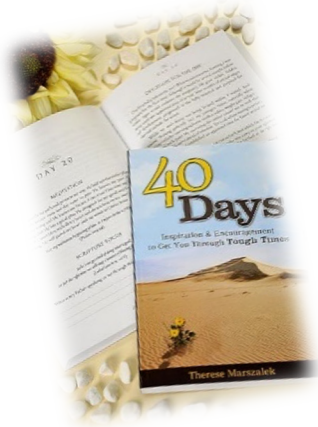


Spiritual Guide for the 40 Days Journey

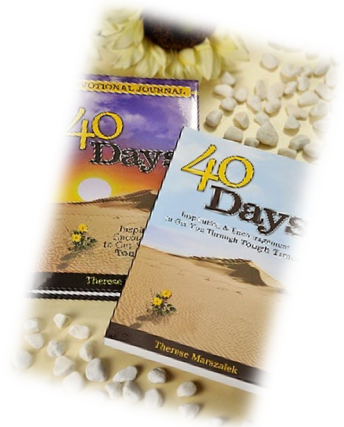
By Therese Marszalek

Join me for a life-changing 40-day journey through my book *40 Days*.

This inspiring book brims with revelation and will draw you to a deeper faith while navigating life's rough patches. If you're struggling through tough times and feel as if you're hopelessly lost in the wilderness, you'll be led to a bright, beautiful new season! Look forward to a fresh start as your faith in God's marvelous plan for your life is renewed.



To purchase a personalized copy of *40 Days*, contact Therese at therese.marszalek@gmail.com. The *40 Days Devotional Journal* (padded hard cover) is suggested as an excellent supplement to *40 Days*.



40 Days Joy for the Journey Note:

Welcome to the 40 Days journey! I'm looking forward to sharing this 40-day journey with you. Though you can begin *40 Days* at any time, the initial *40 Days* journey that you're about to partake of through these pages and videos was divinely orchestrated to begin on Resurrection Day, Sunday, April 1, 2018. From the day Jesus rose from the dead and for the next 40 days, He revealed himself to multitudes as the resurrected Savior before ascending into heaven. God continues to reveal Himself powerfully to those on the *40 Days* journey as they seek Him at a deeper level of intimacy. As you'll soon learn, the initial journey and the journey you're about to embark on was and is a "kairos" time, a specific event that came to pass according to God's timeline.

I encourage you be intentional about choosing a starting day for *40 Days*. God will lead you at just the right pace from there.

As you prayerfully prepare yourself for this *40 Days* journey, please review and enjoy the following seven (7) videos prior to starting the *40 Days* journey:

Video #1 (Click [here](#)) - Word of Encouragement

Video #2 (Click [here](#)) - Why *40 Days* Began on Resurrection Day

Video #3 (Click [here](#)) - Introduction to Jesus

Video #4 (Click [here](#)) - A Word about Trials and the Defeated Foe

Video #5 (Click [here](#)) - Preparation for *40 Days*

Video #6 (Click [here](#)) - How to Benefit Most from *40 Days*

Video #7 (Click [here](#)) - Prayer for the *40 Days* journey.

***40 Days* Joy for the Journey Note:**

The day before we started the *40 Days* journey, I had an emergency trip to the hospital in severe abdominal pain. We returned home at 2:30 am after a multitude of tests (and thankfully pain med in my IV!) Gall bladder surgery was in my near future. This too shall and did pass!

A new friend brought me a special surprise shortly before we left for the hospital that day. Isn't it pretty! Note the monarch butterfly.... This was a sign for me and for you as we start the journey: When in its cocoon, the monarch endures a GREAT difficult struggle. But it's **THROUGH** that struggle that its wings are developed and strengthened so it can fly!

No matter what you're facing right now, God is with you and is developing and strengthening your wings so you can fly!

Relax as you prepare for this journey. God has already prepared the way and has a glorious plan as we walk out this journey with Him. It's going to be a life changing *40 Days*!



Day 1 - I Will Give You Rest

Because He lives, we too can live!

What a wakeup call day 1 is for me! This past year has included continual major life challenges that have contributed to feeling again like that guitar that's strung too tight. I could sure use another day at the "Mandeville Manor." How about you?

Come away with me

Life is full of activity and hustle bustle for all of us. Though we need time with the Lord more than ever in the midst of extra pressure, devotion time often gets squeezed out.

It continues to amaze me that our awesome God, the creator of this universe, wants to spend time with us. Personal time. Just you and Him. Wow! Yet notice we play an important part: We have to show up! He says, "Come to Me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." Our part is to come to Him. If we come to Him, He will give us rest.

In the midst of our busy lives, it's critical that we take a time out regularly - daily - to spend time with God and His Word. It doesn't have to be a huge chunk of time, it's amazing what the Lord can do even in a short time, if only we'll come to Him. This week, you'll be challenged to set two hours aside to come with a notebook in hand to talk with the Lord about your burdens and stress. I pray you'll make this a priority.

Spending time alone with God may be a new thing for you, and it may feel uncomfortable at first. You may feel a bit like I felt at the Mandeville Manor - I didn't know what to do! Yet if you simply show up, and be still, and shut the busyness off for a bit, you'll be amazed at what He speaks to your heart and what He does in you just by being with Him. And if you come with your head hanging low in shame as I did that day, God always longs to restore you and draw you closer to Him as He did me.

I love in Acts 4:13, after Peter and John got in trouble for healing the beggar that had been lame from birth, the leaders recognized that they had been with Jesus. May it be evident to others around us that we've been in God's presence, as people will notice that His presence changes us.

Day 2 - Fear Not ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

The giant of fear is coming down!

God's Love Assignment ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Sit - relax - listen and let these words soak in.

Day 3 - Just Believe

What are you believing God for? A physical healing? The healing of your marriage? Financial breakthrough? Restoration of a broken relationship? Deliverance from addiction? A new job? A ministry? A prodigal child's return? As we stand in faith, circumstances can scream so loud to drown out faith and tempt us to give up hope. It can look like anything BUT what you're trusting God for, is coming to pass.

But God is faithful. Always.

Circumstances have a commanding presence, don't they? Every day, without exception, we face ever changing circumstances, and along with it, opportunities to respond to those circumstances. Sometimes tragic circumstances tempt us to believe that the things God promised us will never come to pass. The perceived death of our dreams brings great mourning of soul. While we're trying to hang on to a shred of hope, choruses of people (and the devil!) often encourage us to stop believing. Some will even laugh when we express hope for what appears hopeless. God doesn't appear to care about popularity polls and doesn't seem to bend a bit when He asks us to believe what He said. Even if you're standing alone and are the only one willing to believe God, He continues to say, "Don't be afraid, just believe."



Like Jesus said after Jairus learned that his daughter had died, "Don't be afraid. Just believe, and she will be healed." (Mark 5:36). Jairus believed and his daughter was raised to life.

What hope has died in you that needs to be brought back to life? How will you respond to your circumstances today? In spite of how hopeless it may appear—just believe. The resurrected Savior will breathe resurrection life into that which appears to be without hope.

40 Days Joy for the Journey Note:

When I opened the blinds this morning, over 4 more inches of snow awaited me (it's April 3 for goodness sake!). Sitting in the bare tree was a lost looking robin, all



puffed up and trying to stay warm. I imagined what he was thinking: "WHAT is going on? This is NOT what I expected! I feel so alone! This is unfamiliar! I'm going back south where it's more comfortable." After starting the 40 Days Journey, you might be feeling like that little robin. This is new territory for many of us, allowing God to take us into the places where He can heal us and grow us through it. Don't

go south! We're transitioning into a new season and transition isn't easy. The rainbow comes **AFTER** the storm. The sunrise comes **AFTER** the darkness of midnight. Spring comes **AFTER** winter (eventually!)

I hope you're putting a slice of time aside to talk to the Lord about the things addressed in the devotions. This may be unfamiliar to you, and uncomfortable!

It's not complicated. You can talk to the Lord just like you'd talk to a close trusted friend. He longs to hear what's on your heart. And He's available always! You're not alone!

From Genesis to Revelation, God has always communicated with His people if they'll only have ears to hear. Let's have ears to hear today.

Day 4 - Dilemma of Depression ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Today we're addressing the complicated and difficult subject of depression. If you've dealt with depression personally or through a loved one, you're on my heart this week and I'm praying for you.

As I mention in the video, part of my depression arsenal is a list of personalized Scripture based statements of faith that I developed to combat the common lies the enemy tries to convince us of when we're discouraged. If you'd like a copy, please email me. Depression too, is a temporary affliction for which God made provision to defeat! The following is the truth about who you are in Christ.

Who You Are In Christ

Why do I need to know, who I am in Christ?

You need to know who you are in Christ so that you can live your life as God intended and fulfil your destiny.

The more you agree with God about your identity in Christ, the more your behavior will begin to reflect your GOD GIVEN identity.

I encourage you to learn to see yourself as God sees you

God's opinion is the one that counts. Accept what God says about you, agree with Him that it is true of you and become the spiritual person you are.

Understanding who you are in Christ will give you a strong foundation to build your life on. Knowing who you are in Jesus is the key to a successful Christian life and a life lived ON purpose.

Your identity doesn't depend on something you do or have done. Your true identity is who God says you are.

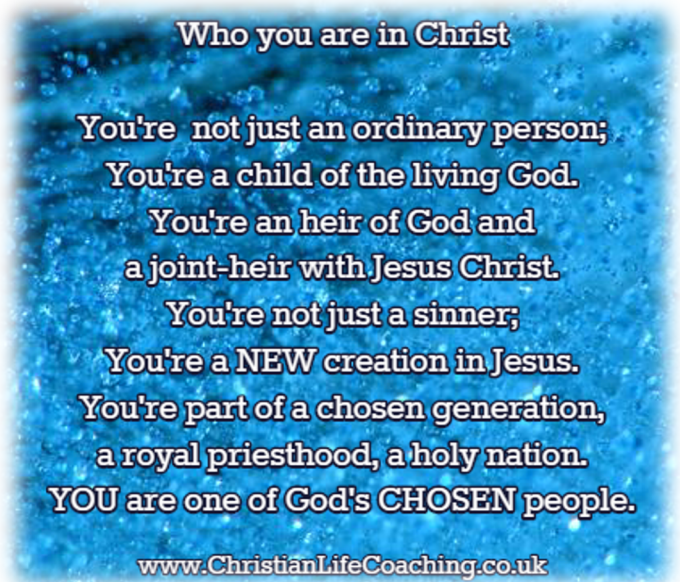
Once you choose to follow Jesus you become a new creation, the old you passes away and you become who you are in Him. Please stop living out of who other people say you are and take hold of the truth of God's word. Find out what God says about you and agree with Him.

You need to know WHO you are in Christ so that you know WHAT to do, WHEN to do it, WHERE to go, and HOW to do it!

Who you are in Christ

Because you are in Christ, EVERY ONE of these statements is true of you.

- I am loved. 1 John 3:3
- I am accepted. Ephesians 1:6
- I am a child of God. John 1:12
- I am Jesus' friend. John 15:14
- I am a joint heir with Jesus, sharing His inheritance with Him. Romans 8:17
- I am united with God and one spirit with Him. 1 Corinthians 6:17



- I am a temple of God. His Spirit and his life lives in me. 1 Corinthians 6:19
- I am a member of Christ's body. 1 Corinthians 12:27
- I am a Saint. Ephesians 1:1
- I am redeemed and forgiven. Colossians 1:14
- I am complete in Jesus Christ. Colossians 2:10
- I am free from condemnation. Romans 8:1
- I am a new creation because I am in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17
- I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved. Colossians 3:12
- I am established, anointed, and sealed by God. 2 Corinthians 1:21
- I do not have a spirit of fear, but of love, power, and a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7
- I am God's co-worker. 2 Corinthians 6:1
- I am seated in heavenly places with Christ. Eph 2:6
- I have direct access to God Ephesians. 2:18
- I am chosen to bear fruit John. 15:16
- I am one of God's living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house. 1 Peter 2:5
- I have been given exceedingly great and precious promises by God by which I share His nature. 2 Peter 1:4
- I can always know the presence of God because He never leaves me Hebrews. 13:5
- God works in me to help me do the things He wants me to do Philippians 2:13
- I can ask God for wisdom and He will give me what I need. James 1:5

Simply choose to believe what God says about you.

"How can two walk together unless they agree?" Amos 3:3

Try reading the above list every day for a month, preferably out loud. The more you know who you are in Christ, the more your behavior will reflect your true identity.

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2

To live an effective Christian life you need to KNOW and BELIEVE who you are in Christ. Understanding your identity in Christ is crucial to living life as God intended.

The best way to renew your mind and experience inner transformation is by knowing, thinking and speaking out loud who you are in Christ

Train yourself to say the same things that God says in His word. Become who you ALREADY ARE in Christ. God wants to do more in your life than you imagine.

Day 5 - Perfect Peace

Throughout the years in the ministry, I've seen many people wind up in a spiritual ditch, on one side or another of the balanced center road of biblical truth. I've visited a ditch or two myself in years gone by! Unbalanced teachings that don't line



up with God's Word can and do get people in trouble and lead to a ditch! That's why God directs us to "rightly divide" the Word of Truth (2 Tim 2:15). We must study the Scriptures **OURSELVES** as accepting everything you hear will get you in trouble and make you vulnerable to deception. Biblical teachings must withstand the scrutiny of Scripture or

they simply aren't something we can stand on or put our faith in.

Years ago I heard many teachings that said if you were facing trials in life, it indicated that you must be in some sort of sin, that the challenges you faced were a direct result of your mistakes and rebellion against God. **NOT TRUE!** That's a ditch!

The Truth is, although we will certainly face consequences for our choices, many troubles we encounter are simply part of life. God warned us in advance that a righteous man (or woman) will face **MANY** trials (Psalm 34:19). Did you catch that? A **RIGHTEOUS** person, who is in "right standing" with God **WILL** face many trials. Nobody is immune from facing rough patches in life. We live in a fallen world and trials are a normal and common part of the Christian life.

Christianity and following Christ without compromise is not a fluffy puffy cake walk - on the contrary! Yet like Isaiah 26:3 says, "You will keep Him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You because He trusts in You." Think about that - **GOD** will keep you in perfect peace **IN SPITE OF** what challenges you face today. Your job is to keep your mind and heart stayed on Him and the only way we can do that is by **TRUSTING** Him.

Charles Phil, a man for whom I have great respect is the man you read about in today's devotion. Charles is an amazing role model who demonstrates how to trust God **NO MATTER WHAT** as he knows God is worthy of praise and honor **NO MATTER WHAT**. When Charles is squeezed, the joy of the Lord continues

to shine through him. Charles is not oblivious to his suffering, but his relationship with God does not waver because of that suffering.

What come out of us when we're squeezed in a trial?

Though our circumstances in life can zoom up at rocket speed one day, then plummet down like a runaway roller coaster the next, our trust in and dedication to God can remain on a steady peaceful course IF we choose to trust God and His Word - no matter what.

Day 6 - From Death to Life ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Dying to self (giving up having our way and surrendering wholly to God's way) isn't as easy as it may seem. In today's devotion, Dave White, a fourth-generation wheat farmer in St. John, Washington, shared the amazing life cycle of wheat, reminding me of my (and your) impending death to self.

Although at first hidden from the human eye, when a kernel falls to the ground it develops new life within, converting starch into sugar to feed itself. Within a week, it sprouts roots that start absorbing water and nutrients from the soil, while at the same time nutrients from its original shell run out. The kernel **MUST** give up everything it has ever known to take on its new life. The transformed seed, producing a sprout that reaches toward the sun as it grows, produces other seeds that will also bring life. Those new seeds, when developed, will fall to the ground and start the process all over again.

Incredible!

Like the kernel of wheat, those who belong to Christ Jesus must die to self, crucifying the sinful nature with its passion and desires (Galatians 5:24). We, like the seed, must surrender everything we've known to take on new life in Christ. As we continue dying to self, giving up our ways and receiving nourishment from Jesus instead of from self, He lives through us, radiating His glory to bring life to others.

It's a lifelong process. The flesh-self, always ready and willing to take the reins, needs a constant reminder that the spirit, not the flesh, is in control and that it will do things God's way, not its way. By enlisting the help of the Holy Spirit, the spirit-self will rule and reign in victory! Then we, like the grain of wheat that falls to the ground a single seed, but dies and produces many, will produce a great harvest from which others can feed.

Day 7 - Not Guilty! ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

You can unlock any door if you have the right key! Romans 8:1 provides a spiritual key that can unlock the prison door that keeps many locked up in shame, condemnation, and judgements. This is the devil's focus of course, as he strives to lead us to total hopelessness, but unfortunately the devil gets much assistance from people, even Christians and churches, that pile on judgements and condemnation on God's people.

The Bible says, "There is therefore now **NO** condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." If we're "in Christ" we can receive forgiveness and be free of condemnation. Listen in today, this is a key!

Day 8 - Choose Life

Since we have two dogs, we've been considering options for a fence. Gracie, also known as "Dora the Explorer" and Harley Anne, would certainly encounter doggie trouble without established yard boundaries. We invited the invisible fence company out to give us their sales pitch the other day, which provided a perfect parallel for today's devotion. God never ceases to amaze me!

Our human nature doesn't care much for boundaries. In fact, it downright despises them at times. As I shared in the video for Day 6, our flesh is like a spoiled brat wanting to have its way and do whatever it wants--whenever it wants. The battle between the flesh and the spirit is a very real battle that we face every day.

Scripture makes it clear that God loves us enough to establish boundaries for us--for our good. From Genesis to Revelation, He makes His directions, expectations and limitations crystal clear. He knows what's good for us and what will lead to a healthy abundant life, and also knows what's harmful to us, that will lead us to death and destruction. Father knows best!

Yet...God doesn't force us to stay within the boundaries as He's given us the great blessing of freewill. Though He longs for us to believe in Him and to follow His ways, He doesn't force us to believe in or to follow Him. He tells us the best option is to choose life (Deut 30:19), but then steps back and lets us make our



choices. Every day. We will face the consequences of those choices, both good and not so good.

Being the God of love that He is, He longs for us to enjoy the abundant life He promises throughout His Word. The boundaries established in His Word are there to lead us on the pathway of His ways and His blessings. Going outside the boundaries He established is a sure recipe for trouble and even disaster.

Unfortunately, people often blame God when they face the natural consequences of choices THEY made to go outside the boundaries God established to keep us safe. I've been there!

Harley Anne and Gracie will soon have an invisible fence that will train them to stay in the yard as we love our pups and don't want them playing in traffic. God loves us too, and provided us with the most powerful "invisible fence" laid out in His Word so we won't be like Dora the Explorer, wandering into dangerous territory.

Today, choose His ways. Choose life.

Day 9 - Think About It

What you're thinking about today matters. It matters a lot. Our thoughts affect our attitude, our joy, our peace, our health, and much more! We must think about what we're thinking about!



As we've talked about in previous videos, the life God desires for us is found by knowing His plan (through His written Word and as He leads us by His Spirit). His Word and the leading of His Spirit will always be in agreement with each other as God will never--ever--contradict Himself or His Word. Once we know God's plan, then

we can choose to walk out that plan with Him. Our thoughts are key to the entire process. What we allow in our thoughts can keep us on a steady safe course or can take us off course like a derailed runaway train.

As today's devotion says, thoughts are not sin. But if our "thought filter" is not engaged, those thoughts can LEAD us to sin if we don't do as 2 Corinthians 10:5 directs us—to take wrong thoughts CAPTIVE and make them obedient to Christ. I encourage you to practice, even for an hour or two, to intentionally pay attention to what you're thinking about. It will be a most eye opening (and thought provoking) experience! As you "think about what you're thinking about," see if it

agrees or disagrees with what God tells us to be thinking about: "Whatever is **TRUE**, whatever is **NOBLE**, whatever is **RIGHT**, whatever is **PURE**, whatever is **LOVELY**, whatever is **ADMIRABLE**-if anything is **EXCELLENT** or **PRAISEWORTHY**-think about these things" (Phil 4:8). Simply asking yourself, "Is **THIS TRUE?**" will knock many thoughts out right off the bat!

Wrong thoughts arrive regularly, but we get to resist them, and replace with right true thoughts. It takes practice and is something I have to stay on top of regularly to this day.

The enemy works hard at putting negative destructive thoughts in our minds about ourselves and about others. Don't take the bait! I've witnessed countless situations where people have suffered long term significant relationship issues that were all caused by vain imaginations, flawed thoughts and beliefs that were not based on one shred of truth. That's so sad!

Let's rightly divide the Word of Truth on this important subject: This is **NOT** saying that you should be la-dee-dah oblivious and ignorant of life issues, experiences, pain, suffering, or reality. On the contrary! But it **DOES** mean that to live the abundant life God promises, we must keep our thought life in line with God's Truth **AS WE WALK OUT** those life issues and challenges. Thoughts will come but we don't need to allow them to become the focus of our attention.

Let's continue to make it a habit to read, meditate on, fill our hearts with and renew our minds with God's Word, which is Truth. An amazing transformation takes place as we practice this - our thoughts are more like His thoughts!

Like everything we've talked about since we started this 40 Days journey, walking out God's plan requires discipline and heart (and hard) work. Staying in tune to our thought life is no exception. As we submit ourselves to God, He will help us one day at a time. He's such a good good Father! It's who He is.

Day 10 - No Trespassing ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Today we have another huge key that will further transform our lives.

I encourage you to not breeze over #4 in the "Reflection Section" in the *40 Days* book, as these scriptures will help you understand your authority over the devil and his tactics. In case you haven't noticed, he's busy stirring as much trouble as possible before his demise. I've put in a request for ring side seats for when "the devil, who deceived them, will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where he will be tormented forever and ever (Rev 20:10). His time is short!

We'd be ignorant if we thought the devil had no power. The devil does exist and he does have power. But he's no match for our great and mighty God! The

devil is a defeated foe thanks to Jesus and the price He paid for you and me! The very cross that the devil THOUGHT gave him the victory, was the very cross that God used to defeat him, to bring salvation to the world and to conquer sin and death. The devil is not very smart.

Col 2:15 says, "Having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." The authority that man lost in the garden through sin, Jesus regained, then gave to us: "I have given YOU authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome ALL the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you" (Luke 10:19).

The devil is not to be feared! If you're in Christ, he fears YOU as the King of kings and His power dwells on the inside of you! The devil reminds me of "The Great Oz" in the Wizard of Oz. When Dorothy's dog Toto pulled back the curtain, the Great Oz was exposed. A fraud. Smoke and mirrors. Let's pull the curtain back on the devil and expose him. He can't stand against the Name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus or the Word of God. Blessings for a victorious day!

Day 11 - Pregnant with Purpose ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

I love how God uses such remarkable real life examples to emphasize His spiritual points. Today many on the *40 Days* Journey will learn for the first time that they're pregnant with purpose. Congratulations!

It's true. God designed you to birth that which He's deposited in your spiritual womb BEFORE you were even born! You're FULL of purpose and in the fullness of God's time His perfect plan will unfold. I pray that today you'll embrace what God is doing in and through your life, known and not-yet-known, good and what appears not-so-good.

Though I used a strap on tummy to appear pregnant in today's video, we have a soon-to-be new mommy on the *40 Days* journey with us. Please pray for the safe arrival of this little one, for mom and dad, for the other four siblings and extended family that will soon welcome this new addition. What a HUGE event!

This beautiful mommy-to-be will be giving birth to a child of great destiny in the natural. I was excited to learn that her name means "sanctified" which actually means "set apart to God." How awesome is THAT?! Did you know that if you're in Christ, YOU are set apart to God too? He set you apart with divine destiny, a unique tailor made purpose and plan that only you can fulfill.

I pray that today you allow God to breathe resurrection LIFE into dreams that have died. God-given dreams and desires have divine purpose. God gives us the desires of our hearts to lead us into His perfect will. What a brilliant God. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

Day 12 - Just Stand There

Today's devotion is near and dear to my heart as it's a subject that's been a continual lifelong area of growth for me. I'm very good at NOT just standing there, but DOING something and NOT very good at just STANDING there and NOT doing something. Being a doer has been a strength and a weakness at the same time. I could write a book on this issue. Actually, I DID write a book (From the Wilderness to the Miraculous-Destiny Image Publishers). That 15-chapter book might be the focus for a future 15-week journey!



Today's world is busy busy busy with everyone and everything going to and fro constantly. So, when God says, "Be STILL and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10) or "Be STILL and WAIT patiently" (Psalm 37:7) our response can be much like a deer caught in the head lights as we don't have a clue how to be still.

It requires great discipline to be intentional about slowing down, taking time to reflect, pray and seek God for direction. I don't have enough fingers and toes to count how many times I've jumped ahead of God's timing and made decisions that ended up being wrong decisions—because I didn't take the necessary time to slow down, to seek God and to seek counsel. It can be a big revelation to realize that not all good ideas are GOD ideas!

God has (patiently) dealt with me on this subject for much of my life and at 57, I'm starting to get it! Mondays are what I call my "Sabbath rest" day, which I set aside for—rest, study and prayer. It requires discipline for me to resist distractions and temptations to compromise this commitment. It's much easier to be—busy.

As you reflect on your schedule today, it might be a good time to do some pruning. I encourage you to take time to review your schedule and examine your motives for doing what you're doing. People pleasing, feeling personally responsible for others, and unconsciously trying to earn God's love and approval are often at the core of our motives.

As you review your time commitments, ask yourself which activities fill you up and which ones drain you. It might be an eye opener! If the majority of activities are draining you and there's a shortage of activities that fill you up, you'll likely be out of balance and empty! When we're doing what we were designed to do, it's accompanied by inner joy.

When we're willing to surrender our agenda to God's agenda, and allow Him to help us prune the areas that might need to be trimmed back, we'll find greater peace and greater fruitfulness in the things God prepared and equipped us to do.

Don't just DO something today. Stand there and let God show you where a little trimming is needed—and where you can plan something special that will fill you up. Something as simple as meeting a special friend for coffee is often just what the Doctor (the Great Physician) ordered!

Day 13 - God Remembers ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

As we await the predicated snowstorm with 9-13" of snow and high winds (on Apr 13 for goodness sake!), I'm reminding myself that God hasn't forgotten us. 🥰 Do you ever feel as if God has forgotten you? Multitudes of people in the Bible who were used powerfully by God experienced this emotion, so we're in good company.

The good news is that in spite of how you may feel, you're **REALLY** not alone and never will be! God will **NEVER-EVER** leave you or forsake you. He promised.

Though we encounter changing emotions and feelings on this earthly journey, including feeling alone at times, we have the opportunity daily to choose to stand on what we **KNOW** and not on what we feel. Our feelings and emotions change like the wind and are unpredictable. God's Word however, which has been forever settled in heaven and will never change, says that He "will **NEVER** leave us or forsake us."

Thank You, Lord for keeping Your promises!

Day 14 - What's Your Name? ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

As we look at the importance of names (our identity), God reminds us of the importance of being real with Him. Nothing is hidden from Him. He knows every detail about us, so humbling ourselves and acknowledging the truth of where we're

at, is a powerful tool that can lead us to a more authentic way of living out this journey on earth.

As God asked Jacob: "What's YOUR name?" What's YOUR identity? Take it to the mat with the Lord today. Even if you have to wrestle some things out with Him, be like Jacob, and determine to not let go of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob until He blesses you and brings the breakthrough!

Day 15 - About Face ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Today we're talking about "repentance" as it's an often-misunderstood subject. The ability to repent is in itself a gift from God that leads us to His finest blessings and enriched life during this very temporary time on the earth, not to mention eternal life with Him (the Greatest Gift!)

Unfortunately, people often believe they need to get themselves cleaned up and perfected in areas of weakness BEFORE they can approach God in repentance. That's actually backwards. If we'll come to Him, sin, mistakes, failures and all, He accepts us where we're at and will help us get cleaned up as he teaches us one day at a time.

Do you remember the prodigal son who had wasted away his inheritance and wound up in a pig pen? When he returned home, his father ran toward him with open arms and threw a big shindig in celebration of his son's return. I hope today you'll turn to our heavenly Father - His arms are open wide.

Day 16 - Led by the Spirit

Compassion is one of the most beautiful traits of Jesus, and one that we should operate in as well. It's the Greek word "sympathos" (in English Sympathy) a

compound of 'sun' (means something equally shared) and the word 'pathos,' which means feelings, affection or passion. Together they literally mean to share feelings and emotion.

When we're moving in compassion, God enables us to enter into another person's experience to share that experience and then to share that

experience and be a partner who understands what that person is going through. If



compassion results in sympathy, we will be empathetic, kind, considerate, caring and full of mercy. Be on the lookout today for opportunities to move in compassion and respond with sympathy.

Yet...a word of wisdom from a person of compassion that's had to learn many hard lessons: Remember that Jesus didn't heal every single person He passed and He didn't get personally involved in every situation He encountered. He did only as His Father showed Him.

Be in tune to the Holy Spirit and His leading and follow where He leads. Our role is to point people to Jesus as they trust in and become dependent on Him, not to enable people to trust in and become dependent on us.

One of the most challenging things can be to step back instead of jumping in to rescue. Sometimes, when we continually rescue others, our misplaced compassion can get in God's way, tie His hands and hinder Him from what He's trying to teach our loved ones.

40 Days Joy for the Journey Note:

Please pray for one of our *40 Days Journey* family! Mandy and her hubby are at the hospital being induced right now in preparation for the arrival of their baby girl!



Day 17 - The Yap Strap ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

I've been thinking about godly people I admire and respect most. I suspect if you composed such a list and then we compared notes we'd likely find that they have something in common: They're quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19). Mature godly people make a practice of thinking about what they say before it escapes their mouth.

It takes practice.

Lots of practice.

I'm still practicing.

Though I took oodles of practice tests on-line prior to taking my MN State Driver's License exam this morning, I still missed two questions. Likewise, when

we practice guarding our mouth, our ears and our eyes, we'll still miss the mark at times. Thankfully God is long-suffering and patient as we learn.

I'm reminded of the restraint Jesus demonstrated as He stood before Pilate. After Jesus had been falsely accused and faced crucifixion, "Pilate asked him, 'Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?' But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge-to the great amazement of the governor" (Matthew 27:13-14).

Wow. Lord, help us be more like You.

Practice may not make perfect, but practice will surely help you continue the process of being transformed into the image of Jesus.

40 Days Joy for the Journey Note:

PRAISE GOD!!!! Baby Gianna has arrived safe and beautiful as ever! **Congratulations** to the family and thank God for this little girl who has arrived for "such a time as this!" What a prophetic picture for our *40 Days Journey!* NEW life! NEW beginnings!



Day 18 - Simple Priorities

God never intended our relationship with Him to be complicated. I love Jesus' answer when asked which was the greatest commandment of the Law. "Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:36-40).



Love God. Love your neighbor. That covers it all. It sounds so gloriously simple, doesn't it? Yet navigating priorities and finding a healthy and proper balance in those priorities isn't so simple. As you've likely discerned by now, issues surrounding this subject have been a lifelong challenge for me as the topic seems to weave through many of my writings and messages.

As evidenced in our society, people's lives are jam packed with busyness and guess Who is often left out? Priorities within overflowing plates of activity are often mixed up and the consequences of that mix up have resulted in stiff consequences

for individuals, families, entire societies, businesses and churches alike. Some, like me, have crashed and burned by 40-something before learning that God had a better way. At 50-something I'm starting to get it.

Though establishing and finding the proper balance of priorities is a personal journey for each of us, God has the same desire for all of us: He wants to be first. Numero uno. #1.

Having "no other gods" before Him didn't only make the top 10, it was the first of the top 10. Notice the lower case "g" as there is only One true God. Nothing compares to Him.

Just about anything can become a god: Relationships, money, television, career, children, food, shopping, sports—even ministry—can rise up to take God's place as top priority in our lives. It doesn't go well when God isn't first. Unfortunately, He's often not even in the mix, ignored as if He doesn't exist.

Though we learn how to keep God first through His tailor made home schooling of the Holy Spirit, I remember a helpful classic book that impacted me greatly in learning to simplify. In "Practicing the Presence of God" by Brother Lawrence, the simplicity of Brother Lawrence's devotion to God was so... simple. Uncomplicated. His relationship with God wasn't hard work, it was the daily joy of knowing His Heavenly Father's love that drove him.

Lord, teach us what it means to keep You first and help us to practice Your presence today as we align our priorities with Your priorities out of a natural overflow of our love for You.

Day 19 - The Package Deal ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Do you have any needs today? Me too!

I'm so glad that God promised to meet ALL of our needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:19). That's a big promise and one that's worth pondering today.

So, if God provided for all of our needs, then why do we seem to be missing out on so much?

God's promises are received by faith. In fact, the Bible says that without faith, it's impossible to please God (See Hebrews 11:6). God wants us to take Him at His Word.

There's a reason this faith walk is called the good "fight" of faith. Walking life out with a God whose ways are not our ways and whose thoughts are not our

thoughts is not for wimpy faithless people who need to see before they will believe. Standing on God's promises when everything in sight seems to contradict the very things that He promised is...a walk of faith. We're instructed to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7). Believing something when we can see it with our eyes requires no faith at all, but believing something because God said it and you trust Him, does take faith. And it pleases Him. It pleases Him a lot.

Lord, increase our faith. Give us revelation of Your Word and help us write it on the tablet of our hearts so we can please You and walk in our blood bought inheritance in Christ.

Day 20 - A Kairos Time ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

We're at the half way mark of the *40 Days Journey!*

Today's message on God's timing is ...right on time! I'm rather in awe of how God brought baby Gianna this week when we're focused on God's perfect timing to birth that which He's designed us for during our time on earth. I'm sure Gianna's mom Mandy can relate to today's message in a very personal way!

Surrendering to God's appointed timing in our lives will usher us into a life of great peace and rest in our hearts. It can be a major revelation to discover that if we quit trying so hard to make things work in our own strength, God will bring it all to pass without much effort on our part. If we'll cooperate with Him and follow as He leads, our destiny will unfold at just the right time.

The most significant victory for you today might be in simply surrendering to God's timetable and moving from the driver's seat into the passenger seat so He can steer you on the right path—at the right time.

Day 21 - "Why, God?" ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

God is God.

We're not.

God's ways are not our ways.

God's love is unfailing.

Once we firmly settle those things in our heart, we can begin to move forward.

Facing heart-wrenching loss when things don't turn out the way we desired or believed they were supposed to turn out, is (in my opinion) one of the greatest challenges of the Christian journey. Especially when a loved one is taken from us to enter eternity before we thought they were supposed to leave us.

As I pondered the subject of the loss of loved ones yesterday, God brought a complete stranger to our home to pick up an item we were giving away and I learned that her 9-year old son passed away after a long battle with Leukemia. Though words were few, the teary eyes and warm heart of this beautiful mother spoke about the painful journey of loss this was for her and her family.

We may have prayed the right prayers, done the right things at the right time, spoken and believed the right scriptures, and exercised great faith, yet the outcome of what we believed God for is the opposite of our desire. We can spend countless hours and sleepless nights trying to figure out why God may have allowed various circumstances, but the reality is that we simply have little understanding of His sovereign ways. And in our pain, sometimes a spiritual fog may set in that causes us to forget: His love is unfailing and He is faithful. Always. No matter what.

When we face loss, God longs for us to come to Him. Though we may wrestle things out with Him, we most often still don't get answers to our "whys?" Can we choose, by faith, to trust God in spite of not understanding?

Day 22 - Audience of One

A zebra can't change his stripes and a leopard can't change his spots. Right?

Right.

People can't change. Right?

Wrong!

If we try to become more Christlike in OUR strength, utilizing OUR wisdom or OUR ability, we can't change. I'm well aware that without Jesus, I'm totally helpless and hopeless to change. We're all in that same boat. But when we're submitted to God in Christ, committed to following Him and to being transformed by Him, positive change is certain.

I'm so thankful today that because God loves us and knew how helpless we were to change or save ourselves, He sent Jesus to our rescue.

Recognizing our helplessness and coming to the end of ourselves is the greatest gift we could give ourselves as God is right there to show us a better way. He shows us the ONLY way.

As we enter the journey with Jesus, one would hope the world would be in the sidelines cheering for us as we remain committed to being transformed into



being more Christlike. But, as we read in today's *40 Days* devotional, the Apostle Paul knew that the world's opinion polls don't give good ratings.

If you look around, it's evident that the chasm between non-believers and followers of Christ is becoming greater by the day as we near the return of Jesus. There's a reason for that: God's ways and the world's way are polar opposites.

Let's look at why God's ways and the world's way don't jive so well together. If you're a follower of Jesus, from the world's perspective, the Bible says you're strange! I'm strange too. If we're in Christ, we live **IN** the world but we're not **OF** the world. We live **IN** the world, but we're not **LIKE** the world. Heaven is our home and destiny. We're temporary travelers passing through on the road to eternity—but passing through with great purpose.

Being a stranger isn't something to shrink back from, it's a truth to embrace. In 1 Peter 2:11 believers are referred to as aliens and strangers (pilgrims). **ALIENS** is the Greek word "Paroikos" and means, "To be a stranger, to live at a place only for a short time. An individual who lives among the citizens of a nation but is not a citizen himself. He is a foreigner or an alien in that nation. Even though he may have received the legal right to live there, he doesn't have the same right to participate in society as does a legal citizen."

That's you and me as followers of Christ!

PILGRIMS (strangers) is the Greek word "Parepideomos" and means, "A temporary traveler who is merely passing through a certain territory on the way to his final destination. He doesn't become attached, he stays disconnected as he will soon break camp and move onward."

That's also you and me as followers of Christ!

In Phil 3:20 Paul said to the Philippian believers (and to us), "Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ."

In 1 Peter 1:1, Peter is writing to "To God's elect—strangers in the world." In John 15:18-19, Jesus said, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, **YOU DO NOT BELONG TO THE WORLD**, but I have chosen you **OUT** of the world. That is why the world hates you."

We get to determine if we're going to seek to rise in the world's opinion polls or in God's opinion poll. Are we striving to win the world's approval or God's approval. You may have already learned as I have, that seeking man's approval is

exhausting and from an eternal perspective, a fruitless endeavor that will get us nowhere.

When all is said and done, we will stand before an audience of One. And His opinion is the only opinion that will matter.

As you read today, my kids heard me repeat Lucy Laslo's words of wisdom almost daily: "Don't forget who you, what you're about and Who you represent." But before we can NOT FORGET who we are, or what we're about and Who we represent, we first need to KNOW WHO WE ARE, we need to KNOW WHAT WE ARE ABOUT and we need to KNOW WHO WE DO REPRESENT.

Lord, help us to learn from Your perspective who we are, what we're about and Who represent. And then help us not forget!

Day 23 - Childlike Faith ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Have you ever witnessed what God refers to as "childlike faith?" The story shared in today's *40 Days* devotion about our daughter Emily was one of the greatest demonstrations of what childlike faith looks like. It's branded on my heart and comes to mind when I'm struggling with faith issues as God once again says: "Just trust Me."

He's such an amazing God and seems to enjoy hitting grand slams in our lives when we least expect it or have lost hope.

I hope you're able to hear the short prophetically sung audio message I share today. I believe it will touch your heart as it did mine, and remind you that we serve a great big God! Nothing is too hard for Him and He's here for you and me. I must close as I have a date with a King today. The King of kings.

Day 24 - Opportunity for Offense ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Unforgiveness is a deal breaker.

The very real pain of the severe wrongs we've experienced can either darken and harden our heart or become a not-so-easy-to-learn-but-well-worth-the-effort heavenly lesson that will lead to Christian maturity, peace, joy and liberty. We will all face many opportunities for offense, which can become either ginormous obstacles or ginormous stepping stones. We get to choose.

As you reflect on offenses you've faced in the past or may be facing right now, know that a wonderful opportunity awaits you as you allow God to teach and help you through the process of forgiveness. If you're willing, walking in forgiveness—no

matter what—will keep you out of an eternal prison that offers no peace, no joy and no liberty.

Unlike the game of Monopoly, unforgiveness provides no Get Out Of Jail Free pass, there's no passing go and no collecting \$200. Unforgiveness guarantees an eternal prison sentence, no possibility of passing into eternal glory with God, and no collecting of heavenly rewards.

My brother Jim has been such a good role model in this arena. His life demonstrates what he regularly confesses to God in prayer: he forgives anyone that has harmed him in the past, anyone that might wrong him today and anyone that may hurt him in the future. When opportunities for offense arrive (which they will) he's already determined in his heart that he will forgive. No matter what.

Today resist the deal breaker of unforgiveness and choose forgiveness, the deal maker.

Day 25 - Dethroning of Idols ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Spiritual leaders are a gift to the body of Christ! Thank God for pastors, teachers, evangelists, and other leaders.

As we ponder today's devotion, let's ensure that we aren't elevating pastoral shepherds and other spiritual leaders to a level designed and intended only for the One and only Good Shepherd.

40 Days Joy for the Journey Note:

Surgery went well yesterday. Recovery was very long and difficult. I appreciate prayer today especially for pain control. Now for today's devotion! I'm thankful it was prepared before surgery.

Day 26 - Content in all Things

Betty was one of the most beautiful people I've ever met and no doubt one of the greatest gifts God has ever placed in my path. Though never expressed in words, Betty's life demonstrated that she, like the Apostle Paul, understood one of the greatest keys in life.

Paul, who faced countless intense challenges that most of us will never encounter, says he learned to be content in all things and circumstances (Phil 4:11).

How did he do it? Paul knew the utter lack of his own strength and ability but knew he could do all things THROUGH Christ (v 13) and in HIS strength. If we

can get that, we'll not only survive our circumstances, but we'll **THRIVE** in our circumstances.

Although I sometimes refer to our Golden Retriever Harley Anne as my 'test in life,' God uses her to teach me many things. To me, being cold is torturous. Yet in the icy icky cold and snow, Harley makes snow angels! That's just wrong! Burr! I think Harley gets it.

I think I don't quite get it.

Not only was I not making snow angels last week when we got a blast of 15" of snow in mid-April, I was complaining about it. I'm still learning but I'm starting to get it too!

Living in a place of peace in the heart—in spite of circumstances—is the result of total trust in God. It's total abandon to Him, who knows every detail, knows the beginning and the end, everything in between and has a perfect plan built on His amazing unfailing love. If you feel as if you've been put out in the cold, tossed into torturous circumstances, you get to choose to trust God and maybe even consider making a snow angel.

Since 2013 when I visited Kenya, I step into the shower with a renewed heart of gratitude. I remember the hard work the staff at Shangilia Children's Home endured to boil water, then carry it a long distance to the shower area so we could use buckets to pour water over us.

I never heard one complaint! And during my bucket shower, I could hear the young men in the men's shower who were singing to their hearts content, praising God as they took ice cold showers!

I sing in the shower now too.

The Bible says, "In everything give thanks, for that is the will of God concerning you." How much we take for granted! Just two days ago I realized how much I had taken for granted the ability to drink a glass of water whenever I want it. 7 hours after surgery I was still only allowed an occasional ice chip due to complications I was having in recovery. I was SO thirsty! When I finally got a glass of water, nobody could have pried that glass from my hands. I've never enjoyed water like I did that water!



Instead of grumbling about the little irritants in life, let's remember how blessed we are and pray for the multitudes across the globe that, like Betty, don't get to experience or enjoy the things we so often take for granted.

Day 27 - No Fair! ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people. Bummer! That just doesn't seem fair—if we look at it from our limited human perspective.

It's difficult to see good people like Joseph suffer what seems unjustly. Especially when the one suffering is us or a loved one. Yet God IS just. It's a good thing He doesn't agree with our limited perspective or we'd miss out on the most wonderful opportunities to grow and mature in our faith!

When we're in the throes of undeserved wrongful suffering—especially when we're doing our best to do what's right to walk faithfully before God—we can become so focused on our suffering that we lose our perspective and fall into a pity party pit deeper than the pit Joseph was tossed in by his brothers.

Being home schooled by the Holy Spirit on this journey with Jesus is tailor made training designed by a loving God that knows exactly how we need to be trained and prepared for what is ahead. When I was in recovery for 7 hours the other day after surgery and the nurse wouldn't let me have any water and only one measly ice chip, I called her a "meanie." Yet she was doing what was best for me. God does the same. He's not a meanie!

Though we may not get to choose some of the challenges we'll face, we DO get to choose our attitude as we endure the tough stuff.

If I reflect on some of the greatest challenges I've faced, it's evident that my greatest growth came **THROUGH** those challenges. We can grow through our trials, especially the ones we seemingly didn't deserve, **IF** we'll remain faithful in the rough spots, and allow God to have **His** way.

Joseph had to endure 22 years of training before his God's given dreams came to pass. God's timetable for equipping us and training us is much different that we might prefer.

The greater the tests, the greater the testimonies! Embrace God as you go **THROUGH** your training ground and be determined to learn everything you can possibly learn through it so you can squeeze every last drop of good from it. God will use it for good. He promised.

Day 28 - Angels on Assignment ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

You might be surprised today that discussing the subject of angels involves talking about our mouth. Isn't it interesting that our mouth eventually comes into most subjects as we grow on the Christian journey? Life and death ARE in the power of the tongue, as the Bible says (Proverbs 18:21).

It's true. Learning to hold our tongues, as we've discussed in previous days is a big key, but learning to speak the right things when we do speak is key also!

Angels would agree!

It's exciting to know that angels are at work in our midst every single day, though we don't see them. I wonder how many close calls there have been in our lives when angels protected us from extreme danger or even death without us even knowing it. I'm hoping that the angels assigned to us might be able to share some of those stories with us in eternity. I'm so thankful Emily's angel was on duty when her hand was in the van door as I shared in today's *40 Days* devotional.

I believe if God opened our spiritual eyes and pulled back the curtain, we'd be in absolute awe of what's going on around us in angelic activity. We might experience what Elijah's servant experienced when Elijah asked God to open his servant's eyes so he could see they had nothing to fear while being surrounded by the enemy. If you're able today, go to 2 Kings 6 starting in verse 8 and read that story. It's amazing! We serve an awesome supernatural God who will do whatever is needed to send help in our time of need.



Excuse me while I have a Gramma moment: speaking of angels, I must share this picture of our sweet granddaughter Evelynn.

Doesn't it look as if she's saying, "Happy Spring!" Yesterday was the first day there is no ice on the pond behind us and the geese and ducks are swimming!

Happy Spring! It's been a long wait, but it's a new season!

Day 29 - Walking in Like and Love ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Today we delve into the subject of love (and like!). The Bible has much to say about “love” and almost nil on the subject of “like” so that’s a clue where God wants our emphasis as well. Romans 5:5 says, "God poured out His *love* into our hearts by the Holy Spirit," He didn't pour *like* into our hearts (Rom 5:5).

Webster defines “like” as “to feel attraction toward or take pleasure in.” Like is a feeling; love is an intentional choice. We can like and love something (or someone) at the same time, but love can stand alone without like.

Just as we prefer some foods and avoid others, as we simply don’t like them, we prefer some people and avoid others as for one reason or another we simply don’t care for them or enjoy being around them. One of the greatest privileges we have is the opportunity to choose with whom we're in close relationship. As my friend Joanne says, "Friends are family we get to choose."

It's wise to be in close relationship with those who sharpen you as iron sharpens iron, pushing you *toward* God's best, and avoid close relationship with those who push you *away* from God's best. You will become like and be influenced by your relationships whether or not you want to be so it's wise to think about the inner circle you choose. God has such amazing ways of connecting those He designed to be connected with divine purpose as He continues His heavenly DOT-to-DOT masterpiece.

On this earthly journey, we'll encounter many we may not like and those who are a great challenge for us. Hard to like people are GOOD for us and necessary for training as we learn to walk in and mature in love. God's kind of love.

Love, unlike like, is something God requires of us.

I hope you’ll consider doing the “extra credit assignment” in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

Here's God's recipe for love:

Here’s what love is (from 1 Cor 13:4-8):

Love is patient

Love is kind

Love does not envy

Love does not boast

Love is not proud

Love is not rude

Love is not self-seeking

Love is not easily angered

Love keeps no record of wrongs

Love does not delight in evil

Love rejoices with the truth

Love always protects

Love always trusts

Love always hopes

Love always perseveres

As I ponder those attributes, I see I have much work to do! How about you?

Day 30 - Joy through Suffering ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

I hope it's becoming more clear that the trials we face are often full of divine purpose that, although we may not understand, are overseen by a Sovereign God of love whose ways are flawless.

It's difficult to endure suffering and heart wrenching to witness the suffering of others. Yet God permits it.

If God had been unwilling to allow His Son's suffering, we'd have no opportunity to receive forgiveness, no hope, and no eternal life. Jesus was the **ONLY** way to reconcile God and man (John 14:6). Thank God Jesus was willing to fulfill His destiny. And thank God His Father was willing to allow it.

Imagine what it was like for God the Father to see His only begotten and perfect sinless Son nailed to the cross with our sin. Only Love could allow that. Only a Father that knew the big picture could allow that.

Imagine the pain Jesus' mother Mary experienced in witnessing her Son's suffering and death. Yet the suffering He endured brought eternal resurrection life to Mary too. If not for her Son's sacrifice, Mary would have no hope either. She was part of the "joy set before Him" as Jesus endured the cross (Hebrews 12:2). He was able to look beyond the suffering of the cross and see Mary—and you—and me. We were worth it to Him.

In today's video we touch on the subject of how we can get in God's way when we try to rescue people from their suffering. I'm a "recovering rescuer" so I know the subject well! For us parents, this might touch a tender spot.

I hope it's becoming increasingly evident as you continue the *40 Days* Journey, that we need God's wisdom and the discernment of the Holy Spirit to navigate through our trials and support others as they walk through their trials. Wisdom and discernment are available for the asking! Check in with God today, He's got the answers you need.

Day 31 - Assault on Assignment For the next two days we'll be talking about the awesome account of Nehemiah. Though we're focusing on specific things from this section of Scripture, I'd highly recommend you read the entire story from Nehemiah Chapter 1 through 6. It's over the top! The pages of my Bible are very

worn here and covered with notes and comments. This story is RICH with meaning and lessons we can apply to our lives today.

One of the reasons I love Nehemiah is that he was a humble man, one of the most attractive qualities I believe a person can possess. Notice that as he repented before God on behalf of the Israelites for the sins THEY had committed, he counted himself amongst the sinners. He counted himself as part of the problem. I like him.

Hearing about the condition of the wall of Jerusalem being devastated, Nehemiah broke down in tears as he genuinely cared. “For some days” he mourned, fasted and prayed before petitioning the King of kings for direction. God was preparing Nehemiah to go before an earthly king (Artaxerxes) who had the earthly authority to send Nehemiah on a divine mission. Part of his destiny was to help the troubled exiles and to rebuild what the enemy had destroyed.

Though God made the way for Nehemiah and provided for all of his needs, many troubles awaited him when he arrived. Opposition had already been set up to thwart what God had sent him there to do. Yet in spite of the opposition, God enabled Nehemiah to fulfill his mission with great success.

God moved on my heart to write books about His supernatural miracles, yet when I put my hand to the plow for *Extraordinary Miracles in the Lives of Ordinary People*, I entered into the greatest challenges I had ever faced. But in spite of those challenges, that book was completed exactly as God had directed me. The day I received copies of *Extraordinary Miracles in the Lives of Ordinary People* from my publisher {Harrison House}, I wept, as I knew there was no way I could have written the book without an amazing God who made the impossible possible.



God did it! That was the only explanation for Nehemiah’s success as well. God did it! Nehemiah cooperated with God, but God did it.

Listen in to what was said when the wall of Jerusalem was completed in 52 days: “When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God” (Nehemiah 6:16). The world is watching the rebuilding projects in our lives.

To what building or re-building projects might God be calling you? Though significant work, opposition and challenge may be part of that project, He will provide everything you need to get the job done. When you complete your God given assignments in spite of the opposition you may face, may your attitude be, “Yay, God! You did it! Thank You for enabling me to accomplish what You directed me to do! I'm clapping for Jesus!”

Day 32 - Distracted by Distraction ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Have you noticed that everyone we've talked about so far on the *40 Days* journey faced significant trials for which none of us would likely volunteer? I have yet to find a man or woman of God that had a trouble-free-easy-peasy life on earth. On the contrary!

Nehemiah is no exception. Another one of my biblical heroes, he faced great opposition and challenge in fulfilling what God asked of Him, yet didn't quit regardless of what the enemy threw at him.

Confronting each challenge and distraction that tried to steal his focus, He was determined to complete his assignment of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem as God had called him to do. His unwavering commitment is admirable!

If you read through this story from chapter 1-6, you'll see a key woven throughout Nehemiah's experience that's well worth noting. Whatever he faced, Nehemiah spontaneously prayed, seeking God for answers, direction, wisdom and protection. Right in the midst of the enemy chaos, he sought God. We should do the same.

Though committed followers of Jesus can feel like salmon swimming upstream in today's society, pressing through the challenges and resisting distractions that are trying to steal your God directed focus is well worth it. God will always provide the strength, provision and wisdom needed to do what He's asked of you.

If the enemy invites you into a skirmish today, designed to distract you from your assignments, decline the invitation. Resist engaging in senseless distractions and say, “Thanks, but no thanks.” After all, you've already been invited to a God engagement. A much better choice!

Day 33 - Drifting ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

How appropriate that the Bible likens the devil to a roaring lion, as lions stalk their prey just as the enemy does! (1 Peter 5:8). He's always on the prowl looking for inroads or open doors that will enable him to steal, kill and destroy. If we close down access roads and shut doors we may have left open, he cannot get access to us or send us adrift.

When we start “drifting” away from devotion to God and His Word, we become more vulnerable to falling prey to the enemy, often even without being aware of it.

Though we can take numerous measures to stay on the right course, let's highlight a few of the most effective ways to avoid going adrift.

First, be sure Jesus is in your boat! Invite Him in and anchor in Him, as He is the foundation of our faith. He is the way, the Truth and the life. IN Him, is not only salvation, but everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Everything else is built upon Jesus, the Rock of our salvation. Though storms will come, He keeps us from going adrift—if we keep Him in our boat.

Second, walk in the Truth of God's Word, love the Truth of God's Word and don't compromise the Truth of God's Word. If we know the Truth, we'll recognize the counterfeit when it arrives. If we know God's Word, we can make choices to align with His ways and live the abundant life He longs for us to have. With no understanding of God's Truth, we'll be susceptible to deception of all sorts, which leads to drifting into all kinds of troubles.

Third, staying in Christian fellowship builds a safety zone around us. As I often say, we need each other; we need our brothers and sisters in Christ. We're the “body of Christ” and each part is needed and important! We were meant to connect to others as we walk out this earthly destiny. Living in isolation is one of the most dangerous options as it makes us a target of the enemy. We're more vulnerable if we're trying to walk alone.

I mentioned Hebrews 10:25 in today's video. I'll leave you with the same verse from the Message Bible as it says it so well: “So let's do it—full of belief, confident that we're presentable inside and out. Let's keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps his word. Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big Day approaching.” Yes, let's do that!

Day 34 - Finders Keepers ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

It's amazing the way God gives us treasures and riches right in the midst of our greatest challenges. Because we can be so wrapped up and caught up in trial survival, we sometimes don't even realize we've received treasures along the way until well after the trials are behind us. We can emerge from seasons of darkness with priceless wisdom and lessons learned that will not only turn the course of our lives, but impact the lives of countless others.

After reading Isaiah 45:3 in several translations, it's clear that the riches of darkness are either hidden or in secret places. If something is hidden or in a secret place, it means we're going to have to do some intentional searching to find it! If we're willing to search, we'll discover more riches than we could find in the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. God's riches are truly priceless and no earthly treasure can possibly compare.

Do you remember playing "Hide and Seek" as a child? It seems that God likes that game too. Not only does He seem to hide--sometimes when we need His presence known and felt the most--but He obviously likes to hide spiritual treasures. Both require us to be intentional about seeking Him and His treasures out. As a loving Father, He wants us to find Him and the treasures He's bestowed on us!

As we discuss in today's video, we'll also face loss of many kinds, including things and people we treasure the most.

Today I pray that you can face losses you've experienced that might still need your attention. Ignoring the pain of loss or refusing to let go can lead to even greater loss, but meeting Jesus at the foot of the cross where we can release those losses into His loving hands will start us on a journey of healing and enable us to move forward in a healthy way.

As Mom learned through her little baby chick, if we keep a loose hold on that which we love, we can enjoy and delight in those things while we have them, yet must be willing to let go if and when that time comes to say good-bye.

Job, who received great treasures, yet also faced tragic loss, proclaimed "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised" (Job 1:21). Job got it: God is worthy of our praise when we're receiving and when we're facing loss. Lord, help us get it too.

Day 35 - Possible Impossibility ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

As I prayed for direction with today's message, the Lord spoke to my heart, "Run in your own lane."

I've been pondering those words today and thinking of my younger days when I was on a track team. The lanes we ran in both for practice and races were clearly marked to help us stay in our own lane.

God divinely orchestrated a plan and calling for each of our lives and gifted us accordingly to run in our own lane. God deposited abilities on the inside of us so we could fulfill our individual destiny according to His master plan. Every person is equally important and key to the big picture! If we're trying to run in someone else's lane, who's going to run in our lane to fulfill OUR assignments? When we stand before God, we'll give an account for what we did with what He gave us, not for our attempt to run in someone else's lane. Isn't that a sobering thought?

Sometimes people mistakenly observe other people's lives and wish they could do what **THEY'RE** doing, wish they could live the life **THEY'RE** living, wish they could have what **THEY** have. Not only does their own God-given destiny lie dormant, but their longing to run in someone else's lane leads to hopeless discouragement as they're not graced or equipped to run in someone else's lane.

I encourage you today to reflect on what God is asking of you. It doesn't matter how big or small you believe your assignment is today. Luke 16:10 says, "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much." God cares about the little things and cares about our faithfulness to the little things. What we consider little things are bigger than we likely realize.

What is God asking of you today? Whatever it is, be faithful. Run in your own lane. You'll cross the finish line and hear what we long to hear from the Master in Matthew 25:21: "Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!" Won't that be music to our ears!

Day 36 - It's No Accident

God sees the big picture.

We see little of the big picture.

When unexpected “interruptions” pop up in life, it’s so easy to get upset, complain, lose patience, or start questioning God, His plan and His Word. As shared in today’s devotion, though Tom was inconvenienced to have been in an accident, that accident prompted a string of events that ended up saving his life. Thank You Jesus! Thank God we serve such a wise and loving sovereign God who knows the beginning from the end.

Sometimes our life path is rerouted when a sudden detour shows up that we had no control over and certainly would have preferred to avoid. Those detours can leave us feeling like we missed out on the perfect Plan A: OUR preferred course that WE determined is best. Our Plan A’s, however, don’t always align with God’s Plan A.

If we remain faithful when we’re taken on a detour and follow as God guides us on the new route(s), an amazing most wonderful outcome often unfolds! We can discover that what we believed was a distraction that ruined OUR Plan A, and forced us into Plan B, C, or D, was really God’s plan A in disguise! We can also realize, like Tom did, that what appeared an interruption to our well thought out plans, actually saved our life.

As we encounter interruptions that cause a detour today, can we be intentional about trusting God, knowing that He may be redirecting or rerouting our path according to His perfect plan? Can we be content and keep a positive attitude in the midst of it?

I hope you’ll ponder today’s “Scripture Focus” as it’s a fabulous reminder: “You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed” (Psalm 139:15-16).

God knows what you’re facing today. He had put His plan into motion before you arrived on earth, and knows every day and every moment of your life before it comes to pass. We may not embrace unexpected detours, but we can choose to embrace the Lord and trust Him IN the detours.

As you walk out your destiny with Christ and in Christ, remember a promise: “He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him” (Proverbs 2:8). He’s got your back! And He's got a plan.

Day 37 - Mistaken Identity ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Thank you--Thank you--Thank you--to every veteran reading or hearing this message today, including my amazing beloved husband Tom, a Vietnam vet.

I have few words today, but want to simply encourage you to take every opportunity of thanking our veterans for their selfless service. And to thank our Savior Jesus for the life He willingly and selflessly laid down for us to pay a debt we could not pay.

May we never take for granted the price that was paid on our behalf by our service men and women, and our Lord and Savior Jesus, so we could walk in the freedoms available to us both now and throughout eternity.

Thank you, Tom.

Thank you, veterans.

Thank You, Jesus.

Day 38 - On Your Mark ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

Responding to “On your mark, get set, GO!” is much easier for me than, “On your mark, get set, STOP!” How about you? If you’re a doer, you know what I’m talking about.

Taking time to check in with God so we can receive His wisdom and direction BEFORE jumping into action can save us valuable time and effort.

I’ve learned a lesson or two in this arena over the years. I’ve had some good ideas about what I thought I was supposed to do and others have had some good ideas about what I was supposed to do too. But not every good idea is a God idea. Unfortunately, I suspect we may all see some wood, hay and stubble go up in smoke when all is said and done (see 1 Corinthians 3:11-13).

How easily we can waste well-intentioned valuable time on things that God had no intention for us to be involved with! If we’re investing time, effort and resources into every good thing that comes along, how can we fulfill what we ARE supposed to do with excellence?

If the enemy can't woo us into blatant sin, he'll strive to get us so busy with endless activity that we're not effective—or fruitful—or prosperous—or successful in anything.

It might be time to simplify and purge a thing or two! Taking a time out to examine our activities and honestly determine if those activities are effective—or fruitful—or prosperous—or successful, is time well spent. Simply asking yourself if you have joy—or a lack of joy—in your activities is a great clue as well as there seems to be great joy doing what God created us to do.

When opportunities or needs come along, we can be like a horse at the starting gate, literally chomping at the bit for the barrier to open, rarin' to race down the track with all our might. Yet if we didn't first get direction from the One who's at the finish line with rewards, we may discover that we ran some races for which we weren't even on the race card. If we've invested our time in the wrong races, we're likely missing out on a few races of which we were supposed to partake.

If you're feeling pressure to jump into something before you have peace about it, don't do it! Slow down and take time to check in with the One who oversees the race. Things that are of God will not go away, but will withstand the test of time.

Psalm 127:1 says it all: “Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.” Lord, help us build YOUR house and to fulfill YOUR plan. Teach us Your ways and help us remember to consult You before we leave the starting gate. Show us today, Lord, the good things that are not God things and enable us to let them go so we can focus on Your perfect plan and to do that plan with excellence.

Day 39 - The Lifter of our Head

I still remember the beautiful woman I prayed with on that special day highlighted in today's *40 Days* devotion. Seeing her arrive in emotional and spiritual bondage yet leave in total freedom in Christ was a huge blessing to say the least!

This woman, like multitudes of others, had suffered from well-established lies of the enemy that had been planted deep in her heart. Hindering her ability to see who she was created to be in Christ, the lies simmered underneath the surface and affected her daily life negatively and destructively.

God sent His Word - His Truth - to the rescue!

Fortunately, the enemy doesn't get to use a permanent marker when he writes lies on our drawing boards! If we're willing to have ears to hear, God's Truth

comes like a huge heavenly eraser to eradicate the lies and establish His Truth. But to believe the Truth, we must know the Truth. “God’s Word is Truth” (John 17:17). We’ve got to know the Truth before we can recognize and eradicate the lies. And we’ve got to know the Truth before we can walk in the Truth.

Are lies dogging you? Maybe it’s time to go back to the drawing board. Let God erase the lies and solidify what is true. John 16:13 says, “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.” If you’re not sure if something is true or not, ask God! He will always tell you the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth. Today, may we walk in the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth, so help us God!

Day 40 - He’s Coming Soon ♦ (Click [here](#) for Video)

It’s the last day of our *40 Days Journey*! What a life changing season this has been for me, and I hope for you as well. I encourage you to share what God has done in your life through the *40 Days Journey* with others. Let’s tattle on our awesome God! He’s been SO faithful to lead us through this *40 Days*.

I’m thankful.

It’s with mixed emotion that I record this last video of the journey. My heart is full as I reflect on the joys—and challenges—of the past 40 days. I marvel at the many amazing signs God provided along the journey, including bringing baby Gianna into the world at the very time we were learning about birthing our destiny in the fulness of God’s time. He sure provides amazing visuals!

As I share in today’s *40 Days* devotion, I continue to sense an urgency to remind you that Jesus is coming soon. Time is short. I’m in awe realizing that God gave us a supernatural sign to remind us of His desire for all to know Him: The sand in the hourglass on my desk stopped and started twice while I was talking. Wow, God! I believe He would stop heaven and earth, and make time stand still to give one more person an opportunity to come to Him and gain eternal life. Don’t leave this earth without Him.

As I close, I bless you and pray that God’s finest blessings will chase you down and overtake you in Jesus Name. I thank God and thank you for the honor and privilege of sharing this *40 Days Journey* with you.

To order inscribed copies of *40 Days* or my other books, please either email me at therese.marszalek@gmail.com or go to www.theresemarszalek.net:

Books by Therese Marszalek:

40 Days (Word & Spirit Publishers)

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