

My Little Praise for Our Higher Power



By Peggy Rowe, Member Geyserville Christian Church.

12/12/2002 I'm writing this to share my experience. It is one way for me to rejoice in the Lord and share with you. This year, my little church, a church, obviously filled with spirit started opening Sunday Services by singing, "The Prayer of Jabez". Magic " i.e. God" in my life started to happen immediately. I'm not writing this to convert anyone.... Or to try to shove "God" down your throat. I know from my own experience, that won't work. Rebellion is what you get from someone who is tired of you shoving these facts in your face. My answer twenty years ago was, "God wants me to have a dozen babies, I'm supposed to obey my husband and he is mean to me, no, no... I don't like that..." Let me give you some background. I'll try not to bore you. I was raised by an atheistic mother, and a father who was raised by a atheistic mother and a 7th day Adventist father. I have leaned towards the atheism all of my young life as that was the strongest influence in my childhood. I have struggled all my life with religion, spirituality, and the universe so to speak. I've been the rebel atheist "there is no God powerful enough to have made this beautiful earth." I've shopped around and toured the domains of the Baptists, 7th Day Adventists, Methodists, Jehovah's Witness, and Mormons. They are good people, but I just didn't fit in. As I was doing this shopping in my early 20's all I found an angry, unforgiving, bossy God that one could not please. I felt these religions unfairly doomed to me to hell and I was angry with this God because of it. Well, I've been searching for something all my life. And whatever it was it was a need, a void, a something that no human could fill. Again I went shopping... I read books by Joseph Campbell, Stephan Hawking, and many others. I took classes on mythology and art at my local junior college. I studied paganism, and the religions that are "goddess" based. What an eye opener. You know, no matter what 'myth' we choose to live by, in nearly any kind of culture, the basis of "The Word" is almost identical in message. The message is that we are all human, and we all share a common experience, and we all have someone we can turn too who is anywhere you are all the time, the Sacred is here now. You know, something funny, for years I've been telling people that the universe was held together by Love. At those times, I did not make the connection. How many bumper stickers had I read, "God is Love" Light Bulbs... God = Love. The universe is held together by God??? During my later shopping era, I was invited next to an AA meeting to "learn" about the 12 steps and how they worked. I got into a group with a beautiful leader (Jack Crawford), Overcomers Anonymous, more 12 steps and a lot of love and support. So, I started again trying to reach out, to find that something. With the guidance of a sponsor, me who never drinks; worked those 12-steps for my own sanity. My mother said there was no God. One time she made a very nasty remark about God being a doorknob or some silly thing. Her tone of voice was very angry. I was very young. I don't understand the connection altogether, but in the beginning I assigned any

and all doorknobs to be my Higher Power. Seems silly, but you know, I think I needed to have something I could touch and feel. Something that was nearly everywhere I was: God is a doorknob. I've since realized, you can call God anything you want. God has many names for many kinds of people, I think so that he can be more understood. He can be our Higher Power, she can be Buddha, and God can be called of Son of A Bitch. Not to nice, but it's okay. God Forgives. Believe me, I know. God is bigger than anything we can dish out! I lost a baby once. In my eyes it was completely tragic. A loss of life, and I thought I was a failure. After the baby, "the product" as they refer to this precious life in the hospital was expelled, the doctor generously sent me home to 'finish the job'. He didn't tell me I'd lost the baby. I didn't understand their terminology. I had to go back after a certain time for an ultrasound to make sure the job was complete. I lay on my back watching a monitor as a nurse moved the sensor back and forth across my belly. I will swear until my dieing day that I saw my baby in there... in fact, I was so convinced, I asked the nurse if there was a possible way that perhaps the baby could have left an impression, sort of like a fingerprint. She told me it looked normal and there was no baby or impression. But, it doesn't matter what the nurse said. That baby turned toward me and I heard a voice, and it told me not to worry because it was okay.... And I knew I had seen the face of God in that moment. This experience had me in tears. I knew and even told people I saw the face of God. Yet, I fought the idea of God... There is NO GOD; it was planted deeply in my consciousness. A couple of years ago I was dragged darn near kicking and screaming into my little church. This place where I found forgiveness and love. The place calls itself, "open and affirming". I grew to love the people and the 'Spirit' that is there. I go there because it's a family. I keep going back because I love the hugs! And because at the end of the service more and more each time, I want to shout out and thank the Lord. Enough background, huh? I've had enough!! I am soooooo human.... Wanna know my life story??? Just kidding!!!! Fast forward to the year 2002... This year, at this little church of mine, we started to sing this silly song... The song is called "The Prayer of Jabez". It is based on a biblical passage: 1Chronicles 4:10. Oh God Bless Me... This year as I asked God to bless me.... I was rewarded with work, working me up from a small job with a printing company and then to the office where I am now... the garbage company. But, you know, I needed the small time job to build my confidence. So much of it has been bravado all my life... I smile no matter what.... I've convinced a lot of people... that no matter what all was well. He brought back my beautiful oldest daughter into my life. She is no longer being moved from place to place in Nevada. Her father had her signed up for the army, it turns out against her wishes. She came to me in March, also against her will. An 18-year-old child/woman who seemed like she knew what she wanted, when in fact, she was scared to death. She was being banished to the evil woman mother. She does not remember our previous life where we were actually best friends. But she found out, I wasn't evil and cried when it was time to go to the Army. She wants to stay with me, which is okay; I want to be there for my baby. But, the biggest blessing of all? That I can share this with you, I am not ashamed anymore to be Christian or to claim the awesome Gift that God has given to me. "Please enlarge my ministry, let your hand always be with me..." The God I believe in... and I realized this even more this morning as I traveled up Highway 101 to Ukiah. I saw the beautiful cloud formations in the air, and beautiful rock formations on the ground. I saw four deer coming down, I suppose for a drink at the Russian River. Hills turning ever so slightly green as the winter storms nourish the seeds with much needed moisture. Even when the trees are not green... when things are dark, at time when you would have otherwise found me totally depressed (I hate winter with a passion!)...I rejoice. I rejoice. God has blessed me.... Yes, I've been through

hell, yes so have my children. But, Rejoice we are all beautiful people with a future that looks pretty darn good. The hell made me a better person; it made us all better people. Thank you, God, for giving me trials and tribulations in my life, so that I might develop my own kind of inner strength, for giving me many chances to learn to hold my temper. Over and over, you put me in situations that you knew that I could handle, and I did not trust you.... But, over the years each lesson was laid before me. I woke up today and realized you were also teaching me to trust, to trust in you. Today I realized that I do trust you. I will never, ever no matter how hard it feels in the moment, be placed into a situation I can not handle. So, with trust comes confidence. Do what you will with me Lord, I am yours. Enlarge my ministry. Lay your hand on me, I trust you. "Keep me from evil..." I never even had to ask. God knew what he was doing. I used to so resent the fact that God loved me like a father. Huh, what good did my father ever do for me? God loves us like any parent, and like any good parent he allows us the freedom of will to explore the universe. Like any good parent this Higher Power of ours allows us to explore, stumble and fall. We face the consequences of our behavior; God is the ultimate in 'Positive Discipline' because all consequences are relevant. God is powerful and loves us all. He loves us enough to let us live our lives and even if evil does come along, it's not like we can't bear it, God is with us every moment! "Oh God, please let me cause no pain." This is the one, which I cry out the most these days. I know I am human and I know that I hurt others even when I don't mean to. I know that when I was younger and reckless, I meant to hurt people and I ask forgiveness of that. But now is the moment, today is the day; let me cause no more pain. There is NO doubt in my mind that the Lord is restraining certain activities now so that I won't hurt others. Is there no greater love? I thank you, Lord. When the timing is right, it will happen. Have I worn out your eyes? A second to the last thought?? I classify myself as a quiet Christian. I have a tendency to lean toward the liberal side. I have been someone who wants to stay away from those "holy rollers" who make so much noise. And yet, This God... has given me such gifts that I've got to share and the more I share, the more I receive. Another name for God: Could it be Karma? A last thought, if you will indulge me a bit farther. In the 'old' days I always listened to the wind. **I've always had a connection but I did not make the connection.** The Lord has grown on me to the point that he is everywhere with me and I realize, contrary to my mother's belief, that God is indeed everywhere, with everyone... God is within, and all around us. This Higher Power is the sun that warms us, air we breathe, it is the Wisdom of the Universe that keeps us alive as our hearts beat away, and Our God is the one who will greet us, when we are finally ready to reach out and begin all over. It is not God who has not forgiven us; it is us who have not forgiven us.