Beth Stevens Testimony - 0926

Have you ever looked back on your life and said, "It has not been at all as I would have planned it," and yet felt deeply thankful for each part because you know God was teaching you through it all? That truly describes my life. I grew up as the third child in a family of six right here in Cedar Falls, Iowa. I have so many happy memories of my childhood. We attended a church alongside many other families, and with so many kids around, we all loved going. My parents were very active in church activities, and I always wanted to be right at my mom's side. I loved being at church and wanted to be helpful to everyone. We hosted people in our home every week; our house was big, and we never turned anyone away. A typical Sunday included twelve people around our dinner table, and somehow, we never ran out of food.

When I was ten years old, I had a very serious accident. I fell, and my arm shattered a glass windowpane. It was a terrifying moment—I was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance and received 180 stitches. At one point, doctors feared they might have to amputate my arm. During that time, I learned that so many people were praying for me, and seeing God answer those prayers built a strong foundation for my faith.

I have a distinct memory of one particular Sunday when I made a life-changing decision. A guest speaker came to our church, and while I don't recall his exact words, I knew in my heart that God was speaking directly to me. I realized then how much Jesus loved me and was watching over me. I felt He had a plan for my life, and I wanted His plan more than anything. I invited Christ into my heart that day and decided to know Him and follow Him.

I made good choices as a young girl, but as my teenage years began, life became more challenging, and I started making some poor decisions. Yet, through it all, I continued to pray for God's protection, and time and again, He was faithfully there for me.

When I was twenty-nine, I reached another significant turning point. A routine gallbladder surgery went wrong, leading to a two-and-a-half-month hospital stay. Severe infection spread through my body, requiring weekly surgeries. Eventually, I was emergency-flown to the Mayo Clinic. I coded twice and spent weeks in the ICU, completely unaware of what was happening. My doctor later told me he felt I was an incredible fighter and that people must have been praying. Once again, I discovered a vast network of people had been lifting me up in prayer, and this deepened my faith even further.

I love telling others how good God has been to me through these difficult seasons. I believe He calls us to share what He has done so others can find encouragement during their own trials.

My two daughters have been such a source of joy in my life, though we have walked through hard times together as well. One had a baby in high school, and the other struggled with a drug addiction that ultimately led to imprisonment. Even in those heavy seasons, I never stopped praying for them, and God remained faithfully by my side—even in the darkest days.

Looking back over my life, I am deeply grateful for learning about Jesus' love at an early age; it has sustained me throughout my entire journey. I know He still has a special purpose for me today.

One of my favorite chapters in the Bible is Psalm 34, especially verses 4 and 6. Verse 4 says, "I sought the Lord, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears," and verse 6 says, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles." I truly feel as though God preserved those words specifically for me.

About two years ago, God gave me both the words and the melody to a song that encourages me whenever I sing it. I still marvel that I wrote my very first song at age seventy! It always reminds me of the countless times Jesus has been there for me. I sing it often, and I would love for us to sing it together today.