

A close-up photograph of a hand gripping a black steering wheel. The entire image is overlaid with a vibrant, multi-colored quilted pattern in shades of blue, green, and yellow. The sun is shining brightly through the quilt, creating a lens flare effect. The background shows a blurred landscape with trees and a building.

Fiction

The Quilt

by CHRIS FABRY

She was tired and had been kept late at work — as usual. Nobody there understood how much she did. If she ever quit, they'd find out quickly. If 10 percent did 90 percent of the work, she was 100 percent sure she was in that group. And nobody saw or cared.



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SHE EASED ONTO THE interstate and stayed in the slow lane, which felt a lot like her life. Things hadn't gone the way she had planned. Nothing had. And here she was heading home to an empty house and a mailbox full of bills from the hospital and the doctors. Probably a rejection letter or two from the insurance company. She had hoped the medical procedure she'd gone through would change things, but the pain was there every day, just like the bills, and growing.

She'd always believed in God. Couldn't remember a time when she hadn't. But He was off in the distance, like some majestic mountain on the horizon that was nice to look at but made no difference other than the view. Sometimes He was shrouded in clouds. As she drove, she wanted to speak to Him, to talk like He was right there next to her. Have a conversation instead of being the only one talking. The only one crying out.

I need some answers here, Lord, she whispered in her heart. *I need You to show me You're there. I need You to wrap Your love around me and hang on. I need some of the peace that You promise Your children. And I need it quick.*

But, of course, that wasn't going to happen. Mountains in the distance rarely climbed into a 10-year-old Ford Focus to give comfort. And even if that happened, she wasn't sure she could hear His voice over the rumble of the bad motor mounts underneath her.

Brakes flashed red ahead and traffic slowed to a crawl. She punched the power button on the radio and turned it up. The news station gave reports every 10 minutes, and she turned it on in

the middle of the weather. Then some political pundit came on who was upset about something a senator had said, and she didn't need any more stress. She hit the search button and heard scores of meaningless games; then an old song took her back to her broken heart, and she hit the power button. But she missed it and hit search instead, and the next channel was on the left side of the FM dial, a Christian station.

A woman's voice on a phone line came through the speakers. A call-in show. They were the worst. Especially Christian call-in shows where everyone's life and marriage was tied up with neat little bows and Jesus spoke to everyone personally and

all the bad things were in the rearview instead of straight ahead. She reached again for the power button, but something stopped her. Was it the pain in the caller's voice? The shaky sound of emotion?

"Two years ago I was diagnosed with cancer," the caller said with a drawl. She could have been a relative from back home, her voice sounded so familiar. "I had surgery and

radiation after that. As I was going through treatment, I felt so alone. And the poison they dripped into me took down my immune system. I'd never felt so cold in all my life. The chill reached down to my bones."

It was exactly how she felt sitting there in the driver's seat. Cold to the bone and no hope of warmth in sight.

"A family in my church made me a quilt, and they covered it with Scripture verses from the Bible. Every day they wanted me to wake up and see things God had said. They told me they hoped I wouldn't feel quite so alone as I was going through this. So after my treatments, I'd wrap



**She stared at the radio.
She couldn't believe what
she was hearing.**

myself up in this cover, and I'd feel so sick I could hardly hold my head up. But when I opened my eyes, I would go over all the squares. I'm telling you, it not only kept me warm, but I was literally covered in God's Word. Covered in His love."

A horn honked behind her, and she looked up and saw traffic was moving again, and she wasn't. She pushed the accelerator and closed the gap between her and the red taillights in front of her while she listened.

"I want to read a few of these that are right in front of me now," the caller continued. "I'm hoping they'll give somebody else a little comfort today.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever' (Hebrews 13:8).

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding' (Proverbs 3:5).

"I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me' (Philippians 4:13).

"They will name him Immanuel, which is translated 'God is with us'" (Matthew 1:23)."

The host of the program stayed quiet. There was no music. Nothing but the sound of her phone line and her shaky voice. It felt like a holy moment as the woman continued, her voice gaining strength.

"Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God' (Isaiah 41:10).

"The Mighty One has done great things for me, and his name is holy' (Luke 1:49).

"Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength' (Deuteronomy 6:5).

"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6).

"For we walk by faith, not by sight' (2 Corinthians 5:7)."

Tears welled as she listened, and the Scripture washed over her like a flood. Through blurred vision, she saw an exit and took it and wound toward a gas station and parked at the side of the building in the darkness.

"For nothing will be impossible with God' (Luke 1:37).

"I know that my Redeemer lives' (Job 19:25).

"The angel said to them, 'Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people'" (Luke 2:10).

"Do not grieve, because the joy of the LORD is your strength' (Nehemiah 8:10)."

The caller paused and gathered herself. "Right now we have six people in our church with cancer. The husband of a friend of mine just went to hospice. There's a group of ladies who are trying to encourage others the way I've been encouraged, and we've been sending Scripture quilts every day via text. I know you can't send a cover that way, but it's the same thought. I've been helped so much by this quilt that I had to get with the program. So the Scripture I sent this morning was Isaiah 26:3. 'You will keep the mind that is dependent on you in perfect peace, for it is trusting in you.'"

She stared at the radio. She couldn't believe what she was hearing.

"I can't tell you what the Word of God means to me. I can't tell you how near I feel to Him today, just speaking those words. And I want to say to anybody who feels alone, who feels cold inside, who feels like God is somewhere a thousand miles away, He's not. He's right there. He cares more than you can know. And I pray He will wrap His love around you right now."

Her mouth open, her heart beating, she looked at the empty seat beside her. She reached out and turned off the ignition; the motor came to rest, and the radio suddenly fell silent. She wanted to turn it back on quickly so she could hear the rest of what the woman said.

Then she realized she didn't need to hear any voice other than the one echoing and warming her soul. ☺

Note: Find the article at lifeway.com/matureliving, and share it with someone who needs to hear from God today.

CHRIS FABRY'S latest novel is *Under a Cloudless Sky*. He wrote the best-selling *War Room* novelization. His novels have won five Christy Awards and an ECPA Christian Book Award. You can hear Chris daily on *Chris Fabry Live on Moody Radio*. Find him at ChrisFabry.com.