

# I Will Not Fear

*A Chosen Life*



J.A. McPhail

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Rowe Publishing

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ISBN 13: 978-1-939054-19-7  
ISBN 10: 1-939054-19-2

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At the time of this book's publication, all facts and figures cited are the most current available.

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed in the United States of America

Published by



Rowe Publishing

[www.rowepub.com](http://www.rowepub.com)  
Stockton, Kansas

This book is dedicated to our  
beloved daughter.



***Stacie Jeanne McPhail***

Arrived—June 2, 1976

Departed—June 17, 2012



*Many daughters have done well,  
but you excel them all.*

—Proverbs 31:29



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# Foreword



On an early summer morning in June, 2012, life as we knew it changed forever. We weren't expecting it to change, we didn't want it to change, but by the grace of God, we knew exactly what we needed to do when it did.

Our precious and only child, Stacie Jeanne McPhail, reminded me of the task at hand in the title of the book she and I had planned to co-write. She chose the title in the spring when she first felt the need to write it—*I Will Not Fear*. That was the key to the peace and strength we needed then and now. She told me she wanted us to write it together—the first half from her point of view as a single thirty-something career woman who was faced with a cancer diagnosis, and the second half from my point of view as her mother and caregiver. It was to be the story of how we dealt with what she was going through, both in the natural and the spiritual realms. But more importantly we wanted to share the amazing truths we learned while on the journey, truths from God's Word, His Holy Spirit, many anointed preachers and teachers, as well as accounts of ordinary people with not-so-ordinary stories—truths that changed everything.

This is not another self-help book on how to deal with the grief of losing a child. We miss Stacie more than I can say, but she is not lost. We know exactly where she is and who she's with—her Father, Savior, and our family and friends who arrived before she did. Our greatest joy and peace comes from keeping our minds and hearts stayed on all the awesome things Stacie is experiencing this very moment.

At the Celebrations of Life we held after Stacie moved to Heaven, her family and friends viewed tables filled to overflowing with all the things she loved and enjoyed during her time here. This book is a celebration of her life story thus far. The book will end with the last chapter, but Stacie's story is never-ending.

My task in these pages is to tell about the first 36 years of the life of our daughter, and how the faith we shared as a family grew stronger every day—faith without fear. With that same faith we eagerly anticipate resuming our life together in the New Heaven and the New Earth that God is preparing for His children. Our imaginations love to go there and we hope you will catch a glimpse of what we believe waits for every person who knows our Jesus as Lord and Savior. When our time comes to join Stacie and other loved ones in that wonderful place, whether by the grave or when Jesus returns in the clouds to take us Home for all eternity, what a joyous reunion we will have. Until then, she waits for us in a paradise full of beauty and splendor far beyond what our mortal minds can conceive. Stacie is exactly where she chose to be.

In the first part of her life, Stacie chose to live every day to the fullest, and she wanted her choices to please her Heavenly Father. There is not a doubt in our minds that on that morning when Jesus asked her if she wanted to stay or go, she chose to go on Home to be with Him.

How can we grieve when she chose so well? It is our prayer that you will be blessed as you read her story, *I Will Not Fear: A Chosen Life*.

Stacie is not just in our past. She's in our future.

Keep looking up—He is coming soon!

Jeanne Ann and Dennis McPhail



# A Chosen Arrival



“Your due date is May 9,” the doctor informed me.

What could be more perfect for the arrival of my first child? In 1976, May 9 fell on Mother’s Day. I was thrilled.

The following months proved that my chosen career path of being a stay-at-home wife and mother was exactly what God meant me to be. I embraced every part of pregnancy, from morning sickness to maternity clothes to my craving for jelly rolls. I quit my job as a teacher’s aide early, partly to accommodate my swollen ankles, but mainly to have more time to decorate the nursery—in bicentennial red, white and blue Raggedy Ann and Andy. I figured my favorite rag dolls would work for a couple years even for a boy. Lamaze classes and sonograms were not common yet and I had neither. I was determined to give birth the same way my mother had—endure the labor pains and be surprised at the outcome.

My husband and I set up housekeeping early. We were both only eighteen on our wedding day and Dennis was entering college a couple weeks after the honeymoon. The original long-range plan was to wait to start a family until after graduation and landing a vocal music job. But after less than two years of it being just us, my

maternal instincts kicked in and we decided to go ahead and become a trio—Divine providence even then.

As May 9 approached, I was in full bloom and blissfully anticipating a wonderful Mother's Day. However, the day passed uneventfully.

Three weeks later on May 29, I had to relinquish my job as a bridesmaid for my new sister-in-law because there was no way I could fit into the dress or stand through the entire ceremony. So, from the second pew sitting beside my parents, I watched my only brother get married.

On the first day of June, I was still miserably huge. I went to my doctor appointment in less than a good mood.

"We may have miscalculated," the doctor said.

You think?

"Let's give it another couple days and see what happens."

Seriously?

My mother, a former RN who had decided even earlier that my doctor was a quack, picked me up an hour later in her little yellow pickup truck. She took me seriously when I commented that I was ready to do whatever it took to get the show on the road.

"Come on," she said, "we need to find some bumpy gravel roads."

Fortunately, it was a relatively easy task to find such roads in Kansas. We drove around for almost three hours. The labor pains began before supper.

"Hey, I want to have this baby more than you do," I told my anxious husband after supper that night. "But I'm going to finish watching *Starsky and Hutch* before we go to the hospital." Dennis watched the show with me but was not willing to put the two detectives ahead of his wife having his baby. He had me packed up and out the door before the final credits began to roll. I'm pretty sure

I sang “Don’t give up on us, Baby” as our car pulled away from the curb. I was a big David Soul fan.

The maternity ward was quiet when we arrived, but there were several of us on the floor that night and it did not remain so long. As my labor pains began in earnest, and Dennis and I were getting a crash course in Lamaze from the nurse, the cries from a young mother-to-be down the hall became increasingly vocal.



“Let me push! AARRGGHH! I’m going to die!”

Not exactly encouraging words to a young couple about to have their first baby, but I did my best to ignore them. Had I known what I know now about the power contained in our words, I would have marched down the hall and told that woman, “Don’t SAY that!”

The nursing staff stayed busy all night as baby after baby was brought into the world. Dennis lined up chair cushions on the floor of my room and tried to take a nap while I concentrated on blowing and not pushing. He succeeded and so did I.

When the morning shift nurse came in, Dennis woke up as I was being instructed to turn over on my side. It had been a while since anyone had checked on me due to the busy delivery schedule during the night. My water still had not broken and I had been in labor for almost twelve hours. My new nurse decided to take charge of the situation. She was from the same “old school” as my mother and whatever she did, it worked. By 8 AM my bed was being wheeled into the delivery room.

I soon found out my regular doctor was on vacation, so one of his senior colleagues was there to greet me—the same doctor who had delivered me twenty years earlier. As they wheeled me to the delivery room, I was asked if I minded if a few student nurses observed. At the

time, I certainly didn't care and was totally unaware of who was in the room.

A few minutes before 9 AM, our baby girl finally chose to make her arrival. When the doctor put her in my arms and Dennis locked a tear-filled gaze on now both of his favorite girls, I knew that moment was just the beginning of a marvelous adventure.

No hospital rooms were available yet, so they wheeled me out into the hall and pulled curtains around my bed. Dennis went out to greet family members who had arrived to see their new granddaughter and niece. My mother soon poked her head through the curtains and told me I had done a good job. She was very happy to hear my "quack" had been replaced by her chosen doctor.

We were finally put in a room and our very own pink bundled girl was placed in my arms. Up until that day, she was going to be named Tracy. But at the last minute, guided by a special knowing deep within our hearts, we decided her name was Stacie Jeanne—spelled with the unconventional "ie" and my spelling of Jeanne. I didn't know it at the time but Stacie Jeanne means "Rise Again—God is Gracious."

A week later, Stacie left the hospital wearing the same aqua dress, bonnet, and shoes that I had worn on my first trip home from the hospital just down the road. Maybe it was how she slept soundly for six solid hours from almost the first night at home, or how she stared at the bright figures on her crib quilt, but I was sure that she loved her Raggedy Ann room as much as I did.

Years later, when I remembered the student nurses in the delivery room and how they broke into spontaneous applause at her first cry, I realized God knew all along that our precious Stacie Jeanne was born to be in front of an audience.

"This is certainly one of the most powerful things I've ever read. I am in awe of your ability to express your innermost feelings so well and create such a well-written and readable account of a devout Christian family's life together and what happened when it was torn asunder. I think readers will no doubt be affected deeply. What a blessing you have given."

*Gwen Veazey, Freelance writer, Morganton, NC*

"I do believe that your story...and Stacie's story...will bring healing to others. A broken heart, a broken spirit can be more damaging than a broken body. Everything begins from the inside out. Jesus was sent to heal the broken-hearted (Luke 4:18). That is my prayer over *I Will Not Fear: A Chosen Life* that the anointing word of healing in which it was written and inspired will be transmitted to bring healing to many who may be broken in spirit and heart."

*Dr. Shirley Bowles, Springs of Hope Counseling Center, PLLC, Statesville, NC*

"It is a beautiful story! Thank you for sharing it! It is a treasure!"

*Carol Nelson, Ed. Technology Media Specialist, McPherson, KS*



J.A. McPhail is a writer and children's author. *Dawn of Day*, was her first middle-grade historical fiction novel. She and her husband, Dennis, write Gospel songs and live near the Blue Ridge Mountains.

~ [www.themacsmusic.com](http://www.themacsmusic.com) ~

"The Holy Spirit wants this book out there to minister to people...and it will! You covered a lot of issues that a family can face where faith can be applied; chemo, tumors, surgeries, relationship issues, career decisions, etc. Every young girl will be inspired as they read about Stacie's happy life because she chose to live for the Lord."

*Linda Lee White, Linda Lee Ministries, Fairview, PA*

"Wonderful. Not just wonderfully told, but beautifully lived. I've cried through every page, and feel refreshed for doing it."

*Melissa Wright, The Wrights Ministries, Topeka, KS*

"As a pastor, I am often asked to answer tough questions. One of the toughest I've ever faced was, 'Why did Stacie go to Heaven at such a young age?' After much prayer and meditation, I have come to the simple conclusion that Stacie was not of this world. Stacie loved Gospel music. She is now singing with her heroes. Stacie loved the Bible. She is now with the One who inspired it and the men who wrote it. She loved her mom and dad. She is now with her Heavenly Father. In other words, Stacie is Home. She was our song leader and friend, faithful, devoted, irreplaceable. That sums up Stacie. She just wasn't interested in too many things associated with this world. Don't miss this story of a life lived in total devotion to the Lord. Then you, like everyone who knew her here, will have one more reason to go to Heaven."

*Pastor John Whisnant, Jr., Grandview Baptist Church, Morganton, NC*

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PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.