

INTRODUCTION

God has called Anne Graham Lotz to passionately issue a spiritual wake-up call to the nations. She proclaims life-changing messages of hope and revival to audiences around the world. Her knowledge of Scripture and heart-touching narrative storytelling has inspired listeners from all walks of life. She is comfortable proclaiming God's message to a small group or a full arena. Lotz is not just passionate about her own public proclamation of the Word of God; she relentlessly desires for people to know how to read God's word for themselves and to apply it for their own spiritual benefit. Lotz's aim is clear—to bring revival to the hearts of God's people, and her message is consistent—calling people to a personal relationship with God through His Word.¹ Her sensitive heart and deep desire to please God have led to her effectiveness and God's ability to use her to touch so many others.

AN AMAZING PRICE TO PAY

How did Anne Graham Lotz embark on a ministry that would expand to hundreds of thousands of men and women around the world? It might have started in China, as her mother, Ruth Bell Graham, grew up the daughter of Presbyterian missionaries. Her grandfather, Reverend Bell, was a medical missionary. Lotz's mother was accustomed to sparse and often dangerous surroundings, and she often felt the loneliness of enduring long periods of separation from her family due to the distant location of her boarding school. Ruth Bell came to the United

¹“About Anne Graham Lotz,” AnGeL Ministries, <http://www.annegrahamlotz.com/about-us/about-anne-graham-lotz/> (accessed September 29, 2009).

States to attend college, and while attending Wheaton College, she met a tall young man named Billy Graham. Billy Graham was excited as he tried to explain the call of God he felt on his life to begin an itinerant ministry proclaiming the saving message of Jesus Christ to a lost world. Bell and Graham were married, and Ruth Bell Graham often stayed home with the children allowing her husband the freedom and opportunity to travel and preach wherever God called him. In her prayer book, *It's My Turn*, Lotz's mother pens this prayer to God regarding her marriage, "If you let me share his life, I'll consider it the greatest privilege in the world. It's a good thing I did not know exactly what lay ahead, for I would have never had the nerve to pray such a prayer."² Often privileges come with huge price tags, and Ruth and Billy Graham's life was certainly no exception.

In 1948, Anne Graham Lotz was born in Montreat, North Carolina. She was the second daughter of her parents. When Anne was about fifteen months old, her mother decided to leave her and Gigi, her older sister, with relatives so she could fly to Los Angeles in order to spend a few days with her husband. The tent meeting her father was speaking at was only scheduled to last for three weeks, but each week the committee voted to continue for one more week. The meeting continued for so long that Ruth Graham began to miss her two girls.

One day Anne's mother heard a knock at her door, and she opened it to find her sister, Rosa, had brought Anne to Los Angeles to be with her. As she held out her arms in delight to hold her daughter, Anne turned her head away and hid her face against Rosa's neck. Anne did not recognize her mother. When her father returned, he did not know Anne either.

In *It's My Turn* Ruth Graham gives a glimpse into her daughter's teachable spirit. One day Ruth took Anne out to lunch with some friends at a local hotel. Gigi, Anne's older sister,

²Ruth Bell Graham, *It's My Turn* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1982), 78.

could not go with them, and Anne was not pleased. She acted rude and disagreeable. As they got into the car to drive away Anne asked, “‘Mother, I behaved really dreadfully today, didn’t I?’ At bedtime, Anne’s conscience still bothered her. She approached Ruth, ‘Mother?’ she begged. ‘Now please tell me everything I did wrong. I want to know, I want to know. I want to learn.’”³ God put into Lotz’s heart at a young age the desire to know Him and His ways and to learn from life experiences. Her malleable spirit would serve her well in the days ahead.

As a young girl, Anne Graham Lotz was mesmerized while watching the crucifixion scene unfold in a black-and-white Cecil B. De Mille film on the life of Jesus entitled *King of Kings*. As she began to watch the brutality of the crucifixion unfold, she realized Jesus made a huge sacrifice by dying on a cross for her sins. She began to weep. Being the wise mother of such a tenderhearted girl, Ruth Graham seized the opportunity to lead her daughter in a prayer that would forever change her life. Ruth led Anne to confess her sin to God and explained the realization of what Jesus’ death meant for her personally. Anne knew in her heart that God had removed her sin. She had been forgiven, and if she died, God would allow her into heaven. Lotz’s prayer began a love relationship with Jesus that is still today more real to her than any other.⁴

Lotz’s love for Scripture was birthed in her heart at a young age. When Anne was ten years old, her mother gave her a gift, a copy of *Daily Light*,⁵ that would forever leave its mark on

³Ibid., 98.

⁴Anne Graham Lotz, *Just Give Me Jesus* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000), 309.

⁵Anne Graham Lotz, *Daily Light* (Nashville: J. Countryman, 1988). This book is a compilation of Scripture divided into morning and evening readings. As Lotz begins her time with Jesus each morning, she reads the selected Scripture verses for that day in the *Daily Light*. She then uses the subjects, themes, promises, warnings, or commands in those verses as her springboard into prayer. The original *Daily Light* was compiled by Samuel Bagster and first published 1794, and Lotz revised the book while sitting by the bedside of her son during cancer treatments.

her soul. This book became the avenue she would use repeatedly over the years to help her through painful times.

Lotz had a keen ear to hear the whispering words of the Holy Spirit in her life—a pattern of repeated wake-up calls beckoning her to go deeper into the heart and mind of God. At age sixteen, Lotz was confronted by the fact that she could not rely on her relatives’ spirituality. She had to step out of the shadows and come to her own saving faith in Jesus Christ—all on her own. Lotz says that she does not remember anything specific that triggered the confrontation. She simply experienced a gradual awakening to the fact that she would stand alone before God. One afternoon in her parents’ mountain home, she prayed a special prayer. While kneeling down on the floor beside the window of her upstairs bedroom, she told God she wanted her life to count for something of eternal significance. She surrendered all her heart, mind, strength, and spirit to the lordship of Jesus Christ.⁶

When Anne was seventeen, she graduated from high school, and two nights later her father arranged for her to meet a man eleven years her senior. Danny Lotz was six-feet seven-inches of tanned muscles, broad shoulders, ramrod-straight back, and the friendliest, warmest eyes Anne had ever looked into. Lotz was an amazing athlete and had been awarded a scholarship to play football his first year at the University of North Carolina dental school. After graduating from dental school, he entered the Air Force where he quickly made its all-service basketball team and was invited to play for the Olympics.⁷ Anne was smitten with Lotz, and he with her. They married when she was eighteen years old.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Lotz, *Jesus*, 44.

A COURAGEOUS CALL

By the time Anne Graham Lotz was twenty-six years old, she was the very busy mother of three small children. But she felt weak, tired, and insignificant. She had gotten so busy with life that she had neglected her first love—Jesus.

One day as Anne was riding in a car, her godly mother-in-law began reading aloud Revelation 3:8, and the verse just seemed to leap into her heart. God spoke directly to Anne, calling her by name into service: “Anne, I know your deeds, and you haven’t done much. Like all young mothers, you only have a little strength. But you have kept My word and have not denied your identification with Me. Therefore I am placing before you an open door for service that no one can shut” (Lotz’s paraphrase).⁸

Lotz began praying and reading her Bible on a regular basis. She became aware that the open door for service God had provided was an opportunity to establish and teach a weekly Bible class for women in her city. She also knew that when God set before her an open door, He usually intends for her to walk through it. She began the class, and it exploded with five hundred women coming weekly to study God’s Word together. After many hours of strenuous study in preparation for teaching, her relationship with the Lord escalated to a much higher level.

In 1958, Lotz’s father, Billy Graham, had conducted an evangelistic crusade in San Francisco. Audrey Wetherell Johnson, a missionary to China, was home from her duties in China. Johnson had started a Bible study in Berkeley, California and was asked by the Graham organization to teach her class as a follow-up discipleship class for new believers. Years later, Johnson taught and mentored Lotz in Bible study showing her how to teach the Scriptures to

⁸Anne Graham Lotz, *My Heart’s Cry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 244.

others.⁹ Johnson founded Bible Study Fellowship and directed that life-challenging ministry for over thirty years authoring commentary notes that have been transformational for so many.¹⁰

A CALL FOR SHADOW MISSION

As a young mother, Lotz felt that her first priority was to be a great wife and an excellent mother. But deep inside she believed she was meant for something more even though she did not know what that something more was at the time. She shared this thought with her very wise mother who encouraged Anne not to “waste her wilderness years.”¹¹ She told Anne that if one day God called her to serve Him outside her home, she needed to be ready.¹² As Lotz spent time in the study of God’s Word and prayer, God began to reveal His mission for her life.

The enemy will often send different situations and means to get individuals sidetracked from His true purpose and mission for their lives.¹³ Lotz was no exception. While the Graham family and ministry organization had the highest regards for Johnson and her superb ability to teach the Scriptures, when Lotz felt her time to “be ready” was at hand and expressed her desire to start a Bible Study Fellowship class in her area, her mother and father had reservations. Their hesitation and questions could have sidetracked their daughter, but those reservations quickly evaporated when both parents visited her home.¹⁴

⁹Audrey Wetherell Johnson’s autobiography is *Created for Commitment* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1892).

¹⁰Lotz’s ministry impacted my life deeply when she spoke a message at the Amsterdam 86 Conference for Itinerant Evangelists held in Amsterdam. I returned home and joined a Bible Study Fellowship class in my area and studied the Word of God systematically with this group for ten years. It has been life-changing for me.

¹¹ Lotz, *Obsession*, 60.

¹²Ibid.

¹³For more insight on how to stay true to God’s purpose, see John Ortberg, *Overcoming Your Shadow Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008).

¹⁴Lotz, *Obsession*, 269.

After teaching her weekly Bible class for twelve years, Lotz felt the Shepherd calling her to her fulfill her life of significance. Throughout her life, God had used a pattern of speaking to her through His written Word, and this particular challenge to her came dramatically from Deuteronomy 1:3, 6-7: “Anne, in your fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month...tell these people you have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance” (Lotz’s paraphrase).¹⁵ Her class was heartbroken at the thought of losing their founding leader, and many told her they were sure God was *not* calling her to walk away from her class. But she knew from her time in God’s Word that He was calling her to leave her current ministry position and move on. Again, if she had listened to those around her, she would have missed what God was calling her to in a wider area of service.

As Lotz stepped out in her new calling, one of her first opportunities was to speak to a large convention of pastors. Eight hundred church leaders were seated around tables in a banquet-type setting that seemed to stretch as far as the eye could see. As she walked to the lectern, she was shocked to see that many of the pastors had turned their chairs around and put their backs to her. Some of those who faced her did so with such hostile rejection that she was confused and ashamed. She managed to share the message she had been invited to present, but by the time she concluded, she was shaking.¹⁶ Lotz went home and had a face-to-face with her Lord. Again God spoke to her in His Word through John 6 where He sends Mary (a woman) to go to Jerusalem and tell eleven men what she has seen and heard. God confirmed again His call on her life, and she avoided getting sidetracked by a shadow mission as God confirmed to her that she was not accountable to her audience—she was accountable only to Him.

¹⁵Lotz, *Heart’s Cry*, 244.

¹⁶Ibid., 7.

In the year 2000, Anne Graham Lotz launched *Just Give Me Jesus*, life-changing revivals for women. Lotz states the revival God is calling people to today is not a tent meeting or a series of church services designed to save the lost. It is something completely different—authentic personal revival. It is a wake-up call to the heart.¹⁷

Lotz spoke recently at a citywide meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina. The meeting was made up of church leaders from around the area. The leaders came for information, inspiration, and in preparation for the upcoming arena event of *Just Give Me Jesus Revival*.¹⁸ The meeting was held at historic Spirit Square in the downtown heart of Charlotte.

Only ten minutes into her inspiring, challenging message, Lotz heard a loud crash behind her. She kept her focus and continued her message without flinching. She realized after she was seated that the choir, which had been sitting behind her, had staged a walkout in protest to her brief reference to homosexuality. A few days later they took the protest to the front page of the local newspaper accusing Lotz of intolerance.¹⁹ The very message God had implanted in her heart had been rejected by so-called church leaders. Again, the temptation to please people rather than please God could have sidetracked her message of revival to this generation.

A FAITHFUL CALL

Today, Lotz remains faithful to the call God placed upon her life. Many of her audiences, though not all, include men. Lotz is not content to just proclaim a message of revival; she also desires to teach others her mentor Johnson's method of systematically studying God's Word for

¹⁷AnGeL Ministries, <http://www.annegrahamlotz.com> (accessed September 29, 2009).

¹⁸Anne Graham Lotz, *I Saw The Lord* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 48.

¹⁹I was present at this gathering and witnessed the walkout.

themselves.²⁰ Lotz calls her ministry AnGeL Ministries, not just because it is a play on her initials (A. G. L.), but because it accurately describes her calling. Angels are messengers of God. They never go anywhere unless they are sent; when they speak, they give out God's Word, and they address whomever God places in front of them. Foremost, she considers herself God's servant. Then, she sees herself as a messenger sent by God to go wherever He sends her, to speak to whomever He puts in front of her, and to deliver whatever Biblical passage He lays on her heart.

As history unfolds, Anne Graham Lotz's greatest impact on her generation likely will be the revivals she brings to women. Lotz's revivals for women have been held in over thirty cities around the world.²¹ Indeed, Lotz continues to serve Christ's call to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, and in so doing, she testifies to what God can do with a life that is wholeheartedly committed to Him.

²⁰Once a year at The Cove: The Billy Graham Training Center in Asheville, North Carolina, Lotz teaches an intensive seminar on how to read, study, and teach God's Word. I have had the privilege of attending this seminar twice.

²¹"About Anne Graham Lotz," (accessed September 29, 2009).

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