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Introduction

Have you ever felt anonymous—overlooked, unimportant, or bruised by the world? We all have at one time or another. But there’s good news. While the opinions of others may drag us down, the God who created us has an entirely different opinion of who we are. That’s because we are His creations, and everything He created is good. And to Him, each of us is a significant somebody!

In this little book we will discover our uniqueness and significance to Christ by exploring the stories of four “anonymous” women of the Bible—women who were known and remembered not by their names but by their circumstances:

The Woman Who Anointed Jesus – Judged
The Woman with the Issue of Blood – Hurting
The Woman at the Well – Ordinary
The Woman Who Committed Adultery – Shame
Anonymous

Though we do not know their names, all of these women were known and loved by God. And when each woman encountered Jesus, she was never the same again!

As we consider the highlights of these women’s stories (stories I explore in depth in my Bible study by the same title, Anonymous: Discovering the Somebody You Are to God), we will discover powerful ways that we all can relate to and learn from their experiences. By digging into God’s Word, we will mine our way to uncover the jewels of God’s mercy and grace.

Join me as together we find the joy that comes with knowing we are sweetly significant to Jesus!
Shades of Anonymous

When You Feel Invisible

Scripture: Psalm 139:16

Anonymous. We all know what it feels like to be overlooked, rejected, or discounted. My friend, God longs to touch our hearts during those times when we think we are less than we really are.

When you feel nobody knows your name or cares anything about you, remember this good news: you are known and loved by God!

Feeling Anonymous

God wants you to allow His great love for you to override negative circumstances and the negative opinions of others. In fact, He wants you to allow Him to eliminate any negativity that has weighed
down your soul and clouded your vision of Him. It’s never His plan that you live a life chained to sadness over yesterday. It’s also not His plan that you live today defined by the faulty perceptions of others—especially the perception of being anonymous.

Here’s a working definition:

**anonymous** – lacking individuality, unique character, or distinction

To get us thinking about the love that God has for us and our significance to Him, we will be exploring the stories of four nameless women from God’s Word. Although nameless to us, each of these real, anonymous women held a special place in the heart of God. Their stories are included in His Word to encourage us and empower us to live life in vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ.

**Meet the Women**

Throughout this book and the companion study, I refer to these anonymous women as our girlfriends and sisters. That’s because this is who they’ve become to me as I’ve investigated their lives and talked to our heavenly Father about
them. I’ve considered their plights and how their circumstances could have undone them, but instead, by God’s mercy, they came face to face with Jesus.

I’ve given these women names so that we might identify with them as real people. Each woman’s name gives a reference point of who she was when she met Jesus. First we’ll meet Judged in the house of the Pharisee. Then we’ll encounter Hurting near the shores of the Sea of Galilee. By the well in Samaria we’ll be introduced to Ordinary. And finally, in Jerusalem’s temple courtyard, we’ll become acquainted with Shame.

It’s not spelled out in Scripture, but I imagine that Judged, Hurting, Ordinary, and Shame each faced Jesus with warped identities. In other words, they had become the personification of what they were going through.

Life lends itself to that kind of thinking. If you hurt long enough, you begin to view yourself as a hurting person. If you’re never noticed as someone making a contribution or if you’re never valued, you begin to perceive yourself as overlooked. Each of these women had some time to develop scars before she met Jesus. I think that’s why I’ve become so intrigued and connected with them. I’ve had moments with every one of those scars. Here’s the beautiful reality. Having a relationship with
Jesus Christ dispels every other identity that holds you hostage.

These four women in Scripture came to Jesus with different backgrounds. Judged, Hurting, Ordinary, and Shame all brought with them a background that Jesus used to reach others for His glory. When they turned to Him, God used their stories, which included their histories of sin and heartache. Each had an encounter with the Lord that was life changing—not only for themselves, but also for those who would hear their stories.

God wants to do the same in your life. Whatever your past, Jesus will use you to shine His glory if you come to Him.

You Are God’s Somebody

My dear friend, if you belong to Christ, if you are in relationship with Him, then you can know that you are held in the highest esteem.

One day at a meal hosted by the Pharisees, the guests were laying claim to the best seats of the house while Jesus had the attention of the few standing before Him. Jesus proceeded to paint a word picture of a great supper with guests arriving (see Luke 14:7-11).
When an honorable guest arrived after the choice seats had been taken, the host could not permit the worthy guest to take the lowest place. Because that would be a breach of etiquette, he was left with one choice. He must inform the person occupying the seat of honor, of which he was not entitled, to take the lowest place. He then would invite the distinguished guest to sit in the place of honor, leaving the humiliated guest with a lesson he’d long remember. Jesus’ point was that it would be better to take the lowliest spot in the first place, and then if your host disagreed with your choice, you’d hear him inviting you to move to a place of higher honor. You’d be respected in the presence of the other guests instead of embarrassed before them.

Jesus has reserved your spot at the most wonderful celebration banquet of all time! The marriage supper of Revelation 19 is a glorious celebration of all who are in Christ. Our four anonymous girlfriends never would have imagined they’d land on the guest list of such a grand celebration. Never… until they met Jesus!

How about you, my friend? If you’ve ever questioned how He feels about you, then it’s time for you to celebrate your place of honor in the heart of God!
The Woman Who Anointed Jesus

When You Are Judged

Scripture: Luke 7:36-50

My heart is so moved by the passion of this anonymous woman, *Judged*. I picture her with her eyes fixed on Jesus and her heart determined to get to Him. Something had happened to spur her on. Something glorious had given her the guts to burst into the Pharisee’s house to carry out her mission of lavishing love upon Jesus. The accusing stares and judgments whispered about her did not matter at all. All she wanted to do was get to Jesus.

Living in a world tainted with sin and filled with sinners, it’s easy to find yourself trapped inside walls of judgment. And if you’re not mindful, you
The Woman Who Anointed Jesus

can get caught up in helping to erect those walls around others. Whether a victim of judgment or an occasional whisperer, Jesus has a pertinent word for all of us straight from His spot at the Pharisee’s table.

The Great Love of God

I have been blessed to have a dad who loved me, enjoyed being with me, and approved of me. No matter what others thought, he thought I was the best! Every girl needs a daddy like that.

Maybe you’re one of the few who share my blessing of this kind of father-daughter relationship. But if this scenario seems totally foreign to you, I have some great news. You have exactly that kind of Father. He is your Father God, and He adores you. His love is not based on your success or accomplishments—or even on your worthiness to be loved. He loves you because He created you. Talk about some good news! And it’s good news for each one of us, regardless of the kind of father-daughter relationship we’ve experienced on earth.

My friend, if you are feeling judged, as this woman certainly was, I pray her example will spur you on to love Him all the more. His great mercy trumps every judgmental thought from those around you. I pray your focus will turn from
what others think to what He thinks. His opinion is the important one.

Now let’s step inside the house of the Pharisee.

*Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to eat.*

Luke 7:36

The home of the Pharisee was a great place for this showdown between love and grace. In this setting, you’ll see compassion rather than rules, mercy instead of legalities, and uncompromising love instead of hard-core law. Simon could have been orchestrating an opportunity to accuse Jesus, as the Pharisees did in Luke 6:7. Or perhaps Simon didn’t feel strongly either way and was simply curious about the One who was stirring up controversy with His radical love. Whatever the case, I bet he wasn’t at all prepared for what was about to go down.

Lo and behold, here she came—the woman in the city who was known as a sinner. Judged and shunned, she was given dirty looks by perhaps all who passed her on the street. It’s likely that no one saw any good in her at all—no one except Jesus.

As she approached Him, Jesus welcomed her. Undoubtedly she had heard the good news that if she came to Him in repentance, He would not
turn her away. And He didn’t. The longer she was in His presence, the deeper was her expression of love. She lingered before Him, adoring Him by washing His feet with her tears and drying them with her hair. He allowed her to do what she’d come to do: worship Him. And so she did—wholeheartedly and unashamedly. Judged by others but loved by Jesus.

**How Jesus Views Judgment**

Consider this definition of judgment: “the forming of an opinion, estimate, notion, or conclusion, as from circumstances presented to the mind.” Simon the Pharisee was full of judgment! He was not only offended at what this sinner-woman was doing, but he most likely was irritated that it was happening in his house.

I love sinking into Scripture, and I really get pumped when I get to that strategic moment when Jesus prepares to pounce. This is one of those grand occasions when He uses questioning skills, story illustration, and critical thinking to get His truth across. In the parable of two debtors, Jesus says that a creditor forgives one who owes a large amount and one who owes a small amount. Then he asks Simon who would love the creditor more. Simon answers, “I suppose the one whom he forgave more.”
Jesus rushed in to affirm Simon’s assessment of the storyline. He said, “You have rightly judged” (Luke 7:43b). Simon didn’t know it, but with his own words he had just pronounced judgment upon himself.

My sister, all of us struggle from time to time with how others perceive us. It’s natural that we do. It’s also true that we don’t want to toss the opinions of others out the window. It matters much that we behave like Christ. But when it comes to the insecurities brought on by feelings of judgment and negative evaluations by others, God does not want us to become overly concerned with impressing others. He also does not want us to allow the judgments of others, whether accurate or not, to consume us.

Jesus Our Defender

After asking Simon an easy question with an obvious answer, Jesus instructed him to look at the woman. You might say that Jesus moved in for the kill. Here’s my paraphrase:

Simon, just look at this woman! Although you invited me to your house today, you didn’t welcome me with a basin of water and towel to wash my feet. She has washed them with her outpouring of
The Woman Who Anointed Jesus

tears and dried them with the hair on her head. 
You didn’t offer a kiss of hospitality, but she 
hasn’t stopped kissing my feet since I came in. 
And you did not show respect by anointing my 
head with oil as you do for many other guests, but 
she has lavished her fragrant oil all over my feet.

What a contrast between the well-to-do 
righteous man and the lowly sinner. With verbal 
gusto Jesus spoke to Simon but also exposed to those gathered the shabby treatment He’d received from His host. He had not been met with any of the customary protocol for honored guests. At best, His reception had been inhospitable.

Although Jesus spoke strongly, I don’t believe he spoke harshly. His grace is too inclusive for that. We don’t know Simon’s true motives for inviting Jesus over, but Jesus knew exactly what was in his heart. Whatever the Pharisee’s objective, Jesus took the opportunity to teach deep spiritual truth. His words were for Simon, as well as for the other guests who were invited that day.

Jesus was not only this woman’s Savior; He was her Defender. This woman had been forgiven her sins, and she wanted to thank Him. Because of the grace she’d received, she wanted to bring a gift to Jesus. She didn’t seek approval of others, only Him. She loved deeply because she had been loved deeply. With humility and gratitude,
she made her way to her Lord. And Jesus was all about defending her—publicly and straight to her heart.

The Law of Love

Jesus saw this woman as a forgiven sinner. Speaking to Simon, Jesus did not name her sins or make light of them; He merely stated that there were many of them and they were forgiven. Her sins were not forgiven because she loved much; that would have come by her *earning* forgiveness. Rather, she loved much because her sins had already been forgiven. This was evidenced in her outpouring of love to Jesus.

Sometimes, my friend, we need to be reminded of the basic and glorious truth of salvation by faith alone. In almost every part of life, we’re evaluated in some way. It may be by performance, intelligence, creativity, personality, appearance, or some other measure. We’re so conditioned to the idea of earning approval that it’s difficult to grasp that God does not evaluate us by our efforts.

Salvation is God’s gift to us and for us, so that we might live in deep intimacy with Him and “explode” His glory throughout the world. Our extravagant love becomes the consequence or result of our salvation; it is not the cause of it.
If you have invited Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior and have received the gift of salvation, it is a matter of faith and trust that you never again doubt your salvation. Doubting your salvation is essentially dismissing Christ’s death and resurrection. Anytime you step away from the truth of Christ’s gift of salvation, you are adding your works to God’s grace. You’re accepting His grace but adding a bit of you to the mix. On this the Scriptures are clear: faith in God’s gift of grace is sufficient—not only for receiving salvation but also for keeping it!

In the Old Testament, before Christ came, the law required God’s people to atone or make payment for their own sins. Thank goodness we live on this side of the cross! Under the law, God related to humanity through commandments and regulations. Under grace, God relates to us through faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Oh, there is such sweetness in the Lord’s words to our dear sister who lovingly showered Him with her devotion. He could have specified her sins or given her specific instructions about her actions from there on out. But Jesus merely said, “Your sins are forgiven.” There was no list of do’s and don’ts for her to follow in order to earn His love and approval. Rather, her love moved her to actions of gratitude. Likewise, our deep gratitude for what Jesus has done for us intensifies our love for Him; and our love increases our gratitude.
Knowing Jesus Changes Everything

Simon’s guests seated at the table with Jesus seemed pretty irked about His pronouncement of forgiveness of sins. There was no room for joy in their hearts over forgiveness of sins, because their hearts were full of criticism of the One who’d forgiven the sins. In His claim of forgiving sin, Jesus also was claiming to be the Messiah. Since they did not believe this could possibly be true, they focused on the idea that He was a blasphemer of the Holy God of Israel.

And then something very beautiful happened. Jesus ignored them. There was plenty He could have said to them. But in that moment she was His priority. She stood before Him in humility and devotion—perhaps longing for His affirmation.

Jesus lovingly turned His attention to her, addressing this one who had doused Him with “liquid passion.” He affirmed her by letting her know that her sins had certainly been forgiven and she could now live in peace. In fact, He specifically gave her this directive: “Go in peace” (Luke 7:50).

That short sentence containing only three words—“Go in peace”—was backed by all the power of the universe. I believe that when she heard Jesus’ words, she realized that along with every sin He also knew every broken dream that
had shattered her life. And He was assuring Her that she had been restored, healed, and forgiven and now could move forward.

This unnamed woman went from a nobody judged by others to a somebody validated in the heart of God. Her deep thankfulness carried her broken spirit straight into the presence of the Lord. Her past was still a part of who she was, but it no longer defined who she was. Because of grace, she was able to push through her negative circumstances and emotions to discover new life in Jesus Christ!

Stepping in and out of Scripture quickly, this woman leaves us with a beautiful illustration of how God’s grace can turn a life of fractured dreams into one of joyful and meaningful living.
As I think about this poor woman, *Hurting*, and her seemingly endless search for healing, I’m so grateful that her story is included in God’s Word! The woman we read about in Mark 5 is nameless to us but known by God. He not only knew her name but He knew all about her suffering and her raw hurt. She reached for Him, and He tenderly turned her way.

Just as our Lord met her needs, so He longs to meet the needs of all who live with suffering today. Thankfully, this woman’s story does not end in her anguish but in her healing! What is true for this woman whose companion was continual misery is
true for all believers in the Great Physician: God is able and willing to heal!

Depleted And Done

Years ago I was a sufferer of the temporomandibular joint disorder otherwise known as TMJ. Doctor after doctor told me that there was no reason for my pain. After years of intense suffering and a long search for relief, hope eventually returned when I found a maxillofacial doctor who understood what I was going through and paid attention to my pain. It just took the right doctor to diagnose the problem and set me on the road to healing.

This unnamed woman in Mark 5 and I have shared similar frustrations. Even though thousands of years separate our journeys, there’s a common thread in the adversity we both experienced. Her pain lasted for many years; so did mine. She invested much financially; so did I. She had many doctor visits with no remedy for pain; same with me. Instead of getting better, she only got worse; same here.

The Scripture that got me through my worst days is found in 2 Corinthians:

*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and*
not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

2 Corinthians 4:7-10

I sometimes have difficulty remembering that there’s treasure in this earthly vessel of mine. That’s especially true if I’m suffering in some way. Feeling cruddy keeps me distracted from Who is living on the inside. Listen, my friend. If Jesus Christ has taken up residence in your life, then He doesn’t depart when things go terribly wrong in your body or mind.

According to the Greek meaning of the phrase “treasure in earthen vessels,” our bodies are actually a storehouse where good and precious things are laid up. Think of it: as believers, our bodies hold Christ Himself and His treasures.

The Scripture goes on to report that the reason we house this wonderful treasure is so that “the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us” (v. 7). In other words, this is a power for performing miracles—a power that is only possible and permissible by God Himself!
**The Woman with the Issue of Blood**

*Not crushed, not in despair, not forsaken, and not destroyed.* This is not only wonderful news; it’s true news! This is our reality because of the treasure living inside of us. And why? So that the “life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body” and, I would add, in our circumstances.

Paul uses the phrase “may be manifested in our body” to teach us that because of the work of Christ Who lives inside of us, we have the opportunity to use our sufferings to make the glory of Christ known.

Oh my, how I long to store up this word in my heart and apply it when the suffering hits!

**Desperate for Jesus**

This anonymous woman who was depleted and done with it all had something in her spirit that kept her from throwing in the towel. Personally, I believe that “something” was the Spirit of our Lord Himself. I believe He was drawing her so that He could be glorified in her life at that moment, as well as for years to come. And based on the Scriptures, including the one below, I believe He is drawing you and thinking about you as you contemplate His intervention during your times of suffering:
Anonymous

Your eyes saw me when I was formless;
all my days were written in Your book and planned
before a single one of them began.

Psalm 139:16 HCSB

The Greek word for “written” in this verse is kathab. It’s the same word used in Exodus 31:18 detailing how Moses was given “two tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.”2 God knows you to the depths of your being. He knows you better than you know yourself. The details of your life—now and yet to come—are recorded in His heart, written by His finger. And according to His Word, not one moment of angst has gone unnoticed (see Psalm 56:8).

As we suffer, God is not absent. He is there in the suffering with us, waiting and watching and longing to ease our pain. God is always drawing you and giving you opportunities to reach out for Him. And sometimes those opportunities come blaring when you go through a time of ongoing suffering.

You know, this woman named Hurting had a choice. Although I personally believe Jesus was drawing her to Himself, I also believe He gave her the choice to respond by reaching out to Him. This woman was certainly at a crossroads in her life,
positioned at a juncture that demanded a response on her part. Would she hang it all up, finally giving in to her depths of despair? Or would she latch on to that faint hope that maybe this was the One who could and would heal her?

Of course, we’re privy to how it all went down, but she didn’t know this side of heaven how this single decision to go after Jesus would offer hope and encouragement to countless hurting people. Still, she had the energy to hold on to a holy morsel of hope and reach one tired and weary hand toward Jesus. And that’s the amount of energy it takes for you to do the same.

For years as I struggled with pain and depression, I latched onto this promise: “Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ” (2 Corinthians 2:14a). Focusing there kept me steady and rock-solid as I based my outlook on the truth of Scripture instead of on my feelings.

Reaching toward Jesus with even a trace of hope will set you on the road to victory. God may or may not change your circumstances. And if He does, it may take longer than you imagined it would take. But if you turn to Him, He will fill your heart with His presence, and that will be more than enough to get you through.
I still remember the moment I awoke from my TMJ surgery. Even in the grogginess of those first few minutes, I remember being ecstatic over being out of pain. I wonder how our Mark 5 friend *Hurting* felt as she was suddenly released from her pain. I wonder if her world rocked with joy and excitement over fresh healing, just as mine did when I awoke from surgery.

My friend, it’s true that we will all face trials during our lives. Here’s the wonderful news: if you are in relationship with Jesus Christ, your suffering will always be followed by peace and restoration—if not immediately, then eventually.

God is still in the healing business. I’ve come to discover, however, that sometimes the healing process He uses seems excruciatingly long. And there are other times when we realize the healing we long for is not to be realized here but is waiting on us when we move our residency to heaven. That’s why these words of Jesus are particularly comforting: “You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world” (John 16:33b HCSB).

If I loaned my journals to you, you could read my ramblings written en route to the recoveries I’ve experienced. Some of these healings were
physical; some were emotional and mental. You’d find that on occasion I failed to recognize God’s instruments of healing He placed before me. To me they seemed unlikely tools for Him to use. That was the case during my clinical-depression years. Always a strong Christian, I believed I could pray my way out of any negative circumstance. Being attacked by this monster of an illness was no different for me. I would just commit to praying long and hard enough, and it would go away—or so I thought.

Weeks and months gave way to years. Finally, the only thing left to do outside of praying was to visit my doctor. His words rang true: “When you’ve been under continual stress for a long period of time, the chemicals in your brain get out of whack, and it’s necessary to use medicine to get them back in line.” What followed was a pretty nasty argument: me with me. I seemed unable to recognize and receive the truth that antidepressants would be a tool God would use to set me on the road to recovery. I’d heard teaching from the Christian community that Christians were not placing enough faith in God if they were using medicine to overcome depression.

I look back on those days now and can hardly believe it took me so long to visit my doctor. My friend, if you know it’s more than a case
of the blues you’re experiencing, you need to seek medical attention. I encourage you to visit a trusted healthcare provider and follow the treatment program prescribed. I’m so thankful I did! I can also tell you that I know God led me to this kind doctor who used medicine that God created through human beings as part of His plan to restore my health. My desperation was the holy vehicle used by God to recognize and receive the healing treatment He designed for me.

Are you open to God’s plan for healing in your life? Are you willing to receive His power in whatever way He chooses to give it? It was extremely difficult for me to allow my suffering to be exposed to my friends—and even to my family. Blasting through those areas of pride, however, ushered me into God’s healing.

Jesus knew what had occurred at the moment the hemorrhaging woman was healed. He knew the healing properties that were transferred from His body into hers. He knew who had touched Him, because He knows all things. And yet He asked, “Who touched My clothes?” (Mark 5:30). I get a charge out of this question. The disciples’ reaction makes me giggle: “You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, ‘Who touched Me?’” (Mark 5:31).
The Woman with the Issue of Blood

Jesus turned around as He asked the question, looking at the woman. As He saw her fear and trembling, His mercy kicked in.

Held Close in Suffering

Now we come to the sweetest part of the story: the words of Jesus pronouncing His blessing upon her.

Oh, the relief that must have flooded her soul with the sound of His words! Jesus did not publicly scold her or dismiss her with disapproval. Instead He responded with great compassion. He noticed her shakiness, and yet with a strong and gentle response He blessed her. My friend, let this visual play across your mind and sink into your heart. When you come to Jesus, He’s always full of compassion to embrace you. His love is unconditional and steady. We can affirm with the psalmist, “Whenever I am afraid, / I will trust in You” (Psalm 56:3).

Human fears are natural responses to the jolts of life. From little snags of panic to giant episodes of sheer fright, these fears can shatter your peace in an instant. The psalmist encourages us to replace our earthly fears with trust in God. I tucked Psalm 56:3 into my memory files a long time ago. On
Anonymous

many occasions, this verse has redirected my focus away from the defeater of my soul to the Source of my strength.

There’s another fear, however, that I’ve often seen in God’s children that causes me concern. This fear is misplaced and often keeps those who are experiencing it from emptying their hearts to the Lord and saying what’s really on their minds. They are afraid of offending or displeasing God in some way. Or, if they are angry at God, they fear it would be unholy to tell Him so.

Psalm 56:3 covers this kind of fear as well. You can trust God with the secret anguish of your heart. You can even trust Him with your displeasure of what He’s allowing in your life. Not placing these issues before God is sweeping them under the proverbial rug of “I’ll think about this later.” And that later gets placed on your shelf of things to address someday. Meanwhile, you don’t experience the peace that is yours as God’s child.

Here’s a question that has an obvious answer, but I’ll ask it anyway. Doesn’t He know what’s going on in your mind and heart whether you tell Him or not?

My friend, as I hope we will glean from this Scripture, there’s nothing we can’t or shouldn’t take to the Lord. This woman who feared being reproached by Jesus models for us how to push
through such fears by talking to Him and then receiving His blessing.

If you’ll let Him, Christ will turn your trembling into triumphing. He longs to encourage you in your faith and in your communication with Him. He longs to reassure you just as He reassured our sister from long ago: “And He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction” (Mark 5:34).

I encourage you to receive and move forward in this same blessing, applying it to your present suffering. If you are fortunate to not be going through difficult times right now, then tuck these words away in your heart so that you can draw strength from them when the trials hit.

Jesus’ compassionate declaration to Hurting excites and encourages my heart! He was addressing a woman who was reaching out to Him for the first time. She was a novice at interacting with Jesus. We don’t even know for a fact if her faith was in His clothing or in Him; and yet Jesus lovingly commended her for her faith.

The message for us is clear. We don’t need to have the right words or even understand the circumstances. We just reach for Him, rely on Him, and trust in His perfect will. Oh, the simplicity of the love of Jesus! It’s not about the amount of our faith but where we place our faith! When we look to Jesus, we can find peace, comfort, and hope!
The Woman at the Well

When You Feel Ordinary

Scripture: John 4:3-26

While traveling with His disciples through Samaria, Jesus met a woman at Jacob’s well. Scripture doesn’t say how this anonymous woman viewed herself, but based on what we learn about her circumstances, I believe she must have felt ordinary and overlooked—hence the name I’ve given her, Ordinary. Her encounter with Jesus can help us understand His thoughts about us when we feel the same way. I’m thrilled to travel through this passage in John 4 with you and explore God’s truth about who we are in Jesus. After all, what He thinks about us is the only opinion that matters!
Without understanding the religious climate of the day, it would certainly seem that Samaria would be a likely place for Jesus and His disciples to stop, rest, and talk with the locals. This region was located about halfway between Judea and Galilee, and going through the area certainly was a direct route, geographically speaking. Yet most Jews avoided it, adding extra miles to their journey in order to travel around it.

Walls of bitterness and hatred had arisen between the full-blooded monotheistic Jews and the Samaritans because of their inter-marriage and worship practices. Prejudices grew. As a whole, Samaritans and Jews detested one another.

Yet we read that Jesus “needed to go through Samaria” (John 4:4, emphasis added). The Greek word translated as “needed” is dei, which means “it is necessary.”

Psalm 139:16 tells us that all the days of our lives were planned before we were even born. Jesus knew this day would come in the life of the
Samaritan woman who came to draw water from the well. He knew her hurts, the longings of her heart, and where she was trying to find satisfaction. He knew she needed fulfillment and purpose for living. He waited for the conversation that would begin to heal her heart and give her a fresh outlook on life.

The Nature of Our Lord

John 4:6 tells us that Jesus, who experienced every aspect of being human, was weary as He sat by the well. As He rested, this Samaritan woman came to draw water in the heat of the day. Usual times for gathering water were morning and evening, and yet she approached at a time when others were not typically there. Speculation is that she was shunned and rejected by the other women in her area because of her immoral lifestyle.

As she approached, Jesus began a conversation with her, asking her for a drink. His request for a drink of water gives me such pause. He, being God in the flesh, became physically thirsty and asked for water. From His physical need, He began a discourse with this dear woman about the Water of life. He was always willing to set His glory down
right in the middle of humanity to help others understand about God’s love.

When I consider Jesus’ request and its relevance for us today, I think about what God desires from us. Though God does not have “needs” that He asks us to meet, He does desire a relationship with us; and we can bring Him pleasure in this relationship. In other words, we can give Him a drink by offering Him our love and worship.

As for the woman at the well, I believe she was a bit taken aback when Jesus spoke to her. We see later in the account that His disciples apparently were too, for when they returned they were amazed that He was talking with a woman (John 4:27). I can almost see their faces and body language as they expressed their surprise.

While they were in the city buying food to replenish the physical body, He was offering a woman true sustenance—the living water that nurtures the soul and spirit.

The Water of Life

Surely our anonymous sister eyed Jesus with curiosity during their dialogue. They had a verbal exchange about how He, a Jewish man, would even speak to her, much less ask her for a drink of water. There was something about this man that drew her deeper into conversation. Then Jesus pressed
further in with these words: “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water” (John 4:10). Now she was puzzled—perhaps slightly amused—replying, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?” (John 4:11).

I bet there were some real questions forming in her mind by this point in the conversation—questions about Jesus and this living water. Our questions are of a different sort. We know about Jesus and His living water. But we don’t always understand how to take hold of it. We want Him to give us an answer to our situation or problem.

His answer to our Samaritan girlfriend is the same one that He gives to us: “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again. But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give Him will never thirst” (John 4:13b-14a). Calming yourself in God’s Word and Presence will begin to quench that insatiable thirst for Him to tell you the answer and will help you find sanity in Him instead. He is the Living Water—for now and all of eternity.

Jesus went on to say: “But the water that I shall give him will become in Him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14b). When He spoke of this fountain of water, He used
The Woman at the Well

the Greek word *hallomai*, which means to “leap or spring up.” Jesus was speaking metaphorically of the Holy Spirit springing up in the believer’s life. We find the same word used in Acts 14 to describe the action of the man who was crippled from birth and healed by the Holy Spirit through Paul: “And he *leaped* and walked” (Acts. 14:10b, emphasis added).

Oh, how I need the leaping Holy Spirit to spring up within me and flow outward into my life. My friend, He longs to fill you with the energy and excitement for daily living that comes only from Him! He can replace the stagnant water within your soul with glorious ripples of joy.

Conversing with Jesus

After hearing about this living water that Jesus spoke of, the woman replied, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.” The conversation then takes a turn. Jesus says, “Go, call your husband” (John 4:16). He knows that she has been married five times and is not married to the man she is now living with, yet He doesn’t call it to attention. With His words, He surely opens a wound in order to position her to receive His gift of grace.
In deference to her sagging soul, Jesus gives a directive that initiates a response from her. “I have no husband,” she states. Once she admits it, Jesus responds: “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly” (John 4:17b-18).

What she most likely intends as a denial and dismissal of the fact, Jesus uses to bring her to conviction. Knowing the kindness of our Lord, I don’t believe His tone is an accusing one here. He confirms the fact simply, as if to allow her conscience to state the rest. What a gentle example He sets before us in this discourse.

It seems that in her realization of His knowledge about her situation, her mind and heart begin to soften. Jesus allows her to take the conversation where she will. So, she turns it to religion and worship. The passage implies that she knows she should worship God; she just isn’t sure where and how to do this.

Both the Jews and Samaritans agree that God should be worshipped, but her point of interest seems to be the place of worship. Perhaps she believes that because of their lineage, the mountain where they worship is the proper and only place to approach God.
Jesus knows a time is coming when it will make no difference at all where God is worshiped. He will not be confined to a place or a group of people. So Jesus responds, “An hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know, because salvation is from the Jews (John 4:21-22 HCSB).

According to many biblical commentaries, Jesus was simply referring to the fact that He, the Messiah, was a Jew by birth, and that He would bring salvation into the world. Perhaps Jesus was leading the woman at the well to a gradual understanding that He, the Christ, is the way of salvation—the only plan of deliverance made available to humanity.

As He continues His response, Jesus focuses not on the where of worship but the how: “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24).

This phrase tells us that true worshipers are those who are not worshiping in name only. They do not simply give the resemblance of worship but are genuine in their worship. And where is true
worship determined—where does it take place? In spirit, that connection between the believer and God. A true worship experience is not only about the object of worship but also the nature of worship. It’s what happens when we connect with God, spirit to Spirit, offering everything. It is when our worship is sincere, genuine, and from the heart. Though our own worship experiences will be unique to each of us, as they should be, our connection with God always should be genuine and complete—holding nothing back.

As you make it a practice to worship God in spirit and truth, you’ll begin to experience excitement that exceeds the earthly kind—the kind of passion that refreshes your own spirit and drives you to tell others about what God has done, just as this anonymous woman did.

We learn that after their encounter at the well, she returned to the city and said, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (John 4:29). In light of all the holy things she and Jesus had talked about, what astonished and excited her the most was that Jesus knew her! How wonderful it is to know that our extraordinary God knows us ordinary women!

Oh, my friend, may the fact that Jesus knows you and knows everything about you create the same kind of awe, wonder, and love in your heart!
The Woman Who Committed Adultery

When You Are Burdened with Shame

Scripture: John 8:2-12

Years ago I was sitting at my kitchen counter, weeping over an issue that had left me with a raw heart interlaced with raveled emotions. God spoke to me in that moment, as He’s apt to do when every other voice is muddled and nonsensical, “What if the worst thing that ever happened to you is really the best thing?” I replied, “How could that be, Lord?” And immediately I knew. The worst brought me to the Best. The awful carried me to the Glorious. It always does if we so allow.

We don’t know all the particulars of this anonymous woman, Shame, but we do know how God’s grace brought her to the most wonderful person of
all, Jesus Christ. And in understanding her jour-
ney, our own is impacted. Whether we need to
be forgiven or to practice forgiveness, the scene
that unfolds in John 8 with the law-mongers, the
accused one, and Jesus, will show us how to deal
with shame, judgment, and restoration.

The Trap

Let’s start by taking a look at the accusers in
this dramatic encounter with Jesus—the scribes
and the Pharisees. For the most part, they were
adversaries of Jesus during His life on earth. In
addition to being well-versed legal experts, these
men were knowledgeable about Jewish law and
tradition. They certainly had a legal eye on Jesus
and were very zealous in challenging His behavior
and teaching. The way Jesus interpreted the law
not only caught them off guard; it struck at the
very core of who they were. These religious purists
emphasized methods and strict adherence to their
interpretation of the Mosaic law. So blinded by
their observances and nitpicky details, they com-
pletely missed the Messiah in their midst. In Mark
7:6, Jesus echoed words of the prophet Isaiah to
describe the hypocrisy of the Pharisees:

“This people honors Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.”
Now, let’s take a look at the particular crime of adultery. The Jewish law declared that marital unfaithfulness was punishable by stoning. The Old Testament listed it as a capital crime: “If a man commits adultery with a married woman—if he commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death” (Leviticus 20:10 HCSB).

After reading the account of the woman caught in adultery, the obvious question is, Where was the man?

In addition to the issue of only the woman being brought to Jesus, there’s another matter to consider. These sticklers of the law knew what was mandated by the law. Why, then, did they ask Jesus His opinion? At the outset, it sounds like an honest request for justice: “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” (John 8:4-5).

We must remember that these law keepers did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah. Their intent in this matter was not to deliver justice, for they could have done that apart from Jesus. It appears a clever trap was what they had in mind; they wanted to discredit Jesus along with His teaching. If Jesus answered, “Stone her,” He would prove inconsistent with His teaching and behavior since He was a
friend to sinners. If He answered, “Let her go,” He would appear to be an enemy of the law of Moses and a condoner of sin.

Their interest was in dealing with people who broke the law. Their typical *modus operandi* (method of operation) was that the offender should receive justice. They laid out the law, along with their duty to implement it. This approach, itself, sounds rather noble. But remember the loophole of the missing man, along with the underlying plot to trap Jesus.

Now take a look through the eyes of the woman. She was a real flesh and blood soul who was surely humiliated, mortified, and shamed beyond expression. Could this have been some flagrant scandal that was ingeniously contrived with the sole purpose of discrediting Jesus? My heartache for this woman at this moment in her storyline is intense, so I quickly move forward to the reality of her worst becoming her best—which brings us to Jesus.

Take a look at the situation through Jesus’ pure eyes that see 100 percent sin alongside 100 percent grace. As I look through His eyes, I am spellbound by His response to her heart, and I am thrilled that He speaks the same to mine—and to yours. On our own, our sin and the anguish it creates is simply too hard for us to handle. But if Jesus lives inside
of us, He has taken this sin away. He has broken the power of sin so that it may not have dominion over us.

Spiritual Showdown

The Pharisees planned for Jesus’ verbal reply to their questioning to be the rope that would hang Him. Surely He wouldn’t go against the holy law of Moses, right?

The next sequence in this sacred drama is rather mystifying. It’s also one of my favorite word pictures in all of Scripture. I’m intrigued by the fact that we are invited to use our God-given imaginations to fancy the message of Jesus as He stoops down and writes: “But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear” (John 8:6b).

Was Jesus stalling for time? Though some have suggested that possibility, my heartfelt response is “Gracious no!” I side with those scholars who point out that Jesus was never caught off guard by questions or the tests of others.

Silence is a powerful form of communication. During this silence, perhaps the Pharisees were thinking, We’ve got Him this time. He doesn’t know how to answer. Or this silence could have panicked them, leaving them to wonder about
His next move. Whether they were emboldened or they lost their nerve, they pressed in. With their continual questioning, Jesus rose from where He had stooped on the ground. Then, He dropped this verbal bomb: “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first” (John 8:7b).

Jesus neither addressed the law nor excused her guilt. He merely turned the sentencing back on them, silencing them to shame with this infamous, holy one-liner. With subtle ease, He turned the conviction of the one accused upon the ones accusing. His words—perhaps in combination with whatever He wrote on the ground—were the impetus that prompted the retreat of the Pharisees.

At the time of this biblical encounter, the Holy Spirit had not yet been sent by the Father. But I believe that having Jesus in their midst evidently opened their spiritual ears to hear a word from Him. Having just thunderstruck them with His powerful one-liner, Jesus then paused again and stooped to the ground to continue writing.

Oh, the gravity of that moment must have weighed heavily on their hearts and minds! They did not hear silence; they heard conviction. The text tells us, “Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last” (John 8:9).
Given the description of how the Pharisees departed the scene, I’d say the words of Jesus about throwing stones got lodged in their hearts. Whether it was the words spoken to the physical ear or those spoken to the spiritual ear, something caused these men to stop persecuting Jesus and to stop prosecuting the woman.

Perhaps along with their conviction, they were frightened of their motives being discovered. Or maybe it was the combination of the two that led them to disappear into the crowd one by one. The conscience is a powerful communicator of God’s truth. Given the way they pulled away, could they have possibly felt shame over the whole ordeal?

Since this particular incident is not followed up with scriptural details, we’re left to wonder what happened next. I like to think that what happened in their hearts during this quiet confrontation gave some of them reason enough to investigate His claims of being the Messiah. I believe that Jesus sought to lovingly bring the woman to repentance as He strategically and silently revealed the sins of the men who brought her there.

The Look That Changed Her Life

Now we come to a powerful sentence in the story: “And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst” (John 8:9b).
I wonder what she was thinking. Did she know that Jesus was the only One in that crowd without sin? By His own directive, He was the only One qualified to cast that first stone. Perhaps if she did know this about Him, she also knew there was nobody who hated sin more than He did. And if she knew that, then maybe she knew there was none more compassionate toward sinners.

Imagine the moment when Jesus rose from His kneeling position and came face to face with the woman. Allow your heart to feel the gloriously beautiful moment when the eyes of Grace looked into the eyes of this sinful woman. We are not given the intimate details of what happened in that split second between them. I simply choose to believe it was a riveting moment—one that changed the rest of her life.

Jesus said, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?” (John 8:10b). Perhaps He spoke loudly enough for those who had slipped away to hear. It seems obvious that these words were spoken to give encouragement and boldness to her heart.

Jesus asked two questions, but the woman answered only one of them. She replied, “No one, Lord.” To me, it seems as though she is filled with respect for Jesus during these moments. Not only does she call Him Lord; instead of focusing on His dealings with the ones who’d dragged her before
Him, she focuses on what concerns her. This is a wonderful reminder for each of us to be more caught up in “Jesus and me” rather than being so concerned with “Jesus and them.”

Next, a beautifully freeing thing happens. Jesus gives her His absolution: “Neither do I condemn you.” This woman, who had been held captive by a sinful lifestyle that led to public degradation, was freed from shame and guilt in the forgiving heart of Jesus Christ.

After Jesus forgave her, He commanded her, “Go and sin no more” (John 8:11b). And that’s where this remarkable storyline drops off—except in our imaginations. So what do you think? Was she so radically changed in that moment with Jesus that she made a new commitment to walk in His purity?

Jesus has forgiven you, too. It’s time for you to look deeply into the face and heart of your Savior and hear His powerfully gentle words, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.”

You may wonder how it is possible to live sinless in a world full of sin. I haven’t been able to get my brain wrapped around the answer to that question. I know that the Holy Spirit who lives inside us is our helper and promises to provide a way out of every sin (see John 14:26, Romans 8:2-6, and 1 Corinthians 10:13). Still, I’ve
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come to the conclusion that it isn’t for us to reason it out but only to strive to do right and rely on the Holy Spirit within us.

New Life in Christ

Personally, I think this passage is not as much about the sin of this woman as it is about her new identity in Jesus. A new life in Christ means that His Spirit lives within us. “We live and move and have our being” in Him, according to the apostle Paul’s words in Acts 17:28a. Yes, the adulterous woman was given new life and new opportunity to move within God’s love.

Roughly two thousand years ago, our sister who was dragged before Jesus wound up being dipped into the cleansing waters of forgiveness. With His light flooding her mind and heart, grace washed over and through her.

In Ezekiel 36:26 we find this promise: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” I believe that our friend in the temple courtyard experienced the removal of her stony heart by the hands of the skilled Surgeon Himself—as He gazed deeply into her soul. I imagine Him performing the holy
procedure of replacing that dulled-by-sin heart of hers with a living and vibrant new one; and as He removed the old heart, He filled her new heart with His affections and desires, enveloped by fresh delight.

My friend, you can keep your heart fresh in Him by remembering that your identity is found in Jesus alone. You can choose to saturate your mind with life-changing Scriptures that will serve as ongoing reminders of His unconditional love for you. You can choose to trust Him to meet every desire of your heart instead of turning to incapable lovers. If you have made the all-important decision to turn your life over to Jesus Christ, your identity is locked in the heart of Christ!
I love this Scripture as written in *The Message* Bible, which includes these words: “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. . . . Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Just reading this passage calms me and brings me back to my spiritual roots. It’s all about walking in sweet rhythm with the Lover of my soul. We have been considering what it means to draw closer to Jesus and discover our identity in the very heart of God. And as we do, we learn the rhythm of grace.

As we reflect on our four anonymous girlfriends, remember that like each of them, God wants us to
enjoy Him by simply being who we are—a special somebody created by God. He has given each of us a personality, a calling, and gifts to equip us to live life to the fullest within His unforced rhythm of grace. Just as our four anonymous girlfriends met Jesus and were forever changed, so we are changed by drawing close to Him. Not only do we receive a new identity, but one day we also will receive a new name!

New Name

As God’s child, you have something to look forward to, my friend. When you come face to face with the Lord, you will receive a brand new name. According to Revelation 2:17, each of His children will be given a new name by King Jesus Himself:

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

We will consider the hidden manna in a moment, but for now let’s focus on the new name we will be
given. Here’s the fun part: this name is so intimate that it will be a secret between you and Him.

Because Revelation 2:17 is the only reference in the Bible to this white stone on which is written a new name, this makes it all the more mysterious. Here is one of several common interpretations that makes sense to me. In ancient Greece, jury members would cast a white stone to signify an acquittal, whereas a black stone proclaimed the defendant guilty. Christ’s sacrifice on the cross pronounces us innocent when we are indeed guilty. What a joy it will be to receive this white stone of remembrance as a gift from the One who has delivered us and set us free.

The Greek word for this stone, *psephos*, describes it as being one that is worn smooth or polished. And *leukos*, the Greek word for white, means brilliantly white, as in garments of angels. It will be some gem!

Personally, I like to think that this stone has been worn and polished by the trials of life (see Isaiah 40:1-5). For me, every time I’ve become submissive to God and have depended upon Him to bring me through such trials, it seems He has smoothed me out through the process. As life wears me down, God has a way of lifting me up! Through Jesus we were victorious overcomers in all of life’s trials.
In the same verse, Jesus also states that overcomers will receive some of the hidden manna: “To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat” (Revelation 2:17).

Let’s take a look at the manna that God provided for the Israelites as they wandered around in the desert. They ate this food for forty years. That’s some straight-up superfood! We are introduced to this heavenly superfood, referred to as “bread from heaven,” in Exodus 16: “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not’” (verse 4).

In Hebrews 9:4 we learn that the manna was placed in the ark of the covenant as a reminder of God’s provision and faithfulness to the Israelites, along with Aaron’s rod that had budded and the tablets of the covenant. And 1 Kings 8:9 tells us that when the ark was opened years later, nothing was inside but the two tablets of stone. Somewhere between Moses placing the three items in the ark and Solomon having the ark brought to the Temple, the manna and Aaron’s rod both disappeared. Although this disappearance remains a mystery, Jesus gave us some clues about the deeper
symbolism of the manna and its connection to the Messiah:

“I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

John 6:48-51 HCSB

Jesus wanted the Jews who were listening to Him to understand that He was the fulfillment of the old covenant. Whereas the manna of the old covenant was the bread of heaven provided for the Israelites in the wilderness, the manna of the new covenant was Jesus Himself—the living bread that came down from heaven.

Biblical commentaries have much to say about this hidden manna. I like to think of it representing that which Christ has reserved for me—if I really want it. A Scripture from the prophet Jeremiah comes to mind: “You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). To me, flowing in the rhythm of the grace of Jesus is about searching for Him with a whole heart—and then receiving His revelations as a result. Jesus, our Hidden Manna, is ready to
reveal to us as much as we want to know about Him. That knowledge, according to God’s Word, is available when we seek it with our whole heart. As we seek Him and receive the fresh word of His manna, we are equipped to be overcomers through Jesus Christ.

According to 1 John 5:4-5, we who believe Jesus is the Son of God are overcomers (conquerors, victors). I cannot think of the word overcomer without remembering Jesus’ words in John 16:33: “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (emphasis added).

Yes, my friend, we are overcomers if Jesus Christ lives in our hearts. We may not always behave as overcomers, but that is what we are. Why? Because He lives inside us, and He is the One Who overcomes!

As an overcomer in Jesus Christ, we will receive hidden manna. We know from the Scriptures that our hidden manna is Jesus Christ Himself. One day we will receive Him fully and completely as we stand face to face with the living bread of heaven, but we do not have to wait to receive Him. Jesus is our hidden manna even now.

Feasting on the presence of Jesus strengthens your spirit in the same way that eating fortified
energy foods strengthens your body. He wants to help us desire Him more than anything of this world. He is the living bread that truly satisfies!

Every Day After

As we’ve seen, our four anonymous girlfriends had holy encounters that transformed their lives. All of them faced earthly judgments before meeting Jesus. But as their stories reveal, the only judgment that matters is the judgment of God. And when they met Jesus, they did not encounter condemnation for their sin but mercy and grace and the chance to have true, abundant, everlasting life.

Their stories are our stories. We too have faced the earthly judgments of others. We too have been burdened by sin and shame. But when we met Jesus and gave our hearts and lives to Him, we encountered grace and mercy and crossed over from death into life.

After their encounters with Jesus, we part ways with them in Scripture. But we know that they had to return to their day-to-day lives that, most likely, were less than dramatic. Can you relate? Much of life is filled with ordinary, routine living. Does this mean that our spiritual lives must follow suit?
Although we love the spiritual mountaintop experiences, the truth is that our everyday spiritual journey does not have to be mundane. It’s possible to enjoy exhilaration with the Lord each and every day—even in the midst of the routine and ordinary!

This is a fairly recent revelation for me. I’m not yet proficient in living it out, but I’m certainly getting better at it. The longer we walk with Jesus, the more adept we become in taking hold of His glory. How? We can be intentional about pursuing simplicity, consistency, and focus in our daily worship and quiet time experiences. Even in the ordinary and often tedious or complex tasks of daily life, we can experience pervading peace and joy when we approach all that we do with a reverent attitude of worship, keeping our focus on Jesus.

I believe a focus on Jesus is likely what sustained our four anonymous sisters from Scripture. Though we do not know what happened to them after their encounters with Jesus, I believe we know enough from Scripture to know that they were changed—transformed. It follows that the challenges and mundane tasks these women faced “after Jesus” must have been somehow different than before because they were different “after Jesus.” They each had a brand new identity.
Anonymous

When Jesus enters our life, we are never the same. Because of Jesus, every day can be glorious! It’s not about our circumstances but our glorious Lord living on the inside of us!

We, like our four anonymous sisters, have new life within us. Because of this reality, we have every reason to rejoice! One day we’ll enjoy a grand reunion with our new girlfriends *Judged, Hurting, Ordinary,* and *Shame,* only we won’t use those names for we will know their real ones! Even better, we will have the thrill of knowing that both they and we will have new names as well! Until then, take hold of God’s hand and connect with His heart for your journey ahead. He loves you and knows you by name, right now. You are His special somebody—for this moment and every moment hereafter!
Notes

If you liked this book, you’ll love the Bible study.

For more information about the study and Anonymous Leader Kit (ISBN 978-1-4267-9218-2), visit AbingdonWomen.com or your favorite Christian retailer.