



The Story Behind

*Home
with a
Heart*



Elaine Bond



Dedication

*This book is dedicated
to my three beautiful daughters,
Amy, Natalie and Laura,
who are the reason my
heart is in my home.*

A decorative border of light gray floral and leaf patterns surrounds the text. Four heart shapes are placed at the top, bottom, left, and right center of the border.

Foreword

Long overdue, Elaine has blended practical common sense knowledge which, unfortunately, is not all that common with a compassionate, loving sense of servanthood. She communicates not only how to survive, but also how to thrive, while living in a world that is less than kind to single mothers. Written from her own personal experiences, these handbooks are a must for single moms of any age who desire to be the best they can, living under the worst of circumstances. Leaders and consumers who desire to be better equipped to serve and encourage this rapidly growing population of women worldwide need to offer *Home with a Heart* to single mothers in their area of influence.

Reverend Bill Wilson
Founder, Metro Ministries
Brooklyn, New York
Author, *Whose Child is This?*



A Personal Note

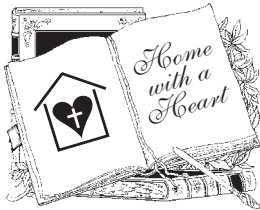
It is my desire as a single mother to impart to you that which has sustained me and brought me joy over the years. I have seen that many hurting women and children do not know where to turn to find the help for which they are crying out.

Although *Home with a Heart* offers much in the way of practical help, that in itself will not sustain you.

I know, as well as any single mother could know, how great a responsibility is upon your shoulders because I have parented alone from pregnancy to graduation.

Home with a Heart is not just a book or a course, or a place of refreshing and restoration. It is a place deep within my heart that God has touched for my own home and children.

Elaine



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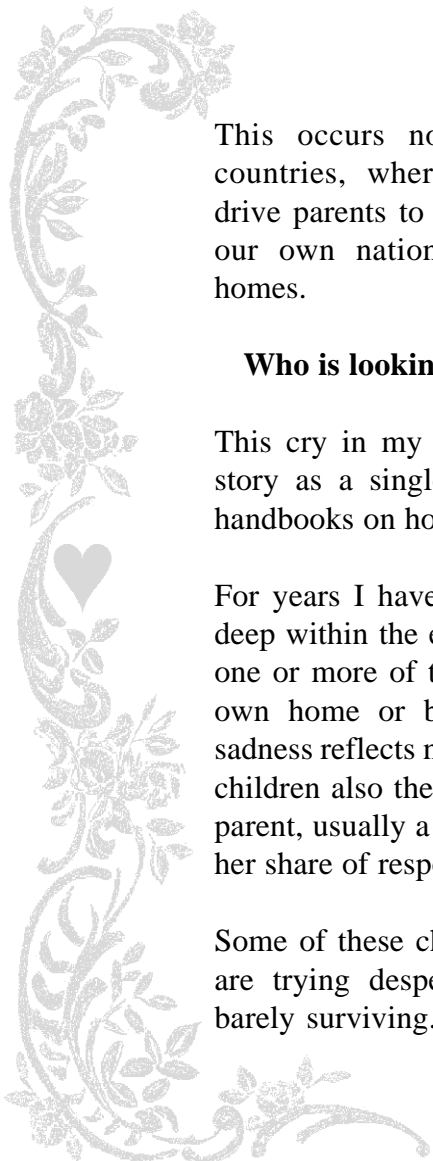


One

*The Heart
Behind the Home*

*M*y heart cries so deeply for hurting children that I do not know if words can express what I feel. Behind closed doors or worse yet, from the streets, children cry from every corner of the earth for someone to love them, care for them and fulfill their needs.

Never before in history have children been so abandoned by their parents. Never before have so many millions of children needed someone, yet no one is there for them.



This occurs not only in under-developed countries, where poverty and hopelessness drive parents to leave their young, but also in our own nation, cities, neighborhoods and homes.

Who is looking after the children today?

This cry in my heart moved me to write my story as a single mother and the subsequent handbooks on homemaking.

For years I have seen the pain and emptiness deep within the eyes of children abandoned by one or more of their parents, either within my own home or beyond my four walls. Their sadness reflects not only their loss, but for many children also the strain of living with only one parent, usually a mother carrying far more than her share of responsibility.

Some of these children live with mothers who are trying desperately to cope, but are just barely surviving. Other faces depict the shame

and suffering that results from a home life in which abuse and addictions dominate. Still other precious children have tragic stories similar to the pastor who wrote the foreword for this book. They are homeless children, rejected by mothers who deserted them, mothers who never found the help they needed.

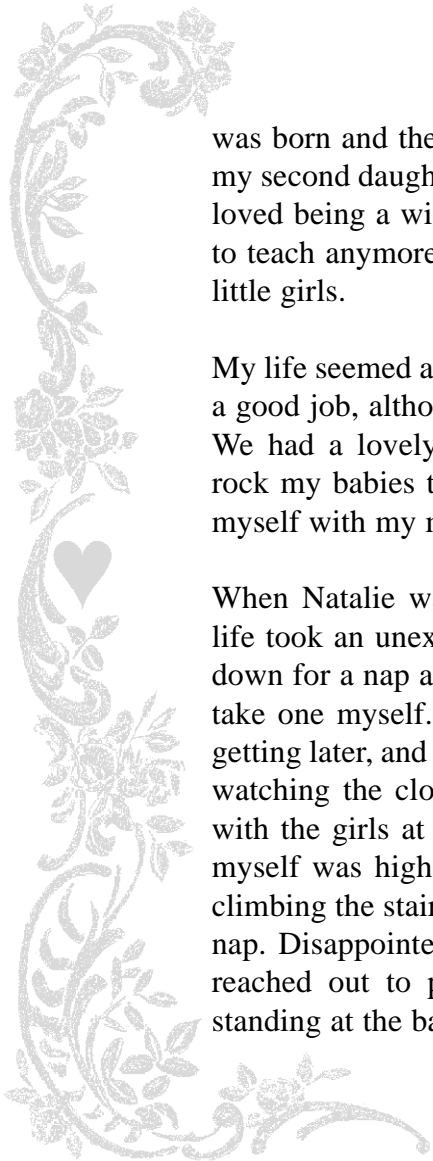
Is there an answer for the hearts' cries of abandoned children? I believe there is.

My Story Begins

I grew up in a small town in the Niagara Region of Canada. I lived in a well functioning home with two older sisters and parents who loved me. When I turned fifteen years of age, my Dad died very suddenly. His loss left an ache in my heart throughout my teenage years. I had always felt very close to my Dad and missed him terribly.

However, I successfully completed high school and went on to Teacher's College. I married at twenty. Five years later my first daughter Amy





was born and then nineteen months after, I had my second daughter Natalie. I was very happy. I loved being a wife and a mother and chose not to teach anymore, but to remain home with my little girls.

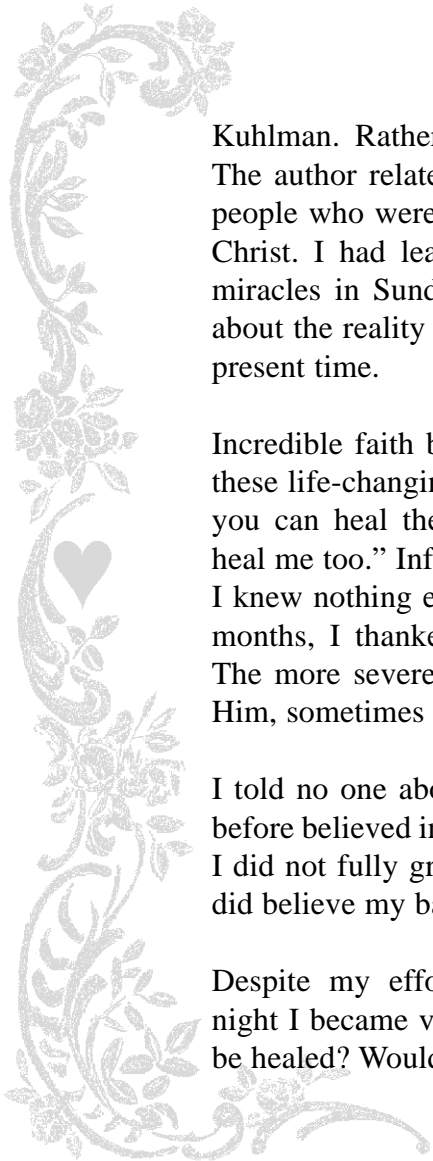
My life seemed almost perfect. My husband had a good job, although he worked most evenings. We had a lovely home and I could walk and rock my babies to my heart's content. I busied myself with my mothering and homemaking.

When Natalie was only three months old, my life took an unexpected turn. I had just put her down for a nap and was heading to my room to take one myself. My husband's evenings were getting later, and the night before I found myself watching the clock until 3:00 a.m., then arose with the girls at 6:00 a.m. Therefore a rest for myself was high on my priority list. As I was climbing the stairs I heard Amy awake from her nap. Disappointed at my missed opportunity, I reached out to pick her up because she was standing at the back of her crib.

All of a sudden, I fell to my knees in excruciating pain as I heard muscles and ligaments rip across my lower back. I didn't know what had happened to me. Dragging myself to a phone, I called for help. I soon learned how serious the injury was. After months of back braces, a body cast and then traction, the pain was just as intense as in the beginning. Throughout this time, I needed daily help to assist me in caring for my new baby and two-year-old.

Four more months of physical therapy still brought no change. My back was badly scarred and damaged. A team of six specialists determined I would live with the pain for the rest of my life. I couldn't believe this was happening to me. I thought, "I am too young for such a diagnosis!"

A few days after receiving this news, I was wandering through a bookstore where a particular book caught my eye. The name of it was *I Believe in Miracles*, by Kathryn



Kuhlman. Rather curious, I bought the book. The author related many miraculous stories of people who were healed by the power of Jesus Christ. I had learned about and taught Jesus' miracles in Sunday School, but never thought about the reality of anyone being healed in this present time.

Incredible faith began to fill me while reading these life-changing stories. I cried out, "God, if you can heal these people, I believe you can heal me too." Influenced only by my own faith, I knew nothing else but to trust God. For three months, I thanked Him daily for healing me. The more severe the pain, the more I thanked Him, sometimes praying just minutes apart.

I told no one about my prayers as I had never before believed in God so strongly. Even though I did not fully grasp what I was doing, I really did believe my back would be healed.

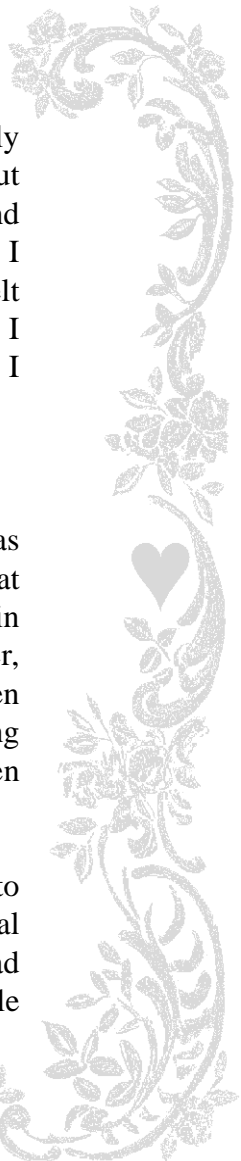
Despite my efforts, the pain remained. One night I became very discouraged. Would I ever be healed? Would I ever lift my children again?

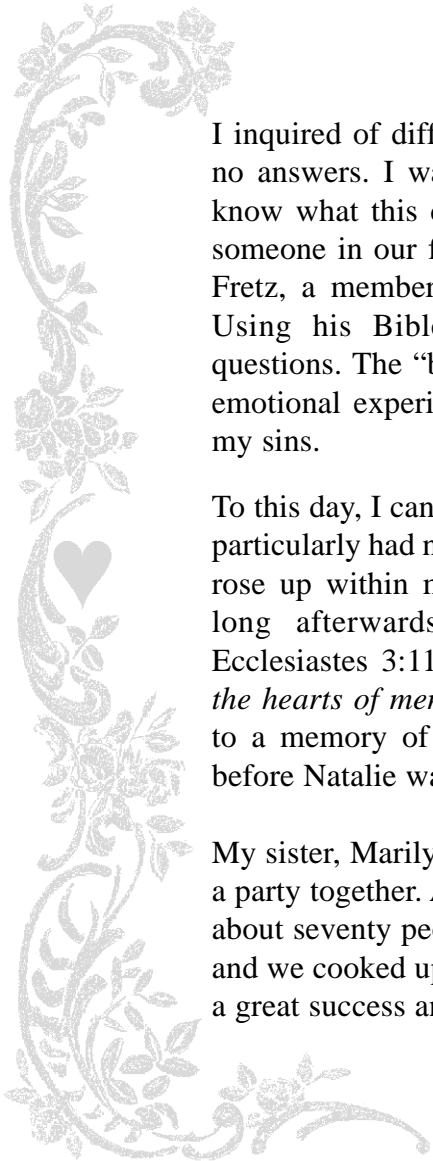
Soon I became aware that fear had completely replaced my faith. Without even thinking about what I was doing, I knelt quietly by my bed and asked God to forgive me for doubting that I would be healed. Then, not knowing why, I felt compelled to ask forgiveness for everything I had done wrong in my life. Shortly after, I crawled under the covers.

The Next Morning

The next morning when I awoke my back was healed! I will never forget opening my eyes that day and realizing that for the first time in fourteen months I had no pain. However, something else had happened to me too. Even more noticeable to me than my physical healing was how differently I felt inside. I can't even express it well; I just felt brand new!

I did not understand, nor could I find anyone to explain this great change in me. The physical healing I understood because that is what I had been praying for. But what was this incredible inner peace I had never known in my life?





I inquired of different ministers, but I still had no answers. I was bewildered. Someone must know what this change is? Then I approached someone in our family, a second cousin, Girve Fretz, a member of the Canadian Parliament. Using his Bible, he began to answer my questions. The “brand new” feeling was not an emotional experience. It was a cleansing from my sins.

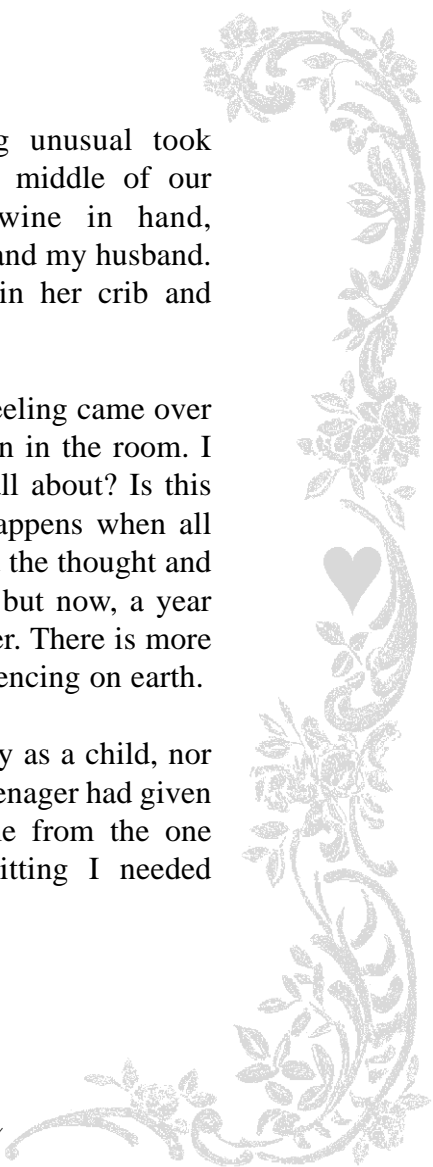
To this day, I cannot remember what I thought I particularly had need of to repent. A longing just rose up within me to be right with God. Not long afterwards, I read this scripture in Ecclesiastes 3:11, *God has planted eternity in the hearts of men.* Then my mind flashed back to a memory of a recent Christmas gathering before Natalie was born.

My sister, Marilyn had asked if we could throw a party together. And indeed we did. We invited about seventy people, called it a “formal party” and we cooked up a storm for our guests. It was a great success and no one wanted to leave.

Around 2:00 a.m. something unusual took place. I was standing in the middle of our family room, a glass of wine in hand, surrounded by friends, family and my husband. My baby was tucked safely in her crib and another in my tummy.

Out of the blue, the loneliest feeling came over me, as if I was the only person in the room. I thought, “Is this what life is all about? Is this what I was born for? What happens when all this ends?” I quickly dismissed the thought and continued my role as hostess, but now, a year and a half later, I had an answer. There is more to life than what we are experiencing on earth.

Neither going to church weekly as a child, nor teaching Sunday School as a teenager had given this insight to me. It all came from the one simple act of humility, admitting I needed God’s forgiveness.





Another Change

Within a few weeks of my healing, another unforeseen event took place that was to affect the rest of my life. My husband left and I became a single parent.

This time I faced a crisis that immediately changed everything about my life. To this day I am so grateful I had a relationship with God when the relationship with my husband ended so abruptly. It steadied me and brought comfort to us. Although my girls were very, very young when this happened, even so, their loss was evident as well.

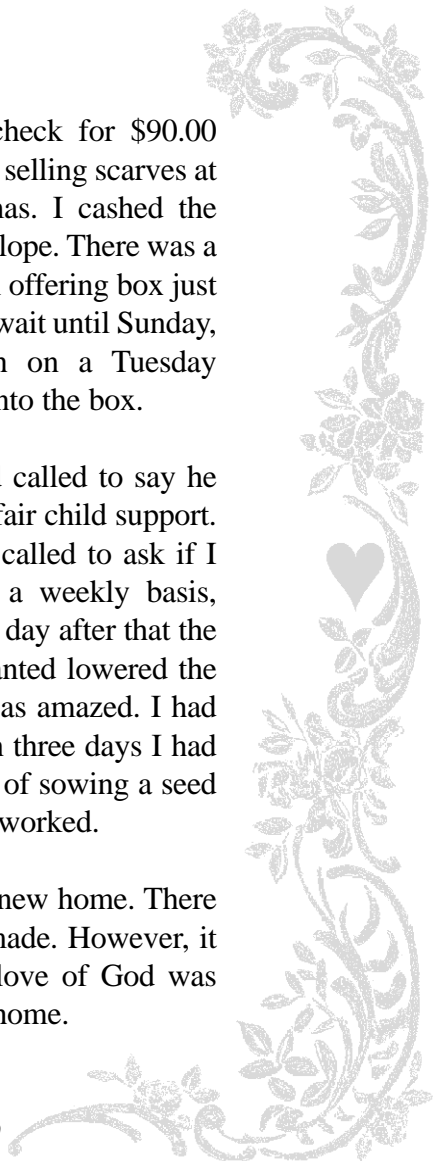
This was the beginning of believing there is an answer for abandoned children.

I remember that the first great need we had was in the area of finances. I wasn't working; I had been bedridden a good part of the past year. One day, while wondering what to do, I came across a little pamphlet by a pastor. In it he talked about planting a seed to God and in return you would receive a harvest. I thought that maybe I would try this.

All the money I had was a check for \$90.00 tucked away in my drawer from selling scarves at a Department store at Christmas. I cashed the check and put \$60.00 in an envelope. There was a little church near me that had an offering box just inside the door. I didn't want to wait until Sunday, so I sneaked into the church on a Tuesday morning and put my envelope into the box.

The very next day my husband called to say he was going to start to give me a fair child support. The following day a girlfriend called to ask if I would watch her children on a weekly basis, which began my Day Care. The day after that the landlord of the townhouse I wanted lowered the rent to what I could afford. I was amazed. I had sown \$60.00 in faith and within three days I had several blessings. The principle of sowing a seed to bring a harvest certainly had worked.

The girls and I moved into our new home. There were many adjustments to be made. However, it was already a reality that the love of God was becoming the heart behind our home.



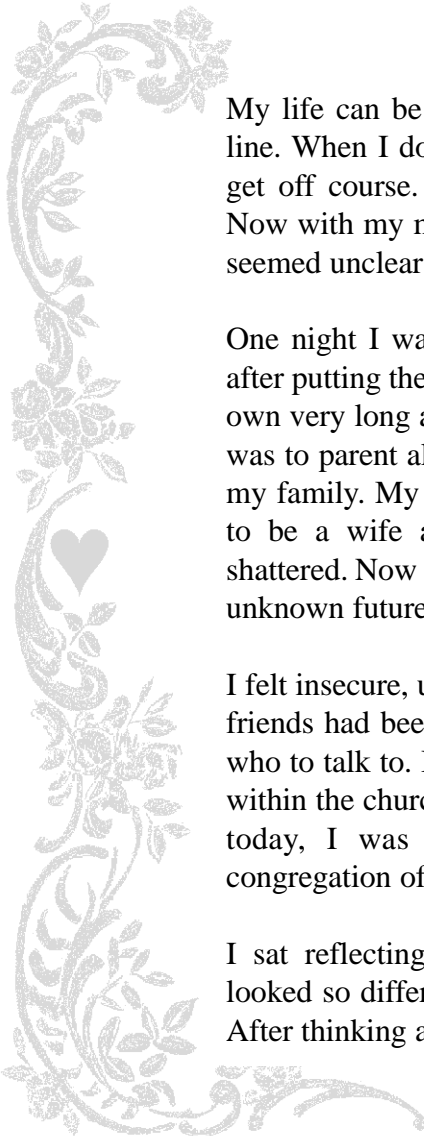




Two

Vision for the Home

A vision is like a plumb line. I use a plumb line when I hang wallpaper to find if the wall is straight. It is a lead weight on the end of a string that is tacked to the ceiling. The weight drops down towards the floor and becomes an accurate vertical line. I put my first piece of wallpaper next to my plumb line. Without this line, my wallpaper becomes crooked so gradually that it goes unnoticed for much of the job. I think my decorating looks fine, then I stand back and realize my pretty new paper is on a slant.



My life can be like wallpaper without a plumb line. When I don't know where I am heading, I get off course. Does that ever happen to you? Now with my marriage breaking down, the way seemed unclear to me.

One night I was sitting in my living room just after putting the girls to bed. I hadn't been on my own very long and I started to think about how I was to parent alone, and what was to become of my family. My only goal when growing up was to be a wife and mother, and that goal was shattered. Now as a single parent, I was facing an unknown future with my children.

I felt insecure, unsure of everything. Most of my friends had been "our friends" so I didn't know who to talk to. I didn't yet have any new friends within the church I just started attending. Unlike today, I was the only single mother in a congregation of about 800 people.

I sat reflecting that night about how my life looked so different than a few months previous. After thinking about my past, I knew it was time

to look forward, so I asked God to give me a vision for my future. Before the evening ended, it seemed I did have some direction for my life and the children, and a few months later, a third vision came.

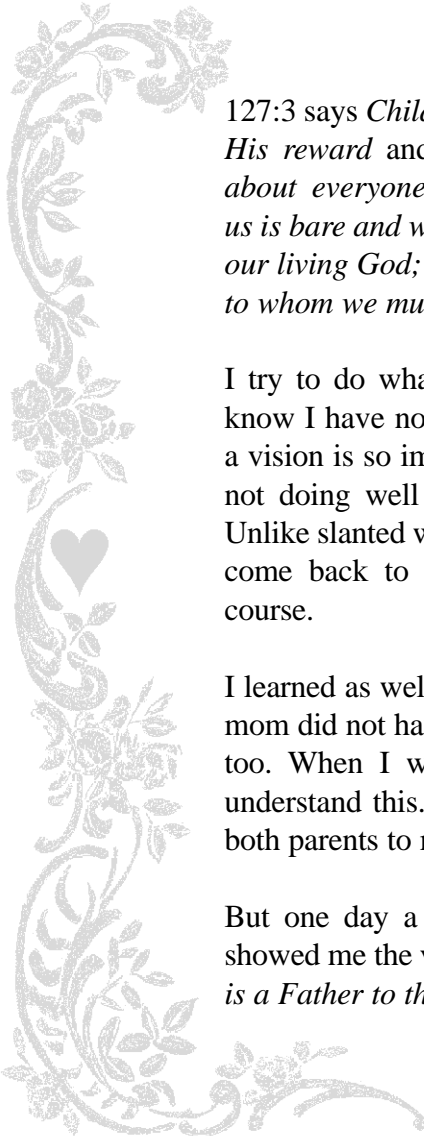
All three were regarding motherhood. One was for myself as a mother, another for my children, and one for my life personally. It turned out to be a very significant evening because I have spent my life fulfilling these three visions.

First Vision

First of all I knew right that evening, whether married or single, I needed to be the best mom I could. This would mean doing whatever was required of me to be a good mom, not doing just whatever I want to do. I thought about things like carrying on with a daily schedule for my children, keeping traditions and helping my children through the transition in our home life.

Over the years in trying to fulfill my first vision I have often thought of two scriptures. Psalm





127:3 says *Children are a gift from God; they are His reward* and Hebrews 4:13 says *He knows about everyone, everywhere. Everything about us is bare and wide open to the all-seeing eyes of our living God; nothing can be hidden from Him to whom we must explain all that we have done.*

I try to do what is best for my children, but I know I have not always succeeded. That is why a vision is so important for me. When I see I am not doing well in an area, I want to improve. Unlike slanted wallpaper that is immovable, I can come back to my plumb line when I get off course.

I learned as well that my vision for being a good mom did not have to include trying to be a father too. When I was first on my own, I did not understand this. For a couple years I tried to be both parents to my children.

But one day a pastor was visiting me, and he showed me the verse in Psalm 68:5 that says *God is a Father to the fatherless.*

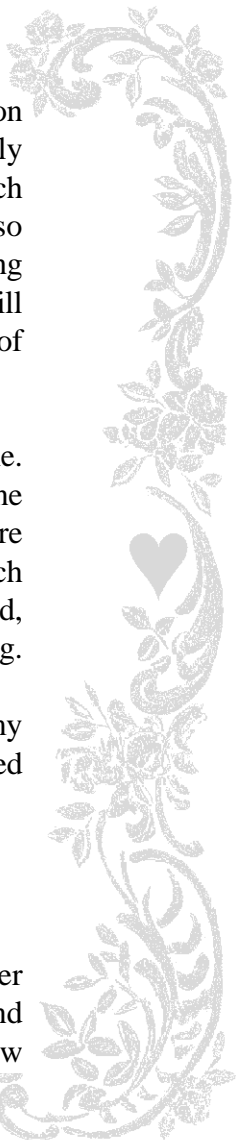
Once I understood this scripture, I depended on Him more to help me in the areas usually undertaken by a husband. This lifted so much pressure off me. I didn't have to be so independent; I could accept help if something needed fixing, or the girls wanted to learn a skill I didn't know how to teach them. I let go of carrying two roles and enjoyed being a mom.

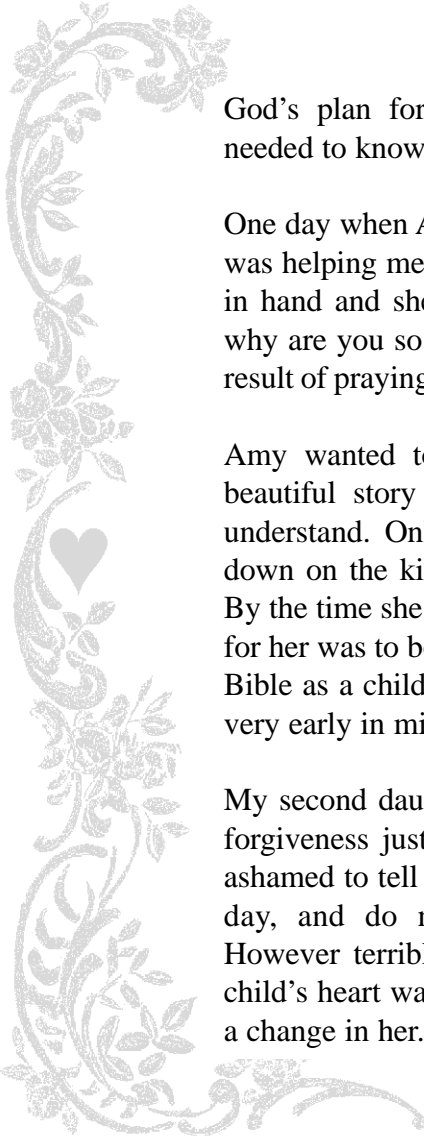
This truth also helped me in the area of discipline. Topics like kindness, submission, helping one another, honesty, work habits and so many more are clearly outlined in the Bible. I began to teach the girls more about the authority of God's Word, therefore leaning less on my ways of disciplining.

Throughout the years, this first vision for my home became easier and easier because I carried out the second vision that was in my heart.

Second Vision

I didn't want my girl's to grow up and suffer some of what I had experienced, so the second vision for my home was to help my girls follow





God's plan for their lives. I recognized they needed to know God personally, just as I did.

One day when Amy was only five years old, she was helping me in the kitchen. She had a broom in hand and she looked up and said, "Mommy why are you so happy." I told her my joy was a result of praying with a friend over the telephone.

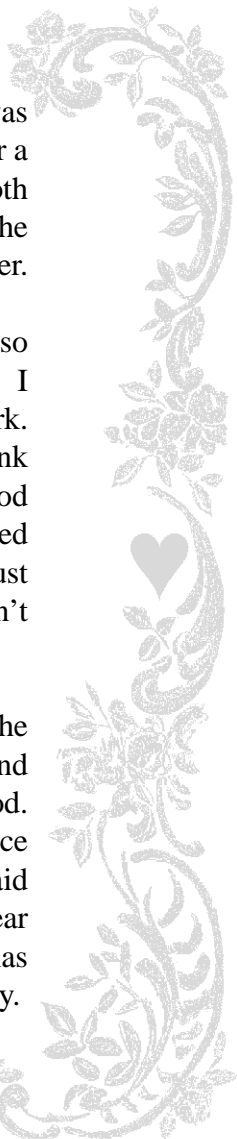
Amy wanted to know more, so I shared the beautiful story of Christ in a way she could understand. Only minutes later Amy and I sat down on the kitchen floor and prayed together. By the time she was seven, she knew God's plan for her was to be a pastor's wife. She studied her Bible as a child and teenager, and was involved very early in ministry.

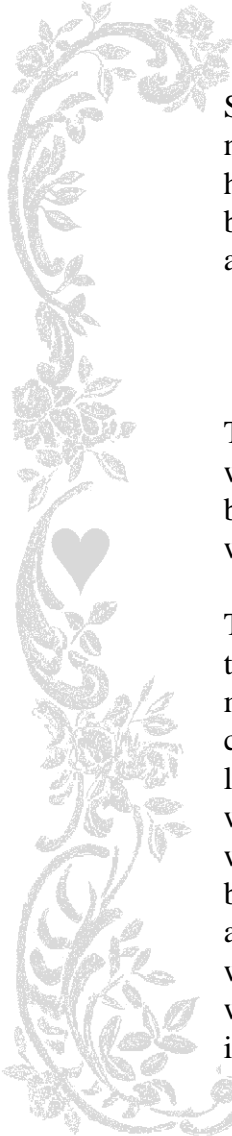
My second daughter Natalie experienced God's forgiveness just before her fifth birthday. I am ashamed to tell about my horrible parenting that day, and do not recommend it to anyone. However terrible it was, the conversion in my child's heart was so great, that everyone noticed a change in her.

Natalie was a very strong-willed child who was difficult to parent. One Saturday morning, after a particularly trying tug-of-war, we were both frustrated and in tears. I was trying to get out the door to work, but with no co-operation from her.

There had been so many of these battles over so many incidences that I remember thinking I would like to run away, rather than go to work. Then to be perfectly honest, I did more than think it. In my frustration I said, “If you don’t let God change you, I feel like running away!” I shocked myself, listening to my own words. But with just as much resolve Natalie blurted back, “I don’t want to be bad!”

Suddenly, the atmosphere quieted. We sat on the bottom step just in front of the door, hugging and praying. She poured out her little heart to God. She said she was sorry for all her disobedience and wanted to be like Jesus. She must have said it with tremendous sincerity, (and not out of fear her mom was running away) because Natalie has walked very intimately with God since that day.





Soon after her prayer she started bringing the neighborhood children to Sunday School with her. And I have never gone further than a good brisk walk around the block, when parenting alone was getting the better of me.

Third Vision

The third vision was for my own personal life. It was born from a series of events that, in looking back, seem very funny to me now. However, they were anything but funny at the time.

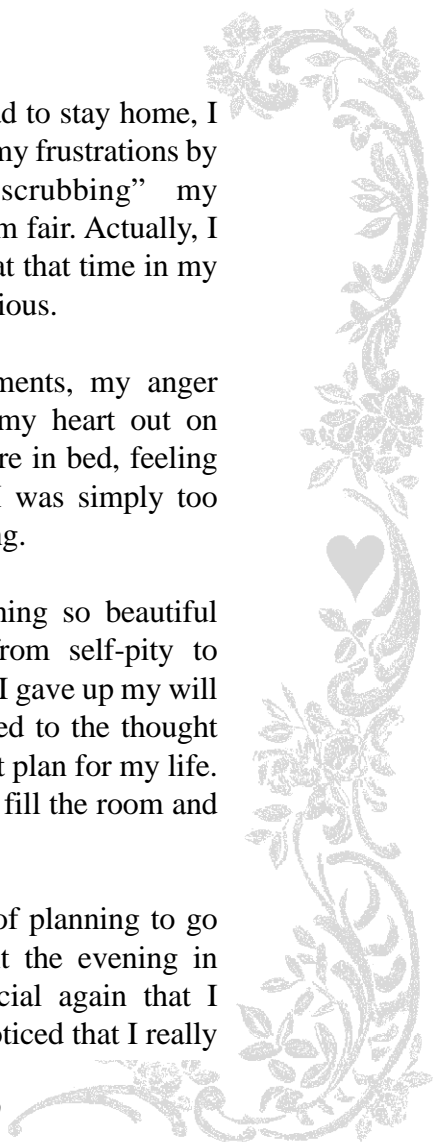
This occurred shortly after the evening I was thinking about vision. Although I really enjoyed my role as a mother (even with a strong-willed child), my frame of mind was that I needed at least a little time away from my children on a weekly basis. Therefore, I made plans to go out with a girlfriend Friday evenings, just for a quick bite to eat or something as simple. Nevertheless, almost every time I arranged to go out, the way was blocked. Babysitters cancelled, the car would not start or my friend was unable to make it. You can imagine my frustration.

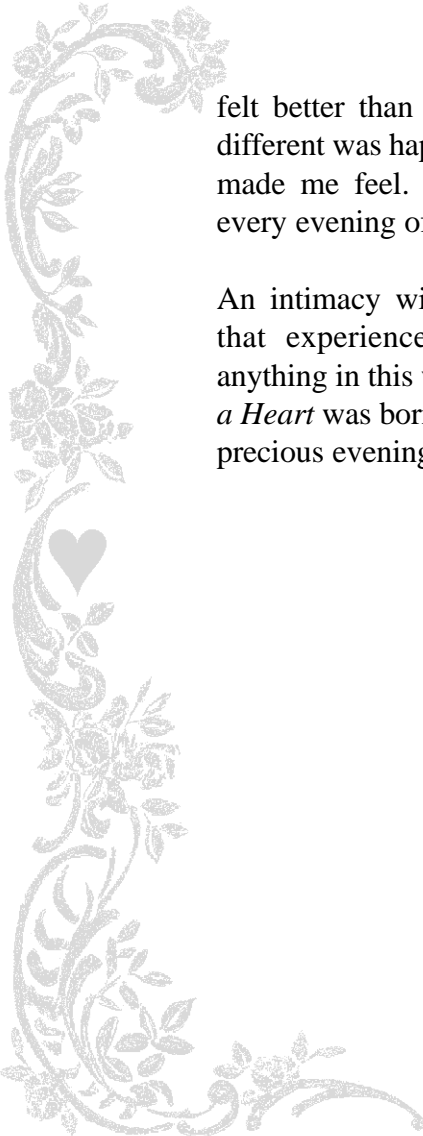
The first few Friday nights I had to stay home, I was so angry that I worked out my frustrations by cleaning or better put, “scrubbing” my townhouse. Life just didn’t seem fair. Actually, I have learned life isn’t fair, but at that time in my life the unfairness made me furious.

After a few more disappointments, my anger turned to tears. I would sob my heart out on Friday nights after the girls were in bed, feeling really sorry for myself, until I was simply too exhausted to care about anything.

Then one Friday night something so beautiful happened. My tears turned from self-pity to brokenness. I knelt and prayed. I gave up my will to do what I wanted and yielded to the thought that maybe there was a different plan for my life. A wonderful presence began to fill the room and a peace filled my heart.

The following Friday, instead of planning to go out, for a second time I spent the evening in prayer. My night was so special again that I didn’t miss being out at all. I noticed that I really





felt better than if I had gone. Something very different was happening to me, and I liked how it made me feel. My prayer times then grew to every evening of the week.

An intimacy with God has developed through that experience that I would not trade for anything in this world. The vision for *Home with a Heart* was born over many years through those precious evenings.





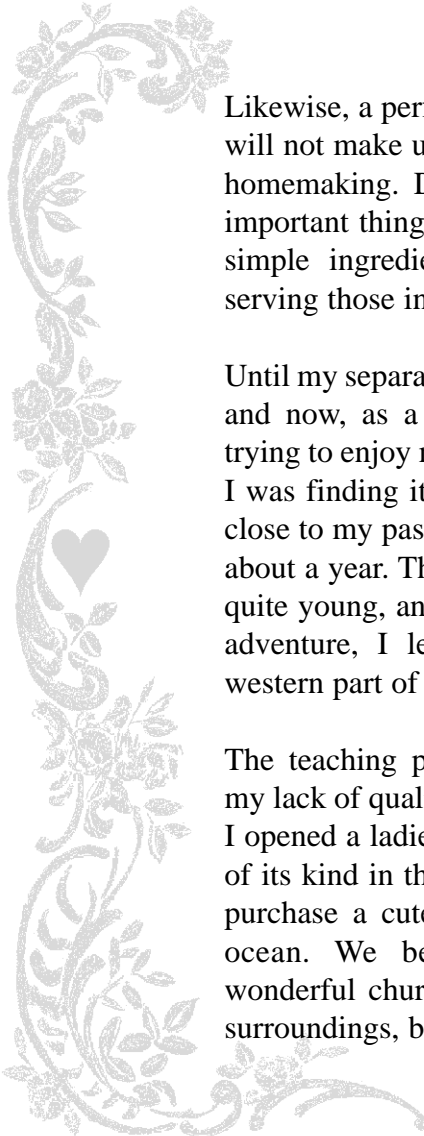


Three

Serving in the Home

There is a wonderful art that is being lost in today's society amidst shifting family values and structures. It is the art of homemaking – the gift of making a home into a special place for your family.

Homemaking is a bit like cooking a special meal. If you miss the main ingredient in your meal, you ruin the flavor of the dish. An attractive table setting and a lovely arrangement of food on your best china will not make up for that missing ingredient.



Likewise, a perfectly organized and clean house will not make up for missing the main aspect in homemaking. Do you know what is the most important thing in homemaking? It is love, one simple ingredient that enables you to enjoy serving those in your home.

Until my separation, I loved being a homemaker, and now, as a single mother, I was sincerely trying to enjoy my children and home. However, I was finding it uncomfortable to be located so close to my past. I stayed in the Niagara Region about a year. Then while Amy and Natalie were quite young, and I felt young enough for a new adventure, I left Ontario and headed to the western part of Canada for a teaching job.

The teaching position fell through because of my lack of qualifications in another province, so I opened a ladies consignment store, the second of its kind in the province. As well, I set out to purchase a cute home on half an acre on the ocean. We became quite connected to a wonderful church. I thoroughly loved my new surroundings, business, children and home.

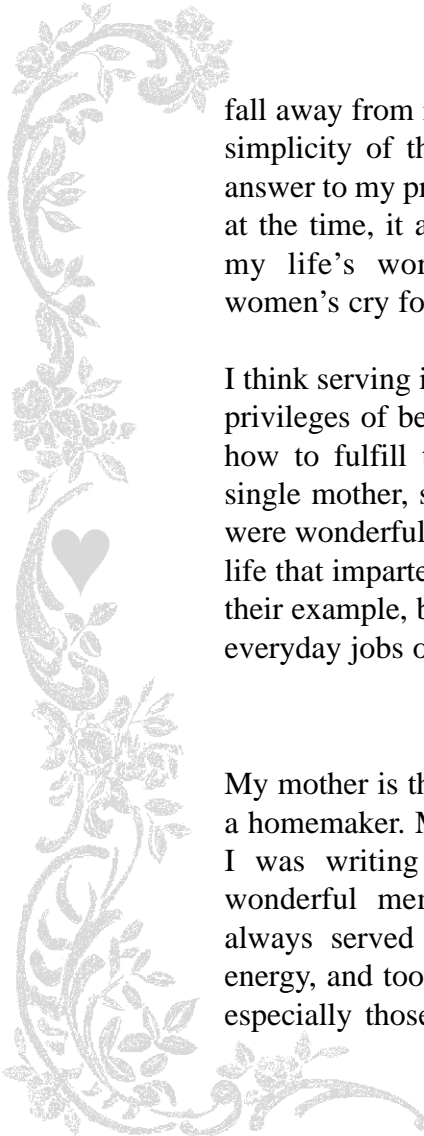
Nonetheless, like many other single mothers I soon became overwhelmed with my workload.

One evening I was ironing late at night. My day started early. I walked the girls to school and then I walked to my store. When I finished work, I walked to the babysitters to get the girls. The evening consisted of dinner, dishes, making lunches for the next day, bath time, story time, bedtime, books for the business – and then ironing!

I was so tired standing over my ironing board that I cried out to God, “Please help me!” I didn’t know in what way I wanted help. I just needed something. Without consciously thinking about it, the next few days I created a new routine for my week. It was amazing what happened.

Order seemed to come to every area of responsibility. I reorganized how I did everything from cleaning to managing paperwork. The routine totally altered the way I ran my home, and I have used and improved on it ever since. It changes somewhat as my life does. I sometimes





fall away from it, but I always come back to the simplicity of this routine. I believe it was the answer to my prayer that night. Little did I know at the time, it also would become the basis for my life's work, and the answer to many women's cry for help in the home.

I think serving in the home is one of the greatest privileges of being a woman, but I had to learn how to fulfill the many household tasks as a single mother, so I could enjoy that role. There were wonderful examples of homemakers in my life that imparted so much to me. I learned from their example, but also had to adapt to the many everyday jobs of a sole parent.

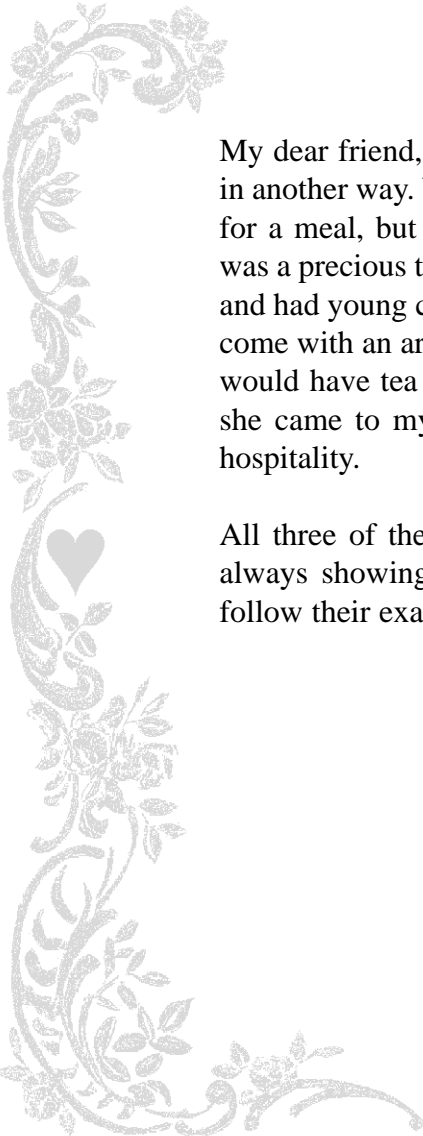
My Examples

My mother is the greatest example in my life of a homemaker. My mom just passed away while I was writing this book, but I have many wonderful memories of her mothering. She always served her family with her time and energy, and took pleasure in serving others too, especially those who could not return the gift.

My mother was widowed for many years. Even while living alone, she was a wonderful example to other women. She kept her house lovely, cooked a full meal for herself daily, and was ceaselessly hospitable. She often shared her table with dinner guests.

Two other women greatly influenced my life at that time. Mary Clarke used to call me at my store and say, “Come for supper.” I would arrive tired, toting a small child on each arm. Her home was always inviting – the fireplace burning, popcorn on the coffee table, games to entertain my children and magazines for me. She would direct me to the couch to await a simple but delicious meal.

Sometimes, I arrived home from work to a dozen muffins and a magazine hanging on my doorknob. Many times a little produce from a local market was waiting. Often, Mary invited us to share Christmas dinner with her family since we lived far from my family. She never seemed to miss an opportunity to be thoughtful.



My dear friend, Jean Horgan, served my family in another way. We sometimes went to her home for a meal, but more often she visited us. This was a precious time because I did not have a car, and had young children to get to bed. She would come with an armload of goodies and a hug. We would have tea and pray together. Even though she came to my home, I felt she provided the hospitality.

All three of these women were always giving, always showing love to someone. I wanted to follow their example.





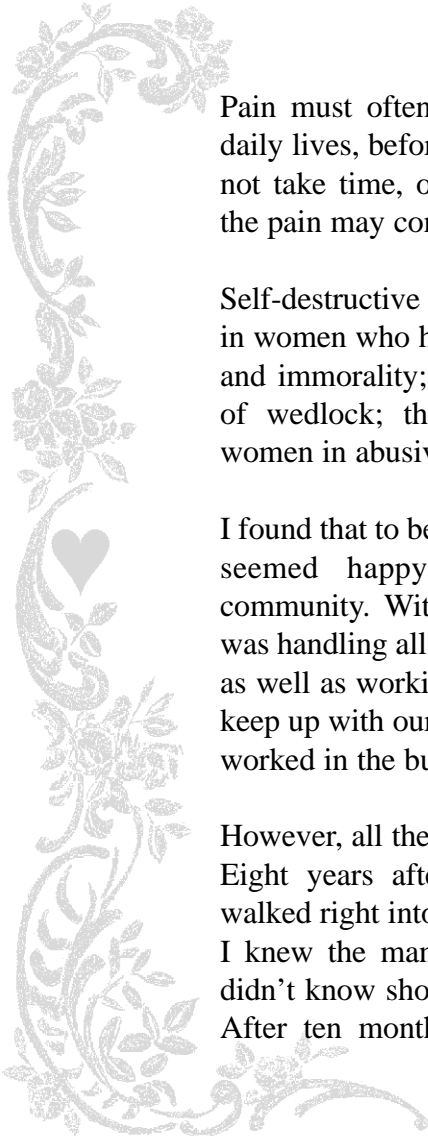


Four

Healing for the Home

Sometimes it is possible to have a vision for your home, your children, and your life personally, yet be unable to fulfill that vision because of pain within your family members.

Pain can be well hidden from the public eye, even hidden from our own eyes. Still, the signs of it will eventually manifest in our home. We may try to go forward, but we will keep coming up against the same obstacles. We will hit the same wall, or be bound by the same or similar circumstances and emotions.



Pain must often become intense, affecting our daily lives, before we take time to heal. If we do not take time, our behavior pattern that covers the pain may continue to be repeated.

Self-destructive patterns are sometimes viewed in women who have addictions to alcohol, drugs and immorality; women who have children out of wedlock; those who have abortions; and women in abusive relationships.

I found that to be true in my life. My little family seemed happy and healthy in our new community. With my new routines in place, I was handling all I had to do. We were having fun as well as working. Amy and Natalie helped me keep up with our big yard and gardens, and even worked in the business at times.

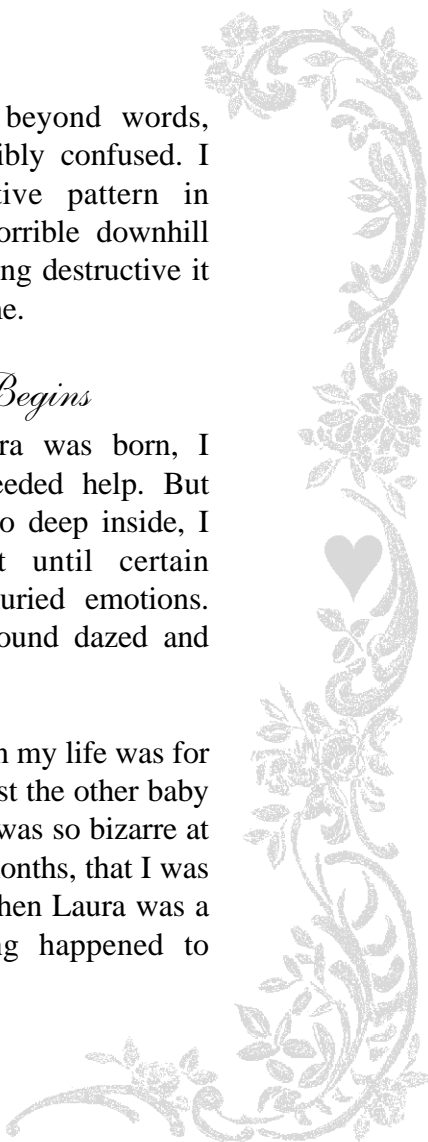
However, all the stability was over far too soon. Eight years after my first marriage ended, I walked right into another unhealthy relationship. I knew the man was a new Christian. What I didn't know showed up soon after the wedding. After ten months I was on my own again –

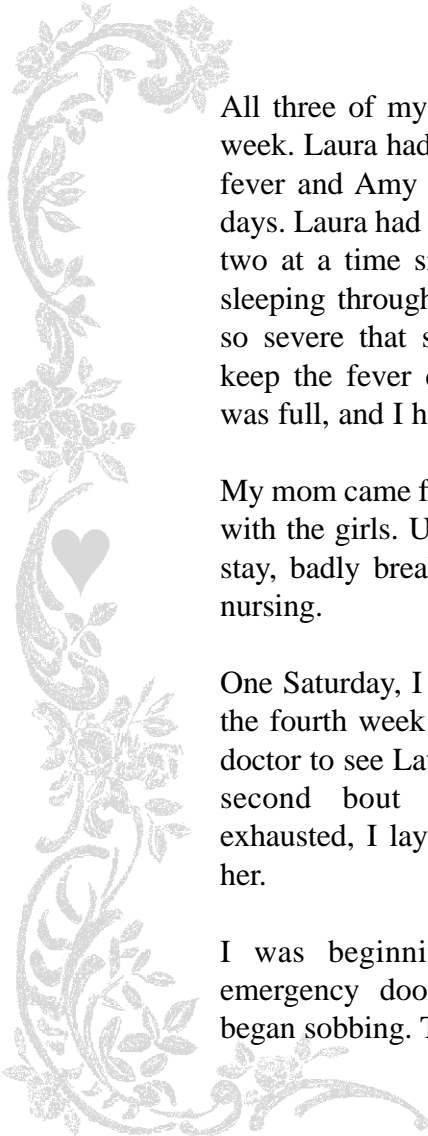
pregnant, frightened, broken beyond words, financially devastated and terribly confused. I had repeated a self-destructive pattern in marriage that sent me in a horrible downhill spiral. When we repeat something destructive it usually ends up worse every time.

My Healing Begins

Once my third daughter Laura was born, I realized how desperately I needed help. But because the pain was hidden so deep inside, I often was not aware of it until certain circumstances triggered my buried emotions. Most of the time I walked around dazed and numb.

The first area I needed healing in my life was for grief. Laura was a twin, but I lost the other baby early in the pregnancy. My life was so bizarre at the time, and in the following months, that I was busy just surviving. Even so, when Laura was a couple months old, something happened to trigger my pain.





All three of my girls had been sick week after week. Laura had strep throat, Natalie had scarlet fever and Amy had tonsillitis. I hadn't slept in days. Laura had never slept more than an hour or two at a time since she was born, never mind sleeping through sickness. Natalie's illness was so severe that she needed constant bathing to keep the fever down. The community hospital was full, and I had to nurse her at home.

My mom came from Ontario to visit and help me with the girls. Unfortunately, she fell during her stay, badly breaking her wrist. She too needed nursing.

One Saturday, I was in the emergency room for the fourth week in a row. I was waiting for the doctor to see Laura, who was suffering from her second bout of strep throat. Extremely exhausted, I lay down on an empty bed beside her.

I was beginning to fall asleep when the emergency door flew open. Unexpectedly, I began sobbing. The familiar sound of the sliding

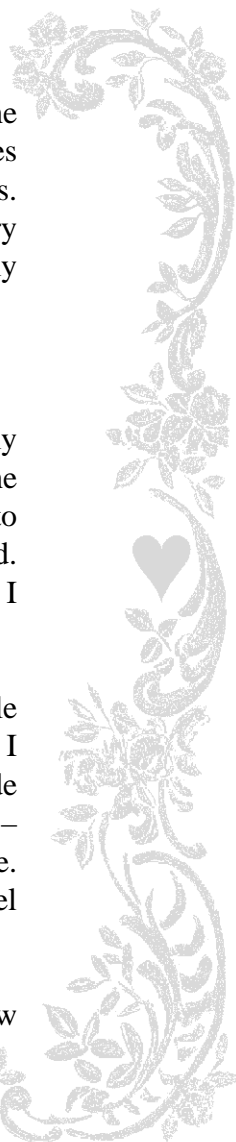
door instantly brought me back to the night in the emergency ward when I lost my baby. Memories rushed back, and tears flooded down my cheeks. I reached out to God for comfort. For the very first time I was able to grieve for the loss of my baby.

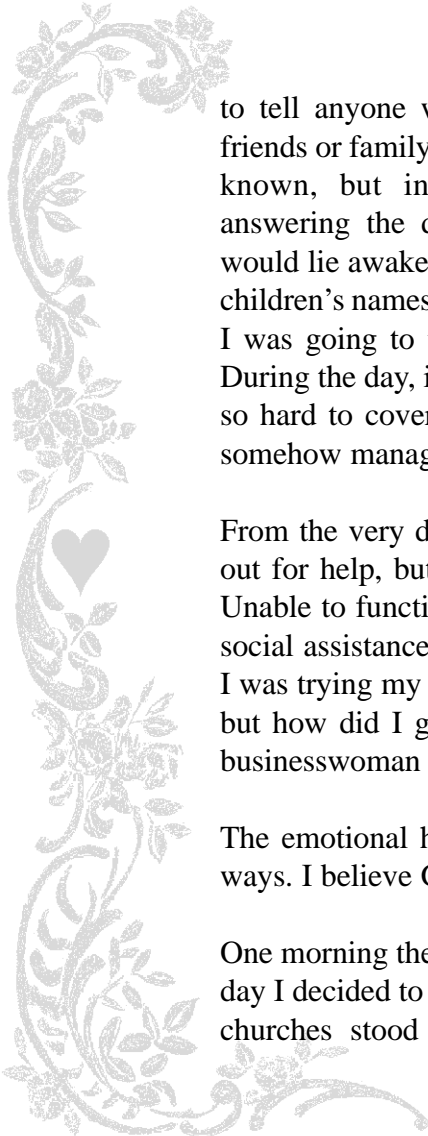
Overwhelmed

But there was much more healing needed in my life. I soon found it difficult to function in the simplest of tasks that used to be so easy for me to accomplish. I was completely overwhelmed. Dressed only in my housecoat most days, I wandered aimlessly through my home.

Unable to serve my family, the dishes would pile up in the sink and the laundry in the hamper. I had very little appetite, but struggled to provide meals for the girls. Concentration was difficult – so I barely heard what the children said to me. My mind racing, I wondered if I would ever feel a sense of stability again.

I was so emotionally sick that I didn't know how





to tell anyone what I was going through. My friends or family would have helped me had they known, but instead I isolated myself, not answering the door nor telephone. At night I would lie awake just repeating my name and my children's names over and over because I thought I was going to totally lose touch with reality. During the day, if I had to talk to someone I tried so hard to cover everything, and pretend I was somehow managing.

From the very depths of my being I was crying out for help, but had no idea how to ask for it. Unable to function in the workplace, I turned to social assistance for financial aid. Through it all I was trying my best to look after my three girls, but how did I go from being a good mom and businesswoman to this state, in only one year?

The emotional healing I needed came in a few ways. I believe God orchestrated it all.

One morning there was a knock at my door. This day I decided to answer it. Two ladies from local churches stood on my porch. They said that

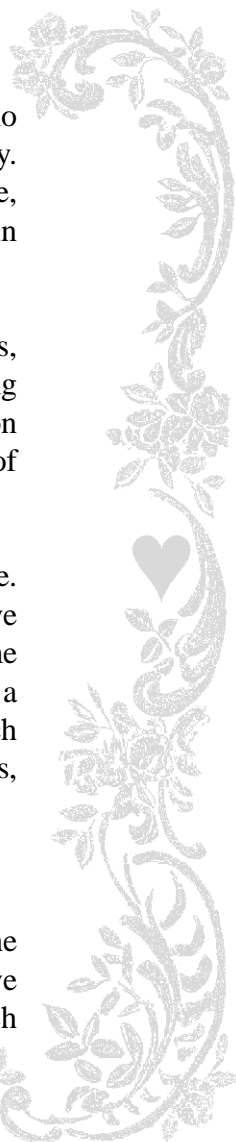
weeks earlier I had invited them over. I had no recollection of it, but invited them in anyway. After a short conversation, one lady said to me, “Has there ever been drug or alcohol problems in your home?” I replied, “Possibly.”

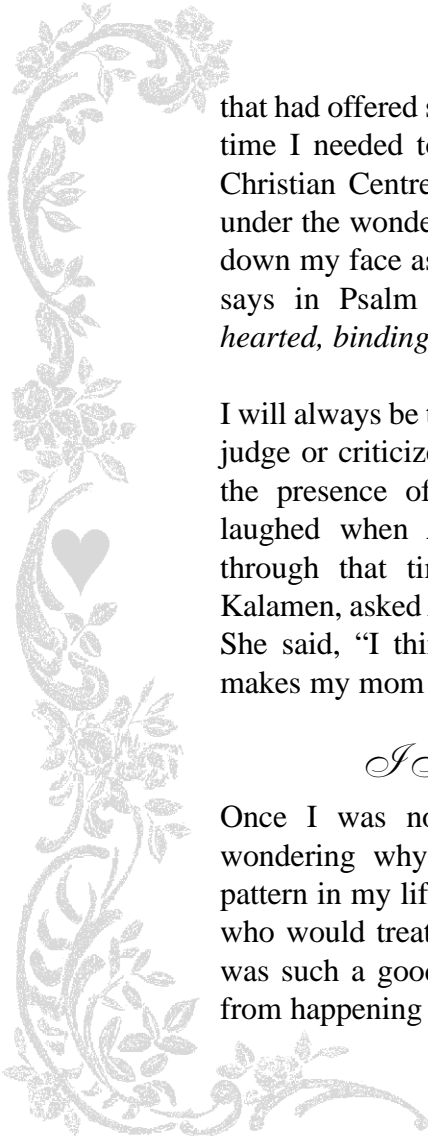
With that response the ladies helped me dress, wrapped up my baby and took us off to a meeting held in a church basement. It was an Al-Anon meeting, a meeting to aid in the recovery of friends and families of alcoholics.

For the first time in years something made sense. I began to understand the patterns in addictive behavior and one of the reasons why I became sick. I continued going to these meetings for a few months until I was strong enough to detach from the unhealthy situations in my relationships, and focus on what I needed to do as a mother.

A Place to Heal

Then another turn of events forced us to leave the area in which we were living. I decided to move to Kelowna, British Columbia to attend a church





that had offered support to us and allowed me the time I needed to heal. The church is Kelowna Christian Centre, and week after week as I sat under the wonderful worship, the tears streamed down my face as my wounds were healing. God says in Psalm 147:3, *He heals the broken-hearted, binding up their wounds.*

I will always be thankful for a church that did not judge or criticize me, but let me quietly heal in the presence of God. Several months later I laughed when Amy told me what happened through that time. The pastor's son, Brodie Kalamen, asked Amy how she liked their church. She said, "I think it is great except your Dad makes my mom cry every week!"

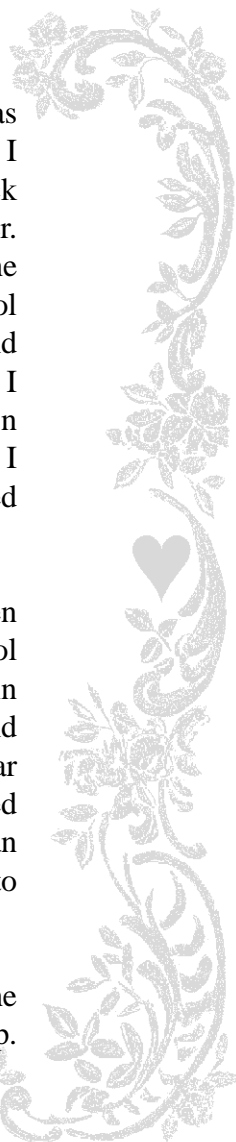
I Needed to Change

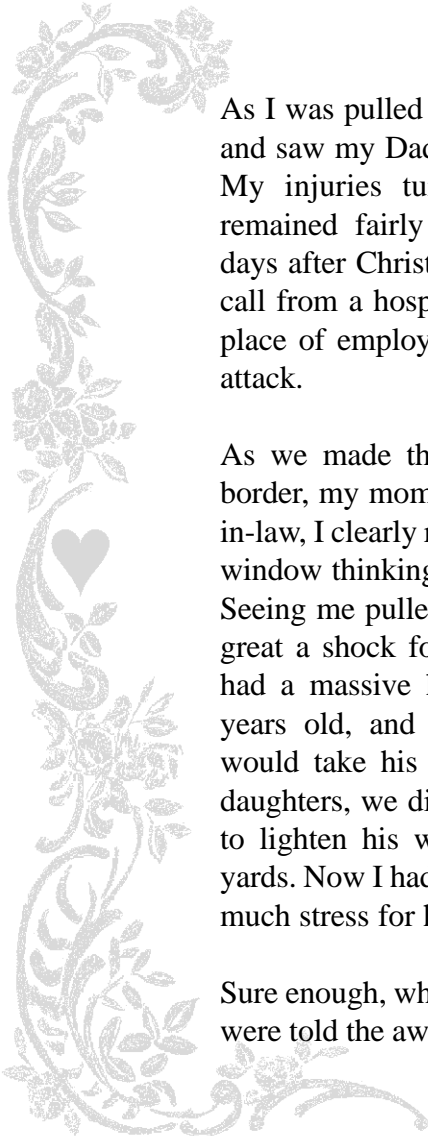
Once I was not hurting so much, I started wondering why I had such a self-destructive pattern in my life. Why had I not married a man who would treat me well, when my own father was such a good example? What would stop it from happening again?

In high school I started to date a boy who was very kind and stable, but after my Dad died, I kept breaking up the relationship, and going back to it, ending it finally for my marriage partner. Even when my first marriage ended, I had the opportunity again to marry my high school sweetheart. I chose not to marry him the second time. So what was wrong with me? I knew that I could not alter my past or even certain circumstances, but I knew I had to change. I prayed for an answer. And the answer surprised me.

Five days before my Dad passed away I had been in a bad car accident. It was the last day of school for the Christmas holidays. There was a dance in the next town that I attended with my friends and sister. Driving home with my boyfriend, the car skidded on black ice on the highway. We swirled around in a circle, and then drove over an embankment with the car rolling over and onto the roof.

My sister had been only a few cars behind, so she got word to my parents who were home asleep.





As I was pulled from the wreckage, I looked up and saw my Dad, standing at the top of the hill. My injuries turned out to be minor, but I remained fairly quiet over the holidays. Two days after Christmas my mom received a phone call from a hospital in Buffalo near my father's place of employment. He'd had a serious heart attack.

As we made the thirty minute trip across the border, my mom, sisters and soon to be brother-in-law, I clearly remember staring out of the back window thinking, "This heart attack is my fault. Seeing me pulled from the car accident was too great a shock for my Dad's health." My father had a massive heart attack when I was seven years old, and we grew up knowing another would take his life. Even though he had only daughters, we did what we could over the years to lighten his workload around the house and yards. Now I had done something that caused too much stress for his heart.

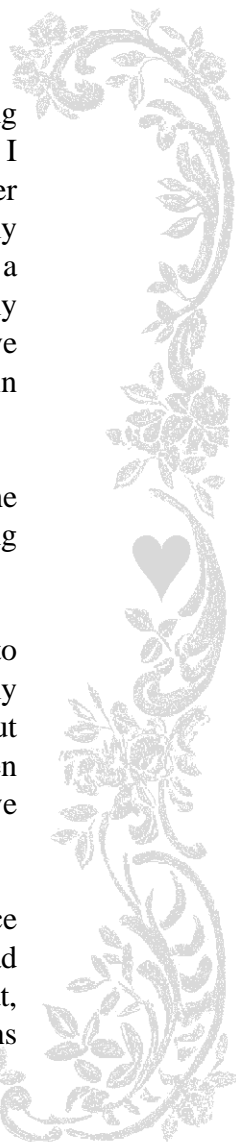
Sure enough, when we arrived at the hospital, we were told the awful news. I buried my guilt. I did

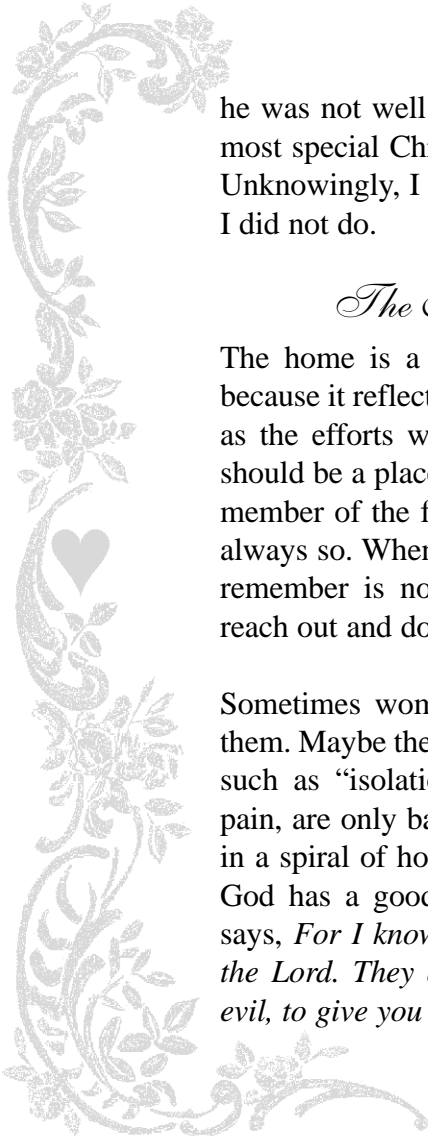
not tell anyone my thoughts. But something within me was drastically changed. First, I noticed that when I returned to high school after Christmas, I never could speak in front of my class again, not even reading a paragraph from a history book. This remained a great hurdle in my life until just a few years ago. I didn't have trouble speaking before children, but never in front of adults.

But what affected my life the most was the pattern I began of breaking up with the young man who treated me so well.

So now, two divorces later, God helped me to understand how the guilt I buried changed my life. I felt I was not deserving of good; without realizing it, I was punishing myself. Had I been able to talk about it sooner, I would have recognized the error of my thinking.

When I finally told my mother what took place that day, she assured me that my car accident had nothing to do with my Dad's death. She said that, in looking back, my Dad had known for months





he was not well – which is why he planned the most special Christmas our family had together. Unknowingly, I paid a great price for something I did not do.

The Home is a Mirror

The home is a mirror of our lives as women because it reflects our state of well being, as well as the efforts we are giving our family. Home should be a place of peace and love where every member of the family feels safe. But that is not always so. When it is not, the important thing to remember is not to deny the situation, but to reach out and do something about it.

Sometimes women ask me how God can heal them. Maybe they learned, as I did, that solutions such as “isolation” or “running” to ease their pain, are only bandages. It is easy to feel bound in a spiral of hopelessness until you realize that God has a good plan for you. Jeremiah 29:11 says, *For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

If you have a broken leg, you could not expect the doctor to heal it unless you went to see him, allowing him to examine the break and prescribe a treatment.

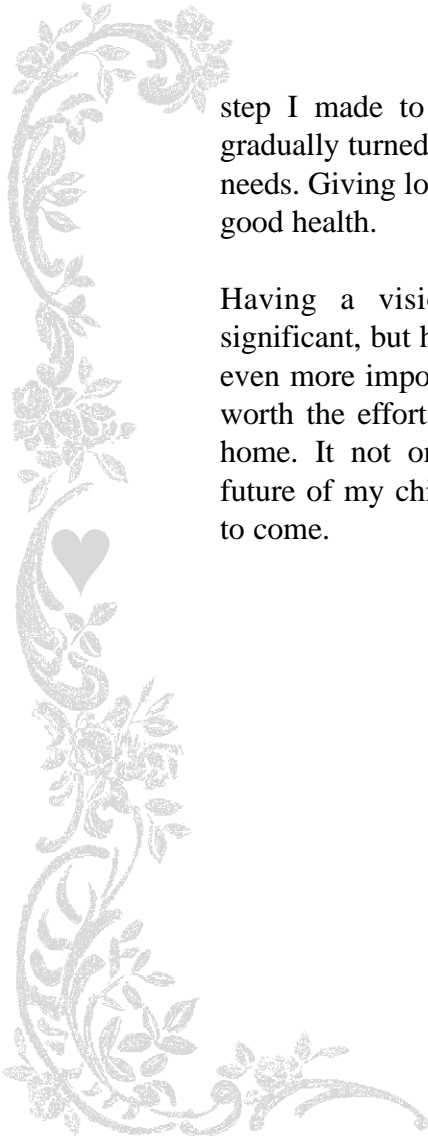
Similarly, if you turn to God to heal a broken heart, you need to get close enough to Him and His Word so He can touch the pain and heal it. The hurt and pain wash away, and peace and joy take their place.

I honestly do not know where my children and I would be today if I had not turned to God for healing in my home.

Healing and Serving

Interestingly, I discovered something else very, very important through those difficult times that aided in my healing. When I began to serve in my home again, I started to go forward. Slowly, sometimes very slowly, but at least I went forward! At that point, I picked up on my sense of responsibility to my children, and step-by-step, life began to fall into place with each tiny





step I made to be a good mother. My focus gradually turned from my crisis to my children's needs. Giving love is one of the greatest roads to good health.

Having a vision for my home was very significant, but having the health to fulfill it was even more important for my family. It was well worth the effort it took to bring healing to our home. It not only affects my future, and the future of my children, but I believe generations to come.







Five

*Miracles in
the Home*

Throughout the years my girls and I have thankfully experienced many miracles as we depended upon God in our home. We love to look back and remember His faithfulness, and so there are some other memories that are especially meaningful to our family, that I would like to share with you.

More importantly, my desire is to encourage you to begin to trust God to work on your behalf and to meet your needs.



The Littlest

When my youngest daughter Laura was two years old, she swallowed powdered chlorine for a swimming pool. The bucket had been left outside accidentally.

Inquisitively, Laura scooped up a handful and ate it. Anyone who has been around two-year-olds knows that everything they touch goes in their mouths. Laura began screaming in pain.

After calling the emergency poison line, I picked up Laura and put her in her car seat in the back of the car, along with her friends that had been playing with her. I felt sick inside and helpless.

While I was racing to the hospital, her screams continued. All at once the screaming stopped and she fell into a chilling silence, eyes staring blankly. Fear had completely gripped me when a quiet voice inside urged, "Pray." I immediately looked in the rear view mirror and commanded, "Laura, in the name of Jesus be healed!" In a state of shock and panic, I hurriedly drove on to the emergency room.

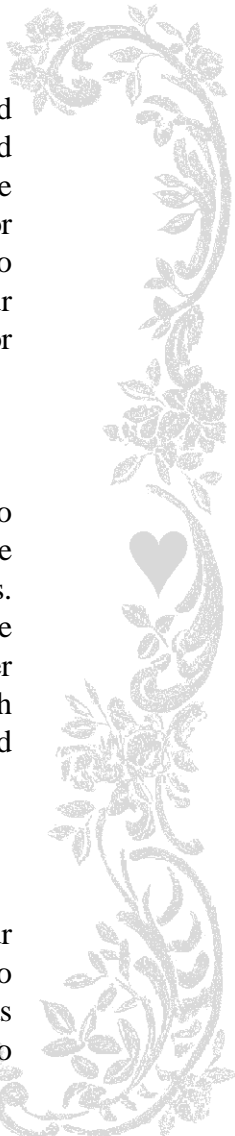
Upon arriving at the hospital, I realized Laura had been healed miraculously! She was smiling and playing with her friends when I took her from the car. The doctors kept her under observation for four hours because the smell of chlorine was so strong. The odor stayed on her breath for four days, but she had not even the tiniest burn or blister in her mouth.

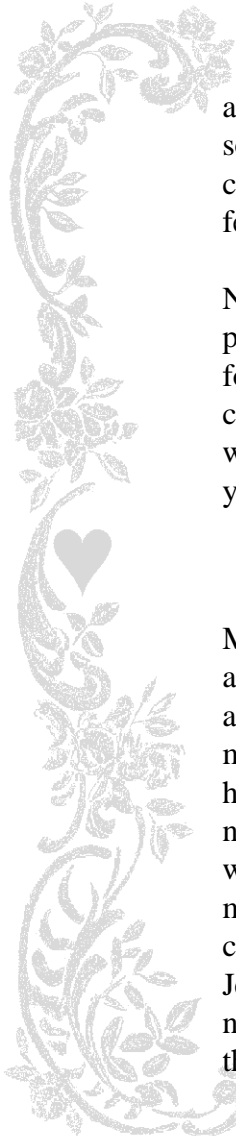
Bedtime Prayers

Like many children, Amy required braces to straighten her teeth. At the time the dentist told me she needed them, I could not afford braces. Therefore, every night at bedtime for two years we prayed together, asking God to straighten her teeth. One day, we were aware that every tooth had moved into perfect position. We then realized miracles come in many ways.

A Pair of Shoes

We have received many financial blessings in our home. There were times when it was difficult to earn enough money to make ends meet. This was especially true when I had a baby and two





adolescents to support. The girls were all growing so rapidly it was hard to keep up with their clothing needs, and I was trying to get back on my feet after my second marriage.

Natalie needed special sports shoes costing \$75 plus tax. I prayed and asked for help to buy them for her. Two days later a friend, Tony Penney, called. Rather embarrassed, he asked, “When I was praying this morning, I had the impression you need \$80 for a pair of shoes. Do you?”

A Tumor

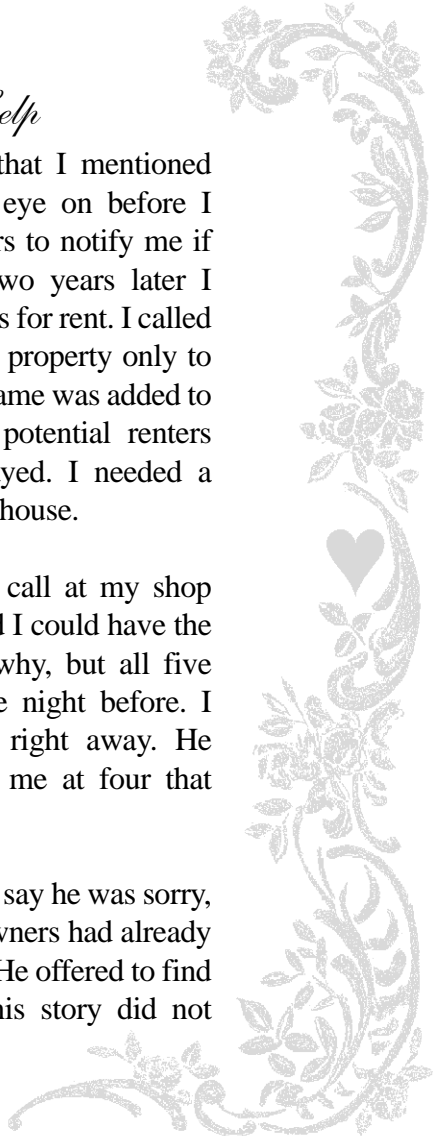
My doctor once gave me very disturbing news of a tumor that required immediate medical attention. She made a next-day appointment for me to enter the hospital for tests, and then sent me home. Instead of dwelling on the obviously negative aspect of this unwelcome discovery, I went to a prayer meeting and asked my pastor’s mother, Audrey Kalamen, for prayer. We commanded the spirit of infirmity to leave in Jesus’ name, and thanked God for my healing. The next day when I went to the hospital, no trace of the tumor was found.

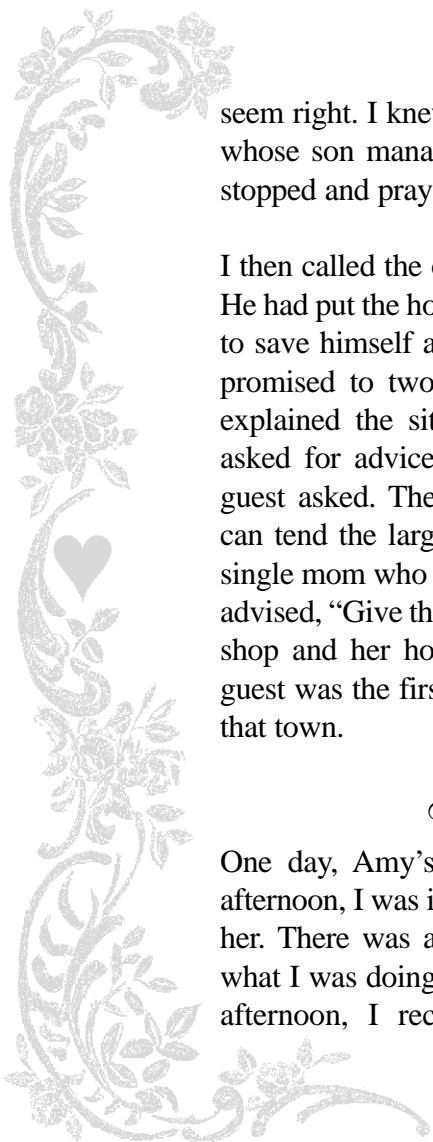
Housing Help

The little house on the ocean that I mentioned earlier was a home I had my eye on before I moved in to it. I asked neighbors to notify me if the house became available. Two years later I received a call. Yes, the home was for rent. I called the rental agent in charge of the property only to find out it had been rented. My name was added to a waiting list with five other potential renters before me. That evening I prayed. I needed a miracle if I was going to get the house.

The next morning I received a call at my shop from a bewildered agent. He said I could have the house. He did not understand why, but all five people changed their minds the night before. I asked if he wanted a deposit right away. He declined and arranged to meet me at four that afternoon to sign papers.

At noon the agent called again to say he was sorry, but the house was rented. The owners had already signed a lease with new tenants. He offered to find me another house. Somehow his story did not





seem right. I knew the owner was an elderly lady whose son managed her house. Without delay, I stopped and prayed again.

I then called the owner's son. He was very upset. He had put the house in the hands of a rental agent to save himself a hassle, and now the house was promised to two parties. That evening, the son explained the situation to his dinner guest and asked for advice. "Who are your choices?" the guest asked. The son answered, "A couple who can tend the large yard and gardens or Elaine, a single mom who owns a shop in town." The guest advised, "Give the house to Elaine. I have seen her shop and her home." And so it was done! The guest was the first person I met when I moved to that town.

A Ski Trip

One day, Amy's class was going skiing. Mid-afternoon, I was impressed with a need to pray for her. There was a sense of urgency so I stopped what I was doing and prayed fervently. Later that afternoon, I received a phone call from the

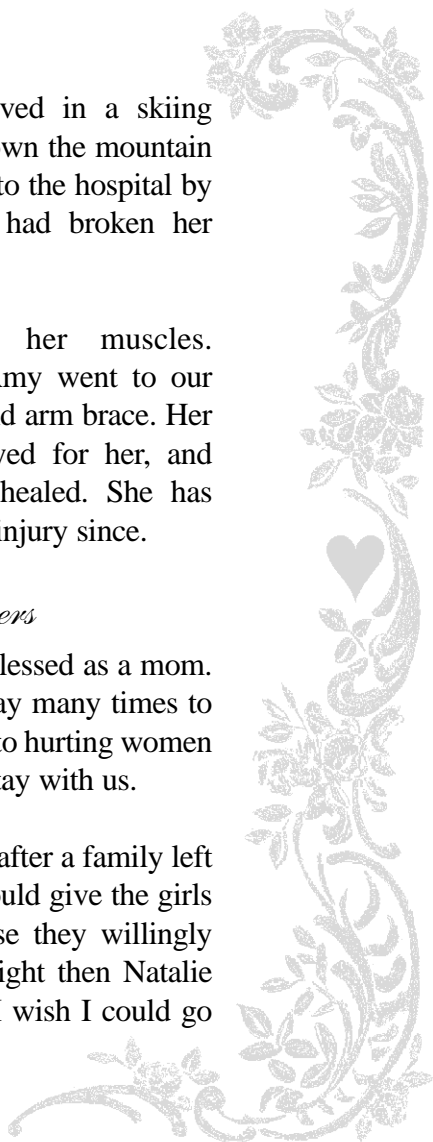
hospital. Amy had been involved in a skiing accident. After being brought down the mountain by the ski patrol, she was taken to the hospital by ambulance. They thought she had broken her neck.

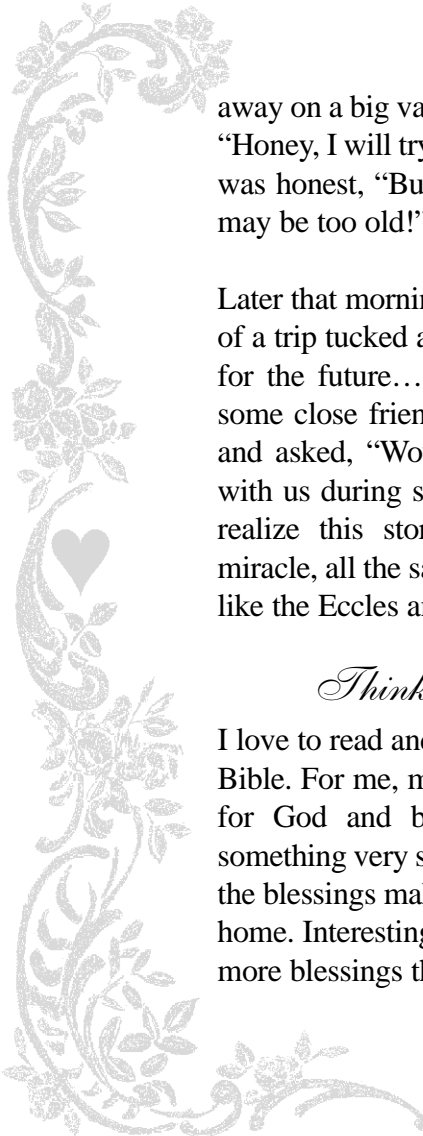
Thankfully, she only tore her muscles. Incidentally, two nights later Amy went to our church youth group in a neck and arm brace. Her friend, Amanda Frankson, prayed for her, and Amy came home completely healed. She has never mentioned pain from that injury since.

Blessing Others

Over the years, I have been so blessed as a mom. My daughters go out of their way many times to give their clothes, time and love to hurting women and children who occasionally stay with us.

Early one Sunday morning, just after a family left our home, I asked God if He would give the girls a really special blessing because they willingly gave of themselves so often. Right then Natalie came into my room and said, "I wish I could go





away on a big vacation like my friends do.” I said, “Honey, I will try to take you someday.” Her reply was honest, “But by the time you can afford it, I may be too old!”

Later that morning we left for church, the thought of a trip tucked at the back of our minds, a dream for the future...or so we thought. After church, some close friends came up to Amy and Natalie and asked, “Would you like to go to California with us during spring break?” What a surprise! I realize this story is a blessing rather than a miracle, all the same, I am still grateful for friends like the Eccles and the Chaissons!

Thinking About Miracles

I love to read and reflect about the miracles in the Bible. For me, miracles create awe and reverence for God and build my faith. I have noticed something very special over the years. Recounting the blessings makes us continually thankful in our home. Interestingly, the more thankful we are, the more blessings there are to recount.

Although I have shared just a few of our memories with you, I believe most of our lives are filled with miracles, many of which we are not aware.

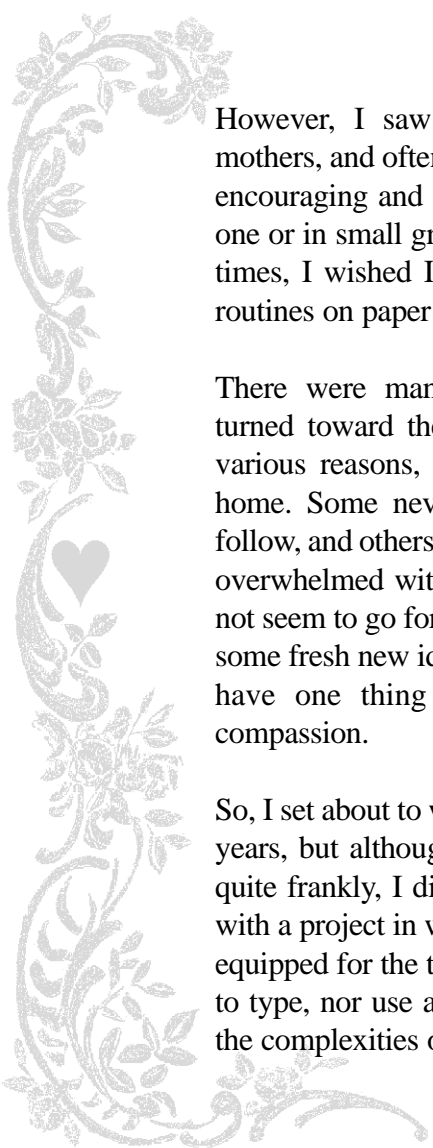




Six

Fulfilling the Vision

*I*n 1992, after moving my family to Kelowna and finding the healing I needed, I started on a journey to fulfill my third vision. It was in my heart to write how I had lived as a single mother. At the time, it seemed such an unlikely thing for me to do because I was still trying to bring stability back into my family. By now I was beginning to regain my self-respect. I was providing for my family through a new idea of buying and selling property. Once again, I was enjoying my role as a mother.



However, I saw such a need in other single mothers, and often found myself in the position of encouraging and teaching women, either one-on-one or in small group settings in my home. Many times, I wished I had some of my thoughts and routines on paper to make them easier to pass on.

There were many women whose hearts were turned toward their children and homes but for various reasons, lacked the skills to maintain a home. Some never had a mother's example to follow, and others, like in my story, had become so overwhelmed with circumstances that they could not seem to go forward. Other women just needed some fresh new ideas. Nevertheless, all seemed to have one thing in common – the need for compassion.

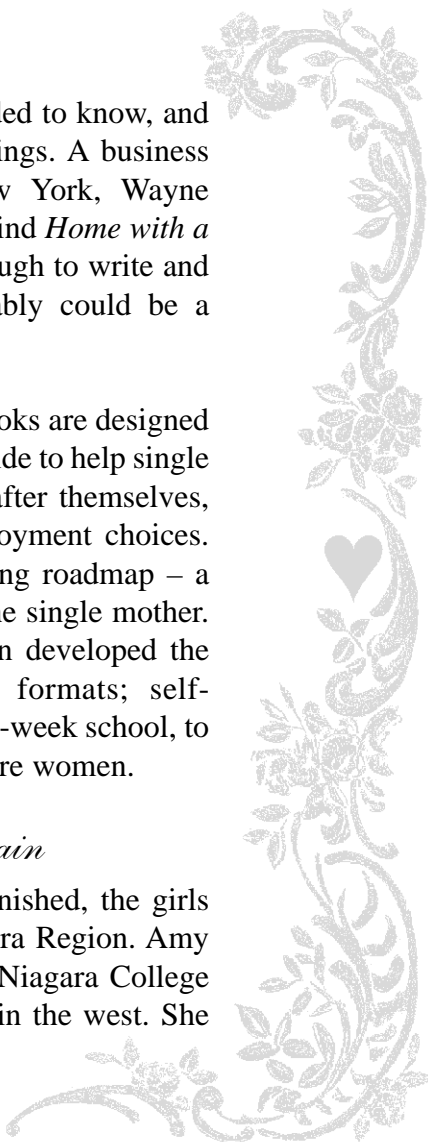
So, I set about to write what I had learned over the years, but although my training was in teaching, quite frankly, I didn't know where to even begin with a project in writing. I was, to say the least, ill equipped for the task at hand. I did not know how to type, nor use a computer, let alone understand the complexities of the publishing industry.

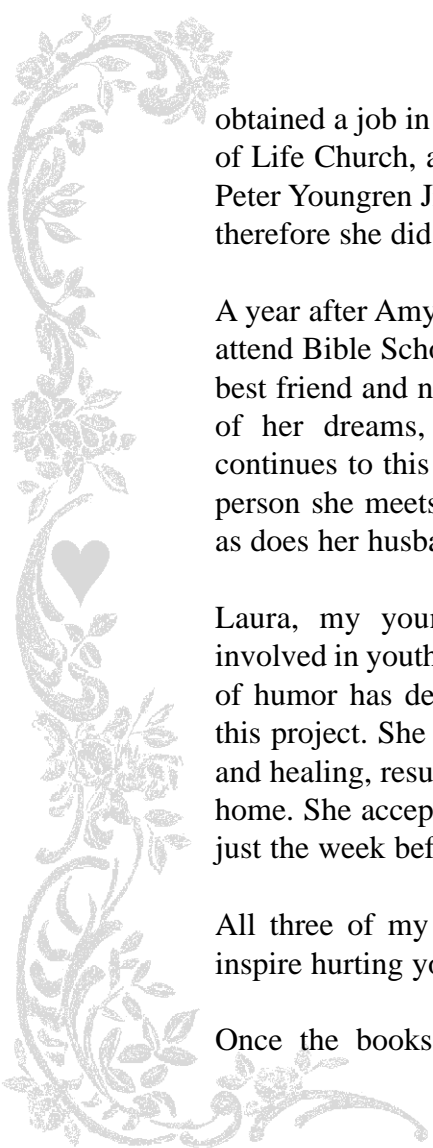
Bit-by-bit I learned what I needed to know, and am still learning many new things. A business consultant and friend in New York, Wayne Messick, said the real story behind *Home with a Heart*, is what I have gone through to write and publish this work. That probably could be a book in itself!

The *Home with a Heart* handbooks are designed to be a practical step-by-step guide to help single mothers set goals for looking after themselves, their children, home and employment choices. As well, they become a life-long roadmap – a small library of resources for the single mother. I self-published the books, then developed the material into three teaching formats; self-instructional, conference and 12-week school, to hopefully meet the needs of more women.

Eastward Again

Before my work was totally finished, the girls and I moved back to the Niagara Region. Amy led the way to take courses at Niagara College after completing Bible School in the west. She





obtained a job in the Youth Department of Word of Life Church, and soon after won the heart of Peter Youngren Jr., whom she married in 1998 – therefore she did become a pastor’s wife!

A year after Amy left home, Natalie followed to attend Bible School. She immediately became a best friend and now the wife of, the young man of her dreams, Darrick Vanderwier. Natalie continues to this day to reach out to any young person she meets, as a friend and youth pastor, as does her husband.

Laura, my youngest, is starting to become involved in youth ministry as well, and her sense of humor has definitely eased the workload of this project. She too is experiencing God’s love and healing, resulting from living in a fatherless home. She accepted Christ at a very young age, just the week before her third birthday.

All three of my girls have a story of hope to inspire hurting young people.

Once the books were published, I started to

teach my program from my home, and soon The Salvation Army came alongside me to help build the conferences and schools. Now my vision has expanded from books to television.

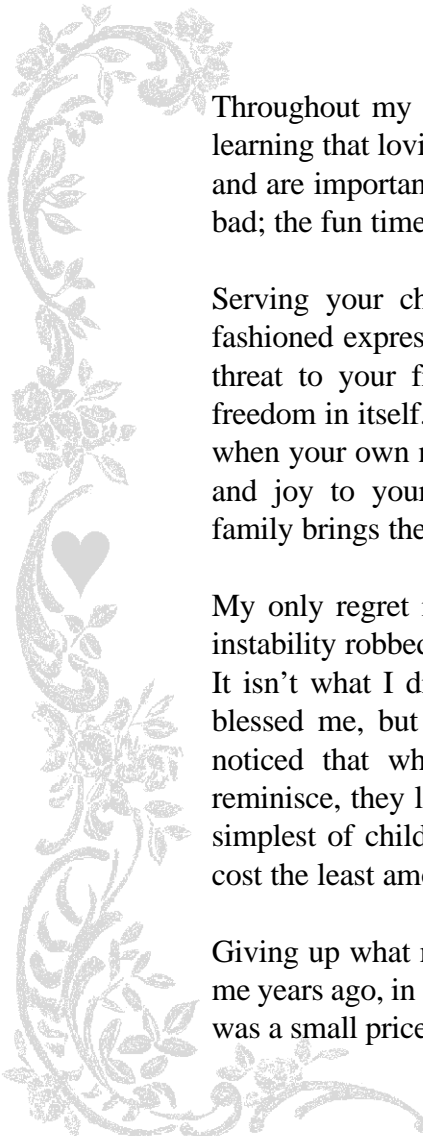
It has taken what I call the three “P’s” to fulfill the third vision for my life – prayer, perseverance and persistence. All three are worth the effort because each time I see *Home with a Heart* touch a single parent home, it gives me the courage to add more prayer, perseverance and persistence to my efforts.

I hope *Home with a Heart* lightens the load of single parenting for many women. Homemaking skills are easy to learn – from housework to business. It is the heart behind the home that makes all the difference.

Finally

I have been a homemaker in every kind of home imaginable, and some you could not imagine at all! Regardless of my circumstances, I really love being a mom. I choose to live, and not just survive, as a single mother!





Throughout my years of parenting, I have been learning that loving and serving go hand in hand, and are important at all times – the good and the bad; the fun times and sad times.

Serving your children may seem like an old-fashioned expression, and might even feel like a threat to your freedom, but indeed, serving is freedom in itself. Giving into another's life, even when your own needs may be great brings peace and joy to your heart. Giving into your own family brings the greatest life-long rewards.

My only regret is the times when my pain and instability robbed me of giving more to my girls. It isn't what I did for them monetarily that has blessed me, but the dedication of time. I have noticed that when my girls get together and reminisce, they laugh over the silliest things, the simplest of childhood memories – the ones that cost the least amount of money.

Giving up what might have seemed important to me years ago, in order to watch over my children, was a small price to pay for the joy their love and

respect brings to my life now.

I had my moments, like any mother, when love felt, well, – off in the distance! Like the day Amy talked her grandmother into cutting both her and Natalie’s long curly hair to a mere one inch; or when Natalie dumped her bowl of food on her head for three weeks straight; or when Laura woke up in the night for the umpteenth time.

However, I know love is a choice, not a feeling. Love is a child’s greatest need.

It is the answer for abandoned children.

Henry Drummond, an author from the 1800’s is quoted as saying, “You will find, as you look back upon your life, that the moments when you have really lived are the moments when you have done things in the spirit of love.”

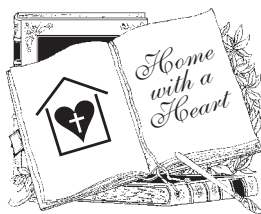
That has been, and remains today, to be, one of the greatest truths in my life. It is this simple truth that I want to spend the rest of my life passing on to other women.





Home with a Heart

The Art of Homemaking



For more information
visit us on the Internet at:
www.homewithaheart.org



The Art of Homemaking

COURSE GUIDE

Planning for Success

PART 1

THE BASICS OF HOMEMAKING

- Handbook 1 Organizing Your Household
- Handbook 2 Finances & Paperwork
- Handbook 3 Cooking Made Easy
- Handbook 4 Recipes Made Easy

PART 2

ENRICHING YOUR FAMILY

- Handbook 5 Time for Mom
- Handbook 6 Hobbies
- Handbook 7 Parenting

PART 3

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Handbook 8 Home Business & Job Search

PART 4 (Optional)

A TIME TO HEAL

- Book & Seminar Healing of Spirit, Soul & Body

