

MY EXPERIENCES
WITH
G O D

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LETIZIA MACBAIN



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*This is a true story, narrated by a simple woman who
believes her life journey was not left up to chance.
It was divinely planned by God, who steered her
toward His Son, Jesus Christ.*

To Marilyn Harte, my longtime friend and unsung hero, whose prison ministry has saved many souls; and to my daughter, Patricia, who made sure you are reading this book. My prayer is that while you read my book, you would be receptive to your own personal experiences with God.

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P R E F A C E



D E A R R E A D E R,

I have always wanted to thank God, our dear Father, for His everlasting goodness. But besides a quick “thank you,” I never took the time to express my gratitude until now. I will soon reach my sixty-seventh birthday, and in three years I will be three score and ten. I would like, through the Holy One within me, to reveal my story of His unfailing love.

When I look back on my life and see His faithfulness and ever-present help in moments of trouble, I get tears in my eyes because no one else has ever done so much for me and received so little from me in return.

I thank my dear sister in the Lord who came suddenly into my life by the grace of God, whose persistence gave me the encouragement to write this book. I sincerely hope that this story will help you, the reader, to increase your patience in waiting for the Lord to supply your needs.

He never fails to do it. Believe—only believe—and trust in Him, and you *will* receive.

It is written!

—*Letizia MacBain*

THE GOODNESS
OF GOD



GOD HAS BEEN a good and faithful Father throughout my life, but to take you through the story of how God watched over me through my childhood and teenage years would take far too long. Thus, this story begins in my twenty-seventh year.

An Arranged Marriage

On December 8, 1961, I married a complete stranger in a court of law in Lagos, Nigeria, a former colony that had just declared its independence from Britain.

I was born and educated in Cairo, Egypt, where my parents lived. They had arranged my marriage to a British man, fifteen years my senior, living in Nigeria. In those days parents had full authority over their children's lives (or at least mine did), so I had no choice but to marry the man they chose for me, as I was completely financially dependent on them.

My mother was Greek and my father was Italian, and those were the languages that were spoken at home. In addition, I learned English and French while being schooled at the French Catholic convent in Cairo.

My mother's Greek friend had conducted my "introduction" to my husband-to-be by showing him a home movie that I was in. She only knew the man as a close friend of her husband, and she assumed that he was a reliable and trustworthy person. My mother's friend never thought to delve into his past life to find out what kind of person he truly was before matchmaking him with me.

I became pregnant early in the spring of 1962. When I was five months' pregnant, my husband got fired from his job. I later discovered that his reputation as a working man was so bad that nobody wanted to offer him another job. Therefore, he concocted the idea of running a garage, and he talked some people into supporting the idea. But in order to open a garage, he urgently needed money. Naively, I told him that I could help if I went to visit my parents, who lived in Cairo, Egypt. I would ask them to give me a dowry since they had pressed me into marrying the man of their choice. This was justified according to my Greek mother's customs.

So we traveled to Cairo to pay my parents a visit. I was very sick at the time, but I hid it from my parents, as I did not want them to know I was struggling with the pregnancy. I should not have flown in my condition—even on the relatively short flight from Nigeria to Egypt—but my husband desperately needed the money, so he ignored the dangers involved. I simply had to go with him because he needed me to convince my parents, in their native language, that his plan for a garage was sound, as they could not speak English.

As a result, my parents were conned into becoming partners in the proposed garage, which supposedly would make our fortune and theirs. They were convinced that it would be multiplied in the near future, as my husband promised. Little did they know that they would pay dearly for having entrusted their daughter's future into the hands of a complete stranger.

Unexpected Help

My dowry was the equivalent of one-third of my parents' combined savings, which they had put away for their old age. We did not get the money immediately because most of my parents' savings was in a bank account in Rome, Italy, where we would have to go to get the money. I could not travel to Italy as I was unwell due to the pregnancy, so my husband and I returned to Ikeja, Nigeria. He decided to travel alone to Rome to collect the money. Not wanting to leave me alone in our rented flat, he instead left me with a couple that he knew socially, for them to take care of me while he was away.

This couple were far from hospitable and I felt stranded. They informed me that my husband had promised them a tidy sum of money per day to look after me while he was away. In the meantime, I had thought that they were offering me their hospitality out of kindness and friendship toward my husband.

My husband was supposed to return after three days, but when the fourth day came and he did not arrive, this couple refused to feed me, as I had already cost them three days of food. They constantly told me that my husband could not be trusted. They believed that once he got his hands on my money he would disappear.

In my pregnant condition, with various thoughts about my husband and my future churning around in my mind, I could hardly stand the thought of eating. But I desperately wanted some milk to maintain my strength and nourish the child growing inside me. However, the couple I was staying with adamantly refused to give me any milk. They also told me I would have to leave their home the next day because they could no longer afford to house me.

At 5:30 that evening I left their house feeling depressed. I simply walked down the street, determined to go wherever it

led me. Ikeja was a suburb around the outer ring of the city of Lagos, the capital city of Nigeria. I roamed the streets, unaware and uncaring of the possible consequences for my unborn child and me. Before I knew it, I had walked all the way to the edge of the bush. Not a soul was in sight for miles around. I was now far from home and feeling totally abandoned. All I could hear was the noisy chirping of birds as the sun was setting. All was deserted; there were no buildings, let alone a vehicle or person. It never occurred to me that I could have been raped, abducted, or killed out there in the bush. I was so caught up in my thoughts as I cried out to God that I was unaware of anything else.

As I walked, I asked God, “Why all this? Why am I pregnant?” I blamed God for my pregnancy; I was unable to understand how He could allow me to become pregnant in such miserable circumstances. When I had first learned I was pregnant, I panicked and wanted to abort the baby because I felt stranded in a new land with a man I hardly knew and trusted very little. All I knew about his past life was that he was divorced and had no children after thirteen years of marriage, and he constantly changed jobs. However, as my parents had arranged the marriage for me, I thought I had to accept his way of living and simply soldier on. So I decided to keep the child, though I didn’t want it, and I blamed God for being pregnant. Why hadn’t He kept me from my current misery and made me barren? Other women were barren; why not me? It was only later in life that I realized God had other plans and He wanted me to be pregnant at that time and give birth to and raise the child growing inside me.

So there I was at the edge of the bush, far from any buildings or people, alone and crying out in anger to God. I told God that I only needed £1. I needed that pound to buy milk to drink until my husband returned. I was shouting at God with tears in my eyes when suddenly a man appeared in front of me. My

husband and I had met this very man on the first day of our arrival in Lagos in October of 1961. Back then, he had invited my husband and me to meet his wife and stay with them for supper. Now he stood before me, asking, “What are you doing here all alone and pregnant? Why those tears?”

I was sobbing hysterically as I briefly explained that my husband was away and I needed £1 to get some milk. He put his hand inside his native white robe, pulled out just £1, and handed it to me. He said, “Go back quickly. Walk straight ahead; do not take any turns and you will find yourself in front of the supermarket. Go, as it will get dark very soon and it is not safe for you out here.”

I profusely thanked the man and speedily returned by the path he had advised me to take. I soon found myself in front of the supermarket. It was only after I had bought the milk, drank some, and returned to the couple’s flat that I realized the man had not been in a car but on foot. I knew he was the general manager of Eskom, the large electric company in the area. He typically traveled in a black limousine, as did others of his rank and social status. There was no reason for him to be in the area where I saw him, but even if he had reason, he should not have been walking alone.

My husband arrived to fetch me from the couple’s house early the next morning. We never saw those people again, nor did we ever see or hear from the man who gave me the money. He simply gave me the amount of money I had asked God and then him for—£1, not £2 or £5—and disappeared out of my life, not taking the time to check up on me later to find out if I was OK. I wondered if he was really the man I had met upon my arrival in Lagos, or was he an angel sent from God to answer my prayer? I thank God for not failing me in my dire moment of need.

A Miraculous Birth

My daughter, Patricia, was born premature at six months and three weeks. She was kept in an incubator for about a month. Her birth itself was a miracle, as I began to hemorrhage and had to be rushed to the hospital. The doctor had to perform an emergency Caesarean section to rescue my daughter, as she was drowning in the blood filling in my womb. When the doctor removed her from me, she was not breathing. There was no sign of life; she was born dead. Then all of a sudden she gasped for air, followed by a prolonged silence. Finally she again gasped and started breathing evenly. For some divine reason, she survived her traumatic birth, to the great astonishment of the doctors and nurses. When I started to come out from under the anesthesia, the first words that greeted me were, "It's a girl! She was dead but she came back to life for some reason."

When I finally completely woke up from the ordeal, I discovered a long cut in my stomach from the medical procedure. It was held shut by nineteen ugly metal staples, which turned purulent after two weeks. They had to be removed with great care, as they had become embedded and were festering in my flesh. Even though the wound had become infected, the doctor simply bandaged the area and left it to heal on its own. However, I did not suffer any consequences from my infection. By the grace of God, the wound did close and I now have a deep scar to remind me that God never fails.

Another Trial

Six months later we were still living in Ikeja when I got pregnant again. Violence and unrest had been the norm in Nigeria since the colony had received its independence in 1960. As a result of the governmental changes, all the hospitals were nationalized and had so deteriorated that foreign citizens were

urged by their respective embassies to return to their native lands for hospital care. My husband and I were British expats, but there was no option for me to go to England for medical care when my baby died in my womb in the sixth month of my pregnancy. I was taken straight to Lagos General Hospital, where I was put into a private room to wait until my dead baby was naturally expelled from my body. They would not induce labor.

It took two days of sheer agony for my dead baby to leave my body. During this time my screams were unearthly. At the end of the second day I was whisked into a delivery room and put on a metal bed with my legs raised wide apart. My body finally ejected the fetal corpse, and a nurse cut the umbilical cord. She asked me what I wanted her to do with the body, and I told her, "Do what you want with the corpse, as the soul is with God."

The nurse then left me alone in the room, still in the same position on the metal bed. She had not made any effort to clean me, clear away the afterbirth, or disinfect me. I could feel that I was slowly bleeding to death. There was a clock on the opposite wall, and when midnight came I began to call for help in a feeble voice. A very young nurse from another delivery room appeared and told me she could not help me, as I was not under the care of her doctor. I would have to wait to be attended by my own doctor.

When this young nurse left me without even a backward glance, I started to call out to God in desperation. "Why have You kept my first child alive but are now calling me home?" I asked. "Lord, You know that I am the only one who will look after Patricia on this earth, as her father is a useless, egotistical, idle man who has no desire to keep a job or work for a living and spends his days drinking in the pubs!" By this time I had learned that my husband was a con artist who cheated hard-working people out of their earnings and savings. He had done two years jail time for embezzlement, then disappeared to Nigeria.

I was beginning to feel the grip of death take hold of me when all of a sudden a tall, thin, young man in his early twenties entered the room. He was dressed all in white, with long sleeves. His medical cap covered his head down to his eyebrows, and the mask covered his lower face up to his eyes, which was the only part of his body I could see. He came up beside me and whispered in my ear, “You *will* live.”

In a very faint voice, I told him, “I need blood. If I don’t get any, I feel I am going to die!”

The man disappeared and returned with a large surgical bottle full of blood. At that time there was an IV pouch connected to a needle on the top of my left hand. He disconnected the IV from the needle and connected the bottle of blood to it. Then he looked at me with smiling eyes and I passed out.

At 4:00 A.M. I awoke to a commotion in my room and saw my doctor, who had arrived wearing a tuxedo. He said to me, “I’m sorry I could not come earlier. The anesthetist is with me. We’ll take over from here.” I lost consciousness again.

When I awoke I was in a small room on a small bed with no linens, still in my dirty, stinking state. I was wearing baby doll pajamas, which were plastered to my body, and my long hair was practically glued to my back. I had not eaten anything throughout the entire ordeal. A friend from the Italian embassy where I was working came to see me, but she immediately ran away, saying, “I’ll see you at home!” I must have looked absolutely terrible.

Much later in the day, my husband came to take me home. He had brought a dressing gown to cover me, as I was in such a terrible physical state. However, he did not show the slightest consideration for my condition; his demeanor was ice cold. When we got home, he didn’t offer me any help but simply waited while I got out of the car and then left immediately—most likely to go to the pub. I needed to check on my sleeping

daughter, but I needed to get cleaned up first. I immediately went to the bathroom to wash, walking with difficulty. Taking that bath felt like floating on clouds. I think all the angels in heaven must have been praising God and singing, because the peace I felt in that bath was absolutely amazing.

Two weeks later I returned to the hospital for a check-up with my doctor. By God's divine power, all my wounds were healed, and the doctor was satisfied. Before leaving, I asked the doctor to call the young man who had helped me so that I could thank him. I can still hear him telling my husband and me, "There is *no one* who fits that description on our staff! In addition, the matron's keys to the blood supply never left her side that night. We have no idea what you are talking about or how you got the blood you said saved your life." I was given no further explanation. I never returned to see that doctor, nor did I venture into that hospital again.

A few months later we fled Nigeria—my husband had no work and no money—leaving a trail of bad checks and debt behind. We returned briefly to England to live, and from there we went to Aden Yemen. In Aden I was employed as secretary of Hassan Ali Bazra, who was a Muslim, a very influential man and my husband's boss. One of the conditions of my husband's employment was that under no circumstance was he to drink alcohol during working hours. One evening, at about six o'clock my husband came home drunk and shaking all over and showed me his car, which had been riddled with bullets. The next day, his boss came to see me and gave me this alternative: "You can stay here with Patricia and I will look after both of you, but your husband will be killed; or you can leave the country for good with your husband and daughter, never to return."

I chose to leave Aden with my husband and daughter and went to Rome, Italy, with Patricia, while my husband went to England to look for work. In Rome, we stayed with my good

friend Anna, a spiritualist who invoked the spirits. She told me that my husband would be offered work in Canada, Australia, and South Africa, but that my future would be in South Africa. That is how I came to be living in Johannesburg, South Africa, where I live to this day.

Trusting in God's Goodness

Why do things like this happen to us? Only God has the answer. But one thing is certain: Whatever we go through, wherever we are, God is in control. If we trust Him more than we trust what we can see, feel, or hear, He has promised never to leave us or forsake us (see Heb. 13:5; Deut. 31:6). So when you go through trials, accept His promise and let go. Let God deal with your situation.

We are the reason for our bad choices, not our good God. Our greatest problem rests with our impatience and ourselves. My life—and my daughter's life—could have been very different if only I had made wiser choices. I'm sure the same is true of your life.

Unfortunately, we tend to be like our grandmother Sarah, who got tired of waiting for God to deliver His promise of a son to her and her husband, Abraham. So she convinced Abraham to sleep with Hagar, her Egyptian maidservant. What happened as a result of her impatience and not waiting on God's promise? Hagar gave birth to Ishmael, father of the Ishmaelites, who created the religion of Islam. On the other hand, Sarah's son Isaac became the father of the Israelites, or Jews. We are all aware of the division and strife between the Muslims and Jews throughout the ages. I am sure God has been and is still being blamed for these problems that can be traced back to one woman's impatience and lack of trust in God.

My experience in the delivery room in Lagos General Hospital brought me so close to God that no one could deter

me from the fact that God truly exists and that I can trust Him. To this day, and forward until my last breath, I have not and will not doubt for even a second that there is a God. Do I wonder at and question His ways of operating in my life? Yes, time and time again I have questioned Him. After all, my humanity often interferes with my spirituality, and that is when things go awry. But when we run back to God to undo what we have messed up, I picture Him smiling and saying, "I have you." He is so good to us! I imagine Him shaking His head and saying, "I knew you would come to Me. Now are you ready to leave *all* to Me?"

If your answer to this question is yes, and if you will accept God's help, then *do not move*. Instead, wait for Him to get you out of trouble. He will help you because He loves you so much. He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus, who died on Calvary not to condemn us, but to save us, to teach us to leave our cares to Him, to trust wholly in Him, and to believe in Him and His goodness!