



I said, "If only I had
WINGS like a dove!
I would fly away
and find rest.

Psalm 55:6



On Wings
LIKE A DOVE
A MINISTRY TO LOVED ONES
OF PRODIGALS & PRISONERS

A Newsletter from On Wings Like A Dove Ministry September 2026 Vol. 22 Issue 9

ADDRESS

455 South Church St
Winston Salem, NC

WEBSITE

www.OnWingsLikeADove.com

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday-Thursday
10 am-2 pm
or by appointment
336-829-5060

Ladies Bible Study

Each Tuesday
At On Wings Office
From 12:30-2:00
We are studying
Ruach Journey
By Sylvia & Elizabeth Gunter
COME JOIN US!

Upcoming Events

September 19th
Join us for a Day Retreat
on Spiritual Warfare
10 am - 3 pm
Home Moravian Church
Bring a dish to share for lunch
RSVP 336-829-5060

October 10th
Join us for a Day Retreat
on Spiritual Gifts
10 am - 3 pm
Home Moravian Church
Lunch will be provided

EVERYONE WELCOME



Celebrating Twenty Years

On Thursday, September 17, we will have a celebration of the 20th anniversary of On Wings Like a Dove ministry. Please see the invitation in this newsletter!

In 2006, five ladies sat at a small kitchen table answering God's call to begin this ministry. Psalm 55:6 was instrumental in speaking to my heart in my journey with a prodigal son and from that verse we chose our name. Oh that I had wings like a dove and could fly away and be at rest. Psalm 55:6. During that season of my life, it was my desire to escape the trial and the heartache and go to a place of rest. We have found when new mothers come to us this is their cry too. We have also found that many agree that God uses those valleys to grow and change them as much as their prodigal.

In the beginning, our focus was to minister to the families of prodigals and prisoners. As we reached families, we began to broaden our focus by reaching the inmate in prison. Now our impact is over 3,000 inmates with newsletters, individual Bible studies, and Pen Pal programs. On the last page of each newsletter is a prayer of salvation. Frequently prisoners return that page stating they have prayed that prayer. We send them A Faith Booklet, by Dr. Kent Oviatt, to help them grow in their walk with Jesus. We have provided over 20,000 study Bibles to inmates in over 40 states. Frequently we receive letters expressing the impact Bibles, Bible studies, and newsletters have had on their lives.

Over the past fifteen years, we have gone into needy communities to minister to families, distributing food, clothing, book bags, Christmas treasure boxes, and Gospel materials. We have seen a difference in the atmosphere of these communities over the years.

On Wings Like a Dove has continued to minister because of many volunteers and generous donors. At our 20th year celebration, we will be blessed to hear Dr. Gary Chapman and Dr. Clarence Shuler share their journey together over the years. We will fellowship and share what only God could have done!

We would love for you to join us!

~Sandra



From the Desk of
Dr. Kent Oviatt

THE STORY OF ONE

One Sheep. One Coin. One Son.

When someone you love becomes a prodigal, it can feel as though two journeys begin. Your loved one may be far from home, incarcerated, estranged from the family, or making choices you cannot understand. At the same time, you are walking your own difficult road. You may carry disappointment, anger, fear, or questions about what you should have done differently.

You and your prodigal may be in very different places, but both of you matter to God. In Luke 15, Jesus told three stories about the value of one.

ONE SHEEP — Luke 15:3–7

A shepherd had one hundred sheep, but one wandered away. The shepherd noticed and went looking for that one sheep.

We naturally think of the prodigal as the wandering sheep. That may be true. Your loved one may be far from God and far from you.

But while you pray for the wandering one, remember that the Shepherd also sees you.

He knows the nights you have worried. He knows the prayers you have prayed and the questions you cannot answer. Your prodigal matters to the Shepherd, and so do you.

ONE COIN — Luke 15:8–10

Jesus next told about a woman who lost one of her ten coins. She searched carefully until she found it.

The coin was lost, but it had not lost its value.

Your loved one's circumstances or failures have not made that person worthless to God. Whatever has happened, your prodigal is still someone created in God's image and someone God cares about deeply.

But pain can also make you feel lost. Your identity can slowly become wrapped around your prodigal's problems. You may begin to measure every day by whether your loved one is doing better or worse.

God reminds you that your life matters to Him too.

ONE SON — Luke 15:11–32

The final story is about a son who left home and made destructive choices. Eventually, he came to his senses and turned toward home.

His father could not make that decision for him.

That can be one of the hardest truths for a family to accept. You can love your prodigal. You can pray. You can keep the door of appropriate reconciliation open. But there are choices your loved one must make.

The father waited, but he did not stop loving.

Then one day, while the son was still far away, the father saw him. Luke 15:20 tells us that he was filled with compassion and ran to meet him.

Perhaps you are still waiting.

As you wait, remember that God is working in more than one life. You are asking Him to work in your prodigal, but He also wants to work in you.

Your prodigal may need God's correction, mercy, and restoration. You may need God's comfort, strength, and help to release the things you cannot control.

Both are the "one" God cares about.

You may be living under the same roof or hundreds of miles apart. One may be incarcerated while the other waits at home. One may be angry while the other is grieving. Your circumstances may be completely different.

But neither of you is outside God's sight.

The Shepherd sees your prodigal.

The Shepherd sees you.

So continue praying for the one you love. But while you pray, allow the Father to care for you too.

THIS WEEK

Read Luke 15:1–32 slowly.

Instead of reading only to find your prodigal in these stories, ask: Where am I in this story?

What might God want to do in my heart while I wait for Him to work in theirs?

A SHORT PRAYER

Father, You know where my loved one is today, and You know where I am. I cannot control their choices or determine what happens next. Help me trust You with the one I love. And while I pray for You to work in their heart, please continue Your work in mine. Thank You that my prodigal matters to You—and that I do too. Amen.


On Wings Like a Dove
CELEBRATING OUR 20th ANNIVERSARY
**YOU ARE INVITED
TO CELEBRATE**
20 years of God's faithfulness

 

DR. GARY CHAPMAN
Best-selling Author,
The 5 Love Languages

DR. CLARENCE SHULER
Author, Speaker,
Life Coach

Dr. Chapman and Dr. Shuler
will share with us as we reflect on the past
and look forward to the future.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2026
6:30 PM

Hors d'oeuvres will be provided
The Red Barn at Tanglewood Park
625 RIVER BIRCH CIRCLE, CLEMMONS, NC 27012



BLESSINGS

The calendar always seems to shift in September. Summer vacations are over, children are returning to school and work returns to a more normal rhythm.

The beastly hot days of summer are fading and the anticipation of fall is beginning to creep in. September signals

change; change in weather, change

in routines, change in outlook and maybe a change in behavior.

Our Tuesday Bible Study at On Wings Like a Dove is completing a study by Sylvia and Elizabeth Gunter: "Ruach Journey". It has been a fabulous journey learning about awakening and enlarging our spirits to have a deeper connection with God's Spirit. One of the first tools we learned was to bless - both others and ourselves. Blessing in Hebrew is Baruch, and in Greek Eulogeo. Closely related to blessing is benediction which, broken down, means "Good Word". To speak a blessing over someone is to speak a good word over them, and specifically God's Word.

Scripture is full of blessings with the most well-known being the Aaronic Blessing found in Number 6:24-26: "May the Lord bless you and keep you. May His face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you His favor and give you His peace." Other blessings may be derived from familiar verses: May you be comforted in knowing that God is meeting your every need. (Phil 4:19); May your spirit be guarded by the Good Shepherd as He guides you, protects you and gives you rest. (Psalm 23); May God renew your strength as you hope in Him. May you soar like eagles and run without being weary. (Is 40:31) As I read Scripture now I frequently see blessings "popping off" the page.

Blessing others may seem more comfortable than blessing myself. I recently read that 95% of people regularly fall prey to negative thinking and negative self-talk. It occurs to me that if I'm so good at saying negative things to myself, how important it is to be speaking "Good Words" to myself. Blessing myself becomes a new behavior as I read the Scripture and personalize it to me. I bless myself in remembering that I belong to Christ. (John 17:9) I bless myself in rejoicing that God as given me strength and armor. (Eph 6:10) I bless myself in gratitude that God does not condemn me, but His Spirit pleads for me. (Rom 8:34) And I bless myself that fears for today and worries about tomorrow cannot separate me from God's love. (Rom 8: 38)

Just like praying, I can bless others and myself silently or out loud. I have started saying a blessing over my family at the start of the day and before activities. I bless the checkout person at grocery stores. I bless people as I am waiting in line. I bless those whose driving style makes me uncomfortable. All people can use a Good Word spoken over them!

As September starts and rhythms change, I intend to ensure that frequent blessings become part of my new normal routine.

Be blessed in knowing that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. You will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom 15:13)



Prayer Thoughts

WHY DID THE HOLY SPIRIT DESCEND LIKE A DOVE?

One afternoon, I started looking for doves, determined to learn something about the Holy Spirit. I'd sit cross-legged on my porch, scanning the skies for a gray-chested bird, and hoping that seeing one would grant me insight into a fascinating passage:

One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus himself was baptized. As he was praying, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit, in bodily form, descended on him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy" (Luke 3:21-22, NLT)

Here, the entire Trinity was made manifest: the Father's voice, Jesus as a man, and the Holy Spirit in bodily form. It marked the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, which created a path that can unite us with God forever.

God's Spirit descended like a dove, of all birds. His Spirit didn't land on Jesus with the intensity of an eagle, but like a bird weighing less than a loaf of bread arrives on a branch—quiet as the turning of pages in a Bible. So, why a dove? What does a dove teach us about the Holy Spirit?

Looking into dove behavior helped. They're monogamous, signifying God's loyal love, but so are ducks. Doves are also partial migrants—meaning some birds travel vast distances while others remain year-round in the same place—suggesting a Spirit that both dwells within us and compels us outward; but then, so are robins. These details offered glimpses, but none explained why a dove was specifically chosen.

So, I kept watching for one every afternoon perched on my porch, secretly hoping a dove would descend into the mesquite tree with a scroll containing profound wisdom in its beak.

When no such dove came, I dug into Bible cross-references. One returned to Noah carrying an olive leaf after the flood, the first sign of God's mercy as the floodwaters receded (see Genesis 8:11); God's Spirit brings hope.

The dove family appears when Mary and Joseph brought one to the Temple at Jesus' dedication (Luke 2:24). God prescribed turtledoves or pigeons as the offering for the poorest in Israel (Leviticus 12:8). Together these details paint a picture of the Spirit's nature: humble and accessible to everyone who reaches for Him. Yet none of those insights clicked as a complete answer for me, and because the dove appears at Jesus' dedication and His baptism, I had to keep searching for more.

After weeks of seeing nothing but red robins and sparrows, I finally got up. Calling my dogs, I slunk into the woods and thought about birds.

I heard one before I saw it.

A mourning dove's song is unmistakable: a low coo-AH, coo, coo, coo. Our movement startled them into flight over the oaks, causing one to coo nearby. It's a distinct voice—a recognizable call. It's the same with God. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice" (John 10:27, ESV). His voice is distinct once you've learned to hear it.

When we learn to hear Him, He moves us: to pray, to reach out, and to go:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NLT).

The Holy Spirit can descend like a dove: a bird that arrives quietly, compels us to move, and whose voice—once you hear it—you never forget.

What is His Spirit saying to you? And what is He calling you to do?



Taken from CBN Daily Devotional



Dear On Wings,

I'm writing this one with a lump in my throat, because my whole new life can be traced back to one of your flyers on a prison wall.

It was 2015, Craven Correctional in North Carolina. I was at the bottom. I saw a flyer for On Wings Like a Dove on the wall and another inmate showed me he'd gotten a real nice Bible — and that I could have one too. I needed something. Anything. So I scraped together what stamps I could find and sent off for it.

I still have that Bible to this day. Let me back up, so you'll understand the man that Bible found.

My dad was a faithful Catholic, and when he died — I was just 13 — I got sad and I got resentful. Honestly, I was running from God like Jonah, and the whale was already swimming my way. I turned to alcohol and drugs to numb it. My first real trouble was a \$250,000 bond over marijuana. My mama had to put our beach house up on a lien to deal with what I'd become.

When that Bible finally came, it came through the bean hole — that little food slot in the cell door. I remember telling God, I'm not even going to ask You for it. But there it was. I opened it up and it fell open to Psalm 98. Now, I didn't even know there had been a King David in the Bible — and my name is David. I just kind of went, "...hello?" And it talked about the Lord's right hand getting Him the victory. Something in me whispered, maybe this is real.

So I started living on faith — straight faith, no money down. A bail bondsman named Tommy Golden got me out on nothing but my signature. I didn't have a dime. Just faith.

But I wasn't fixed yet. Drugs and alcohol drove me all the way to Mexico, running from the law. AA calls that a "geographical cure." It doesn't work. Wherever I went, I took me with me.

It finally caught up. I overdosed on heroin and it very nearly cost me my life. Six days in a coma. My ex-wife sat by that bed reading the Bible out loud over me — Ezekiel 37, "breathe into these dry bones." On the third day, my toe twitched. That Friday was Good Friday, and I woke up. I came out of that coma on the very weekend the whole world remembers the empty tomb. You can't tell me God isn't real.

He still had some shaping to do. The vision for Faith and Fitness was actually born in Tabor City — "The Rock" — another NC prison. Within 90 days of getting there I caught an infraction. On hot dog day, I double-swiped for an extra one. Stealing, plain and simple. It cost me a \$10 write-up and a wardrobe change — green clothes to brown, a bump up to max custody. But you know what? God knew exactly where He needed me to be. Romans 8:28 — He works it all together for good.

Three years after that little Bible came through the bean hole, I was ordained. The head pastor at Hillside Baptist Church laid hands on me through One Promise Ministry, a street-outreach and addiction ministry.

Today I have a life I couldn't have imagined down in that cell. By God's grace I own homes and investments, I run real businesses — Faith and Fitness, a scooter rental company, and as of this very week, Hahn Technologies Corporation. I make my amends. I hire people. And I get to pass it forward: just yesterday I bailed a man out of jail and put him on contract for a transition house, so he'd get the same accountability that saved my life.

My house caught fire once. When it was over, that Bible came out white as snow (Isaiah 1:18) — like the Lord was reminding me what He does with a scarlet sinner.

I've been to Open Door Ministry seven times. Alpha and Omega House twice. Detox more times than I can count. Jail too many to number. And today I have a brand-new life.

So here's what I'd say to any prodigal, prisoner, or loved one reading this: ‘

Deposit the Word of God in your heart now, so you can withdraw on it later (Psalm 119:11). Say no to your flesh and your own will. When you don't know what to do, ask Him for wisdom — He gives to all freely (James 1:5). Get a sponsor. Get an older, wiser mentor. And don't quit before the miracle.

To everyone at On Wings Like a Dove — thank you for putting that flyer on that wall, and that Bible through that slot. You changed my life through the living Word of God, and now I get to help change others.

Come fish for men with me. Jesus said follow Him, and He'll make us fishers of men (Matthew 4:19) — and the net is fuller than I ever dreamed.

He enlarged my territory, just like Jabez prayed. He can enlarge yours too. Soli Deo Gloria.

~ David

