

All Things New

A FORMER LESBIAN'S LIFELONG SEARCH FOR LOVE

Debora Barr



True Potential
REACH THE WORLD

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All Things New: A Former Lesbian's Lifelong Search for Love

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my mother, whom I love dearly and whom God used to set in motion my life journey to discover the amazing love of Jesus.

I also dedicate this book to the women of Covenant Baptist Church, who loved me unconditionally and who helped me to heal when I didn't even know I was hurting.

Finally, I owe a great debt of gratitude to Clarise, my dear sister in Christ, who gently pushed me outside of my comfort zone years ago to begin sharing the testimony of what God has done in my life and who continues to pray for me and encourage me to this day.

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Endorsements

Debora's testimony reveals the incredible power of Jesus Christ to transform lives. Her transparency and willingness to expose her heart for all to see as she recounts the path she took to apply the Word of God to her life will encourage you wherever you are in your walk with the Lord. This book is a must-read for churches interested in ministering to people from all walks of life. It contains a shining example of how the church should respond with the unconditional love of Christ toward all people.

ARCHBISHOP ALFRED A. OWENS, JR.
GREATER MOUNT CALVARY HOLY CHURCH
WASHINGTON, DC

An engaging and provocative life story that sometimes makes you cry and later has you applauding for the triumphant victories in Debora's life. It is a celebration of finding and embracing what she had been searching for most of her life: true love, which is found in the arms of God. This is a now story for present-day problems that many people face daily in the secular world and in Christian society. This testimonial is brutally honest and revealing of the struggles of same-sex attraction yet gives us joy in the victory of God's power. It exemplifies Romans 8:37: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (KJV).

ASSOCIATE PASTOR RAMONA MOORE
THE TEMPLE OF PRAISE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

What a compelling, convicting and challenging testimony. The record of this writing is challenging to those who are participants in the struggle with same-sex attraction and yet is also challenging to those who are spectators standing on the sidelines with their Christian

morals. Debora has certainly demonstrated in the pages of this chronicle her odyssey of resurrection and transformation. It's obvious that such a transformation in Debora's life required a level of faith that could have easily been abandoned as a result of the religious misinformation that was imparted in her life. Her willingness to be transparent speaks volumes about her commitment to reach others with a transformative message of love. This book is a testament to what God can do and what agape love is all about. It's a must-read!

SENIOR PASTOR ANTHONY E. MOORE
CAROLINA MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
FORT WASHINGTON, MARYLAND

Christianity has often been delivered up in carefully choreographed, highly sanitized packages that many times leave us short of the real stuff of change. Debora Barr, however, delivers up a powerful and deeply personal revelation of her transition from a committed lesbian relationship to a single heterosexual woman committed to pleasing the Lord. You will marvel at her honesty and transparent portrayal of resounding highs and crashing lows in her journey. This book is for anyone who desires to transition away from any controlling life issue.

PASTOR RONALD E. CRAWFORD
NEW VISION CHURCH
BOWIE, MARYLAND

One of the greatest joys of my life has been watching the personal transformation of Debora Barr. Her spiritual journey will challenge those who believe they have fallen beyond the reach of God's grace, and her transparency about the painful struggle of living a holy life will encourage those wanting to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength.

SENIOR PASTOR J. SCOTT HESLER
POTOMAC BAPTIST CHURCH
POTOMAC FALLS, VIRGINIA

Debora Barr's story is both authentic and inspiring. And she shares it with a combination of transparency and compassion. Now that her story is in print, people all over the world can be moved by it.

LEAD PASTOR KEITH BATTLE
ZION CHURCH
BOWIE, MARYLAND

ALL THINGS NEW is an amazing testament of God's power to heal. I am encouraged by Debora's story that displays God's endless love and ability to overcome any issue holding you back from His best for your life. This book is life-changing!

SENIOR PASTOR BOBBY MANNING
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF DISTRICT HEIGHTS
DISTRICT HEIGHTS, MARYLAND

This book is a must-read for those who have questions about same-sex attraction and how a loving non-threatening environment can allow the word of God to have preeminence that leads to a relationship with Christ. Debora, thank you for your courage to be a source of illumination and enlightenment and for telling your story with such grace.

PASTOR LOUIS B. JONES II
PILGRIM BAPTIST CHURCH
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Debora Barr's autobiography, ALL THINGS NEW, offers an inspirational story of transformation. Debora allows us private glimpses into her heart and mind as she journeys from pain to prosperity. Anyone reading this book will be inspired by the amazing grace of God's redemptive love.

RICHARD COHEN, M.A., AUTHOR
GAY CHILDREN, STRAIGHT PARENTS
COMING OUT STRAIGHT

Sample

Contents

FOREWORD BY FIRST LADY TRINA JENKINS	15
CHAPTER 1 MY EARLY YEARS (1963–1976)	19
CHAPTER 2 THE DIFFICULT YEARS (1977–1987)	25
CHAPTER 3 THE TUMULTUOUS YEARS (1988–1999)	29
CHAPTER 4 THE TRANSITION YEARS (2000–2005): PART I	39
CHAPTER 5 THE TRANSITION YEARS (2000–2005): PART II	57
CHAPTER 6 THE NEW BEGINNING YEARS (2006–2008): PART I—2006	75
CHAPTER 7 THE NEW BEGINNING YEARS (2006–2008): PART II—2007	105
CHAPTER 8 THE NEW BEGINNING YEARS (2006–2008): PART III—2008	123
STUDY GUIDE: INTRODUCTION	157
LESSON 1 READ CHAPTERS 1 & 2	159
LESSON 2 READ CHAPTERS 3	161
LESSON 3 READ CHAPTERS 4	163
LESSON 4 READ CHAPTERS 5	165
LESSON 5 READ CHAPTERS 7	167
LESSON 6 READ CHAPTERS 8	169
FINAL WORDS	171

Sample

Foreword

Everybody wants to feel loved. The yearning for love is in our DNA. We enter life demanding to be loved and cared for, and for most of us, those needs are met at home where we are surrounded by familial love. Then as we move into adolescence, we long to be found attractive and desirous. Intuitively, we seek the companionship of the opposite sex to satisfy our yearning for romantic love. Ultimately, we want total and complete acceptance. We want the assurance that we are loved—warts and all.

Our search for unconditional love is fulfilled in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He is the manifestation of God's unconditional and sacrificial love for mankind. The journey to experiencing the richness of God's love may take us down many roads. If our needs for familial love and romantic love go unmet or are somehow distorted, we may find ourselves looking for love in all the wrong places. Love unfulfilled can be a dangerous thing. Feelings of dejection and desperation can cause us to compromise what we know to be true and leave us vulnerable. Instead of holding out for true love and acceptance, we settle for abusive, dysfunctional and ungodly relationships.

Ask Debora Barr. She knows all too well where unmet needs can lead. Having grown up in a broken home and having fallen victim to inappropriate sexual advances, she did not know what real love looked like. Confused, lonely and longing for love, she found solace in the arms of another woman. Her experimentation with lesbianism led to a same-sex lifestyle and, ultimately, to a civil union with a woman lover. It took the love of a God-fearing church family to open her eyes

to the true meaning of love. Their love, tolerance, prayers, biblical instruction, gentle rebuke, godly wisdom and patience won Debora to the Lord. Having a relationship with Him and experiencing His love transformed her life.

Debora's story is not uncommon. The number of men and women turning to homosexuality is alarming. Society would have us accept homosexuality as the norm, legitimize same-sex relationships and ostracize anyone who speaks out against gay rights. What I love about Debora's story is that she does not involve the reader in the social discourse and controversy of same-sex relationships. She goes straight to the heart of the matter and removes all stigma, judgment and condemnation. Her personal account of what drew her to a lifestyle of homosexuality and what led her out of it allows us to see the person behind the label. She brings us face to face with the reality that we are all capable of wandering away from God and, no matter what form of sin we choose to engage in, that He is calling us back to a relationship with Him. It is the ultimate love story—a story of God's redeeming love.

I thank God for giving Debora the courage to share her story with us. Her transparency is refreshing. Her transformation is miraculous. Her testimony is enlightening. If you have ever discounted God or professed Christianity, this book is for you. Read it and witness God's love in action.

May the sweet love of Jesus enrapture you as it has Debora.

Enjoy!

FIRST LADY TRINA JENKINS
WOMEN'S MINISTRY DIRECTOR
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF GLENARDEN, MARYLAND



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CHAPTER 1

My Early Years

(1963–1976)

*When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child,
I thought as a child; but when I became a [wo]man, I put away
childish things.*

1 CORINTHIANS 13:11

I have overcome the bondage imposed by the enemy of my soul by the precious blood of Jesus Christ and by the word of my testimony (Rev. 12:11)! I will never stop proclaiming the riches of God's glory available to all through the power of His Spirit, to those who allow Jesus Christ to dwell in their heart through faith, enabling them to be rooted and grounded in love and capable of comprehending the width and length and depth and height of His love for them (Eph. 3:16-19).

For most of my forty-eight years on this earth I was lord and master of my life. I was extremely selfish and self-sufficient and I worked hard to achieve status and recognition in all areas of my life. I have had an

amazing professional career, flying helicopters for the U.S. Army and for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). I have worked directly for generals and admirals and have traveled to many places in the world. I have seen incredible places and things like magnificent castles in the countryside of Germany and camels running in the deserts of the Middle East; I've explored caves in the Midwestern United States; I have seen polar bears, whales and other magnificent creatures in the wild on the north slope of Alaska and the Bering Sea; I have observed humpback whales breaching near the Galapagos Islands; and I have seen blue whales up close in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. However, even with all of that, I sensed an aching void in my heart that just could not be satisfied. I didn't know what my purpose was, but God began to stir my spirit and draw me to Him. I realized that all of the incredible things I had experienced could not fill the void in my heart. In 2003, the pastor of the church I was attending challenged the congregation to "40 Days of Purpose," where we collectively worked through *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. I found that what was missing in my life was a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

It Was Jesus!

I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior and was born again, and my life changed forever! Since then Jesus has completely filled that void in my heart with His unconditional and pure love. I realized that I had been separated from God for a very long time. When I was in control of my life I was sinning against God, and the penalty for my sin was separation from Him (Rom. 3:23). Jesus Christ died on the cross to take away my sins and offered to me His free gift of salvation (Rom. 6:23). All I had to do was admit that I was a sinner, believe that Jesus died for my sins and ask for His forgiveness. I did. I asked Him to take over as Lord and Savior of my life and I gave up the role that I held for so long. I started to focus on the

things that matter to God and miracles began to occur in my life. It was as if He rearranged my very DNA. Everything about my life has changed! He changed the way I think, the way I act and the way I react. Now I am living my life with full satisfaction and purpose. All things are new!

As I began to study the Word of God, I found the story of my life right there in the pages of the Bible. When I dug deeper into the Word, I became more and more excited about life as I developed an intimate relationship with Jesus, the lover of my soul.

As a result, my life was being completely transformed. I hope that my testimony will encourage you to see how God has worked in my life and that you will realize that God is no respecter of persons. He does not show partiality for one person over another (Acts 10:34). The incredible miracles that God performed in the lives of Moses, Abraham, Joseph, Paul and Debora Barr, He can and will do for you if you surrender your life to Him and love Him with all of your heart!

Much of the content of this book comes directly from my journal and emails that I sent to friends. Many of these entries and messages contain my written prayers and conversations with God. Each journal entry or email is preceded by the date of the entry, and for the sake of this book has been edited to correct mistakes. I also changed many of the names of people in my life to protect their identities.

What follows is God's story of my life. It is my story of transformation and I hope it blesses you. If you don't yet know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, I pray that you too will surrender your life to Him and let Him take control of every area of your life. You will never be the same!

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My Beginning

I came into this world in December of 1963, the daughter of young parents who each had difficult childhoods, and the oldest of four children. Both of my parents came from homes where a parent died when they were still children. My dad was an only child and his father died when he was just ten years old. Likewise, my mom's mother died when she was ten years old. She was only sixteen years old when she married my dad to get away from her alcoholic father and the responsibilities of raising her two younger brothers.

I knew and loved God as a little girl. My mother took me to Catholic Church every week where I learned about God, Jesus and religion. My understanding of who God is was very different at that time in my life. I remember one Sunday afternoon I had a plan that I just knew would work because I believed God would perform a miracle for me. Going into my bedroom, I closed the door and put a plastic model horse in the middle of the room. I then moved other things out of the way and began to pray to God that He would turn it into a real horse because I loved horses and wanted one of my own. Looking back on that incident, I am glad God didn't answer that prayer because I have no idea how I would have gotten that horse out of the house or where I would have kept him if God had answered that prayer!

When I was growing up, I was very insecure and did not make friends easily. I had trouble connecting with kids my own age and usually had one or two older friends whom I connected with. For as long as I can remember, I have been competitive and achievement-oriented, striving to excel in everything I got involved in. I was also very much a tomboy growing up. One day when I was quite young, my mother dropped me off at a neighbor's house for dance lessons and I cried the entire time I was there because I was so shy and didn't want to participate in any of the

dancing lessons. My mom never took me back. Instead I played softball and was very involved in music, playing the clarinet in the orchestra and marching band and playing the piano for many years. I was also driven academically and excelled in school, especially in science. In elementary school, I had already decided on a future career as a doctor and was working toward that. Little did I know that my life would not follow the plan I had envisioned.

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In sixth grade I began to exhibit signs of stress in my life: I started compulsively pulling out my hair, which left embarrassing bald spots on my head. I now know that this disorder is called trichotillomania. I ended up struggling with that disorder for about fifteen years. When it started, I was babysitting a lot for my younger brothers and sister and the foster children my family took in at the time. We would usually have two infants at a time in foster care. So much responsibility in addition to my self-imposed pressure to excel at school, music and sports was beginning to take its toll on me.