



# *Freedom from Fear*

ESCAPING THE BONDS OF BROKEN RELIGION



MARLENE GARCIA

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BROKEN RELIGION



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## **Freedom from Fear**

Escaping the Bonds of Broken Religion

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*It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

**Galatians 5:1 (NASB)**



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# INTRODUCTION

When we follow Christ many questions surface, especially, when we long to see changes in our lives, and these changes do not occur.

In my walk with Christ I realized changes were few, and sometimes difficult to perceive. It is in trials and difficult times our true character is revealed.

I lived thinking I was serving God. I had a sincere desire to know more of God, and I was committed to studying the Scriptures. When trials came in my life I could not overcome, I

found myself  
completely empty.  
The Word I meditated  
on daily and I thought  
was accomplishing  
something had no  
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I got to the place of desperation, and it was in my frustration God became real. It was there He gave me



the tools to confront what I did not know, because I was perishing for lack of knowledge.

*“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...”* (Hosea 4:6, KJV).

We are not only dying spiritually but also physically. Even while knowing Him we are dying prematurely. We are living life without strength or vitality and thinking we are doing everything well. What a frustrating reality!

I have an urge to share my walk because of what I am experiencing and the hope I have. My reality can be your reality. My God is an almighty God and wants to

I have an urge to share  
my walk because of  
what I am experiencing  
and the hope I have.

give us peace in  
abundance. Many of  
us think when we have  
financial wealth we are  
going to have peace.  
When one has found  
peace, which is in

Jesus, true rest comes, and what you have in the bank no longer matters. This is because you know you are being supported from where everything comes.

When we are in a pit, no matter how we got there, the solution is the same. We need the right arm of the Father to reach out and rescue us. The sad thing is He has already rescued us, but lack understanding in how to walk in victory.

*“Jesus said to them- Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God?” (Mark 12:24, KJV).*

We have attended seminars, conventions, church services, intercession groups and Bible studies, waiting for our miracle. We hope one day we see a real change in our spouses, our children, our circumstances, and ourselves. We think when certain situations change we will have joy, or be complete. We do not know that in Christ we are complete and have no need for one more miracle. What has happened? The truth has been hidden. We are attending religious meetings without understanding how to utilize the tools we already possess.

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My desire is for you to journey through these pages as I share my story on how God has given me new life.





## CHAPTER 1

# GOVERNED BY FEAR

*“Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.”*

**Isaiah 5:13 (KJV).**

---

I was born in Medellin, Colombia, where my parents met at a Christian college. My father had been sent there to straighten his wayward ways; on the other hand, my mom arrived there with great expectations embracing the religious system and its doctrines. What impressed her was that alcohol was forbidden. Her father died when she was three, leaving her mother pregnant and a widow at a young age. Her grandmother and an alcoholic uncle raised her.

My parents got married when my father studied to be a pastor. Soon after my birth, my father turned his back on God and religion. My dad had a problem: The most minor incident could ignite a deep violent and uncontrollable anger. In one of his manifestations of anger, the leaders of the Christian college labeled him as a “crooked tree without remedy.”

When there are issues we cannot cover or hide, and don't fit the mold of the system, we end up leaving. Often we think it is better to live in rebellion than in a condemning environment.

What my mom least expected was to raise six children with her husband removed from the Lord. My father did support my mom in her beliefs and forced us to

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follow the doctrines of the church, even though he did not follow the doctrines or live that life. He wanted to make sure his children were going to achieve what he could not. He was

a father who said: “Do as I say, not as I do”. My five siblings and I were exemplary children. A look from my father was all it required to keep us in line.

One memory I have is of my brothers being spanked after leaving the house of a minister. The minister's children had been misbehaving during our visit. The spanking was to insure my brothers would never

display such behavior even though they were well behaved during the visit. With that type of discipline, it wasn't hard to be exemplary.

When my father came home each day, we never knew what to expect. Tension filled our house; we waited to see what mood my father was in. Was it going to be a good day or a bad day? We waited on pins and needles because for no reason his wrath would arise. Anything within reach would be broken and tables would be overturned.

When I was three years old, we moved to the United States. My life was ruled by fear, but it wasn't until years later I discovered

this. I was focused on having a career. I chose to study earnestly and be self-reliant and do things myself. My fear was that men were undependable.

At age sixteen, I was determined to be a registered nurse, because this gave me security. When the school administered aptitude tests, I found them pointless, I knew what I wanted to be.

All this time I never stopped attending church, because it was expected of me. Our religious rules were so strict that from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday we had to rest. This meant we had to refrain from what the church considered worldly activities

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and any type of labor. My brothers and I would look forward to sundown on Saturday, so we could resume our activities; we would run to turn on the television.

The focus of the religion was more on behavior and not so much on God. The motivation given to fulfill the church requirements was about not going to Hell.

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The questions frequently asked in the church were: "Are you ready? Have you prepared yourself?" The second coming of Christ was the focus of the church's beliefs. My world changed when, after many years of anger and abuse my dad left. From one day to the next, after an

exemplary youth, I went into rebellion.

I finished my nursing education and continued apart from God, until one day I got on my knees and cried out. The only religion I knew was from my upbringing. I cried out. If He were real, He would have to help me. What I found difficult was fitting into a religious system after acquiring behaviors that did not conform. The internal struggle was strong because the guilt and accusation was immense.

I began attending the church with one foot in and the other out. In this condition, after making many mistakes, I heard a message by a visiting preacher on how God forgave King David after being an adulterer and a murderer. Through that message I found a glimmer of hope.

A few years later, I was confronted with a reality that changed the focus of my life. When I was working in the recovery room I received a patient from surgery.

He was a twenty-five-year-old young man who had been in an airplane accident. He had been in surgery all day, and I was the first

I began attending the church with one foot in and the other out.

nurse to care for him. I was focused to ensure everything was working right. He was on a respirator and connected to all kinds of intravenous lines. As he awoke from his anesthesia, he took my hand wanting to tell me something. I gave him a piece of paper and a pen and he wrote a question: "Am I okay?" I took his hand and looked into his eyes, and I told him he was going to be fine.

When I arrived at work the next day I learned he had died during the night. He suffered from a condition making it difficult for his lungs to endure after the long surgery. The medical staff had not been aware of this condition and did not give him the proper preparation for the surgery. From that day on the thought of that happening to one of my family members or loved ones haunted me. I realized our



lives are fragile, and we can inevitably fall into human hands prone to make mistakes. I remembered the

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message I had heard years before. I wanted to know more about God so I looked for the preacher who had spoken about King David's life, since I felt he knew God.

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# *Freedom from Fear*

ESCAPING THE BONDS OF BROKEN RELIGION

**FREEDOM FROM FEAR** I lived thinking I was serving God. I had a sincere desire to know more of God, and I was committed to studying the Scriptures. Then trials came in my life, when I found myself completely empty. The Word I meditated on and on which I thought was accomplishing something had no true effect on my life. I got to the place of desperation, and it was in my frustration that God became real. It was there He gave me the tools to confront what I did not know, because I was perishing for lack of knowledge.



## **MARLENE GARCIA**

Marlene Garcia was born in Medellin, Colombia, and raised in the suburbs of San Francisco, California. She is a registered nurse and graduated from Walla Walla University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and practiced for more than 25 years. Today she is

dedicated to restoring and equipping women on how to maintain good physical health along with emotional stability according to biblical principles.



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