



IGNITING A PASSION FOR GOD

Bible teacher, Priscilla Shirer, is passionate about women's ministry. Priscilla will be a guest speaker at this year's Beauty For Ashes women's conference. Here's a glimpse at this extraordinary woman's life. By Melissa Riddle

IT'S A TYPICAL WEDNESDAY MORNING AT THE SHIRER HOME IN

Dallas, and like any other mother of two young children, Priscilla is on the run early. Literally. Up by 6 am and out the door for a 3-mile jog, she's back and in the shower before the men in her life open their sleepy eyes. Then the rest of the morning whizzes by as she does her best to keep everybody fed, dressed and loved.

Two-month-old JC naps and feeds throughout the morning, and two-year-old Jackson goes from inside to outside and back again under Priscilla's watchful eye. Then, about 1 pm, Priscilla and her husband, Jerry, make the great switch-off. Jerry wraps up his morning business calls and e-mails to care for the kids so that Priscilla can make the trek to her office (the kitchen table).

There for much of the afternoon, Priscilla studies Scriptures, writes, listens, prays and prepares for the coming weekend when she'll stand before hundreds, maybe even thousands, of women to teach the message God has given to her.

Such work seems natural for the daughter of well-known Dallas pastor, speaker and author Dr Tony Evans. After all, she grew up in the spotlight, a talented girl with a powerful singing voice who was never afraid of a microphone. She's also a graduate of the University of Houston with a degree in communications, sought with the intention of becoming a TV news anchor. But God had other plans.

RAISING HER VOICE

While in college, Priscilla hunted for an internship that would give her broadcast experience and landed at Christian radio station KHCB as an on-air host. It wasn't long before people started calling

the radio station, asking Priscilla to speak at their Bible study groups or special events.

"They didn't know me. They knew my father and just assumed. I guess, that some of the anointing had trickled down from Dad to me," she says with a laugh. "So I would show up, an 18-year-old freshman, and sometimes there would be 10 women, sometimes 500 women."

All she knew to do, she says, was teach what God had been teaching her through the Bible. Nothing more, nothing less. And the fire was ignited in her to share God's Word. Nothing she was learning about broadcasting was more exciting. So after graduation, Priscilla headed straight for Dallas Theological Seminary for her master's degree, all the while asking God to show her what He wanted for her life.

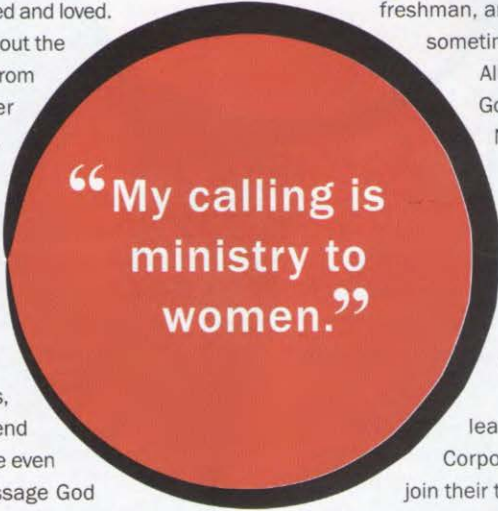
That first semester, she received a call to lead a weekly Bible study at the Zig Ziglar Corporation, and after doing so, was asked to join their team of speakers. God opened the door for

Priscilla to sharpen her skills as she spoke to hundreds of corporate employees.

A PARTNER FOR LIFE

And then Priscilla met a man who would further shape her direction: Jerry Shirer. An executive for Hilton Hotels, Jerry had attended Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship (where Priscilla's dad serves as pastor) for more than six years, but the two had never met. But God stepped in and set things on fast forward. Priscilla spoke at a regional manager's luncheon for Hilton Hotels, and Jerry called her that evening. A little more than a year later, the two were married.

"It's almost like the Lord was saying, 'I was waiting for both of you to finish what y'all were going to do, so I could do what I was



“My calling is ministry to women.”

going to do," Priscilla says, smiling.

She loved the fact that Jerry was not the least bit concerned with her family tree. And Jerry's faith and character struck her as rock solid. Jerry also saw something in her that he desperately needed. "I grew up in corporate America where you work from 8 am to 8 pm, six days a week and another four hours or so on Sunday," Jerry says.

"But not Priscilla. I saw her zeal to have fun while still serving the Lord, and I wanted it along with her."

Jerry left the corporate world to establish (with Priscilla) Going Beyond Ministries, a speaker's bureau of gifted Bible teachers, including Priscilla, who minister at gatherings nationwide.

"I use my gift of administration to deal with the business side of things," Jerry says of his behind-the-scenes work, "which allows her to focus on her gift of communication."

Jerry and Priscilla are truly partners in every aspect of life. "We run interference for each other all day with the kids— 'You take that one so I can study; you take this one because I have a meeting.' God has blessed me. So many husbands would be like, 'The children are your thing, not mine.' But not Jerry. He's excited and serious about me and the kids. And I'm so grateful for that."

"The word of God is alive and it can speak to you"

A PASSION FOR WOMEN

Married for six years, the Shirers are very protective of their family life. Jerry and JC travel with Priscilla on every trip, and Jerry's mother, "Granny," takes care of Jackson while they're away. But any trips over two days mean both kids go on the road. Together, Jerry and Priscilla are focused on ministering to women.

Until two years ago, Priscilla recalls, she was taking any business opportunity that came her way, working as an independent contractor for CBS as one of their live reporters; hosting "Positively Texas," a local TV show; and taking speaking engagements.

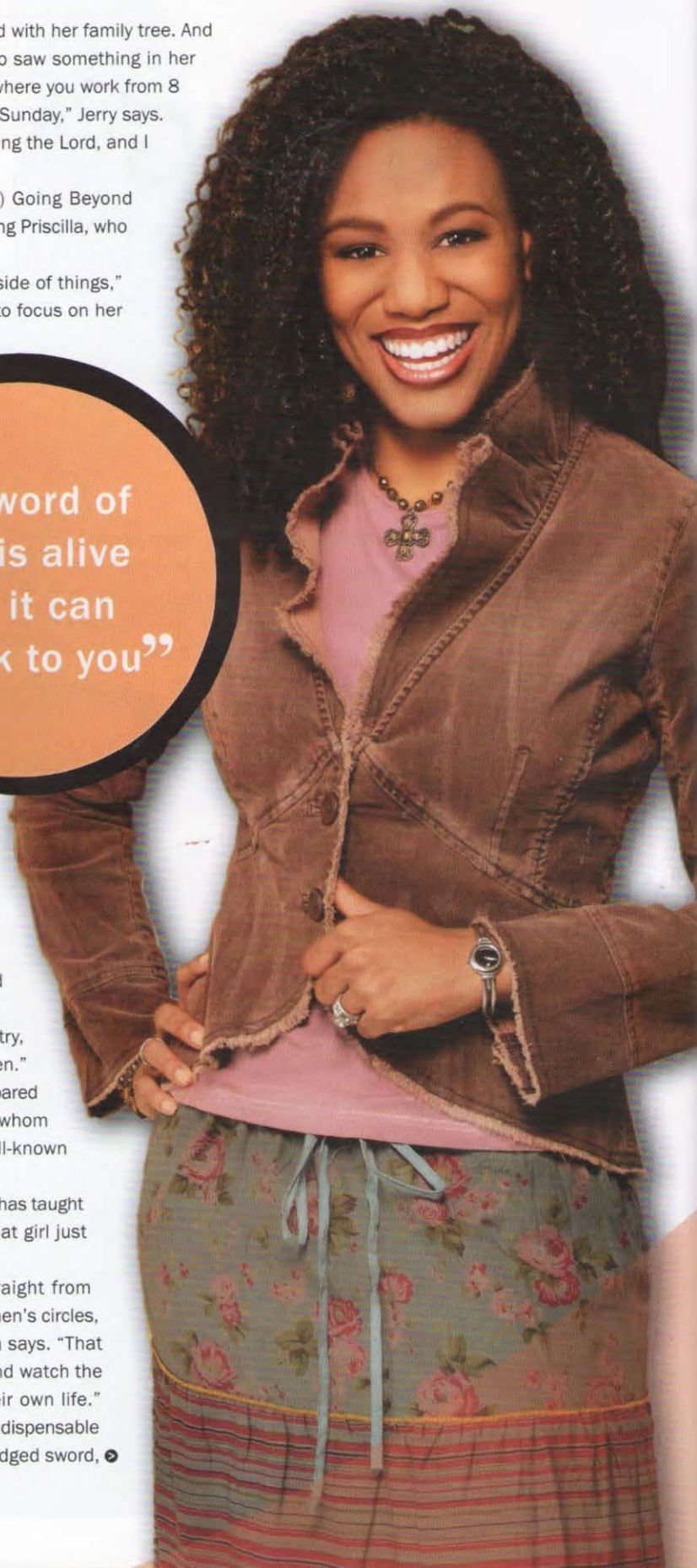
"The Lord slowly weeded things out, saying, 'Priscilla—ministry, ministry, ministry.'" she says. "My calling is ministry to women."

Within that calling, Priscilla's teaching approach is often compared to her mentor and friend, Anne Graham Lotz, a woman with whom she has a lot in common, even beyond their respective well-known preacher fathers.

"Anne has been my mentor for ministry," Priscilla says. "She has taught me to stick to the integrity of Scripture, not to fluff it up. That girl just gets up there and gives it to them straight."

And while expository teaching (critically interpreting straight from Scripture) isn't necessarily the most popular approach in women's circles, "that's very clearly what God has asked me to do," Priscilla says. "That way, women open up the Bible, see the passages unfold, and watch the principles jump out, and then realise they can do it in their own life."

The crux of Priscilla's ministry is helping women grasp one indispensable reality: "The Word of God is alive, it's sharper than any two-edged sword, ☉



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and it can speak to you," she says, longing to ignite a passion for Scripture in other women.

And, perhaps ironically, she wants to free women from their speaker-dependency. "So many of us become so dependent on books and tapes and conferences. We become conference junkies. We want to hear what everybody else has to say about Scripture. But the Holy Spirit is saying, 'If you'd just open it yourself, I would tell you what I want you to know.'"

FAMILY FIRST

While Priscilla is passionate about her ministry to women, she's also passionate about ministering to the men in her life—and making sure they make the most of every opportunity to enjoy life.

"I love spontaneity," she says. So oftentimes she and Jerry will drop what they're doing to go to dinner and spend time together. And on weekends that take them out of town, Priscilla and Jerry are intentional about carving out time for each other.

"Priscilla wants to experience the foods and culture of each city. She's always dragging me somewhere," Jerry laughs. "My feet hurt just thinking about it."

At home, their favourite hangout is the park, where Priscilla beats Jackson to the swings and they laugh and play for hours.

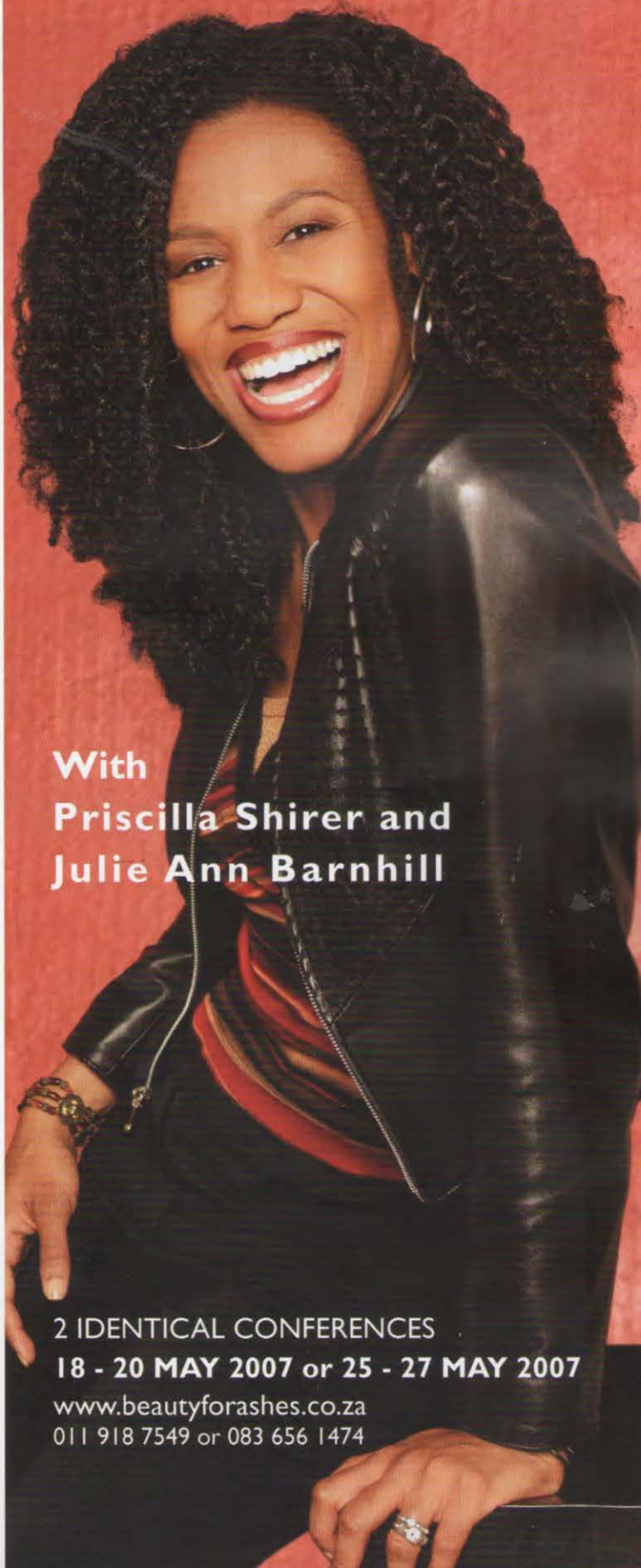
"My wife takes her study time with the Lord very seriously," Jerry says. "But she also enjoys her time away from the kitchen table."

On an ordinary Wednesday morning like this one, what's important to God may not be preparing for the weekend conference, spending more time in prayer, or taking notes at the kitchen table. In fact, sometimes the Lord's work may not seem like the Lord's work at all, Priscilla says.

What's important is often revealed in an eager tug on her skirt, the appearance of little Jackson's big eyes, and his pleas for her: "Mom, mom, mom! Play ball with me! Mom, come build blocks!"

And with those small hands and bright eyes, the Spirit redirects her attention to what matters most during this time as a wife and mom. And she goes to build blocks with her two-year-old, because that's what's important to God. **T**

This article first appeared in *HomeLife* magazine, a publication of LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, TN, USA. The mission of *HomeLife* is to nurture godly families by providing biblical principles for spiritual growth and practical solutions for everyday life. To subscribe visit www.lifeway.com/homelife



**With
Priscilla Shirer and
Julie Ann Barnhill**

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