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One Beautiful Edition*

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what happens when women

*say yes to god*

*and walk in faith*

#1 *New York Times* Bestselling Author

LYSA TERKEURST

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HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS  
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## **What Happens When Women Say Yes to God and Walk in Faith**

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*To my two beautiful sons, Jackson and Mark.  
Through you, God has made my feet walk paths  
that I never knew could be so amazing.  
From the first night you called me “Mom,”  
my heart and life have never been the same.  
I lovingly dedicate the words penned here to you.*



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# INTRODUCTION

I believe God gives every woman a dream. Not the same dream, of course, but a dream that is especially tailored for her talents and His purposes. Each woman receives a dream that only she is destined to fulfill.

But just as the Israelites were promised a land flowing with milk and honey only if they had the faith to move ahead and take the promised land, as women with dreams we'll also face obstacles that will try to keep us from God's best for us. The Israelites had to overcome giants in the land. Those giants struck fear in the heart of those to whom the promise was given. Some drew back as a result. Discouragement set in. Fatigue, impatience, unbelief...all of these were common to those men and women who spent 40 years in the desert because they simply couldn't walk in faith toward the destiny God had called them to.

I meet many women who know in their hearts that God has great things for them. But with every step, they meet obstacles. Giants are in their promised land. And they experience those same feelings of discouragement, fatigue, and unbelief. I also understand these struggles on a deeply personal level. In the past several years, I've experienced betrayal and broken promises in a few of my closest relationships.

The books in this volume—*What Happens When Women Say Yes to God* and *What Happens When Women Walk in Faith*—were written at the very beginning of my writing and ministry journey. Many changes have happened in

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my life since then, and just like the Israelites, I've faced giants in the promised land. But through it all, God has remained faithful. I still believe what I wrote all those years ago:

*Death does not mean defeat.  
New life is just around the corner.*

Let me ask you this: What dream has God has given you? Maybe you can't quite put it into words except to say that you know that God wants to use you. But how that's going to happen...you're not quite sure.

Not knowing exactly how God wants to use you is okay. When a woman begins to walk in faith toward God, He will give the dream. For me, the dream has resulted in speaking, writing, and the birth of Proverbs 31 Ministries. Your dream—the way God wants to use you—may be totally different. But though the dreams we have are different, I've discovered that the path is very similar for most women. And walking that path by faith, choosing to say *Yes!* even when you can't see the end of the road, is what this book is all about.

So get ready, my friend. Put your most comfortable walking shoes on. You've got a basic understanding of where we're headed, and now it's time to go. At the end of each chapter you'll find a Bible study. You'll find it helpful to get a notebook to record your answers and thoughts along the way. Take time to read the Scriptures, think about the questions, and record your responses in your notebook. Are you excited? I am. Because I really believe that walking with God takes us to amazing places!

Now, let's turn the page together.

ONE

## A SOUL THAT LONGS FOR MORE

*Whatever God says do, do it.*

**I**t all started the day God told me to give away my Bible.

I was exhausted from traveling and speaking. All I wanted to do was to get to my assigned seat on the plane and settle in for a long winter's nap. Imagine my absolute delight at being the only person seated in my row. I was just about to close my eyes when two last-minute passengers made their way to my row and took their seats.

Reluctantly, I decided to forgo my nap. The last thing I needed was to fall asleep and snore or, worse yet, wake up with my head resting on the guy's shoulder beside me. No, I didn't need another most embarrassing moment, so I pulled a manuscript out of my bag and started reading.

"What are you working on?" the guy asked. I told him I was a writer and I was working on a book titled *Leading Women to the Heart of God*. He smiled and said he thought God was a very interesting topic. I agreed and asked him a few questions about his beliefs. Before long, I found myself reaching into my bag and pulling out my Bible, walking him through some key verses that dealt with the issues he was facing. He kept asking questions, and I kept praying God would give me answers.

All of a sudden, I felt God tugging at my heart to give this man my Bible. Now, this was not just any Bible. This was my everyday, highlighted, underlined, written in, and tearstained Bible. My kids had even drawn pictures in this Bible. I started to argue with God in my head, but His message was clear. I was to give away my Bible.

I emptied it of some old church bulletins and other papers, took a deep breath, sighed, and placed it in the man's hands. "I'd like for you to have my Bible," I said. Astonished, he started to hand it back to me, saying he couldn't possibly accept such a gift. "God told me to give it to you," I insisted. "Sometimes the God of the universe pauses in the midst of all His creation to touch the heart of one person. Today, He paused for you."

The man took my Bible and made two promises. First, he said he would read it, and, second, someday he would pass it on, doing for someone else what I'd done for him.

Before I knew it, the plane landed and we were saying our goodbyes. As I stepped into the aisle preparing to disembark, the woman on the other side of the businessman reached out and grabbed my arm. She'd been staring out the window the entire time we were flying, and I thought she'd been ignoring us. But her tearstained face told a different story. In a tone so hushed I could barely hear her, she whispered, "Thank you. What you shared today has changed my life." I put my hand on hers and whispered back, "You're welcome." Then a knot caught in my throat as tears welled up in my eyes. I didn't have another Bible to give away, so I gave her one of my books and hugged her goodbye. It has been said that we are to tell the whole world about Jesus, using words only if necessary. I saw this powerful truth come to life. Though I never spoke to this lady about Jesus, she saw Him through my obedience. How humbling. How profound.

As I got off the plane that day, I could barely hold back my tears. Three people's hearts were radically changed. I believe the businessman came to know Jesus as his Lord and Savior. I believe the same is true for the lady. But my heart was changed in a dramatic way as well. While on the one hand I was overjoyed at what God had done, I was also brokenhearted by the flood of thoughts that came to mind recounting times I'd told God no. How tragic to miss God's



divine appointments. I just kept wondering, *How many times have I told You no, God? How many times because I was too tired, too insecure, too uncertain, too busy, or too selfish have I walked right past Your divine appointment for me and missed experiencing You?* I lifted up my heart to the Lord and whispered, “Please forgive me for all those noes. Right now I say yes, Lord. I say yes to You before I even know what You might ask me to do. I simply want You to see a yes-heart in me.”

Several minutes after exiting the plane, I was weaving in and out of the crowds, trying to find my connecting gate, when I spotted the businessman again. He stopped me to tell me he had been praying to God and thanking Him for what happened on the plane. We swapped business cards, and, though we lived several states apart, I knew we would stay in touch.

About a month later he called to tell me his life had totally changed. He’d taken a week off from work to read the Bible, and he’d already shared his testimony with numerous people. When he said this to me, my mouth dropped open. I couldn’t bring myself to tell him that I’d never taken a week off from work to read the Bible. God was definitely pursuing this man in a serious way! When I asked him what his favorite verse was, he said it was Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.” I thought to myself, *Wow! Look at how God has already answered that for my new friend.*

He also told me that after reading the Scriptures he knew he needed to get involved in a church, so he’d decided to visit a large church in his town. On his way there he passed another church, and a strong feeling came over him to turn his car around and go back to that church. So he did. When he got to his seat in the sanctuary, he opened up his bulletin and gasped. Inside the bulletin he saw my picture and an announcement that I was to be the speaker at an upcoming women’s conference. He said he felt as though, once again, God had paused just for him.

That day on the plane, when God impressed on my heart to give this man my Bible, I did not know what would happen. This man might have thrown my Bible into the nearest airport trash can, for all I knew. Normally, I would

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have come up with a hundred reasons not to give my Bible away, but that day something changed in me. That day, for the first time, I truly heard the call of a woman who says yes to God: “Whatever God says do, do it.”

## A FRESH INVITATION

When I said yes that day, I caught a glimpse of eternity. I saw how beautiful it is when God says to do something and it is done. And I thought, *Why wait for heaven? Why not say yes to God on this side of eternity?*

Oh, dear friend, the call to become a woman who says yes to God is the fresh invitation your soul is looking for. We all feel a tug at our heart and a stirring in our soul for more, but we are often afraid to venture past our comfort zone. Outside our comfort zone, though, is where we experience the true awesomeness of God.

I think at this point it is important for me to paint an accurate picture of what my life looks like on a daily basis. Lest you imagine me as this woman dressed in sackcloth who is perfectly calm, amazingly organized, incredibly disciplined, and who spends hours upon hours on her knees in solemn solitude before the Lord, let me assure you that’s not how it is. I am a wife and busy mom of five who can often be found rushing from one carpool to the next. My to-do list rarely gets fully accomplished. My emotions have been known to run wild, and my patience can easily run thin. I get pushed to the limit by everyday aggravations, such as a summer’s worth of pictures getting erased from my digital camera by a child who wasn’t even supposed to be handling the camera. And a dog that I love dearly who insists on running away. And some important paperwork that should be in a file that has mysteriously sprouted wings and flown the coop!

Can you relate? Great! You are a woman perfectly equipped to say yes to Him. Notice that I did not say you are a perfect woman. But if you are in the thick of living with all that life throws at you and you simply whisper yes, you are equipped. “Yes, Lord. I want Your patience to invade my desire to fly off the handle.” “Yes, Lord. I want Your perspective to keep my emotions in check.”

“Yes, Lord. I want Your provision so things don’t seem so overwhelming.” “Yes, Lord. I want Your courage to do what I feel You calling me to do.” “Yes, Lord. I want and need more of You in every moment.”

You don’t need perfect circumstances to be a woman who says yes to God. You don’t need the perfect religious attitude or all the answers to religious questions. You simply have to surrender all that’s clamoring for attention in your heart with the answer God is longing to hear spill from your lips: “Yes, God.”

Each day when I wake up I pray a very simple prayer even before my feet hit the floor. *God, I want to see You. God, I want to hear You. God, I want to know You. God, I want to follow hard after You. And even before I know what I will face today, I say yes to You.* This simple act of surrender each morning will prepare your eyes to see Him, your ears to hear Him, your mind to perceive Him, and your heart to receive Him. This is how to live expecting to experience God.

You see, we have become so familiar with God yet so unaware of Him. We make the mysterious mundane. We construct careful reasons for our rules and sensible whys for our behavior. All the while our soul is longing for a richer experience—one that allows us to escape the limits of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell and journey to a place of wild, wonder, and passion.

Women who say yes to God will see life like few others. They are drawn in and embraced by a love like no other. They don’t have to wait until the next time they’re in church to experience God because they sense God’s presence all around them, all through their day. Instead of merely walking through the motions of life, they pursue the adventure of the moment-by-moment divine lessons and appointments God has in store for them. They expect to see God, to hear from Him, and to be absolutely filled by His peace and joy—and, therefore, they do and they are.

A woman who says yes to God isn’t afraid to be honest with God. Just last week I woke up feeling drained and overwhelmed. I couldn’t quite put my finger on the source of my anxiety, but I couldn’t shake it, either. As I prayed my normal prayer of wanting to see and hear God, I told Him honestly that I really needed to see evidence of Him in my day. Later on I was in my kitchen washing dishes, preparing dinner, and talking with one of my sons. My attention was

focused on my son while my hands were just going through the motions of my tasks. Suddenly I felt God's strong impression on my heart to look down in the sink before I reached for another dish. As I did, I saw a very sharp butcher knife sticking blade up from inside a glass. Immediately, I knew God's presence was there. I closed my eyes and thanked Him. More than just for sparing my hand from serious injury, I thanked Him for caring enough to be so real in my life.

A holy God in the middle of life's mundane activities will change your life. But you might not always feel happy about the changes. I can't let you think that being a woman who says yes to God means everything will suddenly be happily ever after. As I am writing this, I must tell you about an experience I had today where I simply wanted to throw my hands in the air, throw my computer out the window, and cry out to God, "You have hurt my feelings and I'm just a little unnerved and upset!"

I am on a retreat at a friend's lake house where I have three days during which I'd hoped to accomplish a lot of writing. I am under a tight deadline for this project and really needed to make a big dent in the task before me. Yesterday went great. I wrote almost 2,000 words and the friends with me loved what I'd written. I went to bed excited about all I'd accomplished so far. Visions of a completed manuscript and my editor's praises danced in my dreams all night long. I woke up this morning ready to tackle another huge chunk of writing, but first I wanted to admire yesterday's accomplishment. I opened up my documents section and the manuscript was nowhere to be found.

Refusing to panic, I asked for my friends' help. They felt confident we could locate the document I'd saved three times the night before. After two hours of searching, one of my friends gently looked at me and verbalized the truth we'd all come to know. "It's gone, Lysa. You are going to have to start over."

*Wait just a minute, I thought. I have said yes to God today and had a great quiet time. I just know He can and will help me find this.* But for whatever reason, my document was gone and God had chosen not to bring it back. Tears filled my eyes as bitterness started to creep in my heart. Why would God allow this? My friend could sense my despair and gently replied, "Lysa, recently when something like this happened to me, someone told me to look at my loss as a sacrifice

of praise to God. It is so hard in today's abundance to give God a true sacrifice, but losing 2,000 words and a whole day's work would qualify. Give this to Him without feeling bitter."

I resisted slapping my well-meaning friend as she then broke into singing, "We bring a sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord..." By the second stanza I actually found myself joining in with a lighter heart and a resilient spirit. Being a woman who says yes to God means making the choice to trust Him even when you can't understand why He requires some of the things He does. It also means that once you've said yes to God, you refuse to turn back, even when things get hard.

This kind of obedience invites you to embrace a bigger vision for your life. When you look at your everyday circumstances through the lens of God's perspective, everything changes. You come to realize that God uses each circumstance, each person who crosses your path, and each encounter you have with Him as a divine appointment. Each day counts, and every action and reaction matters. God absolutely loves to take ordinary people and do extraordinary things in them, through them, and with them.

## **A PARTY IN YOUR HONOR**

Imagine you're planning a wonderful surprise party for someone you dearly love. You've made the plans, invited all the guests, and decided on an exquisite menu. You can't wait for the big moment when all the guests yell, "Surprise!" and your loved one finally joins in the festivities. You know she'll understand just how cherished and adored she is when she sees everything that's been done in her honor.

Finally, the time for the surprise arrives. All of the guests are waiting in anticipation at the front door. You see your loved one pull into the driveway, and you hear the car engine turn off. As she opens the car door, you see the interior lights come on while she gathers her things. Your heart races as you see her heading up the driveway. Suddenly, she makes an unusual turn and heads to the back door.

You quickly make your way to the back door to redirect her. Your cheerful greeting is met with a half-hearted smile, and your attempts to send her to the



front door are brushed aside. She insists she is tired and will look at what you want to show her tomorrow. Only you know that tomorrow the guests will be gone, the leftover food will be stored away, and the party will be over.

How sad for the guest of honor who missed her own surprise party! And how disappointing for the party planner who orchestrated the event.

God must feel the same way when we miss the “surprise parties” (the divine appointments) that await us each day. How it must disappoint Him when we don’t hear or don’t listen to Him redirecting us to the front door. How it must grieve Him when we walk through our lives oblivious of His activity all around us. How it must break His heart when we brush aside something that not only would make us feel special and noticed by God, but also would allow us to join Him in making life a little sweeter for others.

How many times have we missed our own surprise party?

God reveals Himself and His activity to all of us, but very few really want an encounter with Him. Encounters cause extreme changes in our plans, our perspectives, and our personhood, and most of us hate change. In reality, though, the very act of trying to protect ourselves from change is the very thing that makes our life the boring mess that it sometimes is.

As I’ve traveled around the country speaking at conferences, I am amazed and saddened by the number of people missing out on the most exciting part of being a Christian—experiencing God. Over and over people tell me they want something more in their Christian life. They want the kind of relationship with God where they recognize His voice, live in expectation of His activity, and embrace a life totally sold out for Him. I suspect that tucked in the corner of your heart is the same desire. And I’ve discovered that the key to having this kind of incredible adventure is radical obedience.

## THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO BLESSING

You may be surprised to discover that radical obedience is not really that radical. It is really biblical obedience—but we’ve strayed so far from biblical obedience that it now seems radical. In today’s society, it is radical to obey God’s

Saying yes to God

isn't about perfect performance,

but rather perfect surrender

to the Lord day by day.

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commands, listen to the Holy Spirit's convictions, and walk in Jesus' character. But we will never experience the radical blessings God has in store for us without radical obedience. It is the road that leads to blessing. It is what happens when women say yes to God.

And you won't find the full blessing until you give walking in obedience your full attention. Obedience, however, is more than just "not sinning." It is having the overwhelming desire to walk in the center of God's will at every moment. Don't stumble over fearing you won't be perfect or that you are sure to mess up. Saying yes to God isn't about perfect performance, but rather perfect surrender to the Lord day by day. Your obedience becomes radical the minute this desire turns into real action. Radical obedience is hearing from God, feeling His nudges, participating in His activity, and experiencing His blessings in ways few people ever do.

If this is what you want, read on.

## SIX SIMPLE WORDS

After hearing about the day I gave away my Bible, people often ask me if I've ever gotten it back. I always chuckle because, to be honest, I don't want to get that Bible back (or any of the Bibles I've given away since then)—at least not for a very long time. I've had this vision of one day being on a plane when I'm old and gray, and the person next to me starts talking. She tells me of the amazing things God has done in her life since the day she received a Bible from a stranger who had received it from another stranger who had received it from another stranger. She'll then reach inside her bag and pull out a worn and tattered book I've held once before. Wow, what a day that will be!

The man I gave the Bible to that day has continued to share his testimony, and I still hear from others whose lives have been changed because of his story. Recently, a lady wrote to tell me that the "Bible man" opened up a business meeting she attended by sharing how God had changed his life.

*I just finished visiting with a friend of yours and mine. His name is Ron. Over the years I have seen him*

struggling with his success and the decisions in his life. Today, Ron is filled with a different spirit. Your actions brought him back in touch with God. He shared his story with the office on how he met you and the effect of your actions. Isn't it strange that we know God is powerful and we know that we should listen, but sometimes we shut Him out? I can't explain the emotion I felt when I heard this story, but I can tell you that I am seeking some way to be more active in spreading God's Word. Bless you and bless Ron for being wonderful messengers.

Don't we all long to see God at work? Evidence of His activity around us, in us, and through us is the greatest adventure there is. The God of the universe wants to use you!

There is but one requirement for this adventure. We have to set our rules and agendas aside—our dos and don'ts, our social graces and proper places—and follow God's command. His one requirement is so simple and yet so profound: Whatever God says do, do it. That's it. That is the entire Bible, Old Testament and New, hundreds of pages, thousands of verses, all wrapped up in six words.

It is the call of the radically obedient woman who makes the choice to say yes to God.





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## BIBLE STUDY

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Did the story about the man on the airplane and giving him the Bible inspire you? How?

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What is holding you back from going deeper in your relationship with God?

- Time?
- Intimidation?
- Not feeling like the Bible applies to your everyday life?
- Seems too hard?

Comment on one or more of the above or another thing you sense holding you back.

---

Psalm 19:7-10 (MSG) says:

The revelation of GOD is whole and pulls our lives together. The signposts of GOD are clear and point out the right road. The life-maps of

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GOD are right, showing the way to joy. The directions of GOD are plain and easy on the eyes. GOD's reputation is twenty-four-carat gold, with a lifetime guarantee. The decisions of GOD are accurate down to the nth degree. GOD's Word is better than a diamond, better than a diamond set between emeralds. You'll like it better than strawberries in spring, better than red, ripe strawberries.

List what Psalm 19:7-10 from *The Message* promises about God's Word.

The resolve of the human spirit is truly an amazing thing. We will fight to the death for something we want to protect, truly believe in, or desire. So why would we be lackadaisical about the most eternally significant relationship there is?

---

Read Deuteronomy 6:5.

- How can you love God with your heart?
- How can you love God with your soul?
- How can you love God with your strength?

Is there something you might need to let go of in order to have the freedom to say yes to God?

- Fear that it may cost you too much?
- Uncertain that you will like what a life sold out to Christ looks like?
- Feeling insecure that you'll be able to go the distance?

---

Psalm 16:7-9 (NLT) says,

I will bless the LORD who guides me; even at night my heart instructs me. I know the LORD is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me. No wonder my heart is filled with joy, and my mouth shouts his praises! My body rests in safety.

How does this verse give a sure answer for each concern listed above?

Write out a personal prayer of commitment for your new adventure with God.

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walk in faith





# INTRODUCTION

**I**n the following chapters, I want to talk to you about the five phases I've identified in the Bible common to people who have stepped out with God in pursuit of their dream. Throughout this book we'll see how different biblical characters weathered those five phases, and we'll learn how to recognize these phases in our own faith walk. I'll also be sharing with you many of my own adventures as I've progressed through these stages time and time again. I hope that as you better understand these phases of faith, you'll avoid the discouragement and defeat so many of us have gotten bogged down in along the way. You'll be able to press through, walk confidently, and avoid doubting God.

The five phases of faith go hand in hand with five fundamental truths of God:

1. God has a plan for me.
2. God is with me.
3. God will make a way.
4. God isn't surprised by death.
5. God brings dreams to life.

Keeping these five vital truths in mind will sustain you as you pass through the five phases of faith. As you'll soon discover, Satan will oppose you as you begin to fulfill your dream. He will suggest some lies that are in direct opposition to the five truths above:

1. God couldn't care less about you.
2. God is too busy with the important people to be bothered by insignificant you.
3. God isn't to be trusted.
4. Death means defeat.
5. Dreams only happen by chance.

These are the lies that Satan will use to kill your dream. The better we understand the difference between truth and lies, the freer we are to walk with God through the phases of faith and not get sidetracked.

These are the five phases of faith you'll pass through to achieve your dream:

1. Leaving: In order to go to a new level of faith with God, you've got to leave the old behind.
2. Famine: In this new place, you'll realize your comfort zone is gone, and you'll learn to depend on God like never before.
3. Believing: You've always wanted to really believe God, but now your experience of Him becomes too real to deny.
4. Death: Coming to the end of your ability to make things happen seems like death to you. But to God, this is the only way to new life with Him.
5. Resurrection: In a way only He could, God makes your dream come true. Only then do you understand that real joy isn't in the dream itself but rather in the richer faith you acquired along the way.

PHASE ONE

*Leaving*



## ONE

# THE MAP

I felt so insignificant. So small. I made my way up to the speaker in the front of the room. She was surrounded by women of all ages. Some just wanted to give her a tearful hug. Others held her book in their hands, looking for a note of encouragement and an autograph.

I just wanted to ask her *how?*

How do I take a broken life and allow God to use it for His glory? Is it possible that a girl rejected by her earthly father could actually be chosen and set apart for a divine calling? Could God really have a purpose for my life just as He had for hers?

I waited in line for my turn. Then, as I opened my mouth to speak, my throat tightened, my eyes filled with tears, and all I could squeak out was an emotional “How?” I wanted her to take me home with her and teach me. I wanted her to pack me in her suitcase and whisk me away from my meaningless life and into the life of one making a difference. I wanted her to share some quick and easy answer, three easy steps to the life you dream of, all for the low price of attending the seminar. But this speaker wasn’t a magician, a slick salesman, or a woman looking for a new houseguest. She was a woman who had experienced deep hurts and bitter disappointments and who had chosen to surrender her life—with all its failure and pain—to God. Now she was being used by Him in a truly wonderful way.



She did not give me the quick and easy answer I was looking for. She didn't give me any profound wisdom or direction. We only had time for her to simply tell me how she got started, and then I found myself making my way back to my seat. But I wasn't heading back empty and without hope. What this speaker lacked in words, she more than made up for in example. I had seen Jesus in her. I had seen living proof of God's redemption. I thought to myself, *If God could do that with her, I think there's hope for me after all.* And something new and big and God-directed was born in me and confirmed in my heart in an undeniable way that day.

### GOD WILL FILL IN THE GAPS

Though I still didn't know how God could possibly use me, I knew He could find a way. Though I didn't know when God could use me, I knew the timing was in His hands. Though I didn't even think I had much to offer, I knew God would fill in my many gaps. I simply knew God was calling me, inviting me, wooing me to something with His fingerprints all over it. And that was enough.

My life certainly didn't change overnight. I experienced a waiting period, a time of growth, development, and perseverance as God prepared me. Lessons on patience, trust, surrender, and learning to take hold all preceded my stepping out. But even in this seemingly unimportant time of pruning and trials, God was preparing me for the next step. This "getting ready period" was not a waste of time. It was an important part of fulfilling my calling. Though I couldn't see much fruit, God was getting my branches ready and healthy enough to hold all He knew was coming.

So I left the conference that day excited, only to be hit with a shocking dose of reality back home. There were still dishes to be washed, clothes to be folded, bottoms to be wiped, and everyday life to be dealt with. To be completely honest, I didn't like my mundane life. And yet what we call mundane is, in some very important ways, significant in God's school of preparation.

## DREAMS AND DESPAIR

I can remember as a young girl looking out my bedroom window, dreaming of the man I'd one day marry and the children I'd one day hear call me Mommy. I counted the years on my small hand and delighted as each one ticked away. With each passing birthday, my anticipation grew. Like most other girls, I had other goals and dreams, but the fairy tale of my heart was being a wife and mother. I could hardly wait!

Then all of a sudden I was an adult woman, and God had indeed blessed me with both a loving husband and wonderful children... and I was miserable.

How could this be? What kind of terrible joke was this, that the very thing I dreamed would bring me ultimate happiness had actually ushered me into a deep despair? How ungrateful I felt. I had asked, begged, pleaded for God to give me these gifts, and now I was desperately looking for the return policy.

Was I missing something genetically? As I looked around at church and the mall and the grocery store, I saw other women who seemed delighted to be the June Cleaver of my generation. They'd walk by me, giggling and cooing at their baby as if they were in a romantic movie. They mentioned offhandedly that their husbands were whisking them off to New York that weekend. These women were, of course, all skinny, and their well-ordered shopping lists gave evidence that their homes were no doubt tidier than mine.

What was wrong with me? I felt like a failure as a woman. And most disturbing was the fact that I didn't like being a mother. I was a gold-star member of the Mommy Guilt Club almost from the moment my child exited the womb. Can you imagine feeling this way and then considering that God was calling you into ministry?

*Who do you think you are? Do you really think God could use a woman like you to help others?* Satan's whispers were relentless. Sadly, to be honest, I agreed with him. At the conference, I had felt such assurance of God's calling, but back in the midst of everyday life, I began to doubt.

My only recourse was prayer. I got down on my knees and cried out to the Lord for His assurance. And as He always does, God met me there at the point

of my need. He assured me that He doesn't call the qualified, but He qualifies those He calls.

## SURRENDERING INADEQUACY

My friend, I don't know where you are as you read these words. I don't know the circumstances of your life. I don't know the dream God has given you. Perhaps you don't either...yet. But I do know you have this book in your hands for a reason. God has a plan for you. A dream perhaps you can't even imagine, an assignment you can't figure out and wouldn't even dare to consider as being for you. I pray that as I have honestly shared the misgivings I had, you will find great hope that God really can use any woman who surrenders her inadequacies and circumstances to Him. I've seen Him do it time and time again in the lives of women who were willing to walk in faith. But most powerfully I've seen it in my own life.

Though it started small and happened slowly, I'm now able to live the dream God has given me. But also, and more importantly, I'm now a very happily married mother of five kids. I wake up most days excited about my life and can't wait to unwrap the blessings of serving, loving, and enjoying those whom God has entrusted to me.

Now don't get me wrong, I still have days when I feel like a failure, but they are fewer and far between. My circumstances haven't really changed since those early mommy days (except I have a lot more kids!), but my perspective certainly has.

Perspective is the key. If I'd never had the husband and the kids that I have, I'm convinced I would be incredibly self-centered and seriously lacking in character. God uses different things in different lives to shape and mold them, and my family was God's perfect tool for building my life. God used many everyday life experiences to shape and mold me for ministry. I learned so much by being faithful in little, everyday responsibilities, and eventually God was able to entrust larger responsibilities to me. Any woman who wishes to be used by God must be willing to honor God no matter what.

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## HONORING GOD

During those early years, God was asking me, “Lysa, as you start to feel overwhelmed with doing the laundry and caring for the kids and cooking meals and handling life, will you honor Me? Will you do it with a grateful heart? Will you see the blessings hidden in the long to-do lists? Will you surrender your plans of convenience and ease and accept My plans for your growth and maturity?”

When I aligned my perspectives with God’s and decided to honor Him in all things, big and small, I was finally ready to step out in ministry. My circumstances were not perfect, but I knew whose face to seek when I fell flat on my own. So I declared in my heart I was a woman in ministry, dedicated to serving God, and I started to watch for His invitation to join Him.

Trust me—those first steps were the furthest thing from limelight ministry. They were everyday choices to honor God right where I was: spending time in God’s Word even when the items on my to-do list seemed more urgent. Getting filled with Him first so I could love and give and serve out of an overflow rather than relying on my own strength.

Honoring my husband even when he’d said something that hurt my feelings. Choosing to keep a good attitude even when the grocery store clerk overcharged me and took longer than necessary to remedy the problem. Having patience with my children and handling a problem calmly when I really wanted to yell and send them to their room. Graciously serving other people without calling attention to my service. Honoring Him in these ways was a vital part of getting my heart ready to serve Him in larger ways.

God wants us to honor Him. He wants us to put personal conveniences aside, lay our own ideas down, and get past our stubborn will to have and do things our way and in our time. God wants our obedience, not just lip service. It’s one thing to say we’ll honor Him but another thing entirely to actually do it. Don’t wait for the perfect day to start honoring God. Make that choice today. Don’t think you’re not doing what God called you to do just because things don’t seem as glamorous as you thought they would be. If you are a woman who honors God right where you are, you are in ministry. Keep being obedient, keep looking for the next open door of opportunity, and above all else hold closely to our Lord.

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## BIBLE STUDY

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Read Job 1:6; Luke 22:31; 1 Peter 5:8.

These verses show us how active Satan is in our world. His very name means “one who separates.” His chief purpose is to separate us from God however he can. He wants us to chase after other things—even good things—so we miss God’s best. He wants to keep us busy. He wants to fill our heads full of lies so that we can’t hear God’s truth. Too many times I have allowed his tricks to steer me down the wrong path. What about you? What tactics is he using to try to defeat you right now?

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Read Ephesians 6:11; James 4:7; John 10:10.

Satan uses the same old bag of tricks, but we have God—who is infinitely creative—on our side. We can turn to Him as our support, wisdom, and way out under temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13). God gives us the strength to stand and the armor to protect ourselves from our enemy. Satan comes to steal our joy, to kill our spirit, and to destroy our hope. He masquerades as the angel of light, deceiving us with his false beauty (2 Corinthians 11:14). We must be aware of how he works so we can guard our minds, hearts, and steps as we set out on our amazing journey. Make no mistake, this is one trip Satan does not want you to take, and he will pull out every trick in his bag to try to stop you. Just remember



what happens when women *walk in faith*

the scriptural paradigm: Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7).  
Draw close to God and He will draw close to you (James 4:8).

List some practical ways to resist Satan.

List some practical ways to draw close to God.

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Read Hebrews 10:35-36.

As we set out on our journey together, I want you to really ponder these verses. Copy them down in your notebook. This book is written to enable you to journey with confidence wherever God is leading in your life. Your journey will not look the same as mine—it is as unique as you are. But the same basic truths described in these verses apply to us all. Circle these words after you have copied down the verses: *confidence*, *perseverance*, and *promised*. My prayer is that you will find the confidence you need to persevere until you have received whatever God has promised you. Press on, my friend, and prepare to be amazed at what God has to show you through this study!