

Psalms from the Heart

By Chariane Quille

—Psalms 1-10—

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Soup 'n' Psalms...

Soup 'n' Psalms is my favourite time of day during these winter months. I sit at the kitchen table with a steamy bowl of soup, looking out the window as the sun starts to peer higher in the sky and cheers us with its rays. I read a Psalm and ponder about what those penned words of long ago mean to me personally—today.

Somehow just reading these prayers and words from this king who knew more than his share of hardship, helps boost me up with the tools I need for my own work and service for Jesus, as well as stirs me to do the same: I find myself leaving the table with an urge to pray and commune heart-to-heart with the One that heard and answered David's prayers time and again.

I enter my room alone and commit myself, my family, my work, my day, and my future into Jesus' hands. Ah! I feel ready then to tackle the day, knowing I've just used the best strategy for success and progress—and good health too, leaving the worries with the One who can actually do something about them.

However, I wanted to do more than just read through the book of Psalms. I wanted to absorb them; to really think about the concepts each one was trying to express. Although I can read a Psalm from the Bible a thousand times—or any Bible verse—and get something new from it each time, I wanted to at least focus on one or two aspects of the passages read that morning. I wanted to put myself in a position of heart and mind for something specific to stand out to me. I wanted to take the time to pause and notice one aspect that it expressed, and then write about it, as a way to further remember and enjoy it.

In this devotional book I've written down the prose, thoughts, personal anecdotes and reflections that each Psalm inspired in me, or brought to my memory that I'd written in the past—based on the particular facet of a Psalm that I was savouring... along with my soup.

Maybe some of what I've written here will bring the Book of Psalms to life for you as well, as you read it together with these personal memoirs. And I'm sure you'll notice your own unique jewels from the Psalms as you do.

Psalm 1: Stay Connected

Pure Connection

A thousand voices keeping me from You
They yell out the way I ought to go,
And what I ought to do, they seem to know.
What am I to do? What do I choose?

When at last I find my way through
The brambles of opinions galore
That push, press and stress,
“You have to do more!”
And I find that rare tranquillity
With none else, just You and me
It is the only thing that seems right
But getting there is a daily fight.

When our hearts and minds get a pure connection
Everything seems to fall in to place
I no longer struggle in exasperation
Your voice all else can replace.

Like leaves that fall from the trees each year
Flutter away and can no longer hold on,
I too may crumble and wither, I fear
If my connection to Your sap-source is gone.

Psalm 1:2-3 But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Connected

Our property happens to be the hub and access point for the Internet connection and telephone wires for several houses. One day, as had happened countless times before, a pair of telephone wire fix-it men knocked on our door. However, after they left, we were without Internet for the next 10 days. For us that's a problem, as both my husband's and my work rely on it. People were waiting for prompt replies or work would slow down or halt—and they would be clueless as to why the sudden silence.

When we called the company, we were put in the queue for servicing. It was to take one or two weeks until it would be our turn. What had they done to our connection? We found out later.

During that time, there were other struggles to contend with. Some issues with our children had peaked, and at long last I took some time alone with the Lord to ask Him a string of questions. My husband would do the same. We would compare notes and hopefully find solutions.

One thing the Lord asked of me was something I had long kissed good-bye to, and that by all circumstances would seem utterly impossible: Stop everything each day—during the day—for a good long while, to pray, read the Bible, connect and commune with Him. I read at night sometimes, when I wasn't needed for mother duties throughout the night. But to stop during the day, while the kids did whatever ... I really didn't see it as being doable.

"If you want me to do this, You're going to have to work some kind of miracle—I don't see how it can be a reality," I told Him. Do this on top of all the kids' care, teaching, cooking, cleaning, and my work as well that had to get woven in to each day. But I was desperate, and eager to grasp at anything to bring a solution.

As I was having this prayer time in a tent outside, and I made the decision to say yes, not worrying about how it could actually work out, I heard a comforting voice. It was a man saying to my husband, "I've come to fix your Internet."

Something in his tone made me feel at peace. He climbed the ladder and took care of the problem. He then explained, "Someone has come and taken your line and given it to someone else. I'm going to give it back to you, and they'll just have to come back again and do the job right."

Our connection was working, and somehow I knew there was something more to it than that. My connection with the Lord was getting hooked up again. Life had just been too busy to really stop, breathe, listen, and look up.

I pray each day alone and with my family. I read the Word with my children. I read many of the online articles and posts. My work involves a lot of Word-based reading material and Spirit-led writing and prophecy. But there's something different about stopping for just me-time. Just me and Jesus, absorbing things that are just for me. Luxury.

When you are a mother, with constant needs to tend to, you put your own needs aside so many times that eventually you save yourself the trouble and stop wishing for and attempting to enjoy things for yourself anymore. But Jesus wanted me to connect—my heart to His.

Peace and relief in our children's situation was felt as I attempted each day to spend some "just Jesus and me" time. There was a marked difference from that time on in the problems we were facing—especially on the days I managed to take time to stop and have quiet, focused reading and meditation time.

The other day I was about to read something to the children. Two of them were eager to listen, but one of them darted out of the room, as if the sight of a book triggered an eject button. He chose to go off to play. I was sad. I wanted to have a nice time teaching them something. I looked forward to this time.

This boy is happy to play with me, he loves my cooking and is vocal with his appreciation, he's obedient, and he's glad to romp around outside together. He's very glad to hug and cuddle, and he's thankful that I'm there to comfort him when he's hurt. So it's not that he doesn't like me, and he knows he needs me. But it seemed lately he didn't want to listen or absorb anything I wanted to impart—in books or verbally. And that leaves a hole in our relationship.

The thought came to me, "Am I being that way with Jesus? I like to have Jesus around. I'm glad He can fix up my hurts. I depend on Him being there for me when I pray and have a need. I like to praise Him and think He's just great. I like to know that I'm pleasing Him and I try to obey Him. But am I willing to take the time to sit in the student seat and to let Him instruct me and read His Word, to study it, to focus?"

It's really hard to do. There's so much else to think about. My mind is like a dozen machines, trying to keep everything going and keeping track of everything. There are a lot of jokes about guys not understanding how a woman's mind works, and they have to learn tolerance and understanding. A woman might, in a moment of intimacy, say the most unrelated things—because there is so much going on in her mind!

But for some of us women, at least for me, I have to not give in to negative comparing with guys' seeming luxury of being able to face things one at a time, focus on one job at a time. Seems so relaxing! To compensate for the many jobs I have to fill—all simultaneously—the

Lord gave me a complex mind-machine that can juggle several things at once, keeping mental track, data, and stats of everything.

So for me to take the time to stop all those thinking machines, put everything on pause, put my motor in “park” and focus on something that is only for me—not for the kids, the house, our marriage, the work, for others, and so forth—is a real change of gears. The experience with my son, who for that week wanted to do anything—as long as it wasn’t to listen and learn anything—gave me a clear picture of how Jesus must feel. My son has changed now, and so have I.

Until then, I thought it was good enough to tell Jesus I love Him, to be serving Him, to be working for Him, to be His intimate mate. But my not stopping to let Him instruct and teach me, and to take time to really get to know Him personally, was leaving a hole in our relationship. I needed to do more than just read Word-related material quickly to take in spiritual facts. Like meeting with a close friend over a meal. The food intake isn’t the main thing you are there for, but the fellowship and the knitting of hearts.

I’m forming new habits and schedules now. I tell the kids, “It’s my Jesus time now.” And most of the time it works out, and they respect it. After all, it’s baked into their day and expected of them—to have time daily to read and pray. If I don’t do it too, how will they learn to make it a life habit and reap the wonderful benefits?

Psalm 2: Tables Turn

The Tables Will Turn

It’s a mystery

How what seems to be,

Eventually

Will change and then

The ways of men

Will be gone, and again

And once more will be

Eternally

The ways heavenly.

Just because
Mankind does
What's wrong right here
And many shed a tear
The tables will turn
The rubble will burn
The true King will reign
And make things right again.

Though troubled temporarily
And oft must tread on warily
These words tell us verily
The good that is in sight
If we stay with what is right
And follow in God's light

Psalm 2:2-4, 8 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

A New Perspective

If it weren't for a vision, a mental picture that flashed in my mind when I was 18, I think I would have a very hard time emotionally processing all the outrageous wrongs that go on in the world today. I simply would be an angry and bitter mess. The negativity about it all would churn and sour, rendering me little good; unable to be of much use or any positive force.

I wasn't in deep prayer or doing anything particularly spiritual at the time, but my whole being at that age was one big vacuum. I needed every bit of help from Heaven that would come through—and was welcomed at any hour, day or night.

The setting of the vision in my mind was in the distant future. All was done and passed away, from the world as we know it. All who had ever lived on Earth were having a meeting with God. He was talking to all. It was as if He was saying, "So now do you understand?"

It was as if everyone had chosen to play a role in this life—poor or rich; soldier or ruler. Or simply because people had experienced the different stations of life on Earth, and because of all that mankind on Earth has experienced, there was a deep and wonderful knowledge and understanding of great truths.

There was no more pain then, just gained depth of wisdom. It all would make sense to us and to all, in that day. Our choices and all the pain and sorrow that mankind's choices have brought about, in the end were turned around for the better.

Just the peace that vision gave me, that one day all hearts will be at peace and all will be made right again, has kept me from the harsh blows of the turmoil down here.

Another time I had a dream that helped to put a positive spin on what at first seemed so negative. Some years ago, I saw on the news the heartbreaking scenes of what a flood had done in an Asian country. I'm glad it was aired, as then worldwide sympathy would be stirred, and outside help could be offered.

However, the question in these so-called, "natural" disasters, can sometimes be: "Why does God allow it?" We shouldn't think that in a negative way, but many people do. There's so much nonsense being told and taught about the theory of the world's origins and how it was evolved, but when disaster strikes, all of a sudden people can start to revive their oppressed belief in God, just long enough to blame, and then sink back into their atheistic stance.

Well, seeing the imagery on the news, and how much trouble this flood seemed to bring did make me wonder, in a genuine way, why it would have been allowed—knowing God to be loving and just, as I have experienced and come to know Him personally in my life. After the dream I had, I knew once again, in more clarity than ever, that He is just that—the God of love and justice as well.

It was a very vivid dream. And I will spare you the details, for such things should never be spoken of. However, I was there in that land, and observed such things that should never happen anywhere, involving children.

The dream progressed and I saw the water rising, the land was then being flooded. It was enough to bring surcease and relief to the abused young people and children in the area—at

least temporarily. Perhaps one good side effect was that through allowing it to be flooded, God could bring a stop to some wrongs being committed.

When I woke I was at peace, and actually felt glad that the flood had happened. I had a complete change of perspective. I prayed fervently, crying out for the people there—both for their flood relief, as well as for a more permanent change for the better in the lives of its citizens, and its young ones.

When I was a child I had a repeated dream. The place I would go to I believe to be the place and era that Psalm 2 is speaking about—the beautiful world of the future, when Jesus is the King, and all is made nice again.

I would fly over this type of cliff and fly over the land below. It was a nice place, and I visited it many times in my dreams. I remember it vividly. Keeping our vision and sights beyond what is now reality, and thinking about the glories to come, will help us to be victorious through it.

Psalm 3: Rest and Revive

Rest and Revive

When troubles multiply

And all seems set against me

I take flight to somewhere high

To the arms of He Who loves me.

Things will always be too much to bear

If alone in constant struggle I go,

But I will revive with rest and prayer

For me His power He'll show.

Psalm 3:5, 8 I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

He Carries Me

(A vision of the heart)

Night fell, and I was sitting wearily on the pathway just a bit before the cosy-looking, welcoming house—the next resting spot from my journey. I didn't feel I had the strength to make it there. My legs collapsed under me. I was starting to drift into sleep, resting my head down on my knees. Then Jesus came and sat beside me. He too knew the feelings of weariness.

"I just couldn't make it to the goal..." I began to explain, starting to cry, more from tiredness than from despair.

"Sweetheart, the goal isn't always to make it to everything and do all that you think I wish for you to do, and be all you can and should. But just to be using all Heaven's power to help you go with ease as far as you can go, and love Me and others as much as you can while you are at it. Then I can and will do the rest."

He picked me up and set me on His lap, as He sat there on the ground. The lights of the cottage looked brighter, as the sky got darker. I slept on His shoulder until past midnight. When I woke, I saw the ground moving, then looked up and realized I was being carried. He opened the door and brought me into the house. I didn't have to make it, through resting on Him, He did it for me. I just had to do what I could, and then He did the rest, what I couldn't do. I slept for another few hours on the soft and welcoming bed. This time I woke to the smell of a yummy and hearty breakfast being prepared. "This should keep me going all day!" I said as I looked at the spread. Then I looked over at Him and He winked, as if reminding me that He alone could do that—I gave Him a warm hug and said, "I mean THIS will!"

We ate together, laughed together, watched the sunrise together, hugged and talked. When I began my trek, it was hard to start. I didn't feel energetic or eager. I could have stayed in that house all day and enjoyed more rest, and refilling, and time with my Heavenly Mate. But I knew that "as my day, so would my strength be" and each step I took He'd help me have what I needed to make it to the next rest stop, and reach the next goals. After a few hours of journeying through the day, I came to a stream of clear water and refilled my canteen. I sat and listened to the birds, looked up at the surrounding nature. He'd restored my soul and I felt great. A closing thought: Getting started is difficult sometimes, because you dread the familiar tiredness you'll feel. But the exhilaration at His power running through your soul and strengthening you in supernatural ways is a marvel and something only experienced by those who give Him a chance to do the humanly impossible and carry you through when you feel you can't take another step. It's a taste of Heaven.

Psalm 4: Belonging

Belonging

I want to feel surrounded in love,
Bathed in care.

I want to know there is One up above
Who answers prayer.

When I'm still and quiet absorbing His thoughts
It confirms to me:

I belong to Him; He plans and plots;
He's there for me.

Psalm 4:3-4 But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

My Teddy Bear

I remember my first teddy bear. It was given to me by my dear friend—when I was in my early-twenties! It was odd, but I felt better going to my bed each night. My arms at times nearly ached to have someone to hold. I felt so very alone most of the time. But that cheery, soft teddy with an “I love you” heart on it just seemed to take the edge off the lonesomeness I would face. There was “someone” I could cuddle. My bed was no longer just cold and empty.

Oh those aching years of waiting and wanting a special someone to be there for me; someone to belong to. Now I look around at my children's stuffed animals and I remember that teddy bear of years ago. I no longer need it, for in time I did find that special someone, followed by having little bundles of love to cuddle as well—the three children I've had.

However, I am glad for those lonesome days. They gave me a treasure that no husband or child ever could—a gift that I found was the most essential element to having a happy family and coping with parenthood.

In my desperation I clung in heart and mind and spirit to the One who holds me. Jesus was the only option for deep friendship and companionship for so long. I spent daily time talking with Him, telling Him all my heart's feelings and thoughts, and depending on His grace to sustain me. He was—and still is—my closest companion.

It was hard, and at times very soul shaking, to go through that long time of waiting and loneliness. But in retrospect, if I hadn't been, in a way, forced through the depth of emotional turmoil to gain that beautiful and strong relationship with Him, I know I wouldn't have had what it took to ride the waves of the challenges I faced as a parent.

My arms no longer ache in loneliness, but my heart has many times, through the trials of life. My husband, as wonderful as he is, can't practically and physically always be there for me, nor can he make every difficulty go away. I have to cling to someone who holds us all in His arms, and who knows what to do, and can support and strengthen us no matter what comes our way.

Psalm 5: Morning Meditation

Morning Meditation

The night fades fast

The sun's rays chase the last shades away

Along with the daybreak come the cares, the work, the multitude of thoughts.

I hear a call; not as silence-shattering as the ringing of the phone

Rather the call to stillness, to silence.

I shut my door; in quietness I sit

It's time to listen, to learn, to be refilled.

Before I can give, I must stop to receive

For if I give again without aligning my thoughts with Him who is in control, I may end up just spinning my wheels, and have to retrace my steps and do maintenance for misuse

I'll just forget it all, just for now.

The hours of work and output lay before me.

I may not get everything done that I want to, or even feel that I must

But I must, first and foremost, take time to turn my thoughts upward

Or even to turn them off completely and to receive new ones from a higher plane.

Can I do that? It takes trust to stop work, to sit still, to not even always pray a string of requests, but to be open to His mind.

If I do, if I summon the grit to put it all aside and to meditate on Him in the morning, then I too may be able to feel the same joy expressed in this psalm, by one who did, and set an example for us to follow.

Psalm 5:1,3,11 Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

Morning Dew

(A vision of the heart)

It was still dark as I walked out the kitchen door to walk in the garden. The stillness was inviting me for a time of heart-to-heart communion before the day's press was upon me. There would be cooking and cleaning, and children to teach and care for. The work in the garden would be hot in the summer heat. It would be hard to find time for even the most important things. But, ah, this time with the One who made it all a pleasure, sprinkled each day with the magic of Heaven.

I wrapped my filmy shawl around me and walked out into the dew-covered rose garden, and made my way to the swinging bench. It faced where the sun would rise. I sat and quieted myself, and then began to hear Him commune with me.

First the smell of roses wafted through the air to me. It was a Heaven-scented kiss. Then a soft warm breeze brushed my cheeks and rippled through the leaves on the trees. His spirit was there, and moving, and was enveloping me. The cares from the day before were being taken away to the special place where He alone can access them, and will tend to them in His perfect time and way.

I love that sound, the clicking of the keys locking away all that troubles and weighs me down. It is a sound that gives faith. It is the sound that means He's got it under control; it's now in His safety vault, and on His to-take-care-of list.

Okay, now with that done, I can breathe the morning air deeply and slowly, and relax fully in His warm and life-giving embrace.

Psalm 6: Tears and Prayers

I know You See

I've cried;

I know You see.

I've prayed;

You've heard my plea.

Though Your magic I don't see today

And out of this turmoil I scarcely see a way

Yet I know, that because of this great struggle,

The end will be more beautiful.

Psalm 6:3a-4,8b-9 My soul is also sore vexed: Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake. ...The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer.

Tears and Prayers

Do you know what it's like to cry, with every part of your inner being cramped in deep desperation; to cry until you feel you have no tears left? But the next night comes, and with it a new flood of turmoil and pain. I know you do.

To be a mother means to feel more joy and also more pain than you ever did when alone. You no longer live merely your own feelings, but you live each feeling along with your children too. You care, you laugh, you cry, you pray, and you do your best to assure them the healthiest start to life in every way—physically, emotionally, morally, mentally, and spiritually.

When any area of their life is in want, it pulls on you more than anything. —For it's the God-given duty to tend to their needs. He sees to it that the children are cared for by compelling those that have borne them to go the distance and do whatever it takes to give them the best they possibly can.

I didn't know it would hurt so badly—this graduation to motherhood. My instincts told me so, but when faced with the reality of the challenges my children faced, I was in way over my head. I was glad then for every second of time I had spent alone with Jesus before I was married. I needed every ounce of spiritual strength gained, and more.

The physical battles they endured; the heart-wrenching inexplicable nightly pains we faced, again and again, for years, brought me to my knees and on flowed the tears.

It wouldn't have been so hard if I had the moral support of others, rather than being humoured, at best, for my desperation in their care. I would have been able to hold my head up a little higher if people really understood just what we faced, and better yet what caused it. No one had answers. Not until I was willing to go full-out, giving up anything and everything necessary to find solutions, did we find just that.

I gave up my image, or what I thought might be left of it, in the face of my peers and hoped-for friends; I gave up nearly everything I enjoyed; I gave up my personality of flow-along and donned a whole new appearance; I gave up my desire to have things make sense and instead to try out new and unknown tactics; I gave up, or was willing to give up everything I'd known as "basic essentials" and "normal" for me and my needs.

My heart was tried in the "fires of afflictions". And now, though life is not glitch-free, and I still have to live a fairly revolutionised life, I do have joy and peace. He's brought surcease to many of the fierce struggles. If I hadn't had those times of "burning out the dross" I wonder how strong my "gold" of faith and fortitude would be. I wonder how surrendered I would be in utter abandonment to His will alone—without a single soul to see completely eye to eye with. I wonder, if I hadn't had to go it alone in heart and mind, how firmly I would be clasp the hand of Jesus as I walk life's uncertain pathway.

He has truly brought beauty out of ashes, and given joy in the place of sorrow. As that saying says, "Sorrow stretches out places in the heart for joy."

When comparing my life's journey with others, what brought me to my knees in desperate tears seems rather trite. I didn't lose any of my children. I have never had to live in a state of real starvation. We've never been without a nice house to call our home, or at least temporary dwelling place. My children have never been fatherless.

But the Lord of love and of our lives tailor made His plan to guide us to His perfect will, with just the right level of intensity as to close off all other possibilities and options.

Now, while we walk in His plan and will, we can laugh. Of course, at times, there continues to be tears and desperation, for it's still the element of growth and the deepening of one's heart. But those times have taught me much:

*One can only be truly happy when finding God's unique will for their life and their little ones, no matter if (or when) you are the only one on the planet that is called to do just that.

*Jesus sees and hears every prayer, but with His foresight He knows that to bring you lasting joy He needs to prepare the metals of your character in just the right way. That takes time, and painful experiences too; burning heat and blow upon blow, to form just what is needed to live a joyful, strong-hearted life.

*Jesus is the one, and the only one, who truly knows all that is in our hearts, and what we feel. The more we communicate with Him and receive His words of direction, the better able we are to handle the blows and tempests of life. We're never truly alone when we allow the Maker of our souls and the Author of our life of faith, to walk hand in hand, step by step, with us.

*No matter how wrong a situation is, and how many roadblocks seem to stop us from living what we feel God wants us to do, when we keep praying and asking Him what to do, He'll show us what to do, regardless; and then in His time, He'll let us fully live His will and find complete fulfilment.

Psalm 7: God's Righteous Anger

That's God's Job

I don't need to take on me
Justice and get angry
That's God's job, and I
Can pray and to Him cry
For pain's surcease; for wrongs
He'll right before too long.

Psalm 7:10-11 My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart. God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high.

Anger—Right or Wrong?

David reflected on God's feelings of anger at those who were wilfully doing wrong and harming others. He turned his feelings of fear and pain, and wishing for righteousness to prevail, into prayers for God to do just that. He knew that God sees each one on Earth and will mete out to each one what is most needed to bring His kingdom of love on Earth one day.

When I think of the anger that I have felt, I think of these two events. One time when it was wrong, and one time when I needed to be angry, and it would be wrong not to be.

I have a scar still on my leg, reminding me of my mistake. I believed it to be my turn on the bicycle, and my gentle-natured brother was still on it. I screamed out in anger that he needed to give it to me immediately. Saying nothing, but calmly getting off he offered it to me.

Was I grateful? No. I had let anger override normal reason and reactions. It's a poison that contorts and controls. I screamed out yet again, while my brother patiently endured. The bike was facing the wrong direction! Oh dear. He assisted me and helped me to turn it around. But Jesus was beginning to work in my heart and life more, and I wasn't to end up riding the bike that day after all, or for a long time after that.

Something sharp must have been on the bike, and a sharp piece of metal cut a large gash, about 5 cm long, on my right lower leg. I knew then and there that I had overstepped behavioural boundaries and had lost control. My patient brother could have the bike for as long as he wanted. My anger cost me what I wanted, and was trying to use to get it.

The next event happened many years later, as a young woman. One time, in prayer, a friend received a message for me from the Lord. I was to be angry—well, to hate evil. I thought I did. I thought I loved the Lord and His word. I had given my life to Him, and was serving Him 100% of the time.

However, I was being severely tested emotionally and mentally—mind battles of all sorts. I was often wanted to give up on life and was barely holding it together. Personal relationships did not go as I had hoped, my health was acting up in strange ways, and I was a mess on the inside.

I asked friends to pray for me, and they did. As I held on and tried every trick in the book to keep on going and staying sane, and working with the Lord through that time, things changed and I pulled out of it and went on to new challenges. But I never forgot that message of instruction. One of the keys to my spiritual healing was to have an active hate or anger at the one who was trying to snuff out my life and to fervently have nothing to do with any of his tricks and thoughts that so plagued me.

It's good to be angry at the one causing the wrong—the spiritual powers behind the evil around. And then to love the humans on Earth enough to pray them through their rough spots; to forgive them for their mistakes; and be willing to show them love, just as Jesus wants it shown. God will take care of the retribution, and bring help in time of need when the wrongs of others are causing us or others hurt. Then we just help people find the way to salvation.

Psalm 8: Creation Inspiration

Do I?

Do I “consider the heavens”?

Or do I busily carry on half-oblivious to the tailor-made wonders He’s placed all around me?

Do I pause when the sun is setting to take a deep breath and realise the amazing wonder that I’ve just lived a whole new day?

Do I ponder the thought that not only did He make all the wonderful things that He did, at the start of this Earth, but His hands never left us, and continue to help us day by day?

Do I realise how very small I am compared to the huge vastness of space around? Isn’t it just a wonder that He takes such notice of each one of us anyway? How does He manage?

Psalm 8:3-4 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

Master Designer

A rainbow crowns the morning sun rays, after the dawn’s cloud burst. Each hue, each colour displays the splendour of the Divine Artistic designer and Master painter.

There is nothing that is not more beautiful after being touched by His hands.

The painter’s arch-enemy—the lord of hate and disarray, evil and destruction—tries his hardest to mar every work of art. He tries to use calamities, sorrow, heartbreak, purging and loss, spiteful deeds, corruption, pride and fear to blacken or tear down all that this Lord of love and Master designer has created and formed.

But love always wins, and “gets the last laugh.” For the King of the universe is also Master in improvisation, re-creation, satisfaction, new ideas, and betterment in all situations.

It’s not that He couldn’t or won’t stop His pesky enemy, who’s more than a nuisance than an actual threat. But there’s even a beauty in the marring of perfection while this world yet exists in this state—the beauty of rainbows after a terrible storm, of tenderness from a crushing experience, of laughter so much fuller and genuine after the shallowness of a soul has been deepened by difficulties and hardships; of a new life preciousy treasured for its unique beauty, after the pains and hardship of bearing and giving birth.

Psalm 9: Get to Know the Lord

Altogether

When the starlight shines on a bright clear night
I think of Your omniscience,
You know each detail—from atom to universe
I'm always within Your reach, Your thoughts, Your sight.

When the super-natural becomes reality, then I see
You are altogether omnipotent,
There is nothing You cannot do, You simply wish it
I'm secure in the knowledge we're cared for by Thee.

When the day seems bleak and I hear You speak
In Your quiet yet confident way
I feel your omnipresence and give You full sway,
You are able when I can't, strong when I am weak.

Psalm 9:10,16,20 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee. The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth. Put them in fear, O Lord: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.

My Heart Belongs to You

To My dearest One,

The One to whom my heart belongs and is linked to. I feel like having You ever so very near to me tonight. I just feel I can't even begin to get close enough. I want to see You, to feel You close, to hear You beside me. You are all I want. How can we be closer? How can we be nearer? How can we spend more time with each other, connected together?

There's so so very much I have yet to learn about You that it'll take all eternity to grasp it all. But I want to start now, today, to have that special time of connecting and feeling what each other feels, knowing what each other is needing each moment.

What can I do to show My greatest love for You? Is there anything more I can be doing for You? You know I don't want to hurt You. I don't want to live my life and spend my days only in this temporal world, with all its ways, but I want to live equally in the spirit, spend just as much time really tuned in to You and Your desires and to build on our love together. –For You are the meaning of all life. It is for You that I live and breathe and carry on in my service.

Psalm 10: He Notices the Humble

I Am

You are weak—I am omnipotence

You are small—I'm a tall fortress

You feel helpless—I can do anything

You have no power—great power I bring

You get lost—I know it all

You are poor—I've got it all

Each thing you can't, I can do

Each time you slip, I carry you

You can't see far, the way isn't clear

I know what's ahead, and what's past in the rear

I'm faithful to take you one step at a time

As this challenging, steep mountain you climb
Hold on to Me, dear, with Me you'll go far
I have a perfect plan that nothing can mar
You may not know what lies ahead of you
But I've got the tools and gear to bring you through
Fight though you are weary and feeling faint
It's not perfection I look for in a disciple saint
Hold on to My hand, don't go astray
In spite of the challenge, I know the best way
One day at a time is what you must face
And I give the courage and strength for the race.

PSA.10:4,12,17 The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble. Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.

Broken Things

(By Jesus)

Broken things... the list of such things is as long as time itself. It began with a promise to Me that was broken. Yet now, how brightly My unfailing Word shines in contrast. (Adam and Eve)

A broken body and then family soon followed. The life eternal and unending love that I offer is thus cherished for the welcome treasure that is it. (Cain and Abel/ Salvation)

Broken plans and a broken work resulted in variety, varied nations, and a more colourful world—the collage and mosaic of cultures and languages being born. (Tower of Babel)

Then there were broken hopes in a people who once were called My own. But now none can think of themselves as more dear to Me—of all who choose to know and love Me. (Israelites)

A broken self-image and broken pride is what crowned their finest king, bringing the rich aroma from a heart that was desperate for My help and mercy and that touched My heart.

And many millions have been helped and drawn close to Me in heart also through the words recorded in the “Psalms.” (David)

Broken countries and nations are what fill the historical tomes. Yet the unbroken line and pattern that runs continually throughout history has not gone unnoticed nor been buried in supposed fame of man’s accomplishments—for all men fail. The pattern is seen of God’s mercy on mankind, and His steadfastness in keeping His word and promise to granting freedom of choice to all men.

Broken ideals from those who followed afar off and took no heed to My pleading to follow My Words. Thus the cries of the suffering brought such a fervent longing for a Saviour and Deliverer. And many were touched, helped and delivered from their afflictions—and yet many more, too countless to list—were helped through the stories written by such broken souls who clung tightly to Me and were healed and delivered from their painful afflictions.

A broken heart, pierced by many a sorrow, gushed forth from My broken body as I hung on the cross. But love everlasting was found by multitudes as a result.

I have a way of piecing together broken fragments to make a beautiful work of art. Not even as a puzzle with every piece there in the box—but even with a fragment of a piece of some broken life can I recreate something wonderful, if they are willing.

I create things. I don’t even need something to work with. I can form things out of thin air. But I choose to use each and every thing I can. “None of these have I lost,” I told My Father. (John 17)

None of those who clung to My side were “whole and entire, wanting nothing”. But I made of them what only I could. I watered their clay with my tears, and moulded them with the loving labours of My hands. And they chose to then be used alone for Me.

So yes, broken things fill your life as well—hopes, wishes, health, friendships; things you’ve laboured long for smashed and crushed. But if you have faith in Me, the Master planner, and constructor, you’ll rejoice, for you see, I prefer to work with the humble and lowly pieces of your lives. –The full and complete hold less attraction for My focused and loving attention. The broken things you hold will get priority care. Wherever something is broken down, yet placed in My hands, you can be sure I’m in there and My hands are ever close.

*And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. (Luke 5:31)

*He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. (Luke 1:53)

*The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart. (Psalm 34:18)

*He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3)

Psalm 11-13: Trust—Love—God’s Word—Prayer—Praise

Five Forces

There is a word that can calm the tempest of fear.

A word that says, my Lord is here.

A word that no matter what others say,

This word will dispel voices of dismay.

—Trust.

What will endure beyond anything else known?

What brings greatest harvest when it’s sown?

How can I find the secret of true success?

An element strong in the One Who made us:

—Love.

What will bring right in the face of wrong?

What is fit in times of sorrow or song?

What can lift, guide and comfort me,

And will be current down throughout all history?

— God’s Word.

Through this I can reach God’s very heart.

And with this, sickness and troubles depart.

Through it the impossible becomes possible,

With faith and fervency to Jesus I call.

—Prayer.

It's like looking for a rainbow before the shower is past.

It's knowing good will come, and no harm will not last.

It's telling the One Who made what's down here and above,

That we're assured He does all from His bounty of love.

—Praise.

Psalm 11:1 In the Lord put I my trust.

Psalm 11:7 For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.

Psalm 12:6 The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

Psalm 13:3,5-6 Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes.

Psalm 13:5-6 But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

Daring to Play Tennis

Neither King David of old, nor us today who are trying our best to love and follow the Lord, had or will have things go smoothly. The struggles and conflicts will seem insurmountable at times, or joy-threatening at the least. But as Psalms 11-13 bring out, with the undefeatable forces of trust, love, God's Word, prayer and praise, victorious we can be.

The following was written over two years ago, as in the midst of daily life and survival we'd chosen as a family to tackle a small "mission"—of sending free Bibles to missionaries in several countries around the world. Nothing we do for the Lord will ever be easy or unchallenged—but will always be both rewarding and rewarded.

(July, 2011)

The last things hurled at us were tough blows. I wouldn't say unexpected—as predictably when one makes a move to "go over the top" for the Lord, the oppositions throws a fit.

I liken it to playing tennis. I'm on one side, with the best Teammate ever. I know we are sure winners. But every time He—Jesus— hands me the ball to "serve", I know it's going to cost. There will be something flying back again, no doubt about it—and it ain't usually fuzzy balls. But if I've got any at all, I will still make the serve regardless.

After what felt like one too many rocks and whatnot thrown back our way, I retreated to be alone, while I carried on a heated, one-way, debate with the Lord. With hot tears streaming down my face and my horse voice, from sickness, I tried to demand some answer, some reason. Why need it be so? Why couldn't I just "delight to do His will?" (Psalms 40:8) There are millions of things I would do for Him to help win the hearts and souls of men. Why did the game rules need to be so tough, "eye for an eye" it seemed—with a tough bout of troubles thrown into our court every time we did something deliberately for the Lord and those who needed Him?

His calm answers seemed to find their way past the mental torrent. He answered with that verse, "I delight to do thy will..." adding the thought, probing me, "Is His will always delightful?" Regardless of what it is, I am to rejoice. Was there a chance that this tough part—the consequences of doing it—a part of His will too? If it truly was His will that I experience these things, and He'd allowed them, should I not "take it" and praise Him just the same?

It was sound counsel. But there was more to be worked out. The hardest part is that the blows aren't just on me. My children get it too. Why should my children have to suffer the attacks of the Enemy, when we their parents make a move to "preach the gospel" in whatever way He leads us to? It seemed too much to expect. I wasn't ready to continue with the game.

Maybe that's enough, I thought. Perhaps we've done enough. If every time we do something for the spreading of His love and Word, we all get slapped with numerous problems, that notably were not there a day or two before, was it wrong for me to keep it up? I needed to know what was right.

Then His voice wended through again, "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matthew 19:29)

He was telling me, that should I choose to "do His will" and end up taking a "beating" for it, and not only me, but have all that is dear to me touched in some way, that was considered to Him to be "forsaking houses, children, husband, lands" and so forth.

Going "all out" for Him, unreservedly, was in essence making all these things that are special to me on Earth, vulnerable. It was "giving it up" in a way. And thus the rewards handed out—those "100 fold" ones—would be likewise granted.

As I am thinking about the next "ball" He wants me to "serve" (for) Him, I don't take it lightly. My knees tremble, my fingers fidget with it. I contemplate it. I don't feel ready or willing to endure whatever it will cost. My thoughts go back to a recent round that landed my son in the hospital and many other home-front difficulties that sprung on us simultaneously. Then there was our latest "ball" and thrust for the Lord, knocking our whole family out with sickness, both computers unusable until fixed, special durable toys

mysteriously broken, and the mice returned (after a long, difficult, nauseating, and then victorious struggle to rid our house of them). –And all in the few days after we’d “gone over the top”. I knew we’d pay for it.

I felt brave and strong and “right” at the time, flashing a cheeky grin to our opponent, as I hit that ball, that was more like a grenade. No matter what, I had willed to do it, regardless of the cost. But now, bleeding from the shrapnel wounds I was losing spirit. I needed reassurance. His words were comforting in a way. They built faith—but as always were true. He told no candy-coated lies. Things would be tough.

But when all is said and done, it probably won’t be any less trouble if I attempted to just make my life cosy. One way or the other “in the world ye shall have tribulation.”

(John16:33) At least getting pelted for doing right will bring compensation—eventually.

“Is it worth it?” That is the question. I thought then of all those who must have “dared to play tennis” for me, that have helped better my life in some way: my parents, Christians of old, Tyndale and other Bible translators. The list would be long. But what if they had given up? Where would I be at now, today?

That night to highlight His point, it seems Jesus spoke a message to me through my nearly four-year-old son, while settling the children in bed. My heart’s struggles completely unknown to him, and half asleep he asks me, “Mummy, are you going to give up sending the Bibles to people because you can’t talk?” (My voice was gone for days due to the sickness that sprang on us after we mailed of several boxes of Bibles to missionaries in varied places). Odd, eerie, and making the point clear, as well as bringing me to a decision. I ask my boys then, “Should I give up?” They both unanimously and emphatically exclaim: “No! You shouldn’t give up!” I had their support and encouragement to go on, regardless of what it seems to cost our family. I state in a whisper, as bravely as I can, “Okay, I won’t give up!”

The next day, as if to further me on in the path of faith and service, a friend shows up with three more boxes of free Bibles for us to continue to ship abroad to missionaries in hard-to-get-Bibles places. Ah, those strange coincidences. God knows our thoughts!

And yet the following day—(Is Someone on my trail or what?)—there is the part that I’d forgotten all about, that’s when it’s my Heavenly Partner’s turn to hit back. Somehow He makes it turn out even better than if I’d never gotten those “casualties of war”. As sit at our now fixed computer, that because of the glitches, was fixed up and working even better than before, for free... hmmm, He does have a way of making even the rough things work out for the best, for me, His teammate.

So as I hold the ball that is now again in my court, I glance my Partner’s way. He seemed to be polishing a trophy of sorts, and with a look in His eyes that truly is “to die for” I’m reminded that the payback will be “too good to be true”. I gather my guts, and before hurling the ball I yell the score “Four love!” ...Yes, that’s why—for love.

Psalm 14: Wisdom is Getting to Know God

Mere mortals with mixed-up minds, mingle and muddle through, trying to make their way as a misguided mob of mankind. Merriment and mercy might be theirs, rather, if only they'd quit mocking, messing up and muddying the way of their Maker.

There's only one wonderful way, the way to wisdom is to want the truth, and to walk the way Heaven leads. Once people learn this secret, and stop wondering if it's the way God says things are, their wandering in woeful wildernesses of want will cease. With joy they'll embrace the ways of light, wishing for true understanding. Wisdom is to know God's Word and walk His ways.

Only foolish fools filled with folly, who've forsaken the truth, will fumble around trying to find fanciful alternatives. But they are only left with fear and famine, as their heart within is famished for the food God would feed them heartily with. Folks who focus on finding the truth in God's Word will feel free to enjoy life as it was meant to be lived—few though they may be—find life fresh and fun, fortified and built on the best foundation.

Psalm 14:2 The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

How do I know God made us, and that He's real—though some expend their life trying so hard to block Him out and disprove the truth of Him as the Creator and maintainer... if the truth weren't so blaringly obvious, they might not have to work so hard at it.

I interviewed my husband and jotted down the reasons he listed, how he knows without a shadow of doubt, that God is real, is around, and is very involved in our lives. Here is our combined short list:

- 1.) When I really cry and talk with Jesus about what's going on in my heart and mind, something notable, good and problem-relieving, always happen.
- 2.) He tells me secrets—things only know to Him and a certain individual. And He says it with the words that touch their inner soul. Things said in a personally meaningful and moving way, as only their Creator can.
- 3.) When I really need a miracle, for myself or for the good the children, He breaks the rules of known science to do whatever it takes to help us, and show His love and care.
- 4.) A close and honest look at the design, intricacy, and balance of all forces and elements of creation shows it's impossible for it to come into being in any other way but by a Divine

Creator. Even the astounding element of life itself is too vast, too incredible to not be a Creation of God, the giver of life.

5.) The Bible tells truth—including the reality of the God of all. The ringing core principle of the Bible is truth, and those writing it out were people who walked in the fear of God, knowing that the truth was to be told. History written therein is not glossed over with only valiant, faultless tales of its heroes and those upheld as great men or women of God, for the stories do not fail to include mention of the failure, sins and shortcomings. The Bible holds the hallmarks of a realistic narrative, not a legendary. Among the texts, the person of God is likewise brought in as solid word of truth.

6.) The beauty of nature. It's not just functional. The way beauty is manifested everywhere shows something bigger and better is planning and bring it into being. Man-made environments are not as beautiful as the things God made. When man and God's creation is in harmony, there is great beauty.

7.) Personal life-transforming influences of God that changed life, giving me hope, answers to prayer and miracles. Such things as were void before I turned to Him and believed fully in His love and reality.

Psalm 15: Tips for Happy Living

What kind of people show that they are Heavenly Citizens? What traits should we work on having here and now? Psalm 15 gives some tips.

- Use your time, skills, and energy to do things that are good and beneficial—what Jesus would do if He were in your shoes.
- Believe and accept what is true and right; hunger for it, speak it, think on it.
- Be honest with yourself and others.
- Don't waste time talking badly about others behind their backs.
- Say things that life-build and help bring positive results.
- Don't give expecting or hoping to get more in return.
- Think on the good qualities and assume the best of those around you.
- Use your energies to help improve the life quality of others, rather than stirring up ill feelings in others towards them, and harbouring them in your own heart.
- Keep your promises or don't make them unless you are committed to doing so.
- Don't be swayed by financial benefits for doing what is ultimately to the hurt of others.
- Stand up for those who are doing what's right, even if others try to put them down or pressure you to side against them; side with the right, even if it brings you less monetary benefits or approval of others.

- Choose the right kind of characters to admire and emulate—those who respect God’s ways and love Him.
- Show respect to and speak well of all those who are trying their best to follow and please the Lord; you’re all on the same team.

Psalm 15: 1-2a Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness.

Psalm 16: Full Joy

In this psalm there are secrets to deep and abiding joy. Here are some that I discovered when reading it. See if you can match the point or points with the verse in this psalm, that showed me this secret.

* Trust in the Lord’s unlimited ability to keep and protect us; praying in faith for His safe keeping without worry.

*Knowing the greatness of the everlasting God.

*Focusing on the good that those who love and follow the Lord are doing; hearing about the good and speaking only what honours and glorifies the Lord.

*Being content to have Jesus as your inheritance, your land, your heritage.

*Listening to the Lord’s advice and counsel. Realising that we’re not alone, having to find our way through the maze of life; we have an ever-present guide, whose spot-on words can help us to find the happiest and wisest ways to take.

*Following the in-built mechanism, that God has placed within us as a guide to happy living; our conscience—and helping others to follow theirs. Taking the time to ponder our actions and make changes in our conduct or make choices in our plans that line up well with that inner voice of God’s spirit. The voice of wisdom He tries to impart if we get still and quiet enough to hear.

*Before we do something or go anywhere, realise Jesus is always with us; don’t ignore His presence, but communicate with Him, draw from His wisdom. Make Him our “right-hand man”. If we do, we are less likely to foolishly walk into trouble and make a mess of things. He’ll lead us in ways that we can maintain our inner stability, peace and joy, and things won’t “rock our boat”. With Him as our companion, and through active communication with Him, we can handle anything.

*Our hearts can fully and deeply rejoice knowing we are saved; He died for our sins and rose again to give us forgiveness, and we will live, forgiven, forever with the Lord. The knowledge of this gift fills us with hope for our long-term future. We can rest at ease; the biggest problem has been taken care of for us. Accepting His gift of eternal life through thanking Him for His forgiveness and asking Him into our hearts and lives will bring the best and most enduring joy.

Psalm 16:11 Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

10 Tips for a Terrible Today (Or skip 'em and have a great one!)

- 1.) Tell yourself you just can't manage, you'll never be able to get around to each thing you feel needs your attention. Things are just too hard for you.
- 2.) Keep looking at your watch, seeing how fast (or slow) the time is passing, wondering why you haven't yet solved all the problems of the whole world, today...time is ticking
- 3.) Every time you see something that you just haven't been able to get around to doing, repeat to yourself, "I'm a loser!"
- 4.) Realise that you are much too busy to smile, talk casually with anyone, play a funny game with the children, or sit down to get quiet for a moment of prayer.
- 5.) Keep a movie playing in your mind of past times that you regret happened, or that caused you heartache, or a longed-for good time that you are pining for.
- 6.) Fault-find in every situation and with everyone you come in contact with. Nothing will ever be completely to your liking. Make it your automatic reaction to find the flaws.
- 7.) If you are in pain, or ill, or going without genuine needs keep focusing on the important fact, "I'm the one that matters most right now... (oh why isn't everyone in the universe rushing into aid me, immediately?)"
- 8.) Say it out loud! No matter what the feeling or irritability, frustration or bother, just put it into words, so all can join you in the play-by-play moments of your ups and downs.
- 9.) Take note and tally up all the seeming "imbalances", the times you seem to work harder, get less sleep, always have to be the one to do a certain dreary task, and whatnot.
- 10.) Keep the formula: First get what I need, then I'll see if I can get a chance to help others.

Take Time

Take time to love, it's your source of joy

Take time to appreciate and enjoy

The simple things, oft gone unseen

Take time to listen, learn and glean,

The lessons & dreams from others' lives

Take time to embrace and realize

The wonder of God's eternal care

Take time to give the gift of prayer

For those in straits graver than your own

Take time to reap the good you've sown

Take time to share a kind look, a smile

Take time to walk the "extra mile"

Take time to savour what's truly best

Take time to tell of how you've been blessed.

Take time to encourage a friend in their need.

Take time to sit, absorb or read

Enhancing understanding, refreshing your mind.

Take time to share the treasures you find

When you have taken the time