

Blessed Transgressions™

THE ONLINE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

A person with long dark hair, wearing a white tank top and blue shorts, stands with their back to the camera on a rocky mountain peak. Their arms are raised high in a gesture of triumph or prayer. The background shows a vast, hazy mountain range under a soft, golden light, suggesting sunrise or sunset. The overall tone is inspirational and hopeful.

Trusting God
When it Seems
Illogical

When Giving Up
is a Good Thing

Miracles Through Prayer:
My Story

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Delight Yourself in the Lord as You Wait



By Kelly Baker

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We all have desires in our heart. Some of us are still waiting on those desires to come to fruition. When I was in a long season of waiting, specifically to be married, the Lord provided a few verses that were an anchor for my spirit. He began with the foundation verse for that season, which opens up a wonderful promise:

Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4 NKJ)

Focus on this phrase: **Delight yourself in the Lord.**

We can easily make the desires of our heart an idol when our focus is on what we want, instead of pleasing God. It brings a weariness to our spirit.

In delighting ourselves in the Lord, it takes our focus off of what we are waiting for and places it back on the Lord. Waiting brings strength, not weariness, if we are waiting on the Lord (Isaiah 40:31).

The key is delighting ourselves in the Lord. Delight is a verb. It is an action of taking great pleasure in Him, to please Him or to be His pleasure.

When a man's heart is tender toward a woman, in wooing her he will want what he is, does and says to be pleasing to the woman; he is delighting himself in her. In the same way, we can be God's pleasure.

The Bible talks about many ways to delight ourselves in the Lord. It's not about a list to follow to make sure we are being righteous, but we delight in Him because we love Him. We will want to give our hearts fully unto Him and delight ourselves in Him.

How to Begin Delighting Yourself in the Lord:

1. Doing His will. I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart. Psalm 40:8 NKJ

2. Meditating on scriptures. Blessed is the man...

who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. Psalm 1:1-2 NKJ

3. Having an honest heart. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal truthfully are His delight. Proverbs 12:22 NKJ


4. Obedience. So Samuel said: Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 1 Samuel 15:22 NKJ

5. Prayer. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But the prayer of the upright is His delight. Proverbs 15:8 NKJ

6. Being all about His Word. I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word. Your testimonies also are my delight And my counselors. Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, For I delight in it. And I will delight myself in Your commandments, Which I love. Let Your tender...

mercies come to me, that I may live; For Your law is my delight. Psalm 119:16, 24, 35, 47, 77 NKJ

When we catch onto this concept, our heart cry becomes, "Yes, I want the desires of my heart, but I want You even more than those desires." And through the process of delighting ourselves in the Lord, we see that He delights in us! We have His whole heart, and will always have His love.

Are you in a season of waiting? Delight yourself in the Lord. Look up these scriptures in your Bible and begin to familiarize yourself with them. Highlight them, write them in your journal, pray them, but mostly get them in your heart! And He will give you the desires of your heart! 

How to Recall God's Truths at a Moment's Notice



By Pam Blosser

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We've all been there. In "that situation" which leaves our head hanging a bit low and takes the spring out of our step. It's when a co-worker whispers unkind words. Or when a dear friend's advice stings a bit.

It's when that promotion goes to someone else. Or when a child or spouse speaks cross words that deflate our spirit.

Often times, my first reaction is just that... a reaction. An emotional response that does nothing to soothe my soul, or encourage me to respond with love and grace. These reactions can tangle up my thoughts and threaten to harm my worth and identity.

And if I don't take "that situation" to the truth-giver...

early on, I can find myself spiraling down to the basement of my heart, to hang out with the other lies spoken into my life.

When the untruths speak too loudly, I need a quick fix—a remedy that is guaranteed to drown out the lies and quiet my heart. It's a spiral bound deck of 3×5 cards where verses that have spoken to me in various situations are captured. I call it my Spiral Bible. While I can't take credit for this ingenious idea, I can confirm it's a great one.

Here's how to create your own. It's simple and fast.

1. Grab yourself a spiral bound 3×5 index card deck at any office supply store.
2. When “that situation” happens, do a topical search in a Bible app or Bible index. Example: Let's say “that situation” left me feeling worried. I search “worry” and find all the verses with “worry” in it. Read through the verses from your search. You will find one or two that God will use to speak to you about “that situation.”
3. Write the verse on one of the cards plus any...

personal note or prayer. (I add hashtags # at the top of my entries so I can easily find that subject again.)

Now, when “that situation” happens, you will be armed with plenty of truths! Truths right at your fingertips. Truths you can pray over yourself in one moment.

My Spiral Bible restrains me from reacting emotionally and keeps me from spiraling away from His truths. It puts me in a proactive posture so I can redefine my thinking and respond appropriately. And bonus... it helps me memorize verses! I’m so not good at that.

God promises that in our weakness, His power shows up (2 Corinthians 12:9a). So it helps to have His whispers readily available to take on the world’s lies. Speak God’s truth over yourself; multiple times. His are the real truths about who you are, and will keep you on the journey He planned just for you.


Ponder: What is your “that situation” that can jostle your joy? Do you have any favorite verses that pick you up?

Practice: a truth...

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled
around your waist. (Ephesians 6:14)

Prayer:

Oh, Lord, thank you that I can carry your words of truth with me everywhere. Let me place your voice, and who you tell me I am, above any negative voices that speak into my life today. Help me to let your truths wash over me in troubled times so that I don't spiral out of control.

Place others around me who will encourage me to chase hard after your voice until my soul is soothed. In Jesus' name, amen. 

Miracles Through Prayer: My Story



By Karen Del Tatto

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Sing to the Lord, for He has done glorious things; let this be known throughout the world. (Isaiah 12:5)

For the mighty One has done great things for me — holy is His name. (Luke 1:49)

In an effort to help calm my tendency to worry, my mom taught me to pray when I was a little girl. She encouraged me that I would find comfort in God through prayer. At that point in my life, I hadn't surrendered to Christ yet, but when I would recite the prayers I was taught, I was filled with a sense of closeness to God that brought me peace.

I never prayed specific prayers for specific things. Instead, prayer for me was a source of comfort.

Once I was born again, my prayer life changed. Through the prayers of the Saints in the Word of God, and hearing believers praying out loud, I learned how to pray – in confession and repentance; in humility; for God's will; for wisdom; in boldness; without ceasing...

Many of the Lord's responses have been above and beyond what I could have hoped or imagined; others were answered exactly how I had requested. I've also had prayers that were answered not in a way I "would have chosen," because some suffering came with the journey to the answer.

But in hindsight, I could see the way God answered it was perfect.

There have also been answers of "no" to my prayers, some that would later become obvious why that was the best answer. Still, others I may never know this side of Heaven why the answer was "no," but I trust my Heavenly Father's Sovereignty.

Since becoming a believer, there have been three "noteworthy" answers to prayer that I have received, all of which greatly strengthened and shaped my...

faith in the Lord.

The first happened when I was a brand new believer. My husband had been out of work for nine months. We were facing the final unemployment check as my husband's allotted amount had run out.

With no other income on the horizon, already scaling back our groceries, eating pasta and pancakes just to preserve money, we went to our penny jars and started counting pennies. We came up with \$50.00.

We had exhausted all our savings... bills were mounting... things were about to become desperate...

I remember going on my exercise bike, pedaling so fast and praying fervently and boldly, pleading our situation to the Lord, asking Him to show Himself to me in a mighty way.

The very next day, three answers came.

1. We found out that the Government issued another extension for those collecting unemployment.
2. Our church presented us with a \$200 check to buy groceries.

3. My husband was contacted for a job interview and was ultimately hired.

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16)

The next matter of noteworthy prayer happened a few years into my Christian walk, and it was quite a serious one. I had discovered a lump in my neck that turned out to be a very large thyroid nodule.

I needed a biopsy.

Unfortunately, the doctor was not able to get enough tissue from the nodule to do an adequate biopsy. However, the removal of fluid shrunk it down quite a bit. The doctor remained hopeful. Within two weeks, the nodule came back and this time it was even bigger! Another biopsy was necessary.

In the week before my biopsy, my prayer request was that the specimen gathered would be sufficient enough to test AND most especially, that it would not be thyroid cancer.

My entire church was praying for me, and I was on several churches prayer chains. I had the biopsy, and the doctor was convinced that again he didn't obtain enough of a specimen to do an adequate biopsy.

Because the nodule was so big, he prepared me that if the biopsy was not sufficient, the next course of action would be a thyroidectomy.

And the church continued to pray...

The answer came one week later.

Not only did the doctor have an adequate specimen to biopsy, it was not cancer! I did not need to have surgery! Even the doctor said he was quite amazed that the biopsy was successful.

I was able to testify to my non-Christian doctor about the great and wonderful answer to prayer.

Is anyone among you sick, let him call the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick..."

(James 5:14-15)

Again, I say to you, if two of you agree about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

(Matthew 18: 19-20)

The third prayer was actually a result of reading a biography about George Muller, who is best known for providing Christian education to children who were under his care.

He established 117 schools which educated over 120,000 children, many of whom were orphans. George Muller's biography details how he raised the money for these schools solely through prayer.

What struck me the most, was that George Mueller did not share his need to anyone. The matter for prayer was just between him and God. Over the years, George Muller's private prayers yielded large amounts of money to build the orphanages.

He also received unsolicited provisions for food and other necessities, always at just the right time. George Muller's faith was greatly strengthened through seeking the Lord in prayer and expectantly...

waiting for answers.

I wanted to experience God in my prayer life the way that George Muller did...

At the time, my daughter had recently started taking piano lessons. We discovered that she was quite gifted at playing the piano. In order for her to be able to diligently practice, it would have been advantageous to have a piano. We didn't have the money for such a luxury, and we really didn't have much space in our home for a piano.

Even though a piano was just a desire and certainly not a dire necessity, I set out to pray the way George Muller did, only sharing my request with the Lord, not with anyone else.

I was quite specific in my prayer for the piano, even down to the size, style and color I preferred.

And then I expectantly waited...

The answer came two weeks later...

A friend of mine called to ask if I knew anyone...

who needed a piano. As the words sunk in, I felt all the air go out of my lungs as I breathlessly said, "We do!"

But wait, there is still more to this story! As my friends were unloading the piano from their vehicle into our living room, I looked in awe to see that it was the EXACT size, style and color that I had specifically prayed for!!

Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)

But when you pray, go away by yourself and shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father who sees everything will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)

The Lord strengthened my faith through each of these very different prayers – a prayer spoken boldly, a prayer lifted up corporately, and a prayer uttered in secret.

Our Heavenly father hears our pleadings, listens when two or three are gathered in His name, and delights in private communion with us. 

The One Note Flute



By Pam Depoyan

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The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. (Hebrews 1:3 NIV)

The gentle spring breeze is stirring up birdsong as I pull my wicker chair to the drive, settling with my prayer journal for a bit of sun. Over here, a smattering of twittering.

There, one insistently calling yoo-hoo! Another joins in, as if playing his one-note flute, over and over...

They make me laugh at a memory of an old movie that contrived the composing of Richard Strauss from such feathered symphony. According to the scene, he'd been riding along in a carriage when...

birdsong swirled a melody of heart-lifting waltz from his soul to paper.

Listening here and now, in my driveway, I almost believe his story happened just that way.

As I ponder a word study I did the other day on the Name of Jesus, a fresh insight tingles across me, in the undeniable way a Strauss waltz spins billowing gowns across a ballroom. Oh my gosh, Lord, I think as I roll the words of Hebrews 1:3 over again in mind.

Mm... The Name of Jesus, the radiance of God's Glory and the exact representation of His being...

I put that together with the stunning words of **Numbers 6:**


You illuminate the wholeness of Your Being towards me, bringing order to my body, my prospering, my success and all that I am...

With these verses, I uncover a wondrous, Old Testament-foreshadowing Truth. "Father," I say in the sudden hush of my spirit. "It's JESUS (the wholeness of Your Being, Name above all Names under...

which all else must bow) You are illuminating towards us... isn't it? The promised blessing of Numbers, richness upon richness!"

The radiance. The only radiation I want pouring in and over and through me. In my driveway cathedral, the symphony continues... the one-note flute player raising his song

"Take time to sit with Me every day – simply soaking quietly in My Presence," He joins in, "and I will suffuse you in the Radiance and Glory of My Being, sustaining and putting all to order within you, in your life, by the One who IS My Powerful Word..."

I close my eyes and sit back, the warmth of the sun melting as His Light over me. Yes, Lord... Let the radiant Glory of Your SON put all my being to order, in Your sustaining Word... fresh and deeper every day... making me whole in all my ways... 

Trusting God When it Seems Illogical



By Debbie Kitterman

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As you read the Bible, do you ever find yourself wondering what was God thinking? Sometimes, I find myself asking God, "Why in the world did you choose that individual? Wasn't there someone better suited to the task at hand?"

Let me just say this: Gideon is definitely not my favorite person in the Bible, but in some ways I totally relate to him. He is NOT someone I would point to as the model leader and yet God chose him to lead an army.

Hmm... maybe the shortcomings and failures of Gideon are ones that are staring back at me in the mirror? I have some of the same fears and insecurities that Gideon experienced.

You know, it's been said that we don't like things in other people that we often have in ourselves. Ouch.

Before studying Gideon's life, I would have said he was a weak leader because of his fear and how he kept asking God for confirmation and assurance every step of the way.

I realize now that fear doesn't make you a weak leader, but it's what you do in spite of fear that makes you a great leader!

...Have you ever noticed that God's ways are not our ways? His math is not like our math? His plans don't always make logical sense? Finally, have you ever noticed that God's plans require your total trust and reliance on Him?

Yet, God's plans are always exactly what is needed to bring about victory and success! Gideon's story in Judges 7:3-22 is one of those stories that has you answering YES to each of the above questions.

As you read it, he is putting together an army per the Lord's direction to fight against the Midianites and deliver God's people from their oppressors.

When the battle call is made, there are 32,000 Israelites that show up prepared to battle. The Midianite army is 135,000 strong. Already God's math is way different than man's math.

Man's math says the Israelites are already outnumbered 4 to 1.

In **Judges 7:2** God says to Gideon:

You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, 'My own strength has saved me.'

Self-sufficiency is our enemy. It makes us believe we don't need help from others, or God. God didn't want Gideon or the Israelites to take credit for the victory He was about to bring. So what does God do?

To prevent the attitude of "I did it on my own," God takes the army from 32,000 to 300!

Say what?

The Lesson: Don't rely on our selves – our strength – our wisdom – our plans – our health...

– our finances – It's all God! – rely on Him – His plans – His Strength – His Provision – His Well Being.

So how did God pair down the army to only 300 men? He did it in two ways. The first makes logical sense. Everyone who was fearful got to return home. A whopping 22,000 men left, leaving only 10,000, which was still too many for God.

The second way God chose who would stay and who would go doesn't make clear sense (or does it?). God told Gideon to choose the ones who would stay by the way they would drink water in **Judges 7: 5-8**:

So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the Lord told him, 'Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink.' Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

The Lord said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home." So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites home but...

kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

Most commentaries don't have thoughts on why one way is better than the other. My opinion, however, is this:

When kneeling to drink, a person is not really watching what's going on around them. Their face is in the water, focused on their need and desire to quench thirst. However, if someone scoops water and remains standing, they are able to pay better attention and are ready to fight.

In Judges 7:10-11, we learn that Gideon was afraid after this. I mean, wouldn't you be? 300 men against an army of 135,000? Not very good odds. In fact, the ratio was 450 Midianites to every 1 Israelite.

God understood and knew Gideon was afraid, but that didn't change His plan. God didn't let fear be an excuse for Gideon, and the same is true for us. Like the Israelites winning the battle against the Midianites when it didn't seem logical or likely, God will deliver us out of our own similarly dire situations.

His point is for us to not place our trust in others or even in our own abilities (self-sufficiency). He wants us to place our trust and confidence in Him and Him alone!

Dear Jesus, please show me where I am relying on myself or others instead of relying on and trusting You. I ask that you would forgive me for the times I haven't trusted you. I want to trust you more, I ask that you help me during the times when my trust and faith waiver.

I choose this day to put my trust and confidence in You, no matter what situations may come. Thank you for your love, care, and guidance. Amen. 

When Giving Up is a Good Thing



By Wendy Munsell
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Blame it on my English-German-Norwegian ancestry; hardworking, reserved, and stoic traits run through my veins making me prone to think that if I just work hard enough and long enough, that eventually I can accomplish anything I set my mind to.

While those are wonderful attributes to have, and in certain instances have proved true, when it comes to working out my salvation... woefully misguided.

When you add other significant characteristics: eldest child, introvert, and people pleaser to the mix, you end up with a pretty buttoned up personality. If life was difficult at times, and of course it was, you did your best and kept quiet about it... no whining or complaining allowed.

In addition, early church training taught me the value of setting goals to receive desired results.

My Sunday School teachers kept track of attendance, offerings, and Bible memorization to ensure we stayed motivated and focused on the prize... recognition in the form of copper, silver, and gold pins that we got to wear on Sundays. The most valuable pin, and one I dearly coveted, was gold with a blue enameled cross.

The joy I felt in being recognized for my accomplishments was delicious and contagious!

Back then, the rules seemed pretty simple, at least to my young mind. As long as you said the sinners prayer and did all the other stuff you were supposed to do, you could pretty much expect to go to heaven.

My check list included going to church regularly, reading my Bible, and being "good." My teachers meant well, but to a rule-following hard worker the spiritual disciplines they presented looked to me like a clear-cut formula for achieving righteousness.

That's where matters stayed until I became a...

young adult. By then I knew that my salvation was not by my efforts. Everything that needed to be accomplished to reunite me with my Heavenly Father had been done by His son.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.
(Ephesians 2:8-9)

Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection wiped my slate clean. So... why was I still working so hard?

Why indeed? Now the "to do" list included prayer, tithing, witnessing, and church leadership. And since more is better that obviously meant shoveling more activities onto each category I felt I performed well. Prayer and witnessing were my weak points, so I focused my efforts on my church roles.

Over the course of the next couple of decades my ministry resume fleshed out nicely. Every time I took on another role, or volunteered to lead or participate in another project, I felt a momentary flash of pride and recognition that what I was doing was meaningful and spiritual. That it mattered... that I mattered.

The problem is, though, that a brief glow of accomplishment doesn't do much good over the long haul. All the striving to prove myself worthy did was make me feel exhausted. Trying to keep up a stiff upper lip when you're running on empty emotionally and spiritually doesn't work forever.

Eventually my works based faith failed. In retrospect, that's the best thing that could have ever happened because it caused me to give up thinking that I could save myself. It wasn't a conscious thought. It wasn't something that I was even aware I was doing.

But somewhere deep down in the depths of my being I believed that, ultimately, it was up to me to prove myself... to God and me.

I became aware that something was wrong a long time before Jesus revealed the source of the problem. My inner life did not reflect love, joy, peace, patience, or any of the rest of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and I found that keeping up the pretense, to yourself or to the people closest to you, that all is well with your soul is difficult to do all the time.

Soul surgery is messy, but Jesus didn't come to...

make things look pretty.

Jesus came to remove and destroy the spiritual disease that brings death.

Jesus died to set me free.


I writhed under the weight of the realization that I couldn't do this thing called Christianity "right." I didn't doubt Jesus or God the Father or the Holy Spirit. I doubted myself because the harder I tried, the more I failed.

The more I failed, the worse I felt. The worse I felt, well, the harder I tried... and so on... Eventually I gave up. In a prayer born of frustration and anger and defeat I cried out to God, "I can't do this anymore!"

In that moment of total abandonment of any pretense of having strength...

In that wrung-out confession of desperation and want...

Jesus answered me, "You aren't supposed to."

The magnitude of that moment is always with me.
As His truth sunk into the broken pieces of my battered soul a stillness came... a quiet descended... and the busy, always reaching to be more, part of me rested... in His work. 

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Thank you for reading!

