

Reach UP



A Life Transformational Magazine

Spring 2020

Faith
Ignorance is NOT Bliss

Lifestyle
Sister, Sister

What do you think of when you hear *sisterhood*? Noisy marches with silly hats? Old-fashioned women with nothing more to do than sip tea in the afternoon? Maybe you think of the sister you fought with as a child but would now lay down your life for? Or the sister who hurt you and you've avoided for a while? Maybe the sister in the program where you are who has your back?

What if I called you my sister even though we have never met? Would you believe me?

Let me go a step further. What if I told you that Jesus Himself called you His sister? Would you believe me?

It's true!

Let me explain. I put a lot of effort into *Reach UP*. I gather volunteers to use their talents to do far more than produce this magazine. I ask for donations from MANY people so you don't have to pay a subscription fee. I do all this to make a difference and show you I — and all the rest of the team — care.

A woman wants us to only use her initials, MJP, sent in an article from jail and in her accompanying letter she wrote, "I have always enjoyed reading *Reach UP* because it enriches women by highlighting the stories of the Broken who have allowed God to use them for His glory and foster them into a Trophy of Grace. The testimonies and content that are shared in the Lifestyle and Faith sections never fail to inspire me." Maybe she echoes your thoughts. Her enthusiasm sparked something in me, and I feel tenderly toward her. I want my sister to succeed!

Jesus said, "The person who obeys my heavenly Father's will is my brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:50). Yes, "if you obey" is a condition of becoming His sister, but let me break it down for you. Everything God wants for you is for your good — 100% GOOD, now and forever! None of us is perfect and God knows that. So, if you try to do His will, which begins with believing in Jesus as your Savior and Forgiver of your sins, you gain Jesus as your big brother and you become His sister.

And in the time it takes to snap your fingers, you go from sisterhood to divine family. Your worth just skyrocketed! As you grow in this spiritual reality, your inner beauty will gush out through the sparkle in your eyes, the smile on your face, the spring in your step, and the kindness in your actions.

Pretty cool, isn't it? Now we are not only connected through *Reach UP*, we are connected in God's eternal family.

So, my sister, let me encourage you to "reach up" today. Go for that goal. Remember your big Brother Jesus is helping you, and your divine family is cheering you on.

Crystal Knapp

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Sometimes while we are getting our lives together, we have to live — shall we say, a little too close to each other — in the housing provided. Here is something to help you get along with each other

Sister SISTER

by Ana Allen

Sister,

Though not of the same blood or born the same mother, we have the same Father in heaven.

When you cry, I cry, and when you laugh, I laugh. No matter how hard life may get, it won't matter because we've already been through our worst.

When you found your way out of the darkness, I was here waiting to hear how you made it out.

As my sister in Christ, I am your keeper. I'll get on your nerves, I'll tire you out, I'll make you scream — maybe even make you fuss me out. I'll make you say, "I've had enough," but I'll never make you feel like you're alone. I'll never make you feel like I don't have your back. I'll never let you forget how proud I am of you. I'll never let you think less of yourself. I'll never let you think that your past determines who you have become today.

My sister, you are the parts of me that God knew I needed, but, with my big head, it wasn't happening, so He blessed me with you.

Sisters, though the path may seem rough, don't give up; I can't let you and I won't allow it! When I was ready to give up, you held me in place and taught me how to keep the enemy from taking what is for me.

Your caring ways caused me to care about you. I cried to be a part of your educational journey as you learned to read.

I cried to realize I made you feel hurt by my mistakes. And I cried to have you boot my self-esteem each day. Back and forth we went. I cried to have you excited about my creativity. I cried to have you trust me. I cried to have you always have my back as my sisters. I cried when you got hurt deeply in any way.

When I am alone, I cry tears of joy, tears of understanding, tears of growth, and tears because I see that people can truly care.

To be loved and called your sister means more to me than you all may see. I love you all for everything you try to teach me. I love you for knowing that my child means the world to me, and for you all loving him as well.

How did I get so blessed with such sisters? Yes, we stress! Yes, we fight! And yes, sometimes we act like we can't live with one another, but we still love one another. That is the true love of sisters.

God blessed me so, and I need you all to know that, to me, you play a part in the recovery of my heart and mind. My sisters, THANK YOU for LOVING me — for seeing the BEST in me — even when I don't feel worthy. Thank you for helping me grow, no matter what!

I AM MY SISTERS KEEPER!!



WHAT'S THE WORTH OF MY BODY?

by K'ryn Mar Lat

I can remember it as if it were yesterday. When I was nine years old, we were evicted from our home. My mother worked two jobs so she took us to stay at the apartment of a male friend of hers for the night.

That same night my body was violated by this so-called friend. I was awakened from my sleep as I suddenly felt this man remove his hands from between my legs to run across the room because there was a knock at the door.

Thank God, it was my mother. In the morning I couldn't figure out if that incident actually took place or if it was just a dream, so I never told anyone.

Where I grew up, guys were usually outside, smoking and drinking on the block. One day when I came home from school, I was met in the dark stretch of a hallway by one of the guys I knew from the neighborhood. This guy was much older than me, and he had strong muscles. You know the kind – he looked as if he'd just been released from the penitentiary. He came very close to me, so close that I was able to smell the aroma of marijuana and alcohol on his clothes. Then he pushed his tongue in my mouth without saying a word. Thanks to the neighbor who saw us through the window of the locked hallway door and started banging on the door to get in, he left me alone. But this wasn't the end of similar confrontations.

*"You are worth
everything to Me"*

I know that many of you have had much worse things happen to you. But if you haven't, know that any sexual abuse affects our worth.

Sometimes I wondered if it was my fault, but mostly I tried to ignore it. That led me to become involved in the riskier parts of fashion shows where the creativity was purposefully eye-catching and other events to make me popular.

Looking back, those things did me no justice but were only a cover up for how I was feeling. The truth is, what started off as a violation to my body — the same as rape — turned into passion, which ultimately grew into lust. That caused more damage because I thought it was normal.

Finally, I started asking myself the question, "What is my body worth?" I didn't realize then that these things happened to lots of women, but they affected each woman differently.

Women like many in my neighborhood made bad decisions by becoming strippers or someone's playmate for money. They gave in and didn't do things God's way because they didn't value themselves. They ended up going through lots of struggles and suffering as they tried to make ends meet, all the while trying to look as if they could afford the expensive living.

I noticed that those women who viewed themselves as having worth and who didn't give their bodies away outside of marriage often found success early and avoided the pitfalls that came with low self-worth. Obedience to God's ways has benefits.

If someone would have told me as a child that my body was worth something, I think I could have probably avoided some situations — and not depended on that knock at the door. Today, I find it very important to tell a child the worth of his or her body while growing up. Everything that I went through early in my life caused so much pain that every day I asked the question, "Man, am I worth anything?" Thoughts of suicide entered my mind often then.

Years later, when a purpose — my child — entered my life, I said to myself, "Man, with all my stupid mistakes, I can't believe I'm still here. I must be worth something." I was ready for a change.

Getting into the Word has helped me see that from the beginning, it was told to us that our bodies are a temple (1 Corinthians 6:19). Our bodies are gifts from God and the place where God lives. I found out that if I allowed Him to come inside of me and reside in

this temple where He belongs, He would release me from all the hurt and disgust I've carried around.

Eventually I watched all the mess that surrounded me finally disappear. Now I can hear Him saying to me, "You are worth everything to Me." I have come to

the Man who paid the ultimate price, the Man who calls me His princess and tells me I'm worth far more than rubies (Proverbs 31:10).

He is on the side of all women (and all men) who are going through any kind of pain and are risking their personal health and



realize that it was always Jesus who was knocking at the door — the door of my heart. And I am thankful that I let Him in.

I could have avoided the outcome of those events just by opening my heart and allowing Him in. For a while I was a victim of circumstances, but not anymore. He bought me with His life, and no one else on earth who would pay that price for me.

The worth of my body is not in the way I look, the way I am shaped, or the price of the clothes I wear. My worth is because of Him who now lives in me. He loves me, and that makes me priceless. Now I adorn myself for Him, not for the men in the night clubs who made me feel worthless and less than a woman. Now, it's for

lives by putting themselves in danger, unintentionally hurting their children and loved ones, and feeling like they're worth nothing.

We need to ask ourselves why God chooses to live in our temples. Could it be because He thinks we're worthy?

Yes, I am worth something! I am worth a lot more than one dollar, a lot more than five hundred dollars, and even more than a million dollars. And so are you!

He wants you to know that He gave His life for you, and He's been knocking on your door. I urge you to free yourself and let Him in, then see your worth.

Thank you, Jesus. Your love is unconditional.

K'ryn Mar Lat lives in Fort Lauderdale with her husband and is a Community Liaison/Victim Advocate with Victim's Advocate Services.

MJP

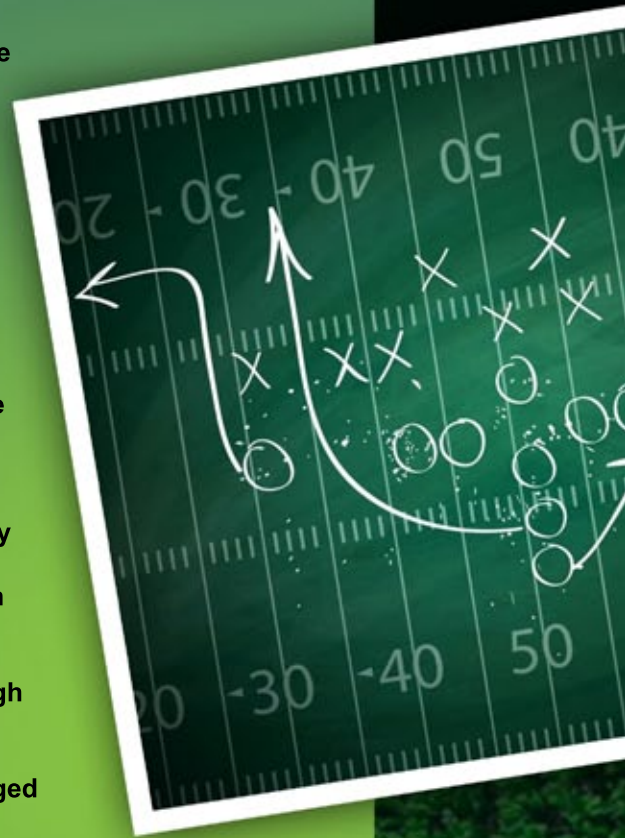
writes to us:

religion but was ignorant of the fact that I was quenching His Spirit in me. I knew of God, but did not know Him.

So, as in JOB 3:25-26, The thing I greatly feared came upon me. I was not at ease, I had no rest, for trouble came my way. When faced with the beginning of major changes in my life in 2010, I did not know how to overcome. I was ignorant of the enemy and didn't know about the weapons I had to resist him. Unknowingly, I gave him a foothold into my life.

But God, rich in His mercy, rescued me in 2015 on so many different levels. In His almighty and clever ways, He did for me what He promised to do for His people. After my encounter with Him, I let Him transform me as He spoke tenderly to my heart and stirred up His Spirit within me. Ever since then I have been intentional about growing my relationship with Him. Even though I have been in jail now for four years, fighting for my physical freedom, I have left everything in my heavenly Father's hands. One of the influential women God has placed in my life challenged me to write a topical study. I chose a subject matter that could empower and educate others to learn about and suit up against our enemy.

In 2005, I made the decision to be baptized and attend church regularly on Sunday mornings. At the time I did not understand what it meant to have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. I was practicing



Ignorance is Not Always Bliss

by M. J. P.

When a coach prepares for a game or a meet, one of the strategies is to watch footage of the opponent's previous performances. The coach's assistants and his players watch too. Notes are taken, shared, and studied. Together, they come up with the best defensive and offensive moves to secure a win over their opponent.

The same goes for troops at war. They gather what is called "combat intelligence." They do all they can to familiarize themselves with their enemy and its resources. And if the troops want to invade the enemy's territory, they need to familiarize themselves with the enemy's grounds.

Well, whether you know it or not, there is a war going on. If you are a believer and have surrendered

your life to Jesus Christ, you are a child of God. You are His soldier. That's the good news. The bad news is that you then become an opponent of God's enemy.

So like a coach with her team or a captain with his troops, we soldiers have to be smart and gather combat intelligence against our enemy.

Who is our enemy? He has several titles which describe what he is like.

- He is called "Satan." This title taken from the Hebrew word for "adversary," which means one who attacks, accuses, or resists.
- He is called "the devil." This title is taken from the Greek word diabolos, which means someone who



slanders or maligns (think of a cancerous tumor).

- We can see this when he tempted Jesus after He fasted 40 days and nights in the wilderness.
- He is called “Beelzebub,” which means “the lord of the flies” because he is the ruler of all the demons.
- He is also called “Lucifer,” which means “Day Star” or “Morning Star.” This title speaks to his original purpose when he was still on God’s side. Because he can still use this ability, it means that he can transform himself into an angel of light. That’s highly deceptive, for sure!

The enemy’s sole desire is to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). He loves to accuse us — God’s chosen people (Revelation 12:11; Job 1) — and put us down.

The Apostle Peter instructs us to be alert and keep a cool head because the devil walks about like a roaring lion, ready to pounce and bring you down (1 Peter 5:8-9). This is because he wants to make us ineffective in life and in this war. He devours us through our fears, anxieties, heartbreaks, failures, loneliness, addictions, and losses — basically, all of our struggles and trials. These struggles and trials are experienced by most everyone. Knowing that should help you not feel alone in the fight.

Now that we have identified who the enemy is and what he aims to do against us, let’s go over some combat intelligence.

In Matthew 2 we learn how the enemy prepped a murderer to try and kill the newborn King Jesus so he could destroy God’s plan for our Savior. If Satan used Herod like that, it is no surprise that he also has nasty plans to kill us emotionally and physically. The enemy is crafty but no match for God.

In Matthew 4 we see an offensive move on the enemy’s part. The devil tempted Jesus when He was physically weak. Having fasted for forty days. But notice that Jesus defeated His enemy by using the Word of God as His defense. Jesus did not just recite the Word, He believed it with His whole heart, mind, and soul. We need to believe like Jesus.

As humans, we struggle with three things: our flesh, the world, and the enemy. The enemy knows how to use our flesh and the world against us, but sometimes we do it to ourselves. Scripture warns us not to love the world’s ways or its goods (1 John 2:15-17). Loving

these things squeezes out our love for the Father.

John goes on to say that practically everything can be put into those three categories: 1) wanting everything your own way — the flesh; 2) wanting everything for yourself — lust of the eyes; and 3) wanting to appear important — pride of life. The devil tempted Jesus in those three areas: 1) His flesh by was tempted by Satan trying to get Him to make bread out of stones during His fast; 2) His identity was questioned by Satan saying, “If You are the Son of God”; and 3) His goal of saving the world was threatened by a false shortcut to quickly gain all the kingdoms of the world.

From what I see, these are the only three plays that the enemy uses. So, let’s not slack up on our defense — or offense, for that matter. Let’s not wait for an attack or temptation. Now you are aware and informed. Look up the Bible passages and ask questions until you understand it and can apply it to your everyday life.

Let’s stand our ground in our uniforms of the armor of God (Isaiah 61:10; Ephesians 6:10-18 — there’s so much to learn here, too) and represent God’s camp of troops. That’s a winning team! Let’s not be ignorant concerning this battle. Let’s occupy until Jesus comes back. We are not going to just let stuff happen to us! We are going to fight and gain ground!



BEAUTY TIPS

from
Your Kitchen

Olive Oil for Nails: Works great for strengthening your nails. Dip a clean nail polish brush into olive oil and lightly coat each nail. Let it sit for a few minutes, then wash it off. Because your nails and hair follicles are made up of the same proteins, you can use a similar treatment to strengthen weak hair.

Toothpaste: You use it for brushing your teeth twice a day, everyday. But did you know you can also use it to remove water marks on stained wood when the kids don't use coasters? It also works great for reducing the redness of blemishes. Why spend money on designer creams when you already have one sitting on your bathroom counter? After washing your face, gently dab a bit of white toothpaste on your zit. For best results, let it sit overnight. Then wash off the dried paste with your regular face wash and blot it dry with a soft towel.

Honey: The best facial mask is honey. Place a cloth in warm water and apply it to your face to open the pores.

You don't have to be rich to look fabulous. You just have to be a little creative. But watch out! Some of these quick-fix beauty remedies sound good enough to eat!

Then smear honey on your face and leave it for 15 to 30 minutes. Rinse off with warm water, and then use cold water to close the pores. Do this once a week.

Lemon and Egg: Here's an easy way to make a great facial masque. Squeeze half a lemon and mix the juice with one beaten egg white. Leave this mask on your face overnight, or for a quick pick-me-up, just leave it on 15 minutes. Splash warm water on your face to rinse. This masque helps remove blotches because the lemon works as a bleaching agent.

Banana: Banana is wonderful as an anti-wrinkle treatment. Mash 1/4 banana until it is very creamy. Spread it all over you face and leave it on for 15 to 20 minutes before rinsing it off with warm water. Follow with a splash of cold water. Gently pat dry.

Egg: Try this super hair conditioner. Beat an egg yolk until it's frothy. Then add 1 teaspoon baby oil and beat again. Finally add 1 cup of water. Massage into the scalp and throughout your hair. Rinse well.

Avocado and Coconut Milk: To make an effective hair conditioner, combine mashed avocado with some coconut milk. Comb it through your hair and let sit for 10 to 15 minutes, then rinse out.

Given to you by: