

Rape and ALS: Horrors that God turned to good. This is the story of the joyful life of an ordinary Christian who, despite tragedy and a life-altering illness, lives a life of love and blessing.

BLESSED! Rape to Redemption to Rewards

By Suzanne L Maurer & Kristin P Snyder, Foreword by Don Piper

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Blessed!

Rape to Redemption to Rewards

FOREWORD BY DON PIPER



Suzanne L Maurer
& Kristin P Snyder

Endorsements

Your life began with a very difficult situation, but you are still walking with the Lord and you are a model of faith. Thank you for sharing your journey.

Pastor Wayne Cordeiro
New Hope Ranch

"Blessed" is the life story of Suzanne Maurer (Mom), and it is a reflection of a remarkable journey from trial to triumph, and it is in equal parts both engaging and endearing. Sometimes, a book allows you to journey with the author as a spectator, and very rarely, life allows you the privilege to become both a contributor and a companion. In this book, Mom captures resilience and commitment to living as moments and memories brilliantly and lovingly. This effort in prose and picture is a tribute to her ability to overcome and her availability to help others do the same. Read it to be blessed, receive it, and then forward the effort to bless others.

Krish Dhanam
Author and Speaker

Life is a precious gift. Suzanne's redemption story touches the very heart of God, that starting in the womb we already have inestimable value, and equally important - be told about the ultimate gift - eternal life!

Janet Hochberg
Former Executive Director
Hawaii Right to Life

Inspirational! That summarizes Suzanne's life story. Her life is a testimony that God can do extraordinary things through ordinary people. God has given her opportunities to meet many prominent people, but she

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remains humble and gives glory to God for the ability to touch countless lives with the gospel of Christ.

Morris Isara
Author of
Shelley's Story

Suzanne Maurer's memoir reads like a novel. It's filled with a captivating combination of exhilarating joy and devastating sorrow—but the reader is always aware of the power of renewed hope, enduring faith, and purposeful living. Suzanne's book provides us with a model of how to overcome adversity so we can live for things that will outlast our lives.

Carol Kent, Speaker, Author, and Founder of Speak Up Ministries
When I Lay My Isaac Down (NavPress) and He Holds My Hand (Tyndale)

Amazing book

As I look around at all the people we know on this planet, very few people today have really challenged me in living out my faith. Suzanne has been one of these rare people that so lives out her faith, she actually makes me want to be more like her. Her love for people, her enthusiasm for life, her kindness and passion for Jesus overflows in everything she does.

The challenges she has faced in this life and her attitude towards them is deeply inspiring as they all point to her love and trust for her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The times I have spent with her and the conversations we've had have left me wanting more, more time talking, more time listening to her and more time watching her live out her faith.

Deeply Touched by her life,
Eileen Marx
Co- founder - All Things Possible Ministries

In a time when we see so many well-known Christians falling short, Suzanne's book *BLESSED!* is the opposite. She exemplifies what a follower of Jesus Christ can do and be in this world. She is a light and having known her for many years and worked with her in ministry, I've seen her character, love, faithfulness, and steadfastness, which have encouraged me. Reading her book *BLESSED!* is a quick read of encouragement and inspiration for truly being a disciple and making disciples. I highly recommend this and thank God for her being our spiritual mother.

Victor Marx
President and Founder of ATP Ministries

Do you feel your past is so awful God could never forgive you? Does your past keep you from moving forward? Do you believe you will have to live with shame, guilt, and trauma for the rest of your life? If you answered yes to any of these questions then you HAVE to read Suzanne Maurer's true life story *BLESSED! Rape to Redemption to Rewards*. Through the pages of her book Suzanne leads her readers to see how God can use even the most vile of situations to bring blessings, joy and complete fulfillment of life by turning to Him. Her story is completely open and honest. Her enthusiasm for sharing the love of God bounces off the page. Suzanne is living the Biblical truth of Romans 8:28 "*And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*" In reading her story you will be encouraged and inspired to allow God to fill the empty places in your heart with His love, freeing you to live life to the fullest.....Suzanne certainly has done that!

Eva Piper
Author of
A Walk Through the Dark

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A riveting glimpse into what seemed to be a perfect life... The perfect life that suddenly appeared stolen, packed with trauma, heartbreak and regret. Yet through it all... God was tugging at her heart, painfully tumbling into dark emotional valleys... which seemed to have no way out Yet all the while Jesus was waiting....

And GRACE was there all along. Finding that Grace, that unconditional love, and the forgiving arms of Jesus will absolutely captivate you. And there's more ... so much more.

She was our cheerleader let her be yours!

Lucy Wedemeyer
ALS Advisory Trust

The Bible tells us that “we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them. For God knew His people in advance, and chose them to become like His Son, so that His Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.” Romans 8:28-29, NLT. Suzanne’s book is a living testament to the truth of this passage. She reveals events in her life that most would do all in their power to conceal. She can do that because she truly believes that “God CAUSES...”

Since she believes this, all of the essential Truths in the Bible came naturally to her over time. She could hear His voice; she could see His Hand actively working in events from the rape to her current diagnosis. She could see how God used her courage to draw her to His Son, and is working to help her become “like His Son.” She has no fear, she has no worry, and she Trusts that God is sovereign in the Universe as well as sovereign over the events in her life.

Rape to Redemption to Rewards

You could not go wrong in investing time to be touched by God reading her book.

Pastor Jimmy Yamada
Cedar Assembly of God Church

Suzanne Maurer has ministered to my family and me like a soothing ointment on our deepest pain and the oil of joy to our greatest news. *BLESSED! Rape to Redemption to Rewards* vibrantly testifies how Jesus Christ, her wellspring of love, tenderly touches each person in her life, offering readers a gift we all long for: HOPE.

Rev. Danny Yamashiro, Ph.D.
MIT Chaplain and Host of *The Good Life* Radio/Podcast

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Suzanne L Maurer
Kristin P Snyder

Foreword by Don Piper



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Trenton, Georgia

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Heartsick and Fearful

Returning to college heartsick early in January, I felt filthy. Defiled. Devastated. Loaded with false guilt. I was determined never to see David again.

But, then, I was late for my period. Panic! Could I possibly be pregnant after the date rape, when I had been a virgin? At the end of January, I borrowed a sorority sister's car to keep an appointment with Dr. Wood, who confirmed I was pregnant.

My life was over. I drove back to college somehow and cried and cried and cried...and cried.

I was overwhelmed with fear. I worried about the embarrassment to my family, the shame they would feel, and the impact on my undefeated politician father. I didn't think I could go home and tell my parents. Suicide? I spent days in the sorority bathroom crying. I didn't attend classes, but hid it from my sorority sisters.

When I realized suicide was not the answer, I called David and told him I was pregnant. I asked him to come and pick me up in a vehicle that would hold my belongings, because I was dropping out of college. He quickly picked me up, drove me to my parents, and unloaded my belongings in the garage. I told him I never wanted to see him again as long as I lived, and that he would never see the child. What he had done to me was unconscionable and I wanted him out of my life forever.

I went into the house and my parents were both in the kitchen. Sobbing, I told my parents what had happened on Christmas Eve and that I was pregnant.

My mom cried. My dad was really upset. They were beyond shocked, and in emotional angst themselves. I went into my bedroom and basically stayed there. One morning my mom came in and said: “Suzanne we are going for a drive and want you to come along.” Unbeknownst to me, they had responded to my pregnancy by deciding the baby would be adopted. They identified a pastor and his wife who agreed to adopt my baby.

I was driven to a little church, 50 miles north, pastored by Reverend DR, without knowing why. I was actually in shock. My dad was on my right, my mom next to him, and Pastor DR was sitting behind a big wooden desk. They began talking. When I figured out what was going on, I spoke up: “Dad, what are you talking about? Adoption?” He explained that Reverend DR and his wife had agreed to adopt my baby without ever discussing it with me. I said: “My baby is not going to be put up for adoption. I am going to give birth and raise my child myself.”

My father pointed to the exit and forcefully replied: “Do you see that door over there? You have two choices, you can either walk through that door and never look back, and never see your family again, or you can marry David.” My mother sat there with tears silently running down her face.

I knew the devastation I caused my parents, whom I dearly loved. I knew their dreams for my life would never come true. I wanted to make it up for them the best I could.

When I wouldn't agree to adoption, and when I did not want to leave my family, Mom, Dad, and my sister Judy planned my private wedding. David and I married a few days later, with only our immediate families present. My rushed marriage quietly took place in the pastor's church just two days later on February 4, 1961.

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I was terrified of God at that point. How could I have been raped? How could I be pregnant? How could this have happened to me, to my family? I wanted to do anything to bring peace to my family.

Raped, pregnant, then married, at 19.

Marriage and Divorce

David and I had a horrible start, but I wanted a good life for our child. And I didn't want to cause my parents more pain. Darin was born September 11, 1961.

I didn't want Darin to be an only child, so four years into the marriage I got pregnant. A second son, Rick, was born June 15, 1966. David was very emotionally cruel to me during that pregnancy. He wouldn't speak to me for long periods for no reason at all. In fact, the entire last month of the pregnancy, he didn't speak to me, so when I went into labor my mother had to take me to the hospital. She and Dad kept Darin, then brought Rick and me to their house when I was released from the hospital. David had gone fishing!

I had dropped out of college after the date rape and pregnancy. Twenty months after Darin was born, my family gave me the rest of my college education. I graduated with a teaching degree just two weeks before Rick was born. I started teaching that fall.

David and I tried to make our marriage work, but we were young and haunted by date rape. There was so much guilt. It was a marriage of effort. Once home as a family again after Rick's birth, things got worse and worse and worse. I suggested a separation, shocking David. I don't think he ever expected that. He said he would try to do better. Instead, it got worse.

On five distinct occasions over the years, I felt I could no longer endure the situation, and called five different Catholic priests to see if I could come and see him. Each time each priest said: “Yes, can you come now?” I called Catholic priests because their religion doesn’t believe in divorce, so I thought maybe they could counsel me on how to make our marriage work. As I explained my situation, the forced marriage, and my deep sadness, each of them suggested I get the marriage annulled. It had been a forced marriage and the way it was going, none of them felt we could successfully make it work. It was a forced marriage, not ordained by God.

One night, as the boys were asleep, David had been out playing slow pitch softball. When he returned through the front door, I could see him from where I was sitting in the kitchen and I blurted out “I want a divorce. You can stay over the weekend, but you need to have everything out by Monday evening.” David was out Monday, and we divorced a month later. It was a HUGE relief for me. I had my teaching degree, a job, and I could support my little family. I did receive \$50.00 a month child support.

Reflections

As I look back on these years from 82 years of age, I can see, and vividly remember, both joys and heartbreaks. The love and stability of my life up to the date rape gave me a life-long sense that I was okay and that there was hope. Surviving the horror of date rape, resulting conception, and being forced into an unwanted marriage, showed me I was strong. Being able to complete my college education, even into a very late pregnancy, proved I was determined and tenacious.

Now, after walking with Christ for more than 40 years, I can see God’s hand in all of it. I didn’t yet know God, but God was there. I now know Him as my loving sovereign, who allowed into my life the sin of date rape, and who has brought enormous good from that evil. The next chapters show how.



It is my prayer that this book has helped and encouraged you to live out hope—Helping Others Prepare for Eternity

The Authors

Suzanne and Kristin have been friends since Kristin's birth, six years after Suzanne's. Their families were two of a close-knit four family group who together celebrated Thanksgiving, Christmas, birthdays, Fourth of July, Summer, and whatever/whenever.

Suzanne's father was Kristin's funnest (**funnest**, NOT funniest) friend.

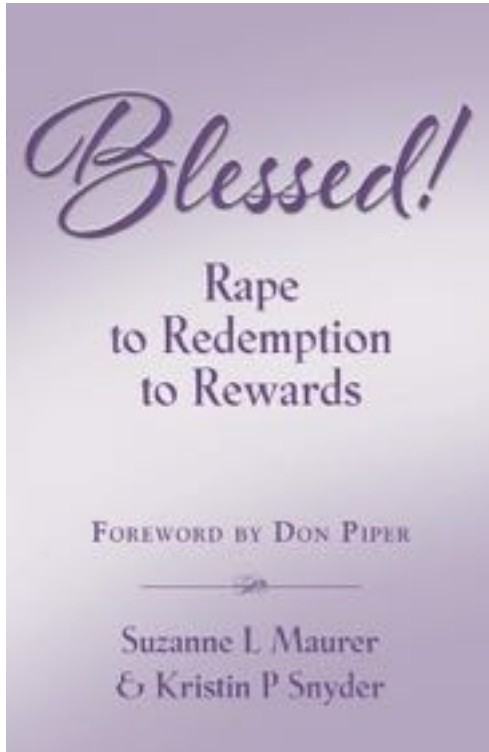
The four families were so close, Kristin thought Suzanne was her cousin until she was about 12. Now, even better, Suzanne and Kristin are sisters in Christ.

Despite being sisters in Christ, they are very different. Suzanne says she doesn't have an analytic bone in her body. Kristin analyzes nearly everything. Suzanne is an extrovert. Kristin is an introvert. Suzanne does not create "to do" lists. Kristin is such a list-maker, she will add an item she already completed in order to have the fun of crossing it out. And they have different gifts.

"Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly." (Romans 12:6, NASB)

You read a lot about Suzanne in this book, so here is a little more about Kristin.

Kristin is married to a great guy and is step-mom, -grandma, and -great grandma to three delightful adults and their families. Kristin started her fifty years of work by picking strawberries (so did Suzanne), went on to obtain a doctorate in economics, completed many management courses, and was appointed vice president in a major company. She published a book, *When Storms Come: Will You Be Ready?*, and blogs at KristinPSnyder.com.



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