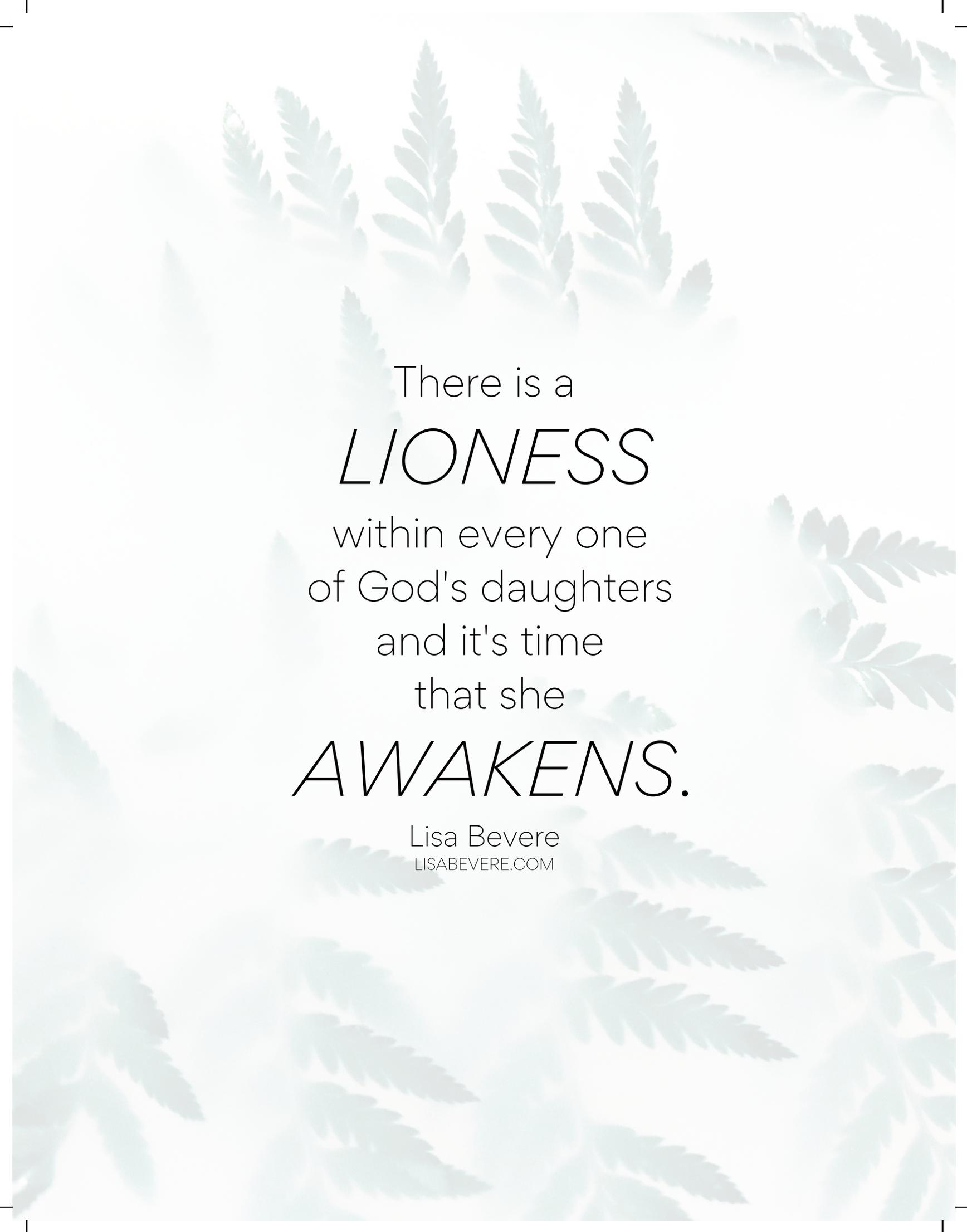


A decorative graphic featuring a central arrangement of tropical plants. A gold-colored, textured leafy branch forms a diamond shape. Inside and around this branch are various green leaves, including large monstera leaves and smaller fern-like leaves. The background is white with gold leopard print patterns in the top-left and bottom-right corners. The text is centered within the diamond shape.

# EMBRACE

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

*Devotional*



There is a  
*LIONESS*  
within every one  
of God's daughters  
and it's time  
that she  
*AWAKENS.*

Lisa Bevere  
[LISABEVERE.COM](http://LISABEVERE.COM)



# Righteous

**Acting in accord with divine or moral law: free from guilt or sin. Morally right or justifiable.**

# Bold

**Showing an ability to take risks; confident and courageous. Fearless before danger.**



*"The righteous are as BOLD as a lion."*

**- Proverbs 28:1 AMP**

This weekend has been forever etched in each of our hearts! It's been unforgettable and life changing! We are overcome with joy and gratitude for the privilege of gathering together for the Embrace Conference. Our prayer is that you were lavished with love and empowered with strength.

We felt the Lord clearly speak a simple yet resounding theme for this year's conference from Proverbs 28:1 AMP, "The righteous are as BOLD as a lion." Our vision is to equip and empower you to rise up out of the darkness of 2020 to come boldly before the throne of grace, and leave this weekend knowing that you are more than conquerors, ready to take brave steps into your victory. We see throughout the Bible where women rose up in a crucial hour and time.

- Esther was hand-picked "for such a time as this" to stand in the gap for her people and to step forward in courage before the king.
- Deborah arose fearlessly and boldly to lead an army into battle when no one else would.
- Mary bravely walked a journey that no other women in history had done.

Our heart is that this EMBRACE DEVOTIONAL will serve as a steady guide and encouragement in your spiritual growth. Each entry has been intentionally written by a modern-day woman who dally chooses to walk boldly and humbly before the Lord.

Although this unexpected season has brought varying situations, feelings, and reactions, we must "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." (Hebrews 10:23) Let's rally together and embrace this year with joy, passion and purpose. Our desire is that you take all that God has done for you this past weekend and live it out boldly before your family, friends and community!

With a loving embrace,

*Pastors Colleen & Shannon Marocco*

# Cool Confidence

## - 1 Samuel 25:1-39 NKJV

Abigail is the beautiful wife of a fool named Nabal. She is also wise and discerning. When David's requests for care for his servants go blatantly disregarded, he begins to set a course in motion that would cause the end of Nabal's entire household.

Abigail does not sit passively when hearing about this conflict. She sends a pre-emptive host of gifts to David before heading out to meet him. Once she is before David, with cool confidence she begins to negotiate a plan of mercy for her undeserving husband. She, in essence, protects both men from bloodshed. In a time when advice given by women remained unheeded, David listened to Abigail's heart, did the merciful thing, and retracted his threat. Abigail could have let events play out and been done with being married to a horrible man. Yet, in humility and love for her household, she invites the blame for his actions to fall on her. What a selfless act!

Abigail's quick thinking, generosity, humble approach and words of wisdom saves her entire household and in turn keeps her on David's mind. So much so that after Nabal's death comes David's proposal of marriage. Abigail's confidence in the God she served highlighted other gifts she possessed to resolve the conflict that would have bloodied the hands of a future king. What about you friend? Does your confidence in the God you serve make you a peacemaker in your sphere of influence? Let God's wisdom fill you to be unshakeable during times of chaos.

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*Father, thank You for Your wisdom and discernment You give so generously. May I hear You clearly in times where confrontation is difficult, yet necessary. May You be glorified in every circumstance. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

# *It's Who You Know*

**"The moment I called out, you stepped in; you made my life large with strength."**

**- Psalm 138:3 MSG**

The old phrase "it's not what you know, it's who you know" applies when it comes to the topic of boldness. In this messy thing called life we are sometimes faced with impossible and emotionally painful situations. The things staring us in the face seem to be the "what we know" part.

Are you looking at a broken marriage, a son or daughter who has turned away from God, a debilitating physical problem, or a crippling financial crisis? These are the things we know to be true; the bank account doesn't lie.

However, the second part of the saying "it's who you know" comes into play when, in faith, we turn to God, and the sooner the better. In Him alone can we have the boldness to look these "true" situations in the eye, face them with courage, and speak to them with the boldness that only comes through Christ.

***Christ holds the greater truth about your situation, greater than the one that is staring you in the face.***

The boldness and confidence of Christ can come on you, in you, and over you if you ask for it. His boldness will allow you to face any situation that seems impossible, emotionally painful or fearful. Sometimes, it is a battle to put on that boldness from Christ, but the moment we do, we can speak to our impossible situations and receive a renewed faith making us brave, imparting to us the confidence to persevere until we overcome.

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*Lion of Judah, we ask for You to help us put on the boldness and confidence of Christ, and to have the faith to know that with it, we can face anything. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

# *Courage That Keeps a Hard Promise*

**- 1 Samuel 1:1-20 NKJV**

Hannah was "in bitterness of soul"; she "wept in anguish." Have you ever been so distraught, so unhappy with life that the will to live seemed sucked right out of you? You've lost your purpose? That's how Hannah felt being unable to have a child. She prayed and promised God that if He would give her a son, she would give him back to the Lord. She prayed earnestly, received a word from a prophet, and went away confident that God had heard her prayer.

In time, Hannah did indeed have her son, and once he was weaned she promptly and willingly took him back to the temple to "appear before the Lord and remain there forever." FOREVER!

Okay, can we just pause and think about what that meant to a mom who had her miracle baby, and then would promise to spend her life apart from him?

Had it been me, I might have left the country to keep my son. Hannah, given the desire of her heart, did good on a promise. She turned him back over to the Lord. FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE! Then, she worshipped. Was there grief? Possibly. However, reading on, we ONLY see her worship to the Most High God. She kept a promise known only to God. How that must have pleased Him. Samuel was her legacy when she had no future. Her courageous move of a promise kept, transpired into a blessed life.

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*Father, I pray for a courageous spirit to keep my word, however difficult it may be. Help me to be honorable and faithful in all I do. I pray You receive all the glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

# *Supernatural Faith Like a Three-fold Cord*

**"Then He touched their eyes, saying, 'According to your faith let it be to you.'"  
- Matthew 9:29 NKJV**

I don't know about you, but when I read this I thought, "Do I have faith like this? Faith enough to restore my sight if I were blind like this man?"

I pressed in, prayed that God give me eyes to see, ears to hear, and an open heart to receive, respond, and grow my faith. I wanted supernatural faith that boldly calls out God's will and sees it done.

One evening during worship, God showed me a vision of a three-fold cord. He imprinted onto my heart that supernatural faith is like this cord.

- Obedience-following the Word and voice of God.
- Trust-laying it all down at the feet of Jesus in complete and absolute surrender.
- Affirmative action-doing works agreeably, lining my will up with His will, being Holy Spirit led.

Supernatural faith is a three-fold cord intertwined. Woven together, the strength is multiplied. Each strand works together for one divine purpose. Together this purpose is strengthened into a faith that is beyond our natural eyes, into a bold supernatural faith that heals, parts seas, and moves mountains.

Let us boldly stretch our faith to a supernatural state to see miracles happen every day.

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*Father God, help us to grow and strengthen our faith to supernatural faith, to do Your works here on earth, and bring You glory. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.*

# Eternity Mindset

**"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."**

**- 2 Corinthians 4:18 KJV**

Shut your eyes from the world and focus on God's promise. He has it all for you, but are you willing to stand? Fix your focus on Jesus and do not get distracted, even for a second, by the pleasures of this world.

I always think of Peter, when Jesus called him to walk on water (before he got distracted, lost focus and lost faith). He trusted God despite the circumstances. The conditions seemed impossible. The other disciples were thinking he was crazy because they thought Jesus was a ghost. Peter tuned out the noise of the world, trusted Jesus, fixed his focus on Jesus and walked on water. The moment he took his focus off of Jesus and onto the circumstances, he lost faith and sank.

Jesus told Peter, "You of little faith." Keep your eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Stand firm. This world is temporary. Worldly things will pass away, but God's kingdom and eternity will not. God's kingdom, even now, is at hand. Have hope and keep your eyes fixed on Him. He will help you see beyond the here and now.

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*Father, we surrender our lives to you. Give us spiritual eyes to see, ears to hear and a heart that understands Your word. Use us as Your vessels here on earth and provide for us our every need. In Jesus' name. Amen!*

## *He Fills the Gaps*

**"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."**

**- 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NKJV**

Growing up, as far back as I can remember, I was looked down upon because of who my mom was and because of my last name. Our large family size kept us uninvited to certain events. I remember making a decision to not let people make me or my siblings feel horrible. We had the most fun climbing trees, riding bikes, playing and making the most of our time. As a matter of fact, we would be the ones to draw the crowd. When we weren't at an event, we were told how much we were missed.

Just like Moses, I grew up feeling like I wasn't good enough. When God spoke to him through a burning bush and called him to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage, he had a big case of the "Not Good Enoughs." That's when he had a one-sided argument with God. Moses told God he was the wrong man for the job. He reminded God that he wasn't brave enough, strong enough, smart enough, eloquent enough, charismatic enough or confident enough. I felt that way as I entered adulthood, married and had children. I felt terrible coming from the family I was born into and for who I was. I started questioning myself. "What kind of mother would I be?" Here, friends, is what we need to remember:

**Whatever we feel we are not, GOD IS. He is the God who fills in our gaps; He is I AM who fills in our blanks. He turns our weaknesses to strengths.**

When we say, "I'm not strong enough," God says, "I AM."

When we say, "I'm not wise enough," God says, "I AM."

When we say, "I'm not bold enough," God says, "I AM."

When we say, "I'm not smart enough," God says, "I AM."

When we say, "I'm not good enough," God says, "I AM."

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*Thank You, God, for healing me. Thank You for loving me and caring for me. Keep me always focused on the truth I find in Your word and Your promises for my life. Teach me to be bold when I need to be. I give You all the honor, glory and praise. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen!*

# Then I Am Strong

**"Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."**

**- 2 Corinthians 12:10 NKJV**

When we step out to minister to someone, the fear of failure can really grip our heart. We feel weak, unworthy, and unable. Paul confesses how he feels, "I can't do this." Yet in those very weaknesses Paul declares "I am strong." I believe that the feelings of weakness can make us strong when we recognize our need for God and call on Him. Without Him we are hopeless, with Him we can do all things.

David expresses that in Psalm 18:29 ESV, **"For by You I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall."**

If our weakness causes us to depend upon God and not on ourselves, then those weaknesses are indeed that which makes us strong! Throughout history we find stories of people who accomplished great things by simply stepping out. When you read their backstory, it usually includes a long list of failures and shortcomings.

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*Lord, Thank You that I don't have to rely on my strength. I need only to trust in Your power and might. I want to display Your glory, and show the world how great You are. In Jesus' holy name, Amen.*

# Be Bold in Your Identity

**"But you are God's chosen treasure—priests who are kings, a spiritual "nation" set apart as God's devoted ones. He called you out of darkness to experience His marvelous light, and now He claims you as His very own. He did this so that you would broadcast His glorious wonders throughout the world. For at one time you were not God's people, but now you are. At one time, you knew nothing of God's mercy, because you hadn't received it yet, but now you are drenched with it!"**

**- 1 Peter 2:9-10 TPT**

Before we knew God as our Father and became His children, we were lost in the darkness. Now that we truly know Him and understand how deeply we are loved by Him, why would we, even for a moment, consider turning back? This is why finding our own identity in Christ and holding onto it is so important.

**Finding your true self in Christ is the ultimate blow to the enemy!**

1 Peter 2:9 TPT calls us "God's chosen treasures - priests who are kings." This is surely no good news to an enemy that desires our destruction. If Satan can find a way to distract you from **who** you are and **whose** you are, he can rob you of your title of God's beloved child and treasure. He can make us forget the eternity we should be purposely living for!

Finding our identity and purpose in Christ not only sets the enemy back, but it gives us a safe haven mentally, emotionally, and spiritually when the days are long and life gets overwhelming.

Put down deep roots in God's word. Seek out more of the Holy Spirit. Settle in your heart who you are as God's child. Know that your victory has already been purchased by Jesus Himself! If God is for you, no one can be against you, and no weapon formed against you shall stand. Be bold, daughter of God, because you are treasured, empowered, and loved unconditionally!

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*God, help me to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that I am loved and treasured by You. Keep my heart deeply rooted in Your truth so that the enemy can never tell me lies about who I am. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

# Simple Wise Answer

## **"Are you hurting? Pray." - James 5:13 MSG**

This is the response I got last night while pondering the events of the day. I asked the Lord, "What am I to do? The situation seems overwhelmingly hopeless at times?" I sensed this quiet response from the Lord, "Pray." It got me thinking. Isn't that the simplest and wisest answer to everything?

- Does our country seem in great turmoil?... pray.
- Did your favorite candidate win the election?...pray.
- Are you sad about your candidate losing?... pray.
- Has your child walked away from God?...pray.
- Are you sick and in need of healing?...pray.
- Is everything going great in your life?...pray.
- Marriage falling apart?...pray.
- Marriage going good?...pray.
- Have a job, lost a job, need a better job?...pray.
- Need friends?...pray. Blessed with good friends?... pray.
- Are you in a crisis?... pray.
- Concerned about injustices?...pray.
- Afraid of getting COVID-19?...pray.

This list could go on for many pages; however, you get the idea. We do not have the answers, only God does. Without Him, we cannot navigate this wonderful, crazy, unpredictable thing called life. Maybe that is why the word "pray," and its various conjugations, are found 375 times in the Bible. That is more than one a day. Have you prayed today about what you are going through? If not...pray.

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*Jesus, we pray that You will guide us to seek Your wisdom first. We acknowledge You as the only wise God who has every answer we need. Thank You for Your promise to share it with us if we ask. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## *Strong and of Good Courage*

**"As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not fail you, nor forsake you. Be strong and of good courage; for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swore unto their fathers to give them."**

**- Joshua 1:5b-6 KJV**

When Joshua took over for Moses, I think he got freaked out. God came to him and three times spoke, "Be strong and of good courage." Well, of course it was an overwhelming job! Joshua, for forty years, watched the Children of Israel (over one million) rebel against God, complain about water and food, die from plagues, and make an idol out of gold to worship Baal. God saw the fear in Joshua and had compassion. He knew the pressure that would be on him. God wasn't merely commanding, "Hey, be strong and of good courage," I believe God was prophesying, pronouncing, and creating strength and courage for Joshua.

As God spoke the universe into existence, so He created in Joshua what he needed for the task. Today, my friend, God has compassion on you. What is it that you need? Are you afraid, discouraged, lonely or overwhelmed? Don't just "suck it up", call on the Lord. Let Him speak into existence what you need. He will be with you and make you strong, just as he did for Moses and Joshua. He promises to never leave us or forsake us. Being confident in His abiding presence gives us every reason to be strong and of good courage.

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*Lord, we are vulnerable to the enemy's lies, vulnerable to other people's misgivings, and vulnerable to the weakness of our flesh. Come and pronounce over us Your love. Help us to realize that Your strength is in us. Declare over us Your favor and blessings. Create in us the strength and courage we need to not be overcome, but to be an overcomer. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

# Turn Timidity into Boldness

**"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline."**

**- 2 Timothy 1:7 NLT**

What if you were shaken by 2020? What if you are afraid of someone you love getting COVID-19? What if you get nervous about not being able to pay your bills? How do we align ourselves to the right spirit in the midst of very real and present fears?

In the pressure cooker of 2020, I was confronted with many of these things. My pre-pandemic vague hauntings turned into real fear, intensified by new fears like that of spatially unaware individuals coughing a deadly virus in my general direction. Then, in the unnerving quiet of the stay-at-home order, I truly faced these fears, and I realized I could hand them over to the Lord. They lost their power to pull me down. There, in my confession of my fear, the Lord dismantled them, one at a time. With each fear I handed over, He aligned me with His Spirit, in self-discipline, in love, and in power. It is into that alignment that He draws you near, Sister. You too can walk in step with peace toward your transformation. I'm right here alongside you, and so is He.

I know how it feels to have so much adrenaline and anxiety that you can't stay in a space long enough to identify what a problem is. But, He knows us better than we know ourselves, and we can lean on His understanding to name that fear or emotion for us.

Turn your timidity into boldness today by naming your fear. Think of a situation that has been particularly full of anxiety for you, and sit uncomfortably with it. See if you can admit that fear to the Lord, or ask the Holy Spirit to name your fear. Then take it in your hand and hold it out to the Lord.

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*God, You didn't give me this. I confess it and hold it up to You to take. Give me a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline in exchange for this spirit of timidity. I thank You for doing it. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

# Am I A "Good" Mother?

**"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."**

**- Proverbs 22:6 KJV**

Do you ever wonder if you're raising your child the "right" way?

We've heard it before that there is no right way to raise your child. We have also heard the Bible verse in Proverbs 22:6 KJV that says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." So, does that mean there is in fact a "right" way to raise a child? When you fully submit to God and are passionately pursuing a true relationship with God, then you will be led by the Bible and the Holy Spirit and represent Jesus even in your own household. Sometimes that can mean showing love, kindness, and mercy to our children even when we're irritated, and sometimes it can mean correcting negative behavior even when it's easier to ignore it.

Regardless, we have to always deal with our children out of a place of love. DON'T STRESS about if you think you're a good or bad mother. Is God a good father? No, He is a PERFECT father! Even so, His children strayed away from Him all throughout the Bible, but they always returned. Don't be swayed if your child is struggling. Just lead by example, encourage them to turn to Jesus, and let them know that they are loved. Let God lead you in the big and small decisions.

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*Father, I cast all of these cares on to You. I ask that You would give me patience and fill me with joy when dealing with my child. I give You all of the glory for the fruit my child will bear. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

# Strength to Bear Another's Burden

**"Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ."  
- Galatians 6:2 ESV**

**"For I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."  
- Philippians 4:13 NKJV**

My heart is to share, encourage and love on the people the Lord brings my way, to reach those that need to know there is HOPE. I have had the privilege to care for strangers in their weakness and time of need. I've always respected people's feelings and wanted them to feel that they were cared for.

We opened our home to a friend we had not seen in twenty years. For three months I helped care for him because he was sick. We didn't know it at the time, but the doctors had given him a short time to live. Our guest was so excited to get to church, that he re-committed himself to the Lord and was a part of transformation ministry for the short time he was with us. When the doctors gave him a diagnosis, his family wasn't able to care for him, and he couldn't stay in the hospital due to his insurance. I was angry at this seemingly hopeless situation, but immediately the Lord said, "What are you going to do?" I was battling with the Lord in the hospital hallway about how to care for him in my household with my kids. He was so sick, and I had so many questions.

The day he came home with us, hospice came over to give us detailed instructions. Although my family was there, and they believed I could do it, it was scary because there was so much to remember. Daily, I would ask the Lord to give me strength. Only ten days later he went to be with the Lord. During that time I was not burdened; I was not overwhelmed; our own children were not stressed out. The day he died was the most peaceful passing I have ever experienced in my time of caring for people. God's hand was upon him. His last words to us were, "Thank you, and I love you guys."

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*I challenge you to be intentional in loving on the people the Lord brings to you. Ask yourself the question "What are you going to do?" I'm going to be intentional in loving on people, connecting and encouraging them along the way.*

# *Love Yourself as God Loves You*

**"For love completes the laws of God. All of the law can be summarized in one grand statement: 'Demonstrate love to your neighbor, even as you care for and love yourself.'"**

**- Galatians 5:14 TPT**

Have you ever looked on Facebook or Instagram and wished you had what someone else had? Or, have you ever felt insecure about your life and thought that your life could never measure up to theirs? If you have, then I am here to tell you that you aren't the only one. The world will tell us to seek after the next big thing (new relationship, great opportunity, brand new car, or promotion). The lie is, if you do, then you can find rest. Yes, you may get some rest, but is it everlasting? Likely, that kind of rest will go away, and you will move on to your next pursuit. It is a trap to keep you stuck in your past, in your present, and ultimately, in your carnal desires.

Is that the kind of life God has destined for you? No! You were destined for more. God thought you to be so valuable that He sent His most valuable possession, Jesus, to die for you. Do you value yourself like God values you? Do you love yourself enough to fight for your destiny? Jesus came so that you could have life and have it more abundantly.

**Live a life that reflects the price that was paid for you.**

Put your trust in Him and Him alone, then you will find true rest and peace that only God can give.

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*God, thank You for valuing me so much that You sent Your most valued possession, Jesus, to die for me. Help me to live a life that reflects that kind of unconditional love. Help me to love myself with dignity, honor, and humility; Give me the strength to love others as I love myself. In Jesus' name, amen.*

# Abide In Him

**"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."**

**- John 15:4-5 NKJV**

When in the fetal state, the baby is connected to the mother through the umbilical cord. This essential connection is the source of the child's sustenance, growth, and development; As long as that connection stays intact, we can expect the child to grow and develop healthily.

As we read in John 15, Jesus expresses to us the necessity of having connection with God. Using the analogy of the vine and its branches, He advises us to abide in Him because apart from Him, we can do nothing. What is interesting about the word abide, is that it expresses the act of remaining or continuing, meaning we are already in that state of being connected. Just as a child does not have to create their own umbilical cord and a branch does not need to attach itself to the vine, we were created with an innate ability to be connected to God, our source of life.

Last year, I celebrated my first Mother's Day at just five months into motherhood. Growing up as the eldest of eleven children, tending to a newborn was not new territory for me. But, there were many challenges in those first five months that I never experienced just being the "big sister:" the demands of work, marriage, and motherhood, left me drained of life, and wanting to give up. God revealed to me that my weariness was a result of trying to do everything in my own strength. As mothers and even as women, we feel like we need to be superwoman and do it all. John 15 reminds us that just as the branch must stay connected to the vine to grow and bear fruit, and just as a fetus must be connected to the mother in order to develop, we must have that same continuous, abiding connection with God in every season and circumstance of our lives because He is our source.

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*In what moments of your life have you felt disconnected from God or struggled with abiding in Him? Renew your connection with Him today, He's got you!*

# *Empowering Our Children*

**"Everything we could ever need for life and godliness has already been deposited in us by His divine power. For all this was lavished upon us through the rich experience of knowing Him who has called us by name and invited us to come to Him through a glorious manifestation of His goodness. As a result of this, He has given you magnificent promises that are beyond all price, so that through the power of these tremendous promises you can experience partnership with the divine nature, by which you have escaped the corrupt desires that are of the world."**

**- 2 Peter 1:3-4 TPT**

As a mom, you can rest assured that if you are raising more than one child, the personality differences can be extreme. And, in this world today there are many challenges that can affect your children's direction in life. The immediate lure of social network options of Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and YouTube videos do not make it any easier. They seem to manipulate and influence our children's identity and self-worth in seconds. What is a mother to do? Empower! You as their MOM can empower them by beginning a journey toward their own self-discovery. As 2 Peter 1:3 TPT reminds us, "Everything we could ever need for life and godliness has already been deposited in us by His divine power."

Speaking words of life from the very promises of God's Word, will begin to empower each child. Given skillfully and personally in every individual phase of their life, God's Word will move their hearts toward God and His righteousness, and away from wrong influences. These words of empowerment that come from the Word of God will not return void. When they begin to believe it, they will place healthy boundaries that do not necessarily restrict them in maturing, but will place a hedge of protection around their heart from the fraudulent identity the world attempts to give them instead of their God-given uniqueness.

God's commandments and His Word are the compass for all empowering words of life simply because they come from our Creator. Your children will grow and mature in their own personal walk with God and in their learning. They will understand how to treat their family members bringing unity and harmony.

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*What steps can you take to empower your children today, tomorrow and through every season? Pray for Godly wisdom to guide your life as you do this.*

# Endurance

**"And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."**

**- Hebrews 12:1b-2 NKJV**

In my late middle school years, I started running track, and it did not start off easily. I wanted to quit before I even began. To get to a place where I could actually run the race my coach expected of me, I had to work out doing plyometric and interval training. There were times when my muscles would be so sore. I had to soak my legs in ice water because of the pain of shin splints. While enduring those moments of weakness, I had my coach, family, and friends there to encourage me. I gradually got stronger and quicker. When it was time for the big race, I was laser-focused and confident. I knew that through my training, encouragement and cheers, I would make it through the finish line.

In the same way, we are running a spiritual race. We have been called to love God, seek Him, and fulfill His purpose for us by loving His people and ministering to them. Because of sin, we have momentary trials to go through in the process where we may get a little bruised up or go through some pain. This is okay and necessary. In those moments, seek God's face more, be refined, renewed and transformed. Our faith becomes stronger, and we are able to know Him intimately and bring glory to God's name.

"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power for all patience and long-suffering with joy" Colossians 1:11 NKJV, we will win the race. In our strides, our loving Father is there, cheering us on, not in the stands, but right beside us. Do not grow weary or lose heart. Cling to Christ and whatever purpose God has for you, you will come out victorious and full of faith.

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*What is God wanting to refine in your life right now so that you can win the race? Ask for His strength when you are weary, and He will help you build your stamina as you face life's race.*

# Mighty Among Beasts

**"Stop weeping! Look closely, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome and conquered!"**

**- Revelation 5:5 AMP**

If you think about it, a lion is not the fastest animal, not the biggest animal, not even the strongest in the animal kingdom, but what sets the lion apart is this: the lion thinks he is! It says in Proverbs "As a man thinks, so is he." When other animals hear a lion's roar, they tremble. When a lion roars, it comes from within. It is an echoing sound that comes from someone fearless, who does not care who you are. He is coming against you, and he is not coming to lose.

Through our Savior Jesus Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah's roar lies within you! That lion in you is ready and waiting to rise up to take possession of everything God has already prepared for you before the beginning of time. It is time for that lion in you to rise up, and when you rise up, the devil has to back off, because he is reminded of what Jesus did with him at Calvary. You can boldly roar to the enemy, "Back off my family, back off my children, back off my business, back off my finances, my mind, my inheritance!" I know God has everything taken care of.

Friend, God has held everything for you that He has called you to be. You do not need to look anywhere else. Be aligned with His Word "listen to My words; incline your ear to My sayings. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh." To know God's heart and desires we need to know what He says, "would two walk together, without having met?" He wants us to know Him as He knows us. God wants to lavish us with everything that He has predestined for us before the beginning of time, "and whom He has ordained beforehand, these He also called." Your calling and your purpose is yours through Christ Jesus, but it's going to take that lion in you to receive it and believe it. Spend time reading these additional scriptures in the KJV- Revelation 5:5; Proverbs 23:7; Amos 3:8; Proverbs 30:30; Proverbs 4:20, 22; Amos 3:3; Romans 8:30.

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*Lord Jesus, let Your roar be our roar. Let us not be shaken, but remain strong in You. Father God, let Your definition of bold be our definition. Show us Your ways, teach us Your paths, and lead us in Your truth. God of our deliverance, teach us. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

# *Courageous Enough to Surrender It All*

**"Be still and know that I am God." - Psalms 46:10 NKJV**

When I was going through a season of change in my life, God placed "Be still and know that I am God," Psalms 46:10 NKJV, on my heart. I had heard this verse many times throughout my life and always just thought the meaning was to rest, be quiet, lay down.

Months passed, and one day I felt a push to dig deeper. I discovered in the original Hebrew text, "be still" comes from the word "rapha" meaning to surrender. Wow! It blew me away. God wanted me to surrender, go weak, let go and give up all control. I needed to lean on and trust solely on Him.

Easier said than done. I had always been very independent. Although I loved God throughout my life, I depended on my own strength. I needed to be broken.

I wept in the revelation of this for days. I needed to renew my walk with God. I changed everything: became obedient in tithing my time as well as my finances, let God decide what I fed my mind and spirit and put God first in every decision of my life.

I like to call it the "surrender season" of my life. In the surrender, He transformed my walk with Him from one of "I have to" into "I gratefully get to, and willingly want to." Now, I yearn, I thirst, I hunger for more and more of Him. In this surrender, He has poured out indescribable peace, love, and joy! Learning to be strong and courageous enough to surrender it all to God was the best choice I've ever made.

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*Father God, I surrender it all to You. I lean on and trust in You. Be my strength so I can go weak. Lead me, guide me, and use me Lord for Your will. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen.*

# Consistency

**"Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord [always doing your best and doing more than is needed], being continually aware that your labor [even to the point of exhaustion] in the Lord is not futile nor wasted [it is never without purpose]."**

**- 1 Corinthians 15:58 AMP**

When I first heard the concept, "Consistency is power for good or evil," I had to stop and think about it for a while. What am I consistently doing that is giving God the biggest advantage in my life? Am I trying to live courageously? If so, the more I consistently act in a courageous manner, the more powerful God's courage will be in me. Do I consistently speak life over myself, others, and my difficult circumstances? If I do, the consistent practice of speaking life, grows powerful and becomes my "go to" response. Am I consistently authentic in my relationships with others? If so, my honesty will grow healthy relationships that bring God glory.

The opposite is also true. The more consistently I do things that go against God's word, the more power I am giving to the enemy, and he is able to use his devices against me. If I complain a lot, I am giving that negative attitude of discontentment a stronger place in my life. If I continue to reach for a sweet treat when I am feeling down, I am giving that bad habit a strong position in my life.

Take a minute to evaluate what you do regularly. What are you excelling in and what do you do steadfastly? Think about your thought life, your actions, your daily consistent habits. Are you operating so that God's glory will be revealed, or are you strengthening the enemy's position in your life? Remember whatever you feed grows.

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*Dear Jesus, help us to live intentionally. May the things we do consistently be the things that bring You and Your kingdom the glory You deserve!*

# Masterpiece

**"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do things he planned for us long ago."**

**- Ephesians 2:10 NLT**

When you hear the word "masterpiece" maybe the names of Michelangelo or Leonardo da Vinci come to mind. Their famous pieces of art, like the Mona Lisa and the Sistine Chapel, have marked history for hundreds of years. Yet, when you look up to the majestic sky you see a starry painted canvas with millions of lights that are held together perfectly in the palm of God's hand.

Just as God lavishly created a breathtaking universe of such great magnitude, He also personally knit you together perfectly in your mother's womb. Do you see how unique, beautiful, and priceless you are? The definition of masterpiece is "a work of outstanding artistry, skill, or workmanship. An artist's or craftsman's best piece of work." You are God's most OUTSTANDING piece of work!!! Compared to the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas, or the crystal-clear waters of the Pacific, you stand far above those places of beauty. What is it that makes you more beautiful than the stars of the sky and the vibrant-colored flowers of the earth? Is it your hair, your smile, your eyes? I venture to say that although God looks at those defined features and is pleased, it is not what captures His eye. As we see in 1 Samuel 16:7 NKJV, "For the Lord does not see what man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." Despite what the world wants you to believe about beauty, your HEART is what God looks upon daily: attitude, obedience, motives, and tenderness of heart are beautiful to Him.

Matthew 5:8 NKJV says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This scripture implies a two-way relationship. The ultimate purpose of God CREATING us was not just to sit afar to look at us, but to be INTIMATE with us. God desires to intimately connect with you for the purpose of making you NEW and complete! So, when your thoughts are flooded with a negative view of yourself, remember this scripture and declare that you are His Masterpiece!

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*Lord, thank You for deeply, deliberately, and divinely loving me as Your precious daughter. Help me to see myself the way You see me, as Your masterpiece! Help me to focus on my inner beauty and reflect Your goodness outwardly. Amen.*

# Confidence Beyond Looks

**"Charm and grace are deceptive, and [superficial] beauty is vain. But, a woman who fears the Lord [reverently worshiping, obeying, serving, and trusting Him with awe-filled respect], she shall be praised."**

**- Proverbs 31:30 AMP**

Okay, real talk today ladies! I am feeling old and chunky! Nothing like a divorce to kick a gal into feeling "mid-life" like. I find myself scouring Amazon for anti-aging remedies, chin lift, face slimmers, and weight loss pills. It's hard enough to feel good about yourself when you have a husband who is doting on you. But, when you are newly single and smack dab in the middle of your life, it is kind of the perfect storm!

I choose to see it as a new start, a do over. This is a chance to find my confidence; not only in who I am on the outside, but especially in WHO I am on the inside. We all say beauty comes from within, but do we really believe it? We have to adjust our mentality to God's Word which will far outlast any beauty ideal or trend.

I'm not saying I'm going to put away my makeup or cute clothes. Nor am I done searching for tips and tricks to curtail wrinkles; but I need to center myself in knowing my worth and my value is not based on these things. I am precious and beautiful because, first and foremost, I am royalty, a daughter of the King, a princess! He sees, accepts and adores me for my heart and the treasure it is. And because I am His!

But, let me take this a step further. Proverbs says that beauty is vain and grace is deceptive, but the woman who worships, obeys and trusts the Lord shall be praised. 1 Peter 3:3-4 BSB says "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair or gold jewelry or fine clothes, but from the inner disposition of your heart, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in God's sight."

The truth is, striving for the fountain of youth is a losing battle. But, our inner attractiveness can grow and accelerate over time if we put forth the effort. Those who love us and know us don't care about how we look. Jesus loves and knows us completely and unconditionally. Let His perfect love cast out all fear, all inadequacy and all shame. When we reflect His beauty and His perfection, we will have a stunning glow that no product can reproduce

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*Lord, fill me with a confidence that comes from You, not in how I look, or how old I am, but, in who You say I am. What do You love about me? What makes me special and beautiful to You? Thank You for loving me just as I am. Amen.*

# God Wants To Do Something New in You

**"Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new. It's bursting out! Don't you see it?"**

**- Isaiah 43:19 MSG**

Every January I go into my overstuffed, four-drawer filing cabinet and purge my files of the items I don't need to hold onto. Old folders that I no longer need to daily access are put in a box for a seven year hold.

As I was thinking about a character issue I have been dealing with for a long time in my life, I realized that God was speaking to me. Although I HAVE been able to move this issue into a box where I don't have daily access, I still keep it in the "just in case I need it" box, long past seven years. Our enemy, who is constantly seeking to destroy us, likes to remind us of what is in the box from the past. He wants to use it to accuse us and lie to us. He wants to make a single hurtful feeling or experience into a repeated pattern in our lives. He does this by making us view everything through the clouded lens of that hurtful past, aka 'the box.'

Now is the time to let God purge those old files; Not move them to the "just in case" box, but to permanently destroy or delete. The point of purging the old is to make room for the new. When I keep too many old files I am not able to find anything in the file cabinet. The legitimate things that God desires to give me, and that I need to hold on to, there just isn't room for them. Consider Paul's words in Philippians 3:13b-14 NKJV "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Our job is to willingly let go of the OLD files. Great freedom is found in the process of letting go.

**God has a wealth of new and beautiful things to place in our lives.**

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*What box or file do you keep revisiting that God wants to remove from your life? Ask God now to remove it, and participate in the process of throwing it away permanently. Ask him to rewire your brain to no longer access those files. You will not regret it.*

# Being Fearless = Love

**"We look away from the natural realm and we fasten our gaze onto Jesus . . . who leads us forward into faith's perfection. His example is this: Because His heart was focused on the joy of knowing that you would be His, He endured the agony of the cross and conquered its humiliation, and now sits exalted at the right hand of the throne of God! So consider carefully how Jesus faced such intense opposition . . . so that you won't become worn down and cave in under life's pressures."**

**- Hebrews 12:2-3 TPT**

**"Love's perfection drives the fear of punishment far from our hearts. . ."**

**- 1 John 4:18b TPT**

**We lock eyes with him because it's what keeps us going and gives us the strength for tomorrow. The Son is not able to do anything from himself or through my own initiative. I only do the works that I see the Father doing, for the Son does the same works as his Father. Because the Father loves His Son so much"**

**- John 5:19-20 TPT**

Being fearless doesn't mean not having fears, it means looking into the eyes of love and remembering there's something greater than our temporary discomfort, pain, or sacrifice. Jesus went to the cross because His eyes were firmly locked into His Father's gaze. He looked forward to the joy set before Him to garner the strength to go through the trial.

Jesus lived for us the perfect example. He lived off the abundance of his Father's love for each day. He looked at what His Father was doing and simply followed. Sometimes we over complicate things when all we are asked is to do is lock our eyes on His love and follow. We live for an audience of One. Today, look into His eyes, thank Him for His lovingkindness and as Him to show you what you are to do; how you are to live.

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*Papa, I want to live out of the abundance of Your love. I want to know Your love in the depths of my soul so that Your love can conquer every unholy fear in my life. Strengthen Your love in me to become the biggest thing in my life. Fix my gaze on You. In Jesus' mighty Name, Amen.*

# Beware of What You Hear

**"God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, and of love and of a sound mind."**

**- 2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV**

I think we can all agree that a spirit of fear was released by the devil in 2020. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV "God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power, and of love and of a sound mind." We are in a battle of the voices: good versus evil. The spirit of antichrist is beginning to manifest in the news, in the lies, and in the mocking. Jesus cautioned us to "take heed how you hear" (Luke 8:18a NKJV) and "take heed what you hear" (Mark 4:24a NKJV).

We must beware of the deception that comes through the demonic airways. Failure to hear accurately can actually decrease our spiritual strength and rob our faith. Fear, paralysis, defilement, lies, and deception come when the devil talks to people, and they listen. The pressure of circumstances doesn't control the true overcomer; they seek higher authority and the truth of God.

We must have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying. When we filter the big events of our day through the Bible and what God is doing and saying here on earth, our perspective changes. The things that loomed large seem to grow smaller in comparison to His greatness and the power He has to keep us steady in trials and calm our every fear.

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*Father, we desire to hear Your voice and be led by Your Spirit. May we know the truth which will set us free. Give us the courage and boldness to fight the good fight of faith.*

# Being Content

## Philippians 4:11-13 AMP

Do you struggle with being content where you are? Why do we always want what we don't have? I'm pretty sure most of us aren't having to deal with the true hunger Paul is referring to, but let's apply this to other areas in our life. When we are single, we want to be married? Or when we're married, we sometimes kind of wish we were single? Or as mothers, we just long for alone time? The barren woman just wants a child to hold?

We all battle with the temptation to compare our seasons with others. From our perspective, we are suffering and others are just coasting down Easy Street. But, this is not the case. Good and bad, easy and hard show up in every season of life. Your trouble or trial would be someone's welcomed blessing.

Whatever season you are in, the secret is to learn how to be content. How in the world do we do this? First, we recognize that our contentment comes not through outward ideals, but through Jesus inside of us. His presence and peace can give supernatural joy that nothing bad or good can diminish.

I've experienced this through the last couple years of my life. My circumstances are less than ideal; in fact they are pretty terrible. But, I've had this almost unexplainable calm through it all. It can begin with a choice to see the good, even in bad things that happen to us. When things are great, we can't let ourselves develop too much dependence on it staying that way. Because good or bad, it will change at some point. Contentment keeps you stable through the ups and downs of life.

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*Jesus, help me to be content; whether single, or married, rich or poor, thin or thick, young or old, a mom or not. Fill me with purpose for every season. Fill me with confidence and boldness to be the best me, wherever I may be today. Fill me with Your spirit, so I can be content in every circumstance. Amen.*

# *Bold Actions = Changed Lives*

**Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

**- Hebrews 4:16 NKJV**

You may ask "how do we come boldly before the throne when our past is littered with sinning and failing God?" There is only one way we can do this. It is through accepting Jesus into our lives, asking for His forgiveness and turning from a life of sin. Through the sacrifice of His own blood on the cross, we are purified from all past sins and failures.

Consider Rahab, who was known to be a prostitute. One evening, two strangers came into her establishment needing her help. They were sent as spies to check out Jericho ahead of the raiding party of Israelites. They needed a place to hide from Jericho's Canaanite soldiers. Rahab acted quickly to save her family, and decided to help hide the spies. In return, she asked for her and her family to be spared during the ensuing raid. What predicated this bold decision?

- She recognized that the Israelites were God's chosen people.
- She aligned herself with them by her bold request.
- She believed in the powerful God of the Israelites.

Amazingly, she did all this while being surrounded by Pagan gods and though she was not yet living a Godly life. Little did she know that day, that this one bold act would lead her to a completely different life. Ultimately, Rahab married an Israelite from the tribe of Judah. Her son was Boaz, the husband of Ruth. Joseph, the adoptive father of Jesus, is her direct descendant.

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*Rahab's inspiring story reminds us that any who have come out of a lifestyle of sin can have a future and a hope. Like her, when we give our lives to Jesus the slate is wiped clean, and we have new access to come boldly before His throne. Take a moment to consider what bold things God is asking you to do.*

# Resilient Marriage

**"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."**

**-Galatians 6:9 NKJV**

Being resilient means to spring back and recover quickly from adversity and trials. It's unbelievable that my husband and I are on the precipice of fifty years of marriage, but it hasn't been easy. We have battled the devastating effects of infidelity, serious health issues, business financial crisis and aging challenges. However, we have the blessing of being able to look back and see things through God's perspective, It's amazing and overwhelming, knowing all that we have been through as a couple. We are imperfect individuals and sometimes still rub each other the wrong way, but the big picture is a miraculous testimony of God's intervention and blessing. Key character traits both of us have needed to implement have been to humble ourselves, repent and forgive in order to move forward. As my husband likes to say, "We have to adjust, readjust and adjust again."

Through the generations we are to teach our children and grandchildren about the goodness of God, while remaining courageous and strong through life's trials. These love notes below from our girls on an anniversary a few years ago bring such joy to our hearts and assure us that we are passing our faith to the generations to come. Our children have risen up and called us "blessed" and with tears of gratitude we give all the glory and praise to Jesus.

"My parents are a beautiful example of God's redemptive and restorative power. They inspire me, not because they've had an easy, happy or successful marriage. But, because they've had trials and challenges one after another and they've persevered. They grew, they changed, they loved, they forgave, they sacrificed! And God used it all to weave a beautiful tapestry, complex and complete."

"My parent's marriage is a MIRACLE! There have been so many times where they could have thrown in the towel, but by God's supernatural grace, they are more in love today than they ever were."

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*Lord, Help us to follow Your principles in marriage. May we live a life to love, honor and forgive each other. Help us to be willing to serve each other and to remain humble in our marriage, and love each other the way You love the church. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## Shepherdess Arise

**"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were [a]weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.'"**

**- Matt 9:36-37 NKJV**

While teaching kindergarten, nearby our school was a shepherd with a flock of sheep. Anxious for the children to learn responsibility, I borrowed a lamb for a couple of months hoping to teach the children daily care of "Wooley" by taking him home on weekends. The children did very well and "Wooley" was returned to his shepherd. Then there was a problem, "Wooley" did not fit back in the flock. He had become one of us and become so accustomed to the children's love and care that he no longer liked the flock. Instead, "Wooley" became so accustomed to our love and care he no longer fit in with the flock of sheep he was born into.

There is a harvest of new sheep coming into our church. At Early Morning Prayer in all our prayer centers we pray daily for the harvest. God is answering our prayers! In every service we see many new people coming and families returning home. They all need to be shepherded with lots of love and care in a life group where they'll be protected with prayer, fed the Word of God and surrounded with lots of fun and fellowship. They need a new family so like "Wooley" they wouldn't be recognized or fit back into the world.

We are needing tenacious "shepherdesses" who will not give-up on the sheep, but disciple them in a life group. Won't you answer the call and join a team shepherding the harvest. Begin by simply attending the Discover Track. You can be a part of seeing many fulfill the destiny and call on their lives and know the joy of being a "shepherdess" for the Lord.

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*Father, I thank you for loving and saving me. Use me to love and care for the many new women you are bringing into our church. I Thank you for the courage, love and strength you're giving me to become a shepherdess for You. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!*

# Notes

PART III



*the righteous are*  
as **BOLD** *as a lion*



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