

Announcer

Welcome to transformed by the word, a podcast about discovering how to live your life with gratifying purpose. God created you for a reason and the Bible contains the keys to unlock your transformed life. Now, here's your host, Debora Barr

Debora 0:27

Thanks for joining me for Episode 31 of Transformed by the Word.

I want to take a moment to thank each and every one of you who regularly tunes into this podcast, as new episodes are published every two weeks on Tuesday morning. So far, these messages have been coming from my 31-day devotional that I wrote. The title is Life Transformation, Day by Day. And you can find the link to purchase the devotional on my website at TBTWpodcast.com. That's TBTWpodcast.com. It is the word of God. That is what completely transformed my life a number of years ago. And my desire is to help you find God's healing and transforming power for your own life as well.

Our topic today is abiding in Christ. And I will share with you a bit of a story. It's about the journey that God took me on about two years ago, through a traumatic injury that I experienced. But before we go there, let's talk about abiding in Christ.

In the book of John, Chapter 15, verse four, we hear the words of Jesus. He says, abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. To abide means to remain or to stay. And in this passage of Scripture that I just read, Jesus commands us to abide in Him, to remain in him to stay in him.

Think about a fruit tree, like an apple tree. Does the branch of an apple tree have to work to produce an apple? Well, no, the branch really only has to remain attached firmly to the trunk of the tree in order to draw nourishment from the soil. And to absorb the light from the sun through its leaves. The Apple, or the fruit of that tree is produced as a result of the work that God does in the tree to bring forth this fruit.

Now, if you think about it, if the branch is broken off the tree, no fruit can come from a broken branch. It withers and dies away. And this is exactly what happens to us spiritually if we become disconnected from Jesus. And that can happen either through unrepentant sin, or by letting the cares of the world override our devotion to God.

Now a couple years ago, I had just purchased a new home. And I was moving from an apartment in the city to a house in the suburbs. I had only been in the house about three or four days. I moved in on a Friday, and on Wednesday, the following week, is when it happened. I was going up onto the roof. And I know many of you might say why in the world were you going on the roof. But there was a sunroom on the back of my house and it had windows up in the roof. And they were open. And there were a bunch of dead leaves stuck on the screen. And my goal that day was to go up there, brush the leaves away and shut those windows. So, as I was climbing the ladder on the deck to get up on the roof, I had one foot on the roof, one foot on the ladder when the unthinkable happened. The base of the ladder began to slide away and there was nothing but air. So, I fell from the roof down onto the ladder on the deck below. And as soon as I tried to get up, I knew that my leg was broken. But thankfully, I had my cell phone with me because I was the only one home. I didn't know any of the neighbors. And it was Wednesday

morning around 10:30. So, I reached into my pocket and picked up my phone and I called 911. And thankfully, they were able to get to me within about five minutes.

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I was taken by ambulance to a hospital. Mind you, I wasn't taken to the local hospital, because when they saw the extent of my injury, they took me to a trauma hospital, which was about 30 miles away. But here I am. For the very first time in my life, I broke a bone. The very first time in my life that I was hospitalized, I was brought into the hospital. And it turned out that I needed surgery the next day. So during this time, I had a lot of time to think about my relationship with Christ.

As it turns out, I was in the hospital after the surgery for about a week. And then I was transferred to a rehabilitation hospital. So, the person who was very active, who walked every day, was suddenly unable to walk, unable to get out of bed for a long time. And it was during this time that I drew even closer to the Lord. Probably for the first time in my life, I truly was able to abide in Christ. I spent a lot of time in prayer, I spent a lot of time in my Word. And I was so, so grateful for the many blessings that God showed me during this time.

I began to learn about other people that had similar accidents, like the one that I did, falling off the roof onto a ladder below. I began to think about what could have happened, I could have hit my head. I could have been paralyzed. I could have died that day. But God was protecting me. And I believe that he was using this to draw me closer to him.

Now there were some amazing things that I realized during this time of infirmity, in this time of rehabilitation. Some of the blessings that I experienced were the fact that in both of the hospitals that I was in, I was in a single occupant room. And what I later learned was that that was very unusual. So God gave me time away without the pressure of another person in the room to really spend quality time with him. Another thing that I believe he did, just for me, is both rooms in both hospitals were just outside the helicopter pad. Now you may not know it, but I was a helicopter pilot for about 13 years. And so the fact that I could see a helipad there and hear the helicopters coming in and going out, just made me smile. So I know that God did that just for me.

Here's another thing that happened in the rehab hospital that I think is just amazing. Once I arrived there, they asked me if I wanted to attend chapel service on Sunday, because they would bring you your schedule for the upcoming events. As you were working on your rehabilitation, your schedule. They asked if I would like to go to chapel. And I said yes. So the first day they wheeled me down to the room at the end of the hall. And there I met the chaplain who was serving in that area of the hospital. Well, she and I struck up a conversation and later she stopped by my room. When we were talking, I began to share a bit of my story with her when she was asking some questions about my relationship with the Lord. And as I began to share with her about my friend who helped me to draw close to God many years ago, when I mentioned her name, Clarise I told her that I had met Clarise in a church in West Virginia. This chaplain looked at me and began to cry. I look back at her and I said, Are you okay?

10:18

And she said, Yes. She said, You know, I think you're talking about the exact same Clarise that I have known for many years. It turns out that the two of them had been in a church together. Long before my friend Clarise moved to West Virginia. And so here, God made a connection with a person that knew

someone very close to me. Mind you, I was in a hospital 75 miles from West Virginia. And yet, there was this amazing, amazing connection.

I also got the opportunity to witness or share my faith with some of the nurses that were taking care of me. And that was such an amazing experience, to be able to share and talk about the Lord. God is truly amazing.

No matter what we experience in life, if we can just slow down and really look for the ways that God is blessing us it'll blow your mind. Some of the things that I learned during that time as I was hospitalized, and even when I came home and had to slowly get to where I could walk again. Because after the injury in the surgery, I wasn't even allowed to put my toe on the ground for the first six weeks. And so a very active person that used to hike in the woods every single day, walked at least 10,000 steps a day prior to the accident. I could barely walk from one side of my house to the other. So, the recovery process took quite a bit of time.

But some of the things that I learned during that time was how to abide in Christ. I believe that God allowed this to happen, so that I would slow down, that I would take that additional quality time to be with him. Because he loves to be with us just as much as we love to be with him. I was able to take time away from my day to day routine, and connect deeply with the Lord. And he was able to speak to me in a way that he could never get through to me when I was so busy moving from one thing to another.

I love the lyrics of a song that I heard recently and titled Blessings, by Laura Story. Here's how it starts. We pray for blessings. We pray for peace, comfort for family protection while we sleep. We pray for healing for prosperity. We pray for your mighty hand to ease our suffering. Yet all the while you hear each spoken need. Yet love is way too much to give us lesser things. Because what if your blessings come through raindrops? What if your healing comes through tears? Whatever 1000 sleepless nights are what it takes to know you're near. What if trials of this life are your mercies in disguise?

Well, I certainly experienced God's mercies through my time of trial. And I'm reminded of the scripture in Jeremiah 29:11 that says, For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Another translation says it this way. For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for disaster to give you a future and a hope. In the midst of my accident and recovery. I knew that God was working all things together for my good. And part of that was my getting even closer to him through this experience of abiding in him.

15:13

Abide in Jesus and allow him to abide in you. And you will be able to face any challenges that life might bring. And you will come out on the other side, victorious.

Now, if you don't have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, if you don't have this deep connection with him, but you want to, He is waiting for you to surrender your life to Him. And He will forgive you of all of your sins, washing them away and bringing your spirit to life within you.

If you've never surrendered your life, to Jesus Christ, you can do that right now. And you can bring yourself into right relationship with God. It is by faith that we believe that Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment for our sins. And you can pray a prayer like this with me right now.

God, I confess that I'm a sinner and I need Jesus in my life. I repent of my sins and I turn to you. I believe that Jesus died on the cross, he was buried and he rose from the dead. I accept this by faith and invite Jesus to be Lord of my life, to reign and rule in my heart. Thank you for forgiving me and for saving me. Amen.

Now, if you just made a decision for Christ, start reading your Bible. Get connected to a Bible teaching Bible believing church get around other Christians who can help you grow in your walk with the Lord. And if you just made that decision for Christ I would love for you to reach out to me through my website at TBTWpodcast.com that stands for transformed by the word podcast. TBTWpodcast.com - click on the link that says that you've made a decision for Christ. And I will reach back to you and support you on these next steps of your faith.

My prayer for you today is that you will abide in Christ and allow him to abide in you. Stay close to him. read his Word daily and pray to Him.

Father, I pray for each and every listener. I ask that you draw them close to you. Father I pray that you would reignite for those that have lost their faith and their love for you has grown dry. God reignite that fire. Draw them close to you and show them how much you love them. Help God to transform their lives from the inside out. It's in Jesus name that I pray and I give You thanks in advance for answering this prayer. Amen.

Stay tuned for our next episode of transformed by the word where we will discuss the topic of sanctification.

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Thank you for listening to transformed by the word with your host Debora Barr, be sure to subscribe to our podcast on iTunes or Google Play and connect with us at TBTWPodcast.com. Until next time, be blessed.