

The Solid Rock

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.
When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found,
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand
All other ground is sinking sand,



Dear Readers



Identity is a word that we hear often in our world today. Mostly we hear about identity theft where someone takes your identity (your social security number or a credit card) and uses it as his/her own. We also hear the word used within the context of defining a person's identity.

Psalm 139 says that we each were personally formed by God inside of our mother's womb. We are unique when we are born. Then things that we do or that happen to us in our life add to our birth identity.

When I was born my identity was my name, which represented the family I was born into. Then as I grew older, my identity became different because of those things I associated myself with whether in school or in sports or in music.

Our identity is also very much seen by our friends. My identity changed when I married my best friend and got a new last name, a new identity as his wife, and then as the years passed I received another identity as mother of our five children. About three years ago I took on still another identity when my son married. I became a mother-in-law. And by the time you read this I will have another identity of grandma! I'm very much looking forward to becoming a grandmother to my grandchildren.

But by far the most radical change of identity that ever occurred in my life happened when I by faith placed my trust in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, as my Savior. The Bible says I became "a new creation." Wow! What an identity change. Over the years I've studied more and more the change that has occurred because of salvation in my life. The list is humbling to say the least. My real identity is totally who I am in Jesus Christ. I am now...

A Child of God (Romans 8:16)

Saved by Grace through Faith (Ephesians 2:8)

Redeemed from the Hand of the Foe (Psalm 107:2)

An Heir of Eternal Life (1 John 5:11-12)

Forgiven (Ephesians 1:7)

Led by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14)

A New Creature (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Redeemed from the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13)

Kept in Safety Wherever I Go (Isaiah 46:4)

Living by Faith and Not by Sight (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Rescued from the Dominion of Darkness (Colossians 1:13)

Justified (Romans 5:1)

An Heir of God and Co-Heir with Christ (Romans 8:17)

Blessed with Every Spiritual Blessing (Ephesians 1:3)

An Overcomer by the Blood of the Lamb and the Word of My Testimony (Revelation 12:11)

The Salt of the Earth, the Light of the World (Matthew 5:13-14)

An Imitator of God (Ephesians 5:1)

Healed by His Wounds (1 Peter 2:24)

Being Transformed by the Renewing of My Mind (Romans 12:2)

Heir to the Blessings of Abraham (Galatians 3:14)

Doing All Things through Christ who Gives me Strength (Philippians 4:13)

More than a Conqueror (Romans 8:37)

—Miriam Lofquist, Editor

Memorial Gift



In memory of Eston Gillett
By his wife Gladys Gillett



The New You



When you first realize that your spouse has departed his or her body, you enter a state of shock. No matter how expected the death, you are traumatized. Suddenly everything about your life, as you have known it, has changed. Whether your union was happy or tolerated, whether you were married for decades or days, you are in shock.

Somehow you make the phone calls and funeral arrangements. Somehow you get through the service, and everyone says how well you are doing. You feel numb, probably from sensory shut-down. Then the relatives go back home, and the flowers die, and the casserole dishes are returned, and you have to continue living—on your own. In the words of an Edna St. Vincent Millay poem: "life must go on—I forget just why."

After the shock subsides, your senses wake back up, and you wish they wouldn't. Memories keep you from sleeping at night. Decision overload prevents you from focusing—you stand in the cereal aisle and absolutely cannot decide which box to buy. At times your heart hurts so much, you look up a cardiologist, suspecting that you have some awful disease. Other times you realize you are angry, but at whom? At your mate because he or she left? At your fragmented self because you can't keep it all together? Or maybe at God?

Along with all that, you wonder, *Who am I now?* You grieve over not being needed by a close companion. No one else wants to hear about your day like your spouse used to. Those "inside jokes" you shared must be put away because your history together is now a closed book. And why cook for only one?

If you and your mate were in business or ministry together, the identity crisis has further complications. A business man whose wife did the books or ran the office feels lost without her. He'd rather sell the business than train a new worker, or workers—it would take several to replace his wife. A widow whose husband had been a minister may suddenly feel like she's been fired.

When this happened to my best friend at the age of 47, she kept reminding herself, "I'll get through this; I'll get through this." She did, and so will you. But at this point you may not even want to get through it, because you fear that moving on means you will forget about your mate or lose the love you have. Being happy without him/her feels traitorous.

It takes time to figure out your new identity. It takes even longer to accept it. Our writers know about your struggles—about the maze you are in—because they got lost in it too at one time. Let what they have written in this issue help to point the way for you.

—Marcia Hornok, Managing Editor

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Jaca DePriest, leader of the widow ministry at Bell Shoals Baptist Church in Brandon, Florida, has organized a widows' conference meant to spread hope and information for widows of other churches and their leaders. The 2009 "Tis So Sweet Widow Conference" will be held at the church Thursday through Saturday, October 1-3. It will feature special talks on legal questions, grief issues and advice on beginning new relationships. The program is open to widows of all ages. One of our writers for this issue, Verdell Davis (Krisner), will be a featured speaker. Call the church at 813-689-4229 x314 to request a brochure.



WHO AM I?

I used to be the wife and helpmate of a wonderful, godly man.
 But he's gone, for good.
 He's in the room Christ prepared for him in heaven.
 But I'm still here...without him.
 It hurts.
 I miss him.
 He was my buddy.
 I'm tempted to ask God, "Why?"
 But I choose to stand firm in my faith.
 I choose to become trusting, childlike.
 I won't question God's motives, His judgment,
 sovereignty or His love for me.
 For I know His ways are not my ways.
 And His ways are righteous.
 I will trust in His master plan. I will rest in His loving arms.
 I will draw on His strength. I will lean on His promises.
 I won't ask, "Why?" I will ask expectantly, "How?"
 "How will You use his death for Your glory?"
 "How can I best serve You through my widowhood?"
 "How can I point my children toward You as their
 perfect Father?"
 "How can I let go and trust You to meet my every need?"
 Moment by moment I will ask, "How?"
 And I will wait patiently and silently for His answers

with a thankful heart.
 Thankful for the love of a wonderful man; many never
 experience such a love.
 Thankful for the time I had with him and the way he
 nurtured my relationship with God.
 Thankful that I have never had to wonder where my best
 friend is now.
 Thankful that an awesome God would choose me to bear
 witness of His strength.
 Thankful that God understands my pain and is here to
 comfort me.
 "My God, I know who You are.
 You're the one who brought us together. You joined the
 two of us into one.
 You know that when my husband died, I became a half.
 But through my halfness, Your love makes me whole.
 I know who I am.
 I am a widow in mourning,
 But I am whole.
 For I am a beloved child of Yours."

—Patti McCarthy (Broderick), *written May 1995,
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 4, Number 4, used with permission.*

Books to Help You Heal

Patti McCarthy is an engineer, a graduate of the Air Force Academy, and a homemaker who reared three children. While living in Germany she and her husband held Bible studies for women and couples. After being transferred to Italy, her pilot/husband, Mark McCarthy, age 31, was killed when his F-16 went down in the Adriatic Sea. She wrote her experiences in a book:

He Said, "Press": Hearing God Through Grief is more than a book to help you endure your grief and loss. Through its moving poetry, transparent wrangling with God and

practical insights, this book will challenge you to give God dominion over every aspect of your anguish. Only then will you see how He is able to use your grief for His eternal purposes. A Note from Patti follows.

Dear Friend,
 As I look back over the events of my life, they seem surreal, as though I am reading a novel about someone else's life. The pain that was once an unbearably deep sucking chest wound is now only a memory of that pain.

Although God undoubtedly used time to mend that



wound, the real healing came from God's very presence. During a time when He dealt me a blow that sent me reeling on my heels, He was also there to catch me as no one else could have. But I had to trust Him when He seemed least trustworthy.

During my emotional tumble, I held tighter and listened more intently to God than I ever had before. Like a child with his face pressed up against a window, I sought to find God in the midst of my confusion and understand what He was seeing. The joy He brought in my life and the hope His truths infused in my soul are a testimony that He is worth listening to.

I did not do things right all the time, but each time I chose to press into the Right One, the evidence of His power mounted. I am convinced that if psychiatrists could harness the contentment I found by pressing into God, it would be their most prescribed drug. But it is not as easy as swallowing a pill. It is a day-to-day struggle to overcome our own flesh and seek God.

Loss of Identity

One who lost a mate wrote, "to be a widow is pure humiliation." James 1:27 uses the word "affliction." In Lamentations, Jerusalem is compared to widowhood: "How solitary lies the city, once so full of people! Once great among the nations, now becomes a widow." The comparison involves a stepping down, vast emptiness, humiliation.

One has little or no preparation for widowhood—one of life's most difficult and challenging tasks. It can be a lonely experience, like moving down an ever-darkening tunnel. Trusting the Lord often gives only a tiny glimmer of hope in the darkness. One widow remarked, "You suddenly feel as if the train has kept going but the car you are on has been shunted on a siding."

The frightening thing is being bereft of an identity. It feels shameful, especially if your life had been a supporting role for your husband's ministry or business.

Each new stage in the experience must be accepted for what it contributes to inner growth. Pain either draws us closer to God or embitters us. Oswald Chambers wrote,

This book will not answer all or most of the questions you may be struggling with now. Rather, it was written as a beginning, to point you to the One who does have all the answers, the Mighty Comforter, the Great I Am.

This is a testimony of my walk through some rough roads of life while continually attempting to lean on the Great Comforter, to trust Him and to bathe myself in the living waters of His Word.

It chronicles my journey as I have tried to get off the throne and let God be God, to free Him to work powerfully in my life, as only He can do. Let Him hold you as He longs to do as you press into His loving, capable arms.

For more information or to order Patti's book go to www.hesaidpress.com

"If your cup is pleasant, be thankful; if your cup is bitter, drink it in communion with God." Resting in the Lord does not depend on outward circumstances but on one's relationship to Christ.

As time goes by, one gains a clearer understanding that death is universal, not a punishment from God. Sickness and death come to all. There were problems before and there are problems now. My identity lies with the thousands about me who have also lost their loved one—who are also left "alone." As I have been comforted by those who have already experienced this loss, I can now comfort others who follow after.

—Nila Rae Phelps, *Editor Emeritus, Reprinted from CF December 1996, (Vol. 4, Num. 4) pg. 6*



Rebuilding was not Abandoning

After nearly 35 years of marriage, my journey through the maze of grief toward the goal of healing began by accepting the fact that my loved one was never going to return. Every day brought a fresh realization that she wasn't coming back from a trip out of town or from running an errand. It was final. I was now a "single," a "widower."

At first I did not like to hear these words, but I found that accepting them helped me heal from the inside out. These words gave me opportunities to relate to others who had lost a mate. Listening to them and sharing my story with them did not take away the pain. But every time I talked about the joy, delight, and blessing that Helen Jean was as a wife, mother, and servant of the Lord, I sensed healing. It really was the means of helpful, healing change. I came to understand the words that described my state of being alone as a blessing and not a curse.

I had to learn that rebuilding was not abandoning. I know that some refuse to accept the thought of rebuilding

a new life because they are afraid to let go. To them, letting go means forgetting or dishonoring the memory of their loved one. Some think that the only way to honor their loved one's memory is to live a life of sorrow, remaining in perpetual mourning. This kind of thinking is neither biblical nor spiritual.

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Some time ago a woman who lost her mate shared with me that a doctor advised her to "wear her memories like a necklace." That gives the idea of choosing to adorn one's life with the beautiful memories of the loved one, without those memories becoming a heavy yoke of bondage.

Rebuilding a new life does not mean you have forsaken or forgotten your loved one. It's not either/or. We do not have to choose between living again and remembering our loved one. I realized that the best way to honor Helen Jean's memory would be to live with an affirmative outlook. This would both encourage my children and remind others of the unconditional love and appreciation for life that she demonstrated in life and in death. Therefore, her legacy could live on for generations.

Yes I did emerge from the maze of grief, forever changed. Change hurts, change helps, and change heals.

—Bill Lake, *Biblical Ministries Worldwide*

The peace of God means the absence of conflict with the will of God. It means harmony within, concord with His purpose for our lives. Only Christ Himself, who slept in the boat in the storm and then spoke calm to the wind and waves, can stand beside us when we are in a panic and say to us Peace. It will not be explainable. It transcends human understanding. And there is nothing else like it in the whole wide world.

—Elisabeth Elliott,
from her book, *All That Was
Ever Ours*, used with permission.



FROM GOD'S WORD

That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope (Romans 15:4).

If you have trusted in Jesus Christ for forgiveness and eternal life, then your identity is found in Ephesians 1:1-14. To discover it, do the following exercises to the Scripture passage:

- Draw a box around all words about you. Include: you, us, we, our, etc.
- Use a color to highlight all words that tell what we are or what we have.
- Draw a triangle on all words about God, including He, Him, His.
- Draw a cross on all references to Jesus Christ
- Circle the word, "praise"
- Use a different color to highlight references to God's pleasure / will / plan / purpose.

- To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:
- Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.
- For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love
- He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will--
- to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves.
- In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace
- that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.
- And He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ,
- to be put into effect when the times will have reached

their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one Head, even Christ.

- In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will,
- in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory.
- And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,
- Who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of His glory.

Now you are ready to answer these questions:
List what you are called in verses 1, 5, 11, 14 _____

Read over what you highlighted in "b" (above). Finish this sentence (make it as long as you like): Because of God's love, pleasure, grace, wisdom, understanding, and glory, I am _____

According to verses 5, 6, 7-8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, why does God do all this for you? _____

Now do what verses 3, 6, 12, and 14 speak of and give praise to God. You might even sing "The Doxology" or other praise songs to Him. _____



Who Am I, Anyway?

When my wife Polly died after her long illness, one of the changes for which I found myself least prepared was that of adjusting to my new identity. For nearly 32 years, since our last year in college together, I had been her husband. And for the nearly 20 years of her decline with a neurodegenerative illness I had also been her caregiver. Both of these identities had been forged through sharing life experiences, both the pleasant and the painful, none of which I would ever forget. There was a certain comfortableness and familiarity, an unconscious way of living that defined who we both were over the course of many years. Now, that is all past.

I'm told that when one has not only been spouse but also caregiver for a long period of time, the adjustment process takes longer than usual. I'm not sure why, but I think it's probably true. As caregiver, you have not only been a friend and companion in life, but you have literally been an extension of their person. You have dressed them, bathed them, carried them, fed them. You have done everything for them that they could not do for themselves. During the many years of caring for my wife (including the eleven years she resided in a nursing home), when someone asked me what I did, I told them what my work was, but in my mind and heart I said, "I really take care of my wife—that's what I do—that's who I am."

This is unusual for a husband. They say that whereas most women find their primary identity in their relationships, most men find their identity in what they do in life. They're an auto mechanic, an insurance agent, a teacher, etc. But in my case, I became more and more defined by who I was to my wife. Her survival depended on my vigilant care.

This was so ingrained in my heart that during the initial days after she died, I found myself unconsciously driving to her nursing home. I had to remind myself that *I don't do that anymore. I'm not her husband now. I'm no longer her caregiver.* That much I was beginning to realize. But the big question was, "Then who am I, anyway?" I knew who I wasn't, but I wasn't sure who I was. It's a very unsettling place to be.

It didn't take long for me to realize that though I was still a father to my adult children, and a minister and chaplain in a hospital, I was now a single male at mid-life. In my quieter

moments a whole new set of questions flooded my mind. *How do I do this single thing? How do I relate to married couples? How do I relate to other single people? Where do I fit in life?*

Many people, especially men, are so uncomfortable with their identity as a single person that they seek another spouse as soon as possible. The Lord does often provide someone as a new life companion, but in my case, I have felt that the Lord wants me to take time to become comfortable with who I am now as a single male. And it does take time. It takes time growing through the uncomfortableness of being alone, of learning to navigate life and relationships as a single person.

It is a learning process, asking God to give me the faith and courage to embrace my new identity—trusting in the God of hope who has a purpose for all the remaining days of my life. And doing it day by day...week by week...month by month...year by year...until this new way of life becomes a "new normal" as they say. After almost six years now since my wife's passing, I can see that God has certainly been faithful in shepherding me through this new season of life.

But I've also been learning something more significant about the nature of our identity as persons—and that is that though we fill many roles, and sustain many wonderful relationships, there is only one that is an unchanging constant—our relationship with God as His child and friend through faith in Jesus Christ. Every other temporal role can be lost, and eventually will be. Every other human relationship can be changed or suspended or broken.

Being single again at mid-life has given me the opportunity of realizing that though my God-given roles and relationships are to be highly valued and received as gifts of God's grace, and though God does use them in shaping my identity, none of them can really bear the burden of defining my core identity. Only God is big enough to do that. Perhaps this is one reason why He allows us to suffer losses in life, for they can become the occasion for rooting our identity more deeply and completely in Him and His unique purpose for the remaining days of our lives.

—Rick Rood, May 2009



Putting Truth into Practice

For most of my life I have been able to read the Bible, apply it to my life and go merrily on my way. Not anymore. I would rather learn about God through reading the Bible than through experiences. I'd rather read the book of James, not live it. That's not the way it works, however. We can study a subject but eventually we have to put it into practice. God isn't "testing" me to see if I can pass or not. He's giving me the opportunity to put His truth into practice, to show what I know.

I used to quote Romans 10:28 without much thought. I liked that verse, but James 1:2-4 scared me. It still does. "Consider it all joy my brethren when you encounter various trials knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

You see, one year ago my husband left for work and was in a car accident a block from our house. He was in a coma for a week and then he was dead. (I could have said "gone" but the truth is that he is dead not just gone.) He was 46 years old and we have three children. Daniel is now 14, Michael is 12 and Kara is 9.

It has caused me to rethink everything. Steven Curtis Chapman puts it so well in his song "Yours," which affirms that everything belongs to God. He added a fourth stanza after the accidental death of his five-year-old daughter Maria. It talks about experiencing great darkness, but God's comfort and hope still break through when we realize we belong to God.

From the time I arrived on the scene and saw my husband on the stretcher, I started praying that the children and I would stay close to God and close to each other. God is answering that prayer, but I am still overwhelmed that I'm raising these kids alone! I also struggle with my identity. How many times in one life do I have to do this? Who am I now? Of the many titles that could apply to me, I am a college graduate, a "Texan" (by birthplace), a mother, a landscape designer, a divorcee, a real estate appraiser, a lover of horses, a single mom, a head of household, a widow....These are all circumstances that have happened to me. But they are not who I am. The only title that I care about is that I am a child of God.

As a child of God I get to sit at His feet and worship Him. He will help me through every challenge that I face. He felt it necessary to tell us that He would never leave us or for-

sake us, which means that we're going to go through things that would cause anyone else to leave us and forsake us.

The question God asks is, "Am I enough?" It's a hard question. He's all I have. He is the perfect father for my children and He will give me the wisdom I need to parent them each day (James 1:5). As a child of God, I am learning to let Him be enough.

—Barbara Leitch

How Do We Measure A Man

Must a man's age be measured in years?
Must birthdays mark his time since birth?
Must grey hair, wrinkled skin and faltering steps
Have anything to do with how much he's really worth?
Must degrees and titles, honors and achievements
Be the way we measure the worth of a man?
Or is there a better way?

A barrel is judged, not by the age of its wood,
But by the quality of the wine it holds.
A wire is measured, not by the age of its covering,
But by the size of the current than can flow at its core.
The worth of a book is based, not on the cover,
But by what has been written on its pages.
A man too is measured, not by his years,

When his body aches, his joints scream, his eyes dim,
His hair grays, his steps grow insecure.
A man is measured by his spirit, by his grit, by his cheer.
A man's spirit dares and conquers, loves and is loved.
Measure not by time, but by the man within:
For in my spirit, I am lank and lean, keen of eye,
Sure of step. I can conquer mountains high,
Valleys low and deserts dry.
I am who I am when measured by my inner man.

—Don Booth



Finding My Own Identity

“Now you will have to find your own identity,” wrote a friend soon after my husband’s passing. Those words not only hurt but aroused a certain anger in me. *I am myself!* I thought.

So I continued on with life in my own ministries of mother, grandmother, teacher, etc. but soon discovered I didn’t feel the same support or have approval from anyone significant. When I came home each day there was no one to report to or pat me on the back.

on a new ministry or go on a scary trip, I could imagine God saying, “You can do it. I will be your husband.”

Even though change is extra hard when you are older, I am indebted to my friend for writing that statement to me. It started me down the road of self-acceptance. It is no easy adjustment for anyone at any age when roles in life are changed. The first few years of widowhood are especially difficult as we struggle to establish new ways of thinking and doing.

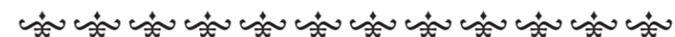
Proverbs 3:5-6 tell us to trust in the Lord with all our heart and not lean on our own understanding. There’s the rub! We want to understand, but God wants our trust. I can’t explain how this happened in my heart and mind, step by step. I just know that during the seven years since my husband’s death, a loving God worked through His Word and enabled me to crawl out of the pit of doubt as I claimed His promises as my own.

—Evelyn Christophersen

*I literally stopped
in my tracks one day
when I found myself asking,
“Where are you God?”*

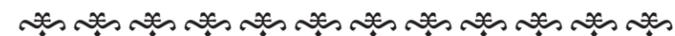
The most shocking thing I found was that I had no faith of my own—I had been using my husband’s faith. He took the risks; he stepped out on faith, and I followed, sometimes complaining. I literally stopped in my tracks one day when I found myself asking, “Where are you God?” The next question was, “Who am I, God?” My identity at that time was that of a lonely, fearful woman! I was stunned into realizing that I had been living in the shadow of my husband, quoting him at every turn, trusting in him instead of God. I thought about Jacob, who had always prayed to “the God of Abraham and Isaac” and then finally in his later years, called Him “the Mighty God of Jacob.”

One day in reading Psalm 139 I saw myself anew as a unique person that God had made. No one else had my exact personality, gifts or DNA. When challenged to take



We can know Who He is when we don’t have
a clue what He’s doing.

—Beth Moore



One or the other must leave,
One or the other must stay.
One or the other must grieve;
That is forever the way.
That is the vow that was sworn,
Faithful till death do us part.
Braving what had to be borne,
Hiding the ache in the heart.
One, how-so-ever adored,
First must be summoned away.
That is the will of the Lord;
One or the other must stay.

—Anonymous



EDITOR’S NOTE: On June 28, 1987, four Christian leaders from Dallas, returning from a Focus on the Family retreat in Montana, were killed when their airplane crashed. One was Creath Davis, senior pastor of Park City Baptist Church. Creath’s wife, Verdell, not only lost her husband but also lost part of her identity: No longer was she a pastor’s wife, and no longer was she sure she could trust God. She felt like she was in...

A Storm Too Big for God

The lifestorm that blew through my life, forever changing its landscape, came like a rogue wind out of a clear blue sky, leaving destruction in its wake. I was left to pick up the broken pieces and try to put together some sort of existence. At least that’s what I thought I was supposed to do. *This is too big even for God*, I thought. Convinced that life could never be good again, I thrashed about, searching for ways to get through each bleak day. Surviving was the best I could hope for.

But over time I learned that God never intended for us just to survive our losses. Within each lifestorm he plants a seed of new life. He buries it deep within our souls and waits as we grieve our way toward it. As we do, the wound opens to the light of his love and grace, the seed sprouts and hopelessness gives way to new life. So it was with me.

Before June 1987, being a wife of a minister defined my life. We had been married 27 years and were at a good place in life. I loved Creath completely and found contentment in his happiness. But then he was gone. My identity, my dreams, my contentment, my security, my sense of future—all went with him. “Do what you must,” I begged God, “but please get me to the place where I can embrace life again.” I owed this to my kids—and to myself.

Now, more than 10 years later, I feel as if I am standing “on the other side” with Pilgrim in John Bunyan’s classic, *Pilgrim’s Progress*: “Now morning being come, he looked back, not with any desire to return, but to see, by the light of day, what hazards he had gone through in the dark.”

Morning has come to me, and I look back in awe. I still remember the darkness; I can still see the shadows. My crisis of faith was very real, and the hazards were ominous. Even so, in the light I see how God has brought forth a new life and taught me many things:

1 Faith Means Wrestling With Questions When Heaven is Silent

I questioned goodness and tragedy, love and pain, promises and reality. One day I found myself praying, “God, help me look beyond my subjective interpretation of Your promises, and look to You, who made those promises.” In time, even while I still ended my sentences with question marks, I came to believe what my husband had taught: you can trust in the character of God beyond what you understand.

2 Living Without Hope Is Not an Option

Our search for the hope that will restore the will to live must take us to the eternal perspective of God’s redeeming purpose; this world is not the whole story. God’s purpose is not to make us comfortable, but to make us like Himself in character. In our darkest hours, we must cling tenaciously to the hope stored up for us in heaven. This hope allows us to believe that God is doing great work in our suffering.

3 An Exit Is Also an Entrance

Moving ahead demanded that I first let go of what was no longer mine—not only my husband, but also a ministry that had given me fulfillment. It was difficult to open my fists, so tightly clenched around “what was.” But once I did, I was able to finish my journey. And now, on this side of a very dark valley, I can see how God’s intent in our suffering is to refine us and enable us to become, in Henri Nouwen’s phrase, “wounded healers.” For God’s work is not about helping us to merely survive. He is about healing; he is about wholeness.

—Verdell Davis. *To read Verdell’s entire article, in the Google search box, type: More Than Surviving – Verdell Davis. Her excellent book, Let Me Grieve, but Not Forever is published by Thomas Nelson.*



Epiphany

The late Dr. Walter Martin liked to remind people there are only two ways to get to heaven: Plan A – never sin or make a mistake. When you see God, you can tell Him, “Move over; now there are two of us.” Plan B – accept the sacrifice Christ made for your sins when He died on the cross.

Which one sounds right to you?

So how does a person accept Christ’s sacrifice? Many churches teach that it comes through being baptized or confirmed, or receiving sacrament, or walking up a church aisle, or praying a certain prayer.

However, according to the Gospel of John, Jesus told individuals how to believe in Him by using word pictures such as: be born again, drink the living water, come to me, eat my flesh and drink my blood, enter the door, hear my voice and follow me.

Usually Jesus aroused curiosity and then let people discover for themselves that He was the Christ—the

promised Messiah—who could forgive sin. When they believed in Him, they had eternal life. (They followed Plan B!) Read John 3:14-18, 3:36, 5:24, 6:28-40.

For most people, their discovery of who Jesus is and what He did for them is like an “epiphany.” This Greek word means to give light, to appear, become visible, shine upon. It really does have the cartoon implication of a light bulb going on over one’s head.

Titus 3:4-5 states: “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared (epiphanized), not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy, He saved us...”

Perhaps as you read this or looked up the verses, you found yourself thinking: *Oh—so that’s it—Jesus died for my sins. If I put my trust in Him, I will have eternal life like the Bible says. I get it!*

That, my friend, is the epiphany that enables you to respond to Christ and receive the gift of eternal life.

When did the “light bulb” about Christ go on in your thinking? Call us at 1-800-347-1840 if you desire to talk about this further. —MKH

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Solid Rock (Japanese: *ãfãf'4ãf%ãfãffã,* Hard Rock) is an Ability introduced in Generation IV. Solid Rock reduces damage from supereffective moves by $\frac{1}{4}$, regardless of the effectiveness multiplier. Solid Rock has no effect outside of battle. In PokÃ©mon Super Mystery Dungeon, Solid Rock reduces damage from supereffective moves by approximately 1/8. All PokÃ©mon with this Ability have at least one 4Ã— weakness, with Camerupt being the only one not to have a 4Ã— weakness to Grass. We have chosen the best rocksolidarcade.com games which you can play online for free. enjoy!Â These games are developed by rocksolidarcade.com, such as Dogfight The Great War, Dogfight The Great War 2 and Stunt Pilot. You can play these games for free on 4J.Com. When rocksolidarcade.com publishes a new game, our editors will add it to 4J.com so you can play the lasted games. Enjoy! Solid Rock Records is a record label started by Larry Norman. It was established in 1975 to distribute his work after he had been released by Capitol Records. Solid Rock had a distribution deal with Word Records until 1980. The label's roster also included Randy Stonehill, Tom Howard, Mark Heard, Daniel Amos, Pantano & Salsbury (formerly known as the J.C. Power Outlet), and Salvation Air Force). Norman worked with David Edwards, who released his debut album on Myrrh Records in 1980, as well as Steve