



Treasure of Love

Something was in the air. I just knew it! The pieces seemed to fit together. Here it was, 2:30 Monday afternoon, and I hadn't seen him online all day! Sure, he'd said he would be busy this morning, but he hadn't said all day. Then too, Dad was on his way home from Spokane. Mother was coming home early from work just to fix a special pizza dinner for him. And to top it all off, she had sent my "sister" to Grandma's house, leaving me home alone. But no, it was impossible. I was in Washington. He was across the country in Kentucky. It just couldn't happen. "Kristina, forget it. You're just being silly. Just close your eyes and relax until Mother gets home. Everything is just fine. You're just reading into things a bit too much." I sighed and rolled over for the hundredth time while trying in vain to take a nap.

"Ding dong!" I sat straight up in bed. "Who could be ringing the doorbell? Mother and Dad never do; the neighbors would just open the door and holler." My heart pounded as I walked slowly towards the door, as if in a dream. "Who could it be?" I reached the door, grasped the door knob, and stopped. "Breathe, Kristina," I coached as each breath came in little gasps, "Breathe." Slowly, I opened the door . . .

Ours is a story of wait and wonder, of serenity and suspense, of song and sadness, of laughter and love. Who would have thought that through all the varied circumstances, God's hand was moving—forming and shaping our characters and lives, and leading us into a path together? In writing our story, we have attempted to present each event as it took place, to share some of the principles that have guided us along the way, and to give you a glimpse into our hearts and lives. Every person is unique, and God leads each of us in different ways, patiently teaching us to

follow Him. This is a testimony of God's love and grace, in bringing our lives together in spite of our struggles and failings. We pray that you may be inspired, blessed, and encouraged as you read our testimony—the *Treasure of Love*.

Chapter 1

The Charlie Plant

"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." Psalm 144:12

Daniel

I first met Kristina's family in 1994, when my family lived in eastern Washington. I always remembered Kristina as a talkative, energetic girl with long, blond hair, big-rimmed glasses, and a perpetual smile. But I was shy—especially around children my age—and rarely spoke to anyone besides my brothers and a few close friends. Even at age ten, I preferred being around the "grown-ups." I can still remember many afternoons listening to Kristina's father discuss biblical topics and their connection with current events.

Kristina

I remember when the McFeeters joined our homeschool choir, with their two lively little boys and an older shy one. I quickly got to know the two younger ones, and what fun we had together! One day, as my brother and I were talking, the realization hit me: "I have gotten to know everyone in the choir except Danny. He's so shy and quiet, he hardly talks to anyone! I'm going to have to get to know him."

Daniel

And Kristina did just that. I remember one Sabbath afternoon when the Reeve family came to our home. As our families walked together, Kristina couldn't resist telling me all about what she and Erick had been studying in homeschool—rainbows! It was a fascinating discussion, but we disagreed on one important point: I was sure that there were only six colors in the rainbow, but Kristina insisted there were seven!

Kristina

I'll never forget that walk, or that Sabbath at the McFeeters' house. I'd done most of the talking, and that, coupled with our argument, left me wondering, *Will Danny ever want to see me again?* But I realized we were still friends by the end of the evening when Daniel gave me a sprig from his Charlie plant. Although Daniel soon forgot about the incident, that little plant was the beginning of our friendship. There was no special attraction between us during those years, and we never dreamed of what would come. But God knew. When Daniel's family moved away, and the memories faded into the past, a glance at that Creeping Charlie in my bedroom window would bring the memories fresh to life once again.

The coming years were filled with a flood of happy activity. Homeschooling through high school, building a house, gardening, backpacking, camping, hiking in nature, caring for my grandfather, and working at my parents' optometry office—all these served as a preparation for other avenues of service. As a family we did cooking classes and door-to-door evangelism in our local community. This grew into opportunities to learn colporteur and even to give Bible studies. Yet we weren't so busy that I couldn't do other things I enjoyed. Every spare moment was spent on the computer or at the piano. Finally, the day came for me to leave the nest. In the summer of 2002, I had the joy of colporteur for ten weeks in New Jersey for the second time. From there I went to a college in Oklahoma, which moved to Arkansas a year later and became Ouachita Hills College.

Daniel

In 1996 my family moved to British Columbia and a year later to Kentucky. The adventures of the following years could fill a book, and my spiritual journey took many turns during this time. We had a busy and happy family life as my brothers and I homeschooled and participated in more and more extra-curricular activities. Weekends and summers would find us camping, caving, canoeing, going to campmeetings, and participating in outreach and evangelism.

During those years I had a passion for learning and especially for computer programming. Soon I started writing computer software for several companies, started a consulting business called *FiForms Solutions*, and earned enough money to buy my first car. After graduating, I enrolled in classes at the community college where Dad had been teaching for six years. By now, friends in Washington were but faded relics of childhood memory. That is, until the phone rang one fall day in 2003. Who should be calling but Kristina Reeve!

Kristina

During the summer of 2003, I volunteered for SonLight Education Ministry, a local homeschool ministry. We put on a week of meetings each month in different cities around the country. A seminar in Virginia was scheduled only a week before classes started, so I decided to drive. I stayed with friends and relatives on the way to Virginia, but I needed a place to stop in Kentucky. *Whom do we know in Kentucky?* Then I saw the Charlie plant. I knew the McFeeters lived somewhere in Kentucky, so I gave them a call. Mrs. McFeeters seemed delighted at my request and gave me directions to meet them at prayer meeting, since that's where they would be.

Daniel

Though we hardly knew each other, I looked forward to seeing Kristina, and felt a strange excitement—the same as I'd always felt when I sang with the homeschool children's choir. When Kristina walked in, I couldn't help but glance her way now and then, as the childhood memories returned. *Was this young lady really the same little girl I'd known seven years before?* On the way home, I found out one thing very quickly: Kristina was still as talkative as I'd ever remembered her to be. We had so much fun talking, in fact, that we missed the exit on the freeway and had to turn around!

Kristina

Turn around? Yes—in an emergency vehicle turn-around! That was the first and last time I've ever done such a thing, and if it weren't for Daniel's insistence that we *had* to because the next exit was ten miles down the freeway, I wouldn't have even thought of it! But it gave us all a good laugh.

Spending time with the McFeeters was a real blessing. We had so much to catch up on! I hardly recognized the three boys, but once I got adjusted to their deep bass voices, we had a lot of fun. Daniel and his dad were at work and the others were busy with homeschool most of the day, so I spent the time on my computer. In the evening we were all together again, and I showed a nature presentation and poem: *Reflections from Kokanee*. The highlight of my stay came when Daniel wanted me to tell him about the different evangelism opportunities. There is nothing I enjoy more than recruiting young people for God's work! When I headed off to school the next morning, it was with a happy heart, more friends, and five new email addresses in my *Knock Knock Reports* mailing list.

Daniel

During Kristina's visit, I realized that Kristina and I had several things in common besides a similar upbringing. We had mutual interests in photography, poetry, nature, evangelism, and computers. As the months passed, we would email each other once in a while, and I always enjoyed reading her "Knock, Knock Reports." Otherwise, I thought little about our friendship. It just seemed an interesting coincidence that we would meet after so many years.

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child." I Corinthians 13:11, RV

Chapter 2

I'll Follow, I'll Wait

"Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day." Psalm 25:4-5

Daniel

I remember a particular late-summer day in 2004 when my father sent me to pick up a load of sawdust for our garden. While driving I was soon deep in thought. *What am I going to do with my life? Will I get married? If so, to whom? How will I decide?* I thought of friends who were struggling with these decisions. Some had gotten married and found themselves in a life of misery. Others didn't seem to care, yet they enjoyed dating around. But that didn't seem right. One had dumped his special friend just because her health broke.

Suddenly, the question hit me like a thunderbolt: *What would you do if you were that person?*

What would I do? I'd always imagined that someday the perfect person would come along: someone perfectly beautiful who would be everything I ever needed or wanted and would do everything they could for me, without hindering me in any way. Now I realized what a selfish person I was! I had wanted someone who could be everything for me without any thought of being anything for her at all! *What if I did marry the perfect person and a few years down the road she wasn't perfect anymore? What would I do then?*

I tried to shake the question. *I'm nearly twenty-one, but I've got school ahead of me. I'm not worried—I know the right one will come along at the right time.* But the questions wouldn't go away. Finally, right there on the road, I made the decision. *"Lord, when You lead me to the right person, and I know that she is the right one for me, I will go forward, no matter what she is like on the outside, or what challenges may be in the path."*

Peace filled my heart. This was a new way of thinking—I would follow God's leading and base my decision on His will rather than on my own feelings, likes, and dislikes. I didn't have to worry about finding the "perfect one."

Kristina

Those early college years were filled with a busy schedule of classes and colporteur-ing. Yet I had hardly begun my first semester before I suddenly found myself in physical difficulty. I didn't know what was happening, but I began experiencing a lot of back pain which drained my energy. My muscles became tense and I soon had difficulty keeping up with the college program. Even worse, it affected my ability to colporteur, because I couldn't carry a book bag door-to-door. Visits to doctors, physical therapists, and massage therapists didn't provide any clear diagnosis or help. In spite of frustrations, setbacks, pain, and depression, God spoke comfort to my soul. I was able to accept His will, even if I were to be disabled for life.

Kind friends helped me with massage and hydrotherapy. By God's grace I regained a little health and was able to function—though at a slower pace. My teachers helped me to adjust my college load to a level that I could manage. I cooked at colporteur programs, worked as a ground leader, and led

colporteur teams instead of carrying a bag and knocking on doors.

Through all these experiences, I learned to trust God, and He gave me strength and grace to make it through. In the spring of 2005, I accepted my first job working for a church in Decatur, Arkansas. They had purchased several thousand copies of *The Great Controversy*, and they needed someone to distribute them to every hotel room in the area! While I was there, the church invited me to do a series of nature talks for their church campout. Little did I dream where that adventure would lead!

In May of 2005, I graduated with an Associate degree in Personal Ministries. *What should I do now?* Opportunities were not lacking—I had already turned down fifteen job offers from conferences, churches, and schools around the country. Because of health struggles, I needed some time to rest and recuperate before embarking on any career. So homeward I drove, back to Washington State, stopping just long enough in Decatur to give the nature talks.

The summer flew by, but one question was first and foremost: *Where does God want me to be? What does He want me to do?* At twenty-two years old, my life was dedicated to His service, yet I still didn't know where! Yes, I was still busy, using every opportunity to further His work, but I wanted to see the bigger picture. This song spoke the language of my heart, and I sang it often—*I'll follow, I'll wait.*

*My mind holds a myriad of thoughts every day
Of what's in the future, is this the right way?
Who will I marry, and where should I go?
What's my vocation? Must I not know?*

*Lord I'll follow; Lord I'll wait.
Lord I trust You to lead in the time You create.
Where should I go? What should I be?
Lord I will wait always on Thee.*

*Oh use in my life Lord, this period of trust.
Draw me much closer, send trials if You must.
Make all my heartstrings in tune with Thine own,
So I'll be ready when Your will's shown.*

*Lord I'll follow; Lord I'll wait.
Lord I trust You to lead in the time You create.
Where should I go? What should I be?
Lord I will wait always on Thee.*

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I knew that until I was sure of my direction in life, I couldn't think about a relationship with anyone. *How can I know that God is leading me to someone if I don't know what I am called to do?* A relationship would only distract me. I would be tempted to start in the work *he* was doing and convince myself that it was God's calling. I committed to not set my affections on any young man until he informed me of his interest with my parents' permission, and I was ready. My prayers increased as the summer progressed.

During the summer I had more opportunity to correspond with friends on the Internet, and this soon became a ministry. Many friends and former classmates would call and email me asking for prayer or encouragement. Among them was Daniel, who by this time was developing a real interest in missions.

Daniel

Yes, I was surprised at how quickly my interest in missions and ministry grew. I'd sent an application to Adventist Frontier Missions (AFM), a pioneering organization spreading the gospel to unreached people groups. When they responded and enthusiastically encouraged me to become a student missionary, I accepted the call to serve as a student missionary in Namibia. Naturally quiet and shy, I wasn't sure how I would survive months of fund raising and then a year among strangers in Africa. Yet God prepared the way by sending me on a two-week mission trip to Cuba. This helped me to experience missions first hand, giving me confidence to continue fund raising and training.

I sent an email to my friends, including Kristina, asking them to pray for our group in Cuba. After returning, I continued a busy schedule of classes, fund raising, and speaking appointments. About a month later, I received an email from Kristina: "*Daniel, are you still alive?*" Poor Kristina, she had been praying for our trip, but never heard that we had gotten back safely! I replied right away, telling her about our experiences.

Kristina

By the fall of 2005, I began to see just how God was answering my prayers. In October, I received a phone call from the church in Decatur, Arkansas, asking for more nature meetings! This was quite a surprise, but made me very happy for another opportunity to share. During the meetings, many church members asked me if I did this full time. "No!" was my quick reply. "I just do this for my local church and as a special favor for Decatur."

*"For now we see in a mirror, darkly;
but then face to face: now I know in part;
but then shall I know even as also I have
been known." I Corinthians 13:12, RV*

Chapter 3

A New Adventure

"Praying also ... that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ." Colossians 4:3

Kristina

However, those questions began to haunt me. *Was God calling me to share these nature object lessons as a full time ministry?* The next Monday morning I discussed the idea with my family, and a few days later with a couple close friends in the area. To my surprise, I received enthusiastic support and encouragement! I began to believe that this was from God, and started thinking seriously about it. *How would it work? What should the ministry be called?* I wondered.

On Friday morning, seeing Daniel on instant messenger, I

shared with him how God had been working, and the new idea He had given me. To my surprise, he was very encouraging! He suggested that I should look up name ideas on Google to see if anyone else was using them. Then he convinced me to start work on a website, and even volunteered to teach me HTML! That afternoon I gave a list of possible ministry names to my parents, two close friends, and Daniel. By Sabbath, we had narrowed it down, and unanimously voted that the new ministry should be called *Discovering His Treasures*.

Daniel

When Kristina shared her idea with me, I was both excited and skeptical. This was something fresh and new—I still remembered how interesting the *Reflections from Kokanee* slideshow had been. However, I was concerned knowing the risk of disaster when embarking in this type of ministry. I decided to test the waters and see how God would lead. Being a web developer and programmer, the first thought that came to mind was that Kristina needed a website. I enjoyed designing websites, but I had stopped doing free computer work for people. It always turned out to be more work than I'd bargained for. I decided instead to teach her how to create her own website. This way I could have the fun of teaching and still help the ministry. My offer was a bit half-hearted at first. I figured that if she wasn't serious about having a website, she would soon give up learning. If she quit, I wasn't going to just create the website for her.

We needed a way to host the website, and to do all we wanted we really needed our own web server. But I didn't have a server, and a new one would be very expensive. That night I prayed, "*Lord, if it is Your will that we should build this website, please help us to find a server.*"

On Sunday I was helping a friend setup some computers, and mentioned that I was looking for a web server. He said he had a couple very old machines that he might be willing to sell me. On Monday, I saw him again and asked him what he wanted for his old system. After thinking a bit, he looked at me and said, "Actually, I'll just give it to you."

I was speechless. I had hoped to get a server fairly inexpensively, but I hardly expected someone to just give one to me—much less the *very next day!*

Kristina

As Daniel looked for a server I had total peace that God would work everything out. When I heard the news that afternoon, however, I was shocked that it had all happened so quickly! It was confirmation that this was His leading, and it was so exciting! Some friends and I had already been working on a logo, so I quickly designed a rough draft of the website in a word processor, and informed Daniel that I was ready to work. His first response was somewhat disappointing: "Here is a program I've been playing around with. Why don't you download it and try it out?"

Wasn't he going to teach me? I thought, installing the program. Hours later, I was still fumbling with the software, trying to figure out what to do! In desperation I sent Daniel the document, so he could picture what I wanted, and asked him for some more help.

Daniel

When Kristina sent me the Word document website, my first thought was, *Oh no—how am I going to teach Kristina anything with this?* I didn't back down on my bargain, but I knew that she would have to be very determined if she wanted to succeed. I decided to teach her the same way I learned—by a lot of experimenting and perseverance. *I wonder how long she will last. . .*

Kristina

Daniel had no clue how determined I was! For years I'd dreamed of building a website. Throughout my teen years, I admired friends' online forums and websites, and more than once had asked one or another how they did it. "Oh, it's easy!" they would respond. "Just play around with it. It's not hard to figure out." But without someone to get me started, and I'd basically given up hope, until Daniel's offer. This was something I couldn't pass up!

I worked on the website eight hours a day, squeezing it in between all other projects. Being a night owl, it was hard to get up early, but I was determined enough to get up at 4:30 every morning for a month! After devotions, I worked a couple hours on the website before Daniel appeared online. He would help me for a while, and then I'd work for several more hours so I could ask more questions in the evening. It was a real marathon, but God helped me to learn quickly, and within four weeks, we had the entire website up and running!

Daniel

After the server miracle, and seeing Kristina's dedication, I realized this ministry was for real, and committed to doing my part in making *Discovering His Treasures* a success. I juggled my classes, work schedule, and speaking appointments, and still found time to help Kristina. We worked against a deadline—in December I would graduate with my Associate degree in Information Technology, and in January I would be leaving for Africa.

Shortly after we started the website, Kristina asked me if I was going to GYC, an Adventist youth convention held annually in different places around the US. This particular GYC would be in Chattanooga, TN, only a few hours drive away. *What a perfect opportunity!* Not only would it provide fellowship with other young people, but it would be a wonderful spiritual retreat before beginning my mission venture. So with my brother Timothy and two friends from Kentucky, I drove to GYC.

Kristina

GYC was a real blessing to all of us, and a fun opportunity to be together with friends who were committed to serving the Lord. There were eight of us who stayed together for all the meetings and meals.

As Daniel and I had worked together, our friendship had grown. While I looked forward to seeing Daniel, I did not want either of us to become distracted from ministry. I needed more time to develop in His work. So I made a commitment to God that I would be watchful and cautious during the weekend, and not allow my heart to set itself on any young man.

Daniel

GYC was a very special time in many ways. On Friday evening, I went forward and dedicated my life to ministry and mission service. On Sabbath afternoon, we went together on the GYC outreach project. I'll never forget Kristina's enthusiasm as we ran from door to door! It was truly a blessing to get better acquainted as we witnessed to the people of Chattanooga. Yet I knew that there were many things the Lord was calling me to, and made a commitment to stay focused on His mission. We parted, being confident in God's care and the assurance of our prayers.

A little over two weeks later, I boarded a plane for Namibia, leaving behind everything familiar to embark on a new mission in a new culture among the Himba people.

*"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away."
I Corinthians 13:9-10, RV*

Chapter 4

Prayer Walk

"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22

Kristina

The year 2006 found me "on the go" as well, with a trip to Arizona and then to Saskatchewan, Canada to do nature research. In addition, I'd taken on a new assignment: organizing a summer colporteur program and recruiting homeschoolers to canvass in Ohio! God truly blessed through hours of talking on the phone and writing email, as 17 young people promised to join the summer colporteur program! Despite the busy schedule, we continued to work on the *Discovering His Treasures* website.

Daniel

Africa proved to be an incredible adventure. Learning a new language, camping in the bush with the locals, traveling, and even spending a weekend on the Zambezi River, were just the beginning. I set up a recording studio, helped to create educational materials for the Himba people, and spent a lot of time with the young people from the local church. As I faced challenges in my interaction with the culture, it forced me to study more deeply into God's Word. As I studied, I asked Kristina for ideas. This gave us an opportunity to discuss Christian principles, how they affect our lifestyle and choices, and how they could be applied within any culture.

Kristina

A major milestone in my life began in January 2006. Now that I had direction in life, and knew what my involvement would be in God's work, I began to spend a lot more time in prayer regarding my future. At age twenty-two, I knew that a relationship, marriage, and my own home were still in the future.

However, as I contemplated the weight of responsibility that would be placed on my shoulders as that time came, I realized that now was not too soon to prepare. A quote that deeply impressed my heart as a teen, came back to me with startling clearness: “If men and women are in the habit of praying twice a day before they contemplate marriage, they should pray four times a day when such a step is anticipated.”¹

Up until now, I'd been in the habit of praying a total of about thirty minutes a day. Now I made a commitment to God to take an hour long “prayer walk” in addition to my usual morning and evening prayers. Oh, what a treasure those hours with God were! They helped me to experience a spiritual revival, gave me peace in each trial, and relieved the burdens that were so heavy on my shoulders. I used part of that time to pray for the many friends on my prayer list, including Daniel, and the remaining time was dedicated to praying through each issue and decision that I faced. I told God all about my feelings, struggles, and burdens—everything on my heart. It was as if He were walking there beside me. He gave amazing answers to my questions and strength to go through each struggle. I would return with a happy heart, refreshed and ready to do His will.

Daniel

During my time in Africa, I had a real encounter with myself and with God. I had dedicated myself to His work. Yet now, I found myself challenged against everything I'd ever believed about God, biblical truth, worship, culture, Christian standards, marriage, family, and life in general. Now, more than ever before, I needed to spend time in study and prayer. I began taking long walks up the mountain behind our little town each day, just thinking and praying, in addition to my morning prayer and study time.

This was not only a preparation for my immediate service in Africa, but also for my future. While becoming acquainted with Kristina, I began to think that God was leading us together for a broader purpose. My first commitment, however, was to the Lord and His work. It was challenging not to do or say anything that would cause Kristina to be distracted from her focus—yet I did not want to create the atmosphere of a special relationship, where we would be tempted to impress each other and hide our true colors. Unbeknown to me, a rumor was already growing and being passed around my circle of friends in Kentucky—“**Daniel has a girlfriend!**” Little did they know what struggles this would cause.

Kristina

When summer arrived I had three months of whirlwind activity as head leader for the homeschooler magabook program in Columbus, Ohio. The 17 young people became a close knit family, and it was a real life-changing experience for all. Something, however, was happening without my notice. A rumor quietly made its way to every student in the program. About halfway through the summer, one of the girls from Kentucky told me that I was Daniel's girlfriend. I was shocked! I quickly informed her, and the other girls, that it was impossible—I was **not** his girlfriend!

The question, however, nagged me: *What did Daniel think of me? Or did I even want to know?* I fled to the Lord in prayer. “*God, You know the longings of the human heart. You know that*

it's tempting to wonder what Daniel thinks of me, or to wish that I had 'someone special' in my life right now. Please help me to keep my eye single to Your glory, and not let distractions take my focus away from Your work. Please help me not to set my affections on him, and to wait patiently for Your timing. May I not be a distraction to him, as he searches for Your will and work in his life.”

Daniel

As the months passed, the African adventures were coming to an end, and I soon said goodbye to all my new friends and flew homeward across the Atlantic. Yet I felt like a different person. I had been on a mission—and was bitten by the “mission bug.” I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Africa, yet I felt that my place was in North America. With a degree in computer technology, and opportunities for work and ministry in this field, I was convicted that God was leading me here. When I returned, I would be able to further my education with a Bachelor's degree.

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.” I Corinthians 13:1-2, RV

Chapter 5

Could It Really Be?

*“The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off.”
I Chronicles 28:9*

Kristina

After the summer of 2006, *Discovering His Treasures* ministry became top priority. In six weeks, Daniel and I had developed a new logo, the website had a new look, and I was headed back to Decatur, Arkansas, for another series of nature meetings. What a blessing to have my first official seminar at the very church where it all began!

November sent me flying once again, this time to Kentucky for two and a half weeks. One of my colporteur students, a friend of Daniel's family, wanted a seminar in her area. She talked to her pastor, and soon I was scheduled in three churches. Daniel had just come back from Africa, and it was such a blessing to see him and his family again.

During those weeks, we enjoyed working together in person for the first time. Daniel helped me put the last few talks together, ran the computer and slides during the presentations, and assisted with the material's table. I was touched by his dedication to the ministry, his real burden for the work, and his personal interest in me and my needs. The demands of leading the summer program had taken its toll on my strength, and at times I needed a wheelchair to get around.

I began thinking what a blessing it would be if God led us together. But suddenly my mind would bring me back to reality.

How do you know what he thinks about you? Do you really

think he'd be willing to care for someone with potentially permanent disabilities? He has dreams, goals and desires, too. Do you think he'd want to give up all his aspirations to help a lowly ministry and a weak young woman? I didn't have the answers. All I could do was wait on the Lord and pray.

Daniel

What Kristina didn't know was the commitment I had made two years before. I had thought about it many times over the past months, and knew that if Kristina was the right one, I wouldn't let her physical limitations deter me, even if they turned out to be permanent.

I had talked to my parents even before going to Africa about my developing interest in Kristina. They had encouraged me to do the work God had given me, and to continue being friends, but not to begin a relationship yet. That was a year ago. The more Kristina and I worked together, the more I realized how well our interests, personality, and goals complemented each other. Her prayers had brought encouragement at just the right time, and I had been a blessing to her as well. Though I didn't tell this to Kristina, I couldn't hide the smile on my face.

Kristina

Seeing Daniel's extra enthusiasm to help me anytime I needed it, and noticing the look on his face when he turned my direction, made me really start to wonder. Though he hadn't said anything, feelings began to spring up in my heart—feelings that I had been trying *so* hard to keep under control.

Daniel

My parents had seen the interest developing between us, and they knew we needed more counsel. I had wanted to talk to Kristina's parents before I let Kristina know about my interest, yet I didn't know how to approach them. Just a few days before Kristina was to fly home, my parents sat down to talk with us, and together, for the first time, we discussed our mutual interest.

Kristina

Now that I knew there really *was* an interest on Daniel's part I had nothing left to hold my feelings in check. I immediately asked Daniel to call my parents and discuss it with them.

Daniel

Kristina's parents were just as astonished as I was afraid they might be. "You know what God's counsel says," they replied. "Your feelings, your impressions, your emotions are not to be trusted, for they are not reliable.' ² They cannot be controlled without yielding your will to Christ. 'If there is any subject that should be considered with calm reason and unimpassioned judgment, it is the subject of marriage.' ³ Now is the time to focus on preparation for your responsibilities of marriage and not on each other, and limit your correspondence until Daniel is finished with school."

Kristina and I agreed to go forward in the work God had given each of us, and to keep boundaries on our communication.

Kristina

I came home from Kentucky with a lot to think about. I wished I had held my emotions in check, and not placed myself in the position to be told of Daniel's interest, before my parents had given their consent. For two weeks I wrestled with my emotions, until finally I realized that I was holding back, and not

giving them to God. I sat down and wrote a letter to God, telling Him everything I was feeling, my hopes and dreams, and turning everything over to Him. Even if Daniel *did* have an interest in me, that wasn't an automatic "This is it!" I left it all in God's hands and told Him that I was willing to follow wherever He should lead.

My parents and I had been studying courtship and marriage for the past year, but Daniel's phone call definitely stimulated more research and discussion. We discussed what should happen when a young man asked their permission to marry me. We also finished a list of qualities I needed in a young man—what fit my specific needs, and what he should be like, so I could benefit him. We analyzed Daniel by that list, along with several other friends. This helped me look at them for who they really were—their weaknesses and their strengths, and put things into perspective.

Daniel

A month later, I was again driving home from GYC. While contemplating the events of the weekend and of the last two months, I became convicted of the need to pray for a miracle. I didn't know what kind of miracle to pray for—only that I needed to pray for a miracle. God gave me peace once again, and He didn't let me down.

The coming months found me starting the routine of work and school again, for the first time in over a year. Despite the challenges of juggling this with church responsibilities and a month of evangelistic meetings, I still found time to work with Kristina on *Discovering His Treasures* projects. During the spring, my computer business—*FiForms Solutions*—hit a speed bump when the Somerset Oil Refinery changed hands and went into bankruptcy. I was left scurrying around town looking for new clients to fill the hole in my pocket book.

Kristina

January 2006 found me doing a nature seminar for my home church, before heading to Canada again, this time for three months. While I was there, Daniel and I embarked on a new project—creating an inventory and accounting database for *Discovering His Treasures!* It was a fun project, because I was able to start learning computer programming in the process.

During this time I was able to counsel more with my parents and with my friends in Canada. It was a blessing to learn from their wisdom and experience, and it helped keep my focus in the right direction—ministry—rather than relationship. Daniel and I set more boundaries in our communication and work time, limiting discussions mainly to work and ministry, rather than focusing on our friendship. Though it was a challenge, it proved to be a tremendous blessing to us by keeping our eyes fixed on Christ.

In May I flew to North Carolina to do nature meetings for a campmeeting. Since it was only a few hours' drive from Kentucky, Daniel's whole family was able to come, and it was so much fun to see them again! I was very busy that week, running the materials booth in addition to finishing my talks and doing the meetings, so Daniel and I had little chance to talk. But what a blessing to have him and his brother helping with the materials' booth and giving ideas for the talks!

Daniel

In early May I graduated with a transfer degree, and North Carolina campmeeting was a refreshing beginning to the summer break. I realized, though, that our friendship was challenging both of us emotionally. Even though I knew Kristina was struggling, I had hardly understood how strong of a battle it was, or how much it was affecting our ability to follow God's leading. Now I didn't know what to do about it.

Back at home after campmeeting, I did a partial overhaul on my car and continued hunting for new business clients. I also signed up for classes at Western Kentucky University which would begin in August. From now on, the school program would be online, and I would complete my Bachelor's in only three semesters.

Kristina

We had been counseling with our parents and praying for God's will and direction. I realized that we needed some time "apart" to think objectively, to pray, and to seek His leading—without communicating or even working together in ministry. Since I would be gone for nearly three months, running the colporteur program in New York, I realized that this would be the best time. As head leader, I would be too busy to maintain a lot of communication, and I needed to be able to focus on the summer program. As hard as the decision was, I knew it was the right thing.

Daniel

When Kristina called me and suggested that we should stop our communication for the entire summer, I was stunned. At first I couldn't believe she was serious! Questions filled my mind: *Would our friendship survive? Or would this spell the end of a friendship closely entwined in my hopes and dreams?* But after much thought and prayer, I too was convicted that this was the right thing, regardless of the outcome. On Thursday night, June 7, we said goodbye.

Kristina

That was probably the hardest decision of my entire life! We had grown close in our friendship, and it was like tearing my heart out to say goodbye. I realized this was best—I had allowed my feelings and emotions to control our friendship, and I needed time to reconnect and focus—to re-intrust my feelings with God. Despite the trying circumstances, God used this to bring about one of His greatest miracles. Little did I dream what He would do during the next few months!

*"Love suffereth long, and is kind;
love envieth not; love vaunteth
not itself, is not puffed up,
doth not behave itself unseemly,
seeketh not its own, is not provoked,
taketh not account of evil;
rejoiceth not in unrighteousness,
but rejoiceth with the truth."
I Corinthians 13:4-6, RV*

Chapter 6

Wings of Hope

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? ... If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Psalm 139:7, 9-1

Daniel

The day we stopped corresponding, I sent an email to Kristina's parents, letting them know about our decision. A few days later, Kristina's Dad called. At the end of our conversation, I volunteered to come and help them during the summer. He seemed very favorable to the idea and within a couple days we had purchased the plane tickets. I would be spending the summer in Washington!

Kristina

I was totally shocked when my parents said that Daniel was going to help them for the summer! It seemed so strange—I was in New York, far away from home, Daniel was at my house, and we weren't communicating! But my parents were very thoughtful to share little updates on how Daniel was doing. It was nice to know that things were going well.

Daniel

Spending the summer in Washington gave me an opportunity to get acquainted with Kristina's family and even to understand Kristina better. It also gave Kristina's Dad lots of time to ask me questions. We had many good discussions while working together on a building project.

Towards the end of my stay, her parents and I had a chance to talk more seriously about our future. When I returned home, it was with her parents' approval for us to correspond with careful boundaries. Soon, my Dad and I were on our way to New York to pick up my brother and several other colporteur students. My heart filled with joy at the thought of seeing Kristina once again, yet it was not without a bit of apprehension. *How will Kristina respond, after so many weeks of not hearing from me?* I wondered.

Kristina

I don't think I've ever been more scared than the day Daniel arrived in New York! *What will he say? Will we be able to communicate again?* But relief and joy flooded my heart when he told me about his visit with my parents, and their approval for us to correspond once again.

As hard as it was, those months of silence were a blessing. It had given time for my emotions to settle down, and enabled me to think more clearly. After seeing all the ways God had been leading thus far, I believed that He really was drawing us together. We committed to continue working together in ministry, to follow His leading, and to spend time discussing issues pertaining to ministry and future work. The change was amazing! My mind was now in control of my emotions. A sweet peace filled my soul, knowing our friendship was based on solid principle and a growing commitment. The spark of true happiness and love—God's love—filled my heart. I didn't worry about what Daniel thought of me, or wonder about the future. I was secure in Jesus' arms.

Daniel

Though I didn't even know what I was praying for, all year I had been praying for a miracle. God was now answering this prayer—by a miracle that I never dreamed possible. God used the time of silence to work a change in our friendship and in our hearts, and now we were beginning once again, this time on a more solid foundation.

Kristina

Just a few days later, my faithful and dedicated “little sister,” Elisabeth Mizner, flew home with me to stay and help with ministry work and traveling. What blessing and joy she has brought! With her help, I was able to become involved in an evangelistic campaign at the Northport church in the fall, to travel to GYC by train, and to plan a schedule of nature seminars for the following summer. We hardly missed a prayer meeting, and I've even been able to help lead the youth Sabbath School! What a treat it has been for me to be able to get out more!

Developing an online store for *Discovering His Treasures* had always been our goal, and through much hard work during the fall and winter it became reality. Daniel taught me more programming, and I learned to develop software using the *FiForms Framework*, a development program he had written for his computer business. I was amazed at how much fun computer programming can be, and was delighted to be able to do some of the programming on my own—not only for our store, but also on his business projects.

Daniel

In December I drove to Minneapolis for GYC. The following morning I met Kristina and Elisabeth at the train station. Despite the winter weather, the three of us enjoyed a quiet stroll through an indoor tropical rain forest before checking in at GYC. This year we had every bit as much fun as the previous years—and perhaps a little bit more. Though I teased Kristina that she “had a hitch in her get-along,” it didn't slow us down a bit. What fun I had pushing her wheelchair back and forth to meetings! After the last meeting, the three of us drove through a blizzard back to the tropical gardens for a little time to visit and rest. By the time the train pulled out of the station Sunday evening, I knew that our lives would never be the same again . . .

Soon vacation was over and classes started again. Yet, a flame was burning in my heart that couldn't be extinguished. It had started as a spark, long before, and slowly, quietly, it was growing. Each time I saw Kristina or even talked to her, her sweet spirit fanned the glow of love in my heart. I was certain God had been leading us, and now was the time to do something—something that would forever change our lives . . .

Kristina

February 3, 2008—I'll never forget it! Daniel and I had been working on a computer project when he left to join his family for worship. He told me to continue on with my project; he would be busy for a little while but would come back to help me again. So I busied myself at the computer. As the evening passed, however, I began to wonder. *It's past his bedtime! Whatever could be taking him so long? Is it coincidence that Dad is on his way home from work in Spokane, two and a half hours away?* I paused in my work to say a prayer, just in case. Finally, after about two hours, Daniel came back online! Exactly thirty

minutes later, Dad walked in the door, and was he ever stressed! You could feel the tension as he walked in the room! He immediately asked Mother to come outside and help him. I was sure now—Daniel had called my dad.

A few minutes later, Daniel called me—just to talk for a bit. He tried to act like nothing had happened, but he couldn't hide the smile from his voice. He didn't tell me what was going on, but I knew he didn't always smile that big.

Daniel

Yes, I had done something. After talking with my parents, I knew it was the time to act. I tried to keep it a secret from Kristina—a hard thing to do, I'm learning. I called Mr. Reeve on Sunday evening, while he was driving home from Spokane. We talked about business, school, FiForms, and more business—All the while I kept trying to get up enough courage to ask him the question. Finally, I realized it was now or never.

“Oh, by the way, Mr. Reeve. I have a question for you—”
(*deep breath—long pause*)

“Yes—?”

“Um, well, I just wanted—” (*another pause*)

“Yes—?”

“Well, I want—to marry—your—daughter.”

There, I said it! The question was out. Now I sat, trembling. . . waiting for an answer. How long I would wait, or what that answer might be, I had no way to know.

“Well, I kind of expected that question,” Mr. Reeve replied in his usual calm tone. “As you know, I'll need to talk it over with Susan and pray about it. We will probably have a few questions for you, before we can give you an answer.”

We chatted a few more minutes, and he asked me a few more questions, and that was it. A few minutes later I phoned Kristina, trying to act like nothing had happened. But, I couldn't keep the huge grin off my face. I was excited! I was ecstatic! I was exuberant! I'd actually asked one of the most important questions of my life—and he hadn't said no! Well, at least not yet. I was still in suspense. Waiting . . . for the questions.

Kristina

The next weeks were filled with suspense—and much prayer! Mother was in her office (which was also Elisabeth's and my bedroom) early every morning, working on the computer before we woke up. I'd never seen her on the computer so much before! Sometimes I wondered how much more suspense I could endure, but God was there for me, and Elisabeth and my other close friend, Kimberly, were ready with a listening ear and encouragement.

Daniel

I don't know who was in more suspense: Kristina or me! The next day, the first round of questions arrived by email. I responded to those, and soon more followed. And more. And more! Some days I was encouraged by the responses; other days I felt almost overwhelmed. Yet it was a blessing, and I appreciated the counsel and encouragement that filled the bulk of each email.

Over the following weeks we exchanged more than seventy pages of emails, and discussed topics ranging from goals, compatibility, marriage preparation, and the role of a husband and father, to education, health, biblical beliefs, finances, and

recreation. They also contacted my parents to get their approval and feedback.

One month later, to the very day, I received a call from Mr. and Mrs. Reeve. With a pounding heart, I answered the telephone.

We have seen that you have what Kristina would accept as a life companion, possessing pure, manly traits of character; one who is diligent, aspiring, and honest, and one who loves and fears God. From much prayer, study, emailing, and our former acquaintance we have seen that you would be a suitable companion for our daughter. ... Yes, we give our full approval to marry Kristina if God has also led her to that decision. ... So, when do you plan to ask her?

As I heard the words, joy flooded my heart and the tears threatened to fill my eyes. We prayed together, and they gave me their blessing. My confidence that this truly was God's leading was now firmly established. Spring break was one week away, and Kristina would be starting her summer tour of nature meetings in only three weeks. Whatever I did, I had to decide quickly. Before we got off the phone, we had arranged for me to fly to Washington for a visit, one week later. I immediately bought a plane ticket, at an amazingly affordable price (yet another miracle). That's when it hit me: *in exactly one week, on March 10, 2008, I had another important question to ask!*

Now with Kristina's parents' full permission for our engagement, it was my turn to plan the suspense. We wanted to surprise Kristina. Under normal circumstances this would have been impossible, but with my travel date only a week away, I thought, just maybe, we could keep it a secret. I would be flying early, and should be in Spokane by mid-morning. I'd just tell Kristina I was busy in the morning, and she wouldn't be too worried. And it worked—almost. . .

“Love ... beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away.” I Corinthians 13:7-8, RV

Chapter 7

Forever in Love

“That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love.” Colossians 2:2

Kristina

Something was in the air. I just knew it. There was no way around it. All the pieces were falling into place. Here it was, 2:30 Monday afternoon (5:30 Daniel's time) and Daniel hadn't appeared online as usual! Sure, he'd told me he was going to be busy in the morning, but he'd never said *all day*. Then too, Dad was coming home from Spokane after spending an extra night there on his way home from Seattle. Mother was coming home early from work (something she rarely does) to fix a special pizza dinner to welcome him home. And to top it all off, she sent

Elisabeth off to Grandma's house to peel garlic, leaving me home by myself right when it was time to fix lunch! But no, it was impossible. It just couldn't happen. *Kristina, forget it. You're just being silly. Close your eyes and relax until Mother gets home. Everything is just fine. You're just reading into things a bit too much.* I sighed and rolled over for the hundredth time while trying in vain to take a nap.

“Ding dong!” I sat straight up in bed. *Who could be ringing the doorbell? Mother and Dad never do, Grandma is busy with Elisabeth at her house, the neighbors usually just open the door and holler.* My heart pounded as I walked slowly towards the door, as if in a dream. *Who could it be? What if it was Daniel?* I reached the door, grasped the door knob, and stopped. *Breathe deeply Kristina, I coached as each breath came in little gasps. Breathe.* Slowly, I opened the door—and there was Daniel!

Daniel

There Kristina stood in her favorite green dress, giggling and smiling like I've never seen her before. “I *knew* it was you!” she whispered, when she could finally speak again. “Come look!” Together we raced to the next room, where she'd been chatting earlier with one of her friends. The excited flow of words spilled off the screen: “there's no way Daniel could be flying ... just ... tell me I'm crazy!!!”

But, crazy or not, there I was. I found it almost as hard to believe myself! But it was real—and we both knew it.

Going quickly to the kitchen, we assembled the pizzas in record time, and were just sliding them into the oven when the others arrived. Somehow, actually doing something together was helping us to believe we weren't dreaming. As I set the table, I glanced over toward the stairway, where Kristina's, no, *our* Charlie plant flourished—its vines spilling far over the sides of the pot—each leaf a tiny heart.

Kristina

Dad, Mother, and Elisabeth walked in the door, faces wreathed in smiles. “What a surprise you brought home!” I exclaimed, running into Dad's arms and giving Mother another hug. I was so happy, yet everything felt like a dream. It was hard to believe it was actually real! After all our talking and laughing, we finally sat down to eat. I'd been too excited to eat much breakfast, so it wasn't hard to eat now. All through the meal I kept looking over at Daniel, again and again, still trying to convince myself that he was really sitting there!

After the meal, I waited for what seemed like an *eternity*, while Daniel brought in his things and got settled. Finally he came upstairs and told me he was ready to take a walk. He wanted me to show him all my favorite places on our property. My heart did a little leap, as I was sure what he had in mind, but I tried to contain at least a *little* of my excitement as we stepped out the door. We walked to each place, starting at the furthest and ending at the closest. I had planned it that way on purpose, so the last one would be my very favorite spot.

Daniel

Kristina may have tried to keep the excitement from showing on her face, but it was pretty apparent in her step. As we headed up the hill towards Kristina's old fort, each step came faster and faster, until she was half running up the hill, through the slush and snow. I could hardly keep up with her!

Kristina

Finally we arrived at the fort, which my brother and I had built together when I was eleven years old. Up on a western slope, facing a beautiful view of the valley below, it was now directly in line with the setting sun. As a teenager, I had dreamed of someday sharing this view with the one with whom I would spend the rest of my life, and had always wished that he would propose there. As we sat down on the grass, I wondered if maybe that dream was becoming a reality.

“Kristina, I have a poem to share with you.” Daniel’s voice broke the busyness of my thoughts. His hands shook as he reached into his pocket and pulled out a small folded paper. “I have it memorized, but want to make sure I don’t forget any lines.”

As I listened with wonder, he shared the most meaningful poem he’d ever written, and the most beautiful poem I had ever heard! It told of the longing in his heart, his dream of working together in ministry, and how much I meant to him. Then, looking me straight in the eye, he quoted the last line of the poem: “*Kristina, will you marry me?*”

I was shocked—too surprised for words! Tears filled my eyes and I began to weep. Finally collecting my thoughts, I realized that Daniel was still waiting patiently for an answer! Then I remembered his poem. It was so beautiful, I couldn’t just answer with a dry, boring, “Yes.” How could I say something that might reflect even a little of the love and joy overflowing in my heart? As I looked out over the setting sun, the words came. I turned, and once again looking into Daniel’s eyes, said slowly, “*Yes, My Love, your words are true; I promise I will marry you.*”

We sat together for a few moments, letting the words sink in. Slowly, Daniel pulled from his pocket a beautiful silver and gold watch, with little golden hearts interlocked in the band. “I’m giving you a two-toned watch,” he explained with a smile, “because the gold represents you, and the silver represents me.” My smile spread from ear to ear as he carefully snapped the watch around my wrist.

“I have a little something for you, too.” I said quietly, reaching into my pocket.

Daniel

Now it was my turn to be surprised. With teary eyes she sang a beautiful song; one I’d never heard before—one she’d written just for me. Unbeknown to me, she had been preparing for this

special day, and when I asked the question, she was ready. Tears filled my eyes as the words and music spoke to my heart. Together we watched as the last rays of the golden sun sank beneath the wooded hills.

We were engaged! We would be married soon! It seemed too good to be true. Yet I knew in that moment that it was true. Walking home together in the gathering twilight, it was as if the whole starry heavens reflected in our eyes. Bursting through the door, we found Kristina’s parents sitting together on the sofa.

Kristina

“*We’re engaged!*” we almost shouted in unison. Smiling and laughing, we hugged Mother and Dad as we told them how everything had happened on our walk.

Daniel

The next few days were like living in a dream. Calling our family and friends, we would put each one on speaker phone, announcing in unison: “*We’re engaged!*” I’ll never forget the looks on everyone’s faces at prayer meeting, when Kristina introduced me as her fiancé to her church family! We set our wedding date for March 8, 2009 and began to make plans for the wedding attendants. The week sped quickly by, and all too soon it was time for me to fly back home. But as we said goodbye, looking into each others eyes, the light and joy of true love was unmistakable—a love grounded in earnest dedication and deepest commitment. There was no more suspense, no more wondering, no more worry. We were engaged! We would be married in less than a year. Soon we would be together—*forever!*

“But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.” I Corinthians 13:13, RV

Daniel and Kristina

As we have pondered over all the ways that God has worked to bring us together, it is with awe and wonder that we recount them now to you. When we dedicated our lives to God’s service, we never even imagined what He had in store for each of us. Now we have the joy of continuing in His work, not just as individuals, but as a team—a couple: “Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God,”⁴ when we may see Him face to face.

*“The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad!”
Psalm 126:3*



References

- 1) E.G. White, *The Adventist Home*, page 71
- 2) E.G. White, *Messages to Young People*, page 152
- 3) E.G. White, *Messages to Young People*, page 447
- 4) II Peter 3:12



Epilogue

The story continues to be written. We were married on March 8, 2009, in the beautiful setting of Northeastern Washington. See our personal website www.dk.discoveringhistreasures.com for a photo gallery of our story, wedding pictures, our new home, and married life.

If you have been blessed by our story, please pass on the blessing. We are happy for you to share our complete story in this format, or by linking to our website www.dk.discoveringhistreasures.com. See copyright details below.



About Our Ministry

Discovering His Treasures is a ministry dedicated to helping you gain a closer walk with Jesus and discover the treasures of God's Word as illustrated in nature. Check out our website where you will discover simple nature object lessons, be empowered to share God's word more effectively, and learn to experience revival in your life as you discover God's second book.

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