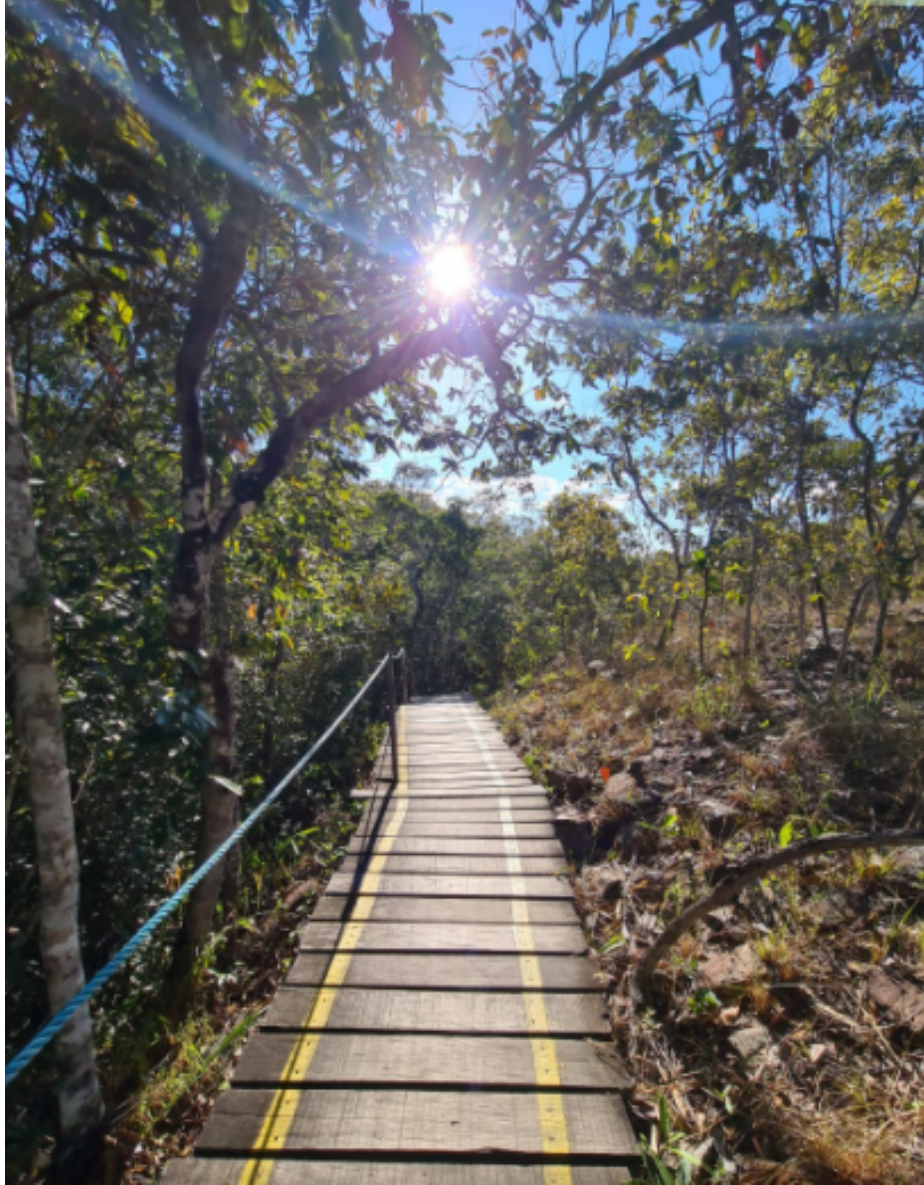


My Life's Journey: Facts and Faith
Luciara Shamah

Volume 1 by Luciara Shamah

Faith Experiences of Luciara Barboza Gentil Almeida
From Childhood to Age 18



International Cataloging Data in Publication – CIP
S528f

Shamah, Luciara.

Facts and Faith: The Journey of My Life – Faith Experiences Lived by Luciara Barboza Gentil Almeida from Childhood to Age 18 / Luciara Shamah; cover by Henrique Rezende.

– Brasília: Movimento, 2021.

87 p. ill.; 16x20 cm. (v. 1)

ISBN 978-6589896-05

1. Faith. 2. Faith – Experience. 3. Biography. 4. Belief. 5. Personal Experiences. I.

Luciara Barboza Gentil Almeida. II. Henrique Rezende. III. Title. IV. Subtitle.

CDD – 920

Cover: Photograph taken by Henrique Rezende on 07/06/2021.

All names mentioned in the accounts were authorized, and therefore appear in this literary work by the author.

All rights reserved to the author.

Any alteration of the content of this book is prohibited by law.

I began writing this book on 10/21/2021 at 7:00 a.m. and completed the first volume on 10/27/2021 at 10:22 p.m.

"Luciara, my dear friend , I read it all and I must admit I cried—it's all so beautiful!

If I were to distill "all so beautiful" into the shortest quote that sums it up, in my view, it would be Romans 12:21: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

" It's a divine command that is hard to fulfill, but certainly very rewarding. Reading your story makes it easier, more understandable, more accessible, and even enjoyable to comprehend and

PRACTICE this teaching... WE ONLY HAVE FAITH WHEN WE PRACTICE IT."

Helton Figueiredo de Carvalho, Teacher and Electrical Engineer

"Hi Luciara! I read it and I am so happy for you and this new achievement. My mother, my siblings, and I feel very honored to be part of your life story and to know that, in some way, we could contribute—though the greatest contribution is your own spiritual life.

Verinha, daughter of D. Joana

"Luciara, I'm glad to be part of this story. We are only instruments of GOD. Go ahead and publish it! Wishing you much success, and may GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY. It seems like all of this happened just yesterday! Your journey truly deserves to be written and shared; with GOD, everything is possible! And that's how Cida, I, and our children live day by day.

Cléber Pires, Entrepreneur

"Dear Luciara... What a beautiful book... What moving stories... I'm reading it and loving it... I will follow the publication of the next volumes very closely. Your stories of faith, the revelations you receive, are truly impactful. I am a witness!"

Maria Ivatônia, Appellate Judge

"Luciara Shamah!!! What an enjoyable read, my dear! I read it without blinking. I will go back to some passages and reread them!"

Elisabeth Amarante, Judge

"Luciara, I'm so happy that you are publishing this book. You know I always root for you, and with all my heart! I know that everything that comes from you is positive, good, and just. I have read your book with the care of a friend and the attention of someone who respects and walks paths of faith. Everything is fascinating and full of a life well-lived.

Congratulations!"

Max Abrahão, Judge

"Luciara, from the very beginning, these are beautiful and impactful stories! Congratulations! May God bless this new achievement of yours. I am very proud of you, your story, and your testimony. It will certainly inspire reflection and serve as another source of inspiration in faith in God!"

Jorgina Rosa, Judge

"Dr. Luciara, in our weekly services, we always pray for protection for you and your family. The vision you had about my life was a divine communication through you, and everything happened according to God's plans. Reading your book now helps me understand why you were chosen to be the messenger. Congratulations on the book; keep recording your beautiful story. We look forward to Volume II. Best wishes!"

Getúlio Moraes, Appellate Judge

"Luciara, I managed to read the entire book! Simple language, accessible, and easy to understand. Even though I already knew your story, I was still moved! May God continue to illuminate you, and may this book touch many lives!"

D. Nita, my wise and beloved mother-in-law

PREFACE

Luciara, I have read it all.

Beautiful, moving, and it touched me deeply!

Your father, Jorge, was between my age and my father's.

At first, I would take my father's car to him for repairs. I graduated in 1972, the year you were born, and now your father was closer to me, repairing my own cars.

I learned a lot from Jorge—he had little formal education but much culture, and above all, he was extremely intelligent and charming, qualities that you have inherited.

Like all humans, Jorge had his weaknesses, but you never had the time to know them or inherit them; however, you would understand and forgive, as when referring to alcohol.

Spirituality, faith, the practice of forgiveness, love, and devotion were qualities even more intense in your mother, with whom you spent more time and shared the most difficult moments.

Jorge told me that your mother was one of the heirs of a farm in Espírito Santo, but some of her siblings, taking advantage of her young age, left her deprived under their guardianship. She worked in Rio de Janeiro as a domestic servant, with little or no money, limited access to education, yet with a rich cultural foundation.

When Jorge and Lacy married, both had a lot of culture, little formal education, little money, and a past full of struggle.

When I met them, they owned two houses, a car, and wonderful children—it was a time of glory.

As you reminded us: There are days of struggle... There are days of glory.

It is not my place to speak of myself here, but my story and that of my parents is similar, and the same wise proverb applies: There are days of struggle... There are days of glory.

Well, here comes the happy ending: now it is your family and mine, your children, my three

children, and seven grandchildren—in days of glory.

Being in days of glory, we wish to share our faith and love with others.

You see, your mother forgave her siblings—I don't know which ones—but she forgave and never held a grudge or lamented the material possessions lost.

I understand that this is why your mother had so much to give you, passing on all these values of spirituality, faith, and love. Jorge, very intelligent, could see the heart of your mother; he loved her and entrusted her

with the running of the household and the education of the children.

And now here you are: the intelligence of one and the faith of the other...

...what a divine mixture you are, my dear Luciara.

Kisses from Helton, and give my regards to the great Robinho, who always knew how to care for this treasure, which is you, Luciara.

I highly recommend the reading!

— Helton Figueiredo de Carvalho

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	13
Chapter I	17
Chapter II	23
Chapter III	26
Chapter IV	27
Chapter V	33
Chapter VI	38
Chapter VII	40
Chapter VIII	51
Conclusion	56
Final Considerations	61
Appendices	64
<i>Nova Friburgo - RJ, the city where my father was born</i>	64
<i>Cachoeiro de Itapemirim - ES, the city where my mother was born</i> ...	70
<i>Photos illustrating the events described in this Volume 1</i>	74
<i>The story of the blue Veraneio</i>	8

INTRODUCTION

As I write the introduction to this book, I am reminded of a biblical passage about the life purpose of the Prophet Jonah, who received a call from God to preach to the people of Nineveh. Instead of immediately obeying the Lord's voice, he chose to follow his own will and do the exact opposite of what God had commanded: Jonah fled on a ship and headed to Tarshish instead of going to Nineveh as instructed by God.

"The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying: 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.

' But Jonah

rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, found a ship going to Tarshish, paid the fare, and went aboard, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD."

— Jonah 1:1-3I understand that God also has a life purpose assigned to each of us.

Sometimes we do not perceive the purpose clearly, but time and circumstances bring evidence to show us that nothing happens by chance.

Now that I am 49 years old, having gone through many life experiences, I have a better understanding of the reasons behind certain events and how each one unfolded to shape me into the person I am today.

Today, Thursday, October 21, 2021, I woke up at 7:00 a.m. and decided to write this book to share some events from my life that involved the exercise of faith. I believe that the experiences I will share here will strengthen the reader's faith.

My desire is to tell you the journey of my life in detail, recounting events that involved the exercise of faith, to demonstrate that:

"Everything is possible for one who believes" (Mark 9:23);

"None of God's plans can be thwarted" (Job 42:2); and

"God works all things together for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

My sincere prayer is that God uses this book to lift you to a higher place, awakening, exercising, and building your faith on the firm foundation that is Jesus Christ. Nothing escapes the eyes of God.

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

— Hebrews 4:13

Remember that only the Lord Jesus Christ can redeem the sinner, and He has already paid the high price of redemption to save us.

"This Jesus is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.'

Therefore, salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

— Acts 4:11-12

Jesus Christ is not only unique, but fully sufficient.

Childhood

Chapter I

My name is Luciara Barboza Gentil Almeida. I was born in Brasília-DF on July 6, 1972, the daughter of Jorge Rodrigues Gentil and Lacy Barboza de Moraes. I am married to Robinho, and together we have three children—Nathália, Gabriela, and Natan Gabriel. In these pages, I will share with you events that I consider essential for a better understanding of the journey of my life. I was born into a well-structured home, marked by harmony and affection. My parents loved

each other deeply and succeeded in passing on to me and my brother the true meaning of family and the warmth of a happy household.

However, when I was nine years old, on February 23, 1982—Carnival Tuesday—a tragedy struck that violently shattered the foundations of our family. My father was taken from us; he was murdered, fatally wounded with several blows from a pocketknife.

My father was an auto mechanic. He would occasionally drink alcohol, usually during festive occasions. My parents had married in Rio de Janeiro on April 1, 1962, in a religious ceremony, though they were never legally married under civil law.

Sometime around 1979 or 1980—though I cannot recall the exact year—my father received a phone call from Rio de Janeiro. On the other end was a young woman, already over twenty years of age, who introduced herself as his daughter. From that moment forward, I noticed that my father carried a certain burden of remorse for not having been present during her childhood. He often appeared sad. It seemed to me that, after that discovery, he began to drink more frequently.

Not long afterward, this newly discovered daughter—Maria Emília—came to Brasília to meet my father and our family. Her visit lasted only a few days, yet those were days filled with joy and new beginnings. From then on, my father, now feeling forgiven for his absence,

gradually reduced his drinking until, by December 1981, he had given it up completely.

During Carnival of 1982, my father and a close friend, Dr. Hícaro, had planned a fishing trip in the city of Formosa-GO, with the intention of returning only after the holiday. However, they decided to come back earlier, on Monday, February 22.

On the following morning, Tuesday, February 23, 1982, my father, who no longer drank, decided to stop briefly at a bar before lunch to have a snack. The bar served pork cracklings (“torresmo”), which he enjoyed very much. As he left home, he playfully patted me and my friend Verinha on the head, told my mother he would return shortly for lunch, while my brother was still asleep since it was a holiday.

That day, however, he happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Considering that he no longer consumed alcohol, one might wonder: why stop at the bar for pork cracklings so close to lunchtime?

My father owned a light blue Chevrolet Veraneio. Whenever he drove, our little dog, Guimba, always went with him. That day was no exception—the dog accompanied him to the bar.

The bar belonged to a neighbor, and most of the people who frequented it were also familiar faces from the neighborhood.

Before lunchtime, my mother received the devastating news that my father had been wounded and was at the Taguatinga Regional Hospital (HRT).

According to neighbors who had been at the bar, an argument began when a man kicked our dog. My father confronted him, saying there was no reason for such an act. The man retorted, “I kicked the dog, and I’ll kick the owner too.

” He then went to the bar’s restroom,

returned holding a pocketknife, and began stabbing my father. Those present at the scene stood by, paralyzed, merely watching. Tragically, my father did not survive his injuries and passed away at the hospital entrance.

From that day on, our family faced deep trials. My brother Beto, who was eighteen at the

time, was devastated and even contemplated suicide. On the very day of our father's death, while the Military Police were in our yard speaking with my mother and neighbors, my brother locked himself in the bathroom. I was only nine years old—small and weak—but I managed to prevent him from securing the door. Others came to help, and when my brother finally opened it, we found him in tears with a knife on the floor, revealing his intention to take his own life. By God's grace, a greater tragedy was averted.

God is the Author of life, and only He has the authority to determine when it should end. One of the Ten Commandments declares,

"You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13). This means that we are not to end any life—neither another's nor our own.

In the wake of our father's passing, each of us sought different ways to fill the void in our hearts. My mother and I turned to God for strength, while my brother sought refuge in drugs, trying his first marijuana (weed) cigarette offered by a neighbor. It is worth noting that, in time, he overcame addiction and also embraced faith.

At just eighteen years of age, my brother had already learned the trade of auto mechanics from our father. Yet, with his passing, our financial resources diminished drastically, and we began to experience real need. Many of our basic necessities were generously provided by our neighbor and my mother's dear friend, Dona Joana. Sometimes my mother would say, "This is the last bit of coffee we have,

" and, almost as if she had overheard, Dona Joana would appear with coffee to share.

Dona Joana was a Christian woman, mother to ten children, and she even adopted one more. Though she did not have much herself, she shared whatever little she had with those in need. In the absence of my father, she became an extraordinary blessing to us.

"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them,

'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,

' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say,

'You have faith; I have deeds.

' Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds."

(James 2:14–18)

Chapter II – Teenage Years

Faced with financial hardship, when I was thirteen years old I began working in a residential building as a cleaning assistant. I worked in the mornings and studied in the afternoons. The building had three floors, with white marble staircases. I was responsible for scrubbing the stairs, while the caretaker—a man of about forty—collected the trash and washed the exterior floors.

Although work is honorable, for me, as a young teenager, that experience was not one of dignity. As I knelt on the stairs, scrubbing each step with steel wool, people would walk past me without a greeting, and without so much as an “excuse me.

” I would place a doormat at the building’s entrance and a cloth at the foot of the stairs, yet few bothered to wipe their feet. I felt ignored and disrespected, an experience that left deep marks on my soul. At the time, I could not fully understand it, but in truth, what I was feeling was that my human dignity was being violated.

During this period, I began attending a Christian church, influenced by the kind people who supported my mother, including Dona Joana.

At church, I was taught to read the Holy Bible, to cultivate a life of prayer, and to develop faith in God. I learned that prayer is made in secret, yet its reward is made public:

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

(Matthew 6:6)

In my prayers, I asked God for a new job opportunity—one more favorable to me and compatible with my school schedule.

A few days later, while I was at church, someone approached me with an offer to work caring for a blind woman and helping with household tasks.

I wish to preserve this lady's identity, since I lost contact with her and her family and do not have permission to disclose her name. For the purposes of this account, I will call her Dona Lia.

At that time, I was studying at the Industrial School of Taguatinga (EIT), in my first year of secondary school, enrolled in the Technical Program in Banking Services.

In the mornings, I would tidy Dona Lia's house, clean the bathrooms, water the plants, and go to the market to do the shopping, presenting receipts so her children could see how the money was being spent. As far as I recall, Dona Lia had lost her sight as an adult. Despite her visual impairment, she knew the layout of her house very well and even prepared lunch, which, I must say, was delicious.

That was a very good season in my life. I learned to be meticulous, for the cleaning had to be thorough; Dona Lia could tell whether the house was clean simply by touch and by smell.

On one occasion, one of Dona Lia's sons, a physician, came to visit her at lunchtime. He picked up a white cloth from the clothesline, thinking it was a dish towel, but I told him it was actually a floor cloth. On that occasion, he complimented me, saying that his mother and her home were being well cared for. I was still very young, yet I already had the maturity to always do my best and to give my

utmost in everything I undertook—keeping in mind that my deepest desire was to please God.

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”

(Colossians 3:23)

Chapter III

In 1987, I was a sophomore in high school, fifteen years old, when I enrolled in a typing course in the evening at Paracatu School, located at Praça do Bicalho in Taguatinga-DF. After completing the course, I took a typing test at Caixa Econômica Federal for a paid internship position. Thanks to God, I was approved. At that time, I arranged for someone else to care for Dona Lia and began my internship at the reception, later moving to the accounts receivable department, where I handled invoices, promissory notes, and bills of exchange.

This was a period of great honor; people respected me and treated me very well. The monthly allowance I received was close to the minimum wage, enough to cover my own expenses as a teenager and still help my mother. I remember that it was even possible to buy a new stove, cabinets, and a sofa for our home.

I always sought to obey and honor my parents, and I believe that this is why God's blessings reached me.

"Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your father and mother, for this is right. As the Scriptures say: 'Honor your father and your mother.

' This is the first commandment with a promise, which is: 'So that things may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.'"

(Ephesians 6:1–3, NLTH)

Chapter IV

In 1988, I was 16 years old, had already finished high school, and my internship contract at Caixa Econômica Federal had ended.

During that year's vacation, my brother Beto and I traveled to the state of Espírito Santo to visit our relatives at the old Beira Alta Farm, owned by my uncles Leonora and Arcelino, both of whom have since passed away.

At that time, inflation in Brazil was alarming. Just to give an idea, inflation based on the CPI (Consumer Price Index) in 1988 was 980.21% in Brazil, while in Germany it was 1.88%, in Canada 3.88%, and in the United States of America 4.42% (source:

<https://www.inflation.eu/pt/taxas-de-inflacao/ipc-inflacao-1988.aspx>). On that vacation trip, Mom didn't come with us, but she gave my brother and me a

reasonable amount of money to cover the bus tickets to and from. We bought the tickets for the trip there, but when the time came to return, our money was only enough to buy tickets from Espírito Santo to Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais. When we arrived in Belo Horizonte, however, we no longer had enough to buy the tickets to Brasília, Federal District. With the inflation of that time, it was impossible to predict prices, since they changed from one day to the next.

My brother walked around the shops inside Belo Horizonte's bus station trying to sell some cheese our aunt had given us, hoping to add enough money for the tickets. But the attempt was unsuccessful.

Beto then suggested we take a taxi to the highway and try to hitchhike with truck drivers heading toward Brasília.

So that's what we did—we got into a taxi and went to the highway. At that moment, I prayed to the LORD, asking Him to provide a ride for us, but that it would not be with anyone ill-intentioned. My heart was heavy, being far from home in an unexpected and difficult situation. I prayed, trusted, and immediately gave thanks.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

— Philippians 4:6–7

Indeed, God heard and answered my prayer!

My brother and I were on the roadside asking for a ride. Within minutes, a golden Monza—a brand-new car at that time—stopped, and the driver asked where we were going. My brother replied: “We can go to any city near Brasília, even if we’ll need another ride later.”

Then the driver said he was going straight to Brasília, DF, and he dropped us off right in the satellite city where we lived, Taguatinga, DF.

The driver’s name was Jorge, an engineer who was coming from Rio de Janeiro and heading to Brasília. He just wanted some company to chat with along the way.

God is wonderful! Not only did He answer my prayer, but He also gave me a special treat: I rode alone in the back seat, with a headrest, in a super-comfortable car!

The blessing came in full: the driver stopped at a diner, bought us a grilled ham and cheese sandwich with orange juice, and—believe it or not—the money Mom had given us for the bus tickets still had some left over!

There are days of struggle... There are days of glory...

1

The Holy Bible tells us of a similar event in which there was scarcity one day, and prosperity the next. Let’s take a look: “Some time later, King Ben-Hadad of Syria mobilized his entire army and marched up

to besiege Samaria.

Because of this, there was such a great famine in the city that a donkey’s head sold for eighty pieces of silver, and a quarter of a cab of dove’s dung sold for five pieces of

silver.”

— 2 Kings 6:24–25 (NLT version)

**“Elisha replied,

‘Hear the word of the LORD. This is what the LORD says: About this time

tomorrow, at the gate of Samaria, three seahs of the finest flour will sell for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel.’

The officer on whose arm the king was leaning said to the man of God,

‘Look, even if the

LORD should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?’

‘You will see it with your own eyes,

’ answered Elisha,

‘but you will not eat any of it!’”**

— 2 Kings 7:1–2

¹ A reference to the Brazilian rock band Charlie Brown Jr., song composed by Chorão and Thiago Castanho.

**“Now there were four men with leprosy at the entrance of the city gate. They said to each other,

‘Why stay here until we die?

If we say,

“We’ll go into the city”

—the famine is there, and we will die. And if we stay here,

we will die also. So let’s go over to the camp of the Arameans and surrender. If they spare us, we live; if they kill us, then we die.’

At dusk they got up and went to the camp of the Arameans. When they reached the edge of the camp, no one was there,

for the Lord had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots and horses and a great

army, so that they said to one another,

‘Look, the king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings to attack us!’

So they got up and fled in the dusk and abandoned their tents and their horses and donkeys.

They left the camp as it was and ran for their lives.

The men who had leprosy reached the edge of the camp, entered one of the tents and ate and drank. Then they took silver, gold and clothes, and went off and hid them. They returned and entered another tent and took some things from it and hid them also.

Then they said to each other,

‘What we’re doing is not right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us. Let’s go at once and report this to the royal palace.

”**

— 2 Kings 7:3–9**“So they went and called out to the city gatekeepers and told them,

‘We went into the

Aramean camp and no one was there—not a sound of anyone—only tethered horses and donkeys, and the tents left just as they were.

,

The gatekeepers shouted the news, and it was reported within the palace.

The king got up in the night and said to his officers,

‘I will tell you what the Arameans have

done to us. They know we are starving; so they have left the camp to hide in the countryside, thinking,

“They will surely come out, and then we will take them alive and get into the city.”

One of his officers answered,

‘Have some men take five of the horses that are left in the city.

Their fate will be like that of all the Israelites left here—yes, they will only be like all these Israelites who are doomed. So let us send them to find out what happened.’

So they selected two chariots with their horses, and the king sent them after the Aramean army. He commanded the drivers,

‘Go and find out what has happened.’

They followed them as far as the Jordan, and they found the whole road strewn with clothing and equipment the Arameans had thrown away in their headlong flight. So the messengers returned and reported to the king.

Then the people went out and plundered the camp of the Arameans. So a seah of the finest flour sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley sold for a shekel, as the LORD had said.

Now the king had put the officer on whose arm he leaned in charge of the gate, and the people trampled him in the gateway, and he died, just as the man of God had foretold when the king came down to his house.

It happened just as the man of God had said to the king: ‘About this time tomorrow, a seah of the finest flour will sell for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.’

The officer had said to the man of God,

‘Look, even if the LORD should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?’

The man of God had replied,

‘You will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of it!’ And that is exactly what happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gateway, and he died.”**

— 2 Kings 7 (NIV version)

Chapter V

At the beginning of 1989, at 16 years old, having already finished high school and with my internship at Caixa Econômica Federal completed, it was time to enter the job market.

The desire of my heart was to work and earn enough to cover my own expenses and also help Mom. One day, I asked Mom to give me some money so I could buy the newspaper and also pay

for the bus fare in order to apply to companies that were offering job openings.

At that time, job opportunities were advertised in the classified sections of major newspapers, remembering that we did not yet have the internet.

Regarding my request, Mom told me that she only had a small amount, enough either to pay for transportation or to buy the newspaper. The money would not cover both expenses.

Before going to the newsstand, I prayed, asking God to guide me in every decision and to lead me to the right job. I searched the Holy Bible for a Word from God for that moment, and the answer came from the Gospel of Matthew 7:7–11:

7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

9 Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”

— Matthew 7:7–11

Holding on to that Word, my heart was already overflowing with faith that God had chosen a job for me, even if I did not yet know where it would be.

I went to the newsstand without money and asked the owner if he would allow me to flip

through the newspaper so that I could copy down into my notebook some job postings that matched what I was looking for.

As things are not always easy, the first obstacle to overcome was whether that man would even let me look through the paper without buying it. He looked at me with a very stern face and said: "If you're not going to buy it, look quickly and don't crease it.

" I thanked him for

allowing me, and so I did. But first, I prayed silently: Lord, I have little time, and I need You to show me the right ad.

As I went through the newspaper, I chose two postings: the first was for a secretary position at a print shop located in Praça do Bicalho, Taguatinga-DF, about 200 meters from where I was standing; the second was at a car dealership in Asa Norte, Brasília-DF, which would require me to take public transportation to get there.

First, I went to the print shop, but the position had already been filled.

I went back home and asked Mom for bus fare to go to Asa Norte, Brasília-DF.

It was around 4 p.m. when I arrived at the car dealership. I was greeted by a receptionist who asked me to fill out a form. This form had several fields to be answered, including my expected salary. When I was interviewed by the owner of the dealership, Mr. Cléber Pires, he greeted me and

said:

—"This is a very late hour to be looking for a job. Anyone who really wants to work applies early in the morning. And this salary expectation of four minimum wages is incompatible with the position. I am hiring a secretary, and the pay is one minimum wage."

Since I already had a Word from God that "the one who knocks, the door will be opened"

, I replied confidently, boldly, yet respectfully:

—"You are right, sir. Anyone looking for a job should come early in the morning, but this was the time that worked for me to get here. I am interested in the job, and I am the employee you need. My expectation of four minimum wages comes from the need to cover

all my expenses and also help at home. I noticed that this is a car dealership, and as a secretary, I can answer the phone, but if I sell a car, you can pay me commission. That way, I will reach the equivalent of four minimum wages.”

At the end, Mr. Cléber said he would review all the other applications submitted by candidates and, if so, he would call me.

I thanked him and said,

“See you tomorrow!”

I believe Mr. Cléber must have thought, what a bold, daring young lady—only 16 years old, yet carrying herself like an adult. What he didn’t know was that I was just a young girl, but standing on a Word from God.

“I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.”

— Philippians 4:13

That same day, when I got home, the phone rang, and I answered. It was Mr. Cléber calling to tell me to start work the next day at 8 a.m.

It was a very good season in my life! Truly, God’s Word was fulfilled.

At that time, it was unusual for anyone under 18 to be hired with a formal contract, but God blessed me in a supernatural way. There was mutual reward: I learned how to work in business, with customer service and car sales, and I earned an excellent salary, higher than I had expected. For his part, Mr. Cléber exceeded all expectations of a mere boss. He and his wife, Cida, were very good to me. Beyond my regular salary, when I turned 18, they even paid for my driving school so that I could take lessons and get my driver’s license. They even allowed me to drive some of the used cars from the dealership.

As a way of showing gratitude, my fiancé and I invited Mr. Cléber and his wife Cida to be the godparents at our wedding. Robinho and I were married in May 1991.

Even after getting married, I continued to work at the dealership for about two more years,

until my husband suggested that I leave my job to study for a public service exam.

When I left the dealership, already working as the manager, I thanked Mr. Cléber for the opportunity he had given me. On that occasion, he also thanked me for the time I had worked there, reminding me that “when you first arrived, there was a fleet of used cars, and by the time I left, I was leaving behind a fleet of new and nearly new cars.

” And,

“when you first arrived, I was poor, living in a rented house, but when you left, I was rich, with my own

house and a commercial office as well.”

A similar account is narrated in the Holy Bible in the work relationship between Laban and his servant Jacob. See:

“And Laban said to him,

‘If I have found favor in your eyes, please stay. I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me because of you.

’ And he added, ‘Name

your wages, and I will pay them.’

So Jacob said to him,

‘You know how I have served you and how your livestock has fared with me. For the little you had before I came has increased greatly, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I have been. But now, when may I do something for my own household?’”

— Genesis 30:27–30

A similar fact is also narrated in the Holy Bible concerning Joseph of Egypt and Potiphar.

Let’s see:

“The LORD was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his

Egyptian master. When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned. From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field.”

— Genesis 39:2–5

I also acknowledge that the good hand of the LORD has guided us, leading us to a good outcome.

“With God we will do valiantly.”

— Psalm 60:12

Chapter VI

Between the years 1985 and 1988, my brother Beto went to a wedding in the city of Anápolis-GO, where he happened to see the man who had committed the crime of homicide against our father. That man had not been arrested in the act when he committed the crime, but was later arrested under a warrant.

My brother had often said: “If one day I ever find the man who killed our father, I myself will settle accounts with him.

” Beto carried a feeling of vengeance. Many times, he told me to study law and become a lawyer so I could defend him when that day came. I always answered that justice would be done by the laws of men and by divine justice, and that my desire was not to be a lawyer, but a judge.

This thought of vengeance, of taking justice into one’s own hands, is not approved by God: **“Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is**

written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,
,’ says the Lord.

”

— Romans 12:19

My mother and I always prayed, asking God to remove this idea of revenge from Beto’s mind.

On that day, when my brother saw the man who had killed our father, he had the opportunity to fulfill what he had always said. In fact, one of his companions even offered him a firearm in case he wanted to carry out his intent. But thanks be to God, my brother chose to leave through another door and return to Brasília, thus avoiding greater evil.

I believe God placed His mighty hand on that situation and delivered my brother from evil thoughts and from the influence of bad company.

“You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

You know when I sit and when I rise;

you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down;

you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue

you, Lord, know it completely.

You hem me in behind and before,

and you lay your hand upon me.

”

— Psalm 139:1–5

“Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.

”

— 1 Corinthians 15:33

The LORD gave great deliverance to my brother and to our family, because when one family member becomes involved in a crime, the consequences are felt by all. Thus, I can affirm that this deliverance was not only for my brother, but for all of us. God spared us from greater suffering.

“I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;

he heard my cry for mercy.
Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.
”

— Psalm 116:1–2

Chapter VII

I compare our life to a thread: fragile and of limited length, yet, when used in skillful hands, it can mend, adjust, sew fabrics, and even suture an incision in the skin during a medical procedure. The same needle that can prick a finger while being handled, in the right hands, can perform great repairs. I also believe that this same thread, with time or misuse, can become tangled with knots,

messy, and difficult to untangle, requiring resilience to undo the knots, straighten the thread, and restore it to its original form.

I was a sweet and gentle girl; however, after losing my father, I began to harbor bitterness and hatred toward the man who killed him. I was like a new spool of thread, but I allowed knots to form, and I became deeply entangled. I needed resilience to return to the original form in which the LORD had created me.

After the event narrated in the previous chapter, when my brother had the chance to do evil but chose to do good by leaving the place rather than yielding to the evil temptation, I began to work on my own heart to also forgive the man who killed my father.

I had harbored hatred for that man who had taken my father’s life and had caused all the adversities that followed from that tragic event.

As I read the Holy Bible and grew in the knowledge of Scripture, I prayed to God for a forgiving heart and came to understand that forgiveness is not a feeling, but an act of obedience to God’s commandments.

I would pray the Lord’s Prayer and say: “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

”

— Matthew 6:12

Yet this prayer was not true in my heart, because at that moment, I had not yet forgiven the one who had offended me.

In those days, God confronted me through various passages in Scripture:

“Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

”

— 1 John 4:20–21

“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

”

— Luke 6:27–28

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will

also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

”

— Matthew 6:14–15

How can we love our enemies? By taking action: praying for those who persecute us, doing good to those who mistreated us, and blessing those who cursed us. These are the lessons of our Master, the Lord Jesus.

Loving our enemies means desiring good even for those who have done us harm. We must remember that God’s children do not repay evil with evil but overcome evil with good. **“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”**

”

— Romans 12:21

The moment I truly decided to forgive the man who killed my father was during a church service, while holding an envelope with money to present as an offering.

As I stood in line to approach the altar, the Pastor preached: “God does not need your money. What God receives as an offering blesses the giver far more than God Himself, for He is the source of all things. But if there is anyone who has not yet reconciled with their brother, do not bring your offering, for it will be only money. First, go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come back and bring your offering.

”

What the Pastor preached has biblical foundation:

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

”

— Matthew 5:23–24

An offering is an act of love. When we give to God, we acknowledge that everything we have comes from Him. Our trust is in God, not in money. We may also offer Him our life, our praise, our worship, our prayers, and our time. And when we give, it should always be voluntary and with joy.

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

”

— 2 Corinthians 9:7

“Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

”

— Proverbs 3:9–10

As I listened to that sermon during the offering, I felt sorrow, realizing that God was rejecting my offering, which I had prepared to bring to the altar. At that time, I was working at the car dealership and had set aside a special amount to give.

I left the line and returned to my seat, my face red with sadness and shame. Right there, I decided in my heart that I would forgive the man who killed my father. I would do it to obey God and because it was the right thing to do as a Christian.

When I got home, I told my mother that I wanted to go to the prison—at the time, the Custody Center of Brasília (NCB), located at Papuda-DF—to speak with the man and tell

him that although he had caused so much pain to our family, I forgave him, and that, despite everything, Jesus loved him and had died for both him and me.

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

”

— Romans 5:8 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes

in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

”

— John 3:16

At first, my mother resisted, afraid I might be taken hostage inside the prison. But seeing that I feared God and that it was truly in my heart to go, she gave me her blessing and allowed me to go, accompanied by pastors and church workers.

At the prison, after the regular security procedures, in the courtyard, I was approached by a man who recognized me and greeted me:

—

“Hi, Pretinha, what are you doing here?”

I answered: “Hi, I don’t recognize you... what’s your name?”

He gave me his nickname: “Glogo.

”

Then I remembered who he was.

“Glogo” lived near our house, in another block. He was suspected of thefts in Taguatinga-DF—burglaries and car stereo thefts. He called me “Pretinha” because that was the affectionate nickname my father used to call me.

I told “Glogo” my purpose there—that I had come to meet the man who killed my father to tell him I forgave him and that Jesus loved him despite everything.

But “Glogo” stopped me: “Pretinha, your father, Mr. Jorge, was a very good man! When I wasn’t accepted at home because of family problems, I would sleep on the street, but your father, more than once, let me sleep in his car. He gave me a blanket, and in the morning, coffee with milk and bread. I respected him very much. So I cannot let you go and speak with that evil man who killed Mr. Jorge. He could take you hostage. But don’t worry—I will deliver your message to him.

”

At that moment, I realized my mother had been right to worry. But just by having gone to the prison and spoken with “Glogo,

” I already felt light, certain that forgiveness had been released, and that God was pleased with my willingness to forgive.

Indeed, I forgave him. The burden I carried was left behind in that prison. I walked out lighter, confident that God’s blessings would no longer be withheld but poured upon me, for I was living in obedience to Him.

From that day on, I regained a tender heart and felt embraced by God. I felt like a new spool of thread again—strong, ready to mend, adjust, repair, suture.

Forgiving means resolving the matter without holding on to bitterness or resentment, and remembering the offense without feeling the same pain. Think of it this way: like seeing a scar—you never forget what happened, but the pain of the cut is gone, because forgiveness has the power to heal. God is powerful enough to do this in me and in you.

To make the meaning of forgiveness clearer, let me explain further.

In Portuguese, the prefix “**per**”

, which comes from Latin, is used to intensify the meaning of the root word. For example, per + seguir = perseguir (“to pursue”)—not simply “to follow,” but

to follow intensely, continuously, until reaching. Likewise, per + doar = perdoar (“to forgive”)—not merely “to give,” but to give more deeply, more completely, at the highest level of giving.

Álvaro Siviero, a Brazilian pianist with an international career, illustrates it this way:

“In Chemistry, to form a molecule, atoms are added inside, but there is a maximum limit before the molecule collapses. That is why we have hypochlorite, chlorite, chloride, chlorate, and perchlorate; we have permanganate and peroxide—all at the maximum level of oxygen within a molecule. When something reaches its maximum limit, we use the prefix PER. Something can be done, but it can also be PERFECT. (...) When we reflect that love is the opposite of selfishness—love gives, selfishness receives—then, when we want to give at the maximum level, we PER-give.

”

(Source: Pensador – Álvaro Siviero)

Thus, forgiveness—PERDONAR—means to release the offense, let go of resentment, and set it permanently free. In the Bible, the Greek word *aphiemi*, translated as “forgive,” literally

means to let go, to dismiss, to release completely. True forgiveness is born out of love and obedience to God’s commands. In that love, wrongs are not counted, debts are canceled. FORGIVENESS is the highest level of surrender and giving.

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

”

— 1 Peter 4:8

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

”

— Matthew 6:14

“Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.

”

— Luke 11:4

We are all imperfect, and we rejoice when we are forgiven.

“We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

”

— James 3:2

“Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.

”

— Psalm 32:1–2

If we enjoy being forgiven, we must also forgive others.

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

”

— Matthew 7:12

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

”

— Ephesians 4:32 My sincere desire is that you may understand the true value of forgiveness.

Forgiveness will

set you free from a sad captivity; forgiveness will bring you joy and restore your will to live.

But if you hold on to bitterness and resentment, you will be the one most harmed.

Reflect on this illustration:

The Boy and the Charcoal

A boy came home stomping his feet and said to his father:

—

“I’m so angry with Lucas, Dad! He embarrassed me at school, and now I wish only bad things for him!”

The father took him to the backyard with a sack of charcoal and said:

—

“Son, I want you to throw these pieces of charcoal at that white sheet hanging on the clothesline, as if it were Lucas.

”

Excited by the game, the boy did as his father said.

In the end, the boy was happy to see part of the sheet dirty, as if he had hit his classmate.

Then the father brought him to a mirror. To the boy’s surprise, his own face was so blackened with charcoal that he could barely see his eyes.

The father concluded:

—

“Look, my son, the evil we wish upon others is like this charcoal. It may soil the sheet a little, but the one most harmed is the one who throws it.

”

(Source: Pensador – Author Unknown)

Adulthood

I became legally independent through marriage. Back then, adulthood was reached at 21, but by getting married at 18, I was emancipated.

Chapter VIII

At the end of 1989, I was 17 years old. I had already finished high school, worked at a car dealership, attended church, but my personal life still didn't feel complete.

I missed having a boyfriend, so I prayed to God, writing Him a letter and asking for one.

LORD, my God and my Father,

I am grateful to You for everything You have done for me and for all You have given me. At this moment, I feel the absence of a boyfriend, and that is why I write You this letter, asking for a very special one with the following characteristics:

First of all, I want him to be a man who fears the LORD, who loves You above all things, and who also loves me deeply.

That he be honest, hardworking, kind, and handsome.

LORD, I also wish that he be taller than me—at least by two centimeters.

In the church I attend, there are some young men, but they are all already committed.

So, LORD, if there isn't anyone there already prepared for me, You can send me one so that I may lead him to You; then he will be won for the LORD, and You can give him to me as a gift as well.

Heavenly Father, whatever I forgot to ask, please complete it, because I know Your plans are greater than mine, and Your will is good, perfect, and pleasing.

I know that You have the best for me.

In Jesus' name, I ask You, and I thank You in advance.

Amen.

My prayer was based on the Holy Bible. See:

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

”

—

Matthew 21:22

“And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

”

— John 14:13–14

Since I had never had a boyfriend before, after writing that letter to God, I started paying attention to the kind of man I had asked the LORD for, waiting for Him to bring about the encounter between me and that person.

Around that time, soon after I wrote the letter, an attractive and charming man appeared—a bank manager—who showed interest in going out with me. He was an acquaintance of my boss, Mr. Cléber, the owner of the car dealership.

That man, used to making invitations and having them accepted, said he would invite me to go out and was certain I would accept. My boss, however, said I wouldn't, because he wasn't the kind of person I was looking for.

So, the two of them made a bet: they wagered a bottle of wine.

Indeed, although that man had many good qualities, he did not fit the profile I had asked God for, so I turned down the invitation and chose to wait for the young man the LORD had prepared for me. I knew I would recognize him when I saw him. I believed that God would give me peace in my heart to show me who the one chosen for me was.

“The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the decisions you make; for it is to this peace that God has called you together in the one body. And be thankful.”

— Colossians 3:15 (GNT) So, Mr. Cléber celebrated for having won the bet, and I was glad for being a trustworthy

person and consistent in my decisions. He already knew me well enough to know that I wouldn't accept that proposal.

Then came **March 8, 1990** — the great day! The day God brought together me and Robinho.

I was at church, and there were two little children distracting their mother and drawing the attention of others during the service. One was about three years old, and the other around five. I asked their mother if she would allow me to stay outside the church with the children so she could have her moment to worship God in peace. She agreed.

While I was playing with the children, a young man stopped at the church door and read a poster that was hanging there. The poster had an illustration of a little stick figure with a heavy iron ball chained to its leg and a message that said something like:

“Stop Suffering!

You who suffer from illness, addictions, envy, anxiety, debt, fear, insomnia, depression, suicidal thoughts, seeing shadows, hearing voices, family problems... Whatever it may be — JESUS is the solution!”

I approached that young man, greeted him, and began to talk with him about the message on the poster. I invited him to come to one of our services, telling him the days and times I would be there in case he wanted to talk again.

Our conversation lasted a little while, then he left, and I went back to taking care of the children until the end of the service, when I returned them to their mother.

After talking with that young man, I spoke to the LORD:

“Oh, Father, he's so handsome! If he's the one You have for me, I want him!”

At first, I was concerned about his well-being — about his soul — but soon I realized he fit the very profile of the boyfriend I had asked God for.

Robinho started attending church regularly, was baptized in water, and grew stronger in the Christian faith.

God answered my prayer — Robinho, a handsome and loving man, truly a gift from God to me! In fact, God did far more than I had asked or imagined; the LORD fulfilled my request in every detail and went beyond my expectations.

“To Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us — to Him be the glory!”

— Ephesians 3:20 (GNT)

We were married on **May 11, 1991**, when I was 18 years old and Robinho was 21.

Although we were very young, both of us had the maturity needed for marriage. We had lived very similar life stories — both had faced difficult days — which made us mature faster. And with the LORD's blessing, thank God, our choice was the right one. We have a very happy and blessed marriage, with three wonderful children: **Nathália**, Gabriela, and Natan Gabriel.

At times, we feel anxious, uncertain about what the future holds, but the Bible advises us to cast all our anxiety on the LORD, for He cares for us!

It is wonderful to receive God's love and care.

Pray, give your worries to God, and trust Him. God is all-powerful to do far more than we ask or even imagine!

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

”

— Philippians 4:6

“Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.

”

— 1 Peter 5:7 (NIV)

Conclusion

Here I bring to a close the first volume of *The Journey of My Life – Facts and Faith*. I chose to write it in smaller parts so as not to tire the reader and to make it accessible to everyone, including those who do not have the habit of reading. For those who are interested, there will be a continuation of this work, for there is still much to be told. My desire is to share these events for the strengthening of your faith. As I finish this volume, I am reminded of a verse from a hymn in the *Christian Harp* titled “Count Your Blessings”:

“Count your blessings, name them one by one;
Count your blessings, see what God has done.”

It’s true — I am amazed! Great things the LORD has done, and for all of this, I rejoice!
“The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.”

— Psalm 126:3

To help you better understand the message conveyed here, I would like to clarify the meaning of fact and faith.

According to the Portuguese Dictionary, fact is:

“Everything that happens by human action or as a result of external or natural events, independent of human will; an occurrence, an event, a happening, something whose existence is unquestionable — a reality, a truth.”

(Michaelis Dictionary: <https://michaelis.uol.com.br/busca?id=pAxp>)

According to the Holy Bible, faith is: “Faith is the confidence that we will receive the things we hope for and the certainty of what we cannot see.”

— Hebrews 11:1 (GNT)

Regarding the illustration of *The Journey of My Life*, I would also like to explain the reason behind the choice of this book’s cover — a photograph taken by **Henrique Rezende**, my blessed son-in-law, on **July 6th, 2021**.

They say we shouldn’t judge a book by its cover, but I say: if you are going to judge it, do so from the right perspective.

The cover was chosen to portray the journey of my life. It shows a wooden path — a trail — that, though rustic, has planks well joined and aligned. The path is surrounded by a diversity of vegetation: on one side, grasses and small shrubs; on the other, trees with twisted trunks and thick bark.

These trees with crooked trunks, few leaves, and rough bark are those that endure high temperatures and low humidity. The ipê tree, for example — found in the Brazilian savanna (the cerrado) — blooms in the hottest and driest months of the year, even when fires are common. Despite all adversity, the ipê blossoms, gifting us with magnificent beauty and teaching us that, no matter the circumstances, we can bloom wherever we are planted. Indeed, the cerrado landscape holds a unique beauty and a profound lesson.

The beauty of the cerrado (Brazilian savanna) is not always noticed by everyone. It takes a sensitive and attentive heart to see beyond surface appearances.

God does not see us the way people usually do — He sees us through eyes of love and values us even when no one else does.

“The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

”

— 1 Samuel 16:7

On the book cover, the sunlight also stands out — its rays shine through the trees and illuminate the path, the wooden trail, the journey of my life.

“But for you who revere my name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in its rays.

”

— Malachi 4:2

When God created the world, He prepared a beautiful garden — everything perfect and wonderful for humanity to enjoy.

However, when sin entered the world, humankind was separated from God’s glory. Sin distanced us from Him, but remember: God longed to reconnect us to Himself, and for that reason, He gave us His Son, Jesus Christ.

With Christ, we are able to overcome the adversities of life.

The Lord Jesus Christ said that “in this world we would have troubles, but to take heart.

”“I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

”

— John 16:33

Do not let the Lord Jesus Christ remain outside your life.

I encourage you to invite Him to come in and make His home in your heart — not as a temporary guest, but as the One who dwells with you forever.

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with Me.

”

— Revelation 3:20

I thank God for the opportunity to write these words, and I thank you for taking the time to read *The Journey of My Life – Facts and Faith*.

May this book in some way help you become a happier person, with faith strengthened and renewed — a person grateful to God for everything, for through faith,

“from weakness we can draw strength.

”

“By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.

By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak,

Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel and the prophets,
who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what
was promised; who shut the mouths of lions,
quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose
weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and
routed foreign armies.

”

— Hebrews 11:29–34

The Apostle Paul said:

“That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships,
in persecutions, in difficulties.

For when I am weak, then I am strong.

”

— 2 Corinthians 12:10

Finally, I would like to clarify that my birth name is **Luciara Barboza Gentil**, my married
name is **Luciara Barboza Gentil Almeida**, and the new name the LORD gave me is
Luciara Shamah — an experience I will share with you in a future volume.

I wish that the grace and peace of God be with you!

“May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

”

— Philippians 1:2 (GNT) If you still have a moment, please read the **final remarks** and take a
look at the **appendices**
that follow.

Final Considerations

I have sought to write this book in a simple manner and at a low cost to make it accessible to all readers. I believe that the stories contained herein and the experiences of faith shared in these pages can help many people overcome their inner conflicts and find answers through the practice of faith.

My desire is that this book would not be commercialized, but rather distributed for free, as its primary purpose is altruistic. However, so far, I lack sponsors to fulfill this intention. As I wait for sponsors, many lives remain trapped in their inner struggles, lives that could already be finding answers through reading this book. For this reason, I am publishing it at the lowest possible cost, in order to reach as many people as possible.

“Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.”
— Matthew 10:8

This book is available in print, as an e-book, and as an audiobook. More information can be found on the website: luciarashamah.com.br.

I also provide my email: luciarashamah@gmail.com for future contact, should you wish to share your experience reading this book and its impact on your life.

If you wish, you may also authorize me to mention your name and your testimony of faith, derived from reading this book, in future volumes of *The Journey of My Life – Facts and Faith*.

The preaching of the gospel must be continuous and intended to reach all people. Thus, I want to continue sharing the good news in strict obedience to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“He said to them,
‘Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.’”
— Mark 16:15 (NIV)

Indeed, the work of preaching the gospel is arduous, but seeing a life transformed is rewarding! It is like giving birth — feeling the pain of labor, which is soon forgotten when you see the baby who has come into the world!

“The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says: ‘Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,’ and ‘The worker deserves his wages.’”
— 1 Timothy 5:17–18

I have freely received the Word of God, and freely I also share it. But, dear reader, if you

wish to contribute financially to the ministry of preaching the gospel, I accept donations, provided they are given joyfully and according to what is in your heart, without compulsion, and deliberately. In this way, the ministry will be blessed, and the LORD will also reward you.

“Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

— 2 Corinthians 9:7

Thank you in advance.

May you remain in the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

With warm regards,

Luciara Shamah

Contacts:

Website: luciarashamah.com.br

Email: luciarashamah@gmail.com

Instagram: Lucia Shamah (@luciarashamah)

WhatsApp: +55 61 99647-1642

Donations can be made using the following banking information:

Inter Banco Digital

Bank: 077

Branch: 0001-9

Account: 163736847

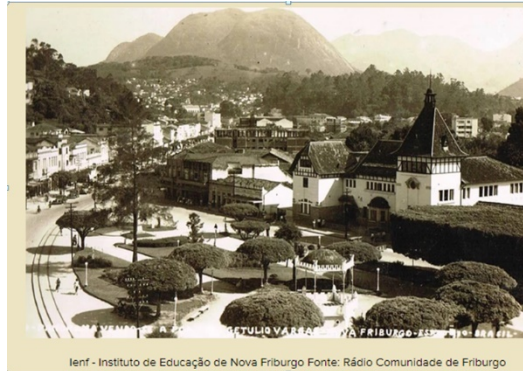
Account Name: Luciara Barboza Gentil Almeida

CPF: 505.798.001-72

PIX key (email): luciarashamah@gmail.com

Appendices

Nova Friburgo – RJ, the city where my father was born.



The photo above is available on the website:

<https://www.acreditaremsi.com/post/trabalhar-em-grupo>

My father, **Jorge Rodrigues Gentil**, was born in Nova Friburgo-RJ on **February 15, 1935**, son of **Otilia Maria Gentil** and **Zacarias Rodrigues**, who at the time lived in Olaria do Cônego, Nova Friburgo-RJ. His maternal grandparents were **Manoel Gentil** and **Virgilina Maria Gentil**, according to the civil birth registry recorded under No. 12,659, pages 132 and 132-v, Book 76, State of Rio de Janeiro, District of the Municipality of Nova Friburgo, on June 24, 1944.



As previously mentioned, I spent little time with my father, so some of the information here comes from third parties who knew him longer, especially his friend **Helton Figueiredo de Carvalho**, who authorized me to publish these accounts.

I now transcribe some of the stories shared by Helton:

“Nova Friburgo, known as the Brazilian Switzerland, named after the European city (Fribourg), was part of a plan by King Dom João VI to generate wealth through the production of goods such as silk in the textile sector... thus beginning the industrial era in Friburgo.

That is why Dom João VI offered these lands to Europeans, particularly the Swiss, with whom Jorge began his work in mechanics.

Given the intelligence Jorge demonstrated, I believe he had a deeper connection with these immigrants, who had a vast cultural heritage... He never spoke about it, but to me it is obvious he had... Jorge was tall (around 1.85 m or 6 feet 1 inch), fair-skinned, and green-eyed — clear signs of Swiss ancestry.”



The photograph above shows Jorge at his work as an automobile mechanic. For more historical information about the origins of the city of Nova Friburgo-RJ, see Wikipedia: https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nova_Friburgo

261 Swiss settler families, 161 more than had been agreed upon in the contracts, thus forming the initial nucleus of the settlement. Recognizing how promising the cooperation of these foreigners was for the new homeland, the Royal Government issued, on **January 3, 1820**, a decree elevating Nova Friburgo to the status of a town, separating its lands from those of Cantagalo. The town was officially established on **April 17 of the same year**. (...) From 1910 onward, Nova Friburgo, which until then owed its progress to agricultural development and its dry climate ideal for a summer resort, saw the arrival of several enterprising citizens, such as Councillors **Julius Arp, Maximilian Falck, and William Peacock Denis**, who became pioneers of Friburgo’s industrial era. Other valuable figures joined them, triggering the surge of progress observed until the mid-1980s. (...)

The article “The Resumption of the Proposal for the Creation of the Technological Hub in Nova Friburgo,

” available at <https://inovafri.com.br/ecossistema/historia/>, clarifies the beginning of the industrialization process in the city of Nova Friburgo-RJ:

“In the first quarter of the 20th century, Nova Friburgo experienced a profound process of industrialization with the arrival of important textile companies, profoundly altering its history and reorganizing its territory. Between 1911 and

1925, industrial plants were established for the factories (M. Sinjen & Cia)/Rendas Arp (1911), Ypu S.A. (1912), and Filó S.A. (1925), enabled by the

city's electrification process starting in 1911 with the implementation of the 'Empreza de Electricidade Julius Arp & Cia' (later CENF, today ENERGISA), led at the time by the German industrial pioneer Peter Julius Ferdinand Arp (1858–1945).

These enterprises generated thousands of jobs for decades, contributing to the formation of a skilled workforce; aided in structuring neighborhoods, regions, and communities with good standards of quality of life and human development; and when they went into crisis, especially the last two, contributed in different ways to the emergence of new economic, educational, and social opportunities. From its originally rural profile (its European roots began precisely with the Swiss and German projects, both bringing settlers for agricultural activities) to an industrial and working city based on the 'three major companies,' joined by

Ferragens Haga (an initiative of engineers Frederico Sichel and Hans Gaiser) in 1937, Nova Friburgo already had industrial activity from 1898, the year in which the Indicador Friburguense presented statistical data, including: seven small industries (mainly producing food and beverages); 11 construction companies; 32 workshops; and 81 commercial stores (a,b).

Over the years, post-industrialization, hundreds of micro and small businesses emerged, both due to layoffs and/or the search for new opportunities by former employees of the so-called '4 major companies,' and because of the existence

of an important technical-professional training institution, **SENAI**, which recently celebrated 70 years of existence. During this period, it provided excellent technical training to thousands of professionals, many of whom went on to create their own businesses in the city and region, strengthening it as a metallurgical-mechanical hub.”

Cachoeiro de Itapemirim – ES, the city where my mother was born.



The old photograph is available at: <https://br.pinterest.com/tabatakasino/fotografias-antigas/>

My mother, **Lacy Barboza de Moraes**, was born in Cachoeiro de Itapemirim-ES on **October**

18, 1933, daughter of Macário Dutra de Moraes and Cecília Barboza de Moraes. Her paternal grandparents were **João José de Moraes** and **Maria Joana Dutra**, and her maternal grandparents were **Bonifácio Barboza dos Reis** and **Vitalina Barboza dos Reis**, according to the civil birth registry recorded under No. 2,177, pages 134 and 134-v, Book 5, District of Pacotuba, Comarca of Cachoeiro de Itapemirim-ES, on **April 5, 1954**.

The city of Cachoeiro de Itapemirim is nationally known because of the song *Meu Pequeno Cachoeiro*, sung by **Roberto Carlos**, who was born there. My mother was the daughter of a Portuguese man and a Black Brazilian woman, who was

born after the enactment of the **Law of Free Birth** (Lei do Ventre Livre), which declared free all children born to enslaved women from **September 28, 1871**, onward.

Mom faced many adversities in life: she lost her father at just one year old, and her older siblings, together with her grandmother, took care of her. One of her brothers later served in the military during **World War II** (September 1, 1939 – September 2, 1945).

Later, although Grandma Cecília owned the old **Fazenda Beira Alta**, there were many financial difficulties to face after Grandpa Macário passed away and in the post-war period.

For this reason, my mother and an aunt (Aurora) spent some time in **Castelo-ES**, at the house of their godmother “Vivinha,

” a family who welcomed them with love, education, and care.

Mom had little formal education and could study only up to the **4th grade**, but she had an excellent command of the Portuguese language — she wrote very well, conjugated verbs perfectly, and for this reason, even before reaching adulthood, she was already teaching literacy to students in **Campos Elíseos-ES**.

At that time, resources were very limited, and mom could not continue her studies, finishing her intellectual training with the completion of a **typing course in 1958**.

The Law of Free Birth (Law No. 2,040, September 28, 1871) was signed by **Princess Isabel** and enacted on September 28, 1871, declaring free all children born to enslaved women from that date onward.

In 1958, when my mother was 25 years old, she moved to the State of Rio de Janeiro in search of work.



Even with her typing course, due to her limited formal education, the job opportunity available to her at that time was to work in a **private household** in the **Jardim Botânico**

neighborhood, as a **cook and housekeeper**. Mom gladly accepted the position because it was a pleasant place to work, and the salary was fair.

Mom served at dinners, took the couple's child to **horse riding lessons**, and enjoyed the family's complete trust. She stayed in this job for about **four years**, leaving in **1962** when she married my father, and they moved to **Brasilia-DF**.



Marriage of Jorge and Lacy: April 1, 1962

Photos Illustrating the Events in Volume 1



Photo taken in 1981: Dad, me, and our little dog Guimba



Veraneio 1968



In 1969 – Dad and Mom



In 1969 – Beto learning the trade of a mechanic



In 1978 – Helton Figueiredo



My sister Maria Emília at 1 year old



My sister Maria Emília at around 21 years old



Photo taken on 02/20/1982 – Dad standing on his last fishing trip



***In December 1982: me, Mom, and my brother Beto
(photo taken on the day of my First Communion)***

In 1986 – Luciara in the uniform of the Industrial School of Taguatinga – EIT



***In 1986 – Luciara and Mom in front of the evangelical church
Luciara – and in the background of the image, the interstate travel bus***





In 1989 – Luciara at the Vehicle Agency where she worked



On May 11, 1991 – Marriage of Robinho and Luciara



The Story of the Blue Veraneio



The story of the Blue Veraneio is told in detail by Helton Figueiredo de Carvalho, son of Mr. Hélio, both friends of my father.

The Brasília–Fortaleza road was built by the National Army Railway Battalion based in Araguari, MG. At the time, there were only funds to construct the road as far as today's city of Luís Eduardo Magalhães, BA. From that point, where the road would eventually continue north, the Battalion built an eastward road to connect to Barreiras, BA, providing relief to the town and maximizing the investment.

Further east, there was already a state highway, which crossed the São Francisco River without a bridge or ferries at the time. Continuing east, the road climbed the Sincorá Mountain Range in the Chapada Diamantina, crossing it at Lençóis, BA, once the largest diamond mine in the world in the 17th century, and, due to its wealth, the birthplace of many prominent jurists of the time. Continuing on, the road reached the BR-116, known as the Rio–Bahia highway, near Feira de Santana, BA. That is why this road was called the road to Salvador.

Being a pioneering road through the backlands, it attracted fishermen looking for untouched rivers and adventurous pioneers — namely: JORGE and HÉLIO.

Jorge ventured in a restored 1951 Plymouth. On one of these adventures, he dislodged a gasket during the reconstruction of the sealed engine. When the gasket came off, boiling water spilled on my legs. Thanks to God, I suffered no harm because I was wearing long

rubber boots to protect against possible snake attacks in that region.

On another occasion, using the Blue Veraneio, the adventurers Mr. Hélio and Mrs. Ana set out on this pioneering road. At the location of today's Alvorada do Norte, which at the time was just a fuel station, while trying to overtake a truck, there was so much dust that, due to poor visibility, the Blue Veraneio collided with the back of the truck. (Travel was only possible in the dry season to avoid getting stuck, but there was still dust.)

Mrs. Ana received some stitches on her face but recovered quickly. Mr. Hélio, holding onto the steering wheel, did not hit the windshield like she did and, thanks to God, was unharmed.

The Blue Veraneio, with its front destroyed, was towed by the TURING CLUB, during its heyday, where Jorge worked at the time. To my knowledge, Mr. Hélio was already planning to buy a new Veraneio. He decided to buy it earlier, purchasing a brand-new brown

Veraneio, and gave the damaged one to Jorge, who was already its mechanic. Jorge calculated the value using the sale of the 1951 Plymouth, and, being a car enthusiast,

repaired it impeccably; the mechanical condition was already excellent.

The Blue Veraneio, this "supercar," was with him when he was stabbed, but the neighbor, not a friend, left him bleeding on the sidewalk instead of urgently taking him to the hospital before he lost all his blood. Their concern was only to remove him from the bar without getting involved.

When someone finally took pity and placed Jorge in the Veraneio to drive him to the hospital, it was already too late.

All of this, involving the homicide and the failure or delay in providing aid, reached my knowledge through neighbors present at Jorge's funeral, but I was not present at any of these events. What remains is the feeling of premature loss of a great and true friend.



In 1977 – Luciana, 5 years old, photographed with the 1951 Plymouth

Synopsis

My desire is to share with you the journey of my life — in detail — recounting significant events that involved the exercise of faith. This is a true story, lived intensely, filled with highs and lows, trials and miracles, all reflecting an unshakable biblical truth:

“Everything is possible for one who believes.” (Mark 9:23)

Throughout these pages, you will see how God's plans cannot be thwarted (Job 42:2), and how He works in all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

This is a journey of faith, perseverance, purpose, and grace — written to inspire and strengthen your heart.

About the Author

The author has walked many paths: she has worked as a cleaner, elderly caregiver, intern, secretary, and sales manager. Her professional journey took a new turn when she passed the public civil service exam for the Court of Justice of the Federal District and Territories (TJDFT), where she served in various roles, including court clerk, hearing assistant, judicial advisor, and secretary director in a criminal court and in the Domestic Violence Court.

She is also a member of the Ethics Committee of the Children’s Hospital of Brasília, an International Chaplain (UNIPAS), holds a postgraduate degree in Law, and is currently preparing for a Master’s in Medical Sciences at the University of Brasília (UnB) as well as for the judicial magistracy entrance exam.

Her life is a testimony of faith, resilience, and purpose.

Back Cover Flap

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”
— Ephesians 4:31–32

This book is an invitation to start again — to forgive, to hope — and to be assured that God can transform any story when there is faith and surrender.

Each chapter is living proof that, even in the midst of pain, it is possible to bloom.