

HOMELESS

BY *God's* DESIGN

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BY GOD'S UNFAILING GRACE this story unfolded in the lives of an average American family. Nothing was planned nor rehearsed. Some of it was disheartening, some wonderful, but a path I hope that our family will never have to travel again. We experienced an adventure that many families will one day find themselves experiencing, whether they are prepared for it or not.

During our travels, people that we met would often tell us that they had never given serious thought about having to take their family, and, leaving all possessions behind, look for a place to start all over again. Few people are prepared to believe that they could find themselves homeless or that their future could remotely resemble what our family went through.

James and Janie O'Keefe

This First Printing Is Dedicated To:

OUR CHILDREN & THEIR FAMILIES

KELLIE CHRISTIN O'KEEFE

CHRISTOPHER, HANNAH & STELLA O'KEEFE

KEVIN JOHN O'KEEFE

COURTNEY ROSE O'KEEFE

CALEB BARRETT O'KEEFE

And Some of Our Kansas Friends Including:

JIM & BONNIE & FAMILY

TERESA

HOWARD & KATHI

GLENN & JUDY & FAMILY

LARRY & PEGGY

AND

All Of The Individuals & Organizations
Striving To Help Those Who Are Homeless

Homeless By God's Design

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All of the stories in this book are true; however, names of individuals, businesses, churches, and cities were changed in some cases to protect identities. It is not our intent to offend anyone. The Scriptures in this book are mostly quoted from the King James and the New King James translations of the Bible.

THE NAME OF OUR FATHER AND JESUS

Michel de Montaigne said, “Nothing is so firmly believed as that which we least know.”¹

We must open our eyes to Truth (the Word of God) and “Study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that does not have to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”²

“O, LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles (Nations) shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and [things]wherein [there is] no profit. Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they [are] no gods?”³

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”⁴

Centuries have passed since the Almighty revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush and then further revealed Himself by descending on Mt. Sinai to present Moses with the Ten Commandments. The scriptures we possess today, for the most part, have been changed during translation; some purposely correct and some purposely incorrect. Many scholars today are working feverishly in attempts to find the correct spelling and pronunciation of the name of GOD and His Son whom we call Jesus. For instance, the “J” was not part of any language until the 16th century; therefore, it is certain that the name of Jesus is an incorrect rendering of our Savior’s name. The word LORD is often used through scriptures to denote the Almighty (GOD), while the name, LORD is nothing more than a title and not the correct name of our GOD.

The Hebrew writings refer to our heavenly Father, the Almighty and GOD as “YHVH.” This use of the name in scriptures does not contain any vowels; therefore, there are different opinions as to the correct pronunciation. At

this time in my studies and for the purpose of this book, I will use the name of YAHUAH, pronounced “YAH-OO-AH,” choosing to use the most commonly agreed upon vowels to present HIS name in a readable manner.

Centuries ago, certain sects, made it a crime to use the name of YHVH (YAHUAH) for fear of showing disrespect to such a holy name. However, I hold to the belief that YAHUAH is well able to defend His name against any that may use it disrespectfully. His name has been removed from scripture (the Torah [first five books of the bible], the Prophets, and the other books of the bible), and translators have used the title LORD instead of YAHUAH. Our fathers of the past profaned YAHUAH by changing the writings, which He gave orders not to change. “You shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish from it, that you may keep the commandments of [YAHUAH], your [ELOHIM] (GOD), which I command you.”⁵

Respect for YAHUAH is based on healthy fear. Scripture says, “The fear of [YAHUAH] is pure, enduring forever.”⁶ Further, “The fear of [YAHUAH] is to hate evil, pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse tongue; for these things I hate says [YAHUAH].”⁷ And finally, “Fear not those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul, but rather fear Him [YAHUAH],” who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.”⁸

Our Messiah’s name is derived from His Father’s name, YAHUAH, and the word SHUA, which means “IS MY SALVATION.” Therefore, the name for Jesus that we believe is correct is YAHUSHUA, which means YAHUAH—IS MY SALVATION.”

There are various historical opinions concerning the name of Jesus, and though we do not object to the usage of this name, we would like to move toward truth. We do not print this for argument’s sake, but rather to say, it is so exciting to know the truth that the name of our Savior is YAHUSHUA, for He, YAHUAH, IS OUR SALVATION!

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Preface

Pearls Of Great Price

*“The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”*¹

“Sell all that you have to buy the pearl of great price.”

What is the pearl of great price? Scriptures say, *“Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom and with all your getting, get understanding.”*²



*“The Fear of the LORD is the beginning of Wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding.”*³

Therefore *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”*⁴

God opens our ability to hear and perceive His voice and discern His way as soon as we commit ourselves to a daily and sincere walk with Him. As we walk with God through difficult times, we begin to discover God’s pearls of wisdom (scriptures, thoughts, dreams, visions, promises, and impressions). It is those pearls that we should write in our hope chest (a journal) for continual reminders of God’s love and unfaltering devotion to our future. He uses discipline, tender mercies, teachings and promises to demonstrate His love and devotion to each of us. If we will believe and seek Him daily, He will fill our hope chests with many pearls of great price, which are His pearls of wisdom, personal promises, and revelations of His greatness.

*“If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes.”*⁵

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is suitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*⁶

 We will mark this book with some of the pearls from God we learned—for it is these pearls that gave us the hope and courage to endure the journey.  Most quotations from the Holy Bible are taken from the King James version, or the New King James version.

Chapter 1

Heaven's Manuscript

If Heaven holds a manuscript containing the life story of each of God's children, detailing how they would live out their life while on earth, without the slightest hesitation, I can admit, "I would never have considered my life's story unfolding this way!" The steps of our life have been beyond our wildest imaginations. God's intricate weavings, His sometimes-stern warnings—but most of all, "*the peace of God, which passes all understanding*,"¹ combined with His unflinching presence, brought us through countless trials of our faith including our homeless ordeal.

Every born-again Christian must follow Yahushua (Jesus) one step at a time. Thirty years ago when my wife and I first encountered the saving power of our LORD Yahushua (Jesus), we had no idea what God Almighty had in store for us. I remember saying one morning with all my heart, "God, I want all you have for me; and if my mind cannot receive it, bypass that 'thing' and give it to me anyway." I can honestly say, to this day God has been faithful to that prayer. Just how God has brought us through the last thirty-two years of trials and tests has been beyond measure and presents contemplative thoughts for what may lay ahead of us. We believe the future will include charting and traversing unexpected horizons for all Americans as fears and trepidations unfold on a continually growing scale while our country suffers judgment, forgiveness, and finally restoration.

Homeless by God's Design is a stern warning, an urgent wake-up call, an admonition to churches across America. It is not directed to a particular denomination, but rather to every group of believers that meet on a regular basis. Our hope is that they will realize that the burden will ultimately rest on their shoulders as to how they receive

and take care of God's children, especially the ones that find themselves homeless. We are also writing this book to prepare families that may one day find themselves in the same situation that our family experienced, though theirs not by choice.

Is our trust for the future in people, money, possessions, talents, jobs, insurance, or the government? Take time as you read this book to think about where your trust truly lies, and what or whom you would turn to in a time of great need. Realize now that there is only One who will not fail you, and He is God, the One who created you. Will you remain true to Him as life unfolds differently than what you might have planned? Do you really know how to trust God?

Yahushua (Jesus) declared *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”*² Do we honestly know the voice of the LORD? Have we tapped into the truth of Proverbs 3:5-6? *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”*³ A family of seven, we set out from the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and found ourselves in mid-America, out of money and “Homeless by God's Design.”

Chapter 2

Homeless By God's Design

Janie Begins...

It was deep in the holiday season in Branson. Jim and I, and our five children, were enjoying all of the wonderful Christmas shows when Jim awoke one morning with a song coursing through his thoughts—“*I Wish I Was In The Land Of Cotton.*”¹ He knew that our expedition was finally over and that it was time to return to the Gulf Coast, where we were from. Early one morning, after giving proper notice to our employers and a few weeks of preparation, Jim left Branson for the Mississippi Gulf Coast. We were secure in our plan that I would finish some business for my job, complete the condominium inspection, and turn in the key. We had determined that two of the kids, Kellie and Christopher, would accompany me and leave for home later that day. However, as soon as Jim and the other three children left, the snow started falling, and the roads began quickly icing. As anyone that has been to Branson, Missouri knows, all the roads are winding and very hilly with steep drop-offs on each side of a two-lane roller-coaster ride around the city. Jim was pulling our 23’ travel trailer with our conversion-van fully overloaded, and he was heading home to the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Because of my brief delay in leaving, I found myself checked out of our condo and stranded, with my car fully loaded. I tried to head to the highway, but my car slid down a hill, and I knew that leaving was no longer an option. The way the snow was now falling, I didn’t know how long it would be before I could get on the highway. After spending my first night at a motel hoping for the snow to stop, I started doing some earnest praying. Mary came to my mind. She was

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