

DEDICATION

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*To all the young women I've been blessed to
work with throughout my career:
Your courage to authentically share your
passion, sorrow, and joy makes the world
(and me) better.*



Published by Concordia Publishing House
3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
1-800-325-3040 • cph.org

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MY NAME IS:

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PRINT YOUR NAME HERE

**I AM THANKFUL TO WALK IN FAITH
WITH JESUS, MY SAVIOR!**

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SIGN YOUR NAME HERE



FAITH NOTES

A CHRIST-CENTERED
SURVIVAL KIT
FOR YOUNG WOMEN

Cassie Moore

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE • SAINT LOUIS

QUICK-START GUIDE

You opened this devotion book because you're curious, brave, and probably struggling with something.

Welcome to the club. You're not alone.

Right now, you might be feeling a mix of emotions as you tackle life—everything from anxiety, fear, and shame to joy, excitement, and happiness. You might be in a tough season, and you might struggle with loneliness, confusion, or uncertainty. Or, you might be having a mountain-top experience and are filled with hope.

Every one of us is trying to learn who God made us to be and how to navigate the world. But the good news? God is right there with us as we try to figure it out.

By absorbing Scripture and focusing on the work of Jesus for you, you'll see the overwhelming love, security, and hope that comes from being a beloved child of God. That makes all the difference as you cope with life's challenges.

How can you use this devotional? Here are some tips:

- ❑ Read without distraction. A thousand things compete for our attention, but it benefits your brain and soul to step away and be still for a few minutes. Tuck your phone and computer away and treat yourself to me time to read and reflect on your faith life.
- ❑ Use the “Faith Notes” sections to journal, think, pray, doodle, and apply what you've read.

- ❑ Consider keeping a journal or a video blog, or talk to a friend or mentor about what you're reading.
- ❑ Go deeper by reading the whole chapter of a Bible passage that's shared or maybe even the entire book of the Bible the passage comes from. God speaks directly to our hearts through Scripture.
- ❑ Share what you're learning with a friend, sibling, parent, or trusted adult—maybe on a car ride to school or over a meal. This can help you better process and absorb what the Holy Spirit whispers in His Word.
- ❑ Don't worry about reading this book from front to back. Look at the table of contents, then choose a devotion that fits your situation and interest in the moment. Sometimes rereading the same devotion can be helpful too.
- ❑ Don't feel guilty if you don't read every day. It takes time to build healthy habits. Try setting an alarm for five minutes of time with God every day for a week, and spend time praying, reading your Bible, and reading devotions. Don't beat yourself up if you miss a day (or week or month!)—God's grace is there for you, no matter what.

Despite the unexpected twists and turns we face in life, one thing is certain: Christ loves us and offers us freedom through His sacrificial death on the cross. He comforts us in our trials and walks with us through every hardship, giving us the strength to face our journey through life with peace and confidence. Lean on Jesus, in the good times and bad. He is *always* there for you.

Let the adventure begin, my friend.

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Jeremiah 29:11–12

YOUR STORY

My grandma taught me to sew when I was a little girl. She was a pro, whipping up blankets and clothes with ease.

While I learned just the basics of how to hem or repair cloth, those sewing skills have served me well. I've carried a tiny sewing kit to many events, and you'd be shocked at how many times I've had to fix a button or a busted seam in a dress.

If you've ever tried to stitch something, you know that every thread matters. Even though they may be tiny and sometimes invisible in your clothing, stitches serve an important function to make something what it is.

In the same way, each experience in your life is a stitch in the grand tapestry of who you are. All those tiny threads weave together to make you unique and to serve as testament to God's design for your life.

The story of your life matters. But in a culture that idolizes comparison and conformity, it can be hard to believe that your unique story has a purpose.

The story of your life may be largely good. Perhaps you were baptized as a baby and grew up in church with

a loving family always there to support you. What a testimony to God's faithfulness in your life!

Perhaps, though, you've just joined God's church after a life full of challenges. Maybe you had to hit rock bottom to realize that there's more to life than the emptiness that comes without Jesus at the center.

Or maybe you're still mulling over this whole faith thing, wondering if you want to know more.

Even if you have come to this point broken, reeling from pain and feeling messy, your story is testament to God's incredible grace.

In Jesus, we have a Savior who accepts us just as we are. It doesn't matter what we've been through or what decisions we've made or what our reputation is. He sees every ugly thought we've had, every mistake we've made, and all the painful moments we've endured—and He welcomes us with open arms.

Some people find it difficult to accept that Jesus gives us His love without expecting anything in return. It may be hard to hear that God is your heavenly Father and trust that He won't disappoint you or hurt you. But, truly, God has great plans for you.

Jeremiah 29:11–12 reminds us,

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will hear you.

Whatever your story may be and however you got here, you're a part of God's family now. He loves you completely, quirks and messy past and all. You are stitched together with Christ, forgiven by His cross, strengthened by His love, and supported by His grace. No matter what challenges you face in life, those threads holding you together will hold firm and keep you whole.

Faith Notes

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Genesis 50:20

REPURPOSE YOUR PAIN

I'm amazed at the way creative people repurpose old junk. From worn-out skateboards turned into lamps and abandoned desks made into trendy artwork, I love to see something broken be made new.

When it comes to people, the process of repurposing what is broken into something new isn't so easy though.

Our lives are often filled with circumstances we'd like to forget. Some of these experiences can haunt us for years, filling our hearts with regret, shame, or hurt. We don't want to be defined by these awful moments, and sometimes we stuff them down deep to try to forget. But what if God wants to use the very worst part of your story for His good?

You see, our God is a God of redemption. He transforms and heals, even when the odds seem impossible.

The Old Testament account of Joseph is a great example of God's power to repurpose pain. Joseph was the apple of his father's eye, but his brothers hated him for it. Their jealousy got out of hand, and they sold him into slavery. When Joseph got to a new land, Egypt, he was falsely accused and thrown in prison. Then his

God-given wisdom got him released from prison and placed in the second-highest position in Egypt. As part of his job, he worked to prevent people from starving to death in a famine—which saved Joseph’s entire family too.

When Joseph encountered his brothers, seventeen years after they’d betrayed him, he spoke a powerful truth: “You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today” (Genesis 50:20).

In time and according to His plan for you, God can use your heartache for good too. No matter what mistakes and struggles you’ve faced, you may be shocked to find out how God repurposes the broken pieces of your life to create a work of art that inspires hope and healing for others.

Own your story, as messy as it may be. God can turn your mess into a message and your pain into an important purpose for His redemptive work to be on display to the world.

Faith Notes

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1 Samuel 16:7

EMBRACING GOD'S DEFINITION OF BEAUTY

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

Every girl I know can answer that question without thinking. We typically envision something we hate about our appearance. Whether you dislike your nose or thighs or wish you were skinnier, taller, or less freckled, it's easy to wish we looked different.

Our world is obsessed with appearances. Filters and photo editors abound, creating a whirlpool of negativity that can suck our self-confidence down the drain.

As you scroll through social media and YouTube, it can feel difficult to measure your life against the perfectly curated, retouched photos and videos we see from others.

I've felt pressure to conform to these beauty standards. I've plucked and primped, squeezed into painful shoes, and practiced poses to hide my insecurities from coming across in photos. I know I'm not alone in this either. From childhood on, this is the reality that women face in a world that is obsessed with unrealistic beauty standards.

Even when we say we don't care—let's be honest—a little bit of us still cares.

In contrast to what the world tells us we should look like, Scripture reminds us that true beauty wells up from within. As 1 Samuel 16:7 tells us,

For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.

Cut through the noise of societal pressures and embrace God's grace like a comforting sweatshirt you can snuggle into. He knows us, inside and out, and He doesn't mind if our hair is frizzy or our zits are on full display.

When the world bombards you with unrealistic standards, remind yourself that you're fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image. Remind your sisters in Christ to love themselves for who God created them to be and who Jesus redeemed them to be, rather than being obsessed with perfection that none of us can attain.

Living wrapped up in the peace of God's unconditional love, knowing that our souls are treasured, offers a comfort that outweighs everything else. His standard of beauty matters more than the ever-changing pressures of this world.

Faith Notes

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FIFTY-TWO BIBLE PASSAGES FOR YOUR LIFE:

When you need peace:

[Jesus said,] “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” (JOHN 14:27)

When your heart is broken:

The LORD is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit. (PSALM 34:18)

When you feel alone:

Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. (JOSHUA 1:9)

When you feel angry:

Be angry, and do not sin; ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the LORD. (PSALM 4:4–5)

When talking is getting you into trouble:

Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent. (PROVERBS 17:28)

When you need guidance about social media:

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (EPHESIANS 4:29)

When you feel like your sin is too big for God:

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved. (EPHESIANS 2:4–5)