

By Carol Carnevali

ANGEL
— IN —
WHITE
(A True Story)

Carol Carnevali

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ISBN-13: 9781234567890

ISBN-10: 1477123456

Cover design by: Art Painter

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018675309

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-1-0980-0706-5 (paperback) ISBN 978-1-0980-0707-2 (digital) Copyright © 2019 by Carol Carnevali All rights reserved.

This book is a true story, however, some of the names have been changed to protect the privacy of the parties involved.

Dedication

To my daughters, Lacey and Lindsay, Though I had to raise you as a single mother, I cherished every second of it, and love you both more than you'll ever know. I dedicate this book to you. May God bless and keep you as His own dear children.

Love, always and forever,

Mom

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6, KJV)

Chapter 1



Up until Christmas of 1987, I had never heard of David Wilkerson, even though he was born and raised in my hometown of Barnesboro, Pennsylvania. It wasn't until my best friend, Joe, had told me about the movie, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, that I came to hear of this man of God, and how he was called from pastoring a small country church to working on the streets of New York City with teenaged gangs and drug addicts. I thought that the story sounded interesting—especially since the man was from Barnesboro—and casually remarked that I might like to see the movie sometime.

I didn't think much more about it until a week or so later when, all day long, *The Cross and the Switchblade* had been strangely on my mind. No matter what I did throughout the day, I couldn't seem to shake the thoughts of this story of the man from Barnesboro. It was with me so strongly that I even thought I would try to rent the video; an unusual thing for me, never having seen a Christian movie before. I heard that there was a new store in town that was renting Christian videos, so I thought I would drive down later in the afternoon to see if they had it. Joe was planning to stop by for the evening, and I thought it would be a nice surprise. But as busy as I was getting ready for Christmas, which was only a week away, the store closed before I could get there.

When Joe arrived that evening, he said that he had a surprise for me.

“What is it?” I asked excitedly.

“I rented *The Cross and the Switchblade* movie,” he replied, “and was wondering if you were in the mood to watch it tonight.”

“Are you kidding?” I exclaimed. “That movie has been on my mind all day long, and I was going to rent it to surprise you!”

So that night we sat and watched *The Cross and the Switchblade* together. Although I wasn’t too impressed with the movie, which I didn’t think seemed very realistic, I thought that the true story of how God used this man from Barnesboro to win so many hard-core gang members and drug addicts to Christ was pretty incredible. Even so, the film didn’t overly move me.

On the day before Christmas, I still had a lot of work to do around the house. I was busy grocery shopping, cleaning, and baking; and I still wasn’t finished wrapping presents. Life as a single, working mother of two wasn’t easy. It seemed as if I was always struggling to keep up the pace, especially when it came to the housework. The hustle and bustle of the Christmas season didn’t help matters and, as usual, come Christmas Eve, I was nowhere near ready.

I had been feeling fine all day. In fact, I was even planning to have some friends over that evening for a Christmas Eve worship service. After complaining to Joe that none of the Pentecostal churches in the area were having a Christmas Eve service, Joe suggested that we have one of our own. He said that we could invite some friends over, and he and my brother, Danny, could bring their guitars so that we could have a time of worship and praise. Then someone could preach, and we could even have communion. It sounded like a great idea but I told Joe to hold off calling everyone until I was sure I was going to be able to get my work done.

It was a good thing we waited because, as evening came, I began to feel a little sick. As time went on, I grew even worse and, by seven o’clock, it was apparent that I was not going to feel up to having anyone over. Besides, I still wasn’t finished wrapping

presents. I struggled to get the gifts wrapped but, by ten o’clock, I became so sick with headache, fever and nausea that I had to call my mother for help or my ten-year-old daughter, Lacey, and my eight-year-old daughter, Lindsay, would not have found anything under the tree in the morning!

My mother came and finished the wrapping for me as I spent the rest of the night in agony at the foot of the toilet. It was a long time since I had been so violently ill, and it was amazing how suddenly it hit me. My mother tucked the girls in bed, got the presents under the tree, and left at around one o’clock in the morning.

It was a long night. It seemed like the pain would never end. I prayed and cried out to God for help and tried to rebuke the devil, but it seemed like nothing was working. Looking back now, I realize that God had *allowed* me to get sick. It was for a purpose.

On Christmas morning, I felt a tiny bit better but was so weak that I could hardly walk. I managed to make it downstairs, however, to watch the girls open their presents and thanked God for my mother who had been there to take care of everything for me.

A little while later, my parents and brother came by to help me get the girls fed and dressed, and to take them to their house to spend Christmas Day. It was our family tradition to gather together at my parents’ house to celebrate the day, but I could see that, this year, I was not going to be able to make it. Christmas, for me, was going to be spent home alone, and sick in bed.

Before leaving, my brother, Danny, wanted me to open the presents he had gotten me. He said that he also had one for me from Joe. I opened the ones from Danny first and then the one from Joe. Joe had gotten me a book. The name of it was *The Cross and the Switchblade*.

After everyone left, I took my book and went back upstairs to bed. But even though I was still very sick, I wasn’t able to sleep, so I began to read. I read and read for hours. In fact, I thought the book was so interesting that I couldn’t put it down until I had read it the whole way through. I finished it sometime that evening and,

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as soon as I did, I began to feel better. A lot better! So much so that I called my mom and asked her to bring the girls back home, and to send me up some turkey, too!

It was an amazing recovery. Just as quickly as I had gotten sick, I got well. I was sick just long enough to miss Christmas and to read *The Cross and the Switchblade*.

Chapter 2



A few days later, Joe came by and brought a newsletter from David Wilkerson. In the newsletter, Rev. Wilkerson wrote about the new church he had just begun to pastor in New York City. The name of it was Times Square Church. The church had only been open for about three months, and the meetings were temporarily being held in Town Hall.

The letter said that the church was going to be holding a special New Year's Eve service and that following the service, they were going to be having a revival on Broadway. Rev. Wilkerson was inviting people who felt led to come and pray, and be a part of the great revival that was taking place in New York City. As Joe and I read the newsletter, both of us suddenly felt a strong urge to go. The urge was so strong that we decided to do some serious praying about it to see if, perhaps, it was God who had placed such a preposterous idea in our minds.

After praying, we began to make some phone calls—just out of curiosity—to see how much the trip would cost. Neither of us had any money so we knew that, if we were to go, it would have to be God because we could only go if He provided the means.

We found out that a roundtrip bus ticket would cost around \$80, and we figured that we would need an additional \$170.00 to cover the cost of food and a hotel room for two nights. (Times Square Church had made arrangements with a certain hotel in the

area to accommodate visitors for the revival at a reasonable rate.) So, the total amount we figured we needed was \$250.00.

The following evening, which was a Sunday, Joe called at around ten o'clock. He said that he had just gotten home from church and that God had poured him out a blessing he was unable to contain! "What is it?" I asked excitedly.

"I can't tell you over the phone!" he said. "I have to show you! Is it okay if I come up?"

"Sure!" I said. "Come right now!"

He came within a few minutes and told me to sit down on the couch as he pulled out a large wad of money and began throwing it, bill by bill, into my lap. There were a number of twenties, tens, fives, and one-dollar bills.

"Joe!" I exclaimed. "Where did you get all this money?"

"Count it!" he said. "It comes to \$248.00, only \$2.00 shy of the \$250.00 we said we needed for the trip. Carol!" he exclaimed ecstatically. "I'm going to New York! God provided the money!"

I could hardly believe my eyes as I stared at all the money in my lap.

"Praise God!" I said. "But, Joe, how did God do it? Where did all this money come from?"

Joe explained that, earlier that afternoon, he had gone to his pastor for prayer concerning the trip and that, right in the middle of the Sunday evening service, his pastor interrupted his message, turned to Joe, and said, "Joe, do you want to go to New York?"

"Yes!" Joe replied with surprise, and his pastor asked him to come forward to be anointed and prayed for. The pastor shared with the congregation the burden Joe felt to go to New York, so the whole church joined together and prayed for him. Afterward, they took up an offering to help cover the expenses of his trip. His pastor gave him a hundred dollars, another sister gave him a hundred, and the rest of the offering amounted to forty-eight dollars.

I was thrilled for Joe, but I couldn't help thinking, "God, what about me?" I couldn't see any way *possible* for God to drop \$250.00 into *my* lap! But I knew that if He did it for Joe, He could do it for

me too, so I continued to pray.

By now, I had a real desire to go. *Besides*, I thought, *I can't let Joe* (who is ten years younger and like a brother to me) *go to New York City on New Year's Eve all by himself! It's too dangerous! He needs me to go with him!*

The thought of going to New York City was both terrifying and exciting. Barnesboro, the tiny, little coal-mining town where we were both born and raised, was about as opposite as you could get from New York City. In our little town, located out in the hills of western Pennsylvania and having a total population of only about five thousand, we had been virtually sheltered from the crime, drugs, and problems of inner-city life.

Except for the two-and-a-half years that I had recently spent in the Tidewater, Virginia area, I had lived all of my thirty-one years in Barnesboro, a town so safe that it really isn't even necessary to lock your doors at night. The "big city" for us was Pittsburgh, which was about a hundred miles away. Even going to the smaller cities, such as Johnstown, Altoona, and Indiana, seemed like a big deal to us as we were growing up.

To us, going to New York City was about as foreign as going to the moon and about as scary as stepping into a death chamber! But in spite of all my fears, I still couldn't seem to shake my desire to go, and I knew Joe felt the same way.

Monday and Tuesday came and went, and I heard nothing from the Lord. That left only one more day for God to move on my behalf. Thursday was New Year's Eve, and Joe was planning to leave first thing in the morning. Come Wednesday, I was beginning to get a little desperate, so I thought that I would try to "help God along." Foolishly, I went downtown and bought a lottery ticket. Needless to say, that didn't work! I finally had to come to grips with the fact that God wasn't calling me to New York after all—He was only calling Joe. It was a big letdown for me, but I only wanted God's will.

That night, I attended the Wednesday-evening service with Joe at his church (we belonged to different fellowships, and this was my first time at his). As the pastor was commenting about

Joe's trip, he said something that really stunned me.

He said, "God has called *both* Carol and Joe to go to New York City, but Carol isn't going to get to go—*this time*."

This time? I thought. *Ha, the pastor must be trying to appease me or something! I won't ever be going because it's obvious that God isn't calling me.* God had provided Joe with the exact amount of money (that night someone had given him the two-dollar difference) we figured we needed for the trip, but He didn't provide one dime for me. He only *used me* to play a part in Joe's calling. *After all, I thought, why would God call a single mother like me to such a dangerous place? What would happen if I got killed or something? Who would take care of my two little girls? No, although it was nice of the pastor to say, I was sure that he was wrong. I will never be going to New York, I thought, because God isn't calling me.*

After the service, I drove Joe home and told him I'd be praying for him until he got back. His pastor was going to be driving him to the Altoona bus station first thing in the morning so, reluctantly, I said goodbye to him that night.

Chapter 3



I was feeling down and a little depressed as the New Year, 1988, rolled in. I had just come through the hardest year and a half of my life—and I had already been through quite a lot in my lifetime.

I had married young, at the age of nineteen, and spent four miserable years with an alcoholic husband who mentally and physically abused me since day one. Having no real concept back then of what hell was like, I was convinced that it could never be any worse than what I had been through in my marriage. I lived constantly in torment and fear, never having any peace. But it had been almost eight years since my divorce, and I had put all those years behind me and, really, had almost forgotten that they even happened.

Three years after the divorce, I managed to get myself off welfare and food stamps (which I had considered a step up after living in even worse poverty with a husband who loved to gamble but hated to work). After going to college to study Business Administration for a year, I landed a job as Secretary/Office Manager in an office in Norfolk, Virginia.

At the time, I was seriously dating a guy by the name of Kevin who had just moved from Barnesboro to Virginia Beach, and I decided to take my little girls and move in with him. (Of course, during this time, I was not yet saved.) I spent close to three very

happy years there with Kevin as we very quickly began to climb the ladder of success.

Neither of us had any money when we first moved to Virginia, but God led me into a job with a real estate development company which, after a month's time, hired Kevin on as Vice President of Sales. Kevin had been working selling cars at one of Virginia Beach's largest dealerships and, after only six months' time, he had become the number one salesperson, outselling all twenty-seven others, some of whom had been working there for many years. Before we knew it, he was a V.P. making over \$100,000 a year selling waterfront condominiums. I was promoted from Secretary to the head of the accounting department, and was also bringing in more money than I had ever made in my life. We were doing very well and soon moved out of our rented townhouse in Virginia Beach into one of the brandnew condominiums that our company had built at Buckroe Beach in nearby Hampton. Kevin bought one for us to live in, and later, bought two or three more for investment purposes.

We were so excited the day we moved into our new home on the beach. We decked it out with all new, and very expensive, furniture—from the plushiest carpeting, to Oriental furniture and paintings, to a king-sized waterbed, to a television set as big as a wall! We were thrilled to wake up to the sunrise over the Chesapeake Bay, the fresh ocean air, and the sound of seagulls. Kevin and I would get up early and run a couple of miles on the beach, then take a dip in the courtyard swimming pool before leaving for work. Our condo had a spectacular view of the Bay, and on a clear night, you could see the lights from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel flickering as far across the water as the eye could see.

Kevin and I had a wonderful relationship. We were the best of friends and were very happy together. But, although we often joked with each other about getting married, neither of us were seriously ready to make such a commitment.

It was during this time of my life that I began to think about God. Not that I had never thought about Him before! I was born

and raised Catholic as were about 90 percent of the people in Barnesboro, went to church all of my life and, in my own mind, had always taken my walk with the Lord seriously. I had always loved God—at least as much as is possible to love Him without really *knowing* Him.

But this was different. From the time that I had moved down to this southern Bible belt, it seemed that everywhere I turned, I ran into born-again Christians! First of all, my boss, the executive director of the real estate development company, was a Christian. The company was just getting off the ground and was sharing an office (and me, as secretary) with a food marketing company, the owner of which was a Christian. Both of their families, which were quite large, were Christians. Most of the business associates that came into the office were also Christians. My next-door neighbor turned out to be a Christian. I found out that my babysitter was a Christian. The mailman, who brought the mail into the office every day and who was originally from Altoona, Pennsylvania, a city near Barnesboro, was a Christian. No matter where I turned, there they were. I just couldn't seem to get away from them!

Every day at work, my bosses would spend time talking to each other, and to me, about the Lord. They spoke excitedly of all the miracles and wonderful things that God was doing in their lives. I had never heard such talk before—they spoke as though they knew God personally! And when they prayed, I would see God answer their prayers immediately. I thought they were a little strange, but I kind of enjoyed listening to them. They kept telling me that I needed to be born again, but I didn't really understand what that meant. One day, when I told my boss that I was a Catholic, he made a comment that really shocked me.

Shaking his head, he said with his slow, southern drawl, "Ya know, of all the religions, I think Catholicism is about the worst."

"The worst!" I exclaimed with surprise. "I always thought it was the best!"

I was never really offended by their comments against my religion. I always liked to keep an open mind and to search things out for myself. Besides, there were a lot of things in the Catholic

Church that didn't make any sense to me and that I didn't agree with, but that I did anyway just because it was what I was taught. I went along with everything, never questioning why I was doing what I was doing; never really having any reason to—until now.

I could see a world of difference between these born-again Christians and the Catholic people I knew in my life. Almost every Catholic I ever knew (including me) drank, partied, and lived their life any way they wanted to while showing up for church on Sunday morning or Saturday night, and even piously walking up to the front of the church to receive communion. Everyone did it, so although deep down I knew it was wrong, I guessed that if the whole church was doing it, it must be all right. I believed that as long as I didn't commit any "mortal" sins like murdering someone, I would waltz right into heaven, no problem. And I believed that as long as I followed the Catholic rituals, I was right with God.

But although as a Catholic I knew *of God*, I really didn't *know God* personally as these Christians seemed to know Him. They explained that the *only* way to know God and the only way to heaven was through God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and by receiving Him as Lord and Savior; by repenting of my sins, asking Him into my heart, and making a commitment to follow Him all the days of my life. They explained that it isn't a religion, but it's a *relationship* with Jesus Christ. That's what it means to be Born Again, as it states in the Bible in John 3:3.

As my bosses talked about the Bible and quoted numerous scriptures from it, I realized that I knew absolutely nothing about the Bible. I had never read a word of it in my life! In fact, at twenty-six years of age, I didn't even know that Genesis is the first book of the Bible! My boss's son and son-in-law both owned their own companies, and they named them after a book and a character in the Bible: The Genesis Group, Ltd. and The Gideon Group, Ltd. That was how I found out!

My one boss gave me a little paperback Bible which I began to try to read, and my other boss invited me to his church. He said it was called the Rock Church.

The Rock Church! I thought. *Well, that sure is a strange name for a church! It's a far cry from Our Lady of Mount Carmel* (the name of the Catholic Church I used to attend back home), *or Holy Cross, or St. Edwards!* But, out of curiosity, I decided to go. I decided I wanted to know the truth about God. Knowing the truth was always something of utmost importance to me and, if I had been wrong about my concept of God all of these years, I wanted to know.

It was the first Pentecostal service I had ever been to in my life. As a matter of fact, it was the first time in my life that I had ever gone to a church that was not Catholic. We were taught that, if we ever did, God would strike us dead!

This was different! Very different! The huge, round-shaped church was packed with about 1,500 people who all seemed to be very loving, happy, and full of life. There was something about these people. They were so friendly! They talked with you, shook hands with you, and hugged you—without even knowing you! Back in the Catholic Church, where the atmosphere was as cold as ice, the people could barely choke out a "Peace be with you" to one or two neighbors when the priest said it was time to offer each other a sign of peace!

The music was just as different. Instead of singing a boring verse or two of a slow hymn accompanied by an organ hidden somewhere in the back of the church, they sang, praised, and clapped their hands for about a half hour to upbeat songs accompanied by a large choir and full orchestra! Then, for just as long, they sang the most beautiful worship songs as they lifted their hands in praise and adoration to their God. It was very moving and I felt something that I had never felt before in my life—I felt what I knew must have been the presence of God!

During the preaching, everyone got their Bibles out and enthusiastically followed a sermon that lasted almost an hour. I was amazed at how the preacher would tell them to turn to a certain book of the Bible—a name that I had never heard of—and they would find it within seconds. "*How do these people know so much about the Bible?*" I wondered. I had the hardest time following the sermon, while all of the people around me seemed to

be understanding it with no problem. As the people would, from time to time, shout out “Amen” or “Praise the Lord” or “Thank you, Jesus,” I would turn my head in shock. They were shouting right in the middle of the sermon! Why, our priest would throw you out if you made any noise during his sermon! Like I said, this was different!

After the message, the preacher gave an altar call, another thing I had never seen before (except maybe on TV while watching a Billy Graham crusade). Many people went up to the altar for prayer and salvation, and I heard many people around me praying out loud! During this time, I also heard people praying out loud in a very strange language. My boss had told me a little about “speaking in tongues,” and I wondered if this was what he was referring to. I couldn’t get over how these people were speaking in different languages, and to be honest, I was a little frightened by it.

As I sat there taking it all in, the only thing I could think was that these people definitely knew something that I didn’t! I went home with a lot to think about.

Every day, it seemed someone was preaching the Gospel to me—whether it was my bosses or the mailman who, along with the daily mail brought me daily tracts to read, or the boss’s daughter or wife, or my next-door neighbor who kept inviting me to Bible studies, or even to my babysitter who would send my little girl home with memorized scriptures and cute, little “holy roller” songs (as I would call them). It didn’t take a genius to figure out that God was trying to get my attention!

Aside from everything that was happening on the outside, I began to become aware that God was dealing with me on the *inside*. Something was going on inside of me that I couldn’t explain, and I kept hearing this constant, nagging voice inside saying, “Buy a Bible. Buy a Bible.”

I couldn’t seem to shake it so, one day, I finally gave in and said, “Okay, okay, I’ll buy a Bible!”

After much looking around, I finally bought a beautiful, leather-bound New American Standard Version Bible that cost forty dollars. It seemed like a fortune to spend on a book, but I thought, *If I’m going to buy a Bible, I’m going to buy a nice one!* Deep in my heart I knew that, one day, I would want to become Born Again—but I kept telling myself, and everyone else, that I wasn’t ready.

One day, however, I began to realize that, although I had everything in the world I had ever dreamed of—everything and more than what I ever thought it would take to make me happy—there was yet an emptiness deep inside of me that I knew only God could fill. I remember as I came to this realization, I was home lying on the bed, sobbing. Poor Kevin, who couldn’t understand what was going on with me, finally asked with frustration, “Carol, what is *wrong* with you?”

I could hardly find the words to tell him, but finally, I blurted out, “*I...need... God!*”

It was shortly after this, on August 26, 1983, (only three months after I had moved to Virginia), that I said to my boss while at work in Norfolk, Virginia, “I’m ready.” We went into his office, and he led me in a sinner’s prayer in which I asked Jesus Christ to come into my heart, forgive me of my sins, and be my Lord and Savior. Praise God, I was saved! Born again! A brand-new creature, as the Bible says! I felt different immediately. I knew that a change had taken place inside of me that would change my life forever. I knew that I would never be the same again. It felt great!

difficult man to work for at times. I often wondered how he could be so loving and God-like one minute and then so ruthless and coldhearted the next. I saw a lot of hypocrisy that eventually had me doubting whether I really wanted to be a Christian like him or not.

It was one thing after another after making my decision to serve the Lord, and even Kevin, who was nowhere near ready to commit his life to God, could sense that something strange—something spiritually strange—was going on. For the first time in my life, I realized not only how real God is, but how real Satan is. I was fighting a tremendous spiritual battle, and it seemed like I was losing. Being such a new Christian, I knew nothing about the Word of God, the authority Christians have over Satan in the name of Jesus, and how the devil must flee when we resist him. The only thing I knew was that I wanted Jesus!

Time and time again, I went crying to my boss, but he couldn't seem to offer me much help. He was very much against my continuing to live with Kevin and told me that, as long as I was living in sin, I had no power over the enemy. I thought, *Well then, forget it! I might as well just give up!* There was no way I could afford to live on my own, and besides, I didn't want to. I was very happy living with Kevin and didn't see any reason to leave. (God had to deal with me about this in His own time.)

The last straw was when, three months after my conversion, I felt that Satan tried to kill me! My daughters and I had taken a trip back home to Pennsylvania for Thanksgiving and were travelling back to Virginia when, without any warning, the car suddenly died on me right in the middle of busy Interstate 95, just south of Washington, DC.

I thought for sure we would be killed because, as the heavy holiday traffic was speeding along at about seventy to eighty miles an hour, there were two lanes that I needed to cross over before I could pull off the highway. I told the girls to get down on the floor, and I cried out to Jesus with all my might as I frantically tried to restart the engine.

It was only by the grace of God that I eventually managed to

Chapter 4



No sooner did I get done saying “Amen,” than all hell broke loose against me. The very first lesson I learned from the Bible was the Parable of the Sower, where it says that, after the seed (or the Word) is sown, the devil comes *immediately* to steal the Word. This was exactly what Satan was doing to me!

First, he attacked with sickness. Minutes later, when I left work to go pick up my girls at the daycare, Lacey was burning up with fever. When she got better, then Lindsay got sick. When Lindsay got better, then I would get sick. I became so sick that I couldn't get out of bed for two weeks! When I finally recovered, the whole cycle started all over again. It continued for months and was really beginning to wear me down. (It was strange, though, how it never touched Kevin.)

On top of this, I began to bleed heavily and continuously for many weeks. I was so weak from loss of blood that, at times, I would get dizzy and nearly faint. After a month, I finally went to the doctor who scheduled me to go to the hospital for a D&C (Dilation & Curettage) procedure but, thank God, the day before I was to go in, the bleeding stopped, and the surgery was canceled.

While trying to deal with this, I was also trying to deal with the extreme pressure that was on me at work. Although my boss was a Christian, he was a very hard businessman and the most

get the car started just long enough to cross the two lanes and get us safely off the highway. After about an hour of trying to get the car started again, only to have it go a few feet and die, I finally managed to get it to an exit where I was able to get us off the dangerous highway and to a gas station. We ended up in the town of Stafford, Virginia. I thought that, at this point, I would be able to get some help, but little did I know that the nightmare had only just begun.

Since it was a Sunday evening, and a holiday weekend at that, the gas station attendant informed me that it would be almost impossible to find a gas station that had a mechanic on duty. But when he saw my desperation, he thought for a minute and then said he knew of one place just a few miles down the road that may be able to help me. He gave me the directions, and I took off down the highway. By then, it seemed like the car was making it a longer distance before it would shut off, so I hoped and prayed that I would be able to make it to the gas station.

I went a few miles but saw no gas station in sight. As a matter of fact, I saw *nothing* in sight. The man had led me down a lonely, wooded highway out in the middle of nowhere. Suddenly, my car died again, and this time we were really in trouble. By then, it was about seven thirty in the evening and getting cold and dark. I tried frantically to get the car started again, but to no avail. I was desperate for help as my two little girls, who were only four and six years old at the time, shivered in the back seat.

Just then, a young man in an old black car that had once been a hearse came by and stopped as though he had known we were there. I was just so thankful that *someone* had stopped! What I didn't realize, though, was that the young man at the gas station had set me up. He purposely sent me down that lonely, wooded highway, and then called his friend, who preyed upon women who were broken down off I-95 to come to my "rescue."

The tall, skinny guy with glasses, who looked to be in his mid to late twenties, came over to the window and asked if I needed some help. At first, I kept the doors locked and talked to him through a crack in the window, but he seemed like a nice enough

guy so, eventually, I got out of the car to help him as he looked under the hood. A few times I noticed him quickly looking me up and down as he said, "You know, you're really lucky that I came by because you really can't trust anyone these days." (That should have been my first clue. No, actually, the hearse should have been my first clue and this statement my second!)

Although the guy, who introduced himself as Dave, tried to act like it, he didn't seem to know very much about cars. Eventually, however, the car started again, and I had to make a decision about what to do next. He invited me to his house (where he said he lived with his parents) to get a cup of coffee and try to calm down. He said that I could make some phone calls and try to decide what to do. It sounded like a good idea to me, so I followed him to his house. The car made it just fine.

When we got there, his parents weren't home, but it looked like a nice, friendly home in a decent neighborhood, so we went inside. He made me a cup of coffee and got the girls something to drink while I called Kevin. Everything seemed to be on the up and up. Eventually, his parents came home, and he introduced me to them. They seemed very nice. After about an hour, we checked the car again, and it seemed to be starting up and running fine, so I decided to try to make it home by way of Route 17 (even though I was still about three and a half hours away). As we were leaving, Dave gave me his phone number to call just in case I ran into problems again.

We only made it about a half hour down the road, to Fredericksburg, when the car died again. Feeling scared and totally frustrated, the only thing I knew to do at that point was to call Dave from the restaurant we were in. He said that I was probably going to have to wait until morning to get the car fixed, which meant that I was going to have to spend the night somewhere. He said that I wouldn't be able to get a room in any of the local hotels because they would all be booked due to the holiday, so he offered to let us stay at his house. Not seeing any other alternative, I took him up on his invitation. He said he would be there shortly to pick us up.

As I waited, I called Kevin to let him know our plans, and then I called my mother. It was about the time when we should have been home, and I had promised to call her when we got there. It was one of the hardest things I ever did, to call my parents and say that we had made it home safely. I needed help so badly, and I wanted to tell them we were in trouble, but there was no point in worrying them. We were over three and a half hours away, and there wasn't anything they could do anyway. So, as I fought back tears, I lied to them and said that, though traffic had been bad, and it was a long trip, we had made it.

The trip from Stafford to Fredericksburg should have only taken about a half hour, but it had been over an hour and a half, and Dave still didn't show up. I couldn't imagine what was taking him so long. When he finally arrived, almost two hours later, I noticed that he had showered and changed clothes. The girls and I got into his creepy black hearse, and we began the trek back to his house. As he drove, he began talking about murder and death and all of these gory-type subjects. He was beginning to make me very nervous as we traveled along the dark highway. I was relieved when we finally made it back to his house, and even more relieved when I saw that his parents were still home.

They had a finished basement downstairs, and Dave's bedroom was down there as well. He said that the girls and I could sleep in his bed, so I tucked the girls in and went back out into the living area to talk for a while. I was so worked up and trembling so uncontrollably that he offered me a glass of wine to try to calm me down. I accepted, and after a while, he offered to massage my shoulders since I was still so tense. Like a fool, I let him.

As time passed, he began to start talking about death again and the most gruesome things. He also started talking about drugs and told me that he was hooked on speed. He told me how he was taking massive dosages of it. I thought to myself, *No wonder his mind is so messed up!*

I sat there a little while longer—until I couldn't stand listening to him anymore—then told him I was going to bed. It was then that he made a pass at me. As we were standing up, he grabbed me

and started trying to kiss me. I pulled away, and he became very angry. He grabbed me again as I fearfully pushed him away.

It was at that moment that it happened. Something in him snapped! Something about him changed! It was his eyes! I watched in horror as they turned into the most demonic, evil-looking eyes I had ever seen. It was like looking straight into the eyes of Satan himself! He was demon-possessed, and I was witnessing a transformation of what seemed like an ordinary man into a creature from hell. I was frozen with fear.

As I slowly backed away from him, crying, "Don't you touch me!", he continued coming at me, backing me into a corner. When he grabbed me again, he said with a smirk, "You know, I do this all the time!"

It was then that I realized I had been set up by the man at the gas station. It was no accident that Dave had come along that wooded highway where the gas station attendant had sent me! It was all part of a plan, and I wasn't the first! I wondered how many others there had been and what happened to them.

As I struggled to get away from him, I cried out to Jesus for help. When I called upon the Lord, he seethed at me and said, "Get out of here! Go to bed!" With my heart racing, I slowly backed down the hall, not knowing whether he would let me go or if he would try to attack me again. I prayed that my little girls wouldn't wake up and see what was going on. When I reached the bedroom, I quickly ran in and tried to lock the door, but there was no lock on it. My girls were still sound asleep. I thanked God! I listened to hear if he was coming after me, but I didn't hear him so, stiffly, I lay down on his bed.

Getting into his bed was like getting into a coffin. I lay there as stiff as a board and wide awake in fear the entire night, praying that he would leave me alone and that morning would come quickly. I knew he had to leave at four o'clock in the morning to commute to his job in D.C., and I lay there counting the seconds until he left.

But time went by so slowly, and every minute seemed like an hour. After an hour or so had actually passed, I heard the

door open, and he walked into the room. I closed my eyes and tried to pretend like I was sleeping as I sensed him standing next to the bed. Before I knew it, he threw himself down on top of me and started trying to feel my body and kiss me—right there, with my daughters sleeping next to me! I fought him off, angrily whispering (so as not to wake up the girls), “Stop it! Get off me!” He got real mad but got off me and left the room. I was petrified in fear and even more afraid of what he’d do next. I wanted to run to his parents who were asleep upstairs, but there was no way to get up there without going past him.

As I lay there, praying and watching the clock turn to 3:30 a.m., suddenly, I heard the door open again. Again, he came to the bed and flung himself down on top of me, trying to rape me. Again, I pushed him away and begged him to leave me alone. Furious, he ended up getting off me and leaving the room. Shortly afterward, I heard the water in the bathroom running and knew that he must be showering for work. *Oh, thank God!* I thought. *Soon, he’ll be leaving, daylight will come, and we’ll be able to get out of this house!*

After his shower, I heard him come back into the room again. And again, he flung himself back on top of me, this time, wearing only a towel. He was more aggressive this time as I struggled to fight him off. He finally jumped off me and stormed out of the room in a rage. He was *very* angry this time. A few minutes later, he came back into the room, went over to his closet, got down on his hands and knees, and began frantically digging for something. I watched him out of the corner of my eye as he digged and digged through the closet. Finally, he stopped digging as I watched him pull out what he was looking for.

As he pulled it out, I saw a handle and thought, *My God! It’s a gun! He’s going to kill me!* But as he pulled it out further, I saw that it wasn’t a gun after all—it was a *hacksaw!* I swallowed hard, sure that he was going to use it on me! He got up, walked toward the bed, and then walked out of the room with it. Shortly afterward, I heard his ride come for work, and he left. My feelings of relief after I knew he was gone can never be described!

A little while afterward, I heard a lot of other cars coming to the house and stopping. I heard little children’s voices and soon realized that people were dropping their kids off there for daycare. His mother must have been running a little babysitting service in her home. *Oh, God,* I thought. *These poor little children! If their parents only knew what kind of monster lives in this house!*

When daylight finally came, the only thing I wanted was to get my kids and get out of that house as soon as I could. I went upstairs, and his mother was just as nice as she could be. She offered us breakfast and said that we were welcome to take a shower if we liked. I probably should have stayed and told his mother what happened, but I just couldn’t face the thoughts of staying one more second in that house, so I refused her offer and we left.

Dave had left me the keys to his car before he attacked me, and, thankfully, after everything that happened, they were still on the nightstand where he left them. I was worried that he would take them back and leave me stranded at his house. My car was about a half hour away, so I needed transportation to get back to it. As much as I hated to be in *anything* that belonged to him, I put the kids in his hearse, and we drove off.

I had the car towed to a gas station where I felt that all of the men were acting very strangely—as though they knew something or were all in on this together. The whole thing reminded me of a movie I had once seen called *Nightmare in Badham County*, where two young women who broke down while traveling through a rural Southern town were set up, raped, and thrown in jail for no reason; and the whole town was in on it. I felt very uncomfortable.

It took all day—and over one hundred dollars—to get the car fixed. The problem was a faulty fuel pump. Finally, at around five o’clock in the afternoon, we were back on the road and heading for home. The nightmare had lasted almost twenty-four hours.

When I finally made it home, I did a lot of thinking about all of the events that had taken place since I had gotten “saved”. It had been one thing after another. My life was in turmoil and, after this latest attack, I was convinced that Satan would stop at nothing to

kill me. I wanted to live for Jesus, but I was scared to death and couldn't see any way possible for me to fight a force as powerful as Satan and his demons. All I wanted was for my life to be back to normal again.

It was at that point that I made a very foolish decision. I made a deal with the devil. I told him that, if he would just leave me alone and let me go back to living a normal life again, I would stop serving Jesus. The attacks stopped *immediately*, and I turned my back on serving the Lord.

Chapter 5



Two years had passed since that time, and things were beginning to go downhill for me and Kevin. Both of us were fed up with our jobs at the development corporation where most of the people in the organization (which had grown to over one hundred employees) would stab you in the back for a quarter, or better yet, your position. So I quit, and Kevin eventually got fired. I went into selling real estate, and Kevin stayed at home trying to deal with his depression after being fired. He had been at the top, so the thoughts of starting over again at anything less was very difficult for him. He decided to sue the company for breach of contract and, after a couple of years, the case finally came to court. I had to go and testify, and he won a large settlement. But, by that time, we were already broken up.

It's still hard to explain why I did what I did. It was a totally irrational move on my part. It made no sense at all. Looking back now, I know it had to have been God's plan to take me out of the sinful situation that I was living in, and get me back to Himself.

The pressures of Kevin not working and my trying to make it in real estate were weighing heavy upon me. We had a lot of bills, and little money was coming in. This situation caused a great strain on our relationship. I needed a lot of love and support during that time, but Kevin wasn't able to give it because he was going through a hard time too.

The end of our relationship came about as a result of a trip home to Barnesboro for a Labor Day weekend. On our weekends home, Kevin always preferred that each of us go our separate ways and that we spend little time together. He saw it as a time to get away from me and to spend time with his friends. Although I never liked this setup, I was growing accustomed to it, so I made plans to spend the weekend with my best friend, Nancy. We went to a church picnic together, and there, I ran into an old flame.

I was dating Liam just before I had gotten involved with Kevin. I had deep feelings for him then, but he didn't feel the same about me. Though we dated for a while, he ended up dumping me and hurting me. So I was on the rebound from Liam when I started dating Kevin. I had never really gotten over him, even after moving away and spending three years with Kevin. I knew that I could only give Kevin 98 percent of my heart; the other 2 percent belonged to Liam. We ended up getting together, and, at the end of four days, fell hopelessly in love. He told me that he didn't just want to live with me; he wanted to *marry* me!

I was so head over heels in love with Liam that I forgot all about Kevin and the life we had shared together for three years. I forgot about Virginia, our beautiful condo on the beach, my job in real estate (which was just starting to take off), our friends—I forgot about everything. All I wanted was to move back home and be with Liam. I wanted to marry him.

The eight-hour trip back to Virginia with Kevin at the end of that weekend was a long one. We barely said two words to each other the whole trip. He didn't know anything about Liam yet. I planned to tell him as soon as we got home.

The memory of that moment out on our deck is still painful as I, without any warning, announced to Kevin that I was in love with another man and that I was leaving him! He was shocked and devastated. Aside from a few minor problems, he thought that our relationship was basically strong and never would have dreamed that I would ever do such a thing to him. I hurt him very badly.

Within two weeks, I quit my job, packed up my belongings, took the kids, and moved back to Barnesboro—the place I had

sworn I would never return to. In all the time I had been away, I had never missed it one day. About six months later, Liam and I got engaged and were planning to marry in the near future. The love I had for him was so deep that I could feel it at the bottom of my soul. He was my dream man, and I loved him with all my heart. Everything in my life seemed so perfect during that time. I was madly in love and never so happy in all my life. There was only one aspect of my life that wasn't quite perfect—that was my walk with the Lord.

I felt that only God could have worked out this miracle of bringing Liam and me together after being so far apart for so many years. It was truly an impossible dream come true. I appreciated so much what God had done for me that I decided I wanted to get my life right again with Him, so I started reading my Bible again. For the first time, the Bible began to open up to me, and I began to develop a hunger for the Word of God. I couldn't wait to settle down and read it each night. It was becoming alive to me. On Sundays, I would go to church back at the Catholic Church I used to attend but, instead of participating in the mass, I would take my Bible in, and sit and read it the whole time. Taking a Bible into the Catholic Church was something you never saw anyone do, and I got a lot of strange looks from both the congregation and the priest!

One phenomenal thing I learned after returning home was that my brother, Danny (who is ten years younger than me and was a freshman in college at the time), had recently gotten saved and was on fire for God! He was attending North End Assembly of God church (the church which David Wilkerson's father had pastored), and he asked me to come along with him one Sunday. I went and was so surprised to find out that there were Christians in Barnesboro! I had no idea that people in Barnesboro knew anything about Jesus, salvation, and the Holy Spirit. The service was very similar to the services I used to attend back at the Rock Church. I could sense the same Spirit of God, and it felt so wonderful to be back in His presence again.

One Sunday morning while my brother was away at college, I

took the girls, and we went to North End by ourselves. I sat way in the back and listened as the pastor, Pastor Henderson, preached a very convicting message. As he gave the altar call, I began to go through a tremendous struggle with God. I knew God was speaking to me and calling me to go forward, but I kept fighting it. I wanted to go, but I had too much pride to get up and walk down the aisle in front of all the people.

As I watched different people go forward, I continued to hold back. Somehow, the pastor knew there was someone else who needed to be at the altar, and he said that he was waiting for that one person. As I sat there with my eyes closed and my heart pounding, I felt that a tug of war for my soul was going on between God and Satan. I knew very well that I was the person he was waiting for.

After continuing the struggle for what seemed like an eternity, I finally came to a decision. I said to the Lord, "God, I know you're calling me, and I want to come, but there is no way I can get up and walk down that aisle in front of all these people. *I'm not going!*" As soon as I said, "I'm not going," I opened my eyes and looked up. Immediately, the pastor caught my eye, pointed to me, and said, "Would the young lady sitting way in the back please come up to the altar? God is calling you!"

With my heart pounding and my face turning red, I looked around hoping that maybe he was pointing to someone else. Surely he couldn't mean *me!* But when he described the striped blouse I was wearing and that I was the one between the two little girls, I knew there could be no mistake. He was speaking to me! Reluctantly, I got up and made my way down to the altar. There, the pastor prayed with me and told me everything that I had been feeling in my heart—things that I had never told anyone. I was shocked because I knew there was no way he could have known. It had to be God! I broke down and began to cry as Jesus touched me in a way that has changed my life forever. I recommitted my life to Him that late-summer morning in 1987, and I have been serving Him with all of my heart ever since.

This time, I was ready and willing to deny myself, take up my

cross, and follow Him no matter what the cost. But I did not realize at the time how great the cost would be. Following after Jesus would cost me *everything*.

Immediately, it was like my eyes were opened, and I could see all of the sin I was in. It was as if I could see everything differently, as though I was looking through God's eyes. The drinking, the cigarettes, the occasional social drugs, the sex, the partying in the bars— suddenly, I could see the death in all of these sins against God, and I just couldn't do them anymore. I quit it all—cold turkey!

My fiancé became very disillusioned with me as I lost interest in all of the "fun" things we used to do and became obsessed with Jesus. I so wanted him to know the Truth too, that all I did was preach to him. He wanted nothing to do with it and couldn't handle the drastic change in me. One night, after spending the evening with me lying in my lap, he walked out of my house as though everything was okay, but he never came back, never called, and I have never heard a word from him to this day. He walked out on me without a word, without an explanation, and without a goodbye.

I was devastated, to say the least. I thought, *How could he turn his back on me now that I've turned my life to God, now that God was changing my heart and making me into someone truly beautiful on the inside.* I thought he would love me more, but he called me weird and said that he liked me better the other way.

I wanted to call him but just couldn't. God had spoken to me clearly through a scripture during a Kid's Crusade at the church. The scripture the children were learning was out of 2 Corinthians 6:14–15, which reads:

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? (2 Corinth. 6:14–15, NASB, author emphasis)

These words burned in my heart. It was true. Liam and I now had nothing in common. The Bible went on to read in verses 17

and 18:

Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, Says the Lord Almighty. (2 Corinth. 17-18, NASB)

In my heart, I knew God was telling me to give Liam up. God had given him the opportunity to come to Him, but after he rejected His call, God told me to let him go. Never really believing that this would be a permanent separation, I prayed continually for over a year and believed with all my heart that God would eventually bring him back to me. He didn't.

I not only lost the man I loved so deeply, I lost all of my friends, my social life, my self-esteem, my personality, and to sum it all up, I lost myself. Everything was gone the minute I said yes to Jesus. It was an excruciatingly painful time for me as I suffered ridicule, shame, rejection, and loneliness. I developed fears and phobias, and even getting up in the morning and going to work seemed to be more than I could handle. At times, I thought of taking a couple of drinks of vodka to help me cope, but I never actually went through with it. I even went to see a psychiatrist for one visit, but felt convicted and never went back. It was a dying time for me as my old self was being crucified with Christ. Everything that I was, was being stripped to the core.

The hardest part of this time, which lasted more than a year, was that I had no idea why God was causing me to suffer so. I just couldn't understand how God could take everything away from me after I had decided to trust Him and put my life in His hands.

"Lord!" I would cry, "You said that You would give me life, and life more abundantly! Where is the abundant life you promised me, Lord? If this is it, I don't want it!" I spent many nights curled up in the corner of the bathroom floor, crying my heart out.

It was difficult, but since Jesus was all I had left, somehow I managed to keep walking (or crawling) on with Him. I constantly felt like I was in a sea of raging water, hanging on only by a thread;

but Jesus never let me go. Right at the moment when I felt sure I would sink, He would uphold me with His arm and see me through the storm. It was during this time that I got deeply into the Word of God and meditated on it day and night. Through studying and going to church as often as the doors were opened, I slowly but surely became rooted and grounded in the Word.

The past year and a half had been the most difficult time of my life but, through it all, I began to understand why God had taken me through such bitter times. He was taking me through the fire to test me, to prove me, and to see if I was truly going to follow after Him or not. Through the fire, He was also separating me unto Himself and burning off all of the dross and sin that had been a part of me all of my life. It was so He could bring me out as a piece of pure gold, tried and tested, and conformed to the image of Christ. He was making me into a vessel of honor unto Him!

Chapter 6



Only a few months after Joe and I had read the newsletter from David Wilkerson back on that snowy December day, when we felt the urge so strongly to go to New York, an opportunity opened up for me to attend a training course that was “coincidentally” being held in New York. It was through my job at the Foundation for Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), where I was working as Information Services Manager.

In late February, 1988, a letter came across my desk at work from ADDS (Applied Digital Data Systems), the computer company that my company dealt with. The letter came with a brochure offering various training courses on certain aspects of the computer system we were using. One course in particular was offering training on the operating system, an area that, if I knew better, would greatly improve my ability to provide information from our donor database. The course, which was coming up in April, seemed to be perfectly tailored to my needs, and was being held at the company headquarters which was in Hauppauge on Long Island in New York.

My company had never sent me on a business trip before, but I felt so strongly that I was to attend this course that I decided to approach my boss to see if he would consider sending me. I really didn't think there was much chance of him saying yes because the cost of the trip would be very expensive, especially since it was

being held in New York. The course was a week long, which meant hotel lodging for seven nights, plus airfare, rental car, food, and the cost of the course itself, which was nine hundred dollars. The total cost of the trip would be around two thousand dollars! In addition, I would have to be away from my job for a week, and I didn't really have anyone who could cover for me. *No*, I thought, *the chances of him sending me look very slim*. But I decided to pray about it and ask God to open the doors if He wanted me to go.

When the time came for me to meet with my boss, I presented the course to him, explaining all of the costs involved, and to my surprise, he said yes without flinching. I couldn't believe it! I thought at best he'd say he would think about it, but he said yes immediately, without a moment's hesitation. I knew it had to be God! Joe's pastor was right. God truly was calling me to New York back in January. It just wasn't the time for me yet. I also knew that God wasn't sending me to New York just to attend a training course. I knew He had a greater purpose for sending me, one which involved my going into the city and to Times Square Church. But why He was sending me, I had no idea.

I could hardly contain my excitement when I came out of that meeting. I immediately called Joe to tell him the news. He couldn't believe it either but rejoiced with me in the awesomeness of our God.

As the day of the trip quickly approached, my excitement began to turn into fear. I knew I would have no problem handling the training course on Long Island, but I was terrified of going into the city all by myself. Everyone I talked to about it—even big, strong men—said that if it were them, they would *never* go into the city alone. I had been to New York only once in my life a few years back, and I remembered what it was like. It was the wildest place I had ever seen, and I knew that it was much too big for me to handle. As my trip grew nearer and my fears grew stronger, I knew that unless I had a clear Word from the Lord, there was no way I would be able to go.

That night, I began to pray and seek the Lord. I prayed: *Lord, who am I that You would send me to New York? Lord, I believe You are*

calling me, but I just don't know if I can do it. I am so scared of going into that strange, wicked city all alone. Oh Lord, if You want me to go, I will. But unless I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that You are calling me, I just can't go. Dear Lord, I must know for sure, and I'm asking you to show me Your will. Lord, please show me.

When I finished praying, I took my Bible and opened it, and it fell open to the third chapter of Exodus. Even though I had been walking closely with the Lord, I still did not know the Bible well enough to know what was written in that chapter, so I had no idea what it said. My eyes went straight to verse 11 where Moses was arguing with God about his call to go to Pharaoh. In Exodus 3:11, it reads:

And Moses said unto God, Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh...? (Ex. 3:11, KJV shortened and emphasized)

Then I read God's reply in verse 12, where He says:

Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be token unto thee, that I have sent thee... (Ex.3:12, KJV, shortened and emphasized)

"Thank you, Jesus!" I whispered, knowing in my heart that the Lord was speaking this verse to me. When I heard Him saying, "Certainly I will be with you," I felt all of my fears being replaced by the peace of God. I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that I had heard from God, and that He was truly calling me to New York. With this Word from the Lord, I knew I would be able to overcome all of my fears and be obedient to His call. The Word He gave me couldn't have been more precious to me, and I felt so humbled and so blessed that God would consider using me!

Chapter 7



I was handling things pretty well up until the night before the trip. Joe was at my house and was telling me all about his experiences in New York, some of which were very frightening. We were sitting at the kitchen table looking over a map of Manhattan so that I could get a feel of where everything was located, and Joe was explaining to me where the church was located. (Back then, it was in the Neiderlander Theatre on West 41st Street.) I knew that the Times Square area, and particularly 42nd Street, were some of the worst sections in the city, but when Joe told me that the church was kind of off on a side street where crack addicts hang out, I became overcome with fear. A spirit of fear that seemed to be from the pit of hell came upon me as I sat imagining all sorts of terrible things that could happen to me.

Joe felt terrible as he left my house that night because he felt that he was responsible for bringing such fear upon me. Instead of telling me all the good things about his trip, he was telling me all the bad. As he drove home, he felt convicted by God.

As soon as he got home, he called and apologized, saying that God had greatly convicted him. But he also said that God had given him a Word for me as he was driving home. It was out of Numbers 13 and 14, where God had commanded Moses to send twelve spies into Canaan, the Promised Land, in order to spy out the land. When the twelve spies returned, ten of them brought back an evil

report, saying:

We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. (Num. 13:27–28, KJV)

They continued in verses 31–33:

We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. (Num. 13:31–33, KJV)

God had shown Joe that He sent him to New York in January to spy out the land and to bring back a report of what he had seen. But instead of telling me about all the good things he saw—that surely it is a land that flows with milk and honey and that God has a mighty remnant of people in that city—he had only been telling me of the bad. He was like the ten spies who brought back an evil report.

Joe repented before God and then began to give me a good report of the land, as Joshua and Caleb did in Numbers 14:7–8, saying:

The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. (Num. 14-7-8, KJV)

Joe particularly pointed out verse 9 to me, which says:

Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not. (Num. 14:9, KJV) Caleb said in chapter 13, verse 30:

Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it. (Num. 13–30, KJV)

Joe assured me that Times Square Church was filled with the presence of the Lord and with people who loved God, and that I needn't fear the people of the city because the Word states that they are my bread. *They* are the ones that need to fear if they are not walking with the Lord because they have no defense, but God is with me, so I have nothing to fear. Besides this, Joe reminded me of the scripture God had given me through which He told me, "Certainly I will be with thee."

Once again, the Word of God had brought me great comfort, and I fell asleep pondering in my heart this Word that God had given to me through Joe.

Chapter 8



The next morning, Joe accompanied me on the trip to the Pittsburgh airport. All we could talk about during the entire one-hundred-mile trip were Numbers 13 and 14, and especially the part about Joshua and Caleb bringing back a good report of the land. We even joked that Joe was Joshua, and I, Carol, was Caleb. The story sure seemed to fit, and though I was still nervous about the trip, I was greatly encouraged by this Word that the Lord had given us.

When the time came for me to board the plane, I tried to be brave, but I kept looking back with anxiety, wondering if I would ever return and ever see my daughters again.

The flight from Pittsburgh to Islip was very pleasant on that Saturday afternoon. We flew just above a mass of white, fluffy clouds, and it was so majestic looking that it almost felt like being in heaven. As I gazed out at the glorious scene, I imagined what it would be like to see Jesus come walking across the clouds. I had my Sony Walkman with me, and I listened to a beautiful worship tape as I sat basking in the presence of the Lord. I felt the peace of God in such a precious way up there in the clouds.

After landing in Islip, I rented a car and drove off to find the city of Hauppauge, the place where ADDS company headquarters was located. I found Hauppauge without any problems, but I had

some trouble finding the Holiday Inn where I would be staying. Finally, at around four o'clock in the afternoon, I found it and checked into my room.

Since I was scheduled to stay until the following Saturday and I would be there over only one Sunday, my plan was to take a train into the city the next morning to go to church. At least that was what I hoped I would have the courage to do, although I seriously doubted that I could actually go through with it. But God led me one step at a time.

Of course, Satan tried to hinder me in every way possible. The first thing I needed to do was to find out the times the trains ran and where the nearest station was located. I decided to ask one of the waitresses at the hotel.

This particular waitress looked tough to me. She had long black hair that was teased up high. She wore a lot of makeup, a short black skirt, and she just seemed to have a rough exterior. I was almost afraid to talk to her myself, but I approached her and asked where I could find the nearest train station and a schedule for the Long Island Railroad.

"Where you goin'?" she asked, with a strong New York accent.

"To the city," I replied.

She looked at me with alarm and said, "By yourself?"

With surprise, I answered, "Wouldn't you?"

"No!" she said. "I've lived here all my life (she looked to be in her late twenties), and I've only been to the city twice, and *never* alone! It's dangerous there—you could get killed!"

"Oh," I said weakly, trying to force a smile while thinking that if a tough, city girl like her wouldn't go into the city, how was a naive, country girl like me to.

I went back to my room with some vague instructions on how to get to the train station, but since I was totally unfamiliar with the area, they didn't mean much to me. The waitress didn't have any train schedules, so I called the Long Island Railroad for a listing of departures and returns. They told me there was a train leaving Smithtown at 7:58 a.m., which would arrive at Penn Station at 9:33 a.m. That would give me just enough time to make

it to the ten o'clock service. I still didn't know if I could go through with it, but I thought that at least I would get the information.

That night while in my room, Satan continued to use his scare tactics on me to try to keep me from going to Times Square Church. At around ten o'clock, a fight broke out in a room a few doors down from mine. It sounded like a jealous man beating up his girlfriend. Never in my life had I heard anyone in such a rage! It was terrifying!

I thought for sure he was going to kill her! Too afraid to do anything, I just sat there, petrified on my bed until it finally stopped. I began to wonder what kind of hotel I was staying in. It wasn't like any other Holiday Inn I had ever stayed at before.

At around midnight, Satan came with yet another scare tactic. As I was lying on my bed, I heard someone outside my door trying to get into my room. They had a key and were jiggling the lock violently, trying to get in. Scared to death, I quickly jumped out of bed and ran to bolt the chain lock that I had left undone. A man began banging on the door and yelling for me to open it up. Shaking with fear, I managed to squeak out a "Yes?"

"You're in my room!" he yelled back angrily.

"No, I'm not." I cried in a high-pitched, little girl voice, nearly melting from fear.

"Open the door!" he shouted. "This is *my* room!"

"No, it isn't!" I cried, starting to wonder if maybe I was in the wrong room.

After what had seemed like an eternity, he finally gave up and left. He must have been drunk and thought that my room was his. After he left, I dropped to my knees, trembling and feeling weak. I spent some time in prayer as the Lord helped me pull myself together. I made sure the door was securely locked, then set the alarm clock for 6:00 a.m. and finally went to bed.

I awoke to the ringing of the alarm clock and thought to myself, *Well, here it is—Sunday. If I'm going to go to Times Square Church, this is my only chance.* (I knew that the church also held evening services during the week, but going to New York City at night wasn't even an option for me!)

Although I still didn't know whether I could actually go through with it, I decided to at least get out of bed and pray about it. *Step one.*

After praying, then I thought, *Well, I suppose I'll take a shower.* *Step two.*

After showering, it seemed like the next logical thing to do was to get dressed. *Step three.*

I was always accustomed to wearing dresses to church, but I decided to wear pants instead because I didn't want to draw any attention to myself, and I wanted to be able to wear shoes that I could run in should it become necessary! Besides, I didn't know if women wore dresses in New York or not!

I also didn't know if women carried purses. Not having any idea how to carry money or ID, I hid several twenties in different parts of my clothing and shoes, and I kept my ID and a few other things in a tiny, little purse that I wore around my neck and kept underneath my coat.

After getting dressed, I decided the next thing to do was to get into my rental car and drive around to see if I could find my way to Smithtown. *Step four.*

As I came to a stoplight on the street on which the hotel was located, I looked up at the street sign and noticed that the sign read "Joshua's Path". *Hmm, I thought, Joshua's Path—that sure is a strange name for a street. I have never heard of a street called Joshua's Path before.* Not thinking much more about it, the light changed, and I drove off to find Smithtown.

I gave myself plenty of time with the idea that, after I found the train station, I would sit and pray about whether to actually board the train or not. If God really wanted me to get on it, He would have to give me the courage because, as yet, I knew I couldn't do it.

I found Smithtown without too much trouble, but when I got there, I was having a very difficult time finding the train station—not that I even knew what one looked like! I was beginning to get frustrated because I was wasting a lot of time, and it was beginning to get a little late. So finally, I pulled over by the side of

the road to pray. I

prayed, "Lord, if You want me to go to Times Square Church, You have got to help me find the train station because the train will be leaving soon, and I just can't seem to find it. Lord, let *Your* will be done."

After praying, I drove back up the road to the center of town to ask someone for directions. They pointed me back in the same direction where I had just come from and explained to me where the station was. As I drove back again, I realized that the place I had pulled over to pray *was* the train station! I just didn't realize it because I didn't follow the road around to the side! God had led me right to it without me even knowing it!

After parking my car, I walked over to the only person there. The young man, who didn't speak very good English and who seemed to be strung out on drugs, told me that the train had just left ten minutes ago.

When he told me that, my heart sank. *Oh, I missed it!* I thought. *My only opportunity to go to Times Square Church, and I missed it!* The man told me there was another train coming in about an hour, and when I heard that, something happened inside of me. Suddenly, all of my fears were gone, and I was filled with a determination to get on the next train.

As I waited for the train to come, I began to realize what God had done. He *knew* that there was no way I could have gotten on the first train had I made it on time. I had to miss the first train in order for God to give me the courage to get on the second train. There was something about missing the train and the opportunity to go to Times Square Church that sparked a determination in me. God let me see how strong my desire was to go even amidst all of my fears. I was amazed at the brilliance of God's plan!

When the 9:28 train rolled in, I had no problem getting on, and before I knew it, I was on my way to New York City.

Chapter 9



The train ride was rather pleasant on that beautiful Sunday morning in the beginning of spring. The train was clean and well managed, and I felt safe on it. At the station, I had overheard two teenaged girls say that they were going to Penn Station (the stop that I was going to), so I tried to stick close by them since it appeared that they had done this before and knew what they were doing. At about halfway there, we had to change trains, so I followed the two girls off the one train, then sat next to them again on the next one.

After about an hour of riding, I knew that we had to be getting close, so I checked the map that I had of the train route and saw that Penn Station was the next stop. My heart started pounding. *Oh, Lord, I thought. In only a few minutes, I will be facing the biggest fear of my life—being in New York City alone!* I prayed that God would give me the strength and courage to handle it as I reminded myself of the scriptures He had given me: “Certainly, I will be with thee...fear ye not the people of the land for they are your bread... their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with you... fear them not!”

As the train pulled to a stop and the conductor called out, “Penn Station!” I thought, *Well, this is it!* With my heart racing, I followed the people off the train, still trying to stick close to the two teenaged girls. They, along with a large crowd of people,

walked hurriedly up a couple flights of stairs, and I followed along until we were in the heart of Penn Station.

It was so huge! There were swarms of all different types of people there, from beggars to businessmen, and they were all hurrying off in all different directions. There were signs everywhere, but I had no idea which way to go, so I continued to follow the two girls, hoping they wouldn’t notice. As I tagged along behind them, suddenly, they stopped, turned around, and started in the opposite direction. I knew it would be too obvious if I did the same, so I left them go and decided to try to manage on my own.

I had made up my mind beforehand how I was going to act in New York. I would always walk fast, never look anybody in the eye, never look up at the skyscrapers, and always act as if I knew where I was going. Unfortunately, though, my plan wasn’t working.

I came to a stairwell that had two beggars waiting at the top, and beyond them, some type of tunnel. As I started climbing the stairs, panic struck and I stopped dead, thinking, *I can’t! I can’t walk past those beggars and through that tunnel!* I quickly turned around and started walking back down the stairs as the two beggars sat watching me. I started in another direction, but when I looked up and saw the signs in front of me that said, “TO THE SUBWAYS,” I panicked again. *The subway!* I thought, *Oh no! That’s the last place I want to go!* So once again, I stopped dead, did an about face, and started in another direction. (So much for trying to act like you know where you’re going!)

By now, I was very confused and couldn’t seem to find any decent way out, so I returned to the stairs where the beggars were sitting and began climbing them again. When I reached the top, the beggars held out their cups, but all I could do was feebly say, “Is this the way out?” They pointed to the tunnel. I held my breath as I hurried through it, and the next thing I knew, I was out on the streets of New York City.

Well, I thought, as I stood there in the midst of the tall buildings seeing nothing but yellow taxicabs, here I am. Now I just need to figure out where I am and what direction I need to take to get

to the church.

I no sooner took a few steps when an elderly lady came up to me and asked *me* for directions. I almost had to laugh as I started thinking to myself, *Lady, you couldn't have picked a worse person to ask because there is no one in this city more lost than me!* But then I heard her say she was looking for Penn Station. "Oh!" I said, "I know where that is! I just came out of Penn Station! It's right over there." So I showed her where Penn Station was and asked her if she could help me figure out what direction I needed to take to get to West 41st Street.

"Oh!" she said, "I just came from *that* direction. You just go right up to the corner there and make a left."

"Thank you!" I said, feeling good that we were able to help each other out and thinking to myself, *What a nice lady. I guess people in New York City aren't all bad!* As I took off down the street, the scripture in Hebrews 13:2 about entertaining angels unawares suddenly came to mind. It says:

***Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby
some have entertained angels unawares.
(Hebrews 13:2, KJV)***

I won't know for sure until I get to heaven but, as I thought about it, I really felt that this lady was an angel sent by God to meet me and show me the way to the church. *What a loving Father to care enough to send an angel to help me!* I thought.

When I got to the corner of 7th Avenue and 33rd Street, I made a left and began counting up the streets until I got to 41st Street. As I walked along, I silently spoke words of reassurance to myself, saying, "Keep going. You're doing fine. Only so many more streets to go. You're still alive. Nobody killed you yet. Look at that woman. She's all alone and no one has killed her. Just keep going. You're almost there!"

When I finally made it to 41st Street, I couldn't figure out which way was east and which was west. Not wanting to stop and look like I was lost, I decided to go right, which took me over to the

Avenue of the Americas. Unsure where to go from there, I asked a group of women which direction I would go to get to 208 W. 41st Street. I showed them the little brochure that I had and told them I was looking for Times Square Church. They pointed me down in the opposite direction, and as I looked down the street, I saw the little blue sign sticking out. It read, "Times Square Church."

Oh, praise God! I thought. *There it is! I found it!* I thanked the women and quickly took off down the street. By now, it was already after eleven thirty, and I had missed over half of the service, so I was more anxious than ever to get inside. As I walked past the bums who appeared to be crack addicts along the street, and past the wet puddles on the sidewalk that I quickly came to realize were urine, I finally came to the doors of the Neiderlander Theatre.

As I walked inside, I immediately felt the presence of God. There was such a contrast between being in the church and being out on the streets of Times Square. There was so much peace inside compared to so much wickedness outside. It was almost like walking out of hell and into heaven!

The church was packed, but I spotted one seat in the middle of a row near the back, so I squeezed my way in. I caught the tail end of the message Pastor Bob Phillips was preaching. As he began to reach the climax of his message, the people around me were getting very excited. I could tell that they were really being blessed by the Word he was bringing forth.

Oh darn, I thought. *I wish I had been here to hear the whole message. It sounded so good!* But even though I had missed most of the service, I was still thrilled to actually be sitting in Times Square Church right in the middle of New York City! It was truly a miracle!

Chapter 10



After the service, my main objective was to find the one contact person Joe had set me up with. His name was Bill Carson. Joe met him and had gotten to know him fairly well during his trip in January and, on the way to Pittsburgh, we stopped to call him to let him know I was coming. I spoke to him briefly and told him I was planning to make it to the Sunday morning service. He said that he would be wearing an usher's pin and that he would be looking for me.

I began walking up to every usher I could find, saying, "Excuse me, can you tell me where I can find Bill Carson?" Each of them said they hadn't seen him and just walked away from me. Then I went to the tape counter and asked the ladies there. "Excuse me," I said, "can you tell me where I can find Bill Carson?" They also said they hadn't seen him and went about their business. Next I went to the book counter and asked again there, but it was the same story. Feeling a little desperate, I started asking the ushers again, trying to explain my situation, but they just said, "Sorry, I haven't seen him," and walked away.

By now, most of the people had left the church and I was beginning to feel very discouraged and frustrated. I had asked every person I could find who looked like they worked for the church— some of whom I even asked twice—but it seemed like no one wanted to help me. I thought, *I might as well just leave, but*

where am I going to go?

As I was getting ready to leave, thinking that maybe I would try to tour the city a little, I distinctly heard God speak to my heart and say, "Don't leave." I heard it very clearly and knew that I was not to walk out the door. Although it seemed pointless to me to hang around, I immediately obeyed the Lord and just stood back against a wall, waiting on God.

After about five minutes, a tall black lady came over to me and said, "Hi, my name is Carol. Are you new here? I don't think I've ever seen you before."

"Yes," I said. "I am new here. In fact, this is my first time at Times Square Church." I told her my name was Carol too.

"Well," she said, "where are you from?"

"Barnesboro, Pennsylvania," I told her. "The same town David Wilkerson is from."

"Oh!" she said. "Did you meet him?"

"Uh, no," I answered. "I don't even know what he looks like." (During the service, I had looked at all of the men sitting up on the platform and tried to figure out which one looked like what I envisioned David Wilkerson looking like. I came to the conclusion that this one man must be him but later found out that I was wrong. It was his brother, Pastor Don.)

"Well, there he is right over there!" she said. "Come on. I'll introduce you to him!" Before I knew it, she whisked me right over to meet him.

"Pastor Wilkerson," she said, "I'd like you to meet Carol who is visiting our church for the first time from Barnesboro, Pennsylvania."

"Hello," I said, as he offered me his hand.

"So you're from Barnesboro," he said. "What church do you attend there?"

"I attend North End Assembly of God," I answered. "The same church you used to attend." "Oh," he said. "Who is pastoring it now?" "Pastor Kenneth Henderson," I replied.

I found him to be very kind and gracious as we made small talk about Barnesboro and the church. Then he spotted his wife,

Gwen, and called her over to introduce me to her. I thought she was just lovely inside and out.

After a little more small talk, Pastor Wilkerson asked me if I would be staying for the evening service. “I don’t know,” I answered with a serious, fearful tone. “Is it safe?”

“Two thousand other people do,” he replied.

“Oh,” I said, forcing a smile but feeling like a fool as he said goodbye and said he hoped I would be able to make it to the service.

“Well, Carol,” I said to myself, “you really blew that one! Of all the stupid things to say to David Wilkerson—I don’t know. Is it safe?” He probably thinks you’re a real loony.” Then I thought, *Oh well, maybe he can remember what it was like for him the first time he came to New York. Coming from Barnesboro, he had to feel the same way!*

As I walked back over to Carol, I explained to her that I was supposed to meet an usher by the name of Bill Carson, but I couldn’t find him anywhere. Just then, she spotted him and said, “Bill Carson! Well, there he is right over there!” and she called him over to meet me. Bill said that he had been assigned to keep watch of the backstage door, so that’s why nobody knew where he was. He seemed surprised to see me and confessed that he had forgotten I was coming.

He forgot about me? I thought to myself. *I guess I made a real impression on him when I spoke to him on the phone just yesterday!*

Carol then said she had to leave but told me that a lot of the people from the church usually went over to a nearby deli for lunch and fellowship, and she asked me if I’d like for her to take me over there. Bill said that he would go with me, so I thanked Carol for all her help and walk over to the deli with him.

I thanked God for a woman like Carol who was so kind and obedient to come over and help me. She was truly a godsend!

Chapter 11



In the back of the deli was a small dining area where customers could sit down and eat. After buying our lunch in the front section, Bill took me back and it was filled with Christians from the church. He introduced me to everyone and, before I knew it, I felt like one of the family.

I remember thinking to myself as I sat there amongst a whole table full of Christians, *This is so incredible! Here I am in New York City where, just an hour ago, I didn’t know a soul. Now I’m sitting at this table with all these strangers and they feel like family to me! I feel right at home with them here!*

I began to see that, because we all know Jesus as our personal Savior, we are all part of the family of God—that even though we were total strangers and our backgrounds were very different, we had everything in common and were truly brothers and sisters in the Lord. *How wonderful*, I thought. I marveled to think that such a thing could never be possible in the world; but with God, all things are possible!

After sharing some of my testimony and explaining that I was there because God had called me, everyone kept asking me if I would be staying for the evening service, the one in which David Wilkerson preaches. “You’ve got to stay and hear Pastor Dave preach,” they said.

“I don’t know,” I replied. “I’d like to, but I’m scared to death of being here at night and having to walk all the way back to Penn Station by myself.”

Bill then offered to walk me back if I wanted to stay. After thinking about it and remembering what Pastor Dave had said—that two thousand other people would be there—I finally said, “Well, okay, but only if you *promise* you won’t forget about me and will walk me back to Penn Station.” Bill promised.

As we sat in the deli all afternoon waiting for the seven o’clock service to begin, all we did was talk about God. Everyone had a Bible, and many people were witnessing to those who came in off the street, many of whom appeared to be drug addicts and homeless people, since the deli was located just off 42nd Street. I began to see that Jesus was not just a part of these Christians’ lives—Jesus *was* their life! They ate, drank, and slept Jesus! I had to wonder if I loved Him as much as they did.

During that time, I also got to know Bill a little better. He had an amazing testimony. Before he had gotten saved, he was a crack addict who ended up living in city shelters and on the street. He said that he had no family—both his parents had died when he was just a boy—except a brother who was serving time in jail. One night, Bill overdosed and was taken to a hospital where his heart had stopped beating. The doctors were able to get it going again and he cried out to God that, if He would just let him live, he would quit doing drugs. God healed him but, the day he walked out of the hospital, he went right back to doing drugs again. One day, when he was at a church service at the Bowery Mission, God revealed Himself to him and showed him that He is real. When Bill’s eyes were opened and he suddenly realized that God was real, that was when he gave his heart and life to Jesus and had gotten wonderfully saved.

All this happened only eight months beforehand, and it was amazing to see the work that God had done in his life in so short a time. Bill loved God with all his heart, and every other phrase that came out of his mouth was, “Praise God!”

Another amazing thing about Bill was his incredible knowledge of the Word. He knew the Bible inside and out and, again, this was only after eight months of being saved! I had been saved much longer and didn’t know half of what he knew. I even began calling him a walking concordance because, if I had a scripture in mind and couldn’t remember where it was in the Bible, he could always tell me in an instant. He had an incredible mind and manner of teaching which caused many of his peers to look up to him and go to him for his opinion about matters in the Word. He was very well respected by his peers.

It had been a good time of fellowship that Sunday afternoon in the deli. I got to meet many new people, and God opened my eyes to a lot of things. When six o’clock rolled around, we went back to the church to get a good seat for the service. I was told that the Sunday night services got even more crowded than the morning services. It was usually the only night during the week that David Wilkerson preached, so a lot of people came out just to hear him.

The service was great! Again, the presence of God was so awesome. The worship was also great and so was Pastor Dave’s message entitled, “Living in the Miraculous.” Although I didn’t fully realize until months later just how much this message was for me, I was so glad that I had decided to stay for the service.

After the service, Bill walked me back to Penn Station as he promised. He told me that the church also had services on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday nights, if I’d like to come back. I asked him if he would mind walking me back and forth to/from Penn Station, and he said that it would be his pleasure. He said he would do *anything* to get people to come to church, so I told him I’d call him if I decided to come. He helped me get on the right train and I had no problem making it back to the Smithtown station and driving back to the hotel.

That night in the hotel, I sat amazed at all of the things that had happened that day. I didn’t think I could make it to even one service but, instead, I stayed for two. God had done so much, yet I couldn’t help but wonder what His purpose was in all of this. *Why*

had God called me to New York? It was still a mystery to me.

Chapter 12



The next morning, I began my weeklong training course at ADDS. It was an excellent course centered on just the material I needed to learn. I still couldn't get over how God had used my job to provide the way for me to go to New York. I hardly spent a dime of my own money. Everything was provided for, even the finest meals in the hotel restaurant.

During the day, I kept my mind on the class but, as soon as it turned five o'clock, my mind went back to thoughts of going into the city to go to church. I called Bill on Tuesday to see if he would be able to meet me at Penn Station but I wasn't able to get hold of him, and it just seemed like God was closing all the doors for me to go that night.

On Thursday, a man from my class—a Frenchman by the name of Charles—said he wanted to visit the city, so we made plans to ride the train in together. Charles, who was probably in his early forties, was an accountant who came all the way from California to attend the course. Our plans were to ride the train together, then he would walk me to the church and go off sightseeing until after the service. Then we would meet again at the deli. It worked out great because I didn't have to bother Bill to walk me back and forth to Penn Station. All I needed him to do was walk me over to the deli after the service and wait with me until Charles came. I called Bill to let him know I was coming.

I arrived at the church a little late and took the end seat in the back row of the middle section so that I would be able to look around and see where Bill was sitting. Pastor Bob Phillips was already into his Bible school teaching entitled, “Meditating the Word.” I was doing my best to concentrate on the teaching, which I thought was just excellent. He was explaining the verse out of 1 Corinthians 14:34 where Paul says,

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; (I Corinth. 14:34, KJV, shortened)

Pastor Bob was showing the congregation how to see what God really meant by that verse by taking it in context with other scriptures on the same subject. It was an incredible teaching, but I was so preoccupied with finding Bill that I wasn’t able to give it a hundred percent of my attention.

I looked all over the church for him but couldn’t seem to find him anywhere. I was beginning to get scared because I just didn’t know what I’d do if I had to walk over to the deli by myself. The thought of being all alone in Times Square at ten o’clock at night was more than I could handle. But Jesus knew, and He had it all under control. As I sat there trying to listen to the message and find Bill at the same time, my attention kept being drawn to a young woman seated three seats down from me, to my left. The seats between us were empty, so I had a clear view of her. For some reason, I couldn’t stop looking at her. She was a young girl, probably in her early twenties. She had long dark hair and wore a long dark skirt and coat. If I had seen her on the streets, I probably never would have guessed she was a Christian, not that there was anything wrong with the way she looked. It was just that, to me, she didn’t “look” like the Christian type.

Maybe that was one of the reasons she caught my attention because, without a doubt, she definitely was a Christian. She sat there engrossed in the Word, taking notes, and saying, “Amen!” often. It was clear to see that this girl loved Jesus and that she loved the Word of God. Her enthusiasm for the Word was

contagious, and I thought maybe that was the reason why I was so taken with her.

As Pastor Phillips was nearing the end of his message, I still had not found Bill and was really beginning to panic. Just then, I heard a “Praise God!” as only Bill Carson could say it. The voice was coming from my left. I leaned over in my seat, stretched out my neck to look, and there was Bill sitting *with* the young woman with whom I had been so taken! He was sitting on the opposite side of her! I hadn’t seen him because of the thickness of the woman’s coat and her long dark hair! I got his attention and he very casually leaned over, smiled, and waved to me. He obviously had no idea how desperately I had been searching for him.

“Thank you, Jesus!” I whispered as I breathed a sigh of relief.

I thought to myself, *Here I was, worried the whole time about finding Bill when, all the while, he was sitting practically right next to me—only five seats away! In a church large enough to hold two thousand people, that was a miracle!* I knew then why I had been so attracted to the young woman. God was again watching over me! At the end of the service, however, a new fear welled up inside of me.

Oh, no! I thought. *She must be his girlfriend! How am I going to ask him to walk me over to the deli now that he’s with his girl? I’m sure he’ll want to leave with her to see her home safely! Now what am I going to do? I can’t intrude on their relationship!*

When the service ended, Bill introduced me to his companion. Her name was Deborah. Although he didn’t say, “This is my girlfriend, Deborah,” I just assumed that she was. Although I never would have intruded on their relationship—except out of sheer desperation—that was the state I was in. So feeling like a third wheel, I said, “Bill, I know you’re with your girlfriend and I hate to intrude, but would you mind walking me over to the deli to wait with me until my friend arrives? I wouldn’t bother you except that I’m scared to death to walk over there myself.”

Bill and Deborah looked at each other and laughed. Then Bill said, “Uh, Carol, Deborah’s not my girlfriend.” “She’s not?” I replied.

“No, she’s my roommate, Norman’s, girlfriend,” he explained.

“Oh!” I exclaimed, breathing a sigh of relief. “I’m sorry! I just assumed that because you were together, she was your girlfriend!” They just laughed.

Then I thought, *But he’s still going to have to see her home safely,* and I expressed my concern to them.

“Oh, no problem,” Deborah said. “Don’t worry about me. I’ll be fine.”

“Are you sure?” I asked.

She shook her head as Bill interjected, “Ya, are you kidding? Themuggers are more afraid of her than she is of them!”

Deborah just smiled, threw her backpack over her shoulder, and took off down the street, waving goodbye. *Wow!* I thought. *How can anyone be so brave?*

Bill really didn’t want to go over to the deli with me. He told me that he was very tired and that he had to get up early for work the next morning and, besides that, he was broke. I offered to buy him something to eat and pleaded with him to come with me. He must have seen the look of desperation on my face so, finally, he took pity on me and gave in.

As we walked across the street, I couldn’t help but notice how badly Bill looked that night. He looked so poor and so thin. His face was sunken and it looked so worn and tired. His hair was a matted mess, his clothes were little more than rags and his shoes were old and worn and had holes in them. He didn’t look much better than some of the homeless people I had seen on the streets. He was quite a different sight from the Bill Carson I had met on Sunday who was wearing the usher’s suit. I asked him what he did for a living and he said that he was a janitor.

Moved with compassion, I thought, *Oh, Lord! How can someone who loves You so much live in such poverty? He doesn’t even have enough money to buy himself something to eat!*

At the deli, Bill allowed me to buy him some soup and milk. I sat across from him and watched as he quickly—and loudly—slurped it all down. Never had I seen anyone eat like him! People sometimes joke about someone inhaling their food but, with Bill, it seemed like this was what he was literally doing! He could

devour a whole plate within minutes and his table manners left a lot to be desired! His notso-long-ago past of living on the streets and in shelters was becoming apparent. He must have still carried a lot of the same mannerisms from those days. As I watched him eat, I thought to myself, *Dear Lord, he must be starving!*

But in spite of his poverty, he had such incredible joy! I don’t think I had ever met a man who loved Jesus more than he did. He was constantly praising God, and every opportunity he had to witness or to pass out a tract to someone, he seized. I watched with amazement as he, in his rags, boldly went up to people who were expensively dressed and said, “Jesus loves you!” To the other extreme, he would walk up to the crack addicts and tell them, “Jesus can set you free!” I was deeply moved.

As we sat waiting for Charles to come, Bill began to tell me about the Friday-night prayer meeting. He said that it was the best service of all and that I just had to come. He said that it was so good that he would wait all week for it. He said that if there was one service he had to miss during the week, the Friday night service would be the last. He kept persuading me to come and even offered to meet me at Penn Station.

Well, this is a change, I thought. *Every other time I wanted to come into the city, I had to be the one to take the initiative and knock on all the doors. Sometimes they opened, and sometimes they didn’t. But now all of the doors are opening wide for me to come back tomorrow night. All I need to do is walk through!*

As we sat talking about it, Charles came in and sat down to chat with us for a while. As we talked about my coming back the next night, Charles said that he didn’t really have enough time to see everything he had wanted to, so he would also like to come back again tomorrow night.

Wow, I thought. *Another open door! I won’t have to worry about riding the train alone!* We decided right then and there that we would come back the next night, and Bill said that he would meet us at Penn Station. He walked with us down to the station that night, helped us find our train, and then took a subway back to his apartment in Queens.

Once on the train, Charles and I had no problem making it back to the station on Long Island. We simply got off the train where we had gotten on (which was at the Huntington Station) and walked right over to the car. It was a piece of cake!

My head was spinning as I got back to the hotel that night. God, again, had done so many wonderful things. My only intention had been to go to one service—the Sunday morning service—but, in addition, God kept me for the Sunday night service, brought me back again for the Thursday-night Bible study, and now was opening all the doors for me to return again for the Friday-night prayer meeting.

As I sat in my room thinking back over all of the events that had taken place, I couldn't help wondering what God's purpose was in all this. Why had He called me to New York? I had only one more day left before I went home, and I still didn't know what His purpose was. The only thing I knew for sure was that all of the events that had taken place had definitely happened for a purpose. But I didn't have a clue what that purpose could be. I prayed that God would reveal to me what it was.

Chapter 13



The next morning while driving off to class, once again, I drove up the street in front of the hotel. When I came to the light at the first intersection, I happened to look up at the street sign and noticed the name. It read, “Caleb’s Path.”

Caleb’s Path! I thought, wondering. *Wait a minute! Didn’t I see a street sign the other day named Joshua’s Path?* When the light changed, I drove up quickly to the next intersection and there it was. The very next street up was named Joshua’s Path!

My God! I thought. *Joshua and Caleb! Numbers 13! This is the Word that the Lord had given me through Joe and upon which my whole trip was based! Joe and I spoke of nothing else the whole way to the airport!*

I sat there in awe as I stared at one of the most incredible miracles I had ever seen in my life. I had never been to Long Island before and never could have known that the two streets running across the Motor Parkway, the road on which the Holiday Inn was located, were called “Joshua’s Path” and “Caleb’s Path.” Only God could have arranged such a thing!

As I pondered what God was trying to show me, I began to understand a part of why He had called me to New York. God was confirming that, like the twelve spies, He had called Joe and me to New York City to spy out the land, to bring back a report of what we had seen, and to bring back the fruit thereof. But we were not

to be like the ten spies who brought back an evil report. We were to be like Joshua and Caleb—the two spies who had a *different spirit*—who brought back a *good* report of the land and said that the children of Israel were well able to go up and possess it. I didn’t understand yet, however, what the fruit was that the Lord wanted to be brought back. God would reveal that to me later.

As I drove off, I made a mental note to come back later to take some pictures of the street signs (see photos below) so that I could show them to Joe when I got home. I couldn’t wait until after my class was over so that I could call and tell him all about this amazing miracle the Lord had so wondrously performed!





All during the class, my mind kept drifting off to thoughts of Bill—of how poor he was in earthly goods yet how rich he was in Jesus. Every time I thought about him, my heart would just break and I would begin to cry. At times, I even found myself crying right in the middle of the class!

What is the matter with me? I thought, trying to snap myself out of it. *Why do I feel such a heavy burden for this man?* In addition to thoughts about Bill, my mind was also consumed with thoughts of the other poor and homeless people I had seen on

the streets of New York City. One man in particular will forever be embedded in my memory. He was an old, seemingly homeless man whom I had passed walking along the street. As I passed him by, I noticed that he was wearing a pair of shoes which looked to be about three or four sizes too big for him. As I thought about him, once again, my heart just broke.

But even though I was broken for all of the homeless people I had seen, my mind was centered on one man in particular—Bill Carson. All through the day, I just couldn't seem to shake the very heavy burden that I felt for him.

When the class, and the course, finally ended, Charles and I rushed back to our hotels to change clothes and get ready to go back into the city. We decided to catch the 5:08 p.m. train out of Huntington, which didn't leave us much time. Although we rode in the same car together the night before, we decided to take our own cars this night and meet at the train station.

As I hurried to get ready, I called Bill to let him know we would be coming into Penn Station at around 6:20 p.m. He said he'd meet us there. I also called Joe to tell him about Joshua and Caleb's Path, and to let him know that I was going back into the city. I told him that I expected to be back at around 11:30 or so. He seemed a little concerned and made me promise to call him when I returned.

I arrived at the Huntington Station a little after Charles and found that the parking lot, which was huge, was packed with cars. It was so crowded that I could hardly find a place to park. Everything seemed so different than it was just the night before. I guessed it was because we were catching the earlier train, and it was just the time that many people were getting off work and coming home from the city.

The station was also packed with people going into the city for their Friday night out. Most of the people going in were not the type that I felt real comfortable around. They were a very rowdy bunch. There looked to be everything from drug addicts to prostitutes to skinheads. Many of them had already started drinking. I could sense an aura of evil in the air that had me feeling very uneasy and out of place.

Another thing I noticed was that almost everyone was wearing black. I must have stuck out like a sore thumb because, there I was, all dressed from head to toe in *white*! I had on white slacks, white shoes, and although I had on a green blouse, you couldn't tell because over top of everything, I had on a long white coat. I thought to myself, *Why did I have to go and wear this outfit? I don't blend in with this crowd at all! I either look like a nurse or an ANGEL!*

Then I thought, *Oh well, Jesus has called me into the darkness to be a light. Maybe looking like an angel in this crowd isn't such a bad idea!* But I still wished I had worn something a little less conspicuous.

I was relieved when I finally spotted Charles, who was dressed very nicely in a suit and tie. Charles was interested in the Jewish faith, and his plans that night were to go to a Jewish temple. He explained that Jewish tradition was that, if a stranger comes to their synagogue, one of the Jewish families usually invites the stranger over to their home for the evening. Charles was hoping that someone would invite him.

I did my best to witness to Charles while on the train. I shared with him how I wasn't in New York just to attend the training class but that God had called me there for another purpose. I told him about Joshua and Caleb, and how I believed that God was sending me into the city to spy out the land. I was surprised to find out that he was very familiar with the story of the twelve spies and that he knew quite a lot about the Bible. He told me that he had even spent some time in Israel. But when I talked to him about Jesus, he shied away from the thoughts of coming under His Lordship. I sensed, however, that he was searching for the truth and, since I no longer believed in coincidences, I knew it was no accident that God had chosen Charles to be my companion. God was dealing with his heart.

When we arrived at Penn Station, Bill was there waiting for us. Charles decided that he would flag a taxi and leave straight from there, so we set a time when we would meet again. We decided to meet at Penn Station at 10:10 p.m. in order to catch the

10:34 train (the next to the last train out), which would have us back in Huntington at 11:38.

The other option was to take the last train out, which was to leave at 11:17 p.m. and arrive in Huntington at 12:19, but we thought that was a little late. We didn't think it wise to plan on taking the last train out of the city in case something happened and we missed it. So, after setting a time and place to meet, Bill and I said goodbye to Charles and hurried off up the street to try to make it to the prayer meeting on time.

Chapter 14



When we arrived at the church, once again, we felt the wonderful presence of the Lord as soon as we walked through the doors. The contrast of being out on the wicked streets of Times Square as opposed to being inside the church was just indescribable. It was like night and day. Outside, there was total chaos; but inside, there was total peace.

I was amazed at how many people came out on a Friday night just to pray. The church wasn't packed, but it was full. As the meeting began, Bill and I took a seat together near the front of the middle section.

First, there was a beautiful time of praise and worship, and then Gary Wilkerson (Pastor Dave's son) preached a short but powerful message. Next, Pastor Dave asked those in the audience who felt a particular burden to come up to the front and lead the congregation in prayer. Many people went forward and, one by one, stepped up to the microphone to pray. I was amazed at how the people in this church could pray!

After that, everyone was asked to get into groups of three, join hands, and take turns praying as the Holy Spirit led. The Spirit of God was very heavy upon us in that meeting as Bill, myself, and another man joined hands to pray. We prayed and prayed for about a half hour to forty-five minutes, then we separated and went into a time of our own private prayer.

It was during this time that I began to pray fervently that God would reveal to me His purpose for bringing me to New York City. I already knew part of the reason, but I couldn't help feeling there was more.

As I prayed, God began to speak to me in a very clear voice. What He said really shocked me. In an almost audible voice, I heard the Lord tell me, "I want you to ask Bill to come back to Barnesboro with you, and I want you to take him into your home." "God!" I protested, "I can't do that! I hardly even know him!" "Ask him," the Lord said.

"God, I can't!" I resisted. "He'd think I was crazy! Besides, what if he doesn't want to come to Barnesboro? Why would he want to leave Times Square Church to go to Barnesboro?"

But again, I heard Him say, "Ask him."

As I spent a long period of time struggling with the command the Lord had given me, finally, I prayed, "Lord, if You really want me to invite Bill to come to Barnesboro, I will, but I must know for sure that this is You speaking to me. Lord, this whole thing seems crazy. There is no way I can ask him to come unless I am certain that I am hearing Your voice. So, Lord, if this is really You speaking, You've got to give me a confirmation. If You confirm it, Lord, then I'll know for certain that I have heard Your voice, and I will obey You."

I no sooner prayed that prayer when Bill, who was sitting next to me, stood up and began to carry on a conversation with a man he knew who was sitting in the row behind us. The man asked Bill how he was doing, and Bill began to unburden his heart to him.

He told him that he really wasn't doing very well. He was very tired and worn out from the city. He said that, between getting up at four o'clock in the morning to go to work and then rushing to church directly afterward to usher, he would usually not get home until around eleven or twelve o'clock at night, and this left him little time to pray and to seek God. He said that he desperately needed a rest, and *he wished that he could get away from the city so he could pray and spend time alone with God.*

As I listened in utter amazement to Bill unburdening his

heart, my own heart started pounding, and I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that this was the confirmation I was looking for. God couldn't have made it any plainer! I could hardly believe my ears as I heard Bill convey his need and his desire to get out of the city. I was also astounded at how quickly God had answered my prayer for this confirmation.

At that point, there was nothing left to do but to obey God, so I turned to Bill and just grinned at him. He looked at me with amusement and said, "What's with you?" while thinking to himself (as he later revealed), *Boy, she must have really gotten blessed!*

"Bill," I said, "*sit down!*"

He looked at me funny and said, "Okay."

"Bill," I began, "I know this is going to sound crazy, but God spoke to me tonight and told me to ask you to come back to Barnesboro with me to stay as a guest in my home."

I went on to tell him the whole story of how I struggled with this command from the Lord, of how I asked for a confirmation, and how the Lord immediately gave me one.

Bill was speechless. I will never forget the look on his face as he rocked back and forth with his head in his hands in a cross between unbelief and ecstasy.

"Thank you, Jesus!" he cried over and over again.

When he was finally able to speak, he told me that, ever since he had gotten saved, he had been praying that God would take him out of the city. He said that, when he had first gotten saved, he wanted out in the worst way but, since Times Square Church opened up, he hadn't been quite so anxious to leave because he loved the church so much. Even so, the fast-paced life of the city was killing him, and he yearned for a time that he could rest and get alone with God. *He told me that this was an answer to his prayer!*

It was then that I realized that God had sent me to New York as an *angel*—as a messenger of God—to carry out an answer to someone's prayer; someone's heart-cry to spend more time with Him. I also realized that Bill Carson was the "fruit of the land" which the Lord wanted to be brought back! I was overwhelmed

and so humbled that God would consider using me in such a precious way. *He called me to New York as an answer to someone's prayer!*

I didn't really expect Bill to say yes when I asked him to come to Barnesboro—and he didn't right away. He said he wanted to go home and pray about it that night and then, on Sunday, he wanted to talk to Pastor Dave about it. But he said that he would call me in the morning to let me know what he felt God was leading him to do.

Bill and I walked back to the train station that night high on Jesus. Bill was right about one thing; the Friday-night prayer meetings were the best! We rejoiced all the way to Penn Station. Little did I know, however, that the enemy wasn't at all pleased with what had just taken place and that I was in for a night of horror.

Chapter 15



We made it back to Penn Station at around ten o'clock. I purchased my ticket and inquired about the track number for the train to Huntington. By that time, it was 10:10, and there was no sign of Charles. I wasn't too concerned because the train wasn't leaving until 10:34, and I figured that he was just running a little late. But, as time went on and there was still no sign of Charles, I began to get a little nervous. I started thinking, "What if he doesn't show? What would I do?"

I had only two options: I could get on the 10:34 train and ride it back to Huntington all by myself, or I could wait for the 11:17 train in hopes that Charles would be back by then. I decided that waiting was too risky. It was the last train out, and if for some reason I missed it, I would really be in trouble. *Besides*, I thought, *what if I waited and Charles still didn't show!* (For all I knew, a Jewish family could have taken him in and invited him to spend the night.) *Then I would be in even worse shape than I was—left to ride the latest train (from 11:17 to 12:19) alone! No, I thought, my only option is to get on the train now.*

"I should be okay," I tried to reassure myself. "After all, I just did this last night without any problems. I'll just watch carefully for the Huntington stop. I'll get off with my keys in my hand, walk quickly to my car, lock the doors, and drive back to the hotel. It was

easy enough last night."

As Bill saw me to the train, my mind went back to all of the things that had happened at the church. As we said goodbye, I looked at Bill almost knowingly, and said, "I'll see you again." With that, I took my seat on the train, and he left.

As I sat waiting for the train to pull out, I felt such an incredible sense of evil all around me. Friday nights in the city sure were different from any of the other nights I had been there. As I sat on the train all alone, I knew I was in over my head. As I stared out the window, I

watched as people were still coming to board the train. From the way most of them looked, each time I saw them coming my way, I would pray, "Oh, God! Please don't let *that one* come into this car!"

As a wild gang of boys approached, I again prayed, "Please, God, don't let them come in here! Let them sit somewhere else!" They did come in, but thankfully, they kept moving toward the back of the car.

Practically everyone who was boarding looked like trouble to me and, to make matters worse, an article that I had read the other day in the Long Island newspaper began to play on my mind. The article was about a girl who had recently been mugged at the Huntington train station while going to work one morning. The remembrance of this article only intensified my fear and, as the train pulled out, I clenched my car keys tightly in my fist and prayed for God's protection.

Only God could have known the intense fear I felt that night as I sat there in what seemed like the pit of hell. I felt like I was in Satan's territory and was surrounded by a multitude of demons. As I looked around, again, it seemed like almost *everyone* was wearing black! There I sat with my white clothes on looking and feeling terribly out of place, thinking to myself, *Oh, Lord! Why did I have to wear this stupid outfit! I'm sticking out like a sore thumb!*

My train ticket had a map on it which showed all of the different stops the train would be making before it arrived in Huntington. I followed the map closely so that I knew how many

more stops I had to go before I was to get off. I knew that if I messed up and got off at the wrong stop, I would be done, so I watched carefully.

When I rode the train on my previous trips to and from the city, the conductor had called out the name of the town for each stop but, for some reason, this night, he wasn't doing that. The only way to know what stop you were at was to watch out the window and read the sign that was painted on the concrete as the train passed by. The train passed by quickly so, if you missed it, you missed it. Again, I watched with all diligence.

I had to go through sixteen stops and about an hour or so of riding before reaching Huntington, and it seemed like an eternity. Miraculously enough, though, nobody bothered me. When I finally saw the sign for Huntington, I said to myself, "Okay, this is it. Just get off the train, walk quickly to your car, get in, lock the door, and you'll be fine." I had my car key all ready to go.

When the train stopped, I got off (as did all of the other passengers on board since it was the last stop) and followed the crowd of people in the direction they were going. But, when we started going up some steps, I stopped and thought, *Wait a minute, I don't remember seeing any steps when I got on!* I looked up and followed the steps to where they were leading. They led to a huge parking garage. *My God!* I thought. *I don't remember seeing a parking garage at the Huntington Station!* Panic struck as I stood there thinking, *Oh, God, I don't remember seeing anything here! I must have gotten off at the wrong stop because nothing looks familiar!*

I turned and started walking back down the steps but was so confused and disoriented that I didn't know which way to go and I knew that, at that hour (it was after midnight), there was nobody I could ask. I started up the walkway by the tracks looking for something—anything—that looked familiar. I saw nothing.

By then, most of the people had scattered off to their cars, and the place was practically deserted. I noticed one man, however, who was walking up on an over-ramp that enabled you to cross over to the other side of the tracks. It was dark and narrow up there, but I didn't know what else to do so I walked up

over it too. When I came down on the other side, I still didn't recognize anything, so I walked aimlessly up the walkway, trying desperately to stay calm and not show my state of panic.

By this time, everyone was gone except for a group of black teenaged boys who just seemed to be hanging out there for kicks. I was hoping they wouldn't notice me as I passed by, but I knew they couldn't miss me in my white outfit.

As I walked by, they began to make remarks and holler things at me. I just kept on walking straight, but soon, there was no place left to go. The walkway came to an end, and there was nothing left but woods in front of me. I had no choice but to turn around and head back in the opposite direction. I dreaded it because I knew it meant passing the teenaged boys again, and I knew that if they hadn't figured it out already, they would surely know this time that I was lost.

Just then, I noticed a huge parking lot over to my left, and out in the middle of it sat one car. The lot was dark and the car was far away, but I thought, *It's my only shot!* I walked down a few steps leading to the lot and started heading toward the car. The teenagers turned around and were calling things at me as I picked up the pace and walked as quickly as I could across the dark parking lot. With the car still quite a ways off, I broke off into a run toward it.

My white coat flapped in the wind as I tore across the parking lot as fast as I could. When I got close enough to see what kind of car it was, I thought, *My God! It's not mine! It's too big!* (The car I had rented was a small Pontiac Sunbird.) But I ran right up to it anyway with my key still in my hand, stuck the key in the lock and, praise God, it opened! *Oh, thank you, Jesus!* I cried as I quickly jumped in, locked the door and sped out of there.

I was crying and trembling so uncontrollably that I could hardly drive, but I was so thankful to be safe in my car again. As I drove along trying to figure out what went wrong, I realized that the train had come up on the opposite side of the tracks than it had the night before. Since I had gotten off in a different location than I had gotten on, I lost my bearings and had no idea where I was. As

I tried to remember what was on the other side of the tracks, I still didn't remember seeing a parking garage.

Because of my inexperience in riding the trains, I never would have thought of such a thing happening. Just the night before, the train had come up on the same side of the tracks on which Charles and I had parked, and we had no problem getting off and walking straight to our car. Never in a million years would I have thought of such a thing happening!

Satan had done his best to attack me with fear and place me in a dangerous situation but, though I walked through the valley of the shadow of death that night, no evil befell me. God was with me, and He protected me throughout the entire ordeal. But even after all this, Satan still didn't let up—his scare tactics continued as I drove back to Hauppauge.

As I drove along the nearly deserted highway at about one o'clock in the morning, I noticed that a dark car seemed to be following me. This went on for quite a while, and was really beginning to make me nervous. As I came to a stoplight, the car pulled right up alongside of me and, as I looked over to see who was in it, the driver suddenly turned his head toward me. I gasped as I looked over and saw some kind of ghoulish-looking creature behind the wheel! The creature, which appeared to me to be a demon right out of the pit of hell, quickly turned its head toward me and started laughing! I immediately turned my head the other way and prayed for the light to turn green. When it did, I tore off the highway at a high rate of speed and, before I knew it, the car was gone.

"Oh, *God!*" I cried. "I don't know how much more of this I can take! Please help me make it back to the hotel!" But even after that, I didn't make it back without any problems. Since I wasn't very familiar with the area, I kept making mistakes and taking wrong roads. There were a number of times that I realized I had made a wrong turn and had to turn around to get back on the right road.

It seemed like forever before I found my way back to the Holiday Inn, but I finally pulled in at about 1:30 a.m. After parking the car, I

was almost too scared to get out. Since my room was located on the backside of the hotel, I had to park around the back and use a key to get into a side entrance. The entrance was dark and secluded and, after everything that had happened, I just couldn't face walking into another dangerous situation. But I knew it was either face it or sleep in the car, so I checked all around to make sure there wasn't anyone lurking about, then I dashed to the door, unlocked it, and ran up the stairs and down the hall to my room.

After entering my room, I locked and bolted the door then collapsed on the bed, crying. "Thank you, Jesus! Thank you for getting me back alive!"

After trying to pull myself together, I remembered that I was supposed to call Joe. I had told him that I expected to be back at around eleven-thirty so I knew that, by then, he had to have been really worried about me. I picked up the phone to call him at his place at the college but I was so shaken up that I couldn't remember his number—and I didn't have it written down anywhere. I kept trying every variation of it that I could think of but, each time, I got a wrong number. I must have tried at least ten different numbers, each time going through the long process of going through the operator so that I could charge the call to my home phone, but I just couldn't remember it.

Frustrated with myself for forgetting it, I finally gave up and decided that the only way I could get his number would be to call his mother. I hated to wake her up at that hour of the night but I didn't have much choice. I couldn't let Joe go on worrying about me all night long, so I called, and she gave me the number.

When I finally got hold of Joe, he was frantic with worry. "Carol!" he cried. "Where have you been? I've been worried sick about you! At ten after ten, I got this feeling that you were in trouble, and I felt strongly impressed to pray for you—and I've been praying ever since! Are you all right?"

"Yes," I said. "I'm fine." And I went on to tell him the whole story of what had happened to me that night. Joe had no way of knowing that ten minutes after ten was the exact time that Charles and I were to meet at Penn Station. He also had no way

of knowing that Charles didn't show up and that, from that point on, I was in serious trouble. Only the Holy Spirit could have put a burden on his heart to pray for me right at that hour! I praised God for once again watching over me and putting it on Joe's heart to pray for me throughout the entire ordeal. It was another awesome miracle!

I also thanked God for blessing me with such a good friend who was in tune with the Spirit of God and who was obedient to pray for me when I was in such danger. Without his prayers, I don't know what might have hap

As I lay in bed that night, exhausted, my mind went back to thoughts of Bill, and how God spoke to me and told me to ask him to come to Barnesboro. I could still hardly believe that God had sent me to New York as an answer to his prayers and that he may actually be coming out to Barnesboro to stay with me. I wondered if he would really come. I also wondered how my parents and children would react if he did. My mind raced on and on before I finally drifted off to sleep.

Chapter 16



The next morning, I got up and started packing for my trip home. Bill called and said that he had been up all night praying and that he felt that it was God's will for him to leave New York and go to Barnesboro. He said that, unless Pastor Dave had strong feelings against it, he was planning to quit his job and leave New York in about a week. He said he was planning to talk with Pastor Dave on Sunday after the morning service, and he would call me at home to let me know what he said.

Wow! I thought. I can't believe it. It looks like he's really going to come!

The flight back to Pittsburgh was quite shaky. We hit a storm with some very gusty winds along the way. Just when I thought I was safe and out of danger from the city, once again, I found myself crying out to Jesus for help. It almost seemed like He was putting me in those fearful situations just to teach me to call on Him, to show me how much I was dependent upon Him. I was learning!

When the plane touched down safely in Pittsburgh, I thanked God again for seeing me through another storm (literally). It felt good to be home. As I got off the plane, I met Joe and my brother, Danny, who were there waiting for me. I ran over to meet them, gave them each a big hug, and said, "Boy, is it good to see you two!" (I think they felt just as glad to see me.) We loaded up the

luggage and then headed for home. On the way, we stopped off at a restaurant where I attempted to fill them in on everything that had happened. God had done so many things during that week, and I had much to share.

When we finally made it back to Barnesboro, I went straight to my parents' house where my girls had been staying for the week. It was so good to see them. They looked like they had each grown an inch since I saw them last! All the way home, I kept wondering how I was going to explain to my parents that I was going to be having a guest in my home. Well, actually, it was their home. I was renting my big four-bedroom house from my parents. (The house itself was a miracle from God, but that's a different story.)

I knew my parents wouldn't be at all pleased about this. They were still following the Catholic religion and didn't understand a lot of the things I did now that I was a Christian. When I explained to them that God *told* me to take Bill into my home as a guest, they thought it was the most ridiculous thing they had ever heard; they were very upset about it.

The next day, Bill called to say that he had met with David Wilkerson.

"Well, what did he say?" I asked anxiously.

"He said that I should go if it's what I felt God was leading me to do," he replied. Bill went on to tell me that he told Pastor Dave how he wanted to go up into the mountains to pray and seek God as he, himself, used to do when he lived in Pennsylvania, and he asked him if he could give him any advice.

Brother Dave said, "Yeah, take your Bible and let the Word speak to you!"

So David Wilkerson approved Bill's coming. He planned to quit his job, pack up all of his belongings, and move to Barnesboro, Pennsylvania, indefinitely. He said that he had already bought his bus ticket and would be arriving in Altoona on Friday night.

Wow, I thought. *I can't believe he's really coming! Bill Carson from New York City is actually coming to live in Barnesboro! As on fire for God as Bill is, the whole town won't be able to help but get saved!*

Just about a month before I left for New York, God had called me to teach Sunday school. When I got back, I decided that instead of teaching a lesson that week, I would share with my Young Teens class all the experiences of my trip. Before I left, I shared with the class how God had called me to New York but that I had no idea why. Now I shared with them that God had revealed to me His purpose for calling me to New York and that it was something that was going to affect them, our church, and even the whole town of Barnesboro.

The class listened intently as I shared my story. But the bell rang, and the class ended before I got even halfway through, and before I could tell them that Bill Carson was coming to town. They were very interested in hearing the rest of the story—and I was very interested in telling it—so I said that, if they wanted to, we could meet again that evening an hour or so before the service, and I would finish telling it. Most of them said they would come so we planned to meet at around six o'clock.

I was surprised at how many teenagers actually showed up that evening—especially certain ones that showed no real interest in God and were there basically because their parents made them. It was really amazing that these teenagers came back that night, not because they were forced to, but because they *wanted* to.

My pastor must have been pretty impressed, too, because he called me into his office before the class began and presented me with a brand-new Thompson Chain-Reference Bible, complete with case. He handed it to me and said, "This is for you. Every good Bible teacher needs a good teaching Bible." I was so touched and blessed by it!

At six o'clock, I finished sharing my story with the class and, afterward, all during the Sunday evening service, I kept feeling that God wanted me to share with the entire congregation why He had sent me to New York. During the service, God had also confirmed it by giving me a scripture out of Matthew 25:40, where Jesus said:

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethern, ye have done it unto me.
(Matt. 25:40, KJV, shortened)

My heart started pounding, and I knew that God wanted me to share my story and tell the congregation about how He told me to bring Bill Carson back to Barnesboro. I hesitated for a long time because I wasn't accustomed to raising my hand and speaking in front of the church, and I was very nervous about it. I had hoped and prayed that maybe the Holy Spirit would move on Pastor Henderson to call on me and ask me to give a testimony about the trip, but he didn't.

Knowing assuredly that the Holy Spirit was prompting me to speak up, finally, I raised my hand and shared with the people how God had spoken to me while in New York and told me to bring Bill Carson back to Barnesboro to be a guest in my home. I shared how he had once been a crack addict but how he had recently gotten saved and was now on fire for God. I shared how poor he was in earthly goods and that he didn't have the best manners, but I also shared how rich he was in Jesus. I also shared the scripture that God had given me about "when ye have done it unto the least of these my brethern, ye have done it unto me," and I asked them to please make him feel welcome when he arrived.

Although the people seemed to respond favorably to it that night, little did I know that most of the people in the church, including my pastor, would eventually come against me for bringing Bill into my home. There were, however, a certain few (God bless them!) that stood behind me all the way, and one couple in particular that was kind enough to invite us to their home one evening for dinner. But, for the most part, my taking Bill in wasn't seen as an act of compassion and obedience to God. It was seen as an act of sin! People actually thought that Bill was my boyfriend, and I took him into my home so that we could live together! I had no idea what a difficult time was in store for me in the coming months.

Chapter 17



At the end of the workday on Friday, I rushed home to clean the spare bedroom and get it ready for Bill's coming. Later that evening, Joe and I drove to Altoona to meet Bill at the bus station. (His bus was due in at about eight-thirty.) Joe was excited about seeing Bill again, and both of us could hardly believe that Bill Carson from New York City was actually coming to Barnesboro to live! As we waited for his bus to arrive, we tried to figure out why God had done this great thing, but there was no way we could have known the events to come and the reason God brought Bill to Barnesboro.

The bus arrived just about on time and off stepped Bill Carson, all dressed up in a suit and tie, and carrying a ton of luggage. We exchanged hugs and then Joe helped carry Bill's luggage to the car — or I should say Joe “tried” to carry his luggage to the car! Bill's suitcase was so huge and heavy that Joe literally had to drag it! I had to laugh as Joe struggled down the sidewalk with it.

“What do you have in here, Bill?” Joe asked facetiously. “Bricks?”

Bill said that he did have his clothes in there but, mostly, it was filled with books and tapes. When we got back to my house and he started unpacking them, we saw that he certainly did have books and tapes in there—he practically had enough to fill a library! He had a couple of different Bibles, a concordance, a lexicon, and

many other different Christian books and study aides. All of which he stacked up a mile high on my coffee table. In addition to the books, he also had about a hundred or so preaching tapes from Times Square Church.

“Well, Bill,” I said in amazement, “you certainly did come here prepared to seek the Lord!”

As Bill was getting settled in, I went down to my parents' house to pick up my girls. My parents were very angry about Bill coming to stay with me and said that I worry more about other people than I do about my own kids. That comment hurt me deeply, because it was anything but true, but I knew I couldn't expect them to understand.

Lacey and Lindsay didn't seem to mind Bill's coming. I had already explained to them everything that had happened in New York and how God told me to bring Bill back to our house, and they just took it in stride. When we got back to the house, I introduced them to Bill and vice versa, and they all got along just fine.

Not too long after Bill got settled in, the phone rang, and I was surprised to find that it was Pastor Henderson calling. He was wondering if Bill had arrived yet because he wanted to let him know that he had connections with the people at the Youth Challenge Bible Institute in Sunbury, and he would be happy to “help Bill out” by making some phone calls to help get him enrolled there. I put Bill on the phone and let him speak to him himself.

Bill thanked Pastor Henderson for his offer to help, but explained that he had already tried to get into Youth Challenge once. He had gone through the man who used to run the Teen Challenge program—Don Wilkerson. Bill explained that, if there was anyone who was able to pull some strings and get him enrolled, it was Pastor Don, who had headed up Teen Challenge for years. But the college had certain stipulations for enrollment that even Don Wilkerson couldn't get around, so he knew there wasn't much point in pursuing it further. Besides that, Bill explained that God had not *called* him to go to Bible school at this time—He had called him to come to Barnesboro.

At the time, I was really appreciative of Pastor Henderson's offer to help but, later on, I discovered that he had indeed wanted to help Bill "out" all right—he wanted to help him right out of my house and out of town! I found out later that he didn't believe for one minute that God had spoken to me and told me to take Bill in. Without even listening to my story, he drew his own false conclusions and was very much opposed to it.

The adjustment to having a guest around the house—especially a male guest—was very difficult for me. Bill, of course, didn't have a job or any money so, in addition to letting him stay at my house, I was supporting him as well. As a single mother who was already living from paycheck to paycheck and just barely getting by, the burden of having another mouth to feed made making ends meet much more difficult. In addition, Bill had a very large appetite, and my grocery bill practically doubled.

I also had a very difficult time adjusting to Bill's mannerisms. His table manners left a lot to be desired and, at times, I would have to get up from the table and leave because I felt sick from some of his actions.

In addition, there was the adjustment to the general lack of privacy to which I was so accustomed. I now had to watch how I was dressed and could no longer walk around my house in a nightgown.

Taking Bill into my home was not an easy thing for me but, what made it even more difficult was the lack of support I received, not so much from my parents, but from my church. My greatest opposition wasn't from people who weren't saved. It was from Christians!

When my pastor informed me that he was receiving anonymous phone calls concerning my "living arrangement," I was shocked that people could even *think* that there was something going on between Bill and me. I was a Christian, a woman of God! Such a horrendous thing had never even crossed

my mind!

I wondered if these "Christians" had ever heard of human compassion or loving your neighbor as yourself, or scriptures such as:

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (1 John 3:17, KJV)

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and you took me in: (Matt. 25:35, KJV) ...Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (Matt. 25:40, KJV, shortened)

And in First Kings where God commanded the prophet Elijah to stay at a widow woman's house, saying:

Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. (1 Kings 17:9, KJV)

But apparently, most people in the church didn't see things from this perspective. They immediately jumped to false conclusions without even giving me a chance to explain. The cold shoulders, the stern looks and the anonymous telephone calls to my pastor demanding that I not be allowed to teach Sunday school any longer, hurt me very deeply. It was not an easy time for me but, even though it seemed everyone was against me, I never wavered in my belief that I was only doing what God had commanded me to do.

Chapter 18



Although having Bill around was difficult and causing me a lot of problems, it also had its positive side. I learned a lot from him about the Word, and it was nice to have someone to fellowship and pray with every evening. Having Bill around also kept me on my toes spiritually. He tended to be very legalistic so, if he saw anything in my life that didn't belong there, he didn't hesitate to tell me about it. I grew a great deal spiritually as a result of Bill's influence.

Another good thing about Bill was that he was a great cook. He made the best spaghetti sauce I had ever eaten and would always have a wonderful meal cooked for me when I got home from work.

I was also very impressed by Bill's total commitment to God, his consistent prayer life and his no-compromise approach to living the Gospel. My house was located at the top of a big hill, which had above it an even bigger mountain. Bill loved to go up on the mountain to pray. Every morning at the crack of dawn, he would get up, grab his Bible, and take off into the woods. He had a certain spot way at the top of the mountain where he would spend hours praying and seeking God.

I also loved it up on the mountain. Every Saturday, I would escape from the pressures I was under and go up on the mountain with Bill to pray and get away from it all. Things got so bad that, at one point, it was about the only thing that kept my sanity. I looked

forward to it all week long.

It was also through Bill that I made one of the best decisions of my life: I got rid of my television set. Bill couldn't stand the fact that I had a TV in my living room, and he didn't hesitate to tell me so. He continually harped on me about how evil television was and how Satan uses it to flood people's minds with the filth of the world. I argued that I didn't watch "those" kinds of programs. I only watched things like the news, Jimmy Swaggart and the Rock Church. But Bill didn't buy it. He argued that, although there was nothing wrong with watching those kinds of programs, the temptation was always there to watch something ungodly during times of weakness. He said that having a TV set right at my fingertips made it much easier to give in to the temptation.

Bill also said that, even during the decent shows, you had to put up with ungodly commercials or advertisements for some sensual movie coming up. Besides all that, he said that time spent before the tube is time wasted—time that could have been productively spent praying and seeking God or reading the Word. He reminded me that the Bible says we are to redeem the time, not waste it.

I listened to all of Bill's arguments, which were all valid, but I still thought it was crazy to get rid of my TV set. I had to admit, though, that it wasn't too long ago that I had been addicted to a soap opera, and it had only been recently that the Lord delivered me from watching it. With the television in the house, the temptation would always be there to go back to watching it again. As Bill prayed daily that God would show me, Himself, how wrong it was, one day, God did just that. It was a simple thing, but it caught my attention and hit me like a ton of bricks.

I was on my lunch hour from work and went to the mall to buy a typewriter ribbon. As I went to the Sears electronic department to make my purchase, there were probably fifty or more television sets that were all tuned in to my once-favorite soap opera. I was surrounded by the program that God had convicted and delivered me of! I knew immediately that God was trying to tell me something.

When I got home that night, I told Bill what had happened. I said, “Bill, I can argue with you all day long, but I can’t argue with God!” Bill laughed and rejoiced that God had answered his prayers and opened my eyes! From that point on, there was no more television for me. Eventually, I had the TV set taken out of my house (although I kept a little portable one upstairs in case there was something major going on in the news—like a war or an earthquake—and I wanted to see what was going on). Other than that, though, it was never turned on. It was the best thing I could have done, not only for my sake, but for the sake of my children. The amazing thing about it was that they *never* once complained, and they always managed to find other, more creative things to do to keep themselves busy.

Having Bill around was a blessing in many ways but, at the same time, it was still a very heavy burden for me to bear. At times, I felt like Moses in Numbers 11, where he asked God why He was afflicting him by laying the burden of the children of Israel on him. In verse 14, he cried to God, saying:

I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. (Num. 11:14, KJV)

It got even worse when problems began to develop between Bill and Pastor Henderson. Looking back now, I can see that God’s purpose was to deal with the hearts of two men who had a lot of pride. He was trying to humble both of them. First off, Bill was often very critical and judgmental about people. He was also very presumptuous and jumped to a lot of false conclusions. Coming from Times Square Church, he had been fed a very pure Word, and he had great difficulty adapting to a church where the Word wasn’t being preached quite as pure. Bill always found a lot of things wrong with the messages that Pastor Henderson was preaching, and he didn’t hesitate to talk with him about it.

After many of the services, Bill would ask Pastor Henderson if he could meet with him in his office, and then he would point out all of the things he saw wrong in his message. Most of the time,

Bill was right in what he saw. He perceived that the pastor’s prayer life was lacking (which the pastor himself admitted was true), and he perceived that the church, as a whole, had no real fear of God. But although Bill was right in what he said, he didn’t realize until much later that he was wrong in his heart. He was wrong in that he was not going to him out of a heart of love, but of pride.

Pastor Henderson, on the other hand, had a lot of pride as well and was not accustomed to someone challenging his messages. He handled it graciously in the beginning and even thanked Bill for pointing certain things out to him but, after a while, as Bill persisted, he understandably began to get a little annoyed. There were even a few times when Bill would disagree so strongly with something Pastor Henderson said that he would get up and walk out—right in the middle of the service! This not only upset Pastor Henderson, but also embarrassed him.

I hated what was going on between them. I saw two men whom I loved and respected as men of God, tearing at each other’s throats, and I felt stuck in the middle of them. When Pastor Henderson would get particularly upset about something, he would call me into his office for a meeting. It was obvious that he wanted rid of Bill in the worst way, and he tried many different tactics to try to get me to get him out of my house, including threatening me that, if I didn’t get him out, I would no longer be allowed to teach Sunday school. He told me that the kids weren’t blind and that they could see what was going on! It was apparent that he also thought that I was living in sin with Bill!

He also told me that he had been in the ministry for so and so many years, and that he had seen Bill’s type before. They got saved, became overly zealous, then ended up completely falling away from the faith. He said that he knew the same thing would happen with Bill.

“You *know*?” I asked, hardly able to believe what I was hearing.

“I know,” he replied.

Wow, I thought to myself. How can he make a statement like that? God’s Word says that He is able to keep that which is committed

unto Him against that day. That's like saying that God is not able to keep His Word!

In addition to this, Pastor Henderson tried to use a scare tactic on me. After calling around New York trying to dig up some dirt on Bill, he asked me how well I really knew him. He brought up something about his past, and then related another story to me of a similar situation in which someone had been raped. He went so far as to try to scare me into believing that my daughters were in danger of being raped by Bill!

I dreaded the times when he called me into his office but, each time, as I sat across his desk, I felt the Holy Spirit come all over me as a protective shield. I found God's Word in Luke 21:12 to be so true where Jesus taught us that, when you are brought before kings and rulers for His name's sake, you should:

Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.
(Luke 21:14-15, KJV)

In Colossians, it reads:

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. (Col. 4:6, KJV)

The Holy Ghost did just that for me, as Pastor Henderson, in a sense, put me on trial to try to find an area of reproach in my life. But through the grace of the Holy Spirit and the words He gave me to speak, Pastor Henderson had to admit that he could find nothing against me.

As Pastor Henderson tried to make me feel that I was doing something wrong, I stood my ground, never wavering in my belief that I had heard from God and that I was only doing His will. I did my best to try to explain that I didn't take Bill in because I liked him, or even because I felt sorry for him. The one and only reason I did it was simply because God told me to. But he didn't believe it

for a minute and didn't even want to hear about all the details that led up to my bringing him to Barnesboro. All he wanted was for me to get him out of my house.

I wondered that, although he and many other people in the church were "so concerned" about me having a strange man living in my house, not one of them offered to take him into their homes. It was not an easy thing for me, keeping and supporting Bill, and it would have been a welcome relief for someone to take him off my hands for a little while. But no one offered.

I was not about to throw Bill out on the streets but, after a month or so, I began to suggest that he try to get a job so that he could get an apartment and begin to support himself. Jobs in Barnesboro were very hard to come by but, miraculously, God provided him with a job as a cook in a Christian-owned Italian pizza shop. Although it didn't pay much, I was so thankful that he would be able to help with the food bills, and he could start looking for a place of his own. He began to check the local newspaper and make some phone calls regarding some apartments, but it seemed God wasn't opening any doors.

After about two months, something happened that ended up getting Bill kicked out of the church. Pastor Henderson had preached a message that grieved me to the point that, during the altar call, I got up and ran out of the church in tears (something I had never done before). He was preaching, of all places, out of Numbers 14, a chapter that, by now, I was very familiar with. He spoke of the murmuring, complaining, and rebellion of the children of Israel against Moses and against God, when He wanted to bring them into the Promised Land, and how God said that He would disinherit them and smite them with a pestilence. Then he told how Moses went before God and interceded for them, asking God to be merciful and to pardon the iniquity of the people. He went as far as verse 20, which says,

And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: (Num. 14:20, KJV)

Then he ended his message. I felt so grieved because he didn't go on to tell them that, although God had forgiven them, in verse 23, God said that because of their iniquity and their unbelief, they would not enter into the Promised Land! The pastor made it seem like you could flippantly sin against God, then run to Him for forgiveness, and everything would be all right. He pointed out the goodness, but failed to point out *the severity* of God!

Bill (who had not been sitting with me) was apparently as grieved as I was but stayed in the service. After a while, though, he walked out too. He came to the car, got in, and we sat there feeling the same sense of grief over the misrepresentation of God's Word, but not saying a word.

Then, all of a sudden, Bill jumped out of the car saying that he had to do something. I tried to stop him, but he wouldn't listen and headed back inside the church. A few minutes later, he returned, almost trembling, and we drove off. I asked him what he did, and he said that God told him to give a prophesy.

He said that he went back in the church, stood up, and "prophesied" out of Jeremiah 5, beginning at verse 21, which reads:

***Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding;
which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:
Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? (Jer. 5:21–22 shortened, KJV)***

"Oh, Bill," I sighed. "You *didn't!*"

"I did," he replied. "I felt so strongly all during the service that God had given me that Word as a prophesy. He spoke to me through verse 20, which says, "Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in Judah." But I was too afraid, so I just walked out. Then I felt that I had disobeyed God so I went back inside, stood up, and declared it loudly to the congregation."

"But, Bill," I said, "they were right in the middle of the altar service, and people were at the altar praying and being prayed for!" "I know," he replied. "But I know it was God." "How much of it did

you read?" I asked.

I cringed as he answered, "All of it—right down to verse 31!"

I just shook my head, saying, "Oh, Bill. You really did it this time!"

As I could have predicted, the next day at work, I received a phone call from Pastor Henderson, asking me to meet him in his office. He sounded very serious. I didn't have to guess what it was about. Reluctantly, I made my way to his office that evening and, from the time that I walked in, I could sense his anger about what had taken place on Sunday night. I could see that he was filled with anger and with pride.

Since God had removed me from the service before the incident took place, I couldn't really say whether I felt the prophecy was of God or not. But I explained to Pastor

Before I left, I gave him three tapes from Times Square Church. One of which was entitled, "Wild Donkeys," by David Wilkerson. God had used this tape to put the fear of God in me, and I hoped He would do the same with Pastor Henderson.

Chapter 19



On the morning that Bill and I were getting ready to leave for New York, we got into a somewhat heated argument over him continuing to stay at my house, and he went upstairs to his room to pray. When he came back down, he told me that God had told him to pack up all his things and take them with him on the trip. He felt that God may be telling him to stay in New York. When he told me that, I felt a great sense of relief. I felt that it was time for him to go too.

Since Bill had no place to go, we fasted and prayed all during the trip that God would show him if it was His Will for him to stay in New York and, if so, that He would provide him a place to stay. We prayed for God's will to be done.

As we neared the George Washington Bridge on that Friday afternoon, I began to get nervous about driving over it and driving through all of the city traffic, but I wasn't nearly as nervous as I was on my first trip to New York. I was thankful that, this time, I wouldn't have to do it alone.

We were heading upstate New York to stay with a friend of Bill's from the church. Claire, a woman of about forty, invited both of us to stay at her home where she lived with her unsaved mother and brother. (She was hoping that we would be able to witness to them.) Our plans were to meet Claire at her house and then the three of us would take the train into the city to attend the Friday night prayer meeting at Times Square Church.

It felt so wonderful to be back at Times Square Church again. It was the most absurd thing, but it felt like home to me. Never in my life did I ever have the feeling like, "This is home. There is no place on earth I would rather be than right here." But that was how I felt, and I felt the same way about the city. Walking down the city streets, I felt so happy and such an incredible sense of peace. It was crazy, but New York City felt like home to me much more so than Barnesboro ever had.

After the prayer meeting, Bill, Claire and I were standing in the back of the church talking when Pastor Dave came over to Bill, grabbed him by the shoulder, and sternly said, "I want to talk to you." They went over to the side to be alone, and I could see that Pastor Dave was so jumping all over him about something. I couldn't imagine what he was upset about. After all, Bill hadn't even been there for the past two months.

They spoke for only a few minutes and then parted as though everything was okay. When Bill came back, Claire and I asked him what *that* was all about. Apparently, Pastor Henderson had called Pastor Dave's office and spoke with Pastor Don. Pastor Henderson fed him with a distorted view of what was going on with Bill. Don went to Dave, and from what Pastor Henderson had said, Pastor Dave was under the impression that Bill and I were living together in sin. Among other things, Pastor Henderson also told him that Bill had gotten out of order in one of his church services and that he had to throw him out of the church. (No wonder Pastor Dave was so upset!)

When Pastor Dave confronted Bill about living with me, Bill explained that we were *not* living in sin and that God had *called him* to stay at my house.

"God doesn't do things that way!" Brother Dave argued.

"He called Elijah to stay at the house of the widow woman," Bill replied.

"Elijah was a hundred-year-old prophet!" Brother Dave shot back. "You're not an old man, and you're not a prophet!"

"I know," said Bill, looking him straight in the eye. "But God called me to her house, and there has been absolutely nothing

going on between us!”

Brother Dave calmed down when he saw the sincerity in Bill's eyes and when Bill told him he would no longer be staying with me because he felt God was calling him back to New York.

I believe the Holy Spirit let Pastor Dave see the truth. Bill also said that he could explain about the incident in the church and, when Pastor Dave was satisfied that things were not the way they had been made out to be, they parted on good terms.

The next day was Saturday, and our plans were to spend the whole day in the city, street-witnessing. I was really nervous about witnessing on the streets of New York City but, as I watched Bill and Claire and saw how God was opening doors, I began to like it. We walked all over the city passing out tracts and witnessing to anyone who would listen. Then around six o'clock in the evening, we went to the Upper Room, an outreach of Times Square Church to drug addicts and homeless people. Every Saturday, people from the church would get together there for a short service and to pray before dividing into twos or threes and going out in the streets to witness. We stayed for the service then went back out on the streets again.

Claire kept talking about going to a particular place where she loved to witness, which was called Hell's Kitchen.

“Hell's Kitchen!” I said with alarm. “That sounds like a horrible place to go!”

“It is,” Bill said. “It's one of the worst sections in the city, but God always seems to work miracles there.”

“Well,” I said, “that's nice, but do you mind if we don't go there this time? This is all pretty new to me yet, and I don't think I'm ready for a place like that. I'd be scared to death!”

Bill and Claire didn't seem to pay too much attention to my fears and, since I didn't know where Hell's Kitchen was, I didn't realize that we were already headed in that direction. We witnessed for about a half hour in a particular area and, when I

finally thought to ask where we were, they said, “We're in Hell's Kitchen.”

“*This* is Hell's Kitchen?” I exclaimed. “You mean we are *in* Hell's Kitchen? How could you do this to me! I told you I didn't want to come here! Get me out of this place!”

I was only half mad, though, when I found out they had brought me there. Since the place didn't seem all that bad to me—probably because it was still daylight—I just laughed it off. As we stood talking to a nice old man out on the steps of his apartment, a young woman came stumbling by us, obviously strung out on drugs. The man said, “If you people want to help someone, why don't you help her. She looks like she's really in trouble.” So we took off down the road after her.

When we caught up with her, she was frantically fumbling in her purse for something. We asked if we could help her, and she told us she was in a drug program and that she needed her methadone. She finally found her bottle of pills and gulped a couple of them down but was so high that she could barely even stand up. We tried to minister to her and tell her that Jesus could set her free, but I found out that it was very difficult to minister to someone who was high.

She opened up to us a little, though, and told us that she was originally from Long Island and that she had a baby daughter there who was living with her mother. She pulled out a picture of her to show us. I was moved when I saw how much she wanted to be able to take care of her baby, but how impossible it was as long as she was hooked on drugs.

We tried to get her to come back to the Upper Room with us, and she said she would, so we began the long journey of trying to walk her all the way back while, literally, having to hold her up.

When we finally got there, we took her upstairs to get her some coffee to help her come down, but it was no use. She was so incoherent that she would hardly drink, and all she wanted was to put her head down and sleep. Some of the other workers tried to talk to her as well, but they also could get nowhere.

I wondered what we were going to do with her now that we

brought her all this way. We couldn't just leave her there, but we couldn't seem to help her much either. Thank God He was watching over us and knew we were in over our heads with this woman. As we sat there in despair, not knowing what to do, suddenly, the woman got up and said she needed to make a phone call. One of the workers offered to take her downstairs to a phone but, as they walked down the stairs, the woman mysteriously disappeared. When we found out she was gone, we ran down the stairs and looked all over the streets for her, but she was nowhere to be found. I knew it was just as well because she was a burden that we were not able to bear. All we could really do was pray for this woman.

I was completely exhausted when we finally got back to Claire's house at about eleven o'clock that night. As I crawled into bed, I could hardly believe that I had spent the day witnessing on the streets of New York City. I prayed that God would save everyone that we had witnessed to, particularly the young woman we had taken to the Upper Room.

As I lay there thinking about the day, I remembered that this was the day that my old boyfriend, Liam, was to get married. I was thankful that God had taken me out of Barnesboro this weekend because, although I hadn't spoke to him since the day he walked out on me over a year and a half ago, I still wasn't over him, and I didn't know if I could handle his getting married. But having God use me in such a special way that day on the streets of New York City, somehow made it all okay. I was doing what really mattered in life—helping people and being a vessel for God to use.

Chapter 20



The next morning, I was excited about going back to Times Square Church to attend the Sunday morning service. Bill, Claire and I decided to sit up in the balcony this time. Pastor Bob Phillips was to preach, and I was just thrilled to be there.

However, the strangest thing happened to me in the middle of Pastor Bob's message, I couldn't stay awake! I was fighting desperately to keep my eyes open while thinking to myself, What is the matter with me? I had a good night's sleep, and there is no reason for me to be tired. I'm certainly not bored with being in Times Square Church, nor with listening to Bob Phillips preach. So why can't I keep my eyes opened?

I struggled and struggled throughout the entire message, barely hearing what was being said. But when the altar call was given, an even stranger thing happened. Although I didn't feel particularly touched by anything that I had heard in the message, however little that was, when Pastor Bob gave the altar call, I literally felt the Holy Spirit brush by me as a wind. I knew immediately that God was calling me to the altar.

Without hesitating, I turned to Bill and said, "Excuse me, Bill, I need to get out. God is calling me!" I made my way down to the altar and, when I got there, I broke down and began to cry uncontrollably. Somehow, I knew that God was delivering me

from the pain of losing Liam and the mental addiction that I still had toward him. I knew that it was finally over in my heart, and I wept tears of joy that morning.

Pastor Dave then asked all those who were at the altar for the first time to raise their hands. Since this was my first time there, I raised mine. Then he asked everyone who had raised their hands to walk up a few steps onto the side of the stage so that they could go back to a prayer room to meet with a counselor. I started up the steps and David Wilkerson reached out his hand to help me up. As I took his hand, he looked at me and said, "This is your day, my dear." I

knew that it was!

Later on, as I thought about how God had moved so mightily on me in a service in which I couldn't even stay awake, I realized that Satan must have known that God was going to deliver me that day, so he put a spirit of sleep on me to try to stop it. But God won the victory and set me totally free! Glory to His Name!

Bill and I spent that beautiful Sunday afternoon in Central Park and then returned for the evening service. After the service, while we were riding the train back to Claire's, we discussed the fact that I was leaving first thing in the morning, and God still had not opened any doors for a place for Bill to stay in New York. He still wasn't sure if God wanted him to return to Barnesboro with me or if he was to stay in New York.

The next morning, as I packed to go home, Bill came to a decision. Somewhat reluctantly, he decided to stay in New York—although he had no idea where he would go. I felt badly leaving him there with no place to stay, but I felt he had made the right decision. I knew I wasn't to be responsible for him anymore. He was in God's hands. I said goodbye to Claire, and then Bill and I said our goodbyes. He handed me a letter he had written and, when I read it, it brought tears to my eyes. The letter read:

Dear Carol,

Thanks for opening your house to me. Thank you also for the presents and cake and the best birthday I've ever had. Thank you for putting up with me. Thank you for loving Jesus. Thank you for your prayers and correction when I needed it. Thank you for everything, especially for being honest. This is a very feeble attempt to express in words how much I appreciate everything you've done. Please tell Lindsay and Lacey I said hello, and that I'll be praying for them. Carol, you are a very special person. I'm going to miss you very much. Of course, you'll be in my prayers. God bless you in Jesus name.

Billy

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies... Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." (Proverbs 31:10, 30) Jesus said:

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matthew 25:40)
"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." (Matthew 10:41,42)
GOD BLESS YOU, in JESUS name.

Love,
Billy

As I drove off, I felt the most incredible sense of relief. It was as if the weight of the world had been lifted off my shoulders. I knew it was a burden keeping Bill, but I had no idea how heavy a burden

it was until it was lifted. Bill had been with me for two months and, although I would miss him, I was looking forward to going back to living a normal life again. I felt very free and blessed as I drove down Interstate 80 on my way back home on that beautiful summer afternoon.

Chapter 21



Life did go back to normal after I returned home. My parents were happy that Bill was out of my home, or to be more correct, their home, and Pastor Henderson was happy that he was out of his church. I could feel the pressures subsiding, but I began to seriously wonder if God was calling me to New York to live. My heart was there now, in Times Square Church and on the streets, and I couldn't get over the strange sense of it feeling like "home."

Bill and I kept in close contact by phone so, instead of our friendship dwindling out, it became even stronger. He called me the day after I left New York and told me that he had not found a place to stay that night. He slept on the ground in Central Park! But he said that, within twenty-four hours, God had provided him a job and a place to stay! He got the New York Times and called about a job working in a jewelry factory. They interviewed him and hired him right on the spot. Then a brother from the church, named Howard, opened up his apartment in the Bronx to him. God was truly watching over Bill, and I was so thankful that He had so quickly provided for his needs.

One of the biggest blessings that came for me as a result of taking Bill into my home was that he began to provide me with the "fruit of the land." What I mean is that he began to send me tapes of the messages from Times Square Church. I had bought a dozen or so myself when I was there, but Bill would send me a large

package-full just about every month. It was such a blessing to receive such a pure Word from the Lord, and I grew tremendously from listening to the tapes. It also made me feel like a member—though a far-off one—of Times Square Church. As far as I was concerned, it was my number one church, and I considered all of the pastors there my pastors.

Only about a month or so since Bill had been living with Howard, God opened up another door for him. God had given him a scripture about dwelling in the house of the Lord, and Bill began to feel strongly that God wanted him to work for the church. So he went to Pastor Gary Wilkerson to see about a job there. Gary talked to his father, Pastor Dave, about it, and they not only hired him but gave him a place to stay in one of the dressing rooms in the church! It was a real blessing for Bill to be able to live twenty-four hours a day inside the church.

As time went on, I began to feel a stronger and stronger desire to go back to New York for another visit, but I was afraid of having to drive into the city. By now, I pretty much knew how to get around by train, but to drive in the city was something I was sure I could never do. But again, God led me one step at a time.

It was somewhat of a setup by God. Joe and I had decided to make a trip to New York over the Thanksgiving weekend but, the night before we were to leave, Joe canceled out on me. I had already made arrangements for my kids to stay down my mom's, and for someone to take over my Sunday-school class, so I didn't really want to cancel my plans. At the same time, however, I was afraid of going by myself and driving in the city alone.

As I talked with Bill on the phone that night trying to decide what to do, I could actually feel the peace that was coming from the church where he was at. There was so much peace there that that was what convinced me to go in spite of all my fears. But I was so afraid of driving into the city that I decided to stay at a hotel in New Jersey (Bill suggested Paterson because he was familiar with the area), then Bill was to take a bus out to meet me, and we would ride another bus back into the city together. It was a big hassle for Bill, but it was the only way I would come, so he agreed to it.

When I got to Paterson, I took an exit off I-80 and ended up lost in a section that looked worse than some of the worst areas I had seen in New York! Because of road construction, I couldn't find my way back to I-80, so I was forced to drive through Paterson, which was just as well since I would be able to look for a hotel. But I drove and drove and could not find one hotel anywhere. I ended up getting terribly lost and finally had to pull off at a gas station to buy a map.

Just when I was becoming extremely frustrated, I popped the tape I was listening to out of the tape deck, and the radio automatically tuned in to a Christian radio station that was playing, "Come This Far by Faith," a song that I loved but hadn't heard since I was in the Rock Church in Virginia Beach. I knew that it was God and was greatly encouraged. But as I found my way to one of New Jersey's major expressways, I ended up in a bad part of Newark and thought, *Okay, this is enough of this. I'm going to pull off and call Bill.*

I called, and Bill gave me directions to the Newark Airport where there would be plenty of hotels, but he still tried to talk me into coming into the city. I flatly refused but told him I might try to find a hotel that was a little closer to the city. So I drove off and found my way to a hotel at the Newark Airport but didn't feel that I was to stay there, so I got back on the highway and headed toward New York. When I got to the last exit before the Holland Tunnel, I pulled off at a shopping center to call Bill again. I was right at the entrance to the tunnel, which meant that all I had to do was drive through it and I would be in Manhattan.

Since I didn't see any hotels around, again, Bill tried to convince me to drive into the city. He said that I could stay at the Times Square Hotel which was only \$59 a night and not too far from the church. He said it would be easier for me because I wouldn't have to travel back out of the city alone on a bus. He would be able to walk me back to the hotel. Well, that sounded good to me, but there was still the issue of driving in the city. So Bill said he would take the subway down to the Holland Tunnel and meet me just outside the tunnel. We would drive to a parking

garage near the hotel, and I wouldn't have to worry about driving again until I left. I was still scared to death, but it seemed like the best solution so, reluctantly, I agreed.

As I got in line for the tunnel on that Saturday night, I couldn't believe all of the lanes of traffic there were going into the city! It seemed like there were twelve or more lanes all jammed with bumperto-bumper traffic. Wouldn't you know it that I would pick a lane where the guy in front of me would break down. Since we were all bumper-to-bumper, there was no way to back up and pull around him, so I just sat there as the cars behind me all began to lay on their horns. A couple of Asian guys who were in a van behind me jumped out and tried to direct me around him, but it was no use. Besides, when the tunnel patrol saw them out of their vehicle, they ordered them over a loud speaker to get back in their car. Finally, a tow truck came, and they pulled the car out of the way.

As I nervously entered the tunnel, I knew that as soon as I got to the other side, I would again be facing one of the biggest fears of my life and doing something that I swore I would never do—drive in New York City! I had the directions Bill had given me memorized, so I did my best to follow them and pull off in the spot where Bill was supposed to meet me. I found the spot, and just as I pulled in, there was Bill coming across the street. Boy was I glad to see him! And I couldn't get over how good he looked! He was all dressed up in a nice suit, and had on an expensive-looking wool coat and top hat. He looked like a million bucks, and so much healthier, too! His complexion looked a lot better, and he even looked like he put on some weight. It was great to see him doing so well.

Well, needless to say, I was a total basket-case driving in the city. One thing I found out about New York City is that many avenues don't have any lines on their streets to divide the lanes—everybody just makes their own! Another thing I learned was that you don't drive in either of the two right lanes, unless you want to get stuck behind a taxi that will just stop right in the middle of the road! I was a nervous wreck driving up Eighth Avenue, one of

the busiest streets in the city. It felt like I was being stampeded by a sea of yellow taxicabs! I sure was glad when we finally made it to a parking garage where I could park the car until I was ready to go home.

Bill helped me get checked in to the hotel, then we were free to do whatever we wanted. It was the first time God allowed me to do some actual touring of the city. We went to the top of the Empire State Building, to Macy's to see the amazing Christmas displays and toy department, and then Bill took me for my first subway ride to Chinatown where I picked up some souvenirs for the girls and we ate dinner. The weather was still nice and warm, and I had a wonderful time that night touring the city. And the best was still yet to come—going to Times Square Church in the morning! I couldn't wait!

When we got back to the hotel, Bill walked me up to my room. As I was checking out the view, I asked him what kind of building was directly across from us. He answered, "You don't want to know." Then, as he was leaving, he said sternly, "Now be sure you lock your door and don't open it up *for anybody!*"

"Why?" I asked. "Who's going to want to come into my room?"

"Probably nobody," he said. "But just don't open it."

"Wait a minute, Bill," I said, becoming worried. "What kind of place *is* this?"

"It's okay," he replied. "It's just that it's not located in the best part of town, and you get a lot of riff-raff staying here."

"Great," I said sarcastically. "No wonder it was so cheap!"

"You'll be fine," Bill said, as he walked out the door, leaving me there all alone. "Just be sure to keep the door locked!"

As I crawled into bed, I prayed that God would protect me and not let anyone knock on my door. It was hard to fall asleep because there was a piece of glass missing from my window, and all you could hear was the sound of the noisy streets below. As I went over to the window to look out again, I realized from the look of the people on the streets that I definitely was not in a very good part of town. I didn't find out until later that the Times Square Hotel has one of the worst reputations in the city! It was located just up from

the Port Authority, and the building located right across it (that Bill didn't want to tell me about) was a welfare hotel.

How could Bill have put me in a place like this? I thought to myself. *I would have gladly paid the difference to stay in a better place!* But I guessed that coming from a background like his, he didn't think it was so bad.

I was finally able to fall asleep, but I woke up every hour, on the hour. When morning finally came, I was glad that I had made it through the night and that I would be checking out. My plans were to stay in New York for the day, then drive the seven hours back home immediately after the evening service, since I had to go to work Monday morning.

As I was getting ready for church, a terrible fight broke out on the street in front of the welfare hotel. I watched from my window as some guy was beating up his girlfriend—on Sunday morning, no less! After the fighting stopped, my biggest concern was how I was going to walk to the church all by myself. It was only a block or so away up 41st Street, but I remembered what that street, called crack alley, was like, and I was scared to death to walk up it. My other alternative was to go up to 42nd Street and come around the other way, but that sounded even worse. I thought of taking a taxi, but I didn't know how to flag one down, and I was afraid the driver would think I was crazy asking him to take me such a short distance.

After praying, I finally decided to take the 41st Street route, so I checked out and started walking in that direction. As I walked down the street all dressed up for church and carrying all of my bags, I was pretty certain that I didn't look like I belonged there to all of the scary people that I passed along the street. Some of them made remarks to me as I walked by and, when I came to the corner by the Port Authority and the light changed, I stopped suddenly (not knowing how to cross the street). One of them ran into me from behind and yelled, "Are you going to f——g walk, or what?"

As I started heading up 41st Street, it looked pretty deserted, and I could see the sign for Times Square Church off in the distance. I got about halfway there when two black men came out

of nowhere. They were about twenty feet in front of me and, when they saw me coming, they stopped and stood still as though they were waiting for me to walk by. I was certain they were going to jump me, but as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus as he walked on the water, I kept my eyes on the Times Square Church sign. It was as if I knew that if I took my eyes off the sign, I would sink. When I approached, they didn't do a thing; they just watched me walk by. I thanked God and just kept on walking as quickly as I could. What a relief I felt when I finally made it through the door of the church!

Again, it was so wonderful to be back at Times Square Church. Like before, it felt like home, and I was sure there was no place on earth I would rather be. Pastor Bob preached a message entitled, "Being Filled to the Fullness," which greatly blessed and encouraged me. After the service, Bill and I walked up to Central Park and hung out together all afternoon before returning for the evening service. Pastor Dave preached a convicting message entitled, "Provoking the Lord." Although it was a hard message, it was still a great blessing. It was truly wonderful to be in God's presence that night. I wished I could have stayed forever. But the service ended, and the time came for me to drive back to Barnesboro.

As I prepared to leave, I had the strongest feeling that I would be coming back soon. I even commented to someone that I felt I would be back real soon. I prayed that I would be able to make the 320-mile trip home without any problems and without falling asleep. The Lord answered my prayer, and I made it home at around five thirty in the morning. I tried to sleep for about an hour or so before getting up and going to work. It was difficult, but it had definitely been worth it!

Chapter 22



I had a feeling that I was going to be returning to New York again soon, but I had no idea how soon. Just about a week after I got back, I was reading my Bible, and God took me to Isaiah 6:8 where the Lord was saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah then said, "Here am I. Send me." And the Lord said, "Go." The scripture reads:

*Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?
Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said,
Go... (Isaiah 6:8-9, KJV, shortened)*

The word "Go" hit me so strongly that I circled it in my Bible and asked the Lord, "Where? Where do you want me to go?" I didn't find out until the next night.

It was during the Wednesday evening service that God began to show me. About halfway through the message, Pastor Henderson began to tell the congregation about a young, teenaged girl whom the Lord had brought to his house, and how his family (his wife and two teenaged sons) were planning to adopt her. He said that her name was Susie and that she was a thirteen-year-old Puerto Rican girl from *New York City*. He explained that her mother was a drug addict, and her father was very sick. Since her parents were not fit to take care of her, Susie had been

staying in an apartment with her grandfather, but got fed up with everything and wanted to get out of the city. So she called her older brother, Frankie, who had recently gotten saved and was in the Youth Challenge program in Sunbury, Pennsylvania.

Frankie told her to get on a bus and come to Youth Challenge until they could decide what to do. Since the Youth Challenge in Sunbury was only for males, she could only stay there temporarily. The people who were in charge of the program, who were related to one of the members in our church, let her stay at their home. As they attempted to find a permanent home for Susie, they contacted the Hendersons, who agreed to take her in.

Pastor Henderson went on to explain that, in order for them to gain legal custody of Susie, which was the only way they could enroll her in school, they needed to have her parents sign over custody to them. So Susie was going to have to return to New York to try to locate her parents and ask them to sign over custody of her to the Hendersons. Pastor Henderson seemed very distraught by the whole thing, and was worried sick about having to put Susie on a bus to New York City all by herself.

As I sat there taking the whole story in, God spoke to me and said that *this* was what He was referring to when He gave me the word "Go." He was calling *me* to take Susie to New York! After the service, I went up to Pastor Henderson and offered to help in any way that I could. I reminded him that I felt a calling to New York City, and I told him that I had just returned from there and was planning to go back again soon.

"How soon?" he asked.

"Well," I replied, "I don't know. I suppose I could go back again this weekend if God wants me to, and I would be happy to take Susie to get those papers signed."

He seemed relieved and, to my surprise, agreed to let me take her. Pastor Henderson had often said that he hated New York and wanted nothing to do with it, and even prayed that God would *never* call him there (which is one of the reasons, I believe, that he refused to accept *my* calling there). But now, for the first time, he seemed to be accepting it and was very relieved that I was able to

help. I found it kind of ironic that in light of the way he felt about New York, Bill Carson, and my trips to New York, the Lord would bring a girl all the way from New York City and drop her off on his doorstep. *God certainly has a sense of humor*, I thought.

As we talked, I noticed a young girl whom I had never seen before walk into the sanctuary, and I knew that this must be Susie. Pastor Henderson took me over to her and introduced us to each other. She looked to be a little over five feet tall with short, black, kind of frizzy hair that was shaved on one side and brushed over to the other. She was wearing tight blue jeans and a heavy black tweed jacket, and she had one of the cutest smiles I had ever seen.

We sat down and started talking and seemed to hit it off right away. We talked "New York talk" for a while and then I told her that Pastor Henderson told me about her situation and that I believed God wanted me to take her to New York to meet with her parents. She seemed happy about it, so I told her that I was going to pray that, if it was truly God's will for me to take her, God would open the doors and help me to get Monday off from work.

The next day at work, I put my leave slip in, and my boss signed it, though hesitantly. Pastor Henderson called me at work to find out if I would be able to go and to explain to me in more detail what he needed me to do. I told him that the trip was on and that I planned to leave on Saturday morning and return Monday night. He offered to help me out with some of the expenses, but I said, "That's okay.

God has already provided me with the money."

Indeed, God had. Just a few weeks beforehand, I had unexpectedly received a rather sizable check in the mail, and I had been praying about how God wanted me to use it. Now I knew. It would take a small fortune to spend two nights in New York City, and had God not provided me the money, there would have been no way I could have afforded to take Susie on this mission trip.

As I thought about how I would have to drive into the city again, I began to understand why God had me drive in on the last trip; He was preparing me for this one! There was no way I would ever have been able to plan to drive into the city had God not set

me up to drive in to on my last trip; so I would not have been prepared to help Susie. But now that I had done it once, I knew that I could do it again, although I was still very nervous about it!

I thought it would be best if Susie stayed over my house on the Friday night before we were to leave, so that we could get an early start the next morning. So Pastor Henderson drove her to my house and dropped her off. He slipped me a twenty-dollar bill for gas and nervously hugged Susie goodbye. I told him not to worry; that we would be just fine.

Susie and I had a long talk before going to bed that night. She opened up to me and told me all about her childhood and what it was like growing up with parents who were drug addicts. At the age of seven, her parents (who were never legally married) split up, and her father sued for custody. The judge asked Susie who she wanted to live with—her mother or her father—and she answered, “I love my mommy.” However, when it came time for the hearing, her mother (who only had to make an appearance in court to gain custody of her daughter), didn’t show up. Susie was devastated.

During the time that she had lived with her mother, she constantly told Susie that she hated her. She would often have parties where she and her friends would sit around and shoot up heroin, and she would even try to get Susie to try it.

Susie said that she hated drugs and didn’t want to turn into a junkie like her mother and her friends. Her mother had a baby daughter to another man, and Susie was the one who was left to take care of her. She wasn’t even able to go to school because she had to stay home and watch her little sister.

As if all this wasn’t enough, the man with whom her mother was living was trying to molest her. Life for Susie had been nothing but hell since the day she was born. Coming from a loving family and a comfortable home, I couldn’t even imagine what it must have been like for her and what she must have been going through. At only thirteen years of age, she had been robbed of her childhood and, as a result, this street-smart little girl seemed more like a twenty-year-old woman.

I was shocked and grieved at all of the things she had shared with me. I was touched, however, when she told me that she believed in God and that she prayed to Him for help all the time. Susie felt that, now that a good Christian family like the Hendersons wanted to adopt her, it looked like her prayers were finally being answered.

Chapter 23



The next morning, we headed off to New York. As we traveled the seven-hour trip on that December day, only two weeks before Christmas, I told Susie that my friend, Bill, would be meeting us at the tunnel. Because I was still scared to drive into the city, I had contacted Bill and asked him to meet us at the same spot where we met before. Apparently, Susie had already heard of Bill—and the things she heard were not very nice.

“Who is this guy, Bill, that everyone puts down all the time?” she asked.

“He’s a good friend of mine,” I answered. “Why, what did you hear about him?”

“Well, one lady didn’t want Pastor Henderson to let me come with you because she figured you would be meeting *your boyfriend, Bill*, and she didn’t want me to be around him.”

“I see,” I said, trying to contain my anger. I told her a little about Bill and explained how God had told me to take him into my home, but how the whole church had come against me for it. Susie said that she could spot a hypocrite from a mile away and, from the way those people had badmouthed Bill, she thought they were nothing but phonies and hypocrites who were masquerading as Christians.

When we got to the other side of the Holland Tunnel, Bill was there waiting for us. I introduced him to Susie, and we headed up

8th Avenue where, once again, I was a total basket-case. Poor Susie didn’t know what to think as I pitifully tried to maneuver around the city according to Bill’s directions. We were all relieved when I finally got the car parked in a garage!

I hadn’t made a hotel reservation because I didn’t think we would have any problem getting a room, but, to my surprise, all of the hotels in the area were booked (due to it being the Christmas season). The first hotel we tried to check in to was the Howard Johnson on 51st Street and 8th Avenue. They had only one room available, which was a single with only one bed. Thinking we could find a double room at another hotel, we walked to a couple of others down the street and called quite a few more on the phone, only to find out that they were all booked solid.

The single room at the Howard Johnson’s was sounding more and more appealing, so we ended up going back, hoping it was still available. It was, but we ran into a problem because Susie didn’t have any identification. It was against hotel policy to let anyone stay there without some form of I.D.

As Bill stood around the corner praying, I kept trying to convince the desk clerk to let us stay, but he was adamant about Susie having to have an I.D. Finally, I looked him straight in the eye and told him that I just drove over three hundred miles so that I could take her to church and try to help her, and I said that I would take full responsibility for her. God must have moved on his heart because, at that moment, he said okay! It was a miracle, and I was glad that Susie, who thought it was hopeless, got to witness it. “God bless you!” I said to the clerk as he reluctantly checked us in.

After settling into our room, which was very nice and even had a sofa bed, the three of us decided to take the subway down to the Lower East Side to try to locate Susie’s mother. Since Susie didn’t really know where to find her, except on the streets, we walked up and down the streets of her neighborhood as Susie asked people she knew if they had seen her. Nobody had.

The other alternative was to go to her grandfather’s place in Little Italy to tell him she was looking for her because her mother

routinely stopped in to see him once a week on Sundays. We went there, and her grandfather said that he would tell Susie's mother that her daughter was looking for her, and Susie said that she would come back again the next day. Since it was getting late and there wasn't much else we could do, we took a taxi back to the hotel.

Susie and I stayed up half the night talking and laughing and enjoying each other's company. I was able to share a lot with her about the Lord, and we discussed a number of different passages from the Bible. Pastor Henderson had given her a Bible of her own, which she treasured and kept with her at all times, and she seemed very interested in reading it and turning to the various scriptures we were discussing. It didn't take long until this little girl began to capture my heart. I just couldn't help but love her!

The next morning, we got up and walked the ten blocks down to 41st Street to go to Times Square Church. All during the service, I prayed that Susie would get saved. I knew that what she needed more than anything was Jesus. She followed the sermon and, to my amazement, was able to turn to the scriptures even faster than I could. But, although the message seemed to be directed straight to her, she didn't respond to the altar call to receive Jesus.

After church, Bill, Susie and I, again, took a subway down to the Lower East Side to try to track down her parents. The weather had changed drastically from just two weeks before, and it was bitter cold on that second weekend of December. Temperatures were subzero, but with the wind-chill factor, it felt like about thirty degrees below zero. As we walked between the tall New York City buildings, it was like walking through a giant wind tunnel. I don't remember ever being so cold in my life!

As we made our way back to her grandfather's apartment, Susie thought it would be best if she went up to talk to her mother by herself. She wanted to spend some time alone with her. She said that she would meet us back at the church for the evening service. I hated the idea of leaving her and of her having to take the subway back all by herself after dark, but she said that she would be fine

so, reluctantly, I let her go, and Bill and I went back to the hotel.

We sat there all afternoon like nervous parents, worrying about Susie. It was pretty apparent that she had also won Bill's heart. It wasn't hard to see that he cared for her as much as I did. We prayed that everything would go well for her and that God would bring her back safely to the service that night.

We arrived at the church at around six-thirty, but there was no sign of Susie. I waited and waited for her by the door but, since she had not returned and the service was beginning, I went in to the sanctuary to find a seat. I was very worried but told myself that she was probably just running a little late, so I took a seat near the back and saved one for Susie so that I could watch for her. Bill was in charge of taping the service that night, so he sat over to my left at the sound booth.

As time went on and Pastor Dave was almost through with his message which he entitled, "The Manifestation of the Presence of Jesus," all of a sudden, he began talking about how God had called him from Pennsylvania to New York City some thirty years ago as he was reading the story of seven teenaged boys who were on trial for murder in a Life magazine. He told how God spoke to him and said, "Go to New York City and help those boys."

As he went into the details of his calling, I broke down and started sobbing uncontrollably as I felt God calling *me* to New York to help *girls* like Susie! I turned my head to look over at Bill, and he just looked at me as though he could hardly believe what was taking place. I knew that he felt it as strongly as I did.

As I sat there crying and blowing my nose loudly, I knew the people sitting around me must have been wondering what was wrong with me. After all, Pastor Dave wasn't really saying anything all that moving. He was just telling about his calling. Then, as he was going on about how he was called to help teenaged boys, just at that moment I looked up, and there was Susie! The timing was incredible!

As she made her way down the row to where I was sitting, I again looked over at Bill, and he just sat there smiling and shaking his head in awe. When Susie made it to her seat and saw that I

was in tears, she said, "Carol, why are you crying? I told you I'd be back!" I just hugged her and cried even harder.

After the service was over, we went into an after-service worship, a time of just worshipping and praising God. The choir led the congregation in the most beautiful worship songs that made you feel like you were praising God with the angels in heaven. It lasted for well over an hour. Near the end, Susie began to tell me about her meeting with her mother.

It didn't go well at all. At first, her mother wouldn't even acknowledge her. When she finally did, all she could do was make fun of her because she was dressed in church clothes and was carrying a Bible. Susie tried to tell her that she wanted to be a Christian, but she called her a religious freak and many other cruel names. When Susie told her about the adoption, her mother said that there was no way she was going to sign over custody of her daughter to someone else. She flatly refused, although Susie told her how much she wanted this.

Susie left there frustrated and very discouraged. I couldn't believe that her mother, who obviously didn't want her and wasn't capable of taking care of her even if she did, wouldn't give her a chance and let her go to a family who would love her, provide for her, and give her a real home. It was very frustrating, but Susie said that her mother didn't really have custody of her anyway since she didn't show up at the custody hearing. Her father was the one who had legal custody, so it was really up to him to sign over custody to the Hendersons.

So our next step was to try to track down her father. Back at the hotel, she called and left a message for him at the desk of the welfare hotel where he was staying, saying that it was urgent for her to see him and that she would stop by the hotel the next morning.

The next morning, I called Bill at the church to see if he could get off work to go with us to meet Susie's father. I was terribly afraid of taking the subway and going down to the Bowery alone without a man there to protect us. Besides, Bill was very familiar with that part of town, seeing that he had once lived on

the Bowery himself. He had actually gotten saved at The Bowery Mission.

I didn't know what to do when he called back saying that he couldn't get off. He said that he was the only guy there but that if one of the other guys who had the day off were to come back and agree to cover for him, then his boss said it would be all right. There were many *ifs* involved, but I hung up the phone and began to pray fervently that God would move in the situation and enable him to get the day off. I was desperate and just couldn't face going down there alone. Within a few *minutes*, Bill called back and said that one of the guys just returned and agreed to cover for him, so he would be over as soon as he could. I was so relieved and so thankful that God had answered so quickly! It was another miracle!

We left at around ten o'clock and planned to be back to the hotel by noon to check out, or it would cost me another \$130 for another night. Because we didn't have a lot of time, we caught a subway train and hurriedly walked to the hotel where her father was staying. As we walked inside, there were men lying around everywhere, and Bill asked one of them to tell Susie's dad that she was there to see him. We went back outside as we waited for him to come down. Within a few minutes, a tall, thin Puerto Rican man appeared in the doorway, and Susie went up to him and gave him a hug. She then introduced us to her father.

We decided to walk down the street to a little coffee house to talk. Susie had already told us that her father had AIDS, but he informed us himself that he had tested HIV positive and that he was undergoing treatment for the disease. He had a nagging cough and was constantly coughing up phlegm into a handkerchief.

As Susie explained to him that she wanted to be adopted by a Christian family in Pennsylvania and that she needed him to sign over custody of her to them, her father seemed very hurt that Susie would consider doing such a thing. He seemed to love her and have a genuine concern for her. He said that he was hoping to get a job and a place of his own soon, and then Susie could

come and stay with him. I sensed that Susie had heard many of his promises before, and she knew better than to believe them. She was upset and about ready to cry when she saw that her father was resisting the idea.

As an alternative to the adoption, her father began to talk about a school where he was trying to get Susie enrolled. The name of it was Freedom Village, located in upstate New York, which is a home for teenagers who are in trouble with drugs, drinking, the law, etc. It is supposedly a Christian school run by a Baptist organization. Her father wanted to know why Susie had changed her mind about going there, and why, all of a sudden, she wanted to be adopted.

As Susie was becoming obviously very upset, Bill broke into the conversation and explained that Susie wasn't in any kind of trouble and didn't belong in a place like Freedom Village. What she needed, he said, was a home and a family to love her and provide for her needs, and that was what the Hendersons were offering her.

Bill was wonderful as he sat there and patiently tried to convince her father that it would be in Susie's best interest if he signed over custody of her to the Hendersons. Having lived on the Bowery himself, Bill could relate to her father in a way that I never could have. He shared his testimony with him and told him how Jesus had delivered him from life as a crack addict, and that He could deliver him too. He talked about David Wilkerson and invited him to Times Square Church and, ironically, we learned that Susie's father knew all about David Wilkerson and the Teen Challenge he had opened on Clinton Avenue in Brooklyn some thirty years ago. He was around ten years old when all that was taking place, and he knew about it firsthand!

However, he still did not want to sign over custody of "his baby" to another family. By now, Susie was crying as she was beginning to see all of her dreams go up in smoke. We did our best to convince him, but the best we could do was to get him to say he would think about it. He said that he wanted to talk with Mr. Henderson first and, possibly, even get together with him before

making a decision. So Bill said that he would make arrangements for Pastor Henderson to call him.

As we walked her father back to the hotel, he hugged Susie goodbye. He then gave both Bill and me a hug and thanked us for caring about Susie, and for going out of our way to try to help her. Bill left him with a little book written by David Wilkerson called, *Two of Me*, and we hurried off to catch a train back to the hotel since it was nearing twelve o'clock.

Poor Susie was so discouraged as we rode the subway back. It was almost time to head back to Barnesboro, and we weren't able to get the signatures of neither her mother nor her father. I hardly knew what to say, but Bill did. He told her that he knew how badly she was hurting. He told her that he could feel her pain because he had lost both of his parents as a boy and had to spend most of his life alone. He said that she needed to quit trying to be so tough, and to go ahead and cry and let the pain out. He told her that Jesus loves her and is the only one who is able to heal her of all her pain. He knew because Jesus had healed him of all of his.

As we checked out of the hotel and I drove us down to Lower Manhattan to leave the city via the Holland Tunnel, Susie asked if we could stop in her neighborhood one more time so that she could see her best friend, Marisa. I decided it would be okay as long as she didn't take long, so Bill and I sat in Ray's Pizza as Susie roamed the streets of Little Italy looking for her friend. Since a lot of junkies would come up to her on the streets and ask her for money, she left what little money she had with me.

As Bill and I sat waiting for her, we began to get a little concerned because she had been gone for such a long time. I told Susie that I wanted to leave by two o'clock so that I would be home in time to pick up my kids and take them home before they fell asleep. But it was well past two, and Susie was nowhere to be found. Bill decided to go out and look for her as I stayed waiting in the pizza shop, but he couldn't find her anywhere.

It was so frustrating sitting there waiting for her. I had to get home, yet I couldn't leave without Susie. Finally, at around threethirty, she came back and said that she had been with her friend, Marisa, and that she had lost track of time. She apologized over and over again for being so late. I told her to forget it; I was just happy that she was back and that we could head home. Because it was rush hour, however, it took us *forever* to get to the tunnel. Bill stayed with us until we started moving, then he left and caught a subway back to the church. Susie and I said goodbye and thanked him for all his help. After he left, Susie said, "I don't understand why those people in your church don't like Bill. I think he's the nicest man I ever met in my whole life!"

We made it back to Barnesboro at around ten o'clock that night in the midst of a heavy snowstorm. Since I was in a hurry to pick up my kids, I just dropped Susie off at the Hendersons and told her I'd talk to her soon. Lacey and Lindsay were still up waiting for me, and I took them home and put them to bed. As I sat up thinking that night of all of the events that had taken place during that trip, I knew in my heart that this was what I wanted to do with my life—I wanted to help girls like Susie.

I couldn't neglect how I felt God calling me to this type of work during the service at Times Square Church. And I couldn't help wondering if it were possible that thirty years after God had called David Wilkerson from Barnesboro to New York to help troubled teenaged

boys, He could be calling me from Barnesboro to New York to help troubled teenaged girls. It sure seemed like this was exactly what He was doing.

Chapter 24



I spoke with Bill a day or two later, and he told me that he had called Pastor Henderson to talk with him about getting in touch with Susie's father. When I asked how he responded, he said that Pastor Henderson was friendly with him and even thanked him for all his help. Another reason Bill called was because he had been invited to a Christmas Eve wedding by a couple in the church and, Lord willing, he was planning to come back to Barnesboro for a week to attend the wedding and to spend Christmas there. Since he had been thrown out of the church, he wanted to ask Pastor Henderson if it would be okay for him to attend the wedding.

Bill told him, "I'm not coming to cause any trouble. I'm just coming to attend a wedding and to share the love of Jesus."

Pastor Henderson responded graciously with his southern accent, saying, "Well, come on, and we'll share the love of Jesus with you." I was so happy that the two of them were getting along again. It was a miracle after everything that happened!

I didn't see Susie again until the following Sunday when she came to my Sunday-school class. Since it was the week before Christmas, we were having a party, and Susie had a good time telling everyone about some of the funny things I did while on our trip. For instance, she revealed to them what a basket-case I was driving in the city, and she told them about my trying to walk through the turnstile in the subway station before putting my

token in!

One story in particular that we got a good laugh at was the problem I had keeping the shoelaces in my sneakers tied. All during the trip, I had to keep stopping over and over again to tie my shoes. (It was because the laces were much too long for the sneakers.)

One night, we were on the subway and, as I was bending over to tie my shoe, I looked up at Bill who was sitting across from me and said loudly, "Hey, Bill, you got a knife?" (I thought I would solve the problem by cutting the laces.) But as soon as I yelled it, I caught myself and thought, Oh, Carol. You idiot! You don't yell across the New York City subway and ask someone if they've got a knife! Bill and Susie just roared with laughter, and I had to laugh too. As the saying goes, "You can take the girl out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the girl."

I joked with them and said, "One day, I'm going to write a book about this whole experience (how prophetic was that?) but, instead of calling it *The Cross and the Switchblade*, I'm going to call it *The Knife and the Shoelace!*" We about rolled with laughter!

Susie and I kept in touch by phone, and she came with me to Altoona on December 23 to pick up Bill at the bus station for his week in Barnesboro. It was so good to have my two "New York buddies" back with me again. Since I was so busy in New York being about the Lord's business, I didn't have time to do any Christmas shopping. So Bill and Susie came with me to the mall and helped me shop. I don't know how God did it, but He miraculously helped me *start* and *finish* my Christmas shopping in only one day. I knew He was blessing me for having been busy working for Him!

Bill stayed at the New Commercial Hotel in Barnesboro this time. The rates were incredibly cheap, something like \$18 a night! What a difference, I thought, from the hotel rates in New York! We went to the wedding together, and he was very nervous about walking in the church and seeing Pastor Henderson and all of the people again. Pastor Henderson was friendly, but most of the people were as cold as ice toward him and wouldn't even say hello.

It was a very uncomfortable situation.

The next time we saw Susie was on Christmas night. It was a night Bill and I will never forget. Bill and Susie were both at my house, and Bill was doing his best to witness to Susie and convince her that she needed to get saved. He was sitting on the floor pouring out his heart to her while she sat silently on the couch with a box of tissues. (She had a terrible cold and her nose was running like a faucet.)

Every now and then, she would say, "Don't think I'm not listening, Bill, 'cause I am." Bill continued on and on for hours.

One of Susie's main excuses for not getting saved was, "I don't want to be a hypocrite."

Bill responded beautifully to that objection saying, "*Then don't be one!*"

Bill gave the most beautiful testimony I had ever heard in my life, and I often wished I had gotten it on tape. It made *me* want to get saved all over again!

It was funny, though. While he sat there pouring out his heart, I sat next to Susie on the couch, but I felt that God did not want me to say one word. I was to sit and offer support, but I was not to speak. It wasn't until the end when Bill had said all that he could say that, then, I felt the Lord telling me to bring Susie to a decision.

"Susie," I began, "Bill has just spent the past couple of hours pouring out his heart to you. You know what Jesus did for you on the cross, and you know you need to be saved. It's time for you to make a decision. Susie, do you want to be saved? Do you want to ask Jesus into your heart?"

"Yes!" she cried.

So I led her in a sinner's prayer and, on that glorious Christmas night of 1988, Susie gave her heart to the Lord. As soon as she was done praying, her cold seemed to get a whole lot better, and she said that she felt really good. You could see it on her face. She was glowing!

Since it was later than Pastor Henderson had wanted Susie to stay out, I called him to let him know what was going on. I was

elated about Susie getting saved and couldn't wait to tell him! I thought he would be just as thrilled as I was, but he just calmly said, "That's nice." I couldn't understand such a nonchalant response from a pastor to a very special salvation we had all been praying about for so long!

As I drove Susie home that night, I had no idea that it would be the last time I would see or hear from her for months.

Chapter 25



A week or so went by and I didn't hear from Susie, so I decided to give her a call at the Hendersons. When I called, Pastor Henderson's son answered and informed me that Susie was gone.

"Gone? Where did she go?" I asked.

"She went to New Start Academy," he answered.

"Really?" I said with surprise. "Well, who drove her?"

"Pat O. (the executive director of Youth Challenge) and her brother, Frankie," he replied.

"Okay, thanks," I said and hung up the phone.

My heart sunk when I found out that Susie was gone, but I found consolation in knowing that she was saved and that the Lord would take care of her no matter where she went.

After a month and a half went by and I didn't hear a word from her, I began to get the feeling that something was wrong. I couldn't put my finger on it, but just thought that it seemed strange that Susie didn't get in touch with me. So I decided to call her at New Start.

When I called, they wouldn't let me speak to her and told me she couldn't have any visitors for three months! I thought that seemed somewhat strange, so I asked to speak to the person in charge so I could find out how she was doing. The woman in charge informed me that Susie was doing just fine and adjusting well to the school. Though I was happy to hear that Susie was

doing well, I still wasn't satisfied that I was being told the whole truth. The woman seemed vague and unwilling to offer much information, and I still couldn't shake the feeling that something was wrong.

I wanted to talk with Susie or see her for myself before I would be satisfied that she was okay, so I pressed the lady about being able to visit her. She said that she couldn't allow it but that their Sunday morning services were open to the public, and I might be able to see her for a minute or two there. I decided it was worth it to see her even if it was only for a minute, so I made plans to go up in January for Susie's birthday. I took my daughters with me on the two-hundred-mile, three-and-a-half-hour trip upstate on that cold Saturday afternoon. We stayed the night at the nearby Holiday Inn, then drove up to New Start the next morning for church.

We arrived a little late, so the service had already begun when we got there. We were ushered into the sanctuary, which was packed with teenagers, and were seated down near the front. Everything *seemed* all right as I observed all of the teenagers around me. I kept looking for Susie but didn't see her anywhere. As we sat through the song service, it seemed very nice, and I began to think that maybe I was wrong; maybe this place wasn't so bad after all.

However, when the preacher began to preach, my suspicions were confirmed. He screamed, yelled, and beat the kids over the head with the Word of God. He called them names and showed no love at all for them. I could see that he was trying to manipulate their behavior by using the Bible. What was even worse was that he was preaching the letter without the Spirit, and the Bible says that the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life. There was no life in the place because there was no Spirit, and it was the most horrible thing I ever sat through in my life.

I felt so badly for the kids because I could see that a lot of them were truly hungering after God, but they weren't being preached the whole truth. I thought to myself how wonderful it would be if this place had a real man of God preaching them the truth in love.

As the sermon went on, my kids spotted Susie sitting way in the back with a group of girls. I managed to get her attention, and she about went into shock when she saw us! I couldn't wait for the service to be over so that I could try to talk to her and see how she was really doing. When the preacher finished preaching, he announced that the evening service was canceled so that they could all watch the *Super Bowl!*; another disturbing thing!

When the service finally ended and all the people were walking out, I managed to squeeze my way through the crowd and catch up to Susie.

"What are you doing here?" Susie asked as she gave me and the girls a hug.

"I had to come," I said. "I had a feeling something was wrong, and I had to come and find out for myself how you are doing."

"How did you get in?" she asked. "I'm not supposed to have any visitors."

"I know, but they told me the service was open to the public and that I might be able to see you long enough to say hello. I decided that, even if I could only see you for a minute, it would be worth it to find out if you are okay. So how are you, Susie?"

"Okay," she said, though she didn't sound very convincing.

Just then, her hall counselor spotted us and came over to ask if I was family. Susie told her that I was a good friend from church and that I traveled a long distance to see her. She asked if we might be able to spend a little time together. The woman looked me over then said, "I suppose it will be all right, but you can only have ten minutes."

We went out into the foyer (which was still crowded with girls) and found a corner where we could talk in private. Susie then began to tell me what was *really* going on there.

"Carol, I hate this place!" she said. "They treat you really bad—almost like a criminal. It's like being in jail! I can't stand it another day here, and I'm getting out! I already went to them and told them that I wanted to leave, but they said they needed to have a parent's signature. So I called my mother and pleaded with her to sign the forms to get me out of this place. She signed them, and

I'm scheduled to leave tomorrow."

"Susie!" I exclaimed. "I'm so sorry! Why didn't you call me?"

"I couldn't," she explained. "You're not allowed to call or see anyone for months!"

"Well, where are you going to go when you leave here?" I asked.

"I don't know," she said. "Maybe with my mother or with my grandfather. It doesn't matter. I'd sleep on the streets before staying another night here!"

Just then, the girls were called into the cafeteria for lunch, and one of the counselors said that it would be all right if we stayed and had lunch with Susie, so we joined her in the cafeteria. Lacey and Lindsay gave her the birthday presents we brought, and we sat and talked with her and a few of her friends.

When the counselors weren't in hearing distance, they would all try to explain to me what it was like there. It sounded like a nightmare, and I was so glad that Susie was getting out. She didn't belong in a place like that. New Start Academy was for kids with serious mental, behavioral, or substance-abuse problems. Susie didn't have any of those kinds of problems. Her problem was that she didn't have parents who were fit to take care of her. She needed a loving home, not to be locked up in an institution!

I began thinking about maybe trying to adopt Susie myself but, for the time being, I felt that I would rather see her on the streets of New York City than in a place like New Start. I thought that, at least she could go to Times Square Church where people would love her, and she would be preached the true Gospel.

But what happened after Susie left made me reconsider what I had felt about her being better off on the streets of New York. I found out a few months later that Susie had not turned to Times Square Church, but to heroin! I was shocked and horrified! After numerous attempts to reach her on my part, and Bill's, and Frankie's, she had turned as cold as ice to all of us. She wouldn't even talk to us.

I was just heartsick over Susie, and I felt so helpless. There was nothing that anyone could do except pray. As I write this book, I'm still praying and believing that God is able to keep that which is

committed unto Him against that day. Susie had committed her heart to the Lord on that Christmas night at my house, and I know that He is *able* to keep that commitment and He will bring her back to Himself one day. She's in His care.

Chapter 26



Since that time, I have made many more trips to New York. In August of 1989, I even took my kids, another thing I thought I could never do! Not that I had planned it, however. The staff workers from Times Square Church were having a church picnic in New Jersey, and Bill had invited us to come. New Jersey was as far as I had planned to go with my kids, but God had other plans, and He gloriously opened up all the doors for me to take my girls to Times Square Church. We were literally ushered in.

What happened was that some of the people from the picnic offered to escort us in. There was one car in front of us leading the way and another behind us. It was amazing, but God said in Isaiah 52:12:

*For ye shall not go out with haste nor go by flight:
for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel
will be your rearward. (Is. 52:12, KJV)*

This was an extra special blessing to me because Pastor Henderson once told me that, when you are called by God to go somewhere, God will not only prepare you but will also prepare your family.

Since it was God's idea, not mine, to take my children to Times Square Church, I took it as a confirmation that God was truly calling me to New York because He was not only preparing me, He

was also preparing my children.

As we walked the streets together, Lindsay (my younger daughter) said that she felt bad for the homeless people. Lacey (my older one), being the animal lover that she is, said that she felt bad for the homeless pigeons!

Oh, well, I thought. *It's a start!* Later on, Lindsay told me that, when she got older, she was going to help the homeless people. What a blessing that was for me to hear!

It was at the church picnic that Bill first introduced us to his girlfriend, Dana. I thought she was a very beautiful and godly woman. Bill had been seeing her for about seven months and was very much in love with her. From the moment I met her, I, strangely enough, felt a deep love for her as well. But Dana didn't feel the same way about me. She was aware of the relationship that Bill and I had and, although I was no threat to her at all, she saw me as such and was very jealous of me. Bill's relationship with me caused a lot of problems for him with Dana, and I felt very badly about it because I liked her so much. It was beginning to pull our relationship apart—one that God had taken so much time to build—so the Lord stepped in with a marvelous plan to solve the problem.

On some of my trips to New York, I felt called; on others, I felt that God was simply opening the doors for me to go. On this particular trip that I took in January 1990, I definitely felt called.

Some of my coworkers from my division at IUP (where I worked) were planning to attend a conference that was being held in New York City at the Waldorf Astoria hotel. This, of course, gave me the opportunity to share a room with a woman that I worked with and enabled me to stay in New York City at one of the most famous hotels in the world for absolutely nothing! I knew it had to be God!

By then, I was brave enough to drive into the city by myself so, that Saturday night, I drove in, found a parking garage and walked

halfway across the city to the hotel. After I checked in, I called Bill, and he and Dana drove over to pick me up. We decided to drive down to the Lower East Side to see if we could find Susie. We went to the place where we knew she had been staying with her mother, but her mother (whom I met for the first time) told us that Susie wasn't living there anymore. We drove down to her grandfather's place to see if she might be staying there, but she wasn't there either. So we left a message that we had stopped by to see her, then we went over to Ray's Pizza.

When we were ready to call it a night, Dana (who was driving) dropped Bill off first at the church where he was still living (only this time, the church had moved to the Mark Hellinger Theatre on 51st Street), then she drove me to The Waldorf. As she pulled over to the side of the street to let me off, we ended up sitting there for a while and having a long talk. Dana started by saying that she wanted to apologize to me for ignoring me and being so cold to me on my previous trips to New York. She explained that she loved Bill and didn't want to lose him. She said it wasn't that she disliked me; it was just that she felt very threatened by the relationship I had with Bill. She said that she was afraid he would stop loving her and start loving me.

Knowing how deeply Bill loved her, I tried to assure her that I was not a threat to her and that the relationship Bill and I shared was not the kind of love relationship that the two of them shared. We were only friends. They were in love. I told Dana how badly I felt about the whole thing, and I shared how God had put a love for her in my heart from the first time I met her. She said she liked me too and that she was going to try real hard to get over her feelings of jealousy toward me.

We had a good talk that night, and I was beginning to feel that *this* was the reason God had called me to New York. He wanted to take away Dana's fears and build a friendship between the two of us, but God had even more than that planned.

During the end of the Sunday evening service, I began to pray fervently that God would reveal to me His full purpose for

bringing me to New York again. I just felt there was a more specific purpose. He didn't say anything but, as I was saying goodbye to some people after the service, Dana came over to say goodbye to me. I hugged her goodbye and then found myself inviting her to come to Barnesboro to visit me sometime. I hadn't thought of it at all while I was there; the words just came out of my mouth. And when they did, they came out so strongly that I felt it was God. Dana felt it too. She felt it so strongly that she told Bill about it (who thought it was a great idea), and she seriously began to pray about it.

A week later, she called me at work and said she had been praying and that she believed it was God's will for her to come to Barnesboro. She said that, if it was all right with me, she would be arriving *that night*. I thought it sounded great! So, once again, God was bringing another person from Times Square Church into my home.

Dana ended up staying about a month and, throughout that time, God worked to develop a very close relationship between the two of us. We prayed together, witnessed on the streets of Barnesboro together, taught my Sunday-school class together, hung out together, laughed together and just enjoyed each other's company. It was great! Through the friendship the Lord had built between us, Dana began to trust me, and her fears and jealousies toward me began to fade away.

Shortly after she went back to New York, she and Bill set a date to be married, and she even asked me to be her maid of honor! I was touched and honored that she would ask me (although it turned out that something came up and I wasn't able to). But Lacey, Lindsay, and I attended their beautiful wedding on July 7, 1990, and I cried the whole way through it.

As I looked at Bill standing at the altar in his tuxedo, glowing with happiness and waiting for his beautiful bride to walk down the aisle, I thought back to the time when I had first met Bill—when he had just been delivered from crack, just came off the streets, and was wearing nothing but rags—and I thought of the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

I thought of how the son had made up his mind to return to his father in repentance after he had gotten so low that he was eating with the pigs. I thought of how his father called for his servants to bring forth the best robe and to put it on him, and how he put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. And he killed the fatted calf, and they ate and were merry. I thought of the father's reaction and what he said:

For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. (Luke 15:24, KJV, shortened)

Before Bill (and all of us!) came to Christ, he was lost and was dead. But when he came to Jesus in repentance, he was found of the Father, and He gave him life, and life abundantly! He took away his filthy rags and gave him a robe of righteousness! He crowned him a king and a priest and made him an heir to the Father and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. He promised him a mansion in heaven where he would rule and reign with Him forever!

What a beautiful example of the prodigal son I was witnessing in watching Bill Carson get married. God had taken a life that was almost destroyed by the enemy and transformed it into something beautiful. It was truly a rags-to-riches story: God had taken away the rags of a life without Christ and replaced them with all of the riches of knowing Jesus! This is what the Lord has done, not only with Bill, but with every believer. How truly wonderful it is to be saved by the blood of Jesus and to be a child of the King!

To God be the Glory!

-THE END-

Epilogue



As I end this story, I would just like to say how thankful I am that the Lord had used me in such a wonderful and exciting way throughout the chapters of this book. Without Jesus as Lord of my life, I would have nothing to write. I am still living in Barnesboro and am hoping that God will continue to use me. But God has shown me that, more importantly than Him using you and doing wonderful and exciting things in your *life*, is God revealing Himself to you and doing wonderful and exciting things in your *heart*. The most exciting thing the Lord could ever do in a Christian's life is to work on their heart to conform them to the image of Christ. Everything else is secondary. And it doesn't take a call to a foreign place for that to happen. Neither does it take a call to be a preacher, evangelist, or missionary. To every Christian who will let Him, God will do the most marvelous things in their heart, and will teach them the joy of loving Him with all of their heart, soul, strength and might.

My prayer is that *you* will allow the Lord to do all of the wonderful and exciting things that He wants to do in *your* life. He will, if you will only let Him! God bless you!

Carol Strong Carnevali, 9-20-1991

Update



In 1993, only two years after writing this book, I finally moved us to the New York City area; to a town in New Jersey, just outside the city. God did many more *amazing* miracles during this time. I often wished that I had written a second book about it, to document all that God did and to give Him Glory; but I never did. After almost thirty years had gone by, I was sure that I could never remember enough detail about that time to write a book. But God started putting it strongly on my heart, especially in the middle of church services, to write it.

I finally decided that the best I could do was to put together an outline of all the things I could remember, as they came to me. After that was done, I could think about writing the book. However, as I soon as I started doing that, the words started flowing and I found myself writing chapter after chapter! Within a month or so, the book was almost finished! God gave me a clear title for it, and a vision of exactly how the cover should look. So stay tuned for the sequel that I expect to publish soon and make available in about a year's time.

But *this* book, inspired by God, and written with all my heart in 1991, sat in my desk drawer for almost thirty years before I finally felt led to publish it. Writing it was another story. I knew that God wanted me to, and I tried over and over again, but I just couldn't find the time or energy to do it, being a single, working mother. God finally had to *allow* me to get sick, just long enough to have the time off from work, and to completely write the book. It was an all-consuming task that took about three solid weeks. May God use it for His Glory!

Currently, as I prepare it for print, I am still living in New

Jersey, walking with the Lord, and growing deeper in Him. Though many trials and tribulations have come my way over the years, God has been faithful!

...Hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God!
(Psalms 43:5 KJV, shortened, author emphasized) Carol Carnevali, 2019

After finishing the book, the author suggests that you listen to a song written and performed by one of her favorite Christian recording artists, Twila Paris. The song is called "Destiny."^[1] In it, Twila wraps up the whole story by her lyrics where she sings that, if you know and obey God, there is an open door to your unspoken dreams! Amen!

^[1] Twila Paris, "Destiny", A Heart That Knows You, 1992

Photo Collage 1



Photo Collage 2



About The Author

Carol Carnevali



Carol Carnevali was born and raised in the same small town in western Pennsylvania where David Wilkerson was from. She was saved in her mid-twenties and writes about the amazing journey that God took her on to save her and call her from Pennsylvania to Times Square Church in New York City. Her story has similarities to Rev. Wilkerson's calling to New York, some thirty years prior, but with its own twists and turns. It's full of suspense, real-life adventures and experiences that can be identified with, as Carol conquered her fears of going from a small town to the big city, and pursuing God's Will with all her heart. This is Carol's first and only book—so far.

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