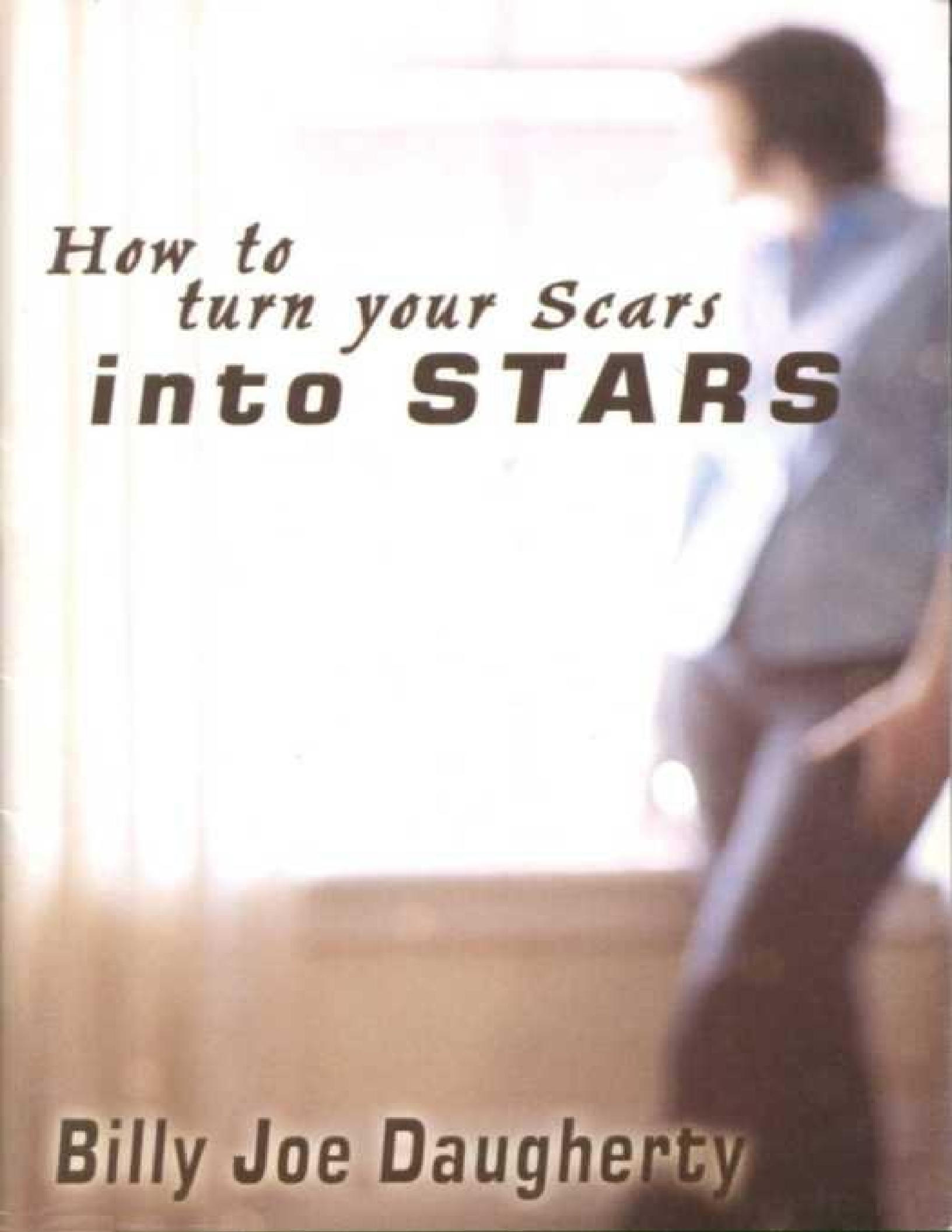

How to turn your Scars into STARS

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Chapter One

Stepping-stones or Stumbling Blocks?

By an act of your own will, you can decide to let God turn your scars into stars—from stumbling blocks to stepping-stones! He can turn the bad things that have happened to you into something that will work for your good.

Sometimes bad things happen because of our own mistakes, faults, or sins. Sometimes they happen because of the mistakes of others—their shortcomings, sins and failures. Then, there are bad things that sometimes happen because we are doing something good. In such a case, it is an attack or an assault from the enemy to distract you from doing the will of God, but you can overcome it. Paul said, **"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution"** (2 Timothy 3:12).

If you set your sails to go against the enemy, you will encounter some opposition and persecution for living in a godly manner. Do not become discouraged, however, because God says:

Fear not, *for I am with you;* be not dismayed, for I am your God. I *will strengthen you,* yes, I *will help you, I will uphold you* with My righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

In the life of Jesus as well as in the life of Paul, people didn't exactly stand up and cheer because they were healing the sick and casting out devils. While some people were happy, others were greatly disturbed and bent out of shape by these activities.

Stephen was stoned to death, and James was beheaded. Paul was persecuted constantly, not for doing wrong, but for doing right.

The good news for us is that Jesus said, **"In the world you will have tribulation; *but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"*** (John 16:33). Because Jesus has already overcome the world, we need to see ourselves from His perspective—seated in heavenly places with Him (Ephesians 2:6)!

Chapter Two

Right Attitude for Turning Scars into Stars

Joseph's life could have ended quite tragically if it hadn't been for something in his character that caused him to take a different attitude about the horrible experiences he went through.

His brothers were jealous of him because he was the favorite son. His father had given him a beautiful coat of many colors and had honored him with special favors.

One day, while his brothers were out tending sheep, his father said to Joseph, **"Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me"** (Genesis 37:14).

Scripture says that when his brothers saw Joseph coming, **"they conspired against him to kill him"** (v. 18). Let's pick up on the story in verse 23.

So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him.

Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

And they sat down to eat a meal....

Verses 23-25

Think about it! You've just thrown your brother into a pit. Then, you go ahead and enjoy your barbecue!

...Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt.

So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood?

"Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened.

Then the Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

Verses 25-28

How would you feel if you were sold by your brothers for money? They would have killed him, except for Judah's intervention.

Talk about terrific scars on the emotions, a dysfunctional family, rejection and child abuse! Joseph experienced it. But there was something in Joseph that kept him from striking back. When you don't strike back, God will bless you. Because of Joseph's attitude, God began to bless everything that he did.

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.

And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand.

Genesis 39:1-3

When God begins to bless you and cause you to be prosperous and successful, you will find favor with leadership.

So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority.

So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had in the house and in the field.

Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

Verses 4-6

Because Joseph didn't strike back, God prospered him. If you will make a decision to turn the scar of rejection around by forgiving and releasing those who caused it, God will prosper you, no matter where you are.

You may be thinking, "I'd be doing a lot better if my upbringing had been better." Joseph could have said that. He could have said, "If only I had been able to get my high school diploma, I could make it in the world." But that's not what Joseph said. *He applied himself with great diligence right where he was and trusted in God.*

How can a slave be blessed? Joseph was Potiphar's slave, and he didn't even get minimum wage! Yet God blessed and prospered him and gave him favor with those in authority over him.

I've heard many excuses why people can't make it in the world. Those excuses come because the scars from what has happened to people are holding them in bondage. Joseph let go of his scars. As a result, God was able to exalt him.

Everything Joseph touched was blessed.

You may be thinking, "But that was Joseph." Scripture says God has no favorites. He shows no partiality (Acts 10:34). The promises of Psalm 1 are for you as much as for any other person:

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

Verses 1-3

Like Joseph, you can say, "Everything I touch is prospering. I am committed to God, and He is committed to me."

Chapter Three

From the Frying Pan into the Fire

Although he was blessed as a slave in Potiphar's house, Joseph went from the frying pan into the fire because of slander by Potiphar's wife.

And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand.

"There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Genesis 39:7-9

Because Joseph was committed to holiness and integrity, he could not sin against Potiphar or against God.

Something inside of Joseph said "no" to sin. If Joseph could respond this way under the Old Covenant, surely you can under the New Covenant. There is power in the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit to stand against any temptation.

First Corinthians 10:13 says:

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

God always prepares an escape door. Just keep checking those knobs until you find one to get out!

Better yet, don't enter the wrong doors in the first place. The Holy Spirit will lead you to the right places.

Potiphar's wife persisted in her plan to seduce

Joseph.

So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.

But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to

do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside,

That she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, *and fled and ran outside.*

And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside,

That she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice.

"And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside."

So she kept his garment with her until his master came home.

Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me;

"So it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside."

Genesis 39:10-18

Potiphar never questioned his wife's story. In his anger, he **"took him [Joseph] and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison"** (v. 20).

Once again, Joseph received a scar for something he didn't do. This scar was against his integrity and character. Although he knew he had done no wrong, he could not convey his innocence to the people because the circumstances and evidence, though untrue, framed him. What was his voice against the voice of a woman of this stature?

Now, everyone thought of Joseph as a horrible person. I am talking about scars that are sometimes far deeper than the ones on the outside—the emotional scars of childhood abuse and rejection, and now the scars of having your record smeared by slander and lies.

Joseph's position was gone. He had started up the ladder of success. Then it was jerked right out from under him. He was left with nothing—no future and no hope, locked up in an Egyptian prison. There was no one to visit Joseph, no one to write to him, no one to encourage him.

When you are slandered, lied about and misrepresented, then you've got a scar you have to deal with. Joseph had to face the same music he faced with his brothers. Slandered and wounded without a cause, he had to let go of it.

Everyone has experienced some type of bad word spoken against them at

one time or another. If those scars are held, they will keep you in bondage. But if you let go of them, you will rise above whatever anyone has ever done to you. It's time to make a choice, "I am forgiving and releasing, and I am rising up."

Genesis 39:21-23 says of Joseph:

But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing.

The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.

If you will let go of the scars from the hurts and offenses of your past, God's hand of blessing and prosperity will not be stopped, regardless of where you end up. If you are a car salesman, be the best you can be. If you are a data processing clerk, a manager, a minister, or a missionary, be the best you can be, and God will prosper you.

Don't settle for mediocrity. Rise up with a vision to prosper right where you are. As you put

God first, He will exalt you.

Begin to confess: No good thing will the Lord withhold from me because *in Christ* I walk uprightly (see Psalm 84:11).

Chapter Four

Your Past Is Past

Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old.

Behold, I *will do a new thing,* now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43:18,19

Joseph did some very important things that we need to follow. What has happened in your past is past, but *what you do about the past will control your future.* You may not have had control over what happened in the past, but *you do have control over what will happen in your future.* Y our response to past situations will determine what you are going to do in your future.

After Nelson Mandela spent twenty-seven years in prison, he was elected president of South Africa. Because he was a Christian, God dealt with him about *responding* rather than reacting to whatever happened to him. When he was released from prison, many horrible things were still being said about him.

When he was elected, many people thought he would retaliate against the white minority who had oppressed the black majority in South Africa, using the force of the military. Exactly the opposite happened. The fighting stopped, and there is peace. It is a modern-day miracle, all because one man chose to forgive and forget.

Forgiveness is a choice that you must make. You can release the offenses and the offenders. You can forget the past. God gave us a word in 1981: "The joys of your future will swallow up the sorrows of your past."

Joseph, with all of the sorrows and bad things that happened to him, chose to forgive. He chose not to harbor all the ill feelings that could have festered. As a result, God continued to prosper him, even in the prison.

When the king's chief butler and baker were thrown into prison, God gave Joseph revelation of the dreams each of them had, indicating that the baker's head would be taken off, but the butler would be restored to his position. Then Joseph said to the butler:

But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house.

For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I

have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon.

Genesis 40:14,15

Just as Joseph had spoken, the butler was restored to his position and the baker was beheaded. The butler forgot about Joseph, so the governor's pardon he desired never came through. One more scar! Rejected! Forgotten!

Have you ever been forgotten? Did you join the "PLO ME Club (poor little 'ole me)"? Joseph could have said, "Why did I give the word to the butler? I should have let him hang, too." In the natural, Joseph could have thought that way. Obviously, what was in Joseph's heart toward his brothers, toward Potiphar's wife and toward the butler was a spirit of forgiveness and release to let go of their offenses.

Chapter Five

God’s Timing Is Perfect

You may think that you've been forgotten for the promotion that you deserve, but God will pull your record up right on time! His records are accurate and complete.

God caused the butler to remember Joseph two years after he was restored to his position. Pharaoh had a dream about some fat cows and some skinny ones and a second dream about plump heads of grain and blighted heads of grain.

Suddenly, the butler remembered Joseph. "When I was doing time in prison, there was a guy who had the ability to interpret dreams. His interpretation of my dream was right on target." Pharaoh said, "Go get him!"

Genesis 41:14 says, **"Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh."**

Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams to mean there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine.

Scripture says:

So the advice [which Joseph gave] was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants.

And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?"

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you.

"You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you."

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See,

I have set you over all the land of Egypt."

Genesis 41:37-41

In one day's time, Joseph went from prison to prime minister.

Chapter Six

Nurse, Rehearse and Curse, or Forgive, Forget and Release?

If you continually nurse and rehearse your scars and wounds, the mistreatment you have received and how you were belittled and forgotten, you will be bound by those scars and snared by your own words. (Proverbs 6:2.)

Joseph refused to nurse, rehearse and curse any of the people or situations that caused him deep scars. He simply said to the butler, "I am an innocent man. I don't belong in here." He spoke the truth.

If you make a decision to forgive, forget and release, the blessing of God cannot be stopped from coming upon your life. The very things that are scars will be turned into stars! The very things that hurt you can become the key to your promotion or the platform from which you go to the next level of success. They will serve as stepping-stones to you.

If you nurse and rehearse your scars and curse your offenders, your scars will become like a millstone around your neck and that will be the end of a fruitful life for you.

You may be thinking, "Everywhere Joseph went, he had a battle." That's true, but God *always* delivered him. Psalm 34:19 says, **"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them *all."***

It was the same in Paul's life. He could have quit after that first experience in the Philippian jail. He cast the devil out of a girl, and the next thing he knew, he was in jail for it. He could have said, "Lord, if this is what I get for preaching, then that's it. If that is Your reward, forget it!"

Instead, Paul chose to forgive, forget and release, and at midnight he led a celebration of praise to God. As a result, God opened the prison doors, and a jailhouse revival broke out.

Think of it! What was a stumbling block and a scar to Paul became a testimony that has literally catapulted millions of people into victory! (Read the entire chapter of Acts 16.)

Your trial or your most horrible experience can become a terrific testimony, depending on your response!

I'm sure you've heard the old saying, "Your attitude will determine your altitude." It's not the things that happen to you, or how fast the wind comes

against you that counts. It's the way you set your wings, because the stronger the winds, the higher you will soar!

Chapter Seven

Don’t Give Up!

As Christians, we don't play nine-inning games! We play until we win. Since God is the Umpire, we can step up to the plate to bat again!

Think of Joni Eareckson Tada, who, because of a diving injury, is now a quadriplegic. She could have become buried in remorse and regret for the rest of her life. She could have cursed the day that it happened and lived in hate and bitterness. Instead, with God's help and direction, she has turned her situation around.

With a paint brush in her teeth, she paints beautiful pictures. She has inspired many people to believe that God is still a good God and that He can use them, even though they may not have the use of all of their limbs or may be handicapped in another way. She has exemplified the fact that you don't have to be handicapped in your spirit just because you are limited physically.

Think of Abraham Lincoln who lost one election after another. The only election he won was the last one for which he ran—the presidency. He won because he wouldn't give up.

The devil will quickly tell you, "That's three strikes. You've blown it. You're out." That could have happened in Joseph's life: "You blew it with your brothers. You blew it with Potiphar's wife. You were imprisoned and forgotten. Three strikes and you are out!" Joseph's brothers took his coat, but they couldn't take his dream!

Don't give up! You could be one step away from your miracle. The darkest point in any night is right before the morning dawn. The sun will rise again! Romans 8:28 says:

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

As a teenager, Oral Roberts ran away from home. He played basketball, he had a job and he studied law books into the late hours of the night. He pressed his body so hard that he developed tuberculosis, which was a common affliction for many of the Indian people.

When he collapsed on the basketball court, his dreams appeared to be over, because at that time, there was no cure for tuberculosis. Usually, the people who had it went to the sanitorium or to the graveyard, and he was on his way.

Doctors shook their heads and said, "It's all over. There is no hope." Ministers said, "It will only be a little while longer, and God will take you home." Brother Roberts didn't want to go home. He began to curse it and rehearse it, and a deep bitterness got inside of his heart. But the good news is, he had a praying mamma and daddy who wouldn't give up!

One evening, a transformation took place in his life as his father prayed. Oral looked up into his father's face as he was praying for him at the end of his bed. Instead of seeing his father's face he saw the face of Jesus. At that moment, he gave his heart totally to Jesus Christ.

Oral's sister came to see him one day and spoke seven words that changed his life: *Oral, God is going to heal you.* Faith for healing ignited in his heart.

Then his brother Elmer, with a borrowed car and 35 cents worth of gas, came and drove him to a meeting where a divorced man was praying for the sick. In one divine moment, when almost everyone else was gone and Oral was the last one to be prayed for, the man of God laid his hands on him and said, "You foul, tormenting disease, I command you, come out in the name of Jesus." Oral felt air and healing power go into his lungs.

The scars of tuberculosis and the loss that Brother Roberts went through during those months of dying and then the reversal when he released his faith for healing, became the platform for a worldwide healing ministry.

Perhaps your life has been scarred from an abortion, drugs, or alcohol. What the enemy has meant for evil, God can turn for your good. It can be your platform for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ's saving, delivering and healing power with others.

After the death of his father, Joseph said to his brothers who had been the source of some of his most severe scars:

"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.

"Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Genesis 50:19-21

Think of Dave Roever who had half of his face blown off by a phosphorous hand grenade in Vietnam. Fire from the phosphorous burned his entire body. Neither he nor his hospital roommate were recognizable.

His buddy's wife walked in, checked the name tag to be sure it was her husband, took her wedding ring off, threw it on the bed and said good-bye.

When Dave Roever's wife came to the hospital, she also had to check the name tag to be sure it was her husband. As she looked down and kissed his cheek, she said, "I love you, Davey."

Out of that burn unit has come the number one public school assembly in America. Dave Roever travels across this nation inspiring young people that they can rise out of the ashes of defeat, and they don't have to be bound by drugs, alcohol and immorality.

Some people are nursing their scars from divorce, rejection, or time spent in jail. Remember, you aren't the first person to experience these types of scars. Quit nursing and rehearsing them and cursing the people who contributed to them. Start believing, "God has an upward call for me. It is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and I will reach for it and attain it!"

In writing to the Philippians from his prison cell, Paul said:

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel,

So that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ;

And most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear...

...In nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

Philippians 1:12-14,20

Paul was saying, "Cheer up! I have made a choice to rejoice regardless of my natural circumstances, because God *always* leads me in triumph (2 Corinthians 2:14)!"

This verse in *The Twentieth Century Translation* of the New Testament says:

All thanks to God, who, through our union with the Christ, leads us in *one continual triumph....*

A Covenant Agreement for Forgiving, Forgetting and Releasing

I'll no longer nurse my wounds, rehearse the causes of my scars, or curse those who were responsible for inflicting them upon me. Instead, I'll forgive, forget and release both the offences and the offenders now, in Jesus' name.

The wounds and scars are no longer mine, for I lay all of my anxieties upon You, Lord. I am in Your care.

I will love my enemies, and pray for those who persecute me, so they may become Your sons and daughters, Father, in Jesus' name.

(Signature) _____ (Date) _____

* 1 Peter 5:7 tcnt; Matthew 5:44 tcnt.

The bottom line of turning your scars into stars is to follow the example Jesus gave us:

Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. Luke 23:34

Personal Prayer of Commitment

Father, I am now aware that Your Son, Jesus Christ, took the greatest scars of all time. He was crucified, buried and resurrected to pay for my sins, sickness, poverty and spiritual death.

I renounce every work of darkness, and I accept Your redemption plan which You purchased at Calvary's cross, Jesus. I receive You now as my personal Lord and Savior.

Thank You for empowering me with Your Spirit, Lord, so I can forgive, forget and release the scars of my past and those who caused them. Thank You for healing me in spirit, body, soul (which includes my mind, will, emotions and intellect), relationships and finances, Lord.

Father, I receive Your stars in exchange for my scars. I will use my past, not as a stumbling block, but as a stepping-stone to higher heights in You, in Jesus' name. Amen.

(Signature) _____ (Date) _____

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