



EXPERIENCING
GOD[®]
AROUND THE
KITCHEN TABLE



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EXPERIENCING
GOD
AROUND THE
KITCHEN TABLE



LIFE LESSONS FROM
Marilynn Blackaby
with Carrie Blackaby Webb

Experiencing God Around the Kitchen Table

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From Marilyn

I have experienced different seasons in my life: growing up in the family home, marriage and children, and life after the children are grown. I would like to dedicate this book to my parents, Melvin and Carrie Wells. They gave me a strong foundation in the first season of my life, which helped me experience all the joys and success that later would come as I walked with the Lord.



From Carrie

I would like to dedicate this book to my two children, Elizabeth and Joshua, with the prayers that I can be the same example that my mother was for me.

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FOREWORD

Experiencing God Around the Kitchen Table could easily be called *A Mother and Wife's Testimony to the Faithfulness of God*. Throughout the pages of this book, Marilyn is transparent and honest about her life as a mother and wife: her pain, her fears, her joys and tears, her expectations and their fulfillment, and her daily trust in the faithfulness of God.

As her husband, I can bear witness to her unwavering trust in God. Though often tested in her faith, she never failed to trust Him for His wisdom, goodness, and provision.

This book contains an honest and timely look back at a lifetime of struggle and pain. But through it all, Marilyn was always a happy person who was overflowing with much laughter and joy. Her music—at the piano, singing—always filled the house (and often the neighborhood) with music. Her gift of song brought delight to those around her and continues to do so even to this day.

As I read this manuscript, I learned a lot about my wonderful wife of 47 years. Although we went through many of these experiences together, it was very inspiring and humbling to see these events through the eyes of my wife. I know that this book will encourage many women as they identify with her life and her experiences.

To me, Marilyn's life is a clear example of God's promises, especially 1 Samuel 2:30: "Those who honor Me, I will honor." She sought at all times to honor God. From the time she was a little girl, honoring her Lord was, and continues to be, the passion of her

life. This passion led her to be involved in all the mission organizations of her church, especially in her college years. Because of this, she has always brought a heart for missions to our marriage. So we both, with one heart, have laid our lives, our marriage, and our children before God for His eternal purposes.

Is it any wonder that this resulted in our home having an atmosphere in which God could call all five of our children into some form of ministry? All five are, to this day, in full-time ministry. In our marriage, we have never struggled with any call or assignment from God in missions. Even in our “retirement years,” we are overwhelmed by all God continues to let us do around the world.

Marilynn continues to be a godly helpmate, as God designed her to be (Genesis 2:18). She is a helper not only to her family but to almost everyone she meets—especially in her church and neighborhood. She is an amazing person shaped by God (Ephesians 2:19–22). Her life is also a picture of the virtuous woman, fully described in Proverbs 31:10–31. She is always working with her hands, sewing, knitting, and making things for her family, missionaries, and the needy around her. And Proverbs 31:28 is her reward: “Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.”

We welcome you to our home, around our kitchen table, to hear the stories of God’s faithfulness.

—HENRY T. BLACKABY

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the years, God has allowed me to encounter many lives and share with others about the Lord. After hearing about what God has done in our lives, people are often interested in how we were able to remain faithful through all the different hardships and challenges and to complete all that God has led us to do. Many have told me that I need to write these stories down so that others can be encouraged by seeing God's faithfulness. After so many years, I feel that God does want me to share some of what He has taught me through my experiences with Him.

My main purpose in writing this for you is to encourage you to know God and to trust Him, to be obedient, and to learn how faithful He is. You are not alone in your struggles, nor do you have to face them alone. God cares for you just as He cares for my family and me, and He is always faithful! I would like to share with you some of the things I have learned through the years I've walked with the Lord, and I want to encourage you that not only does God have a special purpose for your life, He will show you every step of the way! There is nothing better than knowing that your life is pleasing to the Lord.

While I was in college, my favorite scripture was Jeremiah 33:3—"Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." Many years later, I have now experienced the truth of this amazing scripture in my life. Every morning my husband and I sit and talk about the great and

mighty things God has done, as well as the many things He continues to teach us. It hasn't all been easy. God has led us to some very difficult and challenging places. But through it all, we have learned how to walk with God and be obedient to Him. And after these many years, we have the privilege of looking back and seeing how everything, both the good and the bad, works together for God's purposes.

As we walk through these pages together, my prayer is that you will see that real-life challenges come to all of us, not only inside the home but outside, and that you will see how God makes the difference in every situation. There are times of laughter and heartache, of struggle and triumph, but through it all, there is a faithful God who loves us. Many of you could also tell numerous stories of how God has worked in your lives, and I hope that this book will encourage you to remain faithful to Him. For those of you who are at the beginning of your spiritual journey, I hope this book will help you desire more of God and not settle for anything less than His best!

—MARILYNN BLACKABY

During a trip to Germany to visit our family, my mother was asked to lead a women's retreat for all the missionaries in the area. She spoke from her heart and out of her experience with the Lord. Her sharing brought encouragement and a time of refreshing, as well as a challenge to remain faithful to the Lord. It was a powerful time that I have not forgotten.

My mother has led countless conferences and has encouraged, counseled, loved, and cried with many people through the years.

She understands the tough times, and she understands how to go through these experiences with the Lord. As well as being a pastor's wife and a partner in the ministry, she has also raised five children to understand the love of the Lord. This is quite a feat, in my opinion!

With the writing of this book come many prayers that it would be an encouragement to all women who are in the middle of God's activity and would like to hear from one who can testify to God's faithfulness. This is not a biography. Our goal is to tell life stories in a way that will reflect the biblical principles that have directed my mother's life. We will also seek to answer many of the questions that have been asked throughout the years:

How did you raise all five children to serve the Lord?

How did you get everything done and not allow your relationship with the Lord to suffer?

How did you know God's will?

How did you remain faithful to the Lord in the midst of crises?

We have also included some examples of women whom God has used through the ages—some from Scripture, and others from different periods of history to the present day. We hope that by seeing examples of faithful women, it will become clear that God chooses ordinary women to accomplish extraordinary things. He can use anyone He chooses to accomplish His purpose; we must only obey Him. We hope that through these stories, you will find laughter and encouragement for your own life and your daily walk with the Lord. So join us now as we sit around the kitchen table with my mom, and she shares her spiritual journey.

—CARRIE BLACKABY WEBB

1

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

*To everything there is a season, a time
for every purpose under heaven.*

—Ecclesiastes 3:1

“Please don’t pray anymore that Marilyn will survive,” the doctor told my parents. “If she does recover, the high fever she has will have destroyed her mind.”

Just after my fifth birthday, I became extremely ill. At first the doctors weren’t overly concerned, because both my brother and sister had the flu, and they assumed I had the same thing. However, when my mother couldn’t get me out of the fetal position, and I was unresponsive to her appeals, my parents rushed me to the hospital and found that my appendix had ruptured and my condition was critical.

The hospital was sparsely staffed because of World War II, which compounded the gravity of the situation. The doctors fought to save my life, but no one thought I would survive. A special nurse was assigned to me, and on three separate occasions, she went out to the nurses’ station to resign because she couldn’t bear the thought of being in the room when I died. It was my godly mother who never left my side, day or night. She constantly prayed for me regardless of what the doctors told her, and she asked for God’s will to be done.

After 15 days, I finally awakened from my coma and saw my mother sitting beside me. She looked at me, and her first words

were, “Marilynn, God has saved your life for a purpose. You must always do whatever He wants you to do.”

*“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,”
says the LORD, “thoughts of peace and not
of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”
—Jeremiah 29:11*

GOD HAD A SPECIAL PURPOSE FOR MY LIFE

That day I told the Lord that I would do whatever He wanted me to do and that He could have my life and my future. I was only five and didn't know how to read, but from that moment on, I talked to God, and He always answered (Jeremiah 33:3). It set a pattern for my life that continues to this day. For many years, I didn't tell anyone that I talked to God and He talked to me, because *Experiencing God* had not been written yet, and I didn't know that talking to God was okay! I was afraid that people would think there was something wrong with me. Yet from this point on, I truly believed that God had a special plan for my life. Through the years, the doctors' warnings about the high fevers destroying my mind have provided me with a wonderful excuse for my forgetfulness, because I have a doctor's explanation!

I've always been so grateful my mother told me that God had saved my life for a purpose. Those words have come back to me when I have faced difficult decisions, and they have helped me seek God's direction for my life. Before my mother passed away, I was

given the opportunity to talk to her about how special this experience was to me. She also remembered how God had impressed on her to share those words and what He had revealed to her during those difficult days by my bedside. Understanding that God had a special purpose for me set the course for my life. I realize that God has a plan for everyone's life, but because of my brush with death, I grew up with the exciting realization that I needed to walk closely with Him so I would know what He wanted me to do.

*He who heeds the word wisely will find good,
and whoever trusts in the LORD, happy is he.
— Proverbs 16:20*

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH

God chose to place me in a family that had a deep love and respect for the Lord (Genesis 17:7; 2 Timothy 1:5). Just as my mother ingrained in me the knowledge that God had a special plan for my life, my father taught me how important it was to grow and mature in my relationship with the Lord through the church. Although our family was not able to afford a car when my sister and I were small, it never stopped my father from doing what he saw as his responsibility. All through my early years, my parents would carry my older sister and me to church every time the doors were open. Fellowship and learning from other believers were so important to my parents that they willingly made the sacrifice to get us to church.

A few years later, when my brother was born, my father was finally able to buy a car. I remember him making several trips each

Sunday to different neighborhoods, picking up all the adults and children who didn't have a way to get to church. My father didn't want people saying that they couldn't attend church because they didn't have a ride. He believed that missions was the assignment of

MADAME JEANNE GUYON

(1648–1717)

Madame Guyon¹ was born into French high society and raised in Catholic schools and convents. As a girl, she sought after God and His direction. She so desired to be like Christ, she attached a piece of paper, inscribed with His name, to her shirt as a continual reminder of Him and His will. Through much tribulation and sorrow, she grew to believe that with quiet reflection and time before the Lord, one can obtain spiritual perfection. That is, all can stand blameless before the Lord—not sinless, but blameless. All must seek God Himself and not just His gifts. We must be nothing ourselves before we can receive His fullness. For years Madame Guyon taught that inward holiness regulates our outward life, and that holiness is based on faith alone. She was later imprisoned when church leaders became jealous of her popularity, and her early books were burned. Yet her life and writings profoundly influenced many of God's future leaders, among them John Wesley, Andrew Murray, Hudson Taylor, Watchman Nee, and Adoniram Judson. Although she never asked to be justified before others, God did justify her and allowed her influence to span the generations.²

every believer and helping others find the Lord was essential for every Christian.

When we moved from Oklahoma to California, where the churches were smaller than where I grew up, my father told us that if we felt called to be missionaries, we might as well get started. Making friends, bringing them to church, and telling them about Jesus became a way of life for us. If God brought others into our lives, it was our responsibility to share the good news of Christ with them. The simple belief that sharing Christ was our responsibility, combined with seeing at an early age how God worked through our lives, helped prepare me for the path that God had laid out for my life.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.”

—Jeremiah 1:5

GOD’S PURPOSE FOR ME IN MARRIAGE

Knowing that God had a plan for my life, I couldn’t help but be excited about the future. No matter what it included—an interesting career, a husband and family, or living the missionary life alone on the plains of Africa—I was ready! I had no doubt that whatever God planned, it would be an adventure, and His will for my life would be perfect. I was young and energetic, and although I knew there would be difficult days ahead, I was ready to serve the Lord. I also believed that if God prepared a husband for me, I would know and clearly recognize whom He had provided when the time came. Because of this, I decided not to date seriously or outside of a group setting in the same way many of my friends did but to wait

until I knew that God had brought the right person to me. While attending college in California, I knew that I wanted to marry, but I also knew that I would rather stay single than get involved with the wrong man.

During Christmas break, in 1958, my older sister was getting married to a man who attended a seminary in San Francisco. I was so excited for her and thrilled to be involved in her wedding. It just so happened that her fiancé's roommate was to be the best man. Some of my girlfriends had met his roommate, and I asked them if I would like him. They all said, "No, Marilyn, he's much too quiet for you!" But when I met Henry Blackaby, I knew he was not only the best man for my sister's fiancé, but he was the best man for me as well. Two months later, we were engaged, even though we lived five hundred miles apart.

God made it clear to me—not only in my heart and through what He was saying to me in prayer, but also through what I read in Scripture—that Henry was the man He had for me. And it was clear not only to me and to Henry but to everyone around us as well.

Marrying Henry was the easiest decision I had ever made, and the most important one, next to my decision to follow Christ. For not only was God providing me with a husband, He was also presenting me with a ministry partner and a godly father for our future children. There were purposes that God could accomplish only through us as a couple. He knew there would be difficult times that would require a strong marriage to survive. He also knew that we would have five children who would need the foundation of a strong Christian home for all He would call them to do as He worked out His purposes in their lives.

Then he said, "The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth."

—Acts 22:14

GOD'S LONG-TERM PREPARATION

God prepares our lives, bringing us through experiences for reasons that we don't completely comprehend. Looking back, the path God took Henry and me down is easy to recognize, but at the time, all we knew to do was to be obedient and trust Him to lead us.

The year my sister was married, I applied for a summer missions program through my college. I believed that God wanted me to be involved in missions, but I didn't know where. I decided not to select a location on my application but to leave the place of service up to the Lord. I faced a complication, however, because the missions interview was scheduled to take place during the wedding celebrations. I had to make a decision, but I knew I could never miss something so important to my family as my sister's wedding.

Although I was disappointed not to be able to go to the interview, I knew that God would show me what He wanted me to do. What I didn't know was that because the people in charge of the missions program knew me, they bypassed the interview process and assigned me to a place they had never sent anyone before. Much to my amazement, they sent me to the northwest section of Washington State, but technically my position of service was over the Canadian border in the city of Vancouver. I was thrilled to go

to Canada, and through this experience, God gave me an amazing opportunity to see what our denomination's pioneer work there was like.

That summer I took so many surveys that I wore out a pair of shoes! I also worked with three two-week Vacation Bible Schools for children in different locations. The work was difficult, and I saw through this experience that Canada truly is a different country. The work, the attitudes, the churches, the culture, the responses, and the spiritual traditions—everything was completely different from my experience in the United States. God had a special purpose for my life that summer, and it will always stand out in my mind.

Although Henry was still attending seminary in California, I was able to arrange to meet his family in Vancouver for the first time. Henry's family is Canadian, so they were quite interested in getting acquainted with the American girl who had captured Henry's heart. I was also able to meet and work alongside the church leadership of my denomination in Canada. Little did I know at the time that I was about to join them in ministry there and would be working with them for several years to come. Quite a few years later, my oldest son's doctoral dissertation traced the history of our denomination in Canada. Much to my amazement, as I read his work, I realized that I knew all of the names he mentioned, and I remembered the work in those early developmental years. What a privilege to be part of it!

This experience also provided me with years of laughter. Among the small group of missionaries who were sent to work in Canada that summer was a young man who was assigned to Saska-

toon, Saskatchewan. We mercilessly teased him, insisting that he would drop off the end of the world way out there, and we would never see him again! We never did see or hear from him again, which just confirmed our suspicions. Ironically, 12 years later, people told Henry and me the same thing as God led us to work in Saskatoon!

*[God] chose us in [Christ] before the foundation
of the world, that we should be holy and
without blame before Him in love.*

—Ephesians 1:4

*[God] made known to us the mystery of His will,
according to His good pleasure which
He purposed in Himself.*

—Ephesians 1:9

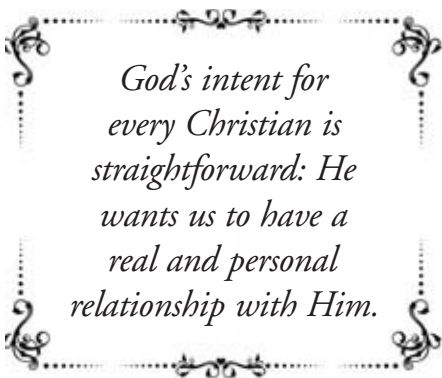
SEEING GOD'S ACTIVITY

After a few years in Saskatoon, our home was continually filled with kids. Not only did we have five children of our own, but I often cared for the two boys across the street and any of my children's other friends who wanted to come over. Our older three boys shared bedrooms in the basement, which also contained a small game and recreation area. With both our front and side doors located off the kitchen, where I was usually working, I often felt like the gatekeeper for all who wanted to spend time at our house.

One day, instead of opening the door and sending a friend of

my boys straight downstairs, I stopped and asked him how he was doing. Almost immediately he began to share something he was struggling with. Although I was incredibly busy, God nudged me to stop what I was doing and take some time to listen to this hurting and troubled youth. We sat together at the kitchen table, and I put everything on hold while we talked. Two hours later, when the boys came up for dinner, they were surprised to find their friend, whom they assumed had never arrived.

Dinner that evening was late and quickly thrown together, but



I was glad I didn't allow my responsibilities to distract me from God's activity. Clearly, only God working in this teenage boy's life could have caused him to share with me all that he needed to that day. After that experience, I always took time to ask guests how

they were doing, and every now and then my boys would find their friends sharing with me around our kitchen table.

To know that God has a plan for our lives and to understand that purpose is the heartfelt desire of most Christians. We want to obey God's call and purpose for us, if only we knew what it was. God's intent for every Christian is straightforward: He wants us to have a real and personal relationship with Him (Colossians 1:24–27; Romans 1:6). It's that simple. When we have a deep and growing relationship with the Lord, He will guide us throughout each day.

When we faithfully obey Him, He will reveal more and more of His nature and His ways to us. As we mature, so does the way He works in our lives, and this leads to an exciting life with Christ.

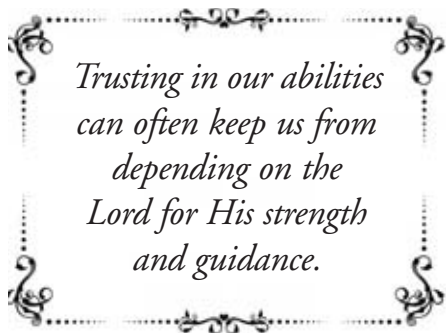
As busy as I was as a pastor's wife and mother of five, I could easily have come to resent the fact that so many other children kept showing up on my doorstep. Instead, God opened my eyes to the significant work He was doing in the lives of these young people, and He invited me to join Him in that activity.

God wants us to understand His plan—even in the little things. Before He gave me the wisdom and insight to help the boy I mentioned earlier, He waited for me to obey—to stop my own activity and listen. Often, it's difficult to realize that God waits for us to obey, and possibly repent of something in our lives, before He will use us for His purpose.

We can easily miss God's activity if we're not actively aware and looking for it. Sometimes we can miss God's activity because we tend to make things more complicated than they actually are (Philippians 3:8–10, Luke

10:38–42). We can be so concerned about finding God's will for our lives that we don't pay attention to what God has placed right in front of us. Being preoccupied with daily responsibilities can leave us unaware

of what God is doing around us (Philippians 3:8–10). We can also be so involved with church programs and weekly activities that we



miss what God wants us to do. We can be so focused on what *we* think we're gifted at doing that we fail to recognize when God is seeking to do a fresh work through our lives by using our weaknesses. God only equips us for His assignments as we obey Him, not before. Trusting in our abilities can often keep us from depending on the Lord for His strength and guidance (Psalm 25:9).

The example of Moses, who turned aside from his work to encounter God and to receive God's invitation, still applies to us today. When Moses saw the burning bush, he turned aside to see this great sight (Exodus 3:1–4). God talked to Moses only after he stopped what he had been doing and came to Him. In this same way, God will also extend to us an invitation to join Him and His activity. We must adjust our lives, no matter what we're involved with at the time, and follow Him.

So when the LORD saw that he [Moses] turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

—Exodus 3:4

WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE?

As I've talked with many people around the world, the questions I'm most often asked are: "How did you know God's purpose for your life?" and "How can I know what God wants me to do?" Simply put, it's a daily process that God will reveal as you grow in your love relationship through obedience.

While I was visiting our daughter in Germany several years ago, I was filled with the sense that God wanted me to be part of a missions trip. I discussed it with her, commenting that this was the first time God had asked me to be involved in a missions venture without my husband. I had no idea what it would entail, but I knew God was preparing me for something, and I was ready to obey. I flew home, and the next day I received a call from a leader in my church. He needed me to go on a missions trip to Cambodia to teach smocking and sewing. If I hadn't been prepared by the Lord for this call, I wouldn't have been ready for this development. Instead, I knew that the Lord wanted me to go on this trip, and after sharing with my husband, I signed up to go.

I encountered many roadblocks in the months between the decision to go and the actual trip. In fact, if I had relied on logic, I would have canceled. First of all, there were some serious health complications with several members of the team, and my husband had also been seriously ill in the hospital. In addition, after the tickets were booked, I was told of an oversight that had occurred in my schedule. I was due to return to Atlanta two hours *after* I was to leave for a two-week trip to Africa. I had to change my tickets to come home one day early, without the rest of the team. This left me with only 22 hours to wash clothes and prepare for the other trip. But in spite of these difficulties, I knew that God wanted me to go on this trip.

I worked harder than I've ever worked on any project. It took months to get together the materials and the equipment needed to teach the class. Never having taught something like this before, I

spent countless hours preparing my presentations and considering how to best demonstrate the new techniques. It was an exciting challenge for me.

While in Cambodia, the rest of the church group worked as a medical team, and I was sent to another location to train the local women in smocking and sewing, skills that would help them earn a living. This was the first time I had done anything like this—especially without my husband. I worked from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. every day in the heat and communicated through a translator. Yet I know that God blessed my time there. The women were deeply appreciative, and it gave me an open door to share the love of Christ. Since this trip, the women have used their ability to sell clothing and other handmade things at the local craft fairs, and the smocking and sewing have brought more money into the community than the locals would make in months of work. It gave the believers working in the area an open door to establish relationships as well as help the community have a better way of life. Through this experience, God allowed me to be part of something I had always dreamed of doing: serving on the international mission field with indigenous people.

God loves me, and it was out of His love for me that He sent me to represent Him and share His love through practical means. Scripture tells us that out of our love relationship with God, He will reveal His ways and His purpose for our lives. We can see many examples of this relationship in Scripture: Abraham, through whom He created a nation for Himself; Moses, who was used of God to lead His people out of captivity; Esther, who was chosen by God to save His people from annihilation; Mary, through whom God

sent His Son into the world; the apostle Paul, who ultimately wrote much of the New Testament and was chosen to take the gospel message to the world; and countless other examples. That should be a huge weight off our shoulders! We don't have to be stressed out trying to find God's will for our lives. What we need to be seeking is God Himself. If we're pursuing the Lord and His righteousness, then everything will be added to us (Matthew 6:33)—including knowing His will for our lives.

God speaks to us in many different ways (Hebrews 1:1–2), and when He does, we ought to embrace what He has for us. God's ways are always best! At times, He knows we don't have the faith and trust to follow where He is leading, so He will wait to reveal something new to us. If we truly want to follow the Lord, we don't get to pick and choose the way we go; we can only follow Him (Matthew 4:18–22). That's what being obedient is all about.

Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants." Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."

— Genesis 50:18–20

GOD HAS A PURPOSE FOR US TODAY

As you read through these pages, you may be able to completely relate to some of the things I've talked about. You may have grown

up in a Christian home where one or both parents helped nurture in you the same sense of purpose I had. But if that was not your reality, God can still use your life for Him, even without the influence of a Christian upbringing. What is most important to God isn't *when* you chose to trust Him but that you love Him *now* with all of your heart.

God's ways haven't changed, nor have His purposes. The same God who purposed to build a nation from Abraham is the same God who intended that I would survive my trauma at age five. The same God who revealed Himself to Jeanne Guyon, who influenced countless people to seek holiness in their lives, is the same God who encounters our lives today. We can always count on God to have a plan and to complete it, and His plan will often be completely different from what we're expecting.



God has a purpose for our lives, and He wants us to know what His will is (Ephesians 2:10). He won't hide it from us and leave us confused and uncertain, but we must watch for His activity and obey Him. Our job is not to seek God's will but rather to seek after God Himself (Matthew 6:33). We must live before the Lord in such a way that when He reveals His plan to us, we have nothing in our lives that would hinder our obedience to him. God isn't concerned with our "doing" His will; He is concerned with who we are in Christ. When our hearts are completely centered in God, He will use us to complete His purposes, which will always lead to a deeper and more meaningful relationship with Him. God's purpose is for something much greater than we could imagine, and we

could never accomplish it without taking the steps to grow in our relationship with Him. Spiritual maturity doesn't happen overnight; it happens with each little step of obedience, and we're all on this journey together!

*The LORD of hosts has sworn,
saying, "Surely, as I have thought,
so it shall come to pass, and as I
have purposed, so it shall stand."*

—Isaiah 14:24

QUESTIONS FOR DEEPER REFLECTION

1. Knowing that God is more concerned with your character than with what you can do for Him, how have you recognized or experienced God shaping who you are? In what ways has He accomplished this? What characteristics is He currently working on?
2. God works daily in and around our lives. Often, the little things make the biggest impact on lives around us: taking time to listen to another person, asking the right questions, turning aside in the middle of a busy day to refocus our attention on the Lord. As you evaluate your day, are you careful with the "little things"? Did God bring an opportunity your way today that allowed Him to work through you to touch another person? If not, ask Him to give you a chance to make an impact on others every day, and commit to obey Him when the opportunities come your way.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Since God has an eternal purpose for each of us, it should cause us to live with the expectation of seeing Him work through our lives. How do you see God working out His purposes in your lives?
2. Discuss how a challenging situation you are currently facing is causing you to trust the Lord more and grow in your Christian walk and relationship with Christ.
3. No matter what our background is, God has a plan to bring each of us joy and completeness in Him. If God has helped you overcome something from your past, please share how He has healed you and made you stronger.

NOTES

Chapter 1

1. We highly recommend Madame Guyon's book *Experiencing God Through Prayer* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1984), arranged and revised by Donna C. Arthur.
2. Edith Deen, *Great Women of the Christian Faith* (Chappaqua, NY: Christian Herald Books, 1959), 130-40.

Chapter 2

1. Henry Blackaby and Carrie Blackaby Webb, *Prepared to Be God's Vessel* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2006).
2. Ruth A. Tucker and Walter L. Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 308.
3. Edith Deen, *Great Women of the Christian Faith* (Chappaqua, NY: Christian Herald Books, 1959), 248.
4. *Ibid.*, 249.
5. *Ibid.*, 252.
6. *Ibid.*, 249.
7. *Ibid.*, 247-54.

Chapter 3

1. Edith Deen, *Great Women of the Christian Faith* (Chappaqua, NY: Christian Herald Books, 1959), 243.
2. *Ibid.*, 240-46.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

MARILYNN SUE BLACKABY is the wife of Henry Blackaby, author of *Experiencing God*. Marilynn has been a pastor's wife for 30 years and is a much sought-after speaker on the difference God can make in your everyday life. She has led many women's retreats and Experiencing God for Couples conferences, and she has a deep passion for helping people understand the love of the Lord. For her efforts in counseling and encouraging others, she was given an honorary doctor of discipleship from California Baptist University, where she also earned her bachelor's degree. Currently, along with traveling and speaking with her husband, Marilynn serves as the business manager for Blackaby Ministries International. She is the mother of five children, who have all dedicated their lives to the Lord's service. She is also delighted to be the grandmother of 14 grandchildren.



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Blackaby Ministries (www.blackaby.org) was established to respond to increasing opportunities for ministry globally. The key ministries that make up Blackaby Ministries International:

- Marketplace Ministry
- Writing Articles
- Training Institute
- International Conferences
- Preaching / Teaching / Speaking

The heart-cry of the Blackaby family is to disciple God's people in such a way that God's Holy Spirit would bring revival in the hearts of God's people and spiritual awakening to a lost world.