

Strengthening Families Across the World

# ABOVE RUBIES

ISSUE: Ninety-four

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

# From Our Home to Yours



Colin and Nancy with Joseph and Psalmody.

Can you believe we are nearly at the end of this year? Where does time go? I used to say, "I need 48 hours in every day to do everything I want to do." However, God convicted me of confessing these words. He only gave us 24 hours each day and certain of those hours for sleep. Therefore, I must be grateful for the hours I am given. It's all I need. Now, instead of getting frustrated, I work hard and do what I can. What doesn't get done can be done the next day, or the next. And I am grateful for the strength for each new day. God is good, and His plans are always the best.

Every year is a special year with our large family. We continually enjoy parties, celebrations, and weddings. We were blessed with family weddings again this year, each one beautiful and special—Psalmody and Joseph Anton on April 24, a second celebration for Gabi and Greg Warden on April 26, Bowen and Kahoru Barrett on May 6, and Crusoe and Stephanie Johnson on September 22. Crusoe and Stephanie kept their first kiss for the wedding day. You can read Stephanie's testimony on page 4.

We are looking forward to six new babies coming in 2018 and we are sure there will be more! Meadow and Kendall in January, Serene and Sam in February, Chanel and Ben in March, Psalmody and Joseph in May, and yes—Stephanie and Crusoe and Bowen and Kahoru in July! God is good.

We recently enjoyed a celebration party for Kendall and Meadow's baby, arriving January 2018. This was not a normal baby shower. Do we do anything normal in our family? It was like a wedding celebration. Meadow is Pearl's daughter, but she gave the task of preparation to Evangeline. When Evangeline decides to do something, look out! It was a beautiful sit-down meal for 60 people with the whole purpose to prepare the young couple for parenting. We added up the years of parenting children from 1 - 18 years amongst those present and found we had over 900 years of parenting experience to share with them! Parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts, and others each got up to share parenting wisdom to them. It was such a wonderful evening.



Bowen and Kahoru taking off on their honeymoon.



Kahoru's veil blowing in the wind.



This past week we celebrated Breezy's Ball. We began this tradition when Breeze was only four years old. She has always loved to dance and dress like a princess and so Serene decided to have a princess ball for her birthday. You need to understand that when we have birthday parties in our family, it is not age-segregated. Everyone comes—babies, children, and adults! Serene asked all the daughters and ladies to dress up as a princess and the guys to dress up as a prince, knight, or warrior. All the young people love dressing up and it turned out such an amazing evening that we have now made it a tradition every year! This year was no exception.

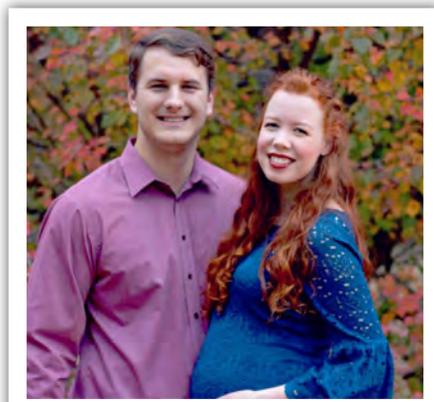
I have a new book advertised on the back page of this magazine. It's a book I would love every family in the nation to purchase. It's the famous DAILY LIGHT ON THE DAILY PATH, but with a difference. The Daily Light is the most wonderful book to have for your family devotions. It has nothing else but Scripture. The Scriptures are put together on a certain theme for every morning and every evening of the year. Therefore, when it is time to read God's Word as a family, all you do is go to the date and there are the Scriptures waiting for you. This also makes it easy for husbands who are not familiar with leading devotions with their family--it takes all the sweat out of it.

However, this Daily Light has a big difference. For every month of the year I have written a new idea of how to make reading God's Word exciting to your children. I have found over the years that if you only read the Word to your children, they often daydream and don't really hear what is read. We must find ways to engage them. To keep them on their toes. To keep them listening every

moment. You will find great ideas in this book. It will revolutionize your Bible reading time. Your children will never get bored. They will learn to listen to the voice of God speaking to them. They will love it and look forward to it.

This Daily Light is in the King James Version, which is the original Daily Light. Also, many have asked me if I could make a King James Version available to them. For those not familiar with this version, you will not find it a problem with your children, especially as you learn to ask questions and incorporate the ideas in this book.

I trust you are blessed and nestled in your home as you read this magazine. God wants you to nest, rest, and invest in your home. He made the home for you. He created the home for you to raise your children. Before God created Eve, He first prepared the home for her. When she woke up to life, she was in her delightful home of Eden. Adam had already been created before the home, but not the woman!



Kendall and Meadow waiting for their first baby.

Whenever God talks about the home, he invariably uses the Hebrew word "yashab." It means "to sit down, to dwell, to remain, to settle, to continue, to abide, to keep house." In Hosea 11:11 God uses the word "yashab" and says: "I will settle them in their own homes, declares the LORD." Are you settled and nestled?

The KNOX translation says: "In their own home, the Lord says, I will give them rest." Are you feeling overwhelmed? Are you running ragged? Too much to do? God always has the answer. Stop running around so much. Come back home. In your own home God gives you rest.

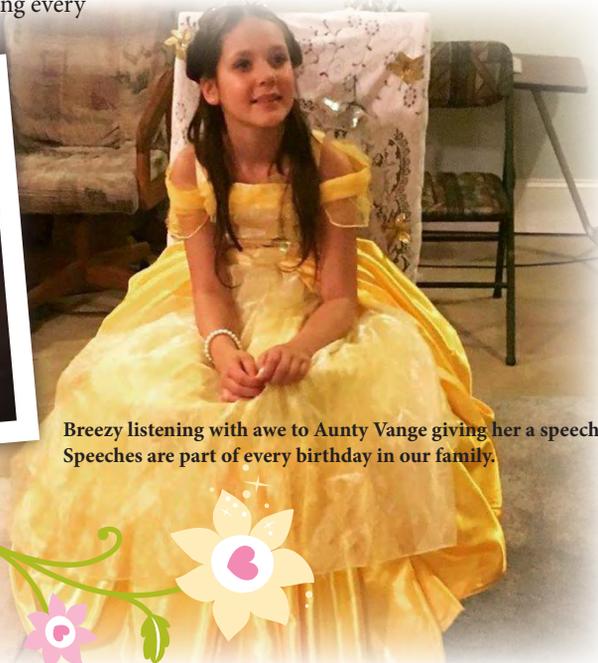
It's not only we who get tense and stressed out. Our children do too. When we hustle them around to go to this place and that place they get restless and upset. Did you notice one of the meanings of "yashab" is to "sit down."



Emory Delight, two months.



Breezy listening with awe to Aunty Vange giving her a speech. Speeches are part of every birthday in our family.



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Above Rubies is a magazine to encourage women in their high calling as wives, mothers and homemakers. Its purpose is to uphold and strengthen family life and to raise the standard of God's truth in the nation. The name has been chosen from Proverbs 31:10 AMP, "A capable, intelligent and virtuous woman, who is he who can find her? She is far more precious than jewels and her value is far ABOVE RUBIES or pearls."

EDITRESS: Nancy Campbell

GRAPHICS: Abbie Williams

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FRONT COVER: Great-granddaughter, Ezzie

(Ezra Violet Simpson), 18 months. We tried

to take a picture of Ezzie and her baby sister

together, but they wouldn't cooperate. Above is

a picture of Emory Delight (2 months). [www.RashidaLaelPhotography.com](http://www.RashidaLaelPhotography.com) \* <https://www.facebook.com/RashidaLaelPhotography>

\* (615) 693-1574.

Wedding photography:

Joseph and Psalmody \* Isaiah Allison Photography

Bowen and Kahoru \* Rashida La'el Photography

Crusoe and Stephanie \* Christina Mimm

Photography

The Young's Literal translation of Psalm 113:9 renders it literally: "Causing the barren one of the house to SIT, a joyful mother of sons." Even in the home we can be so busy running around that we don't take time to SIT DOWN with our children.

Children need mothers to SIT DOWN! When your little ones get out of control, instead of screaming and feeling you are going crazy, stop what you are doing and say, "Come, let's sit on the sofa and have a story." Grab your baby to nurse and gather your little ones all around you and read some stories to them until they are all relaxed and settled. They will then be ready to play happily again. There's nothing like sitting down with your little ones to bring peace and calm. And you become calm in the process too.

Take time to sit with your older ones to talk to them too. You mother much better sitting down than running around the house doing all your own projects! Remember, you are a mother before everything else you do. This is your highest priority.

We continue celebrating 40 years of publishing Above Rubies this year. We praise God for His great faithfulness. While so many magazines come and go, God has enabled us, by His grace, to keep printing for 40 years. The message of Above Rubies continues to be so greatly needed in the nations of the world. Therefore, with joy, I keep plodding on.

**Blessings from Nancy Campbell  
Editress of Above Rubies**

# A Daughter's Perspective

*I am married to the most amazing man in the world, Nancy and Colin's grandson. September 22, 2017 was the happiest day of my life. I still can't believe I'm married to such a wonderful man!*

*However, I didn't wake up the day after my wedding and suddenly have all the skills a wife needs. The day after my engagement, my parents didn't thrust me into a sudden crash course on marriage. It wasn't even at a certain age that they started preparing me. They have been preparing me my whole life for this high calling of being a wife.*

*Proverbs 31:12 says: "She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life." I believe that "all the days of my life" means even before I married my husband.*

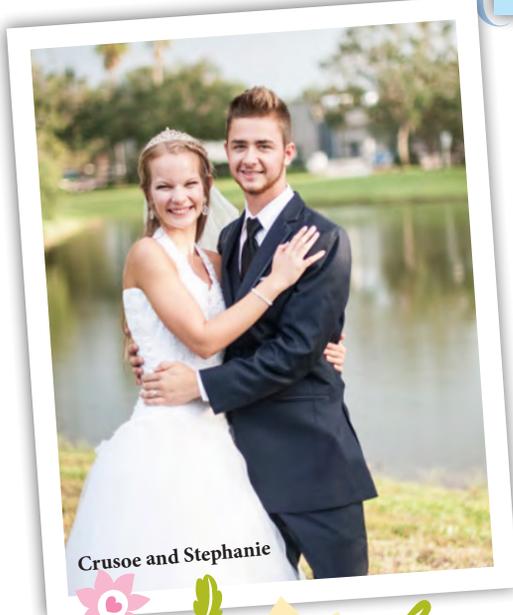
*One of the ways, and probably the most important way, that I have done good to my husband is by praying for him—before I met him, after I met him, and now that I am married to him. Before I was married, I would often study Proverbs 31 as I sought to prepare to be the best wife I could be. I also discovered Psalm 112 which is the description*

*of a man who fears the Lord and I often prayed this psalm for my future husband.*

*My sisters and I also spent a lot of time praying for each other's future husbands. They take credit for all of Crusoe's amazing qualities! We prayed for specific qualities such as courage and compassion, and that our husbands would come to us in the Lord's timing.*

*When I was 16, before I met Crusoe, I wrote a letter to my future husband. During our wedding ceremony, I surprised him by reading it to him. Crusoe was blessed by the letter and blessed that I saved myself and my heart for him. The years of praying for Crusoe before I even met him made it easier to keep my focus and not be distracted by other young men during my teenage years. I am glad I spent so many hours praying for my future husband even before I was married.*

~ Stephanie Johnson



Crusoe and Stephanie



Four cousins who have grown up together like brothers all married Above Rubies helpers: Bowen and Kahoru (from Japan), Arden and Esther (from Canada, but originally from China), Josiah and Shelby (from Alabama), and Crusoe and Stephanie (from Florida). What a beautiful blessing.

# Will was God's Will



Jim (second from left) and Sandra (holding baby Jane, 8 months) and the rest of their 12 children: Courtney (21), Hunter (16), Marcus (13), Sage (12), Everett (10), Savannah (9), Cyrus and WILL (7), Lucas (5), Elias (4), and Jude (2).

People often call him William, but his name isn't William. He's Will. And for the first four months of his life, I, his mother, didn't even know he existed. Pregnant, I hobbled into the living room and sat on the couch across from my husband. "John, I'm tired."

"Maybe you should take a nap."

"That's not what I mean," I sighed. "I'm tired of changing diapers. Tired of nursing babies. Tired of being pregnant."

He clicked off the TV and leaned toward me.

"This will be our seventh child. Right now, we have just enough car seats in the minivan and just enough bedroom space."

"What are you saying?"

"Jim, I want this to be our last pregnancy. I don't want any more babies after this one."

Jim's cheeks burned red. "I don't think that's a good idea."

"Jim, I'm done." My stomach turned with nausea. John ran a hand through his short brown hair. "Well, you're the one who has to carry and deliver the babies, so . . . if that's what you want . . ."

I didn't tell the doctor about my pregnancy until I was a month into my second trimester. Why did I need to go? Not much happened in the first few months—a couple of doctor's visits and some blood tests. I had been through this so many times. I wasn't missing a thing by not going. But God has a funny way of humbling us when we are overly confident.

My first doctor's visit was an ultrasound appointment. The technician rubbed clear gel on my stomach as my husband and children filed into the room.

"Wow. You have a large family." She switched on the machine. "How many children will this make for you?" She ran the wand over my belly.

"This will be our seventh child."

"No, it won't." Her eyes grew wide. "This will be seven and eight!"

The room erupted in shouts and cheers.

"No way! Are you sure?" I repeated over and over again.

This is what it must be like to win the lottery. It was as if God Himself reached down and touched us.

It was God's will for us to have two babies instead of one. Needless to say, the second of the two—Will—completely disrupted my plans for a seven-child family. But we didn't mind one bit.

From that day forward, my husband and I committed to bearing and birthing each child God planned for us. After all, they were all blessings from Him.

One morning, a month after the twins were born, I awoke to find Will motionless and unresponsive. His skin was pale white, and his lips and eyelids were blue.

We raced in an ambulance to the emergency room where doctors immediately went to work. Standing at the back of the operating room, I spoke to God through an endless stream of tears. "I want Will to live, Lord. But he's Yours. If You want to take him, take him. Your will be done."

After a week in the intensive care unit of the children's hospital, God gave little Will back to me. It was as if He was saying, "You said you didn't want him, but I showed you how much you actually do."

Now, every time I look at Will and the other babies that followed, I'm reminded that these are the children I told God I didn't want.

His name is not William. He's Will—God's Will.

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# They Still Need Me!

**T**ime is fleeting. When you have a string of teenagers, you see time like an hourglass. It slips through your fingers faster and faster. I remember my five precious children always gathered around whatever I was doing. Whether it was cleaning, cooking, canning, out to the barnyard, on a walk, or sitting in my room, there they were. If I ran to the restroom, there was a crew of little ones calling out, “Mama!”

There are days you want to fly away like a bird because you never get that moment to just be you, to be still, and not to be forever needed. However, the days turn into years and soon the toothless smiles and mismatched clothes turn into perfectly groomed teenagers who’ve learned to care for themselves. You start to feel less needed, but it’s a deception. Don’t believe it for a minute! These budding adults need us **MORE THAN EVER**.

If we are not available to meet the teenager’s needs, they meet their needs with independent force. They make their

own meals, do their own laundry, learn independently with schooling, and find their own answers to all their many questions. Life is an open book to write. No longer are we writing our stories together; they are writing their own.

I remember when things started to change and my little children were growing up. They no longer fought to help mix the batter, use my mop, or be first to help clean. I remember when the children learned how to crack an egg and all the many eggshells we pulled out of the bowl, the mess, and the chairs pulled up to the counter tops that had to be pushed back into place. Now they are taller than me and when I bake, I often bake alone.

It’s not necessarily a bad thing. However, about eight months ago when my daughter, Molly was rushed off in an ambulance, I was off chasing **MY DREAMS**. I was in Hawaii on a trip we earned from a great company with products that changed my health in a miraculous way. But as with all things in life, we can become overzeal-

ous, we can set aside the things that are right in front of us to pursue the American Dream. I did.

After a year of pursuing the dream, I must be honest, I became lost in a rat race. I felt like that rat in a maze, searching for the prize, but never finding it—the very rat race I strived so hard to escape years ago when we bought our first homestead. I never cared much for money, but the dream of having freedom was over me like a trance.

I became so passionate about helping others that I often felt stressed and set aside my precious family. They never seemed to mind. They kept themselves busy with other things. Good things, but they were essentially not needing me like they used to.

But God’s still small voice came as a phone call in the middle of the night—the faint breathing of my precious daughter, her life in the balance. I heard. I listened. I knew I needed to get off track from my dreams and fight to

build the relationships back again.

The great news is that it was not too late. I set aside my long working hours from home on the phone or computer and exchanged it for long periods of being a mother. Instead of spending hours listening to other's health issues and knowing how to help others, I started listening to my children tell me their issues. I told each one of them that they matter the most, that they are my purpose, and that I want to set aside everything for them. I told them we won't have fancy cars, extravagant trips, or money for all the things we want, but we will have what we need from the hand of God.

It worked! Praise the Lord! I have my normal homestead, humble, do-it-yourself, children gathered around-life BACK! And I could not be more filled with joy! Teens need you MORE THAN BEFORE and now I help them follow their dreams and give them all the time they need, pouring into their hearts. Now, when I use the restroom for a moment, I hear the faint words, "Where is mom?" They need me! Thank you, God, they still need me!

My husband is a man of very few words, but recently he said to me: "God created the woman for pouring. Keeping a home and loving your husband and children is a huge undertaking and it takes ALL of a woman to fill. That's why God created the woman to pour of herself completely because He knows it takes all of her heart to care for her family. Because the modern woman finds a million other things to pour into, the most important things often suffer. There is only so much in a heart to pour. When a mother pours herself out and there is nothing left to give, the family suffers. That's why our country is suffering. It all starts in the home." His words were right on.

As you see in my illustration, each cup represents things we can be involved in. There are many things we pour into in life. I have had times when there were dozens of glasses to fill. The only trouble is that I only had so much in my heart to pour. If I poured equally, the glasses would, at best, be about half way full!



## A Woman was Created to Pour Into Her Family

But I want to pour fully into the most important vessels!

It was not easy for me to transition from being a full-time blogger, business woman, and all the creative things I loved to do. But I have learned to live with less and find that less is MORE! More is empty. LESS gives your mind inventive ideas and much more creativity. When you learn to live with less, you learn to make do, and be content. I don't want to lay aside these virtues for all the money in the world.

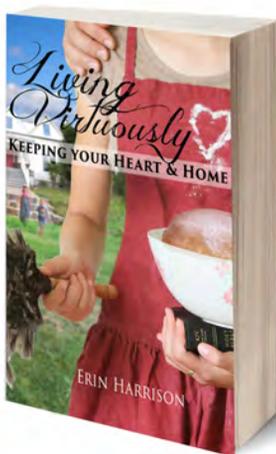
I wanted to change the world, make it better, help the sick, and those in need. In the process, I looked for the approval of man, the respect, and vanity of success. Even having the best of intentions to bring help and healing to others can distract us from our divine purpose and calling.

At the end of the day, I have what most people in this earth want right in front of me. I have peace, joy, love, and fellowship with my family which is sweeter than anything. My oldest son has reached adulthood. How did it happen this fast? Time slipped by fast and it seems like yesterday he was a tiny, blond, curly-headed toddler telling me about the turkeys in the barnyard on our very first homestead.

I am excited for the adventure that is yet before me as I complete my calling to raise these five children for the Lord!

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# A Gracious Woman

*Because this year is the 40th anniversary of publishing Above Rubies, I recently re-read the very first magazine I published. I was amazed to see that I am still speaking and writing the same things I did 40 years ago. God's truth doesn't change. The only wonderful thing is that over the years God has revealed increasingly more understanding of His plan and ways to me about women from His living Word. God doesn't leave us in the dark, but makes His Word a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105). We don't have to sit in darkness. The following is the FIRST little article I wrote for Above Rubies 40 years ago. I wonder who still has a copy of this magazine?*

Did you know that God has given honor to women? Christianity does not put women down, but raises her to a place of honor and dignity. You are not insignificant. Nor are you inferior as a serving wife, mother, and homemaker. These are the greatest privileges God has given to women. Proverbs 11:16 says: "A gracious woman retaineth honor."

The reason many are not happy in their role is because they have not accepted it and often resist it. It is true that there are times when it is not easy going, but there is a price to success in any career. It involves selflessness that is foreign to our lower nature. But surely it is this that matures us in strength and character and refines us to be gracious women.

Many women are crying out for their own rights. Feminists herald: "You don't have to stay married. Put yourself first rather than serving your husband and children." Does this really work? In fighting for her own rights, a woman loses the honor God divinely gives her.

It is the gracious woman who keeps her honor. What is grace? Jesus showed us what grace is like. We read the description in Philippians 2:6-8: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

These words are preceded by the admonition: "Let this mind (attitude) be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (v. 5). Do we have the same attitude Jesus had? In our marriage and in our home? Are we prepared to lay down our lives for others? Do we show the same grace He showed?

We often feel we have the right to do what we want, but we don't earn respect and honor by demanding our own way. There were times in my younger days when I stomped through the house and exclaimed, "I'm just a servant around this place." Then I hear the words of Jesus in my ear, "Nancy, didn't I come to serve?" My heart softens again and I respond, "I'm sorry, Lord. Let me serve with love and graciousness." With this attitude, I find true happiness and contentment.

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NANCY CAMPBELL



# Faith for Each Birth

**M**y first child came normally. Not that any new mother in labor feels “normal,” but I can’t say there were any red flags. What started out as a normal delivery quickly turned into a C-section after I asked for and received an epidural. Looking back, it was unnecessary. I had never been through labor and I didn’t think it would hurt that bad, eternal optimist that I am! Without the support of a good doula, the epidural was just too tempting. After I got it, everything slowed to a crawwwl. I pushed (is that what I was doing? I couldn’t feel anything) for three hours and finally my doctor insisted I have an emergency C-section. I agree.

Suddenly everything happened so fast and the smurfs descended upon me, (they all wore blue scrubs). It was overwhelming and frightening! The first hours of my beautiful baby boy’s life were spent with his daddy, not me. Nothing went the way I had dreamed or expected.

## LANCE – C-SECTION

We named him Lance, mainly because we loved the name and partly, I blush to admit it, because of an amazing athlete (at the time) named Lance Armstrong. Ouch! My faith and commitment to God were pretty shallow. Since that time, we rededicated Lance’s name based on Hebrews 4:12: *“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*

## FELICIA – VBAC

Felicia’s birth, (her name means “great joy”), was entirely different. I was determined it should be full of joy. I yearned for a different beginning for my child; I wanted a VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Cesarean). I informed my doctor at my six-month check-up, but she said it was out of the question. However, she told me to talk to her partner who was licensed to do high-risk type deliveries. He agreed to let me try.

As my due date came closer, only one person supported me, my husband Jonathan. A nurse friend told me that if I came to the local hospital in labor and refused a C-section, they would kick me out of the hospital! In labor? I was in such turmoil. No one understood!

Finally, at 38 weeks I interviewed a midwife and asked her point blank, “Based on my history with my first delivery, do you think I can have this baby naturally?” She looked me in the eye saying, “MaryAnn, they had you in bed on your back the entire time. OF COURSE, you can have this baby naturally!” Waves of hope flowed through me. And I learned something. Whenever you know what you need to do, surround yourself with the people who support you. Everyone else needs to go.

God over-ruled in my second baby’s delivery! My doctors convinced me to schedule a C-section. I did, but I also wrote myself a letter. This letter was an agreement to myself that if I went into labor before the date, I would refuse it and try for a VBAC. And IF that happened, I would name my baby



Jonathan and MaryAnn with Lance (12), Felicia (10), Nathan (7), and Baby Siloam (18 months).

Felicity, because of the great joy I would experience through God's care.

My water broke TWO DAYS before the date! Not only that, but my contractions didn't begin for another 24 hours which gave me time. My doula encouraged me to stay home for as long as possible, "because you know what they're going to want you to do as soon as you get there," she explained. Finally, after about twelve hours we both decided it was time to get to the hospital. By that time, however, the Labor and Delivery department of the hospital was full! Maybe there was a full moon, I don't know!

I had to cross state lines into Idaho, and by doing so, my ever-so-against-me doctors couldn't follow me. I was completely at the mercy of the doctor on-call, and who was it? None other than the most well-respected gynecologist in the entire region!

Dr. M. walked into the room around midnight with a form and said, "I'm required by law to inform you of the risks of having a VBAC. You need to sign this form acknowledging it." He handed me the form and walked out of the room, but before he left he turned and added, "Before the insurance companies got all crazy about VBACs, I used to do about one of these a week." He smiled and left.

God freed me and paved the way for the most wonderful, amazing experience of giving birth! I slept through the night and began my contractions in the morning. The whole thing took four hours from beginning to end. I got to experience those first precious moments of life with my new child. She latched on immediately. It was perfect. Felicity became Felicia, a derivative of the name by Jonathan's choice. We did indeed have great joy.

### **NATHAN – GOD'S PROVISION**

Nathan's name means "Gift of God," and indeed, he was and is. Nathan was born seven weeks early, but the main step of faith needed for Nathan was financial in nature. We had no health insurance. We had a little cash saved up in the bank, just enough to pay for a doctor. God knew everything had to go like clockwork with this one, right? (I laugh thinking about it).

The problem was that my self-employed husband got a strong leading to hire someone to help him with his business. When Jonathan told me who he was hiring I thought we would lose a bunch of money on this guy and that is exactly what happened. Still, if nothing went haywire, we could still squeak through. We might owe the hospital something for a while, but it was still feasible. But then, Jonathan had a strong urge to buy a new truck for the business. How is THAT supposed to work? Nonetheless, a new truck pulled into our driveway soon afterwards.

When I started getting contractions at 33 weeks, I panicked. I laid in bed for two days, praying and hoping they would go away. But they didn't. When they were about three minutes apart and steady, we checked in at the Emergency room. I distinctly remember getting out of the car thinking, "Let the dollars begin. Ch-ching!"

Nathan was born at our country hospital in Moscow, Idaho. He was then helicoptered up to Spokane's NICU where he stayed 15 days. The bill came to \$85,000 total, clearly enough to financially sink a sole-proprietorship remodeling business. But that is not what happened; we didn't pay a dime. As it turns out, we decided to see if the state would qualify us for Medicaid, and we came within \$600 of the maximum limit. They accepted us and paid the hospitals in full. Had Jonathan not followed the Lord's urging to spend about \$26,000.00 on a deadbeat employee and a new truck, there is no way we would have qualified. Our God is great, powerful, and loving.

### **SILOAM - WITH JESUS**

Our last baby was a long time in coming. By this time, I was starting to notice a pattern. It took faith to go through a natural delivery which I didn't have for my first. It took a little more faith to defy the doctors and go against what everyone else thought for our second. It took a little more faith to stare financial bankruptcy straight in the eye with our third. Deliverance is incredible, but the faith to get to it? What would be required of us for this one? And indeed, that's the understatement of the year.

Siloam means "sent." The word is found in the Gospel of John where Jesus makes a blind man see. He told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam, a pool that means "sent."

With my fourth, the doctor wanted to repeat my 20-week ultra-sound. Why? Evidently, they never got a look at my baby's stomach, which doesn't mean that she didn't have a stomach, but that her esophagus was not working or completely missing. (Babies swallow amniotic fluid, which is what the ultra-sound notices on the screen, illuminating the rest of the digestive system. No stomach on an ultrasound means no flow of fluid.) But they didn't find it the second time either and my pregnancy immediately went into high-risk.

I began contractions with Siloam at 32 weeks. We helicoptered up to Spokane. Everything was going fine and then when I was 7 cm dilated, the doctor decided it was time to break my water. He broke it and left the room, but shortly afterwards an intense pain came over me. I thought I was going to die! The nurse saw all the blood on the floor and immediately pulled the plugs out of the wall and raced me to the ER.

"You two, PRAY!" the nurse yelled at Jonathan and my doula. Unknown to me, my placenta had completely dislodged and my baby was now suffocating. I remember the doctor pacing back and forth waiting for the anesthesiologist. He finally came and I grabbed the gas mask, gulping the gas just as fast as I could. When I became conscious again, everything was calm. We had a beautiful baby girl. Siloam was born July 18th, 2015.

She had Down Syndrome. It was also verified she had Esophageal Atresia, type A. (The common name is "Ultra long-gap Esophageal Atresia," because she had a 5-cm gap from the top pouch to the bottom. This rare type affects about one in 10,000 births.) We also learned later that her stomach could hold no more than 1 ml of liquid at a time and that she had several heart defects. Later still, after one of her surgeries, her heart stopped beating for over five minutes. Last, but not least, she caught a case of croup at the hospital that sent her temperature soaring to a whopping 107.3 before returning to

normal. It was a Spokane PICU record.

### HOW LONG . . . ONE YEAR?

At first, staying any longer than September seemed unimaginable. Not home for Christmas? How could this possibly be happening? Nathan's birthday present? January—Felicia's birthday present? March—mine? April. Mother's Day? When? Why?

The first forty days were shock and panic. The next forty were anger and panic. Around 90 days I fell into despair. This is when my milk completely dried up and there was still no hint on the horizon as to when my baby would be home, living a normal existence, sleeping with me in my arms. After 100 days, I just put one foot in front of the other and did what I had to do.

Siloam spent 365 days in the NICU and PICU before she came home for the first time on her first birthday. I will remember that day for the rest of my life. It was one of the very best days of my life. Siloam was blind, but she knew that she was with her family. Though the ride home was 1½ hours, she smiled and cooed the whole way home. There was a rainbow in

the air. We were all together. Before we left, the nurses threw her a first birthday party and we all hugged each other good-bye. Finally, after seven surgeries, numerous illnesses, and so much waiting, Siloam's "normal" life was about to start. We would wean her from her many narcotics at home, Lord willing.

Siloam never weaned from her narcotics. The code in the hospital had given her severe brain damage leaving her quadriplegic. Later she began getting grand-mal seizures, several per day. Right before Christmas her little body rejected food and water. She died on the 27th of December after we had the blessing of spending our first and only Christmas at home with her. Despite the sadness, it was a blessed day.

I love her every bit as much as my other children and I miss her so much, despite her brain damage, her Down Syndrome, her quadriplegia, and her blindness. I miss how she smiled when I sang to her, and her "almost" giggles when we held her upside-down (her favorite!). She loved to be rocked. She was so beautiful.

Still, I thank God for taking her, despite the pain. I wouldn't wish her

difficulties on my worst enemy. Now she is with Jesus. Now she is at rest. After Siloam died, a friend of mine's blind daughter dreamed that Siloam was showing her how to do gymnastics. God really is amazing. You see, during the shocked, panic phase of this journey, I had a vision of a toddler who looked just like me doing a somersault in the grass. The vision was a split second, but I believed it was Siloam and that she'd eventually be okay. It carried me through a lot of agony.

However, over the months it became clear that Siloam would never be doing somersaults in the grass and I became very confused. A good friend of mine helped me see that this wasn't a vision of earth, but of heaven. Isn't it amazing? My friend's child, born blind, saw Siloam's somersault? I am eternally grateful, despite the pain, for I see too.

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# God loves you!

*God wants to be your Savior and Friend here on earth and wants you to live with Him forever in Heaven.*

*But we have sinned and the wages of sin is death. We are responsible to pay the punishment of our sin.*

*However, because God loves you so much, He sent His only son to pay the penalty of your sin. He died a cruel death upon the cross and shed His precious, spotless blood to redeem you. Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day to prove that God accepted His sacrifice for your sins.*

*Will you thank Him and receive Him to be your Lord and Savior? Your eternal destiny depends upon your acceptance and trust in Jesus Christ.*

*Pray this prayer now: "Lord Jesus Christ, I repent of all my sins. I accept Your sacrifice upon the cross for the forgiveness of my sins. I welcome You into my heart right now as my Lord and Savior. Thank You, Lord Jesus for hearing my prayer. Amen."*

# Choosing to Serve One Another



Nathan and Suzanne celebrating 30 years of marriage. They have three children: Austin married to Emily with Lucas (4) and Fiona (1 1/2 years); Jarrod married to Sandra with Amelia (2) and Lucille (7 months).

Nathan and I recently celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary.

We didn't always honor our marriage covenant the way we do now. We were 10 years into our marriage before we came to know our Lord and Savior. It was at the most desperate time of our relationship.

When I saw my husband, I knew he was the man I wanted to marry. I nudged my friend and said to her, "Do you see that handsome guy over there? I'm going to marry him!" One year later we were husband and wife. Unfortunately, not being followers of Christ at that time, our problems began the day after getting home from our honeymoon. I was begging for a divorce. I wanted out now! Our problems were a mixture of drinking, yelling, selfishness, lack of communication, a wife who didn't understand or appreciate her man, and who was always offended.

Ten years of problems and you have two miserable adults and two sad, unhappy boys. There was so much strife and so many poor decisions. My way to solve the problem was to start a new life. For the third time, I asked for a divorce, packed up, took the boys, and drove away. As an unwise and foolish woman, I believed the grass would be greener on the other side! Thankfully life didn't get any better! It became harder. Six months of trying to figure out life on my own became extremely difficult.

After six months of being apart we made the decision to give it another try. We saw other couples who seemed to have it all together. What was different about them? Oh yes, they went to church! I told my husband that the only way this marriage would possibly work is if we went to church, and we did!

We came to Christ within three months of each other and making Jesus Christ Lord of our lives sealed the sweet deal of restoration.

It was 1997 and the same year we also made the decision to homeschool and have more children.

Was it easy after coming to Christ, you ask? No, but when we choose to purpose in our hearts to hear God's word and obey our Lord Jesus Christ and His ways, it all comes together much more smoothly.

God restored our marriage, praise the Lord! We have learned so much since we came to Christ. We have learned to protect our relationship, to love and serve one another, and to serve others in and outside the body of Christ.

How did we celebrate our anniversary? We set out on a road trip to Montana to visit friends. We toured Glacier National Park and played Friday night volleyball with a wonderful group of new friends. We enjoyed a Farmer's Market in Whitefish and on our way home through Oregon we stayed in a cabin. Having forgotten we needed to bring our own bedding we snuggled under three very thin blankets from good old Walmart!

After 30 years of marriage, people ask us, "What is the recipe for your beautiful marriage?"

- ♥ We choose to honor God, honor each other with our actions, and put each other first,
- ♥ To have goodwill towards one another,
- ♥ Always think the best of one another, and
- ♥ Look for ways to serve one another.

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# The Empty Cradle

There may be few griefs that liken to the deep despair of losing a child. As mothers, we love with our whole hearts. Therefore, we grieve with our whole hearts. Whether it be spiritual death or physical, it forever changes the humor of a mother.

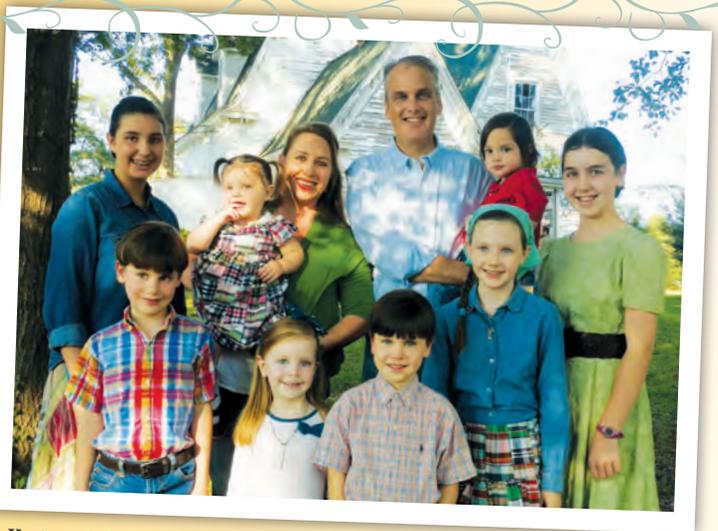
No matter how common or how many people you know who have experienced it, miscarriage is devastating. It is as though something reaches into that hidden place and robs you of a most precious miracle. A miracle purposely placed by God. The questions abound. Why? Why me? Why now? Why would a loving God give, only to take? Is it my fault? Or perhaps most unnerving, a guilt if you feel relieved. Whatever your personal experience with these questions, life is altered the moment you lose life.

As believers, our response should reflect our theology. Do we see God as a sovereign God who gives good gifts, even though we don't deserve them? Or is He just waiting to make hardship? We expose our idea of God in these moments of affliction.

We prepare for difficult times by habitually drawing near to the Most High before the tragedy arises. And yet the tears and grief are overwhelming, even in the most grounded believer. Job, perhaps the greatest human sufferer in the Bible, struggled immensely with grief and despair. The book of Job offers a lens into his heart as he wrestled from lamenting his birth to finding hope in God's supreme plan for his life and finally being brought low before the Almighty.

One summer day, the Lord saw fit for me to become pregnant. I was elated! My normal pregnancy symptoms were much less than usual which made me concerned. I remember admitting that "this pregnancy feels different." Looking back, the Lord was lovingly preparing my heart even then.

Several weeks later, I began showing signs of miscarriage. An ultrasound confirmed the baby was not formed and there was no heartbeat. We were very saddened and yet a peace came over me as I attempted to understand and settle in my heart that only God gives life AND takes it away. It is His holy privilege and my great honor to be His instrument. I rested in that comfort and though I cried many tears and was sad in my heart as a mother, I was at peace as a daughter of the High King.



Kevin and Shannon with their children: Caroline (15), Mary Grace (12), Ellie (10), Samuel (8), Josiah (6), Providence (5), Levi (3), and Susanna Ruth (21 months).

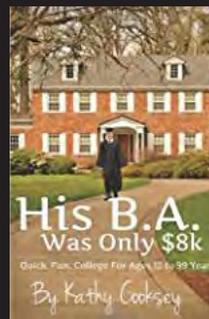
About five days later, I officially lost that precious child and delivered him or her into the hands of the Almighty. It was hard. I cried. My heart hurt. And yet I knew deep within my being that God was in control. I felt anger in that knowledge. Yet the Lord did not allow it to fester, gently cradling me with His perfect peace and love. My other children also shed tears as they realized they would never know that brother or sister on this side of heaven. That was painful to watch. I long to meet this child in glory one day.

I resolved to remain a willing instrument of the Lord, whether that meant more children or none. There is a healing balm for a hurting heart when we rest in the Lord and relinquish control of the events of this temporal life.

In the Lord's providence I have lost six children, but found comfort during the grief of miscarriage in the question God asked Job: "Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it" (Job 40:1-2 ESV).

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## His B.A. was Only \$8K

By Kathy Cooksey

Quick, Fun College for  
Ages 12 to 99 Years

Using humor, interesting stories, and an off-the-wall writing style, Kathy describes her own son's journey of getting an accredited bachelor's degree from home at the tender age of 16. She explains how this method works for adult students, transfers, homeschoolers, or anyone. Older students sometimes finish an entire degree with this method in only one year.

Go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/HisBAOnly8K>



Back l to r: Eugene (13), Esther (10), Elisabeth (16), Evan (15), Erin (29), Elijah (18), Evelyn (11).  
 Front l to r: Elsie (6), Jill with Eva Mercy (3) and Gary with Elaina (6). Jill had Emily, Eric, and Erin before she was 20 before they were blessed with nine more blessings from God. Emily and Eric, not in the picture, are married and both have four children and Eric and Sara are expecting their 5th baby in March 2018.

# COULD WE HAVE MISSED NINE BLESSINGS?

Over 18 years ago I had met a family who came to help us with our church building project. We had a casual conversation about determining the size of your family. Her words radically changed my life.

At the time, I was the mother of three children, the youngest nine years old. They were all born by the time I was twenty!

We were young and poor. My youngest was diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder (autism and shufflers syndrome) and we decided (with a lot of persuasion) that my husband should have a vasectomy. I was the ripe old age of only 21 years! I told him that since I had to go through the pain of having the children, he could go through the pain of the vasectomy!

I became a child of God when I was 24 years. From that time, I occasionally desired another child, but the feeling would go and life carried on. It wasn't

until the "conversation" with the lady (whom I can't even remember her name), that I was burdened with the desire to let God determine my family size. I shared this with my husband, but he was noncommittal.

I wrestled with the Lord and argued: "Erin is potty trained! (At nine years old, I would hope so!). It's a lot of work to take care of a baby. I don't want to go through pregnancy, delivery, changing diapers, potty training again!" I finally told God that if He wanted us to do this then our insurance company would have to pay for it. I made the call, feeling confident there was NO WAY they would pay. I was wrong.

I shared this with my husband and through a personal encounter with the Lord himself, he decided this was truly what we should do.

We made an appointment with a urologist to discuss the surgery. He didn't give us much hope and said

we would be wasting our money, but we scheduled the surgery. Everyone, including most of the people in our church, thought we were crazy.

Months went by and no baby. Finally, I became pregnant! The Lord impressed upon my heart that I was going to have a boy and to name him Elijah Malachi. He gave me Malachi 4:5, 6: "*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*"

I called my mother and shared with her how the Lord had told me we were going to have a boy and his name would be Elijah Malachi. She was not very encouraging, but was very surprised when the ultrasound showed we were in fact having a boy!

Elijah Malachi was born in September. The Lord blessed again and

Elisabeth was born on my birthday, 22 months later. Evan came on Elijah's birthday. Then Eugene, Evelyn, and Esther. The Lord gradually changed the heart of my husband and drew it back to children and the children were responding to him. God is good.

The months before Eugene was born were not easy ones. I experienced gestational diabetes for the first time in my pregnancies. My husband, now in the ministry, was trying to balance his family and his church responsibilities. Our oldest daughter was teetering on the fence of rebellion. We prayed long about it and decided that my husband should step down from pastoring to try to and salvage our daughter's life. It was of no avail. I grieved the spiritual loss of my daughter who left our home. Heartbreaking doesn't even begin to describe the emotions I experienced through this ordeal.

Two more precious children were given to us during this time and my oldest daughter moved back in with her two children. The emotional stress took a huge toll on my body. I began to walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

I had lost Esther's twin at five weeks with what they described as "the disappearing twin syndrome." The loss of our baby made me very sad, but it was only a prelude to what was to come. Pregnant again, I went to the doctor for my routine twelve-week checkup. My husband had not been able to make this appointment and I was alone.

"We can't find a heartbeat," I heard them say. Those words still leave a pit in my stomach. The baby had "expired" at about five or six weeks. They

informed me they did surgeries on Thursdays and could schedule a D&C and the doctor left the room. I was devastated.

I went home to my precious children who waited expectantly to find out news of the baby. What words can I even use to portray the sadness at having to share with them that their baby brother or sister was no more? I passed this precious child a few weeks later and we did a family burial for him. I could not stand the thought of having my baby's body being ripped from my body in a cold, sterile hospital environment. I then miscarried a third time at twelve weeks.

I decided that I was finished. I could not go through any more grief from losing more babies. This wasn't what I had agreed to and I let the Lord know this.

But did you know that God speaks to us through His living Word? He spoke to me through Romans 12:1, 2: *"I beseech ye therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."*

I knew with no uncertainty that I was to be a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God and that this was my REASONABLE service! God gently reminded me that He wanted me to let Him continue to determine my family size and that meant to let Him have complete control. It wasn't about me. It was about the work He was doing in my life to conform me to the image of

Christ. This was so important for me to get a hold of before my next fiery trial.

My next baby went to be with the Lord at 14 weeks. It was by far the hardest and through it the Lord showed me the darkness of my heart so He could refine me once again.

He has since blessed me with twins, Elsie and Elaina, and my last baby, precious Eva Mercy.

I would still love to have another baby. Every time my husband thanks God for His mercy and His grace I feel that we need a Grace, but that would definitely take a miracle since I will be 50 next birthday!

I take comfort in 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10: *"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong."*

I don't have it all together. Many days I feel like I'm drowning. But I know God is with me every step of the way. I know He has called me to walk this walk for His glory. And I have been very blessed to embrace grandchildren along with my own children. To Him be honor and glory forever.

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# PERFECT DESIGN!



God created you for glory. When God created male and female He exclaimed, “It is very good.” The Hebrew word “very” means “exceedingly, especially, wholly.” God’s creation of male and female was “honorable, majestic, splendid, amazing, glorious, wonderful, and powerful (Psalm 111:2-8). Does this seem over the top? If I gave you all the meanings of the Hebrew words used, I’d have to write even more adjectives! God is an extravagant God and He is extravagant with His words.

## THE ETERNAL DESIGN

God created the man perfectly. He created the woman perfectly, according to His eternal design. He didn’t create another Adam as that would have been superfluous.

He created Eve with a different function, although complementary. God gave specific strengths to the man and specific strengths to the woman. He created men to be fathers with the anointing to protect, provide, and guide their homes. He created women to be mothers with the anointing to nurture children and nest in the home. As they each embrace the unique and God-given strengths given to them they become a strong force for God in this world.

Of course, Satan knows God plans and hates them. He seeks to undermine and wipe out every plan of God. And he hates motherhood. He knows the power of godly motherhood to impact the nation for righteousness and therefore wants to wipe it out. He uses humanism, feminism, and progressivism and sadly, so many listen to His deceitful ways. They are brainwashed to think that motherhood is insignificant and are enticed away from the home into the corporate man’s world.

Homes are left vacant of mothers. The children are in daycares instead of being nurtured by mothers in the home. God’s heart cries and the devil laughs up his sleeves. When he

the mothers out of the home, he can influence the minds of the children to his deceitful ways.

It’s time for the mothers of the nation to wake up. God, the One who created us knows best. He has the ultimate plan. The one that works. The one that brings blessing. The one that brings healing and wholeness. The one that blesses nations.

It’s time to embrace the glory God intends for women, instead of the deception, heartache, divorce, rejection of children through contraception, sterilization, and abortion, and the fragmentation of families—all inspired by the devil.

## PRESERVED, DELIVERED, AND HEALED

Let’s read 1 Timothy 2:15 (NASB): “Women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint.”

Do you mean to say that I must embrace childbearing as a woman? We know that not every woman will marry, and not all who marry are blessed with children. These precious women are still God-anointed nurturers and should use this anointing in the way God directs them to minister to hurting, sick, motherless children, and lonely people.

However, the embracing of childbearing is God’s ultimate plan for those who are married. It does not mean you will not use your unique gifts with which God has endowed you. The home is the greatest place for the release of creative gifts that can bless our families and the world.

The above Scripture states that women will be preserved in

childbearing? The KJV uses the word “saved.”

The Greek word for “saved” is *sozo*. It’s a verb and you pronounce it so-de’-zo. It is a powerful, multi-encompassing word meaning “to save, deliver, protect, heal, cure, preserve, keep safe, and make whole.”

I want you to get a hold of the fullness of *sozo*. Through embracing motherhood, you are saved, delivered, protected, preserved, healed, and made whole—physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. You can’t beat that! This is what it means to live in the glory of motherhood.

In the context of this Scripture it says you will be saved from deception. When women reject mothering for a full-time career outside the home they are often lured into deception, into a world that God did not create for women, but for men. God created mothers for a life of power, anointing, and blessing in the home as they raise children who will impact nations. When we move out from God’s divine purpose, we move out from under the covering of God’s protection and become vulnerable to deception.

Other commentaries of *sozo* enlarge on the meaning: “To deliver out of danger or destruction and into safety.”

“To keep safe.”

“To save a suffering one from perishing (one suffering from disease).”

“To restore to health.”

“To lift above trouble.”

“To cause something to change to an earlier, correct, or appropriate state.”

Millions of women, even those who name the name of Christ, have been robbed of God’s original plan for them. He wants to draw them back into His ultimate intention so they can live in the fullness of *sozo*.

Isn’t it amazing to know that motherhood will preserve and heal us physically? Many modern studies reveal the truth of this Scripture that women are preserved physically from diseases as they embrace childbearing. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/PreservedThroughMotherhood> to read studies that disclose that the more children a woman births and the longer she breastfeeds the less likelihood of female cancers.

## WHOLENESS FOR MOTHERS

Jesus used this same word *sozo* when healing the sick and making them whole. Here are a few examples:

Healing the woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years: Matthew 19:20-22: “Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made (*sozo*) thee whole (*sozo*).”

Further Scriptures using the words “made whole” which are from the word *sozo*:

Raising Jairus’ daughter from the dead (Luke 8:40-42, 49-56).

Healing all that touched Him (Mark 6:56).

Healing blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52).

Healing the Gadarene demoniac (Luke 8:26-39).

Healing the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19).

Because God created our bodies for childbearing, He is faithful to protect, preserve, and heal us in childbearing and mothering. It does not mean we are saved from pain in childbirth, but He watches over us and preserves us as we trust in Him. It does not mean that we’ll have no physical complaints and problems as we live in this imperfect world, but God will reveal His mighty power in our lives as we trust in Him.

God gives a message of wholeness for motherhood, just as He gives a message of wholeness for our salvation. We need to confess, affirm, and hold fast to this truth.

One Bible commentator challenged me when he wrote that after he understood the full meaning of *sozo*, he decided to speak out the full meaning every time he read the word “saved.” For example, Romans 10:13 says: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (*sozo*).” Therefore, he reads: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, delivered, protected, healed, preserved, kept safe, and made whole.” It changed his life.

Would you like to read 1 Timothy 2:15 and speak out every word of the full understanding of *sozo*? Confessing these truths will change your life as a mother.

## EMBRACE IT ALL

The word “childbearing” in 1 Timothy 2:15 is from the Greek word, *teknogonia*. It simply means “to be a child-bearer, implying the performance of maternal duties.” One source states that it means “all that is motherhood,” and another source calls it “a proper married life.” Therefore, the word includes far more than the process of birth. It encompasses all that is involved in motherhood.

You were ordained for “all that is motherhood.” Live in the fullness. Embrace your glory.

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# The Harvest

Trees laden with pink and white blooms, the air heavily perfumed, bird choirs enthusiastically singing . . . I love spring. I love sowing seeds in rich earth and joyfully imagining the harvest.

However, in fall a strange thing happens to me. I look out at my plants buried amongst a riot of weeds and stinging nettle and I don't want to go out to harvest. The air outside is damp and chilly while the house is warm and inviting. It takes real effort and a determined attitude on my part to go out into that muddy jungle and harvest the crop.

One day a verse in Proverbs 10:5 (NIV) jumped out at me: "He who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son." As I mused, an interesting parallel came to mind. Now is harvest time in the earth. All over the world people are open to the gospel, but there are not enough workers. Jesus said: "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2).

Several years ago, I specifically prayed for the Lord to give a special gift of evangelism to someone in our family. We are all involved in evangelism in various ways, but I specifically wanted God to give an extra passion and gifting to someone. That prayer was answered a short time later in a most unexpected way when the child I thought the least likely to be an evangelist became one!

Some of our children are extroverts, very friendly and outgoing, but we have some quieter personalities too. Our most quiet, shy, and introverted child of all was given an amazing passion for evangelism. She was 14 years old when this happened to her and she has been a street evangelist ever since. She loves approaching strangers on the streets and sharing the gospel with them. She goes out every day she can (even on her birthday). She regularly has amazing conversations with people, many of whom have never heard the gospel before and are very interested. It is astonishing.

We have never seen such openness in New Zealand before. Years ago, it

was much harder to share the gospel here, but now people's hearts in general are much softer. Certainly, it is harvest time. There are a lot of "weeds" and distractions in the world, but let us not be "disgraceful sons" who sleep during harvest. Let's pray for the harvest and pray for the Lord to use our families. God will show you opportunities if you ask Him for them.

A dear friend of ours found talking to people difficult, but she diligently prayed for opportunities and the Lord gave her an idea. She began painting pictures and bible verses on stones and leaving them on streets for people to find. Amazingly, she has since heard of many people becoming Christians because they found one of her stones. The Bible verse on it really spoke to them and they considered it a personal message from God. We know many other people who had remarkable God-appointed encounters when they prayed for opportunities.

As the homeschooling mother of eleven children, I have very little time, but it is amazing how many opportunities I have been given while in



Roger and Gwenda with their family: Abigail (20), Bonnie (19), Danella (18), Sophie (17), Benjamin (15), Jonathan (14), Lydia (11), Caleb (10), Jacob (7), Jana (3), and Michael (1). Bonnie came to be one of our Above Rubies helpers in 2016.

shops, or waiting at the doctor.

Last year hundreds of people from the local community came through our property for a special display the children and I assembled shortly before Christmas to present the real reason for Jesus coming to earth. We felt the idea was from God and it certainly came together with the help

of God. God took care of so many details. For example, we realized we needed traffic cones. We didn't mention it to anyone, but the next day someone rang up out of the blue. She didn't know what we were doing or anything about our need, but she had acquired traffic cones and wondered if we could use them!

Harvesting is exciting! "We must do the works of Him who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4).

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I love this poem by Thomas Bracken, written in the late 1800s. Among many other poems, he is the author of the famous poem, "Not Understood," and the great words of the New Zealand National Anthem. Thomas Bracken was born in Ireland, raised in Australia, and then moved to New Zealand where he married and worked as a poet, journalist, and politician. I printed this poem in the very first issue of Above Rubies, September 1977, 40 years ago. Celebrating, I print it for you again.



## Woman's Rights

Some people think that women should  
Compete in life's swift race  
With men, and gain each privilege  
Position, power, and place  
Which he enjoys. I can't agree  
With those progressive lights;  
I'll tell you what appears to me  
To be fair woman's rights.

When passion's young ecstatic fire  
First kindles in our veins,  
'Tis woman's right to bind our hearts  
In Cupid's rosy chains;  
She wields a queenly scepter then  
Which we must needs obey,  
We're building castles in the night  
And dreaming all the day.

'Tis woman's right to be caressed  
When love is in the spring  
And when affection's harvest comes  
Her right it is to bring  
The garnered fruits of happiness  
To cheer man's dreary way,  
To smooth his tougher nature  
And refine his coarser clay.

'Tis woman's right to wean us from  
Our selfishness and greed,  
A counsellor in trouble and  
A faithful friend in need.  
'Tis woman's right to lead us from

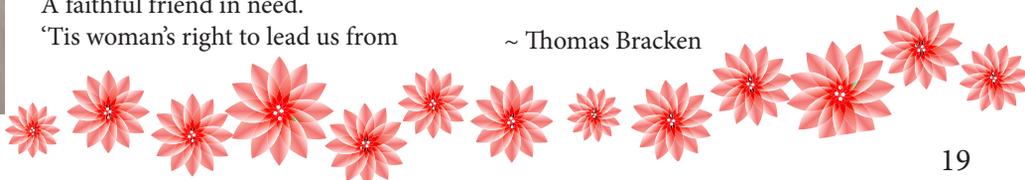
The foot of Mammon's throne  
And take us to a nobler shrine  
Where purer joys are known.

'Tis woman's sacred right—and this  
To her by God is given,  
To teach the lisping little ones  
The password into Heaven.  
No joy man knows on earth can with  
A mother's bliss compare  
When listening with the angel choir  
She hears her child's first prayer.

'Tis woman's right to lean on man  
In sorrow and distress  
For he was made to comfort her  
And she was made to bless;  
Her bulwark against danger, be  
She daughter, sister, wife,  
Or mother, he should guard her well  
Aye, even with his life.

'Tis woman's right, ere we prepare  
To battle in life's van,  
To shape our future destinies  
And mould the mind of man.  
And here, where we're erecting on  
Pacific's breast a state,  
The mothers of our rising race  
Can make it poor or great.

~ Thomas Bracken



# I Can't Feed my Baby

Some time ago, I wrote an article in *Above Rubies*, #89 entitled "My Multiplication Miracle" where I shared about the birth of my third child. The birth went beautifully at home as planned, but I later hemorrhaged from a retained placenta and had to transport to the hospital. I was in surgery for two hours. I lost so much blood and my blood pressure dropped dangerously low. They had an extremely difficult time getting an IV in to give me a transfusion. I almost died that day.

My milk only came in a few drops and I was devastated, but God miraculously provided over 1,000 oz. of breastmilk from a stranger (a friend of my husband's family). God then miraculously doubled the milk in the freezer! I was so thankful for that milk, although it was never easy to accept that I couldn't feed my baby. I missed my nursing times.

Two and a half years later, I gave birth to our fourth child and we rejoiced greatly over her perfect delivery. No hemorrhaging. No retained placenta! God IS good!

Now I waited for the last miracle—my milk. I nursed and nursed, but she barely peed or pooped. She continued to lose weight. I couldn't even hear her swallowing. She was hungry and I was falling apart.

We acquired some goat's milk and once again, I mixed up the "all-too-familiar" WAP formula and she guzzled it down. I continued to nurse, pump, pray, nurse, pump, and pray. I used an SNS (Supplemental Nursing Supplement) and every herb and supplement known to increase milk. Still nothing. I fought hard not to be depressed, but there was one thing God knew I needed to keep me thankful during that time.

My sister-in-law was due to have a baby a week before me, but at 31 weeks, her sweet Hope Iris was stillborn. Oh, how the rest of my 10 weeks of pregnancy dragged by as we mourned. And when my baby girl was born, I cried and could only whisper, "Thank You, Lord," because I was holding my baby and she wasn't. It just wasn't fair and while I trust our Father completely, there are just some things I will never understand earth side.

Even in my most difficult, heartbroken days when once again I couldn't nurse my baby the way I wanted to, the Father reminded me to praise Him anyway and thank Him for His blessings. Yes, it is hard to praise Him in your pain, but it is

true that there is always someone going through more pain than you. We always have reason to praise and thank Him, even if it is for WHO HE IS!

This is the biggest thing He has been teaching me this past year. Finding things to be thankful for, even when I don't feel like it. Trusting Him more. Just because my body won't do something it was created to do, doesn't make me a failure as a mother. The enemy never stops trying to tell us that we aren't good enough, that we are a failure, or that something is somehow our fault. But the devil is a LIAR!



Chris and Amy with their precious blessings: Alyssa (6.5), Evelyn (5), Benjamin (3.5), and Brianna (1).

I am learning that Proverbs 18:21 is true: "Death and life is in the power of the tongue." I must speak truth and life! I am not a failure! A failure would have been to let my baby starve. Instead, I hold her every time I give her a bottle, snuggle her, and give her just as much love, attention, and kisses as if I were nursing her. I have also learned not to cast judgment on mothers I see feeding their baby a bottle when I don't know their circumstances. I am now one of those mothers who must ignore those looks of judgment, knowing I am doing all I can do.

Are you discouraged because your birth didn't go as planned, or your husband's job, or your living situation, or, or, or? We are not failures, fellow mothers. We are raising the next generation to love and serve our Father and build His Kingdom and NO ONE ELSE can do our job!

Know that your Heavenly Father loves you right where you are, the way you are. He is proud of you. Every time you feel sorry for yourself, offer up a praise, or thank Him for a blessing, because it sends the enemy running the other direction!

Yes, it is hard, and pain is real. I still have tears in my eyes writing this nearly two years later. It still hurts to see other mothers nursing their babies, but I am THANKFUL. I have so much more than I deserve. And . . . I have HOPE! I serve a mighty God who does miracles and I am still believing to see more in my life. He will do them for you, too! Hold fast, stay strong, and rest in Him, dear mother. You are priceless.

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## AMY BREWER

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\* Supplemental Nursing System. Google for Medela or Lact-Aid.

# Write it Down . . . Pass it on!



A while back my husband, Phil, was made redundant from his job of ten years. It came as a great surprise as we both expected him to be there forever!

The children frequently asked, "Mum, what's Dad going to do about a job?"

"I'm not sure, but God says He is Jehovah Jireh, our Provider and only He can open doors for work. I have no idea what God has planned for our family!" We prayed.

Around the dinner table one evening, I told the children stories of my own childhood. I shared how the Lord had always provided for my family's needs when I was growing up and how He opened amazing doors for work for my siblings and me. Being one of twelve children, there were MANY stories! The children's faith (and my own, and I'm sure my husband's) grew as I shared these testimonies.

Phil and Helen with their children: Becky (21) third from left, who was an Above Rubies helper for two months in 2013, David (19), Hannah (17) left of picture who was an Above Rubies helper for two months 2016/2017, Jonny (15), and Leah (12).

I told the children, "One day I will write them all down." Hannah, who was 16 at the time, looked me right in the eye and said firmly, "Mum, do it NOW!"

I began. On almost the first day of writing I read Psalm 78:1-7 (NLT): "Oh my people, listen to my instructions. Open your ears to what I am saying . . . I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—stories we have heard and known, stories our ancestors handed down to us. We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about His power and His mighty wonders . . . He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children, so the next generation might know them—even the children not yet born—and they in turn will teach their own children. So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting His glorious miracles and obeying His commands."

This passage confirmed to me that I needed to write down what God has done and is doing in my life to encourage my family. It also encourages me as I look back on God's faithfulness.

Six weeks after Phil finished his previous job, he got employment in the lower South Island for nine months. We moved from the North Island of New Zealand to the bottom of the beautiful South Island. We lived with my sister and family on a picturesque sheep farm near Phil's work. My sister and her husband had just added a lodge to their home for visitors, God's perfect timing! It was a wonderful time and we visited so many amazing places.

When we returned home, my husband got a new job within three weeks of our return. Only God could open these doors. Recently, our eldest son, David, headed to London to live. He also had to trust God for work and accommodation, but was strengthened through seeing the faith in his father. He was blessed to get a job within the first week.

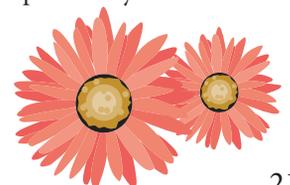
Let's be faithful to pass on God's goodness to the next generation. Psalm 31:19 (NLT) says: "How great is the goodness you have stored up for those who fear you. You lavish it on those who come to you for protection."

Jeremiah 30:2 (ESV) says: "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you.'"

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## HELEN BRONN

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Tyler and Sarah are blessed with four blessings: Vanessa Lynn (14) David Allen (10) Jared Michael (8) Bridget Claire (2)

## *I Learned My Trade*

What do you do when you hate home? I was raised by two working parents with the understanding that I would go to college, have a career, and if I really felt the need, I could have one child in my thirties to check “parenting” off my to-do list.

Unfortunately for my parents, I was a rebel. I married young and had a baby right away. I never finished college, which meant that when baby number two was on the way, my husband quickly realized that my income would not cover two children in daycare. It just made financial sense for me to stay home “until they both started school.”

I didn’t want to be home forever. I didn’t know if I wanted to be home at all, but the numbers didn’t lie. So, December of 2006, I gave my notice at work and after the Christmas holiday became a stay-at-home mom—and soon after a homeschool mom.

I learned in a hurry that my childhood had left me grossly unprepared for the task at hand. I had never once seen my mother clean our home because every Thursday we had a housekeeper come in and do it for us. I had never been given chores as a child because it was just too much trouble to teach me to do anything. I never cooked a meal because my mom had to get dinner on the table in a hurry after working a full day in the office. I would have slowed her down.

I didn’t know how to begin taking on the task of keeper at home. So, I ran away. I packed up my children almost daily and we went to the park, the zoo, the museum, and when money was too tight to afford anything with admission, we window shopped. We walked the mall like it was our job. Anything we could do to get out of the house and away from the mess and the constant reminder that I had no idea what I was doing.

Deep down I knew it wasn’t normal to hate your home so much, but I just thought it was because we had a tiny little starter home in the wrong part of town. I was absolutely spoiled rotten, but as it turns out, “home” has a lot less to do with the house and a lot more to do with the heart.

A few years later, we moved to a new, larger home in a nicer area and I thought my problems were solved. Nope. The bigger, better house didn’t make a home either. Our move took us farther from the church we had attended for years and my husband wanted to find a new church, closer to our new house.

God directed us to a small congregation that was not even on our radar, and after one service, we knew we were in the right place. Within a few weeks of attending, my husband and I both found our relationship with God growing by leaps and bounds. Our hearts changed for each other, our children, and our home. I suddenly had a deep desire to learn my trade, and learn it well.

We live in a world of easy information and I quickly found resources to help me learn to cook better meals, plan my time wisely, and truly be a keeper at home. We now have four children and I live for the days that we don’t have to go anywhere. I love days spent in our home, learning together, working together, and serving together. I am still far from an accomplished homemaker, and I still hate scrubbing toilets, but I know that God made a mighty change in my heart.

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## *It's Okay to Say No*

I will never forget the question, "Don't you love being home?" "No," I answered. I didn't even have to think twice about it. "I would rather be anywhere, but home."

As a child, I loved my home and my mom made it a safe haven for our family. I slowly drifted from the love of home when I started having sleepovers at other people's homes. It opened the door to other people's influence on my life and walk with the Lord. It wasn't always good either.

Although I drifted, I never forgot what home should be. I was married at 21 and thought I knew it all. I was independent and didn't want children. My husband didn't either. As time went on and other friends began families of their own, I fell in love with their children and loved my own nieces and nephews.

Chad and I soon couldn't wait to have our own children and God blessed us with Trinity Faith. I was a working mother, but Chad and I decided it would be best if I stayed home with her. I did all the things mothers do with their first child and followed all the rules. We were both book parents. I stayed very busy and we went lots of places.

Charity came fifteen months later. My husband picked up a second job so I could continue to stay home. I now had two children and still ran the roads. To not be there was an escape from reality. I became discontented and complained about everything.

I wanted something bigger for the children so we decided to sell our home. We moved to another home almost an hour away from our family and friends. I thought moving into a bigger home would make me happier. It turned out to be my worst nightmare. Discontentment cost me five years of torment.

God blessed Chad and I with two more children during our second move. Noah and Serenity were the best gifts during our five years spent in Bloomfield, Kentucky. I learned much more about being a good wife and mother during that time away from family and friends.

However, I still managed to burn up the roads. Four children didn't stop me from being everywhere, but home. I packed them up and off we went. Even though I was a good person, wife, and mother, I didn't truly love my home and calling. I took great care of my children and my home. I cooked, cleaned, and made sure my hubby had what he needed, but I kept myself too busy. I even found excuses to run the roads after dinner was over!

I was too busy to watch a show with my husband. Too busy to get on the floor to play with my children. I thought they needed to be entertained somewhere else, anywhere but in their home.

I realized that you can be a stay-at-home mom and still be too busy. You can get caught up in things you shouldn't. As mothers, we think we should keep our children busy. We think busy equals happy. Not true! Our number one priority is our husbands and children. I was so busy working for the church, other activities, helping other people, and running the roads that I neglected the very gifts God had given me.

My mom started to have many heart to heart conversations with me about my business. She knew it was affecting my home. She reminded me that my first calling is to my husband and children. God first, then my husband, then my children, and then the church. She let me know I had them all out of order. God slowly got through to me that I needed to not only to be home, but to love being home.

As the Holy Spirit convicted me, my heart changed. Chad and I decided to sell our home in Bloomfield and move back to Louisville, but it took over three years to sell. I had never been more thankful to finally be settled in our new home. I was closer to my family and my mommy.

Now, I love the privilege I've been given to stay home and homeschool my children. It's a blessing I no longer take for granted. I never thought I would say the words, "There is nowhere I would rather be."

I work hard to make it a place of refuge, a safe haven for my husband and children. I've not mastered it all. The enemy still tries to lure me into being away from home too much. I'm wiser now and when I get over committed I back off. The Holy Spirit reminds me that it's okay to say no.



Chad and Christy with their family: Trinity (15), Charity (14), Noah (11), and Serenity (9).

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# WHAT'S IN

## A Surprise



Matt and Shani with their children: Ellyn (21), John (19), Eli (15), William (14), Josiah (10), Levi (5), and Ezekielle (3).

We chose each of our children's names specifically with much prayer and even some research into their meanings. However, our seventh child was named in a different way—God named this baby.

In the middle of a normal night, my husband sat straight up in bed. Startled, I asked him if he was all right. He had just had what he thought was a vision from the Lord. In his vision, someone handed him a baby and said, "This is Ezekiel."

"Huh." was my simple response and we both went back to sleep.

The next morning, while getting breakfast ready, one of my older boys said to me, "Mom, you know what's a good name that you rarely hear?"

"What?" I asked.

"Ezekiel," he answered.

"Now, this is getting weird," I thought to myself.

About six weeks later, we found we were expecting our seventh baby. I looked at my husband and laughingly said, "Well, we know it's a boy, and we know what to name him!" We both felt strongly that God had already given us the name before we even asked, but we kept it to ourselves as our little secret.

Due to my age at the time (43), we agreed to have an ultrasound at 20 weeks to make sure things were progressing normally. The technician asked me if

we wanted to know the sex of the baby. I responded that we thought we already knew, but she could confirm it for us if she got a peek. After a few minutes, she said, "It's a girl!"

"Um, are you sure?" I asked uneasily. She took a few more peeks and was very definite that we should plan on a girl.

As we drove home in stunned silence, we both found ourselves laughing with cautious joy. We knew it could be a mistake, but maybe the Lord was just wanting to surprise us. After all, we were already missing our oldest and only girl. I had just driven her across country to attend a discipleship school for a year.

We had five wonderful boys in a row following her and another girl would be an extra special blessing at this time. Glancing over at my husband, I asked if he could go back to the Lord on the name. If it wasn't a mistake, Ezekiel would be an odd name for a girl. Not to mention the list of unused girl names that had piled up from the past five pregnancies! Cute names. Meaningful names. My husband promised he would ask the Lord about the name and we both agreed to pray about it that day.

That night I picked up my devotional to read before turning off the light to sleep. My bookmark was at Day 86 in Nancy's "100 Days of Blessing." It began: "The Lord is the strength of my life. The devotion continued . . . in the Lord Jehovah is Everlasting Strength . . . You are my strength, Lord . . . God is the strength of my heart." "Oh my," I thought as my husband walked into the bedroom.

"Sweetie, I'd like you to read my devotional for tonight." He willingly read it with his eyes getting wider with each passing sentence. You see, the meaning of the name Ezekiel is "Strength of God."

"Well," I laughed, "I guess we're stuck with the name." My husband had received the same answer earlier. This confirmed it. "Do you think the Lord would mind if I put an extra "le" on the end to feminize it?" I asked sheepishly.

Our beautiful daughter was born a few months later. It wasn't a mistake. She was definitely all "girl." We confidently gave

her the name Ezekielle Joy. Her middle name came from the fact that I had told the Lord we needed more joy in our home shortly before finding out I was pregnant. And she has lived up to her name already! There is a special lightness in our home with this little lady running about in her favorite colors of pink and purple.

We call her Zellie as a nickname, but I'm amazed at how many people curiously ask if that is short for something. This is my opening to tell them the story of how God gave her this name. This often leads to sharing the good news of Jesus with total strangers who thought they were asking a simple question. Or sometimes encouraging a fellow believer that God is present and powerful.

### SHANI GIBBS

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## At Last, a Son!



Laurie and Stan with some of their family—from left to right: Sarabeth (16), Kate (13), Laurie and Stan holding Ruth (9), Sophia (20) married to Logan, kneeling, (and they have a one-month old baby, Elowynn Grace), Olivia (18), Jessica (26), and Stanley Elijah (10).

Not pictured: Danielle married to Anthony who have Jocelyn (8), Finley (6), and Mason (4); Rebecca married to Chris who have Rayna (12), Alexis (11), Abel (10 months), and baby Elijah; Cassidy married to Kyle who have Colten (one month).

We are the parents of nine daughters and one son. After our eighth daughter was born, I read a book by John R. Rice called "The Home: Courtship, Marriage, and Children." The author wrote that the reason there aren't more young

# ...AN A NAME?

men preaching is because there aren't many parents praying for sons to raise as preachers.

I mentioned this to my husband, and we began to pray for the Lord to give us a son whom we could raise to preach the gospel. Not long after, I discovered I was pregnant again. My husband said, "Oh, God, if you give me a boy, I'll give him the biggest Bible name I can think of!"

A few months later, an ultrasound revealed our answer to prayer—a baby boy was growing in my womb! When I returned home from the doctor's office, I gave my husband and children the news, to which my husband replied, "Stanley Jr." "It doesn't sound like a Bible name to me," I replied. He compromised and gave our young preacher his daddy's first name and the middle name Elijah, my husband's favorite prophet in the Bible.

Stanley Elijah (who goes by Elijah) is now 10 years old and loves to hear us tell this story.

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## Scripture Names



Ryan and Marie with their children: Grace (11), Rose (9), Price (7), Newman (5), Joy (2), and Baby due January 2018.

We named each of our children English words that are found throughout Scripture—Grace, Rose, Price, Newman, and Joy. The children hear their

names most weeks in church, either in the liturgy, hymns, or Bible readings. When I hear their name recited in church, I touch their head or shoulder and they give me a knowing look, reminded of the reason for their names.

We also have each name and a Scripture that includes their name placed on the wall of our home. The Scripture for GRACE is Ephesians 2:8; ROSE is 1 Thessalonians 4:14; PRICE is 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; NEWMAN is Ephesians 4:23,24; and JOY is Psalm 5:11.

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## Important to God and Children



Thomas and Angie with their children: Aliyah (10), Makayla (8), Isaac (7), Cohen (5), and Samuel (3).

Names are not only very important to God, but important to the person who receives the name. A wisely chosen name can speak life into a person; a poorly chosen name can speak defeat.

Our family name is Stewart which means "Steward" or one who manages and looks after another's property. Therefore, we encourage our children with this character quality. They carry a sense of belonging to our Lord because they know they are His stewards—stewards of the Ascending King, stewards who know

there is none like God, stewards who laugh and rejoice, stewards who are faithful to their tasks, stewards of the High Priest and grace of God, stewards who are brave and strong! How can you do anything but smile when you are given a label such as this?

We gave each of our children an original first name and a family middle name. This gives them a sense of being unique, yet belonging to a group of people who love them. For example, our fourth child is Cohen (meaning priest of God) and Jackson (named after his grandfather).

We posted our children's names, along with their meanings, on their bedroom doors. Their faces light up with joy when we talk about their name meanings.

We are thrilled to discover what God has in store for these beautiful children of His. We pray that if they should happen to lose their way, they will remember it again by the knowledge of the meaning of their name.

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## It's Exciting



Jordan and Julianna with their girls: Olivia (9), Ruthy (7), Melody (5), Brianna (3), and Abrielle (1).

Finding out that we are having another baby is always exciting. And so is picking the name! I always want to decide on one right away, but my husband reminds me that we have plenty of time.

During this last pregnancy with our fifth girl, I attended a Beth Moore Bible study called "Breaking Free." I knew it would be good for me because I needed freedom in the area of fear.

In the study, Beth Moore says: "In Christ we find the freedom to be safely exposed." Wow! That is the opposite of fear. You don't have to hide to be safe. You are safe in Jesus and He enables you to be free!

What she said reminded me of a baby name I had heard before which means "Open, secure, protected." These things can only go together in Christ. My husband liked the name, so we kept it as a probability.

About a month later I checked the internet to discover any other meanings of this name. I found it means: "God is my strength" or "Strong one of God." Woah! Chills! After that it was settled. This was her name! In God's strength, I find freedom to be "open, secure, and protected."

We chose Joy for her middle name, because that is my sister-in-law's middle name. Our other four daughters are named after four of my husband's other sisters, and this sister was next in line! But then I remembered that "The joy of the Lord is my strength" (Nehemiah 8:10).

How beautiful.

I love how God directed us in naming our little Abrielle Joy.

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#### JULIANNA GESSLER

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## God Overruled Tradition

We never thought about names for our babies as I am a stickler to traditions and the children simply received their names as per birth order from the family lineage.

Our eldest is a daughter. It wasn't a difficult pregnancy, but emotionally stressful. My husband prayed for a son. When he learned it was to be a daughter, he was rather upset. We had some ugly fights resulting in me telling him that he is not God and he should be thankful that we even conceived, never mind the gender of the baby! Oh, the ugly things we say in heated moments!

But when she was born and put into his arms, she stole his heart. She was named after my mother (her maternal

grandmother, Cecilia Aletta), although we made a combination name and called her Leticia. Years later I did an internet search and discovered her name means Joy. She brought only joy into our lives. Today she is married and bringing joy in a new community.

The next child was a son. He was baptized Henry Deighton Keyter and called Henry. He is my "home" son. He prefers home to anything. Even vacations drain him. Later I learned his name means "home ruler."

I did not conceive again for four years. We visited the GP who ran some blood tests and diagnosed Hypothyroidism. After a year on medication, I fell pregnant again. We named this son after his maternal grandfather, Johan Christiaan. Oh, he is such a blessing to us! I was so joyful and glad when he was born. And, lo and behold, his name means "God is gracious," exactly what we experienced.

Two years later, another boy was to be born. We did not expect to have another child. We did not realize at that time that we should give everything, even conception and birth control, to the Lord. However, God spoke to me through a visiting minister. We attended a weekend seminar on marriage and the minister opened his sermon with the words: "If there is anyone here who is pregnant with an unprayed for pregnancy, you should repent. Every baby is a gift and blessing from God. You should pray for every baby and accept them from God." I was in tears as the Lord spoke clearly and directly to me.

God wanted this "unwanted" baby. How could I not accept him? I prayed so much for a "natural" birth and the Lord mercifully granted it to me. We named him after his daddy, Andries Petrus. The name Andries means "manly" and Petrus "rock." His dad is an example of both and I believe André will follow in his dad's footsteps.

Four years after André's birth I was introduced to Above Rubies. For four years I had taken control with Mirena (IUD), but had it removed. It's been eight years since, so if there is another baby it will be miraculous.

I am still in awe how God used my traditions to turn out true for our children. I never knew there were name meanings until much later, but they fit each one of them perfectly.

---

#### MARELIZE KEYTER

Naboomspruit, South Africa  
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## Three Times



Christopher & Katy Norberg, Paul (9), Anna (7), Joshua (4), and Andrew (2).

Before my first baby, I didn't realize the importance of naming children. My husband and I had prayed about it a little, and talked about a few names we liked, but we weren't ready with a name when my water broke at 35 weeks.

Because the baby was sideways, we had a C-section a few hours later. While lying on the operating table, I heard, "Paul." Hmm. I thought, that's a great name. Then I heard the baby cry and my husband surprisingly said, "It's a boy!" as the baby was brought over to the examining table. Then I heard "Paul" again and thought, "That makes sense since the baby is a boy."

Finally, I heard "Paul" a third time. I was still lying on the table but it was so clear to me that I called over to my husband, "I have a name! The baby's name is Paul!"

Later, we celebrated that the Holy Spirit helped us name our new little one. Paul means, "small" and "humble," which was perfect for a baby who was only 4 lbs. 4 oz.

Since then we are thankful for three VBACs and each new child has a great story for how the Lord helped us to choose their name. We are so thankful!

---

#### KATY NORBERG

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## Names Help Us Belong

Our children's names by order of birth are Jeremiah, Samuel, Wonder, Elizah, Jairus, Cyrus, and baby #7 on the way.

When we find out we are expecting, we ask God the name and the calling of the child He is sending to us. The Bible says in Jeremiah 1:5: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you," If the Lord knows us before He forms us it makes sense to get the name from Him.

Names have to do with belonging. Our parents named us and so we belong to them. Women get married and take on their husband's name and that shows they belong to their husbands. Jesus gave us His name because we belong to Him.

Because the Lord already knows we want Him to name our children, sometimes God has given us the name a year or two before the child is conceived. Not once has the ultrasound or birth confirmed a different gender than the one the Lord gave us.

Often God has a message to communicate to us in the naming of a child. Each one of our children's names had a message either that was communicated to us along with it or embedded in their meaning. For example, our first child's name is

Jeremiah which means "Jehovah who lays a foundation." Sure enough, at the time of his birth the Lord was laying a righteous foundation in our lives.

A few years later, Samuel was born and his name means "heard by God." During that season, the Lord was teaching us that He hears our prayers. He taught us different kinds of praying, including praying all night, which we see in both the life of Samuel the prophet and our Lord Jesus. From the time Samuel could crawl and up to this day, he has loved to pray and talk to God. To get the names of your children from the Lord brings so much clarity to their purpose in life. It makes it easier to "train them in the way they should go."

Either the husband or the wife can receive the name from the Lord. We see in Scripture that both men and women received names from the Lord for their children.

When we discovered Nadia was pregnant with our third born, we began asking God for the name and He gave Nadia the name "WONDER." We had never heard of such a name before, nor did the name give us a hint of what gender our child would be.

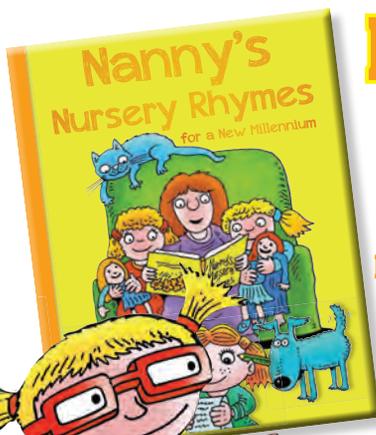
We continued to pray for confirmation and God gave us the Scripture from Isaiah 8: 18: "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for WONDERS in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." Truly, after she was born, we began to see incredible miracles and wonders in our lives that have not stopped since! God is good and God is faithful.

### PITANA AND NADIA MUTANA

Collinwood, Tennessee, USA  
pitanamutana@gmail.com  
www.mutanafamily.com



Pitana and Nadia with their children: Jeremiah (12), Samuel (9), Wonder (7), Elizah (5), Jairus (3), Cyrus (16 months), and new baby due January 2018.



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Contact Joy Bloom \* Ph: 404 710 1007

[joy.bloom.blessed@gmail.com](mailto:joy.bloom.blessed@gmail.com)

## 24 - 25 FEBRUARY, SCOTLAND

Meetings in Edinburgh and Glasgow

Contact Esther Mcdermott \* [family@mcdermottchris.plus.com](mailto:family@mcdermottchris.plus.com)

## 1 MARCH, ENGLAND

### LADIES DAY in EAST ANGLIA

Contact Anna \* [goannago@gmail.com](mailto:goannago@gmail.com)

## 2 - 4 MARCH, ENGLAND

### LADIES RETREAT

at De Vere Wokefield Estate, Reading, SE England

And for meetings in Chester and other places:

Contact Tania Potter \* Ph: 97 879 693941

[taniaaboverubies@gmail.com](mailto:taniaaboverubies@gmail.com)

## 16 - 18 FEBRUARY, WASHINGTON

LADIES RETREAT at Black Lake Bible Camp, Olympia

Registration questions:

Elizabeth Stol \* [proudisisofmany@gmail.com](mailto:proudisisofmany@gmail.com)

Nicole Stol: Ph: 253 312 0969 \* [arblessings@gmail.com](mailto:arblessings@gmail.com)

General retreat questions:

Heather Bryant: Ph: 360 271 9668

or Lisa Strickland: Ph: 360 265 1737

[slstrickland96@hotmail.com](mailto:slstrickland96@hotmail.com)

**This retreat is going to be a one-off SPECIAL!**

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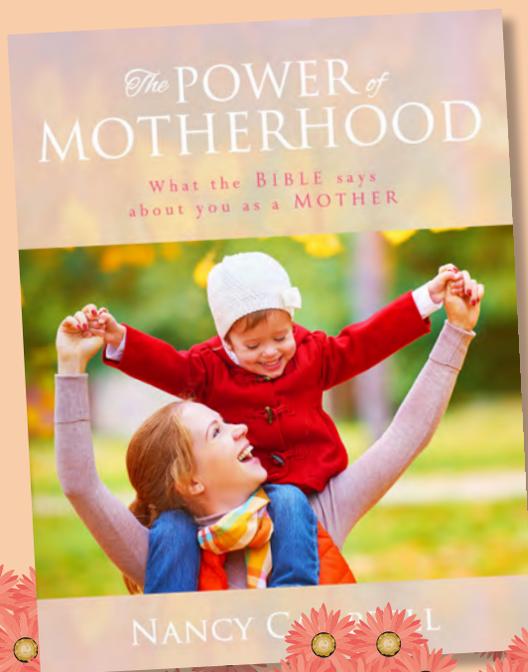
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Contact: Daniel and Allison Hartman

Ph: 850 221 1222 \* innerlight@yahoo.com

**4 - 6 MAY, TENNESSEE**

FAMILY CAMP at Natchez Trace Wilderness Preserve,  
1331 Napier Rd, Hohenwald, TN.

Contact David and Sherri Leiter \* Ph: 931 964 9944

sewingmama7@hotmail.com

Or Amy Brewer \* amy.chris.brewer@gmail.com

**24 - 26 AUGUST, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA  
FAMILY AND LADIES RETREAT**

Pine Valley Bible Conference Center, near San Diego

Contact: Gary and Trish Evans

Ph: 951 681 4858 \* bondedtogether1@yahoo.com

**12 - 13 OCTOBER, OREGON**

LADIES RETREAT at Valley Baptist Church, McMinnville  
2631 NE McDonald Ln, McMinnville, OR 97128

Contact: Charity Jenkins \* Ph: 503 871 9535

kengjenkins@msn.com or Sonia Ramsay \* Ph: 503 743 3002

upsetmyapplecart@gmail.com

**31 AUGUST - 2 SEPTEMBER,  
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at Wolf Creek Circle Square Ranch, Wolseley.

Contact: Anita Johnson \* Ph: 306 522 7601

jer924@sasktel.net

Or Theresa Vanderstoel \* Ph: 306 345 2039

ctvfarms@sasktel.net

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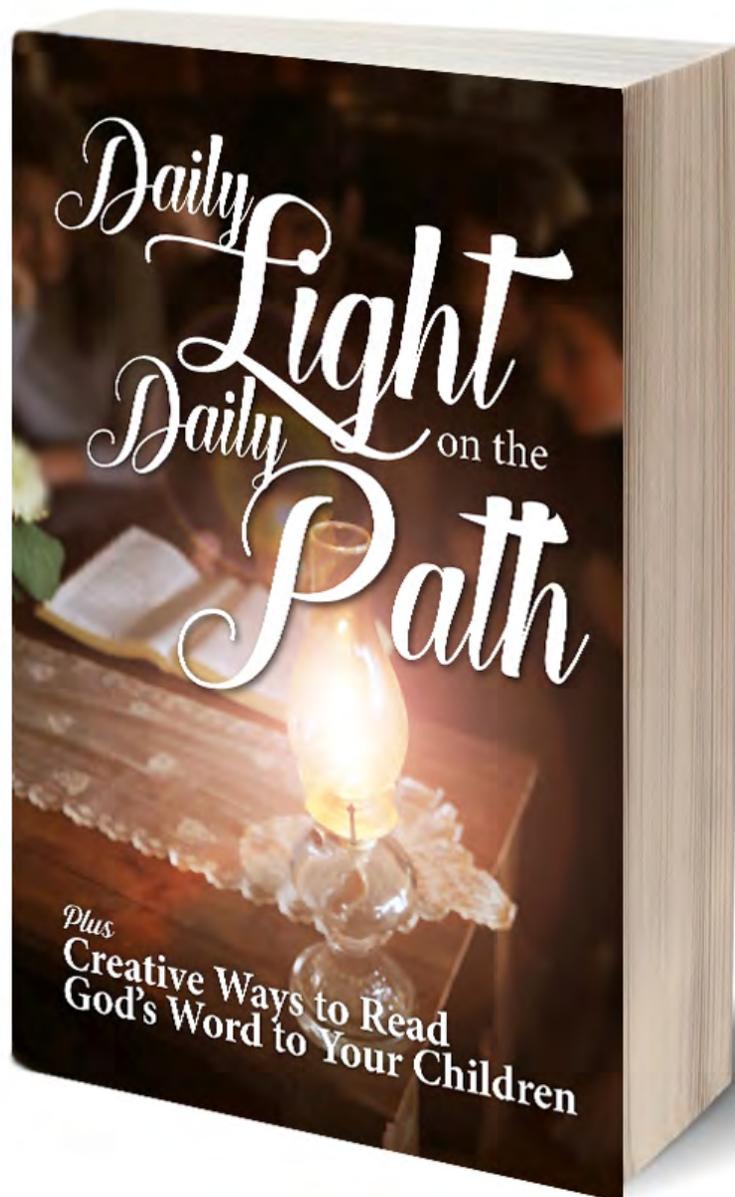
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