



# Sisterhood

DEVOTIONAL

SPRING 2018

# Contents

“BE BRAVE” IS AN INSPIRING AND UPLIFTING 31-DAY DEVOTIONAL WRITTEN BY THE LADIES OF CITY POINT IN ALLEN, TEXAS. EACH DAY OF THE MONTH THERE IS A SHORT 5-MINUTE DEVOTION ALONG WITH A PRAYER FOR EACH DAY. YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF ENCOURAGED AND READY TO TAKE ON THE DAY AS YOU READ THESE STORIES OF LIFE-CHANGE. YOU WILL LAUGH, YOU WILL CRY AND YOU WILL FIND A COMMON THREAD OF BRAVERY IN EACH OF THESE WOMEN’S STORIES. WHATEVER SEASON OF LIFE YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF IN - BE BRAVE - GET IN GOD’S WORD AND ALLOW HIM TO LEAD YOU AND GUIDE YOU.

PSALMS 31:24 “BE BRAVE. BE STRONG. DON’T GIVE UP. EXPECT GOD TO GET HERE SOON.”



# Day 1



Have you ever signed up for something – volunteering at your kids school, a new job, a work-out program, a mammogram – and once you got started thought, “Wait! This isn’t what I signed up for?”

This very situation happened to me! (and not just during that first awesome mammogram!)

A few years ago Eddie and I were offered the lead pastor position at a church in Los Angeles. We stepped out with our two daughters, ages 6 & 7, left Texas and our family behind and moved our lives to the unknown of L.A. To quote the famous line from, A Tale of Two Cities, “It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.” There were days that I could feel God in every step – and then there were days that I couldn’t find enough air in my lungs to utter a prayer. I was lost. I was drowning. I felt hopeless. I found myself in a place of total despair. It was at that moment that I cried out to God with every ounce of strength I had left. It was an ugly cry moment. It was a turning point for me. As I prayed for God’s help – He gave me this scripture.....

Psalms 142:3

“When my Spirit was overwhelmed within me, Then you knew my path. In the way in which I walk....”

Sometimes in our lives it’s not until we are completely overwhelmed that we stop and give total control over to God. It’s when we stop trying to figure it out, worry about it or stress over it. When I was overwhelmed – only God knew my path. HE knew the way I should walk.

And then suddenly I could breathe again – I saw it clear as day. I was overwhelmed BUT God knew where I should walk. He knew. All I had to do was trust Him and follow.

If you are reading this today and you are feeling that sense of hopelessness – TRUST GOD – rely on Him. He’ll guide you and lead you out of that place. God took our little family on a journey that I never expected and certainly didn’t sign up for – but God was faithful and the deposits He made in my life during those years are the very foundation that I stand on now.

- Julie Woods





Day 2





I can't tell you how many times I plan to take my three boys shopping... and naively think we'll have a GREAT TIME this trip. Like, we will all actually agree on which shoes to buy. So, here's three oh-so-harsh realities...

One, my kids detest shopping. Two, my kids would rather test the limits of the store's management by reenacting pro-wrestling match-ups, including dog-piling in the underwear aisle. Three, I am a slow, thorough shopper.

When we're done, if I don't give up and make a fool of myself in the store, we usually leave feeling miserable. Yet once I find holes in my son's shoes, I start to think "Maybe we should all go shoe shopping again!"

Yes, I know doing the same thing over and over — yet expecting a different outcome — is the definition of crazy! And that's me!!!

Sometimes I ask, "In what other ways am I spinning my wheels and getting nowhere? Am I doing the same thing over and over again expecting a different outcome?" Notice in that sentence, I'm spinning my wheels. Maybe they are not my wheels to spin? I'm reminded of the scripture in Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God." I like to add the word "Stop" to the beginning of that verse. "Stop! Be still, and know that I am God." That "Stop" indicates I'm approaching a red light, so actually stop. Don't race ahead to try to beat a yellow light. God says, "Stop moving and worrying and fretting over the situation. Don't you remember that I'm in control!" God created the universe, so surely He can handle one child passionately debating why he should purchase an oversized, 1987 era'd blue denim, "Roger Rabbit" labeled hat, right? (Yes, that was an actual request. No, we did not buy it!)

Shopping with kids might be stressful, but it's a decision of little consequence. So what about the important decisions we all have to make? Did you make the right choice about that job? What college should I attend next fall? Am I engaged to the right guy?

Spin your wheels? Gun it, and try to beat the yellow light? Nope. Recognize the red light. Stop! Be still and know He is God.

There may be some practical steps to take, and counsel to receive. But before you do anything, take the problem to Him first. Let Him tell you the next step. Be led by His peace first. Transform your worries into a prayer request.

Find scriptures that pertain to what you are facing and begin speaking God's truth over it. Write those scriptures on sticky notes and put them on your mirror or at your work space. Say them, memorize them, say them again, believe them! His Word will not come up empty, but will accomplish what He desires, and achieve the purpose for which it was sent. (Isaiah 55:11)

- Alicia Ingram





Day 3



For four years my annual reviews all sounded the same; “her tone is harsh”, “she’s negative”, “she’s uncaring”, “she’s unapproachable”. I tried to combat their perceptions of me by attempting to soften emails and messages with lots of emojis so they would know that I was trying to be friendly. But still every year the reviews were the same.

You see I moved to New York just over 5 years ago, so most of my communication with staff during this time was done through emails and instant messaging. When I would fly into Dallas I would go into the office while I was in town. People got to see that I wasn’t mad at them. I didn’t hate them. I just had to enforce our rules on how we processed things. It would help for a short time, but when I left they went back to thinking negatively about me.

Then about a year and a half ago I moved back to Texas and began to work from the office daily. This year when I sat for my review I was expecting to hear the same things I had heard for the past 4 years. My boss started my review by asking the wonderful question “What do you think you could improve on?” I answered, “My temper, my tone, etc,” all the typical things I felt that I was never going to overcome.

Then he kind of laughed and said, “No one said one word about any of that.” He said that I had received some of the best reviews in the whole company. They say you are “friendly and helpful and easy to approach.” He said the only “negative” things people said about you is that you are too busy because you help too much and you cannot say no. I was amazed and humbled.

You see I didn’t change my tone. I didn’t change what I was saying. I just changed how close I was to them. All my issues had more to do with proximity than anything else. How many times have we thought that God was distant and cold, or that he only wanted to give us rules or was mad at us? This is never true of God. God loves us and is always there for us, but we may not be close enough to him to see that. We need to change our proximity. We need to change how often we talk to him and get to know him. When we do that our perception of him changes.

- Amber Britain









In my life, January 2013 marks a battle with fear and worry like I had never known. I had just lost my mom to a 6 month battle with brain cancer, our new business was failing, and I was 6 months pregnant with our second child. I was struggling with a dangerous cocktail of fear, anxiety and grief. I withdrew and allowed myself to become a wallflower, preferring to go through life unnoticed.

I know that is not what God desires for me or for you. God has been using 2 Timothy 1:7 to transform me since those dismal days.

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

Fear is not based on truth, but God’s word is truth. The Bible reminds us, numerous times, to FEAR NOT. Why does God have to remind us so often? Maybe because our earthly minds are unable to determine all the answers for the things we cannot control, resulting in fear. Dwelling on the unknown of relationships, money or sickness can easily cause fear in my mind if I allow my focus to drift from Scripture.

After reading and memorizing this verse, I had to know more about this power. In Greek, this word is *dunamis*, which is our root for the word DYNAMIC! Wow! Instead of fear, God gave us dynamic power; a force that stimulates change and progress. This power doesn’t replace fear, it overcomes it. We are not made to be timid and live as a wallflower. God desires for us to be a force that stimulates change, loves others and lives right.

What has God brought you through that can speak life into someone’s situation? In my life, God graciously provided for us during our roughest days. When I look back at those times, I can’t explain how all of our bills were paid or how God gave me peace to get up each day and live life after such loss. I do know that those experiences deepened my relationship with Him and brought me to a new level of trust. He brought me out of that valley. I now treasure opportunities to encourage others when they are walking through a trial because I know we serve a God who loves and cares for us so perfectly. I believe God is actively making this verse a reality in my life and showing me how to trust His voice, lean on His power and be brave.

- Misti Tucker





Day 5



When I actively started seeking a relationship with Christ and to know more, I realized I was really good at asking for things with an expectation. Before I ever made a request I had already decided what it would look like and how it should play out. To my utter surprise and dismay, God did not do what I had already planned for him to do. I became upset and I didn't trust people around me because God wasn't fixing them the way I saw fit. I allowed the idea that God wasn't helping me to take over and rule my thoughts and emotions. I felt like I was under attack. I believed I was trusting God but actually I had allowed the devil to place seeds of doubt that I watered and allowed to grow. I quickly realized I was doing something wrong.

My God is faithful and loving. I started really reading my bible to know more about God's promises and faithfulness. I found 3 different verses to stand on. I kept them near my work computer, I printed them out and put them on my refrigerator, I surrounded myself with them. Every time I wondered or worried about a situation, I would speak the verses out loud. God started working on me immediately. He showed me it wasn't those around me that needed to be fixed, it was me. In those dark times it wasn't that I didn't trust those around me, it was that I wasn't trusting God. He didn't do what I told him to do! Now I can see God's fingerprints in everything I prayed for and even better - I can see them in parts of my life where I didn't even know I was in need. God is faithful, God will strengthen you, but you have to seek him and patiently trust that he is for you.

Today I am thankful for the amazing women God has put in my life. They give me inspiration to seek and to know more. They set an example and help me see the Godly woman I strive to be. With God leading me, I aim to be a mighty lion that retreats before nothing and no one! Be Brave!

- Emily Villegas





Day 6





For years, I carried a secret from my past...one that I swore to never tell. I thought I was protecting myself from shame and humiliation. What I did not know was that the secret itself was holding me captive. The secret had power over my life and so did the lies that surrounded it. I was imprisoned by my negative thoughts and wounded by my broken heart. After surrendering my life to Jesus and asking him to be Lord of my life, the secret eventually came bubbling to the surface like fizz from a carbonated drink. I could no longer push it down. I could no longer keep it hidden. It was as if God himself was trying to expel it from me. One day, I did tell my secret to a trusted friend... It was the beginning of my healing journey. Initially, there was a gaping hole in the space in my heart where the secret once occupied for so long... But God began to fill this hole with his love. He began to take me on a journey to wholeness. God used people in my path to bring me the Good News, to walk alongside me as Jesus healed my broken heart, renewed my mind and set me free from my own prison.

Is there something in your heart that you've been protecting; a secret you desperately want no one to know? God wants to possess every area of our hearts. Be brave. Find a trusted friend to share your secret. Allow God to expel it. Allow Him to replace the pain with His love. God wants to bring liberty and freedom into your life. He wants to take your secrets and turn them into stories of his redemption and restoration. He wants you to surrender everything to him...

I now have a story to share. It is my testimony-one that points to Jesus as my redeemer. God is now using me to share my story with others. He is allowing me to walk alongside others as they go through the same pain and experiences that I went through. He took my yucky secret and shameful past, and showered me with His forgiveness and love. He has anointed me to share His goodness and mercy with others.

You never know how blessed someone may be from hearing your story. Trust God with your secrets. Trust Him to bring freedom, restoration and redemption in your life. Trust Him as He calls you to share your testimony. The Spirit of the Lord will anoint you as He has me.

- Stacy Reaves





Day 7



Growing up, there was a popular line of shirts with the words “No Fear” on them. I remember when they first came out, the different styles, colors and designs each had. The term “No Fear” turned into a common phrase that was used with most young people. It meant to be fearless, while others believed it was causing young ones to rebel. That was not the case. As I look back at this term “No Fear” I think of how Joshua 1:9 played a big part of my life throughout the years.

During the most difficult times in our lives, he is there guiding us through that obstacle. As we share the positive things in our lives, we need to know that he is there, no matter the circumstances. We may go off the path from time to time but his arms will be wide open to help guide us back on that road.

Whenever I feel overwhelmed or discouraged, I know that I can count on him to help me through that situation. He’s always teaching me to be a fearless leader. There is nothing big or small that we cannot handle or overcome through the power of the holy spirit. No matter where I go, his love is there, always constant, everlasting from above. His presence is felt daily and I call upon him not only during the worst of times but I praise his name and thank him for the best of times.

We all have fears which is part of the flesh. When we put our trust in the Lord, we are just like the saying on that tshirt, having “No Fear” because we are never alone. He is our constant, he is our guide, he is our protector.

- Stephanie Franco





Day 8





The world we live in makes it easy to dwell on our flaws. They come in all sorts of forms and make us feel inadequate, creating a perfect opening for the enemy. We're encouraged to hide them or make them disappear without appreciating why we have them. We are ashamed of them and afraid to confront them, much less embrace them.

I'm here to tell you that God knew about every single one of those flaws when he created you! In fact, I don't even like describing them as "flaws" because it implies error in God's handiwork. You didn't end up with a weakness because God overlooked something or made a mistake. You have every unique way about you - strengths and weaknesses - because you are wonderfully complex (Psalm 139:14). You are a beautiful, custom work of art that he designed intentionally with great care. He loves you exactly the way he created you.

We are God's workmanship, created to glorify Him through opportunities that he prepared for us ahead of time (Eph. 2:10). His eyes have already seen each of our days and the purpose weaved through them (Psalm 139: 16). If we know he equips us with everything good for fulfilling his purpose for us (Heb. 13:21), why do we exclude our weaknesses from the list of what he's equipped us with? Though it can be difficult to imagine your weakness as anything other than what you experience it as today, he "has made everything beautiful for its own time" (Ecc. 3:11).

Don't be afraid or ashamed of your weaknesses. Seek them out and then learn to see them through His eyes - as precious intricacies designed to bring glory to Him. He will go before us and he will follow us (Psalm 139:5) so ask yourself, "What weaknesses did God give me and how can they glorify Him?"

- Katt Anderson





Day 9



Overwhelmed, anxious, worried, stressed...if you've used these words to describe yourself lately, you're not alone. It's so easy to let our circumstances get the best of us. I could list 100 examples of stressful events in our lives, but I know something has already come to mind for you. When we find ourselves in these circumstances, our first reaction should be to call on the Lord. He is always there, always listening. Even if it is as simple as 'Lord help me' or 'Father give me the words to say'. That's enough; that's all it takes. It's tempting to begin griping, complaining, having negative thoughts or even being fearful. 2 Timothy 1:7 tells us that God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind.

In my line of work, I frequently make presentations, need to develop relationships quickly and yes at times have to have tough conversations with people. As you can imagine, sometimes the butterflies set in. Fear and anxiety could easily creep in as well. It's at those moments, I've learned to trust in the Lord to give me the words to say and I pray for favor with those I'm speaking with. Without fail, he comes through. He will give you a peace that passes all understanding. Don't forget to be thankful. The last part of that verse says "with thanksgiving let your requests be known". Thank Him ahead of time for working on your behalf and always be thankful in the end. I hope this has encouraged you today.

- Ruthann Yates





Day 10





Have you ever just thrown your hands up in desperation and cried out to God and asked, “What are you doing? Why do I have to go through this?” I have, I’ve done it a lot. Becoming a mom has pushed me to limits that I didn’t think I could ever reach. I’ve suffered through postpartum depression. I’ve had tiny hands dig into my skin for the hundredth time that day, while tears rolled down my face because I just couldn’t handle it anymore. I’ve watched my best friend struggle with infertility for four years while I popped out two children who were planned against. I’ve watched my grandmother, a pastor’s wife who has always served the Lord, go through breast cancer, have a double mastectomy, and deal with countless rounds of chemo. It doesn’t make sense.

When Jesus uttered these words he was preparing to leave his friends and pay the price for our lives on the cross. He was preparing for his own demise, to be tortured, and spat upon. As he knelt at Simon Peter’s feet, Simon Peter asked him why. Why are you washing my feet? I’m not worthy, please let me wash your feet. But Jesus brushed him aside and said, “You don’t understand now what I am doing, but someday you will.”

This verse echos through life’s ugliest hardest moment, I hear, “someday you will.” Before I had postpartum depression, I didn’t understand it. I couldn’t wrap a mama in the love she needs to start to overcome it. I didn’t know how to serve her, or even that she needed to be served at all. Every battle connects you, it connects you with other people who have fought the same battle, and it connects you with a God who loves you and will use this battle to mold you into the woman he always planned for you to become.

In the moment, it’s hard to see the purpose in where God has you and the things that he brings you through. But, sister take heart and hear my cry that right now you don’t know what he is doing. You can’t see it, you can’t touch it, you are barely holding on. But, he has mighty plans for you and he loves you fiercely, keep your head up and trust in him.

- Whitney Rogers







I never thought of myself as a fearful person. Strong-willed, yes. Stubborn, yes. Witty, maybe. But Fearful? No, not really. That is until I was told that I was bleeding in my brain and then, I lost it. I crumpled to the floor in a ball of tears completely scared to death.

What you don't know is that when I was twenty-five years old my Dad died of brain cancer at the age of 48. He went through four brain surgeries and numerous chemo and radiation treatments, but the cancer finally became too much. I watched my Dad go from someone with a larger than life personality to someone who could not be alone by himself. I am the oldest of three kids thus the self-appointed "rock" of the family. I had to hold it together for my Mom, and my brothers, and my husband, and my two small children. No one could see me waiver or fear because then the whole family would come crumbling down, so I thought.

As the years went by I would talk about my Dad, but never about the cancer. The disease became a death sentence to me. I would start worrying if I had a headache that lasted too long. I was constantly analyzing my scalp for bumps. The crazy part of it all was that no matter what I found, I was too terrified to go to the doctor just in case it might be cancer. I didn't want to know. I would rather live in fear. However, that fear began to seep into my everyday thoughts and life. I would pray to God, but never really trusted that He would listen.

God has always used music to get through to me. I find myself fully engaged when worshipping in song. It was around the Spring of 2017 when I first heard the song, "You Never Let Go" by Bryan and Katie Torwalt. The lyrics pulled me in and I found myself in tears every time that I heard it. Shortly after hearing this song I began a "No Fear" Bible Reading Challenge. One passage kept coming back to me over and over and that is Psalm 91:1-6.

In April of 2017 I had a brain hemorrhage. My worst fear had become a reality. I had to have an MRI and a CT scan of my brain and all I could think was that I had cancer and I was going to die. I held onto the song, "You Never Let Go" and played it over and over and over. This song became my anthem. After a couple of days in the hospital the doctors determined that my hemorrhage was not caused by a stroke or aneurysm. It was a fluke thing that baffled them. It was a wake-up call for me. I had been letting fear of this disease take over and it was time to "find rest in the shadow of the Almighty...He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him. "

- Jamie Sorrells









Jesus says this to his followers toward the end of the Sermon on the Mount, which is the teaching he gave to his disciples and other people who followed him up on a mountainside. What does he mean by the narrow gate? And just how hard is it to enter through it?

It is important to understand that Jesus alone is “the way, the truth and the life.” (John 14:6) The way to eternal life is narrow, because Christ is truly the only way to God and many on the broad road will try to find another way to God on their own terms and will not find life. When he calls us to enter the narrow gate, what exactly are we signing up for?

Jesus is clear that the narrow way is not an easy way, but promises to be difficult. He says “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23) What he calls us to as those who choose to put our faith in him and walk through the narrow gate is a difficult often path paved with pain, suffering and loss. On the narrow path, we have to face our own pride, our struggle with sin and the lies of the enemy.

How can we “be brave” as we face the daily decision to walk in obedience and continue to choose the narrow path that leads to life? We need to accept our utter poverty and inability to live our lives in our own strength. We have the power of the Holy Spirit, the comforter and encourager, the one for whom Jesus told the first disciples to wait for before they went out to preach the good news to the world. Most of all, we have the promise that the one who gave his life for ours will always be with us (Hebrews 13:5). We will never walk any part of the narrow way alone.

- Corin Folkins





Day 13



Why do I feel like I have to do it all? Running here, scurrying there, working late into the night until everything on the list is done. Is it that I pridefully feel like if I don't do it, it won't get done? Or maybe it won't get done right? Or could it be that the issue is a little deeper than that? That my efforts are what God really wants of me. Without working, without getting it just right, I can't earn my way to Him. All my life I've been told and have repeatedly read in His word just that in Ephesians 2:8-9. Do I truly believe that? Or deep down do I secretly believe I have to earn my standing with God and my place among the people in my life? That I'm not worth it if I don't produce?

I am reminded of a lady, quite similar to me, we meet in Luke chapter 10, who graciously opens her home to Jesus and his disciples. Diligently Martha, "was busy with all the work to be done," (vs 40 NCV), "distracted by the big dinner she was preparing," (vs 40 NLT). I can imagine she was trying to make things perfect for the Lord. All the while, "her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet listening to what He taught," (vs 39 NLT). Anxious and frustrated with Mary's lack of attention to detail and unwillingness to contribute, Martha requests that Jesus tell her sister to come and help. It is Jesus' answer to Martha that catches my attention. "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her," (vs 41-42 NLT). Could it be that all my busy effort trying to earn standing and acceptance is actually distracting me from the one thing that truly matters? Sister, let everything we do or say be done to obey Jesus our Lord (paraphrased from Colossian 3:17). Not of our own choosing or out of human effort, but may the things we put our hand to be birthed out of sitting at our Master's feet, just as Mary had done, listening to what He has to say. For, "The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life," (John 6:63 NLT).

- Cheryl Castile





Day 14





Our identity directly affects our emotions. If your identity is rooted in your circumstances, you will be blown and tossed by the wind. If you've said yes to following Jesus your identity is rooted in Christ. You are a new creation because of his death and resurrection. His finished work on the Cross paid for your freedom and this is essential to your faith.

The passage above remind us that you will have difficulty. You may find yourself overwhelmed, worried, downcast, afflicted, and struggling. One single word changes the course of this lament. Yet. The author doesn't wallow in his past or his existing circumstances, he "calls to mind" truth about his identity. The truth is you have hope. The Lord's great love and compassions never fail. They are new every morning. He is faithful. The Lord is enough.

Sister, what is your lament or circumstance right now? Are you calling to mind who God is and clinging to the truth of your identity in him? May you call to mind today the character of the One who is your hope and be reminded of your true identity in Him.

- Jennifer Duran





Day 15



I lost my husband of 42 years to a 10 year battle with prostate cancer right before Christmas last year. We found out through a simple routine physical, (have your guys checked). We decided to go the radical route and have the prostate removed surgically and nip it in the bud. The results came back and some of the cancer cells had not been caught. About once a year he ended up needing some sort of treatment-chemo, radiation, clinical trials, hormone therapy. Seven years in, it metastasized into the bones. That's when things started to become more painful. Treatments became regular but he never missed work other than the day after a chemo treatment because he was too tired and needed to "sleep it off". No one at his work knew he was sick besides his boss and a few friends.

Now you have to understand something about my husband, Pete. He was a very stubborn man, had a very high threshold for pain, rarely complained about the pain and had a very strong faith in God.

He worked through August of last year, the last two months at home. By that point the pain was excruciating but he still went to church every Sunday volunteering as a greeter for as long as he could, he hated to miss church. He was so brave and used to say about death, "What?, are you going to threaten me with Heaven?" and then he would laugh. He couldn't wait to see his Lord. He touched so many lives and mentored so many people right up until the end. I was blessed to be able to walk this journey with him. There are many others that don't get the opportunity to spend the time Pete and I did. Either way, we all still hurt and miss our loved ones. I know mine is much better off, he's out of pain but there is a hole in my heart. He was my best friend.

One of my first Sunday's back to church after his death, I was leaving after service and was almost to my car when I noticed a 7 year old little girl running across the parking lot towards me. When she came near she said, "How are you doing?" She said it with such sincerity I was taken aback for a moment. Then I answered her that I was doing fine but that I missed my husband. We went on to talk about being excited for Christmas coming and school being out soon for the break. Someone else came over, our conversation ended and she walked back into the church.

Now that is "sisterhood" at its finest and coming from a wee one.

We all need to look for these opportunities to reach out to others, we don't know what they might be going through that day. It may be a cancer diagnoses or a problem with a child or parent, an overwhelming job or just a bad day. But whatever it is-if a child can do it we most certainly can-just open your eyes and look for that person that needs you to ask, "How are you doing today?"and mean it sincerely. It just might make their day.

- Sandy Mason









I am enamored by people, my degree in Psychology allowed me to study every being of humans, from the way they think, to the way they feel, to the way they do life. The consuming knowledge that is of a person, hasn't always allowed me to think of the bigger picture that is. That bigger picture being our everlasting and eternal life with our Lord and Savior. I feel as though so many of us get consumed by the way people see us, those we call our friends, those we look up to, and those we want to do life with. Yet, in the midst of this constant need to fit in, we are closing the door that is opened by God to truly find who we are, what our purpose here on Earth is and how we can truly be images of heaven's prodigious wonders. When we allow the consumption of the "right now" to take over the bigger picture God has in store for us, we lose touch with the things that matter.

This past year my best friend from my youth group perished in a car accident, at the young age of 22. When the news broke, it was as if everything I thought I knew about my life and my future would never be the same. How could someone, who truly touched every person's life they met, be taken from this world so young? Earlier in the day my biggest worry was about having to mow the lawn, and just mere hours later it was about having to bury one of my best friends. God really worked in my heart and my eyes this year to allow me to see that time is a gift, we are so lucky to be here with those we love and adore, and we must take every day, every second, to be examples of God's grace unto others. I challenge myself daily now, to step back from my "first world" problems, and focus on the word of God and how I can be his shepherd here on Earth.

As humans, it is easy to get caught up in the need to worry about how we look, how we dress, whom we hang out with and what our job is. However, we aren't just humans, we are God's children, what an unimaginable and venerating gift that is. We are more than this world makes us feel, we are crafted to be the hands and feet of Jesus on Earth and that alone lasts longer than any problem we may feel we have. The next time you're outside and see the grass changing colors, or flowers wilting, I hope you will stop and admire that beauty. As the grass withering and the flowers fading, is a reminder that God is forever, and we are forever with Him.

- Jayme Satterwhite







Have you wondered why you didn't fit in? Why you were always left out? Me too.

As a kid I was picked on and teased. I was always the odd man out, never really fitting in. I was the girl that people would be friends with only to make their "real" friend mad. But when they made up I was the one they left out. I felt like there must be something wrong with me, a reason no one wanted to be my friend.

I carried this mindset with me into my adult life. I found it hard to open up and let people in because of the way I was treated as a kid.

As I started to attend Bible studies I let the Word of God begin to work in me. My favorite scripture is Hebrews 4:12. I began to really understand and realize just how powerful His Word is. I discovered scriptures that showed me my value and worth, not in man's eyes but God's. I began to speak these over my life; "I am the apple of God's eye", "I am the head and not the tail", "I am chosen by God."

Over time my confidence began to grow in who I was in Christ. My mindset shifted and the enemy no longer had a hold on my self perception. God showed me I had a voice, and that the talents and gifts he had given me were valuable to his kingdom.

- Sharon Brittain





Day 18





We all have trouble. Some greater than others, but we all experience it. As the wife of a firefighter I am in an exposed and sometimes seemingly helpless position. I hear of the stories he comes home with and the things he sees. He helps people on the worst day of their lives. I want to hug these people who have lost everything, lost a child, or have been pulled from ravaged cars. But I can't. I haven't seen their faces. I don't know their names. So, I pray. I pray for their lives to be put back together and for their hearts to heal. I also constantly pray for my husband's heart in processing everything he sees. He is the strongest man I know, but I know each shift brings its own worries.

The good news is that God is able to step in to the place where I cannot. He told us "we will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world!" I cling to this when I pray for my husband and the people he serves. The troubles are obvious in this world and always easy to see. What we often miss is the peace we can have in our Lord. He sends us comfort in that He has overcome the world!

- Katie Tsutsumi





Day 19



As I reach my 50th birthday this year, I look back on all God has done for me and it brings me to tears. Tears of Joy! How great is our God?! I gave my heart to the lord in 1996 at a Christian church in Dallas at the age of 28. I did not know God but he knew me, he knew my heart and my most darkest secrets yet he pursued me, loved me and accepted me just as I was.

Putting my trust and faith in God was literally like learning to walk like a new baby. I was fearful and ashamed of the circumstances in my life and I wouldn't let God all the way in. But I learned through God's word, attending church and surrounding myself with life giving people that God was for me and the enemy wanted to keep me in bondage. I was invited to a Restore Ministry event to take pictures because I am a photographer and my friend Stacy asked me if I would take pictures for them. I went and had no idea that would be a divine appointment for me. It was God's gentle way to say to me, "Hey you know that deep dark secret you have that you've never dealt with? Well I want that." I was in awe of the ladies I saw and heard that night talking about their restoration and healing through this ministry. I was crying so much it was hard for me to take pictures! You see this ministry is for post-abortive women who had been through abortion at some time in their life. I, too, had had an abortion in my younger years. I was already saved and knew God loved me and had forgiven me of all my sin but I had never dealt with the guilt and shame that comes with aborting a child. After this event I knew God was speaking to me that I needed to join this ministry and begin my healing and restoration. Through the Restore ministry I found out how much my fear, shame, guilt and emotional pain had affected every area of my life and I didn't even realize it. I am amazed at God's love and mercy. He loved me so much that he sought out my heart and wanted to heal every bit of it. It's like the bible verse Psalm 147:3 "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." God wanted to start with my most painful secret and work his way down. If I gave him that - then the rest would be much easier to trust him with. I am so happy that I did and I am forever changed because of it.

The enemy uses fear, shame, and guilt as weapons to separate us from God. I'm not saying it was easy, it was day by day, month by month and year by year. But I finally realized that my God wanted to heal me. The more I gave him the more he healed me. The more I trusted him the more he had to work with. And now there is not a thing I don't give to God. I give it all to him, the good and the bad because I know my God will strengthen me, help me and will hold me up victorious in his right hand! Wow! Thank you Jesus!

- Laura Rios





Day 20





The disciples were overwhelmed by all the people needing to be fed. They asked Jesus, "Where would we get enough food here in the wilderness for such a huge crowd?" Asking questions is never a bad thing. Allowing our questions to keep us from moving forward in what we desire in our heart or what's in front of us is never good. The disciples didn't feed 4000 people all at once. 7 loaves of bread wasn't enough to feed 4000 people; however it was enough to feed one person at a time. When the disciples allowed God to bless all they had for the person in front of them, He multiplied it into all they needed for everyone.

What season of life are you in? Is it time to start moving forward in the dreams or goals you have in your heart? Do you want to own your own business, start a new career, lose weight, start a family, etc.? Has life brought you to a different scenario than you were in the past. Are you a first time parent, recently promoted, newly married or divorced, experiencing the loss of a loved one, moving to a brand new city, etc.? Are you asking the same questions the disciples asked. "Do I have what it takes to handle the task at hand?" We allow God to bless what we have by moving forward and doing what we can right now. We allow God to bless what we have by taking steps in a positive direction in whatever scenario life finds us in. God will always put something in our hands today that will help us accomplish what we're trying to do tomorrow. You may not have an office to run your business out of, but you can take your laptop to Starbucks. You may not have the wisdom to raise a teenager, but you do have the wisdom to care for your newborn. Maybe you just lost a loved one and all you can do is ask God for the strength to help you get through the day. That's something. Find out what you can do today and do it. It will not only be enough for today but you will see God turn it into all you need for tomorrow. If we withhold what we have in our hands today, it will end up not being enough for today or tomorrow.

- Krystle Davis







When you make God a part of your life, you can accomplish way more than what you can accomplish on your own. He wants to give you the advantage of success. So many people do not take care of the spiritual part of their lives. When you do not have a relationship with God there is no way you can do or be your best. If you want to reach your highest potential you must make your spiritual life a priority.

I learned at a very young age that prayer was powerful and necessary to make it through this tough world. As a little girl I was taught, by my mother, to pray, and pray with the expectation that “it” was already done. This lesson carried me through so many tough times in my life. I had always relied on my Mother to be my prayer warrior. But when I became a first time Mom, she was overtaken by anxiety and depression. At this point in my life I had not gone to church in years and my relationship with God was on the back burner. My Mother could no longer function day to day and I knew God had to take over because I couldn’t do this on my own. I vividly remember crying out to God in my living room, “God I need you and so does my Mother!” That was the turning point for my Mother’s recovery and my journey to rebuild my relationship with God. In the months to follow my Mother recovered and is stronger than ever. My relationship with God is tighter than it’s ever been and I still have so much more to accomplish with God by my side.

- Jeniffer Reyez









No matter what you think you can or cannot accomplish, give it to God. First thing every day- start with a prayer and talk to our Heavenly Father about your joys, fears and challenges.

As you envision your dreams and goals, there are two things that I am sure will help you succeed: faith and a spirit of gratitude, and that means even being grateful for the bad days. You may not know how to get through a season in your life, or maybe just a particular day, but what is amazing is that God will send you the provision you need to fulfill His calling in your life. That doesn't mean you know everything you need to know to be successful. But in the right season, God will bless you. Be open to hearing Him and listen to that still, small voice to guide you. Do not stress and about the unknown or what may not be. Give it to Him every morning and listen for Him to guide you.

- Erica Anderson





Day 23



Recently, it seems God keeps telling me “Do not be afraid.” I pick up a book, “Do not be afraid.” Pastor Eddie, “Do not be afraid.”, I prepare for Club 56, and the verse of the week is Joshua 1:9 Initially, I didn’t understand it. What was I supposed to “not be afraid” of?

God has brought me through some scary stuff in my life, so I wasn’t sure why he would be telling me this now. By nature, I am not a big worrier. I have seen horrible things happen—I have been close to a divorce, been without a job, seen people I love die way too soon—I have been through difficult times, so I am not really a person who is afraid of the trials that come. I concluded that this really didn’t apply to me, so I just ignored all the reminders God was giving me. Then, last week, while I was listening to the radio a clip of Joy Behar from The View speaking about the Vice President’s faith was played. “It is one thing to talk to Jesus,” Joy Behar explained, “It’s another when Jesus talks to you. Hearing voices is called a mental illness.” As I heard her words, I felt like I had been kicked in the gut and instantly an unsettling feeling came over me. Not only had I just heard a public figure compare listening to Jesus to having a mental illness, but I heard the audience applauding her statement. That was when God reminded me, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” I realized that uncomfortable feeling was fear.

Perhaps, my fear was not as obvious as being afraid of terrible things happening to me or those I love but rather God was pointing out a fear offending people. I realized I had not been speaking as openly with my non-believing friends or my colleagues about my relationship with Jesus out of fear of offending them. I hadn’t been offering to pray for, or with, those who I knew just needed Jesus as not to offend. I had been fearful of the response of those who are offended by my God, rather than seeking to grow His kingdom.

While raising our kids in the Midwest and Northeast regions of the U.S., they frequently came home discussing the children they knew who did not attend church. Recently, our daughter, who is back in the Northeast attending college, told us about someone she had met whose only concept of Jesus came from what he had heard from the news on the Pope and what he had read on Catholicism. Although church attendance is more common in the South, even in Texas, it is becoming more frightening to obey God and tell people about Jesus and what he is doing in my life. Nothing is more important than following Jesus and He is the answer to all of life’s struggles.

- Sue Gessner









Recently, I was faced with a very challenging situation in the two companies I own and manage. At three months pregnant, I found out that my right-hand employee decided to stay home with her new baby and other kids. Before she left, she helped me hire and train a new person. Unfortunately, after three months, I had to let the new employee go since she wasn't meeting the required expectations for her position.

I then hired another person who recently had a baby and was coming back into the workforce. I spent 6 weeks training her while also doing my own work and was finally able to come up for some air. A couple of days later, after her babysitter fell through, she decided to stay home with her kids full time. At this point I was six months pregnant, and quickly approaching maternity leave. I was exhausted from working, being pregnant, and having responsibilities at home with my two children and husband.

Immediately God reminded me of Mark 11 - to "speak" to the mountain in front of me to be removed! I was reminded of His promises. All I had to do was ask God for whatever I needed and believe that He could do it no matter what my situation looked like. God didn't say You had to trudge halfway up the mountain before it was removed!

That night I prayed over the situation and asked God to remove the mountain I was facing because there was no way I could do it in my own strength. I envisioned the mountain being cast into the sea and me walking right through where it "was" but it had become a flat surface! The mountain in front of me was so big, and I was so exhausted, that the only choice I had was to ask God to take care of it and BELIEVE that He would. I went online that night, posted the job listing to different sites, and prayed that God would perform a miracle to send me the perfect employee that same week. I only had two weeks to find someone and was too busy to go without an employee; especially one that was going to run things while I was at home with my new baby.

That week I found and hired the perfect employee that is far better and more qualified than what I prayed for! She is efficient and was fully trained by the time my baby arrived.

Every time you are faced with a difficult situation you should always have a "Faith Response"! Whether you're short on bills, having marital issues, problems at work, or with the kids, you should speak to the situation (to the mountain). You can fully expect God to be true to the promises in His word. Wouldn't you much rather believe and rest in God than to try to do it on your own?

- Sarah Marshall





Day 25



A promise from our Heavenly Father that we should never forget is, he is always present and strengthening us in a healing love - even when we are too overcome by our, “day of distress” to notice. Distress is defined as extreme anxiety, sorrow or pain. These are unfortunate conditions that we as humans have all experienced at some point in our lives. Even Jesus Christ himself suffered immensely in his human form.

My day of distress came the day I lost my parents in a tragic motorcycle accident. At only 25 years old I had experienced intense sufferings already, but nothing could have prepared me for this trauma. God had already seen me through life-threatening illnesses, sexual abuse, over a dozen deaths of friends and family, deep depression and anxiety, financial instability and miscarriage. The Lord healed and supported me through what I had felt was my darkest of times, but this was a horrifying darkness that had never enshrouded me before. My soul was ripped to the core. My mom and dad had been everyone’s go-to for advice and Godly encouragement, devoted parents and grandparents, and my best friends in the world—suddenly gone without a goodbye, life left un-lived, and dreams un-reached.

I felt alone and scared, and it seemed so unfair; how could God betray me and take away what I held so dear? After all that I had been through already, wasn’t that enough? Who or what next? Foolish questions and doubts tried to dig their roots down deep, but they weren’t strong enough against the power of the Holy Spirit living inside of me, silently praying on my behalf when I couldn’t find the words. I was soon struck with the reality that we will never see or understand the entirety of God’s plan while we are here in this world; who are we to question his authority and allowance? We must trust his plan and his unfaltering goodness, even when it seems to not make sense to us and brings the deepest suffering into our life. The Lord will not forsake us, and he has not punished us, we just need to open our eyes wide enough to look outside of the earthly boundaries of our distress and into the light of his glory. I pursued countless faith-based books, counselors, and support groups to find some comfort to my grieving and relief from my PTSD, but nothing was more uplifting and true than the words of the Psalmist that reminded me of God’s tender capabilities.

Even still, I journey through my grief daily, but I can rejoice in the unwavering protection and peace of God. Each day, our broken hearts can sing instead of suffer, our mouths can strongly proclaim the happiness still offered to us, and we are sheltered in the unconditional love of our Heavenly Father. He never left me, and he will never leave you.

- Tessa Redden









I was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2010. While going through cancer, these were two of my favorite scriptures during that time and through everything that has happened since.

I know, and still know, God has plans for me and my future. I know He loves me and will never leave me. I've had many conversations with Him as He continues to guide me and give me hope and peace. He lets me know he is ALWAYS by my side; leading me, guiding me, and comforting me. He tells me that these times are tests and I will get through them to show His comfort and peace to others.

As I read these 2 scriptures - I praise God daily, thanking Him for all he has done for me, brought me through and given to me. I thank Him for the people that He has put in my life. I have nothing to complain about because I am wealthy in God's love and that is all I need.

- Sharon Thompson







When my daughter was a toddler, she had one of those motorized ride on cars, that she just loved to drive during our afternoon strolls around the block. As she would ride on a head of me, every so often she would turn her head around to make sure I was still there. Every time she did, her car would begin to veer onto the grass. She would quickly look ahead, and readjust back onto the sidewalk, only to turn her head back around to me and drive back onto the grass yet again. I amusedly watched for a while, hoping she'd stop looking behind and just stay focused on the path that's already been laid out in front of her, a roadway that will get her to where she needs to go.

Fast forward a few years, and I found myself in the same lesson. You see, The Lord had begun to do a new thing in me, but often times I was not aware of it because I kept turning my head to what was behind me, holding onto former things that kept me from seeing the road laid out in front of me. For so long I held onto an identity that only I could see, all the while, God was gracefully reminding me that I was made for so much more than what I saw myself as. Faith was urging me to step out and take a chance on God's vision of me.

How often do we allow our past to dictate our future, or listen to the lies of the enemy that says we will never overcome our past failures? Let us always remember that we are created in the image of Christ, fearfully and wonderfully made. Let me remind you, that YOU were CREATED for a purpose, on purpose because YOU have a destiny that's worth pursuing. When God is for you, who then can be against you? No matter where you find yourself today my friend, God is faithfully standing with you, encouraging you to be who you are, and go for your dreams! You are the right girl, and ALL things are possible for those who believe. YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES!!!!

- Sara Johnson









The last time my family and I were at the Fort Worth Zoo, I had the perfect representation of this verse. If you've ever been there you have probably noticed that the zoo is designed in levels. There are steps everywhere you look!

As we stopped to admire the beautiful gazelles, I noticed if you looked up you could see the lion enclosure. At the time I remember thinking how uncomfortable that must be for the gazelles to be watched all day long by their natural predator.

A few days ago, as I studied 1 Peter 5:8 the Holy Spirit reminded me of that day. The parallels were uncanny. Our enemy, as the lion, watches us and waits for a chance to attack. We, like the gazelles, are safe from him as long as we stay in our enclosure, in obedience to the Lord.

But what happens if the gazelles should stray from the safety of their enclosure? Well, if they stray into the lions lair, certain trouble, danger and quite possibly death. The same is true for us. When we get out of God's will we are susceptible to becoming the enemies victim. The word says in John 10:10 that he comes only to steal, kill and destroy.

But, just like the gazelles, we can rest safely in our dwelling place. The will of God.

I heard the lion roar that day, it was a frightful sound. All of the gazelles responded in fear, even though they were perfectly safe. How many times does the enemy trip us up with fear as he roars in our lives? We have all heard his roar, in the bad medical report, the tightening financial bind, the increasing distance in our marriage, or the growing rebellion of our children. The enemy roars and we grow fearful. Forgetting that he is powerless to harm us if we stay in our safe place.

Look at that verse again, it says our enemy is looking for someone to destroy. The only way he can destroy you, your family, your life, is if you let him do it. So when he comes prowling around you, and be assured that he will, you stand up in faith and tell him NO! Not today devil, you may NOT destroy me and my family. You have that authority as a believer. The Word says so in Matthew 16:19. Take your stand on the Word, and all of heaven will back you up!

- Tabby Kelley







Do you read this scripture & feel some serious emotion? I sure do! “Is anyone crying for help?” So many times throughout life I’ve found myself turning to this scripture. Crying out to God through countless trials, some seemingly small looking back on them and some giant mountains that still face me today. But the powerful thing is the next part- “if your heart is broken, you’ll find God right there.” He is there waiting for you. In your darkest moments and your lowest of lows- there He is. The line that says “if you’re kicked in the gut” is such a raw and realistic description of what life feels like sometimes. Things happen & challenges face you & suddenly the wind is knocked out of you. Life as you know it has shifted & what can you possibly do to fix it? Yet, that still small voice whispers & you know you aren’t alone. He’s been with you all along.

As long as I can remember I’ve struggled with knowing my value & my worth. Growing up in church & having a strong faith in God almost made this harder for me. Because to know the truth and still feel like you can’t live it is devastating. At a young age I experienced a broken family, spiritual abuse, broken relationships, heartbreak & the list goes on. But in those moments where I felt broken & didn’t understand why such terrible things kept happening I found God. He rescued me. Then life went on & with it came more hurt and brokenness, but it looked different as an adult & as a wife. Sometimes as a Christian it feels like we don’t deserve to go through tough times. Or if we have faced them in the past, it feels like we shouldn’t have to face them again in the future. But time & time again God shows up to rescue us. I got a tattoo last year that says, “It Is Well”. It has a lot of different meanings for me but it comes from a hymn. The writer lost all of his children in a shipwreck & later riding in that very place where the ship went down is where he wrote the hymn. “When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul.” No matter what I face, no matter what challenges or heartbreak comes my way “It Is Well”. Why? Because God is still here. Because I’m not alone.

The biggest lie you can believe is that you’re alone, that you’ve been abandoned. God is with you. He will never leave you or forsake you. He will never give up on you. Rather, He builds you up when you are at your lowest. It’s in those moments, in the valleys, that we find God’s strength. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says that His strength is actually made BEST in our weakness. Maybe you’re facing medical, financial or family problems; maybe you’ve had a miscarriage or are walking through infertility; maybe you are searching for your place and your purpose in the world; maybe you’ve been hurt by those closest to you. No matter what it is- don’t walk through it alone. Choose to allow God to step in & comfort you. Remember today when you feel like you’re in the valley of whatever challenges are facing you- THAT is right where you will find Him. He is waiting there for you and wants you to experience His perfect peace, love, joy & strength! He is waiting there to rescue you.

- Liz Brenden









Young and in love and married for just over a year - that's what I was at 21 years old. I thought life would be just like the fairy tales - you fall in love, get married, build a life together and live happily ever after. I felt as long as we kept God at the center of our marriage and we followed after Him then we wouldn't go through hardships like other people - wasn't simply serving Jesus our guarantee of that? But that wasn't the case.

Eddie and I had recently gone on a ski trip with the youth ministry at our church. When we got home we both felt sick - which I attributed to a virus we must have gotten on the trip. After a few days I recovered but Eddie seemed to only feel worse. After a couple of weeks we decided to see a doctor. The doctor recommended we see a specialist for further testing. We did and he ran tests on him.

The colonoscopy revealed that he had lesions and infection all throughout his colon. He was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease. I sat there; I didn't know what to do. We weren't prepared for this. Crohn's is a chronic disease for which there is no known cure. It goes into remission and then flares up again - your entire life. I had no idea where this journey would lead us. It was the complete unknown and a total trust in God like we had never known. Eddie lost over 50 pounds in a matter of weeks - he could barely walk and breathing was a chore. The doctor told him he had the worst case of Crohn's Disease he had ever seen in someone so young. It affected every area of our lives - our finances, our faith, our joy, our ability to enjoy life. We just existed.

After several flare-ups over nearly three-years - the disease had taken its toll on Eddie's body. The doctor told him that if he wasn't better by his next doctor appointment then he was going to hospitalize him and remove a large portion of his colon.

Throughout all of this - we never stopped believing God to heal Eddie. We stood on God's word - His promises to us. God is the great physician and we had faith that God would heal him.

By this time I was pregnant with our first baby, Madison. We were 24 years old. I'll never forget the day that God healed Eddie. He literally had strength return to his body - the constant pain was gone - he could eat and keep it down - he started gaining weight. He was HEALED!

We walked into that season as children and we walked out as mature adults. We learned that God's grace was enough to walk us through that time. He carried us through.

Whatever you are facing today - God has already given you the grace you need to get to the other side. Trust Him. Rely on Him. His Strength. His Mercy.

Go before Him with boldness - He is always gracious and loving and there isn't anything too hard for him. He loves you.

- Julie Woods





Day 31



Do you remember the first time you fell in love?

Maybe it was the boy in 5th grade that you asked to meet after school so you could offer a stick of gum. And maybe he declined your kind offer because he, and I quote, "had braces." I mean, how were you supposed to know cute boys with braces don't chew gum?

Or maybe it was when you were in high school and you thought you were in love with an older guy. And maybe your heart was broken... more than once. You were special, but you found out other girls were just as special to him too. Perhaps you thought it wasn't possible to love someone AND to stay in love. Yet it does happen.

I know it happened to me. I remember seeing a certain someone stepping out of his silver 1990 Eagle Talon sports car. A light scent of coconut air freshener wafted into the atmosphere. He walked by, and I wondered if one day I would be the one to sit beside him in that meticulously-cared for automobile (Hint: I would!)

Once we spoke, there was chemistry. Our conversations launched a world of inside jokes. I had his complete attention. He was a train leaving the station and I could either go for the ride or stay behind. I felt he wasn't all talk. He was going places...and I wanted to go there with him.

He would write me love letters. I would read them over and over again. Every night, I would pour over a few phrases at a time...while listening to Michael Bolton. (Keep in mind this was 1996 after all!) At first I tried to deny it. But to be honest, I was captivated!

Within months our relationship took a shift from the fun, surface waters and dove into the deep end of the pool. We talked about meaningful and often difficult things in our lives. Eventually he saw a glimpse into my soul, and loved what he saw. My heart was his, and still is almost 20 years later.

What a picture of our relationship with Jesus! Did you know He is the lover of your soul? He sees you, into the very deep heart of you. He sees all the hidden, dark and secret places, but He doesn't shy away or cringe or even judge. You know what would make Him so happy? For you to trust Him with those dark places! He already knows it all anyway. Why not go there with Him?

He wrote you a beautiful love letter. In this letter, He tells you how much you mean to Him. He says that He carries your sins for you. He says He takes your pain and suffering for you. He says He gave His life for you.

He sees your tears, and hears your cries, and wants you to bring them to Him. He has healing and comfort and peace and answers for you. He wants to make you brave. Read His love letter. Talk with Him. And get to know the One who is madly in love with you!

- Alicia Ingram

