

Table of Contents

<i>Dedication</i>	1
Chapter 1 Encountering Fear	7
Chapter 2 Finding the Root	15
Chapter 3 My Life in Nepal	23
Chapter 4 Back to the States	37
Chapter 5 Diagnosing the Problem	45
Chapter 6 A Victim of Fear	53
Chapter 7 Identifying Strongholds	59
Chapter 8 Spiritual Attacks	67
Chapter 9 Recognizing Lies & Dealing with Emotions	79
Chapter 10 Growing in Faith	89
Chapter 11 Confronting Fear	93
Chapter 12 The Fear of the Lord	99
Chapter 13 Renewing the Mind	109
Chapter 14 New Beginnings	117
Chapter 15 Free from the Curse	125
Chapter 16 A Change in Our Lives	135
Chapter 17 An Opportunity for Growth	147
Chapter 18 A Season of Learning	155
Chapter 19 Alignment with Christ	167
Chapter 20 Forgiveness	175
Chapter 21 Anger	183
Chapter 22 Becoming a Warrior	189
Chapter 23 The Ongoing Journey	195
<i>Conclusion</i>	199

Dedication

I dedicate this book to my mother-in-law, Nova. She lived a life devoted to Christ by exemplifying who He was through her. Many times she told me of the struggles she had while growing up. She chose to not live with a victim mentality but to be an overcomer of the many hurts, disappointments, and rejections she felt. What I saw in her gave me hope and helped me believe I could overcome issues in my past as well. Her positive impact on my life helped me on my own path of spiritual growth and healing.

Nova was born out of wedlock in the early '40s, and in those days illegitimate children were looked down upon. She was raised by strict Presbyterian grandparents who ruled by the law of religion rather than the law of love. Despite this, she knew they loved her and was grateful for their care. Still, their love did not soothe the ache within her heart to be with her mother, and she struggled with feelings of rejection. During this time, there were many obstacles and emotions for her to overcome.

One of the things my mother-in-law struggled with was the desire to express love to her mother, but because of the

circumstances she couldn't. It was a complicated situation, as her grandparents didn't allow her to show feelings toward her mother and often spoke badly to Nova of her. When Nova did something wrong, they would tell her, "You're going to be just like your mother." This brought deep emotional pain to Nova. She struggled with conflicting emotions—being angry and hurt by her grandparents and yet wanting to love them. She carried these same feelings in her relationship with her mother. Her heart was torn with wanting to please and honor everyone. She felt like she had to choose sides, when all she wanted was to love each one freely. That longing desire turned to hurt and disappointment, hiding deep within her for years.

Nova's mother, Ezma, would come to visit, and once in a while she went home with her and stayed for the night. As much as she loved her mother, Nova was afraid of being in her home. It wasn't a stable place. Many times she witnessed her mother being physically and verbally abused. Her stepfather drank a lot, and she remembers him drunk most of the time. He was unfaithful, cheating on Ezma multiple times. This broke Nova's heart for her mother. Ezma went through many hurts and rejections as well.

As time passed, Ezma and her husband divorced. After a while she met another man and they moved in together. My mother-in-law couldn't remember when they got married, but she just knew that somewhere in their 20 years together they had married. This relationship wasn't any easier, because he too drank and cheated.

No one knew the real story of Nova's biological father, and if they did they remained quiet. Growing up, Nova

always heard that the relationship between her mother and father was a forbidden love, but a true love. Ezma kept the identity of Nova's father a secret and she never knew the identity of her real father. She always wondered what her life would have been like had her mother been able to marry her father.

All through Nova's life she knew nothing about her father—how he looked, his character, where he came from, or his name. Her father became a locked-up secret that no one ever talked about. Many years later, after Nova was married and had her own children, her mother became ill with emphysema and was placed in a state hospital where remained for three years. During one of Nova's visits she asked her mother one more time about her father. Ezma refused to tell her, and from that moment on she let go of finding out the truth. Ezma died taking the secret to her grave.

One afternoon I was talking with my mother-in-law and she said to me, "For years I have wrestled with not knowing who my father was, feeling a hole inside. Now I have come to a settling place. I am okay with not knowing my natural father. I have come to realize that I may not have had a natural father, but I have a Heavenly Father. He raised me and He is my Father—the only one I have ever known. God has completely filled that empty place." It took her years to find this contentment, but she did find it and was at perfect peace.

While Ezma was in the hospital, Nova faithfully took her young family every Sunday to visit. Ezma was in a state hospital for terminally ill patients that was at one point a tuberculosis center. My husband, Van, remembers those

Sundays very well. He hated going because the atmosphere was so cold and depressing. He remembers the concrete floors and their footsteps echoing throughout the long hallways. As they walked past other rooms, he could hear patients moaning in pain. This would send chills through Van, and he remembers the fear he had of this place. Van said it was the most unwelcoming place. No one left this place alive; you were sent there to die.

Ezma was always so happy to see Nova and her family. She had a tracheotomy, which made it very difficult to speak. Van said it was hard to watch her struggle to talk. She would suck in air then make burping sounds to speak. Every word was an effort. Nova would also visit her mother during the week, and every time Ezma asked Nova to pray for her or sing a song, which she did. She knew the comfort it gave her mother.

Ezma was still married to her second husband, and he would come and visit her. When he came to visit, he brought his girlfriend. She would wait for him in the waiting room while he went up to see Ezma. Nova would see her sitting in the waiting room on her way to her mother's room. This always made her so angry and filled her with such sorrow for her mother. She thought it cold and uncaring and wondered how he could do this to her. One day, Nova was standing around her mother's bed along with Ezma's husband. Nova saw a tear run down the side of her mother's face and melt into her pillow. She knew immediately her mother knew about the girlfriend in the waiting room. How she wished she could remove the hurt and pain from her mother, but there was nothing

she could do but love her through it.

My mother-in-law told me how helpless she felt. All she could do was cry the whole way home from the visit with her mother. The only thing she knew to do was release it all into the Lord's hands. The Lord spoke so much to her on her drive home and brought healing to her heart. She began to understand her mother's pain, and she learned how to let go of her past.

On Nova's last visit with her mother, her mother asked, "Would you pray for me once again?" With tears running down Nova's cheeks she answered, "Mom, I have prayed and prayed for you. I have nothing left. You have to pray."

So Ezma began to pray, "God, you have helped me so many times. Will you help me just one more time?" Those were the last words Nova heard her mother say. Ezma died soon after that.

Those words struck my mother-in-law to the core of her heart. They were forever etched within her. And now, seeing the many times God had truly rescued and helped Ezma, sorrow filled my mother-in-law as she realized how she had judged her mother through all the years of growing up. She judged her mother for allowing herself to be put in these hurtful situations.

For the first time, Nova saw their reality from a different perspective. She realized how many times God had answered her prayers—and not just her prayers but her mother's prayers as well. She just hadn't recognized them as God's answers. She realized her mother saw and felt the Lord's help. All my mother-in-law ever wanted was to love her mother freely, but her judgment kept her from

it. Those words broke off any judgment and for the first time she felt complete freedom to love unconditionally.

My mother-in-law was a selfless woman who loved to give and always put others first. She gave of her time and loved to give tangible gifts. She expressed love through giving.

As my daughter said, “She was a chain breaker.”

She set the standard for our family breaking off chains of the past and taught me how to do the same. She made a way for her children and grandchildren to follow. She was a warrior who fought for her family and anyone else who needed prayer. She would tell me many times how she had been awakened by the Lord at 2 a.m. with someone on her heart. She would pray for them until she felt a release in her spirit. Many times I heard her fight in prayer for her family and not give up on the Lord’s promises. She was a lover of the truth. She sought after truth within her heart, mind, and spirit. “Change me, oh Lord,” she would say.

Nova taught me how to desire and seek after truth in my entire being as well. She truly was an inspiration and an example of a godly woman in my life. She never treated me as a daughter-in-law but as her very own daughter. One afternoon, when she was in the hospital and it was just the two of us in the room, a nurse walked in and asked Mom if I was her daughter. Mom said, “Well, no, a daughter-in-law, but also a daughter and my friend.”

These words are forever etched into my heart. She passed away in November 2016. To me, she will always be a mother, warrior, intercessor, chain breaker, overcomer, and my friend.

CHAPTER 1

Encountering Fear

Our bags were packed and ready for the next day. Van and I were flying to Montana, testing the water, so to say. We were thinking of moving there and wanted to see if it was a good fit for our family. It was after 10 p.m. and the kids had just gone to bed when the shrill ringing of the phone broke the stillness. I was exhausted after a day of teaching school, shopping for groceries, and packing for our trip. The last thing I wanted to do was talk on the phone. I just wanted to go to bed.

“Hello?” I answered tentatively, wondering who was on the other end at this time of night.

“Regina?” responded a familiar voice. With a sigh of relief, I knew it was my dad.

“Regina,” he began, “I wanted to call you before you left. Your mother and I want you to know we support you and Van if you decide to move to Montana. We don’t want you to move away, but if this is where the Lord is calling

you, we will support you. Mom and I know how it feels to be called by the Lord to live far away from family, since we had to make the same choice when you were young. We understand the difficult decision you are making, and how it pulls on the heart. Wherever you go, wherever He leads, we support you. We want what God has for you and your family.”

I was so choked up I could hardly talk. This was exactly what I needed—words of encouragement. Hearing my dad say those things gave me instant comfort and peace. It calmed the storm that was brewing inside of me.

When we had first told our parents we were contemplating a move to Montana, it was very difficult for them to hear. In the beginning, they did not approve. While they understood the importance of following the Lord’s leading, they still couldn’t let go. It became such a tug-of-war in the heart for Van and me. We wanted to honor our parents but also obey what we felt the Lord was saying to us. This made it difficult for us to move forward and hear clearly from Him. So to hear my dad say they supported us meant the world to me, even though I knew it was hard for them.

I was so excited to fly to Montana. The last time I had been on a plane was at the age of nine when our family was returning from Nepal where we had been living as missionaries for three years. I eagerly anticipated the thought of tomorrow’s adventure and what could possibly be a new era in our lives.

The next morning we arrived at the airport, found our airline, and got in line to check our bags. As we were

standing at the check-in counter, my heart began to pound, anxiety setting in. At first I tried to ignore it, thinking it would go away, but the longer we stood in line the worse it became. I thought to myself, *I am 35 years old. This is ridiculous. What is going on?* Why was I feeling nervous? The more I questioned myself, the more frustrated and anxious I became. Moments before I had been so excited for this trip, and now I was in a state of complete panic. My heart pounded so hard I was sure Van could hear it. I felt a rush of intense embarrassment, sure everyone around me could see what was happening. Since my greatest fear was appearing foolish in public, this was the last thing I wanted to happen. In reality, no one could see what was going on inside of me, but in that moment I believed they saw every emotion I felt.

By now, it was our turn at the counter and I handed the woman my suitcase. She asked for my driver's license, but my heart was pounding so loudly I couldn't hear a word she was saying. I had never felt such panic before. Heat started rising in my face and felt like I was being pulled into a tunnel. All the airport noise faded and I couldn't hear anything except the pounding of my heart and a ringing noise in my ears. I couldn't focus. I turned and looked at Van. He was giving me a questioning look, head tilted and eyebrow raised, asking, "What are you doing?" I could see his mouth move but I couldn't focus on what he was saying. Then it dawned on me—my license! I fumbled through my purse trying to find my wallet. My fingers closed around it and I passed it to Van, my hand shaking badly. He opened it, retrieved the driver's license,

and handed it to the woman. I was so humiliated and just wanted to get out of there.

The residue of that moment remained with me the rest of that day. I tried to enjoy our travel, but the feeling lingered. It had been so long since anything like that had happened to me. I went from excitement to panic, fear, anxiety, and humiliation. What a trick of the enemy and a lie that brought me down in seconds! This swing of emotions took me by surprise. I had conquered all kinds of fears in the previous fourteen years and thought I had dealt with everything. What was this all about? Where did this come from? The last time I remembered having the feeling of being pulled into a tunnel was when I was a little girl. Any time I would become afraid or embarrassed in a room with people, I would feel myself being pulled, like through a tunnel. Everything around me would disappear and I felt safe.

Looking back, I can see this was a great tool the Lord used to get my attention. The airport triggered something deep within me—a fear that had remained hidden for years. I had confronted and dealt with many of my fears up to this point. I thought they were all gone. What I discovered was a main root that needed to be removed. I had uprooted so many strongholds in my life and was shocked to find there was still something lingering. I went back to the drawing board (the Lord), asking, seeking, and searching for the truth.

Over the years, I had learned to never ignore an issue once I became aware of it. Left unattended, those things could grow, gain strength, and become hidden again. I had

worked hard to be freed from fear and insecurities, and I wasn't about to be drawn into that bondage again. I began asking the Lord, "Where did this come from and why did this happen?"

One morning after I took my kids to school, I came back and had my quiet time with the Lord. A memory flashed in front of me and something stirred inside. It flashed so quickly I couldn't grab hold of the image I had seen. It felt familiar, but I couldn't figure out what it was. Since it was time for me to leave for school I had to let it go, but I was afraid it wouldn't come back to me.

When I got to school, I tried to teach, but it was hard to focus. After school I wanted to have quiet time, but there was dinner to make, my own homework to do, as well as helping my kids with theirs. It wasn't until later that night while lying in bed that I asked the Lord to bring back the flash of a memory I had seen that morning. I asked Him to show me clearly what it was. I didn't feel anything at the moment, but the next morning during my quiet time, I was talking with the Lord when I felt a sharp pain, like a trauma, hit me. I began to remember memories triggered by feelings, and over the next several weeks, emotions I experienced as a child began to surface. With them came a memory of being separated from my mother in an airport in Beirut on our way to Nepal when I was six years old. Though it had long since slipped from my memory, the Lord was bringing it to the surface.

Through this memory, the Lord began to speak to me about how fear initially entered my life. This one incident opened a door allowing many other fears over the course

of several years to enter. Now I had to shut the door. It took removing layer after layer to find this one root fear. God knew what He was doing all along, unveiling each fear that had entered into my life. Step by step He showed me each one. It took fourteen years to work out all this stuff. The first seven were the most intense, but this is where the foundation of Christ and the Holy Spirit in me was built. I needed this foundation, and it prepared me for the next seven years. Everything I went through was a building block in my life. I didn't realize the baggage I was carrying until it was removed.

We flew to Montana two more times, but I never had another panic attack. We ended up not moving there, and I was devastated since I thought that's where we were to be. In the end, I kept hearing my dad's voice saying "We want you where the Lord has called you to be," and when it came right down to it, *I want to be where the Lord calls me.* When the door to Montana closed, another door opened. We did move, and we found a great church for our family.

At first I couldn't understand why the Lord would have us travel to Montana if we were never going to move there. But it became a wonderful learning experience for us, trying every avenue. It was a process of hearing, growing, and knowing His voice. We learned that when it felt wrong, we should back up, and when it felt right, we should move forward. But most importantly the airport situation triggered something deep inside of me that had stayed hidden for years. That's what God was doing—bringing me to a full circle of healing.

Application: *We all live with some amount of fear, and not all fear is bad. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but when fear controls us like my fear did, it becomes sin. My fear imprisoned me. I responded out of fear and made decisions based on my fears. I never had rest or peace inside—a discovery I made when some of my fears were removed. I truly believed I couldn't live my life to the fullest purpose of God because of my fears. My fears ruled me and I believed they were true.*

Ask the Lord to reveal things from your past that may be causing you to respond in fear. Ask Him to show you where fear entered your life and then how to take steps to close the door to fear.

1. What are some fears you would like to be rid of in your life?
2. What are some things you would do if fear wasn't holding you back?

CHAPTER 2

Finding the Root

My story really begins when my parents and I, along with my two siblings, left for Nepal in November 1971. During the summer of 1969, Mr. Les Troyer from Sugarcreek, Ohio, had been the featured speaker at a mission conference at Maple Grove Mennonite, the church where my family attended. We ended the week of meetings with a potluck lunch at Hartville Park. During the course of the meal Mr. Troyer asked our pastor if he would recommend a young couple to accompany him back to the Philippines where he and his wife lived. They were working with Wycliffe Bible Translators and needed some help with the daily tasks of living so they could spend most of their time on translation.

When our pastor suggested my parents, Mr. Troyer approached them and started talking about his work in the Philippines. My parents agreed to correspond with him and they exchanged addresses. They went home that

afternoon with a lot of questions, but before they began seriously considering the move to Asia, they received a letter from Les informing them that he and his family were being transferred to Nepal, where he would be taking on the role as Director of the mission.

In early 1971, my mom's parents were making plans to move to a different Amish community. My mom and dad thought it would be nice to keep the family farm and began talking about buying the property. It was on a Tuesday night as they were planning to approach my grandparents about their idea when the phone rang. It was our pastor, who said he had received a letter that day from Mr. Troyer asking if we might consider coming to Nepal to help with the mission. My parents felt the timing of the phone call was providential and they canceled their plans of talking to my grandparents about buying the farm.

That night, my dad opened his Bible at random to Romans 10:14 (NAS) and read, "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?" He shared this verse with my mom, and they both knew God was calling them to Nepal. That summer my family moved to Oklahoma for eight weeks where my parents attended orientation classes with the goal of arriving in Nepal by Thanksgiving.

Then it was time to say goodbye. I remember it as if it were yesterday. I stood in my aunt's living room along with all my other aunts and uncles. Both of my parents grew up Amish and no one on either side of the family had done what we were about to do. We were all standing in a

circle holding hands and praying for safety for our family. I was holding my grandma's hand and she was squeezing it tightly, as if never to let go. As I was holding my grandma's hand, I could hear relatives crying as different people prayed. I opened my eyes and looked up at my grandma and saw tears running down her cheeks. I had never seen my grandma cry before, and soon I found myself crying as well.

I had mixed emotions: feeling sad for leaving my family and yet very excited for this new adventure. We were going to be missionaries in Nepal. I had heard about missionaries and knew they went to foreign lands and came back with stories of God's miracles. I loved hearing these stories, and now I would have a chance to experience my own stories.

I couldn't believe the day had finally come. Mom and Dad had prepared for months. Dad tried to explain it to my sister and me as best as he could. He told us we were traveling far away, flying over the ocean. We would not come home for three years. I understood leaving home and moving far away but didn't really understand how long three years was.

We met my dad's side of the family at the airport and everyone was crying, hugging, and saying final goodbyes. It was our turn to board the plane, and I held my dad's hand as we walked down the ramp. I turned around, and in a memory-etched moment, saw my uncle Bob at the gate entrance, waving as tears ran down his face. I kept turning around until I could no longer see him.

We flew from Cleveland to New York then boarded a 747 to London. By the time we reached London, it was late

at night. Our flight wasn't scheduled to leave until the next morning, so we got a hotel for the night. In the morning, the airport shuttle picked us up, but it was running late. I could hear my parents discuss their concern of possibly missing our flights, and I began to worry about this. As soon as we arrived at the airport, my dad put our luggage in a corner and had us three girls sit on it while my mom stood in front of us. He then went to check on the status of our flight. He came back with the news we had missed our flight to Germany and would be rerouted to Beirut instead.

We stayed at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Beirut and it was the most beautiful hotel I had ever seen. It was situated on the bank of the Mediterranean Sea, and our room had a balcony facing the water. I loved standing on the balcony and looking out over the water. The colors were such vivid blues and greens, it didn't look real. The street below us was lined with palm trees and bright pink blooming flowers. It seemed like heaven.

Soon it was time for us to go back to the airport. When we arrived, we got in line to go through customs. We had four or five large suitcases with us, and during inspection they opened every suitcase and rummaged through them. There were armed guards standing right beside me and it felt so intimidating. In fact, armed guards were posted throughout the airport. I had never seen a real gun before and these were *huge*. They looked like machine guns strapped across their chests. As a young girl, I didn't understand why there were so many guards with guns. All I knew was that I was afraid of the guards. This was a new

environment for me, and I didn't feel safe.

We made it through customs and continued to the gate. The airport was crowded and people kept walking between my parents and me, putting distance between us. I was afraid of getting lost and separated from my parents. I ran to catch up with them and grabbed hold of my mom's dress.

As we walked down the hallway, I began to see more armed guards and noticed men and women being separated. Men were directed to go to the left through a door and women to the right. No one explained to us what was happening but just motioned for us where to go. Dad went left while Mom and the three of us girls went to the right. Again we stood in a long line. It was very hot, and as the line moved along I could see doors ahead leading to what looked like a fitting room. My mom carried my youngest sister Valerie who was a year and a half. My other sister Chris was five and holding my mom's hand. I was hiding behind my mom, still holding onto her dress. I could feel my heart beat faster and faster. I was afraid to go through those doors, not knowing what was going on. I watched as ladies entered the doors and didn't come back.

When we made it to the front of the line, one of the female guards motioned Mom forward. We walked toward her and she pointed to the door Mom was to enter. All at once, another guard grabbed my arm and pulled me away from Mom. She pointed to me to go into another door.

"Mom, Mom!" I yelled.

Mom turned around and tried to tell the guard I was with her and requested for me to go with her. The guard

shook her head, saying I was to go in this door. My heart nearly pounded out of my chest I was so afraid.

Mom said to me, "It's okay. Go where they are telling you to go."

I took a step toward the door, but my legs were shaking so badly I didn't know if I would be able to walk. I made it into one of the little rooms. There was another guard in that room. The guard pulled the door closed behind her. Shut off completely from my family, I felt like I was going to suffocate. My whole body shook from sheer terror, and a hot sensation rushed to the top of my head. I wondered what would happen to me and whether I would find my mom again. The lady then told me to take off my dress. I wanted to cry but held back the tears.

I yelled for my mom. "Mom, Mom!"

My mom yelled back and said, "It's okay! Do what she wants you to do!"

I could barely grab hold of my dress because my hands were shaking so bad. The lady helped me take off my clothes, and then she frisked me. I was so afraid of being kidnapped. I thought I was being taken from my family. When she finished, she told me I could put my dress back on. Finally, I was dressed, and the lady opened another door in front of me. My legs felt like noodles as I entered a larger room. I didn't know what to do or where to go. I worried that Mom and Dad had already left for the departure gate, and I didn't know if I could find it on my own.

The guards constantly motioned us to keep moving. I was so afraid they hadn't let my mom and dad wait for me and I was left behind. I had no idea where to go. There I

stood by myself for what seemed like an hour, although in reality it was just a few minutes. The tears were beginning to well up in my eyes. Finally, through blurred vision I saw my mom and sisters step out from their room. I was so relieved to see them! I quickly wiped my eyes. I didn't want my mom to see how scared I was, so I hid my tears.

We joined my dad who had been waiting for us and walked to our gate. As we boarded our plane, I noticed not many people were on this flight. It was getting dark and my sisters and I were very tired. The flight attendant told my parents they could make beds for us using the empty seats, so each of us had a whole row of seats to sleep on. She gave us blankets and pillows. I curled up under my blanket, pulling it over my head. I felt safe and cozy and comforted by the plane's engine. Finally, I released my pent-up emotions and cried myself to sleep.

Application: *There are reasons why we react in fear. If we pay attention to our responses, it will help us understand our natural impulse to give in to fear. Looking back on my experience as a child in the airport, I could see it was clearly a traumatic moment in my life. Over time, fear magnified inside of me, producing all kinds of emotional and physical conditions.*

Fear uses other emotions and behaviors to take our focus off fear and onto the issue at hand. Fear wants to remain hidden inside of us. It uses its power to intimidate and tries to keep us from progressing in life.

If fear is an issue for you, ask yourself the questions below. Then ask the Lord to reveal things from your past that may be causing you to respond in fear.

1. Why am I responding this way?
2. Why am I so afraid?
3. What is there to be afraid of?