

The Gift of Prophetic Encouragement

Hearing the Words of God for Others

DEBBIE KITTERMAN



Chosen

a division of Baker Publishing Group
Minneapolis, Minnesota

© 2018 by Debbie Kitterman

Published by Chosen Books
11400 Hampshire Avenue South
Bloomington, Minnesota 55438
www.chosenbooks.com

Chosen Books is a division of
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Printed in the United States of America

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ISBN 978-0-8007-9886-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018933920

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The personal testimonies included in this book are real; however, some names have been changed.

Cover design by Rob Williams, InsideOutCreativeArts

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

This book is dedicated to you!

Yes, *you!* As you read the pages of this book, I pray that my testimony and those of others will inspire you to be courageous. God is calling an army of ordinary people to rise up and release His love and heart to a world in desperate need. I pray this book would spark an awakening in the body of Christ, an opening of ears to hear the voice of God and a courage to step out in obedience to share His love with the world. It is time, Church. God is calling you. Awaken and arise!

God wants to communicate with us just as He did with Jesus when He walked on earth. Jesus' relationship with the Father is prophecy in action.

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Foreword

The one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. . . . I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy.

1 Corinthians 14:3, 5

Some things, like another pair of socks on Christmas morning, are added extras, but other gifts are much more than an optional luxury.

They are necessary gifts.

Like being rescued by a stranger when you are stranded in the middle of the night, or being caught after tripping headlong toward a cliff and saved from a fatal accident. These are *gifts* that can alter our future.

Archived in a safe place within the Library of Congress you will find an odd blue box. Written on the label are these words: *Contents of the President's pockets on the night of April 14, 1865*. History reminds us that this was the fateful night President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. Among the items in the box, you will see a handkerchief embroidered *A. Lincoln*, a small pen knife, a pair of spectacles repaired with string and a

wallet containing a Confederate five-dollar bill and some worn newspaper articles. The newspaper clippings are most interesting. They report the great deeds of Abraham Lincoln. One of them records the declaration of John Bright, a British statesman, that Abraham Lincoln is one of the greatest men of all time.

Today, history tells us of the exploits, leadership, speeches and deeds of this great president, but in 1865, “history” hadn’t been written yet. In 1865, Lincoln faced a divided nation. He struggled with soiled press reports of ineptitude, he debated with fierce critics and brutal opponents and he toiled tirelessly to restore a divided Union.

I can imagine the long nights in his study. There is something so moving about picturing a vulnerable president alone in a dimly lit Oval Office. Sitting at his desk, he’d reach into his pocket to read and reread the newspaper articles from an English statesman who declared that Lincoln was a great man. In the midst of his adversaries and doubts, those words refreshed and emboldened his heart. They gave him the courage and strength to go on, and today history heralds him as one of America’s greatest presidents.

Everyone, even great leaders (as well as leaders *yet to be*), will face defining moments when they desperately need words of encouragement to go on.

God knew that.

He knew each of us would require a necessary gift that would enable us to fulfill His purpose in our lives. Moses reminds us of this. Scripture records his stunning legacy as one of Israel’s greatest deliverers. Moses led two million Israelites out of slavery, wrote the Pentateuch and would appear with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration—yet there were times he was hanging by a thread, depleted and unsure. He needed a gift of prophetic encouragement. Then God raised up Jethro, Aaron and Hur.

David was known as the world’s most gifted commander of covert operations, yet he would begin as an uncertain shepherd, unknown and anonymous. So God brought Samuel. We read

about his great victories and exploits, yet hushed within the pages of 2 Samuel, we find him struggling outside Bethlehem, thirsty and exhausted. God raised up mighty men who encouraged and refreshed him.

Paul is the great apostle whose prolific pen God used to bring us much of the New Testament, yet there would be times when he was “troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears” (2 Corinthians 7:5 KJV). Then God brought Barnabas, and later, an obscure Onesiphorus, who refreshed Paul.

The gift of prophetic encouragement is a necessary gift, one that the Church is in great need of during these last days.

In *The Gift of Prophetic Encouragement*, Debbie Kitterman explains it well, but she does far more than that. She issues a call to those whom God is raising up, men and women through whom He will disburse the gift of prophetic encouragement. It is a necessary gift, and my prayer is that you will not only begin to recognize it, but become a part of it.

Please come in. The Kingdom of God has been waiting for you.

Dr. Wayne Cordeiro, president, New Hope Christian College;
author, *The Divine Mentor, Leading on Empty* and more

Acknowledgments

There is an African proverb that says, “It takes a village to raise a child,” that I think is also fitting for writing a book. In my opinion, a book is very much like raising a child; it is something that is the very best of who you are, poured out upon pages others will read. I could not have written this book without the prayers, love and support of my village. Thank you for gifting me with your encouragement, guidance and love.

For everyone who had a part in making this book a reality, thank you! Mere words cannot express the gratitude in my heart for you and your willingness to stand with me and cheer me on, so thank you from the bottom of my heart. This book holds my legacy and yours for this generation and the generations to come. I pray this book would cause an awakening in the body of Christ. May we all boldly step out in obedience to God and use the gift of prophetic encouragement to release the love of God.

Thank you to those who shared personal testimonies with me for use in the book. Most of your names have been changed, and others may never know who you are, but I do, and more importantly, God knows. I know many will be able to relate to

what you shared, and I pray we can all glean and learn from each other's journey.

Thank you to those of you who read the early manuscript and gave feedback. Thank you for valuable input, thoughts and suggestions in making this the best book it could be. You have no idea how much it meant to me to have you be a part of this process. Also, special thanks to Kathy Marzolf for having an eagle eye and being a grammar guru. You are a wealth of knowledge when it comes to the English language.

To my husband, John: I thank God for you every single day. You have always been my biggest supporter and my champion. You are my knight in shining armor, always willing to go above and beyond to make sure I can say yes to the calling of God on my life and to the things I enjoy. Thank you for your hard work, sacrifice and dedication to God, to our family and to Restoration Church. I cannot imagine doing life or ministry without you by my side.

To my children, Jesse and Brandi: I love you, I am always for you and I believe in you. I will love you forever, and you will always be my babies, even when you have babies of your own. Never forget that. I know God has amazing things for you both as you continue to keep your eyes on Him. Thank you for your trust, your forgiveness for times when I was not the perfect mom, and for always giving me your support and love. You both have brought much joy to our family, and my life is so much richer with you both in it. God is about to do some amazing things and open doors for you both in this next season. Get ready!

Mom and Dad: Thank you, Mom, for being a persistent, powerful prayer warrior. I know your prayers are a large part of getting me to where I am today. Thank you for showing me that pursuing healing is a necessity if we are to live life to the fullest and for teaching me the power of saying, "I'm sorry." Dad, thank you for your love and support and for always being

the proud dad of your kids and proud grandfather of your grandkids. I love you both so very much.

Thank you to the rest of my family and friends who have been so understanding and patient as I have been completely immersed in passionately pursuing my God calling and dream of writing. To my friends around the world and those living close by, you are all precious to me. Your faith and belief in me is what helped propel me forward, never to give up and to continue to share the message God has given me.

D2H Board: Thank you to all current and past Dare 2 Hear ministry board members, including Carl and Donna Sagerser, Ron and Patty Stoddard, Ben and Kate McDonald, Karter and Kathy Marzolf, and Pastor Jerry Tyler. You have stood beside me, believed in me and cheered me on when I needed it most. I am forever grateful for your friendship, your prayers, your wisdom and your support.

Pastor Jerry Tyler: Even though you are no longer here on the earth to share your love, support and wisdom, I want the world to know how much you meant to me. Dare 2 Hear ministry exists in large part due to your encouragement to step out. Thank you for believing in me and giving me a place to minister. You have left a huge legacy for those of us who called you pastor. Thank you for your obedience to Jesus and for entrusting John and me to carry your legacy forward with Restoration Church.

Restoration Church: Thank you for your love and support. Thank you for being our family and for sending me out all over the world with your blessing to minister to others in the body of Christ.

Melodi Stoddard and the D2H prayer shield team: Melodi, you are a godsend! Thank you for heading up my prayer partner ministry, but more importantly, thank you for being an amazing example of what it means to be a warrior woman of God. You do not back down, and you face challenges head on. I love your loyalty and the fierceness you have in protecting the ones

Acknowledgments

you love. To the prayer shields: I am a firm believer that nothing advances in the kingdom without prayer, and truly much has been accomplished already. Thank you for being kingdom warriors and continuing to partner with me in prayer to see lives touched and miracles happen. I am excited to see what God does with the prayers of faith we have been praying for this book and the people who will read it.

Andy and Shannon Tate: Thank you both for your valuable input and help in working out a rearrangement solution and working with temperamental software. You are both a gift to John and me and Restoration Church. Andy, thank you for your graciousness and going with the flow when five minutes turned into five hours when Shannon and I would get carried away talking and working. Shannon, thank you for always going above and beyond the call of duty. Thank you for bringing your organization and administrative skills to our church and our lives. You help bring order to chaos, and I could not have fully dedicated the time I did and stepped away from some of my duties if you had not been here to fill in the gap. John and I are grateful for the gifts God has equipped you with, and we are humbled that He sent you to us. Thank you for reading, rereading and reading again each draft of the manuscript and giving valuable input and for being one of my biggest encouragers.

Kelly and Patti Krank: Thank you for always providing a place for me to write and serving as a home away from home from coast to coast. This book's journey began in the cottage on your property, the property that then became my family's home when you moved to the opposite coast. Patti, you have always been in my corner, and you are one of my biggest promoters. You have pushed me to be a better writer and blogger. You have always believed in me and inspired me. Thank you for pushing me to attend writers' conferences and even for making me sign up for an appointment with an editor. It looks like your

encouragement was prophetic and spot on! It is your turn next, my friend. I can't wait for us both to be published authors.

Liz Curtis Higgs: Thank you for being a genuinely caring and loving person. Thank you for ministering to the one right in front of you and being obedient to God when He asked you to attend a conference to encourage your sisters in Christ even though you weren't a speaker or being paid to do so. Thank you for extending me the gift of your time and wisdom. You literally put courage into me the day we met, and your words propelled me forward with a new determination not to give up hope.

Kim Bangs: Thank you for believing in me and being sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. You are the real deal; you are genuine and personal. You are a truth teller but temper it with much love, and you made a scary process bearable. Thank you for being a visionary, taking a chance on an unknown writer and seeing the potential in this book and in me. I wouldn't want to be on this journey with anyone else!

Amanda Quain: I can't thank you enough for your attention to detail and your sensitivity to the Spirit. You made the editing process a lot less painful than I had imagined it would be, and you definitely brought out the best in my writing! Thank you for partnering with the Holy Spirit and lending me your talents to make this book the best it can be. I have been incredibly blessed by you. Though we have never met face-to-face, I know you are one amazing woman! I pray our paths cross again one day.

The team at Chosen Books and Baker Publishing: Thank you for taking a chance on me and believing in the message God has given me to share. Thank you for walking me through every step of the process with much grace and understanding.

To my heavenly Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit: I am forever grateful for Your love, grace and mercy! Thank You for fully equipping me to do the work You have set before me. I am humbled by how You helped me dream again and embrace the call to be a writer. Even when doubt, fear and discouragement

Acknowledgments

from others came, You continued to place people in my life to speak prophetic encouragement and truth to me. You are my Champion, my Healer and my Friend. You are amazing at opening doors. Thank You for never giving up on me and staying true to the promises of Your Word. Holy Spirit, thank You for breathing inspiration into my writing and allowing me to partner with You to write this book. You are always good and always faithful.

Introduction

God longs for His people to use the gifts He has given them, especially the gift of prophecy. The spiritual gift of prophecy (see appendix 1) is speaking Holy Spirit–inspired words of edification, exhortation or comfort to individuals. Prophetic encouragement is something every follower of Christ can give to others in his or her day-to-day life. This simple truth opens our eyes to the ordinary nature of prophecy, which breathes life, love and hope into the dry places of our lives.

While recently attending a conference, I was sitting by ladies I had met a few days prior. One turned to me and said, “I know what you do. I’ve been stalking you on Facebook.” I was thinking she was probably shocked to discover I am a pastor. I laughed and asked her what it was I did that was so fascinating. “You operate in the prophetic, and we want a prophetic word.”

It did not even cross my mind to think she was talking about the fact that I operate in the prophetic. I do not hide it, but it is not something I broadcast on Facebook. It is part of who I am. My response was said in laughter: “The prophetic isn’t like a slot machine where you make a demand and out pops a message. However, God is always speaking, and I am sure He has some encouragement for you.”

They laughed and thought the conversation ended because the session began. But it was not the end of the conversation. During the session the Lord began showing me His heart for these women. As soon as I could, I shared with the ladies what God had shown me. They both walked away blessed and knew without a doubt God was real. He loved them, He knew them by name, and He cared about their concerns.

Prophetic messages are more than validation, reassurances or knowledge of what the future holds. God longs to breathe life, hope and healing into the lives of His children through the gift of prophetic encouragement. He wants us all to be available to speak His words to those we meet, regardless of their relationship with God.

As I sat in an airport restaurant working on this book, I was reminded how much God loves those who do not yet have a relationship with Him. I was waiting for my server, Seth, to return when I glanced up and saw him. Instantly, a picture of a little girl flashed in my mind. The Lord whispered to my heart, *He's got a heavy heart concerning his daughter.* I thought to myself, *I don't even know if he has a daughter.* I continued to work but was mindful of Seth's whereabouts. He was laughing and joking and seemed to be having an awesome day, not a heavy heart. I thought to myself, *I am going to have to step out in faith and trust that God wants me to encourage this young man. If he doesn't have a daughter, I know God will give me an encouraging word.*

Finally, he returned to my table, and I politely asked if he had a little girl. He looked at me funny and said he did indeed have a daughter. He stared at me with a puzzled look, a look that said, "How did you know?" Before he could ask, I told him he had caught my attention from across the restaurant, and I felt God showed me he had a heavy heart for his little girl. I went on to share the heaviness had to do with a financial need, and he nodded his head in agreement. I shared more of

what God revealed to me. He was extremely grateful and kept thanking me. I had not done anything extraordinary; I simply had responded to what God was showing me. This is exactly what Jesus modeled in every encounter we read about in the New Testament.

When I read the stories of Jesus' great adventures I am struck by how clearly He showed us exactly what it looks like to embrace a lifestyle of encouragement. Jesus had radical encounters with ordinary people every day. By listening to the Father's voice and doing what the Father said, Jesus was able to release heaven into the situations and lives of those He encountered.

You may recall the biblical stories when God provided the Israelites with manna and quail to sustain them in the desert (see Exodus 16:13–15, 35; Psalm 105:40; John 6:31). He did the same for John the Baptist by providing honey and locusts (see Matthew 3:4). And Jesus? His sustenance came through the very words and pictures God gave Him. This is the same encouragement Jesus then shared with others. His words of encouragement were filled with truth, life and hope. These prophetic messages were spoken to the brokenhearted and the lost for the purpose of drawing them closer to God.

When Jesus interacted with people, He fulfilled and renewed the meaning of what was written in Old Testament Scriptures: “Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy [8:3]: ‘It takes more than bread to stay alive. It takes a steady stream of words from God’s mouth’” (Matthew 4:4 MESSAGE).

There is a difference between our human words of encouragement and those empowered by the Spirit. We can empathize and encourage others when they seem down, upset or sad. We can even pray for them to be encouraged and ask God to comfort them. Yet we do not always know or see that someone needs encouragement. Such was the case with Seth. From all appearances, Seth acted like everything was right in his world. Had God not interrupted my thoughts and showed me what I could

not see in the natural, I would have missed an opportunity to encourage someone with the love of God.

The gift of prophetic encouragement requires us to hear and see things from God's perspective. Once we do that, we can speak His language, which is love and encouragement to others. This is the prophetic gift of encouragement in action. The messages God gives are hope-filled and life-giving, and even more so when they are exactly what the person needs in that moment. They are not our best intentions; they are God's words and His intentions for the individual. God knows what someone is going through, He knows exactly what they need, and He's looking for someone to be a willing and available vessel to speak through. Are you ready to be that someone? Keep reading.

The truth is we are all prophetic, which simply means we can all hear from God. In the New Testament, Paul tells us the spiritual gift of prophecy is for all:

Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. . . . But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. . . . I would rather have you prophesy.

1 Corinthians 14:1, 3, 5

God speaks to us today like He did from the beginning. God desires a two-way conversation. I believe—no, I know—God wants to speak directly to His children, and He wants His children to speak directly to Him. God has given us *all* the gift of prophecy, and as we walk with Him daily He wants us to embrace a lifestyle of speaking encouragement to others we meet: “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:11 *ESV*).

God's messages or “words” (see appendix 1) come to us directly through reading the Bible and through prophetic

words in the form of comfort, strength and encouragement. In prophetic circles, “a word” can mean any message from God represented as an impression, picture, vision, Scripture or a literal word.

For some, the prophetic is yet to be experienced. For others, the prophetic is rare and random. There are even some who have been hurt by the misuse and abuse of prophecy. Yet, the prophetic needs to be a part of our everyday lives. We need to listen to the Lord, we need to respond when He asks us to do something, and we need to speak encouragement to others as He directs.

I do not know about you, but I do not think I am super special. In fact, I view my life as normal. You could say I am ordinary, like you. Yet, I am also radical. When I partner with the Holy Spirit and allow Him to move in my ordinary life, radical things happen. I become bold. I become brave. I step out of my fears and lean into the Father’s heart for others. I embrace operating in a lifestyle of encouragement. I have simply learned how to tune in to the frequency of heaven for the purpose of receiving these prophetic messages, or words, with the intent of encouraging others. Everyone can use encouragement, comfort and strengthening daily.

God’s Word tells why encouragement is necessary in Hebrews 3:13 (NASB): “But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called ‘Today,’ *so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin*” (emphasis added).

We are called to be beacons of light and hope in a dying world. This world is lost, and Jesus is the answer! We need to remember that when we speak, our words greatly affect us and those around us. Good words spoken to us meet our basic need to love and be loved. Therefore, when we embrace the lifestyle of encouragement, we are operating in God’s original design of life-giving prophecy.

This is the gift of prophetic encouragement.

Activation Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for Your Holy Spirit, who leads me into all truth. Jesus, I give You permission to search my heart and mind. Show me places where I have preconceived ideas or prejudices, especially when it comes to understanding prophecy. Create a hunger in me to be radical for the Kingdom of God. Open my ears, eyes, heart and mind to receive fresh revelation from You today.

Note to the Reader

This book is designed to give you an interactive experience. Throughout the book you will find personal reflection questions in Go Deeper sections, as well as Activation Prayers and Activate Encouragement exercises.* The Think on It! sections guide you deeper than the personal reflection questions. Last, you will find testimonies designed to build your faith and increase boldness in the Encouragement in Action sections.

*Activate Encouragement exercises are simple activities designed to help you become familiar with the process of hearing God's voice. They are structured to provide a safe environment for you to experience a variety of methods that God uses to speak to people.

1

Open Invitation

I have spent a great deal of my life trying to figure out how to connect genuinely with God. I kept waiting by my mailbox for Him to send me an invitation. The truth is, my invitation had already arrived. I simply had to RSVP.

Authentic relationship with God is about spending time with Him, hearing from Him, listening to Him, responding to Him. Throughout Scripture there are examples of what authentic relationships look like between God and His people. It is not only about going to church, worshiping, reading the Word or praying. It is about experiencing a two-way conversation.

In the beginning, literally, God set the model of relationship with Adam and Eve. This intimacy with God gave them an open dialogue with the Father at all times. Jesus' relationship with the Father is exactly the same. Jesus has full access, and it is the same for you and me.

Jesus shared how God speaks directly to His Spirit. He said, "I only do and say what My Father does and says" (see John 5:19; 8:28; 12:49–50). This is not an exclusive conversation reserved

for the Creator and His Son. This is our relationship goal with God. When Jesus walked on the earth, He was both fully God and fully human. This distinction is vital to understanding that we are co-heirs with Christ (see Romans 8:17).

Jesus laid down His divine nature and walked on earth. He walked in our shoes to show us we have access to the Kingdom of heaven. We can lay hands on the sick and see them healed. We can hear God's voice and prophesy. We can pray and see miracles in action. We have a relationship with the Father by communicating directly with Him. Jesus demonstrated this communication when He implored God to take the burden of the cross from Him (see Luke 22:42). Even though we do not hear the other side of the conversation in the Scriptures, we know God answered Jesus by dispatching an angel to comfort Him (see Luke 22:43).

God wants a true and intimate connection directly with His people. Adam and Eve had this connection with God in the Garden. From the very beginning of creation God desired relationship, so He created mankind. God gave them dominion over the earth, as well as knowledge and access to the thoughts and heart of the Father. They had a deep connection with one another until Satan slithered in and mucked it up.

True relationships are powerful and destructive to the enemy, so Satan set out to destroy Adam and Eve's fellowship with God. Satan first approached Eve with questions crafted to twist the truth of God's mandate regarding the forbidden fruit. In doing so, Satan launched a full-out assault on man's relationship with God. Adam and Eve disobeyed, and the result was a broken relationship with God and spiritual death.

Originally, Satan (also called Lucifer, the Daystar or the Son of the Morning) was an archangel created by God to be the angel of worship. He was the covering angel created to dwell eternally in the throne room in the presence of God: "You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were

on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones” (Ezekiel 28:14).

Lucifer’s problem was he wanted to be an equal with God, and God does not share glory. He was stripped of his beauty, wisdom and position and cast from heaven.

How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.

Isaiah 14:12–15

Because of his jealousy, Satan set out to destroy mankind’s personal relationship with God. If he could not have a relationship with God, then he would make sure no one did.

Satan’s idea of relationship is a dictatorship leading to slavery and bondage. His attack is direct: divide a household so it cannot stand. This is why we see such an assault against healthy relationships in our world today.

Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.”

Matthew 12:25

God’s Relational Character

God reveals His relational character to Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:4 by using a different name. Wait, what? He uses a different name? Genesis 2:4 tells us, “This is the account of the heavens

and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.”

The references to God in the verses leading up to this passage refer to the deity of God as the transcendent* Creator. This is an image of God that is distant and conceptual. In Genesis 2:4, however, we see God’s personal name being used, “the LORD God.” In the original Hebrew language, it is represented as *Yahweh*. This is a significant shift from the formal use of “God the Creator” to His relational name, Yahweh. The use of God’s personal name is important and illuminates the relational nature of God.

Again, in Genesis 3:1 when the serpent addresses Eve, he does not use God’s personal name, Yahweh, but addresses Him as God:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

What is your view of God? Do you see Him as personal and relational, or is He distant and indifferent? It matters how you view Him. It affects everything about your relationship with Him.

I first met Jodi at a workshop I taught. She was having a hard time understanding some concepts I was sharing, but she wanted to know the truth of who God was. Jodi shared that she came from a background that viewed God as a distant authoritarian figure. She did not know or believe God knew her personally

*According to Dictionary.com, *transcendent* means “going beyond ordinary limits; surpassing; exceeding; superior or supreme; Theology. (of the Deity) transcending the universe, time, etc. Compare *immanent*.”

Transcendent is “a theological term referring to the relation of God to creation. God is ‘other,’ ‘different’ from His creation. He is independent and different from His creatures (Isaiah 55:8–9). He transcends His creation. He is beyond it and not limited by it or to it” (“Meaning of Transcendence,” *Bible.org*, <https://bible.org/illustration/meaning-transcendence>).

or that He spoke today. But she always felt there was more and was on a spiritual journey desiring to learn more about God.

Later, while Jodi took my classes, she came to understand God does speak today through the ordinary and even mundane. She realized He saw her as an individual and wanted an even deeper relationship with her than she thought possible. As Jodi was awakened to a deeper relationship with God, she felt more cherished, loved and chosen by Him. She felt her view of God shift, and she came to know Him as a real, personal Savior.

She now understands that God was not looking to punish; instead, He was lifting her up and showing her He loved her in a million different ways. Jodi said to me, referring to the Parable of the Lost Sheep (see Luke 15:1–7), “It has made all the difference in my relationship and how I interact with God. I do not come from a place of judgment or anger, or even from a place where I am not good enough. Instead, I now know I am the one He left the ninety-nine for! God is pursuing me, and He’s pursuing others as well. You and I, we are the one.”

God Wants Restoration

Jesus’ life on earth, His death and His resurrection restored our relationship with God: “He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents” (Malachi 4:6). But in order to have an authentic relationship characterized by intimacy and communication, like Adam and Eve experienced with God in the Garden, we need the Spirit of God. On the Day of Pentecost God poured out His Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:2–14, 17–18) on the people and in an instant restored the final piece necessary to reestablish communication with the Father.

Through salvation and grace, we too have access to the Father when we choose to be in relationship with Him. Once we

have our eyes focused on God and our relationship with Him is firmly established, God will use us in each other's lives. God wants people who are willing to hear, who can be trusted and who are in relationship with others. We need God, and we need each other.

Go Deeper

- Do you have a difficult time connecting with God? If yes, why do you think that is?
- How do John 5:19; 8:28; 12:49–50 apply to you today?
- If Jesus is our model for relationship with the Father, what can you learn and implement from His example?
- Why is the Holy Spirit the vital piece to restore our relationship with the Father?
- What image comes to mind when you think of God?
- Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? One where you have personally asked Him to be Lord of your life?

If your answer to the last question above is yes, congratulations! If not, this book is about incorporating the gift of prophetic encouragement into your everyday life. For that to happen you need to have a relationship with God, the Creator of the universe, but you also need to come to know Him as Yahweh.

If you have not said yes to a personal relationship with Jesus, or if you have walked away from Him, I implore you to enter into a real relationship with Him. You will find a prayer to do this in appendix 2.

Activation Prayer

Father God, I say yes to Your invitation to go deeper with You today. Help me to see You as more than just the Creator of the universe. I'm tired of not living in the fullness of relationship You have to offer. God, show me how to authentically connect with You. I ask for full restoration of relationship with You. God, touch and heal any misbeliefs in me that have created a wrong perception of who You really are. Help my eyes to stay focused on You and establish a strong, firm foundation built upon the truths found in Your Word.

Activate Encouragement

Real, authentic relationship involves a two-way conversation. When you need some advice or want to spend time with a friend, what do you do? You usually share a meal, talk on the phone or meet for coffee. I know this may seem strange, but I want you to invite Jesus to sit with you and visit over a cup of coffee or tea.

In your home, pull up an extra chair at the table or make room on your couch and invite Jesus to join you. Begin by sharing with Him about the things on your mind concerning your day. Then listen for Him to respond. More than likely you will not hear the audible voice of God—that is rare—but God can answer through your thoughts and give you His ideas or whisper Scriptures of encouragement to you. He may even bring to mind a sermon, a podcast, an article or another message you read or heard someone speak.