



Treasures Among Us

Lana Harris

Lana Harris and her husband, Frank, love being a part of the

Lord's church. Both of them had been married before. They met at a Christmas gathering with friends. She says the friends probably intentionally invited Frank so that he and she could meet. They hit it off, and he suggested that they go out for dinner some night—but he didn't call! Finally after about two weeks, she called him because, "I didn't want to let him get away."

Bob Pipes was the preacher at that time, so he counseled with them. He told them they really didn't want to get married because it probably wouldn't work anyway. However, they have been happily married for 37 years and hope there will be many more anniversaries to celebrate in the future. "We were determined to start this marriage 'in church' by making a commitment to God that we would attend services and have God in our life and family. What a blessing it has been." Lana had been baptized earlier, but Frank had not. Through their studies with Bob, Frank was also baptized before they married. "The church made our family feel so welcome when we were new Christians. I sometimes wonder what our marriage (family) would be like today if we had not been part of the church."

She says, "Don't take me wrong—we have had the same struggles as everyone else with our children, grandchildren, mothers and fathers, job losses, and so forth. We always looked to God for guidance and love through prayer. He always came through and blessed us. Hope returns—again and again."

"Our children tell us, 'the grandchildren are watching you, mom and dad, as to how you have gotten through all the crises and how you have reacted to your problems.'" She continues, "As Bob Pipes always said, 'Keep on keepin' on.'"

As a child, Lana attended Perkins School in Doolittle, Missouri. It was a three-room school house, and she went there 1st through 8th grades. Her dad was a carpenter and built houses. "Every time he would almost have the (family) house finished, someone would come to buy it." She has a box that Frank made for her out of wood from the house she was born in. It is a real treasure to her, and she proudly displays it in her kitchen.

Her career was primarily in sales. One of her first jobs was as a beauty adviser at The Copper Tree in downtown Rolla. She worked for Estee Lauder (the company) as a consultant for five years. She was very shy when she started there. She worked on commission and "didn't make anything" the first month. She knew that was not going to work, so she read a book about sales. She took the information to heart and learned how to approach people and find out how she could help them achieve their goals. She says it was the only job I ever had that I was glad when vacation was over so I could go back to work.

Her next job was at Missouri Furniture where she sold furniture and consulted on home decorating. She worked in furniture sales for 19 years as a consultant. Her decorating talents are displayed in her own home. She really enjoys helping people get the most out of their budget while making their home look like they want it to. Sales is a common bond between her and Frank as he also worked in sales for many years. Their vacation time was usually just a week at a time, so they began going on cruises and love it. They have cruised all around the Caribbean, have been to Hawaii twice, and to Alaska. "We've had a wonderful life together and enjoy doing

things together. We love to travel, especially cruising, and have met a lot of nice people. We love to talk and visit, as most of you know!" She says, "We also enjoy having new and old friends for casual meals and getting to know each other better."

Her favorite "room" in her home is their screened-in porch. Every morning, they enjoy their coffee as they watch all the wildlife. They have seen red fox, lots of deer and rabbits, coons, and various others, including a cougar.

Lana is a very interesting Treasure Among Us.

NOTE: *This is the 21st in a series highlighting noble Christian women in our congregation. We truly have many "treasures among us" in the women who exemplify Christianity in all its facets and have much to teach us all.*

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THE TWELFTH YEAR

A Short Story By Ina Ruth McKune
Part 3 (Conclusion)

She had never before seen so large a crowd. It swayed back and forth like an animal with a mind of its own, but she nevertheless plunged forward. A heavy man stepped hard on her foot, and sweaty bodies jostled her first one way and then the other. For a moment she thought she would lose her footing and be crushed under the masses, but the press of people kept her upright, and she pushed onward in the direction she had last seen him from her rooftop minutes before.

She no longer knew how long she had been shoving, wriggling, and wedging her way through the crowd. She heard voices crying out, "Rabbi! Jesus!" but she was not certain she was even going in the right direction any longer. *I've lost him. How will I ever get my bearings?*

Then suddenly the throng parted briefly in front of her, and there he was, his back toward her, his head bent toward a richly dressed man who clutched his arm. Like an ocean the crowd surged forward, and as though caught up in a wave, she surged with it toward him. *If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.*

And there his cloak was, right in front of her. Stretching out her arm until her shoulder ached, she extended her hand toward the nearest corner of the Tallith and for the briefest moment saw and felt the four silky fringes -- three snowy white and one hyacinth blue -- slide across her fingers (*Some authorities believe Jesus would have worn the ordinary, less ostentatious, garment worn by Jewish teachers of Galilee. Over His inner, seamless robe fastened with a girdle, He may have worn "the square outer garment, or Tallith, with the customary fringes of four long white threads with one of hyacinth knotted together*

on each of the four corners." Edersheim, Alfred, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, McDonald Publishing Company, p. 624. *See also Numbers 15:37-41; Deuteronomy 22:12.*)

Instantly she knew it was all gone – the bleeding, the weariness, the endlessness. She knew it, and yet she felt numb. Then above the roar of the crowd, she heard his voice as clearly as though he whispered in her ear, "Who touched me?" *He knows I touched him. I am – was – unclean. Will he punish me?* Suddenly trembling with fear, she fell at his feet and told the entire, sad story, all twelve years of it.

As the last few words echoed in her ears, she lifted her head toward the bright, blue sky and looked him in the face. "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace." It was such an ordinary face, but as she gazed into those eyes, a certainty filled her heart. *It is you, Lord. It is you. You are here with us.*

What is he doing? This crowd has already slowed us down. There is not much time. Why in heaven's name must he stop and talk to this woman? Jairus felt a hand on his shoulder and turned to see a familiar face from home.

No, no, don't say it!

"Jairus, your daughter is dead."

No! Don't say it!

"Why bother the teacher anymore?" The world began to splinter apart, and the ground to shift beneath his feet.

But then he heard another voice – "Don't be afraid; just believe" – and he felt the world and his heart right themselves. Later he could not remember the rest of the trip to his house, except for locking his eyes on the Teacher's face, as a drowning man locks his arms around a lifeline.

When he, Jesus, and the three companions entered the courtyard, dust filled the air as the hired mourners danced rhythmically from side to side, and their ululating voices pierced Jairus' ears.

"Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep."

Laughter replaced the wailing, but Jairus latched on to that thought. *Why laugh? Perhaps the Teacher knows she is really asleep, in a trance.* Yet as they entered her bedchamber, and Jairus looked upon his little girl's face and then into her mother's eyes; he knew this was death.

The door was shut, the mourners locked outside, all was quiet. The child on her back, still – never had they seen her so still, not even in sleep when gentle breath raised and lowered her chest – and white, as white as the bedclothes. The hands – the hands that had patted his cheek and played in the water and grasped his finger when first he saw her – were folded motionless.

In the silence Jesus sat upon the bed and lifted up her hand. “Little girl, I say to you, get up.” The voice was low, but in the stillness of that room, it rang out like a battering ram against a sealed gate. And the gate could not prevail against that voice.

Those brown eyes opened, the color flooded into her cheeks, and as effortlessly as she had every ordinary morning of her life, she sat up and swung her legs over the side of the bed. As from a distance Jairus heard his wife gasp and laugh and sob. Yet in that moment he could only apprehend his daughter’s earnest gaze into the eyes of Jesus.

The sun beat down on the hillside teeming with people, but the woman did not feel the heat, only the joy of sitting there healthy and active on a beautiful day -- and even more, the joy of anticipating more words from the Teacher. By her side, a father, mother, and young girl took their places on the grass. As the words of Jesus began to ring out over the crowd, the woman noticed the girl turn in her direction, her deep brown, lash-fringed eyes crinkling in a sweet smile. The woman smiled back. Above them the blue canopy of sky stretched endlessly in an enveloping embrace.

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SKEINS OF YARN

Wander over some time to the crafts department of your local discount store. Look at all the beautiful colors of yarn that are available. The teals, the blues, the



the maroons, the purples, the pinks, the yellows, and the variegated. The skeins of yarn are just lying there, waiting for someone to transform them

into sweaters or afghans or even pot holders! A pattern is chosen and followed, and the yarn becomes a useful product.

We are more than skeins of yarn lying around. It’s true we come in all colors and from different backgrounds, but God has designed a pattern for our lives. As we pick

up His pattern book, the Bible, and read and study it, our lives will be transformed also into a useful product.

Some of us will mature into beautiful afghans with intricate designs. Some of us will become sweaters, simple or fancy. And, yes, some of us will be pot holders. But whatever purpose we find in life in service to Him, let’s give it all we’ve got!

God wants us to give our lives as a “living sacrifice” to Him. He doesn’t need old skeins of yarn lying around on the shelf.

Lorna Smith, Lubbock, Texas
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FINDING RHYTHM IN THE WORLD

I had a CD of “The Best of Tennessee Ernie Ford,” on in the truck and had slowed down to a crawl to avoid a crazy long-haired, snaggle-toothed, white-bearded, coconut-seed-brown man in raggedy, pusher length, dirty but tannish colored pants with no belt, no shirt, no shoes, walking too much in my lane.

As the truck barely moved, the old man heard the lively beat of the music, raised his skinny arms and began swaying and jiggling and bobbing to the music. I moseyed carefully around him. As I looked in the side mirror, I saw a most glorious smile of ecstasy on his old face. He had finally found his rhythm in the world.



Rebecca Voraritskul—Khon Kaen, Thailand
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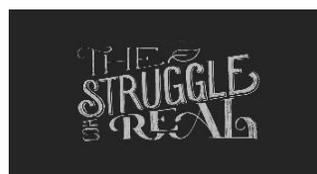
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THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

Have you ever faced a time in your life when struggles and trials happened one after another? Like me, maybe you wondered why. Why, God? Why do I have to face all this?

I was recently offered a new job. Shortly after I accepted this position I found out I had skin cancer. Whoa . . . wait a minute, this wasn’t in my plan.

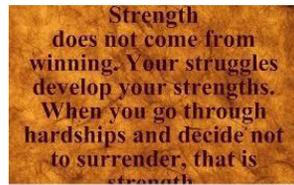
I would be losing my insurance in just a few short weeks -- this was not good. How was I going to deal with this?



Luckily, I didn’t have to. God took over the situation and I was able to have the surgery on my last scheduled day of work,

which was also my last day of being covered with insurance.

Thinking my troubles were over, I started my new job with bandages over my eye from the surgery. Not an ideal situation, but I could deal with it. The first two days went smoothly, then I injured my knee at home that night. What now? I couldn't call in sick on my third day at a new job, so I toughed it out through the morning before I was told I should see a doctor. Seriously? I couldn't see a doctor now. I had no insurance. But eventually I did go and found out that I needed to miss over a week of work to rest my knee. Now I was really stressed, not only did I have to pay for the doctor visit and miss a week of pay, but will I be able to keep my job? How could I deal with this new problem? Once again, God provided relief for my worries. My boss assured me the job would be waiting for me once I took care of myself.



Even though this time in my life has been a struggle, God stepped up to help me through each situation. I am thankful He has given me wonderful friends and fellow Christians who always encourage me. Maybe we all have to face times like these in our lives in order to learn to trust God, to accept help from others, and not rely on ourselves. And someday, after we persevere here on earth, living the life God has called us to live, we'll be free from all struggles and trials for good.

Laura Sumpter, Waynesville, Missouri
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THE GREATEST BLESSING OF ALL

Ofentimes when troubles beset us, we fail to see how God is working through our life in our difficulties all the while still bringing about blessings to ourselves and others. Matthew 5:45 tells us that God sends the rain on



the just and unjust alike. For those who love the Lord, we are told in Hebrews 6:18 to, "Lay hold of the hope set before us."

I thank God for the enduring hope that he gives us through all the seasons of our life.

Recently, I fell down some steps and broke my leg in three places. At the moment the pain kept away any thoughts or reflection; but once in the hospital, I was able to reflect about how God placed the right people at the right time to help me and comfort me. I was with a

nurse friend. Neither of us had any cell service, but the campers across from us had cell service. She was also an orthopedic nurse from Wisconsin. A retired sheriff also came to help. These three individuals immediately splinted my leg with a pillow and held my leg steady for 45 minutes as we waited for the ambulance to arrive.

By then I was worrying about my dog and about my vehicle and how I was going to manage a broken leg for weeks or months. God was already working these things out for me in my distress. The ambulance personnel were very gentle in moving me to the stretcher and into the vehicle. I was amazed, but I should not have been, for we are told in 2 Corinthians 1:3-5, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

Over the following couple of weeks, I experienced the love of my brethren and my friends over and over again. My aunt and uncle came from Iowa and helped me to be



able to stay in my home safely. I thank God daily for the His grace and blessings, with His greatest gift, my Lord Jesus Christ, my

salvation. I don't know what the future holds for me, but I know for a fact that my Father in heaven will be with me all the days of my life. That is the greatest blessing of all.

Sharon Hamilton, Rolla, Missouri
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