

# *CROSSING THE JORDAN*

There is a golden road for everyone

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## Foreword

My dear friend and sister in the Lord has given me the honor of introducing the incredible story of her salvation and walk with Jesus. Melany is one of the people in my life who has left such a great imprint in my heart. I believe in her, I have seen her walk and I know she has a heart that's truly submitted to God. She is a follower of Jesus, unafraid and unashamed.

I recall meeting Melany many years ago at a company we both worked for in South Africa. We had short friendly chats in the office kitchen. At that point we didn't have a clue that God would weave our stories together. I knew her when she didn't yet believe in Jesus as her Lord and Savior and saw how, after her dreadful experience with the dark side of the supernatural realm, she reached out and encountered the Lord, giving her life to him and falling deeply in love. Her transformation was so beautiful to watch. She dedicated herself to studying God's Word and took it at face value, following the instructions therein. I was also in awe at the incredible boldness that God gave her to share the gospel and pray for the sick.

On one specific occasion, there was a young lady with us in a taxi and her face, particularly around her eyes, was badly swollen from a reaction to aspirin. Melany laid her hands on the girl to pray, the swelling went down almost immediately and the pain was gone. The girl was almost in disbelief at her own quick recovery. She couldn't quite understand what had happened, but Mel wasted no time in telling her about Jesus and his love for her. I remember the tangible presence of God in that car; I wonder what the taxi driver was thinking! Praise God for his healing power and for choosing such a willing vessel to pass it on to those in need of his touch.

Melany has believed God on many occasions when everything looked impossible, but was willing to follow his leading no matter what the consequences might be. This is a rare quality even in most believers today. Her journey reminds me so much of the faith that Abraham displayed when God called him to "go to a land I will show you." God did not yet reveal where that land would be, but Abraham trusted God and believed His promise and reacted in obedience. In the same way, I have seen Melany's faith grow as God led her on many adventures. He has always been faithful in providing for her on her journey and she has always given him the glory.

I believe that her story and the lessons that she has learned will greatly impact the non-Christian and Christian alike. I encourage you, whether you believe in Jesus or not to go on a journey with Melany in the following pages and open your heart to God, allow him to speak to you through her story and testimonies and encounter him for yourself.

What God has done for her, he can do for you. Your golden road awaits!

Tara Rautenbach, 1 September 2017

## Preface

Christians? I hated them. I considered them hypocritical and weak. Pathetic even. I saw them as willing to grasp onto anything including an illusion of a virgin birth for the sake of a crutch since they were too weak to withstand the highs and lows of everyday life alone. I pitied them and was proud to consider myself strong enough to have no need of this crutch; this so called Savior, Jesus. Yes, the name Jesus would typically result in a foul four-letter word leaving my lips and a well-timed hand gesture along with it. I'd made up my mind—I wanted no part of it.

So what happened, you ask? How does a self-proclaimed atheist, a once Christian-bashing opportunist become sold out for Jesus Christ and leave everything for the sake of the cross? One encounter. One real encounter with the Lord is all it takes.

My prayer is that every single individual reading this book will have that one encounter. The encounter that has you fall head over heels in love. When you have truly fallen in love you will proclaim it from the rooftops, and *this* is my goal. That each and every person shall come to salvation knowledge of Christ and be set radically on fire through the love of Jesus and boldly declare his name from every mountaintop.

In him I find unconditional and everlasting love, total restoration, redemption, freedom from guilt, shame, and all manner of wounds and sin wrought from 29 years of worldly living.

My praise to him and proclamation of him and all he has done *is* my heart's promise to him. And, I will never stop.

May you know that despite apparent circumstances, despite whether you personally know him or not, even if you have not realized it, he knows you, he knows you intimately. He loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, plans to prosper you, not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. The very hairs on your head are numbered. He knit you together perfectly in your mother's womb. He knew your name before the creation of the world. He purposed you, he designed you, and he is calling you, for you were fearfully and wonderfully made. The Word of God is truth and all promises therein are for all who believe. There is healing, there is deliverance, there is salvation to be found in Jesus for you today, you need only believe.

If you would like to give your life to the Lord before you even begin this book, to know that your sins are forgiven and that your name has been written in the Lamb's Book of Life, without any shadow of a doubt, turn to **page xxx** to pray a prayer accepting Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior.

*Jeremiah 29:11, Psalm 139:1-5, Psalm 139:13, Psalm 139:16, John 17:17*

In July 2015, the Lord spoke to my heart regarding the writing of this book. A few months later, I received a prophetic word from a friend in a different country, who had had a dream regarding this very book. She encouraged me and told me that the Lord was going to use me to write. I kept this in my heart, as I did not feel released to begin. At the end of September 2016, I again felt the Lord speak to my heart and say that now was the time to start writing. I persisted in prayer and on Sunday, October 30, 2016, while in our regular Sunday Celebration Service, I asked the Lord for confirmation to be given that day by way of a prophetic word from the pastor, who was speaking. Since I had just arrived in America, he knew nothing about me nor my belief that I should write. Within thirty seconds of my silent prayer, the very thing I asked for was fulfilled when seemingly randomly the pastor in the middle of his sermon said, “The last chapters of your book are going to be phenomenal, can you say Amen! Hallelujah! I don’t care what the beginning chapters looked like; the final chapters of your story are going to be for his glory! Can you say Amen! Hallelujah, Hallelujah!”

I believe the Lord has commissioned me to write this book with a two-fold purpose. The first is to compel all those who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior to know him. If this is you, know that he loves you and desires for you to have an intimate and personal relationship with him.

The second is to encourage the body of Christ to live with both feet fully and firmly in the kingdom. His plans for us are great; however, they require submission, a fully yielded heart.

I will, within these pages, show that age and experience in the things of God are not to be the measuring rod by which our release into the things and callings of God are to be gauged. It is the Lord who qualifies, calls, and equips, and he does so in his timing. We see this principle on display in the story of the parable of the workers in the vineyard in Matthew 20; I encourage you to go read this. Here, the workers hired in the last hour were rewarded with the same benefits as the workers who had been toiling all day. I don’t believe this points only to entering the kingdom of heaven, but also to how the Lord will reward a diligent heart that seeks after his kingdom with just as great a level of anointing as those who have served him for years.

I believe he is raising up a new breed who will, in astounding speed, flow in the power of the Holy Ghost like never before for the sake of the end time harvest. What was previously the ceiling has in this last hour now become the floor. The trumpet has blown. Get ready!

You are not to disqualify yourself because of your past, as there is no sin that the blood of Jesus cannot wash away. Likewise, you are not too old to begin. You should not worry about your audience, as every person has a sphere of influence, be it big or small. Having lived and travelled in various countries around the world including the Middle East, I can truthfully say that I have never lacked a hungry audience, even if it’s an audience of one.

When you seek *first* his kingdom and his righteousness, he will raise you up and give you a voice in the most difficult and seemingly impossible of settings. Just as Jesus increased in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and with man, we too increase in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man. Prove yourself faithful with little and much more will be given. Physical age is not the determining factor in this, a radically obedient heart, the heart after God's, is.

“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.”

*2 Chronicles 16:9 (a) KJV*

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

*Revelation 12:11 KJV*

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

*Romans 1:16 KJV*

*Note, various names and places have been changed due to the sensitivity of the region, to protect the local church and leaders from persecution that could potentially follow the writings of this book.*

## Introduction Nothing Unredeemable

*“Clothe the prisoners, Mel,”* the voice in the dream boomed.

It had been roughly a year since I’d given my life to Jesus and I had begun to have some very interesting and detailed dreams that, upon sharing with my pastors, I learned was in fact one of the ways in which the Lord could speak.

As the dream continued, I didn’t know from which direction the booming voice came; yet, I knew it was the voice of the Lord. I also knew who the prisoners were since I was staring at them. I found myself sitting at a desk in a room I did not recognize, watching a group of prisoners on a monitor, much like a security monitor you would expect to find at a prison. I was aware I was being commissioned, being given a new job from the Lord. This job, however, did not pertain to my actual employment in real life; this was an entirely new commission unrelated to my actual occupation. I knew immediately that it would affect everything I did going forward, as well as everyone in my office. This role was being passed to me straight from heaven and it was geared at preparing people for eternity. It was online marketing with the goal of selling clothing to the prisoners. Instinctively, I knew that these items of clothing were not actual garments one would find in stores today, but rather the robes of righteousness offered by Jesus. I also instinctively knew that the prisoners were those who did not know the Lord Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, those desperate and dying, bound in chains by the demonic powers of this world. Lastly, I knew that the online marketing role was the Lord showing me that outside and unrelated to my actual occupation, he was giving me an opportunity to influence those connected to me on social media by sharing all the amazing things I had begun to witness him do for, in, and through me.

Two arms stretched out in front of me, from where and whom they belonged to I did not know. In each hand was a checkered shirt. One red and white, the other black and white.

The voice boomed once again, *“From today you will begin to share what I have done for you and through you. You will sell the blood of Jesus, holiness, and righteousness—the hope found only in Christ my Son.”*

One of the outstretched arms reached forward and placed the red-and-white checkered shirt in my one hand.

The booming voice continued, *“As you share of my goodness, the people will be drawn and know, too, of my coming judgment on all those who have not accepted my Son.”* The other arm stretched forward, placing the black-and-white checkered shirt in my other hand.

*“Tell them about my Son!”* The voice echoed.

In this moment of the dream, I recalled a scripture found in Romans 2:4. It is the goodness, the kindness of God that leads us to repentance and as this was brought to my mind, I knew that while opportunities would come to explain and share on the reality of life after death, and the coming judgment, that what the Lord was asking me to do at this point was to share testimonies of life and hope, to encourage and exhort people, allowing them to see Jesus as he really is...Our Savior, Healer and Deliverer...Our only hope. It was clear to me that this opportunity was not being given me to condemn sinners to hell by preaching fire and brimstone, but to share the goodness and love of Christ, to compel the prisoners to find the freedom in Christ they so desperately needed by accepting Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.

Next, instead of a booming voice, I heard, clear as day, a soft word spoken to my heart. It was not something I heard audibly in the dream, but rather it bypassed my mind and was spoken directly to my heart and spirit. Since this time, I have learned that this is hearing something "in the Spirit." What I heard was, *"I am causing a multiplication to occur for I love my people."*

Suddenly, the scene in the dream changed. I found myself no longer at a desk staring at a monitor, but instead I was in a clothing store. Here, I found I was an assistant in charge of selling clothing. There were ladies all around me wanting to try these garments on. No longer selling online but rather now face-to-face, I began to point them to the correct garments for each of them. Some gladly replaced their clothing, others sneered at me and passed snide comments amongst themselves. Arabic men walked into the store wearing their Thobes and glared at me as if to kill me. I had a camera in my hands and began to take photos of all the people. I once again heard in the Spirit, *"I'm giving you a snapshot of what is to come, remember what I've shown you and get ready!"*

I immediately knew that while I would share Jesus with people online for the time being, a time was fast approaching where this would change, that the Lord would create opportunities and open doors for me to share the gospel message face-to-face with people who were desperate and dying, in need of his robes of righteousness.

As a result of this dream, I began to record and share online all that I saw the Lord do. Everything shared throughout the pages of this book is a direct result of these recordings, and ultimately this dream. Three years later and I now see more clearly than ever before how the Lord has been faithful to his word given to me in this dream, as many opportunities have since presented themselves to share the gospel, both online and face-to-face. One thing is crystal clear, when we are faithful with the little, much

more will be given. I have now had the opportunity to see the Lord begin to increase my influence and have had the privilege of sharing the gospel and many testimonies not only online but in six different countries. Here, I have seen many saved, healed and delivered in person. Jesus is amazing and His Word will never return void.

What he has done for me, he can do for you.

“...For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

*Revelations 19:10 KJV*

## Chapter 1

### Eyes to See

At the start of 2013, as a 29-year-old, I rang in the New Year from the Middle East with much drinking and partying, something that had become a way of life for me early on. Essentially, I had picked up the same wild lifestyle of booze, partying and men that I had had in Southern Africa before moving to the Gulf six months prior when a new and unexpected job opportunity arose. On arriving in the Gulf, I had quickly made a new group of friends through an expat community website and most of us ended up living in the same apartment block, which made the party lifestyle almost non-stop. On the night of January 14, 2013, I was coming home to my comfortable studio apartment after dinner with a friend when everything I believed about the world and life—not believing in angels, demons, heaven, hell, God and Satan—was challenged. It was around 11 p.m. when this friend said goodbye and left my apartment for the evening.

Now alone, in preparation for bed, I cleared away a few wine glasses from the previous night's party that had not made it to the sink that morning and wondered how I had managed to go this particular night without opening another bottle of Merlot. This particular wine had fast become my favorite and trusty companion to almost every evening, be it spent alone or with friends. Going to bed completely sober was not something that happened often and I thought about what a change it would make going to work the following day hangover free. As I cleared the glasses and made my way into the kitchen, my mind moved to how fortunate I had been to find this particular apartment.

Found in a busy but central location, the building itself was tall and impressive and had a great communal swimming pool, sauna, and barbeque area along with a small private gym for tenants. Apart from the many stray cats always loitering outside (something that is a problem regardless of where you live in this particular country), it was safe and fairly quiet. I'd never had any real problems other than an occasional issue with an overheating air-conditioning unit, something that was also a common problem in the Middle East due to the extreme heat. Within my apartment itself—which was found a number of floors up—the entire place had been newly painted in a warm off-white tone for my arrival. The kitchen was large with ample cupboard space and came fitted with all the necessary appliances, making life as a new expatriate extremely simple and convenient. It was also the only room in the apartment, apart from the bathroom which stood a few meters away but adjacent, which was completely separated and closed off by walls and a door. While these two rooms, the kitchen and bathroom, were completely closed off and private, the rest of the apartment was made up of one large open plan room that I had separated into three distinct areas using various pieces of furniture.

My bedroom, which consisted of an array of costly modern art pieces on the walls and a dark mahogany wood-finish, queen-size bed set adorned with pure white duck-down covers, was found in the corner area directly opposite the kitchen. The space between what I called my bedroom area and the kitchen was large enough to allow not only plenty of space to change clothing and move around, but also to provide something of a dining area for entertaining guests. To separate the bedroom area from this dining area, I placed a matching dark-wood

nightstand and mirror set, along with a very large double sliding door wardrobe that came with a fitted full length mirror, all of which reached almost to the ceiling. This provided the perfect barrier between the two spaces, giving the feel of a little privacy to the bedroom section. Immediately to the right of my bedroom was the living room area. With this layout, from the bedroom area I had a full view of the living room, part of the dining area and the bathroom, while the kitchen area remained hidden. I loved this apartment and was extremely happy to have found it after having spent my first month in the Gulf in a temporary one very different to the one just described.

Having cleared up the empty wine glasses from the night before, I was settling into bed for the night when the world as I knew it changed forever. What I know understand was the spirit realm, although I had no gauge for, or understanding of this at the time, suddenly opened up to me. First one and then another demon flew out of my bathroom and slammed into me as I lay in bed. It is very hard for me to describe what I was seeing with my natural eye as it appeared to me as if an entirely new dimension was visible, almost as if a veil from my vision was suddenly removed and I was seeing into a new world that co-existed with the world that I knew. My apartment, while it looked the same, now seemed different, almost as if I was looking at it as an architectural drawing. In this moment it seemed as if a clear blue-gray tinged blueprint had been placed on top of everything I was seeing, and this was revealing new detail in the room. What is more, there was an entirely different feel to it, as if every sensory organ in my body had been heightened and I was acutely aware of the presence of evil in the room. Not believing in the supernatural realm, I was both very fearful and very confused, not having ever experienced anything like what I was seeing or feeling. Every hair on my body stood on end. Initially, in the first split-second of these events, I was not sure if I had fallen asleep and was in a dream state or if I was actually experiencing something in reality. My fear mounted as the first demon hit me in the right shoulder, pinning me to the bed. I began to scream, realizing that this was indeed reality. I was terrified and as I struggled to get free, the demon's head swiveled around so that it was facing the bathroom from where it had come. It made a terrible sound; the only thing that I can think of that it remotely resembled was the sound of an electronic game that you would hear in an arcade. This seemed to echo through the apartment along with my screams, although I'm not sure I was even hearing it audibly.

As if in answer to this sound, the second demon came flying out of the bathroom. It hit me in the left shoulder, also pinning me down. The first one was about a meter tall, its upper body had a torso, a neck, two arms and a head, but I could not see it below the waist. It looked as if a sheet of fine, black-colored glass had been shattered and the glass shards clothed it. I could hear the grating noise as the shards scraped up against each other. It was blacker than any black I'd ever seen and it had sharp, straight, black, fang-like teeth. It consistently bit into my face. I could feel it going through me; it seemed to somehow disintegrate as it did and come back together to charge at me again. It spoke to me in my mind and told me that I was going to die, that they were going to kill me. The second took a shape similar to that of a pit-bull dog. It too was covered in the black glass shards. They pushed me down into the bed with an incredible force. They took turns tormenting me as I could hear their thoughts about the end of my life, which I saw was fast approaching. I saw pictures of myself in my mind, being dragged by them up to, and

over, the edge of my balcony, falling the few stories to my death at the parking lot below. All the while they told me that this was what was coming for me.

I was able to struggle and scream, and as I did I had a memory come back to me of my mother telling me as a young child, "If you ever get scared just shout out loud, 'In the name of Jesus, be gone Devil!'"

I don't know from where that thought came, but without even thinking about it, I yelled it at the demon on my right shoulder. I don't know what exactly I expected would happen, but I did not expect what followed. It threw its head back and laughed at me, a horrific electronic sounding shrill of a laugh, whether I was hearing this audibly or not I don't know. Again, it spoke to my mind and said, "You don't belong to that family!"

After much struggling, it was as if a paralysis came over me, leaving me unable to move or even whisper. It was in this state that they tormented me until early the next morning. When they finally disappeared at about 6 a.m., as swiftly as they'd arrived, I jumped up, threw on some clothes, and fled from the apartment in search of help, but not without first noticing the bruising down my shoulders and the stiffness in the back of my neck from the force of being pinned down all night. If anyone tries to tell you that demons don't exist or that they cannot hurt you, take it from me, they are wrong. Demons are very real and they can most definitely hurt you!

At the time of this encounter, I didn't have a clue what that demon meant when it said "You don't belong to that family," but looking back now, I have come to some understanding. This is similar to what happened with the seven sons of Sceva in the Book of Acts. If you have not given your life to Jesus, if you're not born again, you cannot expect to carry any authority over the demonic simply by using the name of Jesus. The power is in the relationship. He has to be your Lord if you want the benefits of the blood, the benefits of operating in the power of the Holy Ghost.

"Then some of the traveling Jewish exorcists also attempted to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, 'I implore you and solemnly command you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches!' Seven sons of one [named] Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. But the evil spirit retorted, 'I know and recognize and acknowledge Jesus, and I know about Paul, but as for you, who are you?' Then the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they ran out of that house [in terror, stripped] naked and wounded. "

***Acts 19:13-16 AMP***

## A Quick Look Back

I grew up in a religious home in a town called Nelspruit in South Africa. Despite having the gospel and Jesus shared with me often while growing up, I did not actually see him, his character, which I had been told about, in anyone doing the sharing. I very quickly made up my mind that if this was what Christianity actually looked like; I would have no part of it. It did not seem to be working for anyone I knew, and as such I would not even consider taking it onboard myself, especially considering the depths of depression, physical illness, and perversion I saw in those around me who proclaimed to be Christ followers. I was a very proud atheist. I did not believe there was a God. I did not believe in Satan. I did not believe there was a heaven or a hell, nor did I believe there were angels or demons. I did not really know what it was that I did believe because the truth of the matter was, the thought of dying scared me so much that I refused to allow myself to think about it, much less think about what would come thereafter.

My childhood was not a happy one. My mother, in the little memory I have of her, had become ill with emphysema when I was just a young girl in primary school. By the time I started high school at thirteen she was on oxygen almost permanently and our home looked like a hospital with oxygen tanks and machines, wires and medications found in many of the rooms. By the time I was fifteen, she was mostly bedridden and unable to move around. She suffered for seven years in this state and my three sisters and I learned to help bath and clothe her and give her physiotherapy daily. She passed away after being in Intensive Care for a number of days in the Nelspruit Private Hospital when I was twenty-two years old. I'll never forget the nurses turning off the monitor when it flat-lined. When this happened, one of my family members simply could not comprehend that she had actually passed and asked for it to be turned back on in order to be sure. It did not surprise me. We had watched my mom rally and fight for her life many times, even fighting her way out of a coma. As such we had all been called many times to say goodbye to her, only for her to be discharged from the hospital a week later. This time however, was different. I have always been grateful that she held on as long as she did. I'm even more grateful that I was by her side to hold her hand when the time came to say goodbye. My only wish would have been to have had memory of her being well.

My father and I had a terribly strained relationship. As the youngest of five kids, I was mostly left to my own devices and often resorted to crazy schemes in an attempt to get attention, one of which actually resulted in an unnecessary surgery. I felt very much like one of the "black sheep" in the family, mostly because this is how I was labeled although not in those exact words. I was seen as always rebelling, always causing problems of some kind, and the reality was that this was not far from the truth. There are, however, always reasons behind childhood rebellion, which in my case was also true.

At twelve, I was smoking regularly and experimenting with alcohol. By sixteen, I had temporarily been kicked out of the house for speaking out about being sexually abused. By this time, my smoking habit had grown to over a pack a day and was now including weed. I was also a regular binge drinker, which, in one particular case I remember, resulted in a 2 a.m. emergency ambulance trip to hospital to avoid alcohol poisoning. I had also met and began sleeping with a

man who was a close friend's stepfather; he was thirty-four-years old, more than double my age. At the time I believed I had found my knight. In actuality he was a desperately sought-after father figure, albeit a very distorted and skewed one. He was, however, not the first man I'd been with.

At 17, while in my final year of high school, due to much tension at home and multiple unresolved issues within my family, I moved out of the house and in with this man and his family. My father, relieved to be free of his out of control child I am sure, agreed to cover the living expenses for me to settle into life in my new home. Of course, the new mom and sisters at my new house had no idea I was heavily involved in an affair with their husband and father. As with all things hidden, it eventually came to light and ended his marriage. Our relationship didn't last long before I too got the boot despite promises of marriage, which at the time, came sealed with a pretty white-gold promise ring. This further reinforced my already active orphan spirit and spirit of rejection, although I had no idea what these were at the time.

At nineteen, I was given a job in Johannesburg, a three-and-a-half hour drive away from where I lived in Nelspruit. Here, unfortunately, married men became a trend that continued for many years. I often simultaneously juggled both boyfriends and married men, believing that if I could spark jealousy in either one of them, they might stick around longer.

The fear of death was always in the back of my mind. Living the type of lifestyle that I was, I needed to find a justification that allowed me to continue on that path. In my late twenties, after a few discussions with some new friends, I decided to believe in a mixture of atheism and reincarnation. I appeased my conscience by telling myself that even though I would die at some point, I would just keep coming back to life in a different form and not ever really be held accountable for the things I was doing. I started visiting a psychic therapist, who as I understood it, believed much the same. Here, I spent many hours and much money as she conducted various forms of energy healing on me and shared with me about my past lives, the ones to come, and how all this information was relevant to where I found myself at that particular point in time. Her sessions opened doors into the demonic spirit realm that I had no idea were there. I remained oblivious of this fact until much later.

By the time I was twenty-nine, I had had multiple relationships with many different men. One in particular, let's call him Sam, left me with deep heart wounds and further reinforced my fears of rejection after having lived with him. The breakup was the strangest thing to me, as I had loved him with all my heart; however, one day after an ongoing argument, I realized how very tired I was of it all. There always seemed to be something wrong with us. On this particular day, something told me that it was never going to change, that this fight would be my life if I stayed. While he was out for the morning, without him knowing, I packed all my belongings into my car. With many tears, I left without so much as a goodbye. It was one of the most devastating and traumatic things I'd ever had to do, but looking back I now know the Lord's hand was in it and I thank him and pray that he has healed the poor man as much as he did me, as I was certainly not blameless in all of our problems.

I specifically mention this because many think that if you're the one to end a relationship that you cannot suffer rejection or pain. Not so. I questioned my decision to leave Sam virtually every day for over a year, especially after I found out that he had moved on. I went into a deep depression that resulted in suicidal thoughts and me partying harder than I ever had in my life, all the while pretending everything was okay. In truth, through all the partying I was actually looking to fill a void, to feel something, anything, after losing what I genuinely believed at that time was everything – the man, the perfect picture of my future marriage and life. I did not realize it at the time, but he had become my identity. He had become my god, my idol. Without him by my side, I saw myself as utterly worthless and unlovable.

Looking back, I now clearly see that I was convinced that I was not good enough to be loved. It was this, and my fear of being alone, that actually resulted in my being alone. I was so convinced that I would eventually be rejected that I made a point of always rejecting everyone around me first, sure that if I didn't leave them, that it was only a matter of time before they left me. I wanted, needed, to be in control of losing those I cared about rather than leaving the timing of this to someone else. This desire resulted in many very short-lived relationships, whether they were friendships or of a romantic nature.

With all these factors to consider, it is not surprising that I had a terrible problem with anger and rage. I would fly off the handle at the smallest, most insignificant of things. While I didn't have a problem finding drinking buddies, I was the person everyone hated to be around at work. If you were on my team and you did something wrong, you would cringe and go seek refuge from me in the bathroom to hide from my wrath. Not only would I make sure you knew what an idiot you were, I'd make sure everyone around you knew it too. I developed this tool to feel better about myself, because when you point out other people's flaws, you don't seem so flawed yourself. This behavior isolated me even more. While I pretended the anger issue didn't exist, it bothered me immensely, but I could not seem to get control over it.

Even as I type this, I feel to pray over some of you now who have had similar experiences. I feel the Lord wants to begin a process of deep healing in many of you reading. If this is you, just lift your hands in agreement to receive as you read, being open to what the Holy Spirit wants to do for you today.

*Yes, Father, right now I pray over every hurt and wounded heart. I thank you that you know every person intimately by name, that you designed, planned, and purposed them before the creation of the world. You know what has been done to each of them to make them react in the ways that they do. You understand them while so many don't care to try. I thank you, Jesus, that you're not far away on your throne casting judgment and counting every sin, but rather you are right now interceding for each and every one of them, calling them to you with your great love that covers a multitude of sin.*

*I thank you Lord, that we don't need to clean up our act before we can come and seek refuge in you. We don't need to be perfect to come and sit on your lap. You are the perfect Father, and I thank you that you meet us where we are at, that you love us back to life and restore all things that the enemy has stolen and is even now trying to steal. I thank you that it is your love and kindness that leads us to repentance. I thank you that you don't say, "change this and fix that and then you can follow me," but rather you say, "Follow me and you will change."*

*Yes, Lord, I thank you right now that you are sending ministering angels, that marriages will begin to heal and rejection will lose its grip. Wounds from absent fathers are being healed and abuse is being washed off bodies even as we pray. I thank you that you turn all things for our good, no matter how very bad they are. Father, you see every tear that is being shed. Holy Spirit, I pray that you come and reveal yourself in undeniable ways, touch each heart in a way that they know that they know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that you, the Lord of the universe, has heard even those very silent prayers that were in their hearts. I thank you Lord for replacing pain and rejection with joy, love, and a hope for the future. I pray most of all Lord that you bring life. Prepare each heart to receive you, Lord, before the sun sets on this day. Do a quick work, in Jesus' name.*

*If you feel your heart tugging and pulling on you to give your life to Jesus right now, turn to page xxx to be led through the salvation prayer, to know that you're a child of God and that, having had your sins forgiven, your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Whether you are rededicating your life to the Lord, coming back to him after a time of straying, or whether you are giving your life to him for the very first time, do not let the sun go down without getting right with God first. If your heart is beating like crazy in your chest, this opportunity to receive Jesus as your Savior is for you.*

Over April and May 2012, I decided to take a holiday and go to Cape Town for a few days. This decision came about after a near suicide attempt. Not believing in demons, I did not know that it was possible for them to speak to you, nor did I know that when they did, it could sound like your very own thoughts. On this day, I had been driving home from work. I was in a very dark place of depression specifically related to having left Sam, and I was crying as I drove. In front of me on the highway was a very large truck, the wheels almost as high as my vehicle. As if out of nowhere came this thought, *what are you waiting for? Just put your foot flat. If you get enough speed, you'll go right under the truck and the floor of it will take your head off and this will all be over. You don't have to suffer like this.*

The thought genuinely shocked me. I knew I was depressed. By this stage, I had been taking medication for depression for quite some time, but I had never considered myself suicidal. What scared me more was the fact that I entertained the thought and played it out in my mind, imagining the emergency vehicles and what would happen at the scene and even what people

would say at my funeral. Truthfully, I'm not really sure why I didn't just do it. God's mercy and grace are the only explanations as the darkness around me at that time felt so unbearable that I wanted to die. Instead, I remember literally shaking my head in the car to clear my mind of the thoughts as I took the off-ramp leading from the highway and headed home. That day I decided I was either working or partying too hard, and booked the holiday to Cape Town.

While on holiday, I decided to take a road trip to see a bit of the Garden Route and Cape Point, a very famous and scenic tourist attraction in Southern Africa. I was alone as I drove my little rental car along a high ridge with a drop on my right overlooking the ocean. I remember seeing the most incredible view and being blown away by the beauty. The Lord has reminded me of this moment and what's more, of a prayer I prayed while driving, a prayer I prayed to a God I did not believe in. The prayer was about taking me far away to create a new and better life, to see the world, a prayer to give me purpose. I desperately wanted change, but would never have admitted that to anyone at the time.

That same day as I was heading back to the hotel from Cape Point, I came across a beautiful mountain range. It was breathtaking. I had the strangest impulse, so strong, to go to it. I didn't understand why or have any gauge for the Holy Spirit or that it might be God drawing me. All I knew was that when looking at it, the beauty overwhelmed me to tears. I wanted to be right on it. The road I was on, a big highway, however, would not allow for this, and was in fact leading away in the opposite direction. I started making a plan in my mind to go back the next day to explore and find a way, but while doing this I saw a narrow road branching off the highway. It appeared to me that this road was headed in the direction of the mountain. Abruptly, on a whim, I turned off the highway and took it.

The little road wound around over an old railway track and through a dirty squatter camp where the poorest of the poor lived in small shacks and huts. Up and up the road went. As I drove, the closer and closer I got to the mountain range, the narrower and narrower the road I was on got, until the tar on the road was virtually disintegrating and disappearing on either side. The thicket and bush began closing tighter and tighter around my rental car until eventually I could hear the bush scratching on either side. I could not stop going, however; I was being drawn. I kept telling myself that I would just drive for five more minutes and then if the thicket didn't open up, I would reverse my way back out since turning the car around at this point was simply not an option.

After what seemed like forever driving on this tiny road while only being able to see the very tops of the mountains, suddenly the road and thicket cleared and opened up. I was blown away by what I saw. The sun streamed over the mountains, the light breaking through the clouds. I'd never seen anything like it. Right there I got out of my car, stood at the hood, and wept. I was totally and utterly undone by the beauty. Again, I prayed to the God I didn't know or even believe in. I remember thanking him for his creation; I remember thanking him for drawing me to something that I knew in my heart only a handful of people had ever seen.

After recovering from this powerful encounter (albeit I did not recognize it as that at the time), I managed in that tiny clearing to turn my car around and make my way back. It was slow going through the thicket, but eventually I passed the squatter camp and found myself at the old railway track. Here, I was compelled to stop right on the tracks because of the different views I had on either side. To my right, the light streamed in through the clouds. It was open, light, and uncluttered. To the left, while still beautiful and compelling, there was a darkness over the tracks. I marveled at the difference in the two views before continuing back, not knowing how important and prophetic the moment was and what God was going to reveal to me through it in the months to come.

After the holiday, I returned back home to Johannesburg and went straight back to my crazy lifestyle of partying, booze, and men. I did not give these encounters another thought; they did not even cross my mind. At the time, I was leading a treasury division within a prominent VAT recovery firm in Johannesburg. Approximately thirty days after returning back to work from that holiday, I got a call from a competitor in the Middle East, offering me a job with their firm. In truth, I'd never heard of the country and I genuinely thought it was a scam, so I hung up the phone. In God's kindness they called me back and supernaturally, thirty-three days later on July 21, 2012, I landed in the Gulf to take on my new role as country manager. This job offer in itself was supernatural and purely God's favor. There was nothing in my history that should have allowed me an opportunity to take on such a role, nor was I even educated past high school. After my arrival, I was told much later that the government had declined my work visa multiple times before it was finally approved. Somehow the right people got in touch with the right people and I got re-evaluated. God opens doors no man can shut, even when you don't personally know him!

The same day I landed in the Middle East, God orchestrated a visit to a mall that allowed me to have a chance introduction to a couple, Van and Theresa. Unbeknownst to me, they were leaders in the local church. Having never met me before, they insisted on taking me for a coffee. I thought this was very strange behavior and privately wondered why they were being so nice to me, being sure that there was an ulterior motive. I followed them down the mall. Upon sitting down in the busy little coffee shop, they started talking to me about Jesus and their church. I thought, *oooooh*, and rolled my eyes. I swallowed the coffee down as quickly as I could and made my getaway, but the truth is, there was something about these people that I really liked. Six months later, this same couple was to become my spiritual parents.