

## Finding a Balance in Life

By Frank Gibson

### Introduction

As we are living in this era of May 2024 it is very obvious that the world is out of balance.

Politically there are no more moderates. There are many who are very angry about almost everything. Science doesn't use a scientific method anymore in order to prove valid statistics or research, they just expect us to believe what they say... At this time we are at war in two regions: Ukraine and the Middle East. It is very apparent that World War 3 is looming in the near future. Perhaps by the time you read this short book we will already be there. Financially, families are struggling to keep up with inflation while the U. S Government spends twice as much money as they collect in taxes. Crime, talk about crime... it's through the roof because they can steal up to \$900 without charges in several states, and if there are charges they get out the next day.... Those indications of life being out of balance are pretty obvious and I could add more... Yes, the world is pretty much a mess. That's why it is imperative that we as individuals strive to find balance in our lives. Good is called bad, and bad is called good... As I have recently tried to find balance in my personal life I have asked myself many questions as to how I got here and how to best accomplish the quest of finding balance in my life. Please excuse grammatical errors or not following the rules of writing... Actually I am a television writer who writes as people speak to communicate as clearly as I can... I am also a bit of a rule breaker anyway...

This book will be a short read, I hope you are able to glean many truths from it and it is a conduit to making your life better. I will tell many stories that happened in my life and many of them seem amazing, almost unbelievable. Let me assure you these stories are not embellished or exaggerated at all. Everything stated is true as described.

I would like to dedicate this book to my wonderful wife of 40 years Elaine, her patience with me has been remarkable, but that's what it takes to keep a marriage going.... patience, perseverance, and lots of forgiveness.... Here we go....

### Early Years

Many peoples lives begin with a bad family life. Divorce affects 50% of marriages and it's climbing....or they just don't get married. My parents got divorced when I was 2 years old. I remember wishing my parents were together with me, but it was not to be.. I also remember they always blamed each other for everything, and I always wished they would find more time to spend with me. It has been proven many times a fatherless household is a key determinate to a problem life. I loved my parents very much and I remember thinking to myself what can I do to make this better? It became evident to me whatever I did was not going to change my parents. So I did the next best thing... I would change my thinking.... I was only 5 or 6, but wise beyond my years. My mother was a hard working business woman, but lacked morals... Taking advance of people was part of the business process and cheating on her second husband happened somewhat regularly. One experience which I had that might illustrate my mother's morals was when I was 4 or 5, my mother said we're going swimming tonight... I thought great! So we went with one of my mother's boyfriends at the time to a lake... believe it or not we went to a nudist lake to swim. Yep, what did I know... I'm only a kid... but I can recall it very clearly all 3 of us in the nude in a lake swimming. At the time I remember thinking

this was fun, but like so many other memories I later realized this wasn't a very good thing to do.... My father on the other hand also worked hard but he seemed to be directionless in his life, perhaps 5 marriages would indicate that. I always said: "My Dad loves women". My father was supposed to pick me up every Sunday to spend a few hours with me, but sadly I remember sitting on a step waiting for my father to come get me but he only showed up 25% of the time. He no doubt had a great Saturday night somewhere and just didn't value the time he could have spent with his son. When he did pick me up half the time we went to the movies where he would fall asleep during the movie. I worked with my Dad every summer as a laborer in construction from age 8 to 19. He was an independent contractor and at times had another worker with him. Those working summers enabled me to spend time with my Dad, get to know him better, and learn a few skills in the process. Getting paid only \$25 per day lead me to finally go to another Construction Company to earn a lot more when I was 19 year old. There, I was often referred to as "the college kid" in a derogatory tone. I was in charge of the office on sight. Many times I was challenged with my figures as to how many yards of concrete were poured, how much material had to be ordered, etc. The men were frustrated many times because I could count. I only remember being wrong once. The superintendent of the job was so happy..... and that info spread all over the work site. "Hey college kid, I heard you really F'd up. Hey college kid, not that smart are you?"

My mother wasn't much better. She was young and beautiful and got a lot of attention from men. I remember going out with her on many occasions and men would try to use me to approach my mother... so I lived many years with my alcoholic grandmother who got drunk every night. My mother was so desperate to be free she worked out of town many years, and sent me away for the occasional summer break. Believe it or not when I was 8 years old she sent me to work with a man for many weeks traveling the country selling balloons, cotton candy, and souvenirs at the circus and state fairs. The justification was that I made \$25 per day and at that time around 1962 that was a lot of money for a kid. My first job that my mother also found for me was selling flowers on a street corner... Believe it or not when I was 6 years old a small bouquet of flowers cost just 50 cents. The strategy was: I carried a bunch of bouquets along cars that had stoped at a traffic light asking; "Flowers for your wife sir?" From time to time the florist would replenish my bouquets and take most of my money in case a big kid might try to steal from me. I did that on Saturdays making any where from \$2.50 to a big holiday take of \$4. I got 10 cents per bouquet. I always had money as a little kid, I could save and buy what I wanted pretty much... So the flower gig was OK, but I had a better, more profitable plan... I would sell Yum Yum which was a sweeter version of Italian Ice. The big kids had the perfect locations and stayed there all day... So I put the barrel with dry ice and a metal canister with the Yum Yum in a shopping cart. I would walk all over several neighborhoods and call out: "Yum Yum Yum Yum" In a melodic voice... Kids would come up and buy Yum Yum for 5 cents for a small cup, 10 cents for a large... Working all day at that entrepreneurial effort landed me typically around \$5. At the end of the day when the dry ice was melted and the Yum Yum was too slushy I gave it to my friends. I was very popular when that happened. One thing my Mom did give me was a work ethic. In 46 years of working in the television industry I have only been late once. An accident on I 4 was the cause. I apologetically called the client and he said: "You're good". As it turned out I was only 15 mins late to the Orlando location, I always leave early in case of such a diversion.

One other aspect of my mother, that affected me greatly was that from time to time she would travel with her husband Carl to places with casinos. He was a gambler, lost a lot of money through the years, but he was always kind to me. When they traveled they always promised me next time we'll take you with us. That never happened.... Later I learned the souvenirs they brought me were something they picked up at the airport as they were getting ready to board a plane.... I always said to myself: "I will travel the world and see places my mother never knew existed"... I did, having visited 65 countries so far, going to Patagonia in January. You will find

out later just how passionate I am in regards to travel.... Another story that illustrates my mother's second marriage was when Carl went to jail... I'm not sure if it was the first or second time... As I recall he was away around 8 months or so. He was a bit of a shyster, he sold franchises with territories for various products. The only problem was he sold the same territories to different people if I'm not mistaken... So Carl was off to jail and he gave my mother \$60,000 cash to put in their safe at their home. I recall my mother not being happy about prisoner's wife's trying to form a support group, she wanted no part of that... I recall teasing her saying: "Mom don't you was to get to know Mugsey's wife, or the wife of Knuckles?" She didn't think that was funny... So when Carl returned home of course he asked for his \$60,000. My mom innocently replied: "What money? I don't know what you're talking about?" He tried to refresh her memory, but soon realized he was had... I also remember my mom joking about it much later saying: "He was stupid, he should have known I'd never give it back". Somehow their marriage did last till Carl died. A great example not to follow...

So I deliberately took on what I thought were the positive attributes of my parents. I would work very hard, not cheat people, keep my word, keep deadlines, and get married for life. My Dad had a very good nature made people laugh a lot, I have tried to emulate that, but some just don't get my sense of humor...

## Education

My father only got through 5th. Grade, my mother got a high school equivalent degree. I thought to myself to make myself better, certainly an education would help greatly. If I am not mistaken only my grandfather on my mother's side went to college. He was an engineer who traveled the world and was seldom home with my grandmother. When he was there, I witnessed constant arguments. When he was gone, it was better. So I was determined to go to college. Luckily I was very good at soccer and that made a huge impact on my getting into and playing for Rutgers. As it turns out my coach made a good move to recruit me, I was one of the best players on the team as a freshman. My sophomore year he actually made me co captain and got me a national award: Outstanding Athletes of America, but frankly looking at the list of past award winners, I wasn't in that class of athlete. Funny story, my coach also coached the tennis team and he had to give one sport up because they said he couldn't be head coach anymore of 2 sports so he gave up soccer. My junior year we had a new Jamaican coach who brought many players with him from all over the world, and they were good... He promised them the American dream and they were anxious to play for him. He was a good coach, but a terrible organizer and administrator. When I often tried to help him with advise he often stated: "Frank Gibson, you think you know everything".... Well getting to away games late on a regular basis and taking wrong turns to get there was something I guess I just had to accept. As I stated before... I hate being late, it's almost an obsession. He didn't think white boys could play soccer, and by my senior year I was the only white player still good enough to be on the team...the team photo is a hoot. The one token white boy was me... We actually played the National Champions and only lost 5 to 0, we won just about every other game though... Once we played in a tournament in North Carolina in 1976 and the coach promised the team if we won the first game we would go out on the town... I told him that was a bad idea, my fellow players who I loved and adored could get hurt I explained... letting a bunch of foreign black men loose on Southern town: Fayetteville, an army town no less... would not be appreciated when as boys will do... they tried to be friendly to white women. As always the coach told me I didn't know anything... he of course did... Sure enough the coach had the bus running around as he tried to gather all the chicks to get back in the bus as soon as possible.

At the time Rutgers was a very good school and very hard to get into so soccer served me well. I actually ended up playing in men's leagues till I was about 56 years old.... 43 years of soccer, looking back on it, I was a little too compulsive about paying all those years... I wasn't a bad student, I worked very hard to learn what I knew I didn't know which was a lot.

My major was History and Education. I thought for a few years I'd teach. When I worked as a substitute teaching in Philadelphia Public Schools trying to get a regular job, I was shocked as kids were disruptive, cursed, fought, did interesting deals in my classroom right in front of me, threatened me from time to time, but I was big and strong... I was fine... this was a survival mode approach, but this was no profession I would stay in for long.

### Poor Job Choice

So I was going nowhere... My Mother offered to hire me to help run her business. She ultimately would try to give it to me some day, but working in the insurance industry was like watching paint dry. I was OK at it, but it was no fun.... I did get to know my mother better, but I knew I couldn't stay in her business....

### My life finally began to have direction and balance

I met my wife Elaine of 40 years on fourth of July in Philadelphia. She was leaving for Europe the next day, I had been to Europe for 6 months on a bicycle tour in 1977. She had just been out West a few years ago, I was leaving in a few days to go out West. We shared information at a rapid pace and in what seemed like moments I fell in love. She didn't, but I did.... When we returned from our respected trips I visited her and shortly after that I was able to win her over. We both had boy and girlfriends, but those relationships ended quickly. I adored her, I was overwhelmed with love and devotion to her. Certainly this is the motivation needed to get married. We were 24 at the time, when I told her I loved her and wanted to marry her she with common sense said: "you want to marry me, but you don't even know what you want to do when you grow up"... She was right, she pointed out: "you hate what you're doing... what will you do for a living? What would you do if you had your dream come true?" It didn't take me long to respond: "If I had my dream, I would travel the world and make documentary films". Next she asked, "Have you every taken a film course?" "No, I responded, but I am a good photographer".. "Well, why don't you take a film course?" "Why not, if it meant getting closer to getting my future bride... I'll do it". So I enrolled in a graduate level film course and WOW this was it... Like a duck to water, in weeks I knew my chosen profession... Looks like I'm going to grad school.... My mother was furious.... My father asked: "How much education do you need?" I was done... my mother fired me and threw me out of the house.. Luckily I always worked hard and had some savings... I got an apartment, enrolled full time at Temple University which at the time was one of the best film schools in the nation. I had to work 3 jobs to make ends meet, but I persevered... I was a waiter at a little French cafe, where I learned so much about people I really thought that was crucial... I went back to combat pay in the Philadelphia Public School System, and I freelanced with a Production Company after my internship there.... After 2 and a half years the Production Company said to me: "We think you have what it takes in this business, there is an entry level job opening for a writer/producer in Connecticut at the station where you worked with us. We would be willing to recommend you... what do you think?" I said, "Absolutely, I thought I'll get a start, school was all about getting a job - not a degree.. Then, I'll have a real job, certainly Elaine will marry me now...."

So we had a new pattern of living... I lived in Hartford, CT, Elaine lived in Cherry Hill, NJ. We had a 3 weekend rotation: 1 weekend I'd drive to New Jersey, 1 weekend Elaine would drive to CT, and 1 weekend we didn't see each other... It wasn't the best situation, but I had to wait for Elaine to finally agree to marry me. When I drove to New Jersey I would usually visit my Dad whose health was failing - he had lung cancer. He smoked unfiltered cigarettes his entire life, he was dying... One Friday getting ready to drive as usual I heard a still quiet voice say to me: "bring your dark suit." I thought, dark suit... what for? I resisted that thought, but it repeatedly told me to bring my dark suit.. I couldn't shake it so I figured I bring it, leave it in the car, and if I did need it at least I'd have it... Well that night my father died. I needed a dark suit to not only go to the funeral, but give the eulogy. It took me years to understand, but I

eventually realized even though I didn't know God, He knew me and knew what was best for me. I always thought there was a God, but He was a personal God as well. It would be many years before I knew Him personally as I should, but He knows the end from the beginning and He knew what He would eventually do with me so this might have been just an introduction to His glory.

So after 3 years of driving back and forth from Hartford, CT to Cherry Hill, NJ and romantically asking Elaine to marry me several times, making real good money at that point.. but she still wouldn't marry me. I guess inwardly she knew life with me wouldn't be easy... Oh well, I guess it's time to move on... I tried my best... I told her, "I'm sorry, I love you, but tomorrow when you drive back home we'll end it. We'll move on".... The next morning she woke up crying, "yes I'll marry you".... The burden on her mind was released... We had direction, purpose, and even a tilt to the balanced side of life, but that would come to fruition later...

So we both loved to travel, as a couple we took many trips together, always had a blast... So the honeymoon would have to be big!

We discussed it, and Elaine wanted to go to New Zealand to visit her friend... I said, "great but surely we'd have to get at least a month off to go that distance", she agreed. I asked my boss for a month off, he said they couldn't spare you for a month, perhaps 2 weeks.... So when I next spoke to Elaine I said, "Well it's either a typical 2 week honeymoon or we quit our jobs and travel around the world for a year?" She didn't hesitate, "Let's go around the world for a year"... She planned the wedding, I planned the honeymoon. This was way before the internet, you had to go to the library to do research the old fashioned way to plan flights, trains, places of interest, budgets for each country... you name it!

We did it, and it was awesome... Many didn't understand why we would do such a thing, after all what we would spend could be a down payment for a house... I said on many occasions: "I have my whole life to make payments on a house, we're going to see the world before it changes".... Being a history major I knew war could change our ability to travel at any moment. That's why I always said, "I'm saving major travels through the U.S. for later when we're at war".... I don't think I was being pessimistic, just a realist...

So the year long honeymoon would either make us or break us, but I always said we would never divorce. There were many times during the trip that Elaine would have gladly pushed me off a mountain on one of our adventure hikes... but she never bowed to the temptation. One hike comes to mind where as always Elaine followed my lead because I was sure "everything would be fine... no problem, I know where we're going... it will be great"... We were in Nepal trying to enter a National Park where you could go to Tiger Tops. A place where the rich could stay in elegant above ground tree houses hearing the Tigers' calls at night and even ride elephants to possibly see them. My research told me there were less expensive options near that area. That's where we would go.... So we take a bus for 10 hours or so... a typical bus with freshly butchered goats bleeding through a burlap bag pouring all over the bus floor. Sadly we were given the wrong information.. we got to the East side of the National Park and not the West side where there were tours and accommodations. So we get to this village at 9 or 10 pm, it's totally dark, not a street light anywhere, and some guy welcomes us to the town saying "you'll come and stay at my house"... I was very suspect as you always had to be stating: "No thank you, we're going to stay at a hotel". He laughed and said, "Hotel? Look around you, there's no Hotel here!" He was right, this was a very backward place with next to nothing anywhere. So we agreed, we walked to his house, we stayed in a loft sleeping on hay vacated by his kids who normally slept there... we paid \$2 for the privilege.... Couldn't wait to get out of there the next morning... We were directed to simply follow the dirt road to the edge of town and before you know it, you'd be at the park. So walking some 7 miles or so we passed vultures eating a carcass... before you know it, we reach a river. Observing the tire

tracks going into the river and out the other side, I confidently said let's go, it can't be that deep... So we waded into the river up to our arm pits and through to the other side... It was only about 40 feet across. Started hiking again, saw a sign for the National Park, that's a good sign... Then we came upon a guard house with 2 soldiers in it about a half a mile further. They looked at us like we were ghosts. With wide open eyes the one said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "We're trying to get to Tiger Tops". He asked: "How did you cross the river?" "We waded through it"... "Don't you know there are crocodiles in that river?" "No".... "Don't you know this is the rhino season with the high grass you see and they will attack anything that moves?" "No"... He said to his comrade: "We got to get them to the other side of the park where they belong". So they arranged for a Land Rover to take us approximately 25 miles through the jungle, but we had to pay \$25 for the gas... That was a great ride... Beautiful jungle, lots of birds... So we got to the other side of the park, found a great place to stay, took an elephant ride seeing rhinos, antelope, no tigers though.... That was just one of many adventures that my wife would have gladly avoided had she seen the future... I wonder why she was hesitant to marry me? Another adventure was when we were in India. We spent a month there... very interesting to say the least, but we meet some wonderful people always traveling second class. One family we meet insisted we visit them in Bombay. We did, stayed in very small quarters but they were the nicest people you could ever meet. I was looking around their small home and I saw a small interesting item on the shelf that was very artistic. I complimented them on it, and they told me to have it. I tried to get them to keep it, but they insisted I take it with me.

So it was June, and hot in India. We worked our way north seeing many interesting places that were as exotic as you could ever imagine. We asked, "Is there anyplace to go to avoid the heat?" Yes, Kashmir is where you want to go.... So we asked the official tourist information office how to get there and they advised us to take a train. "Just get a sleeper car and you'll be there in the morning." So we bought the tickets, and around 3 or 4 in the morning someone banged on our compartment and demanded we let them in. It seemed like everything in India was broken so I actually had a rope trying keep the the door closed. I opened the door in my underwear thinking once they saw me they'd go away... No, he said: "look at all these people out here, let us in!" I said, in the morning, we paid for a sleeper car and I slammed and tied the door shut... Elaine asked what I thought was going on... I said, "try to get some sleep I think we're in for a crazy situation." So as the sun rose and I looked out the window to my surprise there was a machine gun pointing at the train when we pulled into a town. I knew I had to get intel pretty fast. So we opened the door, of course people rushed in and 7 people sat on the bench that was a bed... that bench would have seated 4 comfortably, but this is India. Kids were up in the luggage racks... and as I walked through the hallway through a maze of tightly compacted bodies I found what I would consider professional class people, probably salesmen. As it turned out they were oriental carpet dealers going back to Srinagar, that's where we thought we were going. They explained this was the first train going through Punjab since the storming of the Golden Temple. What happened was the Sikhs who wanted independence from India were trying to move in that direction. The Indian Federal Government put a stop to it, but they had to overrun their most sacred sight, the Golden Temple that was loaded with guns and ammunition. I believe 1,000's died in the battle. The newspaper reported only 100's died. So the people on the train were going back to Punjab to find out if their relatives were alive, if their homes were still there etc. The government had cut off the entire region... no one in or out. So I asked what could I expect, and they said: when we get to Chandigarh you take a cab to Kashmir. I said: "I was told this train goes to Srinagar".... They laughed and said "how would the train get through the mountains?" How long was the cab ride? I asked. 12 hours... 12 hours? Yes... 12 hours. So I went back to report to Elaine. When we got to the capital and that was the end of the line for the train.. I saw the carpet dealers and they invited us to share the cab and split the fare. I said, "Let me first look into a bus." Again they laughed... And they were right... full to the brim, people hanging from the sides and sitting on the roof, the honeymoon couple had to come up with a better plan. So I

found the carpet dealers and we were on our way.... If you saw the Indiana Jones movie where they stopped at a bar that eventually caught on fire in the fight. That looked almost exactly like the place we stopped at 6 hours into the trip. Eventually we got to Srinagar, thanked them, they invited us to go to their shop when we settled in...

So the objective was to find a house boat with city water, not lake water... I asked, they lied, we got sick for 5 days... The house boat was very nice though, hand carved right on the lake with kingfisher birds flying right off our balcony. We paid \$10 per day and had a servant serve us tea in the afternoon. Those boats were built by the British who couldn't own land and wanted to escape the heat, so the boats were pretty luxurious. After we recovered we went around sight seeing as we always did.... 3 days later we woke up, went to town, and everything was different. Machine gun nests and tanks were on every major street corner. Just as the Sikhs, the Kashmiris people from time to time wanted independence and the Pakistanis encouraged that... Kashmir has lots of needed water. Pakistan and India have always fought over Kashmir. For centuries. So we asked our British friends who we meet "what should we do?" "Get out of here, we leave tomorrow". So we booked a flight out the day after them. When we visited the British couple at their home in England, they thought we knew they were hijacked to Pakistan, but we never knew... They were set free after several days and we had a great time visiting them for about 4 days...

So you might argue that year long adventure formed a mighty bond, not to be broken... a better balance as a couple...

So Elaine obviously had a wonderful time because at the end of the year as we reminisced what we had done, where we went, what we enjoyed... Elaine said: "Let's not go home, let's go to South America". During that year, I would periodically send exotic post cards to potential employers I was counting on...telling them that I would be home for Christmas ready to start work on the New Year. Television jobs were hard to come by, you really had to know somebody to get a job... and to be frank, were we broke. But even if it were possible, who would hire a guy who didn't keep his word about getting home for Christmas, and the thinking might be: This guy doesn't want to work, he only wants to travel...

So we went home... lean, mean, traveling machines with a new outlook on life that few could appreciate. Before long I got a job in Tampa at TV 28. As you might expect I worked hard... normally 65 hours a week just as I had in Connecticut. I worked hard because I was promised a review in 6 months where my salary would be adjusted to what it should be... 6 months passed, I was to rate myself in about 10 categories. I rated myself excellent in 9 of the 10, very good in the 10th. My boss rated me excellent in all 10 categories. I said: "Great so you obviously want to give me a sizable raise, I do want to raise a family in the near future". He said: "Hold on, Well I guess I can give you a \$1,000 raise". This was well short of what I was making in Connecticut and well short of what I deserved... when I stated my case, foolishly he said, "Well you might have to go somewhere else to make that kind of money". Quietly I thought to myself: Wow, what a idiot... he just admitted I was an excellent employee and he is ready to cut me loose without a reasonable compromise? The writing was on the wall... I loved Tampa, I would have to go into my own business. I wasn't the type to play political games to get ahead. How often I saw workers support their bosses in things they didn't agree with. That brings to mind something that happened at TV 28. So I was the Promotions Writer/ Producer. I produced all on air television and radio promos for the station as well as advise on the billboards. So my department was having a creative meeting, this was a regular thing... My boss suggested a movie package promo campaign. I don't remember the theme, but it was bad... He asked me: "What do you think?" I said: "It's stupid, I wouldn't do it". He said: "Well I like it, produce the the campaign." I said: "You're the boss." We always broke new campaigns over the weekend. When I got into work on Monday morning a co worker told me Lew, the General Manager of the station wanted to see me right away, he's pissed.... I walked

into his office, I knew him from Connecticut so I typically spoke to him very casually... "Hey Lew, what's up". He started cursing me out frantically: "Why in the world did you put that F'n crap on air". You're an idiot, etc.etc. I said: "Oh the new movie campaign... that was Joseph's idea, I told him it was stupid". "He said it was your idea, you're the producer...". "He's a liar, no one in their right mind would think that was a good idea." So that was my demise... My boss made my life as miserable as he could from that point forward... So just as I had done in Connecticut I gave them 6 months notice so I could train my replacement. In both cases I had developed a well oiled machine and wanted what was best for the company. 6 months passed, just like in Connecticut they didn't hire anyone. In Connecticut the wedding was set, I left never training my replacement, but in Tampa they begged me to stay on and work less hours so I could build my business. I told them my salary divided by a normal 40 hour workweek was X... they agreed to pay it....Even though my boss hated me and was out to get me, he had no choice... So luckily I was able to work 35 hours a week for TV 28 making almost my full salary and I was able to build my business with the other 30 hours or so. Before you knew it, I was doing well enough to leave TV 28 after 6 additional months of trying to keep them above water. Then, I was on my own trying to find a better work home life balance.... What made everything possible hereafter was the fact that Elaine had gotten a management job at a department store and was doing very well... So well that only after about a year and a half later my wife said: "it time to start looking for a home." I said, "you don't have any money!" She said: "Yes I do". "How much I asked?" "About \$20,000".... So one thing I knew was that my parents always argued about money. I would never fall into that trap. I would simply hand her the checks, and that would be that. Elaine always amazed me how she could save and spend money responsibly. We always had an on going joke: "You could have a young handsome cabana boy on some island, and I would never know it." So we bought a home and all things were going well.... Our marriage was fairly balanced at this point... good for us...

## Babytime

We tried for 4 years to get pregnant... fertility experts, we tried everything... One night we were driving through Clearwater and we were rear ended. The damage wasn't that bad, the driver of the other car begged me to give him time to pay me for the damage. He had no insurance. I knew without a doubt he was broke, living in his car, apparently with bad brakes, I would never see a dime so I told him don't worry about it, just try to get your life together.... Later that night, I did the math, we conceived. Recently we were at the hospital where my daughter was having her first child, and shared that story with the nurse at the desk and she stated: "Well, well, you got a big bang and went home for more banging". I laughed so hard I nearly fell over.... So Elaine had the perfect upbringing with kind parents who were stable and devoted to their family and the Lord. She often referred to her upbringing as Camelot. My upbringing on the other hand was like a bad movie... But one thing I knew: I knew what not to do as a parent. Pretty much if I just do the opposite of my parents, I'd be a great Dad. And that's what happened... I coached my daughter for 10 years in soccer of course, we went to all the parent meetings and school functions... funny looking back, my parents only went to my high school and college graduations and weren't too thrilled to go at that... My Dad saw only 2 of my soccer games... amazingly I happened to score at both of those games. My mother never saw me play soccer... Oh well.... But I can honestly say my wife was the best mother of all time...and I was a pretty darn good Dad as well... To this day I often wonder how in the world my wife managed to pay for private schools for my daughter her whole life. My daughter got straight A's her whole life, we always said: "School is you job, do well, get straight A's and you'll get a \$100 bill every report card". And that's what happened... I also told her about a million times: "To be a huge success in life you only have to do 3 things: Keep you word, never be late...never, and miss you deadlines... if you do those 3 things, you'll be in the top 10 percentile"... So she now has a doctorate and



has a very important job as a hospital administrator making 3 times what I make. As parents I can confidently say we were good at it and very balanced...

### The spiritual Walk

So one thing my wife always tried to do was share her faith with me. We were married in a Catholic Church. I had to go to classes in order to get married in the Catholic Church. My daughter went to Catholic Schools. I went to church with them if there wasn't a soccer game that Sunday, but usually there was.... Soccer was too important... My biggest regret in life was when my daughter was finally born I dropped the ball. My wife went into labor on Friday night. The baby was born 22 and a half hours later. We had a lovely dinner in the hospital Saturday night. We were to be released on Sunday morning. My wife had overheard me ask the nurse what time? Elaine thought, there's going to be a big party when I get home... this is exciting! Well when we went home I told my wife: "I'm going to play the second half of my game, I'll be back in a few hours". Elaine, holding our new born baby must have been in shock. I can definitely say my soccer life was out of balance...

So I only ever went to church as a little boy when I visited my father's mother on the weekend from time to time. Never, ever read the Bible. Totally unchurched... My mother did become Jewish in order to marry my step father. She asked me to do the same, but I said I wasn't interested.... Which leads to another wonderful family filled story: My mother and her boyfriend pretty much lived together from when I was around 3 years old. When I was 13 it was decided we were moving to Miami Beach. Along the 22 hour drive my mother asked me: "What do you think about Carl?" I said: "He's alright". She said: "That's great because I married him". Funny, but my father did the same... My so called step brothers told me he got married for the 3rd time. I never knew about the 4th. or 5th. marriage either, but it seemed obvious, so I assumed he was once again married. So much for the sanctity of marriage in God's presence.... We only lived in Miami Beach for 6 months, then back to New Jersey... My father never contacted me once while I was in Florida. So when I got back to Jersey I rode my bike about 14 miles or so to the bar my father frequented... sure enough, there he was... He was so glad to see me. We caught up. I told him where I lived, and we continued as if we weren't ever separated. Yes, the Father's Love... what a concept. We'll get into that in more detail later...

So as I said, I never had a relationship with God, or ever really appreciated going to church the few times I went. When I was 39 years old everything changed in my life.

I was producing a monthly show I had been working on for years. It was a very upscale accounting show. To keep your license, accountants had to have continuing education on the latest code changes, laws, as well as get advice from those in the field. Every month, always on a Thursday, I entered that very top notch studio and since there were several studios operating at the same time, I often had my attention drawn to a particular TV show being produced: God's News Behind the News. You can look at other monitors in master control and see what's going on elsewhere at the facility. They used graphics just as I did, full frame or lower thirds, but they had bible verses. Interesting... look at that... well that makes sense... One week they had scripture from Ezekiel 38. It described how Russia and various Muslim countries would attack Israel and how it would go down... Well I was a history major, I understood past empires and their possible motivation, so I thought Wow that is going to happen in the future. And if that bible spoke of that thousands of years ago predicting the future... maybe I should know something about that bible. A few hours later, an ad agency friend called me. I assumed it would be a job, I worked for him a fair amount... He asked: "What are you doing tomorrow morning?" I said: "nothing, what's up?" He said: "I'm going to a bible study group tomorrow morning at 6:30 and it's right in your neighborhood, want to

go?" I said: "Yeah, I have some questions I would like to ask". I didn't know it then, but looking back, that was a divine set up, no doubt. We went, they were helpful, tried to lead me in the right direction... I went to that bible study for years. But I also had questions few could answer. I went to my Rotary Club and asked 4 different Pastors or Ministers the same questions about Bible Prophecy. None knew the answers. I even stated to them, "wait a minute, you're supposed to know the Bible... it's your job!" You would think they might say as I would now: "Let me do some research and I'll get back to you with an answer". Never happened. So I had to research on my own. I knew I had to buy a study bible so I went to a Christian book store and ordered a beautiful new King James Study Bible. They asked me did I want my name engraved on the cover? I said sure... When I went to pick up the Bible the engraved name was off and blurred. They said they were so sorry, I could keep this one and get a reasonable discount or they would reprint another. My spirit cried out: You have to be humbled, this would be a reminder... I knew this was the Bible for me... It is still my most prized possession to this day and I will give it to my daughter when I die. So shortly after that I volunteered to work with God's News. They didn't have gear to go on location so I used my gear for interviews, B-roll, etc. That afforded me the opportunity to go to Israel 6 or 7 times shooting video for them.

One story worth mentioning was when we went to interview a guy by the name of Gershon Solomon at his office in Jerusalem. His ministry was called the Temple Mount and Faithful Movement. Every year they tried to lay the corner stone of the third temple only to be repulsed by the IDF. Sometimes some of them would be arrested in the effort, but every year, same scenario... here we go again... The IDF couldn't allow that to happen, it would start World War III.

We were to get to his office around 4 pm. I knew that it was getting dark around 5 pm, it was November. So I asked how long the interview would last and I was told about 45 mins. Got there at 4 and started shooting. I had plenty of videotape, but no lights except a camera light that I brought just in case. The interview was going very well, this guy was a fascinating person... He was one of the first 6 Israeli soldiers who went up on the Temple Mount in the 1967 War. When they got up there they saw an Arabic man who asked them if they wanted a tour of the Temple Mount. They said yes, please... and the tour went on for awhile. At some point the soldiers looked at each other for a moment and the Arabic tour guide disappeared... and there was no way he could have walked enough distance to get out of sight in that short period of time. Gershon said he thought he was an angel for sure. Many topics of discussion ensued and as I looked at my watch it was getting late and dark in his office. Around 4:50 pm I knew I had to put on my camera light, take a fast white balance and keep on recording while hoping that the interview would be over soon. I knew that a freshly charged battery wouldn't last longer than 25 mins. The interview though very interesting was lasting longer than expected. At 5:15 my battery should have been dead, but the light was still strong. 20 mins after that the interview finally ended and the battery lasted 20 mins longer than it should have, the light hadn't faded one bit. Never in all my experience had I ever seen a battery last that long supernaturally. You can believe what you want, but I was and am still convinced God wanted that interview and made the battery last longer than it should.

We also did countless interviews in the field back in the U.S. with my gear or in their studio with their gear. The guests interviewed were usually biblical scholars with really interesting topics more often than not about bible prophecy. Of course I was learning a great deal through all the video production.

God's News and I had a good deal going, we could use my gear on location, I would run camera wherever we filmed, and I could use their edit facility to do my other work for profit.

Earlier, I received calls from other ministries asking me to produce their shows. How they got my contact info is a mystery, another divine set up I believe. From my first encounter at the Bible study to six months later, I was producing 3 Christian television shows... So, in order to be a good producer covering all kinds of subjects, I had to study that bible so I could put good shows together and more importantly communicate truth. I would not lead anyone astray for any reason. It had to be real. It had to be Biblical, and It had to be something I felt God would approve of.

### Huge changes in my life

So one ministry that contacted me was Revival Ministries International. They had heard that I was a teleprompter operator and asked if I could put the lyrics of praise and worship songs up on projected screens so the people could sing those words at their camp meetings at the Sun Dome in Tampa. I agreed.... I showed up to work, this was pretty much before the internet was used, so I had to type in 122 songs... It was comical when being on headsets with the entire crew, the band begins to play yet another song I didn't know and I asked the director: "What song is this? What number?" He said: "You don't know How Great Thou Art?" I didn't know it, but God was loading me up with his Word, His hymns, the whole works... There was only one of the 122 songs I actually ever remember hearing: Amazing Grace. To this day it is my favorite. Later I realized, I recall many scripture verses because I knew a song.. there were many scriptures that are apart of Christian song lyrics. Add music and it's very memorable. I remember asking the Praise and Worship leader, what songs I should load up for the first service? He said, "I don't know, the Holy Spirit leads us, I obey and we sing that song." I said, "Well try to make a guess". I had a lot to learn about the things of God. So the services lasted about 3 hours and there were 3 services a day. I only worked in the beginning when they sang... After that I observed all that was going on and I was very perplexed. The Word was preached, sometimes people would have a Word from God and it seemed to accurately describe something that the audience should know. Toward the end of the services, the minister would pray for the entire crowd. People would fall down when touched. Line after line of people falling down and younger assistants would have to run in front of the minister to catch the people so they wouldn't fall and hurt themselves. One day there was even an ambulance that showed up... but no one was hurt, all seemed to be in order. This was pretty crazy to me, I asked so many people in the crowd so many questions. They were patient and answered my questions like: "Why do they fall? What do they feel? How do you know this is from God?" But I'll tell you this... those people were happy... I had to find out for myself so when the young men were quickly jumping into position to catch the people falling after prayer I ran down and jumped in like I too was a catcher. Sure enough the evangelist touched the head of the woman in front of me and she was out like a bag of potatoes... Wow, this is real...

So after almost a week of these services, I told God: "I don't know what these people have, or how they have it, but I want it!" Later that night at about 3 or 4 in the morning all of the sudden I had electricity touch the top of my head to the soles of my feet, pulsating with power up and down my body... it was intense, even painful to a degree and I screamed: "Enough! I got it!" Immediately I was speaking in tongues just like the people in those services. Later while trying to analyze what had actually happened I realized God was burning all the sin in my life out of me. I really never ever cursed again. I was a new creature in Christ. The best part was I felt the love of God. The Father's Love was something I never knew... Now I had it. And the Word says: He will never leave us or forsake us... I knew I'd never be alone again. Everyone is different in their walk with God, but many times I know that I know that I know something God gave me and I never doubted it. And if you obediently follow that still quiet voice, you will never regret it.

So it looks like I am officially a Christian... I guess I had better find a church, but it had to be like my Pentecostal experience. It had to be real. It had to be powerful. People's lives had to

be impacted. At that time the Bible study I was planning to attend a Promise Keepers Conference. Of course I would go... It was huge stadiums filled with men who would make 7 promises to God that made them better Godly men. God was still downloading the Holy Spirit into me and I felt so wonderful at those meetings. And I was sold out for God. I went to my wife and told her about Promise Keepers and excitedly stated, "I have to share God with others, influence people to come closer to God.." She, using her common sense again, just as she did when she said you don't even know what you want to do when you grow up, this time she said: "But you don't even go to church." I realized she was right... She said: "Why don't you go to my church?" I said: "Why not?" So I went to her local Catholic Church and went to the office and stated I wanted to teach bible study to members of their church. I think the woman sensed my enthusiasm and didn't know what to do with it, she said the Priest would have to consider it and I would have to be chaperoned by a Priest to be sure I didn't teach any false doctrines. I said: "Great, no problem." Well sure enough, the class was scheduled and I began to teach the Bible every week for a few months... It was going great, we had about 20 men every week. I was teaching something I really didn't know a lot about, but I was going forward anyway. I had great enthusiasm because I was so excited about being used by God.... He touched me, changed me, and now He was using me... No doubt... God's Word says He uses the foolish to confound the wise. That was ME! The discussions were great, I believe I was anointed to do this, at least I felt I was obedient. Sadly, we got to a few doctrinal differences that couldn't be compromised. Everyone knew I was done when someone asked me: "What are you a fundamentalist?" I said: "I don't know what's a fundamentalist?" He said: "You only believe the Bible and nothing else?" I said: "Yep, I only believe the Bible..." The group went on for a while, but I don't know how long it lasted after that... I heard it stopped around 6 months later.

Once I was attending a service in Tampa where the Revival Ministries leader was preaching. This church that I was at had their choir perform at the conference I prompted for months ago... After this service in Tampa, I ran into their Minister of Music who lead the choir who had given me the words to the lyrics they sang ... I said to him: "Wow your choir is great, I wish I could sing like that." He said: "You can, follow me..." He grabbed my hand, walked me into their building and into his office... He said: "Sit down." I did, then he threw a choir handbook on the desk in front of me. He said: "Join the choir, I'll teach you how to sing." I said: "OK." This was my first church. Similar to my senior soccer team I was in the minority again. About 65% black, 25% hispanic, and 10% white. I never developed a good voice so I was way in the back line, but I had a great time praising and singing to God. With about 60 people singing you couldn't even hear me.... The night that I joined the choir, my wife was in Jersey taking care of her parents. She did that about 6 times per year. She asked me how things were going? I said: "Great, I joined a choir." She said: "What? A what." I said: "A choir." She said: "you can't sing." I said: "I know." Soon after that, my new church went on TV, and yes I shot and produced the show. That lasted for awhile, maybe 18 months? But when they wouldn't pay me my greatly discounted rates in a timely manner... I eventually left the church, left the debt and quit. My wife told me from the start I was at the wrong church.... She was right again...

So I eventually did find a new church. The new church I attended sponsored a Healing Evangelist who came to town. About 5 months before that, my mother called me and told me she had cancer and had only 6 months to live. She was coming to live with me and my family till she died. So our household was turned upside down... My mother always made an impact one way or another... So she moved in with us. My biggest concern was that she could die without the Lord... I wanted her to go to heaven of course. She had to be saved. I talked to her so many times about God, what He was doing in my life, but she would have none of it. Not that I'm a prophet but the Word says a prophet is without honor in his own house, in his own country, among his own family... Mark 6:4. So one Sunday I was out in the yard and my

Christian neighbor from across the street yelled to me: "Did you hear about the Healing Evangelist coming to town today". I said "yes, I did." He said: "Did you ask you Mom?" I said "yes, I did." "Is she going?" "No," I said. He said: "Mind if I ask her?" I said: "Go ahead...". He asked, she said yes, I was so excited... finally my mother could be saved... I went into the house and started to get stuff and my mom together to jump into the car. My wife said: "What are you doing, we're having a Super Bowl Party in 40 mins. And you're the Grill Master." I said: "Sorry, I'm taking mom...". So my daughter and mother-in-law came along... We got there, the music was good, and the evangelist began... He looked around the room and looked for the worst case... it was my mom... She was gray, skin and bones, very frail, looked like she could die at any moment. He said: "What can the Lord do for you?" Mom said: "I have cancer." He said: "The Lord can heal cancer, are you saved?" She said: "yes". He said: "You're not saved, let's take care of business...". Behind her holding her wheel chair I was crying like a baby... so much water poured down my face, chest and pants... my prayers were miraculously being answered... Finally, she can go to heaven, I thought. He prayed for her, after she said the sinner's prayer, and I wheeled her back. Later, other people were called up for prayer and my daughter asked me: "Dad what's wrong with him?" He seemed to be perfectly whole. I said: "Everyone has something wrong with them." She said: "What's wrong with you?" I said: "Me, I have a bad back." She said, "Go up there Dad." I said "Honey, these people need healing more than I do." She said: "Do it for me." I had to go... The evangelist said: "What can the Lord do for you?" I said: "My daughter want my back to be healed." He said: "Come up here sweetheart, put you hand on your Dad's back." She did, and heat immediately emanated from her hand into my back and it was healed. That was the first time I was healed, so far I've been healed 5 times, maybe 6... I'll mention how later... Back to my mom... We got home, the party went well without me. My wife wasn't too thrilled with me, but I felt my mother was saved... that's all that mattered. So a day or two goes by and to our surprise my mother's gray toned skin seems to be getting closer to flesh tone. Red... healthier... Wow! What's going on? Within 2 weeks my mother was up walking, looking very healthy, strong, out driving, terrorizing the neighborhood. I told her God healed her, she was very cautious... why? I don't have a clue...the evidence was clear. She insisted on continuing her Chemo treatments... I begged her: "Mom God healed you, you can't take that Chemo any longer it will kill you..." Sure enough, it took 5 years, but the Chemo did kill her... My back was good as gold, I asked my mother to give glory to God and at least go to church. She wouldn't... I never saw any evidence that her life had been changed, that she was in Christ. When I get to heaven, one of the first things I'll do is look to see if mom made it.

## Mission Trips

So then I asked God, You know me better than I know myself, why don't you send me on mission trips... You know I love to travel.... It took awhile... God's timing is always better than our own. Maybe about a year later an evangelist to Africa came to my new church, the church that sponsored the healing evangelist.. After the service I walk up to him and said: "I'm going to Africa with you." He said: "Great." I told him what I could do for him as far as videotaping his services, miracles, the cultural aspects of his mission, I could also take stills for him. He was very happy that I offered to help his ministry. I think I went to South Africa with him 6 times? Benin once... There were plenty of miracles, it was thrilling to watch what God could do. He had a big blue and white tent that held a about 3,000 people or so, later he got a much bigger tent that held about 25,000. Of course they really packed the people in, they were used to tighter seating. Witch doctors would pour blood around the tent and cast spells and put goat heads on the ground outside the tent. This was the dark continent. Black magic is very real. I videotaped all kinds of demonic activity and deliverances. Earlier in my Christian walk I was disappointed in myself and cried out to God I'm sorry, I have to be humbled.... I asked God what is the most humbling thing I could do to deal with my pride and the first thing that came to mind is something I would never want to do... clean toilets. So I secretly had a toilet

ministry where whenever I got to God's News Studio I would clean the bathroom... It was always a mess. So in Africa, I decided I would take care of the port a potys. Pretty disgusting... but I felt it was good for me... And it seemed I was hearing from God every now and again, and that was so encouraging... One of the early trips to South Africa we were picked up at the airport by a minister who would help us organize the crusade. His name was Justice. His car was a a junker. The door in the back seat wouldn't close, you had to tire it closed with a rope. I thought to myself: "Wow this guy needs a car, which one of these men of God would help Justice buy a newer car that he obviously needed"... So days later, I was videotaping a conference and it was going great when suddenly I heard the audible voice of God say to me: "He needs a car, give him \$2500." I turned and Justice was walking up the aisle towards me... I was so excited I heard God's audible voice I grabbed him and said God told me to give you \$2500 toward a car, we'll go to the dealership and use my credit card... He was so happy, back then \$2500 was more like \$6000 today. Then reality set in when I realized, I really didn't have \$2500. For some reason I was struggling financially. I was in fact petitioning God: "I'm doing everything I can do your you, I need money." Well I think it was 2 days later I was videotaping another day of the day conferences and the preacher looked right at me and declared, "you will never struggle financially again." And guess what? I never struggled financially again to this day.... Justice did get his car and from that point on he picked us up in a very nice car.... The crusades were awesome... One other crusade something else happened where I know I heard God's still quiet voice this time, not audibly. I was told to bring a message just in case I had to preach, so of course I did. Sure enough, I was preaching one Sunday morning. The message was pretty good, I wasn't a preacher really. But again and again I heard: "these people need bibles". As I look around I noticed only a few had a bible... so at the end of the message I stated to the congregation: "I'm not sure about this, but I believe the Holy Spirit is telling me to buy this church bibles". The place erupted with joy and hysteria.... They had been praying for bibles for 2 years, and now they would get them... I told the Pastor to buy the ones he liked and here's my credit card.... I thought to myself: "Wow, how wonderful, maybe one of these people will become and African Billy Graham?"

So one day the evangelist called me out of the blue and said he had great news for me... I asked what is it? He said you're going to get your dream, you talk about it all the time... I said, "what?" He said you always talked about how you would do anything to work for CFAN, Reinhard Bonnke's ministry... I said absolutely! He had meet the photographer for the ministry and he was looking for an additional photographer. I called him, meet with him, and showed him my work... He was happy with me as a photographer. I was a Christian willing to travel to dangerous places, who had a true heart for God. Bottom line, I took stills of 3 crusades... 120,000 people in one, 98,000 in another, and later about 65,000 with Daniel Kolenda Reinhard's protege.... All three were better than amazing. The first 2 I had to go up on a telescopic lift to shoot crowd shots trying my best not to show holes in the crowd were there were dips in the terrain. I would take a series of horizontal shots that would be stitched together so the magnanimous images of the huge crowds could be captured. So imagine being about 7 stories high, surrounded by about 100,000 people praising and worshipping God. It was the greatest high anyone could have. To a smaller degree it was most likely like what it will be like when we're around the throne room of God in Heaven... I'm looking forward to it...

I of course also took pictures of the miracles at the crusades. And believe it or not I had a Land Rover with a driver and a guide to go into the jungles and villages to get cultural shots and scenic shots. Are you kidding me... what in the world could be better than that. After my marriage, and birth of my daughter, this was definitely the highlight of my life. God took me around the world, I believe because He loved me and wanted to make me happy while at the same time, I was doing great work for Him. So I have been to about 6 other countries on mission trips... Mexico, Poland, Haiti, Czech Republic, India, including my favorite... Cuba. The Cuban people are the most wonderful people. They typically only make about \$16 a

month at that time.... Happy, loving, praising God beyond belief, I truly loved those wonderful people.

I was definitely doing what God wanted me to do. I remember earlier at the beginning of this Christian adventure just before I started producing 3 Christian television shows... it was if He said, "You're good at what you do... but now you're going to do it for me." What a joy to serve the Lord in a capacity that I couldn't enjoy more...

So another interesting aspect of my walk was this: two of the evangelists to Africa and India that I served had requested that I prepare a sermon just in case they needed another preacher. I wasn't a preacher, but I did what they asked... The people are hungry, and want to hear other things from other perspectives. So on each trip I had a message just in case.. Africa was great because while preaching I kept getting something from the Holy Spirit: These people need bibles... So at a given point at the end of the message I said: "I'm not sure, but I think the Holy Spirit is telling me to buy the church bibles." The crowd erupted, they were so happy, they were praying for bibles for years, but didn't have the money to buy them. I told the Pastor to please go to the book store and order what you need, he did, and I gave the store my credit card... Easily done.. I thought to myself: This small purchase could really change the world in a good way... who knows who will blossom into a great evangelist or Pastor?

In India similarly I got a last minute request... you're preaching tomorrow... A guy will pick you up on a motor cycle.... Sure enough, there he was, and I rode on the back through rough roads for about 45 mins. We showed up, I was told to be done by a certain hour because I had to go preach at another church in the afternoon.... I told him I would not hurry, if the Holy Spirit is good enough to give me guidance.... That is what I will do no matter how long it takes... So the service went well and at the end I was told I would sit in this throne-like chair and pray for anyone who came up to receive prayer. I said I was uncomfortable sitting in such a chair, that I would simply stand. Well out of about 250 people 40 lined up for prayer.... Ok, here we go... I remember saying to the Holy Spirit you're in charge, I don't have a clue what I am doing... So having videotaped so many evangelists through the years, I thought, I'll just do what they typically do... I laid my hand or hands on the area that was in pain or needed repair and prayed... Well what do you know about 8 people actually got healed... I was shocked, but more people kept coming up so I didn't have time to ponder it... One woman, when I put my hand on her head shaked and quaked pretty rigorously, and I remember saying out loud: "I don't know what you're doing Holy Spirit, but keep doing it." It went very well... God was certainly using the foolish to confound the wise once again... Then off to the next church to preach the same prepared message. It wasn't as eventful, but the people were pleased and that was good enough for me...

Then, we stopped at a Pastor's house on the way back to eat and there were about 100 people waiting in line outside of his house. Apparently that happens every week after the service, and somehow everyone gets feed. Is this a multiplication of the loaves and fish moment? I didn't know...

So the ministry I was working for in India was pretty amazing. The people typically had to walk quite a distance to get water. They would fill their daily buckets, bottles, whatever they could carry for daily use.

This ministry would drill water wells in far more convenient places near where they lived. This was huge... not only was the water more accessible, but it was clean. People got sick from drinking contaminated water all the time, especially the children. So after the water pump was in place for awhile and more money came in, they would build a small church right next to the water pump. A plaque clearly indicated the water pump was provided by the church. People were blessed, and eventually would come to hear more about this Jesus whose servants put in the water pump. The churches were very small, but always packed with people outside

listening from every window. This was a fantastic formula to reach the lost. Sadly, the government being Hindu, decided to no longer issue visas to the ministry members and the whole process ended. They have similar efforts in Africa, but in Africa there are always open hands looking to be bribed for doing practically nothing. But permits have to be had, and officials have to be bribed. So many times the bands who planned to play at the crusades all of the sudden had additional expenses. Equipment always just broke... They needed a new X,Y, or Z. The gas we gave drivers used our gas to run errands to make extra money. I would notice things like this all the time and that evangelist what just say: "Let it go, we're here to save souls."

So that evangelist to Africa and I became fast friends. He would often tilt his head to one side asking me to speak to his good ear. One time while back in the States he came to my church to preach... While he spoke all of the sudden the Holy spirit told me his ear would be healed. I was very excited for him. I was sitting on the seat on the end of the center row just opposite the Pastor, I leaned to whisper to him: "Ken's ear is going to be healed tonight." The Pastor said, "great, you're going to pray for him." I thought to myself, no, you're the Pastor, you're supposed to pray for him.... Well, the message ended and the Pastor took the stage and boldly declared: "Ken's ear is going to be healed and Frank is going to pray for him." Everyone looked and me knowing they had never seen me do anything like that before. I slowly walked up and took the mic and said: "I have never done this, I'm only going to do what I saw in the Spirit." I put the mic down and clapped both my hands in his bad ear. His body crashed to the floor as if a supernatural force took total control of his body. There was a loud bang when his body hit the stage. He couldn't have forced his body to crash that hard. Ken was stunned, he later stated: "All I did was say I receive my healing." He got up, his ear opened up and was miraculously healed.

So I had the faith to believe anyone could get healed because I too got healed a total of 5 or 6 times. The 6th. people might question so I will too.... I told you about the first time when my daughter put her hand on my back. 2 times I was healed by a healing evangelist I produced shows for... worked on and off for him 24 years... I was running a camera, and Word he spoke was: "Someone's knees are being healed right now." I was on my guard to swing the camera toward the person receiving the healing, but no one stood up. Again, it was stated someone is being healed right now. All of the sudden I thought, is it me? My knees from many years of abuse from playing soccer were almost bone on bone... Suddenly they felt better... I moved them, they were better... so I raised my hand and told the crowd it was me... The same evangelist at another service had another Word... I was running around with a hand held camera and he said: "Shoulder, someone's shoulder is being healed." I didn't announce it this time because there was so much activity on the stage, but my very bad shoulder was perfectly healed... And that was a good thing because I was leaving for Africa the very next day, and I refused to stay home even though I probably should have... the 4th time was in Africa. I had popped my achilles heel, playing soccer, I couldn't play for months, but that wouldn't stop me from going to Africa... no way...

So a young African evangelist was preaching on stage, I was about 4 feet from him on the floor tilting the camera up at him and he looked into the camera lens and said: "Someone's heel is being healed." It was me... I tested it, and it was perfect... The 5th time I think I was healed... you decide... So I prayed for 11 years for God to heal my hip: "God it's so easy for you, give me a new hip, I can't afford the deductible, you've done it 4 times before." Well, when I became 65 years old I could get the surgery done without paying the deductible. I found one of the best hip surgeons there is... When he looked at the X-ray he said: "I don't know how you're walking?" I told him: "I've played soccer for 43 years, we always played through the pain." So the surgery was scheduled. Prior to going into the operating room I prayed for him and his team. I expected the best results and I got it... My recovery was so fast, I was walking normally 20 mins. after coming to. They wanted me to test it right after surgery, but this wasn't normal. Hours later I heard nurses comment as I was walking in the hallway... "That's the guy,



look at him.” They probably never saw such a fast recovery before. My problem was I had to slow down, and think of the fact that I just had a \$50,000 surgery and I could botch up if I didn’t give it time to strengthen properly. When the physical therapist when he came to the house asked for Frank Gibson, I told him I was he, and he said: “Well we won’t be working together very long at this pace.” Now as for 6th time I was healed, this one was maybe the most amazing. Covid had come. I was pissed. I couldn’t work for 9 months. I refused to take the Vax... wasn’t happening... I rode my bike a lot to do something useful. I kept getting pains in my chest. I would have to lay down on my back and breath for about 20 mins for the pain to go away before I got back on my bike and rode home... After about 3 times of the same thing, I thought I guess I had better make an appointment to see my doctor. Well he, afraid of the covid wasn’t seeing anybody... so I saw his associate. She checked me out and said I had better see a cardiologist as soon as possible this was very serious... I said: “OK, who?” She referred me to someone and I saw him. I was to go on a treadmill and they’d hook me up to a bunch a wires and that would tell the tale... They thought I had blockage in an artery. When I went back to the doctor he said: “We need to do and angioplasty as soon as possible.” I said: “I can’t.” He asked why? I said: “I’m going to Colorado in a few days.” He asked what I would be doing there? I said: “Hiking in the mountains.” He said I could die! I said; “Maybe, but I’m going non the less.” I had been caged up in this ridiculous covid world and now I was going to be free for 10 or 11 days... No way I wasn’t going... He said: “Well the altitude will make it more risky, but here is a bottle of nitro glycerin. If you get the pain, take it right away.” Well I was hiking and sure enough here comes the pain... I remember complaining if I die and they have to drag my body down this mountain I won’t be happy.... Well I didn’t take the nitro, got down OK and the rest of the trip was awesome. No one was allowed in the park for more than a year. The park had just opened up. The animals were everywhere... no people, just animals coming from remote places exploring new areas they wouldn’t normally go to.... So I got home successfully, went to the doctor, they scheduled the angioplasty, and before you know it I was in the hospital. But before they wired me up I had to be shaved so they could enter the vein with a tube that would go up to the artery. I was nude in a hospital gown. The nurse instructed me to put a cloth over my groin area. Without warning she pulled it off and began to shave me. I said: “We haven’t even been properly introduced...”. She smiled.... I do have a strange sense of humor.... Then so many hoses and tubes were hooked into me, they were coming out from every direction... We were about to begin when all of the sudden someone ran in and said: “We’re sorry Mr. Gibson, but someone just had a massive heart attack we have to get him in here right away.” I said “go for it.” So I’m in another room waiting and the anesthesiologist comes in to see how I’m doing... I told him I was fine... He asked me if I knew what was going to happen? I said: “Not really.” He said: “Well we’ll enter your body through vein and go up to the artery and see if there is a blockage, and we pretty much think there is. We might have to put in a stint, but we don’t want to.” I asked: “Why don’t you want to?” He said: “Well any foreign object in your body isn’t a good thing.” I said: “Well then I don’t want a stint.” He said: “You might have to get one.” I said: “No I don’t, I’m going to pray against it.” He looked at me like I was nuts, and left the room. Later, they wheeled me back into the operating room and I told the head nurse I wanted to pray with the team. She said she wasn’t sure the surgeon would do that. I said: “Ask him.” She said it was OK to pray... and with the team of around 8 people surrounding me I prayed: “Heavenly Father you are such a good and wonderful God, I love and honor you so much. I don’t want a stint. I want this procedure to go as smooth as possible without any complications. The artery will be cleared and I will not get a stint in the name of Jesus.” They put me out so fast it may have taken less than a minute... then they brought be back out... and the nurse excitedly said: “Frank, Frank, it was just as you said, there was no blockage, we didn’t put in a stint... look at the monitor... it’s clear as can be... you’re good for at least 5 years... I simply said: “Praise God.” By the way I never had chest pains again. God is a good God...

So as I inferred before, the covid made me frustrated and angry, the world was shut down for what? I thought.... Even if people died at least they were living a productive life, not trapped in

a cage...being forced to wear a mask and get the vax. Because I refused to cooperate, I couldn't work for about 9 months. I often quoted the New Hampshire state Motto: Live Free or Die. Luckily Florida opened up before most states and I started to work again... I always loved my work, this was ridiculous! Thank God my church never stopped meeting. The Pastors were right to stay open... The attendance was small for awhile but in a few months we were back to normal. One week we were told we were going to be given a prophetic Word for each member. I deliberately waited to the very end of the line, I wanted to be the last person. I said to my Pastor, you better pray in tongues.... She said why? I said: "I need to hear from God and I'm not playing... He can either use me or lose me... what I meant very earnestly was if I can't do anything productive for you Lord, take me home... I'm ready to die... 5 different mission trips were cancelled. I had flown to Washington DC changing planes to go to Africa when the trip was cancelled, I had to fly back to Florida for what?. I had had enough... So the Pastor prayed in tongues, had a Word for me, but that wasn't it. As I was leaving, obviously frustrated, another leader of the church asked: "What's going on? Why are you so desperate?" I told him, then I immediately had a Ah Ha moment... wait a minute... I thought, one time I fasted and prayed for 3 days and I got the answer I needed.. That's what I would do... Sure enough 2 days later I got the Word: Christ Out of the Box.com In a split second God downloaded what I was to do... I would shoot videos for a website that give ideas as to how to evangelize and messages about Bible prophesy that few people want to talk about. So God gave me a purpose. I could be productive again... I produced the videos, the messages, interviewed all kinds of Godly people about their ministries and the website still exists today.... I wasn't getting a lot of views, and when I asked the Lord about that I believed the Lord said: "If just one great man or woman of God is encouraged to serve Me, the website was worth it." That's good enough for me.... At least I finally felt good about myself working as He instructed me...

So life goes on... I'm still trying to serve the Lord in anyway I can as He instructs. I try to share my faith with people. I try to teach here and there. I had a great God moment recently. I was in Panama and I drove to the beach. The sign clearly indicated to take a dirt road. As I drove, the dirt became sand and the sand got deeper and deeper. After about 1 mile I thought this is getting worse... I could easily get stuck on this one lane sandy road and I am in the middle of nowhere... I only saw one four wheel drive vehicle coming from the other direction, I was driving a small SUV not equipped for this road. So I pulled a K turn and started heading back. A few minutes later, I was stuck. I did all that I knew to do, nothing worked... I prayed: "Lord I could be stuck out here for hours, I could walk back, but I need the car to continue to travel for the next 6 days... There's no Triple A out here... You have to get me out of this, it's the only way...". 4 minutes later I see a truck coming my way in the distance. I practiced what I would try to say in Spanish... I went up to the driver side and to my surprise the driver was an American lobster fisherman from Maine... a real man's man. He had a rope and a truck that could pull me out... I gave him some money to have lunch on me with his family... a beautiful Panamanian wife and daughter... About an hour and a half later they pulled into the restaurant that I was at, right on the beach. We had a great time together, talking for about an hour or so... I witnessed to him... seemed like another divine appointment to me? His wife knew God, but he wasn't a believer... the wife was ecstatic that I shared my faith. She encouraged me to do so...

Hopefully we all have encounters with God. We certainly all have challenges, especially in this economy... but I truly believe a semblance of balance in life cannot be achieved without God. Mistakes are made all the time by everyone.... But it's important to talk to God regularly. Let the Holy Spirit guide you... God knows everything about you, He created you... He knows about the world and what is to come... You'd be stupid not to capitalize on that wealth of knowledge that He has that He is willing to use to benefit you! You know, the closer you are to anyone, the better you know them... How do you get to know them? Spend time with them,

it's simple. Likewise with God, talk to God about everything. Pray to Him for everything. The more time you spend with Him the faster it seems you get a response from Him because He knows you. Paul speaks in the Bible about walking in the spirit. You might think it's hard to get there, but it's worth the effort to try. And through time and experience with God you will come to know who you are in Christ. At that point you really won't care when people criticize you or come against you... you will only care about what He thinks.

One other piece of advise is to praise Him often, but especially when you think you're in trouble... Trust Him, He wants you to trust Him. Which brings up a memory from years ago... I was working a shoot and my wife called me in a panic: "The roof is on fire, come home right away." I couldn't, I was in the middle of a shoot with one of my best clients. I told her I would come home as soon as I could. Roofers were replacing our roof and when they used a fire torch to heat and seal the flat roof materials they caught on fire what appeared to have been a rat's nest. The house caught on fire in a flash. So I was able to wrap up the shoot early and I was on my way home. I remember thinking... Wow, that portion of the roof is right above all my video equipment. If it's burned up that could really affect my business... I was tabulating what it might cost, back then video equipment was so much more expensive than today... A typical broadcast video camera started at \$26,000. Today you can shoot a movie with a \$4,000 camera... So while driving I decided to trust the Lord. I was singing and praising Him to Christian CDs on the car stereo. I was so joyous it was amazing... I wasn't concerned at all... I remember thinking, Lord I know this situation will turn out great... if I get new equipment it will only make my business better... I finally arrived at my house, the fire trucks were finished and the fire was out. There was a big hole in the roof, but it was about 12 feet from my equipment closet. The roofer had to repair the roof and finish the job, it really was no big deal at all except for the fact that our house smelled like smoke for quite awhile.... I put my situation in God's hands and trusted Him to take care of me... He did.

One amazing experience where I didn't consciously put my situation in His hands, but as it turned out... He took control of my situation where I wasn't totally unprepared. For the last 25 years or so I have volunteered to help an organization Called Somebody Cares Tampa Bay. They've done great things for God. The biggest thing they did in my opinion was to get churches to put on a huge event called: "Raise the Roof." We had a Christian music concert before the Tampa Bay Rays games. We have players give their testimonies, ministers give brief messages, and it was very successful... If you bought a ticket for the concert you went to the game for free. The concert happened before the game and that yielded the largest crowds for the game attendance. Many Christians went to a baseball game because they really wanted to go to the concert. That may have added to the fan base? I think we did this very successfully for 4 years? One year we had an Australian female singer named Rebecca St. James perform. In the years previous I would run a camera and get another cameraman to run another camera while we also had the benefit of 2 cameramen provided by the Rays team. Their director would switch cameras for the jumbo screen in the outfield and we would record everything in the control room. Well this one year when Rebecca was to perform the director said he wasn't going to switch cameras.... He said he wasn't going to be paid anything extra and I had to get my own director. Well I had no one... I've called shots plenty of times, but actually punching the buttons was another skill I never had. Fades, cross fades, dissolves... you get the idea... So I sat at the board and attempted to fake it till I made it... I was doing OK, and then I began to be very, very creative having the frame filled with a tight shot of the singer while bringing up a full body shot of the singer... all blending to the pace of the music... I was creating beautiful images that I really wasn't capable of doing... I was filled with the Holy Spirit in this amazing state and I realized: I wan't doing this... The Holy Spirit was directing me to direct the show... I was so touched to be used in this powerful way I began to cry as I was working... It was like I was in a beautiful bubble and everything was going so well and I had nothing to do with it... Wouldn't it be great if we could just let go of ourselves and let God control our every step...

You may have heard this: God is the Father of the Fatherless.... In my case it is so true... I couldn't live without Him. The family structure in our society more often than not is greatly flawed... My example is bad, but there are worse situations where the children are abused... Parents on drugs, booze, you name it... Parents cheat, decide to change sexes out of the blue, things are extremely unbalanced... but God is always there for you. He will encourage you, love you no matter what you do...

More than anything I want to convey this: If you follow His Word to the best of your ability, try to serve Him faithfully, let Him take control of your life and talk to Him regularly you will be happy, fulfilled, and balanced...

I pray you have benefited in some way by reading this book. God Bless, Frank

The END....