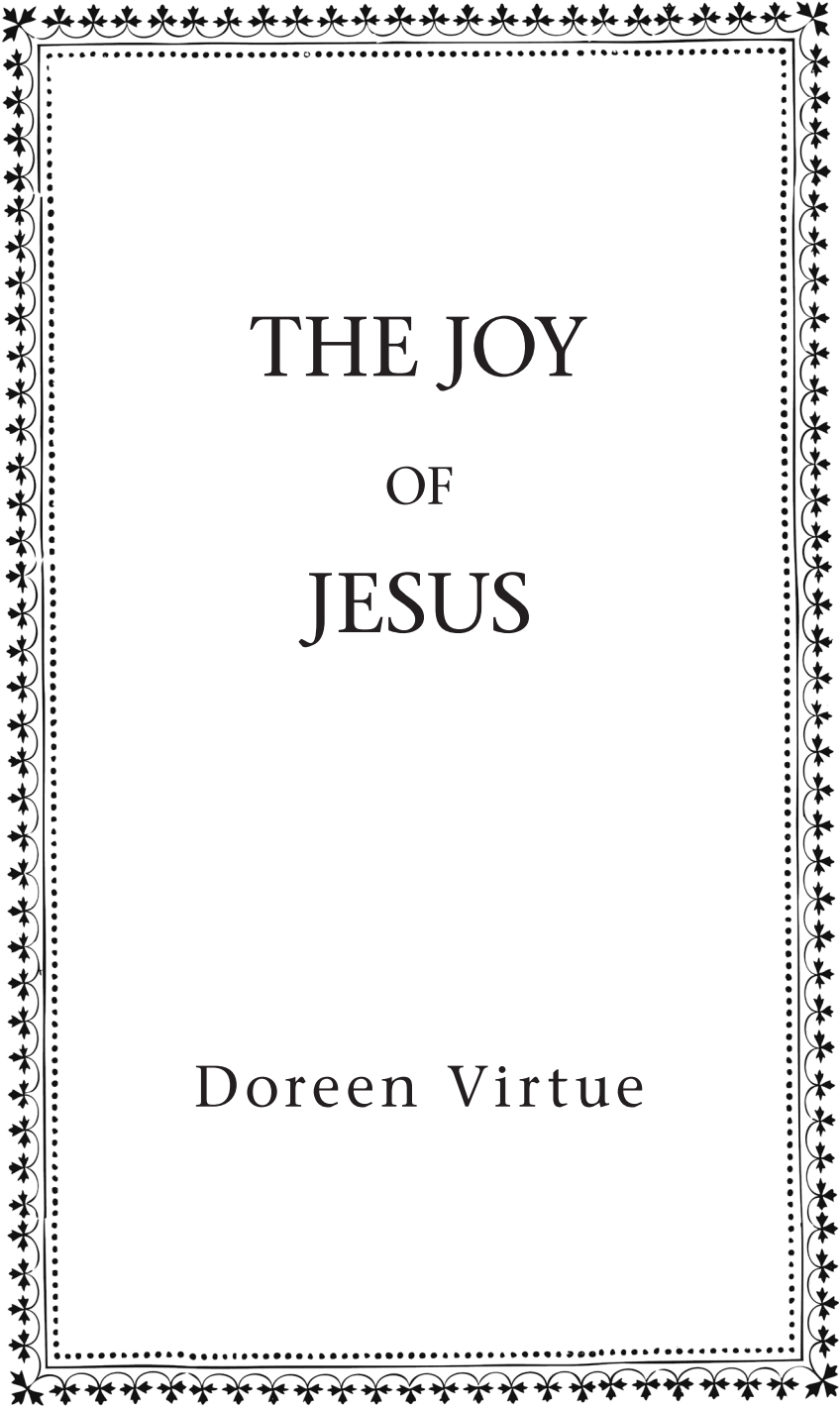


THE JOY  
OF  
JESUS





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OF  
JESUS

Doreen Virtue

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# INTRODUCTION



*"I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!"*

JESUS IN JOHN 15:11 NLT

The above words from Jesus are about a blessing that he gives to believers: *Joy! Pure and lasting joy!*

It's a joy that sustains you through life's trials and times of suffering. This joy isn't dependent upon external circumstances. This joy is steady and consistent *no matter what's going on*, because it rests upon the rock-solid foundation of the Gospel.

It's the joy of being head-over-heels in love with Jesus, and following his words because you love him . . . and knowing that Jesus loves you! The joy is finally finding the love that you've been craving your whole life. It's longing to be with Jesus for eternity in heaven.

It's knowing that Jesus loves you so much, that he was willing to suffer and die to wash you and all believers clean.

It's knowing that you'll spend eternity in Paradise with Jesus and other believers, and knowing that you've finally found what you've been seeking.

It's totally and completely trusting God's promises, and surrendering to his will, guidance, and leadership.

It's the joy of freedom from the weight of oppressive guilt, as you take each transgression to God and are lifted in forgiveness and edified in his teachings.

It took me a long time to understand and live this message, though. Previously, I was unaware of the joy that Jesus offers. I had an incorrect view of Jesus and Christianity that kept me from knowing the truth.

I spent 58 years searching for this joy, which I finally found when I surrendered my life to Jesus. This book contains my hard-won lessons that I wish someone had taught me long ago.

I've met people who associate Jesus with guilt, fear, rules, patriarchy, and punishment. They equate Christianity with judgmental church ladies, disapproving pastors, hypocrisy, misogyny, elitism, sexism, Bible conspiracies, and dusty hymnals.

I did not have a relationship with God the Father, because I didn't know him. I held the concept that God was the energy of the universe. I had confused the Creator (God) with his creation (the universe).

So God seemed as cold and distant as the planets and stars. I knew God was love, but it seemed like an impersonal love. I also didn't realize that I could share my problems with him. So I developed a closeness with angels, because they seemed accessible and non-threatening.

Little did I know that we need to exercise careful discernment, as some angels are actually demons pretending to be



an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14). I learned the hard way that just like there are human hypocrites who pretend to be one thing but are really another, the same applies to the spirit world.

Just like there are people that go to church but are really evil, there are spirits that pretend to be good but are truly wicked. It's true what they say that "not all that glitters is gold." The good news is, just like there's fake gold there's also real gold.

The real treasure available to us all is Jesus.

Three events catapulted my heart into Jesus's open arms:

- When I read the entire Gospels while researching my *Loving Words from Jesus Cards*, I realized that my previous beliefs about Jesus hadn't been accurate.
- I had a life-changing vision of Jesus while at church on January 7, 2017. When I saw Jesus, I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that everything written about him in the Bible was real and true. I also fell so deeply in love with Jesus, that I was willing to change my whole life to follow him. You'll read more about that experience in this book.
- I began reading and studying the entire Bible (previously I'd only read random Bible passages) in a format called *The One Year Bible, New Living Translation*. This Bible has daily readings in a modern language that makes it easier to understand, to help motivate you to read the Bible in a year. I also took, and continue to take, lots of Bible study classes.

In the midst of a lot of fervent prayer and Bible study, Jesus planted joy in my heart!

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Miraculously, I stayed joyful during the upheaval and persecution that followed my conversion to Christianity. Although I lost my ranch, publisher, radio show, and most of my income because of my conversion, my heart remained filled with the joy of the Lord and the faith that God was in charge. This little book is my story of what I've learned about the joy of Jesus.

May you find the joy that Jesus gives to all who believe and receive him as our Lord and Savior.

*Love, Doreen*





# CHAPTER ONE



## I Never Knew Him

*“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God,  
and trust also in me.”*

JESUS IN JOHN 14:1 NLT

I’ve always loved Jesus, but I didn’t know who he was until I saw a bigger-than-life vision of him while I was at church on January 7, 2017. This is my story of how Jesus changed my life, and how I found the joy of Jesus that sustained me during the biggest challenges in my life.

Growing up, I heard Bible stories of Jesus walking on water and healing the sick. I knew the Christmas story of the Bethlehem manger and wise men. I’d say “I pray the Lord my soul to keep” nightly as a child, and recite the Lord’s Prayer in Sunday School at the Unity Church my family and I attended.

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*Still, I didn't know him.*

Looking back, I can see how I'd adopted a one-dimensional idea that Jesus was a combination of a cuddly teddy bear and a protective superhero. I had the idea that Jesus approved of everything, no matter what. That was how I defined "unconditional love." Everything goes. Just follow your heart. Be "free" and "happy." What I didn't know is the power and wisdom of God that calls us to trade mere "happiness" for what the Bible calls "the beauty of holiness" and chasing passing pleasures for Eternal and unshakeable purpose and the joy that knowing Christ brings (see 1 John 2:17).

I thought that prayers were wish-requests, and that God granted wishes like Santa Claus. I'd pray for something, and expected God to grant each wish. After all, didn't God want all of us to be happy?

And the thing is, many of my prayers *did* come true! So this idea was reinforced. It was only later that I noticed that much of what I'd asked for, would fade away soon after it arrived, along with the associated happiness.

These "answered prayers" were a mirage, because they weren't God's will. I hadn't first stopped to pray, "What is *your* will, God?" I was headstrong, impulsive, and I hadn't yet learned how to trust in God. Because I didn't *know* God.

Now I understand that my prayers weren't actually *prayers*. They were *demands* and *lists*. I also discovered that the enemy was answering some of my requests, to keep me hooked into his control.

Beneath my continuous prayers was my desire to find fulfillment and happiness. I'd decide that some item or condition would make me happy, so I'd ask the Universe

(because at that time, I believed God was the universe) for it. And it would happen, and I'd feel grateful, excited, and happy for a little while. Then the emptiness would return, so I'd search for something else.

This "search for happiness" motivates many of our actions. We want to feel safe and loved, and assured that our needs will be met.

I've met many people during my years of traveling the globe giving workshops worldwide. Several have confided that they're searching and seeking for the "key."

They've left organized religions because they seemed filled with fear, guilt, and depressing topics. Some people told me that they ran away from churches where they found hypocrisy. And they've tried alternative spiritual paths which didn't yield lasting happiness either.

Which brings us to the joy of Jesus. The real Jesus who brings us many essential gifts: salvation, forgiveness, love . . . and joy!



A few years ago, I seemed to have everything that a person could want. I lived a comfortable lifestyle in Hawaii, and was a best-selling author with sold-out keynote speeches and a lucrative income. I traveled the world in first class airline seats and stayed in amazing hotel suites, all paid for by my publisher. My family and I were healthy, I supported charities, and enjoyed good friendships.

*So, what more could a person want?*

Well, that's what I kept asking myself too. As I looked around at all of my blessings, I wondered why I didn't feel

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a sense of happiness. I was *grateful*, but not *joyful*. I'd find pleasurable moments, like eating dessert, enjoying a sunset, and hugging a loved one.

Yet, these were temporary and fleeting moments of pleasure. As soon as the dessert was eaten, the sun set, and the hug ended, I'd search for the next source of pleasure. It seemed like this search for happiness was endless. I'd find something, feel happy for awhile, and then begin a new search.

I remember being on a Disneyland ride, and not enjoying the ride fully because I was already planning which ride to go on next. My mind was always in the future, searching for that elusive experience to fulfill me.

Do you ever feel that way? My search for happiness took me to unlikely places, and ended in an unexpected way: with Jesus! Through him, I've finally found an otherworldly joy that lasts all day, every day. And even when problems and pain are occurring, I still feel happy! This is a miracle that I want to share with you, in case you're searching too.

I remember looking at people who had different lives than my own, and I'd imagine that they were happier than I was. Here are the paths that I took in my search for happiness:

***Looking for Secret and Hidden Wisdom.*** Each spiritual path that I studied promised enlightenment and fulfillment, so I took lots of classes and read many books. I was convinced that the older metaphysical books contained lost secrets.

Yet, there was still that gnawing sense of *seeking* happiness, instead of *being* happy. I believed that some spiritual path held the secrets, and all I needed to do was find their key. I acquired metaphysical knowledge, diplomas and certificates, but I didn't acquire happiness or the "secret

wisdom” I was seeking. Each book I’d read would bring up dozens of new questions, instead of providing the satisfying answers I sought.

I didn’t realize that Jesus was that answer, and that he was holding out the key to me and to everyone!

***Being a Published Author.*** When I turned 29 years old, I decided that the key to happiness was being published. For some reason, I decided this needed to happen before I turned 30 years old.

So I devoted my free time to writing a book proposal. My first book was published seven months after my 30<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Yet, that accomplishment didn’t bring me the joy I’d imaged. Like a mountain climber, I continually searched for the next peak to climb.

So after my first book came out, my publisher sent me on a “book tour,” which means that you travel to major cities and appear on morning television shows, and give radio and newspaper interviews. You finish your interviews in the first city, then hop on a plane for the next city. It’s a whirlwind of nonstop travel and talking.

Ironically, a person needs to be *introverted* to write books. Sitting still for several hours and typing on your keyboard requires the ability to quiet your mind. You’ve got to be okay with being away from other people during the writing process. And you have to say *no* to activities which could take away from your writing time. It gets lonely! I didn’t socialize or go to movies or parties while I was writing my book.

And yet, to be a writer you also need to be *extroverted* enough to stand in front of an audience of people who are

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staring at you, and give a coherent speech. Also, your book publisher may ask you to give interviews on radio or television, which can be intimidating for shy introverts.

Being published *does* yield the fulfillment of telling your story and inspiring and helping others. Yet, in and of itself, it's not the key to happiness. I should know, as I've had over 50 books published in 38 languages worldwide. It's fulfilling in an emotional and psychological sense and I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity, but it's not the "it" of finding happiness – especially since I know now that some of the topics I wrote were not of God's will. It ultimately left me feeling empty and spiritually unfulfilled. I've repented, and now only write as He directs me. More about this topic, later in this book.

***Life Purpose.*** From a young age, I wanted to be a writer. And yet, knowing and fulfilling your life purpose is not, in and of itself, the key to happiness. It *is* fulfilling to meet people who've benefited from your work, but life purpose is not "it" in terms of happiness.

***Exciting Experiences.*** Part of my quest involved the search for excitement and novelty. There was always the lure of "something new." So I tried scuba diving. At first, it was frightening to be underwater and depending upon equipment for breathing. What if the equipment failed? And the sharks? So many scary thoughts!

Yet, there was something about scuba diving that helped me to face and conquer fears. And the freedom of floating and flying through water, amidst gorgeous sunlight rays beaming through the water, and colorful fish and coral . . . all amazing!

Then a friend introduced me to "mermaiding," which involved wearing a mermaid tail from the waist down, with



your feet in fins that are fused together as a “monofin.” We took free-diving classes together and learned how to hold our breath for minutes at a time. It was mesmerizingly beautiful to swim like a mermaid, but the pleasure was also momentary.

I also thought happiness could be found in fulfilling my teenage “rockstar” dreams. I’d been playing guitar since I was 14 years old, so I joined a band. We played concerts in several countries, which was really fun, but also a lot of work. And expensive, because of the equipment costs. The blessing was that I finally realized that it was egoic and self-glorifying to want to be a rockstar, so I let that go.

These exciting experiences filled me with adrenaline, life lessons, and fun memories. Yet they weren’t “it” in terms of lasting happiness.

**Materiality.** As a successful author, I had a good income that afforded me the ability to live in Hawaii on a 40 acre ranch with a beautiful 20,000 square foot barn. I loved the warmth of Hawaii, although I didn’t care for the bugs that constantly crawl and fly into Hawaiian homes. I also struggled with the exorbitant cost of living there. Also, when you live in Hawaii, you don’t spend your days at the beach like you do on vacation. You work and take care of responsibilities.

It was deeply pleasurable to walk around the ranch, enjoying the fresh air and sunshine while feeding and caring for our rescue animals. Hanging out with animals can be heart-opening, as they are honest beings who extend unconditional love. There was a sense of love and purpose with the ranch. And yet, I was still seeking.

**Family and Friends.** I’m so fortunate to live with my loveable parents, and for my husband Michael, and my

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wonderful sons, and other family members. I'm also close with my two childhood best girlfriends Anita and Silvia. It's been a good life, thank you Lord!

After fifty-eight years of practicing "manifestation work" (the new age term for "name it and claim it"), I was practically an expert who could conjure almost anything I needed. Yet I was still seeking, which showed me that the experience wasn't "it" in terms of lasting happiness. At that time, I didn't know that I was manifesting from the enemy, who never allows us to have joy.

I also didn't know anyone who was truly happy. Everyone seemed to be seeking for something, and never satisfied with their current condition. Although our motto was to be positive always, it seemed that everyone I knew was complaining about emptiness in their lives.

Top speakers and authors, such as I was then, are treated like rock stars with first class everything, standing ovations, long autograph lines, and interview requests. Yet none of those experiences fulfilled my seeking heart.

Even with all of the blessings I had, I was still searching. Still seeking. Was I ungrateful? Spoiled? Entitled? Or was there a knowingness that something – or someone – else held the key to happiness?

I was learning the lesson of King Solomon, as he had everything anyone could possibly imagine. Wealth beyond measure, wisdom, pleasure at his beck and call and yet he knew there was an eternal void in our hearts and without God in the end it was at best "vanity and chasing the wind" (Ecclesiastes 1:14).





## CHAPTER TWO



### Who Were They?

*Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!*

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

As I continued in my spirituality studies in the early 2000's, I began to think of Jesus as an “ascended master,” a New Age term which means a great teacher, healer, or mystic who once walked the earth, and who is now helping humanity from heaven. I believed Jesus was on equal par with the other ascended masters like Buddha, Quan Yin, and so forth. *I knew him not*, and I've repented for this previous heresy.

Looking back over my life, I can see intersections where Jesus was calling to me. While I was in High School, a *very* happy and exuberant teenager approached me.

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He asked if I was born-again, and when I said no, he proceeded to list the requirements to become so. I didn't understand what he was talking about, as he emphasized the crucifixion of Jesus – a topic I'd previously avoided because it seemed so depressing. And his list of rules to become born-again seemed confusing. He insisted that I needed to believe in the Gospel, without explaining to me what the Gospel was. But I never forgot that young man's blissful glow. *He was joyful in a way I'd never before seen.*

There's a big difference between a Christian who is weak in their faith, someone who has never heard the Gospel, and someone who is in rebellion against Jesus or who is ignoring the Holy Spirit's convictions. When someone doesn't know the Gospel or hasn't studied the Bible, their knowledge is weak. Their commitment is probably weak, as well, since they don't have that foundational understanding of what they're believing in.

That's why it's essential to explain the story of the Gospel to unbelievers. Tell them who Jesus is, and share his parables and miracle stories. "Receive one who is weak in the faith" (Romans 14:1) means to help those who are spiritual babies.

A rebellious Christian is someone who knows the Gospel, but rebels against it. They want to twist scripture to fulfill selfish ambitions, and they don't want God telling them what to do.



I'd always been intuitive and had visions growing up of angels dancing around me whenever I'd feel afraid or lonely.

Their images gave me great comfort, and at times I considered the angels to be my only friends.

I'd also had frightening childhood nightmares and visions of ghoulish-looking people peering into my bedroom window. These nightmares and visions were just as scary as they sound!

I'd cry easily, and my two pet cats would come and comfort me. Sometimes my mother would sleep next to me after having these nightmares and visions. Her presence – and that of my cats – helped me to relax, but I still didn't understand what I was seeing.

And because I grew up with metaphysically-minded parents, I had a new age vocabulary before I realized what the term “new age” meant. When I'd say words like “manifestation” around the other kids, they'd roll their eyes and say that I was weird.



After High School, I got a part-time job, and enrolled in college. I didn't feel happy like that born-again teenager I'd met. My quest for happiness continued.

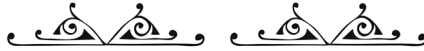
I didn't realize then that demons were oppressing me, pretending to be angels and deceased people. They were trying to steer me away from God, with their isolation and fear-tactics.

Satan doesn't have any shred of mercy, he knows what's at stake - our eternal souls - and he will use bribery or terror on us, even as children to manipulate us into submitting to him, even if we don't know at the time that's what's going



on. In fact, especially when we are naive and trusting and scared.

I used to think of the spiritual world as a playground, only to realize it's a battle ground (Ephesians 6:12).





## CHAPTER THREE



### Looking for God's Love

*"You will seek me and find me when you seek me  
with all your heart."*

JEREMIAH 29:13 NIV

My concept of God was still fuzzy and unclear. On the one hand, I'd been taught that God is love. The New Thought churches I'd been raised in – Unity and Christian Science – had emphasized that point. But what did that mean? And why was I still searching for love and happiness, if God is love? After all, I was taught that God is *omnipresent*, meaning everywhere. So wasn't his love everywhere, including within me?

As I mentioned earlier, I believed God *was* the Universe. To me, God was the energy of love and intelligence. His

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energy was all-encompassing. He was the stars, the planets, the sun, and the moon. So overwhelmingly expansive, and unreachable like a cold emotionally-distant dad.

I didn't realize that I was confusing the Creator (God) with the creation (the universe). So I was seeking God's love in all the wrong places. I was a seeker, reading every spiritual book I could find – especially the older antiquarian spiritual books. I figured that the earlier generations knew some hidden wisdom.

I read the so-called “lost books of the Bible,” such as the Gospels of Thomas and Mary. I read occult books from the Far East, and New Thought inspiration. These writings charmed me, but I still didn't feel like they offered “it,” that elusive key to happiness and love.

I didn't realize back then, that these books also kept a doorway to demons open in my life. In fact it was the promise of hidden knowledge that satan used in the Garden of Eden to tempt and deceive Eve. I didn't realize he was using the same old trick on me!



I'd been teased as a child for dressing in outdated sale-rack clothing, which was all that my family could afford at the time. Growing up in Southern California in the 1970's, there was a lot of peer pressure to dress fashionably.

So as an adult, I thought wearing fashionable clothing would win the affection and approval of others. This led me to becoming obsessed with shopping for new clothing, a time- and money-consuming focus.



I became fixated on 1970's-inspired clothing, since my family hadn't been able to afford cute outfits when I was growing up during that time period. So I wore a lot of tie-dye and block prints.

After I got saved and had a relationship with Jesus I started praying to understand my hippy fixation, the Holy Spirit helped me to realize that I was seeking approval from those kids who'd made fun of my unfashionable clothing in the 1970's.

Yet, as fun as it was to acquire and wear new outfits, their appeal was short-lived as well. It turned out that having my clothing admired was a hollow experience, as I realized that only my exterior was being appreciated.

I'd always seek *something new*, convinced that happiness and love were just around the corner. I craved novelty and excitement, and was unconsciously drawn toward finding the secret to happiness and love.

Now I realize that the enemy sends these obsessions into our mind, tempting us to spend all of our time and money so that we're in a perpetual state of emptiness and anxiety.

The devil will say: "People will like you if you buy this outfit, or car, or house." So we work hard to acquire the money, but find that this purchase doesn't yield the promised results.

I'd get glimpses of happiness: appreciating a sunset, hugging a dear friend, walking my dog, savoring a great meal, and so forth. But these experiences were always temporary and fleeting.

Where was the lasting happiness? I *knew* it had to be somewhere! When I prayed about this question, I received an answer: *Read the Bible*. As I mentioned earlier, I've always

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been intuitive. Throughout my life I've received impressions, visions, and guidance. Although, this has all changed since Jesus saved me. More on this topic later in this book.

So I started reading the Bible. I loved Genesis 1 and 2, even though at that time, I considered them metaphorical instead of a real account of actual events. But then I got to Abram and especially the story of what God asked him to do to his son, Isaac. Freaked out by the seemingly violent premise, I put the Bible away. *That can't be a loving God!* I decided.

I'd read the Bible since childhood, and even had my own King James copy, thanks to my mother. But I'd only read the prescribed passages (2 to 3 verses from various books of the Bible) from our Christian Science weekly lessons.

Out of context from each other, these passages didn't make sense. I read them because I was supposed to, not because they inspired me. I didn't know the overarching story of the Bible.

Any book that we read, only makes sense if we read it from beginning to end. Can you imagine only reading random paragraphs from a book? Why would the Bible be any different?

A few other times, when I received guidance to read the entire Bible, I attempted to. One time while traveling, I pulled out the *Gideon's Bible* from the desk in my hotel room. That time, I got midway through Exodus, but then it was time to go home. So I put the Bible back in the hotel desk and forgot about it.





# CHAPTER FOUR



## Intersections

*“He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”*

PSALM 91:4 NIV

God still seemed inaccessible and far away. No matter how many books I read or classes I took, I still couldn't seem to connect with him. I couldn't feel His Presence or His love. I decided that God's love must be more intellectual, instead of emotional or tangible. Jesus also seemed distant. That's when I began to focus upon the angels, who'd been comforting me since childhood.

The angels, with their beatific smiles and softness, seemed to offer the cuddly warmth that I craved. So I started talking

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to them. All the time. And pretty soon, I started teaching others how to talk with angels.

This was especially true after I survived a harrowing ordeal on July 15, 1995 when I was driving to the Learning Light Foundation, a new age center in Anaheim, California. I was enrolled to take a class on mediumship, a topic that had fascinated me since my childhood experiences of seeing the ghoulish people who were pale and sallow, like the walking dead. I'd been so frightened by them in childhood, and I wanted to learn why I saw them then . . . and still occasionally saw them.

I also wanted to contact my Grandma Pearl who had recently passed away. I didn't yet know that mediumship is forbidden by God, as I had not yet read the entire Bible.

At that time, I attended services at different churches: the United Methodist Church near my home, where my sons and I attended Bible Study classes in the evenings and church services on Sundays. We also attended a Religious Science Church and a Unity Church in the area. Back then, I thought that all churches were basically the same. I loved going to church, but still had no idea who God or Jesus were.

I frequently listened to radio broadcasts from the Calvary Chapel Church of Costa Mesa, California. They had fascinating discussions, and I even called into their shows with questions a couple of times. During that same time period, I was studying a new age channeled book called *A Course in Miracles*, and also listening to the audiobook of the Bible.

I was trying to walk in two different worlds – Christianity and New Age. Like oil and water, they could never mix. How could they, since they are opposite? The new age is about glorifying the self, and Christianity is about glorifying God.

The harrowing ordeal happened as I was getting ready to drive to the Learning Light Foundation. I was at home in my bathroom when I heard a voice outside my right ear, audibly as if a person were talking to me. The voice clearly told me to put the top up on my convertible car or it would be stolen. But, I argued with the voice: the electric motor controlling my car's top was broken! *Then have Grant do it!* the voice insisted, a reference to my then-teenage son who was home with me at that moment.

Intuitively, I understood the voice's instructions. My white convertible BMW had white upholstery. So when the cloth top was down, the car was flashy and could attract unwanted attention from car thieves. But when the weathered and faded top was up, the car looked ordinary.

Even with this clear warning, I was in a hurry since the class was starting soon. I didn't want to be late. So I prayed for protection while driving toward Anaheim. As I got closer to the Learning Light Foundation on Lincoln Boulevard, I had this eerie chill and thought, "I've been spotted," like prey in a hunter's gunsight. I prayed harder for God to please protect me.

And then as I pulled into the parking lot, turned off my car and stepped out, I heard a loud male voice screaming cuss words at me. His cuss words startled me, as I didn't hang-out with people who cursed, nor did I watch movies with foul language. So the novelty of hearing cuss words – especially so loudly - made me jump.

I turned around and saw the culprit: an angry young man pointing to my purse and car keys. *Give them to me now!* he demanded. I noticed a second man waiting for him by an idling car.

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Then I heard the same voice which had earlier told me to put my car top up: *"Scream with all your might, Doreen!"* it said. This time, I obeyed its instructions. I even surprised myself with my loud cavewoman-like guttural scream.

My yelling attracted the attention of a woman who sat in her car in the parking lot. She saw what was happening, and immediately leaned on her car horn to attract attention. The people from the Learning Light Foundation ran out to the parking lot to investigate the noise. Their presence scared away the two men who jumped in their car and fled away.

In shock, I dropped to my knees in the parking lot, and thanked God for sending his angels to protect me. I realized I'd been willful in the past, ignoring and even wrestling with the guidance that God had been sending me.

When the Anaheim police arrived, they said I was the third car-jacking of the day. The two men had been traveling along Lincoln Boulevard stealing cars. The police added that the men were were armed and dangerous, too, with a gun and a knife.

I drove home in a daze, shaking with the adrenaline of my brush with death. What did this all mean? How could a disembodied voice know my future enough to warn me of the car-jacking? And who's voice was it that had warned me? God? Holy Spirit? My deceased Grandma Pearl? My guardian angel?

In the following months, I began meeting other people who'd also had their lives saved by divine intervention. I started researching the topic of angels, and eventually wrote and taught about them. I was truly grateful to God for his holy angels!





# CHAPTER FIVE



## Choices

*“Be sober and self-controlled. Be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”*

1 PETER 5:8 WEB

We all have forks in the roads of our life, those moments when our choices can either lead us toward or away from God’s will. These intersections are also moments when the enemy – the devil - tries to point us in the wrong direction.

After my life was saved in the car-jacking incident, I set out to research and teach about divine intervention. I felt urged to write and speak about the reality of angels, and how God sends them to protect us. So I interviewed lots of people who’d had similar life-saving experiences of divine

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intervention. That could have been a godly and biblically correct topic to research and write about. However, I also talked with people who had paranormal experiences which – now I realize – were probably fallen angels instead of God’s holy angels.

Because I felt too frightened to research the topic of fallen angels and demons, I didn’t learn enough about them. The whole topic seemed scary and negative. I always tried to stay positive, and avoid anything violent or upsetting. So I ignored the topic of researching fallen angels. Big mistake!

I rationalized, quite rightly, that the word “angel” means “messenger of God.” So how could any angel be fallen? If they were fallen, they couldn’t be God’s messenger. And that’s true . . . sort of. The fallen angels once were God’s beloved angels. But their leader became prideful and jealous, and he wanted to be a god in his own right. And a third of God’s angels followed him (Hebrews 12:22 and Revelation 12:4).

Demons-in-disguise try to enlist unsuspecting people like you and me to follow them. And they do so in very sneaky ways that are almost undetectable until we understand the nature of God.

The devil is the ultimate narcissistic abuser who preys on people who are lost and seeking. He manipulates those who have social or financial anxiety, promising to fulfill you. He also exploits those who are ambitious, promising fame and riches for anyone who carries out his diabolical schemes. And yet he makes these promises under-cover, because they sound so good and plausible.

He’ll even disguise his lies as your “life purpose,” telling you that you’re the only person who can save the world. He strokes your ego, saying that you’re a specially gifted healer



or teacher. So, you begin to believe that it's your *duty* to share your special gifts with the world.

If you don't fall for his promises, the devil tries another tactic: guilt. In the books of Zechariah (3:1) and Revelation (12:10), the devil is called the Accuser. That's the Hebrew meaning of the word Satan: accuser or adversary. The accuser sends accusations into your mind – known as the “battlefield of the mind” – to bring you down.

The devil will accuse you of everything you've ever done, and tell you horrible things about yourself. If you listen to him, you're filled with doubts, confusion, guilt, anxiety, and depression.

The devil not only will accuse you, but will constantly be tempting you to accuse others and worst of all, he will plant seeds in your mind to blame God and accuse Him of the very things the devil is guilty of! (see John 10:10)

His voice is entirely different than God's Holy Spirit, who councils us to stop harmful and destructive actions. When the Holy Spirit convicts you, he doesn't pummel you with accusations. He instead strongly confronts you to transform your actions into those which lead you to God's will.

The Bible calls this “godly sorrow that leads to repentance” as opposed to “worldly sorrow that leads to death” (2 Corinthians 7:10). Another way to say that could be “good guilt” (where you're corrected and shown the way of godly living) and “bad guilt” (where you're being mentally and emotionally thrashed by the force of darkness). It wasn't until I read and really studied the Bible, that I discerned the difference.

For example, let's say a person is getting drunk on alcohol regularly. The Bible tells us that drunkenness is a sin (Galatians 5:21), and we know that it's also a health risk.

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So, the Holy Spirit would give you strong reoccurring thoughts of getting sober or practicing moderation. You might have the thought of contacting a therapist, avoiding bars, getting alcohol out of your house, etc.

In contrast, the enemy would attempt to tell you that you're a bad person for getting drunk. He may say that you're unlovable, and that God could never forgive you. These are examples of the lies that the accuser uses to steal your joy.

The accuser uses guilt to bring about shame:

*Guilt* is feeling bad about your *actions*, while  
*Shame* is feeling bad about *yourself*.

The accuser wants to rip away the joy from your heart by having you feel bad about yourself, while God helps you to find and live in joy. God shows us that He wants to save us from sin, because He created us for an eternal and meaningful purpose. We not only get the joy of a relationship with Him, we get the deep meaning of a calling and vocation as well.

Just like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden didn't just have freedom from sin before the fall, but they had a legitimate, and amazing calling to care for God's Creation. They had a *calling*, not just some list of rules and regulations to follow. God leads us away from sin because it destroys our God-given calling and intention he has for our lives.

Here are some ways to discern between the voice of God and the accuser:

**The accuser tempts you with something you desire.** He promises secret and hidden wisdom, for you to gain social

acceptance, success, wealth, fame, etc. – and this is how he hooks people in.

The devil also protects his hold on you, by convincing you that you have the “highest vibrational wisdom.” He tells you that Christians are “low vibrational” and that they lack the “true wisdom” that you possess.

This creates a stubborn pridefulness. Once the devil convinces you that your esoteric knowledge is special and rare, you’ll protect it from people who try to share the Gospel with you. This insures that you’ll be offended and closed down to the Bible, the real Jesus, and freeing processes such as repentance.

And then the devil will show you how to share your “special wisdom” with others through your healing practice, workshops, and writings. The devil is so clever, in such an evil way! He will make you an evangelist for his kingdom rather than God’s kingdom.

The devil will pay you well if you work for him. Yet, you will never have enough, because he’ll keep you indentured to insure your ongoing devotion to his evil plan.

Worldly ambitions open us up to the accuser’s temptations. This is one reason why Hebrews 13:5 tells us to be satisfied with what we have.

**Notice your reactions.** Let’s say that the accuser offers to show you some secret hidden wisdom that he claims only a few people are privy to know. To recognize that this is an offer from the accuser, notice how your body reacts to this: your heart’s racing, your breath is fast and shallow, and you get a feeling that you’re doing something forbidden. These are tell-tale characteristics of being led by the accuser.

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Contrast this to how you react when God leads you, and you follow: there's a sense of peace and being cared for your Heavenly Father. God has no "hidden wisdom," as the scroll of his wisdom is freely available through the Bible and prayer. The Book of Revelation clearly shows that the Lamb of God, Jesus, opened the scrolls for us all.

In addition, if you follow the accuser, there's a sense of adrenaline hurry-up impulsivity. Like you're sneaking behind your parents' back before they return home. With God, there may be an urgency to follow his lead, but not with a sense of impulsivity and certainly no sense of sneaking or getting away with something.

Jesus is a shepherd, He leads and guides but doesn't push and shove. The devil is like a wild beast who tries to scare you into making impulsive and foolish decisions. He promises short cuts that really are illusions.

**Study God's Living Word.** The accuser mixes in lies with truth. For this reason, he's also rightly called "the deceiver." So he'll give you a message that seems legitimate and relevant, but then his next message is designed to pull you away from God. When the accuser tried to tempt Jesus in the wilderness, the accuser even quoted scripture (Matthew 4:1-11)!

So psychic readings, channeled books, and intuitive messages are a confusing mixture of truth and deception in this way. It's all the accuser's way of leading us away from God's answers, wisdom, and guidance.

The enemy's "hidden wisdom" always claims to show us why the Bible isn't correct. That's a big warning flag right there! Run the other direction from anyone or anything that tries to lead you away from the Bible.

Think for a moment: if you have children, would you leave them alone in the house without any instructions at all? Wouldn't that be negligent? Our Father in Heaven loves us and He didn't leave the most important things of all up to chance. He gave us instructions, and that's why we sometimes call the Bible our "Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth."

Reading and studying the Bible gives us the solid foundation of knowing how God speaks, and an understanding of the pattern of his messages. Although the Bible is historically set in an ancient culture that had very different ways of living, the essence of how people behave and – most importantly – how God speaks, hasn't changed.

When we read the Bible, God's voice comes through the passages. That's why it's called His *Living* Word, because the Bible is alive as you read and study it.

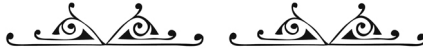
If I'd known the above information, and if I'd previously taken the time to read and study the entire Bible (not just parts of it), if I'd listened to the Christians who sent me angry letters about my unbiblical writings, I would have been on the straight-and-narrow path much sooner.

Do you see how smart the devil is, as he will even send people to tell us something we need to hear but in a very mean way so that we shut down and lose the needed message because of the folly of the messenger? How important it is that we be like Jesus and "speak the truth in love!" (Ephesians 4:15).

Fortunately, God uses everything for His glory (Romans 8:28), even when we drift away from Him or take actions that aren't His will. Today, God is using me to teach people



the truth about the New Age movement, and help them to turn toward Jesus. He is the answer we need, and the love we are seeking.





## CHAPTER SIX



### The Stars and the Universe

*“And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself  
as an angel of light.”*

2 CORINTHIANS 11:14 ESV

By 2014, Michael and I were living in Maui, Hawaii on a hill that was perpetually hot and sunny. I always loved sunshine and warm temperatures, but this was too much. We’d stay indoors during the afternoons, and go outside at sunset. The warm evenings were wonderful and you could clearly see the stars. Michael bought a telescope, but we didn’t really need one. Sitting there at night, we could see shooting stars and moon craters. It was that clear!

At that time, I had a fascination with both astronomy (the study of stars and planets) and astrology (trying to predict

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the future with birth charts). Sitting beneath the clear sky nightly, I'd even talk with the stars. I didn't realize this was blasphemy until I read the entire Bible.

I still believed then that God *was* the universe. I had no concept of how to get close to him, because he seemed overwhelmingly vast. How do you cuddle the universe?

So I'd talk with the stars, and keep track of astrological forecasts. I wasn't worshipping them, but I was definitely trying to gain information from them. I studied information about the star Sirius and paid attention to when the planet Mercury was said to dance backwards in retrograde.

So many topics fascinated me! I was constantly reading and meditating, and then I'd write about my research results. The universe seemed multi-layered, and I'd dig and dig to find new information. Each layer would lead to another layer. Each question would lead to another question.

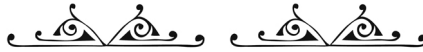
Some scientists believe that the universe has no end because it's shaped like a Mobius Strip, which is an endless loop. By focusing upon the universe instead of upon God, I was caught in this endless loop of seeking and searching. That's one of the ways in which the enemy hooks us, by continually looking for God in all the wrong directions. Little did I know that 3000 years ago King David considered the stars and said:

“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” Psalm 8:3-4





He saw the majesty and beauty of the Heavens and it made him feel humbled at the Power and Glory of God. The vastness of space humbled David. That's the role of the Creation, to help us appreciate the absolutely unfathomable power and love of God. It's to humble us, and exalt the Lord.







# CHAPTER SEVEN



## Jesus Cards

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith.  
And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result  
of works, so that no one may boast.”*

EPHESIANS 2:8-9

My former publisher and I had produced several decks of “angel cards.” These cards featured angel images and positive messages. Many of them had predictive messages too, and we used them to give “angel readings,” which involved reading the cards to peak into the future.

At that time, I hadn’t yet read God’s word in Deuteronomy 18:10 and Acts 16:16-19 which forbids divination and fortune telling. I was operating out of ignorance of God’s will, and being deceived by the deceiver.

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Many people asked me to create a deck of Jesus cards, but I'd always decline. I didn't want to disrespect him in any way. Even though I didn't know Jesus, I respected his enormity and awesomeness. There was no way I'd make a deck of oracle cards about Jesus!

Did this mean that I didn't respect the angels who graced my other cards? Not at all. It's just that angels seemed so immediate and accessible to me, while Jesus still felt far-away.

Then I found an artist named Gregg Olsen. His paintings reflected the joy and peacefulness which I always associated with Jesus. If Gregg would agree to work with me on these cards, and we only used scripture from the King James Version of the Bible, then we *could* make respectful Jesus Cards, I realized. Granted, I know now the King James Version isn't the only possible version but in my mind at the time I felt it was important.

They wouldn't be *oracle* cards, but *scriptural* cards. That seemed like the only way to honor Jesus on cards.

Gregg agreed to collaborate with me on the Jesus Cards. So we selected 44 of his paintings, and I bought a "Red Letter" King James Bible in order to select quotations from Jesus in the gospel, that would be placed on each card. A "Red Letter Bible" means that Jesus' words are highlighted in red ink, so they stand out.

So, I sat down and began reading the Gospels, beginning with Matthew 1. I didn't fully appreciate the significance of genealogy section with all the "begats" until later when I read the entire Bible story.

So I decided to skip to the red letter sections, and just concentrate on Jesus' words. I was familiar with his famous quotes of "Ask and ye shall receive" and "Knock and it shall

be opened,” since these phrases were used in support of the manifestation work that many of us did in the new age movement.

This time, I went deeper. I read the beautiful Beatitudes of Jesus’ blessings and the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, and his that-makes-sense words in Matthew 6. So far, so good.

Then I got to Matthew 7:21 where Jesus tells his disciples that not everyone who calls Him Lord will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. He says that only those who do the will of God will enter. Jesus then says that he will reply that he never knew those who break God’s laws, and for them to get away from him.

Well, that didn’t sound “teddy bear like” at all! In fact, it sounded downright harsh! Would the Jesus I thought I knew, exclude certain people from heaven? Didn’t everyone go to heaven because God and Jesus unconditionally love us all? Didn’t all paths lead to God?

I wondered if my Bible had been mistranslated. There must’ve been some mistake! The loving Jesus I knew couldn’t possibly have talked like this.

But I kept going, and was amazed by Jesus’ words. They rang true in my heart, even though they surprised me with their scolding tone.

Then I read the passage that set me on a new course in life:

*“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”*

– Jesus in Matthew 10:32-33 KJV

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I gulped. And read it again. Did Jesus just say that we needed to publicly acknowledge Him, in order for Him to acknowledge us? I went online and researched, and yes that was what he was saying. Gulp.

You see, I'd been reluctant to mention Jesus publicly at my workshops and in my books. It seemed that whenever I said the name Jesus, I was met with a backlash of criticism. Either someone was offended by the modern name Jesus and angrily insisted he be called by his Hebrew name Yeshua or the new age term, "Sananda." Or I'd hear complaints about Christianity being patriarchal, contrived, hypocritical, judgmental, and so on.

To avoid this conflict, I rarely mentioned Jesus. And because of this, I'd receive angry letters and social media posts from Christians. They'd post Bible verses, and angry accusations, and so I didn't understand their point. All I could hear was their anger.

The rage from both new agers and Christians on the topic of Jesus, was why I avoided talking or writing about Him. I didn't want to offend or upset anyone. I had been a people-pleaser instead of a God-pleaser (Galatians 1:10).

But I knew that I had no choice but to talk about Jesus, after reading his rebuke in Matthew 10:32-33, and later in Mark 8:38 where Jesus says:

*"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."*

As I poured through the synoptic gospels while writing the *Loving Words From Jesus Cards*, I became aware that there

was much more to Jesus than I'd previously realized. My heart was becoming "teachable" as I hungered to know the meanings of his parables.

Michael, who was raised a Methodist, had no problem talking openly about Jesus. So when I told Michael that I wanted to start attending a Christian church to learn more about the Bible, he was happy to attend with me. We decided to attend the local Methodist Church, since we both had a background in this denomination (I'd attended their services and Bible study briefly with my sons during the 1990's).

Each Sunday morning, we'd wake up and say, "Well, should we get up and go to church?" We'd think about it. Church was only 20 minutes from our house, and the weather was fine. There was no reason not to go.

But we'd always make an excuse and not go. Then we'd feel bad about not going, so we'd promise that the following Sunday, we'd attend. We never did go to that Methodist Church, and I later learned this "Should we go to church?" conversation is another way the enemy pulls us away from the Bible.

Church is important, but studying the Bible is even more important. We should start reading the Bible right away while we look for a church. But I didn't know that then. Yet, my hunger to learn more about Jesus was still there . . .









# CHAPTER EIGHT



## Dogs, Cats, Goats, and Chickens

*“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”*

ROMANS 12:2 NLT

As I mentioned earlier, Hawaii has a lot of bugs. And some of those bugs bite and sting, and it’s painful! In the Maui hills where we lived, huge centipedes were everywhere. All the homes had invasions, unless you were willing to spray a lot of pesticides, which we weren’t.

Someone told us that chickens love to eat these insects. Since our home was on an agricultural lot, we were allowed to have chickens. So, Michael – who loves birds anyway – was happy to find chickens that needed new homes. We

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found some on Craigslist from people who were moving, and couldn't take their pet chickens with them.

So, Michael built a little wire fence around our yard, and brought the chickens to our home. Sure enough, they did decrease the bug population, and we grew fond of our new feathered family members. They each had names and very distinct personalities.

Then we kept going and found other animals on Craigslist who needed homes. There were cute baby goats who we named Cupid and Frodo. But they were crying for their mothers, so we adopted their mothers too. And one of the mothers was already pregnant again when we got her, so she had more babies.

Since we were adopting animals, I voted to get a horse since they'd been on my wish-list since childhood. So we brought home two miniature horses, and two full-sized horses. And just like that, we had a lot of animals!

We lived on less than one acre, and we'd outgrown the land. So we started looking for an affordable home with acreage. Maui's prices were too high for us, but the Big Island was still reasonable because the volcano fog had lowered home values. We quickly found a 40 acre ranch with a beautiful 20,000 square foot barn and 3 small 1000 square foot cottages.

My parents had been wanting to live with us, so it would be perfect. They'd live in one of the cottages, Michael and I would be in another cottage, and the third cottage would function as our office.

We moved in the Spring of 2016 and adjusted to the much cooler climate of living at 3000 feet above sea level. It was so cold on our ranch that no palm trees or tropical fruit

could grow. We were surrounded by pine trees. You couldn't even tell we were in Hawaii except for the distant view of the ocean.

It was quite the process transporting our horses, chickens, goats, and other animals in-between islands. You'd think there'd be a ferry boat between islands, but there isn't because of valid concerns that it would disrupt the whales who migrate there.

Fortunately, a friend of a friend owned a tiny two seat propeller airplane and he "island hopped" between Maui and the Big Island with our animals over several trips. Family, friends, and I would be at the Maui airport putting the animals on the plane, and Michael would receive them when the plane would land on the Big Island. People laughed at us for taking our chickens with us, but they'd become beloved pets!

Once we moved to the ranch, we kept looking at Craigslist and adopting animals in need of a home. Some were animals whose owners were moving off-island or to smaller homes where they couldn't take their farm animals.

Some were animals being sold to slaughter. Since we had so much land, we couldn't say "no" to an animal who could be killed unless we bought them. Our animal rescuing became a daily activity. We'd pay full price to buy animals out of slaughter or adopt them, and we didn't think about the mounting costs. Our focus was on helping wherever we could.

As an animal lover who'd been a vegan since 1996, I couldn't stand the thought of any animal suffering. We rescued as many animals as we could, even though we didn't have much experience with farm animals (except for



horses). We hired experienced ranch hands, and relied on two veterinarian services to tell us how to keep the animals safe, healthy, and happy.





## CHAPTER NINE



### Church Shopping

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.”*

PROVERBS 3:5-6

Fortunately, our ranch was also near a lot of churches. This time, we followed through with our intention to attend church. *Yet, which church should we go to?* We wondered. Michael and I decided to attend various churches, to find a good fit. So we went “church shopping.”

Each Sunday, we’d attend a different church. At that time (before I’d read the entire Bible) we were evaluating churches based upon comfort. For example, how close the church was to our home, how early was the service, how long did

the service last, were people friendly, etc. I admit that we stopped attending churches on those factors, including their music being too rock and roll.

Today though, we realize that the most important factors in church selection are: the pastor preaching according to the Bible, and if the church is engaged in charitable outreach programs.

Admittedly, it was probably easier for us to attend various churches as we “church shopped” because we arrived as a couple. Many people tell me they’re intimidated to go alone to a new church. Often these fears relate to two areas:

- ***Previous church experiences.*** They felt hurt because they, or someone close to them, was judged or rejected because of church doctrine, or because of politics within the church. Or, they witnessed hypocrisy within church members (or leaders) who said one thing, but did another ala The Pharisees. They may also be boycotting the church because of child abuse within the church that wasn’t reported or punished. The difference between ordinary human failings such as pride or being unwelcoming, and purely abusive or illegal behavior is important to note here. God is a God of justice. He never turns a blind eye on abuse. If you have endured something terrible, please know that Jesus loves you and stands opposed to those who have harmed you. He will hold them to account on the Day of Judgement if they don’t repent.
- ***Social anxiety.*** There’s a fear of being judged by church members who appear to be perfect, when on the inside you feel like a hot mess. You worry that

every mistake you've made is apparent to the righteous or judgmental church members, and that you'll be shunned or outcast.

So I always counsel folks who have these fears to remember that churches aren't gathering places for the perfect. Churches are like hospitals for the spiritually sick, because we attend services to heal, grow, and lean into God. So of course there will be a cast of characters with personality flaws at every church you attend. In fact, the ones that need the most Grace and love are the ones who show it least. Charity begins at home and what better place to start loving people than in the church.

*"If we love our Christian brothers and sisters, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead." (1 John 3:14)*

Please don't let fears keep you from worshipping with a group of believers – because church can be powerfully healing and uplifting. The right church can fill you with the Holy Spirit, and bring joy to your heart all week long.

And if people have hurt you at churches in the past, or behaved abusively, that's awful! But please don't let that prevent you from trying again with a different church. After all, you've likely been emotionally hurt in your love life, but you keep trying. You've been emotionally wounded at work, no doubt, but you keep working. Think of church attendance as a necessity, instead of optional.

Besides, holding onto offenses in your heart is a doorway for the enemy to attack or try to control you. In his book,

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*The Bait of Satan*, John Bevere explains that the biblical Greek word for offense is *skandalon*. This word means bait for a trap. In other words, allowing yourself to hang on to offenses baits you into the enemy's deceit.

In Ephesians 4:26-27, the Apostle Paul explains that getting angry is normal. We just want to take care of that anger right away, and not let it simmer and stew in our hearts:

*“And don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.” (NLT)*

The last thing we want is to give a foothold to the devil! That would be like handing the enemy a rampway to our heart!

So no matter what has occurred in your past, please keep church shopping, and you'll find your home. If you're socially anxious, then sit in the back row and wear plain clothing that doesn't draw attention to you. If someone says Hello to you, just smile and say Hello in return.

And most of all, keep going!



After a few months of church shopping, Michael and I agreed on the local Episcopal Church to be our spiritual home. It was an active church with three services, an on-campus thrift store, and a newly enacted community meal outreach program.



It was also an inclusive church. They openly proclaimed that *everyone* was welcome to attend and share in communion, and they meant it. The congregation was a wide mixture of people from all different backgrounds. This is what's known as a liberal church.

This is good on the level of making everyone feel welcome, as they should, but also adherence to truth is also important. Jesus spoke to absolutely everyone, and at the same time was not afraid for the sake of Truth to make everyone feel uncomfortable at times.

It's important to look for a church that's welcoming to all kinds of people, but also challenges you to search the Scriptures and really grow in the Truth. The Episcopalian religion is a blend of Catholicism and Protestantism, and it brings in elements of both. Many people refer to Episcopalian as "Catholic lite." Today, we attend a different denomination of Protestant church, but at that time the Episcopal Church offered us a wonderful transitional experience from new age to Christianity.

So Michael and I settled in and began attending services and volunteering at the Saint James Episcopal Church.







## CHAPTER TEN



### The Light That Saved Me

*“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

JOHN 8:12 NLT

Michael and I had been attending the Episcopal Church for three months. Our Christmas seemed extra bright, especially the candlelight service, where we all sang *O Holy Night*, *Angels We Have Heard on High* and other traditional hymns, and watched a sweet children’s pageant about the birth of Jesus.

It was now January 7, 2017, and I was attending Saturday night mass. The other church members were friendly and seemed happy, and we were all getting to know one another.

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The beginning of each church services was filled with announcements. At this service, our priest brought a woman named Karen to the front near the altar. Karen was being honored for her volunteer work, as the priest explained that she was moving away from Hawaii.

I'd never before met Karen. In a larger church that has multiple service times, it's normal to not know everyone. Especially since we'd just started attending.

There was something innocent and childlike about Karen. As she spoke, her words reflected her big faith and trust in God. Her words, countenance, and presence were inspiring. When Jesus told us to be as a child, Karen seemed to embody this childlike state. Not the impulsive wild child, but the child with complete faith, trust, and awe.

I relaxed back into my chair and enjoyed listening to her. And then suddenly, she disappeared. So did the priest, the altar, and everyone around me.

And standing, or rather hovering, in front of me was Jesus himself. My eyes were open, and I was one-hundred percent sober.

I've had spiritual visions throughout my life, but this was more real and all-encompassing. I wasn't just seeing. I was *in* the experience.

It's difficult to put what happened into words, but I'll try: His presence filled my entire eyesight. His arms were outstretched like he was inviting me to him as a "Welcome home" to a prodigal child.

His facial features looked middle Eastern, with a brown tone, dark brown wavy shoulder-length hair, and brown eyes.

And his heart! His heart was shining these rays of light in all directions, huge bright pulsating beams of light. I could

feel the light beams affecting me, and at one point I felt pushed back in my chair.

The light was both dazzling and dizzying. I felt so loved and happy, and yet a part of me was observing the experience and feeling confused. What did this mean? How could this be happening?

Yet it was all so real! And Jesus was real! I'm sure my jaw was dropped because His presence completely floored me. I have no idea how long He was there.

I had the feeling that Jesus is always there for all of us, and we can all experience Him. My sense is that I'd "become as a little child" while pondering Karen's childlike nature. Perhaps that's why the veil was lifted in that moment.

The light radiating from his heart was shining toward everyone, not just toward me. It was so profound and otherworldly. I'd never seen any lights like that before. The rays were bright beyond anything in this world.

During the time I was seeing and experiencing Jesus' presence, I went from merely *believing* in him, to *knowing* his reality. I felt this sensation of Jesus being crucified with the crushing weight of the world's sins upon him while he suffered on the cross. I gasped as I realized that Jesus had *absorbed* all of our sins!

Any doubts I had about the Gospel descriptions of Jesus vanished right then. This *was* Jesus of Nazareth. He knew who I was. He knows who you are. He knows us all.

In my experience, it became clear that Jesus *is* the Son of God, part of the Holy Trinity. Remember that prior to this experience, I revered Jesus as an "ascended master." Yet in that moment of seeing him, I knew that *Jesus is Lord*.

I also had the realization that I could no longer be in the new age world. I'd been trying to walk in both worlds, and

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seeing Jesus instantly changed this. I knew that my new age followers would be upset, but what choice did I have but to publicly declare that I was now one-hundred percent following Jesus? I had no choice, nor did I want another choice.

Most of all, I fell head-over-heels in love with Jesus that day. I was willing to do whatever it took to be with him. My seeking was now over, because Jesus fulfilled my longing for great love. I couldn't wait to see him again, and spend eternity in paradise with him.

And then I lost sight of him. He vanished. I couldn't see him any longer, but I was still reveling in the waves of those light rays from his heart.

I was spent and speechless (which is rare for me). I don't recall the rest of the church service, or anything about how I got home.

The experience was beyond real. *It was Him*. How did I know for sure it was the real Jesus, and not a false apparition from the enemy? (After all, demons do disguise themselves as Jesus, Mary, and angels).

Some people say that any vision is from the devil. Yet, The Book of Acts in the Bible describes how Saul saw a vision of Jesus that led to his conversion.

"You shall know them by their fruits," Jesus teaches us in Matthew 7:16 (KJV).

The fruits of my experience showed me that I genuinely saw a vision of Jesus of Nazareth. I began reading and studying the entire Bible, beginning with Genesis 1. And for the first time in my life, I kept going until I finished the Book of Revelation.

- I got baptized for the first time on February 25, 2017. After meeting Jesus, I couldn't wait to be baptized!

My childhood church (Unity) didn't baptize children, and I'd never before considered getting baptized. Yet after seeing Jesus, getting baptized seemed like the most important action I could take.

- My focus became more about helping other people. I shifted from self-centeredness toward selfless service. I started doing volunteer work, and became more caring toward other people.
- I repented for my past errors, and prayed for God to forgive me.
- With the Holy Spirit's direction, I cleaned out anything from my home and office that could be an idol (more on this topic later in this book).

When I described my vision to the artist Howard David Johnson, he painted the image that graces the cover of this book based on my description. His painting closely captures what I saw, if only pulsating light beams could somehow shine from the painting.









## CHAPTER ELEVEN



### Now What?

*What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man. When that happens, be happy! Yes, Leap for Joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way.*

LUKE 6:22-24 NLT

Seeing Jesus in all of his glorious splendor was pivotal. All my previous doubts about him fell away. *He* was who I'd been seeking my entire life!

And yet I admit that I was nervous about the reaction of followers of my previous new age teachings. From prior experiences, I anticipated that my book readers and video viewers would have strong resistance to me discussing Jesus. And that turned out to be true!

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Right after my baptism, I brought my Bible to my video taping, and showed a photo of me being baptized. I also explained that I'd be reading Bible verses in my videos from then on.

I also made a video discussing my Jesus experience, which immediately led to people making videos and blogs about my conversion. Many of the videos and blogs were cruel and sensationalized, and I noticed that the videos and blogs were also monetized. In other words, people were not only publicly bullying me, they were also making money for doing so.

And yet we learn in Genesis 50:20 that whatever evil actions that people take, God can use it for good:

*“You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.” (NLT)*

Every time someone posted a persecutory blog or video about my conversion, I'd receive letters from people who converted to following Jesus after reading or watching the persecutory posts. These blogs or videos about my conversion were intended to pull people away from God, but they ended up being tools to bring people *to* God.

I dealt with the persecution by realizing it had nothing to do with me personally. It had to do with that person's relationship with God. Some people were so hurt from their prior religious experiences, that they wanted nothing to remind them. Other people had bad experiences with men, and they only wanted to worship female deities. People were confused that I'd changed my beliefs so suddenly, following

my vision of Jesus. And some folks made the persecution all about money.

I could also see they were upset that I'd stopped giving them predictions about the future, and was instead reading from the Bible.

I was a neophyte, a baby Christian, who was converting publicly. Some of my new Christian friends urged me to stay off social media until I was more mature in my faith.

The enemy was loudly threatening me: "If you talk openly about Jesus and the Bible, you will lose everything you've worked so hard for! Everyone will leave you! You'll lose all of your income and your reputation!"

And yet, the Bible reassured me that I just needed to surrender everything, my entire life, and trust God to lead me.

I spent hours and days on my knees, praying and repenting "I'm sorry God! I didn't know!" I kept apologizing when thinking about my former new age beliefs and practices.

I'd previously had myself sitting on the throne of my heart, instead of Jesus who rightfully belongs on the throne of our hearts.

Suddenly, everything in the new age seemed so selfish and shallow, compared to what I was learning about Jesus. My new age experiences had been about finding peace and staying positive, but the prescribed path to get there had all been about the self: self-care, self-love, and self-manifesting. It was all about listening to your heart, instead of listening to God's will. It was creating your own universe, instead of respecting God as the Creator.

And I understood why this was: the devil demolishes your self-respect. He pulls you down, steals your joy, and leads you into addictions that fill you with guilt. Then, after

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the devil gets you to hate yourself, he offers you hollow solutions through “self-love.”

The psychic component of my previous beliefs showed my lack of trust and patience in waiting on the Lord for answers. Instead of trusting God with my future, I insisted on predicting and trying to control the future. There was channeling, mediumship, and divination – all forbidden by God. And yet, as someone who was raised in new thought / new age, and who hadn’t read the entire Bible, how could I have known that?

I thought regretfully about all the times when I’d deleted angry posts from Christians on my social media pages. The Christians would list scripture, but without context, I couldn’t hear their message. No one was explaining it to me. All I could hear was their anger and disapproval of me. I thought they were calling me a “bad person.” I didn’t realize they were trying to save my soul.

I prayed for God’s forgiveness. I prayed for God to teach me about his will. I prayed for God to help me to read and understand the Bible. I prayed for God to show me how I could help others who’d also been deceived by the enemy.



The persecution was thick and furious. People were livid about my conversion. I received letters from people who said I was going backwards in my spirituality. They said that you’re supposed to be a Christian first, and then progress toward new age. Other people accused me of “ditching” the new age people, saying that I had a scheme to make more

money with Christianity. All sorts of theories were posted on social media about “why” I’d follow Jesus.

A few people acted out in ways that can only be described as devilish. One woman wrote nasty letters about me to the office of my church, and followed up with leaving curse-word-laced voicemail messages at my church.

Another woman wrote hateful letters to every person with whom I was associated, telling them what an awful person I was. And another woman published twisted conspiracy theory untruths about me with sensationalized headlines, including weird fake stories about my rescue ranch, which led people to read her blogs which had money-making ads.

One woman had so much hatred that she edited a video with her voice, pretending to be my voice. Everyone could tell that it was a fake video as I have a very unique and distinctive voice pattern. Clearly, this woman was being used by the devil to damage my reputation, so that people wouldn’t listen to my testimony about Jesus. Several people have joined me in praying for her to be delivered from the snares of the devil.

I found solace in the story of Joseph in Genesis, who was severely persecuted by his brothers who sold him into slavery. And then the wife of Joseph’s boss tried to seduce him. When Joseph refused, the wife fabricated a story about him. She claimed that Joseph was the one trying to seduce her! So Joseph was thrown into jail.

Fortunately, God can turn any situation into good (Romans 8:28), which he did for Joseph who eventually was able to mastermind a plan to save the Israelites from starving during a famine.

And I had to remember how much worse the persecution is for Christians in some countries where they are killed and jailed for their faith. In comparison, my social media persecution seemed mild.

Nonetheless, my friends were alarmed by the social media hate campaigns. I was alarmed too, and shocked at the venomous hatred coming toward me. Weren't these the same people who professed to want world peace, love and light? And it seemed to be only women who were after me. Weren't they the same folks who'd told me their stories of being bullied and abused? Apparently, when it came to Jesus followers, all bets were off.

It looked like Christians were the last remaining group who are socially acceptable to bully. After all, if you say demeaning words about any other group, you're called names. But bully a Christian on social media, and you're a hero somehow.

I clung to Jesus's words in the gospels about persecution, which he promised would happen to those who followed him. Jesus promised that we'd be rewarded for being persecuted.

After all, look at how much torture he suffered to bring us the Good News! And the martyrdom of the Apostles and countless Christians, who to this day, are tortured and killed for their faith.

What also helped was to focus upon Jesus's words in John 3:19-21:

*God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil*

*hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants. (NLT)*

In other words, people fear the Light that Jesus shines on us all. They don't want their "fun and games" that they hide in the darkness, to be exposed to his light. They don't want Holy Spirit to confront them. They don't want to change, to come into the light, and to rejoice with Jesus.

I also understood that many of them had been deeply hurt by men, and so they wanted nothing to do with a patriarchal faith. They didn't want to call God their "heavenly father," and they didn't want to talk to Jesus because of his male gender. They preferred goddesses and angels.

And some of the persecutors were likely hurt from unhappy experiences with church. So they rejected anyone or anything representing church.

Throughout this persecution, many followers of Jesus wrote me letters of support, encouragement, and understanding. Several of them said they'd been praying for my salvation over the years. I thanked them profusely!

To their credit, I'd also receive kind letters from new agers who said that – while they didn't agree with my belief in Jesus – they respected my right to choose to follow Him. I'd always say extra prayers for them.

And my greatest joy was, and is, hearing from people who were inspired by my conversion . . . and they converted as well! Many of them had left Christianity, and had heard the call to return to Jesus. Some had never before been a Christian.

It was worth all of the pain and humiliation I endured, to inspire others to follow Jesus. It's not an easy path for sure, but it's the path to God.



Before my conversion, I held the new age belief that "all paths lead to God." I thought Christians were narrow-minded to think that their way was the only way.

But after immersing myself into the Bible and prayer, and talking with mature Christians, I learned the truth:

Jesus loves all of us! He doesn't just love Christians. He loves everyone! And he wants to help and save everyone.

*But isn't there another way to reach God? What about the Buddhists? They're nice people.* Those were the questions I'd had also.

And the answer is that yes, there are many nice and good people in the world. And if you live a completely sinless life, there's no problem.

Except that it's impossible to do so. We all make mistakes! Most of us make multiple mistakes throughout our life.

For example, we're all familiar with the Commandment: Thou shalt not murder. And most of us would say, No problem! I'm not ever going to kill anyone. But then we read Jesus's definition of murder, and we see that we've all broken this commandment:

*"You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to*



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*judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.” (Matthew 5:21-22 NLT).*

Jesus also explained that we break the Commandment against adultery whenever we have a lustful thought. If that’s not enough, there’s the Commandment to honor our mothers and fathers. How many can honestly say that they’ve never dishonored their parents?

Then we need to look at the two Commandments which Jesus said are the most important: to love God, and to love each other. How many have adhered to these Commandments one-hundred percent of the time?

When I was in the new age movement, I thought that the word “sin” was a cuss word. If someone said I sinned, I thought they were calling me a bad person. I didn’t realize then that we’ve *all* sinned (Romans 3:23). Somehow, knowing that I’m in good company with the whole human race helped me to get comfortable with the term, *sin*.

But then, what do you do with the sin you’ve amassed? Well, you first bring it to God in prayer. You confess the wrong-doings to him, with a truly contrite (remorseful) heart. You pray for God to forgive you, and to lift you up.

Then you keep praying, especially if the devil starts to slap you around with guilt. The devil (aka the accuser) tries to convince you that you’re permanently damaged by your past actions. Don’t believe him! Like the story of the prodigal son, God welcomes us prodigal daughters and sons back with open arms.







# CHAPTER TWELVE



## Spiritual Warfare

*“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.”*

JAMES 1:2-3 NLT

Not only did I get bullied by people, but I also had hair-raising experiences with spiritual warfare. The devil was very angry that I was following Jesus, so he'd send demons to frighten and upset me. He'd also try to bully me into being silent about my conversion to Christianity.

This was all new to me. I'd spent a lifetime avoiding any movie, book, or discussion about the devil. I didn't even believe he existed! Most new age teachings claim that the

devil is the human ego, or negative thinking. Therefore, according to the new age movement, if you stay positive, you are safe.

The main book that I read over the years, *A Course in Miracles* (ACIM), was supposedly “channeled” by Jesus as a true revelation of what the Bible was about. According to the ACIM, the Bible had distorted Jesus’s true teachings, so he had to reveal the truth through the ACIM. The ACIM is known as “the new age bible” for this reason.

I’d never heard of the book until the late 1990’s when I was at a girlfriend’s house. While she was in the kitchen getting us some wine to drink, I heard a voice clearly say, “Quit drinking and get into course in miracles.”

Back then, I thought that any spiritual experience must be from God. I believed that all spirits were angels, and that all angels were good. Remember that I’d been afraid to learn about fallen angels or demons, so I had a strong defense mechanism against acknowledging evil.

Of course, the devil loves that people don’t believe in his existence! That way, he can influence people without being noticed.

After I heard the voice telling me to study *A Course in Miracles* (ACIM), I bought a copy and began reading it. It reminded me of the Christian Science principles with which I’d been raised, so I felt comfortable with ACIM and believed it.

About six months later I quit drinking. I’ve since discovered that the devil gives us a mixture of truth and lies, to deceive us. I assumed that since the advice to quit drinking was good, that the rest of the message must be trustworthy too.

Only later did I learn that ACIM and similar new age materials that said they were from Jesus, were actually a demon disguised as Jesus.

The new age Jesus leads us away from God and the Bible, and leads us toward a self-centered theology. You become the center of the universe from following the new age false Jesus. He strokes your ego, and tells you that you're special and that only *you* can save the world.

Jesus warned of these imposters throughout the gospels. For example, in Matthew 24:24, Jesus admonished:

*“For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God’s chosen ones.”*

The “deceiving” part is the purpose of these false Jesus’s. The devil is the deceiver who will do anything to lead us away from God, as he is jealous of the love, power, and attention of God.

I was very upset to learn that I’d been deceived by ACIM and the false Jesus. I’d spent thousands of dollars and hours devoted to ACIM, and I was depressed about this waste.

But what about the angels with whom I’d been in contact? Were they a deception from the devil, too?

Before I could learn the answer, I went through a hail-storm of spiritual warfare. It was like the devil was throwing everything at me at once.



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I learned a lot about spiritual warfare from these experiences. Here are some signs of demonic attacks:

1. ***Insomnia.*** The demons enter your bedroom and create an atmosphere of chaos and confusion. You can sense their presence, similar to how as children we'd fear monsters in our bedroom.

After I first converted, I didn't sleep well for months. I was physically and mentally weakened by insomnia, unable to think clearly. This weakened state is exactly what the devil wants, as he tries to punish us for leaving him, and lure us back into his control. In this world, you either follow God or the devil. And the devil gets furious when he loses a follower.

2. ***Guilt.*** The demons influence your thoughts. Your mind becomes wracked with guilt about your previous actions. Demons try to convince you that you're irredeemable, and that God will never forgive or love you, and that you may as well disappear.

I felt tremendously guilty, like a fool, for being previously deceived by the devil. I'd held pride about being discerning, and my ability to detect "lower energies" as I used to call them. But I'd been duped! And as a result, I'd passed-along some teachings that hadn't come from God. My guilt was off-the-charts and I was inconsolable at first.

3. ***Achilles Heel fears.*** The demons study us, and learn about our worst fears. Then they pounce on these fears to try to control you, so that you'll continue to work for the devil. The book, *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis, explains this process in detail.

So if you fear that following Jesus will lead to problems financially, in relationships, in health, with family, your reputation, safety, etc., then the demons will loudly proclaim that these awful things will happen if you follow Jesus.

In my case, the devil knew that I had financial concerns since I was the only member of the family making an income. While Michael helped me enormously with the ranch and the filming work, he didn't at that time have an independent income for us to fall back on. My income was feeding many human and animal mouths, and I worried that my conversion would disappoint and leave them in a bad position.

Plus, my new age business associates were terrified that I'd denounce everything and ruin their financial interests. It was exactly like the story in the Book of Acts 16:16-19, as told by Luke the author of the book:

“One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a python spirit that enabled her to tell the future. She earned a lot of money for her masters by telling fortunes. She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved.’

“This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he turned and said to the demon within her, ‘I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.’ And instantly it left her.

“Her masters’ hopes of wealth were now shattered, so they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace.”

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Like the slave girl in the story, I was a cash-cow for new age publishers and event producers. They made a fortune off of my fortune-telling abilities and products, and they didn't want to lose this income!

Yet after Jesus saved me, my ability to predict the future seemed to have been cast out. I was still intuitive, but my visions were now rare occurrences.

That's when I realized that psychic gifts may in reality be a "gift" from the devil. Or a person may have true spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit, and the devil hijacks these gifts by offering false promises of fame and fortune.

True spiritual gifts, including prophecy, are gifts from the Holy Spirit that are used in service of God's will. True spiritual gifts lead people to Jesus and the Bible. The devil's "gifts," in contrast, lead people to be self-involved, and away from Jesus and the Bible. A psychic may tell you what's on your mind, while a true prophet will tell you what's on God's mind.

- ***Depression and Despair.*** The devil wants to steal our joy. He comes to kill, steal, and divide us (John 10:10). So when we lose joy, that's a sign of the enemy trampling on us. It's also a sign that we're listening to the enemy, which we never want to do! Be alert for the enemy, and don't listen to him!

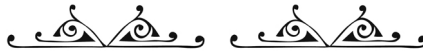
Why would the devil want to steal our joy? Because the Bible says that the "joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10) and he wants to steal our joy so we feel weak and defeated and lose the joy of the Lord. In addition, joy is a big billboard that attracts people to want to know Jesus!





And for the first few months after my conversion, I was not a billboard for joy. Quite the opposite! I was allowing the devil to steal my joy. This fed the gossip and persecution channels even more, with conjecture that I was miserable now that I'd converted to Christianity. Plus I gained weight from overeating to quell my nerves, which fueled the hateful gossip about me even more.

I have learned the most important thing in the world is getting alone with the Lord and listening for His approval and experiencing His joy and peace and love. Ministry and all other things come later. The best witnesses are those that spend the most time with Jesus.







# CHAPTER THIRTEEN



## Seven Ways to Combat Spiritual Warfare

*“For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity,  
but of power, love, and self-discipline.”*

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

Between the social media persecution and the spiritual warfare, I was having difficulty focusing upon my walk with Jesus.

I was horrified to learn that I had been misled my entire life by new age teachings, and felt horrible that I’d shared these teachings with others. I’d lived in the new age movement for 58 years, and at the time, I was sincerely sharing what I believed was true. I really thought I was on a mission from God. It took Jesus to open my eyes to the biblical truth!

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I was wracked with guilt and remorse for not realizing this sooner. And of course, that's exactly the devil's intention! He ran with my guilt and smeared it into my face so that I couldn't sleep or function.

It took me awhile to realize that when we sincerely repent and ask for God's forgiveness, and accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, that our past is forgiven.

I kept thinking that I had to "do something" to earn salvation. That type of thinking discounts Jesus's work on the cross. When our Lord suffered and died for us, the work of salvation was finished for all believers, as the Book of Romans clearly explains.

I had to learn that Jesus truly said "It is finished" and not "to be continued by Doreen." He paid the full price for my salvation and yours we just have to believe it.

Since I wanted to help people who were ready to leave the new age movement, I started doing free coaching work on Instagram Direct Messages, and gave free online Bible support group videos daily for one year (they're housed at [vimeo.com/doreenvirtue](https://vimeo.com/doreenvirtue) if you'd like to watch them).

I immersed myself into learning how to combat spiritual warfare. I read books, articles, talked with mature Christians, prayed, and watched videos on the topic.

Here's what I learned out of necessity:

1. **Put on the *Armor of God*.** In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul outlined a plan to combat spiritual warfare. He first acknowledged that we humans aren't fighting a flesh-and-blood battle. We are instead fighting a spiritual battle with demons.

So as with any soldier in battle, we must put on armor for protection. In this case, we must put on the

full Armor of God. Here's how Paul described it in Ephesians 6:10-17:

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

So, how do you put on the Armor of God? Through prayer. Apostle Paul continued this letter by asking for us to pray with God’s Holy Spirit on all occasions, and to stay alert and keep praying (Ephesians 6:18).

One way to armor yourself with God is to “abide in Jesus,” and believe that you are inside of Jesus for protection. As Romans 8:1 says:

*“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”*

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Pastor and author David Guzik notes that the reverse is also true: “If you are not in Jesus Christ, there is condemnation for you.”

2. Do **“Spiritual Housekeeping.”** Walk around your house and office, and keep saying aloud or silently: “Holy Spirit, please show me what items to discard.” You’ll hear Holy Spirit’s wisdom as thoughts, which guide you to discard items that are from the occult, or that have symbols that could be doorways to demons. Holy Spirit may also direct you to get rid of certain books, new age items, clothing, and jewelry.

You may wonder whether you can sell or donate these items. Ask this question of Holy Spirit, who will usually say: if an item is bad for you, why would you want to burden someone else with it? If you have any questions about what to release, ask Holy Spirit.

After I followed Holy Spirit’s direction, and I got rid of my copies of ACIM, deity and idol statues, and many other items, the spiritual warfare reduced.

Months later, I realized I was resisting throwing away some jewelry and a gold-laden crystal wand. They were so expensive, and beautiful to look at! However, they were made by a jeweler who’d made the items with occult symbolism. The moment that Michael and I threw these items in the trash, our house seemed cleaner and lighter. It was difficult to throw away items that had cost thousands of dollars, but the higher price was living with demons.

3. **Calling upon the name of Jesus of Nazareth.** Once we threw away that jewelry and the crystal wand, the demonic intrusions virtually stopped. They still

happen occasionally, but now I recognize them. Instead of falling for the devil's ploys by getting upset, I loudly say: "Jesus of Nazareth!"

One night for example, I woke up because I thought the television had been turned on. I opened my eyes and I saw a demon crouching, and holding a black bazooka gun that he was pointing toward me threateningly. There was a sense that he was conveying, that he would hunt and torment me my whole earthly life. He was completely dark, and there was NO light around him or emanating from him. He reminded me of the charcoal remains on the bottom of a barbecue. Used up, lifeless, hopeless, and completely devoid of light.

I immediately screamed the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and he left.

But I had seen him, and I will try to explain what I concluded from this experience: the devil's only weapon is to frighten us, and to twist our minds into being worried, anxious, depressed, and feeling ashamed and guilty.

He tries to point us away from God. He tries to tell us that the answers we seek are on his path. He tempts us with bribes, offering to help us to receive fame, fortune, social acceptance, and pleasures. And he may deliver on these promises; *however*, he will never let you enjoy any of this. He will keep you perpetually wanting more, in an endless cycle of devilish greed.

When you discover who the devil is, he will punish you like he was trying to do to me. But he really can't do anything, because once we believe in Jesus, we're

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filled up with the Holy Spirit. The only thing the devil can do is try to frighten us and trick us into following him.

Boldly claim the name of Jesus of Nazareth with confidence! The devil cowers in fright before our Lord! In the presence of Jesus, the devil is powerless.

Why do we say “Jesus of Nazareth,” instead of saying Jesus? Because there are demons pretending to be Jesus. They write the channeled Jesus books, and they permeate the seeker-sensitive sermons of pastors who are afraid to “offend” their congregation with the gospel truth.

The name Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus the Nazarene identifies the real Jesus. Throughout the Book of Acts, Jesus is referred to as “Jesus of Nazareth” and “Jesus the Nazarene.”

Saying the name, “Jesus of Nazareth” is offensive to demons. I believe that’s why people who are being controlled by demons, are offended by the name.

The night that I clearly saw the demon, the name of Jesus of Nazareth made the demon immediately disappear. I’ve heard from many other people who report similar results, including those who’ve said the name Jesus of Nazareth during nightmares. Praise Jesus, the real Jesus who is the Son of God, fully God and fully human, who died for us on the cross and rose three days later!

4. **Wear your “Garment of Praise.”** As we read in Isaiah 61:3 KJV, putting on the “garment of praise” can lift the “spirit of heaviness.” The Accuser tries to smother and steal our joy, by covering our awareness of God’s light.



When I was going through a period of intense spiritual warfare soon after my conversion, I'd notice this heaviness as I was waking up. My whole body would feel heavy, like some pressure was pushing on me. I was healthy, yet I couldn't breathe. I was rested, yet felt sluggish. I was covered in feelings of dread for the upcoming day, and guilt for my past.

I realized that I felt "heavy," not in a weight sense, but in a spiritual sense. So I turned to the Bible and found scripture about "the spirit of heaviness" in Isaiah 61:3. This term is only in the King James Version translation.

So what is the spirit of heaviness? Feeling heavy, sluggish, and discouraged. It's as if the world's colors are dull, like there's nothing to feel joyful or grateful about.

The Bible says that we can lift the spirit of heaviness by putting on the "garment of praise." This means to immerse your mind, heart, and actions with praising God.

I tried this process the following morning. When I woke up with the familiar heaviness, I immediately started praising God. Silently in my mind, I said, "Thank you God." My heart was filled with gratitude, and my mind focused upon all of the blessings that our Creator gives to us all. I was suddenly grateful for blessings that may have seemed small or insignificant. As I continued to praise God, I realized that all blessings are important. There are no small or insignificant blessings.

You can praise God aloud, silently, in writing, and in song. Your actions praise God, by bringing glory to him.

Saying “Thank you God” repeatedly lifts the spirit of heaviness. When I started praising God in response to spiritual warfare, the demons left immediately.

As scripture teaches us:

*“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7 KJV*

Think of different words to use when praising God:

I love you  
You are magnificent  
You created everything  
Your glory is immeasurable  
Glory to you  
You are so awesome  
I praise you

Thank God for being holy, steadfast, glorious, faithful, awesome, loving, mighty, forgiving, merciful, just, and true. The most important of all is to just think about the immeasurable love of God in Christ in His dying on the Cross for your sins. Start saying “Thank you for loving me enough to give your life for me Jesus, You are amazing, I believe you paid for my sins and that You are with me.”

The Cross is the centerpiece of the love of God. If you ever doubt God loves you, think upon and thank

Him for the Cross and the awful price He paid and yet He loved you until the very end. What a wonderful and inexpressible love.

So, if you feel heavy or sluggish, start saying “Thank you God” in as many ways as possible (Glory to you God, I praise you God, and so forth). This can turn your heart toward God and lift you up.

- 5. Speak the scriptures as Jesus did during his temptation.** When the devil tried to tempt Jesus in the wilderness, our Lord combated by speaking scripture aloud. He gave us a model of how to deal with spiritual warfare by doing the same.

In Matthew 4:3, when the devil tempted Jesus to make bread out of stones, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3:

*“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”*

Next, in Matthew 4:5, the devil urged Jesus to jump off the temple pinnacle to prove his divine nature. In response, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:16:

*“You shall not tempt the LORD your God.”*

The devil next promised Jesus fame and fortune, in exchange for following him. At this ridiculous request, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:13:

*“Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD YOUR GOD, and Him only you shall serve.’”*

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You can speak or think scripture to cast away the devil's temptations. The devil tries to persuade you to follow him, by offering you something that you're seeking. He manipulates your insecurities by offering to give you money, fame, social acceptance, and other materialistic goals. While God helps you to get your needs met, the devil promises you lavish excess.

The devil says: "People will like you, if you (buy and wear this new dress; are famous; are popular, are thin, etc.). The devil always promises you something external (popularity, money, revenge, etc.) if you comply with him.

God never tries to tempt you (James 1:13-16). He points you in the right direction, but he doesn't dangle material promises in front of you. Following God yields *spiritual* rewards that are truly valuable and lasting, like strength, faith, and joy.

Bottom line: when the devil tries to remind you of your past to pull you down with guilt, remind the devil of his future: God wins! (Revelation 21:1-8).

- 6. Sleep next to the Bible.** Similar to quoting scripture to cast away demons, sleeping next to the Bible is protective. Some people carry the Bible with them all day, and then sleep next to it at night.

Your Bible can be on your nightstand next to your bed. Some people even have the Bible next to their pillow. You can also buy blankets that have scripture printed on them.

I'm not saying this works like a magic charm or something like that. It may just be the comfort and reminder of the power of God's Word that has the effect. Either way, I have noticed it helps and has

helped many people. Of course it also helps having the Bible at hand so you can remind yourself to read before you go to bed and first thing in the morning.

7. **Turn to the Psalms.** King David, who wrote many of the Psalms, lived through the oppression of spiritual warfare. He was hunted by King Saul and his own son Absalom, and had to live in the wilderness on the run for his own life.

David poured out his heart to God in Psalms, which are poetic prayers and songs found in the Bible's Book of Psalms. You can find inspiration and encouragement from reading the Psalms.

I also found that playing a recording of the Psalms at night helped me to sleep better. YouTube has several audio recordings of Psalms, including an eight-hour audio that I recorded that's available for free on YouTube.







## CHAPTER FOURTEEN



### Sell Everything and Follow Me

*“For the Lord your God is living among you.  
He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you  
with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears.  
He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.”*

ZEPHANIAH 3:17

I told my former publisher about my conversion to following Jesus, and asked them to put some of my products out-of-print, to remove my name from co-written products, and to donate my royalties to their charity.

My former publisher told me that they could enact these changes, but they would take time. They also informed me that they’d licensed my products to foreign publishers, and

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they couldn't control whether my old products would continue to be sold worldwide.

In addition, they informed me that my income would drop by seventy percent because of this change. Michael and I realized that we needed to downsize and simplify, because we'd no longer be able to afford the ranch with the reduced income and increasing expenses.

At first, we decided to raise funds by selling my jewelry and stage dresses. The ranch had over 300 animals by that time. We had sheep, goats, pigs, donkeys, horses, rabbits, alpacas, cows, birds, dogs, and cats. And the cost of keeping them fed, safe, and healthy was skyrocketing.

Vet bills were staggering to help the animals who arrived on our ranch sick, injured, or in need of neutering. If you've ever had to pay for your dog or cat to go to the vet, you can imagine that cost with several hundred animals. There were also fees for maintaining the health of the hooves and teeth of the animals.

Ironically while Michael and I went without dental care, our animals received it. During our year and a half at the ranch, we put our own needs on hold to completely devote our time and money to the animals. I'm not complaining, just explaining how everything we had went into animal care on the ranch. Good intentions and all, it was a lack of planning and wisdom that was our financial downfall. Our hearts were in the right place, but we hadn't used our heads enough.

We also had to hire full-time ranch workers. Fences and water lines needed repair and replacing, which was another expense. We were shocked at how much money it cost to keep the ranch operating.



Some people offered to donate to help with animal expenses, so we added a donation button to our website. People were so sweet to send us their hard-earned donations. Usually, the amounts were around five or ten dollars, which we realized was a lot of money to the sender. So we'd pray over every donation. After we lost the ranch, we began refunding all of the donations.

We also started funneling all the money we made from video classes, to care for the animals. In Hawaii, animal feed prices are almost double of the feed costs on the mainland. Each week, the feed store would deliver pallets of feed bags and hay bales. We'd also pay for medications and grooming supplies.

Unfortunately, though, all of the donations during the few months we had a PayPal donation button on our website, were around four or five thousand dollars total, which was our ranch expense for less than a week. We began refunding all of the donations after our ranch closed.

Our video classes were low-cost, and the amount we'd receive from tuition each week seemed to just cover the ranch costs.

In addition to these expenses, we also were supporting (and continue to support) several charities, including covering monthly expenses for a domestic violence shelter security alarm, giving emergency donations for disaster relief, tithing to our church, supporting a charity for orphaned children and also environmental charities.

So I decided to auction some of my old clothing and jewelry. Again, people were very generous in purchasing these items, but it still wasn't enough. Especially since we had to pay someone to run the auction for us, and we paid all shipping costs worldwide.

The writing was on the wall: with my conversion causing a drastic drop in my income, and the ranch eating up our income, we had to make a change. Fast.

So we prayed for God's will, and both Michael and I received the same answer: Move.

We began shutting down the ranch. Our hearts were broken, as we'd planned on staying at the ranch for a lifetime and caring for the animals forever. I'd even worked with an attorney to create an expensive estate planning will that said, in the event of my death, the ranch animals would be cared for until the last animal passed.

I was crying daily as our friends came to the ranch to take the animals to their property. Saying goodbye to fur babies is painful, and the pain was only softened by knowing I would get regular updates and photos about the animals from my friends.

Fortunately, since I'd lived in Hawaii as a vegan during the 11 years I was in the islands, I knew a lot of animal-compassionate people who would give the rescue animals good forever homes. We made sure that each home was a safe, compassionate forever home for the animals.

After about two months, all of the animals – except for the ducks, turkeys, peacocks, and chickens who'd stay on the ranch, and most of the dogs and cats who would relocate with us – were rehomed.

By this time, my parents lived with us, so we needed to find an affordable home with enough room for us all. We prayed and were led to a home in the Pacific Northwest.

We put the ranch for sale at exactly the price that we owed. It never did sell, so we ended up giving the ranch back to the owners from whom we were buying it.

In November 2017, with tears in our eyes, we said goodbye to the remaining birds on the ranch, and we flew to Washington state, along with our dogs and cats. We continued to pay for the maintenance of the ranch, including the food for the ducks, peacocks, turkeys, and chickens who remained at the ranch.

My parents adjusted well to the move, as did Michael and our animals. My own adjustment took awhile longer. Having lived in warm climates most of my life, it was a shock to spend a winter in the cold darkness of the Northwest. It rained almost daily, and the sun would set at 4:30 pm. I felt depressed and began to gain weight from lack of outdoor exercise.

Just when I thought things couldn't get worse, I received an email from my publisher two weeks before Christmas, that they were letting me go. I trusted that this was God's will, but it still hurt to be fired from a company I'd worked with for over 20 years.

The only thing I could do was turn to God and pray, which I did – fervently!

The guidance I received was to keep studying the Bible, and to share it with others. So now that we had moved, we started church-shopping again and finally found a Christian church that offered scripture study in its sermons and in Bible study groups.

I also started a free daily online video support group for those who felt guided to read the One Year Bible with me. We met daily on Instagram Live video, and then I'd upload each video to my [Vimeo.com/Doreen Virtue](https://www.vimeo.com/DoreenVirtue) page.

Leading the daily Bible support group deepened my study of scripture. In order to explain each day's Bible section, I

had to understand it myself. So I'd spend time daily studying each day's One Year Bible reading, so that I could clearly explain it on that day's video.

I'd read a variety of commentaries so that I could offer alternate viewpoints of the meaning of each Bible story. Mostly, though I relied upon apologetic sites such as [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org) and [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org).

Reading the Bible with the group was therapeutic and inspiring. I now understand why the Bible is called "The Living Word," as the living voice of God comes through the verses.

Each morning, I read a chapter from the Bible, and then I pray and read a commentary book about the chapter I just read. My favorite Bible commentary books are by David Guzik, a Calvary Chapel pastor and contributor to [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org).

The Bible helps us to understand who God is, and what he wants from us. We can see his love and concern for us, and we realize *why* we must be obedient.

I fell in love with scripture, and now each time I see a Bible verse, my heart races with love beats. I understand why people say that the Bible is a love letter from God.





## CHAPTER FIFTEEN



### The Real Jesus vs. the New Age Jesus

*“Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth! Worship the Lord  
with gladness. Come before him, singing with joy.”*

PSALM 100:1-2

With the cold dark winter surrounding me at our new home, I stayed indoors and prayed and read the Bible. Now that my publisher had let me go, I had a lot more free time. During that first winter, I had so many realizations and insights!

My biggest insight was that during the first 58 years of my life, I'd been following a false picture of who I believed Jesus to be. Since I'd only read bits and pieces of the gospel, I didn't have the entire story of Jesus that comes from studying the whole Bible.

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I had imagined Jesus as an easy-going “everything is allowed” guy. In my mind, Jesus loved everyone so much, that he didn’t care what you did. He just wanted you to be happy, so enjoy your life and have fun!

I had no idea, until I read the entire Bible – especially the Gospels – that Jesus gives us perimeters for healthy and happy living. He doesn’t judge, but he definitely has expectations for us. And it’s because he loves us that he wants us to follow these expectations so that we will stay connected with him, and spend eternity in heaven with him.

I’d been misled by the New Thought churches I grew up in, which never explained the Gospel to us. They only gave us the “positive” Bible verses, without explaining the crucifixion, salvation, the parables, spiritual warfare, and other essential teachings of Jesus.

I’d also been deceived by the book, *A Course in Miracles*, which says it was written by Jesus as an explanation for the Bible. And yet, *A Course in Miracles* contradicts the Bible, including denying the crucifixion which is the foundation of salvation.

It also denies the existence of the devil – which is just what the devil wants us to believe, so that he can spread evil without calling attention to himself (or being cast-out). As with many channeled books, *A Course in Miracles* is all about glorifying the self, instead of glorifying God.

Jesus himself warned that there would be those pretending to be Jesus (Matthew 24:5; Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8) who would deceive many. Jesus warned us not to believe them.

The bottom line is that the devil disguises himself as Jesus, Mary, and as angels (2 Corinthians 11:14). So ultimately, it is the devil who deceives us by showing us a false Jesus.

Here are the key characteristics to help you discern between the true and false Jesus:

<u>Real Jesus</u>	<u>False Jesus</u>
Leads you to God	Says that <i>you</i> are god
Encourages you to read the Bible	Says the Bible is in error
Encourages you to attend a healthy church	Encourages you to isolate
Warns of sin leading to hell without salvation	Never discusses sin, hell, or salvation
Leads you to live a godly life	Says that everything is allowed
Says that love has boundaries and guidelines	Says that love means there are no rules
Helps you to glorify God	Tempts you to glorify yourself with fame and riches
Teaches you that he has saved the world	Says that only you can save the world
Encourages you to volunteer and be helpful	Encourages self-care and selfishness
Teaches you to follow God's will	Teaches you to follow your own will
Protects you from the devil	Says the devil doesn't really exist
Encourages you to be bold and evangelize	Says you shouldn't offend others by discussing Jesus
Promotes spending daily time praying and reading scripture	Says you're too busy to spend time praying or reading the Bible

When I realized that I'd been following the false Jesus, I repented and went to God for forgiveness. As in the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), God welcomes all who to return to him.

It made sense why I'd never felt close to Jesus or God, and had turned instead to the angels for spiritual comfort and guidance. I had not known the real Jesus and God!

So *who is* the real Jesus? Scripture teaches us about the true nature of the true Jesus:

- Jesus is the Son of God who is one with God (John 6:69 and John 10:30).
- Jesus was a Creator of this world, along with God (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:17).
- Jesus died for our sins (Colossians 1:22; 1 Peter 1:19).
- Jesus is the Eternal, uncreated Son of God and was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. In regards to His humanity, He was fully human when he walked upon the earth (John 1:14; Philippians 2:7-8) The mystery of Christ is that He's fully God and fully man, This is the central truth that all demons try to change and twist. To get this wrong is to get it all wrong.
- Jesus died on the cross to save us from sin (John 3:16; 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Prior to Jesus's crucifixion, people had to sacrifice unblemished animals to atone for their sins. These sacrifices didn't have a lasting effect, though, so God himself came to earth as Jesus to become the perfect sacrifice that would wash away the sins of all believers (Hebrews 10:1-18).
- Jesus was resurrected from the dead (John 20:1-10; 1 Corinthians 15:4).



- Jesus's life and death as the Messiah and Savior was prophesied in scripture hundreds of years prior (Isaiah 53:3-8).
- Jesus ascended to His Father, God (Acts 1:6-11) where they are one Holy Trinity with the Holy Spirit (John 6:27; John 1:1; 1 Corinthians 3:16).
- To receive eternal salvation with Jesus in Heaven, believe that he was fully God in a fully human body, who died for our sins and rose three days later. Have faith that you will receive eternal life (Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:8-9). Ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, and receive his salvation and guidance.

Next, let's look at how angels fit in with the biblical truth about Jesus.







# CHAPTER SIXTEEN



## Angels and Jesus

*“In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents.”*

LUKE 15:10

While studying the Bible, I realized that my previous views about angels needed refining and maturing. I’d experienced and described angels based upon my own experiences with them, and I hadn’t consulted the Bible enough for explanation of my experiences.

I had previously turned to angels for guidance, because God seemed inaccessible to me. In ancient Israel, High Priests were the only ones who could meet with God in the inner sanctums of the Tabernacle. Curtains divided the Tabernacle into an inner section which contained the Holy

of the Holies – the Ark of the Covenant where God would sit on his mercy seat.

At that time, only High Priests could visit the Ark of the Covenant, because “ordinary people” would die in God’s presence because of the vast contrast between their sinful and “unclean” nature, and God’s perfection. It would be like trying to walk on the surface of the Sun itself without protection. Our human nature simply could not handle the unfiltered, undimmed presence of God.

Even the High Priests would have a rope tied around their ankle when they went beyond the curtain into the inner section of the Tabernacle. That way, if they were unclean and died in God’s presence, they could be dragged out by the rope so no one else had to risk getting near the Ark.

After the rebellion in the Garden of Eden, Heaven and Earth were separated. God had tried to offer a paradise to Adam and Eve, but they chose instead – through their free will – to listen to the serpent’s lies. That created a chasm with all other humans, who continued to choose rebelliousness instead of a subordinate relationship with their Heavenly Father, God.

A sacrificial system was put into place to appease God for the human willfulness. You would sacrifice an unblemished animal to atone for your sins. Everything changed when Jesus died on the cross. He was the perfect Lamb of God who suffered for our sins.

And the moment that Jesus died, the Tabernacle curtain tore! That curtain which had separated people from access to God, ripped in two! (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45)

What that means is that because of Jesus’s sacrifice, you and I – and everyone that believes – have direct access to

God's presence. That includes the ability to receive his guidance. We don't need priests, saints, prophets, or angels to talk with God! Jesus tore the Tabernacle curtain, and we can all talk directly with God ourselves! (Hebrews 6:19; Hebrews 10:20).

Among the gifts that Jesus gave to us from the cross is that we now have direct communication with God. We don't need mediators.

### ***Jesus and the Angels***

As you know, angels heralded the birth of Jesus. The angel Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus to Mary (Luke 1:26-35) and the Angel of the Lord assured her fiancé Joseph that it was right for him to wed Mary (Matthew 1:20-24).

When Jesus was born, the angels announced his birth to the shepherds in Luke 2:8-15. Then, the Angel of the Lord saved Jesus and his family by appearing in a dream to Joseph to escape to Egypt and avoid Herod's treachery (Matthew 2:13-21).

For a little while, Jesus was made lower than the angels (Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:6-8) while he was in human flesh. After the crucifixion, Jesus's name was exalted above every name (Philippians 2:9). *Jesus is now and forever above the angels.*

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus referred to angels as "his angels" as in "The Son of Man will send *his* angels" (Matthew 13:41) and "The Son of Man will come with *his* angels" (Matthew 16:27) italic emphasis added.

Why would Jesus refer to angels as *his* angels? Perhaps because he was involved with their creation? As we read in Colossians 1:15-17:

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[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (ESV).

This fits with the first chapter of the Gospel of John, verse 3 which says that all things were made through Jesus.

Jesus was involved with the creation of everything, including the angels! Since the Holy Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, this makes sense.

According to the Book of Job 38:4-7, the angels were created prior to the earth being made. The angels shouted for joy as God through Jesus the Word, created us all.

Angels also ministered to Jesus after his 40-day fast and temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:11) and at the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43).

When Jesus rose from the dead, an angel rolled away the stone of his tomb (Matthew 28:2), and the angels were at his tomb to give messages to his visitors (Luke 24:22-24).

After Jesus ascended, two angels assured the apostles that Jesus was now in Heaven, and that he would return in the same way that he left (Acts 1:10-11). The second coming of Jesus is also described as Jesus returning in the company of angels (Matthew 24:30-31), and the end times with Jesus and Archangel Michael defeating Satan in the Book of Revelation.

### ***Jacob's Ladder***

So as we've seen from the above scripture, Jesus and the angels are clearly interconnected. They are his servants and messengers. And my favorite connection comes from the story of Jacob's ladder. This is a dream that Jacob had while traveling, in which he saw a ladder extending from earth to heaven.

Angels of God were ascending and descending upon the ladder. At the top of the ladder was the Lord reaffirming his covenant with Jacob's ancestors. Clearly, the dream was about the connection between Heaven and Earth. You'll recall that this connection was lost when Adam and Eve rebelled in Paradise. Well, Jesus told his disciples in John 1:51 (NLT):

*'Then he said, "I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth."*

This shows that Jesus is the ladder, the stairway, the connection! He came to reconnect us with God, after that connection was lost in the Garden of Eden.

### ***Jesus Casts Out Fallen Angels***

Many of Jesus's healing miracles involved him casting out demons. Once the demons were removed, people were instantly restored to health and normalcy. Of the 35 miracles recorded in the Gospels, 7 involved casting out demons. As the demons were cast out by Jesus, people were healed of violent tendencies (Matthew 8:28-32), blindness and muteness (Matthew 12:22), and disease.

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In addition, Jesus empowered his disciples to cast out demons. This later included the Apostle Paul and other believers who cast out demons in Jesus's name, as recorded in the Book of Acts.

So who were these demons? It's a controversial topic, and various theologians answer in one of two ways:

1. Demons are fallen angels
2. Demons are different from fallen angels

I personally believe that demons are fallen angels. I know they don't look angelic, but there's a lot of evidence that demons are the one-third of the angels who followed Lucifer when he fell from Heaven (Revelation 12:4).

As I mentioned earlier in this book, I've never felt comfortable studying the topic of demons or fallen angels. So it's a topic that I avoided for the first 58 years of my life. Big mistake! The demons operate undercover without being noticed, because people don't want to learn about them.

So now that God gave me the courage to learn about fallen angels, here's what I've learned: In this world, you either follow God the Creator, or you follow the devil. If you turn away from the devil and begin following God, the devil gets angry. He doesn't want to lose any followers, so he will try everything to regain your loyalty. He will try temptation, threats, guilt, distractions, and fear-tactics.

Demons are the ultimate posers and deceivers, who try to mimic God's glory, and pretend to be like him. Just as the Pharaoh's magicians tried to mimic God's miracles (Exodus 7:11), so do the demons pretend to create miracles.

The thing is, though, that the "miracles" created by the demons – just like the Pharaoh's magicians in the Book of



Exodus – are poor substitutes. They also dry up and disappear like mirages. Every single thing that I “manifested” during my new age era is gone now. Whenever I used new age tools to attract and create, I received what I asked for . . . and then it would leave. And during the time I did have the manifestation in my life, they never yielded peace or happiness.

“Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” we are reminded in 2 Corinthians. And yet since Satan has no light, he uses poor substitutes to attract us, like neon colors, crystals and glitter.

That bright brilliant pure light that I saw radiating from Jesus, during my January 7, 2017 vision, was the real deal. I believe we’re all starving for God’s light. The only way to satisfy this craving is by drawing closer to God through prayer and reading the Bible. Because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, we *all* have direct access to God (Hebrews 6:19; Hebrews 10:20).

Demons can pretend to be Jesus who channels a book. You can recognize the truth by noticing how the false Jesus teaches contrary to the Bible, and leads you away from God. The false Jesus talks about ways to glorify yourself, whereas the true Jesus always glorifies God.

Demons can pretend to be angels. You can recognize a false angel by its message: it promises to bring you riches and social acceptance, in exchange for you agreeing to not follow Jesus and not read the Bible. Don’t fall for the lies of the demons, as they will lead you straight to eternity in hell. Seriously.

The true angels are messengers of God, sent by God to deliver messages. We don’t summon angels – only God can send angels. We certainly don’t pray to or worship angels (Revelation 22:8-9).

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*The Angel of the Lord*

The Bible is filled with stories of the Angel of the Lord appearing in visible form and delivering vital messages. The name in Hebrew (the original writing of the Old Testament) is Malakh YHWH. Malakh means angel, and YHWH is God.

He appeared to Hagar in Genesis 16; to Abraham in Genesis 22; to Moses in Exodus 3; to Balaam in Numbers 22; and to the Israelites in Judges 2, among other appearances.

Each time the Angel of the Lord appears, he speaks in the first-person voice of God. So, he doesn't say: "God said . . ." but "I say," with the authority of God.

So who is the Angel of the Lord? The Bible doesn't answer this question directly, but scholars have theories that the Angel of the Lord is:

*A Theophany.* This word means God taking on physical appearance.

*A Christophany.* This means Christ Jesus taking on physical appearance, also known as a pre-Christ appearance.

*An archangel.* Some theologians believe the Angel of the Lord may be an archangel, speaking on behalf of God.

While we can't know for certain who has the correct theory, it is interesting to visit each theory while reading the stories of the Angel of the Lord.





# CHAPTER SEVENTEEN



## Jesus is the Way

*“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life.  
No one comes to the Father except through me.’”*

JOHN 14:6

When I had the vision of Jesus on January 7, 2017, it was like a veil was lifted. I could finally know the real Jesus! And then reading and studying the entire Bible helped me to know him even more.

Prior to my conversion, I was one of those people who said “all paths lead to God.” I was a “universalist,” which is a term for the belief that all good people go to Heaven. After all, how could a loving God send anyone to hell? That is, if hell even existed (which I had strong doubts about).

People frequently ask me what changed my mind about hell, and it really started with Michael and I watching YouTube videos of people having near death experiences. We watched dozens of videos of people who claimed they went to hell during a near-death experience, and then they were rescued by Jesus. This included people of non-Christian religions, and also atheists and agnostics. They all converted to following Jesus after they were revived, and then they made videos to warn others that hell is real, and that only Jesus saves us from hell.

Then, I read Jesus's teachings about hell (he used the terms Gehenna, sheol, outer darkness, and hades). Jesus taught more about hell than anyone else in the Bible, and it's clear that his motivation is love and caring, rather than trying to frighten us.

The Bible explains that God created hell as a prison for the devil and his fallen angels. Those who follow the devil and demons during their earthly life, will also follow them in their afterlife. Those who choose to be disconnected from God in this life, will remain disconnected to him in their afterlife.

C.S. Lewis wrote:

“There are only two kinds of people: those who say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, “All right, then, have it your way.”

So, hell is about our free will choices to follow the devil or to follow God. That made so much sense to me!



When we study the Book of Romans in the Bible, we see that Jesus was sent to relieve us of the burden of trying to perfectly live by the 613 laws of Moses. When Jesus died on the cross, he exclaimed “It is finished!” to signify that the laws were fulfilled. We were now under a new covenant of following the two most important commands:

1. Love God with all of your heart, mind, strength, and soul
2. Love your neighbor (all people) as yourself.

At first glance, these two commandments sound easy. No problem! But then when we realize their implications, we realize why we need Jesus in order to obey the commandments.

Loving God with ALL of your heart, mind, strength, and soul means having total and complete trust in him for every part of your life. It means turning *only* to God for answers. No horoscopes, card readings, predictions, idols, or psychics. It also means praising God for every circumstance.

Loving your neighbor as yourself, means treating all people as you want to be treated. No judging, gossiping, stealing, lying, cheating, or breaking promises.

Okay, so in all fairness, every person breaks these two commandments. That’s called sinning. And God asks us to bring that sin to him, so that he can forgive you and teach you why you did it, and how to avoid it in the future.

So you can have a silent or aloud conversation with God, admitting to him what you’ve done. You confess directly to God, and God directly forgives you. No priest, saint, angel, or prophet is needed for this direct connection with God that Jesus’s crucifixion gave to us as a free gift.

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The joy of unburdening your heart through this process of direct confession to God is so freeing! You take the weight and pressure that you've been carrying, and lay them at God's feet. You apologize sincerely, and ask for his forgiveness. God always forgives those who are sincerely repentant.

### ***How to Keep From Drifting Away***

In this world where we want everything instantly, it's tempting to turn away from God instead of trusting in his timing. We want instant answers, so we turn to horoscopes, psychics and cards. We want instant results, so we use new age manifestation techniques. Some churches even teach people to "name it and claim it" as a willful way to instantly create or attract things.

We want more, so we become covetous, which means "itching for more." We see movie stars flaunting their riches, so we listen to the devil's temptations to follow him and find riches and self-glory.

We need to keep our eyes on Jesus always, because it's so easy to drift away. The Book of Hebrews 2:1, in its original Greek language, likens us to a boat that needs to be tightly moored to the harbor of Jesus. Otherwise, the currents of this world will pull you away.

The Greek word for Jesus's role is *Archehos* in Hebrews 2:10 (in English the word is Pioneer). An Archehos is the person who goes out and rescues sailors who have drifted into dangerous ocean territory.

In the ancient days prior to the Coast Guard, the Archehos would tie a rope to himself and then swim in dangerous water to lead others back to safety. The rescued sailors had to hang onto this rope for dear life. In the same way, we must

hang onto Jesus for dear life to avoid being swept out to sea by the world's dangerous currents and undertows.

Theologian Marcus Dods described Jesus as our Archegos in this way:

“He is the strong swimmer who carries the rope ashore and so not only secures his own position but makes rescue for all who will follow.”

Jesus as our Archegos is also described in Hebrews 12:2, Acts 3:15, and Acts 5:31. Jesus rescues us! No one else would jump into the dangerous stormy sea for us! Have you heard of leaders of other religions saving people from their sins? I haven't. That's why Jesus is the way to eternal life.

### ***What I Wish I Knew Then . . .***

If I had a rewind button on my life, I would go back in time and pray that someone would have explained Jesus to me. In my imagination, I picture myself back in my teenage years. I was lonely and drifting back then, searching for love and meaning.

I imagine a kindly person sitting with me on a park bench and lovingly sharing the Bible stories of Jesus. I picture that person patiently explaining that believing in Jesus is essential to salvation.

I would have learned that Jesus was God the creator, appearing fully in human form. This person would have explained the gospel stories of Jesus eating with others, and how he cried, laughed, and felt agony. Jesus also lovingly healed people of disease, and then taught them to have faith. Jesus loved children, and told us to have the faith that children have.

This person would have told me that, prior to Jesus's earthly ministry, the Jewish people had to slaughter innocent animals to atone for turning away from God. Jesus was offered as God's Lamb and he was slaughtered in an agonizing crucifixion to atone for everyone's sins.

I would have learned that every person sins, even those who are considered "good people." And because we all sin, we all need Jesus, to return to our connection with God that had been lost when Adam and Eve misused their free will and defied God and we also followed in their footsteps. This person would have explained that Jesus rose three days after he died, to signify that he *is* the Son of God. And that if you and I believe this about Jesus, he will bring us to eternal life in heaven with him.



I'm frequently asked if I still believe in reincarnation, and I always reply the same way: Who wants to come back to earth? I don't. It's difficult here, to put it mildly. I'd much rather focus upon following Jesus for the rest of my earthly life, and then spending eternity in glorious paradise with him!

And some people ask whether reincarnation could be a way to avoid hell. Or whether all people will go to Heaven, because God loves us all. Well, neither of those concepts are in the Bible. And I'm not willing to risk my eternity on wishful thinking, are you?

I trust the Bible and what it says! I no longer listen to the lies of the serpent who tries to disprove the Bible. There are many scientists and archeologists who have proven the Bible stories are true, and I find joy in listening to them.



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Because joy is a gift that Jesus offers to his believers - instead of spending the rest of your life searching and seeking - why not take Jesus's hand and get some rest? Why not exchange frustration for fulfillment, and pensiveness for peace?

Jesus does not offer to fix or upgrade our material life, but he does promise to lead us to eternal peace. That way, no matter what's going on in your life, you're centered in the peace which surpasses all understanding. It's a peace that defies logic. Your world could be falling apart, and yet your heart is joyful, peaceful, and grateful. And it's all thanks to Jesus *and* to you choosing to believe in him.



When I saw the vision of Jesus on January 7, 2017, my whole entire life was changed. I went from believing that I was in charge of my life, to surrendering my life to Jesus.

I was criticized by Christians who thought I should *instantly* begin speaking and acting like their image of a true Christian. They would post on social media about the mistakes I was making, instead of contacting me to offer advice and support. I've forgiven them, but I do pray that if Christians see new agers converting that they will offer advice instead of criticism. There's a difference between a new Christian (which I was) and a rebellious Christian (which they were accusing me of).

It took months of hard work to change my 58 years of thinking from new age to Christianity. I'm still in the process of sanctification, and letting go of the old.

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Along the way, some wonderful people have held my hand, including Michael my husband, my brother Ken who has been a born-again Christian since the 1990's, Melissa Dougherty and Stephan Joseph, and also my pastors, and Bible study teachers. And I pray for and thank my family who have also been persecuted since my conversion, and thank them for sticking with me through this stormy trial. And to all the people who have prayed for my conversion or taken the time to edify me, thank you!

My vocabulary changed, too! The words we use are a reflection of our beliefs, and as my beliefs became aligned with the Bible, my vocabulary reflected that change.

All those years of not knowing, trusting, or loving God were because I hadn't invested in my relationship with him. We must log hours of prayer and Bible study, to know, trust, and love God.

Several times daily now, I pour out my heart to God about everything, telling him about my regrets, fears, guilt, and needs. He patiently listens, and lifts me up. His Spirit reminds me that Jesus's crucifixion washed away my past sins, and that I don't need to carry around the weight of regret. He will do the same for you, if you bring your problems to him, and be open to his solutions and guidance.

I even discovered that I felt guilty about feeling joyful! The Holy Spirit helped me to see that I was worried that my joy may "cause" someone else to feel bad. I was also unconsciously beating myself up for my past sins, and so I didn't feel deserving of joy. As soon as Holy Spirit showed me these errors, I was able to replace them with gratitude for all that Jesus has done for us.

Converting from new age to Christianity can catapult you into a grieving cycle, where you're in shock at first, and then you go through anger, guilt, and grieving over your old life. I remember feeling like I didn't know who I was. My old identity was gone.

That's called "being broken," which in the new age is considered "negative." In Christianity, though, it's when your old self surrenders. You take an honest inventory of your life, and realize that you haven't been a good captain of your own life. This is necessarily humbling, to break down the old defenses. So that's when you turn to Jesus.

You're an empty vessel, and you pray: "Lord, please fill me up with your presence," and he does.

In the new age, when we'd sing "Amazing Grace," we'd always change the word "Wretch" to something "more positive." We didn't want to admit that our lives were a mess, because that would be too "negative."

Yet, Jesus *did* save a wretch like me! Now I can understand the song, because it's about being so humbled and broken, that you have nowhere else to turn but Jesus.

I've learned so much, and am still learning. In addition to what I've shared with you in this book, I've also realized:

**It's not "negative" to have discernment.** The cardinal sin according to the new age is to "think negatively." I used to think that way too. If you say anything remotely negative, you will be chastised by other new agers for "throwing shade" on their positivity. You're repeatedly told to think positive, and then you will attract positive. I believed this, and so when negative experiences happened, I blamed myself. Studying the Book of Job, we see how Job lost everything he

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valued – his family, his health, and his wealth. Job’s friends blamed him, and their chastising brought further grief to a man who was already beaten down by his circumstances. Having discernment about spirits and spiritual teachings isn’t “negative” – it’s choosing to live with Jesus as your captain, instead of being steered by the devil.

**Test the spirits.** In most new age thinking, all spirits are from God, so are therefore good and trustworthy. An angel is an angel, and a spirit is a spirit. “Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God” are the instructions in 1 John 4. He’s the apostle who lived and worked side-by-side with Jesus. So John should know, as he witnessed Jesus casting out demons to heal people.

**Fill your heart with God’s love.** Don’t try to get your love needs met from people, as all people are struggling themselves. Their hearts are closed, or partially closed, and they can’t love fully. Only God can love to the degree that you crave love. Remember that God is love (1 John 4:8).

**Surrender your self to Jesus.** “Seeking” is actually a very self-centered process. It’s all about trying to fill up a bottomless pit within yourself. So you become self-absorbed, constantly monitoring yourself to see if you’re fulfilled and comfortable. It’s all about self-love, self-care, self, self, self. That’s because the devil steals our joy, and we begin to follow his lies. The devil turns us into a pile of self-hatred, that we try to cover-over with positive affirmations. Jesus, is the opposite, because he leads you to be filled with God’s love.

**Avoid envy and ambition.** When I look back on the turning points of my life, I can see how the devil stepped in and tempted me during the moments when I was envious and ambitious. On an unconscious level, the devil would promise rewards for succumbing to temptations like shopping or over-eating. We don't want to open the door for the devil by wishing we were like someone else. Trust God to steer you in the best direction.

**Don't dabble.** We can't dabble and try to walk in both worlds, Christianity and new age. Look at how many old testament stories show God and his wrath toward those who dabbled. Dabbling shows a lack of trust in God. Most New Age practices are an attempt to get control of our life, especially our future. When we trust in God, we don't need to worry about trying to control anything. We follow, we don't lead. Dabbling is also akin to cheating on your spouse, which is why scripture tells us that God is jealous – in the same way you'd be jealous if you discovered your spouse was flirting with someone else.

**You are worthy!** I realized that I was previously afraid to “bother” God and Jesus with my issues, because I struggled with feeling worthy of their time and attention. Reading the Bible helped me to realize that God doesn't help us because of the actions and works that we take, but because he is righteous and merciful (Titus 3:5). We don't *earn* salvation, we *accept* it as a gift freely given to us by God (Romans 6:23). He's made us worthy. That's why we approach Him not in fear anymore but in boldness and confidence like a child to his loving father.

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**Seek only God's approval.** The approval of people is so shallow and hollow compared to getting the approval of God. Even if your parents or some other person that you crave approval from, would say that you are amazing, it would pale in comparison to hearing from God: well done! In Galatians 1:10, we're reminded to be a Christ-pleaser, not a people-pleaser.

**You've found the precious pearl!** Jesus is the precious missing piece that we've been seeking, as he explains in Matthew 13:45-46: "the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!" Instead of looking at the next mountain to climb, enjoy your current view with Jesus as your guide.



Let me ask you a question: If you knew for sure that Jesus was returning three days from now, what changes would you make in your life today? What are the first answers that pop into your mind?

Well, none of us knows for sure when Jesus will return in the second coming, but he does counsel us to be ready (Matthew 25:1-13). We do this by genuinely repenting of anything that's against God's will, and bringing it to him in prayer for forgiveness and teaching. We do this by believing that Jesus was fully God and fully human, that he died to wash away our sins in the ultimate sacrifice, and then rose three days later.

We may worry that we're giving up fun and freedom by surrendering to Jesus, but the opposite is actually true! Worldly ideas of fun are replaced with true joy and being in love with Jesus.

The word "abide" is used frequently in the New Testament, including this amazing passage 1 John 4:15-16 (Amplified Bible):

Whoever confesses *and* acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. We have come to know [by personal observation and experience], and have believed [with deep, consistent faith] the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides *continually* in him.

Abide means to live within, and have complete dependence upon God. Look at what John is saying here: that when we abide (live) in love, we are living in God and God is living in us! What a joyful realization!

Jesus invites us to abide (live) within him in John 15:5 (NKJV):

I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

We can do lots of things in the worldly sense apart from Jesus, but to do something in the ultimate sense that matters, we need to abide (live) within Jesus.

Imagine resting safely within Jesus's refuge and shelter. How joyful! It's what we've all been seeking! Jesus is the

roof over your head, the walls that guard you, the fireplace of love that warms you, and the foundation which supports you.

This doesn't mean that our worldly life will be comfortable or stress-free. In fact, following Jesus can turn our world upside down (as I know from personal experience). And yet, no matter what our physical life contains, we can abide in the joy that Jesus loved us enough to suffer and die for us. And that we will live with him in paradise forever!



Reading scripture daily is essential, to keep ourselves immersed in God's Word. Daily Bible reading helps to insulate us from the world's distractions and temptations. Even reading one Bible verse a day is helpful in learning how to discern and distinguish between God's messages and those from the enemy.

Here are some verses to remind you that Jesus brings you joy. If you ever find yourself without joy, check in with Jesus, because joylessness is often a sign of spiritual warfare. Pray for Jesus to restore your joy, and he will help you.

Psalm 71:23 - My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you—I whom you have delivered.

Isaiah 49:13 - Sing for joy, O heavens! Rejoice, O earth! Burst into song, O mountains! For the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on them in their suffering.



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Galatians 5:22-23 - But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

James 1: 2-3 - Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.

1 Peter 1:8 - You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy.



May you fall in love with Jesus. May your heart be filled with his profound and eternal love. May your thirst and hunger be quenched by the love that Jesus offers to you. And may you accept his love and be fulfilled and joyful!

With Love and Respect,

*Doreen*





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## About the Author



Doreen Virtue was born and raised in the new age movement, and she converted to Christianity after a life-changing vision of Jesus led her to read the entire Bible. Doreen holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in Counseling Psychology from Chapman University. She leads a One Year Bible support group on Instagram and Vimeo, volunteers for charities, and she is immersed in Bible Study in her personal time and at Bible Studies.

Prior to her conversion to Christianity, Doreen was one of the top-selling new age authors in the world. She had appeared on CNN, Oprah, The View, and media around the world. Following her commitment to following Jesus, she donated many of her royalties to charity, took her name off of many of her old products, and began writing and speaking about Christianity. Website: [DoreenVirtue.com](http://DoreenVirtue.com)

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# Recommended Inspirational Movies



I love watching inspirational movies, with good stories that promote the Gospel. You can find a large selection of Christian movies on PureFlix, The Dove Channel, and Faithlife TV. Some of the movies listed here are available on Netflix and amazon as well.

Here are some of my favorites that I recommend:

**Amazing Love** – Based on the Book of Hosea, this movie illustrates God’s great love for us, and why he wants us to be loyal to his love.

**Courageous** – How a focus on Jesus can help parents with their children.

**Facing the Giants** – How a football team transformed by focusing upon glorifying God.

**Fireproof** – Why we must fight for our marriage to survive.

**Flywheel** – How to depend totally on God for your business and your life.

**God’s Not Dead** – A Christian student debates his atheist professor about God’s existence.

**Patterns of Evidence: Exodus** – A researcher discovers archeological evidence of the Exodus – including the correct

timeline for the Israelites leaving Egypt, the wall of Jericho, and more.

**Remember the Goal** – How a girls' cross-country track team learned how to put their focus on glorifying God.

**The Perfect Stranger** – What would it be like to have a private dinner with Jesus? While this movie is visually unnerving in the way Jesus is portrayed, from a gospel standpoint, it is right on.

**The Perfect Wave** – How a boy's life was saved by Jesus after an ocean accident.

**The Pilgrim's Progress** – How and why our walk with Christ brings up spiritual warfare. Based on the classic book, this movie is free on YouTube and also available as a DVD on amazon.

**The Secrets of Jonathan Sperry** – How a neighbor helps a boy to discover the gospel.

**The Case for Christ** – An atheist journalist does research to try to prove to his Christian wife that Jesus never existed, and he ends up believing in Jesus himself.

**The Gospel of John** – 2003 full movie on YouTube – The Gospel of John in a full movie format.

**Time Changer** – A time-travel story about the importance of sharing scripture accurately.

**War Room** – How the power of prayer saves a marriage, and the importance of praying fervently in your “war room” (a private place, like a closet, where you can focus on prayer).

## Recommended Books



Most of these books are available at Christian bookstore websites and amazon:

**Banana Man by Ray Comfort** – This book will give you the courage to speak up about Jesus. Ray Comfort of Living Waters shares his stories about evangelizing to atheists, and why he doesn't seem to care if people make fun of him.

**David Guzik Commentary Books** – Verse-by-Verse commentary books by David Guzik, who writes for blueletterbible and Enduring Word. These are the books I read for personal study and for the daily Bible group. David Guzik is a Calvary Chapel pastor.

**From New Age to Christianity by Melissa Dougherty** – Frequently asked questions and answers from the moderators of the “From New Age to Christianity Recovery” private Facebook group.

**I Dare You Not to Bore Me with the Bible by Michael S. Heiser** – A collection of essays by the academic editor of FaithLife, helping you to understand some of the puzzling parts of the Bible.

**Jesus-Centered Bible** – A New Living Translation Bible with references to Jesus highlighted in the old testament. This Bible shows the prophecies about the Messiah in the old testament.

**Life Application Study Bible** – A combination Bible and study guide, in the New Living Translation which is easy-to-understand and yet still accurate.

**My Heart – Christ’s Home** – A classic little two dollar book about how and why to invite Jesus into your heart.

**NKJV Bible** – The King James Bible in updated and more modern language.

**One Year Bible** – Available as a paperback and also free of charge at [oneyearbibleonline.com](http://oneyearbibleonline.com), this Bible divides daily readings so that you can read the entire Bible in one year. This book comes in several versions, and they’re all good.

**The Bait of Satan by John Bevere** – Why holding onto anger and offense is spiritually harmful, and part of the devil’s plan to ensnare us. Contains lots of stories and scripture to motivate us to forgive.

**The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel** – An investigative atheist journalist does research to provide to his Christian wife that Jesus didn’t exist, and he ends up becoming a believer in Jesus. Also available as a movie.

**The Light That Was Dark: From the New Age to Amazing Grace by Warren B. Smith** – The autobiography of a new age teacher and Course in Miracles student who discovers the real Jesus.

**The Pilgrim’s Progress** – Centuries ago, every Christian had this book along with the Bible. It’s a classic book about

the spiritual warfare we experience as we walk with Christ. It's also a feature length movie by the same title.

**The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis** – One of the best books about spiritual warfare and the battlefield of the mind. The book is told from the perspective of demons, so you understand your enemy.

**The Story: The Bible as One Continuing Story of God and His People** – The story of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, told in a narrative novel-like format.



# Recommended Websites



**Biblegateway** – A good resource for reading scripture in different translations. Includes some commentaries, too.

**Blueletterbible** – Excellent verse-by-verse KJV commentaries and blogs.

**Enduring Word** – Verse-by-verse commentaries by David Guzik.

**GotQuestions** – Thousands of answers to thousands of frequently asked questions about the Bible.

**Vimeo.com/DoreenVirtue** – My One Year Bible Support and Encouragement Group videos

## **YouTube Channels:**

**DailyEffectivePrayer** – Jesus-centered audio prayers for issues such as faith, healing, marriage, career, and salvation.

**The Bible Project** – short clever animated videos about each Bible book, and explanations about biblical terms, including Hebrew origins.



## Recommended Apps



**God's Calming Promises to You** – My daily audio Devotional app with my favorite scripture and prayers for faith-building.

**GotQuestions** – Thousands of answers to frequently asked questions about the Bible.

**Holy Bible** – A free downloadable Bible, available in many different languages. This app has many features, including movies, free scripture memes for social media posting, and Bible studies.

**PrayerMate** – A way to organize your prayers for others into an online prayer list.

**PureFlix** – Christian and family-friendly movies, documentaries, and television shows. They offer a free 30-day trial.



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