A PUBLICATION FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN

BUT GOD



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BUT GOD

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W W W . B U T G O D M A G A Z I N E . C O M

Editor's Note

BUT GOD MAGAZINE

To walk with God isn't a "walk at the park" but surely the very best walk one can choose for itself.

"'Cause all my life You have been faithful And all my life You have been so, so good With every breath that I am able Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God"

I could've written these lyrics that now we sing and worship and are reminded that we could all go else where BUT GOD in his infinite mercy sent Jesus so that we could have a choice. My prayer is that like me, you'd choose to walk with Jesus



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Mailing address: 1632 Aviation Blvd. Redondo Beach, CA 90278 Happy New Year!
The But God Magazine is happy to celebrate its first Anniverary Edition.

But God Magazine O2

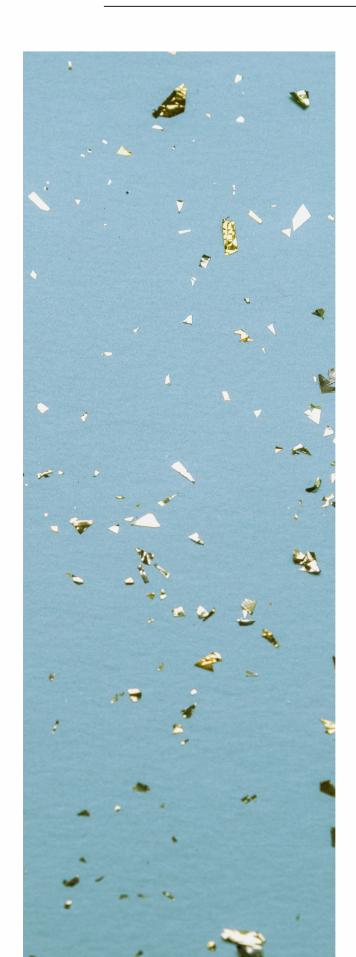


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What's But God" for you in one word?

ENCOURAGING

ENDLESS LOVE

GOD'S GRACE

EDIFICATION

TRUST

FOLLOW US FOR MORE

@BUTGODMAGAZINE

A MESSAGE TO OUR READERS

Dear But God Magazine Readers,

As we pen down this message, our hearts are filled with gratitude and joy as we reflect on the incredible journey of the past year. It's hard to believe that it has already been a year since we embarked on this inspiring adventure with you, our cherished readers. Today, we come together to express our deepest appreciation for your unwavering support and enthusiasm that have fueled the success of But God Magazine.

When we launched But God Magazine a year ago, our vision was clear—to create a platform that not only explores the extraordinary stories of faith, resilience, and triumph but also serves as a source of inspiration and solace for our readers.

In celebrating this milestone, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you who have been a part of this incredible journey. Whether you joined us from day one or discovered us along the way, your presence has been the driving force behind the success of But God Magazine.

But God Magazine is a space where stories of hope, faith, and divine intervention converge to encourage Christian women.

Together, we have witnessed the incredible power of faith to overcome adversity and the transformative impact of "But God" moments. Your engagement, feedback, and shared stories have enriched this platform and made it a true reflection of our collective journey.

As we look back on the past year, we are reminded of the countless moments of inspiration and the stories that touched our hearts. We have grown together, learned from one another, and created a space that goes beyond a magazine—it's a testament to the strength of our shared faith and the beauty of our shared humanity.

In the coming year, we are excited to continue this journey with you, bringing you even more compelling stories, thought-provoking content, and a renewed commitment to being a source of inspiration and encouragement in your lives.

Thank you for being a vital part of But God Magazine's first year. Your support has been our greatest reward, and we are truly blessed to have you as part of our community.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Amanda Menezes, Duda Nicolodi & Thais Eliasen

But God Magazine Editorial Team

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"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

Hebrews 10:22

Many years ago, I took a trip to Florida with my daughter and her best friend. We were heading to a beautiful beach. I was adamant about leaving on time, rushing to the park and then briskly walking to take the trolley that would drop us off at the beachfront. My daughter's friend had a pace of her own and mentioned how fast I walked, and how she couldn't keep up with my fast pace everywhere we went. I just thought to myself, "This girl is so slow." I had a moment later where I realized that she was not slow, but I was the one who was rushing everywhere we went. The fast-paced habit I was used to, prevented me from taking in the beauty around me and quality conversations because I was so fixed on getting to our destination. I had left them behind as I briskly walked before them.

In a microwave society, everyone is looking for a faster and quicker result. Instant everything at your fingertips. There's a rush in traffic, and the stores are filled with the hustle and bustle of people trying to get in and out. The need for easier and quicker results is so evident if you take the time to observe it.

I concluded that I was one of them.

Taking the Time

What happens when we walk with someone? Imagine you and your closest friend enjoying a walk down the beach strand. You are in proximity. You talk, laugh, listen, and share your heart. Your attention is focused on this person to the exclusion of almost everything else. You notice the beauty around you, you share it together. You are in harmony, and you both enjoy the company and surroundings.

Walking with God is like that. When we enter an intimate heart relationship with God through faith in His Son, He becomes our heart's greatest desire.

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"And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?"

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

Knowing Him, hearing His voice, and seeking to please Him becomes our all-consuming focus. He becomes everything to us. Being in His presence is not reserved for just Sunday morning. We live to be in His presence and to fellowship with Him. Slowing our pace to walk with the Father is so important. This is not a quick "Hello God" and then we go about our day. Intentionality is needed and nothing can take the place of our quiet time with the Lord.

If we truly love our friends, our full attention is on them. Likewise, if we truly love the Lord, walking with Him requires letting go of anything that would be a distraction.

Walking with God

If you were on a walk with a friend but you were on your phone the whole time, the walk would not be satisfying for either of you. Many people attempt to walk with God, but they bring along habits, worldly entertainments, distractions, or unhealthy relationships. They know these things are not God's choice for them, but in their eyes everything is fine. To walk with God means that you and God are in agreement about your life.

"Do two walk together, unless they have agreed to meet?" Amos 3:3

To walk with God means you have aligned your will with His and seek every day to consider yourself "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20). You don't have to be perfect, as none of us are (Romans 3:10). But your heart's desire is to be pleasing to God, and you are willing to let His Spirit conform you to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29).

The more we are in communion with God, the more we are aware of our sinful nature. He purifies us as we choose to submit to the Holy Spirit.

The apostle Paul wrote, "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." <u>Galatians 5:16</u>

He also encouraged the believers at Colosse: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk with Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving." Colossians 2:6-7

So do not rush through life. Walk with Him in this beautiful life He has called you to. Set apart, in harmony with our heavenly father. Pausing to hear Him speak, through His living word that still speaks today. In our time of prayer we learn to listen to His voice as He leads and directs our path.

Born and raised in Southern California, Roxanne Vargas is married to the love of her life for 32 years, mom of two, and grandmother of two boys. Roxanne & her husband Eddie have been pastoring for 20 years. They pioneered a church in 2002 that quickly grew as God began to pour out His spirit in such a beautiful way. Today they continue to serve the body of Christ as lead pastors of Restoration Life Church in Lawndale, CA. A thriving family church that continues to reach the local community and the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.







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There are so many reasons to make your book a priority in 2024, but I know it's easier said than done.

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"ABANDON WHAT DOES NOT SERVE YOU."
I HEARD IT LOUD AND CLEAR. THERE
WAS NO MISTAKE. IT WAS GOD.

He was commanding me to stop thinking about anything and everything that was keeping me from honoring my mother. He's telling me to let go of old resentments and forgive her. He is commanding me to cherish the moments I have with her.



s I walk in, I call out loudly, to my mom, "Hola Mami." She looks at me with a blank stare. I'm hoping for a smile, but she greets me with a hazy look and a horizontal line across her lips, like the one on a stick figure that represents a mouth.

What I really wanted was for the line to curve up at the ends, but I guess God forgot to tell her.

This makes me a bit annoyed because the truth is that it makes me sad and hurts that she's not showing me that she's happy to see me.

My body starts to tense up. I prayed from my house to her house, asking to be blessed with patience and grace so I am kind, patient, and most importantly calm with her.

I love her more than anyone in the world, all that I am for better or worse is because of her. I knew where she was every day of my life. The foundation and stability she gave me brought me comfort and security. The same comfort and security we get when we walk with our heavenly Father.

A Mother's Strength

She did the best she could to give my siblings and me the best opportunity for a better life. I'm the last of six, and I was three years old when my dad died. I don't have kids, so I can't imagine what it would take to raise one, let alone six by myself.

Up until I was in kindergarten, she worked the overnight shift so she could be there for us when we got home from school. Once the older kids were able to take care of us, she switched to a regular day shift.

Our mom was a strong woman with a muscular body from hard manual labor. She worked on her feet, eight hours a day, in steel-toed shoes that weighed three and a half pounds each. Her hands were dry and tough with stained misshapen nails from the chemicals she had to use. Even at seventy-three when she finally retired after twenty-five years, she still had so much muscle mass and



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definition that you could see it as she moved about in the kitchen and the garden.

She's strong willed, stubborn and can sometimes expect us to be mind readers, which drives me crazy. Attributes like these can be good and bad, depending on the personality of the individual. My mom is like Eeyore from Winnie the Pooh, a "glass is half empty" type of girl.

LIFE HABITS

Before I read anything about health and nutrition, I knew about it because of what we ate and how she cooked. My eating habits all come mostly from her. Her example showed us that if we wanted to be healthy, we had to eat properly.

My mom always had homemade meals; they were more affordable and healthier. Our diet consisted of vegetables, beans, lentils, lean proteins, eggs, whole milk, and lots of fruit.

If we ever complained about what she made, she would say, "I'm not giving you this because you like it, I'm giving it to you because it's good for you." The tone was everything, and hers was "I'm annoyed and tired, now eat and be quiet." Although she never said that.

As a kid, I hated it when she said that to me. Now whenever she tells me she doesn't want to eat something I'm giving her, I want to bite back the same way she did. Unfortunately, sometimes I do, then I remember I'm supposed to be compassionate like Jesus.

Wait, what, "honor who?"

Honoring Him

We're supposed to honor our mother and father, but sometimes I catch myself not walking with the Lord, not following his commandments, but instead fighting with Him.

I don't need to explain the value of nutrition to her. Before her health started to deteriorate, she had the best eating habits and drank lots of water. Now getting her to drink water is a struggle. It's in these moments that I know I need God, if I fall out of step with him, I get in trouble. If I walk oo fast or too slow, I lose my patience, then my temper, and then it all goes down the toilet.

I pray daily that God grants me patience and kindness so I can be a good daughter. In the Ten Commandments, we are told that we are to honor our mother and father, but honestly, it can be a challenge.

"Mami." I say in Spanish, "You have to drink water, please, so you don't dehydrate." She shakes her head "No." I take a deep breath, "Ma, you're going to dehydrate, and we'll have to take you to the doctor." She ignores me. "Is that what you want?" I want her to feel my frustration.

Her muscular legs and arms have turned into flaccid skin that hangs on bone. What's left of the core is now too soft and weak to get her off the couch sometimes. During a visit to Urgent Care, the doctor said she was dehydrated and malnourished and that's why she was feeling that way.

Most of what ails my mom is depression. She's eighty-six, lives by herself, is almost deaf, and feels isolated, lonely, and probably scared. So I know better and should be loving, kind, and caring.

I don't understand what it feels like to suffer from depression, but according to the National Council On Aging, almost 15% of seniors who live at home and need some form of care, suffer from depression. The pressure starts to build in my head. "Lord, please help me, please be with me," I plead.

So, what does it take to walk with God?

Is it humility, obedience, faith, love, or trust? I finally concluded that these are all part of my journey with the Lord.

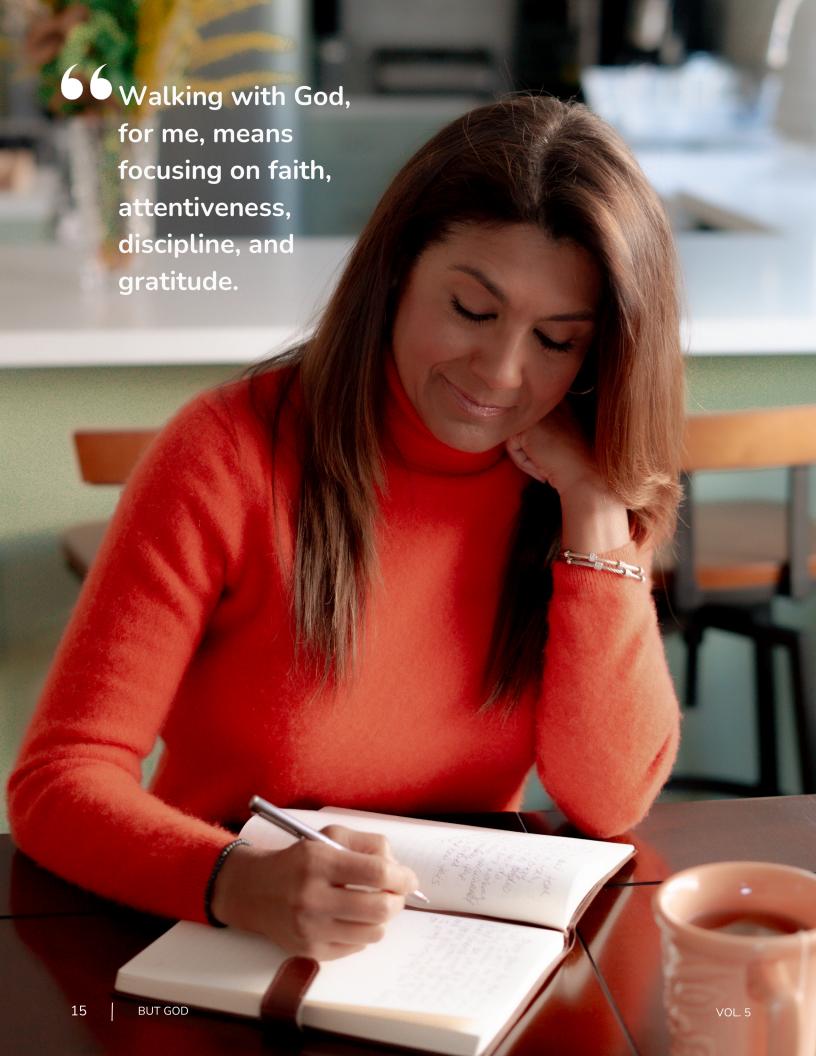
Watching my mom's mental and physical health deteriorate and having to work through it with my siblings means that now more than ever, I need to be clear about what it takes for me to make God a priority, because if I make Him a priority, my priority will take care of everything else.

Walking with God, for me, means focusing on faith, attentiveness, discipline, and gratitude. It isn't always easy to be in step with Him. Surrendering to his will is difficult for many of us. It is for me because I'm a doer.

What about you? Are you a doer too?

Sometimes our ego gets in the way. It rears its loud, ugly face and drowns out the small quiet voice speaking to us.

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As I take this journey, I need to have **faith** and remember that He will never give me more than I can handle and that it will work out, even if I don't see how.

I must be **attentive** so that I can hear and see the messages and signs He gives me.

I must be **disciplined** in making Him a priority by cultivating a daily relationship with Him through prayer, conversation, and listening.

Finally, I need to be **grateful** for the opportunity to learn and grow through the experiences and challenges He gives me.

ABANDONING WHAT DOESN'T SERVE YOU

I was in the shower the other day, and you know how it is, we start thinking about all the tasks and projects that need to get done, and all deadlines that need to be met. As we go through the lists, the stress starts building, right? How is everything going to get done on time while scheduling regular visits to help with my mom's care?

As I thought about this, I began getting frustrated with her. Sometimes I don't feel like she's trying to get well, her "half empty" mindset is locked on "I'm sick," instead of focusing on "getting healthy."

I was feeling that way selfishly, because I wanted to get back to my normal life, with all my deadlines, commitments, and projects.

What I was thinking about was "me" not her. Not what God wanted me to focus on. Resentment was welling up in my heart. When we were kids, mom was always too busy cooking, cleaning, laundering, gardening, whatever it was, but always too busy to sit and play with us, to talk with us, or read to us. If we wanted to spend time with her, we had to be where she was, doing what she was doing. It was always on her terms.

Now as adults, my sisters and I are exactly like her. When we are with her, we are cooking, washing dishes, sweeping, mopping, and trying to get her to eat. Now, she expects us to just sit and watch whatever she's watching. There's little conversation unless I initiate it and since she's hard of hearing, she misses half of what I say, but again on her terms.

If I get on my phone or use my computer to catch up on

work, she gets annoyed with me. She doesn't remember that "just sitting" isn't in our DNA.

As I think about all these things, the frustration and anger get more palpable, but God decides to step in.

I'm hunched over in the shower, with one leg on the bench, shaving my leg, when suddenly I hear a voice, "Abandon what does not serve you." I hear it loud and clear. There was no mistake. It was God.

He was commanding me to stop thinking about anything and everything that was keeping me from honoring my mother. He's telling me to let go of old resentments and forgive her. He is commanding me to cherish the moments I have with her.

The voice in the shower was loud, but what about when the Lord speaks to us in a still small quiet voice? What about when he uses images and signs? If we aren't attentive, we may miss these.

Through discipline, we learn how to quiet our minds and how to settle our flesh so we can yield to the Lord.

Until recently, she was extremely healthy. She was still cooking chicken machaca, lentils, beans, potato tacos, chicken soup, and the usuals.

She was sweeping her driveway, cleaning, and doing laundry. Now I'm experiencing something that I'm not prepared for and feeling like God isn't always with me. Where is He?

"Mami, do you want to go outside so we can get some fresh air?" She shakes her head no and says, "I don't have any energy." She's tired, and either too cold or too hot. In my head, I'm screaming, "Of course you are, you barely eat and drink, how else do you expect to feel?"

Without thinking about it, I raise my voice, "That is why you must eat and drink water, so you have energy. You need sunshine, you need vitamin D," I say in staccato. She doesn't even look at me and my frustration flips to anger.

It's almost as though she's giving up and waiting to die. On her last doctor's visit, all her vitals and organ functions turned out to be in excellent condition. The doctor said my mom is suffering mainly from depression. We were afraid of that, now it was fully diagnosed.

She's almost deaf but refuses to wear her hearing aids, her balance is off and her vision isn't great either. She can only

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see out of the right side of each eye.

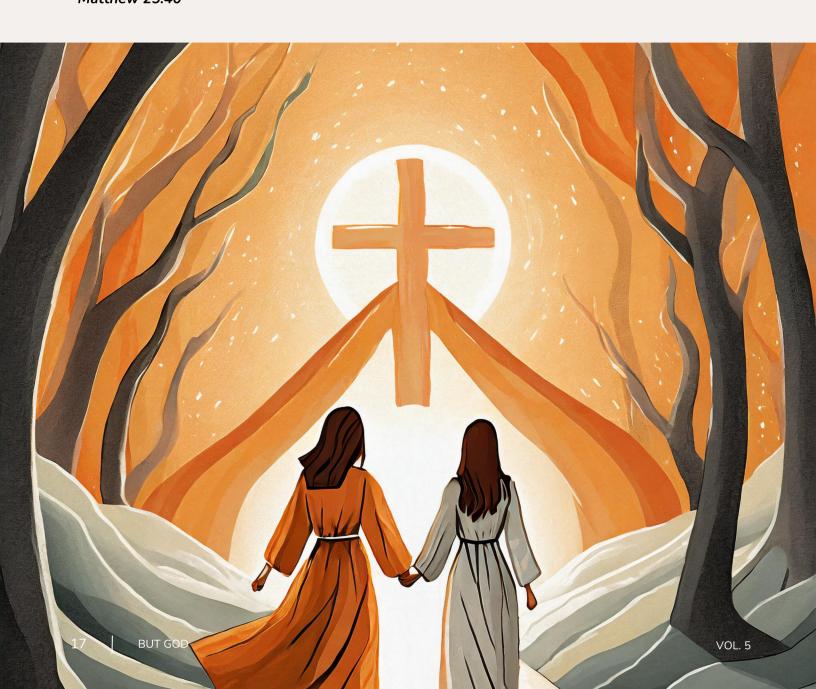
My mom was a woman, who never sat down. She sat to eat and sew. If we had company she would sit, but otherwise, she was always moving. The only time she watched TV was when she was at her sewing machine working on a dress.

I know she feels isolated, alone, and useless. When I try to tell her that the glass is really half full, she gets frustrated and asks me why I always have to contradict her.

Walking with the Lord isn't easy. He never said it would be. It takes faith, attentiveness, discipline, and gratitude. Maintaining this relationship, requires daily nurturing and devotion, just like the relationship with my mom.

As my mom's health goes through ups and downs, I must make her a priority, because making her a priority is making Him a priority too. The Lord commands me to honor her in whatever state she is in. I love her more than I can express. So that is what I will do.

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40



And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep His commandments.

DEUTERONOMY 10:12-13

By Glenia Alexandre

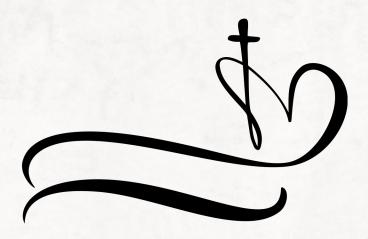
The Blessing of Growing Up in a Christian Home

t is with profound gratitude and a deep sense of privilege that I reflect upon the remarkable blessing bestowed upon me— the privilege of growing up in a

Christian home. In this sacred haven, I was nurtured before great examples of godliness. I was baptized when I was eight years old, and by that age I already knew the importance of making the right choices, to always strive to be pure and a Christ-like child. I went to church every week to pray, study the scriptures, share my testimony, and sing Hymns and songs. Monthly activities presented me with opportunities to serve our community, partaking in endeavors such as distributing food to the less fortunate, going to elderly homes to sing for them, and doing their nails and their laundry. Recollections of visiting orphanages and delivering toys to those with significantly less than I had, remained carved in my heart. Serving others filled my heart with love and happiness and I always wanted to make sure my Heavenly Father would be proud of me. This is the least I could do since I knew that God loved me so much that He allowed His only son, Jesus Christ, to die for me so I could have a happy and eternal life; so I've always had the desire to honor Him. Life seemed pretty easy to live, and every day was all about excitement and fun. Unbeknownst to me, this seemingly untroubled life served as God's way of laying the foundation for the challenges and responsibilities that awaited me in adulthood.

Growing in Faith

Now here I was, going to college and getting ready to live my own life; and having to make my own choices without my spiritual mentors, like my mother and my grandfather. Now I needed my own personal assurance that the Holy Ghost would really guide and inspire my daily acts. Thankfully, I knew how to pray and so it was through prayer that I gained confidence and faith and I knew I would be able to climb the highest mountains and cross the roughest seas. I am grateful for all of the challenges in life and all the dark moments I experienced, because it was during those times that I felt my Heavenly Father closer to me and He was carrying me through moments when my strength faltered. It was during the difficult times that I learned to say the most sincere prayers, and it was also during those times I chose to listen to the Holy Spirit, I chose to listen to my mother and grandfather's wisest advice to never lose hope, have faith, and whenever in doubt to ask myself, "What would God want me to do?" I chose to allow life's challenges to make



me a stronger woman, and strengthen my faith to help me keep going.

Thus, the blessing of growing up in a Christian home became a treasured foundation, shaping my life guided by principles and dignity. Despite the inevitable struggles, life has presented me with opportunities to learn how to navigate its course with serenity. I am forever grateful for all of the great Christ-like examples in my life, and most importantly I am grateful for my Heavenly Father. It is because of Him that I have been able to accomplish so much in life, that we have a successful business in helping others achieve their dreams, I married an amazing man who loves and takes care of our family, I have the most beautiful child. Everything that I have and am today is a testament to God's enduring love for me.

I know that God lives and it is my testimony that when we allow Him to be in our lives and guide us, we need not to fear, we will find peace, and He will never let us down.



@GLENIA.ALEXANDRE COO OF ALEXANDRE LAW FIRM

Glenia Alexandre serves as the Chief Operating Officer of Alexandre Law Firm, a leading immigration law office operating in California, New York, and internationally for over a decade. With a decade of experience, Glenia has become a respected professional in the field. Apart from her successful career, she is a devoted wife to Felipe Alexandre and a caring mother to their son, Vinny. Glenia is recognized for her dedication and commitment to helping individuals and families navigate the complexities of the immigration process. As the COO, she continues to lead Alexandre Law Firm, ensuring clients receive topnotch legal services tailored to their unique needs.

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By Lisa Vanderkwaak

UNDERSTANDING DESTINY

ant to fulfill your destiny this year? Maybe you've been ready for a while but struggle with being sure what your destiny is. Recently, the Lord showed me a perspective I had not seen before. I'd love to share it with you and invite you to consider that DESTINY may not be something you do, but who you become.

To understand this perspective, let's examine the role of DECISIONS and DIALOGUE in unlocking your DESTINY. Three words that carry much weight.

When I asked God "What's destiny?" He simply said, "Eternal Life."

This led me to <u>John 17:3</u>, "Eternal life means to know and experience you as the only true God, and to know and experience Jesus Christ, as the Son whom you have sent."

It starts with an invitation to follow Jesus. This invitation is neither casual nor trite, but purposeful! Jesus illustrates this in contrasting the foolish and wise builder.

To fulfill your calling requires a DECISION, followed by a series of decisions. The word "decision" comes from two Latin words that mean "to cut away".

When you DECIDE that you will follow God in all His ways, you are simultaneously deciding to cut away all other options. That's why decision making is so difficult for so many who fear losing out on opportunity.

But once you decide, the journey of adventure and reve-

lation begins. New understandings open up for you that you didn't see before.

As you give God your YES to follow Him, He extends another invitation. It's to DIALOGUE with Him. This is no ordinary exchange of words, but one that goes quickly to the depths of the heart. Because with every exchange, a new decision is required. He is not satisfied with superficial talk. You must learn to connect with your own heart and with His. Why? Because wherever your heart is not free, you are blocked from fully embracing your destiny.

This dialogue is open and ongoing so you can KNOW and EXPERIENCE Him fully. It's the place where intimacy is forged and character is shaped.

Following God

I remember the day I decided to follow God when I was 15 years old. As I read the Bible for the first time, I was enthralled by Jesus' expressions of love. I wanted to be like Him and love like Him. Instantly, I became aware of two things simultaneously: The extravagant love of the Father, and my own sickness of heart.

This dialogue of the heart that I ventured into with Him became the source of my healing and my hope. I felt vulnerable and valued at the same time. This became the path of transformation and truth, leading me to greater degrees of freedom and fulfillment. With every step and every decision I made to trust Him, my heart became more awakened, alive and empowered. It was in this place that I found my voice again, I discovered my true identity and embraced a new way of living.

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In dialogue, He challenged my perceptions and disrupted my comfort zone. He showed me that if left unchanged, my distorted perceptions would lead to deception and death.

Jesus said in Mark 7: 13, "You nullify the word of God by your traditions." Although Jesus was speaking to the religious leaders, it also refers to any traditions that cancel the Word of God, making it of no effect. Such as traditions that are passed down through family, culture, education, religion and anything that exalts itself as more important than the word and ways of God!

The Greek word for dialogue, means "words that move". It is in this holy exchange of words, God speaks to you from your DESTINY! Each word is overflowing with truth and authority, and as you decide to believe Him, you rise with new convictions and courage.

At first it feels awkward and uncomfortable, until you realize He is speaking to you from love because He sees you as He made you to be. Throughout the scriptures, He did this, such as when He called Abraham, "the Father of many nations" even though Abraham had not yet had a child. And with Gideon, when He called him "Mighty Warrior", while Gideon was still hiding out in a winepress feeling defeated by the enemy.

For too long we have been tricked into thinking our destiny is what we do. However, if destiny is eternal life, then the path is more simple and profound than we thought. It's about deciding to trust Him while you engage in ongoing dialogue of the heart, and pursue the goal to know and experience Him in intimate ways. As you allow His words to move into and make their home in your heart, you become like Him on the earth. That's DESTINY!

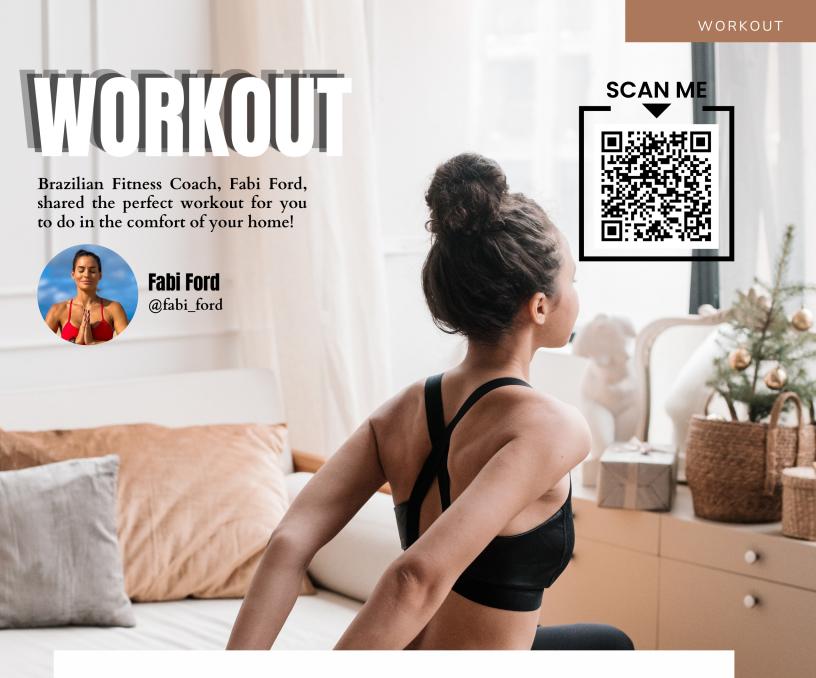


Lisa Vanderkwaak helps Christian Women Speakers go beyond just giving information to Speaking with Confidence, Clarity & Transformational Impact!

She is often referred to as a Communication Expert, and Transformation Catalyst because of her ability to communicate in a way that shifts people's mindsets and empowers audiences to move forward with increased confidence, clarity and impact.

With over 25 years experience, combined with her educational background as a Speech-Language Pathologist (MSc.) and certifications as an Executive Life & Speaking Coach, Lisa specializes in working with highly motivated women who want to expand their leadership capacity and sharpen their communication skills so they can impact more lives.

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30 MIN HIIT WORKOUT

This is a 30-minute HIIT Workout! It incorporates several rounds alternating between several minutes of high-intensity movements to significantly increase the heart rate, followed by short periods of lower-intensity movements. Complete each exercise for 40 seconds and rest for 20 seconds between each exercise and as needed.

Sumo Squats
High Knees
Skaters
Jumping Jacks
Mountain Climbers
Jumping Ropes
Butt Kicks
Abdominal Crunches

3 Rounds

Need help with the exercise? Scan the code and watch selected video tutorials!

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to fear the Lord to walk in His ways to love and serve Him to keep His commandments with all our heart with all our soul

a walk with God

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Speakers Lineup

















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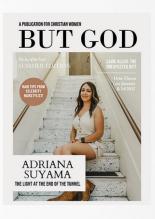
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