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A Bastard's Refuge II catapults you to a place where the fearful dare not tread; taking you on a riveting journey as it exposes "Pulpit Venom." What is a person to do when he or she finds him or herself under the leadership of a "Ravenous Wolf" instead of a loving shepherd? Unlike the others that merely dance around the issues, this book goes there and blows the wolves right out of the water.

In true “Firebrand” style, Prophetess J. Godley-Ramos puts it down way hard - so get ready. You will either say “AMEN!” or “OUCH!” The “Bootleg Shepherds”, the “Prophet Wannabe”, the “Wolf Clerics” and sadly to say, even the poor “Slumbering Sheep” are in for a rude awakening. **“ABR II”** is a “Crooked” pastor's worse nightmare, but it is the answer to prayer for the countless souls that have been wounded by them. For far too long the “Hirelings” have been in the forefront fleecing the sheep.

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The church may not be ready for this one, because things will never be the same again. This time “Dagon shall fall down!”

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Published by: Gutter to Grace to Glory Ministries Int. Inc.

Pages: 432

Genre: Non-fiction

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Please enjoy the following excerpt from **“A Bastard’s Refuge II.”**

A Bastard's Refuge II
Rejected by Man, but
Adopted by God

J. Godley-Ramos



A Gutter to Grace to Glory Communication

*"On authentic **rose** gracefully conquers ugly thorns."*

A Bastard's Refuge II *Rejected by Man, but* *Adopted by God*

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Published and sold in the United States by
Gutter to Grace to Glory Ministries Int. Inc.
Newark, New Jersey 07106
P.O. Box 6377

www.GuttertoGracetoglor.org

Library of Congress Control Number: 2007906363
ISBN 978-0-6151-5836-5

All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version of The Bible unless otherwise specified. Words and capitalization are written exactly as they appear in The Holy Scripture.

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Part 2 – Controversy just ahead. Stay focused & alert!

**Warning: "Fire" will fall! Prepare for a "Holy Encounter."
Enter – if you dare!*

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Oops, Wrong Fold

Struggling to fit in has been something with which I have contended, since my earliest existence. I would even have to fight before legally making it into the earth realm. Looking back, it seems as though a force, sent directly from hell, has *always been intent on trying to make me its causality – in one way or another*. For even the drawing of my very first “post womb” breath, would not be possible, without me first having to engage in serious warfare. It seems as though, I was expected to “*first*” overcome [in the spirit], the very thing that threatened to snuff out my voice (before it would ever be heard) in the natural. I literally had to fight, for the right to exist on this realm. This same thing, [which would follow me for much of my life], would eventually try to keep me from fulfilling the will of God. It was as though I would have to conquer it, *before it conquered me, or before I actually faced it in the natural*. *Very strange the business of spiritual warfare – but it is ever so real!* “God must have something awfully big for me to do, cause the devil sure is trying hard to stop me”, I would often think and say as I grew up.

Little did I realize, that many years later, while on the verge of tears, I would find myself once more uttering the very words that seemed to become my mantra. “God must have something awfully big for me to do, because the devil sure is trying hard to stop me”, I blurted out in-between sobs, as I spoke to a friend. As you already know, sometimes God may be trying to get our attention. However, dear friends you must realize and always remember that your adversary rarely takes a break – if indeed he takes one at all! It is his mission to do everything possible to keep us from fulfilling our purpose and to prevent us from becoming all that we have been created to be. “Damn it if something hasn’t always tried to block my path.” So as it is in the natural, so is it also in the spirit. Brothers and sisters you have got to fight just to be free! Moreover, you may have to fight, in order to live! My mom has told me the story, of how she encountered some major complications during childbirth. Stricken with a life-threatening illness, the doctors *had* no choice but to literally ask my father to choose which of us, they should ‘try’ to save.

Would it be mom or me? According to the physicians, neither of us had but a slim chance of making it through the birthing process alive. My mother said the doctors asked my biological father, (now deceased) which of us should be saved, *if it were even possible to save one at all*. Of course, my dad chose my mother. I mean after all, I cannot really blame him because I had not even been born yet, but my mother, well she was already here. Like most couples, I suppose he figured that they could always try again. Pop, I “ain’t” mad at you, and I do understand. If I were married, I pray that my husband would make the same decision. Not that I would *want* my unborn child to die, but honestly, most of us would probably hope that our spouse would also opt to try again.

In those days, mom said that she prayed a lot. At that time, “prayer cloths” were all the rage throughout Christendom. Mom often tuned in to people like Reverend Ike and Oral Roberts, who were both very popular in her day. I do in fact recall seeing the “red” prayer cloths that she obtained from one of them. Anyway, she said that she prayed and held on to her prayer cloth as a “point of contact.” While I am on this subject, please allow me to say a few brief words about the whole “point of contact” element.

We know that “the cloth” in and of itself is powerless, as it is only a piece of material. It is the power of The Living God, however, that provides the healing, but somehow it seems to help, if we have something tangible upon which to cling. From the body of The Apostle Paul, the sick were brought handkerchiefs or aprons. In turn, sickness departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. God wrought this great miracle through His manservant. God used the Apostle Paul, but – “the virtue” came from above. Read all about it in – Acts 19:11-12. I feel the need to clarify this for people who are younger in the faith or in age, as well as for the many who have been taught or who have “assumed incorrectly.” Some may believe (for whatever reason), that the actual healing comes from an inanimate object or from a man. Because there are so many crazy things being taught out there, I felt compelled to make it plain.

As mom prayed to The Lord, she promised Him that if He would bring her *and* her baby through the ordeal alive, she would serve Him for life, and would bring her child up in the things of The Lord, to the best of her ability. Well, as you can see dear reader, I at least managed to survive the life-threatening ordeal; and am alive and well. I am here and able to tell my own story. Unfortunately, the outcome for my mother was not quite as successful. She may have gotten the worst part of the deal; for you see she has had the task of having to listen to my big mouth and to put up with all of my “talking and dreaming” for all of these years (smile).

Got ya! Besides her bouts with “Arthritis”, mom is doing just fine.

Well, since The Lord did not permit satan to kill me at birth, he would continue to harass me throughout much of my life. The one thing besides Jesus that I use to desire was to be liked by people. I wanted lots friends. You know, like many of us, we want to be loved and to be well spoken of. Although I have never relentlessly pursued the spotlight or endeavored to become overwhelmingly popular, I did however, *want* to fit in or to at least be an integral ‘functioning’ part of something significant. I also wanted to do my part in working for the cause of Christ. I wanted my life to count for *something*. I wanted it to have meaning and purpose. While I did have *a few* friends, still much more of my younger life was subjected to rejection and pain – for quite early in my life, the opinions of people had managed to oppress me – just like satan had always planned it.

Growing up, I constantly seemed to attract opposition and/or unwanted attention. For some reason I simply did not fit and people never seemed to let me forget that very painful fact. Don’t get me wrong, no matter who we are, sometimes we will encounter people who will not like us, *for whatever reason*. At times, even our very presence is enough to irritate them. The worse part about not being liked is that often we do not understand why we are hated so much. This can be extremely devastating, if fitting in and forming friendships rank high on our list.

In fact, to this very day, [for the most part], I still do not fit. The difference now though is; I am ok with it. I have since learned to embrace my calling as well as my differences, and am quite comfortable with being me. To be down right blunt about it – I no longer care about fitting in, because I’ve got to be who I am and not a carbon copy of what others view as being acceptable. It took a very long time, but finally I realized, that I had never fit in, because frankly, I wasn’t supposed to. God had designed me this way from the beginning. I have been born to blaze a trail and not to follow in the footsteps of the majority. For my differences, today I can now say - Thank You Lord!

For those of you, who now walk this same path, I want you to know that I realize how difficult it can be, to feel displaced. But it is even more difficult to feel that way, in an organization that is supposed to be an earthly representation of The Lord’s House. I mean, it is bad enough when you are not welcomed or respected in other areas – but in the church too? My longing to belong only pushed me deeper into the arms of my Heavenly Father. In the midst of my pain, is where The Lord began to share with me, how He also had been a reject.

Sometimes we may read something, or simply skim over it, but about nine years ago, The Lord began to burn this into my soul. He really comforted me, by explaining, in great detail, how He too had been rejected. He let me know that it was ok not to fit with people, so long as I fit with Him. This same precious pearl, I now hand to you. I urge you to strive to fit with Him – and not with them! We are told in The Book of Isaiah concerning The Lord Jesus that, “He hath no form or comeliness (beauty, grace or majesty), and when we shall see Him; there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” In every day language, the people of Jesus’ day considered Him to be “ugly” or “plain”; there was nothing at all about Him that would make you even want to look twice – he was ordinary (I’m sorry Jesus).

Perhaps the prophet was speaking prophetically, in that it would be the world's sins that The Saviour would later take upon Himself, which would indeed render Him unattractive and marred to the natural eye. He was destined to become a bloody mess, hanging on a rugged cross that should have instead held me (and you!) as its captive. He paid the price, which was legally ours to pay. With His skin ripped to shreds, and with The Red Blood streaming down, He hung there with the blackness of our wickedness upon His sinless righteousness. With this, I suppose that He had become very ugly indeed. He laid down His own life and allowed Himself to become an awful sight upon which to gaze because the destiny of a sinful world lay in the balance.

Again Jesus, I am so sorry for whatever part I have personally played in sentencing you to that cruel death, (God I am so sorry).

If this were not only the foreseeing of the prophet, but if indeed Jesus had been *physically* unattractive as well, then He too literally had no choice, but to understand exactly how it feels to be picked on because of some external flaw or feature. His experiencing of the world's cruelty would make Him an even more touchable Saviour and King. This is why I love Him so much. *He truly does understand me.* The Bible says of Jesus that, He "was despised and rejected." "He was a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief." He was an outcast; He was just like me! He knows what it feels like to possess great value and yet lack affirmation, opportunity and respect. He knows exactly how it is that we feel when we desire to fit or long to be accepted, but instead we are turned away.

The Word of God also tells me that my Saviour came to His own people and they received Him not (John 1:11). Even at His birth, The Messiah would have to settle for being born in a manger, used to house the animals. In Matthew 8:20 and Luke 9:58, Jesus Himself lets us know that, "Even the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but The Son of Man hath not where [has no where] to lay His head." He lets us know that if we follow Him, we *must* prepare for some discomfort along the way. Even He had been unwelcome on more occasions than imaginable. He *can* unequivocally identify with all who possess gifting and ability but are not able to utilize them in the places wherein they find themselves.

At times, The Lord Jesus could not even perform miracles in His own town because of the people's unbelief. They did not accept Him, nor had they any faith in Him. In fact, it was His own people that eventually voted to have Him crucified, for they believed not who He was. Imagine, He who had breathed life into creation, had been rejected and would be killed by them. The same people, into whose nostrils He had exhaled, [descendants of the first man Adam], were now using that very breath to scream for His crucifixion at Golgotha, [the place that we call Calvary] - Lord God!

From my earliest recollection of childhood memories and even to this very day, there has always been something inside of me, which causes me to identify with and to vehemently route for the success of the underdog. It is as though I see those who do not fit, as being part of my extended family. I have always been drawn to and have always felt the deepest connection with the rejected, with the left out and with the outcast. Whether or not the victim happened to be a 'real life' or fictional character was of no real significance. What was important is that I had someone with whom I could identify. As I witnessed their struggles, and applauded their triumphs, my heart would break as well as cheer. I would get a glimmer of hope, just knowing that someone who had been a reject had also risen victoriously. I figured that if they could overcome the pain of it all, then so could I.

Thanks to Hans Christian Anderson, there exists a tale of one "little ducky" whose story shall remain immortal. His life has served as a pillar of hope to a myriad of others who have their very own ugly duckling stories to tell. A person will not always display a noticeable physical defect. Some people choose not to like another individual "just because." In the words of the late Reverend James Cleveland, "Some people don't like you – cause they just don't like you." "Not that you've ever done anything to them, but they just don't like you." Others have felt the backlash of people's cruelty and hostility because of skin color, race, religion, weight, economical status or perhaps, because they actually *did* sport an obvious physical and/or emotional defect of some sort.

No wonder even The Lord Jehovah repented in His heart, as He wished He had never made man. It hurt Him to the very core to know that, "Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continuously." (Genesis 6:5-6). It saddens me to know, that even in *our* congregations, people have been the brunt of cruel pranks and jokes, because of some physical characteristic, over which they have absolutely no control. In our world, there exists individuals who feel exactly like, "Rudolf The Red Nosed Reindeer." They have been made fun of, purposely excluded and left totally out of life's reindeer games. They are taunted just because something about *them* or about their appearance does not measure up to what *society* views as *normal*.

These people are faithful in serving, and also in giving, *but* due to their noticeable external differences, they still do not fit the mold and are quite often, viciously scorned. They are stamped REJECT! Very often, they feel compelled to hang their heads in shame. Oh sure, they may feel good as long as the music is pumping and the preacher is ranting, so perhaps *you* cannot tell. They put on a "great face", but how are they 'really' feeling deep inside? It *seems* unlikely, but even churches that claim to be so full of love, love, and more love, are not guiltless of maligning individuals who are not as they expect them to be. Even those that advertise themselves as being "family friendly", where *everyone* is supposed to be welcomed and where *everyone* is supposed to be loved; even in churches like these, there exists a high percentage of the neglected and the lonely.

To people in my church, on my job or in society, I am a mere nothing – a nobody. Maybe I am a "zero" just like a boy named Cliff, whose painful story I shared with you in the beginning of this book. I suppose they see me as nobody at all; only a huge pile of flesh with nothing to offer. I see how they look at me, and I have felt the effects of their ill treatment. I bet though if someone like Billy Graham were to become my mentor, my pastor would sit up and take notice. Let me record an album or suddenly become famous, surely then symbols of dollar bills would replace the piercing glares of disdain that now fills his eyes. Surely then, I would gain some respect from people. If I possessed great wealth, everyone would see me as a candidate, worthy of their precious time. Surely then, I would have no shortage of mentors or lack of advancement opportunities. Instead of my pastor, tossing me aside, surely then he would embrace me as his own.

For thousands of people acceptance has been something for which they have long sought; but to this day, it remains only a dream. Even if such a one should depart, the local assembly may still attack. Although the individual [or group] had been totally ignored while laboring amongst them, neither had he/she ever been given an ounce of respect (nor common courtesy in some cases); yet the person is stigmatized for leaving. It matters not whether he or she departs peacefully, more often than not, there will remain a trail of dusty gossip swirling in the air. Should a brother or sister leave a congregation, he or she is then placed on the pastor's hit list. God forbid anyone should inquire about the brother or sister, after the pastor has shot him or her down with negative comments.

Some congregations can be so brainwashed, that they literally rebuke another person, for simply *asking* about an estranged member. "He has some nerve, leaving our fine, wonderful establishment." "What does she think she will find 'out there' that she can't get from us?" "We have one of the largest congregations in the area – why would anyone *want* to leave?" "Our pastor is the best." "They must have a serious problem!" "Who do they think they are anyway? Humph!" Even a member, who at one time may have received the pastor's public praise and adoration, can suddenly find him or herself on the black list. It is bad enough to be 'totally ignored' and unrecognized; but it has got to be especially painful for a person, who had once been part of the pastor's elite pet club, and who at one time, found him or herself being well spoken of, to suddenly find that he or she has been reduced to bastard or reject status. It must be darned painful for a person to realize that he or she has been booted out of the club and demoted to the same rank as the common folk. Ouch! Now that has to hurt! I don't know what's worse. Is it more difficult to stand, *after one has tasted the morsels of favoritism*, served from the table of "fleshly" delight, only to suddenly be put out? On the other hand, on the other hand, is it worse to have never tasted of the delicious delicacies at all?

Because of an individual's departure as well as the crafty, divisive words of the leader, very often a congregation's opinion of a person is swayed. The poor soul then becomes as one who is deserving of congregational shunning. At the giving of the shepherd's command, the once faithful brother or sister has been reduced to a rebellious foe.

Dear reader, I ask you, is it not better for a person to depart *in peace*, rather than to hang around and harbor ill feelings, or to be forever slighted? How does *anyone* in the congregation even know the 'real' details that led up the person's departure? When an individual (or group) leaves an establishment, those who are left behind, only hear one side of the story. If a member, and the pastor (or another leader) has a falling out, and the bruised individual leaves, (or in some cases is asked or told to vacate), the congregation remains totally oblivious as to what really might have gone down. They are left with fragments of details and at best, can only make assumptions. You know what they say, that a person makes of him or herself as well as of others, whenever one dares to assume don't you? They make an "a*s" out of "u" and "me", while satan makes one out of us all!

Don't you dare do it! It is ugly to hold a brother or sister in contempt based solely upon something you've heard.

More than one person has shared with me, how that upon leaving their assemblies, there was the initiation of an immediate gag order concerning them. The members of their former congregations were told, (in some cases ordered) to have nothing more to do with the departed person (or group). The pastors would tell the leaders; in turn, the leaders of the various auxiliaries would inform the rest of the people, letting everyone know, that their one time brother or sister, had now entered into "sin and rebellion."

Should a current member run into a former parishioner on the street, the order would still be in affect. Even if a former member happened to be a relative, the member, "in good standing", would be prohibited from having any dealings with the traitor. The order would remain effective until the departed sister or brother, makes the decision to come to his/her senses. Until then (if ever), the person would be given the silent treatment or cold shoulder. Regardless of relationship, be it friend or family; any known violation of the gag order, would place the member in good standing, in direct danger of also being "shunned." *What the hell!?* Church, what in the world is up with this foolishness?! Do we as Christians honestly believe that this is how Jesus would handle such matters? We are in worse shape than I thought, if in our hearts we truly believe, that this is how we are *supposed* to treat one another.

There is one thing, that I want you all to get straight and it is this, PASTORS TELL LIES TOO! I did not say that they made mistakes in telling the congregation things; I said that sometimes they outright lie in order to make themselves look good! They are flesh just like the rest of us and they often foul up too.

Clerics have been known to blatantly twist the truth, by *intentionally* omitting parts of a story; consequently, the congregation remains ignorant as to the real events of a matter. They are left clueless, as to what actually transpired. Many brainwashed, controlled congregations have had their minds seared. Often they are the last to know it, and in many instances, they are not even capable of discerning truth from error. I understand that pastors will sometimes enhance their sermons as they paint vivid pictures into the imaginations of the listeners; which is often harmless. However, the danger occurs, when embellishment takes a completely new spin, and is used to purposely add harmful lies. The problem arises when there is an omitting of truth or the covering up of blatant evildoings. The unsuspecting listeners often take everything at face value, based solely on a person's position.

How do we know what really went on? How can we be so sure that our accused brother or sister is actually the guilty party?

We have this notion that leaders are perfect individuals who are incapable of doing wrong. By wrong, I am not referring to them making mistakes or having weaknesses for which they are actively seeking deliverance, because each of us has *some* struggle. Moreover, if we do not admit to such – we are liars and there is no truth in us. What I am talking about though, is when pastors purposely set out to target those in the congregation. I have already told you about Saul and David. Most congregations believe their leaders to be exempt from slandering, and so, the flock tends to automatically take sides, as many therein proceed to talk about that, which they know absolutely nothing about. What they really need to do, is to shut their mouths and go somewhere and pray! I urge you to reserve your quick rendering of judgment, because you do not necessarily know the entire [truthful] story.

If you *must* know what *really* happened, then why not ask The Lord? Let Him decide whether or not He feels it is any of your business. Be warned though, the shoes in which you stand today, may not be the same ones in which you will be standing on tomorrow. For on tomorrow, YOU too could very well be, in the same shoes as today's victims. You may suddenly find yourself on the outside looking in, realizing that you have been kicked out of the clique.

Don't you dare turn your back on, or permanently dismiss a brother or sister based purely on speculation or on the strength of a rumor. You do not know the whole of a matter – but God does. How do you know, if whether or not it was simply within the timing of God for the individual to move on? Why would any righteous leader or congregation be offended in that? _Why does a person always have to be blackballed or described as being in rebellion for doing nothing more than trying to follow Gods lead? Sometimes He does lead people out of places. This is supposed to be God's business and not everyone else's. We have been created in God's image and have been chosen to do His will, not the will of a pastor who refuses to let us - get it?

Although some people will be born in, raised up in and eventually die in the same old spot; be it in a particular church, town, city, home or other; this simply is not the plan for everyone. The destinies of some people will take them over the four walls and into another place entirely. Remember the emphasis on the importance of growing and not remaining stagnant? God will at times, ordain that a person remain in a place for only a season.

Just as He leads us to, sometimes He leads us from. Just as He sends us in, there are times when He will demand us to come out!

There are times however, due to traumatic or unbearable circumstances, that a person may [finally] decide to leave on his or her own. An individual can arrive at a place in life wherein he or she realizes that; *any place* has to be better than his/her current surroundings. It is not until we get tired of hurting, that we finally begin to seek answers. It is not until we as individuals realize that it hurts too much to stay put, that we finally find the courage to do *something* about our pain. When we just cannot take it any longer, because we need to stop hurting, we may stop coming around altogether. Little do we know, nor do we even realize, that this decision may actually be the defining moment of our very lives.

You see, my brothers and sisters, one day we may accidentally discover, that we are nothing at all like those, with whom we have always surrounded ourselves. Often it is by The Master's design, that we literally, find ourselves stumbling into destiny.

I hope that you, dear reader are familiar with the all time classic story of "The Ugly Duckling." Venture with me as we explore the life of *my* little feathered friend, whose personal destiny, left him no choice but to leave his familiar surroundings. One fine day a mother duck decided to take her children out into the world. As they journeyed, the little ducks passed by several creatures. Mother duck instructed her babies to have manners and to always be polite. She told them to give a curtsy to the, "Big haughty-looking duck with the red ribbon around her leg." Mother duck explained to her babies that she was a very important person; she was a "Spanish Grandee." The little ducks were to curtsy politely as they made their way. They obeyed momma duck and did exactly as told.

When the Spanish Grandee however, caught a glimpse of the poor ugly duckling, she bit him on the neck. In his defense, momma duck told her not to bother him. "You leave him alone!" she commanded. "He may not be as pretty as some, but he has a sweet disposition, and he *is* the best swimmer of the lot." "Besides, he'll look better when he grows up." "He won't seem so big and awkward then." (Gee thanks momma duck! – I think).

Taunting, teasing and rejection were something that the little duck would have to get use to. Not only did the Grandee bite him, but *all* of the other creatures in the yard made fun of him too. The ducks pushed him, the chickens teased him, the turkeys bit him; even the girl in charge of feeding the animals kicked him. His own brothers and sisters were mean to him. He felt awful; He was isolated and ever so lonely. The little duckling had in a very short time, become the object *everyone's* ridicule and scorn. One day while hopelessly discouraged, he concluded that he *could not* stand it any longer, and with that, he flew away. Like many of us, I imagine that he came to his conclusion after carefully considering the matter. "Would anyone even care if I were no longer around? "Probably not", he reasoned within himself, and with that, he left. After fleeing his surroundings, the little duckling soon discovered that other people and other animals could be just as cruel as the ones he had left behind. He was still mocked and teased by nearly **everyone** he encountered. One cold winter's day, the little duckling found himself frozen in the center of a solid ice block, which sat directly in the middle of a pond. He had hidden himself behind a bush, as he attempted to escape the dangers of hunting season.

Unfortunately, he did not realize how long he had stayed in that same spot, and now, he was stuck! Somebody please hear God right now!

After a very long time a farmer came along; feeling sorry for the little duckling, he decided to take him to his house. All warmed up now, and inside the kind farmer's home, the children wanted to play with him, but the duck became flustered; for he was not accustomed to *anybody actually wanting* to play with him. He immediately became anxious and afraid, which in turn, made his already awkward movements, even worse. Like so many who have been abused, abandoned or rejected, he had never been the center of **good** attention. Most people (and even animals), who have been abused, are only use to being sought after, in order to be made fun of, or either for the express purpose of becoming the object of another's vicious prank or cruel joke.

Because the only purpose, that they have ever served, has been to be a recipient of ridicule and pain, many abuse victims (and survivors) may not even know how *to receive* kindness. "Good attention" was an entirely new concept for the duckling. Not only was he awkward *looking*, but also his movements were less than graceful. He probably did not know *how* to play; besides we all know how little children can be with animals. In their excitement, they probably frightened the poor duck half to death. At that precise moment, the farmer's wife happened to be doing some baking in the kitchen. As the children tried to play with him, the duckling became all the more awkward and unbalanced. He eventually landed in a tub of butter.

The children continuing with their futile attempts to capture him, while at the same time the duckling was attempting to recover from the butter incident, made things even worse. The duck still being off balance fell again - this time landing in a barrel of flour. He must have looked an awful mess, as he fluttered aimlessly around the kitchen, trying to regain his composure. As if *that* were not bad enough, in her agitation, the farmer's wife shooed him away, forcing him to make a hasty escape. Out the door he went in a flash, with a trail of flour and butter following close behind. In a matter of minutes, he was homeless again, and once more, he set out on his lonely journey. Since the time of the duckling's departure from his home of origin, to the time of the butter and flour incidents, right up to his present set of circumstances, there had been a change in season. The duck had endured an entire winter virtually alone, and still had no place that he could call home. So far, he had not fit anywhere – Lord God! This is so familiar. As he journeyed, he saw these incredibly beautiful white birds. "Oh how graceful they are", he thought as he marveled to himself. He was amazed at how they flew with such grace and precision. Oh God how he looooooonged to meet them.

He found himself completely taken back by their beauty – they were breathtaking. Not only that, but for some strange reason, he felt connected to them. Though he had never met them, still for reasons that he did not understand, nor could he even begin to explain, he found himself intensely drawn to those elegant creatures of flight and grace.

One day, as he [again] was feeling incredibly down on himself, he made another decision. Unbeknownst to him, *this one* however, would change the course of his entire life. Oh God! Can somebody help me say turning point! He determined in his heart that he would go over and meet those beautiful birds. There was *something* about them that *made* him just *have* to meet them. *He simply HAD to – Oh God!*

There is a mighty big difference in someone wanting to do a thing, as opposed to him or her having to. For some of us, ministry has never been optional. Being “marked” by The Almighty has been our portion. We were created for a purpose; we have been commanded to accomplish a thing, and we will never be able to do anything else, no matter how hard we try, and regardless to how violently we may oppose the plan – we simply must comply. Frankly, we would have to admit (or we will eventually discover), that we could never be content doing anything else anyway. Though other things may pacify for the moment or even for several seasons, our soul refuses to be totally satisfied. Never will it be content, until we have become who or what we were destined to be.

And so it was for our friend, who had made up his mind that he would inquire about those lovely creatures, even if it cost him his life. He purposed in his heart that he would go and meet them. He reasoned within himself as he concluded that, “It would be far better to be plucked to death, bitten or rejected by these lovely birds, than to be beaten by the hens, pushed around by the maiden who feeds the poultry or to starve to death each winter.”

Yes! The duckling's mind was made up; “this is it”, he thought. He was afraid as to how they would receive him – *for he expected to be rejected. Ridicule and rejection had after all, been the only things that he had known since birth.* Undaunted by fear, and driven forward by faith, determined to meet them, the duck set out on his intentions. I believe that as he inched his way towards them, doubt and fear began to set in. I know that he had second thoughts about going – I am positive of it. As fear began to overshadow determination, he hesitated. I tell you that his story is similar to my own. This is “soooo” familiar! This is much the same way that I felt, as I attempted to speak with my pastor, about the call that relentlessly beckoned my soul's walk towards the divine. Come on here church!! Beloved of God can you praise Him here with me right now? Open your mouth and shout it to the top of your lungs with a jubilant voice - Ohhhhhhhhhh God! I AM APPROACHING MY DESTINY!

The duck procrastinated. During this time of hesitation, he must have had an instant replay of every painful event that had ever befallen him during the span, of his young life. Surely he recalled how even his very own family had mocked him – and then, he took a step forward. He recalled the time when hunters tried to shoot him; and took yet another step. He even found himself comparing the color of his feathers, which were not at all like those of his family's.

Their feathers had been soft and yellow. In addition, *they and their feathers* were physically much smaller. Not only were his *feathers* darker, and his stature larger, but also his movements were very awkward in comparison. This time, he took a great big ‘giant’ step, maybe even two. He recalled how he had been shooed away by the farmer's wife – and with that, he took yet another. Oh my, he even remembered the time that he came across a different group of hunters with dogs. Not knowing whether to rejoice because his life had been spared or whether to feel far worse, because of the reason it had been, the duck shuttered at the very thought of this scary but extremely painful memory. You see dear child of God, there came a day in the midst of that dreadful hunting season, as he sat frozen in an ice block, that a massive hound dog came by, took one look at him, and become terrified. “Imagine that”, the duck thought to himself, “My very ugliness is even more than a hunting dog can stand.”

The dog thinking the duckling was too ugly to attack, supposing him to be a “strange creature” of some sort, and maybe not even a duck at all. The dog could not figure out what he was - refusing to bite him, the massive hound ran away instead. Deep in his heart rang the silent but very loud beckoning of his inner most being. Everything within him yearned, as he with all his might longed to move forward; but half way there, he had become stuck. “Ok”, he determined – “I *must* meet those beautiful birds.” “I’ve got to go all the way, even if they hurt me!” “Even if I am rejected and even if I die!” To the duckling, those beautiful creatures represented every thing that he was not, nor could ever hope to be. This thought alone, propelled him another five giant steps forward, for grace sake. I suppose he also recalled the time that he had been permitted to stay on trial, at a farm for one week. The owner’s sole interest in him had been only for the hopes of achieving some sort of financial gain. She wanted to see if the little duckling could lay eggs, or “do any thing cleaver.” While there, he found himself being teased, mocked and tormented – yet again. He was ridiculed this time, only because he had no obvious talent that he could flaunt, like the rest.

By now, finally the duckling had made up in his mind that he was going to meet those beautiful birds, even if it killed him. For to live in a state of perpetual rejection hurts far worse he concluded. In spite of the probable consequences of being pecked and bitten to death, he yet pressed his way forward towards the unfamiliar – towards “the divine.”

That is exactly what destiny does. It pulls you; it gnaws at everything inside of you. It causes your insides and even your very bowels to yearn for that which you know you’ve been created to accomplish. You cannot get away from it, neither can you ignore it. Even if you want to turn around, your divine purpose refuses to sanction such a request. It will not take no for an answer as it ever tugs at your heartstrings and even at your soul. It bellows; it woos and it ever summons you unto itself. Often it is into the blistering darkness of the unknown you must walk. Destiny commands you to keep moving towards that which demands your presence – “keep going!” “You have an audience awaiting your arrival!” “Keep moving forward until you make contact.” “Don’t stop!” it commands.

Better to be killed by them he supposed, than to be pushed around by everyone else for a lifetime. Not knowing what would become of him, he continued his journey. His heart raced even at the very thought of being rejected and wounded once again; *still he was willing to die should they decide to kill him.*

I can imagine the little duck breathing deeply, and then, releasing a loud gulp. Everything within him now beginning to cry out and race feverishly – exactly as my insides had done on that faithful day. Go ahead and take a breath my brother, my sister, this is your hour! Hallelujah! With one “final deeeeeeeeeeeep breath”, a thunderously pounding, pulsating heartbeat, and with a leap of faith, he moved forward, into their midst, and made his presence known. The little duckling flew into the water, and swam towards those beautiful, beautiful birds. “Kill me”, said the poor duckling, and with that, he bent his head down to the surface and waited to be pecked to death.

When the beautiful birds espied the stranger, they rushed over to meet him with outstretched wings. With his head still hanging down, he noticed something. He began to see - What’s this? It was - naaaawwwwwooooooo, it couldn’t be! Not lifting his head for a moment, but instead looking deeper into the water, paying strict attention to what he saw atop the glistening surface – he was in awe. He intently studied the image that stared back at him. With a huge gasp, and with utter amazement, he found himself speechless, for his eyes were locked on the pond below. Shocked and bewildered, he could barely believe his eyes. What he saw was his very own reflection! In just one season, he had completely changed. No longer was he the awkward looking, grayish-black, ugly creature he had been born only one short year ago. He was beautiful. In fact – oh my goodness; he was as lovely as those creatures to whom he had been drawn, since first laying eyes on them.

They immediately embraced him. Reader did you hear what I just said? They immediately embraced him – they recognized him; they understood him! They saw him for who and for what he was; they were able to discern him. Not only was he “like them”, but he was one of them. He was not an ugly duckling after all, but he too was a beautiful swan. He had always been one, but had never known it - apparently neither had anyone else with whom he had made contact.

Because he was different, nobody had ever taken the time to get to know him; neither could they discern his ‘true’ identity. Not only had his family of origin been unable to detect him, but neither had they cared anything about him. Never once, had they taken the time to care; neither had they ever bothered to look for him after he left. Well, as it turns out, he had never been one of them at all. (I just said a mouth full right there). What might The Lord be saying to you right now dear friend? Has He been trying to show you something that you refuse to see? Has He already told you something? Are you where you belong?

He that hath an ear let him hear what The Lord is speaking!

Our little duckling friend had always been a beautiful swan in the making, only he had never known it. Surely now, he had to be bubbling over with joy. He could scarcely believe that the reflection his eyes beheld was his very own. “A swan?” “Me?” “You mean I’m too am one of them – I am a swan?” “You mean I have never been a duck at all?” “All this time, everyone treated me like a duck.” “In fact they treated me as if I were a very, very, ugly horrible creature; they persecuted me for being unattractive, and now you say that I am beautiful?”

“The entire time that I longed to meet those beautiful birds, someone also wanted to meet me.” “I have been one of them all along, but I never knew it.” AND - “No one had ever bothered to tell me that I would not be awkward always.” “Never had anyone taken the time to give me an identity; instead they stamped me ‘unworthy’.” “The few, who did try, [to identify me] were always wrong.” “I was destined to be beautiful, and to accomplish great things but I did not know it.” “They never told me that I wasn’t ugly; I believed every bad thing that they said about me.” “For not even once had anyone ever told me the truth.” “Wow!”

And with that ladies and gentleman, I believe that our little friend, shed several tears. There is something about discovering who you ‘really’ are that should make you extremely joyful, but never “puffed up.” When The Lord God places His hand upon an individual, it should never make the person haughty or proud. When He places upon you and I, the “Mantle” of His choosing, and thereby decides to use us in His program, it is a humbling experience. Once more, in our huge world, another light has been ‘turned on’ by The Almighty - and that light my friend, my brother or my sister, happens to be you!

Ever so often, He allows us to see, what He has known all along. When was the last time you saw yourself? Come on...take a closer look. Go ahead and pick up that mirror. This may very well be the set time, on The Lord’s calendar, for you to connect with destiny. This may be the very day wherein you discover something beautiful. For this, child of God, could be the actual moment when you discover YOURSELF!

An entire year had passed since the duckling departed from his home. He had not even seen himself in all that time. As the springtime emerged, so had he. Our little guy was no longer an ugly, awkward looking duckling; but had transformed into a creature of sophistication and had become altogether lovely. The other swans swam around him and stroked him with their beaks. Even the old swans bowed their heads to him. A family that had come to visit the pond made mention of “the new one.” The children exclaimed that he was the most beautiful of all. The story says that –

***“He felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wing; for he was so happy, and yet not at all proud. He had been persecuted and despised for his ugliness and now, he had heard them say that he was the most beautiful of all the birds. Even the elder-tree bent down its bows into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and bright. Then he rustled his feathers, curved his slender neck and cried joyfully, from the depths of his heart. “I never dreamed of such happiness as this while I was an ugly duckling”, he said. “To be born in a duck’s nest in a farmyard, is of no consequence to a bird, if it is hatched from a swan’s egg. How he felt glad at having suffered sorrow, because it enabled him to enjoy so much better all of the pleasure and happiness around him; for the great swans swam around him, and stroked his neck with their beaks as a welcome – for finally destiny had led him home.*”**

“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5). Thanks to Hans Christian Anderson, my little friend’s story will be told until the end of time, as we know it. Just as the duckling was, so are many of you right now, in the wrong folds. So many of us are in congregations that mean us no good. They do not have *our* best interest at heart and in many cases neither are they concerned about Kingdom business! And though we are unproductive, unloved and uncared for - yet we stay. We know that where we are, is no good [neither is it emotionally or spiritually healthy] for us, but for some reason we seem, determined to stay put. “At least we are still in church” – we reason. For what point is it to be “present”, if we are living in a perpetual state of misery? What use is it to be “in the number” when we are dying on the inside? Many of us are not growing because we continue to surround ourselves with people who are unable to discern us, and/or to introduce us, to “our authentic selves.”

Some put downs and/or abusive treatment, [that we receive], is blatant and obvious, while other ‘blows’ (just like the strange fire), is quite subtle, but equally effective at ruining our lives. STILL, WE INSIST ON HANGING AROUND. WE CONSTANTLY SURROUND OURSELVES WITH PEOPLE WHO DO NOTHING BUT TEAR US DOWN. BUT WHY? Why do we stay? Why do we continue to allow them to hurt us? We are not like them; we have never been. We stay around people who care nothing about us, simply for the sake of *belonging somewhere*. But, do we? Do we really ‘belong’ [there?]. Are we supposed to be where we are right now – at this hour? What is The Lord saying to you? What has He already told you to do, that you have refused to take action on? Are you constantly making excuses? Are you fearful or are you just frozen and stuck?

If something or someone appears to be different, very often that difference causes it to be the object of society’s ridicule and scorn. The person or object is looked upon as valueless or possessing nothing of beauty, simply because those surrounding it are unable to see it, for the masterpiece that it truly is. Ironically, it is very often, the scorned individual or object that possesses far more worth [far more value, far more anointing, far more integrity, talent and grace, than those who are intent on doing the scoffing. Whether in ministry, (or in general), it is not necessarily a matter of someone being better or being more valuable, but it is a known fact that human nature tends to reject, fear, envy or devalue anything or anyone that they see as being “different.”

Not only is a masterpiece or valuable antique often stuffed into a corner or tucked away in a dark closet [by those with an untrained eye], but it is often hatred or totally avoided. It takes a ‘true master’ to identify a masterpiece (or to recognize one in the making). There is a grave difference between “an ordinary concert violin” and a “Stradivarius.” Just ask any master violinist. Can you tell the difference? Are you worthy to receive enlightenment concerning the things of The Spirit? Brothers and sisters, they do not hate us because of anything that we have done. No! The reality of the matter is that they have detected a deficiency within themselves. It is their own fallacy that renders them unable to recognize you.

We have given them no reason to fear us, and we wish them no harm; yet because of their [own] prejudices and insecurities, they may never give us a fair chance. Sunday after Sunday, *THEY* preach about how important each of us are. They tell us how The Lord has a plan for each of our lives. Some of us have already espied part of God's plan for our lives, but we are discouraged from coming forward, because whenever we do, we are met with a 'scolding hostility', for simply wanting to grow or to comply with the plan. Based upon their actions, I know that many pastors cannot possibly believe even half of the things that they preach about. They tell you to follow The Lord's plan, but as soon as you do...well we all know what happens next.

We find ourselves grounded, because we continue to walk with and to be entertained by chickens, buzzards, and turkeys, when in fact it has always been by God's design that we soar with majestic eagles.

Why do we to allow *them* keep us at ground level when God has called us to fly high into dimensions and even into stratospheres? I'll tell you why; it is because we have not looked to our Father for the revelation of who we are in Him. We have instead digested the words of others and we have gnawed on the opinions of jealous people, who only possess ground level mentality. This we did without sticking to the "original" blue print for our own lives – the one that God graciously allowed us to glimpse so very long ago. Perhaps we thought that He had forgotten us, and so we believed *their words* instead - and they hurt us.

Because many of them don't know who they are, they don't want you to know who you are. Moreover, if you do happen to know, they seem to hate you even more. Just like satan, they do their best, to kill your dreams, to steal your joy and to destroy your confidence, [and faith] in what God has spoken. Most of them cannot discern you, because they are not high enough (in the spirit) to even see you. Moreover, even when they can, often they lack the common sense and the spiritual depth to realize that they, themselves are the ones who are in need of deliverance. SOMETIMES THEY HATE YOU, BECAUSE SECRETLY, THEY WISH THEY WERE YOU! Did you hear what I just said?

Females especially, are abundantly atrocious when it comes to dishing the hate. Rather than pay a fellow sister a complement, they would prefer to tear her down. How pathetically sad! They only dislike you, because deep down, they dislike [or hate] themselves. It is much easier for them to make you feel badly about yourself. This they do my friend, because they are too proud or too blind to ask for help. Do you not know that hatred, arrogance and pride (or ill treatment towards others) is often nothing more than insecurity in disguise? It is essential that you not give them that kind of power over you. Never should you ever allow ANYONE AT ALL, to force you into a place of self loathing or low self-esteem. Insecure people get their kicks, by making you feel bad. Or shall we say by "trying" to make you feel bad, because their tactics will only work if YOU let them.

We have been *made* to feel useless. All of the best jobs were always taken. We stopped holding the glass to our own faces. We believed *them* as we beheld and gave glory to *their* accomplishments, much to the detriment and neglect of our own. This we did until, the day that the light finally came on. I pray that you will prepare yourselves for the day that something happens in your own life. I pray you will realize, that even though you may not be welcomed in your church, valued at your place of business or appreciated by your family, always, always, always remember that you are welcomed and are accepted in The Beloved. You are welcomed, you are loved and you have a home with like kind. You are neither ugly nor awkward. Glory to God!

The day that I decided to ask The Father, what He thought of me was the beginning of my turning point – it was the last day that I ever asked anyone else what they thought, and neither did I care. Blessed Be His Holy Name!

People may be in the wrong place because they have wondered there on their own. Like sheep, we do sometimes go astray. Nevertheless, even during our stay in the wrong fold, we can acquire much wisdom. Even while we are there, God is working [on our behalf]; we can catch glimpses of Him, if only we would look a little harder. Sometimes people are led into destiny by way of the wrong fold.

If it is by The Father's design that you stay there for a season, then you need not worry, because He knows exactly where you are, and what it will take to bring you out. For a long time after my pastor rejected me, I tried to stay and be a part of the program. It was not until I could no longer pretend that I simply *had* to make some sort of change. Up to that point, I had gone along with the program in order to avoid sticking out and being further rejected. I tried to stuff down, that which The Lord was calling me unto. Like when the duckling found himself absolutely *having* to meet those swans, I too had been drawn and compelled to acknowledge and to finally embrace, the very thing that has always embraced me. It has been there since my soul's existence. It was been there long before I ever knew my own name. So many people try hard, to be things that they are not. They must continue in their charades as they lie to others and even to themselves, as they constantly try to fit in. I am so glad that I'm free! I use to be a liar also. Just like them, I too was guilty of pretending. God accused me of denying myself, as in who He had made me to be. To His accusation; I pled "guilty as charged", and I then asked for mercy.

Instead of pretending to be something that I was not, I instead kept trying to stuff down who and what I was, thereby denying the very destiny that had called my name so long ago. Because of other people, I found myself struggling to keep it (the gift) tucked away. I would not allow the true me to shine through. I stuffed it, because whenever I would try to make, even the slightest attempt to reveal my true self, I would always be sorry that I had. Those who *were* able to discern me, usually did their very best to discourage me, because they hated me and they hated the gift that had been placed inside of me. When the 'burden of pretending' not to be bound to the prophetic became harder than acknowledging it, (by fighting past the opposition), I too felt like running away. Like the ugly duckling, I also *had* to [eventually] make a move. Although I did not immediately depart physically, in my heart as well as in my mind, I had already moved on.

One day, someone confronted me, and told me that I was operating in "false humility." "What do you mean?" - I inquired. The person told me that God would not be pleased with me not being who I am. The person further stated that God would not be happy with me continuing to "play down" that which He had placed inside of me. "Because it had pleased The Master to make me in such a manner that He Himself had been pleased." The person said that I should never attempt to hide who I am, no matter what people have to say. To pretend not to be me, would be to deny the God who made me. In essence, I would be insulting 'His' handiwork and would be slapping 'Him' in 'His' face. (Also, I would be deeming my own self as inferior). Wow!! I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO BE WHO I AM. THE PAIN OF PRETENDING HAD NEARLY DESTROYED ME. THE FEAR OF [MORE] REJECTION FROM OTHER PEOPLE, HAD CAUSED ME TO BE UNTRUE TO GOD AS WELL AS TO MYSELF. NO WONDER I HAD BECOME SO MISERABLE.

So here I am; like me or not, believe me or not, hate me or not - it no longer matters, neither does it change who or what I am; neither does anyone's opinion of me alter God's plan for my life one bit. I am one of God's finest creations. I am "God's Instrument", [one of them anyway], and I am quite proud of it! I have been "fearfully and wonderfully made" by Him. Sisters and brothers, many of you are also pretending, while others of you have not yet discovered your identity. Some of you are still wearing the stickers that people have placed upon you. Be they family members, friends or foes – you are still digesting their words. As a result, you have failed to discover, what God has already said (and what He wants to say). He is not going to compete with everyone else's words.

Take it from me, no longer should you continue hiding or living in a state of pretense. Allow your God ordained self to shine through, for it pleased The Father to cut His fabric in such a way to make yet another design; a design called YOU! And we know that our God does not make junk! There has been no mistake in fashioning you exactly as you are – you are a "Designer's original." Talk about strutting you stuff on the "red carpet"; honey, you are a fashion statement and your Father is the greatest designer of all times! Now let me see you walk! That's it – do your thing!

Lastly, it is in no wise unusual for a person to discover his or her identity while in the midst of great affliction. In fact, it is there that God often chooses to introduce us to our purpose and to ourselves. Nearly 20 years ago, when I got married, (Wow! It has been long).

Anyway...

There came a time, in the midst of my emotionally abusive marriage, that I one day found myself in the valley of decision. I stayed in the abusive situation mainly because I did not want church folks to know that my marriage was failing. It is unfortunate, but I have found fellow Christians, to be down right notorious when it comes to viciously talking about one another. And those who know I'm right about it said– Amen!

My now “ex husband” and I were amongst a series of young couples who had gotten married around the same time. I know it sounds silly *now*, but I did not want to be the *first* of those couples to be heading towards the divorce court. Anyway, as I neared an emotional breaking point, my hair started falling out, my skin started looking bad and the bathroom at work had become one of my dearest friends. Almost daily, I found myself slipping into a stall, for the purpose of having a good cry. I would emerge after my crying spell, facing the world; and pretending as though everything were perfectly ok. On the way home however, I would engage in another crying fit. The very thought of entering into my apartment totally depressed me. At one point, I even contemplated suicide (just so that I could live with Jesus). For at the time, and before I knew better, it seemed to be the only way out of my misery. This I hid from the world, (with the exception of a mere few, who I would call at random, and would proceed to pester them to death. By the way, thanks for listening and for toiling with me – Kenny H., Amy M., and Derek B. For a long time, I denied my sanity, and it wasn't too long before I started to deny myself. Somehow, I had allowed the tape that played in my head, to convince me that I was no longer worth it. Honestly speaking, I had become too weak to fight back.

A co-worker said something that was so simple but yet deeply profound. I suppose that he must have observed the changes in my personality over the years, and also my weight loss, as well as my pitiful emotional condition. As I neared the zone of an emotional crisis he said, “Jo, you need to make a decision.” “You really need to do something.” He further stated, “If you don't make a decision soon, eventually one will be made for you.” I have never forgotten those words, spoken to me so long ago. Whenever I seem to be at a fork in the road, I still recall them to this day. “Make a decision” – “For if you do not, one will be made for you.” Those are classic words – they are eternal! Thank you Maurice S.

A divinely orchestrated set of circumstances will be called upon to propel you, forcefully if need be, into the next lesson connected to your divine assignment. Your destiny will have no choice but to rescue you, especially if you have been chosen for a “specific” purpose. There be many who are called; but only few who are chosen. Blessed be His Holy Name Forever. Some of us have absolutely no choice in the matter; we are going to follow the plan of The Almighty, even if He must create the very circumstance, [or use the thing that satan has attempted to destroy us with], for the express purpose of capturing us, in order to rescue us from ourselves.

Can somebody please say Jonah and “the great fish?”

In other words because of your destiny's sake, because of the assignment that has been placed upon your life, as well as for the sakes of those, who are awaiting your anticipated arrival, the heavenly realm will be forced to help you out should it come to that.

Boy was Maurice ever right about a decision being made for me. I wish I could tell you that I made it on my own. I wish I had had the guts to walk away. The fact of the matter is, *my abusive husband left me*. When I stopped pleading with The Lord to, "Fix me," or to "Fix him," or to "Work it out Jesus"; "Please keep us together Lord. Oh ladies, you know how we do it! You know exactly how desperate we can be, as we plead with The Sovereign One of the universe, to keep us in a "mess" simply because we do not want to be alone, or because we don't want others to talk about us or about our marriage.

"News flash" – THEY ARE ALREADY TALKING ABOUT YOU ANYWAY! HELLO??????????? THEY CAN'T STAND YOU NOW – SO WHY SHOULD THEIR GOSSIP MATTER TO YOU?? DON'T ALLOW WHAT THEY SAY (OR DO NOT SAY) TO KEEP YOU IN BONDAGE! DON'T BE ASHAMED OF YOUR FAILED MARRIAGE – IT NEARLY KILLED YOU REMEMBER?? WOULD YOU RATHER BE TALKED ABOUT OR DEAD???

Oh God, I can still remember. I was half out of my mind – but yet I wanted Him to - "Please fix it Jesus." "Keep my marriage together." "Please don't let him leave me Lord." I begged and cried, and then cried and begged some more. Oh you know I did – and so did many of you. How pitifully pathetic I must have sounded at that time. I am both sick and saddened as I think back on my then state of mind. Oh but today, I am free! Go on and admit the truth, it will make you free too! Not even your bad memories can hold you hostage once you are truly free! What were we asking Him to keep together anyway? A sexless abusive marriage? What? A spouse who raped you or who thoroughly bashed your brains in? Were you being supplied good finances – although your spouse was cheating on you with every man/or woman that he or she could find.

Did you stay for the sake of the children or for the family property - even though your husband or wife was addicted to drugs, and never contributed to the household nor to the bettering of your lives as a family. What was it that you were so afraid of losing? What was it, that you were pleading and begging The Lord to keep you in? I can tell you from experience, that the only real item of value, worth holding onto is yourself! If you do have children, you will be unable to help (or literally save their lives) if you are not ok.

When I finally asked Him to, "Have Thine own way Lord." I remember saying these exact words – "Whatever it takes Lord; even if it takes death." "I don't care what you have to do." "Please help me." Honest to God, at that time, with the condition that my mind was in, [the majority of the time], I would not have cared if I had died, or if The Lord's decision would have been to "smite" my husband from off the face of this earth. My emotional turmoil was just *that* fierce, and I did not care how it was, that The Almighty would see fit to put it to rest. All I know, is that I wanted the torture to stop.

When I asked Him to intervene and to do so as He in His sovereignty saw fit, I got serious, and I didn't care what it took. I had no pride and I no longer cared what the "church folk" were going to think, say or do, because it was I who had endured a living hell. It was I who yet dwelt in agony at the time, AND it was I who needed somebody to rescue me, because evidently I lacked what it took to rescue myself. Therefore, I turned my husband, my abusive marriage and myself completely over to The Lord. God in His Sovereignty was merciful. He decided that enough had been enough.

Within two weeks, it was all over. I remember being on the telephone with a [mutual friend of my husband and me] from church. My husband came home, walking through the door, with hell already in him; hell that he brought in from "out there." Without saying a "kind word", he came in and proceeded to rant and rave, (without me first having said anything to him other than, "Hi"). He came home, cursed me out, and then, he left. Guess what? It was the best thing that he could have ever done for me.

When the pain of remaining in your abusive surroundings becomes too much for you to bear, you will make a decision. If per chance you are taking just a little too long or perhaps like me, (in those days), you are simply unable to make the life saving decision for yourself, no need to worry. When you just cannot seem to do it, there will come a time when your destiny will necessitate that you be driven out or kicked out. The Spirit of The Lord will force you to move, unless He moves the other person [or thing] out of the way first.

From your churches and/or abusive relationships, some of you may need to venture out. Others of you will HAVE to, because you will have no choice in the matter. A portion of you will be PUT out, I am certain of it. Brothers and sisters, if you are put out [first], count it as joy, because you have literally been done a favor – you've been granted "A get out of jail card." Flee from your abuser! You may not go willingly, but you will go. I pray that unlike me (years ago), that when you come face to face with your pivotal point, or hour of visitation, I hope that you will have the guts to make the proper decision – a decision that might just save your life (and/or that of your child/children if you have any). Nevertheless, if you cannot, be exceedingly glad that the decision you are unable [or unwilling] to make for yourself, has been [or will be] made for you.

I WARN YOU THOUGH, DO NOT FIGHT THE DECISION!

In your new home, new job, new church or wherever your journey leads, you will face more challenges, as there will always be lessons to learn. However beloved, such is life. If you allow Jesus, The Good Shepherd, to be your guide, you will survive them just as you have survived the others.



Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

John 5:2-9

There has been a special “troubling of the water” just for you. Crawl if you must! The Angel of YHWH stands guard as He waits to personally escort you into the pool. Have no fear as you make your pilgrimage onward and upward. Courage to you for the journey.

Let me be the first to congratulate you my brothers and my sisters – because for many of you, your season has just - ***“Changed.”***

May the blessings of The Lord Jesus Christ go with you as you travel.

Remember children,

“There ain’t no danger in the water...”

XX

This excerpt was selected by the Author specifically for the “Author’s Den” family and for
“Lulu’s Group Mephibosheth.”

This one will send them running for cover. Whew! Prophetess J. puts it down hard. Her style, in just one word? Hmmmmmmmm, can you say "Firebrand?" So get ready!! The "Bootleg Shepherds" the "Prophet Wannabe" and the "Wolf Clerics" will flee for their lives, be purified through repentance or perish in **"The Fire."**

Are you currently an "Unchurched Believer?"

Were you wounded, spiritually paralyzed or totally devastated by some phony who merely posed as "God's Anointed?"

Were you recently abandoned by your father or mother? Perhaps you never knew your parents at all, and now you struggle with your own sense of identity.

Has anyone ever referred to you as a "Spiritual Bastard?" Does your "Birth Record" bear the stamp "Bastard" or "Illegitimate?"

Are you mad at God? Have you turned your back on HIM based on a bad experience with THEM- the "Church Folk?"

You need this book if you identify with anything written in **Yellow** or if you are a wolf who wants to repent BEFORE **"The Fire"** falls! Forgiveness is still available. There is room for **you** at THE CROSS. Seek The Lord while He may yet be found. Do it TODAY!!!



The "Bootlegs" have given God's good pastors a bad name. No longer will they molest the flock and go free. This eye-opening book is a "Crooked" pastor's worse nightmare!!! But it is the answer to prayer for the countless souls that have been wounded by them.

"And 'The Remnant' said - to God be the glory!"



"The stratosphere is no place for wimps."

- J. Godley-Ramos -

GGG

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REMEMBER:

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense leading to disciplinary procedures when detected. See the CGU bulletin under "Standards of Academic Honesty" for details.

Most plagiarism occurs unintentionally, due to ignorance of academic expectations on citing sources. However, IGNORANCE IS NO DEFENSE in cases of plagiarism.

If you have ANY doubt about the meaning of plagiarism, read the following documentation carefully. It as prepared by Prof. D. McHenry of the Center for Politics and Policy and is used with his permission.

PLAGIARISM: HOW TO IDENTIFY AND AVOID IT

Introduction

Plagiary, pla'ji- -ri, n. (arch.) one who steals the thoughts or writings of others and gives them out as his own: the crime of plagiarism. - adj. (obs.) practicing or got by literary theft. - v.t. pla'giarise, -ize, to steal from the writings or ideas of another. - ns. Pla'giarism, the act or practice of plagiarizing; pla'giarist, a person who plagiarises. [l. plagiarius, a kidnapper, plagiary - plaga, a net.]

From Chambers English Dictionary

Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic ethical standards. For this reason, it is important that you know what it is and how it can be avoided.

What is Plagiarism?

The meaning of plagiarism may be understood best by examining both the definitions given the term by authorities and the forms in which it is manifested.

Definitions

The range of definitions is illustrated by the following examples:

"Plagiarism...means trying to pass off someone else's work as your own."¹

"Plagiarism (derived from a Latin word for kidnapper) means using another person's language or ideas without acknowledgement."²

"Plagiarism is defined as the attempt to fob off another's thought or language as one's own..."³

"Fundamentally, plagiarism is the offering of the words or ideas of another person as one's own."4

"Q. What constitutes plagiarism?

A. Two or more words taken from a source without quotation marks."5

"Plagiarism means taking material written by another and offering it as one's own."6

"To take an idea, even a suggestion, or the peculiar expression of another without acknowledgement of its source is to give the reader the false impression that the idea is your own. This is plagiarism..."7

"Plagiarism exists when a writer leads his reader to believe that what he is reading is the original work of the writer when it is not."8

This definition was borrowed from – “The School of Information Systems and Technology.”
<http://www.cgu.edu/pages/241.asp>