Clarion Review

Religion

Topics for Today's Living
Beverly Tharpe
Trafford Publishing
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Three Stars (out of Five)

Inspiration and evangelism often come from a pulpit, but they can also come from a believer's heart. Beverly Tharpe, a born-again Christian, has written a topical, daily devotional guide based her own experiences and Bible verses. Each topic from Abide to Zeal also includes a prayer and a thought for the day.

One of Tharpe's messages about the Holy Spirit explains how she felt when the Spirit came into her life. She writes: "When He first enlightened me of God's presence, it was as though I actually was in another world, as if I had been sitting in a dark room all my life and finally someone turned on the light. The next morning everything looked more beautiful. Brighter, as though the world was made new just for me. It truly changed my life."

She reveals bits of her life through her messages. She was raised in a dysfunctional family with an alcoholic father and experienced much rejection. As an adult, she was a school bus driver who imparted ideals and information to her young charges. She struggles with dealing with family issues and living alone after being widowed. Tharpe's faith clearly carries her through difficult times.

Her experiences help shape her understanding of Scripture. Under "Rapture," she writes about the concept of being prepared for the second coming of Christ and the importance of being ready and tuned in. She likens this readiness to a day when she was simultaneously blowing her hair dry and listening for a phone call. "The Holy Spirit said, 'This is how closely you are going to have to be listening for that trumpet to sound.'" It's a good image from daily life.

Tharpe has put much thought into compiling and writing about the diverse topics. Her prayers are short and straightforward, and her thought for the day ties into her suggested Bible readings and commentary. She occasionally shares inspiration that she has received from

evangelist Dr. Mike Murdock, and credits him with specific quotes or thoughts.

The author of two pamphlets, Tharpe has been a speaker in schools, prisons, singles' banquets and ladies' ministry meetings. Her book would benefit from editing/proofing to eliminate duplication of material, such as with "Unity of Prayer," and "Being a Giver" that are repeated on consecutive pages, and calling a devotional guide "Beside Blessings" and "Bedside Blessings." Also, an editor should have caught an unintended description of why a plane she was on had returned to the airport. Tharpe writes: "There was a malfunction with the wings of the plane and they would not retract."

Editing and proofing aside, Tharpe's plainspoken and heartfelt messages are likely to inspire others.

Linda Salisbury