

Q&A with Author and Speaker, Dr. Deborah Waterbury



Q: Talk about your faith journey.

A: I was raised in a Christian home. We went to church every Sunday morning, Sunday night, and never missed Wednesday evening prayer service. I accepted Jesus as my Savior when I was 11, and it was absolutely genuine. As I grew older, I spent many Sundays at the altar publicly repenting of the sins I had committed the week before. I went to bed every night scared to death that I might die before I had the chance to repent at the altar on Sunday morning. The person this created became a person very adept at hiding and lying. I met my husband when I was 16, and then we both ended up at the altar every Sunday morning, repenting of teenage sin from the week before. We dated for 6 years and then we got married. For me, the sinning and the constant guilt continued, but what eventually came with that was a need to nurture this other person, the one who wanted so badly to be happy and not guilty, the one who wanted to be loved for who she *was* and not who she *pretended to be*.

Eventually, I grew to resent my husband (a strong Christian man), the church, and anyone else who represented that area I simply couldn't rise above.

I led two distinctly different lives. One was a life where I taught Sunday School, led women's bible studies, led Sunday morning worship service, and portrayed the all-around good Christian wife and mother. The other one, however, was very dark. I sinned in every way imaginable, against my husband, against my body, against my children, against the church, and against God. I had been juggling so many balls for so many years that the thought of letting them drop to the ground in a moment of honesty was nothing less than terrifying. I know now that God was with me, even in the darkest, most awful moments of sin, waiting on the moment when He would bring all the balls crashing down. He did exactly that about 14 years ago. I had finally been caught, and as per my M.O., it was in spectacular fashion. I was leading worship at a church of about 7000 in membership when the last of my many affairs became public. In one fell swoop, everything was out in the open, and I had been caught.

I was devastated and completely alone. My husband chose not to leave me. But all my friends and all my ministries vanished in an instant, and I became known as the Jezebel of the church. God came to me again and again in those dark days, not in sweeping torrents of faith-filled emotion, but in quiet and gentle strokes of affection. For the first time in my life I couldn't hide, and I was left exposed. I had nowhere to go except to the feet of my Savior, and He was there, smiling and waiting for me. I had come to the end of myself, the very bottom of everything, and that is where God lifted me up, gently and softly, even though in the midst of those days, I often felt utterly alone. The beauty is that I wasn't. My entire life changed, and then God called me to His work. I know betrayal and what it means to be the betrayer. I know pain and heartache and despair. But I also know the answer to those things, and my drive now is to tell as many women as I can. This became my life's work, and this has become Love Everlasting Ministries.

Q: How has your story impacted women who hear you speak?

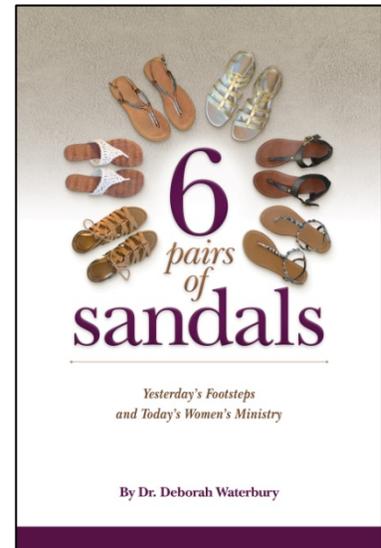
A: Every woman I've met simply wants to be heard. She wants someone to hear her struggles and pain, and then she wants someone to help her get beyond them. Everyone wants to figure out how to be happy. The problem is that while women want to be heard, they seldom want to tell what's really going on in their lives. All of us want to be well thought-of, so just about all of us hide at some level. This is especially true in the church. That is why I am very honest from the pulpit and very honest in my writings. I've found that my transparency frees most women to hear the truths I offer. They listen because they know that I understand the need to hide. They hear me because I'm no different than any of them. The only thing I have that

perhaps they are still seeking is the realization that Jesus loves me because of who He is, not because of who I am. The impact is not me. The impact is truth. The impact is the love of the Savior. I need only remind them of what is already theirs, or in the case of unbelievers, what can be theirs if they will but receive it. I just say the words that my Savior already said. But sometimes it takes a professed, but redeemed sinner to remind them. Sometimes I get to be that person.

Q: Talk about what led you to write *6 Pairs of Sandals*.

A: In the last 10 years of working with women, particularly women in local churches, it has been sad to see how many churches are abdicating the ministry of women within their confines. Often it's a matter of methodology, but just as often it is a matter of scarcity. Too many women either feel they are spiritually inadequate or that they simply lack the gifts necessary to minister to one another in their own home churches. What I hear most often when I address women on this particular issue is the view that they aren't gifted in the area of ministry. Consequently, only a few women are attempting to do all of the ministering in any given church, causing many to go outside of their churches to get what they need.

I wrote *6 Pairs of Sandals* in an attempt to show women how every single one of them can minister to the women in their local churches in at least one way, generally in many ways. I designed the book so that the reader can read a biblical example of each of the six broad categories of women ministering to women (teaching, prayer, mentoring, service, ministry leader, and small group leader), surmise which of those women she is most like, and then give her a list of practical ways she can step out and begin ministering to the women in her church in that way. When women minister to each other in their own churches, the result is healthy churches. Healthy churches are happy churches, and happy churches are attractive to a world that needs desperately to come inside. This is the Great Commission, and this is where we have to start.



Q: What do you think are the biggest challenges to women's ministry today?

A: I believe that the biggest challenges facing women's ministry are encompassed in the biggest challenge facing the church in general: consumerism. Churches have become the place we go in order to have our needs met. We go expecting the temperature to be to our liking, the music correctly chosen, and the volume at a level that best suits us, and then we expect that if something happens in our lives where we need help, then the church must be there to do our bidding. On some levels, a bit of that isn't wrong. However, the attitude that church exists to serve its members is entirely wrong. The church exists to glorify God and to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, this has become a challenge in women's ministry in the local church, as well. Women want a "women's ministry" to exist in their churches so that they have a bible study to attend, social functions they can be a part of, and where they can occasionally step in when it suits them. Again, women's ministry should provide sound study and fellowship opportunities, but I fear the average woman in church today expects someone else to do it. Our Christianity has taken a back seat to our comfort and convenience.

Every believer is a minister. With women I fear that the complacency has come as a result of ignorance of who they really are. It's my contention that if the women of the church truly knew how intimately and ultimately they are adored by the King of kings, then these same women would want to do no less than help every other woman they come in contact with to know the same thing. Our identity has been greatly lost in this consumerist society, and therefore women's ministry is suffering because of it.

Q: Talk about your "Reap What You Sew Project" and how that came about.

A: I have been traveling to countries in Africa to speak to the women there for about six years. Depending on the event, the crowds range from a couple hundred women to over a thousand, and often those conferences are attended by women coming for miles from surrounding villages. They bring their children with them, because meals are included with these conferences. The women attending will be fed breakfast,

lunch, and dinner, all paid for by the local sponsor church. This will be the most food many of these women and their children will see in months, but it is a great expense to the host church. Still, this food is always offered because the pastors of those churches know firsthand the plight of the women in their countries.

About three years ago at the end of a regional women's conference in Blantyre, Malawi, Augustine Mgala, the pastor of Agape Life International, came to see me at my hotel before I was set to return to the States. He and his wife, Priscilla, now pastor 102 churches in Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique. They are tremendous servants of God, and I trust them implicitly. Augustine and I were enjoying some prayer time together when he suddenly stopped and took both of my hands in his. He looked into my eyes and said, "Debbie, we love you. We love the rich food you give our ladies every time you come here. But I need you to pray about something. I need your help in teaching these women how to practically take care of themselves."



He went on to say, "Malawi is a poor country. It was largely decimated by the AIDS epidemic, and now we are the second poorest country in the world. Hunger and poverty have left us not only with thousands of orphans to feed, but thousands of women left to take care of the children. These women have no skills and no way to provide for themselves and their children. I would like you to pray about how Love Everlasting Ministries might help the women here both spiritually *and* physically."

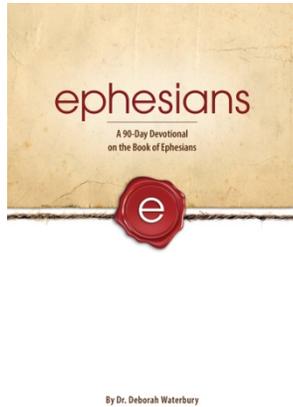
I prayed for three years. Every time I would go, I wanted so badly for God to tell me what to do, but He remained silent. I've learned over the years that my Father's silence doesn't mean He isn't listening. It means, "Wait."

And so I waited. All the while, I kept ministering to my sisters in Malawi and Zimbabwe where they no longer call me Dr. Waterbury but Mama Deb. I love them and they know it. I didn't know it at the time, but that was God's plan all along. We were building trust and love and relationship, which are beautiful ground where the seeds of God's work will grow.

In the summer of 2016, I had the occasion to meet a lovely woman from Kenya. She began telling me of a ministry she was about to go and start in her home village outside of Nairobi. I listened out of courtesy to a fellow minister when almost literally, thunder clapped in my head. She was telling me of a tailoring school she wished to begin in her village for widows and destitute women, and I heard a voice in my head almost scream, "This is it! This is what I have for you to do for the women you love so much in Africa!" Of course, I began listening more attentively to my new Kenyan friend, even as I silently asked, "Are you sure, Lord? I don't even know how to sew! How can I start a school to teach sewing?" But isn't that just like God? He will be in control and He will receive the glory. I spoke to Augustine the next month in person, and when I told him about the idea, he began crying immediately. His first words were, "This is it!"

Every door has swung wide for the *Reap What You Sew Project*, and we are set to launch our very first school in Blantyre in April of 2017. We have nine students to begin, with a board of directors on the ground in Malawi and one here in the States. It is a 6-month program where the women who qualify will be given training on tailoring by a qualified seamstress, as well as 4 weeks of business training. At the end of the 6 months, each graduate will receive the machine she has been sewing on, as well as enough fabric and thread to begin her own tailoring business. Chapel services are a weekly part of the curriculum, as well as a nominal monthly fee from each student (1000 Kwacha, or about \$1.30/month) and a required 85% attendance record. We will also stay committed to each graduate for 6 months following her course completion so that we can help her get her feet on the ground with her new business.

We have plans to eventually open schools all over Africa, helping widows and destitute women in that area know the joy of providing for their children and becoming businesswomen in their own rights.



Q: Talk about the 90-day devotionals you have and why you chose certain books of the bible.

A: Women are busy. We multitask, and we manage. It's what we do. Good, deep study of the God's Word is vitally important in managing our lives. It gives us perspective and grace. That is precisely why I wrote the 90-Day Devotional Series. Concentrating on the letters from Paul, each day's devotion is expositional; that is, it is a verse by verse, line by line study of the Apostle Paul's letters. I designed them so that each day should take between 10-15 minutes—perfect for the busy lifestyle—but in each there is everything needed for comprehensive meditation and study of the bible. Every day begins with the next verse (or sometimes even part of a verse) in the letter, followed by a one to two paragraph exposition, or explanation, of what the Apostle was saying. Each exposition has word study, historical context, and life application, so that the reader does a thorough study each time. The exposition is followed by a short meditation/question and then finally with a prayer. At the end of 90 days, the reader will have studied that book of the bible as if she had been attending a college course.

Q: Today's society is sending a lot of mixed signals to women. How can women stay grounded in an ever-changing culture?

A: I remember many years ago when my oldest son came to me at the ripe old age of 19 to ask a very important question. He was dating a young lady and had been for about a year. I was taking a nap, and he came into my room and sat on the floor next to my bed. He just sat there for a few moments before he asked the question that was obviously burning in his mind: "Mom, is the bible really for today? I mean, times have changed, and some of the things that are in there simply don't seem to apply today. Should I be taking it literally, or are there some areas where I should use it more as a suggestion rather than a guideline?" It was a good question, and I knew where he was going with it. Believe me, it took a lot for me not to just go ahead and talk about the real question he was asking about premarital sex, but I saw a good teaching opportunity about the value of God's Word instead, so I took that road.

God has not left us without instruction or guidelines for this confusing and often very loud society. We simply have to take the time to hear Him, listen to Him, study Him, and then when culture or society try to be our measuring line, we can compare them to God and what He says. Only He will bring peace and joy, but we have to seek Him to find Him. When women ask me the same sort of questions my son did that day, I say, "Everything you see will pass away, but God will not. He is eternal. Do you want to follow the guidelines of something that is here today but will be gone tomorrow, or do you want to base who you are on the One who is the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega?" The answer is pretty clear when you think of things in terms of eternity. Let God be our chalk line in this life, not society that changes with the wind.

About Dr. Deborah Waterbury:

Dr. Deborah Waterbury is the founder of Love Everlasting Ministries, and has authored many books and Bible studies. Dr. Waterbury travels extensively, both nationally and abroad, leading conferences and teaching seminars. She hosts a weekly podcast called "Windows of the Heart," and spends a great deal of her time writing curriculum as well as allegorical novels, including her popular series, *The Painted Window Trilogy*. Dr. Waterbury holds a Masters in the Art of Teaching from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona, and acquired her Doctorate of Ministry in Biblical Expository Studies from Pillsbury Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. She currently resides in Tucson, Arizona, with her husband, Jeff. For more information, visit www.debwaterbury.com.



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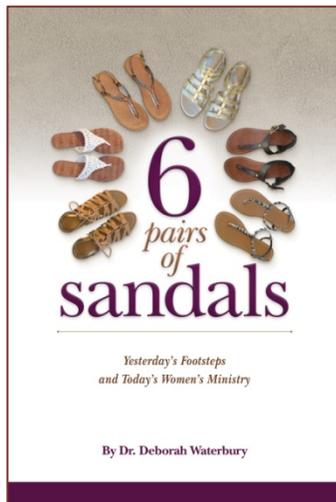
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Press Release

New ministry project to benefit country decimated by AIDS

Author/speaker, Dr. Deborah Waterbury, announces
"Reap What You Sew" Program for women in Malawi



For Immediate Release (Tucson, AZ) – In her new book, "Six Pairs of Sandals: Yesterday's Footsteps and Today's Women's Ministry," author and speaker Dr. Deborah Waterbury highlights six women in the bible who personified the qualities of leadership. She also addresses specific areas of need for women to minister to other women within every local church, something she feels has been greatly lacking.

"In the last 10 years of working with women, particularly women in local churches, it has been sad to see how many churches are abdicating the ministry of women within their confines," says Dr. Waterbury, who founded Love Everlasting Ministries in 2007. "Often it's a matter of methodology, but just as often it is a matter of scarcity. Too many women either feel they are spiritually inadequate or that they simply lack the gifts necessary to minister to one another in their own home churches. I designed the book so that the reader

can read a biblical example of each of the six broad categories of women ministering to women (teaching, prayer, mentoring, service, ministry leader, and small group leader), surmise which of those women she is most like, and then give her a list of practical ways she can step out and begin ministering to the women in her church in that way."

In addition to her ministry in the U.S., Dr. Waterbury has traveled each year to minister to women in Africa. She has witnessed the devastation of the AIDS epidemic up close, seeing thousands of children become orphans and thousands of women, with no skills, being left to care for their children. She has searched for a practical solution to the devastation, particularly in Malawi, now the second poorest country in the world. Her love for the people of Africa led her to seek more tangible ways to minister to the widows there. After years of prayer, a chance encounter led her to the answer.

"This summer, I had the occasion to meet a lovely woman from Kenya," says Waterbury. "She began telling me of a ministry she was about to go and start in her home village outside of Nairobi. She was telling me of a tailoring school she wished to begin in her village for widows and destitute women, and I heard a voice in my head almost scream, 'This is it! This is what I have for you to do for the women you love so much in Africa!'"

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REAP WHAT YOU SEW

The result is the "Reap What You Sew" program – a dedicated training program to teach widows and under-privileged women the sewing trade with educators, tools, materials and supplies necessary to become successful business women in their own right. Students will attend a six-month program focusing on tailoring. They receive a sewing machine and supplies, as well as accounting and bookkeeping training. Classes are held five days a week at Agape Life International Church in Blantyre, Malawi. The students must maintain a 85% attendance record to stay in the program. For the first phase of "Reap What You Sew," Waterbury hopes to raise over \$35,000 by April 2017, which will guarantee at least nine women will be able to go through the program.

"I prayed for three years for God to tell me what to do, but He remained silent," says Waterbury. "I've learned over the years that my Father's silence doesn't mean He isn't listening. It means, 'Wait.' And so I waited. All the while, I kept ministering to my sisters in Malawi and Zimbabwe where they no longer call me Dr. Waterbury but Mama Deb. I love them and they know it. I didn't know it at the time, but that was God's plan all along. We were building trust and love and relationship, which are beautiful ground where the seeds of God's work will grow."

As with the biblical examples she writes about in the book, Dr. Waterbury hopes that by empowering these women with trade skills to better themselves, they will pay it forward to their communities for generations to come. And that ultimately, the gospel message they receive will bring light and revival to a decimated country. She also hopes her book will inspire women in American churches to find their own calling.

"It was the New Testament church, the Pauline church, that moved the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the known world, and that church was not a mega church," says Waterbury. "The New Testament church was made up of small home churches. Those churches didn't seek to get bigger; they sought to start other churches in other areas so that the Gospel was preached in new places. I believe women are the very heart of any church. When women minister to each other in their own churches, the result is healthy churches. Healthy churches are happy churches, and happy churches are attractive to a world that needs desperately to come inside. This is the Great Commission, and this is where we have to start."



For more information, visit www.debwaterbury.com.

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Endorsements:

“I have been associated with [Dr. Waterbury’s] ministry since 2011. Her desire is to see the abused women regain their self-worth through the teachings of Christ. She then challenges the women not to look down upon themselves, but to rise up and begin to follow the biblically proven steps she teaches. Many women from our surrounding communities who had such bad backgrounds have had their lives transformed through her simple, down to earth teaching.” – **Augustine Mgala, Senior Pastor, Agape Life Church International, Blantyre, Malawi**

“Dr. Deborah Waterbury had a radio program on KGMS and KNXN that was very well received by our audience. Her passion in proclaiming that we are intimately loved by God, and that He has a plan for our lives, came through loud and clear over the radio. Even though Love Everlasting Ministries is geared for women the radio program ministered to men like me too!” -- **Doug Martin, President/GM Good News Radio Broadcasting**

“I know Dr. Debbie personally. She is very accomplished. She has not lost touch with the world around her. Her passion for God and the great teaching gift she demonstrates is a great blessing to many. She is a person of fully developed Christian Character. She will be a blessing to anyone or any cause she gives her considerable talent to support.” -- **Dr. Carl E. Conley, JD, President, Faith Community Churches International**

“Her love of Jesus is woven into the very fabric of her existence. Her love of women are the silver and gold threads that line her heart. Not only was she an excellent guest and host, I honestly cannot believe that anything she tackled would not be exemplary.” -- **Kathy Thomas, host of Woman to Woman Radio show for 29 years**

“Dr. Debbie Waterbury has come to speak to the people of Royal Impact Church many times, including our yearly Easter Celebrations, as well as our Women’s Leadership Conferences. She is greatly loved by the people here, and most especially by the women, whose lives have been changed by her teachings.” -- **Bishop Patrick Mapfumo, Royal Impact International Church, Harare, Zimbabwe**