



(1939 Graduation Picture of Pearl Sigman Smyer)

INTRODUCTION TO READER

1 Corinthians 12: 4-6

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.”

The Bible states that all God’s children have been blessed with gifts from the Spirit to be used for the good of His Kingdom. God has chosen each of us to be here on the earth at this time and place for His own pleasure. He also designed our destiny long before we were even a fleeting thought in the minds of our parents. In addition, He has bestowed upon us the free will to choose how the gifts are developed and used. We must be quiet and

carefully listen to that still small voice of the Holy Spirit and then follow with complete obedience. If the door to our hearts is open, the Holy Spirit will work God's supernatural activity in our lives.

Often, it is very difficult for the common person to realize gifts that appear in the mind's eye as ordinary everyday skills, to be what God has predestined for the betterment of His kingdom. Instead, we connect popular figures in society as being the only ones with extraordinary gifts.

In 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul offers a vivid example of how each part of Christ's body of believers is equally important. When one member of the body is weakened or discounted, it affects the entire family. God will first train each child and then use the gift labeled as ordinary in an extraordinary manner at an unexpected time. In fact, having faith and walking with perseverance is imperative in running the race God has laid out for our lives.

At this point, it is important to state this collection of devotional poems with matching photographs is not intended to idolize a human being, but to show how God has used His child's ordinary gift in an extraordinary manner. It is also important to point out that the most dramatic time in the journey has occurred during the sunset of a life. It took 92 years on this earth for His child's walk with God to reach fruition.

THE FOCUS IN THE "STITCHES OF FAITH" COLLECTION IS ALWAYS ON THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT. It is the writer's intent to always point out to everyone that the walk is all about God and not self. Therefore, please understand that "Stitches of Faith" is not an attempt to idolize Pearl Smyer or the writer, but to show how God works His will in the lives of those who love Him.

Meet Pearl Sigman Smyer, a young lady just graduating from high school with hopes and dreams like almost every senior. She fell in love with a young minister who set her life in a direction that was totally unexpected and certainly not in her plans.

Then, get to know Pearl Sigman Smyer who became a minister's wife, friend, mother of 4 daughters, grandmother and great grandmother who was already being prepared for her destiny. Many hours of her young life were spent on childcare which seemed the usual for every new mother. She washed and ironed clothing, gave hundreds of baths, sewed up rips in dresses, shortened the length of hems in a frugal attempt of passing garments to the next in line and endlessly replaced lost buttons. She tirelessly stitched angel costumes out of blue, yellow, pink, and white crepe paper for her little girls to proudly wear in Christmas programs.

Then one day when attending the Ladies Aid Society at church, God added even greater depth to her life. It was in this group that the older women mentored her in the art of quilt making. Again, her only thought was how useful they would be during the long cold winters. Her little girls could cozily snuggle together under the soft fabric as old man winter's wind howled and whistled through the trees outside.

Each evening after her family had gone to dreamland; she would sit at the kitchen table and practice her stitches as she followed the easy patterns given to her by her instructors. In fact, it was a well known Smyer family joke that her husband teasingly accused her of accidentally getting a raveling thread on his plate for dinner.

It was during this time that she fell hopelessly in love with the art of making quilts. The love for what she classified as "what all the women did," grew stronger and stronger in her heart. Later, Christmas gifts for her married children were absolutely no problem because they always requested one of her quilts.

Over the years, Pearl made numerous quilts of all colors and designs thinking they were very common and not that special. After all, what would ever cause her to think quilt making had anything to do with God's destiny for her life?

Hold onto your hats, readers, because our God has thoughts that are far above the ones we are able to process. At the conclusion of this collection called "Stitches of Faith," your heart will rejoice at how He is using an 88 year old lady's common gift in a spectacular way that is touching hundreds of children's lives.

Finally, it is a great pleasure to introduce to you the collection of devotional poetry called "Stitches of Faith" that has been designed with my friends at the nursing homes in mind. They are so precious to our Lord and deserving of material that meets their needs. You will note that each devotional contains a photograph of Pearl's beautiful quilt with a matching scripture beneath, followed by a poem on the back. It is also important to point out the writer gives her Heavenly Father all the credit as the author. Each poem was written only after much prayer and meditation.

Although many people have requested personal copies for their home libraries, church Christ Care Groups and ministers have experienced tremendous success in using the material for the home bound or nursing home residents. Since the collection consists of short devotionals, filled with color and alive with hope, they request to hear them again and again.