Book of Hope

A Devotional Book About God's Love For Us

Book of Hope

A Devotional Book About God's Love For Us

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Introduction: A Book About God's Love for You

Dear Friend,

This book was originally written and intended specifically for recipients of cars and car repairs through Mechanics On A Mission, an organization created to show God's love in a real way. People there give their time, skills, and money to repair cars and give cars to people going through a hard time. They give because God has loved them, and they want others to know that same love.

But we've decided we want to make this book about God's love for us available to everyone.

The first few messages in this book are about those we serve, and they are focused on them. But the rest of the book is for anyone who wants to know how much God loves them, grow closer to God, and have God alongside them when times are tough in this life.

Here is what we have seen again and again:

When God answers a prayer, our faith can grow.

When our faith grows, we move closer to God.

When we move closer to God, we find peace in God.

And when we find peace in God, we find joy this world cannot take away.

We do not have all the answers. But we have seen God's love. We know God's love can change a life.

This book is here to walk with you one day at a time. God sees you. God loves you. You are not alone. We pray this book helps you take many steps closer to God.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Contents

Message 1: You Are Not Forgotten

Message 2: How It All Began

Message 3: When the Waters Rise

Message 4: Never Truly Alone

Message 5: God Always Smiles at You

Message 6: The Father Who Never Stopped Loving

Message 7: God Accepts Me

Message 8: The Peace That Caught Me

Message 9: You Are Not a Problem to Solve

Message 10: Meeting God in the Quiet

Message 11: God Is All I Need

Message 12: Consider the Wildflowers

Message 13: Am I Too Far Gone

Message 14: Run To Him

Message 15: How Do You Become a Child of God

Message 16: What Is Baptism and Should You Be Baptized

Message 17: The Holy Spirit: God Is With You

Message 18: You Are a New Creation
Message 19: You're on the Winning Side
Message 20: You Are Royalty
Message 21: God Holds Us Tight
Message 22: What Is God Really Like
Message 23: Yes, He Really Does Love You
Message 24: He Was There the Whole Time
Message 25: I Am That Person Now
Message 26: How Do We Pray to God?
Message 27: One Day in His Courts
Message 28: The People God Watches Over
Message 29: Your Father Has No Favorites
Message 30: God Is Big Enough
Message 31: You Don't Have to Earn It
Message 32: God Speaks in the Whisper
Message 33: God Hears You
Message 34: You Are Already Enough
Message 35: Love That Doesn't Run Out
Message 36: The Whole World Is in His Hands
Message 37: Who Are You Trying to Impress

Message 38: You Have a True Friend

Message 39: Laugh With God

Message 40: Free Indeed

Message 41: The God Who Sees Me

Message 42: Be Still

Message 43: Let God Take It

Message 44: He Goes Before You

Message 45: Encourage Someone Else

Message 46: We've Been Here Before

Message 47: Before You Speak

Message 48: God Made Them Too

Message 49: Remember What God Has Done

Final Message: Your Journey Begins

Message 1: You Are Not Forgotten

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

"But God will never forget people in need."
Psalm 9:18

Maybe right now you're sitting with this little book in your hands, feeling a mix of tired and thankful. Life has been heavy for a while.

Bills, broken things, long days, and quiet nights where you wonder if anyone really sees how hard you're trying. You've prayed. You've asked God for help. And sometimes you've wondered, "Does He even hear me?"

He does. He always has.

God has not forgotten you.

Maybe you prayed for a car or a repair. Maybe you waited and wondered if God heard you. The help you received through Mechanics On A Mission is an answer to prayer. It is a reminder that God sees you and cares about what you are going through.

The people who donated money, vehicles, parts, and time to help you may never fully know your story. But they wanted to help someone in need. They wanted to be used by God to bless another person. We believe God often works through ordinary people to answer prayers, and He used them to help answer yours.

God Heard You

The Bible tells us about a man named Daniel. Daniel prayed for help, but he did not see the answer right away. For three

weeks, Daniel kept praying. He fasted. He humbled himself before God. He did not know what God was doing, but he kept seeking Him.

Then an angel came and told him:

"Since the first day you prayed, God heard you." Daniel 10:12 (simplified)

God heard Daniel on the very first day. Daniel just could not see the answer yet.

Maybe that is how it felt for you. You prayed and waited. You needed help, but the answer did not come right away. But God heard you. While you were waiting, He had not forgotten you. Today, you can see part of His answer.

There Is More

A car or repair can make a big difference in your life. It can help you get to work, care

for your family, and go where you need to go. But this help is small compared to what we truly hope you receive through Mechanics On A Mission.

We want to give you hope.

More than that, we want you to know the God who heard your prayer. We want you to discover how He can work in your life in ways you never imagined. This car or repair can help you today. A relationship with God can give you hope for every day ahead.

God Loves You

The greatest sign of God's love is Jesus.

We have all made mistakes. We have all hurt people. We have all failed to love others as we should. But God did not give up on us. He sent His Son, Jesus, to give His life for us. Because of Jesus, we can be

forgiven and have a close relationship with God.

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son."
John 3:16 (simplified)

That love is for you.

You do not need to fix your life before you talk to God. You can come to Him just as you are. Tell Him what hurts. Tell Him what scares you. Thank Him for the help you received. Ask Him to guide you. Then keep talking to Him.

Keep Looking for God

God may not always answer your prayers when or how you expect. But that does not mean He has forgotten you.

Keep praying. Keep trusting Him. Watch for the ways He is working around you.

That is why we are giving you this Book of Hope. We hope it helps you know God better. We hope it helps you trust Him with your troubles and your future.

As you receive God's love, He can also help you love others better. He can make you more patient, kind, forgiving, and willing to help someone else.

The car or repair you received is important. But it is not the greatest gift we hope you receive. We hope this book helps you discover how much God loves you and how He can work in your life in ways you never imagined. We hope this is the beginning of a much closer journey with God.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 2: How It All Began

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Kobe Sweatt

As many of you know, Mechanics On A Mission exists to show people the love of Jesus by providing reliable transportation. Our goal is not just to talk about helping people. We want to meet people where they are and become the hands and feet of Jesus.

The church was never meant to stay inside the walls of a building. We are called to go into the world, notice people in need, and be a blessing to them.

Philippians 2:4 says:

"None of you should look out just for your own good. Each of you should also look out for the good of others."

Philippians 2:4 (NIrV)

That verse helped spark an idea that would later become a movement. It is part of the story of how Mechanics On A Mission began.

When I was in high school, one of my friends was facing serious health problems. He was missing school because of illness, medical bills were piling up, and it seemed like he just could not catch a break.

Then his car was totaled.

Now he had one more burden. He needed reliable transportation, but with medical expenses and everything else happening in his life, buying another vehicle seemed impossible.

A classmate and I started talking about what we could do. Our parents had always told

us, “If you ever know someone in need, let us know, and we’ll see what we can do.”

So we went to them with a big request.

We asked, “Can we buy our friend a vehicle?”

Looking back, I laugh because I’m sure our parents weren’t expecting a request that big. They probably thought we’d ask for help with groceries, clothes, or maybe a small bill. Instead, we asked them to help buy someone a car.

After talking it over, they said yes.

That’s when the search began.

Together with our parents, we looked for a vehicle that was affordable, dependable, and safe. We didn’t want to give him something that would become another burden. We wanted it to truly be a blessing.

After several days of searching, we found the right one.

The entire time, our friend had no idea what was happening.

On January 29, 2021, we brought the car to school. That afternoon, we surprised our friend by handing him the keys to a reliable vehicle.

He drove away with more than transportation. He drove away knowing he was loved, seen, cared for, and that the love of Jesus was behind the gift.

That moment changed the way I understood the gospel.

Did our friend earn that vehicle? No.

Did he deserve it because of something he had done for us? No.

Did he even ask us to buy it for him? No.

He received it because people loved him and saw his need.

In a much greater way, that is what Jesus has done for us.

Romans 5:8 says:

"But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8 (NIrV)

Jesus didn't wait for us to become perfect. He didn't wait until we had our lives together. He came to us while we were still broken, sinful, and in need.

He entered humanity, lived the sinless life we could never live, died on the cross, was buried, and rose again on the third day.

He gave us what we could never earn.

At our worst, Jesus gave us His best.

Because of Him, we are offered forgiveness, hope, and new life. Our past no longer has to define our future.

Second Corinthians 5:17 says:

"When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here!"

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIrV)

That is what the gospel does. It gives us a new beginning.

In many ways, the keys to that car became a picture of the new life Jesus offers.

The gift was prepared. The car was ready. The keys were held out. But our friend still had to receive them. He had to take the keys, get into the car, start it, and drive away.

Jesus also offers us new life.

He reaches toward us with grace, forgiveness, and hope. We can never earn those gifts, but we must receive them. We must trust Him and follow where He leads.

Jesus isn't asking you to clean up your life before coming to Him. He simply says, "Come."

He knows your struggles, your fears, your failures, and your pain. He also knows the purpose He has for your life.

The story of that first car was about more than transportation. It showed us that one act of love can change someone's day, someone's future, and sometimes even an entire community.

That is the heart of Mechanics On A Mission.

We provide reliable transportation because a car helps people get to work, care for their families, make medical appointments, and move forward again. But our deeper purpose is to show people they are seen, valued, and deeply loved by Jesus.

Mechanics On A Mission began with a need, a simple act of obedience, and a willingness to help.

The mission continues every time someone chooses to look beyond their own interests and care for another person.

That is our origin. And that is still our purpose today.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 3: When the Waters Rise

Written by Mechanics On A Mission founder, Brian Sweatt

There are times when everything you have built seems to fall apart overnight. Plans fall through. Life goes a way you did not pick. In those moments you face a choice. Will you focus on what you lost? Or will you trust the One who said He would provide?

One of the biggest things my wife, Barbara, and I have learned is this: God's greatest miracles often start in our greatest moments of need.

In May of 2010, Middle Tennessee was hit by what is now called the Great Nashville Flood. Days of heavy rain caused rivers and creeks to overflow. Homes, schools,

churches, and businesses were wiped out all across our area.

At the time we were running Lighthouse Christian School and Preschool. A place full of laughter and learning became a scene of loss. Water poured through our school and left behind mud, ruined classrooms, broken things, and years of good memories buried under the mess.

Standing inside, it was hard to imagine how we would ever come back.

Like most small ministries, we did not have a lot of money saved. The cost to rebuild felt way too big. Insurance would only cover so much. Parents were counting on us. Teachers did not know what came next. We felt the weight of the whole school on our shoulders.

But even in those hard days, one truth kept coming back to us: God is never scared of an "impossible" situation.

All through the Bible, God often waited until His people had nothing left before He showed what He could do. Moses stood at the Red Sea with no way out. A widow gathered her last bit of flour for what she thought was her family's last meal. The disciples looked at five loaves and two fish and saw too little. God saw enough. He still does.

Barbara and I prayed. We asked God for wisdom, strength, and help. We had no idea what He would do.

Then something happened that only God could have set up.

ABC's Extreme Makeover: Home Edition chose our school for a special project. Almost overnight, our campus became the center of one of the most amazing acts of giving we have ever seen. Thousands of people showed up to help. Hardaway Construction led the way. LP Building Solutions came alongside them. Workers, churches, businesses, and total strangers all came together for one reason — to bring hope back.

What would have taken months to fix was done in one week.

Walls went up. Floors were fixed. Classrooms came back to life. New things arrived every day. A playground was put in. It felt like watching God answer prayer through the hands of His people.

When the doors opened again, it was not just a fixed school. It was a story of what God can do. Floodwaters can destroy a building. They cannot destroy God's faithfulness.

That season changed the way we see hard times. God's help rarely comes the way we think it will. But it always comes right when He knows we need it.

Years later, when we stepped out to start Mechanics on a Mission, we brought that lesson with us. Many times the need was bigger than what we had. Cars needed big repairs. Families were waiting. Money was tight. The next step was not clear.

More than once we looked at the numbers and said quietly, "Lord, how are You going to do this?"

Every time, He reminded us of the flood.

He is not stopped by our bank account. He is not caught off guard by what we face. The same God who rebuilt a school in seven days keeps giving cars to single moms, helping veterans get to work, and bringing hope to families who never thought a stranger would care about them.

Mechanics on a Mission has never been built on what we could do. It has been built on what God keeps doing through donors, helpers, repair shops, churches, and everyday people who simply said yes.

Looking back, we see it now. The flood was not just a bad thing that happened. It was training. God was teaching us to trust Him long before Mechanics on a Mission ever started.

He was showing us that miracles often wear work boots. Sometimes they carry tool belts. Sometimes they write checks. Sometimes they give up a Saturday. God does great things through normal people who just say yes.

If you are in your own flood right now — whether it is money, health, or something else — do not give up. The water may have risen around you. But it has not risen above God.

Your situation does not limit what He can do. Your need does not shrink what He has to give.

"My God will meet all your needs. He will meet them in keeping with his wonderful riches. These riches come to you because you belong to Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:19

Not from your money. From His. And His supply has never run out.

The floodwaters went down. The school was rebuilt. The children came back. Hope came back. And because we had seen it with our own eyes, we had the faith to trust Him again when Mechanics on a Mission was born.

Every car we repair. Every car we give away. Every family we help. We want all of it to point to one truth:

When everything around you is falling apart, God is often putting together something greater than you could have thought of.

The greatest miracles do not happen in life's easy times. They happen when we trust the

God who still makes a way when there seems to be no way.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 4: Never Truly Alone

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Bastien Buffat

God is everywhere and He knows everything. He is not a distant idea living only in books or among the stars. He is close, present with every part of His creation, holding all things together by His power. He is with us in the quiet moments, in the air we breathe, and in the spaces of our everyday lives. He is with our neighbor, our parent, our sibling, our child and above all, He is with us.

I know this now. But I did not always know it.

I never met my father. My mother was abusive. For most of my life, loneliness was not just a feeling. It was the air I breathed. I

spent years believing I was completely alone in this world, that no one was truly with me. Then, slowly, something shifted. I began to understand that I had never been alone. Not for a single moment. I had always been guided, always held, always embraced by a warmth I could not explain at the time, but now I know it was God.

Psalm 139 captures it perfectly:

"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?"

Psalm 139:7

The answer is nowhere. And Jesus made the promise clear:

"I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:20

I just didn't know how to hear it yet.

This truth also means no one is more important than another. We are all equal children of God. Paul writes:

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 3:28

The world ranks people. God doesn't. Every one of us is an heir to the same love.

I think about this when I remember the Lord's Supper. When Jesus said "This is my body… this is my blood," it was more than a ritual. It points to something deeper — when we trust in Jesus, He lives in us through His Holy Spirit. The bread and cup remind us that His body was broken and

His blood was shed to forgive our sins. We belong to Him.

Love for others grows out of the love God has shown us first. Jesus said:

"Love your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 22:39

When we receive God's love, it frees us to love others the same way He has loved us.

For a long time, I wished I had never been born. I am not ashamed to admit it. In the Bible, Job cried out the same thing: "May the day of my birth perish." Yet Job ended up having one of the most real, honest relationships with God in all of Scripture. His pain did not push God away — it became the path to God. I understand that now. The pain I carried was not God leaving me. It was part of what I was being

called to learn. I have made peace with that — the hard parts, the lessons, the shape of this life.

Our very existence is the first proof of God's love. Before any action or prayer, God looked at everything He had made and said it was very good. You were included in that. The Bible says:

"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might have life through him."

1 John 4:9

Being here is already His gift.

Living this truth takes practice — learning to ask God for help, receiving His love with trust, giving freely to others, and letting love in.

Receiving God's love is a choice. And for those of us who have been hurt, it is a choice we may have to make again and again, one quiet moment at a time.

At the center of all of this is one hope: no matter how alone or unworthy we have felt, Jesus invites us to come home. Our sins can be fully forgiven through His blood. We can have a real, personal relationship with the God who has never left our side. He is with us always and that changes everything.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 5: God Always Smiles at You

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

"May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you."

Numbers 6:25 (NIrV)

For a long time, I thought God was probably mad at me. I thought He watched me like a teacher watches a kid who keeps getting the answer wrong. I first learned about God in a church. That church talked a lot about rules. Rules can help us. But the way I heard the rules made me afraid. I heard more about what I did wrong than about how much God loved me. I started to think God was always watching for my next

mistake. That made me afraid of Him. It did not make me want to run to Him.

I Thought God Was Keeping Score

I thought God was writing down every bad thing I did. If I missed church, I thought God was upset with me. If I did not invite someone to Bible study, I thought I had failed. If I did not pray for forgiveness at the right time, I was afraid I might not go to heaven. That fear was heavy. I knew I had done many wrong things.

I also grew up in a home where love did not always feel safe. My mom struggled with mental illness. It likely came from her own painful past. My dad did not know God. My mom did not know God either. No one sat with me and said, "God loves you no matter what." So church felt like a courtroom to

me. It felt like I was in trouble. I thought God was looking for every wrong thing I did.

Then God Showed Me Something New

Many days and nights, I prayed. I really prayed. Sometimes in tears. I asked God to show me He was real. I asked Him to show me He heard me. In January 2021, I was listening to a song called "Redeemer" by Nicole C. Mullen. My eyes were closed. Then I saw something just off to my left. I looked to the left, while my eyes were still closed, and I saw Jesus.

He had a crown of thorns on His head. He wore a white robe. He had the kindest smile I had ever seen. His face told me what my heart needed to hear. It was like He was saying this:

"You are loved. Stop beating yourself up. Come to Me. I have made you new. You are clean because of My blood. You are a son of the King. Live like you belong to Me."

For so many years, I thought God was looking for what was wrong with me. But Jesus was smiling at me.

God Is a Father Who Loves You

That smile changed how I saw God. God is not a mean judge waiting to hurt you. He is not a teacher marking your paper with a red pen. God is a Father who loves you. He smiles when He sees you. He made you. He wants you to come home to Him.

The Bible says God honors people who honor Him. But here is what I want you to know. God loved you first. He sent Jesus before you could earn His love. He sent

Jesus while you still needed help. That is not a God who wants to slap your hand for being human. That is a Father running toward you who understands, accepts and cherishes you for being you.

You Have Not Gone Too Far

My life has been messy. I have hurt people. I have done things I am ashamed of. I am thankful when people forgive me. But nothing feels better than knowing God has forgiven me too. Jesus saw everything I had done. And He still smiled at me. Now I want to help other people know this.

Maybe you grew up thinking God was keeping score. Maybe you feel shame today. Maybe you think you have gone too far. You have not gone too far. God sees you right now. He loves you right now. He is

not turning away from you. Look up. Come to Him. Jesus is smiling at you.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 6: The Father Who Never Stopped Loving

Written by Mechanics On A Mission partner, Will Acuff

One of the best-known stories Jesus ever told is the story of the lost son. You can find it in Luke 15:11–32. At first, it seems like a story about a son who ran away. But by the end, we see it is really a story about a loving Father.

The younger son asked his father for his share of the family money early. In that culture, it was almost like saying, "I wish you were already dead." He took the money, left home, and spent it all on wild living. Before long, he had nothing left. Then there was no food in the land. He ended up

feeding pigs, and he was so hungry that he wanted to eat what they were eating.

Then comes one of the most beautiful lines in all of Scripture:

> *"But when he came to himself..."*
> *Luke 15:17*

That little phrase tells us something important. The younger son had spent so much time chasing what he wanted that he forgot who he really was. But in that moment, something changed. He remembered.

Deep down, he knew where he belonged. He belonged at home with his father.

That is true for every one of us. At some point, we have all been like the younger son. We chase things we think will make us happy. We look for life in success, people,

money, comfort, or control. Sometimes God lets us go down those roads because He can teach us there.

But sooner or later, each of us can have a moment when we "come to ourselves." We remember who we really are. We are not defined by what we have done or where we have been. We are loved by our Heavenly Father.

The younger son rehearsed a speech all the way home. He planned to admit his sin. He would tell his father he was no longer worthy to be called his son. Maybe, if he was lucky, he could earn his way back as a servant.

But that is not what happened.

Before the son could even reach the house, his father saw him from a distance. He ran

to him, embraced him, and kissed him.

Think about everything the father didn't say.

He didn't say, "I hope you're proud of yourself."

He didn't ask, "Do you know what you put this family through?"

He didn't demand, "How are you going to pay me back?"

He didn't make his son prove he had changed.

Instead, he interrupted his son's speech. He called for the best robe, a ring for his finger, sandals for his feet, and then gave one unforgettable command:

"Let's have a feast and celebrate."

Luke 15:23

The party is getting started.

The band is warming up.

The feast is being prepared.

And it is all for you.

That is the heart of God.

Our Heavenly Father is not waiting with folded arms, hoping we will hurt enough. He is watching the road, waiting for us to come home. His love is not earned. His forgiveness is not bought. His welcome is not based on how well we perform. It is based on His grace, which is infinite.

This story reminds us that following Jesus is not about climbing our way back to God. It is about seeing that God has already come running toward us through Jesus Christ.

No matter how far you have wandered, you are never beyond the reach of the Father's love.

When you come to yourself, come home.

You will find that the Father has been waiting all along, and His arms are still open.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 7: God Accepts Me

Written by Mechanics On A Mission employee, Pete Taft

I grew up feeling unseen. The lights were shut off in our house many times. The cupboards were empty. My mother was fighting addiction and there was no father there to help. By the time I was twelve, I felt like I was on my own.

So I tried to survive the best way I knew how. I became the one who provided. I carried a gun and sold crack before I was even old enough to shave. I was still a boy, but I was trying to live like a grown man. No one stopped to ask if I was okay.

God was not fully absent from my life. A Baptist group picked me and my brothers and sisters up most Sundays to go to

church. I heard about God, and I prayed too. But when you are hungry and nothing changes, it can feel like God is not listening. For a long time, I thought pain was just going to be my life.

Our hearts were made for love. If we do not find it at home, we will look for it somewhere else.

For me, football was the first place I felt noticed. I was a big kid, and in high school I became a good running back. People cheered my name. My teammates felt like brothers. For a little while, I felt like I belonged. But cheers from a crowd cannot heal a hurting heart. The emptiness was still there.

I remember the moment I recognized how deep that hurt was. I was twenty-one and riding in a car on my way to prison when

my mother told me she loved me. It was the first time I had ever heard her say those words.

I was twenty-one years old. The first time.

Because I did not feel loved, I went looking for love in all the wrong places. I chased women and tried to fill the hole inside me. From the outside, it may have looked wild or careless. But deep down, I was desperate. I wanted to feel wanted. Nothing I chased could fill that empty place.

Later, a judge gave me mercy, and a man named Clyde Jones helped me learn to read the Bible. At that point, I knew some things about God. I had even felt His presence. But knowing about God is not the same as giving your life to Him.

My turning point came when I got tired. Tired of chasing. Tired of being empty. Tired of trying things that never helped.

One day I decided to stop pretending and I brought all my mess to God. I didn't use fancy words. I just cried out. I told Him I was done with the streets, done using people, and done with the life that was wearing me out. I asked Him to take it all away.

That prayer was different because I was not trying to earn God's love. I was not trying to clean myself up first. I just wanted to be close to Him. I finally saw that only God could give me what I was looking for.

And He answered me.

The pull of that old life began to fade. The noise inside me grew quiet. In its place

came peace. Real peace. Joy that did not depend on what was happening around me. Love without strings attached.

Now I know what it means to be God's child through faith in Jesus. I do not have to fight for my worth anymore. I do not have to carry a weapon to feel safe. I do not have to use people to feel important. The acceptance I wanted as a boy was waiting for me in God all along. He was near. He was ready. He was waiting for me to talk to Him.

If you are reading this, maybe you have been chasing something too. Maybe you know what it feels like to have an empty place inside. I do. And I can tell you this: what you are really looking for is found in God.

Think About This

Are you looking for acceptance in places that leave you empty? Our lived experiences give us perspective and access to faith that builds a personal relationship with God. God is not pushing you away. He is not waiting for you to fix yourself first. He is a loving Father, ready to hear you when you call. You do not have to earn His love. You can come to Him right now.

Prayer

Lord, thank You that even with all my pain and all my past, You are still here. Thank You for loving me and accepting me as Your child. Take away my desire for things that pull me away from You. Fill my heart with Your peace, Your joy, and Your love. Amen.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 8: The Peace That Caught Me

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Izzy Hartselle

"Come to me, all of you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28 (NIrV)

I remember being in a very hard place. It felt like everything was falling apart. During that time, I realized that I had tried to build my life on being good enough. Good enough at work. Good enough as a friend. Good enough as a wife. Good enough to hold everything together. I thought I had to be strong and in control. But then life became something I could not fix. I had nothing left to hold on to but God.

I went to counseling and it helped, but I could also feel God leading me directly to Him. I began to see the Holy Spirit working in my mind and heart. I saw myself lying by a river. And there was a man hanging from a bridge. He wanted to drop into the water. I knew the choice was mine to make. If I could let him fall, I would be letting go of fear. I would be letting go of pressure. I would be letting go of my need to control everything.

But I did not want to let go. It felt scary. I loved God, but I still wanted to be in control.

For weeks, that picture stayed with me. I thought about it. I prayed about it. I struggled with it. Then one morning at church, during worship, I felt my shoulders relax. In my mind, I saw the man let go and

fall into the water. But this time, I did not feel fear. I felt peace. Everything became still. I felt rest in a way I had never felt before. Nothing around me had changed, but I had changed internally. For the first time, I understood what people meant by the peace of God.

What surprised me most was this: life still got hard. But God began to teach me how to walk with Him when I did not know what would happen next. In my mind, I saw myself walking down a lonely gravel road. I felt lost. I did not know where I was going. Then Jesus walked out of the woods beside me. He did not rush me. He did not scold me. He did not tell me I should have more faith. He put His hand on my shoulder and walked with me.

That picture changed how I saw God. Before, I thought I had to prove myself to Him all the time. But He showed me that He was not asking me to be perfect. He was asking me to stay close. Little by little, He helped me feel strong again. My peace did not come from life being easy. It came from knowing God would still be with me, especially when life was not easy.

He reminded me that my worth did not come from how much I got done. It did not come from how I looked. It did not come from doing everything right. It did not come from making everyone happy. My worth came from Him alone.

Then, during a particularly hard anniversary, I walked into church carrying so much anxiety and sadness. That morning, I finally brought my pure sadness

to God. I sat there and simply asked Him to take it from me because I couldn't carry it anymore. And He did. I broke down crying in a way I never had before, but it didn't feel hopeless. It felt like release. When I walked up to kneel for prayer, someone prayed over me using words so specific and personal that I knew God was speaking directly to me through her.

When I look back, I can see that God was not waiting for me to have it all figured out. He met me right where I was. He met me in fear. He met me in sadness. He met me when I was confused. He met me when I did not know what would happen next. I still don't have every answer. Life remains uncertain. But I trust God now in a way I never did before. That trust has changed everything.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 9: You Are Not a Problem to Solve

Written by Mechanics On A Mission partner, Will Acuff

There was a season in my life when I was so tired that I honestly did not know if I would ever feel okay again.

My son had several disability diagnoses, and I did not know how to help him the way I wanted to. Every day felt heavy. There were therapies, hard moments, questions, fears, and so much I could not control.

Underneath all of it, I carried one quiet fear:

What if I am not enough for this?

I believed it was all up to me. If I wanted things to be okay, I had to make them okay. If I wanted love, I had to earn it. If I wanted

life to work out, I had to work harder, push harder, and hold everything together.

I believed in God. I believed in Jesus. But a lot of the time, God still felt far away.

Then, in one of the hardest seasons of my life, the Holy Spirit met me.

Not with shame.

Not with anger.

Not with one more thing to do.

He met me with love.

One day, while I was exhausted and afraid, I felt the Holy Spirit speak something to my heart:

> *"Your son is not a problem to solve. He is a person to know and enjoy."*

That stopped me.

I had been treating my son like a problem I had to fix. I was trying to manage every therapy, every behavior, every outcome, and every part of the future.

I was trying so hard to help him that I was missing out on him.

Not his diagnosis.

Him.

His laugh.

His curiosity.

His personality.

His joy.

My son did not need me to be his manager. He needed me to be his father.

Then I realized something else.

I am not a problem to solve either.

I am a person whom God loves.

The Bible says:

"The Lord your God is with you.

He will take great delight in you.

He will quiet you with his love.

He will rejoice over you with singing."

Zephaniah 3:17

That verse helped me see God differently. I had spent so much of my life believing my value came from what I could do. I thought I had to be useful. I thought I had to be strong. I thought I had to hold everything together.

But God was showing me something different.

He loved me because I belonged to Him.

Not because I was doing everything right.

Not because I had all the answers.

Not because I was strong.

Just because I was His.

The Holy Spirit began to show me that God's love is not something I have to earn. It is already there.

It is real love.

Patient love.

Present love.

The kind of love that stays with you when you are tired. The kind of love that does not leave when you are confused, afraid, or worn out. The kind of love that meets you right where you are.

Paul prayed that God's people would understand the love of Christ:

"How wide and long

and high and deep

is the love of Christ."

Ephesians 3:18

Wide.

Long.

High.

Deep.

God's love is bigger than our fear.

It is deeper than our failure.

It is higher than our shame.

It is wider than anything we are facing. No matter what you have been through — no

matter what you are walking through right now — His love is already there, and it is enough.

And that love is not just something God wants us to know in our heads. He wants us to receive it in our hearts.

The more I received God's love for me, the better I was able to love my son.

Not as a project.

Not as an interruption.

Not as a problem.

But as a person.

A person made in the image of God.

A person to know.

A person to enjoy.

Maybe you need to hear that too.

You are not a problem to solve.

You are not too much for God.

You are not loved only when you are strong.

You are not loved only when you have everything together.

You are deeply loved by God right now. As you are.

Let the Holy Spirit remind you of that today. You belong to Him. And because you belong to Him, you are never alone, never too far gone, and never without hope.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 10: Meeting God in the Quiet

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Ken Bayne

I am a quiet man. I thought my heavenly channel was always open, but I did not always know how to connect with God. For years, prayer felt like calling a phone no one answered, leaving a message, and never getting a call back. Church was Sunday mornings, and God felt like Sunday-only. But life has a way of getting loud enough that you start wanting quiet. And in that quiet, I found Him.

I couldn't sleep. Anxiety was sitting on my chest like a weight. My mind was racing through bills, work, family, and a conversation I had replayed 20 times. I

opened my Bible app just to quiet my mind and landed on Philippians 4:6-7.

"Don't worry about anything. No matter what happens, tell God about everything. Ask and pray, and give thanks to him. Then God's peace will watch over your hearts and your minds. He will do this because you belong to Christ Jesus. God's peace can never be completely understood."
Philippians 4:6-7 (NIrV)

I had read it before. But in the quiet of the night, it did not feel like just a verse. It felt like instructions. Do not worry. Pray. Give thanks. Peace will guard you. So I tried it. Awkwardly. I whispered, "God, I don't know if You're listening, but I'm anxious. Thank You that I have a home and all You have given me. Thank You that I'm

breathing. Help me get through tomorrow's challenges. Amen."

My breathing slowed. My mind slowed. That was the first thread.

After that, I started looking for Him in small spaces. Mornings became mine and His. Not an hour-long ritual. Five minutes, coffee in hand, before the phone started buzzing. I would read Psalm 46:10.

"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be honored among the nations. I will be honored in the earth."
Psalm 46:10 (NIrV)

Be still. Not be busy. Not be perfect. Not be loud. Just be still. Some mornings my mind still raced. But stillness became a practice, not a performance.

I learned He speaks through His Word more than through feelings. On days I felt forgotten, I remembered that Deuteronomy 31:6 says, "The Lord will go with me. He will never leave me. He will never desert me."

That promise didn't change based on my mood. When I failed at work, when I lost my temper with family, friends, or co-workers, Romans 8:1 reminded me that those who belong to Christ Jesus are no longer under God's judgment. Not because I get it right, but because Christ got it right for me. I did not have to come begging. I could come as a son.

Connecting with God also happened when I stopped doing all the talking. I used to treat prayer like a shopping list. Now I leave space. 1 Kings 19:11-12 changed me. God

was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire. He was in the gentle whisper. I started reading a Psalm, then sitting for 60 seconds. No agenda. Often nothing seemed to happen. But over the months, I began recognizing nudges: apologize to my wife, call my children.

I asked God for wisdom, like James 1:5 tells us to do. He gave it, usually through Scripture, a verse from my men's Bible study, or in peace about a decision.

The deepest connection came through surrender. I often held too tightly to decisions about job moves. I wanted control, a guarantee, and a five-year plan. Then Proverbs 3:5-6 stopped me.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding. In all your ways obey him. Then he will make your paths

smooth and straight."
Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIrV)

Trust. Not understand first, then trust. Trust first. I prayed, "God, I'll go if You open the door. I'll stay if You close it. My plan is Yours." The doors of opportunity often closed. Most times, I did not understand why. Many times, the work was eventually canceled. His path was straight, even when mine felt off course.

Now, connecting with God is not an event. It is staying close, in relationship with Him. John 15:4-5 reminds me to remain joined to Jesus like a branch joined to a vine. I cannot bear fruit without Him.

I stay close by reading, by praying short prayers while driving, and by confessing quickly when I mess up. 1 John 1:9 reminds

me that God is faithful and fair to forgive us and make us pure.

I stay close by remembering Zephaniah 3:17.

"The Lord your God is with you. He is the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you. In his love he will no longer punish you. Instead, he will sing for joy because of you."
Zephaniah 3:17 (NIrV)

He delights in me. He sings over me. Some nights I fall asleep thinking about that song.

I still have anxious days. I still get distracted. But connection is not about how steady I am. It is about how steady He is. Lamentations 3:22-23 says it this way.

"The Lord loves us very much. So we haven't been completely destroyed. His loving concern never fails. His great love is new every morning.

Lord, how faithful you are!"
Lamentations 3:22-23 (NIrV)

New every morning. So I meet Him there. In the Word, in the stillness, and in the surrender. And He meets me. Every time.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 11: God Is All I Need

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Lynn Hartselle

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." Psalm 23:1 (KJV)

Giving birth to my first child was one of the greatest blessings of my life, but while I was pregnant with my second child, my husband thought he wanted a divorce. Life on earth can be so great, but it can also be very hard. On extremely difficult days, I try to remind myself that God is all I need. No matter what is going on in my life, He is constant.

One of the most quoted scriptures, especially at funerals, is Psalm 23. I memorized it as a child in the King James Version of the Bible. When I am at my lowest, I often quote it:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. (verse 1)

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. (verse 2)

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (verse 3)

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (verse 4)

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. (verse 5)

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. (verse 6)
Psalm 23:1-6 (KJV)

The wording in the King James Version is beautiful and poetic. Some of the words are not words we use today, so I want to say in simple terms what each verse shows us about God.

Verse 1: **God fulfills and supplies**. We lack nothing. God covers all of our needs.

Verse 2: **God is a caretaker.** He gives rest and stillness for our souls.

Verse 3: **God leads**. He restores and guides us. We honor His name when we show His character.

Verse 4: **God protects and comforts**. I do not have to fear.

Verse 5: **God provides and blesses**. His Presence is in me. I am safe.

Verse 6: **God satisfies and saves**. God pursues me and meets my spiritual needs.

Psalm 23 was written by David. He had many highs and lows in his life. His time on earth included being a shepherd, a soldier, a runaway, a king, an adulterer, a murderer, a parent who lost a child, and a man after God's own heart. It seems strange to include all of those words together for the same person, but God sees the heart.

When my marriage was falling apart, I felt like I was walking through my own valley of the shadow. But the Shepherd was with me. He led me beside still waters when my world felt like a storm. He was all that I needed. That is the promise of Psalm 23. Our Shepherd does not abandon us in the valley. He walks through it with us.

The next time you are feeling down, read Psalm 23. Let it remind you of God as our loving Shepherd. His Presence is with us,

bringing peace, goodness, and mercy. God is truly all that you need.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 12: Consider the Wildflowers

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Lindsay Hamric

"Consider how the wildflowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these."

Luke 12:27

One of the best calls Jesus ever gave us was not to build something. It was not to do more. It was not even to figure life out. It was simply this: Consider the wildflowers.

That word, "consider", is easy to miss. It means to stop. To look. To pay close attention.

In a world that tells us to hurry, Jesus points our eyes to something growing quietly beside the path.

Nature is one of the places where I most clearly sense the presence of God. I love sitting outside before the world wakes up. I hear birds begin their songs. I watch sunlight spill across the trees. I notice the breeze moving through tall grass. These things remind me of something big. I am part of something much bigger than myself. God's creation slows down my thoughts. It opens my heart.

The more I learn about nature, the more amazed I become. I experience its beauty. I also wonder at its design.

Plants and people actually have more in common than we often realize.

Like us, plants breathe. We breathe in air with oxygen, then we breathe out carbon dioxide. Plants use that carbon dioxide and then they give back oxygen. That is the air we need for every breath. Together we share this essential gift. Our lives are tied together by the air we all breathe.

Plants also send messages. When bugs attack, some plants send out warning signs, so other plants can get ready. Under the ground, tiny threads can connect tree roots. Food and messages can move from one tree to another. Some people call this hidden system the "Wood Wide Web."

Creation is not silent. It is alive. It is connected. It is always helping one another.

Plants also know when to rest. Many flowers close at night. Trees slow down in

winter. Seeds can wait for months, or even years. They wait until it is time to grow. Nothing in creation seems worried about the timing. Nature honors the seasonal changes.

Only people seem to think everything must happen right now.

Perhaps that's why Jesus told us to "consider" the flowers instead of simply looking at them.

They remind us that growth is often hidden before it can be seen. Roots grow long before flowers bloom. Life is growing under the ground. The surface may still look the same.

Isn't that often how God works in us?

There are times when it feels like nothing is happening. Our prayers seem unanswered.

Our purpose feels unclear. We look at others. They seem to be blooming. We feel like we are still buried in the soil.

But God rarely wastes hidden seasons.

Just as He prepares roots before flowers, He often grows our hearts before He shows us what comes next. He grows trust before we can understand.

Even our bodies show the same Creator's hand at work. Our lungs branch like tree limbs. Our blood vessels spread like the veins in leaves. We need sunlight to help our bodies. Plants use that same sunlight to make food. Different designs come from the same Artist. They all work together in a good, beautiful and organized way.

When I notice these things, worship is not only in a church building. It happens while I

walk through a field. It happens while I watch clouds drift by. It happens when I hear birds sing. They never went to choir practice, but they still sing the way God created them to sing.

Romans tells us that we can see God's power and goodness in what He has made. Creation is one of God's first sermons. It speaks without words. We can all understand it.

The wildflowers never strive to impress anyone. They simply become what God created them to be.

Maybe that's the lesson Jesus wanted us to see.

We can spend so much energy trying to become someone else that we forget the

quiet beauty of becoming exactly who God designed us to be.

So the next time life feels rushed or uncertain, step outside.

Listen.

Look.

Consider the wildflowers.

You may discover they have been preaching the faithfulness of God all along.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 13: Am I Too Far Gone

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:38–39

Maybe you have spent years drifting, rebelling, or doing things you never thought you would do. Maybe you wonder, Have I done too much? Is it too late?

Could God really forgive someone like me? Yes. Absolutely yes. No matter what you've done.

And we mean that. Whatever you've done, however far you've wandered, God's grace is bigger. It is for the person who walked out on their spouse and children. It is for the one who has been unfaithful again and again. It is for the one who drank too much and scared the people they love most. It is for the one struggling with pornography and hating themselves every time. It is for the person who has been part of ending a pregnancy and has carried grief ever since. It is for the addict who has lost count of how many times they've fallen. I know, because all of this is part of my story too.

Yes, God's grace is big enough, even for you.

Consider King David. He committed adultery. He had the woman's husband sent to the front lines of battle to be killed.

Adultery. Betrayal. Murder. And God still called him a man after His own heart. Why? Because when confronted, David didn't run. He fell to his knees and cried out:

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

Psalm 51:10

God put that story in the Bible for you. So you would know. So you could never say that you have gone too far.

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8

Not after you cleaned yourself up. While you were still in the mess. Jesus paid for every sin on the cross. That is how far God's love went for you.

So here is what you do. Come to Jesus right now. Tell Him the truth. Confess your sin. Receive His forgiveness. Believe that what He did on the cross is enough for you.

"...just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."

Romans 6:4

You rose with Him. The old life does not get to name you anymore. You do not have to keep carrying what Jesus already took to the cross. You can stand up and say, "That is not who I am anymore. I belong to Christ now."

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

2 Corinthians 5:17

Six years ago, I truly trusted God for the first time. Today, I hardly recognize the man I used to be. The anger, the shame, and the addictions are not in charge of me anymore. I am a new creation in Christ. And I have never known joy like this. This is the joy of walking with God.

That is what is waiting for you too. Say yes to Him today.

Prayer: Jesus, I have carried shame long enough. Thank You that Your grace is bigger than my sin. Please forgive me, make me new, and teach me to walk with You. Amen.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 14: Run To Him

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

There is a moment that happens after we fail — maybe you know it — where we are standing at a fork in the road. One path leads toward God. The other leads away from Him.

For most of my life, I took the second path.

When I was deep in addiction, I made choices I am not proud of. When I fell, I did not run to God. I ran away from Him. I hid. But hiding only made the shame worse. Once I had crossed a line, a voice inside me would whisper, "You already blew it. You might as well keep going." So one failure became two. Then two became ten. And before long, it felt like a way of life.

I did not understand then what I know now: that hiding from God does not protect you from shame. It feeds it.

"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there."

Psalm 139:7–8

You cannot actually hide from God. He already sees everything. What hiding does is simply cut us off from the only One who can help.

Since I truly came to know God, one of the most important things I have learned is this: God loves me more than I love my own children. That is not a small statement. I would do anything for my kids. I would walk through fire for them. But I am not

perfect, and my love is not perfect. God's love is.

And here is what I know about how I love my children. If one of them was struggling — really struggling, in the worst season of their life — and they felt they could not come to me, that they had to hide from me because of what they had done… it would break my heart. Not because I would be angry at what they did. But because I would want nothing more than to help them. And they would be out there suffering alone when they did not have to be.

God feels that way about you.

"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Hebrews 4:16

“With confidence”. That is not what shame tells us to do. Shame tells us to duck our heads and disappear. But God says: come with confidence. Come knowing that mercy is waiting. Come knowing that grace is available. Come knowing that He already knows what you did and He still wants you to come.

I believe with everything in me that the reason I was finally freed from addictions that had their hooks in me for decades is not because I got stronger or tried harder. It is because I finally stopped running from God and started running to Him. I started taking my failures to Him instead of letting them push me further away from God. And in His presence, the power of those things began to break.

That does not mean it was instant. It does not mean it was easy. But the direction changed. And that shifted everything into the light.

Whatever you are carrying today — whatever you did or did not do, whatever you cannot seem to stop doing — there is One who already knows and loves you. He is not standing at a distance with disappointment. He is lovingly leaning toward you, full of acceptance and understanding. He is waiting for you.

Do not hide. Run to Him.

"He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him."

Psalm 103:10–11

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 15: How Do You Become a Child of God

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

Dear friend,

If you've read this far and you're thinking, "I don't really have a relationship with God yet," I just want to talk with you. This whole book is about what it feels like to be close to God, to know you're His child and that He's glad you're here. And the good news? He wants that for every single person. He's not waiting for you to get your life cleaned up first. He's just waiting for you to come to Him.

The world makes it sound so complicated sometimes. But Jesus kept it simple. He said the most important thing is to love God

with all your heart, mind, and strength and to love other people. That's the heart of it.

So how do we know God loves us? Because He told us, and then He showed us. The Bible says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life." (John 3:16) That's not a small thing. That's the most costly gift anyone could ever give.

Here's something important to understand. God is pure light. There is no darkness in Him at all. And the Bible is honest with us: light and darkness can't share the same space. Every unloving thing we've ever done, every selfish choice, every time we've hurt someone or turned away from what's good, that's what the Bible calls sin. Sin brings darkness into our lives that separates

us from God. Not because He stopped loving us. He will never stop. But the darkness of sin blocks us from experiencing the fullness of His light.

That's the honest part we all share: none of us have loved God or others perfectly.

So God did something about it. He decided He would send His own Son into the world, not just as a teacher, but as the answer to the darkness brought about by our unloving acts. Jesus lived a completely sin-free life. He was the only person who ever lived without a single unloving act. And then He willingly went to the cross and died as a sacrifice for everything we've done wrong. He took our darkness so we could walk in His light.

And three days later, God the Father raised Him from the dead. Jesus rose to a brand

new life. And here's the miracle: We Can Too.

The Bible says it this way:

"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Romans 10:9 (NIrV)

So right now, if you believe that God sent His Son because He loves you and wants a relationship with you, say so. Profess your faith in Jesus. Turn from your old way of life and toward God's loving way. You don't need fancy words. You just need to mean it.

It's not about earning anything. It's about believing that Jesus did for us what we could never do and that He died the death we deserved, and then turning toward Him. When that happens, the Bible says we

become God's children. Not someday, right now.

You get more than a future in heaven. You get a new and real relationship with God starting now. God's own Spirit comes to live inside you, walking with you every day. This is how we bring heaven to earth today. Before Jesus left this earth, He made His followers a promise about this Spirit, that they wouldn't be left alone to figure life out:

"The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 14:26

That's a promise for you too. The Holy Spirit will teach you as you go.

If your heart is ready, you can talk to Him right where you are.

Prayer:

> *"Lord Jesus, I know I'm a sinner and I can't save myself. I believe You died for my sins and rose again. I turn toward You. I want You to be my Lord and Savior. Make me Your child. I want to know You and follow You. Amen."*

If you prayed that from your heart, the Bible says you are now a child of God. You're no longer on the outside looking in. You belong to the Kingdom of God.

From here, these things will help you grow:

First, talk to God every day, in the car, at night, whenever and wherever. Tell Him what's on your mind. Thank Him. Ask Him to show you more of His love.

Second, look into getting baptized. It's the next step Jesus asked His followers to take,

and the very next chapter of this book is all about it.

Third, pray that God will lead you to some friends who also know Him. You'll be surprised how much lighter the road feels when you're not walking it alone.

Fourth, find a church that follows God's Word and get involved. You can ask questions there, worship with other believers, and find people who will help you grow.

Becoming God's child isn't about getting everything right. It's about opening your heart to the One who already loves you more than you can imagine. He's been waiting for this moment. And now, if you prayed that prayer, He's smiling because you're home. I welcome you into God's family of believers.

Keep talking to Him. He loves the sound of your voice.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 16: What Is Baptism and Should You Be Baptized

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

"Peter replied, 'All of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

Acts 2:38 (NIrV)

Maybe you just believed in Jesus for the first time. Maybe you trusted Him a while back, but you have never been baptized. Either way, you may be wondering, "What about baptism? Do I need to do that too?" Let's look at what the Bible says.

What Does Baptism Mean?

The word baptism comes from a Greek word, baptizo. It means to dip, plunge, or immerse something in water. In the Bible, baptism was going down into the water and coming back up. It was not just a few drops of water on the head. Some churches sprinkle or pour water today. That practice came later. I do not want this chapter to become a clash about that. I just want you to know what baptism looked like in the Bible.

Baptism is a holy moment that shows something God is doing in us. Going under the water points to being buried with Jesus. Coming back up signifies being raised to a brand new life.

"By being baptized, we were buried with Christ into his death. Christ has been raised from the

dead by the Father's glory. And like Christ we also can live a new life."

Romans 6:4 (NIrV)

The Bible gives us another way to understand baptism. Going under the water is like taking off your old life. Coming back up is like putting on Christ, the way you would put on new clothes.

"All of you who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ as if he were your clothes."

Galatians 3:27 (NIrV)

Baptism Followed Faith

Look through the book of Acts and you will see a pattern. When people believed in Jesus, baptism followed soon after.

Peter preached at Pentecost. About 3,000 people believed. "Those who accepted his message were

baptized. About 3,000 people joined the believers that day."
Acts 2:41 (NIrV)

Philip met a man from Ethiopia on a desert road and told him about Jesus. As they traveled, they came to some water. The man said, *"Look! Here is water! What can stop me from being baptized?"* — Acts 8:36 (NIrV)

Saul, who later became the apostle Paul, believed in Jesus. Right away, he got up and was baptized.

Peter visited a Roman officer named Cornelius and his family. When they believed, Peter said, *"Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water?"* — Acts 10:47 (NIrV)

A jailer in the city of Philippi asked Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved. They

told him, *"Believe in the Lord Jesus. Then you and your family will be saved."* That same night, he and his family were baptized. — Acts 16:31, 33 (NIrV)

Do you see the pattern? Believing in Jesus came first. Baptism came right after. It was not treated like a small thing. It was the next step.

Jesus Set the Example

Jesus was baptized too. He did not need to turn away from sin, because He never sinned. But He still went to John the Baptist at the Jordan River and was baptized. Jesus said it was the right thing to do. He wanted to obey His Father and show us the way. When Jesus came up out of the water, God the Father said He was pleased with His Son. — Matthew 3:13–17 (NIrV)

Before Jesus returned to heaven, He gave His followers this command:

"Go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Matthew 28:19–20 (NIrV)

Baptism was not treated lightly. Jesus told His followers to baptize new believers.

Should You Be Baptized?

The Bible teaches that we are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus. We do not earn salvation by doing good things.

"God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it."

Ephesians 2:8–9 (NIrV)

So I do not want to make baptism sound like something we do to earn God's love. We are saved through faith in Jesus. Baptism does not replace faith in Jesus. But the Bible also shows that baptism matters. It is tied closely to faith in the New Testament. It is one of the first ways a believer says yes to Jesus with their whole life.

If you have trusted Jesus and have never been baptized, the pattern in the Bible is clear. Baptism is the next step. It shows on the outside what God is doing on the inside.

Christians will probably never agree on the exact role baptism plays in a Christian's life. But we can say this: baptism is important. If you have trusted Jesus, look into it. Pray about it. Talk with a Bible-believing pastor

or minister. Then decide if you are ready to take this step.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 17: The Holy Spirit: God Is With You

Written by Mechanics On A Mission partner, Will Acuff

From the beginning of the Bible to the very end, we see that God is one God who reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the first chapter of Genesis, the Spirit of God is present at creation. When Jesus is baptized, we see the Father speaking from heaven, the Son standing in the water, and the Holy Spirit coming down like a dove. At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells His followers to baptize people "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

The Trinity is a mystery. No one fully understands it. But throughout the Bible we see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit working together as one God.

Jesus came to earth to do the work His Father sent Him to do. He lived a perfect life. He died on the cross for us. Then He rose from the dead so we could have new life with Him. Before Jesus returned to heaven, He made an amazing promise to His followers. He promised they would not be alone.

"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he lives with you and he will be in you."
John 14:16–17

A short time later, Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit. Then, on the day of Pentecost, God's promise came true. The Holy Spirit came to live in His people.

That same promise is true for everyone who trusts in Jesus today.

The Holy Spirit is not just a feeling or an idea. He is God living with us and in us. That means one of the greatest truths of the Christian life is this: You are never alone.

There will be days when life feels hard. You may wonder what to do next. You may feel afraid, confused, or discouraged. But if you belong to Jesus, the Holy Spirit is with you. He does not leave when life gets difficult. He stays with you every day.

Jesus also told us something important about what the Holy Spirit does.

"But the Father will send the Friend in my name to help you. The Friend is the Holy Spirit. He will teach you all things. He will remind you of everything I have said to you."
John 14:26

What a wonderful promise. The Holy Spirit reminds us of the words of Jesus. When we forget that God loves us, He reminds us. When we are afraid, He brings God's promises back to our minds. As we read the Bible, He helps us understand it and live it out.

The Holy Spirit also teaches us. We do not have to figure out life by ourselves. We can talk to God about every part of our lives. We can ask for wisdom when we have a hard decision to make. We can ask for peace

when we are worried. We can ask for strength when we feel weak.

God's Spirit is always with us, helping us take the next step.

That does not mean every answer comes right away. Sometimes we must wait. Sometimes God leads us one small step at a time. But we can trust that His Spirit is always at work, helping us become more like Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is God's presence with you. He comforts you when you are hurting. He gently shows you when you have gone the wrong way. He reminds you of what is true. He gives you strength when you need it most. And every day He helps you grow to be more like Jesus.

Following Jesus was never meant to be a journey you take alone. God has not only given you His Word. He has given you His Spirit.

So wherever life takes you, remember this: if you belong to Jesus, the Holy Spirit is with you. Every day. Every step. No matter what.

You are never alone.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 18: You Are a New Creation

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

If you've come this far with us, you've given your heart to Jesus and maybe you've already been baptized, gone down into the water and come up into a brand-new life. That's exactly where I want to meet you now. Because there's a question that sits quietly in a lot of us after that moment: what is this new life actually supposed to feel like? The Bible gives that new life a name.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

2 Corinthians 5:17

I used to read that verse and wonder what it meant for me.

I had been in church. I believed in Jesus. But a new creation? I didn't feel like one. The same struggles were still there. The same patterns. The same pull toward things I knew weren't good for me. I wondered why the words on the page didn't seem to match the life I was living.

I understand now what was missing. I knew about God. I just didn't yet understand the intense love God has for me personally.

That changed when I truly came to know God, and He made it real to me how big He actually is. Big enough to hear me. Big enough to want to hear from me. Not just willing to listen, but genuinely wanting to hear whatever I have on my heart.

One night my mind ran wild in the best possible way. I started imagining what it would actually be like to have a close relationship with God. A real person who I could talk to any time I wanted, knowing that He heard me and is always glad when I call.

I have been growing closer to God ever since. And it is even better than I imagined.

"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self... and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

Ephesians 4:22–24

Addictions and sinful choices that used to have a strong hold on my life no longer define me. I am not saying life became perfect. I am saying God began to change

something inside me. The old grip started to loosen. The pull was not as intense as it used to be. I had found something real in God to replace what I had been chasing.

I found a Father who loves me more than I can begin to imagine. And I can imagine a lot. He loves me more than that.

That love gives me a strength I never had before. When life gets hard — when someone I love is hurting, when things aren't going right — I don't get swept off my feet the way I used to. I go to God. And He is always there, arms open, saying come on in, son. Let's talk.

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."

Galatians 2:20

If you have given your life to Jesus and you're still waiting to feel like a new creation, I want you to know something. It became real for me the moment the relationship became real. Not religion. Not rules. A simple and deeply treasured relationship.

Talk to God. Tell Him everything. Ask Him to make Himself known to you the way He made Himself known to me.

The old you doesn't have to have the last word. In Christ, you are something brand new.

And that is not just a verse. When you belong to Christ, you are loved, chosen, forgiven, and made new. That is the truest thing about you now. Your past is not the truest thing. Your failures are not the truest thing. What people have called you is not

the truest thing. God sees you as His child, covered by the grace of Jesus. So come to Him today. Talk to Him now, not when you feel ready, but right where you are. He already knows you. He already loves you. And He is waiting.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 19: You're on the Winning Side

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

Have you ever watched a chess match where one player looked completely trapped? Every move seemed to make things worse. It looked like checkmate was only one move away.

Then, with one unexpected move, everything changed.

The player who looked defeated had actually been planning the winning move all along.

That is exactly what happened when Jesus came to earth.

For many years, God's people brought sacrifices to Him. They brought lambs, goats, and bulls. Sin separates us from God. Those sacrifices showed faith and obedience. But they were not the final answer. The Bible says:

> *"It isn't possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."*

Hebrews 10:4 (NIrV)

Those sacrifices pointed to Jesus. One day, God would send the perfect sacrifice.

Then Jesus came.

Unlike every other person who has ever lived, Jesus never sinned. He was fully human, so He could stand in our place. He was fully God, so His sacrifice was enough for every person who would trust Him.

When Jesus was nailed to the cross, it may have looked like evil had finally won. The Son of God was dying. His followers were afraid. Hope seemed lost. It looked like the game was over.

But the cross was God's plan all along.

Jesus gave His life to pay the penalty that belonged to us. Every sin, every failure, every shame, every act of rebellion was placed on Him. He took the punishment we deserved so that we could receive the forgiveness we could never earn.

Three days later, God made His winning move.

Jesus walked out of the tomb alive.

The resurrection showed that sin had been paid for. Death had been defeated. What looked like evil's victory became evil's

defeat. The empty tomb told the world that Jesus is Lord. Everyone who belongs to Him shares in His victory.

That is why becoming a Christian is more than joining a religion. It is stepping onto God's side. It is trusting that Jesus died for your sins and rose again so you could become God's child forever.

Think about how people love being on the winning side. Fans celebrate wildly when they know their team has won. They wear the colors with pride. They don't spend the drive home wondering who won the game.

If you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ, you are on the winning side.

That does not mean life will always be easy. Christians still face sickness, disappointment, loss, and heartache. Jesus

never promised an easy life. But He did promise that He would never leave us. And He promised that the final victory belongs to Him.

The Bible says:

> *"But let us give thanks to God! He gives us the victory because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done."*

1 Corinthians 15:57 (NIrV)

So when life becomes hard, remember whose side you're on.

When guilt whispers that you're not good enough, remember whose side you're on.

When fear tells you the future is not safe, remember whose side you're on.

When money is tight, remember whose side you're on.

If your trust is in Jesus, your sins have been forgiven. You belong to God. Death is not the end of your story. The victory has already been won.

The final move has already been made.

You are on the winning side, not because of anything you have done, but because of everything Jesus has done for you.

That is real hope.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 20: You Are Royalty

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

I grew up in a pretty nice part of town, but I never felt like I was as good as the other kids. My dad did not have much money. I wore clothes from Kmart. The other kids had Izod shirts, Levi's jeans, and Converse shoes. I was the smallest kid in my class. I was the youngest too. My big brother was good at every sport. He had lots of friends. My parents were proud of him. I did not have any of that.

I tried hard to fit in. I tried to talk to the popular kids. I tried to hang out with my brother and his friends. But it felt like I was invisible. Like no one could hear me. That

feeling stayed with me a long time, even when I grew up.

Then I read these words:

> *"But God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are a people who belong to God... He brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light."*
>
> *1 Peter 2:9 (NIrV)*

That verse changed everything for me. I was not just a child of God. I was a prince. My Father is the King. He is the King of the whole universe. That makes me royalty.

When I saw myself that way, everything changed. I did not need nice shirts or shoes to feel like I belonged. All that mattered was that my Father was proud of me. And the Bible says He is.

"I will save the one who loves me. I will keep him safe, because he trusts in me... I will be with him in times of trouble. I will save him and honor him."

Psalm 91:14–15 (NIrV)

The King of everything honors His own children.

That little kid in the Kmart shoes felt like no one could see him. But God saw him the whole time. God heard every word no one else heard. And God was saying, "That is my son. That is my boy."

Stop for a second. Think about what that means. God did not just create your city. He did not just create the earth. He created the whole universe. Scientists say there are more stars than grains of sand on every beach on earth. And the God who made all

of it knows your name. He did not just make you. He chose you. Through faith in Jesus, you are His child. You are a son or daughter of the King of the whole universe.

Let that sink in.

When a king has a child, that child carries the king's name. Not because of what they did. But because of whose child they are. The same is true for you. You carry the name of the King of everything. Every step you take, you walk as royalty. That is not pride. That is fact.

In his book *Your True Reflection*, Don Ankenbrandt makes a good point about how hard it is to reach the people in charge. You can't just walk into a big company and talk to the owner. Most people will never meet the president. To reach someone

powerful, you go through a lot of other people first.

But not with God. You have a direct line to the King of the universe. Any time. Any day. No waiting. No one in between. You go straight to your Father. That is what it means to be His child.

He continues by adding that Royalty also has a job or responsibility. You carry the King's name. You also carry His light. God brought you out of darkness into His wonderful light. That light goes with you everywhere. It goes into every room. It goes to every person you meet. The darkness of this world cannot put it out. You are how God shows the world who He is. When people see you live with joy and peace and love, they see the King.

Think about a real prince or princess. They do not act like they do not matter. They know who they are, and they know whose they are. That changes everything. It changes how they walk. It changes how they speak. It changes how they treat people. Not with pride, but with confidence because they belong to the King.

That is what I want now. I want to live for God. Not because I "should", but because I love Him. When I live that way, people notice. They want what I have. And what I have is a real friendship with God. That friendship brings great joy. It is what life is meant for.

You are royalty. Not because of anything you did. Because of whose child you are, through Jesus.

Walk like it.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 21: God Holds Us Tight

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

"Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? ... Don't worry about these things... your heavenly Father already knows all your needs."

Matthew 6:27, 31–32

There was a time when being alone felt like the worst thing in the world.

When I was young, I did not feel like I fit in. Not at home. Not with the other kids. I always felt like I was too much. Too talkative. Too hard to love. It seemed like no one had room for all of me. So I learned to hold my sadness alone. I kept it quiet.

Then I grew up. Life got better in many ways. But that old lonely feeling never went away.

Even now, that lonely feeling comes back sometimes. It might come after a fight with someone I love. Or it might come when I try to do the right thing and it ends up costing me. At those times, that old hurt returns. It's an empty feeling. It seems to say, "You are all alone."

But something is different now.

Now, when that feeling comes, I know just what to do. I go straight to God.

Not in a fancy way. Not with a long prayer. I just sit with Him. Something happens in the quiet. I can't fully explain it. It feels like sitting next to someone who loves you completely. Someone who is not going to

leave. He puts His hand on my head. He says, "It's okay. I've got you. It's going to be alright."

That is what God does for me now. He holds me tight.

Jesus said, "Don't worry about your life." He was not saying your problems are not real. He was saying that you don't have to carry them alone. Worry can't add one minute to your day. But trusting God? That changes everything.

Listen to what the apostle Peter tells us to do:

"Turn all your worries over to Him. He cares about you."

1 Peter 5:7

I think about all the years I did not know this. All the nights I sat alone. My chest felt

heavy. I didn't realize that God was right there. He would have sat with me. I just needed to turn to Him.

Maybe you know that feeling too. Maybe life has been heavy for you. Maybe your road here was full of hard days and hard people. Maybe you still feel alone sometimes, even now.

If that is you, here is what I want you to know. You don't have to figure it all out. You don't have to stop hurting first. You can come just as you are. Tired. Sad. Angry. Confused. God will meet you right there.

He is not far away. He is not too busy. He is not tired of your questions. He is not tired of your pain.

He holds us tight. And He does not let go.

Take a moment right now. Close your eyes. Sit with this truth. Let God's love wash over you.

God has so much love for you. More than you can imagine. Learn to take it in. Let it comfort you on your hardest days. God can hold you up. He can give you strength you did not know you had. Even in the middle of your worst days.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 22: What Is God Really Like

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Lacy Hartselle

God is everywhere. I love the diversity of His creation and how many different, marvelous types of people, cultures, languages, plants, animals and ecosystems there are. I used to think God was some invisible man, until I realized that creation is how He reveals Himself to us and it is expansive!

When I was struggling with my faith after getting out of an abusive marriage at a young age, someone wise explained to me that God can show up in whatever way felt safe, good and loving to me and that my understanding of His presence can expand

and evolve every day. Even having watched my own body and mind change so much over 33 years is a wonder to me. I believe that God doesn't make mistakes, especially in creating us exactly as we are. He made me extra sensitive, imaginative, intense and artistic. I often feel misunderstood. I used to think this was a problem, but He has reassured me that how He made me is a gift. And that is true for you too. It's been quite a journey learning to accept myself, but it's helped me see that we all make up the infinite expressions of God, for we are His creation. I can personally understand how some people would have a hard time relating to God as a male presence, but I don't think God is hung up on gendered concepts the way we humans can be. If interpreting God as a loving feminine presence or even a big yellow school bus in

the sky is how you connect, then who is anyone to judge that? Our Creator lovingly understands you, your needs and your story. I like the idea that what you are seeking is also seeking you. There's a verse that suggests this:

"Come near to God and He will come near to you."
James 4:8

This has been a fun game to play in my connection with our Creator. Because if I look for His magic and love, I always find it. Especially if I start my morning by deciding to spend the day searching for evidence of His presence and faithfulness in my life, I am never disappointed. Sometimes this starts with realizing all that I am grateful for, even in seasons of struggle when life doesn't seem to be going so well. Those,

honestly, are the chapters of life that have reminded me to come closer to Him than ever, surrendering to His highest path and plan for me. This being human is like constant amnesia, forgetting all He's done for us and becoming blind to the blessings and abundance all around because we're so often fixating our minds on expectations of how we think things should go. I'm a pretty bright person, I did well in school… and I've tried and tried and tried to do it my way and figure it all out myself. But even when I handled things well, I was really stressed and not enjoying the process. We are conditioned to be so goal oriented, productive and future focused. "I'll be happy when I get that job, partner, house, etc." That way of being steals our attention from the present moment, which is exactly where God meets us! Even just slowing down for

10 minutes to check in with our breath and body daily can have an awakening and exhilarating effect. Because that is where we connect and commune with His Spirit, graciously given to each of us.

So what is God really like?

God is like: the sun coming out from the clouds and warming your skin on a chilly day, a little child babbling and staring into your soul at the grocery store, an animal nuzzling up to comfort you when you're upset, hearing your favorite song randomly play in the background when you're out somewhere and feeling a bit lost, a stranger on the street who smiles at you with real joy, a kind flight attendant encouraging you when you're afraid of flying, the magic of a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly, the memory of your loved one's laugh when

you see something that reminds you of them, the warmth of being safely in the arms of someone who loves you, a moment of true connection in the most unexpected place that restores your hope.

If a moment feels present, good, loving and supportive… that's God revealing His love for you. Discovering Him like this has opened the door for a deeper connection. One that feels real, alive and filled with joy. How do you experience God?

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 23: Yes, He Really Does Love You

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

Maybe you have wondered not just whether God is real, but whether He actually cares about you. Not just people in general. You, specifically. With your history. With everything you have done and everything that has been done to you.

That question is not a sign of weak faith. It is one of the most honest questions a person can ask. And God has an answer for it.

He Already Knows Everything About You

Before you ever thought about God, He was thinking about you. The Bible says He has searched you and known you. Not just the good parts. All of it. Every hard thing you have been through. Every mistake you wish you could take back. Every night you cried alone and wondered if anyone noticed.

He noticed. He has always noticed.

"You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise.

You have laid your hand upon me."

Psalm 139:1-2, 5

That word "searched" means He has looked at every part of you. And He has not pulled away. He knows you completely. And He loves you anyway. No person on earth can promise you that. But God can. And He does.

Some people picture God as someone who just puts up with them. Like He is keeping score and they are always behind. But listen to what the Bible says about God's heart.

"But Lord, you are a God who is tender and kind. You are gracious. You are slow to get angry. You are faithful and full of love."
Psalm 86:15 (NIrV)

That is God's heart. He is tender and kind. He is patient. He is full of love. God is not gritting His teeth and putting up with you. He loves you. He knows every part of you, and He still wants a close relationship with you.

I know that can be hard to believe. Especially if the people in your life have not loved you that way. But God is not like the people who let you down. His love does not run out. It does not depend on how well

you are doing. It does not walk away when things get hard.

Nothing Can Change It

I spent most of my life not really knowing this. I knew about God, but I did not know Him as my dad. I used to wonder if I would even make it to heaven someday. I had done enough wrong that I was not sure that Jesus' sacrifice would cover all my sins.

Then I finally understood something. God did not just want to let me in someday. He wanted to be with me right now. And nothing I had done — nothing — was strong enough to push His love away. If that was true for me, it is true for you too.

"Neither death nor life,

nor anything else in all creation,

will be able to separate us

from the love of God."

Romans 8:38-39

Think about those words. Nothing in all creation. That covers whatever you are carrying right now. Your past. Your failures. Your doubts. None of it is stronger than His love for you.

He Is Right There With You Tonight

When your head hits the pillow tonight, whether you are doing okay or barely holding on, He is right there beside you. Not waiting for you to clean yourself up. Not disappointed. Just right there, waiting for you to express anything that is on your heart.

And this is what He wants you to hear:

"I love you. I am right here. And I will be here tomorrow too."

That is not just a nice thought. That is the God of the universe speaking directly to you.

Talk to Him tonight. Just tell Him what is on your heart. You do not need special words. He already knows what you are feeling and He is already listening. He has been waiting for you.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 24: He Was There the Whole Time

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Mikey Chiappone

"I know the plans I have for you," announces the Lord. "I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come."
Jeremiah 29:11 (NIrV)

Nobody handed me an easy road. By the time I was eight years old, someone had already stolen something from me that I never got back. A man I should have been able to trust hurt me in ways no child should ever have to go through. When I finally told my father, I hid in the hallway and listened. He sent the man away. But he never called the police. He never got me any

help. And from that day on, he treated me differently — like I was something broken, something shameful. Like it was my fault.

I needed my father's love more than I'd ever needed anything. Instead, I got silence. I felt mocked and pushed away.

By twelve, I was looking for someone to fill that empty place. I found another adult I trusted — and he hurt me too.

By thirteen, I was using drugs and alcohol to numb the pain. By eighteen, I had tried to end my life. My younger brother found me in time.

In my early twenties, I almost went to prison for five years for dealing drugs. By God's grace, that door closed.

For the next several decades, I kept running. I ran into a marriage I was not

ready for. I ran into religion, hoping it would fix me. I ran into a gay lifestyle while still carrying the pain from what had been done to me as a child. I thought it might finally make me feel something real. I spent twenty-eight years in a world of partying, addiction, and searching. But none of those things could give me what I was really looking for. What I needed was a relationship with God. I just did not know it yet.

And through all of it, I carried a quiet belief: a man like me was too far gone for God to want.

"The LORD is close to those whose hearts have been broken. He saves those whose spirits have been crushed."

Psalm 34:18 (NIrV)

Then one day I was about to lose my apartment. My relationship had just ended. I was out of options and out of fight. I decided to call a business associate I hadn't spoken to in a while — a man named Larry in Huntsville, Alabama. I needed work. I needed to be near my daughter. I needed something to change.

He hired me on the spot.

I didn't think much of it at first. Just a lucky break. But when I walked into his office, there was a Bible sitting on his desk. And for some reason, I told him about the prayer I'd said the night before. He looked at me and asked if I had ever accepted Jesus.

I told him no. I had too many sins. Men like me didn't get that.

But I kept showing up. Every Wednesday, his company gathered for a Bible study in the conference room. Out of about twenty-three employees, twenty-one of them were believers. I sat in that room week after week, watching people who seemed to have something I'd been looking for my whole life.

It took a while. Then one day, after many months and several moments I could not explain, I finally said yes to Jesus.

When I look back now, I can see it. God was there when I was eight years old hiding in that hallway. He was there in every desperate year that followed. He was guiding my steps toward that office, that Bible on the desk, those Wednesday lunches, toward the moment I finally stopped running.

He was there the whole time.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."
Romans 8:28

Whatever road brought you here, you are not too far gone. Whatever you have survived, whatever you are ashamed of, whatever you have done, or whatever was done to you, God has not lost track of you.

He was there then. He is here now.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 25: I Am That Person Now

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

"The Lord makes secure the footsteps of the person who delights in him. Even if that person trips, he won't fall. The Lord's hand takes good care of him."

Psalm 37:23–24 (NIrV)

For most of my life, I wanted to believe I was a good person. I tried to do good things. I treated my employees well. I went to church. I gave faithfully. But I also struggled with my addictions and my temper. I tried to stop. I really did. But for a long time, I could not break free on my own. Even after I came to truly know God,

those struggles did not vanish overnight. But God kept working in me.

I knew the Bible said that when you come to Jesus, you become a new person. But I kept looking at my life and asking, "where is that new person?" Because the old one sure didn't seem to be going anywhere. I felt a lot of guilt about that. I knew who God said I was. But I didn't look like that person yet.

But then something changed. Something real. After I came to truly know God, I became a different person. The things that used to pull me down every single day? They are not in my life now. Not because I tried harder. But because God changed me from the inside.

That is what becoming a new person really looks like. It is not just a title. It happens

when you stop just reading about God and start actually talking to Him.

There is a verse in the Bible that says when a good person prays, God listens and things happen. For most of my life I didn't think that verse was for me. Good people were people who had it all together. That was not me.

But something changed when I stopped trying to be good enough and just started spending time with God. I stopped seeing myself as the guy who kept failing. I started to see myself as someone God was walking with. Someone He was changing. Little by little, I became a new person. I can say today — with joy, not pride — that I am walking the right path now. Not because I am better than anyone. But because God is changing me. And that feels good.

I found a verse in Psalm 37 that I love. It says God holds up the person who loves Him and even when that person trips, they will not fall, because God has them by the hand. I read that and thought — that is me now. God is holding my hand. I never thought I would say that about myself.

I can feel it now when I make a good choice. It feels like a Father smiling, watching me grow into who He made me to be. That is one of the best feelings I have ever had. And when I pray, it feels different too. I am not just talking to the ceiling anymore. I know He hears me. I never felt that way before.

If you see that same gap in your own life — the person you are and the person you want to be — here is what I can tell you. That gap started closing for me when I stopped

trying to fix myself and just started showing up for God. Not religion. Just time with Him. Honest talk. And He did the rest.

The Bible says move close to God and He will move close to you. That is a promise. I tried it and He showed up. So reach out to Him. Watch for Him to answer. He will.

The person I used to be feels like a stranger to me now. And honestly, I'm still on the journey. But I'm on the path with God now, and it feels good.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 26: How Do We Pray to God?

Written by Mechanics On A Mission partner, Will Acuff

If you've ever thought, *I'm probably not praying the right way*, you're in good company.

A lot of people feel that way.

They wonder if there are special words they're supposed to say. Whether they should kneel. Fold their hands. Close their eyes. Speak out loud. Pray longer. Pray harder.

The good news is that none of those things are what prayer is really about.

Prayer is simply a conversation with God.

Not a performance.

Not a formula.

Not something you have to master before He listens.

From the very beginning of Scripture, God has invited ordinary people to talk with Him. And they all did it differently.

David poured out everything that was on his heart. Joy. Fear. Anger. Gratitude. Confusion. Nothing was off limits.

Hannah prayed so quietly that no words even came out, yet God heard every one of them.

Elijah prayed with bold confidence, and God stopped the rain for three years. Then he prayed again, and the rain returned.

None of them had perfect prayers.

They just brought honest hearts and their attention.

Then Jesus came and showed us something even more beautiful.

Even though He was the Son of God, He regularly stepped away to spend time with His Father. He prayed early in the morning before the crowds woke up. He prayed alone. He prayed before difficult decisions. He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before he went to the cross.

If Jesus needed time with His Father, how much more do we?

One day His disciples finally asked Him, "Teach us how to pray."

Jesus answered:

"Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored.

May your kingdom come. May what you want to happen be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who sin against us.

Keep us from sinning when we are tempted.

Save us from the evil one."
Matthew 6:9-13 (NIrV)

Notice where Jesus begins.

Not with a request.

With a relationship.

Our Father.

Everything about prayer starts there.

You are not trying to convince a distant God to notice you. You are talking with a

Father who already loves you, already knows you, and already knows what you need before you even ask.

That changes everything.

The Bible also reminds us that prayer isn't empty religious activity. God actually moves through the prayers of His people.

"The prayer of a godly person is powerful.

Things happen because of it."

James 5:16 (NIrV)

Your prayers matter.

They are not wasted words disappearing into the ceiling.

God hears them.

Now, does that mean He always answers exactly the way we hope?

No.

Sometimes His wisdom is greater than our understanding. Sometimes His timing is different from ours. Sometimes the answer is yes. Sometimes it's no. Sometimes it's not yet.

But Scripture gives us this promise:

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."
1 John 5:14-15

So don't be afraid to pray big prayers.

If you're sick, ask God to heal you.

If you're overwhelmed, ask Him for peace.

If your family is struggling, ask Him to provide.

If you're facing something impossible, invite Him into it.

He's not intimidated by your biggest requests.

In fact, I sometimes wonder if what saddens Him most isn't at all that we ask for too much, but that we so often try to carry everything by ourselves and don't even bother to come to Him.

Paul writes:

"Don't worry about anything. No matter what happens, tell God about everything. Ask and pray, and give thanks to him."
Philippians 4:6 (NIrV)

Every situation.

Not just the big ones.

Bring Him the meeting you're nervous about.

Bring Him your finances.

Bring Him your marriage.

Bring Him your doubts.

Bring Him your dreams.

Bring Him all of it.

One verse has changed the way I think about faith itself:

"Don't think of yourself more highly than you should. Be reasonable when you think about yourself. Keep in mind the faith God has given to each of you."
Romans 12:3 (NIrV)

Faith isn't something we manufacture.

It's something God gives.

That means if your faith feels small today, you don't have to pretend it's bigger than it is.

You can simply pray,

"God, I want to trust You more. Help my unbelief. Give me greater faith."

I believe that's a prayer God loves to answer.

Here's what I've seen over and over again in my own life.

The more time I spend with God, the more I begin to trust Him.

The more I trust Him, the more I notice Him at work.

The more I notice Him at work, the more peace replaces fear, hope replaces discouragement, and my life slowly

becomes something I could never have built on my own.

Prayer doesn't just change our circumstances.

More often than not, it changes us.

So don't worry about getting it right.

Just start talking.

Talk to God while you're driving to work.

Talk to Him on your morning walk.

Talk to Him while you're fixing a car.

Talk to Him before you fall asleep.

He isn't looking for polished words.

He's looking for your heart.

And the beautiful news is that before you ever speak the first word...

He's already listening.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 27: One Day in His Courts

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

> *"I'm asking the Lord for only one thing. Here is what I want. I want to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life. I want to look at the beauty of the Lord."*
> *Psalm 27:4*

One of my favorite things to do when I want to relax is play a card game on my phone and listen to music. I joke around with Father God and Jesus while I play. I might say, "Okay, if you're right here with me, how about giving me a good hand?" And when I play a card wrong, I might laugh and say, "Well, Jesus, what were you thinking, letting me do that?"

God does not need you to put on a tie before you talk to Him. He does not need the right words. He just wants to be with you. Because He loves you. Because you are His.

One afternoon on that porch, I laid my head back and closed my eyes. I was still listening to the music. Still thinking about God. And right then, something opened up inside me.

I could see it as clearly as if it were real. In my vision, I was lying on a bench just outside the throne room of God. The great doors were wide open. Bright light was pouring out — light like nothing on this earth. And I was right there on that bench, resting in the glow of it.

I didn't want to get up. I was just at rest. I knew my Father was right inside. I knew I could walk through those doors any time I

wanted and talk to Him. And just knowing that gave me so much peace that I didn't move. I just stayed on that bench, holding on to the blood of Jesus, resting in the light.

That is what forgiveness really does. It does not just erase the past. It opens the door. And then it lets you rest right there next to it, knowing you belong.

A lot of people think forgiveness is the finish line. But it is not. It is the starting line. It is where your life with God begins. It is the moment the door swings open and God says, "Come in. I've been waiting for you."

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in. I will eat with that person, and they will eat with me."
Revelation 3:20

A few days after that afternoon on the porch, a Bible verse came into my mind. I was not looking for it. I didn't remember reading it before. But the book, the chapter, and the verse number were just there in my head. I looked up the verse. This is what it said:

"A single day in your courtyards is better than a thousand anywhere else."
Psalm 84:10

I sat and thought about that for a long time. Because now I knew exactly what it meant. I had just been there. On that bench. Outside those open doors. One afternoon with God, resting in His light. And it was worth more than anything else I could name.

That is what time with God can become for you. Not a job. Not something you check

off a list. Something you really want. Something you miss when you have been away from it too long.

And God loves to hear your voice. Not just the fancy prayers. Not just the words you say when everything is fine. He loves it when you come to Him tired and broken. He loves it when you do not know what to say and you just sit there. He made you. He knows you. Your interests are interesting to Him. He never gets tired of you.

"Don't worry about anything. No matter what happens, tell God about everything. Ask and pray, and give thanks to him. Then God's peace will watch over your hearts and your minds. He will do this because you belong to Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:6–7

That bench outside the throne room is not just for me. It is for you too. No matter

what you have done, or how far away you have gone. The door is open. You have been invited. And the Father is right inside, waiting to hear the sound of your voice.

Nothing is too small or big for Him to hear from you.

He just wants to hear from you.

"Call out to me. I will answer you."
Jeremiah 33:3

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 28: The People God Watches Over

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

The world does not always see you.

You can work hard your whole life and still struggle to pay the bills. You can do everything right and still have very little to show for it. And sometimes it can feel like the people who have the most get the most attention and people who are just trying to get by get overlooked.

But God does not work that way. Not even close. In fact, the people the world overlooks are often the very ones God is most tenderly watching over.

Jesus Knows What This Feels Like

Here is something that might surprise you. Jesus was not born into a wealthy family. He was born in a barn because there was no room for his parents anywhere else. He grew up in a small town, the son of a carpenter. He worked with his hands. He knew what it meant to have very little. Think about that. The God who created everything — every star, every mountain, every ocean — chose to come into this world with nothing. Not because He had to. Because He wanted to be close to you. He wanted you to know that He understands.

And when Jesus began to teach people about God, look at who he said God blesses:

"Blessed are you who are poor,

for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who are hungry now,

for you will be filled."

Luke 6:20-21

He was not talking about people who have it all together. He was talking about people who are hungry for God. People who are struggling. People who realize they need God.

God Knows Your Name

Jesus told another story about a poor man named Lazarus. Lazarus was sick and had nothing. He used to sit outside the gate of a rich man's house, hoping for just the scraps left over from the rich man's table. Nobody helped him. Nobody even seemed to notice he was there.

But God noticed.

When Lazarus died, the Bible says the angels carried him to be with God. He was poor his whole life on earth. The world walked past him every single day. But God knew his name. Not just as a fact; God knew him the way a father knows his child. And when Lazarus's hard life was finally over, God didn't send a memo. He sent angels. That's not obligation. That's love. God saw every hard day he ever lived. And God welcomed him home.

That story is in the Bible for a reason. It is there to tell you that no matter how invisible you feel, God sees you. He knows your name. He has never once looked the other way.

Jesus said "Even the sparrows are not forgotten by God.

And you are worth more to him than many sparrows."

Luke 12:6-7 (simplified)

How God Takes Care of You

Sometimes God takes care of people by moving the hearts of other people who have more.

I want to tell you about my aunt. She worked at Walmart most of her life, making about 1½x minimum wage. She got sick with lung cancer and had very little. But I believe God put it on my heart to help her find a better place to live and get a car.

She did not ask me. I just felt God nudging me. Go help her.

That is how God works sometimes. He looks at someone who is struggling, and He

moves someone else to show up. The Bible even says:

"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to God,

and God will reward them for what they have done."

Proverbs 19:17

When someone helps you, do not just see the person helping. See God behind them. He is the one who moved them. He is the one who made it happen. He was watching over you the whole time.

Keep Your Head Up

You are not forgotten. You are not less than anyone else in God's eyes. The world measures people by what they have. God doesn't. Real richness is not in a bank

account. It is in knowing God in a close and personal way.

"God chose the poor people of this world

to be rich in faith

and to receive the kingdom he promised

to those who love him."

James 2:5

Keep praying. Keep going. Keep your head up.

God has not taken His eyes off you for a single day of your life. Not because it's His job, but because you are His. He made you. He knows you. And He loves you more deeply than anything in this world ever could.

With Love,

Message 29: Your Father Has No Favorites

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

Some pain does not show up at a doctor's office. It is the pain of growing up and feeling like someone else was loved more than you.

Maybe a sibling could do no wrong while you could do nothing right. Maybe you heard things said about you that taught you exactly where you stood. You tried. And it was never quite enough.

If that is your story, then I want you to know that you are not alone. And what you felt was real.

Favoritism has been breaking families apart since the beginning of time. The Bible tells

the story of a boy named David. He was the youngest of eight sons. When the prophet Samuel came to David's father, Jesse, to anoint the next king of Israel, Jesse brought out seven of his sons one by one. But he never even called for David.

He was out in the field watching the sheep. Nobody thought to bring him in. His own father had already decided: it won't be him.

David was out in the field. His father did not call him in. He was dusty and smelled like sheep. You may feel that way too. You may feel overlooked by the people who should have loved and encouraged you. But that field was exactly where God found David. And God sees you right where you are too.

God looked at each of those seven sons and said no. Then He said something very

important:

"Do not consider how handsome or tall he is. I have not chosen him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outside of a person. But the Lord looks at what is in the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7 (NIrV)

When David finally walked in from the field—still dusty, still smelling like sheep—God said: that one. That is the one I have chosen.

The boy nobody called in became the king of Israel.

But here is what makes David's story even more powerful for us. David was not perfect. Not even close.

Later in his life, David sinned in terrible ways. He committed adultery. Then he tried

to cover it up, and a man was killed. David knew he had done great wrong. The weight of it nearly crushed him.

But David did not run away from God. He ran to God. He confessed. He repented. He threw himself on the mercy of the God he had always loved.

And God forgave him.

David had a real relationship with God. It was honest. It lasted his whole life. Out of that relationship, David wrote many of the Psalms. They are words about being safe, known, and loved. People still read them today when they need to feel close to God.

David was overlooked by his father. He sinned terribly. And yet the Bible calls him a man after God's own heart. Not because he

was perfect, but because he kept coming back to God.

God never gave up on David. Not when he was forgotten in a field. Not when he failed terribly. Not once.

He will never give up on you either.

"Can a mother forget the baby who is nursing at her breast? Can she stop having tender love for the child who was born to her? She might forget her child. But I will not forget you. I have written your name on the palms of my hands. Your walls are never out of my sight."

Isaiah 49:15–16 (NIrV)

Written on His hands. That is how close you are to Him. The favoritism you may have experienced was never the truth about your worth. It was a human failure, and you did not deserve it.

You don't need fancy words to talk to God. He is not waiting for you to get your life together first. You can simply say, "God, I need You." He will meet you right there. If you aren't sure how to start, try this simple prayer:

"God, I've felt overlooked and invisible for a long time. Thank you for seeing me right where I am. I'm tired of trying to earn love. Help me to believe that I am already chosen by You. Teach me how to walk with You. Amen."

You have always had a Father who has no favorites. And He has always seen you, fully, completely, and with love.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 30: God Is Big Enough

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

For much of my adult life, I prayed, but I did not pray with much faith. I had two problems. The first was doubt. In my own mind, I had made God too small. I could not understand how He could know every person on earth and still know me. The second was shame. The things I had done made me feel like God would not want to listen to someone like me. Doubt and shame kept my prayers small for many years.

At 59, I had sold my company and should have felt like I had everything. But I was still caught in sin, and my marriage was in trouble. I needed God to help me. Several

times, through tears, I prayed something simple: God, please let me know You are there. I need your help.

The next day, I was listening to the song "Redeemer" by Nicole C. Mullen. My eyes were closed and I saw a vision of Jesus. I knew it was Him. He wore a white robe and a crown of thorns. His face was full of love. I did not feel judged. I felt fully accepted.

Then I wanted to see the Father. With my eyes still closed, I turned to my right and there was a bright light. I had read that we can't see the Father because of His holiness. I began to draw closer to the light. And as I drew closer, I felt like I was starting to glow.

Then the vision ended.

I didn't fully understand what I had just seen. But I knew this — I had prayed and

asked God to let me know He was there. And the very next day, I saw Jesus and the Father.

A couple of days later, I read about how big the universe is. Scientists say there are at least two trillion galaxies that we can see. That number stayed with me. That is 2,000,000,000,000 galaxies.

That night I went outside at our home in the countryside. The sky was full of stars. As I stood there looking up, something became clear to me. It was not just a feeling. It suddenly made sense.

When I accepted all that God has created, suddenly I believed that He was big enough to know me personally, in a way I had never been able to imagine before.

But that was not the only thing I saw that night. About a year earlier, I had read in Ephesians that God does not just let us be His children. He chooses us. He wants us in His family. And it gives Him joy.

"He loved us. So he decided long ago to adopt us. He adopted us as his children with all the rights children have. He did it because of what Jesus Christ has done. It pleased God to do it."

Ephesians 1:4-5 (NIrV)

Standing under those stars, those two truths came together. God was big enough to know me personally, and He actually wanted to know me. Just like I would never want to be away from my own children, God did not want to be away from me. He wanted a close relationship with me. Not someday. Right now.

For the first time in my life, I felt like I had a Father who loved me.

I had lost my own dad to suicide when I was in my 20s. We had never been close. I never really knew what it felt like to have a father who was fully there for me. That kind of loss leaves a hole that doesn't easily fill.

But standing under those stars, I felt that hole fill.

God had never stopped reaching for me. Even in the grief. Even in the years of feeling like I wasn't enough. He was working, waiting, and preparing me for exactly this moment.

And here is what I believe with all my heart: He has been doing the same thing for you. He was there in your hard times too. He was there in your losses. He was there in

the long nights when you did not know how things would turn out.

You may not have seen Him. That doesn't mean He wasn't there.

"The Lord himself will go ahead of you. He will be with you. He will never leave you. He'll never desert you. So don't be afraid. Don't lose hope."

Deuteronomy 31:8 (NIrV)

If you want to talk to Him today, you can. Right now. Right where you are. You do not need special words. Just be honest. He wants to hear from you more than you can imagine. Every time you call on Him, He is listening.

That night, my relationship with God became real to me. Now I pray knowing God hears every word. My prayer life changed. I have real joy because I know God

as my Father. I want to spend the rest of my life helping other people find that same joy in Him.

That's why this ministry exists. That's why you're holding this book.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 31: You Don't Have to Earn It

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

Have you ever sat in church and felt like you were not good enough? Like everyone else had it all figured out and you were the only one still struggling? I have been there. A lot of people have.

For a long time, I thought being a Christian was mostly about showing up for church and following rules. Miss a service and people would wonder what was wrong with your faith. Make a mistake and then carry the weight of shame. I went to a church that, with good hearts, had piled so many rules on top of the gospel that the good news did not always feel very good.

But Jesus was not happy about that kind of thing either. The church leaders in Jesus' day had piled on rule after rule until people felt they could never be good enough to come to God. Jesus looked at those worn-out people and said:

"Come to me, all of you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest. Become my servants and learn from me. I am gentle and free of pride. You will find rest for your souls. Serving me is easy, and my load is light."

Matthew 11:28–30

That is the real Jesus. Not a teacher marking your score for everyone to see. Someone reaching out His hand to people who are worn out from trying.

Paul wrote these words that changed my life when I finally let them sink in:

"God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it."
Ephesians 2:8–9

A gift. Not a paycheck. You do not earn a gift. You just receive it.

I did not fully get that until I was fifty-nine years old. For most of my life, even when I believed in God, I kept a score in my head. All the ways I had failed. All the reasons God had every right to be done with me. I thought He was sitting up there with His arms crossed, waiting for me to get my act together before He would let me in.

Then came the day I truly came to know God. I found out He wanted to talk to me. Not because I had earned it. Not because I had become good enough. Just because He is a Father and that is what fathers do. They want to hear from their children.

Jesus told a story about a farmer planting seed. Some seed fell on the hard path, so it never took root. Some seed fell on rocky soil and dried up. Some seed fell in the weeds and produced no fruit. But seed that fell on good soil grew and produced a big crop. He was talking about what happens when someone opens their heart, like the good soil, and lets God's word take root.

The fruit God is looking for is not perfect church attendance. It is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These things

grow out of a real relationship with God, when your heart is like the good soil.

So if you have ever felt like you were not good enough, not clean enough, not religious enough to come to God — hear this. There is no such thing as good enough. Jesus already knew that. That is exactly why He came. He looked at every person who has ever lived and said, I know you cannot do this on your own. So I will do it for you.

He paid for everything that has ever stood between you and God. Every failure. Every sin. Every thing you wish you could take back. Gone. Covered. Done.

"God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life."
John 3:16

You do not have to earn your way in. You never did. The door has been open all along.

If you want to walk through it, you do not need the right words or the right past. You just need to believe. The way a child believes their father when he says, "I love you. I am here. Come on in."

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 32: God Speaks in the Whisper

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Carter Hamric

For most of my life, prayer looked about the same. It was something we did before meals, before bed, or in church. It usually meant saying the "right" words. If I am honest, it often felt more like checking a box than having a talk with God. I believed in God. But I did not always expect Him to meet me in the middle of a normal Tuesday morning.

That began to change several years ago.

Life had gotten busy. I was building a business, raising kids, chasing dreams, and carrying a lot. It felt like something always needed my attention. I was always talking,

planning, creating, and solving problems. I was not leaving much room to be still. So I started getting up before everyone else in the house. I made a cup of coffee. I went outside with a journal full of blank pages. Then I sat.

Before I ever started writing, I began with something simple: listening.

I listened to the birds in the trees. I listened to a train far away. I heard cars passing through the neighborhood. I heard the wind moving through the leaves. My mind would wander, as minds do. I would think about work, my calendar, the kids, or a project I had not finished. Then I would gently bring my mind back to my breathing and to the sounds around me. A few minutes later, my mind would wander again. So I would begin again. I have

learned to be patient with myself. I am not failing. I am learning.

It reminds me of Elijah in 1 Kings. Elijah may have expected God to come in big ways: the wind, the earthquake, and the fire. But God came in "a gentle whisper" (1 Kings 19:11-13). I think I spent a lot of my life looking for God in big moments. But many times, He was asking me to notice Him in normal moments.

After sitting quietly for a few minutes, I open my journal and write. Most mornings, I try to fill three pages. They are not perfect thoughts. No one else is meant to read them. Sometimes I am talking straight to God. Sometimes I am working through worry or thanks. Sometimes I am thinking through ideas for a song, a children's book,

or a project to help others. Sometimes it is just rambling.

But I have learned that writing is one of the deepest ways I pray.

It is not about making something worth reading. It is about making room for my heart to slow down. Before I check email, scroll my phone, or carry everyone else's needs, I take fifteen or twenty minutes to check in with my own soul.

I believe the Holy Spirit often works in those quiet moments.

"God says, 'Be still, and know that I am God. I will be honored among the nations. I will be honored in the earth.'"

Psalm 46:10 (NIrV)

For years I thought that verse was just good advice. Now I see it as an invitation. Quiet

is not empty. It is often where God helps me see more clearly.

I have also learned that God does not only speak through big moments. Yes, sometimes He shows up in chances that change our lives. Sometimes He shows up in a blessing we did not expect. Sometimes He opens a door we never could have opened. Those moments are beautiful. We should thank God for them.

But I have found that He often speaks through smaller things too.

Sometimes it is the breeze on a cool morning. Sometimes it is the birds singing before the rest of the world wakes up. Sometimes it is a talk with a stranger at a gas station that comes at just the right time. Sometimes it is a quiet nudge to call a

friend, say I am sorry, encourage someone, or simply pay attention.

Those moments are easy to miss if we are moving too fast.

When I look back through my old journals, I can see God at work in my life. Not because I heard a voice out loud. But because I learned to notice His gentle nudges. A thought that would not leave me. A growing peace about a hard choice. An idea that became something good. A reminder that I was not carrying life alone.

If you have never known God this way, my hope for you is simple: make a little room.

You do not need fancy words. You do not need a perfect prayer. You do not have to earn God's attention. Find a quiet place. Leave your phone inside for a few minutes.

Take a deep breath. Listen. Write if it helps. Tell God what is on your heart. You can tell Him your doubt. You can tell Him your anger. You can tell Him your silence.

Relationships grow through time together, not perfect talks.

The more I practice being present, the more I see that God has been present all along. He still speaks. Sometimes He speaks in life's biggest moments. But more often than I expected, He speaks in the whisper.

With Love,
The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 33: God Hears You

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

Maybe you have been praying. Asking God to help you. Waiting. And wondering if He even hears you at all.

He does. He always has.

In the Bible, a man named Daniel prayed every single day for three weeks. Three weeks of praying and hearing nothing back. No sign. No answer. Just silence. Most people would have given up. Daniel did not. He kept going back to God every day, even when it felt like no one was listening. Then God sent a messenger to him. And the first thing the messenger said was this:

"Daniel, do not be afraid. Some time ago you decided to get understanding and to humble

yourself before your God. Since that time God has listened to you, and I have come because of your prayers."
Daniel 10:12

Since that time. Not after three weeks. Not when Daniel finally said the right prayer. God heard him from the very first day he prayed. The help was already on the way. Daniel just could not see it yet.

God is the same with us. The day you first cried out to Him, He heard you. The day you first whispered His name, He heard you. He has not forgotten you. He has not moved on. He is still right there and the answer is already coming, even if you cannot see it yet.

Waiting is hard. It can feel like your prayers are hitting the ceiling and going no further. It can feel like God is quiet because maybe

He doesn't care. But that is not what is happening. He hears you. He cares. He is working on it, even on the days when everything feels still and silent.

So do not stop. Keep praying. Keep talking to Him. Not because you must, but because He is listening. Because He loves you. Because you are not alone in this.

While you wait, you do not have to carry it all. David wrote this about what it felt like to rest in God:

"I have made myself calm and content like a young child in its mother's arms. Deep down inside me, I am as content as a young child."
Psalm 131:2

Think about that. A little child in its mother's arms. Not worried. Not afraid. Not trying to fix anything. Just resting. Safe.

Held. The child does not understand everything that is going on in the world outside. But they don't have to. They just know they are safe right here, in these arms, with this person who loves them more than anything.

That is what God wants for you while you wait. You do not have to have everything figured out. You do not have to understand why things are taking so long. You can come just as you are — tired, scared, unsure — and let Him hold you. He is big enough to hold all of it. And He wants to.

He is not far away. He is not too busy. He is not tired of hearing from you.

Just talk to Him. Tell Him how you feel. He already knows. But He loves to hear your voice. And He is already listening.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 34: You Are Already Enough

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

"I have called you by name. You are mine."

Isaiah 43:1 (NIrV)

I used to watch the popular kids and think, "that will never be me."

They wore nicer clothes than I did. They lived in nicer houses. Their parents drove nicer cars. They were better looking. They just seemed to have everything together. I felt like I did not belong with them. I felt like I was outside the circle.

I also do not remember hearing my name spoken with joy. My older brother was big, popular, and good at sports, and my parents

were proud of him. I spent a lot of years trying to make people proud of me too.

One day I asked if I could go hang with my brother and his friend. His friend said, "I don't want him to come with us; he bugs me." So I did not get to go. No one spoke up for me, including my mom, who overheard everything.

Home was hard in other ways too. There was violence. There were things a child should never see. There were wounds in me that I did not realize I had until much later in life.

For years, I chased what I did not get at home. I wanted respect. I wanted honor. I wanted to feel wanted. I wanted someone to look at me and say, "You matter."

Later, I built a company and had success. People noticed. But even after all of that, the hole was still there. Success did not heal the ache in my heart. What I really wanted was to know that I was loved and appreciated.

I had accepted that Jesus died for my sins. I knew I could be forgiven. But I had never understood that I could really have a close relationship with God as my father.

I thought forgiveness was the finish line. It is not. It is the door. Jesus did not just come to keep me out of hell. He came to bring me into a real relationship with our Father.

I was still struggling with sin, anger, and addictions. I still did not feel like the new creation God said I could be. Nothing I had tried had fixed it.

"When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here!"

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIrV)

One night, something finally changed in me. I had spent so many years trying to prove I was worth noticing, but God began to show me I did not have to perform for His love. I could come to Him as a son. I could talk to Him honestly. I could bring Him my sin, my shame, my anger, and my fear. And He would not turn away.

For the first time, I began to understand what I had missed for so long. God did not just want to forgive me from a distance. He wanted me to know Him as my Father. He wanted me to live like someone who was already loved, already known, and already welcome.

I stopped performing for God and started talking to Him like a Father. I quit trying to impress others and started trusting Him.

I also started seeing something I had missed in the Bible. Jesus did not just come to forgive my sins. He came to bring me home to the Father. He was making a way for me to know I belonged.

The Bible says Jesus endured the cross because of the joy set before Him. Part of that joy was bringing us near to our Father.

"God chose to make us His children through Jesus. He wanted to do this, and it gave Him joy."

Ephesians 1:4–5 (NIrV)

That verse changed me. God did not make me His child because He had to. He wanted

to do it. It gave Him joy. God wants more than religion. He wants relationship.

When I learned that God really wanted to hear from me, everything changed. He is glad when I come to Him. He is not annoyed by me. He is not pushing me away.

Now I stay close to God through the day. I talk to Him in the morning. I talk to Him all through my day.

When I mess up, I come back again and confess my sins. When I am weak, I ask for strength. The more I come to God, the more I know I am heard, welcomed, and wanted.

Staying close to Jesus is not about being perfect. It is about coming back to Him again and again. It is about trusting that He

will teach you, forgive you, and help you walk with Him.

"See what amazing love the Father has given us! Because of it, we are called children of God. And that's what we really are!"

1 John 3:1 (NIrV)

The little boy who once felt forgotten now has a Father who knows his name and says it with love. That changes everything.

That means I do not have to keep proving myself. Do I still do wrong things sometimes? Yes. I am still human. But I am walking on a better path now because God is my Father and I am His child. I want people to see His love in my life and be drawn to Him.

If you have ever felt left out, forgotten, or not good enough, please hear this. God is

not waiting for you to become more impressive. He is inviting you to come into a close relationship with Him now and forever.

You are enough to be loved by God. You have always mattered to Him. Not because of what you have done, what you own, or how people see you, but because God made you, God knows you, and God loves you.

He knows your name too. You are loved. You are His.

He truly answers prayer. He truly speaks to us. He truly wants us near Him. And when you know that, your heart can finally rest.

That is where real change begins. When you know you are loved by the Father, you stop begging the world to tell you who you are.

If you want to come to Him today, you can say, "Father, thank You for knowing my name and loving me. Thank You for wanting me. Help me trust Your love and walk close to You today. Amen."

Say it out loud if you want to, even if the words feel new. God is not waiting for you to say it perfectly. He is waiting for you to trust in Him.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 35: Love That Doesn't Run Out

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

Have you ever felt like you were on a sailboat out in the middle of the ocean with no wind?

You're just sitting there. The sail is up but there's nothing filling it. You can't move. You don't know where the wind went or when it's coming back. You just float there, feeling stuck and stranded.

I know that feeling. I've felt it most of my life in one way or another.

I felt it as a kid when my parents were too caught up in their own pain to really see me. When my brother didn't want me around. When I stood on the outside of

every circle that mattered and nobody opened it up to let me in.

I've felt it as an adult too. When my wife is frustrated with me and I feel like I can't do anything right. When something happens in the family and I feel unheard or left out of the decision. When the people I love the most are the ones making me feel the most alone.

And I know that some of you reading this are carrying something heavier than that. Loss. Abandonment. Wounds that go deeper than anything I've described. If that's you, this chapter is especially for you.

Those moments can feel devastating. And when you don't have anywhere to take them, they just sit on your chest.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever."

Psalm 136:1

That promise — His love endures forever — is not just a nice phrase. It means no matter how still and empty things feel right now, His love has not run out. It never will.

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness."

Jeremiah 31:3

Notice that word — drawn. God didn't wait for you to find your way to Him on your own. He has been drawing you toward Him your whole life. Through every hard season. Through every empty moment on the water. He has been pulling you toward Himself — with kindness, not force —

because He loves you and He wants you close.

But here is what I have found since I came to truly know God as my Father.

God is the wind. No matter how still everything else gets — no matter how quiet or cold or frustrated or empty things feel — God fills my sails. Every time. I go to Him when I'm discouraged and He reminds me through the Holy Spirit how much He loves me. He reminds me that what feels so devastating right now is temporary. That He has me. That He is not going anywhere.

I have never once gone to God and come away still feeling totally alone. Not once.

And I want to be honest with you — knowing God doesn't mean the struggles go away. Not on this earth. There will still be

hard days. There will still be moments when everything feels still and cold and empty. That is just the nature of life on earth at times.

But here is what makes all the difference: I don't face those moments alone anymore. And I know something better is coming. The Bible promises a day when there will be no more pain, no more sorrow, no more tears. I look forward to that day. And knowing it is coming makes the hard days on this earth a little easier to bear.

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain."

Revelation 21:4

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present

nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:38–39

Nothing can separate you from His love. Not your past. Not your failures. Not the people who left. Not the ones who stayed but made you feel invisible. Not your worst day or your worst year or the worst version of yourself.

His love doesn't run out. It doesn't get tired. It doesn't walk away when things get hard or when you feel you have disappointed Him again. It just keeps coming steady and strong and it is more than enough.

You may think God doesn't want to hear from you when you're empty and

discouraged. That is exactly backwards. That is when He is most ready to meet you.

You have been waiting for the wind to come back on its own. It won't. But God will provide it the moment you call on Him.

When everything else feels like dead calm on the water, God is the wind that gets you moving again.

Call on Him. He is already there, ready to fill your sails.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 36: The Whole World Is in His Hands

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Lynn Hartselle

"The earth belongs to the Lord. And so does everything in it. The world belongs to him. And so do all those who live in it. He set it firmly on the oceans. He made it secure on the waters."

Psalm 24:1–2 (NIrV)

I was recently blessed to go to Africa. I was amazed by God's creation. It felt wild, beautiful, and untouched.

While I was there, I kept singing, "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." When I was 13, I sang a short solo from that song in my church choir. Don't be impressed. It was my only solo!

Later, I looked up the song. I learned it is an African-American spiritual. It was first printed in 1927. Many singers have recorded it, including Mahalia Jackson, Marian Anderson, and Nina Simone.

That song stayed in my heart because I was seeing it with my own eyes. God really does hold the whole world. He sees people in places I may never see again. And He sees the person reading this right now.

I met a man in Africa named Paolo. He grew up in the Maasai tribe in Tanzania. The Maasai are beautiful people. Many are herders who care for cattle.

One day Paolo told me about his childhood. Many children in his area herded cattle their whole lives. But Paolo got to go to school. He told me Compassion International had sponsored him.

That got my attention. For several years, I have sponsored a child named Charles in Ghana. I send money each month. I also write letters during the year.

Paolo said Compassion gave him chances he would not have had otherwise. He was very thankful. His story helped me see something. What I do for Charles may matter more than I realize. My part feels small to me. But God can use small things in a big way. A small gift can become school. A letter can become hope. A person can feel seen because someone cared.

Compassion International also shares the good news of Jesus. They do this with words and with action.

Meeting Paolo showed me a picture of God's care. God cares for the whole world. He also lets us be part of His work.

Maybe you are holding this book because someone helped you with a car or a repair. That matters. It is not just metal and wheels. It may be one way God is reminding you, "I see you. I have not forgotten you."

Here in the United States, I can easily forget how big the world is. I can forget how much God has given me. Paolo helped me see that.

I also saw places where I need to grow. I take so much for granted. I miss chances to help. I miss chances to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

But God can use me. God can use you too.

You may not have much money. That is okay. Love doesn't require money. A kind word can bless someone. A prayer can bless

someone. Time can bless someone. A helping hand can bless someone. Even a smile of connection can shift someone's day.

As Christians, we belong to God. He calls us to live in a way that honors Him.

"The God who chose you is holy. So you should be holy in all that you do."

1 Peter 1:15 (NIrV)

God will give us chances to serve others. We need to stay close to Him. We need to keep our hearts open.

My time with Paolo in Tanzania changed me. My letters to Charles in Ghana feel different now. I see them as one small way God can work through me.

God cares for people all over the world. He cares for people in Africa. He cares for

people in the United States. He cares for the person reading this right now.

God is so good. He truly has the whole world in His hands.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 37: Who Are You Trying to Impress

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

"If you are afraid of people, it will trap you. But if you trust in the Lord, he will keep you safe."

Proverbs 29:25 (NIrV)

When God is all I need, I do not have to live trying to impress people. But I still catch myself wanting people to notice me.

Not long ago, my wife and I were out on the water. It was a beautiful day. We were on a boat I had paid to use for the day. It was a very beautiful boat.

I saw some people on the dock looking our way. I started to lean over and say to my

wife, "Hey, look. Those people are checking out this boat."

But I stopped myself. I asked myself, "Why do I want to say that?"

If I am honest, it was not really about her. It was about me. I wanted to be noticed. I wanted to feel important. I wanted to feel good about myself.

So I did not say it.

That small moment showed me something. I wanted people to notice us. It was not really about the boat. It was about me wanting to feel important.

Here is what changes everything. When we know deep down that God is our Father, we do not need people to make us feel important. We are already His children. We are already forgiven. We belong to the

King. That means we are princes and princesses.

That does not make us better than other people. It means we do not have to feel less than them. We do not need a boat, a house, a car, nice clothes, likes on a post, or praise from people to prove we matter. God already says we matter.

The people we try to impress are not above us. They are people God loves too. Some of them may be hurting just like us. So instead of trying to impress them, we can love them.

How often do we do that?

We may not even know we are doing it. We may talk about something, post something, or bring something up because we want people to think well of us.

We want people to see us in a good way.

But what if we asked a better question?

Instead of asking, "How do I look?" we can ask, "Does this help people see God?"

Instead of asking, "What will people think of me?" we can ask, "Will this point people to Him?"

God made us for a reason. He did not make us to impress people. He made us to point people to Him.

He wants people to see His goodness. He wants people to see His love. He wants people to know He wants a real relationship with them.

When we live that way, something good happens. We stop worrying so much about how we look.

A lot of our worry comes from trying too hard to look good to others. We wonder, "Did I say that right? What do they think of me? Am I enough?"

But when we care more about showing God's love, that heavy weight starts to lift. The pressure is not all on us anymore.

Try it today. Before you speak, post, or do something, ask one simple question:

Is this to make me look good, or to help people see God?

You do not have to be perfect at it. You just have to start asking.

God does not need you to show off. He wants His love to show through you.

Even in small moments, even in normal talks, you can point people to Him. That is what you were made to do.

A Prayer for Today

Lord, catch me today in the small moments when I want people to praise me. Help me look to You for the love only You can give. Help my words and actions point people to You and Your love. Amen.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 38: You Have a True Friend

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

Have you ever felt alone in a room full of people?

Maybe you felt like no one saw you.

Maybe it seemed like everyone else had a place to belong, but you felt left out.

Maybe life has hurt you so much that you stopped hoping someone would show up.

God Sees You

King David wrote songs to God. Some days David was afraid. Some days he felt alone. Some days he was tired.

But David learned that God saw him. God knew him. David wrote this:

"Lord, you have seen what is in my heart.
You know all about me.
You know when I sit down and when I get up.
You know what I'm thinking even though you are far away.
You know when I go out to work and when I come back home.
You know exactly how I live."

Psalm 139:1-3 (NIrV)

God sees you too.

He knows your name. He knows your story. He knows what has hurt you. He knows what you are carrying today.

You have never been hidden from God.

God Is Not Mad at You

Some people think God is always mad. They think He is waiting to catch them doing wrong.

But that is not God's heart.

God does care about sin. Sin hurts us and hurts other people. But God sent Jesus because He loves us and wants to save us.

Listen to what the Bible says:

"Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins."
1 John 4:10 (NIrV)

God loves you first. He does not wait for you to clean yourself up. He sent Jesus because He wanted to bring you home.

God takes joy in His people.

God loves the real you. He loves you today. He also wants to help you become more like Jesus.

God Comes Close

When life gets hard, people around us do not always know what to say. Some people step back. Some people leave us feeling alone.

But God comes close.

The Lord is close to those whose hearts have been broken.
He saves those whose spirits have been crushed.

Psalm 34:18 (NIrV)

When your heart hurts, God is near.

You may not feel Him. You may not know what to say. But He is still close.

Jesus Calls You Friend

One night Jesus talked with His friends. He told them something very special.

"I do not call you slaves anymore. Slaves do not know their master's business. Instead, I have called you friends. I have told you everything I learned from my Father."

John 15:15 (NIrV)

Jesus said this to the people who loved Him and trusted Him. He wanted them to know they were His friends.

You can be His friend too. You can talk to Jesus. You can trust Him. You can tell Him the truth.

He is not just working on you like a project.

He loves you.

He wants real friendship with you.

Here is the truth: you were not made to live alone.

You have a true Friend who will never leave you!

God is your true Friend: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 39: Laugh With God

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

> *"A cheerful heart makes you healthy. But a broken spirit dries you up."*
> *Proverbs 17:22 (NIrV)*

I grew up in a house full of dry humor. My mom had it, my dad had it, and it rubbed off on me. My wife, Lynn, does not share this. When I use dry humor with someone in public — someone who doesn't know me — Lynn feels the need to step in and let them know I'm joking. She is terrified that someone will take my dry humor seriously and be offended.

When we were dating, she thought I was funny. Lynn doesn't laugh at my humor

much these days. So I've found another audience: God.

I joke with God. I talk to Him like I'd talk to a friend sitting in the room with me. Maybe I'm struggling to get a jar open and I say, "You know, you could help me with this, but you never do." It's not a real complaint. It's just how I talk to Him. I share my day with Him, including the ridiculous parts. And it's one of my favorite things about my relationship with God.

Some people might wonder if that's okay. I think the answer is in the Bible itself.

In the book of Genesis, God told a man named Abraham and his wife, Sarah, that they were going to have a baby. The problem was they were both very old. Sarah was ninety years old. When she heard the news, she laughed. Not a polite chuckle. She

laughed because it seemed completely impossible. And here's the part I love: when the baby was born, God told them to name him Isaac. In Hebrew, Isaac means "he laughs."

God named a child after a laugh. Think about that. He didn't correct Sarah for laughing. He didn't tell her to be more serious. He made the laugh part of the story forever.

> *"Sarah said, 'God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.'"*
> *Genesis 21:6*

God made laughter. He gave it to us. It makes sense that He would appreciate it when we bring it to Him instead of leaving it at the door.

The Bible also says there is a time to laugh:

"There is a time to weep.
And there's a time to laugh.
There is a time to be sad.
And there's a time to dance."

Ecclesiastes 3:4 (NIrV)

I think a lot of people treat God like a formal relationship — like you must have something serious to say before you can talk to Him. You bring Him your problems, your requests, your thanks. And those things matter. But He's also your Father. You can share the funny stuff too. The small stuff. The jar you can't open. The bad day that turned ridiculous. The thing that made you laugh that you just want to tell somebody about.

When I joke with God, something good happens. It reminds me God is actually there. It reminds me that my relationship with Him is real and not just something I pull out when things go wrong. He's not just the God I go to in a crisis. He's the one I talk to all day.

So go ahead. Talk to God. Tell Him the hard things. Tell Him the funny things too. And when life gives you a reason to laugh, don't leave God out of it. Laugh with Him.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 40: Free Indeed

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

I spent decades struggling with the addictions I have talked about earlier in this book. I am not proud of those things, but I do not want to hide from the truth either. They had a strong hold on me. I tried many times to stop. I prayed many nights for God to take them away. But for a long time, I could not get free on my own.

Here's the thing that makes it harder to understand: I had believed in Jesus since college. I wasn't an atheist. I wasn't someone who had never heard the gospel. I knew the story. I just never fully surrendered myself completely to it.

There's a difference between knowing about Jesus and actually putting your full weight down on Him. You can believe a bridge is there, but if you choose to swim across the river anyway, you must not have much faith in the bridge. That was me.

Jesus said it plainly: "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin." I can't tell you what it's like to be enslaved the way so many people's ancestors were because that is a suffering I have never known. But I can tell you what it felt like to be a slave to my own sin. You can want to be free with everything in you, and still not be able to walk out the door.

What was holding me back? Deep down, I didn't believe God really wanted a relationship with me anymore. Not after everything I had done. I had known about Jesus for decades and I had kept right on

failing. The same addictions, over and over. And somewhere along the way I started to believe that God was exhausted with me. That He had heard my prayers enough times and seen me fall enough times that He had just... given up. I thought maybe there was a limit to how many times you could come back and that I had used mine up.

But later in life, something changed. Everything I had believed in my head, everything I had been reading all those years — I finally embraced it as true. All of it. I stopped holding back. I decided to trust Him. I put my full faith in God and surrendered completely.

And the freedom that came was like nothing I had ever felt.

God's love doesn't run out — even when we keep going back to the things we said we'd

never do again. And here's what I've learned: we can keep going back to God too. But something is different now. We don't go back as a shamed person cowering before a judge. We go back as a child of God — with boldness. That's why Jesus died. Not so we could keep sinning freely, but so that when we stumble, we don't have to hide from God in shame. We can walk right to Him and say, "Father, I did it again. Help me." And He will. As we grow closer to Him, He shows us what needs to change and what to let go of. He helps us see more clearly what honors Him and what doesn't. That's not condemnation — that's a Father raising His child.

Since that day, God has changed me in ways I could have never imagined on my own. When I look back at the man I used to be, I

honestly can't relate to him anymore. The things that used to own me don't own me now. My life is spent in relationship with God.

Now when I stumble, I go to Him with boldness. The Bible says we can approach the throne of God with confidence — and I do. I say, "God, I struggled. Please help me." And He does. Every time.

I am free of the things that used to hold me. I believe that will continue to be true as long as I stay in relationship with the Father, with Jesus, and with the Holy Spirit who leads me every single day.

If that's not what you have yet, it's what's waiting for you. The Son can set you free. And when He does, you will be free indeed.

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

John 8:36

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 41: The God Who Sees Me

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Lynn Hartselle

Do you ever feel disappointed, depressed and so alone? There have been many times in my life when I have felt these emotions. It's easy to get into a downward spiral when life seems to be so heavy. It's during these times when it's even harder to reach out to someone. Sometimes it can feel like God is absent too! When we feel at our worst, it's difficult to feel seen or noticed.

I'm sure that is how Hagar in the Old Testament of the Bible felt when she was rejected and unloved by the people around her. Hagar was Egyptian and a personal servant of Sarah, wife of Abraham. God had

promised that a child would be born to Abraham and Sarah, but Sarah had been unable to conceive.

Sarah came up with a plan for Abraham to have a child through Hagar. What happened to Hagar was not her choice. She was used, exploited, and treated as if she did not matter. She went from being a servant to being regarded as less than nothing. The cruelty was so intense that Hagar ran away, but an angel of the LORD came to her in the desert.

> *"The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert.*
>
> *'Hagar, slave of Sarah, where have you come from, and where are you going?'*
>
> *'I'm running away from my mistress Sarah,' she answered.*

'Go back to your mistress and submit to her.

I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count.'"

Genesis 16:7-10

God sending Hagar back is hard to understand. I know there are times when I am just not going to understand why God allows certain things. But I have learned that I can trust Him even when I don't understand Him. He sees the beginning and the end, while we only see right now.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,

neither are your ways my ways,"

declares the LORD.

Isaiah 55:8

When Hagar responds, she does not speak as if this is only an angel. She seems to

know that God Himself has seen her. Usually in the Bible, God tells people His names. But here, something different happens.

This is the first time in all of Scripture that an angel of the Lord came to someone. And God chose to show up for a woman who had nothing and no one.

After the encounter, she gave God a name — El Roi. In Hebrew, that means "the God who sees me." Hagar was the first person in all of the Bible to give God a name. And the name she chose was not "God Almighty" or "God the Powerful." It was simply "He sees me".

> *"She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: 'You are the God who sees me,' for she said, 'I have now seen the One who sees me.'"*

Genesis 16:13

God saw Hagar in her worst moment. He sees you in yours. He knows your sorrows. He knows your struggles. He knows the things you have never told another person. And He has never once looked away.

You are not forgotten. You are not invisible. You are seen by the God who has always been watching over you.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 42: Be Still

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

"Be still, and know that I am God."
Psalm 46:10

You may have seen those words on a wall or a card. But I want you to see where God said them. The place He said them from matters a lot.

Psalm 46 was written in the middle of war and fear. People were fighting. The earth was shaking. Things were falling apart. And right there is when God speaks those words.

He is not saying this from a calm, quiet place. He is saying it right into the noise. Into the fear. "Stop. Be still. I am still God. Let that be enough."

That was hard to do back then. I think it may be harder to do today.

I grew up in the 1960s and 70s. We had four TV channels. And even those went off at night. The screen would go to colored vertical bars. The quiet came whether you wanted it or not.

Today you can watch movies and shows any time you want. The games on your phone are made to keep you playing. Social media never stops. Most people now spend more than seven hours a day looking at a screen.

Seven hours a day.

None of those things are bad. But I want to ask you something. When was the last time you sat with no screen, no phone, no noise, and just let it be quiet?

God said to be still for a reason. He was telling us something about how He works.

In the Bible, Elijah was worn out and scared. He was hiding in a cave. God told him to stand on a mountain.

A strong wind came. Then an earthquake came. Then a fire came. But the Lord was not in those loud things.

Then the Bible says:

And after the fire there was only a gentle whisper.

1 Kings 19:12 (NIrV)

That matters. God could have shouted, but He chose to whisper. You cannot hear a whisper when your life is full of noise.

That made me think about something I heard recently. Before starting a new show,

someone said they ask God about it. They ask if they really have time for it. They ask if it will take time away from Him.

That question hit me hard.

A show is not always wrong. A game is not always wrong. Social media is not always wrong. Work is not wrong either. But if those things take all our time, what is left for God? What is left for the people He wants us to love?

The Bible says God has trusted us with a message:

"God has trusted us with the message that people may be brought back to him."

2 Corinthians 5:19 (NIrV)

That means we are not saved just so that we can sit still forever. We are saved so that we

can know God, love God, and help other people come back to Him too.

So being still is not the end. It is the start.

We get quiet so we can hear God. Then we go love people. We call someone. We pray for someone. We encourage someone. We tell someone that Jesus forgives sins. We tell them God wants a real relationship with them.

Start small. Five minutes. Put the phone down. Turn off the TV. Sit down and say, "God, I am listening. Who do You want me to love today?"

Then listen.

And when He shows you someone, do not keep it to yourself. Go love them. Go help them. Go tell them the good news.

Be still. He is God. And He wants to speak through people like us.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 43: Let God Take It

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

There's a song I heard during one of the hardest stretches of my life. Not hard like poverty or sickness. It was the kind of hard that comes from loving someone so much that you keep trying to fix things that are not yours to fix.

One of our grown children came to live with us for a time. They were in their late twenties, in a hard in-between season, and my wife and I were trying to figure out how to help without making things worse.

I wanted to hold them accountable, because that's what a good father does, right? But I also loved them. And that tension was tearing me up. It was putting strain

between them and me. It was putting strain between my wife and me. I felt like I was failing on every side.

Then I heard this song. The title is "Carry the World" by Meredith Andrews. And there's a line about letting God carry what we were never meant to hold.

I played the song several times and kept thinking about that truth.

It hit me: I had been carrying something God never asked me to carry. My child was a grownup and had their own relationship with God. They weren't mine to fix. They weren't mine to manage. They were His. And He was more than capable of leading them where they needed to go.

So I let go. I didn't stop loving them. I didn't stop being their dad. But I stopped trying to

be their God. I handed them over — not in frustration, not in giving up — but in genuine trust. I prayed, "Lord, they're Yours. You carry them."

And something remarkable happened. The conflict settled. My relationship with my child got better. In time, God brought the right person into their life. They got married. They moved out. They found their footing — not because I finally figured out the right thing to say or do, but because God was working in them all along, and I finally got out of the way long enough to let Him.

I don't know what you're carrying right now. Maybe it's a person — a child, a parent, a friend — someone you love so much that it hurts to watch them struggle. Maybe you've been telling yourself that if

you just try harder, push harder, pray harder, they'll turn around.

Can I tell you something? There are some things you were never meant to hold.

God isn't asking you to carry the world. He's asking you to trust the One who already does. That was the truth I needed: I cannot carry the world, but God can.

"Turn all your worries over to him. He cares about you."

1 Peter 5:7 (NIrV)

If you are carrying something God never asked you to carry, you can give it to Him today. You can still love the person. You can still pray. You can still be there. But you do not have to be God. Let Him carry what you cannot.

With Love,

Message 44: He Goes Before You

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

"The Lord himself will go ahead of you. He will be with you. He will never leave you. He'll never desert you. So don't be afraid. Don't lose hope."

Deuteronomy 31:8 (NIrV)

God first said these words to Joshua. Joshua had a big job. He had to lead God's people. The road would not be easy. But God told Joshua he would not walk alone.

Have you ever had a day go all wrong?

I have.

One time I was trying to make my wife's birthday especially great. I meant well, but the night did not go well.

Lynn was hurt. I felt sad. I sat by myself and thought, "I can't do anything right."

In that moment, it was hard to turn to God.

I could not see Him sitting by me. He did not call my phone. But God does not have to be seen to be near.

God gives us a promise. He goes before us. He stays with us.

That does not mean troubles will not come. Hard days do come. People get hurt. Plans fail. We make mistakes. We feel alone.

But God is not far away.

The Bible tells us about David. David was a shepherd boy. Later he became king. But his life was not easy. Some people tried to kill him. Some days he had to hide. David knew what it felt like to be alone.

But David learned this:

"How can I get away from your Spirit? Where can I go to escape from you? If I go up to the heavens, you are there. If I lie down in the deepest parts of the earth, you are also there."

Psalm 139:7-8 (NIrV)

David was saying, "There is no place where God is not with me."

Even the lowest place is not too low for God.

Jesus said the same thing to His friends. Before He went back to heaven, He said:

"And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end."

Matthew 28:20 (NIrV)

Always.

Not only on good days.

Not only when we get it right.

Always.

When I sit alone and feel like I failed, God is there.

When I am scared, God is there.

When I do not know what to do next, God is there.

Sometimes I forget. I try to carry my fear by myself. I stay sad longer than I need to.

But when I stop and pray, I remember the truth.

God has already gone before me.

He is with me right now.

He will not leave me.

That truth gives my heart peace.

You may feel alone today. You may feel like no one sees you. You may feel like you messed up too much.

But God sees you. God loves you. God is near.

You are not walking into tomorrow by yourself.

God is already there.

And He will walk with you every step of the way.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 45: Encourage Someone Else

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

> *"So encourage one another with the hope you have. Build each other up. In fact, that's what you are doing."*
> *1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIrV)*

Before I can talk about encouraging others, I need to be honest about why I did not always live that way.

I've mentioned before that I did not grow up feeling good about myself. I carried low self-worth and childhood pain into my adult life and into my marriage. My wife, Lynn, should not have had to carry the weight of that with me, but she often did. I struggled with drinking, pornography,

anger, and selfish actions. I am not proud of any of that, but I do not want to pretend it was not real. I thought marriage might fix what was broken in me. It did not. I learned that you cannot bring brokenness into a new part of your life and expect it to disappear on its own.

I want to be honest about something else. Even after I truly came to know God, those struggles did not disappear overnight. Healing has been slow, but God has kept helping me. That is not failure. That is part of being human and learning to keep walking with Him.

Here is what I noticed. When I was stuck in my own sin and shame, I mostly thought about myself. People around me could become part of what I wanted or they could feel like they were in my way. That is hard

to admit, but it is true. I was not stopping to think about their hurt, their fears, or their need for love. I was too focused on myself and my own pain.

But something began to change as I spent real time with God. I read about how much He loves people. All people. Not just people who look like they have life together. I began to see the people around me in a new way. They were not simply people in my day. They were souls God loves. Some of them may not even know that yet. Some of them may need one kind word today.

That is why this verse matters so much to me:

> *"Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen."*

Ephesians 4:29 (NIrV)

That is what God has been teaching me. Sin pulls us inward in contraction and shame. God pulls us outward into deeper, loving connection with Him and others. When shame keeps us hiding, we are less likely to notice the people around us. We may miss the person who looks tired. We may miss the person who needs someone to ask, "Are you okay?" We may miss a chance to show God's love.

But when I am close to God, I want people to have what I have. I do not have to force that feeling. It grows as I spend time with Him. His love is a well that never runs dry.

I have also learned this: when I encourage someone else, it helps me too. I do not know why it works that way, but it does. When you say something that helps

another person, you often walk away with more joy too.

So I am not going to say, "Just stop sinning and go encourage people." That is not how change usually works. What I can say is this: stay close to God. The closer you get to Him, the more you will want to love people. The sin in your life starts to lose its power because you begin to see what it has been taking from you. It has been stealing the joy of caring about others. And that joy is real.

Ask God to show you one person you can encourage today. It may be a text. It may be a kind word. It may be a prayer. Then take that small step. You may be surprised how God uses it to help them and how He uses it to change your own heart too.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 46: We've Been Here Before

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

Near the beginning of the Bible, in Genesis chapter eleven, there is a story about the Tower of Babel. It doesn't take long to read, but I've never forgotten it.

After a great flood, the people of the earth started over. They learned to build things and got very good at it. Then one day they decided to build a tower so tall it would reach the heavens. And here's the part that matters — it wasn't about needing shelter. Listen to what they actually said.

"Then they said, 'Come, let us build a city for ourselves. Let's build a tower that reaches to the heavens. Then we'll make a name for ourselves.

If we don't, we'll be scattered over the whole earth.'"
Genesis 11:4 (NIrV)

That's the whole thing right there. Not the bricks. Not the tower. The pride. The deep hunger to feel like you matter. To walk into a room and belong there. To have people look at you and know your name.

I understand that hunger better than I wish I did.

I grew up feeling like I wasn't as good as other people. That feeling followed me everywhere.

So I did what a lot of people do — I worked. I pushed. I sold. I built a company from nothing and drove it hard for years. And when people started to notice, when the compliments came and the money

followed, something in me relaxed for the first time.

I felt like I had finally earned the right to walk into the country club and belong there. Like I had built my tower and reached the top.

Then I sold my company for more money than I ever dreamed I would see in my lifetime.

And I want to be honest with you, because I think honesty is what this book is supposed to be about. After the sale, after the congratulations died down and everybody went back to their lives, I fell into a darkness I was not prepared for. I felt a loneliness I could not explain.

More than a few times, I thought to myself, "I wish I wasn't here anymore." I never

would have acted on that. My father took his own life. My grandfather took his own life. I had promised myself I would never go down that road. But the feeling was real, and it scared me.

If you have ever felt that kind of darkness, I want you to know you are not alone, and your life matters deeply to God.

I had built everything the world told me to build, and I was still empty.

The tower was finished. And there was nothing up there.

What changed everything wasn't another accomplishment. It wasn't more money or more success or more people telling me I'd done well. What changed everything was the day I realized I could have a real relationship with God. Not religion. Not

rules. A relationship where I talk to Him and He actually listens, where I bring Him my fears and my failures and He doesn't turn away, where I started to see Him answer prayers in ways I couldn't explain.

And something happened that no amount of money ever did for me. I started to feel like I belonged. Not because of what I'd built. Not because of what I owned. But because I am a child of God. And that is a belonging nobody can ever take away from you.

I can walk into any room now and feel like I belong there. Not because of my net worth, but because of whose I am.

And here's what makes it even better. It doesn't end when this life does. I get to look forward to spending eternity with Him.

That's not a tower that falls, but something that lasts forever.

If you've been building something trying to feel like you matter — I'm not here to judge you. I built one too. And from someone who built a pretty high tower, I can tell you there's nothing up there. The thing you're really looking for isn't up there. It never was. God has been near the whole time, waiting for you to turn around and ask Him.

And here's the best news I know. What you're looking for has a name. It's a relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ. Not someday. Right now. Jesus said it Himself the night before He died, praying for every person who would ever believe in Him — including you.

"And what is eternal life? It is knowing you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."
John 17:3 (NIrV)

Eternal life isn't just something that starts when you die. It starts the moment you come to know Him. That's the belonging the tower could never give you. That's what I found when I finally stopped building and started looking up.

Don't wait until the tower falls. Look up now.

God is not waiting for you at the top of something you build. He is already near. You do not have to make a name for yourself to matter. You already matter to Him.

The world may tell you to build higher. Jesus invites you to come closer. And when you do, you will find the belonging your heart has been looking for all along.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 47: Before You Speak

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

Have you ever said something and wished you could take the words back?

I have. Many times.

Once words leave our mouth, we cannot put them back. The person who heard them may remember them for a long time. That is why God cares so much about our words.

I have mentioned in this book that I wanted to be seen and heard as a kid. One way that showed up in me was by talking "too much". Sometimes people thought I was funny, and I liked that. It made me feel noticed. It fed my ego.

But God has been teaching me that words are powerful. They can help someone or hurt someone. They can build someone up or tear someone down.

The Bible gives us a clear warning about listening before we talk:

"To answer before listening is foolish and shameful."

Proverbs 18:13 (NIrV)

That verse gets my attention. It tells me I do not need to answer fast. I need to listen first. I need to care enough to hear what the other person is really saying.

Proverbs also gives us a warning about using too many words:

"When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise."

Proverbs 10:19 (NIV)

That one speaks to me too. For many years, the more I talked, the more trouble my words caused. I said things I should not have said. I made jokes at the wrong time, just trying to make people laugh, without thinking about who might be hurt by what I said. I hate that now, but it's true. I cared too much about getting attention and not enough about the people I was affecting. Once those words were out, I could not take them back.

Later in life, after I came to know God as my Father in a deeper way, I began to see my words differently. I prayed for Him to help me talk less, listen more, and care more about other people and what they are saying.

God answered those prayers. Not all at once. But little by little, He helped me change. Anyone who knows me well will tell you I talk considerably less than I used to talk. I also try to listen more than I ever have in my life.

And I learned something important.

It is okay to be quiet.

It is okay to listen.

It is okay not to have something to say every time.

James tells us what the better way looks like:

"My dear brothers and sisters, pay attention to what I say. Everyone should be quick to listen. But they should be slow to speak. They should be slow to get angry."

James 1:19 (NIrV)

Now I try to pause before I speak. I try to ask myself simple questions.

Will this help someone?

Will this hurt someone?

Is this kind?

Is this true?

Does this need to be said right now?

Ephesians tells us what kind of words should come out of our mouths:

"Don't let any evil talk come out of your mouths. Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen."

Ephesians 4:29 (NIrV)

That is the kind of speech I want. I want to say things that lift people up. I want my words to help someone feel seen, loved, and encouraged.

I have also learned that when I encourage other people, I always feel encouraged too. That is not why we should do it. But God made life in a beautiful way. When we build others up, something good happens in us too.

Maybe your mouth has gotten you into trouble too. Maybe you talk when you are nervous, thinking you need to prove something. Maybe you joke when you feel uncomfortable. Maybe you speak before you think.

God can help you. You can ask Him to help you listen first and speak with love.

You can pray something simple:

God, help me listen before I speak. Help me know when to talk and when to be quiet. Help my words build people up. Help my tongue bring healing. Amen.

Your words matter. Before you speak, ask God for help. Listen first. Think first. Love first. Then speak. God can change your heart, and when He changes your heart, He can change your words too. With His help, your words can bring life.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 48: God Made Them Too

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

I grew up in a house with a lot of problems. But I will give my parents credit for one thing. They taught me to never look down on anybody because of the color of their skin or where they came from. I did not know it at the time, but that was a gift. A real one.

Not everybody gets that gift. Some people grow up being taught that certain people do not count as much. They may hear it at home. They may hear it from friends. They may pick it up from the world around them.

And somehow, some of those same people carrying deep prejudices can sit in church

every Sunday, thinking they are right with God.

Here is what I want to share about that, as gently as I can. The Bible does not leave much room here.

John was one of Jesus' closest friends. He wrote plainly about this. Listen to what he said:

"Suppose someone claims to love God but hates a brother or sister. Then they are a liar. They don't love their brother or sister, whom they have seen. So they can't love God, whom they haven't seen."
1 John 4:20 (NIrV)

That is strong language. John is saying we cannot claim to love God while we refuse to love the people God made. We cannot say we love the God we cannot see while

harboring hatred for the person standing right in front of us.

That does not mean loving people is always easy. It does not mean we agree with everything people do or say. But it does mean we cannot write people off as if they do not matter.

Jesus said the same thing to His followers:

"I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you. If you love one another, everyone will know you are my disciples."
John 13:34–35 (NIrV)

Jesus did not say people would know His followers by how often they went to church. He did not say they would know us by how loudly we praised Him on Sunday morning. He said they would know us by our love.

That includes the neighbor who does not look like us. The person at the store who speaks with an accent. The man down the street who votes differently than we do. The person we might be tempted to avoid or simply do not understand.

Love is not just a feeling that comes and goes. Jesus showed love to people whom many religious leaders ignored. He loved the sick. He loved the poor. He loved the outcast. He loved the foreigner. He crossed the lines people had drawn.

That is what real love looks like.

When I finally understood how much God loves me, I started to see other people differently. God did not love me because I earned it. He did not love me because I was good enough. He loved me because that is who He is.

If God loves me that way, and if God loves them that way too, then who am I to write anybody off?

"Don't do anything only to get ahead. Don't do it because you are proud. Instead, be humble. Value others more than yourselves."
Philippians 2:3 (NIrV)

Humility is the door. Not fake humility. Real humility. The kind that lets go of the need to be better than somebody else.

Real humility looks at another human being and says, "God made that person. God loves that person. That is enough for me."

The closer I have gotten to God, the less I need to rank people. The less I need to be above anybody. And honestly, that has been one of the most freeing things about this journey. I am not carrying that pressure or

weight or measuring myself or others anymore.

Whoever you are, whatever you have believed, whatever you have held onto about certain kinds of people, I am not here to judge you. I have my own stuff to deal with.

But I would ask you to sit with what John wrote. Ask God to show you if there is any hate, pride, fear, or judgment hiding in your heart. Then ask Him to help you love people the way Jesus loves them.

Because the road to God does not run through the path of looking better than someone else.

It runs through love.

"We love because he loved us first."
1 John 4:19 (NIrV)

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Message 49: Remember What God Has Done

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Kobe Sweatt

As I have read through the Bible this year, one word has stayed with me: monument.

A monument is simply a reminder. It could be a stone, a building, or a special place that helps us remember something important. Memories fade, but reminders help us hold onto what matters most. The Bible is full of monuments. Again and again, God's people built them to remember what He had done.

I think God knows how easy it is for us to forget His love and faithfulness. We can see Him working in our lives one day and still worry the next. That is why He gives us

reminders, to help us remember that He is always with us.

Monuments do not just help us look back. They give us hope to keep moving forward because the God who was faithful then is still faithful today.

Jacob's Monument

One of my favorite examples is Jacob. In Genesis 28, Jacob was running away from home. He did not know what the future held. I am sure he felt afraid, alone, and uncertain. But that is where God met him.

God told Jacob:

"I am with you. I will watch over you everywhere you go. And I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Genesis 28:15 (NIrV)

The next morning, Jacob took the stone he had slept on and stood it up as a monument. He named that place Bethel, which means "house of God." That stone reminded him that God's love reached him before his problems were fixed. God had not left him. God was leading him.

The Twelve Stones

Another story I love is found in Joshua chapter 4.

God stopped the Jordan River so the people of Israel could cross on dry ground. After everyone crossed safely, God told Joshua to have one man from each tribe carry a stone out of the river.

Those twelve stones were stacked together at Gilgal. One day their children would ask, "What do these stones mean?" Then the

parents could tell the story of God's faithfulness. Those stones were not just for the people who crossed the river. They were for the next generation. God does not just work in our lives for us. He works so His love can be seen by others too. Every answered prayer, every hard season He carries us through, and every blessing He gives becomes part of our story. Sometimes remembering is exactly what our hearts need.

David understood this when he wrote:

"Lord, I will remember what you did. Yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago."

Psalm 77:11 (NIrV)

The Greatest Monument

For me, the greatest monument is the cross.

The cross reminds us how much God loves us. It reminds us that Jesus gave His life so we could have hope, forgiveness, and new life.

"But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8 (NIrV)

Whenever I think about God's faithfulness, my mind always comes back to the cross. It is the greatest reminder that His love never changes.

A Personal Monument

One monument in my own life will always stay with me.

When I was in high school, one of my lifelong friends took his own life. It was one of the hardest seasons I have ever walked through.

Years later, on April 17, 2026, God brought a beautiful piece of that story full circle. Through Mechanics On A Mission, we were able to give my friend's car to a young woman who had grown up in foster care. She had faced many hard things, but she was trying to build a better future. Watching her receive those keys reminded me that God still brings hope in the middle of brokenness.

It did not erase the pain of losing my friend. But it reminded me that God's love is bigger than our pain. He can take what is broken and use it to bless someone else. That moment became another stone in my life, a monument I never want to forget.

"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. He appointed them to be saved in keeping with his purpose."

Romans 8:28 (NIrV)

That does not mean that everything that happens is good.

It means God is so loving and so faithful that He can bring good even from the hardest moments of our lives.

What Are Your Monuments?

So let me ask you:

What are the monuments in your life? What moments remind you that God has been with you? Write them down. Tell your children. Share them with your friends. Do not let yourself forget the ways God has loved and cared for you.

And one more question: Are you becoming a monument in someone else's life? When people spend time with you, do they see the love, grace, and hope of Jesus?

My prayer is that our lives become reminders of God's goodness, pointing people not to us, but to the God who has never stopped loving us.

Remember what God has done. Let it help you trust Him today.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family

Final Message: Your Journey Begins

Written by Mechanics On A Mission supporter, Larry Hartselle

This is the beginning of your journey, not the end.

Recently, I started thinking about what it means to stay close to Jesus, so I looked at what the Bible says. I want to share that with you in this message.

Jesus said,

"Remain in me, as I also remain in you."

John 15:4 (NIrV)

When I read that, I asked myself, "How do we stay close to Jesus?"

First, talk to Him. You do not need fancy words. Tell Him what you feel. Tell Him what you need. Thank Him. Ask Him for help.

Second, read His Word. The Bible helps you know what Jesus is like and what He says. When you read it, you learn to hear His voice more clearly.

Third, do what He says. When Jesus shows you something, obey Him. Even small steps matter.

Fourth, do not hide when you sin. Come back to Him quickly. Tell Him the truth. He is full of mercy.

Fifth, stay close to other people who love Jesus. We need people who will pray for us, encourage us, and help us keep going.

Before He returned to heaven, Jesus made this promise:

"But the Father will send the Friend in my name to help you. The Friend is the Holy Spirit. He will teach you all things. He will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 14:26 (NIrV)

The Holy Spirit helps you stay close to Jesus. He teaches you. He reminds you of what Jesus said. He comforts you and leads you.

Some days you will feel strong. Some days you will feel weak. Some days you will feel close to God. Some days you will not.

Do not give up.

If you wander, come back. If you fall, get up. If your heart feels dry, ask Jesus to draw you near again.

Staying close to Jesus does not mean being perfect. It means coming back to Him again and again.

This book has shared stories, verses, and encouragement, but the most important thing is simple: stay close to Jesus every day.

Talk to Him. Read His Word. Obey Him. Come back when you fail. Let the Holy Spirit help you.

One day, your faith will become sight. Until that day, remain in His love.

"May the grace shown by the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. May the love that God has given us be with you. And may the sharing of life brought about by the Holy Spirit be with you all."

2 Corinthians 13:14 (NIrV)

May God richly bless you as you walk with Him until the day you see Him face to face.

If you have questions after reading this Book of Hope, please email bookofhope@mechanicsonamission.com. We will do our best to get back with you.

With Love,

The Mechanics On A Mission Family