

# BREATH OF **Life**

A Testimony of Transformation  
from Caryl Andrew (Guadeloupe)



I had a difficult childhood. I did not lack for food or a roof over my head, but I have been challenged with my right foot from birth. Growing up always being at the hospital, I took time to read my Bible and learn memory verses and later began praying. But I felt lonely and looked down upon in disgust. People would talk about me and gaze insistently at me to the point that I felt very sad, hoping the earth would open and cover me. As a youth, I was angry at God who let me go through all this without coming to my rescue. I stopped praying and decided that if God loved me, he would have healed me throughout these many years of suffering, pain, spending sleepless nights, and having to drop out of school without any qualification.

Boys would not even look at me because I was considered to be a handicap. Who would ever want their son to choose a girl who is not normal? Would she be able to be a good wife, bear children, and make a husband happy? I was not even asked to be a flower girl because I would have spoiled wedding pictures with my sick leg. Even my closest friends would bypass me to choose someone who they were not close to be part of their wedding procession. I was the ugly duckling because of my sickness.

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## ***I was the ugly duckling because of my sickness.***

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I was 20 years old when I was advised to see a certain doctor who was at the time the best surgeon to amputate the foot. I could not stand the pain anymore. To my great surprise, the doctor told me I was too young to make such a decision and that I needed a little more time to consider this decision that would transform my life forever. As time went by, I continued seeing that doctor and finally stopped because nothing had changed.

I did not know then the plan God had for me. Although I stopped praying and went about doing my own thing, the love I had for church was stronger than anything else. So I went to church every Sunday, attending the youth programs, and taking an active part in church. But my heart was empty and sad. Why me? What had I done to deserve such a punishment? Why would the God people say is just, good, loving, and caring allow me to go through so many things – pain, humiliation, rejection, disdainful looks, and people walking away when I entered a room? Why, God, why?

The attitudes were not much better in the Christian realm than in the world and sometimes even worse in my family. Then one day, God called me back to him. I heard his voice and returned to him weeping and asking his forgiveness for my sins towards him – all the harsh words, not praying, and living my life my way.

He forgave me. I took back my stand with him, faltered again, and turned away again to my own business. I thought that living maritally with a man would lead us naturally into marriage, but God once more had another plan for me. The guy left me when I was four months pregnant. That brought me back to God, and I have remained with God ever since. I gave birth to my son, and I took back my walk with Christ.

Several years later, a pastor prophesied over me and told me, “God has great plans for you.” These words seemed like fresh water to me, a new beginning, and the answer to all my prayers.

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***God has great plans for you.***

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Two years later I went back to school and got my first degree, got my driver’s license, got a job, got married the next year, and had another baby. Sadly, my beloved husband passed away while I was seven months pregnant with our last daughter. This was the biggest pain I have ever felt, but God in all his mercy was and is always present. That day I said, “God, you allowed him to pass, so you will take care of me and my children.”

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Things have not always been sweet, but God has never failed in his promise toward us.

Next, God called me into his ministry as a member of the Baptist Federation board, a young adults' leader, the secretary of my local church, etc. I have recently become the Federation's second vice president. At the age of 46, I went back to school for a second degree in counseling young people, and I succeeded in my exams.

**And my foot is completely healed now.** Thank God!

God really transformed my life from one stage to another, and I know I was created to serve him. He did not say it would be easy. He said cast our fears upon him for he cares for us. Call upon him in times of need, and pray without ceasing. It doesn't matter how long, what we have been through or are going through, he is faithful and ever present.

***Father, in Jesus' name, I thank and praise you for everything you have done in my life because there is no one great like You.***