



**RELIANT.**

**CONTENT SERVICES**

To Inform, Engage, & Inspire

At Reliant Creative, we exist to tell powerful stories of how God is working through your ministry. We believe our Creator wired us for stories, so stories of how God is at work through your ministry are powerful and can inspire the Church to action.

Informative, engaging, and inspiring storytelling makes your online visitors want to stick around awhile and get to know you better. Content that serves your readers well, turns virtual visitors into personal contacts and even brand advocates.

So how do you create engaging content to reach your organization's supporters in today's crowded digital landscape? Well, it boils down to Marketing 101. For each piece of content, all you have to do is define the target audience, find the best keyword, brainstorm an idea, research, and outline. Then you're ready to write aligned with your chosen keyword, target audience and brand voice, so you can edit, proofread, and publish.

Or...

If you have neither the time, resources, nor desire, you can hire a professional storyteller who lives to write God's stories. That's us.

We're not just any storytellers, we're mission-driven to help prepare the Church and make her beautiful for Groom.

Our US-born writing team has successfully completed advanced coursework in web and print publishing, grammar, storytelling, writing, editing, proofreading, marketing, SEO, and analytics, which means we can do a bit more for you than Suzy from the second Sunday service.

This booklet consists of a list and definitions of a few of the types of content we offer, along with sample pieces published around the web and in books. Use the Table of Contents to target samples for the type of content you're interested in or enjoy all of it. If you want something you don't see here, just ask.

Thank you for considering content creation with Reliant Creative.

Sincerely,

**Zach Leighton**

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**WE TRULY BELIEVE  
ENGAGING STORIES  
MOBILIZE THE CHURCH**

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**LET'S INSPIRE AND  
MOBILIZE THE  
CHURCH TOGETHER!**

# SERVICES

## Content Creation Services

- Blurbs
- Devotions
- Listics
- Liturgical Year Content
- PDF downloads
- Pillar Content
- Scripture Lists
- SEO-Based Content
- Sermon & Podcast Content
- Testimonies & Storytelling
- Topical Content
- Word Studies

## Other Content services:

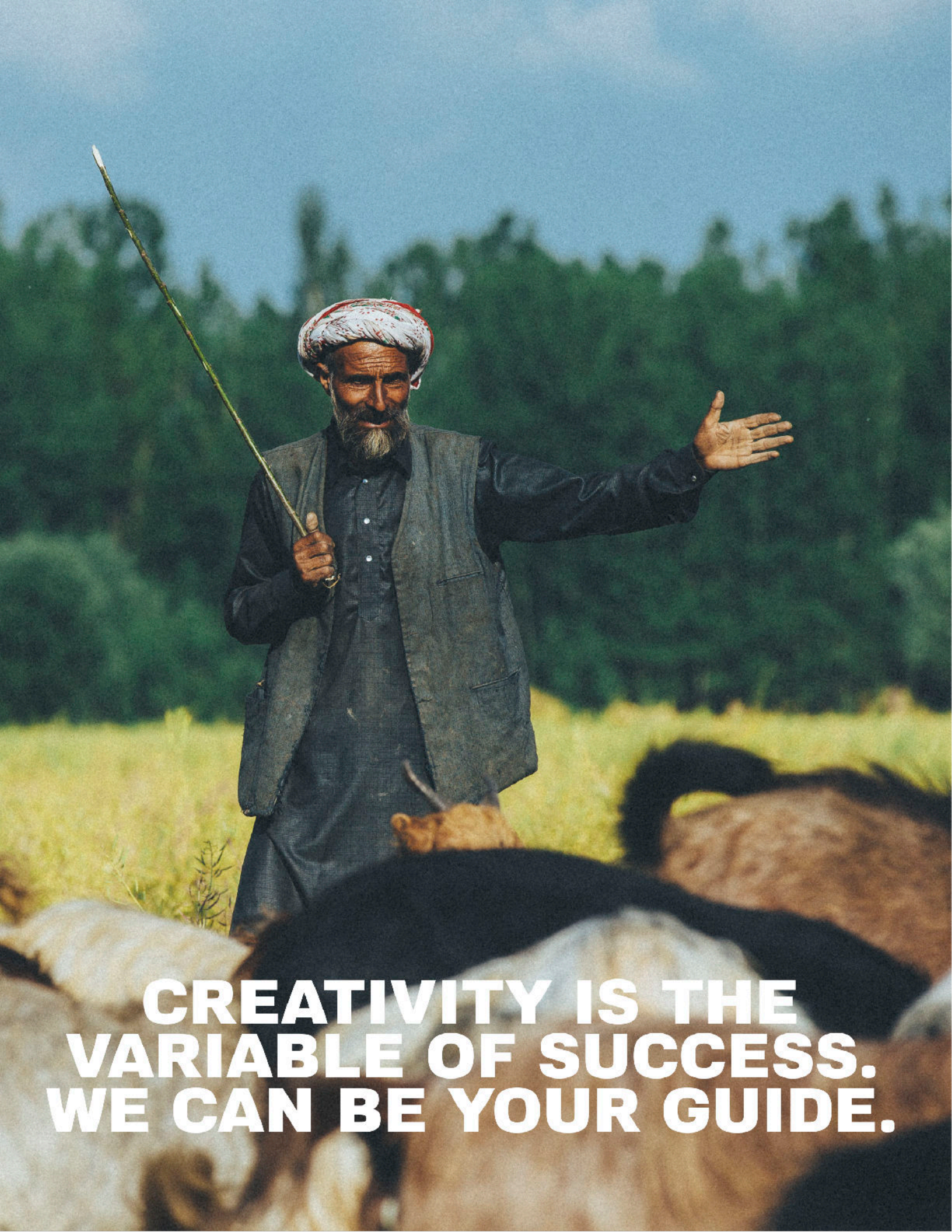
- Line Editing
- Copy Editing
- Proofreading
- SEO research
- Graphic Design
- Transcription

# Definitions

## Content Type

## What is it?

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Liturgical year content</b>        | Content based on seasons of the church year, such as Lent, Advent, or Epiphany  |
| <b>Topical Content</b>                | Content based on a certain topic, theme, or event   |
| <b>Scripture Lists</b>                | Content that explains the biblical view on a topic, including a list of selected Scriptures to teach, inspire, and help readers grow. |
| <b>Listicles</b>                      | A brief introduction followed by a list. The list usually includes detail, pros & cons, and a comparison.                             |
| <b>Pillar Content</b>                 | A comprehensive article or series of articles that is used as the foundation for other smaller, more digestible pieces of content     |
| <b>PDF Downloads</b>                  | Any content offered as a download   |
| <b>Devotions</b>                      | Scripture, relatable story, connection between the scripture and the story, practical application, call to action.                    |
| <b>Sermon and podcast content</b>     | Summary of an audio presentation, or an elaboration of one topic within the speech  |
| <b>SEO-based content</b>              | Content written specifically to rank on Google for a certain keyword phrase   |
| <b>Testimonies &amp; storytelling</b> | Stories of what God is doing in the life of an individual, group, or organization   |
| <b>Blurbs</b>                         | A brief summary or teaser for a book, podcast, or other presentation  |
| <b>Word Studies</b>                   | Explanation of the origin and context a word from Scripture for the purpose of increased understanding                                |



**CREATIVITY IS THE  
VARIABLE OF SUCCESS.  
WE CAN BE YOUR GUIDE.**

# Liturgical Content

## Born in a Barn

“And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.”

Luke 2:6-7

I grew up during the 1980s on a traditional family farm in the Midwest with my 4 younger siblings. Back in the days when bodily noises were fun, we occasionally joked with each other with the saying, “You act like you were raised in a barn!” But we never used the idiom as a scolding because, in fact, we were all growing up in the barn.

While the saying is used to insult rude, filthy behavior, we seem to forget that Jesus was indeed born beside farm animals. A precious baby Boy, the long-awaited Savior, was born in a stable amid manure, dirt, and more than a few unmentionable noises.

And yet, the Nativity is one of the most precious scenes in all of Christianity. Why?

Because Jesus makes all unsightly things beautiful. At His birth, He used a feeding trough full of cow drool as a gateway to our hearts. At His death, He transformed history’s most shameful torture device into the path to salvation. At His resurrection, He turned the sting of death into hope for eternity.

Jesus now lives in the hearts of believers, which I dare say are even more unkempt than His earthly birthplace.

Dear one, what kind of mess hides in your heart? Are bitterness or forgiveness causing a stink in your relationships? Perhaps anxiety or depression make so much noise that you can’t think straight.

Its OK. Jesus was born to transform your stable into a sanctuary for His glory.

He loves you too much to barge into your heart and start throwing out your beloved vices. Cleaning requires sacrifice, so He’s waits for you to bring your mess to Him at the cross.

Fortunately, our sacrifice also comes with a promise from Romans 8:18 “... that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us”

Just as we adore the manger scene, He cherishes you enough to renew your heart into His image. So through our suffering and sacrifice we share in His glory.

God wasted no time showing us that His only Son was born to make beauty from our ashes. What is your mess this Christmas? Just as the innkeeper led the Holy Family to his stable, allow Jesus into your heart today.

Jesus,

You love me so much that you came not to scold me, but to make me a temple. My heart is a mess, Lord, and I can't clean it up without You. I'm ready to give up my mess for Your glory.

Please forgive me and come into my heart today.

Amen

Originally published in Christmas with Jesus by Heather Hart & Contributing Authors, Ed. Valerie Riese <https://www.amazon.com/Christmas-Jesus-25-Devotions-December-ebook/dp/B09KQ7DJ79>

# Topical Content

## Our Comforter In Every Crisis

Kids had been home from school for just a few days and the whole country was reeling, trying to comprehend and adjust to a new normal.

Trying to navigate that crisis as a blogger was... interesting.

But here's where we landed...

Candidly Christian exists to point women to Jesus, so we are focusing on the Comforter rather than the crisis.

No matter the question, the answer is always the same: Jesus. He has always been, is, and always will be the reason for the hope and peace that is in us.

There's always a crisis somewhere. The main difference now is that the entire world is experiencing the same crisis at the same time.

Jesus' peace – the Holy Spirit, lives inside us no matter what is going on around us. So our peace is determined by our dependence on our Comforter.

Yes, Jesus calls on us to comfort each other as we walk through trials together. Heather and I are grateful for the encouragement offered in other posts, but we believe Jesus is calling us to offer a respite of normalcy.

Please know that we are praying for the health and safety of our readers and their loved ones. If you'd like to join us in prayer, please consider joining our Prayer Team.

I'd also like to offer three scriptures and a song to help you focus on Jesus our Comforter. There is power in His Word and in praise, so I invite you to speak and sing with Heather and me.

### 3 Scriptures to Pray to Our Comforter

“And I will pray to the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelt with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”  
John 14:16-18 KJV

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

John 14:26 KJV

“But when the Comforter has come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me:”

John 15:26 KJV

We believe in being candid, and this is just one of the struggles we will face as Christian women. To be honest, Heather says it's like the different verse of the same song we've been dancing to all along. Life is hard, but God is good.

You might be anxious or overwhelmed. You may have just realized that you are a lot lazier than you thought. Or that you are a Mary in a world full of Martha's.

Maybe you need to learn to fight fear with prayer or overcome insecurities you've suddenly found yourself face-to-face with no way out. Perhaps you want to use this time to cultivate gratitude in your life or the excess time with your family has shown you that you need to work on forgiveness.

You may be struggling to hear God's voice through all the crazy. The truth is, none of these things are limited by the current circumstances. Yet God is still the answer when the circumstances bring them to the forefront.

So, wherever today finds you, know that you aren't struggling alone.

Originally published on <https://www.candidlychristian.com/the-comforter/>

# Scripture List

## 5 Scriptures to Help You Overcome Self-Pity

I spent several years wallowing in self-pity after near-fatal complications during my daughter's birth required an emergency hysterectomy.

I cursed at God, demanding to know why loving parents like me and my husband can't have a big family while other homes are full of abused and neglected children? What did I do to deserve this? You know these kids are better off with me, God!

I started down the same path after a year or two of migraines, brain damage, and vision loss. But as I was reaching for Jesus during my illness, a sermon gave me the slap of reality I needed when the pastor asked a different question:

What makes you so special that you have a right to everything you want and a life of ease?

I realized there were two reasons I felt sorry for myself.

I didn't get what I wanted (I deserve this).  
I got what I didn't want (I don't deserve this).  
Entitlement and pride.

Yes, the root of self-pity is sin as old as time. Moses and the Israelites, Job, Jonah, David, Elijah – they all tried to tell God they had a better plan. And God showed them all a way out of their sin.

## 5 BIBLE VERSES TO HELP YOU OVERCOME SELF-PITY

God knows we go there, but He doesn't want us to stay there. So here are five verses to overcome self-pity.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33 NIV

Cancer was smack in the middle of a gauntlet of quick, successive trials. One day, I cried to my husband "By the time I catch my breath and get back up again, something else kicks me in the knees! I'm so tired!!"

But Jesus told us to expect trials. He didn't say "some of you..." or "you might..." have tribulations. Trauma is a part of life – everyone's life. But when it comes, we can have peace by leaning on Jesus.

I learned that by giving even my exasperation to Jesus, He'd take it and reimburse me with His peace.

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

Colossians 1:13-14 NKJV

Sometimes when people comment that I've been through more than my share, I solemnly agree, feeling both cheated and deserving of my martyr status.

When you think you don't deserve the misfortune you're going through, know that you're right. As sinners, we all deserve eternity in Hell. In fact, that was our destination until Jesus' rescued us. My self-sacrificial attitude changes when Jesus gently reminds me, that He saved me from the status I truly deserve.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding."

Proverbs 3:5 NKJV

"Why, God? Why me? I'm a good person, this suffering is pointless! Haven't I been through enough already!"

Just me...? (Please tell me I'm not alone...!)

## **SELF-PITY IN THE BIBLE**

Job thought so, too. He'd lost all of his children, his possessions, and his health. And he was so good that God bragged him up to Satan. Naturally, Job had a lot of questions for God.

God answered Job's questions with a hailstorm of His own questions, summarized by "Do you want to argue with God? Then go ahead and explain to me how the world works and then you can tell me how to run things," (Job 40.2, Valerie Riese translation!)

We don't understand God's plan, and we don't see the bigger picture. But we know He loves us and that He can use anything to bring you closer to Him and more like Jesus. Sometimes your trial isn't even about you. It's so God's glory and faithfulness can be shown to others through you.

In these moments of indignation, I find peace following raw honesty in prayer. God already knows what I'm thinking anyway.

"God, I don't get it. This makes no sense and to be honest, I'm just mad. But I don't know the bigger picture – You do. I know you love me and I trust you. I give this ugly anger to you, Jesus. Please help me trust you more."

"The Lord is my strength and my shield;  
My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped;  
Therefore my heart greatly rejoices,  
And with my song I will praise Him."  
Psalm 28:7 NKJV

I held on to Psalm 28:7 when I had cancer because it reminded me to cling to Jesus. As I leaned on His strength and let Him guard my thoughts, I saw that He was always there for me. And I am so glad I learned to trust Him, because the trial was easier to bear as Jesus carried me.

"I will praise the Lord according to His righteousness,  
And will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High."  
Psalm 7:17 NKJV

My first awareness every morning of daily radiation treatments was dread. I learned by accident that Christian music lifts my spirits because praise lifts up Jesus.

Praise and thanksgiving redirect our inward focus upward. Every good thing in your life came from God, so remember them and thank Him. We can all begin by thanking God for the gift of salvation through Jesus.

## **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

My Grandpa Gordon used to say, "I felt sorry for myself because I had no shoes until I saw a man with no feet."

Self-pity is about perspective. We all waste time feeling sorry for ourselves, but Jesus gives us a way out of every temptation. The God who made you knows it's normal, but His Word tells us to take those thoughts captive. If you're struggling, all you have to do is ask and He will help you.

Lord,  
I'm feeling sorry for myself and I'm struggling to take these thoughts captive. Please help me. I know You are faithful and that You love me. I give you my trail to use for Your good, even if I never know what that is. Thank you for the joy and provisions in my life. Thank you, especially for sending Your son Jesus to save me so I can spend eternity with You. Amen.

Originally published on <https://www.candidlychristian.com/self-pity/>

# Devotions

## Is It True That God Doesn't Give You More Than You Can Handle?

"God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation, he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV

Hi! I'm Valerie Riese. The assurance that God will never give me more than I can handle almost made me turn from Him. Many days I've felt so desperate that I wanted to give up, and the idea that my circumstances came from God, and that I was expected to be strong enough, was more than I could bear.

First Corinthians 10:13 seemed to confirm that I was both weak and a disappointment to God, but I knew this didn't align with God's character, so I studied the verse to find the truth.

So is it true that God doesn't give you more than you can handle?

Yes.

And no.

First Corinthians 10:13 doesn't say God will not allow suffering. It says He will not allow you to be tempted without a way out. Temptation is an invitation to sin, and we always have a choice.

The truth is that suffering is a natural consequence of sin, both our own and someone else's. God doesn't give trials; He uses them to bring us closer to Him.

All good things come from God, and His character never changes. The only way to eliminate sin and trials is to revoke our autonomy, and God loves us too much to turn us into His puppets.

God, thank you for loving us enough to give us a choice to turn from sin and the choice to live by Your word. And thank you for loving us even as we sin. Please help us walk in Your ways. Amen.

Originally published online and on YouTube

<https://www.candidlychristian.com/is-it-true-that-god-doesnt-give-you-more-than-you-can-handle>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2t56yYX6r0&list=PLz225cKoh0zy4VXPab80p9JxjTBUkjg-4&index=15)

[v=t2t56yYX6r0&list=PLz225cKoh0zy4VXPab80p9JxjTBUkjg-4&index=15](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2t56yYX6r0&list=PLz225cKoh0zy4VXPab80p9JxjTBUkjg-4&index=15)

# Sermon or Podcast Content

## Sample 1: What Good Friday Means to Me

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

Colossians 1:13-14

### Not the Usual Good Friday Service

The church slowly went dark, drawing the small group of worshipers closer to the mood of that first Good Friday. All eyes followed Pastor Eric’s silhouette across the altar and behind the 10-foot projector screen. Our ears traced his footsteps to the stained-glass window until we heard the flip of a switch followed by a few seconds of white noise as an old cassette played.

Then it started. The hollow, high-pitched sound of metal striking metal in perfect rhythm.

Ting... Ting...

Pastor Eric explained, “This is the sound of a hammer on a railroad tie.”

Ting..! Ting..!

He continued as the piercing sound made my neck itch: “This is what our Lord heard as His hands and feet were being nailed to the cross – for you.”

TING! TING! TING!

“Each excruciating, eye-popping strike ripped through our Savior’s flesh – for you.”

My eyes darted toward the door and I forced my feet to remain planted in the pew. Pastor Eric said nothing more, but my soul heard the blood-curdling screams between each strike.

TING!!! TING!!! TING!!!

Just when I thought I might lose my lunch, the cassette finally stopped.

### Jesus’ Sacrifice Brought to Life

I attended this Good Friday service in a dwindling, traditional Lutheran church in Green Bay, Wisconsin in 2000. We moved a few months later and found a new church, but my husband and I still remember that service every Easter.

It was the first time Jesus' sacrifice felt real to me. I remember the stunned silence in which the entire congregation left the church. I can still hear that hammer. And I still feel nauseous when I think about it, because I can see His hand seizing and His blood spurting out – for me.

### **My Attitude of Entitlement**

I'm a decent person, so I expected my life to be calm. I've had days when I've whined in self-pity "Why God? I don't deserve this pain and sickness! I never hurt anyone! Bad things should only happen to bad people!"

I cheated throughout Spanish class in high school. TING!  
I lived with my husband before we married. TING!  
I lost my temper and cursed today. TING!

"You're right," He answers back. "You don't deserve the life I've given you. I rescued you from the life you deserve."

### **What We All Deserve**

Those railroad ties were supposed to be for us. We are all sinners. Not one of us is righteous. And when we cheat, disobey, or treat others poorly, we're just as evil and guilty as those on death row.

That's where all sinners belong – on death row. Jesus saved us from the "dominion of darkness", so that means we were already there. And He could have left us there in our rightful home where suffering is expected and death is the norm.

Trouble isn't a curse – it's a fitting consequence for who and what we are.

### **Good Friday: What we deserve vs What He gave...**

But the Son of God willingly spread His arms open wide as I swung the hammer and you held the nail. To give us His life and His peace, He had to suffer our punishment and die our death.

I take peace for granted, as though I'm entitled. But health, laughter, forgiveness, love, warmth – these are all gifts purchased at the highest imaginable ransom.

Because of Good Friday, we all live lives we don't deserve, both now on earth and for all eternity. What gifts will you thank Jesus for today?

Dear Jesus,

I know I deserve the suffering and death you endured. Thank you for coming to give me life to the fullest and peace beyond understanding. Please forgive my attitude of entitlement and help me to always remember the price you paid to give me the life I don't deserve.

Amen

Originally published on <https://www.candidlychristian.com/what-good-friday-means-to-me/>

## Sample 2: 7 Ways Story-Driven Marketing Empowers Your Beneficiaries

Jonathan Barratt is the Executive Director of Project Rescue Foundation, a ministry dedicated to restoring hope to survivors of sexual exploitation using a gospel-centered approach. He visited with us on the Ministry Growth Show to tell us about how Project Rescue has grown since its grassroots beginnings in David and Beth Grant's basement in 1997. Over the last twenty years, Project Rescue has learned how to come into a region gently by forming relationships and how to disciple in hostile countries.

The leadership of Project Rescue has also learned to adapt to the social media landscape, so they won't be forgotten in a digital world of information overload. You won't be surprised to learn they stay relevant to their donors through story, but the foundational purpose behind their storytelling strategy is an inspiring story in itself.

Read on to learn more about a unique, empowering approach to storytelling, and the undeniable impact it's had on the entire organization.

### When Stories Harm

The leadership of Project Rescue used to shy away from sharing beneficiaries' stories because they wanted to protect the girls. Everyone deserves privacy, and especially victims of human trafficking, many of whom are minors. There are additional, special considerations when your beneficiaries are crime victims because using their story for organizational benefit exploits and victimizes the children all over again.

To respect and protect the girls, Project Rescue focused their donor messaging on the numbers, but most facts and statistics left their audience either sleeping or scrolling Facebook. So, they brought out the big guns, such as "over forty million people are held in slavery around the world today," but no one can comprehend such a number, so potential donors responded with glazed eyes and moved on with their day.

## The Shift

Project Rescue experienced a mindset shift when the girls themselves reached out. I'll let Jonathan tell the story.

"What changed for us is about five or six years ago, the first wave of children that we rescued were graduated, and some of them had attended college. And a few of them were coming forward saying 'I want to share my story. I need to share my story.'"

"I was just with a girl five months ago, and we were getting ready to film her story. I said to her 'Are you sure you want to do this?' And she said 'Brother Jonathan, I know where I came from, I've seen that place. It's one of the worst things I can imagine. If my story can help rescue people like me, I want to tell my story everywhere. I know how lucky I am, and I know what God has done in my life.'"

"And I had a lump in my throat. I could barely speak, but it was just one of the most impactful thirty seconds that I've ever had in my Project Rescue career. This girl recognizes what God has done for her, thank the Lord, through Project Rescue, and she's saying, 'I want to share my story because my story can have a positive impact on others in my situation.'"

That was a little bit of shift for us mentally. We will share the stories if the girls are okay with sharing their stories and they want to.

## The Healing Power of Story

As I (Valerie) listened to Jonathan's story, I heard the girl's bravery. I've written stories of God's faithfulness since 2017, but I didn't want the World Wide Web to know what a mess I was when I was diagnosed with cancer in 2019. My husband changed my mind with a reminder that my story can help other women. So, I wrote from my heart and published afraid. As I heard comments from women who were encouraged by God's faithfulness through my mess, a surprising thing happened.

Cancer got a little easier.

## 7 Ways Story-Driven Marketing Empowers Your Beneficiaries

At Reliant, we believe God wired us for story. Scripture tells us His Word reaches to the hearts of His children, so what better way to heal trauma than through stories of God's faithfulness. And since communication goes two ways, so does the impact of those stories.

Here are seven ways beneficiaries are empowered by participating in story-driven marketing.

## 1. We Feel Loved

In Galatians 6:2, Paul tells us to “Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” The law of Christ is to love one another, so in sharing our stories, we share love.

## 2. We Share God's Comfort

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Sharing stories of God’s faithfulness isn’t just a suggestion; it’s a command right from Scripture, and all of God’s commands are for our benefit. Sharing the comfort we receive draws us closer to God and each other. There is great comfort knowing we’re not alone.

## 3. You Can Save Others

Driver’s education instructors share stories of drunk driving accidents because stories save lives. Your beneficiaries will probably never know what didn’t happen, but they know other girls can learn from their experience.

## 4. Stories Provide Hope

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

Galatians 6:7-9

Our story of life on the other side of trauma gives hope to others suffering as we did, and when we sow hope, we reap hope for ourselves.

## 5. Your Suffering is Not in Vain

“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

1 Corinthians 15:57

When we do the work of the Lord by sharing our stories of His faithfulness, we are comforted and encouraged knowing that good can come from our suffering.

## 6. You Can Give Back

There is great fulfillment in giving back to an organization that poured into you.

## 7. You're No Longer a Victim

Love, empowerment, comfort, encouragement, purpose... When you're no longer a victim, you can heal and become stronger.

### Your Turn

Jonathan and his team continually look for new ways to offer a safe, comfortable platform for the beneficiaries who want to share their story. As girls' bravery transforms abstract statistics into hope-filled faces, the ministry has noticed an undeniable impact on donor engagement and staff satisfaction.

Jonathan shows us that our work doesn't stop after our beneficiaries move on. For Project Rescue, a marketing strategy was born from their beneficiaries' healing. As their marketing efforts continue, so does the cycle of healing.

Do you have a platform for your beneficiaries to further their healing? I encourage you to listen to Jonathan's podcast for a few suggestions to implement or improve a combined marketing campaign and beneficiary program for your ministry. If you have questions or need help, please see our library of courses and contact us.

Originally published on <https://reliantcreative.org/news-insights/>

## Sample 3: The Power of Speech

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Hebrews 4:12 (NIV)

Have you ever wondered why your teacher made you read aloud in class, no matter how much it scared you? Or why your thoughts, ideas, or to-do lists swirl around in your brain until you write them down?

Unspoken words are like caged birds. As the hinges squeak and the door opens, our words take to the air. And when we write our words, we give them a place to land and rest. Both speech and writing give life to our thoughts.

### The Power of Speech

The Bible shows us the power of speech on the first page. Eight out of 31 verses in Genesis 1 start with "God said..." But He's God; couldn't He think the universe into

existence? I believe He wanted to show us that words not only have life, but can give life. And as his children, our words also have the power of life and death, too.

So why not give this life to ourselves?

We know the enemy whispers lies in our ears to steal our joy and destroy our lives, but God's Word penetrates past the mind even to the soul. So to stop the enemy, let God's Word loose. Life and death are in the tongue of everyone who hears your words, including you.

In the early days of my recovery from crippling anxiety, I'd go to my car over the lunch hour, lay the seat down so no one could see me, and I'd speak against the spirit of anxiety and declare God's peace to myself out loud. I always came back from lunch better able to face the rest of the day. I didn't understand it then, but now I know that my destructive thoughts were drowned out by the sounds of God's life-giving truth.

Our words are like soul-care pills consumed by the earful. What have you prescribed for your hearing today? If you're not sure what to take, I recommend you consult with your Physician for the right doses of faith, hope, love, and peace. Because if you don't, your soul will decay on the world's moldy crumbs.

Father, thank You for Your life-giving Word. And thank You for giving me the power to speak life, too. Please convict and forgive me when I speak hurt and harm towards others. And please remind me to come to You for Truth when others speak harshly towards me. Help me to speak Your Word boldly to lift myself and others for Your glory. In Your holy name, I pray. Amen.

### Reflection Question

What lies have you been listening to? Determine a place you can go to begin speaking life over yourself.

### Next Steps

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Originally published on <https://nacwe.org/2021/05/11/power-of-speech/>

# SEO-Based Content

## 3 Ways to Find Grants for Churches

Here at ClickNonprofit, our Google Ads Certified team enables nonprofits and churches to reach thousands of people by helping them maximize the \$10k per month Google Ad Grant. But of course, Google Ads isn't the only grant available, and churches need a lot more than ads to spread the Gospel.

For many churches, "grant" is a magical, mysterious, and even scary word. But it doesn't have to be. In this article, we'll begin to de-mystify grants for churches. We'll tell you 3 ways to find grants for churches (and a printable PDF chart), 4 things to look for in a grant, 5 pro tips to get a grant for your church, and where to go for help.

### 3 Ways to Find Grants for Churches

#### 1. Grant Databases

Grant databases contain listings for thousands of grants and funders for all kinds of needs and beneficiaries. Most databases offer tracking and notification dashboards to help you stay on top of your grant applications. While grant databases will save you a lot of time and headaches, they come at a cost.

A few of the largest databases include GrantScape, Instrumental, FBO, GrantStation. We've provided a brief summary of each with their website descriptions, along with a printable PDF chart with details of each database, what type of grants they list, and the pricing.

#### **GrantScape**

GrantScape is powered by Thompson Grants, a division of CBIS, has been providing grants administrators, program managers and financial managers like you with trusted analysis on the most pressing grants compliance issues since 1972. Our products and services cover the entire grants life cycle from pre-award through closeout and will help you find the funding opportunities you need while making sense of the confusing and complicated task of complying with the uniform guidance.

#### **Instrumental**

We propel the best nonprofits into a bigger, brighter future by building a better way to fundraise. Instrumental brings grant discovery, research, and tracking to one place. With Instrumental, development staff are more effective and efficient at finding the right grants for their nonprofits.

## **FDO by Candid**

The most exhaustive and up-to-date knowledge and insight on the social sector to fuel any fundraising mission. Expanded, in-depth profiles of each grant-maker plus inside look at the grants they've actually made keep your organization operating at peak effectiveness.

## **Grant Station**

Offers nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and government agencies the opportunity to identify potential funding sources for their programs or projects as well as resources to mentor these organizations through the grant-seeking process.

### **2. Search for Grants for Churches by Need**

If you're not able or willing to pay for a database, you can search by need. For example, if your church wants to build a playground, a Google search for "Grants for playground equipment for churches" will offer many options, including Planning a community playground (playlsi.com). Does your congregation need an AED? If you search for "grants for churches," you'll learn that KMS Medical is a medically educated and morally driven partner who wants you to be ready to help someone. Whether your ministry needs a computer, Bibles, or even solar panels, you're likely to find it by searching for "Grants for (fill-in-the-blank) for churches"

And on that note, the first non-paid (as in organic—yes, we're tootin' our own horn) result for "grants for advertising for churches" is yours truly, Click Nonprofit. You can learn all about the Google Grant for Churches in our Ultimate Guide.

### **3. Find Grants for Churches from Local Businesses**

As you probably noticed above, many businesses offer grants for the products or services they provide. You can search online for local businesses that may be willing to sponsor your project. You can also call or visit them. Many potential funders don't advertise their grant, so don't hesitate to ask, especially if you already have a relationship with the business.

### **4 Things to Look for in a Grant**

The good news is there are millions of grants available. The bad news is that finding the right one for your program can be overwhelming. Here are a few things to look for as you search.

#### **Location**

Most funders award grants for a specific region, so the first thing you should look for is what area the funder serves.

## **Deadline**

The second thing to check is the submission deadline. If you don't have enough time to put the grant application together, move on with your search.

## **Previous Grantees**

How do you know if you have a chance at getting their attention over all the other applicants? Every funder has allotted the money for a particular cause close to their heart, so review who they've awarded funds to in the past and what types of programs were involved.

## **Management and reporting**

Funders want a return on their investment, so there's always reporting after a grant is awarded. Review their reporting requirements to determine whether you'll have the capacity to follow through.

## **5 Pro Tips to Get a Grant for Your Church**

Finding the grant is the easy part. Writing the grant application takes a lot of time, resources, careful tracking, and collaborative effort. Here are just a few tips to help you write a winning grant.

### **Be On Time**

The most important rule of grant writing is to submit the application on time. A late submission is an automatic disqualification.

### **Be Complete**

Be sure to include all required elements. Even one missing detail may cause your application to meet the circular file. Many funders believe that if you're unable to complete the application, then it's possible you won't be able to manage the funds properly, so the application itself is often treated as a test.

### **Be Persuasive**

Use relevant spaces to tell an engaging story about how your program aligns with the funder's mission. Show them the difference their funds will make with a balance of anecdotal evidence supported by statistics.

### **Be Correct**

Submit a perfectly written and proofread piece.

## **Need Help to Win a Grant for Your Ministry?**

If it sounds like a lot, that's because it is. Many churches and nonprofits avoid grants because they don't have the knowledge or resources to find and apply for them. But there is help. Many colleges, technical schools, and online providers offer grant writing courses, and there are many books on the topic.

If you'd rather leave your church's grant writing duties to a professional, there are many grant writers and grant writing consultants who will do the work for you. I'm happy to recommend Teresa Huff is the host of the Grant Writing Simplified Podcast and the go-to expert in grant writer coaching and nonprofit grant strategy. She's helped nonprofits triple their funding and maximize their impact. After winning over \$7 million for schools and nonprofits, she now teaches grant writers and nonprofits the strategies they need to develop millions in sustainable, long-term funding. Her podcast has been downloaded in over 100 countries across 6 continents; more than 3,000 students worldwide have completed her online grant writing programs. You can learn more and connect with Teresa at [www.teresahuff.com](http://www.teresahuff.com).

## Summary

While free money sounds like a dream come true, writing a winning grant takes a lot of work. We pray these tips get you started on your journey toward funding your ministry's next soul-saving project.

- Search in grant databases, online, and in the community.
- Review each application for location, deadline, giving history, and reporting guidelines.
- Be on time, complete, persuasive, and correct.
- Reach out for help.

Originally published on <https://clicknonprofit.com/blog>

# Testimonies & Storytelling

## My Faithful Defender

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him.”  
Psalm 28:7

“What scares you the most?” My husband’s question fractured the silence as we drove to the hospital.

Oblivious to my surroundings, I contemplated his question. There was so much to be afraid of: surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, side effects... After three days, saying the “c” word still made me nauseous.

We emerged from underneath the overpass and the hospital campus came into view, taking me back to the last time we drove in heavy silence to this place.

A few years prior, I struggled with a rare, incurable brain disease called pseudo-tumor cerebri. I was three years into an untreatable migraine, narrowing vision, and splintered brain function the day my husband appointed our eight-year-old daughter to look after me while he spoke with a computer salesperson. When my little girl transitioned into her parental role without question, I knew I was of no use to anyone anymore.

Panic attacks and fear of debilitating pain, along with eventual blindness and dependency, pushed me to a breaking point. I didn’t want to die; I was just too afraid to live anymore. Concerned for my safety, my husband consented to my pleas and took me to the hospital, where I stayed for nearly a week.

The disease went into remission, but the panic attacks continued until I learned to control my anxiety through medication and by leaning on Jesus through Scripture and prayer. Now, as we pulled into the parking lot, I knew what part of breast cancer scared me the most—the fear.

The cancer team had mostly good news. The annual mammogram caught cancer early, so chemotherapy wasn’t necessary. Unfortunately, the standard medication prescribed to prevent a recurrence of estrogen-fed cancer in premenopausal women is known to cause pseudotumor cerebri. At forty-four, I had a lot of time for cancer to come back.

Without the medication, there were two options: suppress the estrogen by forcing my body into early menopause or decline preventive treatment and hope for the best. The doctors explained that each option came with risks, but neither one was wrong in my situation. I had to decide between sudden, early menopause or live with an elevated risk of getting cancer again.

It boiled down to fear.

But first I had to beat cancer before deciding how to prevent it from coming back. And there was plenty of fear to fight in the meantime.

The day before my lumpectomy, my husband asked me the same question: "What part do you dread the most?" I imagined entering the operating room without the man who always had enough strength for both of us and said: "What I dread the most is the moment you can't be with me anymore."

The next day, my stomach jumped when my husband had to let go of my hand. With my hand still open, I silently prayed, "Jesus, I'm afraid. Please come with me. Please hold my hand." Warmth suddenly filled the void in my palm and forced out an exhale as my body relaxed. The surgery was over in no time.

Then came radiation. The lingering smell of disinfectant led the way to a round, dimly lit room where the giant radiation machine waited. The technician positioned my exposed body on a cold table extending from the machine.

The sound of approaching footsteps signaled yet another unfamiliar face would appear above me to measure my positioning to prepare for the first treatment. I lifted my head and saw someone approaching, but without my glasses, all I could see was dark blue smocks.

I let my head rest, but without warning, a man appeared and stared at my chest! When I gasped, he looked up and saw the horror and violation in my pale face. He held up what looked like a pen and explained, "I'm sorry. I just need to make a quick pen-tip tattoo right in the center of your chest to guide the radiation rays." He reached over as tears trickled down to the starchy sheet.

Another silent drive home until my husband looked at me with bloodshot eyes and stuttered, "You look traumatized."

Every day I lay there half naked while the staff observed from an adjacent control room. Each time the machine stopped rotating, I pushed out my lungs and held my breath to create a vacuum designed to minimize the radiation exposure to my heart and lungs. To hold my breath as long as possible, I cautiously studied a menacing, bright red light piercing through a large hole in the ceiling until the technician permitted me to breathe again.

But there was another presence with me. As the machine hummed, and the table twitched beneath me, I closed my eyes and called on my comforter: "I trust you, Jesus. Thank you for making me brave. Please help me trust you more." The warmth of His presence in the palm of my open hand whisked me away to a peaceful place of quiet waters where He comforted my soul.

Fatigue and burns gave way to fear and dread as daily treatments continued. I listened to music on the way to treatments for comfort. My favorite song was "My Defender" by Jeremy Camp. I sang along at the top of my lungs, declaring to the fear that Jesus was all I needed, He is my defender. As I sang, the fear faded so I could walk into the cancer center with a measure of confidence.

One night I fell asleep agonizing about my chances of a recurrence. In a dream, I sat terrified in a field, curled up with my knees to my chest as the blackest darkness closed in. Jesus stood between me and the darkness. He spread His arms, creating a barrier the fear could not cross. As the darkness retreated, rays of light revealed that I was peacefully sound asleep in the shadow of a cross as Jesus stood in front of me with His arms spread wide.

Upon awakening, I realized I don't have to fight anxiety. Jesus wants to do it for me. All I have to do is surrender my fears at the cross, trust Him, and rest in the faith that the sacrifice of His blood was enough.

A few months later, a nurse handed me a blue folder of survivor's pamphlets, shook my hand and said "Congratulations, you are cancer-free! When is your appointment with the oncologist to discuss prevention options?"

"I'm not meeting with the oncologist," I told her. "I'll be fine no matter what happens." Please know that I don't advocate declining treatment in expectation of a miracle. I made my decision with my cancer team. But I did not make my decision based on fear. So how am I dealing with the uncertainty of a recurrence?

I have more peace than I've had in decades.

Jesus revealed His faithfulness and healed my anxiety through breast cancer, but He isn't a genie in a bottle writing one-and-done, feel-good stories. Jesus is about relationships. He gives me His peace beyond understanding every day through a lifestyle of Scripture, prayer, music, and writing. He is my comforter, my defender, and He never leaves me.

Jesus wants a relationship with you, too. He wants you to surrender your fear for His promises, but He loves you too much to manipulate or control you into obedience. Instead, He died on earth so you could live with Him in heaven. So surrender your fears to Jesus because He first surrendered His life for you. Then you too will abide in peaceful surrender to your faithful Defender.

Originally published in Faith Talk by Heather Hart & Contributing Authors, Ed. Valerie Riese

<https://www.amazon.com/Faith-Talk-Christian-Gospel-Candidly-ebook/dp/B09GCGB4SH>

# Word Study

## What Does it Mean to be Fearfully Made?

“I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.”  
Psalm 139:14 ESV

When I first started reading the Bible, I gravitated to scriptures about my identity in Christ.

Looking back, I know my recovery from debilitating anxiety had to begin with learning who God says I am. But honestly, Psalm 139:14 didn't really help, because all I heard was that I was scary. I've never understood how so many people could cling to a verse that said we were fearfully made, so I focused on the other, prettier verses.

But recently God brought me back to Psalm 139:14 as I read Shannon Popkins' book *Comparison Girl*. As Shannon explained our worth as God's beloved daughter, she wrote, “Our worth is not up for evaluation.”

The words leaped into my heart so forcefully that I had to put the book down and just sit. Those seven words marinated and simmered in my mind for days, along with God whispering, “You are fearfully and wonderfully made.”

It turns out the original Hebrew word for “fearfully” isn't the scary kind of fear at all; it's the reverent, astonishing, remarkable kind of fear. The jaw-dropping kind of fear that makes you stand in awe and wonder. And in fact, other translations of the verse capture this. My favorite is the Holman Christian Standard Bible, which says “I will praise You because I have been remarkably and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, and I know this very well.”

What I love even more about this verse is that it praises God for His wonderful works. So, it's not really even about me; it's about praising God.

If you're beating yourself up today, I encourage you to praise Him for the astounding, breathe-taking love and thought He put into creating you perfectly your exact time, place, and purpose.

Originally published on: <https://www.candidlychristian.com/fearfully-made/>

A vibrant explosion of blue, green, and yellow powder against a black background. The powder is captured in mid-air, creating a dynamic, starburst-like pattern. The colors are bright and saturated, contrasting sharply with the dark background.

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