

THE WONDERS OF
GOD'S

PROTECTIVE HANDS

MY TESTIMONY



CHANADDAH CHAISAKORN

Introduction: As a fetus in the womb, I was poisoned, but God had far greater plans for me. Let me walk you through my life story so you can learn of the wonders of God's protective hands over my life.

1. My Childhood

My mother told me I was a sickly baby and that she held very little hope for me living long enough to enter childhood. I often had high fevers, which were followed by seizures, where for several minutes my eyes rolled upward while my eyelids remained open. Due to my poor health, I was very skinny. Therefore, people called me "small girl" and that became my nickname "Noi", in Thai.

Each time I was ill, my devout Buddhist father would pray a special prayer as he prepared 'magic' holy water for me to drink that was meant to cure me. On one occasion, I recall myself screaming at the top of my lungs in fear of a ghost that I believed was there to take away my life. It was a dark shadow in human form standing at an open window of the house in broad daylight, yet no one else could see it. My family members and relatives that were there tried to comfort me by assuring me that no one could harm me. At the same time, they were busy sprinkling the 'magic' holy water over my body! Although I was sickly as a baby and throughout my childhood, I survived, much to my mother's amazement.

2. My Search Began

My father tried to live a holy life in accordance with the teachings of Buddha, yet at the same time practiced healing through the use of 'holy' oil and 'holy' water along with 'magical' prayer. Many people (including me) who were sick or injured sought his help to be healed, thus he was highly respected.

Every evening, before bedtime, I would join my father in prayer to the image of Buddha that was on the shrine that was erected inside our house. Interestingly enough, each time I did this, I never felt any assurance that my prayers were going to be heard by this Buddha image, or that this image was going to be capable of saving me from harm.

I was scared to pray alone to the image of Buddha as I feared the darkness as well as ghosts. I also believed that there must be some sort of evil spirits that could kill me. Therefore, I lived in fear of death and an unknown future.

Our house was located next to the main street of a large village. This meant that every time someone in the village died, we would see the throng of people pass by as some of them carried the coffin. As I watched this, I could not help but wonder, "Where will this dead person go? What will happen to him/her after this? What will happen to me when I die? Who will judge me?"

Some evenings, I would stand alone looking at the beauty of the stars and sky and would ask other questions such as, "Who created all these things? Where does this beautiful nature come from? Is there a powerful god out there? What about a god who is truly righteous and just, without partiality?" My heart kept wishing for a most powerful god, a god of justice who would someday judge all of mankind such that each person would receive a fair reward for his or her labor. The reason for this is that I had seen injustice among people. It seemed like those who did good things did not prosper, but those who did bad things did. I felt that this world was not a fair place. My heart longed for a god of justice.

I also tried to discover the purpose for all of us being born into this world as well as where we were going afterwards. I pondered more questions, "Is there a life after this one that I will be reborn into? Is there a heaven and a hell? Will I go to hell and suffer for eternity? Is there a heaven where I will live happily? If there is, how do I get there?". I had no answers to these questions, so I sighed over and over again with a feeling of hopelessness. My heart became sad whenever I thought of these questions, which had begun plaguing me prior to my commencement of elementary school.

Because of my fear about death and life after death, I began searching for answers by following Buddha's teachings and practices, and trying to do good works. I was not concerned about money or possessions but just longed for peace and security while living my life on earth.

3. A Devout Buddhist Girl

Through the teachings of Buddha, I was made aware that everyone is a sinner. Therefore, I strived to become sinless by keeping Buddha's five precepts of moral code:

1. Do not kill.
2. Do not steal.
3. Do not commit adultery.
4. Do not lie.
5. Do not consume alcohol.

Because Buddhists believe in reincarnation, I automatically believed in it. I continued my religious rituals day in and day out. I would get up early to prepare food for the monks and I would go to the temple on a holy day for a special ceremony and perform good works to gain merit. Whatever the Buddhist teachings considered to be good works, I would try to perform them in order to save up good works for my next life. I also tried to practice a lot of meditation to set my heart free from the troubles of this world. I was telling myself to flee from worldly things since it was not the answer for true happiness. No matter how hard I tried to do these things, I never felt the assurance of peace that I was seeking. Instead, I became more confused and fearful.

4. Longing for Real Peace

At the age of ten, I thought about becoming a Buddhist nun by forsaking everything and living life in a Buddhist temple, where I could frequently pray and fast. However, my parents would not allow me to become a nun or discontinue my schooling. At thirteen years of age, I again sought their permission, which was again met with rejection. They hoped I would gain a higher level of education in order to obtain a well-paying job that would allow me to have a bright future. I tried to explain to them my goal in life but they would not accept the prospect of me becoming a Buddhist nun.

At the age of sixteen, just before I graduated from high school and without consulting my parents, I decided on a secret plan to become a Buddhist nun. I was so determined to carry out this plan that I sought out a teacher at school who seemed kind and peaceful. I wanted her help in finding a good Buddhist nun to be my mentor. As I shared my heart's desire, she indicated that she was glad to have a student like me who truly desired to do good works for the next life. She contacted the best-known Buddhist nun and sent in an application on my behalf. Then she received a reply that showed that this nun had accepted me for training with the provision that I first complete my graduation. I waited with excitement, thinking that in a few months' time I would be on a path to peace. Shortly after that, I was shocked to hear that this nun had been killed in a bus accident. This news filled me with sadness; I now felt so broken and hopeless in my search for peace. I cried and cried and prayed for another opportunity to find a path to real peace for my empty soul. I begged my schoolteacher to help me find another good Buddhist nun to guide me in Buddha's ways and she said she would try her best.

5. My Conversion

Immediately following my high school graduation, my parents sent me to Bangkok in hopes of me continuing my education as they still did not know about my secret plan to become a Buddhist nun. While in Bangkok, I did not do any studies and just waited for an answer from my high school teacher.

After many months of waiting to no avail, I made a trip to visit my schoolteacher for an answer. On a morning that I still clearly recall, I sat with her and passionately reiterated my main reason for wanting to become a Buddhist nun; I cried out that it was to bring me peace. My schoolteacher (who unbeknown to me was a Christian) proceeded, without any hesitation, to share the Gospel with me. She told me about the death of Christ on the cross and the reason that He had to die. She went straight to the heart of the Gospel by quoting John 3:16. She emphasized the fact that only through believing in Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord, could my sins be forgiven because He alone is the true and living God.

After hearing this wonderful news about God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ for the first time, I sincerely opened my heart to receive Christ as my personal Lord and Savior. Immediately after my prayer to invite Christ into my heart, I began to experience the inner peace and joy that I had longed for. From that moment on, I realized that I had become a new person. I began to see my own sinful nature, which no one else knew about, except for God. I realized that I was a selfish person, prideful, unforgiving, unkind, etc. I was not a good person, as I had previously believed. From that moment on, God began to change me.

I was so grateful that the schoolteacher had shared the Gospel with me. When I first contacted her, she did not do this because she was a new believer and did not know how to share her faith. This delay in sharing the Gospel ended up working out for my good as all these events led me to my wits' end, making me see the need for a Savior.

6. Persecution and Rejection

As a new believer, I went to church in Bangkok with joy and excitement. I also put away all of the idols I used to worship. I read the Bible with a real hunger and never wanted to quit my daily reading.

As soon as I started my new life with a sincerity for Christ, and completely turned from Buddhism, my relatives became very upset about my newfound faith. Persecution began to take place immediately. They prevented me from going to church. Day in and day out, they tried to convince me to return to Buddhism, but I continued with my non-stop daily Bible reading. Finally, they decided to take away my Bible and Christian literature.

For the first six months of my Christian walk, I made it to church only three times because of the persecution. Since I did not have the freedom to worship God while living with my relatives in Bangkok, I decided to return to my parents' place in the province of Sakolnakorn. I was hoping that I could practice my faith and read the Bible as often as I desired in my private bedroom at my parents' home. I had no idea what lay ahead of me!

My parents were informed of my faith in Christ and how I had totally rejected Buddhism. Consequently, they were very angry and felt ashamed among the people living nearby. As soon as I arrived at my parents' home, my father angrily warned me to return to the Buddhist faith before it was too late. I wanted to give him an explanation, but he would not allow me to speak. On the second day, I was warned again and not allowed to explain my situation because he felt that he knew everything regarding religion as he had a lot of experience in life as a religious man. At that point, I had no idea what was going to happen to me so I prayed for courage to face the unknown situation ahead.

On the third morning, when I opened the front door of my house, I was shocked to see a large crowd gathered outside for the purpose of convincing me to return to Buddhism. These were important people from the town and villages nearby.

I was forced to stand before this crowd and listen to all the men who had words to say to me in relation to my belief in Christ. They all believed that I was on the wrong track and had been brainwashed by a schoolteacher causing me to believe in a Western religion. They refused to listen to me as I tried to tell them about my personal relationship with God and the difference He had made in my life. They kept telling me that I was wrong in my understanding and too young to know right from wrong. They tried to convince me to return to my former religion claiming that, because I was born a Buddhist, I must always be a Buddhist.

The whole discussion between us was very tense and lasted for a few hours. The village leader threatened me and strongly warned me that I may regret my decision. As I did not take their advice but insisted on keeping my faith in Christ, my parents angrily offered me two choices.

Firstly, they said that if I still love and appreciate them, I must obey them by returning to Buddhism. Secondly, they said that if I love Jesus more than them, then I would have to leave them and be cut off from any inheritance. In addition, I would have to leave town since it only belonged to Buddhists.

At that moment, I remembered when I had converted to Christianity, my schoolteacher had assured me of my eternal salvation. She had told me that when I have Christ in my heart, I already have eternal life. Therefore, I believed that if they were to kill me right then, I would go straight to heaven.

I had strong confidence in the Savior of my life in helping me make the right choice before the crowd, regardless of the outcome. I silently prayed for courage and then proceeded to utter words that shocked the crowd. I told them loudly and clearly that I had no choice but to choose Jesus as the number one priority in my life and that my parents came second!

As soon as I finished saying those words, my mother became enraged, as did the crowd. Immediately, I was ostracized and had to leave town empty-handed. Amazingly, although I was totally rejected by my parents and their community, and had nothing to live on, God's peace continued flooding my soul. My heart was at rest and I had no fear of my unknown future because I knew that God, in whom I had placed my trust, would never fail me nor forsake me.

7. My Spiritual Journey Through the Valley

When my schoolteacher saw me in this crisis, she located a Christian family in Bangkok who were willing to take care of me for a short time. From that moment on, I began leaning on God to supply all of my needs.

Before my conversion, I was comfortable financially and materially, but spiritually poor, and suffered the fear of insecurity. I now preferred walking with God in poverty, peace and eternal security rather than having all the possessions of this world and forfeiting my soul to hell. Although I had to pray and ask God for everything I needed, I always had peace in my heart. Since the day I chose to follow Christ, I have never regretted the decision I made in front of the people in my hometown.

Shortly after that incident, I decided to go to Bible school because I wanted to spend the rest of my life spreading the Good News to the lost. I truly believed that the best thing I could do for others would be to tell them about Jesus Christ and how to be saved from sin.

During my two years of study at the Bible Institute in Bangkok, God taught me a lot in the area of faith and trust. I literally had to look to Him for all my needs in life. He always proved Himself to be my wonderful Shepherd, according to Psalm 23. Although I did not have enough food at times, the joy of the Lord and His peace were sufficient for my soul, for they were unending. I continually reminded myself that this world was not my home!

8. God's Training Program

After attending the Bible Institute in Bangkok, I decided to go for further training overseas with Operation Mobilization. I served on the ship, Doulos, for two years before returning to Thailand. From then on, God led me to join Campus Crusade for Christ, and I was sent to the Philippines for training at the Great Commission Training Center. During that time, I had the opportunity of leading many students at Far East University to the Lord.

After that training, I had the privilege of working with students at Julalongkorn University in Bangkok for three years, specifically in the area of witnessing and discipleship. It was a wonderful experience to see the students turn to the Lord and have changed lives. I never planned on resigning from that ministry, but my desire was to be used by God in a greater way. That led to another exciting adventure!

In 1984, I began suffering with illnesses, one after another, for four years. I suffered with hives, gout and lower back problems. For a few months, I was unable to use my arms due to the gout problem and the pain in my joints.

When my lower back problem started and I was unable to walk, I left Campus Crusade for Christ and ended up having major back surgery. Following this, I had inflammation along the spinal cord where the pain was excruciating. I had to undergo painful treatments each month that turned out to be unsuccessful. I was bed ridden and therefore dependent on others' help for almost everything. I suffered with acute pain 24 hours a day and that brought me great discouragement.

I went through loneliness and missed seeing the outside world since I could not walk. The only thing that I saw each day was the square room that I was in and the medications that I was being given. My bone specialist could not promise me that I would walk again, although he said that he would try his very best.

During this time of helplessness and uselessness, I truly desired to be in heaven with God. I was not scared of death and each night I kept begging God to take me home, praying, "Lord, I desire to be with you in heaven since I cannot be of use to anyone anymore. Please let me fall asleep and wake up in your presence." But, when I would wake up the next morning, I would realize that God had not done so, and I would say to Him, "Oh no, Lord, I am still here in this square room!"

I remember praying to God, asking Him to either take the pain away or take me to heaven to be with Him but God seemed silent in response to my request. Each day, while lying on my bed I was unable to do anything except talk to God through prayer and meditation on the Word. This fellowship between the Shepherd and myself, in the 'valley of the shadow of death', was very special because He would only speak to me with words of encouragement and hope.

In 1986, my Singaporean friends flew me to Singapore for further treatment. By that time, another illness had developed; my stomach was rejecting food and fluids and I was very weak and skinny. I thought that it must be time for the Lord to take me home. Before my doctor put me to

sleep for an exploratory surgery, I prayed, "Lord, if you have a plan to use my life here on this earth, please wake me up; if not, I will see you in a few hours' time, in Jesus' name, Amen." Then, I allowed the nurse to put me to sleep in preparation for the surgery.

After a few hours of surgery, I woke up with the thought that God still had a plan to use my life on this earth. The treatment continued and I slowly began to get better without having any idea what the root cause of the stomach problem was. Also, my doctor was totally confused about this.

Many prayers were made on my behalf among my friends in various parts of the world. At last, the doctor transferred me to another hospital to receive treatment for my back; however, the bone specialist denied the treatment. He had seen that my records indicated that I had already been through every kind of treatment that he had in mind to offer me. Therefore, he decided to send me to the "School of Back Care", where I learned to take care of my back through exercise and using the right techniques for lifting things. From that point on, my back muscles and lower back began to strengthen and I started to walk slowly, but surely. After two years of rehabilitation, I was again able to walk and sit, although my back still caused me problems from time to time. The fact that I had been able to walk again was a miracle, and was truly by the grace of God.

During those six years of going through that 'dark valley', I learned to cling to the Shepherd of my soul. I went through all kinds of feelings and thoughts such as negativity, bitterness, resentment, etc., but learned that God truly was and is the Restorer of my life in all areas. He helped me understand the feeling of pain, loneliness, rejection, not being needed, not being useful, suffering from being in need, not having money to pay for medical bills, not being able to help myself, not having a place to live in the midst of a crisis, etc. But, in all of these things, God proved Himself to be always faithful. I also learned a lot in the area of clinging to God, my only hope and help, according to Psalm 121.

9. God's Supportive Hand

I am so grateful to the Lord to be able to walk, jog, run and drive again. I know that God's plan is always far beyond my comprehension and that I do not need to question Him about His plan. Instead, my responsibility is to keep believing that His promise, in Romans 8:28, will always remain true. God cannot lie and He is always sovereign over the situations in my life and He will never waste any trials.

After my health was restored in 1990, God led me to the United States for further training in the area of women's ministry. Once again, God's sovereign plan led me, to Grace Community Church in California, where Dr. John MacArthur served as a pastor. There, I discovered that women's ministries wonderfully met the spiritual needs of Christian women.

After getting involved in a weekly Bible study and being greatly blessed by the teaching of Elizabeth George, the vision of mentoring Thai women was born in my heart. In preparation, I continued to study the Word of God and sound biblical doctrine under Dr. John MacArthur's teaching and the many godly women of Grace Community Church. I took additional bible classes at Logos Bible Institute and simultaneously received training at the International School of Theology in Arrowhead Springs, California.

On January 1, 1997, I returned to Bangkok, Thailand to start a women's ministry. I strongly believe this is the mission field God has for me. Since then, I have been leading Bible studies in my home, which also serves as my office, in the Donmuang area of Bangkok. Over the years, God has brought several women from different churches to be discipled by me. They learn to grow in the Word of God and be a blessing to their families, as well as others. I have seen many lives transformed through faithful mentoring and the teaching of God's Word. In addition, I am a member of the Evangelical Church of Bangkok.

My mission statement is, "To build up Christian women with the Word of God through discipleship, teaching and training so that their lives may be transformed for God's glory, resulting in spiritual multiplication."

10. God's Sovereign Plan

I praise God and thank Him for choosing me and having a great plan for my life even before the foundation of the world (Eph.1:4). I believe that everything that has happened to me has been under God's sovereign control, and that nothing happens by accident. God allowed things to happen to me exactly the way He wanted them to, so that His name would be glorified.

In 1993, I was living in Michigan, and had a ministry among Thai and Laotian people. My mother came to live with me for six months. One day, after I finished leading a Bible study group, I had to immediately lay down on the couch because of a lot of back pain. My non-believing mother looked at me with compassion and amazement. She began to utter words that shocked everyone in the room. She said, "I am very surprised that you have lived until now as you were such a sickly baby and your life was often near death. At a young age, you had drowned in a lake, but you survived. These past several years, you went through insufferable sicknesses, and your life was near death, and yet you made it through. These things amaze me and I just cannot understand it."

Everyone stood still while listening to my mother's heartfelt thoughts. No one said a word, but listened to her attentively. She continued, "When you were a baby, about three months old in my womb, I had a huge argument with your father. During that moment of anger, I wanted to get rid of the baby in my womb. I heard of a strong medication that could immediately kill an unborn baby. I bought it and took the whole bottle hoping that my baby would die very quickly. I waited for hours, but nothing strange happened. I continued to wait for a few more days hoping that a dead baby would surely come out, but nothing happened.

At that point, I began to have a terrible fear in my heart thinking that the baby might be born deformed. Fear continued to grip me until the day you were born, beautiful and whole, and I felt relieved. It is amazing; how could you survive all these incredible events? I just can't understand this."

As soon as my mother finished telling this story, the secret that she had never revealed to anyone in 36 years, tears began to stream down my face as I clearly saw how God had protected me even before I was born. Everyone in the room cried without saying a word. Then, I began with a sobbing voice, "Mother, I forgive you. I want you to know that I am still alive today because of God's sovereign control over my life. I want you to know that God is all-powerful and when He does things, no one can alter them. Please know that God is real." Every time I recall that incident, I praise God for His great plan for my life.

I want to give God all the glory and honor that He deserves. I also want to encourage everyone who reads or hears my story, to know that God never makes any mistakes. He always has a purpose in every trial and no one can harm us without God's permission, nor can they die outside of God's timetable. God will certainly cause all things (good and bad) to work together for good to those who love Him and to those who are called according to His purpose (Rom 8:28). Remember that God created us for His own glory (Is. 43:7). God has every right to do anything, in and through us, so that His name might be magnified and glorified. To God be the glory.

CHANADDAH CHAISAKORN

MINISTRY UPDATE:

I rejoice in being able to inform you that my book "Knowing the One True God" is available for purchase on Amazon. The book is very practical for two important purposes: evangelism and discipleship. Please join my working team and me in prayer, asking God to use this book mightily around the world to win many souls to His kingdom, and provide Christians with a solid foundation in their walk with the Lord.

My teammates and I had been praying for a long time for the Lord to open doors for me to be able to reach out to prisoners in Thailand. Recently, God has been doing a mighty work, and our prayers have been answered! Many prison ministries, who have access to the prisons in Thailand, want my book (the Thai version) so that it can be given to prisoners to read. They should easily be able to understand the Gospel since it is presented clearly in my book, and is written in a way for all people to be able to comprehend.

Now, we are facing a bittersweet problem in that there are thousands of prisoners waiting to receive the book. Therefore, I am looking to God to provide financial support to buy books for all of them. I can't do it alone! Please join me in prayer in asking the Lord to provide all that is needed for these lost souls. The Thai book costs only USD \$7.50 to \$8.00 depending on the exchange rate. Although this is a big task ahead of me, I am encouraged by this truth, "The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine, declares the Lord of hosts." (Haggai 2:8)

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www.theword4women.com



AS A FETUS IN THE WOMB, I WAS POISONED,
BUT GOD HAD FAR GREATER PLANS FOR ME.
LET ME WALK YOU THROUGH MY LIFE STORY
SO YOU CAN LEARN OF THE WONDERS OF
GOD'S PROTECTIVE HANDS OVER MY LIFE.

Chanaddah Chaisakorn

