

# 1 *God's Bedtime Story*

The phone rang and interrupted the usual chaos residing in a home filled with four boys set free from school for the summer.

"Hello?"

It was my pastor.

"Lisa, I was wondering if you would be available to speak to the girls of the high-school youth group tonight about sex?"

I froze as my mind flashed back to a recent episode of a local daytime TV talk show I'd seen while folding one of many loads of laundry. If this show was accurate, things had really changed since my high-school days. According to the TV show, even junior-high students were engaged in sexual acts I hadn't even known existed back in my early teens.

"Tonight?!" I stuttered, finding myself surprisingly nervous.

"Yes," he continued. "Here's the plan. We're going to separate the guys and the girls. I'll take the guys, and you'll have the girls in the youth room."

"John is flying in tonight. Would you mind if I checked with him first?" I asked lamely, stalling for time.

"No, sure. Give me or the youth pastor a call back when you've decided."

I hung up . . . a little shaken. What was going on here? I travel all over the country speaking in front of large groups of women of mixed ages, so why did I have trepidation about our local high-school youth

*~ Even junior-high students were engaged in sexual acts I hadn't even known existed back in my early teens.*

## KISSED THE GIRLS AND MADE THEM CRY

group girls? I needed to get ahold of myself. After all, I was a former youth pastor's wife. I'd survived those two years more or less unscathed. Then I realized it wasn't the age group that bothered me . . . it was the subject matter.

I dialed John's cell phone. He answered at some airport in transit to our home.

"Honey, our pastor wants to know if I will talk to the high-school youth-group girls tonight about sex. I don't know what I want to do. . . . I mean, you're coming home tonight, and it's kind of late notice, and I'm not even sure what I'd say to them. I mean, do you know there are a lot of girls in junior high involved in oral sex?"

My last comment was thrown in for shock value, but John was apparently unmoved. "It's fine with me. I think you should do it."

"But what am I going to say to a bunch of high-school girls? I don't even have a daughter, and I have almost no time to prepare," I argued.

"You have three hours, Lisa. I think you should go for it," John countered.

Great—he wasn't going to give me any place to hide. I heard my boys arguing and starting to get rowdy in the distant upstairs.

"No, the boys will be too wild at home for me to get anything done . . . and what should I say about sex anyway?!"

"God will show you. Listen, I'm boarding the plane. Call him and tell him it's fine with me."

"Well, I'm not so sure . . . but I'll let you go. Call me when you land," I muttered.

Of course it was fine with John—he wasn't the one having to do it. I hate it when I want to have an "out" and he won't give me one. I looked around his office, scanning his shelves for possible reference books as I dialed back my pastor, still uncertain what I'd say.

"Hey, John is fine with it." Before I realized it, I was committed.

"Fantastic! Listen, I don't want you to overprepare. Here's the format: We will have praise and worship together. Then the girls will leave with you. They will have an opportunity to fill out three-by-five cards asking any ques-

## G O D ' S B E D T I M E S T O R Y

tions that they might possibly have. You will answer their questions for the first half-hour, teach them for the next half-hour, and then let them go.”

“Will I get to see the questions ahead of time?” The answer was “no.” I became even more uncomfortable.

“Hey did you know I was a *really* good heathen before becoming a Christian? I mean, it isn’t like I have this wonderful testimony of purity or anything. I think someone else might be better equipped for this lecture.”

“Well, I don’t think you should give your testimony (since it was now obvious I didn’t have one). I want you to talk about purity and give them some straight answers. You’ll do great.”

And then he was gone. I hung up, wondering how I’d even gotten myself involved in this. I had a zillion others things I needed to do. It meant another night away from my kids, and I certainly felt anything but qualified on the topic at that point. I ran out of John’s office and gathered my four sons around for the announcement and to plead my case.

“Hey guys, I really need your cooperation here. Mommy has been asked to speak to the high school youth group girls in three hours. I really need to prepare. I’m going to go into Daddy’s office. Please, please, please let me have this time. Don’t bother me unless you’re bleeding. Be nice to each other. Go outside and get some fresh air or go upstairs or down in the basement, but I don’t want anyone on this level of the house. I don’t want to hear any arguing. Understand?”

They looked back and forth at each other and then nodded their assent. They recognized the look of a desperate woman.

I swept back into John’s office and started pulling down concordances and reference materials. Out of the corner of my eye, I caught my nine-year-old son, Alec, standing outside of John’s glass door looking at me. I pulled open the door.

“What is it, Alec?” I asked impatiently.

“Oh, nothing. I’m just watching you,” he answered nonchalantly.

“That is not an option. Remember, you are supposed to be upstairs, downstairs, or outside! Go!” I asserted.

## KISSED THE GIRLS AND MADE THEM CRY

“Okay,” he shrugged as he shuffled off.

*Kids!* I enclosed myself again in the semisolitude and opened up *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, but I really had no idea where to start. I pulled out my *Amplified Bible* and was reviewing all those familiar Scriptures on purity and fornication and whoremongers when the phone rang again. Now I was getting edgy. I picked it up hastily.

“Hello?”

It was my pastor again. “Hey, Lisa. Listen, tonight is off. We just can’t make it happen this soon. But we want to be able to announce it tonight and have it happen next week. Are you going to be in town next week?”

Here was my chance! Perhaps I was scheduled to be out of town. I grabbed for my Daytimer and flipped forward a week.

“I will be home next week.”

“Great—we’ll do it then.” And he was gone again.

I felt *some* sense of relief knowing I now had a week instead of three hours to prepare (which didn’t really count as such since I hadn’t even taken a shower or cooked dinner yet). I breathed a sigh of relief and let my boys know life could return to its usual rhythm, I moved forward with my day feeling a lot lighter.

Over the next week, I carried the service and its content in my heart. I really sought God and searched the Scriptures and my own heart for answers to the questions I knew I would encounter. I made an educated guess that I’d at least be asked how far it was okay “to go,” as if our individual sexuality was a par course or bike race of sorts. I searched the Scriptures for a clear and definitive answer, figuring the one I had given my children when they were young wouldn’t fly. After all, I was the mother who told her children Magic Johnson had gotten the HIV virus by kissing too many girls and then was surprised when they were afraid to kiss relatives goodbye. I hadn’t wanted to trouble them with details when they were “so young.”

I sent my oldest son to a courtship seminar when he was twelve and promised to arrange a marriage for him. I even offered to take applications for his future mate when I was out on the road. I almost had him

## GOD'S BEDTIME STORY

convinced at the point when I told him how much money he would save if he weren't paying for dates. He could use it to buy a really neat car.

But now I had to be serious. There would be several hundred girls who probably wouldn't go for my arranged marriage theory. I prayed in earnest:

*Father, I really need an answer for these girls. I want to impart Your wisdom, not my own opinion or that of anyone else. Should I tell them it is okay to hold hands as long as they go no farther? Or perhaps You think kissing is okay? I really need to know soon.*

I waited but sensed no reply to my prayer, so I got up off my face and headed for the shower. Tomorrow was D-day. As I showered, my mind wandered the paths I could walk down the next night, until I heard the Holy Spirit speak to me and focus my direction a bit.

He said to me, "You are looking for rules to restrict their behavior. Rules will not keep them. The empowerment they need must be born out of relationship. Change your focus from what they *can't* do to what they *can do*. Tell them they can go as far with their boyfriends as they are comfortable doing in front of their fathers. For fathers are the protector and guardian of the virtue for daughters."

I got excited! It wasn't about rules, and I couldn't let myself be led down that path. That would reduce the discussion to a lecture about the law and leave the teenagers powerless and me frustrated. Instead, it was about having a relationship with their heavenly Father and honoring their earthly ones. It wasn't about limitations, morals, and a code of ethics chiseled in cold stone, but of living ones penned on their hearts. I jumped out of the shower, dried off, and began to type out about six pages of notes for myself.

The following night I arrived after praise and worship had already started, feeling rather conspicuous and out of place. I obviously stood out as a woman in her forties surrounded by so many teens. It wasn't even like I could slip in undetected. I imagined the teens viewed me as another "intruder mom" come to spy on their youth group. When worship was

*~ They can go as far with their boyfriends as they are comfortable doing in front of their fathers.*

## KISSED THE GIRLS AND MADE THEM CRY

over, the white three-by-five cards were passed out across the length and width of the auditorium for the recording of the dreaded questions. I smiled at a couple of girls sitting near me and leaned over and encouraged them to write anything they wanted. I was hoping they would be nice out of fear I might recognize their handwriting later.

“Oh, I just have a question about clothes,” one volunteered innocently.

I nodded confidently and smiled, thinking to myself, *Great! I can handle a question about clothing. This will be easier than I thought. I shouldn't have gotten so bent out of shape.*

When the cards were filled out, all the females departed the main sanctuary for our destination, the youth sanctuary down the hall. There the cards were collected as the girls passed through the doorway. I couldn't help noticing how loud and rambunctious the girls were as we all made our exodus. I awkwardly waited on the sidelines as the youth leaders collected the cards from some four hundred girls and watched as these girls packed into the seats. When all the seats were full, the girls spilled out onto the floor. With all the cards collected, the stack and the microphone were handed to me, and I mounted the platform to commence the question-and-answer session.

Even the bonus of an additional week had not prepared me for the kind of questions I received that night. The first was a question as to whether or not I agreed that a certain intern at the church (named on the card) was the sexiest man alive. I replied that I did not agree. I told the girls that I thought my husband was the sexiest man alive.

The next question had to do with clothes: *Is it okay to dress sexy? How much skin can you show at any one time?*

I looked at the girls present. A lot of them were in skirts so short I had been afraid of what might happen when they sat down. Others sported bare midriffs revealing pierced navels suspended above jeans or shorts that looked as if they had been intentionally pulled down as low as possible on their hips.

For clarification I asked, “Are you wondering if I think it is okay for you to dress suggestively?”

## G O D ' S B E D T I M E S T O R Y

The majority nodded their heads, pleased that I understood.

“Sure, I think it is a great idea. Go right ahead and dress like a whore if you want to attract a whoremonger. It’s like fishing—the bait you use will determine what you’ll catch. So if you want to hook a sleazy guy, by all means dress sleazy.”

They were a little stunned, so I continued: “I’m not saying it is wrong to dress attractively or even fashionably, but dressing suggestively is only appropriate behind closed doors between a husband and his wife.”

~ *It’s like fishing—the bait you use will determine what you’ll catch.*

I shared how there were things I wore alone in the bedroom with my husband that would be inappropriate to wear while walking the dog or while scrambling eggs for my four sons the following morning. Often when my children help me fold laundry, a brightly colored or oddly shaped piece of lingerie will be held up for identification, I explain it is “Mommy-Daddy” clothes. Shoulders are shrugged and the item is passed to me, “Here, you fold it. I’m not sure I know how it goes.”

Another question came from the girls about what body parts were okay to pierce, to which I referenced the Bible’s piercing suggestions: ears and noses (Ezek. 16:12). I recommended staying away from anything that is not made of cartilage.

~ *How far is too far?*

There were quite a few questions about the Bible’s stance on homosexuality. Did it say anything about it? Was it wrong? How could love between any two people ever be wrong, homosexual or otherwise? As an answer, I gave them references to study for themselves and explained that the right thing (love) in the wrong setting (sexually expressed between people of the same gender) was still wrong. It is an invalid way to meet a valid need, a perversion of the valid God-ordained expression of sexual love.

There were other questions about oral sex, and some too rude, crude, and disrespectful to even mention. But then came the big one. Now, don’t get me wrong. I had already encountered it a number of times, but I just kept putting it off by pushing the card to the back of the pile. It was

## KISSED THE GIRLS AND MADE THEM CRY

the one most frequently recorded, closely followed by one version or another of, *Is it okay to dress sexy?* I could avoid it no longer—it was the moment they'd been waiting for: the greatly anticipated question . . . *How far is too far?*

When I shared the answer the Holy Spirit had given me, the whispering and giggling stopped and you could hear a pin drop. Each girl was visiting this scenario in her mind. *In front of my dad? What would that look like? Come on, we don't do things like that in front of our fathers!*

This is true, for most everything we would do sexually we'd do behind closed doors, in darkened corners, under the cover of night, in a car, or in a drug or alcohol haze. If we were brazen enough, perhaps we'd mess around in a dark room of our homes while our parents slept elsewhere, but never in the light, sober, right in front of our dads!

A hush over the room continued, and I knew it was the right answer to the wrong question from a generation of confused and vulnerable girls. The most alarming revelation for me was the fact I stood before high-school *church* girls under the leadership of a dynamic, passionate, and on-fire youth pastor. I knew the leadership of this youth group hungered for holiness and the fire of God to sweep through the youth and bring with it revival and restoration. I knew these leaders personally pursued purity. Where was the problem? I was soon given some insight.

I preached my message and closed the service at 9 P.M., those who wanted to stay for prayer or just to talk and ask more questions were invited to remain and speak with one of the youth-group leaders or myself. I was shocked at how many girls lingered, their countenances very different from the almost open defiance I'd encountered when I first came in. What I heard for the next two hours broke my heart.

Young girls who trembled under the pain and shame of sexual violation and molestation at the hands of those they'd trusted: friends, boyfriends, uncles, brothers, stepfathers, or even fathers. Young girls tormented by the mental replay of sexually charged images, perverted movies, music videos, photos, or Internet sites. Young girls who felt dirtied by conversations or jokes they'd been part of, overheard, or shamed

## GOD'S BEDTIME STORY

by names they'd been called. Others were entangled in masturbation.

All these secrets shrouded their young lives like a gray film or clinging residue that refused to be washed off. It lingered behind like the scent of smoke

so all might know they'd walked in the midst of unclean fire.

These daughters had no safe haven where they could simply rest and sleep without wrestling images, imaginations, voices, or shadows from their pasts. They were isolated from peace by fear and shame. Some had been equipped with rules but found them to be a faulty protection from the onslaughts waged against their minds. Too often if bodies had escaped physical violation, minds had not. They longed to be rescued by a knight in shining armor. To escape the dark tower of shadows that imprisoned them, but the knights were gone. Too often it was the men in their lives that had disappointed, violated, or abandoned them, leaving them vulnerable and distrustful.

I was told stories of an abuse—so subtle you may mistake it as harmless: parents who watched movies filled with sexual promiscuity, innuendos, and often, partial nudity with their children in the shelter of their homes or beside them in the dark theatre. Young girls shared how uncomfortable they'd been watching this with their parents, especially with their *fathers*. They'd feel shame and fidget, then look at their parents and notice they weren't flinching. After a few such movies or TV shows, they pushed the uncomfortable feelings away, but were unable to see their parents in quite the same light. It was as though by watching their father view the naked breasts of another woman presented in a sexually suggestive manner, their own virgin breasts had been uncovered. They left the experience feeling vulnerable and violated and not even knowing why.

But how can a daughter feel safe and protected if her father is entertained by promiscuity? Will she sense

~ *They longed to be rescued . . .  
To escape the dark shadows that  
imprisoned them, but the knights  
were gone.*

~ *But how can a daughter feel  
safe and protected if her father is  
entertained by promiscuity?*

## KISSED THE GIRLS AND MADE THEM CRY

his protection, disapproval, or disappointment when he is not around if she has not seen it when he is? What happens when little girls no longer feel safe?

Perhaps you have never felt this way, but have found yourself turned off or shut down sexually because of the ugly godless image our society has projected. It would seem the evil one has tarnished the image of healthy desire and love by turning it into a cheap snapshot of lust. Therefore desire and awakening to passion of any kind becomes a frightening prospect. You wonder how you could ever exchange the safety and restriction of the law for the longing and abandonment.

And why, why, *why* would I write a book on the virtues of sexual purity when it appears nobody is really interested or listening? And to whom would I write? In answer, this book is for daughters in waiting. It is for mothers to remember. It is for every fallen one who longs to be lifted. And it is for those who've kept themselves, to know and fully realize their reward and be encouraged to remain strong.

This book is a letter from a generation of mothers and mentors who have known regret, to the daughters of this generation that they might be kept from our failures, and inherit the promises and not the pain. It is a tool for mothers who feel they can't tell their daughters no because years ago they themselves said yes.

This is not a book of do's and don't's . . . it is a book of restoration. A glimpse at how God see things, a revelation of His original intent. Some might call it an impossible fairy tale, but I believe it can be true. Rules will never set us free, just as fear and control will never keep us safe. It is truth that frees us, one that looms larger than all the lies presently surrounding us. Truth is the dawning of morning where there has been a gross and long night of darkness filled with horrible disappointment and despair.

I have heard it said if you want someone to hear something, tell it in a story. I found this to be true many years ago when telling my children stories when they slept in my room. It was a silly, make-believe one set in pioneer days about a family who moved out west and had many adventures. I

## G O D ' S B E D T I M E S T O R Y

would tell this story as we were all falling asleep. Often my children would drop in and out of the story as they lapsed in and out of sleep. Along with them I too traveled in and out as I drifted to sleep, and if any of them remained awake they would call me back and correct me if I had left out or messed up on any of the details. I am always amazed because to this day they seem to remember the story with so much more clarity and detail than even I do.

Why have I told you this? Because I believe God wants to tell you a bedtime story, to rock back to sleep what's been so rudely awakened. One to softly lull passions back to a place of waiting and resting in slumber, a story to restore to a dreamlike state what was awakened before its time. A place where fears are calmed and hope is restored. A haven where shame is not permitted, and everything is fresh, new, and clean as flowers after a spring rain.

Before we go there, let's pray together:

~ *God wants to tell you a bedtime story, to rock back to sleep what's been so rudely awakened.*

~ *Dear Heavenly Father,*

*You are the Creator of heaven and earth. You are the author of intimacy as well. There are areas of my life that have been awakened before the right time . . . areas of my sexuality that hadn't finished resting or dreaming before they were aroused and inflamed. I ask You to touch these places with Your healing rest. As I read, I ask that the light of Your truth would come and dispel the shadows in this area of my life.*

*I believe You alone can do this, for You are almighty and all-knowing. Open the eyes of my heart that I may know You and walk in Your ways. Let the issues that need to be put to rest be ultimately put to rest. Dispel my fears and draw me under the safety of Your wings. Open my heart and tell me Your stories so I can know and understand Your purpose.*

*Love,  
Your Daughter*

This is an excerpt from **KISSED THE GIRLS  
AND MADE THEM CRY** by Lisa Bevere.  
Copyright (c) 2002 by Lisa Bevere. Reprinted  
by permission of Thomas Nelson, Inc. All rights  
reserved.