

# be encouraged

CHRISTIAN LIVING MAGAZINE

God, Family, Life

In This Issue:

**GOD}**

Jesus Dream:  
There is Life In The Womb

**FAMILY}**

Giving Your Spouse  
What They Really Need

**SHINE-A-LIGHT  
G.L.O.W.**



**AMY BRETALL**  
**PURSUING THE CROSS**

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A photograph of Amy Bretall, a woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a white turtleneck and blue jeans. She is smiling and looking upwards and to the left, with her right hand resting on a wooden railing. The background shows a cityscape with a large bridge structure under a bright sky.

# AMY BRETALL

*PURSUING  
THE CROSS*





Leaving a corporate career and chasing the cross of Christ was not in Amy's long term plans, but God had a different plan for Amy. God's plan included grafting her into the heart of older lady named Jean and a young girl thousands of miles away in Cuba named Yordielis.

Amy, a member on a cycling race team, was engrossed in a life of competitive cycling. Amy said, "I fell in love with the bike and enjoyed the time to be in nature. It wasn't the chance of winning, in fact, I rarely won. It was my own drive for self improvement, that led me to racing. Cycling is a very humbling sport." The pursuit of winning and competing satisfied purpose in her life like none other. Soon her desires for racing changed. She found herself pursuing the cross. "Praying, listening to that inner voice, God's leading and being open to step out with the heart to help someone led me to pursuing the cross."

"It's funny because all of sudden it's like my eyes began to see the cross in ordinary objects. The cross was all around me, in signs, fences, buildings, sidewalks. It was everywhere. Ordinarily I wouldn't have noticed it, but now I wondered how had I missed it all these years?", Amy said.



Tour of the Fo Guang Shan  
Budda Memorial center, Taiwan, 2014

A chance meeting with a friend introduced her to a book called, *Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. It was a later encounter inside of a church she stopped to visit that the book became a catalyst into her pursuit of God's plan for her. "I stopped at a church during a trip and with permission went inside. While I was praying, a gentleman offered me a copy of this same book, *Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. I knew it was a sign from God."

God was indeed leading Amy. During her travels the pursuit of the cross turned into a hobby of photography. "I began to take pictures of the crosses that I would see. Crosses all over the world. Once I got them developed I asked a friend who is skilled in photography for his honest opinion. The pictures were really good." Not really having a plan for the cross pictures, Amy knew they had a purpose.

"The pictures of the cross began to pile up. There were so many, I didn't really know what to do with them. They were too good just keep them in albums. I decided I would make them into greeting cards and give them away to friends. Then I started to sell them. Then I started to enlarge them and frame them." Amy's photography eventually made it to retail. Amy's cross' are on display and for sale at Signs of Life Store in Lawrence, Kansas.



Amy reflected on God's purpose and plan for her life even at a younger age. "Right of college, I started working my first corporate job. That's where I met Jean. She was much older than me, old enough to be my grandmother. We became fast friends and confidants. She poured wisdom into me about life that was priceless. Over the years, I naturally became a caretaker of sorts for Jean. We spent so much time together right up to her passing earlier this year."

"I memorized this scripture from my sweet Jean saying, 'Trust in the Lord, He will take care of you.' On of my favorite scriptures that I hold close to my heart is Proverbs 3:5-6. 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.'"



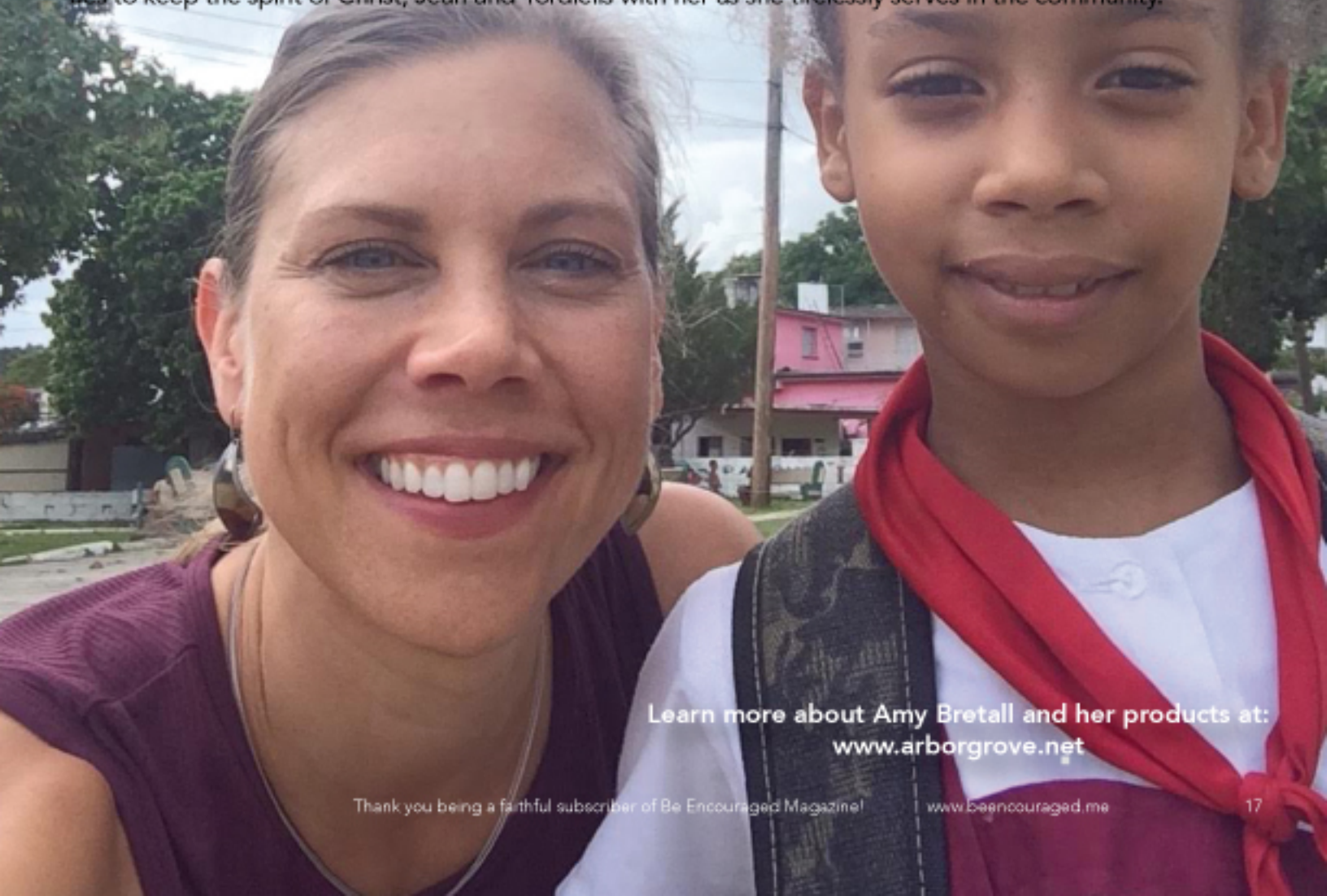


While God had sent Jean to Amy's life, He also sent Amy to a little girl in Cuba named Yordielis.

"A day after meeting this little girl in Cuba, I was still thinking about her. Having dinner the prior evening with Santana, a local taxi driver we met and befriended, he shared about his 7 year old daughter. I shared about the girl I had met only hours earlier. We arranged to meet him the next evening to see more of Cuba. The next evening came and getting into his cab I asked, 'Will you help me find her?' Santana said, 'Yes, I will. Yes, I realize the population in Havana is 2 million, but I know where she is. She can't be far from where I walked with her.'

We drove 30 minutes back to where I met her the day prior. Using the photo on my phone, Santana asked kids in the neighborhood if they knew her. We drove over bumpy roads, potholes and dust. I pointed in the direction where I met her. Finally a little boy playing said he knew her! Santana shows the photo to a girl. She knows her and she turned out to be her sister! Her sister runs down a street so crumbled it is not able to be driven so we wait down the road. As we waited I wondered if she was coming back? Several minutes later they appear. The girl I met yesterday. I walk towards her and she walks to me. And then instinctively we both run towards one another. We hug and I pick her up. I told her, 'I missed you'. With tears in my eyes, kneeling while I talked, her little hands were rubbing my shoulders, we looked at each other. And then it starts raining, we had to go. I didn't know how, but I knew I would know her in 20 years. Like my Jean and I, we also would stick. On the drive back, Santana said the rain was good luck. I asked what that meant. He says "Like on a wedding, the rain is a good sign—what you start will be finished."

Now, Amy has devoted sales from her cross photos to raise funds for Yordielis and her family. Amy continues to keep the spirit of Christ, Jean and Yordielis with her as she tirelessly serves in the community.



Learn more about Amy Bretall and her products at:  
[www.arborsgrove.net](http://www.arborsgrove.net)