

I HAVE ACCEPTED JESUS

WHAT JUST
HAPPENED?

IVETTE LODATO

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to God the Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who enabled me to write and provided His wisdom and revelation of the truth of His Word. Without Him, this book would not be possible.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my husband, Paul Lodato, for all of his encouragement, help, and support. Thank you for believing in the gifts God has given me, and the call on my life.

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I want to thank each person who reads this book. You are the reason it was written and made available free of charge for any who contact *Light of the Word Ministries*: www.LightoftheWord.tv.

Introduction

New believers in Jesus Christ oftentimes have questions after receiving and accepting Him as Lord and Savior. One of the questions I've been asked most frequently throughout my years of ministry is this: "I have accepted Jesus—what just happened?" This question comes from both those who have never had a relationship with Jesus, as well as those who have attended church as a routine, yet did not understand their purpose in attending.

The book you hold in your hands contains Bible verses that will answer this question by helping you understand your new life with Jesus. You were not born into this world by accident. God has a plan for your life, just as He's had a plan for all mankind since the beginning. To better understand God's plan, let's take a brief look at how mankind came into existence.

In the beginning, God created man and woman in His image: *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them* (Genesis 1:27). The purpose for God creating mankind was to establish a family here on Earth for all eternity. God created the man out of the dust of the ground; He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Moreover, mankind's relationship with God was established, and now all have the capacity to have fellowship with Him.

God made all kinds of trees, plants, and fruit that were good for food. He also created the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, along with the tree of life. God gave the man responsibilities to reign and rule the earth by tending all He had created. The man was at liberty to eat of all the trees, with the exception of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because God said, "*for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die*" (Genesis 2:17).

God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to the man, Adam, to see what he would call them (see Genesis 2:19). Creation was completed, but when God saw that the man was alone, He said, "*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him*" (Genesis 2:18). God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and as he slept God took one rib out of Adam and closed him up. Then the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man He made into a woman. Adam said, "*This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man*" (Genesis 2:23).

Adam and his wife disobeyed God by eating of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil; that decision caused them to be separated from the life of God. God said to Adam, "*In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you*

were taken; for dust you are and to dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19).

The Bible says, *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned (Romans 5:12).* This act of disobedience caused Adam and his wife to be banned from the Garden of Eden, away from the presence of God.

But God had a plan to restore mankind back into relationship and fellowship with Him.

The Bible says, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).* God’s redemptive plan was to bring salvation to all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

The Bible says the gospel (good news) of Christ is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes (see Romans 1:16). The sacrifice that was paid on the

cross has made it possible for all who accept Jesus to have free access to God through the eternal life that is now ours. The Bible says, *if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* (Romans 10:9–10).

Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”* (John 14:6). God made Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (see 2 Corinthians 5:21). If you have not yet made Jesus the Lord and Savior of your life, simply pray this prayer out loud:

Heavenly Father, I believe in my heart that Jesus died on the cross for my sins, and that you raised Him from the dead to save me. I

repent of all my sins and ask for your forgiveness. I confess Jesus as Lord and Savior of my life. In Jesus' name—amen.

Welcome to God's family!

Chapter 1

You Became Born Again

Accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior has made you born of God. This new birth took place in your inner spirit, allowing you to be part of God's family as a son of God. Being a son of God is not gender specific, for the Bible says, *For you are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ* (Galatians 3:26) and *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God* (Romans 8:14).

You have the ability to understand what the will of God is for your life. The steps you take in life are ordered by Him: *The steps of a good man are ordered by the*

LORD, and He delights in his way (Psalm 37:23).

In the book of Hebrews we read these words: *“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them”* (Hebrews 10:16). The laws of God are written inside you; therefore, you are able to live a life that is pleasing and acceptable in His sight. As you seek God’s wisdom and guidance during your prayer time, you will have a clear understanding that comes from a knowing inside your spirit: *But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit*

of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God (1 Corinthians 2:9–12).

Every person who believes in the Lord Jesus and receives Him in his or her heart is immediately filled with His Holy Spirit. All who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved—both male and female: *For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved” (Romans 10:13).*

Once you have received Jesus, the Holy Spirit seals your eternal destiny: *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13).*

There is nothing in this world that will separate you from the love of God. He loves you because you chose to believe in Jesus and His Word. The Bible says, *For I am persuaded that neither death nor life,*

nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38–39).

When you receive Jesus, you enter into a covenant relationship with God. It is a relationship that can never be broken. Yes—that is right! When a believer in Jesus sins against God, *fellowship* is broken, but the relationship is not.

Remember this: there will be times in your life when you fall short and sin. The Bible says, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23). But the Word of God also says believers are never condemned: *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death* (Romans 8:1–2). It is important

that we understand this truth.

Many believers think that because they've fallen short or sinned against God, they will be separated from Him forever—but this is not the case. Why? Because we now have an advocate with the Father through Jesus: *My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have and Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous* (1 John 2:1).

Through your new covenant relationship with God, you are able to pray and ask for His forgiveness. This Father-and-son relationship is what God had in mind from the beginning of time: *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy*

and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14–16).

No other sacrifice is needed. God did it all, He did it for you, He did it for me, and He made it available for all who choose to believe and receive Jesus in their hearts. God's desire is for all to come into a heart of repentance. *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy 2:5).

Jesus gave Himself for all. You are His son; from this moment on God will be in you. He will be with you, He will walk with you, He will guide and comfort you when you need Him. He will never leave you or forsake you. Why? Because God lives on the inside of you: *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5).

No other sacrifice is needed because Jesus took care of the sin nature once and for all: *But this Man, after He had offered*

one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God (Hebrews 10:12).

God sent forth His Son, Jesus, to reveal the truth of His existence, to give us an understanding of who we are in Him and the eternal life that has been set before us: *And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life (1 John 5:20).*

You have been set free from the bondage of sin: *He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26).*

The moment you said yes to Jesus, you became a son of God and a joint heir with Christ: *and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together (Romans 8:17).*

You are a new created being, made in the image and likeness of God: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17, 21).*

Chapter 2

You Are Free from Sin

God's grace fell upon the human race; He made a new covenant through Jesus to take away the sins of the world. There are people in this world who do not know God, or if He even exists. God is alive; He demonstrated this fact through His Son and His Word. He wants to bring awareness of this truth.

There *is* eternal life after death. The decision you have made allows you to spend eternity with God and His Son. This is what took place when you accepted Jesus. You have been saved by grace; it is a gift from God. Through His Son we see

God's goodness, mercy, and grace: *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God* (Ephesians 2:8).

Jesus has put you in right standing before God through faith. This means you now have access to the Father. You are able to pray and seek wisdom for your life; you have a Bible right to ask for anything according to His will. There is no more guilt, no more condemnation, no more shame. Why? Because Jesus took all the punishment for you; He sacrificed Himself so that you can live and have confidence before your heavenly Father. The relationship you have with God from now on is a relationship of a father and son. Again, to be a son of God is not gender specific, for the Bible says, *For you are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male*

nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26–28).

Jesus understands what we go through in life. He experienced the same temptations we face in life, yet He never sinned. When we face temptations in life, we can pray to God our Father in the name of Jesus to help us, and God's grace will be available in our time of need. *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:14–16).

Believers in Jesus Christ have been redeemed through His blood. Forgiveness is available because Jesus dealt with the sin nature that kept us bound in sin. *He has delivered us from the power of darkness and*

conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:13–14).

Jesus took care of the sin nature through His death, burial, and resurrection. When we said yes to Jesus, an exchange took place: Jesus took our place and we took His. The same way Jesus suffered, we suffered with Him. Those who believe in the Lord Jesus do not need to worry about being accepted by God, because when God sees us, He sees Jesus. The apostle Paul explained it like this:

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our

old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to

God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace.

And having been set free from sin, you become slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life (Romans 6:4–14, 18–22).

Through Jesus' sacrifice you have been

redeemed, and God has forgiven all sins. You have been united with Jesus: *But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him* (1 Corinthians 6:17).

You are now one with God. You are now joined to God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. This union that took place will not allow you to abide in sin because the seed of God resides in you and you now have the ability to choose to walk in the newness of life: *Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God* (1 John 3:9).

The Bible says, *even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus* (Ephesians 2:6–7). When Jesus was crucified, you were crucified. When Jesus died, you died. As Jesus was raised, you have been raised. Where Jesus sits, you

sit with Him. You are complete in Him and have His authority and ability in the earth: *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father”* (John 14:12).

We serve a mighty God who loves you so much that He gave you the free will to choose the path of life. His divine power allows you to live this life in a godly, holy, and acceptable way that is pleasing to Him. The decision you made to accept Jesus as Lord of your life has made you free, for Jesus Himself said, *“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed”* (John 8:36).

You are now free from sin!

Chapter 3

You Are a New Creation

You are a new creation, created in Christ Jesus. Your past is behind you. God does not look at your past because He has made you righteous through His Son: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him* (2 Corinthians 5:17, 21).

God sees you righteous, in right standing with Him. This new life is a reflection of God's character, nature, and light. You have the ability to walk like

Him, talk like Him, and even think like Him. The Spirit of God lives inside you, and your life is hidden in Christ Jesus. The following four Bible verses explain it like this:

For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3).

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:8–10).

...for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, “for we are also His offspring” (Acts 17:28).

...and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge

according to the image of Him who created him (Colossians 3:10).

The key to walking out this new life is renewing your mind through the truth of the Word of God: *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12: 1–2).*

The Bible provides insight into your new identity. It will sanctify your mind, will, emotions, and intellect. What does the word *sanctify* mean? It means “to purify.” When you read the Word of God, it causes a change in the way you think and the way you see yourself: *...that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of the water by the Word (Ephesians 5:26).*

You are a three-part being: spirit (the

essence of who you are), soul (your mind, will, and emotions), and body. When you became born again, God did not touch or change your soul realm. *You* must make these changes by choosing to renew your mind according to the Word of God. The Bible says, *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus* (Philippians 2:5) and *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy"* (1 Peter 1: 13-16).

Transformation comes through the renewal of your mind and becoming conformed to the image of God, which He has made you to be. You can begin the process of renewing your mind by meditating on these scripture verses:

...that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all

wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Colossians 3:12–16).

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law (Galatians 5:22–23).

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the

corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Peter 1:2–4).

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Let the Word of God change your life. In doing so you will find your whole spirit, soul, and body refreshed and renewed. The Bible is your roadmap that leads to a path of holiness, righteousness, and everlasting life. Your journey has just

begun; the life you were meant to live is now possible because you have come into alignment with the God who created you, and who knows the plans He has for your life.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11–12

A Final Word from Ivette Lodato

Thank you for taking time to read this book, which I put together so that you would understand what took place in your life when you said *yes* to Jesus.

You are going to have more questions; therefore, I encourage you to get a Bible, because it has all the answers for your life. It will help you clearly understand the plans and purpose for your life as you begin this new journey to seek the truth.

If this book has made an impact in your life, please let Paul and I know by emailing us at LightoftheWordtv@gmail.com or writing to us at P.O. Box 51111, Fort Myers, Florida, 33994. We would love to hear from you.

About the Author

Ivette Lodato describes herself as one of those people who attended church once a year. She knew about God, but didn't have a relationship with Jesus.

Born in Bronx, New York, Ivette and her three sisters were raised by their mother after their father passed away when the girls were very young. As a teenager, Ivette lived in Puerto Rico, but following her high school graduation returned to the United States, where she worked in the Florida banking industry for fifteen years.

In 2005, Ivette made the most important decision of her life: she received Jesus as Lord and Savior of her life. "This decision dramatically transformed me, because I learned Jesus had a calling, plan, and purpose for my life," says Ivette.

Ivette and her husband, Paul, live in Fort Myers, Florida, where they both serve as staff members at CTN-10, the Christian Television Network of Southwest Florida.

Ivette serves as the station's traffic manager and administrator, and Paul as general manager.

About *Light of the Word Ministries*

Paul and Ivette Lodato founded *Light of the Word Ministries* to awaken, empower, and equip the body of Jesus Christ to rightly divide the word of truth, and to seek and save the lost.

This mission is accomplished using all forms of media to deliver the message of the gospel.

Paul and Ivette are available to speak or sing at your church, community outreach, concert venue, or marketplace gathering. Simply contact Paul Lodato at any of the addresses listed on this page.

Please stay connected online at www.LightoftheWord.tv. To receive the free monthly e-newsletter, email Paul and Ivette at LightoftheWordtv@gmail.com. To find out where you can watch the weekly international *Light of the Word* television broadcast, go to www.LightoftheWord.tv.

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Accepting Jesus is just the beginning of an exciting new life—one designed by God Himself.

This book is our gift to you. In it you'll find answers to new believers' most frequently asked questions about their new life in Jesus Christ. Welcome to the family!



Ivette and Paul Lodato

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