

WHY WE NEED A SAVIOR

MAN

GOD

IN THE BEGINNING . . . The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were created by God and enjoyed perfect fellowship with Him. They were without sin and lived peacefully in a beautiful garden that supplied all their needs. God gave them only one rule, which was not to eat the fruit of a particular tree. However, Satan tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit by saying it would benefit them. They ate it, and that act of disobedience against God was the first sin. It severed Adam's and Eve's relationships with God because He is holy and cannot have fellowship with evil.

MAN

SIN

GOD

OUR CONDITION TODAY . . . Since we are all Adam's descendants, every child in the world has been born with his fallen nature. Instead of coming into the world desiring to do right, we are all born with an inclination toward sin and evil. Proof of this natural downward tendency is abundantly evident anywhere human beings are found. Our sin results in tremendous pain, sorrow, and suffering. The consequences of sin reach far beyond this life because those who reject God and die in a sinful state will go to Hell and be separated from God eternally.

MAN

JESUS

GOD

GOD'S PLAN . . . God wants to remove sin from our lives so that we can have a relationship with Him and spend eternity in Heaven. However, the penalty for sin is death, and that penalty must be paid. Out of His great love for us, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. Jesus lived as a man and died in our place for our sins. Because of that, if we follow the steps that God has laid out in the Bible, our sins can be forgiven. God will change our desires and give us power to live without sin so we can enjoy eternal life with Him in Heaven one day.

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WHEN CRISIS CALLS

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WHEN CRISIS CALLS

Although Sherry has faced multiple crises since she was widowed at the age of twenty-three, she has found that a relationship with God makes all the difference.

By Sherry Schuermyer

A telephone call can change the course of your life. That happened to me one October day when I was not yet a Christian. Looking back at that crisis and those that have come my way since becoming a believer, I am amazed at what a difference it makes having God in my heart.



As I was growing up, my family was loving and supportive, but we were not Christians. After graduating from high school, I was unsure what profession to choose, so I enlisted in the United States Air Force. Through training and my eventual assignment in Europe, I discovered how much I missed my family and how alone I felt. Although I regret some of my choices while I was in the military, I do not regret serving this great country.

About seven months after being discharged, I married Jim, a young man I had dated during my high school years.

I wish I could say that I was a good wife, but that was not the case. I was someone who had to be right and have the last word in a disagreement. Jim was a good man who deserved better. Within two years we had our first daughter, Sarah, and soon I became pregnant with Jackie.

Then I received that life-changing telephone call.

Jim and a friend had gone deer hunting in the hills about forty miles from our house. There was snow on the ground where they stopped for lunch, and Jim took a misstep and fell over a two-hundred-foot cliff. By the end of the day, I learned that he had died in the fall.

WIDOWED AS A YOUNG MOTHER

There I was at twenty-three years old, with a toddler and five months pregnant, and planning my husband's funeral. I had never even attended a funeral, let alone planned one. Thankfully, my mother-in-law was able to help me, despite the fact that she had just lost her one and only child. I do not remember anything about Jim's service except the image of Sarah running around his casket and how surreal that felt. Through the funeral and the following months, it was like a fog descended on my life and everything became blurred. I was not really living, just existing.

Several months before Jim's death, we had purchased life insurance and also a policy that would pay off the loan on our house if anything happened to either one of us. This is not something people in their twenties usually do, but for whatever reason, we did.

We had also discussed adding on to our house because it was small and our family was growing. So a few months after Jackie was born, I decided to have the

addition built. While my stated purpose was to make more room, I also did the project to keep busy so there would not be much time to think. My parents both had fulltime jobs, and in the evenings Dad would help on the house while Mom watched the girls. During this time, I became very angry and was quick to lash out, taking my grief and frustration out on the very people who were trying to help me. It was a downward spiral in a self-destructive mode.

A LIFELINE FROM GOD

It took about a year to complete the remodel, and when it was finished, there was way too much time on my hands. I knew that I had to get some emotional help, if not for my own sake, for the sake of my two little girls who needed me. Then I remembered that when Jackie was born, a nurse had given me a business card with the number for a young widow's support group the hospital facilitated. Somehow I managed to find that card after not seeing it for over a year. Looking back, it is miraculous to me that I kept it through all my fogginess and the mess of the remodel. I called the number and later went to a meeting.

By then, Jim had been gone nearly two years, but my emotions were as raw as if he had just died. It was wonderful to be around people who understood what it was like to lose a spouse, and it made me feel less alone in the world. It felt good to finally be able to grieve for my loss. I feel that God threw me a lifeline when He helped me retain that business card.

Grief is something a person has to go through. You cannot go around it or suppress it, because it will come out in some way. It is better just to face it head-on, get the necessary help, and then be able to move forward. Going through grief does not mean that you forget. It just puts the loss in a place that is not as painful.

About six months after starting with the support group, I was introduced to Doug Schuermeyer. We started dating and were married a short time later. After we married, we attended the Apostolic Faith Church together, and enrolled Sarah and Jackie in Sunday school. Jackie was two years old and did not want to be left alone in class, so for several months I stayed with her. The teacher's name was Valeta. Spiritually, I was on the same level as Jackie. I did not know any of the foundational Bible stories or teachings. Thank God for that time in Valeta's class! Had I been with adults, the information would have been beyond me, and I might have become discouraged, but under Valeta's teaching, I began to learn about God.

God used the lives of all the church people to draw me to Himself. When I asked Him to, God saved my soul.

All my life, I have been a person that needs to see firsthand how something works. Through the years, the people who I had come across that claimed to be Christians were not much different than me, except they went to church on Sundays. So I was a little skeptical of Christianity at first. However, after attending church and Sunday school for a while, I realized people were not looking down on me or judging me, and they behaved the same whether or not it was Sunday. I felt welcomed and could tell that everyone cared about my eternal destination. God used the lives of all the church people to draw me to Himself. When I asked Him to, God saved my soul.

In time, God blessed Doug and me with two more daughters, and life continued with the usual joys and trials. There were financial ups and downs and the challenges of raising children, and the Lord was with us.

ANOTHER PHONE CALL

Then, several years ago, I found a lump in my breast. After tests, I received another phone call that changed my life: I had cancer. After the initial shock and tears, it was as if I became emotionally detached from the fact that I had cancer. This, I believe was another gift from God.

During the six-hour cancer surgery, many of my family and friends came to the hospital and waited for me. Our pastor and his wife came and prayed for me, which meant so much. After the surgery, I was so weak and in such pain that I was pretty helpless. God caused me to realize that He wanted to help me, and all I had to do was let Him. He would do what I could not do, He would carry the heavy end.

God gave me strength for each day. Through the pain and side effects, the presence of the Lord was so strong. The prayers of God's people were sustaining and carrying me; I could almost physically feel them.

In the cancer treatment process, I drew so much closer to the Lord, and He taught me some valuable lessons. One is that God wants to bear our burdens, to carry the heavy end. Second, prayer is powerful; it can move the hand of God.

These days I am blessed to be a grandmother and to worship God with Doug and my church family. When I think about my testimony, I hardly recognize myself from who I was. What a difference it has made to have God in my life! The Lord has given me joy and peace that is not dependent on life's circumstances. ■

STEPS TO DELIVERANCE

ACKNOWLEDGE

Admit that you have sinned and need God's help.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

CONFESS AND REPENT

Be genuinely sorry for the sins you have committed and ask God to forgive you.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:3)

FORSAKE

Determine that with God's help you are going to turn away from all sin in your life.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him . . . for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:7)

BELIEVE

When you have honestly and sincerely taken the steps above, then believe that God will hear your prayer and save you.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

RECEIVE

God will let you know that the work is done in your heart.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)