

BECAUSE YOU LOVED US FIRST

By Teresa Hallock

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DEDICATED TO:

Roger, my husband—Counterpart of Jesus Christ

INTRODUCTION

Through the years, as a teacher of Bible Study groups, I had been asked to write a book. I never took this seriously until God told me to write it.

He did this by having three girls ask me in the same week, "Have you ever thought of writing a book?" This had been God's way of confirming His leadership in spiritual activities for me by having three people ask for the same thing.

One of these girls shared that she had a vision three times of me holding a book in my hands which I had written. With some levity, I asked her if she had seen the title of the book. But, in my heart I was very serious. I had wondered many times what people wanted when they asked for a book.

I still didn't know when I started the book because I was writing it through obedience to Him, not because I felt I had a book the world couldn't live without.

Even after I finished the manuscript, I wasn't sure it would be for publication. It had been a wonderful time of interaction with God in the writing, and I thought perhaps it was just a love gift to me from Him.

But when people knew the manuscript was complete and ready for publication, the new question was, "When?"

I found myself saying, "When God is ready. If it is really His book, He will have it published."

After three years, I know many were beginning to wonder. They kept telling me you don't get a book published unless you contact a publisher. But, I knew I had to wait on Him. One thing I have learned is that His timing is perfect.

Evidently, God has honored His ability to finish what He starts, because you hold the book in your hands. And, this is how it was published.

A young couple who had set under our teaching for a couple of years, moved to another part of the greater Dallas Metroplex. One day I received a call from the wife and she said a neighbor of hers had insisted they start a neighborhood Bible Study. There were at least two church denominations involved and they needed a teacher. They wanted Roger and me to lead and teach.

We started the study and for several weeks we seemed to have very little rapport with the group. We even wondered if we should continue, but we knew God had called us there and we saw their deep need to be accepted and loved. We stayed and loved, they began to respond.

One night in the study, I just happened to mention that I had a chapter in a manuscript I had written that enlarged on the topic we were studying. After the study was finished, a couple came to me and said they would be interested in seeing the manuscript for publication. I knew they owned and operated a typesetting business, but it had never occurred to me that God would use them to get the book

published. They and others in the Bible Study group worked for months to get it ready for publication. As a love gift, the expenses were underwritten by the group.

When I received the rough draft of the book for my birthday to read, edit, and change if necessary, the heavy paper cover had the words “Because you loved us first” printed on it in ink. I knew immediately this was to be the title even though it was only intended to convey to us their love that had motivated them to do this tremendous love project for us and the Lord.

“HE DOETH ALL THINGS WELL”

T.H.

Forward

It took me many years as a Christian to step fully into the expanse of God’s love. It occurred to me quite recently that we have approached the non-Christian in a rather back-ward way when we ask them to invite Jesus into their life instead of telling them Jesus is inviting them to come into His life. As I reflect back on my own Christian walk, I’m sure it would have been vastly different if I had realized this early in my walk with Him. There were so many frustrating years of trying to fit God into my life rather than place my life into the limitless life He is.

The intent of writing this book has not been to tell you what you “ought” to do. It has been to tell you that you are complete in Christ. Hopefully, it will help you be positive when you say “I am”, and quit wrestling with the “I’ve got to become.”

My prayer is that it will help you enjoy being who you are, where you are, and to know that it isn’t blasphemy for you to joyfully admit, “For me to live is Christ...”

CHAPTER I

A NEW DIMENSION

“Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:19, KJV)

Who knows when a longing in the heart becomes an active prayer which begins to line us up to respond to God’s will for our lives?

In the early 1960’s I began to seriously question my stance as a Christian. I knew I had a personal relationship with God the Father through a conversion experience of faith in Jesus Christ. I had been raised in a traditional church and married a man with a Christian background. Christianity as a way of life

was attractive to me. I was very conscientious about church work, teaching an adult Sunday school class by the time I was thirty years of age.

The size of my class usually indicated success; however, I later realized that much of the time I succeeded only in showing those I taught much of myself and little of Christ. The love I knew I should have for Christ and others just wasn't there. Somehow, self always seemed to get in the way, and resolutions and self-efforts to change were short lived. This was a period of searching and longing for something which always seemed just out of reach.

As I look back now, I see that God was preparing a set of circumstances to allow me to find an answer to the searching. I was ready to learn the beautiful truth that my searching was simply a response to God's wooing love. It is only the human ego that makes us think we are searching for God. (*Romans 3:11*). God is the aggressor in the situation and we love Him because He first loved us. (*1 John 4:19*). He came to seek and to save those who are lost. (*Luke 19:10*)

I had been bothered with chronic attacks of arthritis for about ten years. However, they had responded quite satisfactorily to medication. In early 1963, the attacks became more severe, and I required daily medication. Pain became aggressively worse during this time. When it failed to respond to treatment, my doctors said it was a condition I would just have to learn to live with.

A friend of mine had given me a book dealing with God's healing ministry through the supernatural means of claiming healing promises from the Bible. I had been taught to claim promises to move God into other problem areas of my life, but was this possible for my physical body? I became determined to find God's answer for myself. I read all I could find about healing in the Bible.

After Jesus' baptism, His healing ministry was displayed all through the four gospels. And, I noticed He nearly always dealt with both spiritual and physical healing together. God's timing is perfect. He knows exactly when we have reached the point of accepting what He wants to do in our lives. I had deep spiritual needs, but He knew spiritual pride blinded me from seeing these needs. So, through the arthritis, He met me at the level of the physical where I could admit I had a need. In the process of taking care of the physical, He was able to show me how destitute I was spiritually.

One morning in May, 1964, while having a quiet time with the Lord, I was reading *Luke 13:11-16*, about the woman who was bowed together for eighteen years. For the first time I noticed Jesus said she had a 'spirit' of infirmity. He went on to say to the ruler of the synagogue who had criticized Him for healing her on the Sabbath day, that Satan had bound her for the eighteen years. I had been taught as little about Satan as I had about healing, so I really struggled with that. However, I was identifying with the woman in this scripture because the arthritis was in my upper spine. Because of calcification, I was beginning to develop a dowager's hump and a restriction of the movement in my neck and back.

I became acutely aware that God was speaking to me through this passage. I knew He was saying that Satan had bound me with the arthritis, and, was telling me through this scripture that He could break those bonds of Satan and heal me.

Satan's power to take over my intellect was very real in the next few moments. He tried every way he could to make me see how stupid and foolish I would be to believe God could or would do this for me. However, God's wooing became stronger than ever. He spoke to me by bringing other scriptures to mind. The time I had used searching out the healing promises proved to be time well spent.

The verses He brought to mind were *Hebrews 13:8*, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever"; *Matthew 8:17*, "He Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses"; and, *I Peter 2:21-24*, "...Christ also suffered for us...by whose stripes ye were healed." The truth of the scripture, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (*Romans 10:17*) was in full force. The word began to generate faith, making it possible to respond to God instead of listening to the logic of Satan. I was getting a strong impression that God was telling me I must receive the healing now or it would never be mine. Although I didn't know exactly what to do, I knew I needed whatever He had for me and told Him I was ready to receive healing.

But Satan hadn't given up yet. A great spirit of fear engulfed me. My logical mind processes were telling me I must be crazy to think God would heal me supernaturally. Again, scripture came to my rescue. I remembered *James 4:7* which says, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you!" I simply said, "Satan, I resist you in the name of Jesus. I rebuke your arthritis in the name of Jesus and command it to leave my body." I got up from the table in the kitchen, where I had been sitting, to go to the den. I was seeking some warmth from the chill that had come with the fear a few minutes earlier. As I entered the den, a shaft of sunlight coming through an east window caught my attention. I went over and sat down in the pool of light the sunshine made on the carpet. At the same time God was speaking to me again through another verse of scripture, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." (*Isaiah 41:10*).

As I sat down in the sunshine, I felt relaxed as a wave of warmth flowed through my body. I made no connection of this warmth with anything supernatural. I thought it was the sunshine. However, the presence of God was so strong with me, I decided to lie down in the sunshine and enjoy the peace I was feeling. I dropped off to sleep and slept long enough for the sunlight to move away from me. When I woke up, I sat up and the natural reflex of stretching my arms above my head brought awareness that the stiffness was gone out of my neck and back, allowing me to move freely. The numbness of my left arm and hand from a pinched nerve in my spine due to the calcification was gone. And, with my arms raised, again I had the same sensation of warmth I had experienced when I first sat down in the sunshine. This time, I knew it was supernatural, and that God had done a supernatural work in my body. I knew I was healed!

While sitting on the floor, my whole being turned to God. I completely surrendered myself to Him for the first time in my life. Never before as a Christian had I been willing to do this with no strings attached. But, I decided if a relationship with Him could be as sweet as what I was experiencing, I wanted everything He had to offer me. I told Him I would make the rest of my life available to His will for me to the best of my ability to do so.

For about four hours, I had no outside interruptions of any kind. I experienced a real fellowship with Jesus. I had no visions. I heard no audible voice. But, through an inward voice and the scriptures, He began a clean-up job in me. In His presence, I saw my own attempts at righteousness as the filthy rags they were. (*Isaiah 64:6*) I had been physically healed. But, more importantly, I received a very real spiritual healing.

About mid-afternoon, I had a call from my husband. When he had left for work that morning, he had made me promise to go to the doctor to check on medication to help me get more sleep at night. When I answered the phone, he asked, "Is Teresa there?" My voice sounded so different, he didn't recognize it. He said, "You don't sound like yourself. How are you feeling?" I assured him I felt wonderful because I had been healed. He wanted to know what doctor I had seen. I then realized I hadn't kept my promise to go to the doctor. When I told him Jesus had healed me at home, he thought something was wrong. He told the men with whom he worked that something was wrong and he had to go home. He left his office immediately to come home to see about me. My euphoria made him think that perhaps I had overdosed on drugs.

In a short time, he was home. He hadn't told me he was coming, so I was surprised when he very cautiously opened the front door. I ran to him, throwing my arms around him as I said something again about being healed. He was very stern with me. Taking my arms from around his neck, he took me by the shoulders and held me away from him so he could look into my face. Suddenly, relief replaced the sternness and he said, "You are all right, aren't you?"

"I feel wonderful," I said, and then added, "I feel like I have received a transfusion of love." Then, he wanted to know how I was healed. Even though I knew I was healed, I found I couldn't verbalize the 'how' of what had happened. He didn't push me for an explanation. He saw my inability to communicate as a sure sign that something significant had happened because I'm seldom at a loss for words. However, he made it very plain that as soon as I could talk about it, he wanted to know what had happened.