

The Impossible Reality

A Life Surrendered to Christ

by Lois Snyder

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All Scripture portions are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Preface

This book was written out of a purely unselfish desire to encourage others by sharing the many impossible situations that became realities because of an all-powerful God. *Luke 18:27 says, "And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."*

I will always remember the time when I was around fifteen years old. I was just so unsettled and frustrated with everything in life. I did not realize it at that time, but God was convicting my heart. After several months of ignoring God's call, I remember sitting in church one night. It was there that I realized that I had never come to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and He wanted me to surrender to Him in faith. Right there, as I sat in the pew, I gave my life over to Jesus Christ.

I remember the verse that says in *I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Also *Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."*

I remember so well the overwhelming peace I experienced after that point in time. It was like the peace after a storm. My life verse is *I Corinthians 15:10, which says, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*

For all the years since I became a Christian, God has been showing me His power day by day. When I have had needs that exceeded our family budget, I took those things before the Lord. In *Philippians 4:19, the Bible says, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*

I have often heard people express a desire to be rich, so I decided to look up the word *rich* in Webster's Dictionary. What I found was so interesting. It said, "Abundantly supplied with resources." I then decided that since I have been a Christian I have always been rich.

Then *Luke 12:29-31* says, "*And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.*"

Sometimes I have things that are only desires and not real needs. Even then, God was interested in meeting those things as well. *Psalms 37:4* says, "*Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*"

I am so thankful that for over twenty years of marriage, my husband has encouraged me to tithe ten percent from the first part of any income that we had coming in. Sometimes it did not seem possible, but we carefully followed through with what is clearly taught in Scripture. I wrote that tithe check before any other checks were written for bills, following the Bible teaching of first fruits.

Let's look at scripture. *Malachi 3:8-10* says, "*Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*"

It has certainly been the case in our household. We always had enough and even beyond. *Ephesians 3:20* says, "*Now unto him*

that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Last but not least, God has always been available to me when I simply did not know what to do. *James 1:5 says "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."* I wish I could say that I have always trusted God with my first concern in any given situation. I have not. But God has always been faithful even when I make mistakes.

Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." In a world filled with so much uncertainty, let us look to the One who never changes and is always in control.

Lois

Meeting My Husband

My Dad was a wonderful man who desired the best for his daughter when she married. After completing four years of Bible college, I was still single. Our church started a career singles class, which I attended.

At one point I remember looking around the room of the class and thinking there was no one there I would ever be interested in marrying. I kindly asked the Lord to just drop someone in my lap because I did not feel confident to make such a big decision myself. I am always amazed at how quickly and precisely God answers my prayer. About a week later, there was a new, young man sitting in the front of the class. He had just moved into town to start Bible college the next semester. He was very handsome and I was already interested. I thought I would just sit back and find out what I could, before I got too excited.

It was a blessing that at every church activity there was, I saw him there. When he went shopping, he went to the same second-hand stores I went to. I found out he was musically talented, intelligent and available. The last word was the most exciting!

One Sunday he was sitting in the pew just up from where I was. After the service he turned around and asked me a couple questions about myself, and one was what my major was in college. I later found out that he wanted to marry a Home Economics major, which was exactly what I majored in.

After some time I decided that if he had any interest in me, he was going to express it that evening at church. Would you believe the place where I worked had some problem, and they needed me to work that very night? Although I finished up shortly before the church service would have ended, I went to

church anyway, in my smelly waitress clothes, and sat in the back.

Shortly after I got there, they dismissed, and I saw him. He got up out of his pew, turned around, and when he saw me, he lit up and made a bee line for the back where I was. I was thrilled that he wanted my phone number. The first time we talked we were on the phone for three hours, and well, after twenty-three years I am still married to this wonderful man.

Sweetheart Book

Over the years of our marriage, I regret to say, I was not always a thankful wife. My husband would do things to bless me and, due to unforgiveness, I could not appreciate it. At some point I decided to get this right with God and to notice everything positive. I thought the best way to remember was to write them down. At a moment of frustration you can have a hard time remembering positives, but you can always read and reflect regardless of your memory. After much prayer, God helped me to compose the following poem. This poem idea could be changed to focus on the positives of another: wife, friend, fellow worker, boss, in-laws, etc.

Sweetheart Book Blessings of Your Husband

Each time he does a kindness in word or deed,
It is high time for you to take heed.

It may seem small and miniscule,
But thinking on it twice is the best rule.

So write in this journal each time with the date,
Or the blessings will pass and it will be too late.

If each kindness were the petals on a rose,
You will soon have a bouquet with all of those.

When life seems tough and the petals seem few,
You can read in your book and see life anew.

The blessings are many, when you pay close attention,
You may even find they are too many to mention.

No one is perfect, especially not me,
But with rose colored glasses, you will be pleased.

By Lois Snyder
(with God's help)

In Just One Week

It was one of those paydays when no matter how I figured it, I could not make things work out. I thought it interesting that the amount I needed in spending money was the same as the amount of tithe. I thought about it briefly as a way to make it work. Then I remembered the Bible verse that says in *Malachi 3:8* "*Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.*" No, the greatest need was to give God the full ten percent which pleases God. In faith I went to the post office and put all the bills in the mail, knowing there would be no paycheck for two full weeks. I sighed with relief that I was doing the right thing. On my way home I noticed the gas light was on in the van. I told the Lord before that day was over I would need to fill our van. With the price of gas that was \$60. I did not give it another thought after I left the matter in God's hands. Not long after, someone pulled into the driveway. When I opened the door she had fabric in her hands. She asked if I could do some sewing for her. Of course I love to sew, so I was excited to meet this need. She told me what she needed done and pulled out her checkbook. She generously paid me \$35. I invited her and her son to stay for tea, which they did. As we were visiting, I made trips back and forth to the kitchen. I noticed that check and told the Lord, "I don't know what you are going to do, but I need that check to be \$60." As we visited, her son was upstairs with my children who were sorting out videos we no longer wanted. He kept bringing down videos he would like. I told him he could have all he wanted and said they were free. He kept finding more and more, and I continued with the no-charge idea. Finally the friend said she knew they were valuable and insisted on paying. She said, "Bring me that check," and rewrote a check for \$65. No one but God knew.

The next need for the week was food, so I sat down and wrote a list of all the food we needed and the amount it would cost to buy everything. About two days later I got something in the mail from the dentist's office. I thought that was strange as I had just paid off that bill. I opened it to find out insurance had covered the last cost, and inside was a check for the exact dollar amount I told God I needed to buy all those groceries. *Philippians 4:19 says, "But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*

My daughter had planned to visit a friend she had met at camp. It would be her birthday, and she lived over 100 miles away. I figured it would cost \$50 in gas. About a week before we would go, I was feeling like I wanted to have this need settled before Christmas so I need not wonder how it would work out during the happiness of celebrating Christmas. While driving in town with the children I prayed out loud that God would provide \$50 soon and that it would be in cash so I so it would be ready to use without going to the bank. We got home that same day. On the piano lay an envelope with our names on it. Obviously it had been hand delivered as there was no postage. I wanted to wait until my husband mentioned something. We were talking in the kitchen when somehow it came to his attention. He said, "Someone stopped by and said to not lose it." I went and quickly opened it to find a Christmas card with a fifty-dollar bill inside.

Over the next two weeks our daughter would be having music lessons, which were \$15 each. It soon came to our attention that the teacher would be out of town the one week and had to cancel. That left only the need for the one lesson. God knew. Shortly after, I got a card in the mail from a friend. She mentioned in her letter how the Lord had put me on her heart, and in it she enclosed a twenty-dollar bill. The amount remaining met the desire of my heart for a special food item I

wanted with Christmas dinner.

A desire of my husband's heart was to finish remodeling one of the bedrooms in our house, and he told me the amount. Not long after we received money in the mail. With what was provided I was able to order the materials to finish the bedroom.

Provisions of God

One day we had company over for a meal. When it came time for beverages, my husband put the gallon of milk out on the table. I knew that was the last one we had and there was no more for a while. I started to tell him but quickly realized it was not appropriate. The meal ended, and the company left. The next morning I was feeling terrible. As I had devotions. I told the Lord how wrong I had been to question my husband's decision, and I asked for God's forgiveness. I felt complete peace from God, and went on with the day. A short while later I needed to run to town. As I started backing out of the driveway I noticed something in the middle of the road. I stopped the car and ran out to find a full gallon of milk sitting in the middle of the black top road. How often had I seen a gallon of milk drop and break open, but somehow God placed that gallon there with not so much as a leak. How I praised God for providing for this need!

Another time, as I was figuring out meals for the day. I realized I did not have any meat for supper. I had a lot to do, and I had already spent the money available. I asked the Lord that He would somehow provide without my needing to leave the house or spend any money. A couple hours later, someone called asking if they could stop by for a visit. I told her I would finish up some things and it would work in a couple hours. As that time came to a close I saw her walking up to the house. In

her arms she carried three packages of frozen meat. She had no idea of my need, but God knew.

God Providing Our Homes

What rich blessings we have had with God's provision of our homes. There are three such homes that stood out as direct answers to prayer.

When my husband was in Bible college we were renting an apartment over a bookstore. It was ideal for us in so many ways. My husband prayed one day that we could find something even better than what we had. I could not imagine as what we had was nicer than most our married college friends. At the time he was working at the canning company. Not long after this he came home to tell me that the company he worked for had a house we could possibly rent but it was offered to someone else first. We waited anxiously to see what would happen. They did not want it so it was made available to us. Was it ever better!!! It was a whole house with an upstairs and basement, double garage with garage door opener, nice driveway, out building and beautiful grass all around. Even better yet, the price was cheaper than we were paying for our apartment. God was certainly good to us.

Then we moved to Massachusetts. After renting awhile and now with two children in our care, we decided we needed to move someplace safer. Ideally we wanted to live in the country. God had provided money, and my husband decided that it was sensible to buy a trailer house. I dreaded the thought because they tend to have small windows and dark paneling. My husband looked in the newspaper and found the cheapest ones advertised. One was so much cheaper, I thought it would surely be in terrible condition. When we went to see them I absolutely loved the cheapest one. The woman had

remodeled most of it with white paneling, and the living room had good-sized windows on three sides. Then God provided a special lot to place it on with no other houses around. My husband knew I desired a clear meadow after having grown up in South Dakota. We found one such meadow with thick woods around it, which is what he loved. With much prayer and more provision of God, all the finances worked out to set the trailer there and start living there.

Our last home was the most amazing of all. My husband had been hired for a job in Minnesota. We started looking at houses. My husband felt we could afford between \$50,000-\$60,000. On top of that, we wanted to live in the country and have 4 bedrooms. Both of these features made places more expensive. We looked at so many, and not one did we both have peace about and the price be right. One evening at supper I was so overwhelmed and said I did not want to look at one more house until God dropped one in our lap. God knew. That night my husband took us out driving to encourage me. Just after we passed the edge of town he noticed a house tucked away in some trees. He said how that was just our kind of place. It was very sweet, but I did not see a sale sign, so I did not give it another thought. The next day my husband was still trying to encourage me. He kindly suggested we go out for ice cream bars at the small grocery store in town. As we walked in, the owner of the store, who knew our need, told us how someone had just left. They just found out the night before that they had lost their jobs, so they decided quickly that they would be selling their home. It was a 4-bedroom house on 2 acres for \$62,000. As he described it my husband realized it was that very house. We went right out to look at it, and as we stood in the kitchen Paul and I exchanged glances to communicate that this was indeed just right for us. A few weeks later we closed the sale on our anniversary, as an extra special kindness of my husband.

More Blessings

It was a typical foggy day during the time we lived in the mountains of Massachusetts. I was feeling like I needed some encouragement. The thought came to mind that to make a pumpkin pie was just the thing to turn the day around. I looked in the pantry and there was no pumpkin. God knew. A short time later I decided to take the half mile walk out to get the mail with the children. Another thing that was encouraging was visiting an older lady who lived near our mailbox. We got the mail, but she did not come out to invite us in as she usually did. We continued on walking. About 200 feet down the road I heard someone call my name. I turned around to see that dear older lady waving a sack. I went back to see what she wanted. She asked me if I could use a can of pumpkin, and she had it in a sack for me to take. I was thrilled and thanked her. I had not talked to her that morning, but God has ways. I came home and made that pie, and it certainly did turn the day around.

One morning as I was getting out of bed I leaned on the mattress and the bed sheet ripped. How discouraging, as that was my last set of sheets that fit our queen bed. I told the Lord that I would need another set before I could go to bed that night. I went on with my day without another thought because I was confident God could take care of this need. Later that morning I took our garbage up to the compactor to drop it off, the way things were done in our small town. As I drove up I noticed a box sitting out next to the compactor. When asking about it, the attendant said someone had left a box of sheets to save out for someone to have. I cannot express my delight to find there were not only sheets, but sheets that were the very size I needed for our bed, as well as for our children's beds. An extra bonus was loads of pillowcases. I took them home and washed them up, and before I went to bed that night I put on the sheets I knew God would provide.

It was a spring day, and our family had gone to the store to do some shopping. We got what we needed and shortly before we were done, I noticed the most beautiful brown purse that was just my taste. It was a little pricey, and we decided it was not wise to spend the money. As we were leaving, I looked back at it one more time and told the Lord that someday I would like that purse. A week went by, and I was on my way to a wedding in South Dakota. One desire I had for that trip was to go to a yard sale while visiting my old home state. It did not seem reasonable as I would be attending a wedding on Saturday and we were driving through on a Wednesday. Such details were no bother for God. As we were traveling through, I noticed a yard sale sign. I stopped, and as I neared the back of the garage, I could hardly believe my eyes, for there sat the very purse I had so desired at a store in Massachusetts for just one dollar. *Psalms 37:4 "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."*

We had gotten an advertisement at the house from Swanson Dairy. I looked through it and noticed they sold little personal size pizzas, but the price I could not justify. Sometime later I was tired and thinking how nice it would be to have them for supper that night, with no thought how that could be. I took my son to football practice. As I was leaving to come home, I noticed a Swanson Dairy truck parked by the road out in the country. As I slowed, being unsure what he would do next, he bolted off down the road. When he did a box fell from his truck and broke open. I watched for a while to see if he would come back for it, but he never did. I gathered it up and put it in the car and took it home. I called the company and they decided I should just keep it. The box was full of those personal size pizzas I desired for supper that night. God provided in a way I could not have imagined.

We bought a house, and in the living room were heavy drapes

that were a darker color I did not care for. One day I decided I wanted the house more cheerful and took them all down with no knowledge of how I could replace them, but I prayed. Though I loved to sew, I did not have fabric enough to sew new ones for the nine windows. God knew how much I would need and it was a lot. Shortly after, my husband came home from work. He found out that at his job all the old tablecloths that were no longer in perfect condition were stacked in the back room to be thrown away. They were all the same color. He brought home stacks of those. I had more fun sorting them according to how faded they were, which had holes that could be used for the valences from the good portions, etc. I figured out I had sewn 75 feet of valences and then a longer curtain below to pull for privacy, another 30 feet or so. I had enough, with fabric leftover for other projects. It was so bright and cheery and a constant reminder of God's power to provide.

One day I was feeling sorry for myself. I loved to sew, and JoAnn Fabrics would soon be opening in town. I would not be able to buy very much anyhow with the prices per yard, and I wanted a lot. It always amazes me how quickly and completely God provides. Shortly after, a friend and I were going to the fair. We saw the usual historical buildings, animals barns, etc. Then we stopped in at the Senior Center. Some woman had brought all her sewing things in to be sold to raise money. There were two whole tables stacked with material. It was priced at five dollars a bag full!!! God had provided money the day before, so I could literally buy all I wanted before the fabric store even opened.

My gas tank was very low, and God knew I would need more gas very soon. I was to clean for someone the next week, but I knew I could not wait that long before needing more money. That very person called and asked if I could come the next day instead. I did, and the gas held out until I had the extra money. Another time I was driving and the gas light came on. When I

got home I got a call for someone else needing me to work for them the next day. Of the many times of having the gas light come on, God has had endless ways of providing so I never run out, not one time.

It was the spring of the year, and my husband was preparing our garden for planting. He came in the house and told me to run to town and get a big bag of fertilizer and said it would cost about twenty dollars. He went back out. I got my purse out and noticed I only had two dollars. I debated what I should do since I clearly did not have enough to cover it, but I did not want to discourage my husband. I decided to simply trust God, and I left for town some twenty minutes away. As I was driving I prayed most of the way, wondering how God would provide and yet being confident He would. I got to the store and said one last prayer before going in. I walked in and decided to just look around until God made his plan obvious. In an odd place I saw a large bag of fertilizer. I asked an employee what the deal was with that bag. He said I would not want that bag as it had a hole in it. I said I did not care and asked how much I could have it for, not telling him how much I had. He thought for a minute and said I could have it for two dollars. I went to check out and it was exactly two dollars without tax added on. Just the amount I had!!! Was I ever happy to take that home!

I was doing the budget and figured we would not have food enough to last until next pay day. I said nothing, but God is always one step ahead of me. A day or two later the phone rang. It was our neighbor. They were cleaning out their freezer and were wondering if we would like a box of food. I said I would, and they brought it right over. After they left we all squealed with delight to see so much food and even some very special desires of specific foods we would not have dreamed of.

Our two daughters had bunk beds. One day I was looking at their beds and thought how nice it would be to have matching bedspreads that would coordinate with their white and orange wallpaper. Not long after I went to the laundromat to do the wash. As I walked in the front door a lady was just folding something orange. She had just finished up and asked if I could use two bedspreads. She had just washed them and no longer needed them in her home. I was delighted and could not wait to see them on the girls' beds. God is just so perfect.

Over the course of a week, as I would work in the kitchen, I noticed things were getting low. I started making a mental list: cinnamon, seasoning salt, and soy sauce, to name a few, and a partial bag of cornmeal to try a special recipe. Rather than make a list for the store, I decided to just trust God. A couple days later I went to a church function. As I was ready to leave, a lady told me to wait because she had something for me. She showed me a shoe box full of food items. Someone had started a new way of eating and no longer wanted those things. In it were the exact items I needed and desired.

I had been reading about health and how good it is to eat fish. I thought how this was too expensive to just buy, but I desired to feed fish to our family. Just a couple days later I was out in the yard stacking wood when I saw a car on the road slow down and pull in our driveway. I recognized them as our neighbors. She rolled down her window and asked if I would like some fish. She said her husband loved to fish but did not like to eat them. When I said I would, she gave me a bag of fresh fish. After calling a friend, I learned how to clean fish, and we ate them. What a treat!

Another day I was telling the Lord how much I wanted hamburger for supper because we had gone some time without any, and it sounded good. I prayed for God to provide and in faith got out my skillet and put it on top the burner. A few

hours later there came a knock at the door. A lady had gone shopping, and hamburger was on a buy-one-get-one-free sale, and she wondered if I could use a package. The answer was yes, and I thanked her.

We would often shop at secondhand stores for our clothes. One such trip I found a jean jumper for our oldest daughter. When our younger daughter saw it she expressed a desire to have one just like it. I started to explain that it was just not possible because we bought it used and there was only one. She would not be consoled, so I prayed. Next time we went shopping I looked at the girls' clothes and, sure enough, there was another jumper just like it but a smaller size that would fit our younger daughter.

It was just an ordinary day when God laid on my heart to pray for my husband's safety. Each time this happens I look at my watch to know the time. Every little bit my thoughts were interrupted to pray for my husband over and over again. A few hours later my husband came home early. He told the story how it was raining where he was working as a carpenter. The man he was working with was getting very angry as everything was going wrong. Tempers were high and there was an issue of safety. Nothing bad happened because God was in control as an answer to my prayers.

Another day, for no apparent reason, God laid on my heart to pray for the safety of a lady I knew. A day or two later I heard the story. She had been gone from her office on the main street of our little town that morning. She came back to her office and decided she was thirsty and walked to the gas station less than one block away. She was on her way back and just a few feet from going back into her office when a large dump truck came down that main street. The driver was having a heart attack and at the last moment of his life the steering wheel turned sharp to the right and went head first into the long

narrow office space where just a short time ago this woman had sat. Who would have thought that someone working in the backroom of a brick store front of a small town of 700 people would need to be concerned for her life when she went to work that morning? God knew, and through the prompting of the Holy Spirit could intercede for this one who had no idea her life would be in danger.

My husband had decided we needed to get another car. The one we had was special to me, and I did not want to part with it. In submission to my husband I went to a car dealership with him. One that got my attention was a van that was unlike any other in the lot. We looked at it together and decided the size and price were good for us. I asked the Lord that someday I could know the reason for changing cars. Another desire I had was to know the person we sold our first van to. God answered by having a friend buy it from us. Weeks later my daughter was out driving our van and was in a bad accident but was not injured. When we had it fixed the man told us how our new van was built very sturdy, but if she had been driving the other van it would have done a lot more damage. I was so thankful God protected her life and that I had submitted to my husband in changing to that safer vehicle.

I was newly saved and just learning about the prompting of the Holy Spirit. I remember clearly sitting in my bedroom sewing when I was prompted to pray for the safety of my Dad. I looked at my watch, it was 2:00 pm. When he got home he told me the story. He had been at the top of a ladder when his can of paint slipped, and he fell from the ladder. He was totally unharmed, though he was around seventy years old at the time. He told me this happened around 2:00 pm that day. I was so thankful for a loving God who is all powerful.

I was sitting in prayer meeting at church when God prompted me to pray for a friend who was pregnant and due to deliver

any day. It was around 8:30 pm. I found out later that she was in labor and at 8:30 the doctor said he did not know if the baby would make it because of problems. Praise the Lord all ended well, and they came through it just fine.

It had been my desire for some time to have a subscription to the *Martha Stewart* magazine. My day came on my birthday when I received money in the mail. I was so excited and decided to use the money for the subscription. After a couple issues I had an unsettled feeling that it was not right to keep getting it for myself. I called in to cancel. They told me to keep the two I had, and they would send me a refund. The check came and it was for the full amount. God had burdened my heart to send the full amount to a friend and to send it that same day. A few days later I got the story. This friend had been asked to speak at a ladies meeting. No matter how she did her budget she was short the money needed for gas to drive there. The morning she was to go she went out to the mail box. There was the envelope from me with a check for the exact amount she told the Lord she needed to go on that trip.

It was so much fun to go to second-hand stores. One day I needed shoes. In shopping I found two pair that were my size, or so I thought. The one pair was just the kind a dear friend of mine used to wear. I thought, "They will remind me to pray for her." When I got home I put them on to wear and realized they were too big. God prompted me to put them in a box and mail them to my friend who I remember had slightly bigger feet. I later heard the story. One day her pair of shoes had the strap break so she could no longer wear them. Later the box arrived. They were exactly like the ones that broke, even the same style, color and a perfect fit.

We lived seventeen miles away and up a mountain from where we went to church and from where our friends lived. One day I felt led to take toilet paper to a friend's house, for no human

reason. I drove all the way there and dropped it off and went back home. I later heard the story. They had a house full of company when she realized they were almost out of toilet paper. It was then that the package arrived and met that need.

A friend called me on September 11, 2001, telling me to turn on the news, which I did. They were showing the twin towers and how a plane had crashed into one of the towers and now it was on fire. A second plane crashed into the second of the twin towers with the same effect. Then they announced that there was another plane out there and had been taken over and there was concern about its destination as it was intended to crash into yet another building. I prayed that God would have someone give a clear gospel message on the plane. I also prayed that the plane would crash into a big open field and that only the people on the plane would be killed, instead of the many that were the target for that plane. A while later, the news announced that the plane did crash in a field, and none but those on the plane were killed. Then later I heard that a woman had given a clear gospel message on the plane when they knew that their lives were in danger. God answered that prayer. Not because of anything I am, but because of who God is.

It came to my attention one day that we needed meat. I prayed for God to provide. I had been out that day at a friend's house. While I was on my way home, another friend and her son were at my driveway and wondering where I was. She had a large piece of meat leftover from somewhere, and God put it on their hearts to give it to me. They prayed that they could find me. As they were driving back home they passed me going the other way to my home. They came back and gave me that meat. It was more than I would have imagined and was greatly appreciated.

One day my husband desired to talk to our Pastor and his wife about something, but they were on vacation. They had a cell phone, but we did not have the number. I prayed that we could contact them. It wasn't ten minutes later when the phone rang. It was our Pastor. They were just driving through a town that was the same name as ours and thought they would give us a call. God knew.

We had some medical bills we were paying once. One day when I was making payments I looked everything over and thought how encouraging it would be if I could just pay off some of the smaller ones and a reasonable payment on another. I thought how if I just had one thousand dollars I would be able to meet this need and feel satisfied. Just a couple days later we were at church. The Pastor said to wait behind after church because they had something for us. When we were alone they handed me an envelope. I opened it to find a check for one thousand dollars. No one knew. Some person had anonymously given money to them to then give to us. It perfectly met all the bills I wanted to pay off at that time. Praise the Lord!

I had been shopping and spent fifty dollars. Afterwards I thought to myself how I desired to still have fifty dollars for more needs and desires I had at the time. My husband wanted to go for a long walk with me. I was thrilled. The weather was so nice, and spending time with my husband so special. When we got where we were going, I noticed a piece of paper on the ground. When I went to pick it up, I noticed it was a fifty dollar bill. God is just so good.

One thing I have enjoyed over the years as a hobby more than any other is sewing on a sewing machine. My mother, who disliked sewing, gave me unlimited access to her machine, and I spent hours of my time at home in my room sewing anything and everything. That passion has never left me. One day my

trusty sewing machine wore out and could not be fixed. I was sick, and really next to devastated, to think of life without my own machine. Money was tight, and it did not seem reasonable to buy one at that time. We went to church that night and I asked the people at church to pray for God to provide a sewing machine. It was not common practice for me to verbalize a material need, but I was so upset it just seemed the thing to do. An older lady and her husband were touched. She had gotten a machine years before and rarely ever used it. They decided to not only give me their machine but also a beautiful sewing machine cabinet that came with it. I have gotten years of use out of that machine.

Then another time, when I was getting that machine fixed, I saw a machine at the repair shop. The man told me that with that machine you could easily sew leather and other heavier things, and it had a longer arm to fit the bigger things. I thought that was so cool and desired such a thing, One day I went to drop off my trash at a compactor and there was a machine. It was the very same type machine as he had told me about. Though I did not need a machine at the time, I took it and went to the repair man. He was so touched by the whole story that he repaired it for very little, and I was delighted to have greater sewing potential.

When our two daughters were small we lived out in the country. One time our older daughter needed pants. To buy them would have been a trip to town. As it ended up God spared me even that little effort. A neighbor of ours had a girl a little older than our daughter. Every time she outgrew her clothes the parents would put them in a box beside the road for free. This was a year-round situation, not just during the yard-sale season. For a long time I was spared from needing to go shopping for clothes, and then of course, our younger daughter could wear them when she got bigger. It was a lovely arrangement.

Paying the bills has been something I have enjoyed doing. I love to organize how things are planned with dates to pay the various bills. One day I was considering that winter was coming and humanly, I was unsure how we would pay for heat. We had gotten a corn stove earlier, and corn was not cheap. I prayed that somehow God would provide. About the same time my husband was up at the gas station visiting a neighboring man. They must have been talking about our new corn stove. This man was telling how he had some corn that had gotten damp and was unsuitable to use for feeding animals. He said we could have it for free as it would still work in our stove. Not only was it free but he also delivered that corn, load by load as we had need. We heated our house for free for at least two years with that corn. It was wonderful warm, dry heat, too! It will always be a special memory.

It was coming up on winter, and I realized our daughter was going to need a winter coat. I looked at the only second-hand store in our town. I could not justify those prices, and they were not the type of coat I desired anyhow. I prayed for God to provide. It was awhile later, and I went into the same store again. This time I noticed a beautiful pink coat just our daughter's size. It was a heavier material for the outside and a white fuzzy material on the inside, just what I wanted. Then the greatest surprise of all was the price tag. Though the brand-name coats I did not like were priced for over twenty dollars, this coat was marked at just two dollars. Just right in every way! That coat was such a blessing.

One day I felt burdened to pray as I had a strong feeling that something bad was going to happen to our car, and I prayed that when it did no one would be hurt. It was not long after when that very thing happened. We went out in the morning, and there was a large tree branch lying on the hood of our car. It had broken off the tree above it during the night, but no one

was in the yard, thankfully. Usually our children were in the general area when they would be outside. The car could be repaired, and no one was injured. For this I thank God.

Another time a friend was over visiting. She was getting ready to leave and was talking about seeing us again in about four days. I felt strongly that between the time of her leaving and seeing her again she would be injured in some way. I prayed for God to protect her. It did come about that during that period of time she was in the car accident where she was rear ended. Her knee was cut up but overall she was basically unharmed from the ordeal. No one would have suspected there was any need for concern.

Another time we were at church. We were going to be having a dinner after church. A friend of mine had forgotten a two liter of soda she had at home. As she was getting ready to head out the door to go to her home just a mile away I felt strongly that something bad was going to happen to her. I prayed for her safety. I said to be careful but she saw no reason for me to be concerned. When she returned I heard the story. When she was driving she hit a patch of black ice, and just like that, her car spun around and was facing the opposite direction. There were no other cars at that time, and she did not even hit the rail. She was completely unharmed. God is just so good.

My favorite animals are chickens. I have kept a few chickens for years to lay eggs and give me hours of entertainment, watching all their fun, little ways. Times were tough, and I was wondering if something like my chickens was really a need. I asked God to either provide free feed, or I would butcher them and be done with that expense. God knew my heart. I went to the grain elevator to buy a bag of corn, which I figured would be the last bag I would buy. When I was there I noticed there was corn spilled on the railroad tracks. When I went in I asked about that corn and if I could have it for free. He said I could

but I would have to pick it up myself. And that I did. For years I always keep a shovel and a couple pails in my car for the next time they spill. It has been a continual blessing to watch God even provide for the needs of my chickens.

There was a time when my husband was between jobs. A lady in our church knew of a source for free bread. I was excited. We went and took the amount that was allowed, and we brought it home to add to our other groceries for meals. I was amazed at all the different types of bread that I now tried since they were free. I also learned many ways to prepare bread and add it to meals. It was a great feeling to have so much when we had so little.

I had stopped at the Salvation Army where they sometimes had free food. One such time there was an enormous amount of fresh produce. They said a farmer who sold it at a stand was done selling for the fall and donated all the last of his produce to be given away. In modern times many of the younger generation do not know how to put up food in large amounts, so there it sat day after day. I told them not to throw anything away but gave them my phone number to call when they were through offering it for free to the general public. It would cost them something to throw it away in an expensive dumpster. The time came and they called. My husband lovingly drove me to town in our small pickup and loaded box after box of produce into the back of our pickup, filling the truck. I brought it home and put it all away. It was such a huge blessing to eat, store, and give away as there was need. I even had the odds and ends to feed to my chickens. Praise God for this most wonderful provision.

One day my daughter and I were out shopping at the grocery store. She noticed a box of strawberry tea that she thought sounded good. I was not planning on getting anything extra that day but decided to pray about it. The next time I went to

the store alone. Just inside the entryway there was a grocery cart full of miscellaneous items. The sign on the front said that everything in that cart was only ten cents. I was delighted to see that there were several boxes of that very strawberry tea my daughter wanted. Had I bought it the time before, I would have only bought one box but now I could buy several to last awhile. What a joy to my heart to share this story with my daughter and for her to have the desire of her heart.

It was a busy time in life, and I desired a plain green skirt. Of course I love to sew, but the thought of going through the work of making it at that time was not my desire. No long after I was up in our attic looking in a most unusual place, considering why I went up there, and I noticed a big piece of green material. I wondered why it was there, and when I pulled it out, I realized it was a nice green skirt that was just what I desired, fit perfectly, and met the need without any effort.

I was talking to a friend on the phone and telling her how I desired fresh produce. How often I would get things at a good price, but produce always seemed expensive. She encouraged me to pray for God to provide. Pray I did. Shortly after that, someone called. They would be going on a trip and wondered if I would appreciate the things in their refrigerator that could not last until they returned. I happily agreed to accept their offer. When they came, it was a box full of seven different kinds of fresh produce. It was above and beyond anything I would have dreamed of. Many times since then people have dropped off or called with fresh produce, each with a different story. Thank you, Jesus, for hearing my prayer.

We had an older neighbor who was such a good friend of mine but had passed away. Her family went in and cleaned out her cupboards. They asked me if I would like the food they had boxed up from that, and I said I would. When they came it was a huge amount of food filling several boxes. We were delighted

to get so much. It is neat that earlier I had asked God to provide a lot of food so I would not need to think about shopping and such for a long time. The boxed and canned goods lasted about 2 years. I asked God to show me ways to put it all away as our cupboards were limited. Nothing was left out in the open.

One year my husband wanted to have a very large garden. It was so nice that we could have someone come in and work up the soil with a tractor that first year. Then my husband lovingly got it ready the rest of the way for planting. At the time I did not understand why so big and why he wanted it that year, but I submitted to the idea. I remember when it was all planted, I looked out over the area and told the Lord that I was willing, but somehow He would have to help me get it all done. The garden grew well. God provided help through a friend and our own children. We put up over three hundred containers of food that fall. That next winter proved to be a difficult one, and here we had all that good food.

It was soon to be Thanksgiving. Other years I had used a disposable pan but this year I desired to have an enamel turkey pan to last for years to come. God knew. Though it was cold outside there was one house on my way to town that was having a garage sale just before Thanksgiving. I went inside and was delighted to see that they had a nice turkey pan at just the right price. It has been a blessing through many Thanksgiving dinners and a reminder of God's goodness.

Another time I wanted an artificial Christmas tree. Once again it was just before the holiday and I wondered how that would work. Once again there was a garage sale on my way to town. That time there was a tree that was just what I wanted. I am so glad God is not concerned about the time of year or any other detail, he simply provides.

We were going to be camping and leaving in just a couple days. I desired a nice, warm denim coat. Though I had coats, I did not want to ruin anything with a camp fire and more rustic living. Before the time to go, someone was having a sale by the road. They had just the coat with a red flannel lining and in my size. What fun!

I was looking through a mail-order catalog that sold sewing things. I saw a print of material with chickens on it. It was just so cute and the only one I really liked. I had no real need for it but thought how just right a small piece would be for a napkin or potholder. Some time later I found a little piece for a few cents and it was that exact print. No detail was left out of my desire.

One thing I enjoy, next to sewing, is putting up food. We stored up much food in the summer, and I found out there was a machine that you could put tomatoes through to remove the skins and seeds. Wow, what a wonderful idea, so I started praying for one. We found one that was still in new condition. It was every bit as helpful as it sounded and was a wonderful blessing during canning time.

In rearranging our kitchen I figured out that a butcher block would fit nicely and would give me more counter space. My generous husband took me shopping, and we looked at them. They were expensive, and I had no peace about spending that much. I wanted to pray about it. I had told a friend of mine who lived two states away of my idea. I did not realize that she had told her husband about my idea. Sometime later her husband called me on his cell phone. Here he was at a second-hand store and was looking at a butcher block. He described it, and it sounded like just what I was looking for. He told me the price, and that was good, too. I said the only problem was how I could get it without expense. He went on to explain how friends from South Dakota would be visiting them and could

take it. We had planned to visit those same friends a couple weeks later. So that butcher block traveled something like seven-hundred and fifty miles, and we did not pay a dime for delivery. Its travel was already planned.

In all the many blessings of God's provision I go through a lot of thank-you cards. It seems God's provisions are often so many or so varied that I decided I needed bigger cards to write it all on. I did have card stock to make my own since stores rarely make big thank-you cards. The only thing I would need was large card envelopes. God knew. Shortly after I was helping a woman clean her home. She came across a big box of envelopes without the cards and told me how she had no need for them. I was so thrilled to be able to have them. They were just right for my purposes. In sorting through them there were also ones with pretty pictures on the lid, unusual sizes, etc. that made card making an even greater delight.

When shopping one day I noticed the most beautiful dress in the window. I thought to myself how my husband would love that dress on me, but the ones in the window were not for sale at that time. I prayed that somehow I could have that dress. Another such shopping trip I went back to that same store to shop again. As I was walking through the very long rows of clothes, here a hanger was sticking out, capturing my attention, and in the wrong department. Would you believe it was that very dress? They had taken it out of the window and whoever had put it away misplaced it. God's hand was so in that detail of disorder.

I had grown up eating cooked oatmeal and never thought of it being eaten in any other way. Then one day I went to visit a friend and was there for breakfast. She came to the table and poured raw, rolled oats into my bowl. I was confused as I had never had such a meal before and wondered how I was to eat it. She later came with some milk and commented that I would

want milk on that, which I did. I did eat it and it was good. For years to come I would serve that meal for breakfast when I was pregnant or just plain tired with caring for little ones. It required absolutely no effort but to pour it in a bowl. It was certainly healthy and met our need.

My daughter desired for me to buy fresh peaches. When I went to the store, I thought they seemed rather expensive, so I debated how many to buy. Since they were so good for us I decided to simply trust God so I could buy a big bag full of them. I went up to the check stand, and she rang them up. I noticed the screen read the price, which was the amount per pound, not for a whole bag. I pointed it out, thinking that was most honest. She did it again with the same results. Then she called a supervisor. He rang them up with the same results. In the end they let me have that whole bag of fresh peaches for the price of just one pound. God is so amazing!

It seems like toilet paper was a constant need, and I desired that I would not have to spend money on it for a long time. How nice to have the food budget only be food. So I prayed. Then one day I went shopping at a local store, and they had toilet paper for ten cents a double roll, and there was no limit. Wow, what a deal! I decided to buy a full box with seventy-two rolls in it. I took it home. Living in a home with little storage I asked God to give me a place to put it all out of sight. In answer to that prayer God showed me a place next to the washing machine that was just that space. It was two rolls wide and several rolls tall and able to go the depth of the machine. I fit all the rolls in that space.

My daughter would be going to public school and told me she wanted to take sandwiches in her lunches each day. I happened to be out of bread that day when I went to clean for an older lady. As I walked in she asked me if I could use some bread, having no idea of my need. There had been a party, and

all the leftover bread was in her freezer. I got five packages of bread, and they made many nice lunches without even going to the store.

In organizing my pantry better I figured out I had a space in the corner where I could fit some type of container to put my recycled things in. I did not want a new one for something so simple, so I prayed that God would provide. A few days later I was driving down the road when I saw a white trash can along the road. I stopped to check it out. Nothing was wrong with it, only it needed cleaning. When I got it home and cleaned it well, I found it perfectly fit that space in the pantry. It is neat how God does not need a tape measure but He got the measurements exactly right.

We had always home schooled, and then we decided to send them to public school for high school. The time came for the school dance. Our children had never been to one and wanted to go. I prayed about it. The night of the dance was truly amazing. Two of our three children got sick just about the time the dance was going to start. They were not sick during the day or later that night, only during the hours of the dance. Then our third child did not know how to dance and chose to do something else. God knew the desire of my heart.

One day I realized I was completely out of fresh carrots. It is one food I always keep in the house. Then the phone rang. Someone had been to a sale in which they got a free bag of carrots and wondered if I could use one. I had told no one, but I got them when I needed them.

With all three children in public school the school lunch bill was adding up and a sum of three hundred dollars was due to be paid as soon as possible. I did not have it but prayed for God to provide. The mail came, and in it was a check for two-hundred fifty dollars. I still needed fifty dollars when from

another source I was given sixty dollars. That entire bill was paid just a couple days after I prayed.

We have had a garden for years. Our rototiller was not working and was too hard to repair. It is so much nicer to till a garden, and I desired to have it tilled. A friend called. She was getting a new rototiller that was easier for her to handle and wondered if we would like her heavy-duty tiller for free. We were thrilled. We used it for the garden that year and to level out large areas in our yard. It was a far better tiller for such work than the one that we used to have. God was so good.

One day I was looking in a magazine and saw a picture of a beautiful pie basket. I love to bake pies and the thought of a basket that would allow me to carry two at a time was a dream. Shortly after I was visiting a friend and describing to her the wonderful basket I had seen in the magazine. As I talked I saw her eyes light up and she went into another room. She had gotten that very basket and did not know what to use it for. She had a plant sitting on it in the living room. She certainly did not need it and gave me that very basket. I would not have imagined she would have a pie basket and so I felt comfortable telling her about it. What a surprise to leave with the very thing that was the desire of my heart.

I am one of those odd people that have to wear socks every time I wear shoes. I just cannot stand the feeling of no socks. I realized that I was almost out of socks because I had worn them out. That night I went to visit a friend without socks on thinking I would save the few I had left. She noticed I had no socks on and thought that was strange for me, which it was. I explained the situation. As I talked she said she disliked socks and went to her drawer and starting pulling out one pair after another. In the end I had nine nice pairs of socks for free from someone who did not need them.

We were planning to get married and were looking for an apartment for when we were married. What a delight to find an apartment over a bookstore. We wanted a quiet place and God knew. During the daytime it was a quieter business and at night no one was there. Also it was a larger apartment with big windows and we both love the sun. We could see a river across the street. At a time when someone was going on the mission field we had room enough to store their furniture in the extra space.

During a tough time a dear friend decided to provide all the eggs we could eat. She bought them from a farmer so they were extra good. It was nice to have something I did not need to be sparing with and they were great with all my baking from scratch, scrambled eggs, etc.

We were figuring the bills and realized we were one hundred fifty dollars short. We prayed together for God to provide. A short time later we were asked to sing a duet at a funeral. I thought maybe fifty dollars. I could not wait to show my husband when the check was the exact dollar amount we needed to pay that bill. Yes, we did tithe on this amount from other money we had.

One of many things my husband has taught me is the love of plants. One time I got a geranium plant and had no prior knowledge of its care. It was beautifully green, and I watered it faithfully. I had it for several months, and still no blossom. I was so close to just throwing it away, thinking I preferred a blooming plant and was tired of waiting. Then I decided to wait just one more week. Well, that was just the thing, for shortly after, a huge head of blossoms appeared, and when they opened it was so worth the wait.

It reminded me of people. We all have people we desire to love the Lord, and we wait and water (care for) them. How

important it is to never give up, because as long as there is life, there is hope.

Then the day came when I desired a second plant. Not long after I went to clean for a person I was meeting for the first time. As we walked through the house to see what was expected, I noticed two geranium plants. She told me how she did not want to leave them outside to be killed by the frost. She was unsure about keeping two in the house all winter. In the end we decided to each have one. What a treat to come home with a new plant without expense.

At one time we had a dishwasher. One thing it is wonderful for is washing the jars when preparing to can. Nothing gets them quite so sparkling clean and with almost no effort. It was a desire and certainly not a need to have one just for that time of year. I also desired a portable dishwasher, to add more counter space and not have to redo the plumbing in the kitchen. Then I went to a yard sale. I was pleasantly surprised to see a free sign on a portable dishwasher in the front yard. Why someone else did not snatch it up, I could not tell you, except that God was keeping it until I got there. There was nothing wrong with it, and it has been truly a blessing.

My relatives were coming for a visit shortly after Thanksgiving. I made a hot dish out of all the leftovers and thought how nice it would be to have more potatoes to put on the top. I could just peel, cook up and mash a lot more, but that seemed too much work after the long day I had of cooking. I decided to pray. The next day I went to work. As it ended up, someone had bought cheesy potatoes all hot and ready to eat, and let them get cold. They no longer wanted them for this reason, and now they were offered to me. I was delighted as it was a generous bowl, enough potatoes to fill my casserole dish to the top. No effort and the fact of being cheesy potatoes made it all the more special.

My mother and I were always very close, my being the only daughter. One day I was watching a women walking on the other side of the street, and she reminded me of my mother. It was just about a month later when she became very ill and later died. My own mother had never been ill during my lifetime, and it was not until that event that I started to consider that someday my own dear mother could die. I am so thankful for God who has prepared me for the hard things in life. It was a short time later that my mother was diagnosed with cancer and died a year later.

I was remembering one time I had a sewing machine that could no longer be fixed. I desired to have another one just like it. I went to the Salvation Army, and there was the very same make and model of machine I desired. It also had a book, attachments, and a case. I was so thrilled. The added blessing was that I had the fifteen dollars with me that it cost to buy it, without needing to the bank and take a chance on someone else buying it. It was really beyond what I had asked because of all the extras.

One day I was looking out our back window and thinking how nice it would be to have a nice big barn like the neighbor behind us had. I had no idea how we ever could, but I prayed that one day it could be a reality. My husband and I both love to go to auctions. We heard of one and went. We watched as many things were auctioned off. When it was nearing the end, there was a large pile of twenty-foot boards with nails still in them. The auctioneer commented that no one wants those and was going to just pass them by. Then we spoke up and said we were interested. We got the whole pile for one dollar. Praise the Lord!!! We came home with them, and my husband figured out plans for a large building using those twenty-foot boards. In the end we had a very nice building and even had enough of

those boards after building the frame to put a wood floor in the upper level. It has certainly been a blessing.

I had gone to a ladies retreat and saw someone I knew. We were getting updated on each other's lives. She mentioned how she would like to have another child but with health problems it did not seem possible. I told her I would pray that next year when we met, she would be pregnant. I did not give it another thought. Next year came, and I saw her but no such news. Then a short time after we left there I got the news. She had actually been four months pregnant and did not know she was at the time I saw her. God knew her desire and graciously answered that prayer.

Another woman I knew so desired to have a child and had never been able to be pregnant. I knew she smoked and prayed that she would give up smoking and that she could get pregnant after that was settled. Also her Dad was having major surgery, and I thought the hope of another grandchild would give hope during recovery. Right on schedule, we got the news that she was indeed pregnant. She carried that baby to term, and as I type, I am praying that little boy will one day grow up to do great things for God. I know God is able.

My husband has always been a hard worker. During a time in life it seemed best that I be the one to mow the lawn. I thought how nice it would be to have a riding mower. When driving into town I noticed someone had one for sale in their front yard. There was no price. We stopped to ask the price and it was \$125. That mower has been such a blessing and has made mowing a luxury.

Psalm 18:2

The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.