



Why Me?

Answers for Survivors

Written by Phyllis Myers

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Why Didn't I Die?

Why Did I Live?

How Did I Survive?

What If I Had Done Differently?

These questions may be a survivor's response to an event in which someone else experienced loss, but the survivor didn't. Perhaps he survived the loss of life in a war, recovered from a terminal disease or the COVID-19 pandemic, walked away from a plane crash that took the lives of others, escaped injury in a mass shooting in a school or church, survived a car accident in which a friend or loved one died, came through a natural disaster such as a hurricane, flood or fire without injury, or was not killed in a terrorist attack such as occurred on the World Trade Center in New York City, USA on 9/11/01.

When a person comes through an experience like these physically unscathed while others suffer

death, injury, or substantial loss, one question is asked repeatedly, “Why me?” A common response is feeling responsible for what happened, asking, “Could I have changed things and prevented this disaster?” “If only I had done something, things would have come out differently.”

People have these thoughts even though things were out of their control. One might find oneself having flashbacks or nightmares, being consumed by thoughts about what happened, having continual thoughts of not having done enough, being irritable or angry and having trouble moving past what happened. Here are some examples.

Survivor #1: Robb Elementary School, Uvalde, Texas. In 2022, a teen-aged student walked into the school with a rifle and shot and killed 19 fourth-grade students and two teachers. A fourth grader was found unharmed in the classroom, but that night was troubled with many questions, “Why did he do this to us? We’re good kids. We didn’t do anything wrong. Why did my friends die, but I didn’t?”

Survivor #2: The Russian invasion in 2022 in Bucha, Ukraine. The devastation wrought in Bucha was just the tip of the iceberg. In many villages of the Kyiv, Chernihiv and Sumy regions, the Russian invaders did things that the locals had not seen even during the Nazi occupation 80 years ago. A woman and her husband returned home after fleeing the area a few days after the Russians began their invasion of Ukraine. They discovered that their house had been trashed and looted by Russian soldiers. “The soldiers smoked a lot, put out cigarettes on the table. Alcohol was everywhere. Empty bottles in the hallway, under things,” the couple said. “They lived here as they wished. We wish we could have done something.” The couple also found a dead man in their backyard, shot in the back of the head with his arms tied behind his back, and his trousers pulled down. But they had questions: “Why had we been allowed to escape being murdered?” “Even though our house was trashed, why was it not destroyed like the neighboring homes?”

Survivor #3: Another woman and her sons stayed in Bucha for a couple of weeks after the invasion began, but when the electricity cut out and the pipes ran dry, it became clear they had to leave. They decided that she and her two sons would flee on foot, heading for the nearby suburb of Irpin. The trio traveled on side roads to avoid the Russian soldiers, but when they turned onto one street, the family was stunned to find dead bodies scattered across the road, including a lifeless man collapsed under a bicycle. They escaped and survived, but the fate of the dead man they saw lying beneath a bicycle as they fled still haunts her. “I feel like my sons and I could be in the same place as the man who died,” she said. “I feel the pain and sadness of all these lost people.”

Survivor #4: “I was a soldier in the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the year 2020. Our unit had over 200 men but only 20 of the 200 survived the fighting. One of the survivors was

the son of a pastor; he asked, ‘Why me? Why didn’t I die, too?’ ”

Survivor #5: “I was held up at gunpoint, robbed and pistol whipped by a serial killer who had murdered four innocent victims the same week. I convinced myself that I wasn’t worthy of surviving, and that one of the murdered victims would have brought more good to the earth, because I had nothing of value to offer. My mind was constantly questioning, ‘Why me, instead of one of them?’ ”

Survivor #6: “When I was 13 years old, I was in a car accident with my best friend who died from the accident. Now I ask myself, ‘Why didn’t I die too? Why did I live? Why me?’ ”

Survivor #7: “My son and his best friend were in a car accident. My son was driving. My son lived but his best friend died. Five years later my son took his own life with an overdose of drugs. Now I understand what he meant when

he said, 'I wish it had been me instead of him. Why wasn't it me?'

DIFFERENT SURVIVORS, DIFFERENT ANSWERS

While some people tried to comfort the survivors by saying things such as, "You are so lucky," or "It's fate!", survivors know that it wasn't luck or fate. They know it was a miracle that happened. They came face to face with death or terrible loss and there was GOD, mightier than luck, stronger than fate, greater than death, giving protection and power to the helpless and direction to the lost and confused. There was the almighty powerful God doing the impossible and saving them. A loving God (the God of the Bible) was protecting them, guiding them through their terror. The holy God was there stooping to help His unworthy and helpless Creation. No wonder David the psalmist wrote, "*What is man that you are mindful of him?*" (Psalm 8:4) and survivors ask, "God, why me?"

Just as there may be different reasons for a survivor to question his survival, so there might be different

answers for different survivors in situations. Some survivors may ask, "why me?" because they have been rescued by the holy and powerful God of the Bible, and they have not known His great power, love, or mercy.

They have not known that the great God of the universe loves them and wants to have a personal relationship with them. They do know that they do not have a relationship with Him. They know that they have not been a good person or lived a life worthy of being saved. "Why would God save someone so undeserving, such an unworthy sinner, as I am?" There is an answer:

God in His grace has given you time before you personally stand before Him. No one can know how much time He has given you. Just because He rescued you yesterday does not mean that you are immortal. No one knows what tomorrow will bring. Whenever your time comes to stand face to face with God, He wants you to have a good relationship with Him. How can you do this? You can't, but

God can. Just as He saved you from your impossible situation, He has made the way for you to have a personal relationship with Him. He can forgive all your sins and give you eternal life as a gift. God has a plan to save sinners like you and me.

For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only son, that whoever believes on Him will not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

Jesus, the Son of God, who was completely without sin, came into the world to save sinners.

All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord [God the Father] has laid on Him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:6

He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

1 Peter 2:24

means that while Jesus was dying on the cross, God put all your sins on Jesus and Jesus paid the penalty for every one of your sins, as well as the sins of the whole human race. Now that the penalty for your sins has been paid, God freely offers you the gift of forgiveness of your sins and eternal life for everyone who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Acts 16:31

When you put your faith in Jesus to save you from your sins, at that very moment you become a child of God.

For you all are the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:26

When your time comes to pass from this life into the presence of God, you can stand before Him in

the confidence that your sins are forgiven, that you stand in the relationship that God is your Father, and that you have passed from death into life with God forever. Whatever time God has given to you, now is your second chance to be rightly related to Him. But beware, there may not be another chance for you.

FALSE MORALITY

Another survivor may ask, “Why me?” because going through the terror, they discovered their true self. They had always thought of themselves as highly gifted, highly intelligent, and able to solve all problems, a highly respected moral person and a leader who could handle any problem. But, when their terror came, they found themselves helpless to stop the terror or even to save their own life. Instead of behaving like a moral person, they failed to help others who died. They may have even escaped by pushing others out of the way, abandoning someone, or by their actions caused others to die. Their guilty conscience would cause them to ask, “What

is wrong with me? If only I had ...? Why didn't I ...? I was afraid. I ran away and left them helpless. I am the reason they died.”

You now must admit that your whole life has been a lie and you are just a hopeless, helpless sinner. Perhaps God saved you from physical death to teach you that you need a savior, not only for your physical life on earth, but also for eternal life. Good and bad people need a savior.

For by grace you are saved through faith and that not of yourself. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

Ephesians 2:8–9

Just as you were helpless to save yourself from perishing in terror, so you are helpless to save yourself from perishing eternally. You must accept God's gift of forgiveness of sin and eternal life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

IMMORAL BELIEVER

Another survivor may ask, “Why me?” “Years ago, I trusted Jesus to save me from sin and give me eternal life, and I became a child of God, but I have not lived like a child of God. I lived for my own happiness and turned away from God. I was destroying my mind and body with drugs, I lived a promiscuous life, I lied, stole, cheated. This brush with death was a wake-up call from God. I should have died. I don’t deserve to live.”

God in His mercy has given you another chance. He has allowed you to go through this life-threatening experience to remind you that He is still with you and knows all about you.

You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off.

Psalm 139:2

There is not a word in my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.

Psalm 139:4

... Where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there: if I make my bed in hell, behold You are there.

Psalm 139:7–8

If I say, “Surely the darkness shall hide me, ... even the night shall be light about me.” Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from you, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.

Psalm 139:11–12

God knows very well what you are doing, and He wants you to be obedient to the Word of God and to have fellowship with Him.

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. Your word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:9, 11

Our sinful lifestyle separates us from God.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Psalm 66:18

But God wants to have fellowship with you.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

When we confess our sins, then God forgives our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Then, with our sins forgiven, we can have fellowship with our Father, and He will hear and answer our prayers:

If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1:7

If we refuse to obey Him and live selfishly in sin, God may withdraw His mercy and take His sinful child out of this world.

In His mercy, He has given you another chance to live in obedience to the Word of God, but if you will not heed His awakening call, you may not continue to be a survivor. Why do some believers live, and other people die? One reason God may sometimes bring sorrow and even death into a person's life is because they refuse to obey Him. Paul warns the Corinthian believers about their sinful activities when taking communion.

For this reason, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

1 Corinthians 11:30

meaning that, because of their sin, many were weak. Some had stronger discipline and were sick, and many, who would not be corrected, suffered a greater degree of discipline and they died.

When someone lives a sinful life and refuses to learn or to obey God's Word, God may then turn them over to their own desires and allow them to live a sinful life and reap the consequences of their actions.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.

Romans 1:28

And sometimes God will simply remove that person from this life. If a person will not learn how to live according to the Word of God, then he will learn from his experiences or evil desires—which can be a fearful teacher—or from God's discipline. While believers live, they have another chance to turn back to God. Those who will not return to God may suffer the ultimate: divine discipline of death. God wants all people to choose life.

Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your

tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

Psalm 34:12–16

DISAPPOINTED BELIEVERS

Another survivor may say, “I have put my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has been my protector and savior all my life. I was ready to go if He called me home to heaven. I was not afraid to die, but through it all I survived. I was ready to go to be with my Lord, but I survived. I was ready. Why me? Why didn't He take me home?”

Faithful survivor, you were not only ready to meet your Lord, you had great expectations of going home. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:6–9,

We are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the

Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

But you did not die. So, while it may have been your desire to be with the Lord, He has other plans for you. In His own time, He will give you the desire of your heart and call you home. But until then, He has other plans for your life. Since you have gone through these life-and-death circumstances, you can pray for others who are in trouble.

Paul states the importance of people who pray in desperate times as his example in 2 Corinthians 1:8–10:

... that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we

trust that He will still deliver us, you also helping together in prayer for us.

While many survivors may be asking, “Why me?”, it may be that they survived because someone was praying for them. There are many accounts of people who had a deep desire to pray for someone without any known cause, only to hear later that at that very time that person was in trouble. God answers the prayers of His faithful children.

Another reason that you may have survived a life-threatening experience is so that you can comfort others.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

2 Corinthians 1:3–4

Having gone through this experience, you can be a witness to others that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38–39

Another purpose for your surviving is that it gives God glory.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing,

you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory

1 Peter 1:6–8

SURVIVOR BY CHOICE

Comfort or afflict, peace or grief, joy or pain, love or hate, good or evil, God or Satan—many times we get to choose what will be the circumstances of our life. We know that evil exists in the world. Even from the very beginning, we see Satan in the Garden of Eden deceiving Eve by casting doubts about God's Word,

Has God indeed said ... You shall NOT surely die.
Genesis 3:1, 4

His successful temptation brought sin, pain, and even death into the world.

In Genesis 4:6–7 God talks to Cain,

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do

what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.”

Cain didn't master it, and he murdered his brother and was separated from his family.

Jesus warned the Apostle Peter,

And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.”

Luke 22:31

Peter failed the test when Jesus was being tortured. Peter denied the Lord three times.

All believers are warned of the danger Satan is to us.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

1 Peter 5:8

While we are infinitely inferior to the wisdom and power of Satan, God will protect His children.

You who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.

Psalm 97:10

The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.

Psalm 121:7–8

These promises are only for the person who has put their faith in Jesus Christ, who loves the Lord, and is obedient to the Word of God. Here is a list of verses for how to overcome evil:

1 John 4:4; Ephesians 4:27; Ephesians 6:11–13; 1 Corinthians 2:11; Philippians 4:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

A PART OF GOD'S PLAN

God does not guarantee that believers will never suffer. In fact, we know that suffering may be a part of God's plan for believers that it might lead the believer to maturity and bring glory to God.

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Romans 8:16–18

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

2 Corinthians 4:17

NATIONAL JUDGMENT

As evil becomes progressively dominant in a nation, the wrath of God may turn to judgment upon that nation by bringing disasters. If the people will not turn from their evil ways, God may bring disease, pandemic, economic depression, famine, violence, terrorism—mob violence, murders, rapes, genocide, natural disasters—flood, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, wars—invasions by other countries, loss of freedom—slavery. All of these are warnings from God that there must be a return to divine standards of conduct. But if the nation does not return to the Lord, each judgment may be intensified until the nation is destroyed.

In these evil days, even believers may also suffer and die. They share the relationship of being a member of that nation. Even God's people may suffer because they are members of the rebellious society.

Biblical examples are found in 1 Kings when the prophet Elijah pronounced judgment on the Northern Kingdom of Israel, to wicked King Ahaz and

Jezebel. He pronounced drought for many years. God dried up the earth, and Elijah was a part of that judgment. But God took care of him and sent him to a brook where ravens brought him food. However, even the brook dried up as the judgment continued. Then God provided for the prophet by sending him to a widow who, by the grace of God, was able to feed and lodge him until the drought was over.

When Israel turned away from God and worshiped Baal and sacrificed their children to Baal, God pronounced judgment on the nation. Jerusalem was destroyed along with the Temple. Many people who remained in the city were killed by the sword or by famine or disease, and many were captured and sent to Babylonia as slaves. There were survivors, and in their captivity, God offered protection.

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

CHANGE

As a survivor, you have come through some disaster, you have suffered a loss. Did you lose someone you loved, or did you lose your home or property? Did you lose your health, or an arm, or a leg, or an eye? Did you lose your faith, freedom, peace of mind? Friends and acquaintances may try to comfort or help you by saying things like, “Everything will be all right,” or “Now you are safe, you are okay.” But you are not okay, and everything is not going to be all right for you again!

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

What are you going to do?

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

Proverbs 14:12

The disaster that you have come through has already changed you, and yet, you are being forced to make other changes in your life. You may be

fighting depression. You are out of your comfort zone, and you don't know what to do, so you don't want to do anything. You fight the idea that things are going to be different. You have a choice to make. If you refuse to make changes, you may get caught in the downward spiral that will increase your pain and depression.

If you allow yourself to wallow in your fear or pain, then you will get sucked deeper in a depression that leads to destructive life changes and bad habits. Some people isolate themselves from family and friends who they fear do not understand them. Then loneliness sucks them deeper into the downward spiral.

Some people try to drown their sorrows by drinking alcohol or taking drugs to dull their pain. Then they lose their ability to function in life and may lose their job or avoid all social activities. With each bad decision, they sink deeper into the downward spiral, and the deeper they sink, the harder it becomes to get out. In the end, a life spent in the downward

spiral will lead to depression, loneliness, emptiness, poor health, death, or suicide.

THE NEW NORMAL

You have gone through a disaster and it has already changed you. You have already survived. Now, since everything is not going to return to what it was, you need to make changes and find a new normal way to live.

Step one:

Change your attitude and the way you think about God and your relationship with Him.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:8–9

Think about the cause of your survival. Was it personal, or was God giving you more time to become a child of God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ?

We are all the children of God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:26

Was God showing you that whether you were good or bad, you need the Savior?

For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourself; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.

Ephesians 2:8–9

Was God giving you, as a believer, a second chance to live a life in obedience to the Word of God?

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

Psalms 119:9, 11

Was God showing you as a believer that He still has a plan for your life?

Therefore we make it our aim, ... to be well pleasing to Him.

2 Corinthians 5:9

Whatever your past life was, your new normal life must realize that God wants you to have a relationship with Him and to trust Him, not only to save you from disaster, but trust Him to give you the wisdom, power, and strength to live fully again.

He has given to believers throughout history precious promises that encourage us to trust in Him.

Cast your burden on the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous be shaken.

Psalms 55:22

What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.

Psalms 56:3

I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

Psalm 34:4

So we may boldly say: The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?

Hebrews 13:6

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6–7

Step two:

Transform your thinking.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that

you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:2

You can renew your mind by replacing the troubling thoughts with promises from the Bible.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Philippians 4:8

When a fearful or troubling thought enters your mind, refuse to focus on it. Instead, replace it with good thoughts from the Bible. When you wake up from a nightmare, read or quote a promise from the Word of God, and the peace of God will comfort you. You can't just empty your mind and have the troubling thoughts go away. You have to replace them with good thoughts.

Step three:

Pray.

Pray without ceasing.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Why pray? Because we do not have the strength to overcome evil without God's help. He has promised to hear and answer our prayers in our time of need.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6

Hear my prayer, O LORD, And let my cry come to You. Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble; Incline Your ear to me; In the day that I call, answer me speedily.

Psalm 102:1-2

He shall regard the prayer of the destitute, And shall not despise their prayer.

Psalm 102:17

He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

Psalm 91:15

Step four:

Do not isolate yourself. Find a church that teaches the Bible and attend regularly to learn God's Word. Make friends with faithful people who will encourage you and pray with you. Talk about your fears and troubles with someone you can trust with confidence.

Step five:

Eat healthful meals and have regular sleeping hours. This is a major influence in your mental health. There is a biblical example of this. In 1 Kings

19:4–5 when Elijah was fleeing for his life from Queen Jezebel, he became very depressed.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat."

God first gave Elijah sleep and food and then talked with him.

Step six:

Be busy. Involve yourself in interesting work or hobbies. Socialize and be interested in helping other people. Keep your mind active with activities that will be of benefit to yourself and others.

Step seven:

Be open to good new experiences and avoid places and things that pull you back into depression.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Psalm 1:1–6

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Joshua 1:8

*The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make
His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And
give you peace.*

Numbers 6:24–26

Contact information:
jimmyers7@juno.com

For more answers or spiritual guidance:
<https://www.jfmministries.org/>

Look for a Bible-teaching church:
<https://deanbibleministries.org/>