



Psalm 27

No More Fear

by

Diane Antunes

Table of Contents

Introduction.....

Dedication.....

Chapter 1: Be Fear-Less.....

Chapter 2: God's Got Your Back.....

Chapter 3: Standing Strong Though War Breaks Out.....

Chapter 4: Oh How I Adore Him!.....

Chapter 5: Eternally Secure.....

Chapter 6: Shouts of Praise.....

Chapter 7: God Answers Every Prayer.....

Chapter 8: Seeking an Intimate Relationship with God.....

Chapter 9: Who Is Hiding From Who?.....

Chapter 10: All You Need.....

Chapter 11: Teach Us Lord.....

Chapter 12: The Enemy's Lie or God's Truth?.....

Chapter 13: You See What You Expect to See.....

Chapter 14: Why Wait?.....

Chapter 15: Free to Give Thanks.....

Closing Thoughts.....

Introduction

A little background about me before we begin this journey through Psalm 27:

Like most people, I had a pretty normal and good life. As I grew up, I had good parents who did their best to provide for me and a good education that led to a good career. As I graduated from college, I met and married the man of my dreams, Joe, and we had two beautiful children, Rebecca my sweet miracle, and Joshua my great joy. We had a lovely home, traveled to wonderful places and enjoyed time with family and friends. As I said, life was good...but then our good, little world was rocked to its core.

As Rebecca was turning five years old- or a “whole hand” as she would say- my Baby Girl began having headaches. Sadly, it was not long before we discovered she had a plumb-sized tumor at the base of her brain and cancer seedlings spread through her Central Nervous System. As she slipped into what would be her first coma, I lifted my eyes to God and found that He was so much closer than I could have ever imagined. It was at this point in my life that I also discovered a “good” life is not what we were created to experience...you see, we are created in the image of our Excellent, Magnificent God and He desires nothing less than an Abundant Life for us. God wants each of us to know He is real, that He really loves us and that, no matter what this world may throw at us, He has a holy plan for our lives. This plan is the Abundant Life, one filled to the overflow with peace and joy, no matter what.

My Angel Pie went through what I call one horrendous miracle after another for the next seven and a half years. Horrendous because they were all horrible and life-threatening. Miracles because, as a pharmacist with some

medical background, I know she should not have lived through one of those episodes much less the countless ones she endured. This was the mighty hand of God in our lives. Every time the doctors would say, "This is her last battle," God would prove them wrong and my Faith would deepen more and more. But, in the end, we were not created to stay in this corrupt, temporary world. On December 21, 2007, Rebecca went to be with our Lord....

As we all always do, I had two choices: run as far away from God as I possibly could or trust Him even as my heart was broken in two. But my Friends, by God's Grace, after trusting God all those years and learning about His unconditional Love for me, my heart was so interwoven with His own heart that I never had to make any choice. I had already surrender every part of me to our Loving God and knew He would not abandon me no matter how the circumstances might appear. I am and will always be His! And I have a deep reassurance that my Angel Pie is in His arms right now, rooting me on in life until the day that we are reunited forevermore.

Please understand, this is not wishful thinking. This is not a belief I "have to" have so that I can endure life. This is a confident assurance in our God Who is Faithful. He truly is The Way, The Truth and The Life. I have experienced way too many miraculous things in these past 17 years since I surrendered my heart to Jesus that it would actually be crazy not to believe every word from the Holy Bible. I have seen the unseeable, heard the inaudible, and known the unknowable. It is so very difficult to explain, but in the end Faith cannot be physically proven, it must be experienced.

It is with this Hope that I write. To encourage you to began or deepen your own real relationship with our Marvelous Father Who loves you more than you can ever know this side of Heaven, a Humble Savior Who has given all that He is to help you know this rich Love and a Sustaining Holy Spirit Who is always available to guide and lead you into the Abundant Life filled with this amazing Love. The hard things that happen to you in this life do NOT define God's Love for you! His Love goes above and beyond anything this world holds. Won't you let God pour out His blessings upon you by nurturing this awesome, personal relationship *with* the Father *in* Christ *through* the Holy Spirit? I know every time I center on God's miraculous Love, my life becomes more and more abundant. Do you want that too? Then won't you join me?

Dedication



To my Baby Girl who will forever be my Angel Pie.
May everything I do bring God the highest glory,
bring your sweet life the greatest honor
and be an eternal blessing to everyone
God places in my life!

Chapter 1

Be Fear-Less

Hi Friends,

My favorite Psalm in all the Bible has to be Psalm 27. There are so many lessons we can glean from the simple words of King David that makes this heartfelt song a true treasure. I'd love to break it down verse by verse so we can learn some important points to the victorious Christian Life. After all, we were each created to have, enjoy and share the Abundant Life which has its roots in the Bible and its fulfillment in our personal relationship with Jesus our Lord and Savior. Listen to verse one:

“The Lord is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?” Psalm 27:1 NIV

As we nurture our relationship with God and grow in the Spirit, the little things that used to steal our joy and destroy our peace should no longer do so. It's kind of like lifting weights. When you first start, five pounds seems like a lot, but once you get accustomed to it, it's not a big deal anymore so you move on to ten pounds, then twenty, and so on. The more mature we are in Christ, the less fear rules over us because we can handle the lesser things as we get more grounded on what His Word promises us. We become freer and freer and so the challenging things of life don't have the same negative effect on us they used to. For this reason among many, I am always advising others to read the Word, to study the Word and to apply the Word to their daily lives.

The more I believe what this powerful verse says, the less I fear whatever this life may throw my way. When life gets dark and I begin to get sad, distressed or discouraged, I remember the Lord is my Light and He brightens my mood. Whenever I start to sense the loss of my daughter, I am reminded that the Lord is my salvation and the thought of being reunited with Rebecca in Paradise fills my heart with hope. When I happen to feel insecure, I recall how God is my stronghold and keeps Me safe, protecting me from ultimate harm. Fear quickly leaves me as it is replaced by the Truth of God's all-encompassing Love. No need to sit in fear for long periods of time, worrying about the uncontrollable things of life because I have His Word, His Promise, His Truth and the more I center my life on it, the less fear controls me. What I am left with is the Abundant Life God desires for me, one in which I can trust Him no matter what.

God's Holy Word is supposed to be powerful, but it can only be so for you if you use it. I hope you will walk through this Psalm with me and really read, study and apply what it says so that, you too, can sense the peaceful joy that only God's Love and Grace can give. And when things try to scare you, you can confidently say, "God is my everything so whom shall I fear!"

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think...

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 2

Go's Got Your Back

Hi Friends,

Let's continue with my favorite Psalm:

“When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.”

Psalm 27:2 NIV

The sad reality of our world is that evil exists. I'm not trying to make anyone paranoid, but the sad reality is that, sooner or later perhaps in pursuit of their own idea of peace and joy, someone is going to come against us and cause conflict in our life. Notice this verse doesn't say "IF" the wicked advance, but "WHEN" they do. So what do we do when someone tries to intentionally hurt us? Like everything else, my Friends, we give them to God trusting that, because He takes care of us, He will "take care" of them too, if you get my meaning.

We all know the saying, "What goes around, comes around," right? Please never give in to the temptation of revenge because God's got your back. As we become more grounded in God's Love, we understand deeper that His Love will bring about justice. We can be sure that God is watching over us and will protect us from any wickedness that attempts to "devour" us. As I said in chapter one, with God, there is no need to fear any enemies, both seen and unseen, because He loves us and, as we live in obedience to His Will, He will use even the schemes of our enemies to help us grow and transform into the image of our Perfect Lord.

Meanwhile what do we do then with these enemies? We forgive them. Forgiving is certainly not condoning! It's not

saying, "Oh it's ok that you are trying to harm me"- that would be foolishness and God doesn't advocate foolishness. Forgiving is recognizing the wrong, but then not allowing their sin to make **you** sin. When we forgive someone's wickedness, we are not letting their actions control our actions. Forgiving is the balance of, knowing the enemy is real but taking the focus off the enemy and placing it on God Who will set all things right. When we forgive, we take back the power the enemy is trying to steal from us.

The more we learn to live our lives trusting God to take care of every aspect of our life, including our enemies, the more readily we will forgive them and, any pain they try to inflict, will fail to harm us. Their evil plans will stumble and fall and we will be better off because we learned to trust the God Who's got our back.

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think...

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 3

Standing Strong Though War Breaks Out

Hi Friends,

Verse three of this powerful Psalm builds on the previous two but shows us one of the results of not fearing and, instead, trusting God, listen:

“Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.” Psalm 27:3 NIV

Did you see it? The word I want to focus on is "confident." What stems from letting go of the fear our enemy is trying to imprison us with by simply trusting God to make all things right, is a steady confidence which helps us live the Abundant Life. When we can learn to be confident as our world seems to be falling apart, then what else will cause us to waver?

This confidence is not based on the situations in our life that are constantly changing. It does not find its roots in fickle human beings, including ourselves. This confidence is founded on God and His never changing character. The Bible says that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Heb 13:8) God will never change, nor does He ever have to because He is Perfect. When something is perfect, why would it need to change? It is because He is always the same and has said He so loves us (see Jn 3:16), that we can always be confident that, if God allows something to happen to us, He

has a loving reason for it. So even if "war breaks out" against us, we can stand strong knowing that God's caring love over us has not been shaken.

Think of the things you can do being this confident! When things don't seem to be going the way you planned, you don't have to give up as you keep seeking His Plan. As things in this world seem to be going from bad to worse, you can continue doing the right thing knowing that God is in control. Even after a great heart break, you will have the ability to keep on living a fulfilling life because that situation won't destroy you. Confidence in our loving God gives us the power we need to move forward and make a difference in this world no matter what this life throws at us...this has certainly been my experience. Would you like your life to eternally impact this fallen world, then won't you join me?

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think...

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 4

Oh How I Adore Him!

Hi Friends,

Here's my favorite verse of my favorite Psalm:

“One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.” Psalm 27:4 NIV

A while after Beckie died, when it seemed like God had forgotten all He promised me, I remember being frustrated and very confused about my life. I began complaining to God about how He wasn't using me to further His Kingdom like He said He would- that I wanted to do more for Him and felt like He wasn't paying any attention to me. That's when He asked me these thought provoking and vital questions, "Child, what if this is all you get? What if I never use you any more than I already have? Will I be enough for you? Will this relationship with Me satisfy you?" You see, God was gently redirecting me back to the center of the whole point to life. As I'm sure you've heard before, we are human BEings, not human DOings, and when we lose sight of that fact, we lose sight of Him.

I believe God's point was to remind me HE IS ENOUGH. When the first and foremost "thing" we seek is Him... to live with Him "all the days" of our lives, to get to know Him deeper and deeper still, to marvel at how beautiful He and all He creates is...my Friends, when God is all we need to have

peace and joy and fulfillment, then we've reached a major turning point in our lives. By His Grace, that little conversation that day many years ago, brought me to the place where I can legitimately say this amazing verse and mean every single word.

What we need to understand is that, when God is all you have, you already have all you need. In other words, as we seek a meaningful relationship with Him, everything else falls into place. Now we don't sit at His feet, gazing at His beauty so we can get something from Him! We do so because we are so enamored by Him that we don't care if He ever gives or does anything else for us every again. We realize He already has done and given everything and so we seek Him, wholeheartedly, with deep gratitude and with complete adoration.

Ahhhh, that's the word: adoration! I absolutely adore my Savior!!! This is why I love this verse so very much. Can you picture it? This is what I see: me sitting at the feet of Jesus, mesmerized by His beauty as I cling to every wisdom filled word He speaks, completely and utterly engrossed and speechless as I simply adore Him. It's my true dream. It's all I deeply desire. It's all I've been praying for...how about you? Do you truly want to experience the Abundant Life? Then right here in this verse is exactly where this life becomes so abundant, won't you join me?

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think...

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 5

Eternal Security

Hi Friends,

One of human's greatest needs is to have a deep sense of security. Listen to what David says about this topic:

“For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock.” Psalm 27:5 NIV

So if God promises to keep me safe, why do I still have so many troubles in my life? If that's what you're asking, I think you need to reread that verse. It does not say God will keep us **from** every trouble, but rather, that He will keep us safe "in the day of trouble." My Friends, we live in a corrupt world filled with down fallen people where an Enemy is not only real, but really evil. We are always going to encounter problems in this world because nothing OF this world is perfect. Either we are going to make a wrong decision that causes us and others pain or someone else will make a bad choice that will cause us and others pain. The one unifying fact of all humans is that we all will experience troubles here. This is not me being pessimistic, just truthful. Troubles are part of this life. As Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble." (Jn 16:33) But as always, with God, there is Good News in spite of the bad.

That verse I quoted above is sandwiched between Hope. Listen to the full verse and be encouraged: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world

you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” Did you hear it? Jesus is telling us that this world will bring trouble, not to discourage us, but to show us where our Hope lies. Even as we begin to understand pain naturally flows from a broken world, we can still have peace in Christ. How? Because Jesus has already overcome this world and all its troubles and when we abide in Him, we can too.

Look again at the verse from Psalm 27. Note that it says God will keep us safe IN HIS DWELLING. That means that when we are God-centered, He will equip us with whatever it is we need to be safe. He will help us gain a new perspective about what is going on in our lives. He will direct our thoughts towards the positive effects that our circumstances can have. He will calm our emotions so we can remain in control of ourselves and be able to make good, godly choices. It is not that He will take away every trouble, but more that He will keep us safe in them as we work with Him, and we will be better off because of the challenges.

How much can we depend on God to keep us safe? Eternally! God has already granted us the gift of everlasting life. Jesus has already made The Way for us to overcome death and live in Paradise forever. The Holy Spirit has already been deposited into our spirit as a guarantee of this inheritance. (Eph 1:14) If He has already done the greater thing, what is the lesser? My Friends, LET God hide you in the shelter of His heart. LET Him lift you up high, encouraging you to face whatever this life may bring. He has and continues to do so for me and longs to give you this constant security too. Do you want it? Then won't you join me?

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think...

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 6

Shouts of Praise

Hi Friends,

I have found that one of the simplest ways to defeat any negativity in my life is to praise our God, even in the midst of the trouble. I think King David agrees, listen:

“Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the Lord.” Psalm 27:6 NIV

Last week, we talked about how God keeps us safe in the troubles that come with this life. As we learn to stay focused on God instead of our troubles, we feel secure in His Grace. We know that, no matter what happens in this life, God loves us and will never allow us to be ultimately destroyed by those circumstances. God's desire is for us to continually deepen our faith in Him, to constantly grow in confidence about how great His Love for us truly is. When we remember these truths, we can sense our spirits being lifted up, exalted above all our troubles. The deeper our trust in God, the higher our spirits get and do you know what our natural response should be then? Yes, praise Him!

Did you notice how the verse talks about "sacrifice" in our praise? Sometimes we must decide to praise God even before our emotions feel like shouting out with joy. What we need to realize is that emotions are not truth. Our feelings are about as steady as a rocking boat in the midst of a huge storm.

Perhaps I am only speaking for myself here but, I have been known (sadly enough) to be super happy one moment and down in the pits the very next! If we wait to praise God when we "feel like it," we very well may never feel like it. Does that mean God doesn't deserve our praise? Certainly not! The truth is, on any given day, our blessings far outweigh anything negative that is going on. And so, since we are to live by truth, we decide to praise God no matter what is going on because He is always worthy of our gratitude...always!

I love music and singing my prayers is only one of the ways I love to praise my God. May I give you a challenge this week? Set aside a time every day, perhaps right before you go to sleep, to sing a song of thanks to God. You just might wake up the next morning "feeling" exalted above all the circumstances your day will bring. Think about it, you'll have that many more things to sacrifice with shouts of joy to the Lord! What a lovely cycle of love and gratitude to live in. It's certainly the way I want to live, how about you? Then won't you join me?

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think...

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 7

God Answers Every Prayer

Hi Friends,

Another deep seeded human need is to know we are being heard. Let's continue our study with Psalm 27:

“Hear my voice when I call, Lord; be merciful to me and answer me.” Psalm 27:7 NIV

It comforts me to no end to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that I can cry out to God at any moment and He will hear and answer all of my prayers. Did you know that there is never a time when God does not answer us? While He might not answer the way we want Him to, God answers every prayer. There are four ways He answers us: direct, deny, different and delay.

Direct. This is the way we would love for God to answer every request, with a simple and quick, "Yes!" When our heart aches for something and God grants it, our faith can soar to the heavens. But if we really think about it, an affirmative is not the best way to mature us, is it? If we get everything WE want, the moment WE want it, how can we grow in perseverance, endurance and hope, for instance. While getting what we want may be good some times, it is not the best thing for us. We become spoiled children of entitlement and that's not the maturity that will transform us into the perfect image of Jesus. It's actually quite the opposite. It leads us further away from being like Him.

Deny. "No" is an answer. Of course this is the one answer we never want to hear. What we need to realize though is that Father really does know best. Because God is Omniscient (All Knowing), He knows what requests will actually cause us lasting harm in the long run and so He denies our prayer for our own good. Again because He knows everything, He will often allow certain things into our lives to realign our prayers so that they will be what He Wills for our lives. Then as we pray for His Will to be done, He can answer with a "Yes!" This is one way we grow in faith, trusting that, if God says "No," it is because He has a better plan.

Different. This answer goes hand in hand with direct and denial. This is when God says "Yes, but not that way" because our way would end up causing more problems. The Bible says that God's ways are higher than ours and that is simply because He sees things in terms of eternity while we view them according to this temporary world. What seems right to us can actually be the worse thing for us. Again trust comes into play here. We have to believe that God, not only knows what is best for us, but also knows how best to proceed to accomplish that good.

Delay. Finally we have the "Yes but not yet" answer. Certainly not one of my favorites and yet one that has been so beneficial to me. Patience was never my forte, but God has patiently grown me to the point where I am not stamping my feet when I don't get what I want when I want it.

What a freedom to be able to say, "Here I am, Lord, whenever You want, wherever You want, however You want!" I call this the Gethsemane Moment, you know where Jesus said, "Not My will but Yours be done." This is the whole point, isn't it? To transform us into the perfect image of Jesus, so we can have steady peace and joy whichever way God chooses

to answer our prayer. To be more and more like Jesus is certainly my goal in life, how about you? Then won't you join me?

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think...

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 8

Seeking an Intimate Relationship with God

Hi Friends,

Let me ask you a question: how intimate is your relationship with God? Now allow me to give you the answer: it is as intimate as you want it to be. Please understand, God will never force His Love and Presence upon us- we have to want to be close to Him. How close? That's all up to you. Listen to what David, a man of God said:

“My heart says of you, ‘Seek his face!’ Your face, Lord, I will seek.” Psalm 27:8

This verse speaks about wanting a personal, intimate relationship with the Lord. You see, King David knew how vital it was to every aspect of his life for him to know God as a close, dear Friend. He knew there is no greater quest in this life than to know God as intimately as humanly possible. When we seek someone's face, we are getting extremely personal. I get a lovely vision of a child gently caressing his mother's face from forehead to chin as if to memorize every part of it. This is what the verse is talking about, to seek God's face is to know and recognize all His intricate features.

Why "seek"? Because He is not like anything in this world- we have to be purposeful in getting to know Him. Because a casual glance would never be able to capture His grandeur- God is so majestic it will probably take all eternity to know Him completely. Because we must want to be with Him- the

amount of time and effort we put into nurturing our relationship will be the measure of how deep the relationship can become. I will say it again, we will know Jesus as much as we *want* to know Him.

It is His pleasure to reveal Himself to us. For this reason He came to this broken world. For this reason He has given us the Bible. For this reason He creates the beauty of the changing seasons, the giggling laughter of a child, the rainbow after the rain and so on and so on. All so we can desire to know the God Who is Beauty itself. Seek Him and you will find Him because our Father wants nothing less than to have the most intimate relationship we will allow ourselves to have with Him.

While I cannot see God with my eyes, hear Him with my ears, smell Him, touch Him or taste Him with any other of my five senses, my relationship with God remains by far the greatest relationship I have ever had. It has been the source of my joy even in my agony, the peace of my heart even in the midst of confusion and the only thing that has kept me moving forward no matter what obstacle presents itself. And the more I seek Him, the more real, intimate and personal this amazing relationship gets. For this reason, it is my deepest prayer to know Him and to make Him known. Do you want to know that kind of unchanging joy and peace in your life? Then won't you join me?

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think!

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 9

Who Is Hiding From Who?

Hi Friends,

Have you ever noticed that when we are going through difficult things, we tend to think that God has abandoned us? We all do this, listen to David's words:

“Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior.” Psalm 27:9 NIV

The truth is that God promises over and over again never to leave us nor forsake us, so why do we feel this way at times? Sometimes in life, situations can seem so dark that we cannot see any light around us, but I believe it is because we are looking in the wrong direction. Often what happens is that the trial becomes so overwhelming that it draws our eyes to it, taking our eyes off of our God. The choice we face is always either to focus on the hard circumstance OR on God Who always has a purpose for whatever is happening. As we learn to lift our eyes back to Him, the Light begins to overtake the darkness and we will find that God is right where He has always been, on His throne watching over us and, in reality, He never did turn away from us.

You see, God is Perfect so He never changes- when something is perfect there is no need for it to change, right? It is we who turn away from Him, and when we don't sense God's Presence, we wrongly think He has left us. Picture it

like this: you are standing in front of something that doesn't move, like your home for instance, then you begin to turn a little to the right then a little more then a little more and so on until you no longer can see the house anymore. Would it be right to say to the house, "Why have you hidden yourself from me?" No, of course not, but this is what we do to God all the time. We turn from Him by lowering our eyes onto the problems of this world or blatantly onto some temptation or other, then we sense the darkness and think God has left us.

But this is the mentality one would expect from children, isn't it? After all, the problem couldn't possibly be "me," could it? No, it must be God Who has rejected me and hidden His face from me. It is only as we mature that we realize it is "me" who has changed, not God, regardless of what it feels like. I've said it before but I will risk repeating myself because it is vital for us to understand: feelings are not truth! They change as quickly as the weather, if not faster. As we grow spiritually, we learn to base our actions more and more on the truth instead of what we "feel like" at any particular time. As we mature we see that God's Word is the Truth and filter our understanding by what He says, not what we feel.

What helps us each and every time is to remember God's promises. As we recall all the times God has been our helper. As we remind ourselves that He is God our Savior. As we memorize verses like Jos 1:5, hope begins to well up inside of us. I have found that this hope redirects my eyes back on God and that changes everything for good. Would you like to experience that more and more, no matter what life throws at you? Then won't you join me?

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think...

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 10

All You Need

Hi Friends,

Let's continue with the amazing Psalm 27:

“Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.” Ps 27:10

Think of the worse case scenario for you as a child. Would it not be to be abandoned by your parents, the two people who are supposed to love you and support you and provide for you more than anyone else on earth? Sadly, this is the reality for way too many children in our fallen world today for various reasons and to varying degrees. But my Friends, as sorrowful as this may be, is this not to be expected? The simple truth is that no one but God is perfect so, in one way or another, we are going to let each other down. Now this is not an excuse, but it is the way of this corrupt world of ours. We are all broken so how can we be “all” to one another? Each with our own needs and hurts and shortcomings, how can we make anyone else complete when we ourselves are not? Even the greatest among us is far from perfect, so how can we be everything someone else needs and wants? But here's the Good News, even when those closest to you cannot provide you with the assurances, the understanding or the love you truly crave, please understand that God always can. Moreover, He longs to receive you into His Presence so that He can be everything you so desire other humans would be.

When others fail you, God never will. Again, please understand this is what God longs to be for you: your everything. Listen and meditate on this thought: **When all you have is Jesus, you have all you need.** This is not just a nice little saying that we say, “Amen” to then keep living our lonely lives. This is Truth. We especially need to believe this when the worst case scenario- whatever that looks like to you- happens in our lives. Whether that is having earthly parents who have disappointed you, discovering your spouse has not been faithful, or being gossiped about by a close friend, know that the betrayal does not catch God by surprise. God has not changed. He still longs to be your all. He still wants you to come to Him and, while the situation has left you feeling abandoned, to know that the Lord will never forsake you. As He receives you, receive Him as well. God longs for a deep, intimate, personal relationship with you. Note what this verse says: “the Lord *will* receive me.” (my emphasis) It is His **WILL** to receive you, to pick you up and shower you with His Perfect Love.

He wants you to know Him, especially because He knows that it is only as we know Him that we come to know ourselves, for our identity is closely tied to Him. When Jesus is all we have and we go to Him, we learn that, in Christ, we are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal 5:22-23) It is as we understand who we are that we can live the Abundant Life filled with all that is good, no matter what our outer circumstances are. This is what I have found to be true in my life. Do you want this blessed assurance too? Then won't you join me?

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think!

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 11

Teach Us Lord

Hi Friends,

Here's another great Psalm 27 verse:

“Teach me Your way, Lord; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.” Ps 27:11

Did you ever notice that God works very differently than you would expect? “God works in mysterious ways,” is the saying that comes to mind. Critics would say, “If God is real why is there so much unrest? Why children going hungry, getting cancer, married couples divorcing, nations at war, school shootings? Why earthquakes and floods and fires and droughts? There cannot be a loving, all-powerful God or none of this would take place!” May I offer you another side to this story? The issue is never whether God is real or loving. The problem is whether we know His way and follow it or not.

You see, we humans rarely walk a straight path in life. Either we mess up or someone else around us does and so trials and tribulations happen. All the issues I mentioned above are human created, not God instituted. Yes, even the “natural disasters” originate with human misdeeds. Regardless of which side of the fence you lie with the Green House Effect topic, you must answer this truthfully: are we humans not polluting every part of nature from oceans to rain forests to the atmosphere above? How can all that not have negative effects on our planet? “So if God is Almighty why doesn't He stop us?!” It is exactly because He is a loving God

that He does not force us to follow His Way. He gives us the choice to follow Him... or not. How sad it makes my heart all the times I still do not fully follow Him, now multiply that by the billions of humans on this planet and it should not be surprising to anyone why we have all the havoc we do.

This is not me trying to badmouth "humanity"; I understand I am part of the problem. This is not me trying to make anyone feel guilty over our fallen state either; NOW there is no more condemnation for those who are in Jesus Christ. (Ro 8:1) This is me praying that we will sincerely ask God what King David is asking here in this great verse. It is the beginning to changing everything. Lord, please teach me how to love the way You do. Help me to say the precious words of Jesus at Gethsemane, "Your Will be done, not mine," and mean it! Lord, I want to walk on straight paths, for Your Glory, for my benefit and for the good of everyone around me, even my oppressors who are so quick to complain about You, but so lax in seeking to follow Your Way. Lord, I want to be Your holy, obedient child. I desire to be continually transformed into the likeness of Your Perfect Son, Jesus, so that I can be a part of the solution instead of the problems. Help me dear Lord. Amen.

Will you commit to deeply praying Ps 27:11 with me? Who knows, if we just begin to learn His Way and walk the straight and narrow path of His Love, perhaps we can avoid a disaster or two...but if not, we will certainly know how to love and support and provide for each other when those trials come our way. To live the Abundant Life even in the midst of the storms of life, this is what God has been doing in my life. Won't you join US?

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think!

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 12

The Enemy's Lies or God's Truth?

Hi Friends,

It is my prayer that everyone is keeping healthy in this unpredictable weather! This back and forth in temperature is exactly what causes us to get sick...I know because I have been out of commission for the last two weeks! I had some kind of flu-like illness with chills, nausea, sore throat and loss of voice to name just a few of my symptoms. But sadly, that wasn't the worse part. You see, because I felt horrible physically, I became more susceptible to all sorts of negative thoughts about myself...this is why I thought it was rather interesting when I looked at our next verse. Listen:

“Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.” Ps 27:12

My Friends, we do have a real enemy who wants nothing less than to keep us out of commission and greatly enjoys kicking us when we are down. Too many times we think of this enemy in terms of a Halloween costume, but the Bible calls him the father of lies, the prince of this [fallen] world, and the evil one who does not want us to live life to the full. He began a rebellion in the heavenly realms and, after being cast out (Isa 14:12-15), continues to deceive and bring pain and misery to humans here on earth. It is his utmost desire to kill our spirit, steal our joy and completely destroy us. (Jn 10:10) One of the ways he accomplishes this is by speaking his lies into our minds. He tells us we will never amount to anything.

That we are not good enough. That no one loves us. That we are too sinful, too ugly, too fat, too (fill in the blank) . All this is specifically designed to keep us down and out, but my Friends, gaze upon the Cross and know that these malicious accusations are nothing but lies.

At the Cross, God paints quite a different story about you and me. There God says we are worth His Life which makes us more than good enough. That He loves us eternally and so has removed our sin as far as the east is from the west. That we are beautiful and indescribably precious in His sight! As we focus on the Cross and not on whatever trial we happen to be enduring, we remember Whose we are and, for that reason alone, can be confident that He will never turn us over to the desire of our enemy. We recall God's unconditional love for us and we are able to rise up against the lies. We become mindful once again that, in Christ, we can do all things and gain the strength to fight the battle before us. We regain the assurance that, if God is for us, no one, not even the enemy with his false witnesses, can stand against us. As we recite this verse, we let go of the enemy's lies and hold on to God's Truth as we rejoice in the One who promises to never leave us nor forsake us.

My Friends, whatever challenges you are facing today, please do not listen to the lies of the enemy. Hear instead God's Truth: I love you! And let this Truth alone guide your thoughts and keep you healthy inside and out.

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think!

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 13

You See What You Expect to See

Hi Friends,

Our perspective on life makes a huge difference in the quality of our lives. Our point of view determines what we will experience and how we will either respond or react to the various events in our life. Listen to King David's perspective:

“I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”

Psalm 27:13 NIV

It is exactly because David believed that he would see God's goodness in this life that he *did* see it. One of God's goals is to expand our horizon so we are able to see much more than meets the eye. As we mature, what we expect to see from God grows as well. This is a big part of the Abundant Life He promises us. If we learn to expect God's goodness, we will view life with that prospective and we will see good things even in the midst of difficult circumstances. This doesn't mean everything will work out the way we want it to, but rather that there will be goodness for us to enjoy no matter what is happening around us. Here's a quick example, let's say you have a horrible car accident but no one involved was killed in the crash. If you truly believe God is pouring out His goodness upon you, you will see how God kept everyone alive (and praise Him for it) versus focusing on the accident itself. You will see His goodness because you are looking for it. The plain truth is simply that, no matter what challenging things we go

through in this land of the living, God works all things together for our good and if we trust Him, we will see this goodness.

It's a matter of mindful focus. You will see what you expect to see. Let me give you another example. Towards the end of her life, when Rebecca was in the hospital, the doctors who examined her for a whole two minutes, never saw much potential in her. They believed she could not interact with us, so they did not see any signs of interaction. On the other hand, since I was able to spend time talking to the nurses who cared for her and had the opportunity to share how much Rebecca was able to understand and do, the story became quite different. For instance, if they were going to change her diaper, I told them to explain to Rebecca what they were doing and ask for her to help. Because I raised their level of expectations, as they followed my counsel, they clearly saw that she heard them and tried to help by turning herself. Because I widened their perspective of what she could do, they were able to notice things that the doctors never took the time to look for. Because they believed they would see something good, they looked for it. The doctors expected nothing and saw nothing. The nurses expected something and saw so much more.

We tend to focus on what we believe will happen. If we only expect misery and pain, we will interpret events through those lenses and misery and pain is what we will see. But if we believe God will bless us, then blessings is what we will experience. It's a learning process, my Friends, but this is one of the precious lessons God began to teach me with my Angel Pie and every time I believe I will see God's goodness, His goodness is exactly what I see. I continue to learn with God, no matter how dark the cloud in front of me may be, there is always a silver lining... always. Won't you join me?

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think...

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 14

Why Wait?

Hi Friends,

We have been studying Psalm 27 for several chapters now, and here we are at the last verse of my favorite Psalm. I have turned to this verse time and time again because it has been such a huge source of encouragement to me. Listen:

“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” Psalm 27:14 NIV

I really love this simple verse and have a couple of points I would like to make about it. In this chapter, let's look at one of the reasons why God encourages us to wait for Him. It centers around the way we feel about waiting. Which one among us naturally enjoys waiting? Think about sitting in your car in traffic after a long, hard day of work. Isn't that fun? How about those thrilling snail-paced lines at the DMV? Don't we all look forward to that? Well, if you are like most normal people, you shudder at the thought of those scenarios. In this world of instant gratification, there doesn't seem to be many who look forward to waiting for anything. It's all just such a waste of time...or is it?

No one wants to wait, but of course, the reality of life is that we do spend much of our time waiting and this is all by God's design. You see, the problem is not that we have to wait, the issue is **HOW** we wait. When we heed God's Word, we look at these seemingly passive moments with new eyes. As we grow in Christ, what we discover is that "waiting" grants us the

opportunity for God to mature our character. When we work with God, we find ways to enjoy whatever circumstances we find ourselves in because we start to act more like Him and less like our fallen nature. (Jn 3:30)

What we do as we wait reveals our maturity which makes all the difference in the quality of our lives. The more mature we are in Christ, the more abundant our lives become. Just because we don't like doing something, doesn't mean we cannot intentionally find joy in it. The mature person understands that waiting is a part of life, and so, is able to act with peace and joy in spite of it. The mature person finds ways to be productive during this down time. The mature person doesn't just sit there inactive, but rather, comes up with creative ideas of what to do as they wait, all the while remaining calm and in good humor. It is a matter of attitude, my Friends, and as we grow in Christ, we will find that every moment of life is precious. Every moment a chance to learn something new. Every moment an adventure and an opportunity to praise God.

Choose to make waiting enjoyable. Here are some practical examples that I have made part of my life routine. I always carry a book with me wherever I go (which is so easy to do with all our gadgets), so whether I'm waiting at the doctors office or at the checkout, I can fill that time with something uplifting. In the car, I listen to my favorite Christian radio station, Star 99.1 (shameless plug), which just makes those traffic lights an occasion to lift my hands as I sing to my Jesus. I'm sure you have invented your own techniques too- I'd sure love to hear about them because, when we share what works for us, we help each other develop into the holy children of God we were always meant to be. As we mature, we become more and more like Jesus. That's God's goal for our lives, after all, and the Good News is we can choose to work with Him towards that end at any given moment... no waiting!

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think...

<>< Peace, Diane

Chapter 15

Free th Give Thanks

Hi Friends,

It always amazes me how much God can say with such few words. Let's look again at this lovely little verse:

“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” Psalm 27:14 NIV

In chapter 14 we talked about how God causes the "waiting" periods in our lives to mature us. We become more and more like Jesus as we use every precious moment, no matter what's going on (or not going on, as the case may be), as an opportunity to live and share the Abundant Life. What we find is that, as we learn to wait for the Lord, we move from fear towards gratitude. Now let's look at how our growing faith in the Lord makes this possible.

My first point is simply that, in order to wait for someone, you first have to trust that someone. The Bible teaches us to walk by faith and this is precisely one of the reason for this wisdom. We are not always going to know what God is up to because His ways are higher than ours. That simply means that God takes into account all eternity as He does or allows events, while we look only at our own individual lives here on earth. So it takes a great deal of trust on our part to be able to wait for the Lord. But the more we do so, the stronger this faith becomes and the more we will be able to wait for Him.

You see, Jesus said the truth will set us free and the truth

is God loves us more than we can imagine. (Jn 8:32; 3:16)
The more we wait for the Lord, the more we will witness this love as He works all things together for our good. (Ro 8:28)
The more we see things working together, the more we can trust His good plan for our lives. (Jer 29:11) The more we can trust Him, the more we stop trying to control every single aspect of our lives. (1Pe 5:7) The more we "let go and let God" as the saying goes, the freer we are to simply enjoy every precious moment of life. The freer we are to enjoy life, the more grateful we become. The more grateful we become, the more we can wait for the Lord because we trust Him further...and so it begins all over again. We go from having this need to control every detail of our lives out of the fear of the unknown to trusting that God will take care of us because He loves us eternally which frees us to just be thankful. Truth leads to waiting patiently, which leads to trusting God more, which leads to living with more freedom, which leads to more joy, which leads to more gratitude. Hopefully, as we live with more gratitude, we will share this godly attitude with those around us as well.

Gratitude. My Friends, whatever may be happening in your life today, know that God is still God and still on His throne. Let us not allow the terrors of this broken world to paralyze us, but rather, let us continue to wait for the Lord trusting further as we "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1Thes 5:18) May God continue to bless us in every possible way and may we be more and more aware, and grateful, for each and every blessing.

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think...

<>< Peace, Diane

Closing Thoughts

My Friends, it is my deepest Hope that my thoughts on this amazing Psalm has been a great blessing to you. I truly want you to know you are never alone! God wants to be in your life and He wants you to be in His Life too. No matter where life has led you, turn to our Loving Creator and receive the Grace to move forward. God is not mad **at** you- He is mad **about** you!

The Truth is God will never leave nor forsake us- now it is our part to make sure we do not leave nor forsake Him. Make it a lifelong habit to seek God every day and in every way. Read the Bible. Study God's Word. And apply Scripture to your life. You will see more and more that God is real and He really does love you!

By His Grace, I am available for you also. Never hesitate to reach out to me...it is my desire and great pleasure to "offer you Hope for today and always"! God bless and...

Until we meet again, keep lifting your eyes to God, He's closer than you think...

<>< Peace, Diane

To contact me or for more information
please visit me at
www.spreadthenewsministries.com

