

Moving Mountains God's Way

A Testimony of Hearing and Obeying God's Voice

by

Bob Saunders

Unless otherwise stated all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible.

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Introduction

This book is just a part of my life story. I have chosen a mountain range for my cover picture because as a Christian, I want to talk about the mountains that God has helped me overcome. It is virtually impossible to conquer a mountain without a competent team behind you. However, as believers we have God—He's more than the best team.

As you well know, some mountains are jagged and much more difficult to overcome than others, but each of us can see the mountain move with God's help. God is going to help us overcome every mountain that we encounter in our lives because He is faithful. Even with God's help and direction, it can sometimes feel like actually climbing because when we trust God, He uses every opportunity to teach us to keep going, persevere and to continue to hold on. Then suddenly it's gone.

Bob Saunders

Zechariah 4:7

'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain!

Just as God is with us and we know, that He's with us, our faith can be challenged. As Zechariah says above, the mountain will become a plain. The prophet is saying, that the mountain will become flat and level.

We all have challenges that we face during our lives, whether it is spiritual, physical, emotional or otherwise—there is always going to be another; it's never a smooth path. I want to encourage you as you read this book to understand that with God nothing is impossible. Therefore, we must trust God for things, but also trust Him through things that happen in our lives.

Matthew 17:20

So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

He will hold our hands and carry us at times when we feel we're on our own. Wise disciples do not attempt to conquer mountains alone.

If life is always going to involve mountain moving, then it is in our best interest to be properly trained for the challenges ahead. The easiest way is to trust God because in many cases, there is no one else to trust. Of course, there are times when we may trust in others, and that can be very helpful, I have found at times that God has put people into my life for that very purpose.

In this book, I share my experiences about how God alone helped to remove the mountains in my way. You will find as I have found, that trying to do it my own way was like going around the base of the mountain and coming back to where I started. It is at these times, you realise that you were not listening to God. At times, tears, heartache, and pain overcame me. After trusting Gods leading, direction and voice, there was always relief, joy, and peace. When you realise that it is God that moves the

mountains, not our own efforts. Our experiences equip us to help others defeat their mountains, to encourage, to carry, to lift and sometimes even to push. As we place our trust in God, we can use our encouraging words and determination to inspire others. This has been my experience after meeting my very good friend Pastor Joe Benjamin who has encouraged me and pushed me in the most gentle way to write this book.

One thing that truly amazes me is God's ability to use simple testimonies, simple faith and our willingness to be open to share our experiences. After my divorce in 2002, I made a commitment to stay single, and I've always been willing to share that with anybody who wanted to listen because it's a big thing to do. God backs up that kind of commitment. It means that once you start sharing your testimony, you got to walk in it. Otherwise, you are dishonouring God. You need to be seen to demonstrate what is in your heart when your testimony is real, people will see, and you can be used, by God and for His glory.

CHAPTER 1

Childhood Memories

Like many people, I did not have a great start in life.

The first memory I can recall about my childhood is that I was in a children's home. After I was born, my mother became seriously ill with TB. In those days, the patient stayed in hospital for two to three years to treat the TB. Consequently, I was in the children's home for that amount of time. I had a sister who was also in the children's home, but boys were separated from girls that was the way it was done. The boys stayed in one part of the house, and the girls were in another part, so I didn't know I had a sister. I was unaware at that time I also had a brother many years my senior, who was living at home. He was nine years older than me. When I eventually went home, life proved quite difficult as I had to come to terms with a family I didn't know.

By the time I was 11 years old, one of my biggest problems was that I was dyslexic, but dyslexia

wasn't recognised as such in those days. At that age, I could neither read nor write. More mature readers may remember the 11-plus examination. This was taken by every child to determine the level of education which the child was deemed suitable in essence, the standard of schooling he or she would receive.

Unfortunately, I sat there in the examination room for almost three hours attempting to do this exam when I could not even write my name on the paper. I couldn't do anything! By the time the exam was over, I was determined to learn to read I would accomplish this by the time I left school. In spite of my challenges, I went to another school and learning to read was all I concentrated on. I worked hard, and thankfully by the time I left school, I had achieved my goal; I could read. That made an amazing difference in my life.

My father could neither read nor write. I can remember when I got married he was practising to write his signature on bits of paper. My father was a building laborer and my mother worked serving in

restaurants; we never had much as youngsters. We never had a car never went on holiday and apart from weddings and funerals we never went anywhere else together. Even though we did not have much, we never went hungry.

I searched through the family photo album and found that there is only one photograph of us altogether. I still have fond memories of family life.

When I left school, I went into the construction industry and took a four-year bricklaying and plastering apprenticeship with a local firm. These were practical skills although I couldn't write a letter I could work with my hands and these skills sustained me through all my working life.

CHAPTER 2

My Christian Walk

I can clearly remember the first time God spoke to me. I was 13 years old and looking out of the front room, window in the house in Highbridge Somerset, in which I was born, when I heard the remarkable words *"I will use you as a witness in the world"*. Even at such a young age, I had not a shred of doubt that these words had been spoken into my mind by the God who loved and cared for the world and for me. What makes my certainty all the more amazing is that at this time, I have had no dealings with anything religious, except for my one and only attendance at Sunday school and entering church for the occasional wedding ceremony.

Strangely, however, almost as soon as I had heard them, the words were erased from my mind. I did not remember them until after my baptism by immersion in water - 20 years later. The moment I surfaced, I heard those words once again - as clearly as a first time. (Mark 4:15) says that if the word does

not fall on good ground, the enemy will snatch it away—and that's what happened to me.

My wife, Sandra, was always saying “there must be more to life”. She was always questioning, always talking to Jehovah Witnesses or the Mormons when they came knocking on the door. I never got involved at all. I was very much a “live and let live” kind of person, and so if Sandra wanted to talk to them that was up to her, but for me, I just got on with life. In the mid-60s, our teenage years, there was a big issue with the threat of nuclear war, in newspapers and on the TV they were always quoting the four-minute warning. That's all the time you were supposed to have in the event of a nuclear war. Sandra lived in complete fear of the world coming to an end. She would never listen to anything on the radio or the television about it. She would say, should we have children because the world was going to come to an end. But that never bothered me. We went on to have two sons.

Our Conversions

I had been working for several years at a Royal Ordnance Factory, where explosives were made. A friend of mine had become a Christian, and his wife was talking to Sandra about the Christian faith and how it had changed their lives. Sandra started to talk to me about it and I shrugged my shoulders and did not take any notice. They took her to see Billy Graham at Ashton Gate in Bristol.

I remember I was on a morning shift at the time, and off she went in a coach with the local church. I decided to stay up and wait for her to come home although I had to get up at about 6 o'clock in the morning to go to work. Time went by; twelve o'clock, 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock but she hadn't come home, and I became worried. I had no way of contacting her and no way of finding out what was going on— there were no mobile phones then. Thankfully, about half-past three in the morning, she walked in, she was excited with smiles all over her face and jumping about saying that she had become a Christian. The truth is, I wasn't interested in what she had to say because I had to be up in a few hours time as I told her, but she insisted. She

had listened to this Billy Graham and had gone down to the altar, spoke to somebody, prayed with them and gave her heart to Jesus, "She had become a Christian."

This meant nothing to me as I wanted to go to bed because I had to go to work the next day. When I got home, she started to tell me more about what had happened, she told me that as soon as she became a Christian all the fear of nuclear war went and she was at complete peace. I couldn't believe that because I knew what she was like. Over the next two or three days, I could see that what Sandra was saying was real and that something had definitely happened — she was very different. Sandra invited me to go to see Billy Graham with her on a Saturday night, which was the last night of the crusade. I agreed, and we took both our sons with us, my oldest son Gary was about 12, and Dean was about 10 ½.

I remember going into the stadium and standing right at the top of one of the stands. The place was packed—it was absolutely full. I had never seen so

many people in one place. Different people were coming on the stage singing and talking, I was quite bemused by it all. I said to Sandra: "Well when is this Billy Graham chap coming on then"? She said, "Aren't you listening? He's been speaking for 10 minutes." I wasn't taking any notice of what was being said. I was looking around and wondering what on earth all these people were doing here.

At the end, Billy Graham said: "If you want to get your life right, if you want to get sorted, if you want to come to know Jesus, you can come down to the front, and somebody will pray with you." Suddenly, my youngest son caught hold of my hand and said: "Are you coming, dad?" And I said, "okay then."

And so we went down with Sandra and my other son. For the very first time in my life, I prayed. To be quite honest, I didn't fully understand what was being said; all I knew was that something was different about this guy I was speaking to. Sandra was excited asking me if I felt any different and I said: "No, I don't feel different at all."

The next day, I went to work, I was still on a morning shift at 6 o'clock. I had told the chap I went to work with that I was going to see Billy Graham, the preacher. We shared a vehicle to get to work, and as soon as I got in the car, he asked if I had been converted at the crusade, I swore at him. I'm not going to repeat what I said. It took about 20 minutes to drive to the ROF and by the time I got there, I knew in the depths of my heart that this Jesus was real, this God was real, and He had forgiven all my filth and all my past. I felt like a completely different person. It was a very powerful experience.

When I walked into the shift room where we changed into our working clothes, I said to my best friend Keith: "I've become a Christian." Then he said, "Well I'm a Christian too." I was shocked, we had been friends for so long, we had quite a discussion. What I found out was that several others working at the factory were Christians also. However, unlike them, I was not quiet about my conversion at all, I told everybody. As a result, they also started to open up. It was quite amazing.

God Always Has a Plan and a Purpose

I met Phil at the ROF. We both joined the company around the same time; I liked him, and we worked well together. We were in what we called a mixing house where various materials were mixed and process. It was hot messy and smelly, and heavy work it wasn't a very nice place to be. We were both conscientious and did the best job we could. In fact, the person who was in charge of that particular building after a few weeks told everybody in the factory that he had the best two workers in the whole place. He was always trying to get us to go and work with him.

Often while we worked together on the night shift, we had to take the finished materials out to the magazines, we used a narrow gauge railway. We'd sit inside the train and sing because it was a long way out from anywhere. You could sing and shout. So we used to do a lot of singing while we were on this train and when we were at the magazine's no one could hear us singing (old sixties songs).

We worked together for quite some time; then I found out there was a chance to go and work in another part of the factory. It was about four miles all the way round the perimeter fence. Although I would be working on the other side, we would still be able to see a lot of each other because we were still on the same shift.

The person who replaced me used to be a schoolteacher and had never worked in a factory before. He had left that profession and worked at various jobs. Eventually ended up at the Royal Ordnance Factory. Phil looked after him, his name was Paul Bailey and he was a Christian. He was always talking to him about Jesus. He told Phil that God had said to him, he would find someone, who was singing but unhappy in his heart and that turned out to be Phil. He told me years later that at that time of his life, he was unhappy, and was contemplating suicide. I said: "You seemed all right to me." "I might have seemed okay when I was with you, but deep down I was unhappy," he replied.

Paul, the schoolteacher, spent several months sharing the truth of God's Word with Phil. But Paul was completely unsuited to this kind of heavy work—he couldn't even lift the materials that we were working with, because they were all too heavy for him whereas Phil had been a weightlifter and so he loved doing it anyway. Paul was so tired after a night shift. He'd go into the car park, sit in his car and fall asleep. The MOD police would come around and wake him up after several hours and tell him to go home. But even then, on the way home, he would pull over somewhere and fall asleep. He couldn't do the work at all—yet, he stayed at the factory for one year.

Eventually, Phil listened to the truth of the gospel and gave his heart to Jesus. As the Scripture says, if you repent of your sins (that means to be really sorry about the things you've done) and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, He will come and wash you clean from all the things you've ever done wrong and give you a new fresh start in life (1John 1:9).

The Power of a Simple Testimony and the Word of God

As usual, Phil and his wife Pat went on holiday in France during the two-week summer break at the factory. After the two weeks, Pat had just about had enough of hearing about Paul, what he had said and what he had done. She got fed up and said, "When we get back home, you tell that Paul to come to see me and I'll soon sort him out."

Phil took Paul home after a morning shift and introduced him to Pat. "I'm not going to give you a cup of tea or anything, just say what you want to say, and then you can get out!" she said. With that, Phil disappeared. He went and sat in the car to get out of the way because Pat was very forthright with her views. After half an hour Phil went back in worried about what might have happened. To his surprise, Pat was in a flood of tears; she had given her heart to Jesus.

A simple testimony and the simple gospel had touched her heart and really changed her. Paul gave Pat a New Testament Bible, which she read in a week, and he gave them the name and address of a local Christian church, which they started to attend. Pat was absolutely amazing; she was going on with God.

God always has a plan and a purpose. He led Paul into that factory to a man who was unhappy and near to committing suicide. He got saved —my good friend Phil. That's what God does. If you're reading this, God can touch you through a simple word and a testimony. Paul stayed at the factory for one year and then he moved on because God told him to go somewhere else. He listened to God's voice and obeyed His directions.

Lights in a Dark Factory

God spoke to me at 13-years old, but I didn't become a Christian until I was 33. It took me 20 years to realise God's purpose for my life. His Word now tells me that he sent me into the world as a witness (Mark 16:15)—that's what I do, that's what I say to the people I meet, and that's how God wants us to be. He wants us to be obedient, following him and sharing all of His goodness to those we meet.

The thing is that when we start to tell people that we are Christians, many times, they try to challenge us and test our faith. We were working in the factory with lots of men; they soon started to take the Mickey out of us and do things to try and upset us. They tried their hardest to get us to swear and behave in a manner that was not Christ-like. As a matter of fact, they would put the hose on Phil in particular; they did it to me as well. Just imagine in the middle of the night during the winter being soaked with a hosepipe.

At one stage, Phil was in the showers, and somebody threw a bucket full of ice cubes over the top all over him. But he never responded. I

remember another incident with him. When we started our shift, we didn't know what job we were going to get. So he went over to the foreman's office to find out whether he was going to work in a team, with four or five others or in a one-man building. The processes in these buildings were fairly dangerous so if there was an incident only one person would be in there. Phil worked in those one-man buildings quite often.

One night, there was a big fuss in the foreman's office as he was giving out the jobs. The men were all complaining to the foreman that Phil was going into a building, which was only supposed to have one man; however, there was more than one man in the building. The foreman couldn't understand what all the shouting was about. What they were actually saying was, "It's not fair he's not going in there on his own, he is going in there with Jesus."

Although they were taking the mickey, there was truth in what they were saying because wherever we go God is with us, we are never alone. Wherever we go whether it's in dangerous places or not, He

will go with us. The Word of God says that He will never forsake us nor leave us (Hebrews 13:5).

This sort of thing went on for quite some time. I worked on the other side of the factory in a different part of the plant. In the shift room where there were about 20 men, a lot of them had pictures of half-naked ladies on their lockers or up on the walls. As a Christian, I didn't like to see that anymore. So one day, I took one down. As you can imagine, that caused a bit of a stir. One man, in particular, had a go at me for taking his picture down. But what I found amazing was that he was the only person who put his pictures back up. But because he had a go at me, all the others took their pictures down. Some of them put them inside of their lockers, but nobody put them up on the walls again.

After a while, people got used to the fact that they could see that whatever we were doing in our own private lives as Christians was different. Phil and I would sometimes take Sundays off. They thought we were crazy losing out on double time so that we could go to church. We would have a half shift off to

go to the evening meetings, and this became a regular thing for us.

In the end, they began to accept that we were serious. After about 18 months, they started to ask us various questions. I remember a particular time when Phil was working with a chap who was involved in car boot sales. He said: "Phil I've got an Ouija board, we've tried it out at home and it works." Phil tried to convince him that he was dealing with the wrong kind of spirit and that it was dangerous enough to hurt him and his family. But he wouldn't listen to him. So he said, "Call Bob Saunders and see what he will tell you." There was a phone in every building where we worked, so he called me, and I told him straight to get rid of it.

He said: "No, what I'll do, I'll put it back in the boot sale."

"No, you won't!" I said. "You take it out into the garden and set fire to it because it'll do you harm. If you sell it to anybody it will do them harm."

He came back the next day and said that he did what I told him. We were very pleased that he listened to what we had to say. As Christians, we should be able to influence those around us, our family, friend's, people we meet and work with for their good.

CHAPTER 3

Challenges in My Work and Married Life

During my time at the factory, some other challenging, yet encouraging events occurred.

I remember going to work on a morning shift; the MOD police would randomly pick various people as they came through the gate and searched them. This was good because it kept everybody on their toes. Otherwise, someone could have easily walked in there with things that might be dangerous. You were led into an empty room with a table in the middle nothing else. Usually, there would be two MOD policemen. One of them would stand in the corner and keep an eye on you while the other one searched you. You had to place your bag on the table, take your coat off, and they would search your coat, and frisk you down to see if you had any prohibited items in your pockets like battery watches, cigarettes, lighters or matches. Obviously, these were hazardous items in a factory that made

explosives. Once they searched you completely, they would then go through your bag.

The MOD policeman put his hand in my bag and took out the Christian newspapers that I had. He took out the Christian tracts then my sandwiches, and my book and he if held it up and said, "What's this?" I said, "That's my Bible, and there's more power in that book than there is in all the explosives we make in this factory." So he gently put it back in my bag and sent me on my way. Several months later, I found out that one of the MOD policemen who worked at the gate was a Christian. I think they had quite an interesting conversation talking about what I had in my bag.

I've often thought about that—what I said about the power of God's Word. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

The Deceitfulness of Sin

I want to go back to my friend Keith, who I first confessed my conversion to. In fact, one of the things I do when I lead somebody to the Lord is to encourage them to tell someone about what's happened. It helped me because once I got over that barrier of embarrassment, I was able to share what God was doing in my life to anyone.

Keith became a Christian about 12 months before me, he got baptised in the same church at the same time as me but sadly, his marriage was rocky, and he ended up getting divorced. His wife blamed it on his Christianity. After that, Keith was never the same. He lost heart a bit. He used to come to church often, and he was always getting dreams that were powerful.

However, he started to drift away and stopped coming to church. He had to move out of his house and Sandra, and I took him in as a lodger. After a while, he met a lady and formed a relationship with her. When this happened, I said to him:

"You know, this is not what God wants for you" I said that because she was not a Christian. (Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. 2 Corinthians 6:14)

But he said, "Well, I'm going to walk away from God, and I'm going to live with this lady. I'm going to cut God out of my life."

I said to him, "Well, you might cut God out of your life, but you won't cut Him out of your dreams."

That turned out to be quite a statement because two or three months later, he came to work—it was a morning shift, and he never spoke a word. I could see he was quite upset about something; he was really down. We were doing a mundane sort of clearing up job, and I remember it was a lovely, sunny morning, so we sat outside.

I said, "What's happened, Keith?" He never really answered.

I said, "Well, obviously something's happened. Aren't you going to tell me about it?"

“Well, I’ve had a dream,”

He did not say anything for quite a long time.

So I responded, “Aren’t you going to tell me about this dream?” After a while he said

“Okay,”

I saw this big white building with doors, and I walked through the front door. Inside it was all white and bright, but it had very long corridors. I walked down one corridor, and there was a corner. I walked down another corridor, and then there was another corner. So I turned that corner and went down another corridor. Then I could see something in the distance. As I continued on I saw a table; I could see there were some books on the table as I got closer, , suddenly, the books started to open. And as that happened I was filled with absolute fear—completely taken over. And so I turned, thinking to myself, ‘I have to get out of here; I have to get out of here.’ I ran up the corridors; there were doors on each side. From every door I opened, flames shot out. Then I woke up sweating profusely, and in absolute dread.

After he told me the dream, I asked him: "What do you think God is saying to you in that dream?"

He said, "Well, I'm not leaving her, I'm not leaving her, I'm not leaving her," and he walked away.

You see, he knew what I was going to say, that his lifestyle wasn't in line with what God wanted. Even as Christians, sin can creep in. Having a relationship with someone outside of marriage is not God's best for His children.

After about two or three months, Keith came into the shift room. He met me and said, "I've had another dream!"

I said, "Okay, are you going to tell me about it?"

His attitude towards his second dream was completely different. Straightaway started to tell me about it.

I was in a car with a lady; we drove up to the back of the factory, the lady was driving, I got out and opened the gates. I said, "you'd better move over, and I'll drive inside the factory." I drove around, and suddenly we saw this cottage with a little picket fence outside, flowers, in

the garden. I stopped, got out the car, we walked up the garden path, and in through the door. Inside, it was — dark. I could see something like a glow in the distance. So we walked towards this glow, and then we could see that it was coming out of the ground. As we got closer, we found that there were stones around this hole in the ground, and little children were dancing around it. We walked right up to these stones and looked over. The whole thing was a big pit full of flames—a big hole in the ground full of flames. Then the dream ended.

I was amazed at how detailed this dream was, so again, I challenged him, “What do you think God is saying through this dream?” He wouldn’t answer. But the main difference was that in the first dream, he was in absolute fear. With this second dream, he was very nonchalant about it, you know, matter-of-fact. Unfortunately, this is what happens if you drift away from God. You can get cold to what He’s saying; this is what happened to Keith. He was still living with this lady, he was not right with God, but God’s love still abounded—it was God’s love that was showing him in these dreams what could happen to him.

Revelation 20:12

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Jesus paid the price for our sins on the cross, but when we accept Him, we still have a free will to choose whether to follow Him or not. If you walk away, your heart will gradually get cold and hard towards God. That's what was happening to my friend. His fear of God had gone because the pleasures of the world were nice and enticing. He was in a relationship, everything was going fine; he had money in the bank, had bought another car, she was working, and he was working so everything was fine. But God was not happy with his choice.

My Marriage Breaks Down

During this time, sadly, my marriage wasn't doing too well. Sandra and I actually ended up getting divorced. I was still working shifts at the Royal Ordnance Factory and looking after our two boys. Gary, my older son, was working as an apprentice stonemason over at Cheddar, which was about ten miles away. He could drive, and that made life a lot easier. Dean, my younger son, was still at school. It was a difficult time for everybody. I had to trust God. For me, it was quite a shock to realise that I would have to cook—I had never even fried an egg in my life. Cooking never caught my interest. Sandra did it all; she did very well.

I had never looked after the finances of the house, Sandra always did that, we weren't in debt or anything. Then all of a sudden, I found myself trying to do the washing, do the cooking, do the cleaning, and handling the finances. But the people in the church were very good. Every now and again I'd open up the door, and there would be a hot pot or some sort of meal there waiting, which was much

appreciated. This is what Christianity is about, when you see someone in need, and then do what you can, even if it's cooking a meal, it does make a difference. It certainly did to us anyway.

Although that was a sad time in our lives, some funny things happened. I remember, particularly, going home from work on an afternoon shift, Dean, my youngest son, told me what had happened in the evening. My son, Gary had always been interested in the army and was collecting military uniforms and military equipment. I would never let him have a gun or anything, but he did have a sword and a lot of ammunition. It had all been used. He also had some mortar bombs and an anti-tank shoulder-held rocket launcher without the rocket. And a 105 tank artillery round hand grenades, machine gun belts, various other bits and pieces. It was all up in the loft like a display. He took some photographs of his collection and took them into Boots to get them developed. Ironically, this was at the time the IRA was engaging in mainland bombing (in the UK).

Because of the contents of the photographs, the special branch came down to the house, surrounded it, and they were banging the back door down to get in. Dean ran out to see what was going on. He opened the door, and they all rushed inside looking for all the munitions. They went up in the loft, looked at all of them and realised that it was not a terrorist, bomb-making place but my son's innocent collection of military bits and pieces. Considering where I was working, I think the police might have put two and two together and made five.

Cabbage, Cabbage and More Cabbage!

During that time, I was cooking frozen meals because I didn't know how to do anything else—until I discovered how easy it was to cook cabbage. So, for six weeks straight we ate cabbage with everything. At that time, one of the boys would make the sandwiches for the next day, and the other would do the washing up, and then they'd rotate duties. On this particular evening, it was Dean's turn to make the sandwiches. I went to work the next day, at breaktime, I opened up my lunchbox in

the canteen, took out a sandwich and started to eat. As I eagerly bit the sandwich, the taste of cold cabbage greeted my mouth. I immediately got the point. We didn't have cabbage anymore after that.

Cooking and looking after the house were learning experiences. But the nice thing was that other Christians were coming in and helping me with the things I couldn't do. My longtime friend Simon helped me with the finances, and I got some cooking lessons from various people in the church. Eventually, my cooking improved.

It's at times like this when you find out how real God is in your life, also how strong your relationship is with Him. I found I was at complete peace, despite all that was going on in the situations I was facing.

Sandra and I got along fine. We didn't have any big rows or anything like that; we talked. I was living in the house and looking after Gary and Dean, it was decided I would keep the house and I would provide cash settlement for Sandra. I went to the bank and got an extra mortgage, they told me I

could get tax relief, and so I took out as much as I can possibly afford. It was quite a lot, and that was in addition to the mortgage I already had, so my monthly payments were quite large. While all of this was going on, the church was preparing for a Crusade, with Don Double at Apex Park at Burnham-on-Sea, and my job was head of security for the whole site.

I was at work, and somebody from the office came to find me saying that my bank was trying to reach me and that I should go immediately to see them. I wondered what they wanted to see me for so urgently. I got time off, and went straight there this was on a Friday. They apologised and said, "You came in, and we granted you the finances for your divorce settlement but the paperwork got lost, and it's been completely forgotten. Your wife's solicitor has been on the phone to us, wanting to know where the finances are. Would you sign this, this and this?" About a week later, I had a letter from the bank, with all the details of the new mortgage agreement. When I read it, I discovered that what I had to pay was a lot more than what I had agreed

with the bank when I made the original agreement with them. They said that I would be able to get quite a lot of tax back on this extra mortgage, which made the difference on how much I was going to borrow from them. This letter now said, I was not eligible for this tax relief. (This was a mountain that suddenly got bigger).

However, now my payments were way beyond what I was expecting, and it made things very difficult. So I took it to my friend Phil and his wife, Pat. We placed the letter on the floor and prayed over it asking God to deal with it. And leave it in God's hands until after the crusade.

Isaiah 37:14

And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord.

As soon as a Crusade had come to an end, I got another letter from the bank saying that because it was their fault that the situation occurred forgetting to do all the paperwork, they were going to pay the extra interest.

I learned a great lesson from this incident. When something happens which throws you, take it to some trustworthy friends who you know will pray and give you good advice. Phil and Pat's advice was that we'd lay it before God, pray, and then we'll forget about it, and leave it. This was exactly what I did. I didn't run down to the bank and tell them this and tell them that, I didn't say anything. But miraculously three weeks later, I received a letter saying that the bank was actually going to pay the extra interest on this loan. This was amazing! That goes to show how God is. He's interested in every aspect of our lives. If we trust Him with our issues that we can't understand and issues we can't do anything about—if we will trust Him, leave it in His hands, and God will work it out for us.

CHAPTER 4

My Promise to Stay Single

At the age of 42, I found myself divorced, a single person. I wasn't thinking too much about the future, but it seemed as if everybody else in the church was. Suddenly, I found that various people were dropping words to me like, "so-and-so in the church" or "so-and-so somewhere is single" and "their child could do with a dad" and "she would be good for you" and "you must be lonely" and all this kind of stuff. Now, I wasn't thinking along those lines at all. I think those people saw my situation through their own eyes. How they would react if they found themselves in the position I was in—that they would want to get remarried, they would want to have a family around them.

I wasn't necessarily looking for that. I was wondering what God wanted. And in one sense, it put me at odds with quite a few people in the church. All they perceived was me being unhappy

because I was on my own. But I wasn't. The only time I really felt lonely was on Sunday afternoon when I didn't have anything to do. I was generally a busy person. I was busy at work, I was busy going to church meetings, and I was busy helping people. I wasn't looking for anything else.

Eventually, I did respond, if that's the right word, and I got involved with someone, but I knew that it wasn't right before God. Although everybody else seemed to be quite happy, I wasn't. And so, that came to an end. It seemed to me as if it was a phase that I went through. After all these things and what was going on, I began to consider putting God first seriously, and I mean really putting God first. It was through these issues and through these circumstances that I was driven to look at God's Word and recall what He had done for me. During this time, I decided to stay single for the rest of my earthly life. I got some friends together, and I spoke it out. I made a promise to God in prayer that I would stay single. Eventually, I got the courage to tell the church.

I remember, it was a social time we were having, and then when I spoke up some of the ladies were shocked, they couldn't believe that I would say such a thing. They couldn't understand it. But I said, "I feel very much at peace." It was something that nobody pushed me into; it was a decision that I made for myself over 25 years ago. When you put God first, that's when you know that He is real. It becomes personal. Because what God wants is a personal one-to-one relationship with His children and that's who we are.

God Gives Us a House Miraculously

Trying to run the house and do everything on my own was a challenge. Although the church was, very helpful. We were paid quite well at the R O F, so life did settle down, and it became easier as I was earning enough money to support the household. In that sense, everything was going reasonably well. My friends Phil and his wife Pat were helping me quite a lot. We discussed the future, lots of scriptural matters and how God can use people who

are willing to trust Him. I remember something that Pat said: "Life is very short, and we should make the most of it. We're only here once. Why don't we do something that will make a difference, not only in our own lives, but in the lives of other people?" Phil and Pat had no children; they lived in a flat and owned the flat next door that her parents lived in. That was their nest egg, a good, sound investment. We talked a lot about how we could put our Christianity into practice, and we began to think whether we could perhaps buy a big house together and start up some sort of ministry.

Some friends of ours where in a group called the Jesus Army, they did a lot of that sort of thing, and we started to go to some of their meetings. The people there were very serious about God and putting Him first. We decided to start looking at some houses and see if God would open up a door. This was not something that we could push through on our own. Unless God was involved, it would be a total disaster. So we began to look at some properties, praying all the time. After looking at

quite a few, there was one that came up, which suited our needs.

At that time, there was a big depression as far as buying and selling houses were concerned. The housing market had been flat for about two years. The house I lived in was only half-finished, and I had built a big extension onto the back of the house, but the rest of it was like a builder's yard and not much better on the outside. I was struggling to get it finished. I think there were at least four flats for sale on the block where Phil and Pat lived in Burnham. They had two flats to sell. So we prayed about this particular house in Burnham and believed that this was what God wanted for us. However, God had to move some mountains, to sell two flats, plus my house. That would be virtually impossible in the housing market as it was. I think the house for sale had been on the market for a couple of years. The couple who owned it was getting divorced, and they had to sell it. It was a big house, six bedrooms upstairs, a big lounge, rooms downstairs including the kitchen and utility. There was also a garage

outside, and a really big garden with about, 20 full-grown trees.

We continued to pray, and we told the gentleman who was selling the place that we were interested. We told him about our properties, and he said, "Well, where are they, I'll come and have a look at them." He was a local businessman. So he had a look at Phil and Pat's flats, and then he visited my house. He came back and said, "I'll do a swap." Now, this sort of opened up our eyes a bit. In the market, as it was, he was prepared to take Phil and Pat's two flats and my house as it was. Based on our evaluations, we were £60,000 short. That would mean we would have to take out a mortgage for that amount. That might not sound like very much now, but that was an awful lot 25 years ago. Phil was 57, and I was 42, so technically, we were too old to have mortgages.

These were the mountains, and it was as if the mountains were getting bigger. If God wanted us to have this house, He would have to move these mountains. To our amazement, when we went to

the bank, we got a mortgage very easily, even though the country was in a depression. While we were in the process of going through with the mortgage, things were happening at ROF. About two years before that, British Aerospace had purchased all the Royal Ordnance Factories in the country. They were big business people, and the first thing they did was take out all the machinery from the ROF factory Enfield on the outskirts of London. They sold the site for more than they paid for all the other ROFs, and it caused quite a storm in Parliament because a private business had come in and made a big profit from the government.

We were no longer civil servants; British Aerospace employed us. As soon as BA took over, they started to reduce personnel by natural wastage as they called it, I started work there in 1989, the workforce as at that time was about 1100. When I left in 1992, they were under 600. Then, the day before we were to sign for this house, BA announced that there would be 120 redundancies. So we had to make a choice. The choice was really simple. We would either believe and trust God that this house is what

He wanted for us or that this was a warning from God to stop us from moving. Well, we believed that God wanted us to have that house, and we were prepared to trust Him. We didn't even try to think about the fact that we were taking on £60,000 mortgage even though we could lose our jobs. We knew He was faithful. "Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations." (Deuteronomy 7:9).

The next day, we signed for the mortgage. We were able to trust God with this big, life-changing decision. Pat had a very positive strong-willed personality; she had a very *let's get this sorted* attitude to everything, and was not the *sit-down and do nothing* person. I remember Carol, one of the elder's wives, who knew Pat's nature very well said to her: "If you let everything go, and don't try to push things through or change things just keep your hands off everything, then I will fully support you in this."

This was difficult for Pat, but that's what she did. The three of us in our Christian walk had to trust God with various issues; we had to give up things even bits of furniture that wouldn't fit in the house. For Pat's mum and dad, myself, Gary and Dean, this was going to be a different lifestyle and a challenge. But God was always faithful when we trusted Him. It was because of that that we were able to step out and believe that He was with us in this project. Through all our experiences as Christians, we began to learn that God will never let us down. If you're in His will, if you really want to follow Him, if you put God first in your life, you learn to have faith that you need when really big things come along.

After we moved in, we then found out that what was going on with the 120 redundancies the unions were against B.A's plans. They found out that they wanted to bring in part-time workers, but no company is allowed to do that because under the law your job is redundant and so then you have to go. But our jobs were still there; it would be cheaper more cost-effective for them to have part-time workers to do our work. So they cancelled the

redundancy plan. But B.A still wanted to get rid of 120 personnel. As ex-civil servants, we were still entitled to redundancy pay if we lost our jobs. So what British Aerospace did was that they offered redundancy to anyone who wanted it. They brought the retirement age down 55, and they doubled the redundancy pay. We started to hear rumours about some getting payments of £30,000 plus and things like that. We didn't give that sort of thing a lot of the thought because we were trusting God for our jobs. One day someone asked Phil how old he was, he said 58, and he was told that it is the best age to get a good deal if he were to take voluntary redundancy.

We discussed about taking voluntary redundancy, is this what God would want for us? So we prayed, and we prayed big. Sometimes, God wants us to pray big. We prayed that Phil would get £25,000 and his pension, and I would get £20,000. Now, this was big money, but we were hearing all sorts of rumours of what people were getting. So we went into the office the next day, and Phil got £27,000; I got £18,000. We still did not reach our target for the

amount of money we needed. However, we knew that if I left the company, I would get £12,000 when I was 60, and my pension would start at 60 while Phil's pension started straightaway at 58.

Pat added up all the figures including the endowment policy, which was part of my settlement with Sandra. Pat got a firm to auction the endowment policy, because, in those days, those policies were designed to pay the price of the mortgage when it came to the end of its term. When it was all added up, it came to over £60,000. We knew that this was God. So we took our redundancy packages, and we paid the mortgage off. We trusted God, only nine months before with the threat of redundancy hanging over our heads, not knowing what the future held for us. Apart from seeing what God would do—after nine months, we owned the house lock stock and barrel. We didn't owe a penny. That was amazing. This is the evidence of what God can do when you trust Him. But you have to know God's will. You have to hear God's voice; you have to know what the Spirit is saying when you move

into these things. God wants to see our faith, that's when He blesses us.

CHAPTER 5

God's Provision

Once we settled in, God started to bless us. Being a practical person and a builder, I soon looked around the house and said to Phil and Pat, "You know, we've got all wooden windows. There were about 16 windows, plus two doors, French doors, and a bay window. We had all these windows and doors to paint. I said, "What we need to do is to put all new UPVC windows in. Just as I spoke those words out of my mouth, the doorbell rang. I went to the door, and there was a double glazing salesman. I said to him, "Oh! We were just discussing having our windows done." I don't know whether he believed me or not. I started to go around the house showing him what we wanted done. He measured them roughly. I asked for an estimate. I shared the gospel with him; I told how God had led us to the house and how we were going to open it up as a Christian home to assist people who needed a helping hand and things like that.

He said, "Right, well I'll give you a rough price." He gave us the estimate, and I said, "We'll get a couple more estimates will get back to you." We got other estimates and prayed asking God to show us which company we should use. We felt the Lord saying that He wanted the first one. So we called him, he came in, and he said to me, "I've got something to tell you. I'll measure everything first, and then I'll have a chat with you." He did all that, it took quite some time. We all sat down round the kitchen table, and he said: "When I stood outside your house, at the gate, I looked at your property, and I said as I walked up to your garden path, if there's a God, then let me get some work here in this house. Because I've had this job for about six months, and hardly had any sales, and when I came in, and you started to tell me about this Jesus and this God, I was really taken aback. I could hardly believe what you were saying."

Needless to say, he got the job; we witnessed to him and told him more about what God had done for us and what he wanted to do for him. The Scripture says that sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2).

We all need to come to a place of repentance and to know God so that we can have a fresh start in this life, which goes on into eternity with God, instead of being separated from Him forever.

We spent some time talking to him, and then he opened up and said, "My sister has just become a Christian, and I went to her baptism." It's amazing when you talk to people, and you suddenly find out that God's already speaking to them. That's what was happening here, God touched his sister and brought him into our house so that we could continue to tell him that God loves him.

Our First Lodger

We started to talk to other Christians letting them know we had some rooms available for anybody who needed help. Our first lodger was a chap called Graham. He lived just down the road from us, and was in a long-term relationship that had gone sour—he was thrown out. He had a history of drug taking but had sorted out that area of his life. He was a lot

older now and was running his own business. But he started to tell us about his background where he was popping pills. He said he couldn't stand needles, so he never did go on heroin or any heavy drugs. However, he used to deal drugs, upper and downers and things like that.

A little while after that, some friends of ours came to visit us in our new home, and we were telling them what we hoped to achieve and the purpose of the house. We also mentioned that even if the person had a drug addiction, it was not a problem to us because we knew that God loves them and they needed a helping hand. One of our friends said, "When our girls were at school, the gardener was selling pills to the girls!" I remember thinking, "Oh dear, Graham, I hope you don't come down now." The gardener they were talking about was actually in the room above Well, he didn't come down, so it was all okay, but it just goes to show how small the world is.

The thing is, as a Christian, Graham was doing reasonably well. We helped him by putting a roof

over his head when he needed it. He went back to university as a mature student, about 30 years old at the time and he obtained a degree and got a very good job in the South of France working for a millionaire. He even came back and told us how his life had sorted itself out. So, even after popping the pills and dealing the drugs, when he got his life right with God, God blessed him now he's fine.

We started the house with seven people: Phil, Pat, Pat's mum, Pat's dad, Ralph, my youngest son Dean, my eldest son Gary and me. It wasn't long after that Graham joined us. The day we moved in, the church and everybody helped us. Pat's mum and dad were sent on holiday for a week, so we could get their room ready for them when they came back.

So, three families were moving into this 7 bedroom house. It meant that we had to get rid of a lot of furniture and a lot of personal belongings. That meant sacrifices had to be made by everyone, we did very well. My two sons weren't particularly happy. But at least our food was cooked by Pat, and

it was wonderful she was an excellent cook and organiser. Everything with the move went very smoothly.

God's Transforming Power

Phil and I were witnessing to a chap at ROF, and we invited him for tea after work. He came, we shared the gospel with him, and he gave his heart to the Lord. I remember him jumping up and saying, "I feel so different! I just feel so different!" Anyway, he went home, and about half an hour later, the phone rang. It was his distraught mother. "What have you done to my son? What have you done to my son? He's not the same person who went out the house this morning; he's completely different, what have you done to him?" We had to calm her down on the phone and try to explain to her that when God and man meet, something has to change and it's certainly not God. So his encounter with the Lord Jesus in our house made such a difference to him that his mother was quite bewildered and couldn't understand what had happened. But we've got a

God who loves us that much, and when He cleans us up, we are different.

This story reminds me of when I first became a Christian, and I walked away from the nightclubbing and all sorts of stuff. I was completely changed. A friend of mine said "Bob, this crowd you're tangled up with, they're telling you that you can't do this and you can't do that—" I put my hands up and said "No, hang on a minute. Nobody's telling me I can't do anything. I've decided that I don't want to do those things anymore. Now I'm a Christian; I've walked away from all that."

The R.O.F was a big place, about 4 miles all the way around the perimeter. Everybody had their own bikes; I was cycling around the factory, and I saw a friend of mine coming towards me. He pulled across in front of me, stopped and poked me in the chest with his finger and said. "Bob, I've known you now for quite a few years, but since you've become a Christian—" I don't know you anymore." And he cycled off. I thought to myself, "Well, was that good

or bad?" "It must be good because God is the one who changed me. I haven't changed myself. And I've changed so much that everybody notices." That's what it's about, that's what happened to our friend who came to our home for tea. And that's what God's business is about — change.

There's a story in the Bible of the very first miracle that Jesus did when He changed the water into wine (John 2:1-11). All the wine at the wedding He attended was gone, and they needed more. When Jesus transformed the water into wine, it became the best wine the people ever tasted. That's the sort of change that happens to us. We are like filthy, dirty water, not fit for anything. But when God changes us, He makes us into the very best wine, fit for God. We can't make this transformation ourselves. Only God can do it for us when we ask Him and it's an ongoing work for the rest of our lives.

CHAPTER 6

Tough Decisions

One of the first major issues that I had to face when we moved into the house, was with my youngest son, Dean. Gary had already signed an apprenticeship and was doing well training to be a stonemason. At times, he went to Portland College in Dorset for training, and that was very tough on him. It was his first time away from home. As a Christian, he didn't get involved with what the other lads were doing. We used to visit him and very often he was on his own. All the others were in the pubs at night, but he didn't want to do any of that. He struggled a bit, but he held on to his Christian faith even under pressure, God looked after him during those months he was away from home.

Dean was a different kettle of fish altogether. When he left school, he began to hang around the house, and he wasn't interested in trying to get a job. He didn't want to do anything, and then he began to

spend a lot of time in bed not getting up, not doing anything at all. This was of great concern to me. He was getting benefit of £55 a week and was not prepared to do anything. We were charging them about £15 a week in rent. I never charged them much at home because Gary was an apprentice, and he was also running a car, and so, that's all they were paying. We couldn't get Dean motivated to start to look for a job or do anything with his life. We spent a lot of time discussing this matter and then I decided to do something radical. We had already done something radical by moving into the house.

I said to Pat: "Get a notepad, a pen, and a basket," we always had a basket on the table with fruits. She emptied that, I believe that God wants us to do something about this situation, so I told her to write from £15 to £50 on separate pieces of paper, fold them over, put them in the basket and stir them up. I then prayed "Lord, whatever I take out of this basket, I believe you're guiding me—that would be the rent that I'm going to charge Dean.

After that prayer, I asked Pat to lift the basket up; I reached up and put my hand in, took out a piece of paper, unfolded it and looked at it. It read £50. One thing I was sure of, because of the way I had prayed. This is what God wanted although it was going to be a very difficult thing to do. I had to trust Him with it.

I went upstairs, to Dean and told him that I had decided to put his rent up to £50. Obviously, he didn't like that very much, and said "I'm not going to stay here and pay that kind of money. I'll go out tomorrow and find somewhere else to live." Now that was tough enough to do, but it was even more so to tell my eldest son that his rent was going up to £50. I wasn't interested in taking money off my boys. All I wanted was for my youngest son to get his life sorted out.

These are the tough decisions that we have to make at times, and these are the tough decisions that God wants us to make. But sometimes, as it was in this case, it took a long time before I knew whether it was a right decision.

The next day, Dean got up early, went out all day, came back and never said anything. But he found out that £55 was not going to go very far. The £55 that he was getting in benefits was not even close to what he needed to be able to live anywhere, pay the rent, buy food, pay for utilities and all the rest of it.

It was a bit of a shock to his system over the following months. I can't remember how long it was before he moved out—life was pretty difficult. He would get his benefit money at the end of the month. On one occasion he screwed up his rent money and threw it at me. That was tough because I had already said to him, I wasn't interested in the money. I didn't have any trouble with Gary even though it made things a lot more difficult for him.

Eventually, one day, Dean got up early, went out and found a job that was within walking distance of our house. It was a caring job at the National Home for the blind. He worked hard; he did his NVQs and did very well with it. Once he had saved enough money, he came and said that he was leaving to a flat about a mile away, which was in the same block

of flats where his mother had settled. He was in the ground floor flat, and she was in the first floor flat. As most of you who have teenage children know that when they leave home, they don't really leave. At the first sign of a crisis, they are soon on the phone.

Although our relationship was reasonable, we didn't see a lot of him. But it wasn't long before something happened—there was a cloudburst, and it hammered with rain for about an hour. Dean called us because water started to come under the door into his flat. As a builder, I knew what had happened, it was down at the seafront; the wind always blew the sand at the back of these flats and blocked up all the drains. It was never noticed until it rained heavy for a while. The water couldn't get away, so it started to flood the ground floor flats. We put mops and buckets in the car and my set of drain rods and dashed out to help.

By the time we got there, the storm had ended, but the backyard was flooded. Water was flowing into a neighbours' flat. I went outside and rodded the

drains, and the water subsided within minutes. Then we went and helped the neighbour, where the water had settled, and we used our equipment to mop the floor and get the mats out. Then we went into Dean's flat, which wasn't too bad, and we helped him clean up. I always find it amazing in situations where relationships are strained. God can use the simplest things to break through, and this storm turned out to be a real icebreaker.

Sometime later when I was not home, he came to our house and said to Pat, "what you did while I was living here, was the best thing that you could've possibly done for me." I was pleased that Dean was honest to come back and say those words. Although it was a tough decision to increase his rent and it did create tension between us, I had to hold on and believe that this was what God wanted me to do. However, I had to wait a while before I received confirmation. I believe in these sort of situations, when you love the person, then it's better to do something tough, because you love them, and you can trust God with them. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love

God, to those who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8: 28)

This book speaks a lot about our experiences in listening to God, making tough decisions, holding on to what we believe God has said, and seeing the end results. He knows the beginning from the end, and He wants us to fit into His plan. It would have been so easy to just left him alone. But God wanted to do a tough thing, not only in my life, but also in my youngest son's life.

The Pain of Letting Go

God was faithful in removing this personal mountain. I found this encouraging because as Christians, it doesn't mean that everything is going to be smooth and life is going to be easy. There will be mountains to contend with. But with God, we will be able to overcome them all.

God began to speak to me about my eldest son Gary and the need for me to let him go. It was a heartbreaking revelation. I said, "Lord, my wife is

gone, my youngest son is gone, my house is gone, and I'm not going to give up my eldest son." I struggled with this because I could not bear to let go of Gary. But there is always something to learn from these struggles. It took me a long time to come to terms with what I felt God was saying. At that time, the church we attended was about a hundred miles away, so we stayed with friends there for weekends. I was sharing my struggles with various people, and they suggested that I take a break there for about three days with a change of scenery and see what God would do.

I did that one weekend. There was a big conference going on, and so all the accommodation was full. I stayed in a caravan with four others who were about my age. I remember struggling particularly at night with this issue of letting go of my son. On the last night, I was awake, and I was trying to come to a place where I could trust God. It brought me to tears, and the others prayed for me.

I remember it was winter time and it was freezing outside. At the break of dawn, I broke down saying,

“Okay Lord, I give up! I’ll hand him over to you.” I must admit that at that time, I was really broken before God. This is what God is waiting for, so He can move into our lives and move the mountain and that is when the blessing comes.

I had spoken out of my mouth that I was going to trust God. I went home on the Monday morning, went to work and at tea time I sat at one end of the table, Gary sat at the other, and we were facing each other. After our meal, Gary said, “Next Friday, I will be leaving home.” I replied, “That’s okay.” Amazingly, I was at complete peace.

These are the things God does. He’s waiting for us. He’s waiting for us to come in line with the very best that He has for us and those around us. We don’t see it when we’re going through it; we don’t understand it at that time. It’s painful and difficult. But when we give in like I gave in, that’s when the peace comes, and God’s timing is absolutely perfect.

If I didn’t come to that place of submitting to God, I think I would have been in a mess. Again, God is in control even when we think we’re in control. When

we give up our free will and acknowledge that God has the very best for us we can have peace. You can move the mountains with God's help. With both my sons, I had a mountain that was in the way and with both my sons, God was involved. That encouraged me to move closer to God and to trust Him with even bigger mountains.

Evil Intentions Turned Around For Good

We had empty rooms in our house for people to come and stay. The church that we were in had contacts with rehabs. There were several people with drink, and drug problems who came and stayed with us, directly from this source. They had at least made an effort and had a determination to break the habit—that's what the rehab does, and it's not easy for them depending on how long they've been addicted. Some who came were in rehab for two or three years. They were Christians who had fallen into all sorts of bad stuff, but Christian rehabs have a very high percentage of success in helping them to return to society and get back into church

when they've fully recovered. The reason for this remarkable success is that God is involved.

Someone who attended our church who had been in and out of rehab for several years he was living in a flat. However, he was still struggling with various problems, and we were asked to take him in.

I'm not going to use his real name—I'll call him Harry. He came to us and went into the upstairs room at the front of the house; we didn't see him for about two weeks. He kept himself out of the way, and Pat would take his meals up and leave them by his bedroom door. He would eat his meal and push the plate out afterwards. He slowly got used to us, he came out, and we began to get to know him, but Harry was quite a difficult chap. He had formed some bad habits. He did everything he could to upset us and make living with him uncomfortable. He was in the room next to me and over a period of three years at least, he used to do all sort of things including having his music blaring away late at nights. It would wake me up, and I would have to go in and ask him to turn it down.

He would go into the bathroom, which was on the other side of my room after I had gone to bed, crash about and make a lot of noise to wake me up. He would wait until I went to bed to go into his room and deliberately sneeze very loudly, and this would wake me up. This was a very testing time for me, going the extra mile. (Matthew 5:41) Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Grace and patients, followed by more grace and patients. Learning to love the unlovable? But with God nobody's unlovable.

We had an open house policy for the people in our church. Every now and again, married couples who were struggling in their relationships would turn up at the back door and ring the bell at two or three o'clock in the morning. "I'm leaving him! I need to go somewhere!" would be the cry. So they would come in and sleep on the settee, perhaps spends a couple of nights with us and then go back home again. On one occasion we had the wife for one week then she went back, and the following week we had the husband.

We were living in an old house with lots of rooms; every room had a push-button in it to summon the servants. Downstairs, there was an old-fashioned annunciator panel in the kitchen where the servants were years ago. When the button was pushed in a room, a little star would move on this panel so the servants could see what room they had to go to. When anybody came to the house late at night, it was my job to get up, go to the door, let them in and settle them down.

One night the doorbell rang at one o'clock. I jumped up, went to the door and there was no one there. I went out into the road to see if anybody was there, I went back into the kitchen and looked at the annunciator panel, to see if the back doorbell had been pushed. I noticed that it was showing a signal for Harry's room. So, I knew that he pressed the bell. When I went back upstairs, he was standing at his bedroom door with a sort of a half smile on his face and asked, "Who was that?" I didn't confront him that time in the morning. There were many other instances like that, and it was a difficult time

to show grace to someone like Harry. I forgave him and just moved on.

Every now and again Phil and Pat would go off for a week's holiday and leave me in charge of the house to look after everybody, depending on how many people were there. Pat would prepare all the food and freeze it; I didn't have to cook because it's something I couldn't cope with. So everybody would just get what they wanted out of the freezer, put it into the microwave, that system work well.

On this particular night, we had already eaten, and I walked into the kitchen as Harry burned some toast. He was always burning toast and setting off the fire alarm, just to annoy everybody, and because of that when it did go off nobody took any notice. But this time it never went off, the battery was flat. It was tempting just to leave it, but for safety, I put a new one in. Harry then put two meals in the microwaves, and went up to his room. Richard and was in his room, we had an American staying with us at the time, but he had gone out with our pastor for a meal.

I went into the lounge and was doing some paperwork; about a half an hour later, the fire alarm went off. I was like, "Oh, what has he done in there?" I was annoyed and just sat there waiting for it to stop, but it kept going. So I walked down the hallway to the kitchen and opened the door. It was full of black smoke, from the ceiling to about three feet from the floor. I could see that one of the microwaves was on fire. Because of the nature of my job, I had been fire trained, and BA trained (using breathing apparatus), so I decided to deal with this fire straight away.

I went into the room, closed the door behind me and got down on my hands and knees underneath the smoke, which was quite safe to do. I opened up the kitchen door and the back door to the house, took a big breath went back inside, into the smoke and unplugged the microwaves. I swung the one that was on fire around and got a hold of it, and threw it into the back garden. Then I got the other one and threw that out as well.

I went back into the house, shut the kitchen door and ran up the hallway shouting for everybody to get out of the house. I went to Harry's room, and he was asleep. I shouted at him I was very angry, and he knew it. He weighed about thirteen stone. He jumped off the bed, ran out the bedroom, shot across the landing and started to go down the stairs with me shouting at him. He rushed out the back door I was trying to get hold of him, he ran so fast I couldn't catch him.

Just then our pastor Kelton came round the corner with his American friend; I was still angry and had to calm myself down pretty quick. I went back in and opened up the patio doors and all the windows and turned on the fans to get rid of the smoke. We all stood there at the back of the house waiting for the smoke to disperse.

I think we were all shocked, and I was still angry, but we managed to get it cleaned up a bit. I got in touch with our cleaner Mandy and she came in the morning. It was a lovely and sunny day, I opened the house, took all the curtains down, took up all the

mats, all the cutlery had to be cleaned, washed all the floors and tables—everything. Praise God; there was no actual damage apart from the one microwave, which was burnt out. What happened is, Harry had put the microwaves on full power for about thirty minutes, instead of defrost, so the food inside caught fire. If I hadn't put a new battery in the fire alarm or if I had ignored the alarm, the fire could have spread and destroyed the kitchen and the back of the house. It took a bit of common sense to put a new battery into the fire alarm. God gives us all common sense; we need to tap into that gift from God and use it to guide us everyday.

Mending a Broken Relationship

As part of my day, I usually have personal devotions with a daily reading. This is because I was taught that if you have your own daily devotions and quiet time on a regular basis, God can speak to you. We should set aside time specifically for that.

On the morning of the fire, my daily reading was Psalm 139. I read it all, but verses 23 and 24 of this psalm really spoke to me “Search me oh God and know my heart, try me and know my anxieties and see if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way of everlasting.” I read these verses, at seven in the morning, and I decided to turn these two verses into a prayer. I prayed the exact words over my life and went off to work.

The morning after the fire, I sat down in the kitchen having my breakfast. Sometimes I look at the previous days reading, I read Psalm 139 again, and when I came to verse 23 and 24 Suddenly, I realised that God was using this to show me that I had a deep anger inside of me. I remembered how I shouted at my Christian Brother Harry, and I knew that I did not handle the situation very well. The more I thought about what I said and what I'd done the worse I felt inside. I went up to his room, so I could say sorry and get things right with him. But he wasn't there— it was pretty obvious that he hadn't been home. In all the commotion, I hadn't given a thought to where he was. I was now

worried because I knew when he ran out of the house he didn't have a coat. He certainly was not prepared to stay out all night, I went and sat in the kitchen concerned, wondering if he was okay. Well, certainly my prayer had been answered. God had put his finger on this deep anger that I had hidden (search me oh God know my heart. See if there is any wicked way in me.) I was praying and asking God's forgiveness.

Then I heard a noise at the back door and saw Harry's head come around the kitchen door. He said: "I'm sorry." I was so glad to see him. I stood up walked towards him while he came in saying sorry repeatedly, and I was also saying sorry. We gave each other a big hug. We were both in tears, and I think for the first time in three years or more, we really did have a heart to heart talk. I said: "Look, you've done this and you've done that." I didn't have a written list, but I went through at least twelve things that he had purposely done over the years to annoy me.

One of the things I accused him of was switching off the boiler. On some mornings, there was no hot water. We went through the list of incidents, and he admitted doing everything on the list except switching the boiler off. There was a sense of honesty coming from his heart; I could see that he was telling the truth. I eventually found fault with the programmer on the boiler, because of the way things were. I naturally blamed Harry for that because of all the other things that he'd been doing. There was a barrier between us, but God did something that we could never have done ourselves. Harry's willingness to come back and say sorry and to open up and be honest, God was working out things for my good and for Harry's good. After that, we both changed.

God's Word is true; it is something that He wants us to apply to our lives. We need to understand that God's Word is alive today. It speaks to us, motivates us, changes us, moves us, and is good to us. We both benefited from what happened that night.

During that period that he was with us, there were a lot of other things going on with people we had in the house. Whenever a visiting speaker was coming to the church, whether from America or anywhere from Europe, they would normally come and stay with us. We had enough rooms to put them up. Also, the other churches around and pastors knew that we were open to receiving visiting speakers or anybody who wanted to stay.

CHAPTER 7

Our Eye-Opening Journey to India

The pastor of a local church, Kelton Black who we all knew very well called Pat late one evening. He said: "Would you have room for an Indian pastor, could you put him up?" Pat replied, "I'll go and get the diary and see when we have some space." However, Kelton said, "Oh well, no, I'm talking about now." This was about ten o'clock in the evening "Oh," she said: "That's okay, bring him along. How long would he be staying for?" About three days was the reply, and Pat turned to us and said I hope this one is not like the last guest we had? (Who had left the day before.)

Three weeks previous, a local church had phoned and asked if we could take someone from Israel for a week. He turned out to be quite a trial, insisting on having a bath every day, insisting on having separate meals at separate times from us and we had to take him everywhere. We have a large back garden; he would get up early in the mornings

walking round, shouting in tongues at the top of his voice. And because it was cold he wrapped a jumper around his head with the arms flowing around as he walked about. We have very good neighbours, and one of them came and said to us, I think you have someone who is mad walking around in your garden. To make things worse, he ate raw garlic in his room, it took ages to get rid of the smell. He stayed for three weeks, and we were glad to see him go.

Kelton introduced us to Samuel. Pat showed him around the house and because she was still raw from our last guest, she said this is the fridge, here are the plates, and cups, and cutlery. She told him he could use one of the washing machines, showed him where the iron and ironing board was, and then put him in his room. He had a heart condition, and he said he had to walk a mile each day. We told him if he went out through our gate, turn right and keep going, he would come right around in a circle and that would be a mile walk. He looked after himself, but Pat did the cooking for him. He showed us a few photographs of a church that he had in South

East India, which was interesting. It was the first time he had been to England, and he was very grateful that we were able to put him up at a minute's notice.

After three nights, off he went back to India. We never thought that we would hear from him again. However, about a month later, we received a letter from him thanking us very much for our hospitality and inviting us to India to visit him. Phil and Pat loved travelling; I made a couple of trips with Phil and Pat to Europe, but that's all the travelling I'd ever done. We took up the offer to go India. Phil, Pat and our friend Peter whom we invited to join us on the trip. Peter's wife was a lot older than he was and she had dementia. She was in a nursing home behind our house. This was his first time travelling abroad.

Linda's Advice

Just at that time, a lady turned up at our church. She was an administrator for a charity in Nepal; her name is Linda. The mission did cataract operations in the towns and villages; she was based in

Kathmandu but had returned home because her sister's husband was ill. She came to our church one Sunday morning but didn't have anywhere to stay, so Pat offered her a room in our house. For a few weeks, she was waiting for a visa to go back to Nepal.

Before we left for India, Linda told us a few things about Nepal which was all very interesting, also that the culture in India was just the same. She informed us that when we get there, we would have to sing songs. Phil was used to leading the worship in the church, so that was no problem for him. Along with singing songs, she said we would be asked to lead meetings, preach and share our testimonies. That was a little scary because we were not accustomed to being up front. We did the washing up, cleaning the floors and setting out the chairs—that kind of stuff. But, but she said, "they would be expecting you to lead all the meetings." But we said we were only going there to have a bit of a holiday— she sat and laughed at us.

What a Difference!

Off we went to India, it was my first long-haul flight. We went from Heathrow to Dubai then to Mumbai, and then an internal flight to Chennai. It was a bit of an eye-opener for all of us—the poverty was the first thing that struck us. When we arrived, we met Sam at the airport, and he arranged overnight train it had three-tiered bunks. Although we were in the coach that was air-conditioned, which we soon found out was an absolute blessing. Funny enough, it was in December during their winter season, but it was still pretty warm for us. I suppose it was a culture shock for us as well when we saw people walking around in balaclavas, gloves, and scarves in temperatures of seventy-degrees. (This was in the evenings)

Sam took us to a place called Rajahmundry, which is in the state of Andhra Pradesh in South East India. If you look at the map of India, you will see on the eastern side a kink. It's about sixty miles inland from that kink where we were going; that's the easiest way to describe where it is. Rajahmundry is

about the size of Bristol; about seven hundred thousand people live there—no McDonalds, one hotel, no internet or anything—that was in the year 2000. There were no mobile phones. So the whole thing was a complete eye-opener for us. Also, we soon realised that there was nothing we could teach the Indians in Sam's church. He was very strict, in love with the Lord, and the Word of God was a high priority in everything that he did and said.

Linda Was Right

We arrived after two days of travelling. On Saturday evening after we had meal, Sam brought this old guitar with rusty strings and handed it to Phil and said, "Brother you will be leading the worship tomorrow." He said to Pat: "you will give a testimony." He said to Peter, "You will read a scripture," and he pointed to me and said: "You will be doing the preaching." We all thought to ourselves, "oh dear." We weren't prepared for this. Phil normally played the guitar with written music, but he didn't have any and this guitar hadn't been used for years and was way out of tune. So we spent

the first part of our first night after travelling such a long distance going through the Bible. I was looking for something to preach on, which I hadn't done much of anyway. Peter was looking for some scripture to read, and Pat was going through thinking what she was going to say. While Phil practised his guitar without music and thought about the songs he might be able to sing.

Linda Simms was right. It was exactly what she told us, but we didn't take any notice, and we weren't prepared. The very next morning, we were serious and committed. The Indian Christians were on time, on their knees, praying for an hour before they got into the meeting and already singing and worshipping God. It was amazing! Everything was spick and span; all the ladies were dressed in white with no jewellery. Sam had very politely asked Pat not to wear any earrings, make-up or anything like that and just plain clothes because the congregation were poor. One of the things Sam said was that he wouldn't allow the ladies to wear coloured saris once they became Christians because it would make the others feel out of place. So everybody wore

white. We also adopted the same dress code after the first year we visited. When we go there, we wear white trousers and white shirts; we take our shoes off like everybody else and then go into the church building. The lesson from this is, when someone has been there and done it, as they say, then we should listen and take heed of their experiences. This enables us to be more prepared for what God has already planned for us.

Our Eyes Were Opened

Sam and his son pastored fifty village churches; they were lovely and full of worshipping Christians. It was just so wonderful to see the commitment and the love of God in these people. It made us feel so humble and very small. We were quite embarrassed because they were honouring us by placing garlands around our necks and all sorts of things—but they were so pleased. For some of the villagers, we were the first westerners or white people that they had ever seen—that was quite amazing.

The transportation and roads were also quite shocking. To get to one of the churches, we had to get out of the vehicle and walk because the road came to an abrupt end. There was a cliff on one side with a drop of about a hundred feet, and as we were going along this very narrow lane, it stopped suddenly. So we had to walk over the top of what we called a mountain, and it was extremely hot. Pat struggled. The younger girls from the church came, held her hand and looked after her. One of the men in the group was carrying a live chicken upside down—holding its legs. Pat, being inquisitive asked: Pastor Sam “What’s the chicken for?” He answered, “Sister, that’s your dinner he has to carry it like we can’t kill it before we get there because of the heat.” So they prepared it later for dinner.

It was amazing to be in these villages worshipping God, even though we couldn’t understand what they were saying. Sam had to interpret for us. We got to know Sam well and fell in love with him and his family.

He had visited America to get some funds, and the Americans had paid for eleven acres of field in a village called Divansharervo about seven miles out of Rajahmundry. We went to the field to have a look. Sam was so proud of this field that he put a wire fence around it and planted a lot of coconut trees, banana trees, cashew nuts and all sorts of things to get some revenue to pay the finances of the church. He had dug a well in the centre of it, and they also had one borehole for pumping up water. There was one mud hut in the corner with a family; they were caring for the field, looking after everything and trying to keep the dogs, the pigs, and all the rest of the things that would destroy the plants out of the field.

We were going around the field when Phil had a bout of belly ache, which had to be dealt with immediately—I'm sure you understand what I am trying to say. There was some long grass in the middle of this field. And he said to me, "I'm going to run into this long grass because I have to do something. Otherwise, I'm going to be in a mess."

So he ran off, and a minute or so later, Sam turned around and asked, "Where's Brother Philip?"

I replied, "He took off to go to the toilet in the long grass."

Sam asked with concern in his voice, "What long grass?"

I said, "Over there!"

Immediately Sam shouted, "Brother Phillip come out of there! Come out of there There are Cobras in there. We've already killed some, but we know there are more. You must come out! You must come out!"

Phil wasn't bothered. He was in the long grass saying, "I'm going to do what I'm going to do."

After a few minutes, he came out, but Sam was very stern with all of us and told us that those particular snakes were very dangerous. We took note of what he had said. He was concerned about us over that issue

A little later on, as we stood under a particularly big tree, Anurag – who was Sam's son, loved to tell jokes and mess about a bit said: "We also have scorpions here in the field."

Pat asked, "Where are they?"

He said: "They live up in the trees; they are very big black scorpions and sometimes they drop out of the trees onto you. If they sting you, they won't kill you, but you will be quite ill for about a week."

Pat asked, "Which trees?"

He responded, "The one you are standing under."

He laughed as we ran away from underneath this tree. Well, he did tell us that when they go to harvest the coconuts they have to be careful, and they have to kill the scorpions.

After all, we were in India, out in the wilds where the people drew water out of wells and basically live in mud huts.

However, just as we were about to leave the field, Sam stood up and said: "I have a vision for this

field. I want to build a school in this field, and I want to build a Bible College, where the poorer children can come in from the villages and be taught. They can learn to read and write, and we can educate them so that they can come to know the Lord, attend Bible College and go all over India preaching the gospel.

Unfortunately, as he started to say this, I didn't have the camera going, and I asked him if he would stop and start again because I felt that I needed to film this and have every word on camera. Plus, we were quite taken aback by what he had said. As we were leaving, I remember standing right in the middle of the field and swinging three hundred and sixty degrees—all the way around with the camera just in case we ever came back—not that we intended to. But if we ever returned, I was sure that the place was going to be very different.

This book is about trusting God, to move mountains out of the way. It was pretty obvious to us that Pastor Sam was trusting God every day to move mountains. When he invited us over, he did explain

that we would have to pay for everything. After being there just one day, we could see why everything was being run on a shoestring; we paid for the hire of the car and driver, fuel and food. Sam had a little notebook he wrote down every single expense right down to the last rupee. He made sure that we were not overcharged when we went shopping and he looked after us very well. His wife Sheila and son Anorak and daughter Priti had a wonderful relationship with the Lord, full of love and faith.

CHAPTER 8

The Mountain of Death

We could not wait to return home to share our experiences with our church because we wanted to send some finances to help with the church in India.

However, to our dismay, we were greeted with bad news, when we landed at Heathrow. Richard, our lodger, phoned us to say that Linda was in hospital she had been taken ill, and they had to get an ambulance for her. They took her straight to Bristol. We decided we would call in to see her on the way home. As soon as we got there, we talked to the doctor. She was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour. She was fifty-six years old and the doctors had said she would have to go into a care home where they would look after her.

But Pat, without thinking much about what caring for Linda would entail said that we would take her home and look after her. So we did. I always remember her words when she came to the door of

our house. She said: "Lord, whatever happens, I don't want to lose my marbles." That's the type of person she was; the sort of Christian —that was just upfront with everything. Linda did turn out to be quite a handful. She was very strong-willed, but then, so was Pat.

While Linda was with us, she had people come from Nepal and from the Birmingham area where her mission was based. Several of her friends also came from Holland and others from Australia who stayed with us for about six weeks. It was lovely to have them come so far to see their friend.

One of the amazing things that occurred as the brain tumour took over, was that the doctors would come to see her and say, they could not understand what was happening. Her brain tumour was so big that she should have lost her ability to speak. Actually, she should have lost everything. They couldn't understand it, but we could because we have a God who listens to our prayers, and she had told God, she didn't want to lose her marbles. She ended up being paralyzed down one side and lost use of her

legs, this meant Phil and myself had to get her in and of our car. Part of Linda's treatment involves taking steroids, so she went up from about 10 stone to 15. One day she slipped off the seat down into the footwell of the car, we had quite a struggle, it took us ages to get her out, at one stage we thought we would have to get the Fire Brigade. All her faculties were in place right up until about forty-eight hours before she passed away, before she went to be with her Lord—in complete peace.

Saying Goodbye to Linda—For Now

We joined Kelton Black's church because New Life Christian Fellowship where we had been members for years had actually split. It was a sad time for us. But we had joined Keaton's church because we could get Linda into the church with her wheelchair. We asked him if we could conduct the funeral. Being a humble man, he permitted us to do whatever we wanted to. Phil led the worship. Harry and some other people who were in our house read

scriptures and shared memories of Linda, and I did the preaching.

My message was straightforward. Many of her missionary friends were there with Linda's family. I spoke about the reality of heaven and hell and that because heaven is real, hell is also real. They were real to Linda and real to me. Some criticized me for the message and some complimented me. The people, who had been on the mission field with Linda, were praising God that someone was prepared to preach the gospel message, which went straight down the line. And so, there was a big difference between the background of the people and what they were saying. I learnt something from that.

Sometimes, God moves in ways that we do not understand. Little did we know how God would use Linda to help Harry find his purpose in life. While Linda was in the wheelchair, she would always tell Harry, "Look you've got a future, and it's in caring for people." She saw something in him that we did not see and so she badgered him to take

her out in the wheelchair, take her places, and look after her and things like that. It was Linda who was used by God after the incident with the fire to get Harry a job and to let him see that there was something he could do. God answers prayer, even if it does not seem like a prayer.

God can bring things together for the good of everybody. Harry got involved with a well-known international evangelist and went off to Paris on several occasions. He bought himself a suit with the money he was earning from his job. He cancelled the benefits that he was receiving, and he was a completely changed person. I said to him on many occasions, "Harry because of you, I am a better person. Because of the things that happened between us and the way God turned things around, He has changed me, and He has changed you." At times, it's difficult to see how God can work through the mountains in our lives; we have to thank Him for the difficult times as well as the good times.

Losing Peter

It was about a year after we had been to India that Peter fell ill with bowel cancer. He had been sick for a little while living on his own, but he really couldn't look after himself. Pat soon realised that he needed some help and said: "Peter, you had better move in with us, and we'll look after you. I first met Peter at the ROF when he volunteered to work in the same section where I was. He was on another shift, so I only saw him at shift change over time. When I became a Christian and started to go to church with Sandra and the boys, Peter was there, he was a Christian and I didn't know.

The first men's meeting I went to, I didn't know what to do, so I simply followed everybody else. They were praying so I held my hands together, bowed my head, and close my eyes, then Peter stood up and started to speak in a strange language, he spoke louder and louder and then suddenly stop. It seemed to me that nobody was taking any notice when I looked around, and then one of the leaders started to speak and the most amazing thing

happened. I had my eyes shut and my head bowed, but my eyes suddenly opened, and I found myself staring at the carpet and then it was as if someone had put the best quality earphones on my head my ears actually popped, and these words that were being spoken sank deep into me (I shall plant you by streams of living water). There were other things said as well. I had a warm feeling all over me and I couldn't stop singing that lasted for about a month. Over the years, lots of things like that have happened to me.

Peter's wife, Muriel, was slowly deteriorating with dementia, that she had to go into a nursing home. By the time Peter came to stay with us, his bowel cancer was so advanced that they couldn't do anything for him. So he decided not to go for any chemo or anything at all. He was going to trust God. He was a lovely simple guy, a guy who really loved the Lord. He was notorious for giving things away. If he knew somebody had a need, he would go out and spend the money and buy what they needed—whatever it was. He bought Phil a lovely guitar simply because he was walking past the shop with

Phil and he heard him say, "That's a nice guitar, I wish I could afford one of those." When Phil's back was turned, Peter walked into the shop and bought the guitar. Those are the sort of things that He did.

Peter was with us for nine months with his cancer. He would walk around our garden, and on the other side of the wire fence was the nursing home where his wife Muriel resided. Sadly, because she had dementia they would meet, and she didn't even know him— that was quite difficult for Peter. They had been married for many years, and this terrible disease took away all her memories of him.

Peter used to say if the Lord takes me home, I want my half of the money from the house, to go to India to build a school. That school is now up and running with about 300 children, with Peter's name written on a plaque.

Eventually, Peter went to be with the Lord. We took charge of the funeral. Kelton stepped aside for the second time, and Pat administered it all. Phil conducted the worship session, Pat shared some scriptures along with some of the other people who

lived in the house, and I preached a gospel message. Some of the people who came from the ROF said they had never been to a funeral like it because there was so much joy and so much singing. It was an eye-opener to those who never attended a real Christian funeral. We were joyful because we knew we would see him again.

Pat Goes To Be With The Lord

2010 was a sad time for us because in the spring, Pat was diagnosed with cancer. A cancer that was like Peter's in a sense - well advanced and inoperable. Pat made a decision not to go down the chemotherapy treatment. She had a wonderful relationship with the Lord. That relationship showed through at every opportunity to show her trust in God. At that time there was six people living in the house. Virginia was staying temporarily. Eddie had been with us for quite some time. John had been with us for about four years.

Our lounge at the house had been divided into two by putting a settee and chair across, two-thirds to one-third - which was Pat's office. This consisted of a computer station, bookcase, four filing cabinets, shelving, two printers and a photo copier. From this office, Pat ran church affairs, household affairs, finances, missionary contacts and the PGM school charity in India. She managed all this, including cleaning and cooking for everybody around the house and taking care of guests that visited our church. She also ran a puppet ministry, preaching the gospel with puppets at different churches and venues. We even went to Holland for a week and visited two churches. She was also busy with fundraising events and organising concerts. As you can see from this, Pat was a very busy woman.

For nine years, we all went to India, in one year she organised a party of six to travel. She managed to go on her own on two occasions. In 18 years, I never saw Pat, come from the office part of our lounge and sit to watch the television where Phil and myself, would spend our spare time - not that we had much of that.

As she became weaker with the cancer, we moved all the computer stuff onto a trolley, and put it by the side of her bed. Just once then did she sit and watch television with us. She kept going to the very end. I took over the cooking, of which I didn't do too well with that.

Pat made me a cooking recipe which I followed to the letter and I still do seven years later. This means I am cooking meals for six people because this is what the recipe was made for - six people.

Pat was trusting God for the future and praying for healing. She was also preparing, if it was God's will to go to be with Him. Phil didn't know anything about computers and I only knew how to switch one on. All our banking and everything else was on the computer, so she arranged for someone to come and take everything off the computer and write it into ledgers - one for me and one for Phil. This was in order for Phil to continue doing all the household expenses. One for me as I was running a self employed building business.

This is where God stepped in, because these were mountains that suddenly came in front of us. In eighteen years, I had never written out a single estimate, quotation or invoice. I had all this to deal with and Phil had nothing to do with running the house or shopping. Neither of us knew, what bank accounts we had or how much money was in there.

Pat went home to be with her Lord and Saviour a few days after Christmas in 2010.

God's Provision

God sent Chris and Kathy Betts into our lives, just at the right time. Kathy showed us how to fill in and keep our books. We did it all in pencil and she would come once a month to sort out our books, so that our tax returns would be correct. She still is coming to help us. Chris has been a solid rock when we needed someone to talk to. I had heard that various friends thought that our ministry would fall apart once Pat had gone. But God had a different idea. He moved the mountains and He provided.

Even bringing back Mandy our original house cleaner who Pat had trained many years ago. Some christian friends of ours came to visit us and were amazed to see the house so clean and tidy. Pat was very house proud and God provided that our house should be looked after.

CHAPTER 9

Facing Those Big Mountains

Because I was in a children's home in my first two to three years of life, I didn't know my parents, I didn't know I had a sister Carol because we were separated in the children's home. I didn't even know that I had an older brother, John who was living at home. He was nine years older than me.

When I finally got home, I had to learn who my real family was. I can only remember my mum hugging me once, and that's when my best friend was killed in a road accident. That was the sort of the relationship we had. I had a good relationship with my dad because we would always go fishing and do all sorts of things together.

As I grew up, there were always major issues between my mum and my dad. There was always rivalry in the house, and I did not know why. I learnt as I grew older that it had something to do with my dad's sister—my mum had a problem with

her. My mum was quite an awkward person. She was full of bitterness and resentment, and I think that overflowed into my relationship with her because I never felt close to her. There was always this uncomfortable atmosphere in the house especially when my dad visited his sister.

Later in life, my dad began to suffer from Alzheimer's disease and so the family home was eventually sold. My mum was okay, so she stayed in a residential home. But my dad deteriorated into a state where he had to live in a supposedly secure nursing home. However, very often, he would escape through the door or the window. I would get a phone call telling me that my dad was gone and asking if I could find him. So, I would go searching for him; usually, he would try to find his way back to his old house. He could still remember where it was. When I found him, I would pick him up, put him into the car and take him back to the nursing home. As he got worse, he became violent, and you had to be careful with him.

One day, he got away, and he went into an estate; we couldn't find him anywhere. So Phil went one way, and I went the other. Phil found him—my dad pointed his walking stick at Phil and said, "You come near me my boy, and I'll sort you out!" Phil took some very large steps backwards. We managed to calm him down and take him back to the home. Eventually, he ended up in a nursing home not very far from us. And so I would take my mum to see him on a regular basis. I remember they sat on the other side of the table holding hands and chatting. I said to the Lord, "Lord, I want to honour my mum and dad as your words says." (Ephesians 6:2-3). And the Lord spoke to me and said: "Take your mum home and tell her about me." I had never really sat down with my mum and shared with her as a Christian. I never really had a serious talk with her because of the differences that we had between us.

Mother Meets God

In obedience to the Lord, I took her home, and we sat in our kitchen along with Phil—Pat was out

somewhere. I started telling my mum about the love of God, and she softened and opened up. I had never seen her like this in all my life. She said that just after I was born, she nearly died. But she had a dream, and in it, she saw somebody in the distance, all glowing, white, and shiny waving at her.

As I shared the love of God and the story of the gospel with her, she said that the person in the dream was Jesus. And I said, "Yes it was." I told her how much Jesus loved her and what He did on the cross and that He calls everybody to a place of repentance (Acts 17:30). I told her that He wants us to ask Him to come into our lives and change us. I also asked her if she would like to do that, and she said yes. I had never seen my mum so soft, eventually, I led her to the Lord, and that was precious.

I took her back to the home and the very next day something absolutely amazing happened. I went to the home, and again that was a secured place to get in. You had to stand on the porch where there were two doors and ring the bell. Someone would then

come, make a check and let you in. That day, there were two of the staff who opened up the door, and as they were opening it, I could hear one was saying: "I can't understand what is happening to Molly..." (That's my mum) "...she is so different. I can't understand it." The other woman replied, "I can't believe that she's changed either; she's nothing but trouble."

They let me in, and I went to see her; she was a completely different person—lovely, soft, and sweet. I sat down and chatted with her, and I said: "There's something I need to ask you. God has forgiven you, and that's what changes us because when God and people meet, something has to change, and it's certainly not God. We change with God's help." She said yes and told me how peaceful she felt. And I asked, "Have you forgiven Dad's sister for all the things that happen?" She answered yes, and that's what brought the change in her—being honest before God. All those years of bitterness, all those years of resentment were bottled up inside her, but because she received God's forgiveness, she was able to forgive others.

God wants to do the same with each one of us. He died on the cross so that we can receive forgiveness, and He also said that we need to forgive. So that's how my mum met the Lord, and that's how she changed. If you don't forgive others, the Lord will not forgive you (Mark 11:26).

As for my dad, he slowly got worse. They moved him to the nursing home at the back of our house, it was supposed to be a secure home, but he got violent, smashed the front window and the door and managed to get out into the front yard. He threatened everybody who tried to get him back in. So they called a doctor who was chasing him around with a syringe to try to sedate him. My dad picked up a brick and threw it at him but the doctor ducked, and the brick hit the windscreen of a Mercedes that was parked at a house next door. It then bounced off the windscreen and made a dent in the bonnet.

My Dad's Miracle

They finally held him, and he was sent to a psychiatric ward in a mental home. The truth is, he got out of there as well. He was a determined guy—that was my dad. It cost about a thousand pounds to fix the Mercedes, so it was a very expensive brick. It was around this time, that I went to visit him and he looked at me and said “who are you, I’ve never seen you before?”. It was difficult to sit there and hear that. But after a while of chatting, he was able to recognise me. I am reminded of what the scripture says, depart from me, I never knew you. (Matthew 7:21-23). *We need to make sure that we stay close to God?*

Then one day, during this crisis, I was at home, and the phone rang, it was Dad. He said: “Rob, I want you to come and see me.” I could not understand it. He was talking calmly and absolutely fine. Pat was at home, but Phil was out, and I said, “We had better get into the car and go to see Dad. So we rushed down to the home, went into his room and

he was sitting there. He was in his complete mind and perfectly sound. Considering what he had been through, I was amazed.

I sat in front of him held his hand and told him about the love of God. I told him how much Jesus loved him and what He had done for him. I shared with him the way to know Jesus. I asked him, “Do you want to know Jesus?” And he said, yes. I got so emotional that I couldn’t do it. I had to ask Pat to pray with him and lead him to the Lord which she did. I remember when we went, we had to get a nurse to unlock the door to let us out and my dad came down with us. “tell the nurse what just happened?” He responded, “I have just become a Christian.” He burst into tears. God had cut through all the confusion, aggression, and memory loss that comes with Alzheimer’s disease—all that mental illness. He gave my dad a window of sanity so that he could receive him. Amazing!

That’s the love of God, that’s what God does. If you have older parents or older friends who are going through these sort of things, don’t give up on them

because God is faithful to answer your prayers and God is well able to break through and touch even the biggest mountains and move them out of the way for His glory.

Surprising Revelations

Pat's mum suffered from shingles for many years. The shingle virus was in her head and under her eyes, and it was extremely painful. The only time she ever got relief was when she went to church. She was a Christian, and it was only when she went to church that she got rid of it. That might be the strangest thing to say, but that's what she used to say. She was very intelligent; she had a degree in Latin. And so, she could never understand why I couldn't read or write properly because she was at the other end of the spectrum.

I remember when Pat wrote a book about the school in India; she gave it to her mum to proofread it after she had already studied it quite a lot herself to make sure it was right. She gave it to me to read, and I found all the mistakes in it. Poor Pat's mum got quite upset about that. No, I couldn't say if the

spelling was wrong or anything, but as I read the book, I could see there was something wrong. They were amazed that they read this book and did not pick up the mistakes I did. Pat wrote it and read it, and her mum read it all the way through. They never saw the mistakes, yet, to their surprise, someone who could hardly read or write found the mistakes. This is a bit like when the scripture says that the Lord uses simple things and simple people. “But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong” (1 Corinthians 1:27).

Sometime later, Pat’s mum was diagnosed with cancer and eventually passed away. Ralph, Pats step-dad was always resistant to the gospel. All the time he lived with us, he was a very nice chap. He was hard working—he worked all his life on the farm. We would take him to church sometimes if he decided to come. Pat got him to read a couple of the gospels, and I would also share the gospel with him. I also remember when Pat chatted with him about Jesus one day, he said: “This time next week, I will make a decision about all the things that you’ve said

about this Jesus.” This was the sort of chap he was; when he made up his mind that he would do something—it was done. He was a smoker for most of his life and one day he said, “I’m going to stop smoking,” and he stopped smoking. That was it; he just did it.

He came back the following week as promised, stood in the hallway and said to us: “From now on, I don’t want to know anything or hear anything more about this Jesus or the Holy Spirit,” then, he walked away. It was unbelievable. In all my years sharing the gospel with people on the streets and knocking on doors, I have many people reject Jesus, the gospel or whatever, but I’ve never heard anybody say they reject the Holy Spirit.

Within about two weeks, Ralph died. The Scriptures are quite clear— if we die in our sins, our sins will separate us from God for eternity, (2Thessalonians 1:9). Everybody will get a chance to hear the gospel; they’ll hear the truth of what God has done on the cross through His Son Jesus Christ. Ralph had his chance, but we don’t know what happens at the

point of death, whether he changed his mind in his last moments. It's not for us to say. But even so, I was astounded by the words that came out of his mouth.

CHAPTER 10

Testimonies, Heartbreak, and Miracles

After we had been going to India for a few years; Sam started to open up and tell us some of the things that had gone on there, which were very powerful. He had quite a few churches and what he did was to go out on the streets in the villages and preach the gospel. If a young man got hold of the gospel, he would see if he was keen and if he was fully in love with the Lord. If so, he would take him into his own home, look after him, teach him and bring him up like his own son. When he was ready, he would finance him, build a church and set him up as the pastor.

He had one young man who had become a Christian while he still had leprosy. Leprosy is still common in India, although there are drugs which can be used to control it. But this young man had already lost some fingers, toes which are all the effects of leprosy. There are two types of leprosy—

dry leprosy, which is not contagious and wet leprosy. With wet leprosy, the person has to wrap himself or herself up in bandages, rags, and other things because everything just gets all wet and messy.

This young man had wet leprosy. It was contagious, yet, Sam still took him into his home, and they prayed for healing. When his faith grew, this man believed God for healing, and he was healed. Eventually, Sam set him up in a church, right out on the coast about sixty miles from where he lived. I remember him saying, "I am going to take you to my second son's church." He treated him like his son. He loved him so much. And so the following year, Sam took us to his church. It was not very far from the beach, and it was lovely. Because he had been healed from leprosy, he was praying for people to be healed; it was a very powerful church. All of the ladies were dressed in white, and we did our usual thing.

God Knows Everything

Pat shared something and Doris, an eighty-year-old who went to India with us several times shared from her script. Phil led the worship, and I preached on being committed to God while being single. I told them that I was divorced, but I committed myself to stay single for God the rest of my earthly life.

I also shared that God hates divorce, but He loves it when we make the right decision to follow Him and put Him first. After the meeting, very often, we would have our photograph taken with the pastor. On this particular occasion, I was on one side and Phil on the other with our arms on his shoulders, and Pat took a photo of us. When I walked away, I said to Phil and Pat; there's something wrong with that guy. I don't know what it is but in my spirit, I sense there is something wrong.

Sam had told us that when he brought some Americans to that church, because the pastor had had leprosy, they wouldn't go anywhere near him although he had been healed, and he was fine. He

looked a bit funny because of the fingers he had lost, but we didn't have any problems putting our arms around him. However, I definitely knew that there was something wrong.

The following year, we went back, and I can remember going to pastor Sam's home. Our first greeting was, "How's your second son getting on in his church?" Poor Sam, he sat down, I had never seen him upset. He started to cry, he put his head in his hands and started crying and then he said, "Brother, he didn't listen to your ministry." I said, "what do you mean Sam? What's happened? I can't understand what you're saying." He responded "I've got fifty churches; I can't go around to all the churches in a year because of the rainy season and the hot season. I can only visit a few."

He continued, "A few weeks after you left, some of the congregation came to me—they travelled from their church to come and see me here and told me what was going on." The pastor was having an affair with one of the women in the congregation and was divorcing his wife. Then he was going to

re-marry. Sam had to go there and remove him from the church. He was saying these things with tears. He was hurt that this man whom he had treated as his son had fallen into this kind of sin, and he kept saying: "He didn't listen to your ministry."

What I'm trying to say is that it's amazing what God can do with your testimony. God always knows what's going on, and I was there sharing about my life and about my commitment to the Lord in this area of being single for God. God used that to put His finger on a situation that He wasn't happy about and needed to be dealt with. But the sad thing for Sam was that he had to go and remove the pastor he called his second son from the authority of that church and set up a new pastor there. That broke his heart. As he explained to us, they had to do that for the sake of all the other churches because he knows that God hates divorce, and he couldn't let that go.

Whatever you go through, whatever you have committed to, God can use it. God can use it to break down barriers, God can use it to shine lights,

and God can use it to sort out situations that nobody knows about. That's the innocence and power of our testimonies. Even though it was sad for Sam, it still had to be dealt with.

The Well That Never Runs Dry

One thing that amazed us in India was how faithful and committed the Christians were despite the persecution. One of the things we were able to see was that persecution produces strong Christians. I'll give you a practical example: When Sam and his son went preaching in a new village, and people came to know the Lord, if there were a lot of Hindus, particularly radical Hindus. They would be ostracised by their families and cast out of the village. This happened, especially if they were baptised in the village as a public demonstration of the change in their lives.

Some of them only knew village life. In a situation like that, unless God steps in, in a very big way, they wouldn't survive. But when these

individuals—even the baby Christians trust God, He does turn up in those situations because He is willing to prove himself. That's why there are such powerful Christians. That's why they become strong Christians very quickly because they trust God in impossible situations. God turns up and draws them into his family.

Sam related an incident to us, which left us in awe. On the school field, they had a borehole, but they also had a well, which was about twenty feet deep. In the surrounding villages, their wells were about a hundred feet deep. One year, there was a severe drought and all the village wells dried up. But the church on the field prayed that their well would continue to provide water. Miraculously, it was emptied during the day while people were drawing water and at night; it would fill up to the top and overflow. So Sam opened up the gate and let all the villagers come in, take the water and empty the well, then overnight it would fill up again.

Only God could have done that. There is no other explanation; there was absolutely no other answer

for it at all. You see these things happening in India because of the faith of the Christians, their prayers and their belief in God's Word. It was such a powerful testimony to their neighbours and to the Hindus. They had firsthand experience of what the true and living God can do. In India, you can't turn a corner without seeing a different god because there are thousands and thousands of them—snake gods, cow gods, animal gods, all sorts of gods. Everything is a god for the Hindus. But the Christians preach Jesus Christ, the true and living God and that's what makes a difference.

Little is Much With God

When Peter was diagnosed with cancer, he talked to Pat. He had a flat, and he said to Pat, "Well, if I'm going to go with the Lord, I want you to sell the flat, and I want half of the money to go to my wife and the other half to build a school in India. Peter went to be with the Lord, and his wishes were granted—the money was just over twenty thousand pounds. However, when Pat returned to India to dedicate it

the following year, there was no money to run it. So we did a lot of fundraising and got a lot of support from the church. Sourcing the funds to support the school is still a big part of our lives. The Gospel Tabernacle is only a small church with a maximum of fifty people including children. Yet, for the last ten years (we may have failed a couple of times), we've always managed to send fifteen hundred pounds every month for that school. The church also has outreaches in Pakistan, Uganda, Romania and other places as well. God can do wonders with little just as He did with the little boy's lunch (Matthew 14: 13-21). He can multiply the little we give with a willing heart and make it great. We are confident that every penny we send to India goes to help the children; they now have a hostel there to help the many orphans in India.

One year we went there, and the hostel was full. There were riots in one of the states bordering Andhra Pradesh, and about two hundred Christians were murdered leaving many children orphaned. There were about twenty, of them in the school. Some of them lost both parents, and some lost one.

The love of God is about picking up the pieces after violence and trying to restore love and stability to the lives of these children who have been through so much. Our finances go to help ensure that this happens. We can do much, but not without prayer. They need our finances to continue the school. When I go there, I often talk about my background, not being able to read and write at eleven years old, and how education made such a big difference to my life. I encourage the parents to keep their children in the school and give them the opportunity to learn. They are bright enough; they are well able to learn and to learn English as well. Our goal for the children there is to give them the best start they can have in life.

CHAPTER 11

Acts of Honesty

What is honesty? Honesty for me was not necessarily a mountain that I had to conquer. Before I became a Christian, I was a reasonably honest person, and so honesty to me was having to come down the other side after being on the mountain. It's not the same for all of us; it depends on what you were like before you were saved. The truth is, you have to be honest with yourself and with God to become a Christian. It is God who looks at our hearts, and He sees whether we mean what we say. He knows when we say sorry to Him, our friends or whoever, whether we are sincere or not.

"Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds" (Colossians 3:9). If we hold back a little bit of truth knowingly, then we are turning the truth into a lie because we haven't told the whole truth—God wants us to be truthful with

one another and with Him. The truth and honesty can shock people—we can even shock ourselves.

A Costly Pencil

While I was at the Royal Ordnance factory working, you had to be careful with what you were doing because of the nature of the job. We were trained to do things the right way in emergencies, not only for our own safety but for everybody else's as well. I was working with one particular process dealing with acids, and I took a lid off of a particular piece of apparatus to look in to see how it was going. At the same time, we used to have a little bag around our necks in which we would carry perhaps a little bit of change and a few other bits and pieces. You had to be careful what you put in there. I kept my pencil in there because all the processes had to be written and logged with the times, the actions and the results.

As I took the pencil out of my bag, it slipped out of my fingers and fell into the machinery. Now wood doesn't go very well with the materials we were using, so immediately I took action. I pulled the

handle and “drowned the charge.” In other words, it made the whole process safe because the contaminant (the pencil) could cause a fire and subsequent explosion. That little mistake of mine probably cost the company about £10,000 because of the wasted batch, the work required to take the machine apart to find my pencil and all the work that had already gone into the process—all that was wasted. A week later, they enquired to find out exactly what had happened, and I had to go to the office to see the principal foreman and explain myself. Naturally, I thought I was going to lose my job.

I went in, and he said: “I want you to explain to me what went wrong and what action you took.” I told him exactly what happened. I left the lid off the top of this process, and my pencil slipped out of my hand and dropped in. I “drowned the charge” to make it safe. The first thing he said was: “Bob I want to thank you.” I sort of sunk back into my seat and thought, “That’s not really what I was expecting.” I want to thank you because, first of all, you did the right thing, you “drowned the charge” and made

the whole thing safe.” He continued, “sadly, there are people in this factory who would make a mistake and wouldn’t take the action you took. They endanger not only their own lives but other people’s lives as well. So I want to commend you, you did the right thing.”

Of course, he went on to tell me I was silly to have left the lid off and to make sure I did not make the same mistake again. I did get my telling off, but the initial response was a shock to me—that’s what honesty does! I was honest, I did the right thing, I didn’t try to cover anything up, and I was shocked at the reaction I got. When we are honest, we don’t always get praised for it. In fact, in some cases, you get the exact opposite. However, there are a lot of people who don’t want you to be honest. They prefer if you cover things up. Perhaps, we have all learnt that if we cover things up, they have a nasty habit of exposing themselves later on.

Philippians 4:8 says: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever

things are lovely, whatever things are good, of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praise worthy, meditate on these things. A person who is being honest can meditate on these things. Conversely, a dishonest person will not want to. Honesty gives us great benefits. Eventually, people will know if you are honest or not.

The Damaged Caravan

I left the Royal Ordinance factory, and I went to work with a long-time friend whom I knew for many years in the building industry. I went straight back into the building trade doing bricklaying, plastering, and concrete work. We were building a new workshop at a large caravan retailer at Highbridge, and there were at least five hundred caravans with quite a few new ones. They had a big turnover in new caravans. Some of the latest top of the range, double wheel ones cost around £15,000. I worked there for several years and got to know everybody. We had an old dumper truck that was used to move our materials around, and I remember

one day, I went up to the dispatch area where all the new caravans were ready to be picked up by the customers. They had been down to the workshop and checked over.

I drove into the compound, but for some reason, I got a bit too close to one of the caravans, and I just touched it by the door and made a little dent. So I backed out and looked at it. I went straight around the corner into the office and the lady who dispatches caravans was there. She sat at her desk, and I said: "I'm sorry; I damaged one of the caravans in the compound." She said: "What? I don't believe it." I said again: "I'm sorry." This time, she responded: "I don't believe it, I've worked here for over ten years, and caravans have been damaged all the time. You're the first person to come in here and own up." I took her out, and she looked at it, then she looked at the ticket that was stuck on the side, and she said: "Look at that, they're not coming to pick this up for another two days. I've got time to get this down to the workshop, get it repaired and get it back, I want to thank you very much."

I walked away from that incident thinking: "Wow!" She was really shocked because I'd been honest, and I was a bit amazed that nobody had owned up to damaging the vans over a period of ten years. These caravans get damaged easily. I met her about ten years after that, and she remembered the incident. Our honesty can shock people and leave an impact on their lives. But there is one person we can't shock—that's God.

Distracted by a Lorry

I was going into Bridgwater, along Bath road. There was a lot of traffic, and I wasn't driving very fast. A lorry was turning left in front of me, I stopped and flashed my lights. The lorry pulled across and went up the side road. I pulled away again after the lorry had gone. Suddenly, I noticed that there was a young lady with a pushchair coming out from the right-hand side. I had driven across a zebra crossing, I never even noticed her because I kept my eye on the lorry turning to my left and drove away. I stopped immediately, but I was exactly on a

pedestrian crossing. I put my hand up and said that I was sorry. There was no point of me staying there, so I drove off slowly because I was right in her way.

I only went a few yards and stopped at a roundabout, as I looked in my mirror, I saw a police car right behind me, and I thought "oh no, oh dear." I drove about a quarter of a mile to a builders' merchant and pulled in there. The policeman parked right behind me. I lowered my window; he leaned over and asked: "Do you have any idea why I have been following you?" I said: "Yes, I pulled across a crossing in front a lady with a pushchair because I was distracted by the lorry that I let turn left in front of me. I did say sorry to her, but I realised there was no point in me staying there, so I drove off again." With that, he stood up, put his hands on his hips and said: "Thank you for being honest." After that, he warned me to be more diligent next time and said that he wasn't going to book me for the incident and again thanked me for being so honest.

The sad thing about that whole conversation was that he certainly was not expecting me to apologise; he was more or less expecting me to have a row with him. He was so shocked that I simply apologised. As a police officer, he was obviously not used to people reacting like that.

As Christians, that's how we should react. We should meditate on anything that is praiseworthy. I've often thought about that and the other situations, and I realise that being honest makes you feel good because it touches people, and they can see there are still honest people out there.

Making a Young Lady's Day

The next act of honesty I want to talk about really made this lady's day. Phil and I were in Bridgwater to go into Trend. Parking there can be quite awkward. I was driving an old Peugeot that was a bit beaten up and had plenty of scratches on it because I used it as a builder's van. I was turning around to reverse, and suddenly, I heard a horn

blow. I stopped immediately. As I was reversing, the driver of the car was trying to go past, and I caught the side of her door. I jumped out quickly and told the young lady that I was sorry. We talked a little bit, and I suggested that we move the vehicles out of the way, and then I'll come and have a look.

She pulled over, when I checked I realised there was hardly anything wrong with it. It was not worth getting the insurance company involved. She said that she had just passed her test and did not want to go to the insurance company either.

In addition to being a builder, I also repair cars and spray bits and pieces, and things like that. So, I offered to purchase the items needed to do the work and come back. She agreed. Of course, I am certain that if she told her workmate what had happened, they would have asked her if she got my personal details. It was a risk she took. So when I did turn up as promised, she was surprised.

There, I was standing in front of her. I held up the bag and opened it up—she was speechless. I said:

Here's the sponge, wash it off and then rub it with this t-cut and wash that off. Then, touch it with this paint and in a few days, rub it with the t-cut again wash it off, and polish it and it will be fine." She said: "Oh well, ok, right thanks." She didn't know what to say because I think her mind was made up that she would never see me again.

As Christians, when we say we are going to do something, we need to make sure we carry it through and keep our word. There is a scripture that backs that up, Matthew 5:37: "But let your yes be yes, and your no be no, for whatever is more than these things is from the evil one." If you agree to do something, make sure that you do it. Honesty comes from your heart, and when you want to please God, one of the ways you can do so is through your actions.

Actions Speak Louder

As Christians, we can influence those around us, not only our neighbours and people in the church but

particularly, the people we work with because they know us quite well. When I was working at the factory, Phil and I became Christians around the same time. Everybody knew what we stood for and took a Mickey out of us quite a lot. I remember one particular incident, I was working on quite a big building, and the material that we made went over the mound. All the buildings had big mounds around them so that if they ever blew up everything wouldn't go up in the air.

We had a system especially at break time when people went down to the canteen that we would check on each other because you couldn't completely leave it on its own— there were always people around. They would come and check on us, and we would go over and check on them. One night, I wandered over to see if everything was okay. When I walked in they had all gone off to the canteen and left some of the machinery running; the material was in a place where it shouldn't have been. It was spilling out all over the place. So I shut everything all down, made it safe, and then called

the canteen and told Jack, who was in charge of the process to come back quickly to sort it out.

If anyone at the management level had seen the mess that night, everyone on that shift would probably have been sacked. This happened on the last night shift and on the following shift; he came to me and said: "I can't understand what happened the other night, "Nobody knows about it." If anybody made a mistake, everybody would take the Mickey out of you But, I said nothing. I didn't want to get him in any trouble, and I didn't want people to take the Mickey out of him. He kept saying that he couldn't understand it, but nobody knew because I did not tell anyone. As a result, he asked me for a Bible, which I gave him. That's just another side of being honest and being good to people. As Christians, we should do things that other people do not expect. Had that been anybody else they would have just blurted it out to everybody.

CONCLUSION

This book is a testimony, my testimony, and it's all about overcoming mountains with God's help. My experiences have taught me that the mountains that come into our lives may seem big and impossible to handle. We may not understand what is happening, and we may feel like we will crumble under the weight of the problems we face. But God understands the things that seem so difficult to us. He can make it easy. We get our strength to move forward and keep going in the right direction by knowing that God is there, and He wants to help us to overcome every mountain that we face. Sometimes, we make our situations a lot bigger than what they are. For example, the issue with Harry took about three years to be resolved. I'm pretty sure that if I had been more open and softer before God, it would not have taken three years. Some things can go on for a long time, but others can be dealt with quickly.

As I grow in my relationship with God, I tend to get through issues a lot quicker because I have learned

from my experiences. One of the things I've learnt is that God's Word is faithful. He says that He will never leave us or forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5) I've learnt to believe that the hard way. But now that I believe it, and I know it to be absolutely true, I can face the next mountain. When you see pictures of mountains, like the ones on the front of this book, there are always other mountains behind them. It takes a long time before you can get to flat ground. We always have things to learn, and we always have mountains to trust God with. But with God holding our hands and with our experience, we can overcome. God is so faithful that we can trust Him knowing full well that He's going to get us to where we need to be, where He wants us to be. This is the process, and I believe it goes on for the rest of our earthly lives.

In His Word, God gives us many examples of men of faith. There is a list of them in the book of Hebrews. Included in that list are mighty men who trusted God without actually knowing what was ahead. But they had a relationship with Him, and that took them through many difficulties. God was

faithful to them, and He will be faithful to us. Reading the scriptures is very important; it encourages us in every situation we find ourselves in. It gives us strength and hope for tomorrow. None of us knows what tomorrow holds, but God does. Therefore, we can face the uncertainty of tomorrow with the confidence that God is there fighting for us. When you find God is prompting you to do something that you never thought you could do, He will give you everything you need to get it done. He will put people around you and alongside you to help you. He will encourage you with His Word and with His Spirit because He wants to see you conquer every mountain in your life, to grow and become more like Him.

When I think of the start I had in life, not knowing how to read and write at 11 years old, but being determined to learn to read by the time I left school, it makes a tremendous difference. Being determined can turn negatives into positives. We are encouraged by the Scriptures to be positive people even when everything seems to be against us (Psalm 46:1-3). We all go through tough times and difficult

seasons. I have been through a divorce, and I have had people very close to me pass away, but God has always been there. Human beings, even Christians can let you down, but God will never let you down.

One thing I have discovered about God's Word is that it is full of instructions. Instructions, which are difficult sometimes, but when you follow them, you know you are on the right path. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says "Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character." Therefore, we must be careful who we develop close relationships with. We must closely examine their lifestyles—see how they live their lives. Then ask yourself, "Is that the sort of influence that I want in my life?" If the answer is no, then you need to step away, you need to find friends who have the same heart as you. If you want to go on with God, then make friends with people who are going on with God because they will encourage you to move forward even in tough times.

In reality, when the going gets tough, you need people around you to hold your hand spiritually to pray for you. And when they say they are going to pray for you, they do pray for you. That makes a difference! We all need a helping hand sometimes. We can't stand totally on our own; we need our

brothers and sisters around us. But we also need God's wisdom and discernment. In summary, choose your close friends wisely so that you can rely on them when you are in need. Similarly, they should be able to depend on you—Friendship always goes two ways. That means together you grow.

You will find that, you will have those around you who can help you. With each trial you go through you will learn to trust in God. God has taught me more through the difficult times in my life than through the good times. We cannot overcome mountains of life successfully without God and with each trial and triumph, you will learn to trust God even more.

One evening at home, my son brought Holly my thirteen-year-old granddaughter to visit us. I had asked my son, to fix an issue with the computer as I was coming to the last chapter of this book. The computer would not respond. Holly got very excited when she heard that her granddad was writing a book. "Am I in it?" she asked. I said, "No you're not". She said, "I want to be in the book". I was looking at the screen, and Holly stood behind

me, when she suddenly said, "I want to do an interview with you". I turned around, and she was holding her phone up and video recording me. She asked, "What inspired you to write the book?" I then realised she was going live on Facebook and I had to answer.

1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

As the scripture above says, this is at a time when, whatever comes out of your mouth needs to come from your heart. If the right stuff is not in your heart, it will be very difficult to make up something that sounds like real truth just in an instant. This is why we always need to be ready. The truth must be in your heart for it to come out through your mouth at short notice.

2 Timothy 4:2

*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season.
Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and
teaching.*

This scripture talks about being ready in season and out of season. It means, be ready at any time. Although this is talking about preaching the Word, a testimony that comes from the heart that knows God has brought you through, the tough things of life. A testimony of life experiences is preaching the Word in a very powerful way because, when it is real to you, it will come across to those that listen as truth. Put yourself in the position I was in, with a live camera pushed in my face. Are you ready for that? Once you start to witness for Christ, the reality is you could face that situation tomorrow.

About The Author

The author was born into a low-income family in the back room of a council house in a small town in Somerset. It was not until years later that he realised he had a family.

Growing up, he struggled with dyslexia and could barely read or write until he was 16 years old. Without modern technologies and computers, this book could not have been written.

Looking back, Bob can see God's hand in his life from an early age. At 13 he heard God's voice which said, "I will use you as a witness in the world". It wasn't until 20 years later, that that word came to life. On his baptismal day, as he came out of the water, God spoke that word back into his mind. With that word, Bob witnessed to everyone he met at work, friends, family, street evangelism and knocking on doors.

In the last few years, Bob has been involved with the local church. He has also helped with Christian missions abroad in India. God uses him in the gifts of healing, prophecy and evangelism with signs and wonders following.

Bob is a father of two and is also a grandfather. He lives in Somerset.