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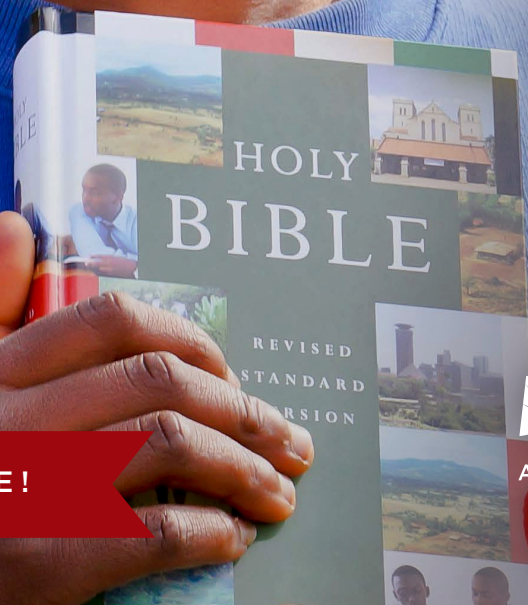
LIVES CHANGED BY GOD'S WORD

CHRISTMAS 2018

FROM MINNESOTA TO KENYA

*One Bible connects two
women from across the globe*

Page 14



CHRISTMAS GIFT CATALOG INSIDE!



Every good gift and every perfect present comes from heaven; it comes down from God ...

📖 JAMES 1:17



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ABOUT THE COVER

In 2013, a group from American Bible Society distributed Bibles to New Hope Orphanage in Kenya. Mercy, the 10-year-old girl featured on the cover, received her first Bible during that visit. You can read Mercy's story on page 14 of this issue.

Photo credit: Jane McGrath, American Bible Society

The mission of American Bible Society is to make the Bible available to every person in a language and format each can understand and afford, so all people may experience its life-changing message. American Bible Society is a member of United Bible Societies, a fellowship of the Bible Societies throughout the world cooperating to make Scriptures available to people everywhere in their own language.

Published since 1818, American Bible Society Record is the official periodical of American Bible Society and the second-oldest continuous publication in the United States. It is published three times a year and is sent to as many of our supporters as budget allows.

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A MESSAGE FROM
ROY PETERSON

American Bible Society President and CEO

*O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

“God is with us”—that’s the translation of the Hebrew term *Emmanuel*. At Christmas, we celebrate that Jesus came to be with us. One of the things I love about the Christmas hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” is that it frames the reality Jesus chose to step into: gloomy clouds of night and people who needed cheering.

Earlier this year, doctors found a cancerous tumor on my lung. I asked God, *What will happen to me and my family? What will this mean for my ministry? Can I rejoice even in this?* Inspired by Scripture and godly men and women I’ve seen walk this path before me, I went into the surgery with a peace that God would care for me and my family. I’m happy to report the procedure was successful, and I had a very quick recovery. I call that the power of prayer.

Although this issue of *Record* covers stories of abuse, of violence, of loneliness, we live in the beautiful promise that Jesus has set death’s dark shadows to flight. Through your prayers and through giving Bibles, you give others the knowledge that God walks with them. Hallelujah! I pray that in this Christmas season, you and your loved ones also sense the presence of Emmanuel, God with all of us.

Serving together,

P.S. I’ll be available to answer your questions live on Tuesday, December 11, 2018. At 8 p.m. EST, dial 1-888-652-0379 to hear how you’re providing Bibles to the remotest regions of the world. Looking forward to sharing with you!

Record

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BRINGING
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FREER & FREER

From addiction and abuse to freedom in Abba, Father God

INSIDE SPREAD: Clare Kendall; British and Foreign Bible Society; TOP PHOTO: Jane McGrath; American Bible Society; BOTTOM PHOTO: Joshua Wann; American Bible Society



Philadelphia Police Commissioner Richard Ross Jr. displays a commemorative copy of *Strength for the Street*.

U.S. Police Draw Strength from Scripture

More than 5,000 law enforcement officers received customized Bibles—thanks to the generosity of friends like you.

These devotional Bibles, titled *Strength for the Street*, are now being

used by officers in 25 states. Originally developed for the Philadelphia Police Department, *Strength for the Street* features devotions written by police chaplains and officers who understand the stress and pain of the job.

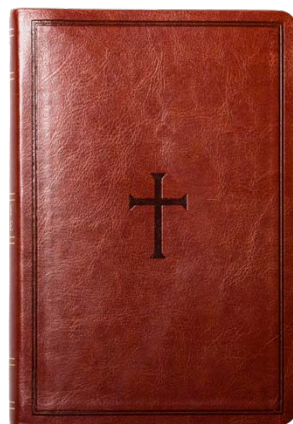
“We had a terrible incident where we lost an officer,” says one Philadelphia police officer. “Instinctively, I reached for the *Strength for the Street* Bibles and resources.”

Saturating New York City with God’s Word

Hundreds of churches in New York City are working together to bring the gospel message to 8.5 million people in 300 neighborhoods, 240 zip codes, and 59 community districts.

In just one month, 2 million Bible resources were distributed by volunteers going door-to-door through their neighborhoods. They gave away

copies of the JESUS film on DVD, tracts, and Christian children’s books and coloring books. Everyone was invited to download the Saturate NYC app, a digital tool developed by American Bible Society that offers daily devotional content, information on upcoming local events, shared prayers, and more.



Sharing God’s Love with Foster Children in Phoenix

This year, 3,500 foster children in Phoenix, Arizona, got a Bible to call their own. Many of these children do not presently have parents who can provide them with peace and stability—qualities their heavenly Father offers in abundance.

At a free festival at Enchanted Island Amusement Park, children and

youth rode coasters, enjoyed cotton candy, and heard about God’s love for them. Volunteers from Calvary Chapel Arrowhead made sure every child who wanted a Bible received one.

Thank you, Lord, that 3,500 children and youth received your Word. We pray that Scripture comforts them in difficult times.

DID YOU KNOW?

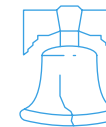
FOSTER CARE IN THE U.S.



437,465 foster children in the U.S.



61% of children are in foster care due to neglect



Give Me Liberty ... and Faith

Did you know that we’re launching the Faith and Liberty Discovery Center (FLDC) in historic Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 2020? The FLDC explores connections between faith and history from the founding of the United States to today.

Visit faithandliberty.org to learn more!



LEFT PHOTO: Doug Nottage, American Bible Society; RIGHT PHOTO: Kyo, Unsplash.com



“I love [Bible stories] a lot because I want to learn more about God,” says Ognjen Mitrovic, age 9. “I am grateful to the Bible Society because I have my own Bible now.”

Serbian Students Excited to Read Bible Stories

You provided 2,500 Bibles to Serbian students. Teacher Jovica Radovic said 95 percent of her students didn't own a Bible. When Bible Society of Serbia heard about

her situation—and the situation of many teachers like her—they used your gifts to provide Bibles to thousands of students in Serbia. Jovica says, “I believe that this precious gift

will encourage our children to read more and to become closer to God and church.” Her students agree! Read Tijana's and Andjela's thanks for these Bibles below.



“I [did] not have my own Bible and I am very much grateful to the Bible Society for this free copy. I am looking forward to reading Bible stories. My favorite one is about Adam and Eve.”

Andjela Tesic, age 7



“I have never read the Bible at home because I [did] not have it. I love to listen Bible stories during religious lessons. I am so happy to receive my own Bible!”

Tijana Purtic, age 10

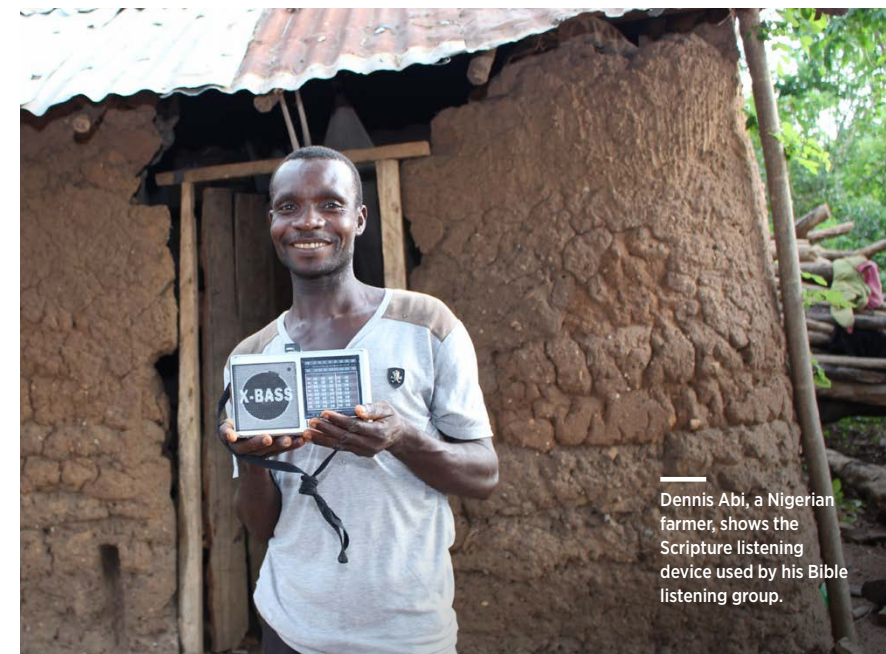
Bibles Reaching Nigeria's Unreached

More than 4,700 Nigerians are now hearing God's Word read over audio Scripture listening devices called Proclaimers. Many of them met Jesus through the JESUS film, a movie that recounts Jesus's life in epic form.

In 2018, Bible Society of Nigeria attracted 34 new partners that showed the JESUS film in places where there

was no local church. New believers were invited to join Bible listening groups that become church plants. The program is now extending throughout Nigeria.

“The program is helping me grow steadily, spiritually,” said Dennis Abi, a Nigerian farmer. “I am convinced that if Jesus comes today, I will go to heaven with him.”



Dennis Abi, a Nigerian farmer, shows the Scripture listening device used by his Bible listening group.

Bible Comes Alive for Deaf Mexicans

One thousand members of Mexico's deaf community have the book of Acts in Mexican Sign Language for the first time. These new video translations are part of the Bible Society of Mexico's efforts to bring the Bible to life for the 300,000 deaf people who use Mexican Sign Language.

Without the Bible in their heart language, only about 1 percent of deaf Mexicans have ever attended church. Only half of those identify as Christians. When the project concludes in 2020, all of God's Word will be available for the deaf community.



Live Call with President and CEO Roy Peterson

Dial in to hear how you're providing Bibles to the world's remotest regions. Have your questions answered live!

Tuesday, December 11, 2018 at 8 p.m. EST

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Rescuing Girls from Human Trafficking in Guatemala

447 girls rescued from trafficking situations received Bibles and are now turning to God's Word for healing and a renewed sense of safety.

A Christmas Song of Praise for the God of Scripture

BY LYDIA SHELDON

In Mary's famous song (Luke 1:39–56), she celebrates the announcement that she is carrying Jesus, the Savior of the world. The news that she was carrying God's Son must have been daunting, yet Mary's song shows us that she relied on Scripture to face her uncertainty and fear.

For many of us, Christmas can be a difficult season. All the festivity, family celebrations, and tinsel can hide unmet longings and deep fears. But like Mary, when life feels unsettled, we can rely on God's Word to refresh us and remind us of a greater purpose. Mary's song shows us how to draw on Scripture to see God at work in our circumstances—at Christmas and into the new year.



MARY SAID,

“My heart praises the Lord;

my soul is glad because of God my Savior,
for he has remembered me, his lowly
servant!

From now on all people will call me happy,

because of the great things the Mighty God
has done for me.

His name is holy;

from one generation to another
he shows mercy to those who honor him.

He has stretched out his mighty arm

and scattered the proud with all their plans.

He has brought down mighty kings from their

thrones, and lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away with empty hands.

He has kept the promise he made to our

ancestors, and has come to the help of his
servant Israel.

He has remembered to show mercy to Abraham

and to all his descendants forever!”

LUKE 1:46–55

Recognize God

Mary recognizes God. She calls God “My savior” (1:47) and “Mighty” (1:49) and “Holy” (1:49). It's as if she's saying, “I know God. I know this God would not do anything wrong or unkind. I can trust him.”

When we read Scripture, we also recognize God. Pay attention to his character traits. Ask the question, if God is _____ [holy, loving, faithful, all-knowing, good], what does that mean for me?

Recall God's Promises

Mary also recalls God's promises. “He has kept the promise he made to our ancestors, and has come to the help of his servant Israel. He has remembered to show mercy to Abraham and to all his descendants forever!” (1:54–55). Mary is comforted that God keeps his word.

We apply God's promises too. The apostle Paul writes that Jesus “is the ‘Yes’ to all of God's promises” (2 Corinthians 1:20). Let that sink in! When you read the Bible, look for God's promises and prayerfully consider how Jesus offers them to you.

Reflect on God's Mercy

Throughout her song, Mary reflects on the mercy of God: “He shows mercy to those who honor him” (1:50). “He has filled the hungry with good things” (1:53). Mary's belief in God's mercy is founded in repeated exposure to God's Word. She understands that the birth of her son is the ultimate demonstration of God's mercy—the one that all the Scriptures pointed to.

We also reflect on God's mercy as we read Scripture. God describes himself as “full of compassion and pity” (Exodus 34:6). After searching for examples of God's mercy in Scripture, begin to look for examples in your own life. Keep a running list.

When we read Scripture in this way, we, like Mary, will be amazed by him. Like Mary, we will sing a song of praise for our Savior. ▀



We've created a daily Bible reading guide just for you! Download your guide at:

[ABS.Bible/DailyBible](https://www.ABS.Bible/DailyBible)



IN MEMORIAM

in memory of my husband
Hugo Anderson
given by Marilyn Anderson

in memory of my father
Jere Lawrence Crook Jr.
given by Senter Crook

in memory of my friend
Alice Hine
given by David Holtz

in memory of my husband
Michael Martin
given by Sharon Martin

in memory of
Erma Seitz & Junior Seitz
given by Karen Ard

in memory of
Helen White & Norman White
given by Carolyn Piper

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Memorials of \$500 or more for one individual or family unit will be published in *Record*.

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The Legacy of Eleanor Wilson

How a faithful partner who went home to glory is still influencing the world for Jesus

BY JACK NEWMAN

Eleanor Wilson followed Jesus faithfully.

Eleanor lived in a cottage on a hill with Bible verses and hymns calligraphied over its walls. “The church was her life,” Eleanor’s friend Linda Clement recalls. “I could start any Bible verse, and she could finish it!”

Eleanor Wilson worked diligently.

As a girl, Eleanor carried water to the cows on her father’s farm in Maine. She lugged coal to poor neighbors in need of heat. As an adult, she pursued a career in library science when it was rare for women to enter the workforce. She cared for those around her consistently and respectfully. “She was quiet. She was humble. She loved everyone,” says Linda.



“Instead of buying anything for herself, she would rather share the Word of God.”

Eleanor Wilson gave generously.

“She loved American Bible Society,” Linda says. “Instead of buying anything for herself, she would rather share the Word of God.”

Eleanor was always looking for opportunities to give. She inspired those near her to do the same. “Eleanor and her family had a big influence on my values and behavior,” says Eleanor’s cousin Sarah.

Eleanor Wilson lives eternally.

Today, Eleanor is with Jesus. When Eleanor entered into glory last year at the age of 92, she



Above: Eleanor Wilson, a faithful American Bible Society partner.
Below: Eleanor Wilson (left) and her sister Mary on the front porch of their cottage in Maine.

continued her legacy of generosity by remembering American Bible Society in her Will.

And through her Will, she is still introducing people to Jesus through the pages of Scripture—the remarkable legacy of a remarkable woman. ■



In the Potter’s Hands

You helped teen girls in an Israeli safe house recognize their value through pottery and Scripture

BY MARISSA RUMPF

In Northern Israel, 19-year-old Lina steps into a ceramic studio to learn from a master potter—and ultimately about the true Master Potter, God. The trip is arranged by the Arab Israeli Bible Society, a special partner of the safe house for abused girls where Lina lives. From childhood, these girls have witnessed discrimination against women—in society, in the workforce, and even in churches. Lina has experienced the worst manifestations of that marginalization: physical and sexual abuse, forced withdrawal from school after eighth grade.

But today, Lina knows that she is valuable. The clay has turned into something beautiful in her hands. The teacher praises her work, encouraging her to develop her

artistic gifts. During this pottery course, she has experienced kindness without criticism. She has experienced generosity without expectations. In the context of this love and care, she has begun to open her heart to a Master Potter who can shape her life into something beautiful.

Since 2009, partners like you have provided support for women like Lina—introducing them to God’s love through seminars, conferences, and trips hosted by the Bible Society. They receive Scripture, counseling, and study tools. Ultimately, these women are empowered to become leaders in their churches and communities. Inspired by God’s Word, they reflect Christ’s heart by seeing all people as God sees them: valuable and equal. ■

LEFT PHOTOS: Courtesy of Sarah Farnsworth; RIGHT PHOTO: Bassam Youssef, Bible Society in Israel



PHOTO: Joshua Wann, American Bible Society

BY HANNAH DEMARCO

BRINGING US BACK TO MERCY

How one Bible connected two women
from across the world

Mercy kicks up dust on the Kenyan roads. After a three-hour bus ride, hopping onto a motorcycle taxi, and wandering through narrow streets of tiny villages, she is finally close to her destination.

Some teens her age would have given up long ago—complained about the weather making their hair frizzy, wanted a snack, gone to hang out with friends.

But Mercy is determined to get where she's going. Because there, she gets to speak her story. There, she gets to tell you how the Bible you gave her five years ago changed her life.

Why Kim Went to Kenya

Kim, a fundraiser for American Bible Society, steps off the plane in Nairobi, Kenya.

As a teen growing up in Minnesota, Kim dreamed of traveling as a photographer for National Geographic. Then she met Jesus, and her life took a different route. She wanted

her gifts to be used for God's kingdom, so she launched into a career of storytelling for Christian nonprofits.

Here she is—in Kenya for the first time—a camera strapped around her neck, ready to tell you about what God's Word is doing in Kenya. She sees the people bustling through the city market. She's struck by the sharp scent of cumin stirred into a stew and the base, slightly bitter note of ugali corn porridge. The March breeze is cooler than she expected. She feels nervous, excited, and expectant. Here, she'll get the chance to hear Mercy's story.

"Will she even remember the time my colleagues gave her a Bible?" Kim wonders. "It was so many years ago."

Five years to be exact. Kim has seen Mercy many times—in a photo of her holding her first Bible, which she received in 2013.

"I thought it would be cool to meet Mercy one day and ask her about her Bible," Kim says. "I wondered what that Bible did to help her."



Kim, a staff member at American Bible Society, connects with Mercy five years after Mercy received her first Bible.

Hearing Mercy's Story

A phone call, bus ride, motorcycle taxi, and long walk later, Mercy and Kim meet.

There's no electricity at the orphanage, so Kim and Mercy meet in a dimly lit room. Still, Kim sees the same sparkle in Mercy's smile that she'd seen in Mercy's picture for all those years. She quietly thanks God for this moment, and then the two women sit: Mercy on the couch and Kim in a chair beside her. Mercy is shy and reserved at first, but she is also eager to tell her story. Kim turns the recorder on.

Along with us, she is about to hear how one Bible gave Mercy the guidance she craved.

How Mercy Became a "Bible Worm"

Mercy's story begins on the steps of New Hope Orphanage, where she was left as a baby.

As Mercy grew up, she assumed that the woman who took care of her at the orphanage was her mother. Later, she discovered that her

birth mother died shortly after she was born. She does not know who her father is.

The woman Mercy calls Mom raised her with stories from the Bible. But Mercy never had a Bible of her own. She dreamed of the day she'd have a Bible to write little notes in and read whenever she wanted. She says the Scriptures "guide you in what to do, so you can't get messed up in life."

Whenever she had the chance, Mercy would beg to borrow a Bible from a friend. She'd pore over the pages, seeking wisdom from the words of God. But these sweet stolen moments weren't enough—she wanted more time to discover what God's Word had to teach her.

Then—during a Scripture distribution trip to Kenya in 2013—you stepped in and handed Mercy her first Bible.

Mercy remembers the moment. She remembers holding her Bible close to her chest. She remembers smiling for a photo, clutching her prized possession—God's words of guidance

"YOU STEPPED IN AND HANDED MERCY HER FIRST BIBLE."

and love written just for her. From that day onward, Mercy cherished your gift to her.

At first, she says, "I didn't know [how] to read the Bible. I didn't know how to connect the verses." But then she remembered the first verse her Mom at the orphanage taught her. So she searched through her Bible for Jeremiah 29:11, found it, and memorized these words: "I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for."

God's Word gave Mercy comfort when she needed it most in the orphanage. Mercy started reading the Bible every morning and evening. She stopped reading novels and storybooks because she couldn't put her Bible down.

"Some people called me a Bible worm because I would stay with my Bible," she giggles. "Even at night, you can find it beside my bed when I'm sleeping."

As she read the Bible every day, Mercy learned what she craved to understand: how to live a life devoted to Jesus. Her life started to change. She obeyed her elders more. She learned how to forgive the other children at her orphanage. She discovered that God loves her more than any earthly parent could—and that he guides her as a parent would.

"When you start doing such bad things, you just remember words that guide you, and you stop it and say, 'My God is not happy when I do these things.'"

As Mercy explored God's Word, she learned that Jesus calls us to live in service of others. The more she read the Bible, the more she longed to

"SOME PEOPLE CALLED ME A BIBLE WORM BECAUSE I WOULD STAY WITH MY BIBLE. EVEN AT NIGHT, YOU CAN FIND IT BESIDE MY BED WHEN I'M SLEEPING."

love the most vulnerable people around her—including orphans like herself.

Mercy plans to become a lawyer one day. "We are oppressed," says Mercy, "Now I want to fight for justice for such people." Mercy longs to fight for and comfort parentless children who might feel alone, rejected, and confused. She wants them to feel God's closeness the way she does. "With God," she says, "everything is possible."

Mercy knows her heavenly Father well. She trusts his plans for her. She follows his guidance to love people well. Thanks to you, his words for her will rest on her bedside table and in her heart for the rest of her life.

Just \$5 Gave Hope

Your gift to Mercy changed Kim, too. It changed the way she thought of the power of a single Bible. "What one Bible can do is incredible!" Kim exclaims. "Just five dollars gave her hope, you know?"

And Kim sees the value of her work even more. "The better I do my job, the better I can help another child on the other side of the world," she reflects.

Your gift to Mercy—one Bible given over five years ago—transformed the way Mercy and Kim experience God's Word.

You give more than Bibles. You give the loving guidance of a Father to a parentless child. You give the awesome reminder of Scripture's power to those of us working alongside you. You give the hope and belonging that comes from God's Word. 📖

Give Bibles to kids like Mercy now. Visit ABS.Bible/GiveBibles

BY WINDSOR

MARCHESI

FREER & FREER

JESUS
SHATTERED
ALL
CHRISTIE'S
ASSUMPTIONS
ABOUT
MEN &
LOVE

Christie says the “bad stuff” started when she was 3. At age 5, Christie was adopted. She remembers the shocking words her biological father spoke in the courtroom: “I don’t want ’em ... Take my name off the birth certificate.”

At 15, Christie sought relief by turning to destructive habits. Drugs. Alcohol. Sex. The men she trusted only hurt her—badly. For the next 31 years, she suffered through one abusive relationship after another. Broken arms. Punctured lungs. A shattered face. Knives. Guns. Death threats. At one point, she prayed to die.

Christie was arrested on forgery charges. When she got to jail, she weighed just 86 pounds, which landed her the nickname of “Bones.”

PHOTO: Jakob Owens, Unsplash.com



“I HAVE LEARNED
TO CLING TO JESUS.
WHEN I HAVE STUFF
GOING ON WITH ME,
I TAKE IT DIRECTLY
TO THE CROSS.”

Bones’s tiny frame was barely capable of supporting all her anger. “I hated everybody and everything,” she says.

Addictions and a life of crime had taken their toll. She was tired. Tired of the life she’d chosen. Tired of the hurt she’d endured.

Looking back, she sees that the Lord was on a mission to set her free—through jail.

A Healing Exchange

It wasn’t Christie’s first time in jail. Or second. Or even third. She knew the drill, and she knew what she’d have to stand up against. What she wasn’t expecting was kindness. But God sent Joy, the jail’s chaplain from Good News Jail and Prison Ministry, to give Christie a message.

“One day, when she walked in, I didn’t see Joy—I saw Christ. He said to me, ‘My beloved daughter, come home to me,’” remembers Christie.

Her walk with the Lord began that day—16 years ago.

THE NEED FOR BIBLE-BASED TRAUMA HEALING IN U.S. PRISONS



97%

of incarcerated women and 75% of incarcerated men have a background of trauma.



100

chaplains were trained as Bible-based trauma healing facilitators in 2017.



435

inmates have experienced Bible-based trauma healing since 2017.



???

Your gifts can help people find healing. **ABS.Bible/ JesusHeals**

It took time for Christie to truly trust God and get to know him as a loving Father. For so many years, the men in her life had used her. Harmed her. Betrayed her. But God pursued her—putting people in her path who led her toward healing through Scripture.

Christie was invited to participate in Bible-based trauma healing—a way of experiencing God’s Word and exchanging years of buried pain for God’s hope. God’s joy. God’s peace. God’s freedom.

At each session, Christie embraced the Bible’s life-changing messages of truth. With each

new revelation came another step of healing.

One session involved expressing trauma through an art exercise. “I drew a picture of me in a corner, like a badger in a corner, ready to come out fighting. There is a man behind me choking me,” Christie explains. “When I drew that out and saw it, it was like—it was like—oh my gosh.”

The suffering from Christie’s trauma-filled life came alive on the page. She realized her burdens were too heavy to bear. And she realized they were no longer hers to carry. She says, “When I laid all that sorrow and everything down to the

Lord, it felt like he took five tons of stuff off my shoulders.”

Loved by Abba

Today, Christie refers to God as “Abba,” an intimate and loving reference to God that means “Daddy.” It reveals the kind of relationship she has with her Father in heaven—one of humble admiration, trust, and confidence.

“He’s the only one who can change me—man can’t,” Christie says. “Abba Father can from the inside out.”

Now, Christie leaves her pain, fears, and worries at the feet of Jesus.

PHOTO: Joshua Wann, American Bible Society

“I’M GETTING FREER
AND FREER EACH AND
EVERY DAY.”



“I have learned to cling to Jesus,” Christie says. “When I have stuff going on with me, I take it directly to the cross.”

Christie is now a successful business owner, active church participant, and trusted friend of those in her community. She says, “Right now, I have no wants and no needs for anything because I depend on [Abba Father] and I depend on him alone.”

Christie now feels free from fear. Free to trust. Free to be loved. “I’m getting freer and freer each and every day,” she says.

Give God Your Heart

Christie knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that God’s unconditional love can transform the hardest of hearts. And she doesn’t want anyone to stay in a place of pain or brokenness for another second. “He doesn’t want us to live in this sorrow or the suffering,” says Christie.

Christie wants everyone to know that Jesus, our great Healer, offers hope to each of us. “If you’ve been abused, if you’re an addict, an alcoholic, a prostitute—if the Lord comes knocking at your heart, give it to him,” Christie says. “He’ll make you into a beautiful creature, like he’s done me. Thank you, Jesus.”

You can share Scripture’s healing power with people who are suffering. [Visit ABS.Bible/JesusHeals](https://www.americanbible.org/abs/bible/jesusheals)






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