

# On WINGS of GRACE

By Christi Foster

The alarm had gone off, and I was waking from a peaceful night's sleep. The sound of the rain had encouraged me to linger a few minutes too long, and now the rush was on. My husband, Steve, routinely turned on the morning news as he prepared for work. But this morning we were all running behind, and there wasn't time.

I was busy making lunches and hurrying everyone out the door. Christopher, our son who was 15, had just left to catch the bus. Nannette, our youngest daughter, was 13 and homeschooled. Natalie, our 17-year-old daughter, was in a nearby town attending college. Our oldest son, Craig, had just turned 21 two days prior and was engaged to be married.

We had made plans to celebrate Craig's birthday in the evening. However, when we discovered we couldn't reach him in the early morning, things began to change. We immediately started to search for him to make sure he was all right. It was just a short time before we learned he and two of his close friends had been killed in a car-

cident the night before. Without warning, we suddenly found ourselves on a detour, a journey down a dark and lonely road.

Life celebrations had come to an abrupt halt, and dreams that were in the making were suddenly shattered. The future that had looked so bright the day before was utterly black. It was as though a bomb had exploded in the middle of our home, leaving a trail of mangled lives behind.

But our home also began immediately to fill with loved ones coming to comfort us in the midst of their own shock and grief. Tears flowed abundantly and tender embraces reached out, wrapping their arms around our

broken hearts. Close friends and family immediately took over, answering telephone calls, organizing food and helping us with necessary funeral arrangements. Our home continued to be filled with people wanting to express their sympathy and love.

God's grace continued to be poured out in abundance as final preparations for Craig's visitation and funeral were made. We wanted this day to reflect not only the goodness and gift of Craig's life on this earth but also to be an opportunity to share the hope God offers everyone through Jesus Christ. Nearly 1,000 people attended his service, and many received salvation from the invitation given at

the close of the service.

Although friends and family had discovered a new hope through Craig's life and death, I felt my hope had vanished. Unable to focus on the future, I was thrust into the dark valley of the shadow of death. Not only was I living in grief from Craig's death, I felt paralyzed as I watched my family seemingly be swallowed up in their own private pain. I felt only anguish and a sense of betrayal, unable to see the loving, faithful hand of a Sovereign God.

The first year was merely survival. As days and weeks passed, sorrow and despair continued to hover over our home. Simple tasks became insurmountable at times. Every thought was consumed with the loss of the family we had been, and the hole created by Craig's absence.

How many times had I questioned God, wondering what had removed His protective hand from our family? In my mind, I continually replayed the promises of God I had tried so diligently to live by and raise our children in. Nothing made sense. Without realizing it, I had reduced life to an equation, believing if I obeyed God, then He would bless ... my way. I had failed to factor in God's grace and sovereignty.

While preparing Nannette's history lesson one day, I found myself rereading the same paragraph again and again, unable to comprehend anything about the lesson. Instead, the haunting

question of Craig's loss remained. Falling to my knees, I cried aloud, "Why?" In that moment, God began to speak to my heart.

*It wouldn't make any difference what reason I gave; it wouldn't be good enough for you. You can't understand the eighth-grade history you are reading. How do you think you could fathom the scope and wisdom of My plan?*

I knew He was right. There was no answer God could have given me that my human mind could have understood and accepted. What He was asking of me was no different than what He wanted all along: simple trust — faith that would grow to be unshakable.

I had come to know Jesus Christ at an early age, but I had only seen the Cross from a distance. I had only a glimpse of the depth of my Savior's love. Even so, I yearned for a deeper understanding, wanting to know God more intimately as I grew into adulthood. Never did I imagine the answer to my plea would lead me down the road of suffering, struggling in my own Gethsemane to lay my treasure down, wrestling with the very words I had read so many times in the familiar story: "Not my will, but thine be done. ... Into your hands I commit my Spirit." **tpe**

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From top: Craig, Natalie, Christopher and Nannette

Christi Foster and Craig

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ABCs  
OF SALVATION

To know God and be ready for heaven, follow these steps:

**A. Admit you are a sinner.**

"There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10,23 (See Romans 5:8; 6:23.)

**Ask God's forgiveness and repent of your sins.**

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13 (See Acts 3:19.)

**B. Believe in Jesus** (put your trust in Him) as your only hope of salvation.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (See John 14:6.)

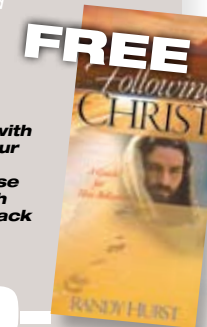
**Become a child of God by receiving Christ.**

"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (See Revelation 3:20.)

**C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.**

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9 (See verse 10.)

For further help, contact the Assemblies of God church near you.



If you would like someone to pray with you concerning your decision to follow Jesus Christ, please contact the church indicated on the back cover or call:

**1-800-4PRAYER**  
Assemblies of God National Prayer Center