

2025 MISSIONS EDITION

Pullin' Weeds Plantin' Seeds
TEMPLE LADIES NEWSLETTER

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Croatia

When Derek first told me about God's calling for him to be a missionary I was, in a word, resistant to the idea. I grew up hearing stories of missionaries like David Livingstone and Amy Carmicheal and the hardships they went through in their lives. I never thought I could possess a faith big enough to reach the world like they did. And I have never been too fond of living in a grass hut.

Pouting and in need of comfort I ran to the Bible for some solace. I ended up in my favorite book of the Bible, Jonah (yes, I see the irony). I love the book of Jonah because of the amazing miracle of the fish and the revival of a very wicked city. But as I was reading, I didn't see any of that. I started to notice Jonah's terrible attitude, his stubbornness, anger, and uncompassionate heart. I began to see the Bible reflecting my uncaring heart.

In that moment the Holy Spirit impressed on me that if God can use a stubborn, callous person like Jonah for a great revival how much more could God use me if I were willing?

I started praying that God would give me the same calling that He had given Derek. But God was ready with another lesson. I was reading Ephesians 5, and came upon verse 22, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." And the Holy Spirit came back and said, "This is your calling."

I, of course, thought "I am not doing that!" (pray for Derek! 😊) Sulking in my own childish disobedience, I found my way to Psalm 37:23-24, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand."

If you have known Derek for any amount of time you know

he is a good man. And if I am following Derek, I am following a good man, which means I am obeying God. If I am submitting myself to Derek, I am submitting myself to God.

These are just a couple of pivotal steps that it took to arrive at peace. I know that submitting to God's direction now will help me yield to His will when we get to Croatia.

I love the verse in Psalm 37:25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." In the moments I forget to have faith I find promises like this to be an anchor in hard times.

I do not know what the future holds, but I know that God will never forsake me, and I can find joy in His perfect will – even if it means living in a grass hut. 🌱



2025 MISSIONS
CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 15 - 19

Matthew 4:19-20
FISHERS
of men

WED-FRI, OCTOBER 15-17
7:00 PM Evening Services

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18
12:00 PM Fellowship Lunch @ 4H Building
See Sign-up Sheets at Hall Table

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19
9:30 AM Missionaries in SS Classes
2026 Faith Promise Received
6:00 PM Evening Service

In Argentina, where I was born, parents had to choose their baby's name from an official book. If the name wasn't in the book, a different one had to be chosen. Thankfully, times have changed. The government is more lenient and many more names have been added to the list.

When I was born, my dad went to the government office to register me. He had chosen **Angela Joy**. *Angela* was in the book; *Joy* was not. So, he registered me with the Argentine government simply as *Angela* and then went to the American embassy and registered me as *Angela Joy*. Growing up, the only time my middle name was ever used was when I was in trouble. For all practical purposes, I didn't really have a middle name.

Imagine my surprise my first Christmas in college in the States when I started seeing my name everywhere. Needless to say, at Christmas, my house is *all about me*: Joy towels, Joy hot pads, Joy tree ornaments – you get the idea. But what I love most is finding my name in the Bible. It's amazing how often the word *Joy* appears in Scripture. Whenever I see it, I pause, reread the verse, and try to soak in all that God is teaching me. Over the years, different “Joy verses” have not only encouraged me but carried me through some very hard times.

First of all, *Joy* is a fruit of the Spirit, so it is not something that can just be manufacture by me. (Yes, I own t-shirts that say “*Choose Joy*,” and I do believe a joyful attitude is a choice.) True Joy does not come from me – it comes from the Lord. He produces it in me.

Here are just a few of my favorite “Joy verses” that I love to share:

Psalms 30:5b: “Weeping may endure for a night, but Joy cometh in the morning.” The first time this verse jumped out at me, I was a teenager going through heartache and drama. Yes, I cried myself to sleep more than once. But God used this verse to promise me that I would be okay. Joy comes in the morning.

Later in life, when I miscarried our first baby, I was

devastated. Once again, God reminded me, “Joy cometh in the morning.” That was a hard one, but I clung to His promise – and He came through. During that time, I also learned Psalm 16:11b: “In Thy presence is fullness of Joy.” People said many kind things after my miscarriage, but none of those “encouraging words” helped me the way God's presence did. Time with Him restored my Joy.

Some years later, when I was pregnant again, I attended childbirth classes. The only thing I remember from those classes was being told to find a fixed focal point in the room – something that would not move – so I could keep my eyes on it during the pain.

That idea came alive for me when I read Hebrews 12:1–2, “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the Joy that was set before him endured the cross...” Jesus also had a focal point to help Him endure His suffering: the Joy set before Him. He knew what awaited Him on the other side.

Through trials, hardships, betrayals, losses, homeschooling challenges, health struggles, robberies, goodbyes – whatever life has thrown at us – I have kept that verse close. I look to Jesus. He is my Joy, my fixed, unmovable focal point. He never lets me down. He gives me strength and carries me through the pain.

Of course, there are times I lose focus. I panic, get discouraged, and stumble. But as soon as I turn my eyes back to Him, He steadies me – and my Joy returns. “The Joy of the LORD is your strength” Nehemiah 8:10b.

It has become a running joke in our family that Christmas is “all about me,” since my house looks like Joy exploded everywhere. But behind every one of those “Joy” decorations is a reminder: He is my focal point. He is my Joy. Only in His presence will I find fullness of Joy – and that is exactly what He wants for me. John 15:11: “These things have I spoken unto you, that my Joy might remain in you, and that your Joy might be full.” 🌱



NOTE: Amber has given permission to publish this article in the format you have received; for their safety, PLEASE, do not post or comment about this testimony, missionary, or ministry on any social media platform.

Leaving my home country meant leaving my friends. I was not sure how the Lord would provide new friends, but I knew that we needed to go. We moved to Nepal four years ago. As soon as we set up our home, my husband made learning the language one of our top priorities. Learning Nepali has been such a blessing. It has significantly increased our ability to minister to Nepali people, both believers and unbelievers alike. It has given us a sense of belonging in our community, and it has made life much easier. People can now easily understand what we want and what we are trying to do. Before we learned Nepali, there was much confusion for us and for everyone who tried to help us. Franke and I enrolled in language school, while our daughter Emilee, who was three at the time, began learning from a private tutor.

Emilee's tutor is a Nepali believer named Gita. She works as a preschool teacher at a local school. Before she goes into work each morning, she comes to our home to teach Emilee Nepali. It was not easy to welcome someone into my home at 7:30am four days a week! Yet it has given me opportunity to work on my hospitality skills. In Nepali culture, it is customary to serve a meal, or at least tea and cookies, when someone comes to your home. So, each morning, after Emilee's class, we invited Gita to enjoy a good ol' American breakfast together at our table. In the beginning, this was hard for her because our food is so different from that which Nepali people are accustomed. Breakfasts vary from biscuits and gravy, to pancakes and sausage, to French toast, or scrambled eggs and potatoes. Eventually she grew to love them – as long as she could add some of her homemade special spicy vegetable “pickled sauce” as a side. Whenever I asked her to pray for our food, she always thanked the Lord for

the “snack” – it's not considered a meal unless there is rice!

During breakfast, we have had many conversations about life, culture, the Bible, spirituality, her family, and just everyday chitchat. Over the last four years, we have forged a special friendship. I was able to support and help her when her alcoholic husband died suddenly last year. This August was the one-year of his passing. Emilee and I went to her home on the anniversary date – which is very significant in Nepali culture – and checked in on her heart and prayed and read the Bible with her, her mother-in-law, and her son. She shared how the Lord has given her strength and peace as a widow and how she has been able to witness to her co-workers as a result of the difference that God has made in her life. Then, per custom Nepali culture, she served us a traditional Nepali breakfast of lentils and rice. It was delicious. My mouth is watering right now thinking about it!

Gita ministers to me too. When I gave birth to our youngest daughter, Ember, Gita stayed the night with our other three children. While I was recovering, she made a special traditional spice soup made up of thyme, cloves, mustard oil, and much more. This soup is a “must” eat for post-partum mothers in Nepal – and it was very good! During the first month, she brought this to my home multiple times along with a special post-partum snack that helped me heal and produce milk for the baby. She has washed my dishes and even cleaned my house. She was the first Nepali friend I made and now she has become one of my dearest friends. Even now while we are on this short furlough, Gita continues to give Emilee Nepali lessons via video calls. After her lessons we don't share a meal, but we do share events and happenings. I am thankful to the Lord for my friend Gita.

I am looking forward to being with you all in October! 🌱



If I said I had no fear of traveling in Ukraine during a time of war, I would be lying. However, I believe that God prepared me for this and taught me a lesson that has helped me to deal with my fears and anxious feelings. Many years ago, as a young missionary in Lithuania, God helped me to obtain victory over my fear and anxiety of what “might happen”. I often heard noises in the night, and my suspicious mind led me to imagine that terrible things may be waiting for me. My husband was very patient and often reminded me of God’s many promises that deal with fear and anxiety. He especially comforted me with the words from 2 Timothy 1:7, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” The fear and anxiety that I was experiencing was coming from Satan, and I was not fully trusting in God. God gives His children a sound mind – not a mind that is allowed to dwell on what *might happen*.

God, in His mercy, taught me a wonderful lesson of trusting in Him when one night a group of men broke into our home while we were sleeping. We were living in the church basement, and the building was secured like a fortress with thick steel doors and strong locks. However, that night, intruders entered through an open window upstairs. My husband was awakened by their voices and was able to chase them out with a baseball bat. The men escaped with some cash and personal property, but our family was unharmed. Through this experience, God taught me that all this time, I had been trusting in big doors and strong locks. He showed me that ultimately it is He who cares for me and protects me. I knew this from reading His Word, but deep down I was not willing to believe it. Mercifully, He allowed me to *experience it*. Warren Wiersbe explains it this way, “What we believe helps to determine how we behave. It is not enough for us to understand Paul’s doctrinal explanations. We must translate our learning into living and show by our daily lives that we trust God’s Word.”

Many times throughout my life, I have looked back on this lesson from God and been blessed by the reminder that He is my protector. In fact, just recently, I was able to

practice what I had been taught so many years ago. To “translate my learning into living”. As I write this, Derek and I are in Ukraine. We often hear sirens and receive texts on our phones about the possibility of incoming drones and ballistic missiles. Most are shot down or taken out by the air defense system. Occasionally one gets through, and the explosion is heard in the distance. I have come to terms with these threats and most times I am resting in the knowledge that God is faithful and will either protect me or give me grace to go through whatever trial I may face. Thursday, August 28, was exceptional. We were awakened by sirens alerting us to an air raid which lasted nine hours. That same old feeling of anxiety came creeping back into my mind. Russia was launching a massive air attack at Kyiv of 629 projectiles including two hypersonic missiles, nine ballistic missiles, 20 cruise missiles, and 598 drones. Thirteen of them penetrated air defense, taking the lives of 27 people and damaging 100 buildings. All of this was exploding in the sky above us. It was an opportunity to allow God to either increase my faith or allow fear and Satan to control my mind. Another opportunity to translate my learning into living. For me, that meant making responsible choices. Instead of opening my phone app to follow the trajectory of drones and missiles, I must open my Bible to direct my thoughts toward God’s promises. I must remind myself that it is not the air defense system in which I am trusting, but He is my shield. I must live by faith and not by fear. We praise the Lord for God’s faithful protection of us that night.

I am thankful for the peace that God gives through my trials and fearful times, for my husband and our faithful Ukrainian partners who encourage me by their example, for the prayers of God’s people, and for God’s lessons in life. I am thankful that I do not need to live in fear of what might happen. As I daily take God’s Word and purposefully translate my learning into living, my faith grows, and I begin to live the abundant life that only He can provide regardless of what is happening in the sky overhead. 🌱

