surgeon



*“Therefore, confess your sins to each other
and pray for each other so that you may be healed.
The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”*

(James 5:16 NIV)

Sometimes you feel like its just a matter of time because there is no cure for your genetic ailment. What next? A consult with 2 vascular surgeons and 3 weekly appointments during the following month discouraged me. Did I cause the issues with my legs? Would I have to deal with the issues? There would be numerous incisions on each leg with bleeding and bruising. I would have to wear a compression hose for days. Truly, that wasn't a very glamorous look! I was, however, convinced that I could go as a peg leg pirate or a mummy for Halloween.

Sin can be like sickness. Satan is on the prowl each and every day. Am I always the one that permits sin to prevail? Will I have to deal with the issue of sin daily? Some days we are bleeding and bruised. We feel the weight of the world pressing in on us.

But if we daily confess our sins and are willing to have the Master Vascular Surgeon intervene, He will make those necessary incisions. He will cut away the sin. We may feel numb at times. We may notice some bruising left behind, but our Savior will be there to bind up our wounds. In His time, He will set us free. The Master Vascular Surgeon will cover us with His blood.

Prayer:

Lord God, help us to confess our sin daily. Thank you for cutting away sin and covering it with Your precious blood, Amen!

Deborah L. Fritz
Lawrenceville, Georgia

Notes:

Day 24

Pillow Talk



“On my bed I remember You, I think of You through the watches of the night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of Your wings.”

(Psalm 63:6-7 NIV)

Tossing and turning, I couldn't sleep. Have you been there? No matter how much you try, your eyes won't close. When moments like this happen to me, it's time for a pillow talk. I need a conversation with God, to ask Him what's in His heart. Sleeplessness is no respecter of age or influence. Sometimes, there are just too many stimulations lingering in our minds. It's not the pizza that you ate that woke you up in the middle of the night. At times, it's just a pure God thing that we lie awake at night.

There were two sleepless nights in Israel with two different outcomes. One case resulted in vindication and the other in retribution. In the first case, Xerxes, a middle-aged king, had a sleepless night. His insomnia turned into one man's exoneration. Palace records showed that Mordecai deserved to be honored. The king gave Mordecai a royal robe, which he had worn, the horse which he had ridden, and he placed a crown on his head (Esther 6). In the second case, a young lad named Samuel, who served under a church leader named Eli, couldn't sleep. A voice calling out his name kept him awake. Suddenly, through Samuel, a divine visitation pronounced a judgment upon Eli for allowing his sons to serve as priests. Eventually, church records of corruption led to the end of Eli's family line of priesthood (1 Samuel 2). Beloved, it's in the silence and when the world is hushed that God can get our attention. Who knows? Your next pillow talk could prove to be a divine visitation.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, I thank You that You are the God who never sleeps nor slumbers. There were so many times I laid on my pillow, needing someone to talk to in the wee hours of the night, and there You were available, just waiting for me to carry on a conversation with You. Thank You for the many pillow talks. Amen!

Lorna Halili Parham
Dacula, Georgia

Notes:

Day 25

Lord, Who Am I?



“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

(Ephesians 2:10 ESV)

The year 2020 will end with a multitude of labels used to describe people’s religious, racial, health, and political beliefs. These labels do not describe the essence and purpose of who we are as God’s daughters. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, workmanship is *“the skill with which something was made.”* If then, WE are HIS workmanship, let us remember that God, Our Father, created the heavens, the Earth, and everything contained within them. With that same skill, He created us for good works.

The trials of this year caused me to ask who I was and where I fit in. I was reminded to *“seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to [me]”* (Matthew 6:33). As I sought the Lord and drew closer, I understood even more that I have been created for good works for such a time as this. They include intercession, worship of Him, and service to others. We must trust that He did not make mistakes in creating the vastness of the heavens or the delicate petal of a rose. In that same way, He did not make a mistake creating us to be present during these prophetic times.

One Godly label we can wear proudly is God’s Workmanship.

Prayer:

Dear Father, help me remember that I am Your daughter, Your workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works. Help me to focus on Your love for me, on the knowledge that You will never leave me, and to trust that You will equip me with grace for doing Your will (Hebrews 13:21). In Jesus' Name, Amen!

Cynthia Gomez
Dacula, Georgia

Notes:

Day 26

Life Without Love Is Meaningless



“And the King will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

(Matthew 25:40 CSB)

For the first time in all my 66 years, I experienced a worldwide pandemic during the COVID-19 outbreak. Mandatory stay at home orders for safety took me back to painting. I practiced drawing angels and painting them with watercolor. I also started drawing Bible characters and enjoyed watching them come to life. I'd never felt so accomplished with my hobby until now!

One day, as I was outside taking a walk, I found myself at Oldsmar Pier, enjoying the breeze and beautiful Florida sunset. This was the start of God's mission field. I met a homeless man who was living in his car. I learned that he was an admirer of simple things in life, like nature and I was able to connect with him quickly about his life. He claimed that he was trying to finish his “adjuster tests” and that he was an alcoholic. Needless to say, I felt drawn to share Christ's love with him. To my surprise, although he was homeless, he was helping feed other homeless people at a local Presbyterian Church. So he invited me to meet his pastor. Eventually, I became one of their volunteers and brought my own home-cooked meals. We prepared their meals and served them, and I learned a valuable lesson about thinking of others.

Not all homeless folks are out there to grab money. Some just need someone to talk to and pray with. I learned to love the unlovable and accept them for who they are. They are just like me: human. And I too can be “homeless” without the Lord residing in my heart.

Prayer:

Lord, open my eyes and ears so that I can be sensitive to the needs of others. Grant me a listening ear, even for a moment, to absorb what You are saying to me, Amen!

Maria Luisa Cekanova
Tampa, Florida

Notes:

Day 27

The Power of Christ



“And he said unto me, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

(2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV)

As the days came to a screeching halt due to the Corona virus and our world was put on pause, I began wondering what the Lord was doing. What was His purpose in all of this? I sensed His nearness and tenderness in the quiet, in a way I had not felt in a while. I didn’t want it to end.

The Lord was showing me that the effort I had been straining under to walk the narrow path in this world, was not from Him. My weariness and burden came from attempting to live for Him, without Him. I needed His help. I discovered it is not possible to live for Jesus in my own strength, and it is not His will that I try. This is only possible by His Holy Spirit. In my weakness, I found joy and peace, because I discovered His strength.

Draw near to Jesus. Let Him take you by the hand. Behold the Savior, not looking at your circumstances or at yourself. He will walk with you. He is more than able to keep you. Near Him is exactly where He wants you to be. You will find yourself walking in His ways without straining to do so.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, as the world begins to encroach on our lives again, please help our efforts to continue to find that place of rest in You, walking with You, keeping our eyes on You, so that we may truly live as Christians, Amen!

Jeannie Dale
Buford, Georgia

Notes:

Day 28

“Who Told You Your World is Too Small?”



“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

(Romans 15:13 NIV)

When my husband and I moved from a city of 500,000 people to a village of 450, I wondered what we had done. Where were the conveniences, traffic, people, or neighbors’ houses! Huge trees hid the sunrise and the sunset! Life there was certainly less worthy of my devotion than the life I had in the city. Thus, commitments and friendships developed with a “my world is shrinking” attitude based on how “big and wonderful” my world was in the city.

Living in a Covid-19 world, that small world attitude resurfaced. As I approached a stop sign one day, a voice said, “Who told you your world is too small?” I blinked, frowned, and wondered. God’s Spirit was speaking to my spirit at that moment and challenging me! The classic song titled *This is My Father’s World* ends with “Why should my heart be sad? The Lord is King; let the heavens ring! God reigns; let the earth be glad!” It ALL began with Him and it all belongs to Him. He is Creator, Sustainer, Savior, Lord, and King over all! My world is part of HIS World. There is nothing small in the world that He created.

Trusting God only happens when Jesus Christ becomes our most priceless treasure. He must surpass anything or anyone. It is a daily humbling of self. Real peace and joy only come because the Holy Spirit invades our lives and teaches us daily!

Prayer:

Lord God, in these strange months, drive me daily to humble myself before You. Enable me to put my trust solely in Jesus Christ and never a village, sunrise, or sunset. Help me to remember my purpose, which began with You, and to be filled with all joy and hope that overflows in Your world by Your power, Amen!

Mary Mulder
New Era, Michigan

Notes:

Day 29

Sing to the Lord



“Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.”

(Ephesians 5:18b-19 NIV)

“Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.”

(Psalm 95:1 NIV)

I grew up with music — symphonic concerts, operas, musicals, singing, playing, and performing. My life was like one big musical! My parents woke us with a song, we sang and played instruments through the day, and they sang us to sleep at night. My dad thought he had raised the next Von Trapp family. We played musical instruments in addition to voice, and performed for guests, churches, schools, each other, and God.

My dear tone-deaf friend, Amy, used to sing LOUDLY. She knew every word from every verse of “How Great Thou Art”. We’d cringe, but sing she did, loudly and with joy. Much of my voice has been ravaged by COPD and severe allergies, yet I continue to sing. No one else wants to hear it, but the Lord does, so I sing for Him.

The Lord really doesn’t care how beautiful the music sounds. He only desires that you make a joyful noise unto Him (Psalm 100:4). So sing, play an instrument or clash pan lids in lieu of cymbals. Let us all praise the Lord.

Prayer:

Lord, hear us as we praise You with our music. Let the words and notes please You and bring peace to our souls. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Jan Klischi
Apple Valley, Utah

Notes:

Day 30

Sweet Dreams



“The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

(Psalm 34:17-18 NIV)

I have always been a restless sleeper. My mom tells me that when I was a baby, any noise, big or small, could wake me up and make me cry. When she heard me, she would gently pick me up out of my crib and rock me until I was able to calm down. Sometimes, she would wrap me up tightly in a blanket, so that I wouldn't focus on the noise and could fall back asleep.

As I've gotten older, I still find myself crying or not being able to sleep when something disturbs me. It's difficult to just "let go and let God" when something happens in my life that I cannot control. But if there's anything this year has taught me, it's that many things are out of my control.

At any moment, our worlds can be disturbed. There is so much noise around us, and the enemy would love nothing more than for us to focus on all the problems and stay up worrying late at night. Yet, no amount of crying or stress can truly give us the comfort we seek. Thankfully, there is a Father who hears our cries and longs to rock us back to sleep. In our moments of being troubled, He knows exactly what we need to be comforted, and promises to come to our rescue like a loving parent soothing a child.

Prayer:

Father, I thank You that You are in control over everything. Thank You that I can trust Your character and faithfulness to hear me when I cry. No matter what happens in the world, would You remind me that I can rest in Your love? Calm my anxious heart and teach me not to be disturbed by all the noise. May I look to Your love to comfort me each and every day. Amen!

Elizabeth Myers
Dacula, Georgia

Notes:

Day 31

Hidden Treasures



“I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name.”

(Isaiah 45:3 NIV)

Bedridden. That was my predicament from 1998 to 2001. Endless doctor visits, drug prescriptions, and blood work to rule out the causes of this mysterious disease left me feeling hopeless. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. As I lay in bed, I felt like Job, asking the Lord to end my life because I felt miserable. Suddenly, I heard His response as audibly as I could possibly describe it: “There are treasures in the very bed of suffering you are lying on.” After that encounter, my spirit was awakened.

What hidden treasures did I unearth from this dark season of my life? Well, I learned to trust Him with my life and my loved ones. I learned to trust God even when healing doesn’t come. The world will continue to spin in orbit without my participation. Sleepless nights turned into a posture of prayer and intimate dialogue with the God of the Universe. Because my love language is acts of service, I never knew what His unconditional love meant until I discovered that I didn’t have to perform to make Him love me more. One of the biggest treasures as a result of my life’s dark crisis was to discover a deeper and more intimate relationship with Jesus. He is the One Friend who stayed by my side in sickness and in health. Three years later, the Lord raised me up from the bed of suffering and Oasis Ministries International was born.

Beloved, how about you? What hidden treasures does God want you to unearth from the crisis you have been through? Jot them down and remind yourself of His sovereignty in every circumstance.

Prayer:

Father, I thank You for coming to my aid during those dark moments when I thought that ceasing to exist was the answer. You had more for me than to live feeling sorry for myself. Your comforting words made me realize that You want me to discover those treasures richly stored in secret places. Oh, how grateful I am that, regardless of any circumstance, there is hope in You. In Jesus' Name, Amen!

Lorna Halili Parham
Dacula, Georgia

Notes:

About Oasis Ministries International

Lorna Halili Parham was born and raised in the Philippines. At the age of 20, she received her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, with a major in Accounting. In November 1989, at the age of 25, Lorna accepted Jesus as her personal Lord and Savior. In December of the same year, the Lord opened an opportunity for her to come to the United States of America. It is in America where Lorna's spiritual journey blossomed.

Lorna faced a mysterious illness and was bedridden for 3 years. Out of those dark days, a ministry for women emerged, a task that the Lord assigned to her in order to help encourage the church. In 2002, Lorna founded *Oasis Ministries International* (OMI). The ministry started out as an outreach to women providing free conferences and retreats here in America. Five years later, the Lord expanded her ministry to the Philippines. *Oasis Ministries International* evolved from a women's ministry to an outreach for children in orphanages and public schools, internationally. Lorna also began organizing medical missions and relief efforts for typhoon and volcanic eruption victims in the Philippines, while sharing the Gospel.

Lorna is married to Dennis Parham and resides in Dacula, Georgia. Together they have 4 children: Elizabeth, Renee, Taylor, and John.

For 31 years, God had etched in my heart the desire to write a book of some sort. I've prayed and waited for the breakthrough. One day, in the spring of 2020 while hiking in Fort Yargo State Park, I casually shared with my daughter Elizabeth that I was considering putting together some Bible study material or a devotional book for women. She suggested that a women's devotional would be more appropriate for the pandemic hour. My desire was to glorify God and encourage women during these difficult times. Nevertheless, questions lingered in my mind. Is this idea truly a "God thing" or just a "good thing?" I just didn't want it to be just another book buried in a vast sea of books! As the days went by, the passion began to dwindle away until I lost interest. Toward the end of summer, Elizabeth asked me about the progress of the project. Her inquiry arrested my soul. I was found guilty of abandoning the idea. But it also awakened the vision and caused me to believe this must be a "God thing." This infused a resolve in my heart to follow through until this project came to fruition. I asked her if we could hold each other accountable and make it a team effort. She concurred. We both prayed together and sought the Lord's guidance. God impressed upon both of our hearts to include other women and compile our stories together. Each name was handpicked by the Lord and He gave us the title *Hidden Treasures - Women's Devotional*.

Buried in the journals of their hearts and minds, each contributor courageously unearthed their accounts of trials and triumphs. The *Hidden Treasures Women's Devotional* project would have been impossible to complete if each woman had not been willing to say "yes" to God's proposal. This devotional book has become a platform for each of the writers to boldly share their hidden treasures and make them public. I invite you to hear the voices of ordinary women, rising up for an extraordinary task.

Inside this devotional book, you will discover the ultimate hidden treasure - Jesus Christ. Those who are willing to seek Him diligently shall find Him (Jeremiah 29:13).

