



Courage  
*for the* Soul *of the*  
Caregiver



Nancy Berthiaume LaPierre



## Reviews

“Nancy LaPierre has done it again! As in her previous books, *Journey to a Better Land* and *God’s Power Revealed Through Prayer*, she has woven spiritual lessons into the interesting stories she is telling. It was so easy for me when we had elderly parents living with us, to get so involved in caregiving that I would forget about what God was trying to teach me. Step by step, through the pages of *Courage for the Soul of the Caregiver*, Nancy helps us turn our face to God, so that we can receive His blessings. This book is going to be a great encouragement for caregivers who are caring for children, elderly parents, relatives, or other persons in need of care.”

— *Pastor Richard Rose*

“This book is full of true-life experiences that offer encouragement and of examples of what God can do in every part of our lives. Reading from the caregiver’s perspective is refreshing. The story flowed beautifully and is full of encouragement for all!”

— *Vicky Toliver, Elder and Caregiver*

“What a devotion and trust in God. A guidance on how to become a caregiver being devoted to the job at hand and trusting in God for guidance. The stories are so relatable and show Nancy being human but trusting in the scripture. You can read how over time she becomes stronger in faith and shows her special connection with her spirituality. I am not even close to Nancy’s belief and trust in God. But her stories and guidance certainly show how truly glorious it can be.”

— *Michaela M.*

# Courage for the Soul of the Caregiver

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*Nancy Berthiaume LaPierre*



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# **Dedication**

To all the caregivers in this world who sacrifice their time, energy, and lives to meet the needs of those around them.



## Foreword

When I was caring for my mom, it became clearer every day what a challenge, what a responsibility, what a sacred trust, what a transforming experience this caregiving was. I found myself in an entirely new role. It was not like raising children, or being a wife, or working in a social setting. God had called me to serve Mom, and He promised to give me sufficient grace to do it. Slowly, but surely, my perceptions of this calling began to change. This book is about those changes, and it is written with the hope that my discoveries will encourage you. God bless your heart.



## Preface

While caring for Mom for seven years, I made many discoveries that I would like to share with you about how to make every day a blessing. I know how challenging it is to care for a loved one—or for anyone who has been entrusted to you. In spite of the difficulties Mom and I faced daily, we loved each other. I wish with all my heart I would have laughed and shared more with her.

As you read my personal stories, may they help you to treasure every day with the precious soul(s) you are caring for. I pray that when you are finally separated from them you will have no regrets. I pray that you will have the hope of seeing them again when Jesus comes in the clouds.

The day is coming soon when Jesus will wipe all the tears from our eyes, and sickness, suffering, and death will be no more. Let us find comfort and courage in that loving promise.

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personal stories,  
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you to treasure  
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## Acknowledgments

The hands on the cover of this book belong to me and a dear Christian sister, Christa Thomas. I want to thank Christa for giving me the honor of photographing her hand with mine. The hands are a true representation of kindness, love, and compassion; they remind me of the many times Mom held my hand while growing up, guiding me into adulthood. I was very thankful that God gave me the opportunity to reverse the roles and to hold her hand, guiding her safely through the golden years.

I also want to dedicate the rose, that beautiful flower, to my mom. It was her favorite flower, and it is a symbol to me of how beautiful the souls are that we care for. Let us look past the thorns and prickliness of some of our charges and remember how all of us are wonderfully and fearfully made in His image. We are not to crush those fragile flowers, but shower them with God's love every day and watch them flourish.

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# Mom, the Caregiver

*Nevertheless I am continually with You;  
You hold me by my right hand (Ps. 73:23).*

**T**he Berthiaume (BERTH-ume) home was bustling with excitement. Mémère (MEM-may) Larue, my grandmother, was coming to live with us, and we five kids could not wait for her arrival! She was my mother's mom, but we didn't know her very well because our family did not visit her too often. Mom loved her mother, but to go out and visit with five kids was not on the list of things to do. Much of our time was spent at home, so we also had little contact with most of our aunts and uncles. There were only four of them who really stayed in touch with us. They were the ones who kept Mom up to date on the family news.

As Mémère got on in years and could not take care of herself, she went to live with one of her sons. She stayed with his family for a bit, but the time came when it was not possible to be there anymore. So my mother took on the role of caregiver. I remember the excitement that filled the air the day when Mom announced Mémère was coming. Finally, we were going to get to know our Mémère! She spoke French which gave some of us the hope of possibly learning a bit of the language from her. Mom and Dad spoke it fluently, but they had not taught it to us.

On the day Mémère arrived, we children stood watching at the window. It was raining hard, as the taxi stopped in front of our home. The door opened and a tiny woman stepped out holding an umbrella. When she stepped into our home, we children suddenly became quite shy. It was as if we were greeting a stranger. But as the days passed, we got to know who she really was, and we enjoyed our time together.

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***You can trust the  
Bible to be true  
and, within its  
pages, you will find  
the encouragement,  
hope, and love that  
you need***

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Sadly, soon after Mémère arrived, she had a stroke that affected her speech. She knew what she wanted to say, but her words often did not come out right. But instead of being angry or frustrated, she would make light of it, laughing at herself. This made us laugh with her, and we loved her for her sweet spirit. As the months went by, Mémère's health grew worse, which made Mom's workload heavy at times. It was hard on Mom. I watched her every day doing what she could, and sometimes I would catch her crying because things were so difficult. Mom was not a praying woman as far as I could see, and I don't think she knew the God of the Bible well, but I know that He was seeing all she was going through and He never left her side. Mémère eventually had another stroke, and this time she had to be placed in a nursing home, where she died soon after that.

**Think about this:** Mom could have found so much comfort from reading God's Word. When you find yourself going through difficult circumstances, remember the God of the Bible is the same today as He was in days of old. He was there with His people while they endured all kinds of trials, and He promises to be there for you today. Psalm 73:23 says, "Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand." You can trust the Bible to be true and, within its pages, you will find the encouragement, hope, and love that you need.

# God's Minutemen

*And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me' (Matt. 25:40).*

There were many times when I was young that Mom was a caregiver. Whenever someone needed help, Mom was there to lend a helping hand. One of those times I remember very well. It was a beautiful sunny day, and we children were playing, cleaning, and doing things that children do when they are home with Mom. That afternoon Mom answered a knock on the door and found our sweet Uncle David hunched over in pain and crying. He was in his twenty's, and had come home from college to visit his family. Mom helped him into the house while David kept saying over and over again that he thought he was going to die, begging her to help him. He was very pale, and Mom quickly assessed the situation and said, "Oh my, you must have a bad stomach virus." With the help of some of us, we managed to get him into Mom's bed and cover him up.

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***You don't have to be a trained caregiver to take up the tasks that God impresses you to do***

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Mom immediately became a caregiver to our uncle. She placed a cool cloth on his forehead and took his temperature. Then she started giving him liquids. Uncle David was in so much agony that he kept saying he thought he had been poisoned. He told us that he had eaten lunch out of a can that afternoon, and he thought the food was bad. We all tried to help him, but he was not getting better. In fact, things were getting worse, and Mom thought Uncle David just might die. Eventually she called an ambulance to take him to the hospital. We were all praying for Uncle David to get better.

We found out later that he had been poisoned. The doctors treated him, and, in a few days, he was better. We were so thankful for that because

our Uncle David was the sweetest man, and God used him throughout his life. He was a Christian teacher for years, marrying my aunt Cathy Ann, who was also a wonderful Christian woman and teacher. Later Uncle David became a true minister of God, preaching in different churches. There were so many times that God saved my Uncle David from different things, including a few near-death experiences. He was a real man of God whom we all grew to love and trust. I am thankful that God sent him to my mom that day. She was calm and patient when it came to doctoring any of us, and it seemed that she always knew what to do.

**Think about this:** God used my mom many times to take care of the ones who needed it. She never claimed to be a caregiver, but she was definitely a minuteman, ready at a moment's notice to help wherever she was needed. My Uncle David knew this, and, although other family members were nearby, he chose to come to my mom because he knew she would be there to help him—no matter how bad the situation was.

You don't have to be a trained caregiver to take up the tasks that God impresses you to do. Mom may not have been a praying woman, but God knew just whom to appoint when someone was in need. When someone comes to you in need of a helping hand, remember that you, too, can become God's minuteman or minutewoman.

# My Grandmother, Our Caregiver

*And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days*  
(Joel 2:28, 29).

**A**s a young girl, I relied on my Dad's mom, my other grandmother, Mémère Berthiaume, to teach me what I needed to know about God. My grandmother knew how to be a wonderful caregiver to us children, knowing just what we needed. She was not only our caregiver, but also my mentor, and she taught me how to love. Whenever I had a problem, I would go to her for answers. She had a special relationship with God, and she would open her Bible asking Him for guidance. He never failed to give her the good counsel she was seeking.

I loved listening to my grandmother's stories. God became real to me as I listened to those precious stories of long ago. God used her to plant a strong faith in God in our family. We respected her because she was God's servant. He gave her a testimony for Jesus Christ, and she chose not to hide it, but to share it with everyone she knew.

Many people were blessed by my grandmother's words, but some of her own children rejected what she was teaching. My dad was one of them. I remember when she came to live with us for a while; she would see Dad smoking and drinking as he watched TV, and it broke her heart.

One night God gave her a dream. She shared it with me, explaining how Jesus was looking in the window of our apartment and watching our family. She explained that God had big tears in His eyes as He saw my dad making bad choices. She told Dad her dream, but it seemed to make him defensive, justifying his actions. But I shall never forget that dream.

**Think about this:** Mémère Berthiaume was God's messenger, bringing hope to people who needed to hear His word. We should respect what our God-fearing older folks have to say. They have more experience with life and are longing to tell their stories to benefit us.

As a caregiver to Grandmother Berthiaume, Mom never realized what a treasure she had staying with her. Both Mom and Dad rejected the counsel that God gave through Mémère, and eventually it resulted in a broken marriage. If they had only listened to her, they might have turned their marriage around.

As you are caring for the elderly, listen to what they have to say, for it might just be that God is trying to tell you something. People need to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Like my grandmother, Mémère Berthiaume, let us also be willing to be Christ's messengers, proclaiming to the world how He lived, died, and rose again to save us. Praise God!

# A Marriage Without God: Mom and Dad

*And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him”*  
(Gen. 2:18).

In reflecting back, Mom and Dad met at a very young age; she was only fifteen and Dad was nineteen. They were attracted to each other right away and decided to date. Things were going well, and they were falling in love, but Mom was too young for a true commitment. Dad was a Christian man, always carrying his Bible everywhere he went. Then came the day that Dad decided to join the military for a few years. He had a burden to serve his country, and maybe—he reasoned, when his two-year commitment was up—Mom would be ready to marry him. While he was in the service, something happened. He didn’t talk about God or carry his Bible anymore. Dad had become a changed man, drinking and smoking with the rest of his buddies. After serving his time, he returned home. Mom noticed the big change in him, but it did not seem to bother her. They were still in love, and, at the ages of seventeen and twenty-one, they were married by a justice of the peace. Her mom and dad were there, along with nine siblings, to help celebrate the happy occasion.

They waited two years before deciding to have a family, and then, to their delight, their first baby was born. Following this, my dad gave his heart to Jesus again. Then the babies kept coming, until there were five of us. Our home was a contented one with God at the center. Unfortunately, our happy family did not last. At his place of work, Dad made friends with those who were not a good influence. They encouraged him to start drinking and smoking again, and soon our home became an unloving place. There was verbal and physical abuse, and the marriage that once held such promise became a place of fear for all of us.

# References

## **Other books written by the Author**

*Journey to a Better Land*

*Journey to a Better Land: Inspirational Gems (Three-Volume Audio Book)*

*God's Power Revealed Through Prayer*

## About the Author

Nancy Berthiaume LaPierre lives in Newport News, Virginia, with her husband, Mark. She decided to share what she learned as a caregiver, with the prayer that her experiences would be an encouragement to others. Throughout her life she has taken care of many precious souls who were in need—young and old. Most recently she cared for her mom until her passing. Those seven years proved to be not only a time of challenge, but also a time of joy.

It is her wish that these writings will help caregivers everywhere turn to God when they need Him. She hopes all caregivers will share with everyone they meet the bright future that awaits those who give their hearts to Jesus.



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This book paints a realistic picture of what it was like for the author to be a caregiver, but its pages are aglow with hope and assurance that will resonate with all caregivers, inspiring and reminding them to trust God for the courage they need to face the tough issues.

The author describes the daily worries, setbacks, missteps, and struggles that occurred when she suddenly found herself in the position of being the caregiver for her mother. All that entailed will be familiar to anyone involved in providing care for a parent or other adult, especially for one who desired to remain independent but was making unwise decisions.

When we are called to do something especially challenging and difficult—such as caregiving—the author wants us to know that God can give us the special talents and abilities we need to handle each trying situation. She relates how, during those times when she sought God's guidance and reassurance, she was surprised and blessed by His specific and timely answers to her prayers. At other times, however, when the constant concerns and uncertainties threatened to overwhelm her, she admits that she ran ahead of God, forgetting how He had provided answers in the past, forgetting His tender care and concern for her—the caregiver.

In spite of the challenges and difficulties of being a caregiver, the author saw that God was teaching her precious life lessons of patience, forgiveness, and love every day. These were His special gifts to her as a caregiver.

It is the author's wish that this book will help caregivers everywhere to turn to God when they need strength and then share with everyone the hope and eternal life that awaits those who trust God and give their hearts to Jesus.



Nancy Berthiaume LaPierre lives in Newport News, Virginia, with her husband, Mark. She is the author of "Journey to a Better Land" and "Journey to a Better Land Inspirational Gems" audiobook (2011). Also, the book "God's Power Revealed Through Prayer."

Several times throughout her life, Nancy has taken care of a precious souls who were in need—both young and old. Most recently, she cared for her own mother until her passing. Those seven years proved to be not only a time of challenge, but also a time of joy.

Nancy decided to share what she has learned—with the prayer that her experiences would be an encouragement to others



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