



the ENCOURAGER magazine

July 2021



BY FAITH

C O L U M B I A C O M M U N I T Y C H U R C H

ON THE COVER

One can almost feel the love emanating from the warm embrace of congregants Stacy and Donna Givhan as they pose during their photo shoot at The Lake in Columbia on September 12, 2021.

Photography By: Michael R. Spry © 2021



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The Encourager Magazine is a quarterly publication of Columbia Community Church

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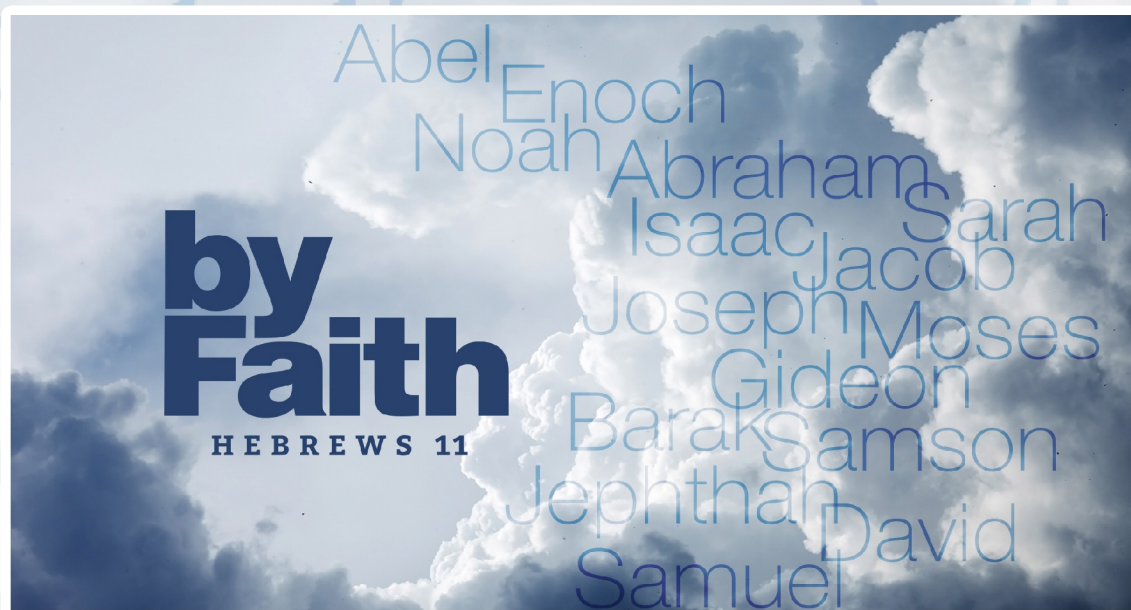


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A WORD FROM **THE WORD**
PASTOR REGINALD L. ELLIOTT



BY FAITH



he words “by faith” appear numerous times in Hebrews 11, describing the actions and lives of many of the early followers of God. While the words themselves are easy to say, they actually encompass a great deal more than what initially appears. They speak of actions taken based on a relationship with God, because without the relationship the action would not have been taken.

Faith is a word we use often, but the question must be asked, “What does ‘by faith’ really involve?” Rather than just focusing on a single event and applying “by faith” to it, think on what is required to produce “by faith”.

To believe God is actually an all-encompassing statement that involves how we relate to everything God has told us about Himself and all He has ever done.

For example, God has described for us in His word His view of life and how man should live. Consider the case of Enoch. The Bible says by faith

Enoch was translated because he pleased God. Enoch pleased God because he agreed with God’s view of how men should be living even though others did not, and were living differently. Enoch’s faith consisted of accepting everything God said as

being true and then seeking to live by it.

“By faith” touches on how we view the entirety of God’s word, not just an attempt to use part of His word for a particular need.

...think on what is
required to produce
"by faith".

Pastor Reginald L. Elliott

Closely examine the lives of others in Hebrews 11 and you will see this is true of them also.

Our entire view of God is included in “by faith”. Can one actually disagree with God on aspects of His teaching on life and still be in a “by faith” relationship with God? Meditate on this.



CHRISTIAN COMEDY**CORNER**

CAROLYN**JACKSON**
COLLIN**DUNLAP**

REMEMBER
"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine"

Proverbs 17:22 (KJV)



So let me get this straight, there's no cure for a virus that can be **KILLED** by Lysol® sanitizer and hand soap?



Brain cells die, skin cells die, hair cells die, even cell phones die...but **FAT CELLS** must have found the Lord because those things have eternal life.

You're not fat, you're just easier to see.




You come from dust, and you will return to dust. That's why I don't dust. It could be someone I know.

Pro is to con as progress is to Congress.

I think the worst time to have a heart attack is during a game of charades.

As my uncle and I walked towards the church he said, "The

choir sings like birds out of heaven, and its music to your ears."

But as we got closer and heard someone singing extra loud and out of tune, my uncle said, "Of course, sometimes crows get in and you need ear plugs." 



Blessings 2U,
Sister Carolyn Jackson
Brother Collin Dunlap




THE **LIBRARIAN'S DESK**

DESIREE COLLINS

READY TO MAKE FAITH A LIFESTYLE?

Faith is a living dynamic force that impacts every aspect and area of our life. Simply put, faith is an action word! Faith requires you to not just “talk the talk”, but more importantly “walk the walk” – walking in obedience to God’s will and ways. Our actions demonstrate what we believe and don’t believe (and believing is often complicated by what we don’t know), which is further complicated by the fact that we don’t know what we don’t know (stay with me now). Proverbs 3:5 tells us, to “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding”. Our faith must affirm the divinity of Jesus Christ. Faith causes us to move beyond our limited understanding and obey in the absence of understanding. There should come a point in our life/faith that we don’t need proof/evidence... faith that does not require evidence is a faith of greater depth. Faith grows with time as we continue to read and meditate on the Word, pray, go to church and allow God’s faithfulness in our Christian walk.

Little faith makes decisions based on what is possible for humans, great faith makes decision based on what is possible for God, and we know that, “things which are impossible with men are

possible with God” (Luke 18:27, KJV), and to take it a little further, “For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37, KJV). Faith is often formed in the difficult and trying seasons in our life. Don’t let seasons of difficulty drive you away from God. Great faith manifests patience. Challenge your faith by believing God more and more and by acting on that truth. 

Recommended Books:





FALL COMFORT FOOD EATING

CAROLYN FLEMING, RN

As we move into the season that leads us to holidays, the days become shorter, colder, and our appetites change as well. We start to crave cozy, heartier meals, warming to body and soul. Unfortunately, based on the presence of this COVID-19 many of us may still be sticking closer to home.

The origin of the term “comfort food”

can be traced back over 50 years ago when it was described as food associated with the security of childhood when an adult was under severe emotional stress (Ref: Palm Beach Post – 1966). Consuming high calorie, high fat, salt or sugar foods may trigger something in the human brain which gives a temporary sense of emotional elevation and relaxation; thus, negative emotions tend to trigger eating unhealthy food.

We can eat comfortably and still be healthy. Soups, stews, butternut squash, apples, pumpkin and greens are typically packed with nutrients such as fiber, protein, beta carotene and vitamin C.

Protein sources can boost heart health.

Root vegetables to include are carrots, squash, pumpkin and sweet potatoes. **Whole grains**

such as brown rice and oats are important.

Legumes to include in your fall meal planning are beans, chickpeas, lentils and soybeans. **Green vegetables** such as broccoli, spinach, kale, and celery are always important.

Here are a couple of traditional comfort foods and how to give them a healthier makeover (Ref.: Betty Crocker Kitchens 2017):

Lasagna – substitute with these ingredients:

Whole wheat noodles; veggies like spinach zucchini, mushrooms, onions, or carrots; lean turkey breast; less ricotta cheese and blend in low fat mozzarella; and, low fat tomato sauce.

French toast – substitutions: Cooking spray instead of oil or butter to brown the toast; whole wheat bread; dip in 2 parts egg substitute to 1 part whole egg; skim instead of whole milk; and, top with fresh chopped peaches or berries instead of syrup.

As we move into the fall months, let's be assured that God is Faithful! Seek God and His support when we feel overwhelmingly tempted to use food as a stress reliever. Eat for the right reasons. Don't deny yourself of everything you enjoy, but eat in moderation and know that God is the Ultimate Stress Reliever. 🍂



MARRIAGEBUILDERS

MIN. MICHAEL & BRENDA MANOKEY

A Blessed Marriage

God's perfect plan to live by faith in marriage begins in Genesis 2:24, KJV, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." In his study guide, *One*, Pastor Jimmy Evans of the Marriage Today ministry gives some insights into how a blessed marriage can emerge with attentive faith by two individuals trusting in God's faithfulness.

When God blessed the creation of Adam and Eve, He gave them the power to succeed, to prosper and to live long under His care. By evidencing faith in God, they were empowered to live in blessed obedience and joyful communion with the Father.


Unfortunately, when Adam and Eve walked away from God's influence and made decisions contrary to His teaching, they experienced the curse rather than the blessing. This teaches us that some couples are willing to follow God's will while others are not – it is a critical choice. When you are yielded to God's principles, you can expect a blessing.

A practical approach to seeing God's blessings come forth is taking time together and identifying where blessings are already being experienced and looking for the areas that are lacking, because together we have not sought God's plan for our lives. Together we must be willing to turn to God for help in areas such as finances, communication,



[God] gave them
the power to succeed...

Min. & Deaconess Manokey

child rearing, friendships, and sensitivity to one another's needs, which will allow these needs to be addressed in unity and strengthen the marriage bond. Also, make a special effort to tell your spouse what a blessing he or she is to your life; we all need affirmation that comes from love. 

A BALM IN GILEAD

FEATURED **ARTICLE**
KIM ODOMS-BOLDEN

Mentioned
as a hero of faith
is Jephthah. Who
is Jephthah?
Glad you asked.
The Bible tells us
in Judges
11:1-10, NIV:

“Jephthah the Gileadite, was a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute. Gilead’s wife also bore him sons, and when they were grown up, believing Jephthah to be illegitimate and unworthy they drove Jephthah away. ‘You are not going to get any inheritance in our family,’ they said, ‘because you are the son of another woman [prostitute].’ So, Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob, where a gang of scoundrels gathered around him and followed him.

Sometime later, when the Ammonites were fighting against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. ‘Come,’ they said, ‘be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites.’

Jephthah said to them, ‘Didn’t you hate me and drive me from my father’s house? Why do you come to me now, when you’re in trouble?’



The elders of Gilead said to him, ‘Nevertheless, we are turning to you now; come with us to fight the Ammonites, and you will be

head over all of us who live in Gilead.’

Jephthah answered, ‘Suppose you take me back to fight the Ammonites and the Lord gives them to me – will I really be your head?’

The elders replied, ‘The LORD is our witness; we will certainly do as you say.’ So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them. And he repeated all his words before the LORD in Mizpah” (Judges 11:1-10, NIV).

“Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jephthah, He crossed Gilead and Manasseh, passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from there he advanced against the Ammonites. And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord; ‘If you give the Ammonites into my hands whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the Lord’s....’” (Judges 11:29-31, NIV).


Out of all the Biblical characters, how did Jephthah make it into the Hebrews Faith Hall of Fame? Glad you asked.

Jephthah was hated by his half-brothers because his mom was a prostitute and because of that he was driven from his home, robbed of his inheritance, and became an outcast by his own family. In other words, the sin of his mother transferred to him and he was treated horribly. When approached by the Elders of Gilead, Jephthah sought the Lord and trusted Him on how to proceed. Imagine that, after the former treatment of his brothers the fact he considered losing his life on their behalf was a miracle all by itself. When Jephthah returned from battle, shockingly, the first to greet him was his one and only child, a daughter. Yet, Jephthah followed through with his vow forever relinquishing ever having grandchildren to carry on his legacy.

By faith, the Lord used Jephthah to deliver the Israelites from eighteen years of oppression by the Ammonites.

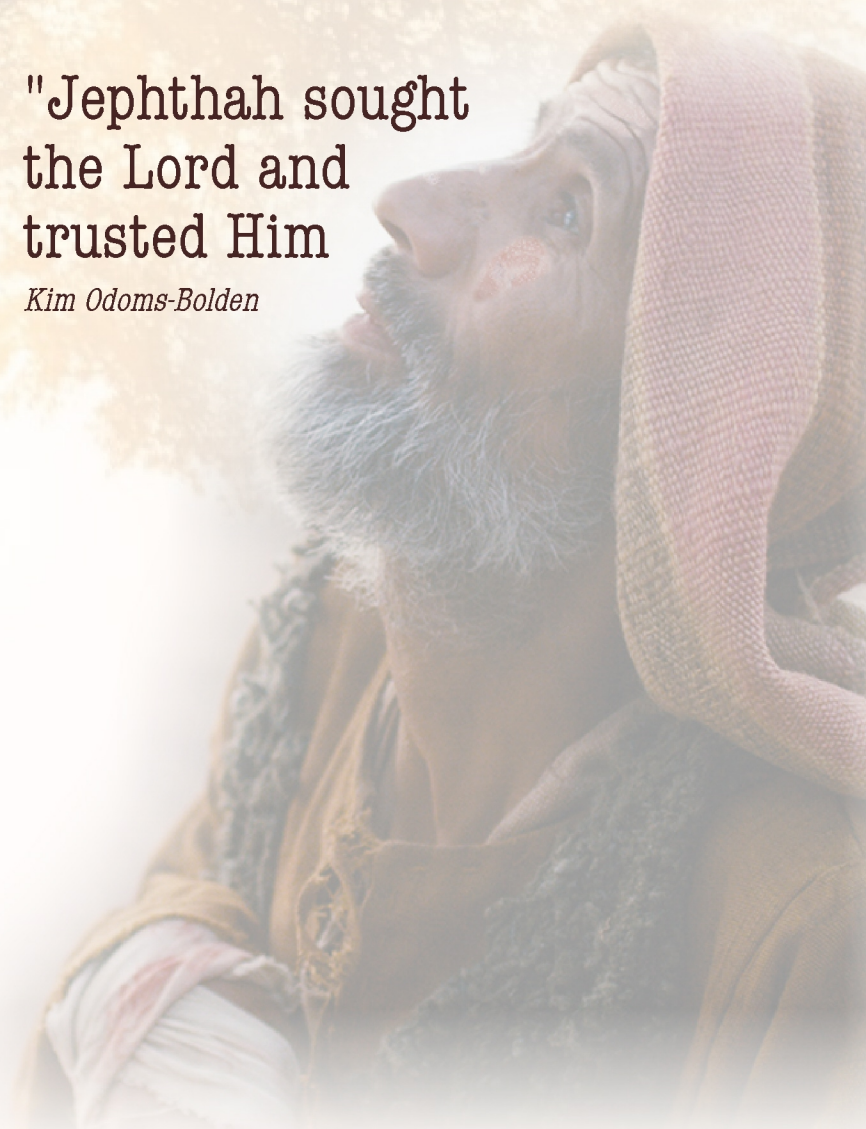
By faith, Jephthah led the Israelites for six years. The glory of Jephthah's latter house was greater than the former (Haggai 2:9).

By faith, Jephthah did not let his circumstances or his flesh weaken his anointing. Faith is the channel that ignites the power of our anointing beyond the natural into the supernatural realm of God Almighty.

Therefore, we can conclude that Jephthah was extraordinary and lived a life of courage, integrity, and faith. It's not how you begin, it's how you end. 

"Jephthah sought the Lord and trusted Him

Kim Odoms-Bolden





There is always something unique that occurs when we believers abandon human sense, choose to step out and set the course of our lives in such a way that shouts faith in God! The testimonies of the believers *in Christ* being perfected through the testing or exercising of their *confidence* in God must continually be told.

Our ongoing effort to do just that lands us before our Brother and Sister, Stacy and Donna Givhan. I invited them to tell their story, as always, in their own words – the things burning in their heart and urged by the Holy Spirit to share.

Linwood Childs (LC): Stacy and Donna tells us a bit about your journey.

Stacy Givhan (SG): Well, even though people may think we're always serious, we love to laugh and joke around, and also sing and dance with each other.

Donna Givhan (DG): I like to bake.

SG: There's a funny story about that. My mother-in-law and I were scheduled to leave on a flight out of BWI but the snow storm turned bad and they ended up cancelling all the flights. The roads were very slippery and we were caught at the

airport. Donna couldn't come get us because the streets were so bad. Well, I ended up asking Bro. Ty Bennett to pick me up so we could get back home. He picked us up with his 4x4 pick-up truck. But Donna was so concerned about us slipping up the walkway that she put down salt.

DG: I didn't have enough rock salt, so I used everything I had that had salt in it: table salt, Epsom salt, season salt; even Old Bay, a lot of Old Bay.

SG: When Bro. Ty came, he thought we were cooking crabs!

DG: I didn't want them to fall down. Mom couldn't see very well so I put down everything I thought would help. I was so grateful that I baked him a nice peach cobbler. He said that was the best he ever had. I'm not sure the rest of it made it home to his wife.

LC: How did you first come to Columbia Community Church (CCC)?

DG: Sis. Mills, she invited us to come and consider CCC.

SG: We were searching for a church home and Sis.
(Continued on Page 11)

A II

I could do
was lay down
on the floor
and I
prayed
and prayed

Stacy Givhan





Mills gave Donna an invitation while we were looking at a few other churches. On one Sunday after one church we visited, I told Donna we can't go back there, that man gave me a headache! He was preaching so loud. But that wasn't the real issue, the real issue was that he was preaching loud but wasn't saying anything! He was doing a lot of yelling but saying nothing. I told Donna, he gave me a literal headache, we can't go back there.

When got to CCC and we heard Pastor Elliot preaching *and* teaching while he was preaching; it reminded us of our Tennessee church back home. But he hit a real point, telling us that it's you, it's up to you to have a relationship *with* God. He said we pray for this situation or that person and we don't get answers because the answer is that God needs to change you! Then the answer will come. That hit home with us. And besides I didn't have headache after service!

DG: I thought he liked the church because Pastor Elliott is a Cowboys fan!

DG & SG: ROTFL (Rolling on the Floor Laughing)

SG: No, I didn't know that until well after we joined.

DG: So that really confirmed it (LOL).

SG: It was the teaching and the preaching he was doing that drew us.

DG: And how they promote family.

LC: So, it wasn't the Cowboys!

DG: It was just like picking up from our church back in Tennessee!

SG: To start out, way before the pandemic started, Donna's mother came to stay with us. Donna and her sisters were each taking times to take care of mom. So, it became her time to come up here with us. Well mom stayed with us for about 8 months?

DG: Yes, 8 months. Mom had a detached retina, suffering from diabetes, managed high blood pressure and a lot of underlying issues, and even had lost her sight during that time.

SG: She had lost part of her sight. We were able to bring mom to church a few times during that time. But then it got really bad, as she went back and forth with the surgeries. But we knew God was in the plan. She had to have eye surgery because her pressure built up so quickly in her eyes, until she had to have emergency surgery to get the pressure



off her eye. The doctors told us that the emergency surgery would not be too long. We waited in the hospital on that day of surgery, and prayed and we waited, and waited but did not hear anything for a long while.

LC: How long had they told you the surgery would last.

SG: About 3 hours. It started a little after 12noon.

DG: We finally left the hospital close to 9:30 p.m. When the staff first came out, they told us that she was still in the recovery area because she was taking a much longer time to come out of the anesthesia. Maybe her mild dementia also had something to do with it.

SG: We thanked God she pulled through; we had to just sit there, and go through that and wait. We kept praying and thanking God that everything was going to work out.

LC: What was going through your mind at that time?

SG: At that time....

DG: At first, I was panicky. We knew that things

might get worse for her, but I was secretly hoping that it would not occur on our watch. I was panicky and nervous at first. I was asking the Lord, please don't let anything real bad happen while she's with us. They had her in surgery for so long, but by the time they came out to us I had calmed down. My faith was really tested there. Because when you're going through something like that it takes a minute before you grasp that God is in control. The initial shock of things, can really test you. They give you all the negatives and I didn't want to talk with my sisters until I had something to actually tell them. I had to get myself together first.

SG: Donna and I just had to pray and speak God's word that He will bring her out. Mom asked me to pray with her just before she went into surgery at the hospital and we did. The surgeon stood there with us as we joined hands and prayed. We prayed that if anything went wrong that God would lead his (the surgeon's) hand and mind to know what to do, to hear from God to know what to do when he (the surgeon) didn't know what to do. After that prayer, Mom felt at peace knowing that she would see us after surgery. She had the confidence that she was coming out of this. We had to keep meditating on the word of God: He will never leave us nor forsake us.

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DG: Then remember when you were home taking care of her and you were having heart problems yourself?

SG: Oh yeah. That leads me to another testimony. Mom was in her recovery at home with us. Everyone was away and I was working from home, just me and her. I starting to have some really bad chest pains, thinking I was having a heart attack. In my mind I was thinking, “I can’t call the ambulance for myself and leave her here by herself!” I thought I had heard that I needed to get my heart flow up, so I tried doing jumping-jacks. That did not work cause the pain really shot up. So, I had to lay down on the ottoman and raised my feet to let the blood flow more toward my heart.

DG: Now remember, my mom was upstairs, she’s 87, just had eye surgery and cannot see. She needed total care, even eating, restroom and everything.

SG: Oh yeah. After the surgery she had to lay down in a certain way and we had to check on her to make sure she didn’t move into a bad position that would cause the eye pressure to rise. Yet, my heart pain kept increasing, so that all I could do was lay down on the floor and I prayed and prayed.

DG: The way I see it, God was taking care of him while he was taking care his mother-in-law!

LC: Had you ever had this problem before?

*My faith was
really tested...it takes
a minute before you grasp
that God is in control.*

Donna Givhan





SG: No, that was the worst heart pain I had ever felt.

DG: When this passed, he went to the cardiologist for tests. They ran special tests and could not find anything at all.

SG: Special MRI tests were also done, which included dyes, but the result came back and indicated that there was no blockage and no plaque build up. It was totally normal.

DG: This was all in the same week! You know, some people believe that if things don't go your way, then they start to question whether God is real. I had to let my family really know this. My mom later passed away, this past May my dad passed away due to COVID-19, and I lost my job. But we still made it. So, I've learned that it can get as bad as it can get or as good as it can be, but God is still God, no matter what it is, no matter what you're facing. You can weep and weep but when you're done, He's still God. It just doesn't matter what it is you're facing, He's still God. Others have got to know it, so you've got to keep the faith!

LC: Faith comes in different ways!

SG: You've got to have an environment that has

some upheaval to grow faith, to change the way we think.

DG: The Book [*Bible*] that has never changed. Got trouble? You want to know how to handle it? It's in The Book. It's nothing new, it's just your turn. I asked for a very specific request from God. I asked for a break from trouble, and asked for 10 months with no trouble. We had storm after storm in our lives. But I asked God and He gave me about 10 months of peace, no problems, and God gave it to me. I hadn't realized it until around the 9th month. It just seemed like everything was perfect in my life. I thought at that point that I should have asked for a much longer period! Later, I told a co-worker that I have the answer to life's problems. I told her the answer is God. She just really laughed at me as if I was dressed in some ridiculous outfit or said something silly. But I was serious, I'm not ashamed of God, not at all.

SG: Many years ago, I really wanted a *permanent* job with the federal government. I was driving an over-the-road tractor trailer. But I didn't tell the people who I was working for about that. This one day the supervisor told us they were going to replace all the temp driver positions; some would be permanent and the others would be let go. Well the opportunity came up with about 2 weeks left.

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They decided to make me permanent but I turned them down. This offer did not line up with my prayer. Yes, I wanted a permanent position but with the federal government. The supervisor called me and said, “Stacy you must be living right, I have replaced all my drivers but your replacement. The new driver declined the position at the last minute. So, you have another week or two.” So finally, he called and told me to drop off the truck and product, leave it all for your services are no longer required. Now the devil tried to tempt me to do the wrong things. But I prayed and did what God wanted me to do, even though I was mad, I didn’t vandalize anything I left everything is good order. I lived about 5-minutes from that job location. I said, “Lord I don’t have a job! What do you want me to do?” I’m talking and praying to God on the way home. That seemed like a 30-minute drive. I got home, sat down on the side of my bed taking off my work boots, listening to my answering service messages. It’s the Treasury Department?! They said, sir we have picked you to work in this area, here are dates and location. The schedule was like a permanent schedule even though the position was classified as seasonal but it was full time work. After I got off that phone, I tell you I was jumping up and down on that bed just like a little kid just praising the Lord, just praising the Lord. Nobody was home but me, and I’m thanking the Lord, that

He heard my cry.

That position, took me to places I never thought I would end up going. It put me in contact with people I never thought I would be in contact with. Even though I was a seasonal employee, I was working as a Union Representative. I was the Vice President of the union. They put me on a project that I was select to be on, selected by the National President of the union. They have information on who are active union stewards, and who was getting cases resolved that were not detrimental to anyone. She heard about me and put me over this project. I was the only seasonal person, traveling with all these managers and executives. They told us that if you are a union person you are on the same footing with any manager not matter what their level. As long as I know my rules and understand the contract between management, then I can go in and argue my case and defend the person in a grievance case, and it didn’t matter what level of person I was taking to, they had to treat me as if I was on the same level as they were. But they didn’t know that I was seasonal I just went in and did my job. That led me to my permanent job with the Treasury Department. I went from driving a truck in all kinds of weather conditions, to now – God has blessed that I’m working from home. I don’t have anyone barking down orders or telling me what to do. As long as I do my job I’m pretty much left alone working at



home and still able to provide for my family and do my job properly. I just thank God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon me. I've been there 30 years, thank the Lord. I've come a long way.

LC: That's awesome, look at God. I recall Stacy that you had an incident regarding a truck on the highway? What was that?

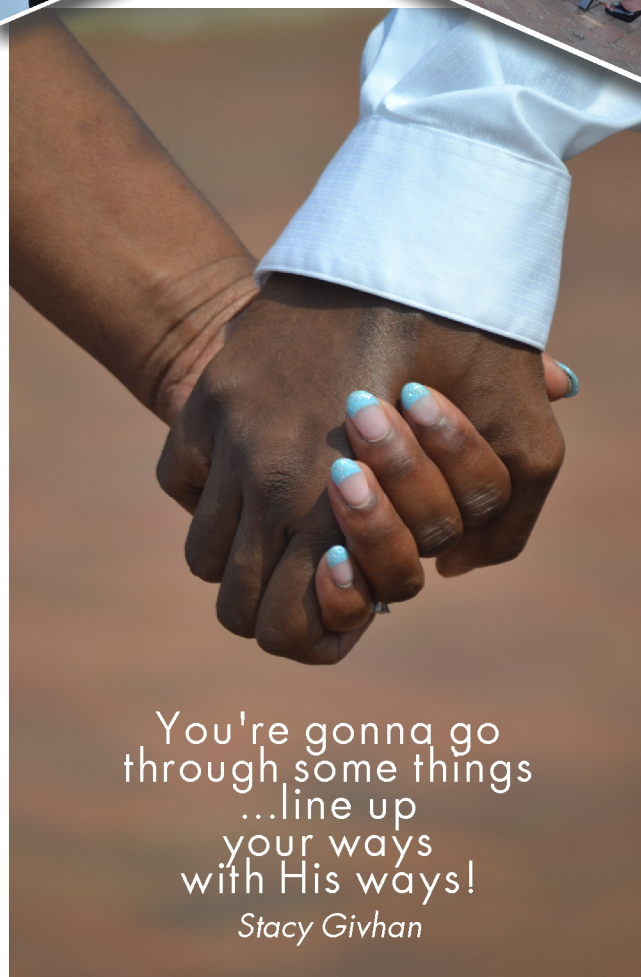
SG: I was coming back from a run from Alabama and returning to Memphis to pick up another load. On the way back making a delivery. I was driving a flatbed tractor trailer when I got into the curve, and the load shifted. Now this is when I initially say I had my Jesus moment. I was already in church but I didn't have the real moment that made *you* know

Jesus is real. I hadn't had that moment yet. When I saw that load shifting, looking out the side mirror, the momentum of the curve made the trailer flip the opposite way. I'm looking at this through the mirror saying to myself, "I know this is not happening." Now this was just as the new seat-belt law was coming out but was not mandatory yet, and I did not have my seat belt on. I repeated to myself, "I know this is not happening, this is NOT happening." So, I finally said, "I'm going to find out if Jesus is real today!" It hit my spirit so hard to call on Jesus. So, I yelled with every fiber of my being, as loud as I could, "Jesus, save me!" I still saw the truck roll over. Not having a seat belt on, I'm climbing up the cab trying to stay upright. When the truck finally slapped the ground, my feet were on the door and I'm sort of standing up. As the truck slammed down, I'm yelling Jesus save me, the truck slid just a few feet and stopped instantly. The next thing I knew these two men, were kicking in the windshield trying to get to me, a white guy and a black guy. They had pulled the mattress from the rear and carried me and the mattress away from the cab. They set me down on the mattress and told me they had called the ambulance and they were going back to direct the traffic. I'm laying on my back seeing the news helicopter flying over me. No broken bones, not scrapes from the grass – just a little tiny spot on the
(Continued on Page 17)



knuckle of my thumb. There was no traffic since the truck blocked the road. I was so glad the truck didn't flip all the way over and roll down the hill, because the curve was on an incline. The truck was carrying a load of coils for fencing and I didn't want that to roll down the hill into the oncoming traffic below and cause more accidents. Those two men rescued me, but I never knew who they were. The ambulance arrived and took me to the hospital. I had some back pain, but was back to work in two weeks. This was my beginning of really walking with Jesus.

I just thank God He always watches over me. It's like my favorite songs: He Keeps On Blessing Me (Over and Over Again), Your Grace and Mercy, I'm a Living Testimony, I'm Still Here, and If the Storm Keep On Raging. But when I'm singing those songs it's like I'm singing in God's ear! While I may not hit the notes right or have the best



You're gonna go
through some things
...line up
your ways
with His ways!
Stacy Givhan

timing, but I just want to let God know I'm truly grateful for what He's done for me.

DG: Even my mother on her death bed breathing her last breaths, was giving thanks to God. My mother had gone through so much. I'm sure everybody feels the same way, but she witnessed children dying in her arms, two men came with a gun shot a 6-year-old boy and he died in her arms, someone killed one of our brothers, her father

was abusive, she was a civil rights Freedom Rider. But mom raised her voice on her death bed and said, "I thank you God for taking care of me *all* of my life!" Even on her death bed she was giving thanks to the Lord! If she could do that and still pass away, surely, I've have got to know Him.

SG: Good days or so called, bad days, He's still God. Be still and know that I am God comes to mind.



DG: He's not going to change because you've had a bad day! You go ahead weep and play your small violin and when you're done, God says, "I'm still here."

LC: It's so good when you're going through challenges that you have those testimonies of victories. Testimonies that say, Lord if you did it for them, then I'm expecting you to be with me and never leave me either.

DG: There is no room in your life to be mad at God. You need Him too much.


LC: Amen, He's always right too!

DG: If you can hold on to the faith the size of a mustard seed! Through death, through sickness, through various diagnoses, through any of life's trials, if you lose your home, your job, whatever it is, hold on and know that He is there.

you have a "best" friend but you barely spend any time with him, you may call it a best friend, but it's not!

DG: The Word does not contradict itself either, everything falls into place and it makes sense. The Word even shows us where we are now and how we got there.

SG: That falls in line with my favorite scripture, ever since I came to Christ, "God is my strength and power: and He maketh my way perfect" (2 Sam 22:33, KJV). That does not mean only lollipops and sunny days; you're going to go through some things, until you see what you really want is to line up your ways with His ways!

LC: Saints, there is much more I haven't room to tell you about. Suffice to say, God looks for extraordinary living through ordinary people. To God be the glory. 

SG: You have to have a r-e-l-a-t-i-o-n-s-h-i-p with God. You have to be willing to interact with God and that means taking time with Him. If you say

We Can't Make It on Our Own

LET US **PRAY**
ANGELA HUNT BONITTO

Do you sometimes feel like you are being swallowed up by life? Fasting can be an effective means of keeping you from being consumed by your surroundings. Fasting is about making room for God's presence in your life. When we fast, by faith we are saying to God, I need You. Fasting builds our faith in God.

Daniel, one of the leading Jewish young men taken into captivity by King Nebuchadnezzar, undertook several disciplines to maintain his faith and identity. His decision to fast was one of the most visible ways by which he avoided being fully absorbed into that culture (Daniel 1:5-20)

Sometimes in life we need the help of another person – a friend who can provide us with a perspective we cannot gain from our best efforts. Jesus is that friend. When you are troubled mentally by family circumstances or are experiencing financial crisis, our faith is tested. In the book of Isaiah Chapter 58, the Prophet Isaiah has a word for us at this point in our lives. God has provided us with 22 promises in this chapter that we can expect to receive from engaging in prayer and fasting. I will share seven of those promises. The rest you'll find in this chapter.

Promise #1: God Promises Freedom

When we pray and fast, God promises that He will free us from the things that are holding us captive (v.6).

Promise #2: Oppressed No More

God promises to break every chain of oppression that tries to crush us (v.6).

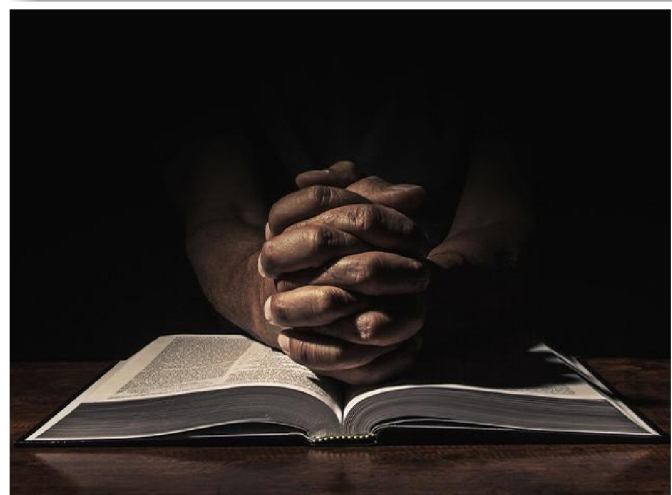
Promise #3: Learning to Share

God teaches us how to share with those who have physical and spiritual needs (v.7).

Promise #4: Healing for Body, Soul and Spirit

“And your healing will quickly appear” (v.8).

Healing – Becoming robust and healthy in our body, soul and spirit. This is what our world cries out for: Please deliver me from the pain. I can't stand it any longer.





Promise #5: Our Light Shines

God will light up our life and give us an inner glow as we begin to allow Jesus to take over our inner spirit and we experience an awakening to who we are in Christ Jesus. This is what brings a glow that God alone can give to people when they fast and pray (v.10).

Promise 6: Protection from the Father

When we come into the presence of God in prayer and fasting, our Father promises us protection. He will give us protection from the front and protection from the back... “the glory of the Lord will be your guard” (v.8).

Promise 7: Answered Prayer

As we pray and fast, we call on God and He will answer us. When we humble ourselves and cast our cares on Him, He sees our faith and answers our prayers (v.11).

Let Us Pray...

Heavenly Father, we pray for help to strengthen our faith in you. Help our head, heart, and soul to believe in You and trust in You fully, without doubt, knowing that in You all things are possible. Lord strengthen us and help our unbelief. In Jesus' name. Amen. 🙏

FAITH IS

FAMILY FOCUS

CRYSTAL A. HOOD

When we say by faith and then add something to the end like by faith I am healed, or by faith I am delivered what are we actually saying. What is faith? The Bible defines faith in Hebrew 11:1, KJV: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen." However, in the Greek language faith is more like an action, not a substance that is made of something. Watchman Nee (1903-1972), a well known minister of the 20th century, wrote that he spent a life time searching for a good translation of Hebrew 11:1. He felt the closest accuracy was in *The New Translation of J.N. Darby*, "Faith is the substantiating of things hoped for." He stated that he liked this translation because it implies that faith is the making of something real in experience.

He then asks and answers the question, "How do we substantiate something?" To answer this we first need to explain the difference between substances and substantiate. Substance is the real physical matter of which a person or thing consists and which has a tangible solid presence. Substantiating means that I have a certain power or faculty that makes that substance to be real to me. For example, a table in front of me is an object; it has substance. I have senses that allow me to see and touch the table, but if all of my senses are blocked the table becomes nothing to me. However, when my senses are returned, I possess the power to


substantiate. In other words, through my senses I have the power to provide evidence to support or prove to myself the truth that the table exists. Substantiating means that I have the power, in this case by my senses, to make the table true to me and to give it reality in my consciousness.

This is the same when we consider the cross. If we do not believe the facts of the cross they still remain as real as ever, but they are valueless to us. We do not need to have faith in the cross to make what happened with Jesus on the cross to be real, they are real regardless of whether we believe or not. But faith can substantiate that fact and make it real in our experience. Whatever contradicts the truth of God's Word we are to regard as the devil's lie, not because it may not be in itself a very real fact to our senses, but because God has stated a greater fact before which the lie must yield. This is what by faith means.



Faith

A Biblical example is recorded in Luke Chapters 1-2. These chapters give the account of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and her miraculous experiences. She was visited by an angel and told she would conceive the savior of the world. She visited her cousin, Elizabeth, who called her blessed and the mother of our Lord. She listened to the testimony of the shepherds who told of the heavenly celebration the night Jesus was born. Then there is one very important fact shared about Mary, “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart” (2:19, NIV). Mary held the truth of God’s Words and made it real to her.

By faith is taking God’s Word and making it real to us. If, we refuse to accept as truth anything that contradicts God’s Word and maintain an attitude of faith in Jesus alone, we shall find instead that Satan’s lies begin to dissolve and that our life experiences progressively align with God’s Word. It is our focus on Christ that has this result. This is what Paul meant in what he wrote to the Galatians 4:19, KJV: “I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.” Faith is “substantiating”, God’s facts; and faith is always the “substantiating” of eternal fact, of something eternally true. 

Resource: The Normal Christian Life – Watchman Nee

I travail in birth again until

CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU
Galatians 4:19, KJV





Dear Valued Reader,

If you have never participated in Operation Christmas Child (OCC) before it is our prayer that you will consider filling a shoe box this holiday season, and if you have done so in the past we "thank you" and it is our prayer that you will continue! When children reach the age of 14 they are no longer allowed to receive shoe boxes and so this powerful witnessing tool may never reach children beyond that age and, consequently, limits their opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Boys Ages 10-14
receive the least amount of shoe boxes

Therefore, we ask and strongly encourage our congregation and readers to focus on filling this year's shoe boxes for that demographic so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ may reach these young men before they age out of the OCC program.

For ideas on what to pack visit:

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/what-goes-in-my-shoebox-suggestions/>

COVID-19 UPDATES

Build a Shoebox Online:

https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/buildonline/?utm_source=buildonline&utm_medium=direct&ver=1.2

"At this time there are no changes as to what can and can't be packed in shoebox gifts this year.

We encourage you to continue visiting this page for the latest updates" at:

<https://www.samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child/covid-19>

Complimentary shoe boxes may be picked up at the display table in the Hospitality Room while supplies last!

Janet and I are looking forward to joining our resources with all of you in a unified effort to bless children around the world and share the Good News of Jesus Christ with them and their families!

In Love & In Christ...Mike & Janet Spry



ON THE INSIDE COVERS

Inside Front: Baby Aerielle is picture perfect during Parking Lot Fellowship following her Christening ceremony on 08/22/21.
Photography By: Michael R. Spry © 2021

Inside Back: Michelle Dirickson blesses the congregation with her angelic voice during Praise & Worship on 07/18/21.
Photography By: Michael R. Spry © 2021

COLUMBIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

8516 Thomas Williams Way
P.O. Box 2292
Columbia, MD 21045

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

EVERY SUNDAY:

10:00 AM Church School (All Ages)
11:00 AM Meditation & Prayer
11:15 AM Morning Worship

COMMUNION SERVICE:

1st Sunday of Every Month

EVERY WEDNESDAY:

Noon-Day Prayer 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Noon-Day Bible Study 12:00 PM - 01:00 PM
Evening Prayer 07:30 PM - 08:00 PM
Evening Bible Study 08:00 PM - 09:00 PM

1st & 3rd WEDNESDAYS:

Youth Bible Study 07:00 PM - 08:00 PM

GENERAL INFORMATION

CARE & COMFORT MINISTRY

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columbiamdcareandcomfort@gmail.com

CHURCH CONTACTS

Phone: 410-465-7040 / Fax: 410-465-0943
Church Website: www.columbiaccmd.org

CHURCH LIBRARY

Open Every Sunday 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM and after service until 2:00 PM