

**This is Chapter 2 of
Simply a Woman Of Faith
A book by
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(6 June 2007)**

CHAPTER 2

HELP ME TO BELIEVE

How God Guides Through Open and Closed Doors

My life changed thirty years ago when I walked into that little bookstore. On that day, my browsing led me to a small book called *How God Guides Us* (Manna Christian Outreach, Basham, 1975.) Tucked away on the back of the wooden bookshelf, I almost missed the tiny book with one hundred pages.

Only a buck, I thought silently - I couldn't resist the bargain. When I returned home that day, I read it from cover to cover in two hours.

When I don't know if something is God's will or my will, I pray, "God open or close the door." It hurts when the door is slammed in my face and I'm left wandering in the hallway until the next door opens. God must get a chuckle when I'm banging and pleading with Him to do something. Here's where the trust and faith come in.

"Closed doors are a valid part of guidance. When God closes a door, it's because there is another plan, a better plan. If He closes one door, He'll open another – according to His timing, not mine. I keep moving in faith, even in the face of closed doors."

(Basham, 1975)

I may be guided to do one thing and then when I get there, God has something else in mind. He doesn't tell me His full plan ahead of time, which is probably good. That's His

way. Mine is to love, trust and follow.

Guidance comes when I move in faith, not when I sit in doubt. I step out in faith, trusting that if I make a mistake, God will correct it and get me back on the right path for my life. I've made plenty of mistakes along the way, but have always been protected and led back to where I need to be. It's not easy to hear God in the midst of our busy lives. Sometimes, it doesn't make sense and I question if I am really hearing God or not. When I'm faithful in listening to the seemingly small things, I will be led in more important ways. For example, the next incident my listening didn't seem important, but it turned out to be the right thing to do.

Walking into the building from the parking lot where I work, I heard the small still voice of God say

GO IN ANOTHER DOOR

But God, I'm already late, why do I have to go in another door? What difference does it make what door I go in? I silently argued. Will I miss something important if I don't listen? I wondered.

I reluctantly turned around and headed for the other door.

God, is this my imagination? What is it I'm supposed to learn or do?

As I hurried back to my office, I heard over the loud speaker that the meeting I needed to attend was starting in five minutes.

Oh, that's right, the meeting. Thank you God for reminding me.

I forgot all about the meeting and would have missed it if I'd gone in the other door and missed the announcement. Once in the door, I ran into my co-worker Donna with whom I'd been playing phone tag for several days. We talked face to face about the

patient who recently overdosed on heroin and was in the intensive care unit. This wouldn't have happened if I walked through the other door.

God is not only interested in guiding us in the big things in our lives, but the small ones as well. Do you listen, even when it doesn't make sense?

God acts as my real estate agent

God, what should I do? I don't want to make a mistake. Please help me. What is your will for me? I have to make up my mind, whether to sell or re-mortgage my house.

I could no longer afford the high monthly mortgage payment because of my impending divorce. I didn't want to sell my house and would do anything to stay there. My mind was like a blender, and I couldn't find the off button. One minute, I was moving and the next I was staying. If I re-mortgaged, I could get a lower interest rate and could then afford the monthly payments.

God, please guide me to make the right decision, I quietly prayed. When I finally made the decision to re-mortgage, the peace came. My soon to be ex-husband agreed to sign the necessary papers. On the morning of the closing, he called and said, "Sorry, but I changed my mind and cannot sign the papers." I couldn't speak at first, as the fear rose up in my throat.

This can't be happening. I must not be hearing him right.

"You have to sign them, I shouted over the phone hysterically. I won't be able to keep the house if I don't re-mortgage now."

I couldn't talk him out of it, no matter what I said. His mind was made up. I called the bank to ask if I could sign the papers without my husband's signature. "No." He had

to sign the papers because his name was on the house. The closing was cancelled.

God, I don't understand, I trusted you were guiding me. Did I hear you wrong? Why did you allow me to go through all of this only to close the door at the last minute?

I don't like it when my faith is tested.

Can I trust you God? I want to believe you closed the door for a reason and there is something better for me, but I'm having a hard time trusting now.

A week later, to my surprise, I received a letter from the mortgage company informing me that the interest rate had gone down (on its own) because it was an adjustable mortgage. The payment was the same as if I had re-mortgaged. I even saved a few thousand dollars in the process. God closed the door (through my ex's husband's last minute postponement) to save me money. When I walk in faith, God always provides in His way and His time.

Several years later, I made the decision to sell my house and rent a condo. The idea of renting a condo appealed to me because I didn't like all the work that came along with owning my own home. I thought it would take months to sell the house because houses weren't moving at all. It clearly wasn't a seller's market.

I can take my time and leisurely look for something that is affordable and close to work, I thought to myself.

My house sold in three days! Not only did I have one offer, but two. When it rains, it pours and I was flying high until reality set in. I didn't have a place to live, and I had to be out in eight weeks.

God, what am I going to do now? Where am I going to live? I don't know where to even start.

I looked in the newspaper the next day. To my surprise, there were several condos in the area for rent. Off I went with newspaper in hand, determined to find a condo that day. As I drove along a street lined with big old oak trees, I got excited about the first house before even seeing it. I could ride my bike to work if I wanted to. A woman with grey hair pulled back in a bun answered the door.

“Hi, I’m Millie Olsen, you must be Pat Hastings, come right in.”

“Thanks,” I answered and entered into the foyer.

She gave me a tour of the house and I instantly fell in love with the very large rooms and hardwood floors. The patio in the back with the flower garden and blooming red roses sealed it for me. I put a deposit down that day. I knew in my heart that God had led me there.

I went home, started packing boxes and throwing things away. My four children grew up in this house so there were many sentimental things that I didn’t want to part with.

How did I ever accumulate all of this stuff, I wondered. What do I keep and what do I throw away? I can’t throw away my kid’s birthday cards to me, or the gifts they gave me over the years, can I? Things were going along fine until.....

Four weeks prior to the settlement, I received a phone call from my real estate agent.

“Pat, are you sitting down, I have some bad news for you.”

“Oh”

God, I really don’t want to hear any bad news.

I held my breath and clenched my fist tightly as I waited for him to tell me the bad news.

“The woman backed out of the deal due to some technicality in the agreement.”

“You have to be kidding me. Can she do that legally?”

“Yes, Pat, I’m afraid she has the right to do it. I’m sorry, but the deal is off.”

“What am I going to do now? I’ve already paid a deposit plus first months rent on the condo.”

“We can put the house back on the market immediately and hope for the best.”

It felt like I couldn’t breathe and I wanted to throw up, as I sat there and sobbed.

That’s easy for him to say. He’s not in my shoes. I’ll never be able to sell it in four weeks and be in the condo on time. My house is in total shambles with boxes piled high in all the rooms. No one will buy it like this. God, where are you and what are you doing? I want to trust you God because you have never let me down, but this doesn’t look good. Help me to believe.

I calmed down by taking a deep breath, and remembering God’s timing is perfect. I prayed and asked for help.

God, you’re in control. I trust you. I don’t know what the future will bring, but I do know that I will be okay, no matter what. As I sat there and meditated, I heard God’s voice say,

PAT, CALL THE FIRST COUPLE WHO MADE A BID ON THE HOUSE

They were from out of state and also wanted to settle in eight weeks.

Maybe they haven’t found a house yet.

I could feel the excitement bubbling up inside of me. My hands trembled as I dialed the phone to call my real estate agent.

“John, I have a great idea and wished I’d thought of it sooner.”

“What’s that, Pat?”

“Will you call the couple who made a bid on the house and see if they are still interested in buying my house?”

God, I don't ask you much, but I'm asking you to please let them say “ yes.”

I didn't hear for several days and it seemed like an eternity. I didn't sleep much because my mind wouldn't shut off.

What am I going to do if they say “no?”

Finally, the call came – I waited with bated breath for the verdict.

“Pat, I have good news for you. The couple wants to buy your house and can move in within four weeks.”

“Are your kidding me? What happened?”

“They hadn't found a house yet and were planning on moving in with his parents until they could find a house they liked. And, by the way, they're thrilled.”

We settled exactly four weeks to the day, and I happily moved into the condo right on time. Another “GODincidence.” My faith is strengthened each time I trust God and His perfect timing. The more impossible things look, the more God is glorified.

I AM A WOMAN GIVING BIRTH TO MYSELF

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