

# LEADING HEARTS

EMPOWERING CHRISTIAN WOMEN FOR LEADERSHIP

*It's our 5th Birthday!*

♥ **LISA BEVERE**  
CAN YOU DISCERN  
TRUTH VS. OPINION?

♥ **baby steps**  
WITH KARI JOBE

♥ **BEHIND THE SCENES:**  
**I CAN ONLY**  
**IMAGINE**

♥ **THE FACE VALUE**  
**OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

**AUTHOR OF**  
**THREE TIMES SOLD**

*Sioni Rodriguez shares*  
**the FREEDOM of**  
**FORGIVENESS**



# "Arise, Shine..."

## the glory of the LORD rises upon you."

-Isaiah 60:1 (niv)



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## FROM THE PUBLISHER

*Linda Evans Shepherd*



### leading hearts 5 years & counting

**NO WAY. I'D NEVER PUBLISH A MAGAZINE.** That would require unrelenting deadlines — and forget about the printing and mailing costs. Becoming a magazine publisher was not how I pictured my future.

But the day I learned I could create an electronic magazine, which would bypass all the normal printing and postage costs, I still said, “No way!” Yet God kept bringing the idea back to me. Finally, I told Him, respectfully of course, that I wasn't crazy enough to publish a magazine.

But He countered, “But what if I was in it? Would you do it then?” Oh boy, I knew God wasn't crazy, and I knew I would be crazy not to follow His leading for my life.

There was only one thing to do; I had to put this whole magazine idea to the test. So I casually mentioned to a friend, “I think God might be calling me to create a magazine.”

“Call Amber,” Karen Whiting said. “She'll help you.”

Of course! I knew Amber Weigand-Buckley! She'd once been my roommate at the Colorado Christian Writers Conference. I already knew she was a great editor. So, I decided, I'd test the waters once again. I called her and said, in my most hesitant voice, “If I were to create a magazine for Christian women leaders, would you be —”

“Yes! Oh, I would! This is something I know God has called me to do,” Amber gushed.

I blinked “But, I'm not sure if I should. I don't know if I have the money —”

Amber shrugged off my worries and said, “Let's do it!” So we did, and God has continued to supply our needs, for five whole years.

Every issue has been a Jericho victory in which God has multiplied our efforts—and we've received awards every year since from the Evangelical Press Association.

It's been an incredibly fun and humbling experience to create a magazine with God, Amber and all of our wonderful columnists and friends.

So I would like to say, “Thank you, Lord. And thank you to all who have helped create each issue. And our Leading Hearts sisters for reading all of our issues.

As I look back at my very first welcome in our very first issue, I described our mission by saying: “The magazine is designed with you in mind, to encourage you as you follow your God-given call; whether it's to be an influencer for Christ at home, at work, your church, community or all of the above.”

We've stuck true to our mission and we will continue to write to inspire you.

Here's what I said at the close of my first letter from the publisher, five years ago this month, “Do dive into this issue so we can become new best friends in our journey to influence our world for Christ as we learn how to best live a significant life.”

In the words of Amber, “Let's do it!”

And with God, so we shall. *LSH*

Love,  
LINDA EVANS SHEPHERD  
PUBLISHER, LEADING HEARTS MAGAZINE

# LEADING HEARTS

EMPOWERING CHRISTIAN WOMEN FOR LEADERSHIP

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**LEADING HEARTS**  
2017 Evangelical Press Association Award of Merit FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN

5 BREAKTHROUGHS THAT WILL TRANSFORM YOUR LOVE WALK  
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OUT OF THE DARK

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**UNFINISHED**  
FIND THE FREEDOM YOU NEED TO WIN THE RACE

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— Award of Merit —  
Christian Ministry Digital Magazine

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FROM THE EDITOR  
*amber weigand-buckley*

## the heart of an author in a post-it mind

I'VE ALWAYS SAID IF I WROTE A BOOK, it would look less like a book and more like a collection of Post-it Notes.

After all, my books would be better as sticky notes written for one person — a person who looks a lot like me.

That's why, when the Pinterest photo quotes started trending, I got very excited. I knew that this was the kind of daily self-publishing I could commit to.

So it was then, five years ago, my #barefacedpinthology found its beautiful beginnings.

My pinthology is a history of my short journal entries that God drops in my heart like a Holy Spirit multivitamin — not to give me something to teach, but to give me something to grow.

And even though I have many, I just picked a few faves.

- My Heavenly Father will never give me half of a gift, just as He will never give me a gifting that I only have the opportunity to halfway use.
- Laughter is a healing balm; it can break a load of frustration and a heavy mind's toiling on what's not quite right.
- I no longer want to give life's predictable delays the power to multiply discouragement and frustration in my day.
- A faith walk is not a cakewalk. So, even though I prefer cake, I have to admit it is faith that adds to my strong.

- I must learn to be okay with people not being okay with my story: this is the price of vulnerability, and this is what it means to be brave.
- If my living is only known for the measure of my loving, that is more than enough of purpose written in my days.
- I am held by the God of all solutions, provisions, remedies and victories whose love for me is far greater than my heart can comprehend in its finite feel of it.
- Never underestimate the power of knowing that God is already in the process of answering your prayers, even before you ask.
- Be true to an audience of one. And in order to be true to God, you have to get real with yourself.
- God is the God of Spectacular Beginnings, Silent In-Betweens, and Victorious Outcomes.
- Because "at a time when I thought I'd lost everything, God gave me more than I'd ever dreamed." One of those moments was the day I was asked to help create **Leading Hearts** magazine.

I hope this anniversary issue will not only help you reflect on the goodness and growth of the past five years, but will continue to inspire you, as a woman called for leadership, to walk confidently into all God has for you.

PEACE,

AMBER WEIGAND-BUCKLEY  
EDITOR, LEADING HEARTS MAGAZINE

*AW*



*by jennifer taylor* — PROFILE CONTRIBUTOR

# *lisa bevere*

## it's a world of opinions

A BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT, JOB PROMOTION, RELATIONSHIP STATUS, ROAD RAGE OR EVEN A MASSIVE SNEEZE. Today, it doesn't seem like we can do anything "in private" any more. We are driven to tell everyone about everything thanks to the technological advances with our computers, smart phones, speak-to-act devices and more. No, we may not have those flying cars yet, but we can tell Alexa to change the channel, play music, turn on the lights and more. But with these technological changes, have we really become advanced?

Leading Hearts recently had the opportunity to speak with New York Times bestselling author and internationally known speaker, Lisa Bevere, about her newest upcoming book "Adamant: Finding Truth in a Universe of Opinions," as well as the blessings and challenges Christians face with technology today.

"We have chosen to become what we do and yet remain unfulfilled," Bevere writes in "Adamant." "We use technology to throw stones at people we will never see. When truth becomes fluid, we lose contact with answers larger than ourselves. Real truth is a rock. Indivisible. Immovable. Jesus is truth. And I propose Jesus is the Adamant."

With more than a million followers between her Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts, Bevere chooses to be wise with her influence. Using her half-Sicilian roots, she takes on two philosophies from "The Godfather" when she uses technology.

"Technology can be the best of things and the worst of things, and it can just be community. In 'The Godfather,' there's this line where they say, 'Never tell anyone outside of the family what you are thinking.' Initially that sounds like a gag order but it actually isn't. What I want to see is the family have the conversations that the family needs to have. This is talking about Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: you actually have no idea who you are talking to. You are not across the table. You're not aware. You don't know their frame of mind. You don't know their frame of reference. I've seen a lot of people as leaders begin to attack the church at large," Lisa says. "And maybe what they are saying is right, but the approach is wrong because they are attacking and slandering people in public arenas and they are like raising up a mob against the Church."

The second philosophy from "The Godfather" is you never go against the family. "So, do I think the Church has big opportunities to grow and be more Christlike? Absolutely, but I'm never going to use my social media to attack people that I do not have a relationship with. I'm never going to use my social

**-continued on p. 10-**



I would tell these young girls to step back.  
Edit your life. Get into knowing who you are by  
understanding whose you are.

— *Lisa to Leading Hearts*

**-continued from p. 9-**



media to criticize,” she says. “I’m going to use my social media to build and prophesy. When I say prophesy, that means I need to be speak about what could be and what should be, not just the frame about what is.”

Lisa believes that immediate access to everyone can be a good thing, but not always. “We think, I can just throw something out there and I can get this incredible feedback. Sometimes that feedback is affirming that what you’re doing is proper and what God breaths, and sometimes it’s not. Sometimes when something goes viral, you are not influencing people, you are infecting them. Sometimes we need to distance ourselves from some relationships so that we can have the right conversations with the right people.”

“We live in a day where everyone thinks that truth is a river. That it ebbs and flows with popular tides and currents, my experiences and my feelings about this, or my favorite blogger’s feelings about something. But truth is not a river. It is a rock. Jesus is our truth and our cornerstone. If we do not anchor our thoughts to something bigger than ourselves, we are all going to be set adrift.”

When young Christian women especially are tempted to post and respond to everything happening around them, Lisa wants to remind them that we, as Christians, are not our own. “I am an ambassador to another kingdom. If we actually remember that we are representing another kingdom, then we speak that kingdom’s language. We speak that kingdom’s goodwill to the earth,” Bevere says.

The final answer for our young people, Lisa insists, is the Word of God. It is truth and love. It is supposed to be an integral part of our lives. “When we post what God is doing in our lives, and we don’t want people to argue about it, we must speak truth. We post Scriptures. We speak things that we know are going to build life; it’s not loving to tell people something that is not truth. It’s not loving to tell people that right is wrong. We just need a whole generation that is grounded in the Word and fluent in Scripture so that they can rightly divide.”

Lisa, who birthed four millennials, believes this generation is filled with some of the smartest, most well-connected people on the face of the earth, and yet they are some of the most confused people. “We never had so much comparison. We never were aware of so much competition,” she says. “So, I



### Be Passionate Now—Lisa Bevere

would tell these young girls to step back. Edit your life. Get into knowing who you are by understanding whose you are. Get in the presences of God. Read the Scriptures and allow those things to round out your life so that you have a rock to stand on.”

With a world that is so confused, Lisa stresses that followers of Christ must speak the truth. “Those who know the truth cannot be silent about the truth.” She has a word of caution, though. “Truth without love is

Social media can create a very false sense of intimacy and at the same time depersonalize people. That is why people will throw stones at people they will never see.

harsh but love without truth is a lie. We are living in a day and time that says everything is love, and that is not true. Love is not God. God is love.”

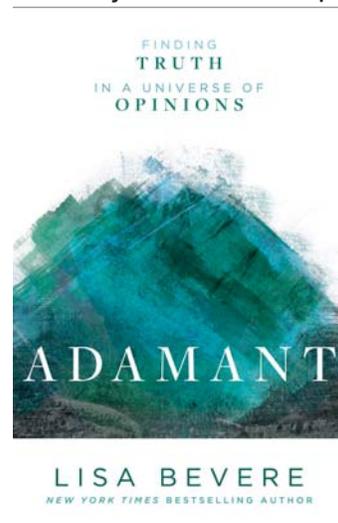
Recently, Lisa connected with a follower who started posting her devotionals, starting conversations and asking people what they thought it was saying to them. The young woman started receiving responses from people asking to know more about her faith. This interest grew into a group that met and had discussions in a coffee shop. Now they are meeting in her home.

“Rather than telling people, ‘You’re wrong,’ invite them on your journey,” she says. “On my Instagram,

I try to do that. I don’t want to get combative with trolls. I want to post things that build people’s lives, but I also want to challenge the way people are thinking so that they understand that there is more.”

“Social media can create a very false sense of intimacy and at the same time depersonalize people. That is why people will throw stones at people they will never see. They do not have to see the consequences of their actions or their words. They think that they have thrown it into this pot and they forget that those waves are going to come back.”

Lisa says one of our greatest privileges is our words. “[As Christians,] we need to understand that we are going to give an account for every idle word. If our words are not building, if our words are destroying, then we are going to give an account,” she says. “It’s not just words. It’s spoken words. It’s posted



words. It’s retweeted words. Just because someone tweeted it and you retweeted it, that doesn’t make you innocent. At the end of the day, we have to say: I want to be influential, which means powerful, more than I want to be popular, which means common.” *JH*

~ Jennifer Taylor



by karen porter  
WWW.KARENPORTER.COM



## learning to lead

WHEN I BEGAN WRITING THIS COLUMN FIVE YEARS AGO TO EMPOWER YOU IN LEADERSHIP, I NEVER IMAGINED I WOULD HAVE TO DISCOVER NEW PERSONAL DISCIPLINES FOR MYSELF. I had to learn how to consistently get the articles into the editor, along with new insights into how to find the energy and creativity for each issue. And I've contemplated a lot about what it means to be a leader. So I wrote a new definition.

### Def. leader

*noun* lead·er \ 'lē-dər \

A life-long learner.

My new definition of a leader is that she is life-long learner. A leader is a person who never stagnates in the status quo. A leader absorbs and develops what she has learned into strategies to lead her team.

I confess I am a total nerd about reading — and studying — every word I can find on speaking skills, the writing craft and marketing in this techno world. Not because I am required to learn these skills, but because I love these topics. I want to know, understand and experience all the best and latest from experts in these areas. Julia Child said, “You’ll never know everything about anything, especially something you love.”

But learning goes beyond the subjects we love. Our job as leaders is to go beyond what we adore into areas we don’t know. I’ve learned a lot from this magazine.

I’ve learned about you, our readers. Many of you have sent notes of encouragement or questions or requests. I love hearing from you and I learn so much from you. Keep sending your comments and questions. I read each one and try to answer each one. I’d love to start a conversation with you.

I’m also learning about technology and new software and interesting apps, discovering all the latest tools

Learning goes beyond the subjects we love. Our job as leaders is to go beyond what we adore into areas we don’t know. I’ve learned a lot from this magazine.

in these electronic devices we own — skills which organize me, tutor me and make my life easier (love those grocery lists on my phone).

I’ve gone to new depths spiritually by spending mornings in the Word, reading and meditating — and discovering my failures, which are overshadowed by God’s forgiveness and love.

I’m becoming a gourmet cook with a healthy twist, making sure that what we eat is not only delicious but nutritious as well.

And I’m headed for new adventures. I am learning

how to relax using breathing techniques to eliminate stress. And I’ve signed up for guitar lessons (with a real teacher). And my friend Candie has inspired me to memorize large chunks of Scripture.

“You’ll never know everything about anything, especially something you love.

—Julia Child—

## How will you intentionally open yourself to new learning opportunities in the weeks, months and years to come?

*Here are some suggestions to get you started:*

- **Learn how to be a good friend.** Judy Dippel once said, “To talk less and be a better listener is the lifelong quest of a good friend.” Determine that you will become the essence of friendship: listening and caring.
- **Read to Learn.** Books, blogs, articles and the Bible are your best friends. When you read, your mind is refreshed and you’ll find answers, knowledge and treasure.
- **Sign up for a class.** Learn photography or how to draw or paint. The experts will teach you how to clean and declutter your house or build a garden. There are courses on self-defense, woodworking, dance, CPR and how to change a flat tire. What is it that you secretly want to learn?

Bible schools and seminaries offer online courses to help you deep-dive into a book of the Bible or learn how to develop deeper spiritual capabilities.

There is something new to be learned from every situation and every person and every opportunity to read, study or investigate. Your key to success as a leader is to keep learning. Email me at [kaeporter@gmail.com](mailto:kaeporter@gmail.com), to share what you are learning.

KA

# what keeps you from crossing the line?



IN LIGHT OF ALL THE RECENT ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN VARIOUS

PROFESSIONS, it is my hope that I can help define the boundaries of appropriate conduct and prevent false accusations.

Many years ago, I betrayed my husband with a coworker, so I'm an expert on workplace temptation. Once, the most common type of office infidelity was between male bosses and females who were lower-ranking employees, but that's changed in the last 10 years. With more and more women working, the most common office affair is between coworkers. Jake, the man I had the affair with, was not my boss; we were both sales reps — equals.

Coworkers sometimes work on projects or solve problems together. The resulting closeness can build teamwork, but it can also build a feeling of intimacy. If you feel an attraction to someone in your office, consider a transfer to a different department or a different position, or maybe you should quit. No job is more valuable than your marriage. I knew that I could not continue to work with Jake without being tempted, so I left the best job I'd ever had.

Be honest with yourself. If you're dressing to please someone at work or lingering in the parking lot hoping that person will ask you to lunch, stop now, before you've gone too far. If you're in doubt as to what conduct is inappropriate, ask yourself, *Would I do this in front of my spouse? And if you're still not sure, ask yourself, Would I do it in front of the Lord?* (You are, you know.) Here is a simple rule to keep you on the straight and narrow: If you'd have to hide it or lie about it — don't do it!



by nancy c. anderson — [WWW.NANCYCANDERSON.COM](http://WWW.NANCYCANDERSON.COM)





“...God will always provide a way of escape,  
but we must make a decision to run toward the door.”

— Nancy to Leading Hearts

My relationship with Jake started innocently. I noticed that he laughed at the same things I laughed at, and he noticed that we both liked similar music, so we started to sit together in the lunchroom. We were just friends ... until we weren't.

I remember the first time we went out of the friendship zone and into the danger zone. We were sitting next to each other at a sales meeting when his leg brushed up against mine. I felt a spark at the contact point and was a bit disappointed when he pulled away. A few minutes later, he shifted slightly in his chair and his leg, from knee to thigh, pressed gently against mine. I liked it, and I didn't pull away.

I should have. And because I didn't, I sent him a signal that I was unguarded. We both began to look for excuses to be together. If I'd pulled away and not responded to his flirtations, I would have avoided the biggest regret of my life.

Many companies have codes of conduct that are safeguards against the temptations of emotional or physical affairs with coworkers. **Here are some suggestions to keep you out of the danger zone:**

**1. People of the opposite sex should not ride in a car together without a third-party present. (This also protects against false accusations.)**

**2. Don't make personal phone calls to another employee of the opposite sex.** Keep the conversation business-oriented. As for emails and texts, they should also be about job-related topics. Keep personal comments minimal and avoid flirtatious or suggestive comments. Also, give your mate your phone passcode and permission to look at your phone. (You should also have access to your spouse's phone.)

**3. Don't have lunch with the same person every day.** Move around the lunchroom, and if you go out to a restaurant, go in a group.

**4. Talk about your spouse positively, making it**

**clear that you're married and intend to stay that way.**

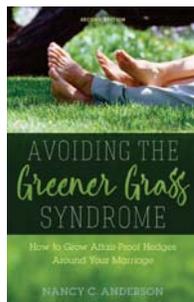
**5. Be careful not to make any lingering eye contact.**

**6. The only appropriate touch between business associates of the opposite sex is a handshake.** Lingering hugs can be seen as sensual, so be cautious if you are a hugger.

The best defense against an office affair is a healthy marriage. Your marriage could be an excellent example to other married coworkers if you stand strong. So be bold and fearless when you're defending your marriage.

Affairs begin in many ways and for many reasons, so we must be always on guard for the slightest hint of temptation because hints turn into flirtations, flirtations turn into attractions, attractions turn into affairs, and affairs turn into disasters. First Corinthians 10:13 says that God will always provide a way of escape, but we must make a decision to run toward the door.

When you're guarding your marriage, you're not guarding just your spouse, but guarding yourself too. I rationalized my way into a boatload of trouble because I thought, the rules don't apply to me. I've been to Bible college, I'm smart, I have self-control, and I can stop before it gets too far. All lies! I eventually came to my senses and miraculously, my husband forgave me, and we began to rebuild with safeguards firmly in place. I'm thrilled to tell you that we are whole and healed.

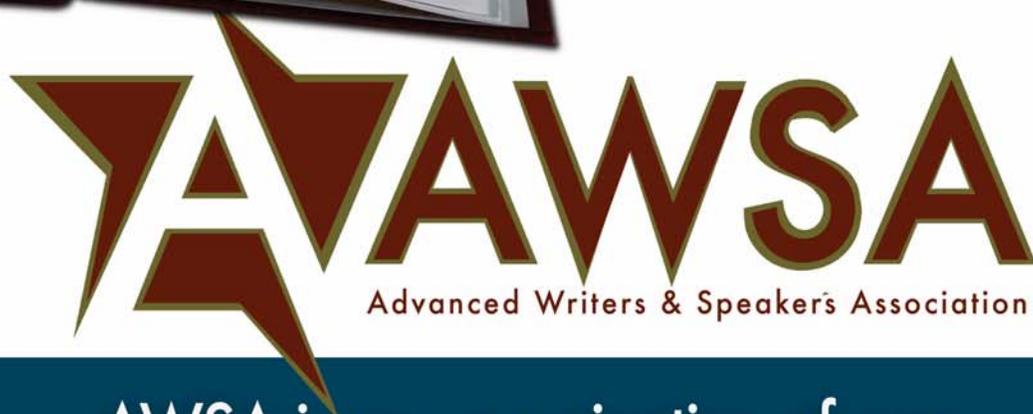


Article adapted from Nancy's book **Avoiding the Greener Grass Syndrome: How to Grow Affair Proof Hedges Around Your Marriage** (2nd Edition) ©2017 Kregel Publications.

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# sioni rodriguez

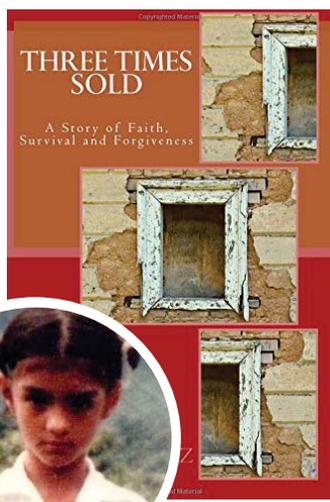
## *the freedom of forgiveness*

“FORGIVENESS IS A GIFT, AND YOU CAN GIVE IT TO YOURSELF AND GIVE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE,” Sioni says. Sold three times and a survivor of unspeakable horrors, Sioni Rodriguez is a champion of the healing power that God and forgiveness can bring.

Raised in Costa Rica with her younger brother, Sioni’s early years were torturous. “I was confused and afraid, living in poverty. I was abused and violated,” Sioni says. “Our mother seemed to hate us so much.” Her parents were alcoholics who physically, mentally and verbally abused them daily. When she was five she began getting raped nightly by her mother’s lover. “I would sit in my bed [at night], dreading his arrival,” Sioni says.

Sioni was sold for the first time when she was nine. Her mother took her to a brothel in the city and left her there.

**-continued on p. 18-**



Read a review of Sioni’s book *Three Times Sold* on p. 41.



People would expect that I would be emotionally crippled, that I wouldn't be able to live a meaningful or happy life. Yet, here I am today.

—Sioni to *Leading Hearts*

**-continued from p. 17-**



"It never entered my mind that my own mother was going to leave me in the hand of evil," Sioni remembers. She eventually snuck out of the house and was able to get home. Sioni's pain would not end that day, but something was coming that would help her through everything she was about to endure.

While running an errand for her mother one day, Sioni heard a sound that would foreshadow a change in her life. The sound was unlike anything she had ever heard. It was so full of joy. Following the sound, Sioni walked into a house to see that the sound was tambourines. She had just walked into a church service.

The people in that house were so welcoming that she stayed. "That was the first time I ever felt love," Sioni says. They did not judge her because of who she was or what had happened to her. "We don't

know who's going to walk into the church. Just looking at someone in the eyes a different way can make someone turn around," Sioni says. She accepted Jesus into her heart that day.

While her heart and spirit had changed, Sioni's daily life did not. Her mother sold her for a second time when she was 13. This time, Sioni did not get to escape right away. Sioni spent three unspeakable years in a brothel, but she now had something to help her through it. While many with her turned to drugs, Sioni would think God is going to take me out of here.

We don't know who's going to walk into the church. Just looking at someone in the eyes a different way can make someone turn around

God eventually did give Sioni a chance to escape, and she returned home again with nowhere else to go. There, her mother would sell her for a third time, to a man in the U.S. when she was 16. He took her as his wife and moved them to the states. What seemed like an escape soon turned into a nightmare as he became abusive as well.

After the birth of her two children, Sioni was able to leave him. She later met a man named Richard Rodriguez and married him in 2005. Even with her new life, Sioni still felt like something was missing. She still held anger and resentment towards those who hurt her. A call in February 2003 changed this. She found out that her mother was dying. Upon seeing her mother in a hospital bed, weak and covered in tubes, Sioni realized that she had finally come to a place of true forgiveness in her heart.

"When you don't forgive, it's like a wall that you build,



The Devil should have killed me when he had the chance because now God's going to use my story to speak life to people.

and God cannot reach out to us," Sioni says. She later forgave her father and let go of the anger she had towards the other men who had hurt her. No longer burdened, Sioni was able to fully open her heart to God and others.

"People would expect that I would be emotionally crippled," Sioni says, "that I wouldn't be able to live a meaningful or happy life. Yet, here I am today.

Everything the devil makes to be ugly, God turns around and makes it beautiful."



Sioni now spends her time volunteering with her church's prison ministry, with A Time To Heal Beyond Survival, and speaking at churches to raise awareness about human trafficking.

Not only does Sioni support the ministry of Project Rescue ([projectrescue.com](http://projectrescue.com)) as an ambassador, she takes missions trips to minister to children and survivors of sexual slavery and promotes awareness of this growing issue. She has also published her story, **Three Times Sold**, and prays for it to give comfort, hope, healing and encouragement to others.

"It's to tell other people that if God did this for me, He can do it for you. I'm not different or special. The Devil should have killed me when he had the chance because now God's going to use my story to speak life to people." *SH*



by emily walton  
EDITORIAL INTERN



by *pam farrel* — [WWW.LOVE-WISE.COM](http://WWW.LOVE-WISE.COM)

# five tips for being a WOW wife

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO PUT AND KEEP A SMILE ON YOUR

**HUSBAND'S FACE?** I've had 38 years of marriage, 45 books written and published on relationships, and two of them specifically for wives ("Red Hot Romance Tips for Women" and "52 Ways to Wow Your Husband"). As I reflect on what I have learned over my years of being a wife — and especially what I have seen WORK for wives as I have led online marriage groups for wives and coached individual wives the past five years — I find myself regularly repeating five key principles. These principles will build and bless your marriage, but also have the side benefit of inspiring, encouraging and equipping you, the woman, to live a stronger, healthier, more loving life. Pause this reading for just a moment. Now hold your left hand up, the one with your wedding ring on it. Picture these five tips as the best way to give your marriage a "helping hand" or help you get and keep a grip on love:

**1. Fold Your Hands in Prayer:** By far, the most powerful activity you can do to empower your husband and bring God's supernatural strength to your marriage is to pray.

On my night stand is Sharon Jaynes' "**Praying for Your Husband From Head to Toe**" (check out her Facebook site, [Praying Wives Club](#)) and my list of "**26 Days To Pray for Our Marriage**, (a part of the [26 Day Red Hot Wife Challenge](#)). The challenge walks you through the 26 traits, A to Z, that can make you a more loving wife. For example, A is for *Appreciate Your Husband*; it encourages you to ask God to help

you see your husband from heaven's point of view — as a gift from God to you! In Genesis, God made man, Adam, and said it was not good for him to be alone, to be separated, curtained off or isolated from you, his "Eve." The word "made" means that God designed and fashioned your husband for YOU! One of the best ways to draw your husband to you is to simply value, appreciate, thank and PRAY for him.

**2. Touch Him With a Tender Hand:** Nothing carries the power of love like holding a hand, walking hand in hand, reaching out a comforting hand to his arm or shoulder; using your hand for a pat on the back — or both hands for a well-deserved massage. Touch is magic to a relationship. It releases happy endorphins, lightening the mood; touch chemically bonds you to your mate; and touch given through a hug lowers your husband's stress and raises his confidence!

Recently, in our own marriage, I have seen how powerful a gentle touch can be. My hard-working husband has had several very burdensome years in a row. He was driving 12-hour round trips weekly, caring for his aging parents. Finally, the heaviness of that extra responsibility on top of caring for our home (an acre of property) and our Love-Wise ministry was stretching him to the max.

We decided to sell our home — our office — and move near his folks. This was very emotional for me, but I knew if I wanted him to live, to thrive, I had to embrace the move. Then he said, "Pam, why don't we sell 90 percent of our stuff and move on to a liveaboard boat?" I had a big choice in that

**-continued on p. 25-**

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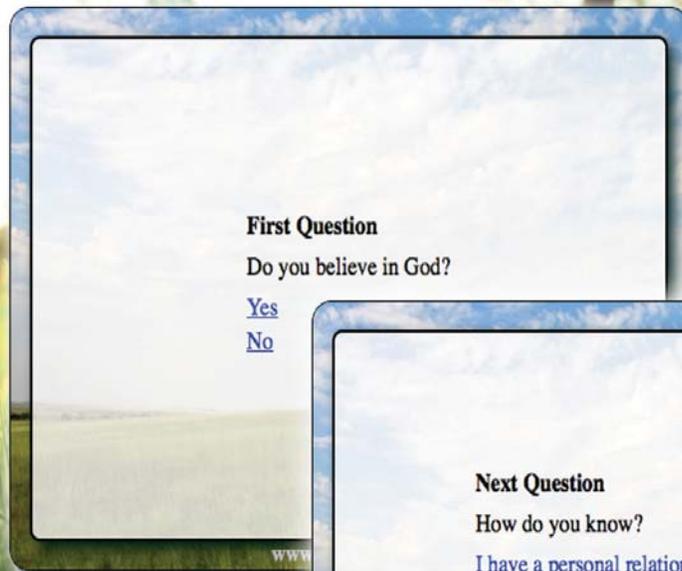
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watershed moment. I shot up a prayer for courage, then answered, “That is a fabulous idea!” and gave him a big hug. I could feel the stress, the angst, the overwhelming load exit with his exhaled sigh of relief.

**3. Offer a Helping Hand:** Like you, as we were raising our children, our home was a busy mix of year-round sports, church meetings, youth group outings, grocery shopping, laundry and housekeeping, lawn mowing and homework reminding!

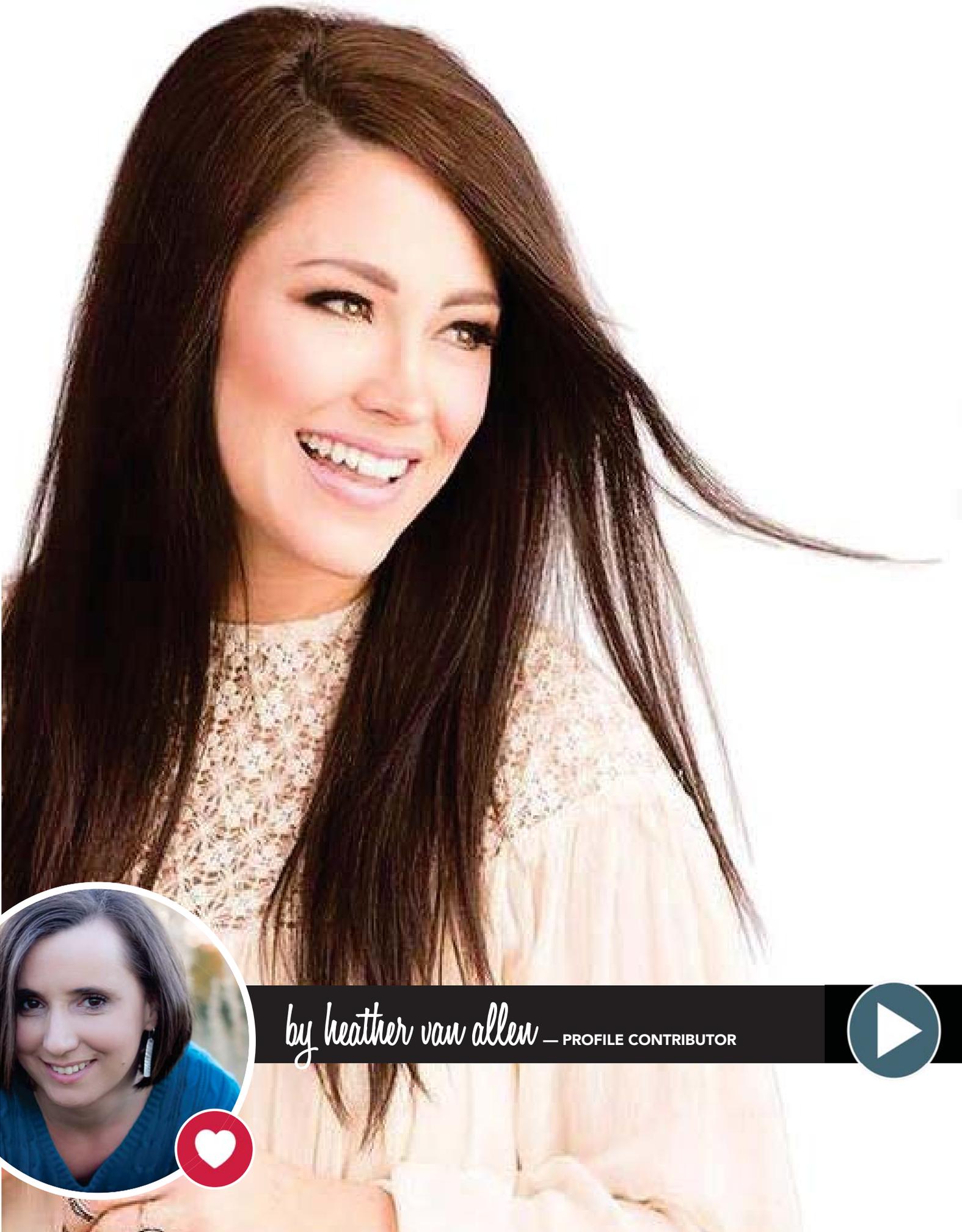
While our “divide and conquer” method of tackling chores got more done, sometimes, it was a joy to do tasks TOGETHER! The fun of painting each other’s faces while painting our bedroom, flirting in the aisles of the home improvement store, working a vineyard harvest side by side while we talked, dreamed and shared our thoughts on God as our “vinedresser” — those are all precious memories made only by working hand in hand, side by side to cut the work in half while doubling the joy of accomplishment.

**4. Give Him a Hand of Applause:** If you are in my world, you will hear me give you the marriage code: Men are wired for success. If you seek to meet his success need first, your husband will be easier to live with and easier to love. This is sometimes called the male ego, but whatever you name it, summarize it as MEN LOVE TO WIN! Your husband loves when you are proud of him, when you brag on him, when you jump in and help him succeed at work, at church, in the community, with the kids — and he especially loves it when he is fully convinced he has succeeded with you! *Here are a few ways to give your husband the trophy of your love and validation:*

- Write him a love note or set up a congratulatory dinner to mark a victory.
- Brag on him in front of family, friends, coworkers or his boss.

- Laud one of his accomplishments with a public party with family and friends — or a private session of “red hot monogamy.”
- Post a photo of him garnering a victory at a hobby, in the workplace or simply landing that “big fish.”
- Tell or show him your gratitude on his ability to “win your heart.”
- Speak words he longs to hear: “That is so wise, honey!” “Great idea!” or “Yes, dear, that sounds great!”
- **5. Hand Him Over to God:** I have walked alongside MANY wives as they have given their best, tried their hardest and worked diligently on their marriage. There are times when ONLY a miracle of God will create the relationship breakthrough that is needed. In that time of waiting for the miracle, I encourage wives to focus on “becoming your best you.” Instead of focusing on what you wish God would do to change him, focus on what you want God to do in and through you. You cannot control your spouse or your spouse’s attitudes or actions, but you can control YOURS! There is no downside to becoming your best self. Your children, your friendships, your ministry will all be blessed as you keep your heavenly focus and allow God to lead you, heal you, grow you and motivate you.

One of my dearest friends prayed more than 20 years for her husband to come to Christ. Then she prayed more years for his emotional healing — and I prayed with her! We prayer-walked weekly, standing on verses from the Bible, praying in faith as we claimed the man he “could become.” And then it happened. God brought a pastor, a counselor, who spoke the truths that finally healed her husband’s heart. *LH*



*by heather van allen* — PROFILE CONTRIBUTOR



# kari jobe baby steps

## WHEN ARTIST AND WORSHIP SONGSTRESS KARI JOBE TAKES THE STAGE, THE WHOLE PLACE BECOMES CHURCH.

*As soon as the music starts, the concert becomes a worship session, and the shift in feeling is palpable as God's presence floods the atmosphere and hands go up all over the crowd. Kari has a softness to her voice that, combined with her passion for God, has a way of bringing a calm and peace over the room. Watching her share the stage with her husband Cody Carnes, a solo artist in his own right, is to watch a family (one that seems to be extended in the form of their bandmates) that truly worships together.*

**Leading Hearts** caught up with Kari backstage at the Springfield (Missouri) WinterJam 2018 tour stop for a chat about life over the past five year, and what she has learned about marriage, motherhood and giving worship a place in the home.

**Leading Hearts: The past five years have been pretty significant for you. You got married, you became a mom. Tell a bit about the lessons you've learned as a mother, a wife and a daughter of Christ.**

Kari Jobe: It has been a fun five years. I feel like I've watched the favor of God. Sometimes we go through seasons when we may think, *God, you know the deep desires of my heart and I don't see them happening.* Then, overnight, it felt like, God started to shift that into me getting to get married, and five months later, we got pregnant; it was very quick.

The Lord was in it the whole time. I married one of my best friends, and never saw it coming. We're

eight years apart, and it never dawned on me that he would be my husband. But God just did it, and it's just been beautiful. He's been doing ministry with me for years, and that's been special.

**LH: This past five years hasn't been without some pretty severe trials for you and your family. Tell us a bit about that.**

Kari: It was like we were right in the middle of God's promises and we hit a massive storm. Most sisters probably talk and dream about being pregnant at the same time and raising their kids together. My sister and I talked about that our whole lives. We got pregnant at about the same time; I was three months behind her. We were having a blast; it was so much fun.

She already had a 2-year-old, and this was her second baby. Right at the end of her pregnancy she had to give birth to a sleeping angel who was already back with Jesus before we got to meet her. Hard isn't even the word. It was one of those moments where I felt like all the wind got knocked out of my lungs. It took me quite a few months—maybe even a year or two—to really get over that. There is still pain, but I feel like I'm healed in my heart.

In the midst of all that, I was still pregnant, trying to grieve with her with her major loss and having a funeral, but still carrying life inside of me and having to navigate that.

**LH: How did the grief surrounding the loss of your sister's child impact the arrival of your son?**

Kari: It made it even more special, I think. Kris had a hard time coming to the baby shower—something that's supposed to be celebration—but I had to hear the Holy Spirit and be at peace knowing that she was still celebrating, and she would get there, but it just wasn't time yet. Not to get offended at her in that season that she was in, but to give grace. Then

when [Canyon] came, she had the most beautiful look on her face. I have a picture of it. We were able to capture this look of extreme joy that only God could bring up. I show it to her still, and it makes her cry because you could see this supernatural joy. She celebrated with me and celebrated Canyon. Now she and Canyon are very close. I think God really helped bring a newness of life through Canyon for my sister's heart.

**LH: How does being a mom affect your relationship with Christ? Have your thoughts about Father-daughter changed since you've been mother-son?**

Kari: Absolutely. The biggest change is the amount of time that I don't have to sit and read my Bible and spend time like that. It just looks different now, and I've had to learn to give myself grace. If I have five minutes, the Lord always meets me there. If I'm playing and I'm praying, that's just as beautiful to the Lord.

Being a mommy helps me realize how much more patient God is with us. When Canyon is acting up or he's doing something for which I have to bring discipline, I'm patient because I know that he's learning. I have realized God really does have that patience for us. It's not like He thinks we have to have it all figured out. He loves us with an unconditional love, even more than I love my son.

**LH: In an interview, you talked about how imparting worship into your home brings calmness into it. Tell me a bit about those moments where you as a mom bring worship into your home.**

Kari: We have worship [music] playing a lot. Also, I'm sensitive to stuff he watches, even sweet, cute little cartoons. But there was a Halloween special of a cartoon, and I changed it, because you could feel the atmosphere in the house change a little bit and his little facial expressions. I like to be sensitive. I don't want to shelter him to the point that he doesn't understand culture, but I want to help him understand the presence of God and how that can change an atmosphere from darkness into light. He's only 2, but the older he gets, I want to be able to explain.

**LH: What are some things you and your husband do to show him or teach him about worship even at a young age?**

Kari: Well, he's in it so much. He's around worship

at church and on the road so much that he's in that atmosphere a lot. Also, I talk to him about how Jesus lives in his heart — technically not yet, I guess — but I'll ask him, "Where's Jesus?" and he'll point to his heart. Little things start to plant those seeds in his heart, because [God's Word teaches us] to teach a child the way he should go, and in the end, he will not depart from it.

**LH: What is the greatest challenge of being a woman in ministry in your home?**

Kari: Keeping peace, I think. I don't want to be one person on stage and a different person at my house or with my husband. We're still learning to be married, too, so we just have to give grace to each other. Believe it or not, there is a difference as a married couple between traveling and being at home. On the road, you learn to always be in each other's space, and when you're home you're like, "Could you just go in the other room?" or "I'm just going to go and take a bath and chill." I [try to] let him do the same, if he wants to go play golf or go be with his guy friends.

**LH: In the dynamic of your careers and taking your child on the road, how do you keep a feeling of normalcy?**

Kari: For us, [normal] might not be the word. I think we just have to find our strides. Systems is a good word for me, because if I feel like I have a system that's similar to the system I have at home, it feels more normal. Canyon still goes to bed at the same time as he does at home. We kind of set up the bus to feel like home for him, because I don't want him to start dreading ministry. I grew up doing ministry with my parents, and we had a blast. I want Canyon to love it, and if we get to have more kids, I want them to love it and to fall in love with the presence of God. To me, it's in simple stuff like being careful of what we're allowing, whether that's on TV or in our conversations. Something I learned lately is kids take in everything. I want to create an environment of peace.

**LH: Can you leave us with one verse of Scripture that's really on your heart for this moment?**

Yes, Genesis 28:15 (when God was really meeting Jacob in a place of fear): "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you" (ESV). *LH*



NEWBORN PROMISE PODCAST with guest

Kari Jobe

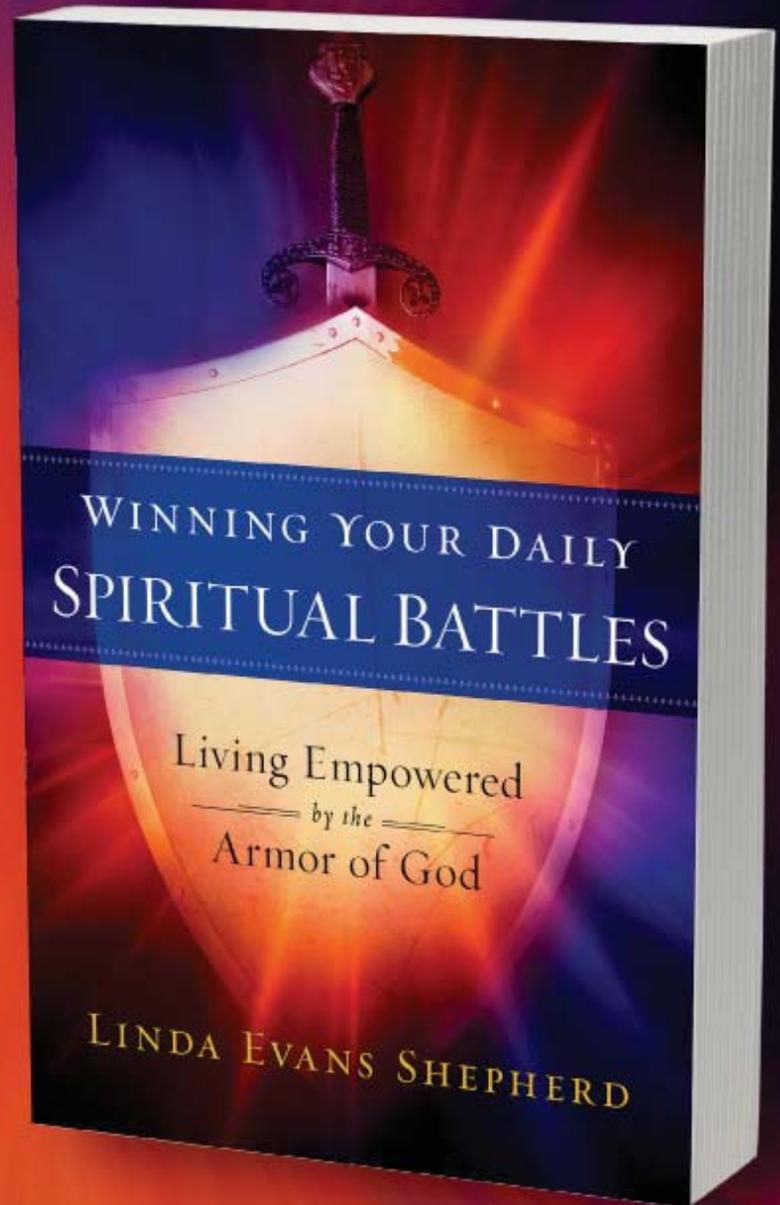
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## the big question



**Q:** My son's professor taught that God wouldn't do miracles since the world reveals His nature. The teacher said a miracle would distort God's image. My son now questions the Resurrection.



with *cynthia l. simmons*  
WWW.CLSIMMONS.COM

### YOUR SON'S INSTRUCTOR

**ESPOUSES DEISM**, a popular idea in the 19th century. Deism taught God revealed himself through what He made, but stepped away, refusing to interact with mankind. This view contains an element of truth, because creation does give us information about God. Romans 1:20 says that "his [God's] invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived ... in the things that have been made" (ESV). However, the Bible also teaches God intervenes in the course of history. Hebrews 2:4 tells us that "God also bore witness [to truth/redemption] by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit" (ESV). Based on this verse and others demonstrating God's involvement in our lives, we can say deism is not true.

Next, let's tackle proofs of the Resurrection. First, consider the disciple's actions. As you would expect, the capture and crucifixion of Jesus terrified them. All except John ran away, hiding in the upper room in

fear of their lives. Peter hung around during the trial, but he denied knowing Jesus three times. However, a change came over followers of Jesus after the Resurrection, and they proclaimed what they had seen without fear. At that time, rulers didn't hesitate to torture prisoners to force them to recant, however, the disciples remained adamant. What they had seen took away their fear of death. Plus, seven or more sources confirm the disciples' confidence as the Early Church formed.

Second, Saul of Tarsus and his conversion from Judaism to Christianity testifies Jesus rose. As a devout Jew, he wanted to destroy what he considered a cult by imprisoning Christians. He even asked permission to find converts in Damascus, but on the way had a vision which changed his mind and his name to Paul. In this case, the enemy put aside his firm convictions to embrace what he persecuted. He claimed he saw the resurrected Jesus, and he accepted persecution and even death without altering. Pretty convincing!

Third, the empty tomb serves as a silent witness Jesus lives. Roman soldiers put a seal on the tomb, and anyone breaking that seal would die. When the body wasn't available to curb rumors Jesus was alive, government officials spread the lie about His disciples stealing the body. Not likely. If the disciples faked His resurrection, they would have chosen to tell their news anyplace other than the city where He died. It would be too easy to squelch the false rumor with the corpse, but Jesus' body was not handy for display. Almost 75 percent of scholars who research this event believe witnesses found an empty tomb.

In summary, the empty tomb, the changed disciples, and the enemy's conversion give strong evidence Jesus lives while deism fails to explain the facts. Learn more by reading Gary Habermas or William Lane Craig. *SLH*



## A ROYAL HERITAGE *by penelope carlevato* WWW.PENELOPECARLEVATO.COM



THIS YEAR MARKS THE 66TH ANNIVERSARY OF BRITAIN'S QUEEN ELIZABETH ON THE THRONE. She surpassed Queen Victoria's record of 63 years and also holds the title of the oldest living monarch. These kinds of proclamations fascinate me, and I ask myself: "Why I am such a royal fanatic?" I guess it's because my British mother was a Royalist and, in her lifetime, collected enough magazine articles and newspaper clippings to fill many scrapbooks. I continue to collect articles and books about the royal family, and since my writing mentor suggested I include my English heritage (I was born in England), I took her advice and now include it with my passion for hospitality and history.

During the past few years, there has been a huge

increase in the popularity of the British royal family worldwide, mainly as the new young royals are taking such an active part in the monarchy. Royalty in Britain is thriving. They have become icons of fashion, dining and travel. Their involvement in public events makes them more approachable than the older generation of royals. However, all the wealth and power doesn't make them immune from life's trials and tribulations. God in His mercy, gives all of us wisdom, whether royal or not. I think many of us secretly think if we had their wealth and power, our lives would be great. But ... not so.

"If any of you lacks wisdom,  
you should ask God, who gives  
generously to all without finding fault,  
and it will be given to you."  
James 1:5

As we study God's Word, we find wealth and power are not to be envied. The greatest treasure we can obtain is wisdom. Wisdom helps us make right choices and equips us to handle life's difficult circumstances. Without wisdom, whatever goals we aspire to achieve will be empty and meaningless.

As a young girl, our family took a holiday to England. We spent the summer seeing the country and visiting relatives. One afternoon, we drove to Sandringham House, one of the royal residences. Queen Mary (pictured left), the current queen's grandmother, was there inspecting some of the business properties on the grounds. We were fortunate to have an unexpected private audience with Queen Mary. As my mother and the Queen were chatting, I remember looking in awe at this stately woman dressed in white. She was regal,

yet very real as she shared her concerns about her son (King Edward VIII), who had abdicated the throne to marry a divorced woman. They were living in New York, as he was no longer able to remain king. Many believe it was an unwise decision. Today, that stipulation has been relaxed, as several of the new royals have been divorced. Like my mother, Queen Mary cared for her family and had concerns for their future.

As a child, I was awe-stuck on meeting the Queen and thought this must be very similar to talking to God! After I became a Christian, I realized this encounter was pale in comparison to meeting Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. As exciting as it was to meet the Queen, we have the awesome privilege and responsibility to introduce our family and friends to King Jesus. The result will not only be eternal life for them, but a royal life as we live as daughters and sons of the King.

“Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”

Ephesians 5:15-16, NIV

A breakfast recipe fit for a queen (or a king) for your next overnight guests.

To maximize my time with guests, I like to prepare meals before they arrive.

This breakfast entrée can be made the day before.

## Royal English Muffins Cups

6 English muffins, halved and chopped into bite-size pieces

8 oz. breakfast sausage

8 eggs

1 ¼ cup milk

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon pepper

¼ teaspoon Coleman's or Dijon mustard

1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

⅓ cup green onions, diced

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Spray a 12-cup muffin tin with cooking spray.

Heat a skillet and crumble the sausage and cook until browned. Drain off excess grease.



In a large bowl, combine the eggs, milk and seasonings.

Add the sausage, muffins, cheese and onions to the egg mixture and mix thoroughly.

Cover and refrigerate overnight, then pour the mixture evenly into the prepared muffin cups.

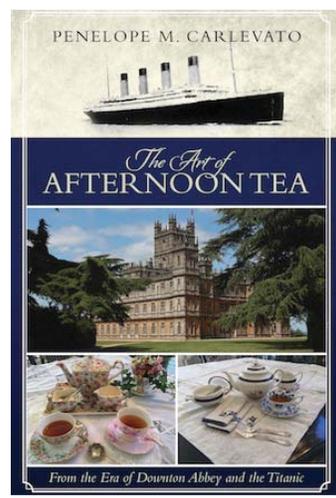
(If making in the morning, let the mixture set for at least 15 minutes.)

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes until the eggs are set and top is lightly browned.

To remove from the muffin tin, run a sharp knife around the edges of each cup.

Serve with fresh fruit, yogurt, tea or coffee.

Enjoy! *PH*



Find great recipes like this in

Penelope's book:

**The Art of Afternoon Tea: From the Era of Downton Abbey and the Titanic.**

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## TIME TO REFLECT

by *karen whiting*  
WWW.KARENWHITING.COM



- What are the things that holds you back?
- What encourages you to move forward?
- How are things going on your journey, overall?

Think of what you need and let us know. We want to walk with you, celebrate or cry with you and encourage you to reach your dreams and follow God's call.

There may be times in the past (or now) when you felt broken. It would be a surprise if you didn't have some turning point in the past five years. Reflect on how God used those times to shape you.

Five years ago, I became a widow and faced lots of change. Those turning points give us choices. I chose to rejoice in the memories of my husband, to be grateful for the qualities he instilled in our children and to move forward because of his faith in me. My husband believed God wanted to keep using me, and I've had numerous books released since we parted on earth. I've spoken as far away as China. I hope you have also chosen a positive path with each turning point and that the years will be full of family, friends and opportunities.

Our days are numbered, and we hope you'll use yours to make a difference. Learn from the women who write the articles and apply their lessons. Join us in AWSA as you start speaking and become part of the sisterhood. Look ahead and make plans to serve others, gather with friends and grow in grace and knowledge.

Life may seem complicated and overwhelming, but you can choose the best. Choose to be guided by Scripture and prayer. You can make a difference too. It doesn't need to be complicated or a huge ministry. Choose to bless one person each day. Ask God to put one person in your path and let you know how to bless that individual. It can be as easy as listening or sharing an encouraging word. *KH*

### FIVE YEARS OF LEADING HEARTS INSPIRING AND ENCOURAGING WOMEN — that's reason to celebrate!

When I reflect on the past five years has built familiarity and established a rhythm. We've come to know some of the regular columnists and been surprised by new faces and ideas. We've met strong women who struggled with faith and grew closer to God. We've tackled tough problems and celebrated great victories.

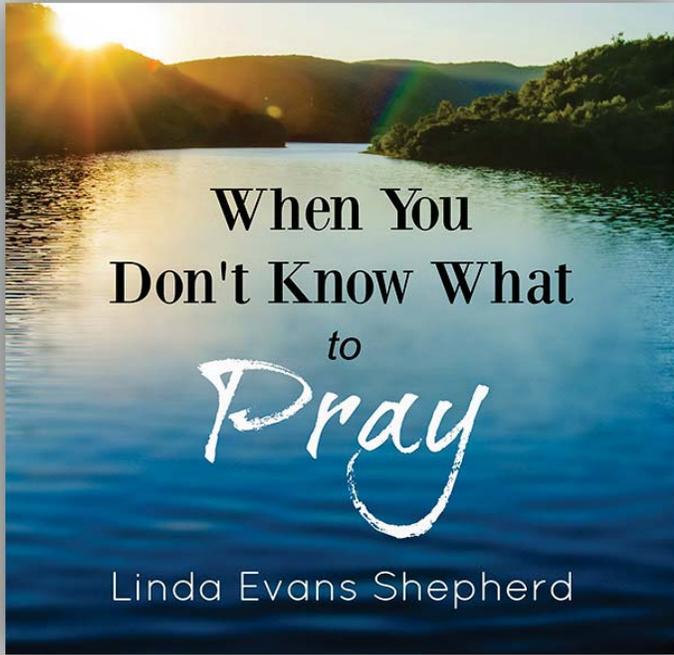
The stories of women overcoming struggles, moving forward to help others, and their love for you and other readers have filled the pages to bring hope.

In honor of our fifth year anniversary take time to reflect on your life and the past few years.

- How have you grown?
- What's your dream and how have you moved toward it?

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# STOP CHASING NUMBERS

by *edie melson*  
WWW.EDIEMELSON.COM



The point is what the numbers represent.

The point is the individuals who can be impacted by what I write, challenged by what I say, and changed by what I share.

When I get caught up chasing the numbers, the significance of what I'm doing diminishes. But when I step away from the race and concentrate on Who I'm writing for and the individuals I'm writing to, things fall back into place.

I'm first and foremost a writer. Social media is a tool, a means to an end. It helps me find my audience. But when I begin to measure my worth as a writer through the numbers, I've gotten off course.

My worth is not determined by my numbers.

For me, the blog posts and social media updates that mean the most are rarely the ones that generate the highest numbers. The ones that mean the most are those that help someone. Fulfillment comes from writing things that connect with individuals who are hurting or help those who are frustrated finally see God in the equation. It's when I pen those words that I feel true satisfaction in my calling.

As twenty-first century wordsmiths, social media is an important part of our toolbox, but it's not our focus. It's so easy to get caught up in the race to the highest numbers and forget why we're doing it.

This media driven world ebbs and flows. One second, we're on top; the next, we're at the bottom of the pile. When we measure our worth through charts and graphs generated by numbers, we're certain to fail. But when we look at the lives that are impacted by our words, success is guaranteed. *JH*

## ON THE SURFACE, SOCIAL

**MEDIA APPEARS** to be all about amassing numbers, increasing reach and generating sales. Everywhere we look, we're being told how to get more hits on our blogs, generate new followers and strengthen our web presence. After all, the higher our numbers, the more valuable we are. Right?

The truth is, that couldn't be more of a perversion of the truth.

I'm not doing this writing thing to win some numbers race. I write because I want to be used by God to reach people, to help them and have a positive impact on the world around me.

If all I'm looking for is higher numbers, I've missed the point. I've set a course that follows certain frustration and ultimate failure. So if it's not for the numbers, then what's the point? Why even bother with social media?



by *saundera dalton-smith*  
WWW.ICHOOSEMYBESTLIFE.COM

# 10 truths

## I WISH I HAD BELIEVED 10 YEARS AGO



I RECENTLY CELEBRATED MY BIRTHDAY. AROUND THIS TIME

EVERY YEAR, I start reflecting on how my life is progressing. I wish I could say I'm always pleased with my self-evaluation. Too often, I find myself utterly amazed at my ability to doubt, fear and regret. Instead of seeing the fruit I desire, I notice too much precious time spent striving and not enough time spent thriving. Too many moments focused on fighting back negative thoughts and too little spent on cultivating the truth.

The truth is timeless, but the time we spend outside of it has a profound effect on how deep our roots grow and how high we can reach. It doesn't change. The truth remains stable throughout our ups and downs. But the truth does have the power to change us. It becomes a solid foundation on which we can build, and it refuses to be shaken by temporary

nuances. The truth remains true even in the face of our deepest fears and unspoken doubts.

Today, I'm sharing with you 10 truths I wish I had believed 10 years ago. Why 10 years? Because that's around the time I burned out, lost my joy, hated my job and wanted out of my life. Because that's when every weakness, flaw and imperfection decided to introduce itself to me. Because that's when I came to the end of myself and found God. These 10 truths became breath to my dry bones. They filled the empty places of my heart and spoke life to my body.

### If only I had believed...

#### 1. My worth is not in question.

**Psalm 139:13-14** — For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well (ESV).

I was born with value my soul recognizes even when my mind does not. Not feeling worthy does not change my self-worth.

## 2. My future is never without hope.

**Jeremiah 29:11** — For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope” (NLT).

Even when I do not know what tomorrow holds, I can be confident of this one thing — hope. Hope goes before me and paves the way for better tomorrows.

## 3. Fatigue is an invitation to rest.

**Matthew 11:28-29** — Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (NIV).

I’ve always seen fatigue as a part of life. It’s how you get things done. If you are not worn out by the end of the day, then you apparently wasted your day. The truth is fatigue is how our body reminds us to take care of ourselves. It’s an invitation to a divine exchange.

## 4. My weakness has potential.

**2 Corinthians 12:9** — But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me (NIV).

Weaknesses are only opportunities awaiting a revelation of what is possible. They are a chance for me to experience grace on new levels.

## 5. Peace is a readily available gift.

**John 14:27** — I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid (NLT).

Many wars are fought over peace; some in my mind. An anxious heart has difficulty accepting gifts it can’t fully comprehend. Receiving this gift means I have to give up my fight to understand.

## 6. Scripture has life-changing power.

**Hebrews 4:12** — For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart (KJV).

There will always be new books, new research and new ideas being birthed, but none of these will ever hold more power than the Word of God. Choose it as the definitive answer over all other resources.

## 7. Good is a pre-determined destination.

**Romans 8:28** — And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (KJV).

On the way to the destination, you will journey across all types of sorrow, pain, disappointment and failures. Don’t visit too long at any of these stops.

## 8. Life has many seasons.

**Ecclesiastes 3:1** — There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens (NIV).

In one season, I spent most of my days changing dirty diapers. In my current season, I navigate the complicated waters of teen hormones. Each season is different. Some are more difficult than others, but it’s only for a season.

## 9. Jealousy is a silent killer.

**Proverbs 14:30** — A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot (ESV).

I wasted many years comparing myself to others. Instead of celebrating their successes, I feared their gain was my loss. Jealousy is a slow poison, destroying you from the inside by blocking your personal growth. It puts unnecessary boundaries on your ability to excel.

## 10. There’s plenty for both of us.

**Philippians 4:19** — And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus (NIV).

Life is not a fight or competition. There is an abundance of everything for everyone, including you and me.

LH



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## no regrets

PARENTING IS A ROLE LEARNED BY A LIFETIME OF DAILY LESSONS. IN HINDSIGHT, MOST OF US WISH WE'D LEARNED THOSE BEFORE WE HAD CHILDREN.

We all have those bumps in the road that we wish we could have avoided. Those lessons that we learned that we experienced the hard way. We could miss those parenting mistakes that we wish had never happened and become the parents we wanted to be.

Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way, but you do have me. I've reached that stage where my sons are now grown with families of their own, so maybe you won't mind me sharing what I learned from my own hindsight moments.

- **Love hard — and verbalize the words.** Love covers a multitude of mistakes, and if your children know you truly love them, you'll be amazed at how forgiving they will be.
- **Love them enough to be their parent instead of their friend.**
- **Set limits. Set standards.** Expect your children to mind — and follow through when they don't. Kids need structure; it provides security for them.

- **Build good channels of communication when your children are small** and you'll be grateful when they're teens. Learn to listen, when to give advice, and when to stay silent.

Expect your children to mind — and follow through when they don't. Kids need structure; it provides security for them.

- **Put God first in your home.**
- **Keep your children in church.**
- **Teach them His Word.**
- **Live like Jesus in front of them.** There are no better guardrails for life than equipping your children with faith.

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (KJV).

That's the best insurance policy any parent can have, and the dividends will carry on to the next generation.

- **Squeeze the moments.** All those old ladies who told you your children would grow up before you can blink? Turns out they're right. Determine now that you'll look back with sweet memories instead of regrets. *LH*



WOULDN'T IT BE WONDERFUL IF PRAYER WAS A WAY WE COULD CONTROL GOD? Oh my, did I really put that thought into print?

Maybe this isn't a godly idea, yet we've all been guilty of this unspoken notion when we've faced what seemed to be a major failure in prayer. We've agonized, But I thought I was an insider. I thought God loved me. I thought I was God's boss.

**OOPS!** Most people would never admit to aspiring to boss God, yet most of us, when faced with a grave difficulty, have tried to do just that whether we've realized it or not.

Consider Mary and Martha, two godly sisters who no doubt considered themselves to be a part of Jesus' inner circle. Jesus and their brother, Lazarus, were friends. They'd fed Jesus and His disciples more times than they could count. And so, when they sent Jesus a note instructing Him to hurry to Bethany because their brother was sick, Jesus did not run to their rescue. In fact, by the time He showed up, Lazarus had been rotting in the grave for four days.

Martha was crushed. She fell at Jesus' feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." And Mary? She was so distraught; all she could do was cry. I understand. There have been times when God's silence felt as though He was ignoring me completely. That kind of rejection hurts. It's no easy thing to process or to get over.

Mary and Martha felt this same sting. Even so, Martha told Jesus, "But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

Wow. Martha's response would be a great response to our own unanswered prayers: trust that God has another plan.

Mary and Martha's unanswered request for Jesus to promptly return to Bethany brought them an unimagined miracle. Though Jesus waited too late to heal Lazarus from his illness, He still had the power to call him out of the grave, and He did!

I like how pastor David Wilkinson described this scene, "Mary and Martha exhibit that faith is not trusting in what you want Jesus to do, but trusting in Jesus in the midst of unanswered requests."

So when we are faced with unanswered prayer, we should trust God anyway. For Jesus has the power to call heartache into joy, pain into peace and death into new life in ways we never expected.

Let's pray.

*Dear Lord, I give You my unanswered prayer. I am sorry if I ever tried to control You with prayer, and though it's not wrong for me to ask You my requests, it's wrong to think You must perform my every plea because I said so.*

*Forgive me. Now I humbly request that You turn my unanswered prayer into miracles that I have yet to imagine.*

*Thank You, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen. LH*

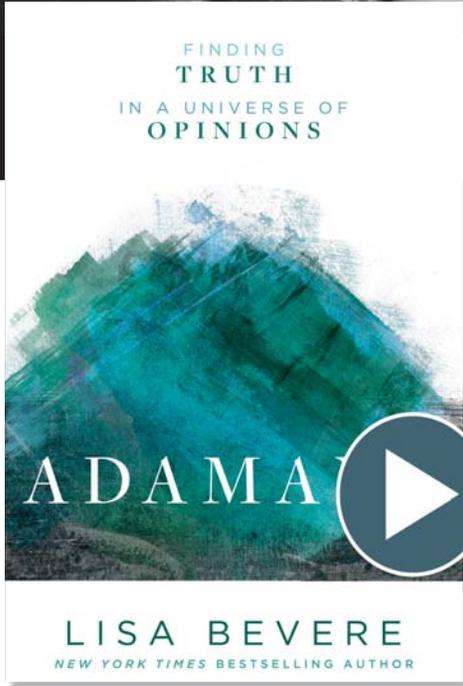


# BOOKSTOREAD



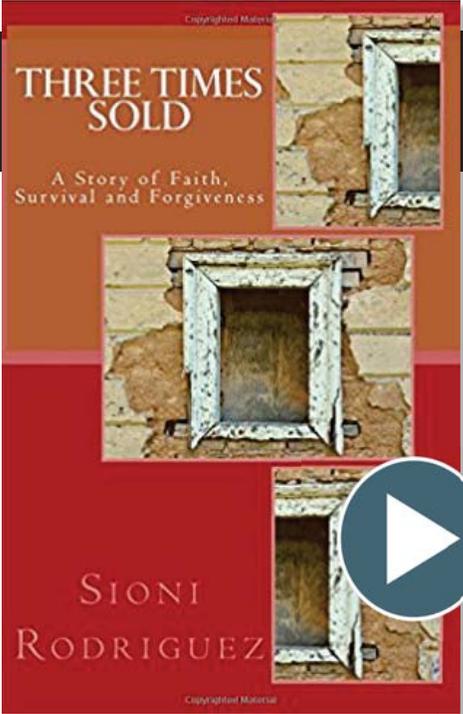
## IT'LL BE OKAY by Sheryl Giesbrecht Turner

In *It'll be Okay*, Sheryl Giesbrecht Turner gives hope, help, and healing for the doubting, hurting, questioning or confused soul. Sheryl is an overcoming woman who has been through many life trials and tribulations. In taking her own questions to God, she helps us find answers for our own. —Pam Farrel, author of 45 books including *Discovering Hope in the Psalms: A Creative Bible Study Experience* and *7 Simple Skills for Every Woman: Success in Keeping It All Together*



## ADAMANT by Lisa Bevere

Using the mediums of Scripture and story, *New York Times* best-selling author Lisa Bevere takes readers on a journey into the Mountain of God, to the one place they can learn not only to abide in God’s unshakeable truth and love, but become adamant — people who are unmovable, determined, and steadfast. With conviction and passion, Lisa unpacks the concept of the adamant for readers, linking together the grand story of Scripture and God’s purpose in their lives. Readers will see that God’s plan is revealed as we dwell in him, it is there that we are forged and shaped. As we abide in Christ our Cornerstone, we are shaped into the image of the adamant.



## THREE TIMES SOLD by Sioni Rodriguez

A remarkable story, one that will leave you in awe of the strength of the human spirit, this particular human being at least. Not everyone would have turned the many negatives into springboards to a productive and generous life dedicated to others. But the message of hope and a strong belief in God’s love weaves throughout. Hope permeates this story of survival, and in a world where hope is often in short supply, one cannot but feel uplifted by this book. —Mary A. Gordon

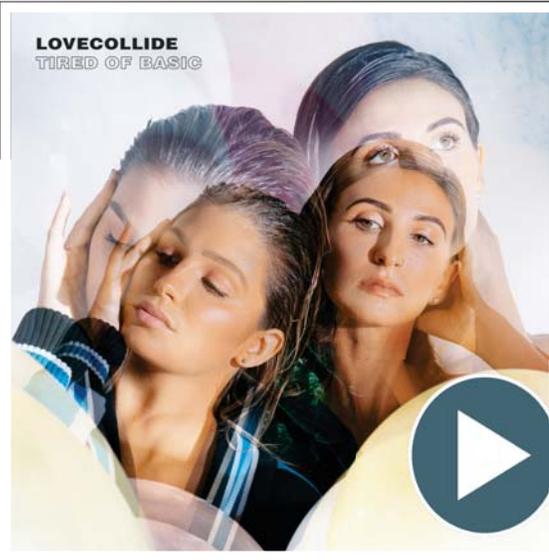
This book will break your heart but the positive message of surviving against all odds will lift you up. I don’t think many people have the strength to survive even one of the many hardships that this author had to endure, but to come through it all with grace and such a strong belief system is nothing short of amazing. Anyone who has had to endure abuse will find comfort in the message that you are not alone. —Max Smedwell



by heather van allen  
LH STAFF REVIEWER



# MUSICREVIEWS



## LOVECOLLIDE Tired of Basic

Lauren Budnick and Brooke DeLeary, who combine to form pop sister duo LOVECOLLIDE, offer ***Tired of Basic*** (April 13, 2018), their third full-length album.

Describing what fuels the sisters' current sound, Lauren says, "We've always wanted to be current. It's always been a journey for us, and always will be. I think our biggest goal with this new music and this new album was to create something that truly sounded like what we listen to on a daily basis, and what gets us going, and that's dancy pop."

Fun, upbeat and energetic in tone and style, ***Tired of Basic*** is a positive turn in response to a season of doubt and uncertainty. From beginning to end, every track plays like a determined refusal to settle for ordinary — or anything close to it — in living and sharing faith. It is a youthful package carrying a mature message, encouraging listeners to be all in for Jesus.



## MICHAEL W. SMITH

### A Million Lights

Multi-award-winning, acclaimed artist Michael W. Smith has released ***A Million Lights*** (February 16, 2018), a new album through Rocketown Records and The Fuel Music.

Commenting on his desire to create something new and fresh, Michael says, “I think you have to reinvent a little bit.” As part of revamping his sound, Michael added songwriters he had never worked with before to the creative process.

***A Million Lights*** features Michael’s familiar pop vocals, but lyrically it stretches into new territory. Several of the tracks are a positive and hopeful response to the division and

negative tension that seems to have heightened among American society recently, especially in our current social media culture. “We’ve lost the value of conversation. That’s the dialogue I’d like to open,” says Michael.

“Music is the most powerful language there is,” he adds. “It can transform your life on every level, not just the spiritual. It can help people reconnect with why they’re here. That’s what I’m doing with ***A Million Lights***.”



## AUDREY ASSAD

### Evergreen

Singer-songwriter Audrey Assad’s newest album ***Evergreen*** (released February 23) is beautiful, calming, soothing and healing in ways difficult to fully package into words. From the first note of the first track (the title track), the senses are arrested and the sweet lilt of Audrey’s voice instantly transports the inner spirit to a place of peace.

Audrey describes her intent for the album, saying, “I hope that ***Evergreen*** is a healing oil in the wounds of whoever

comes across it. I am stumbling towards health and wholeness, and I desire that for anyone who hears this music. I am hopeful that it will be a solace and sanctuary for anyone who needs peace and joy in their lives. It has been a labor of hard-won love and emerged from the deepest parts of my spirit.”

The full effect of ***Evergreen*** — which these few words cannot quite capture — is well worth experiencing for yourself.



by rhonda rhea — [WWW.RHONDARHEA.COM](http://WWW.RHONDARHEA.COM)

# a clean finish

EVER HAD ONE OF THOSE DAYS? I HAD SEVERAL IN A ROW. AND BY “SEVERAL,” I MEAN AT LEAST 10 YEARS’ WORTH. They were days of never feeling quite ... finished. I would get to the end of the day and think, what did I actually get done? It wasn’t that I hadn’t accomplished anything.

But when you have five children in seven years, there will no doubt be days when, while you’re trying to salvage the toaster (the one someone used to try to toast Milk Duds), one of the other kids tells you your toddler covered the cat with pudding and your first-grader just threw up in the toy box.

Without even resorting to laundry stories, I could tell an extra-large load of stories of finishing a day without really finishing what I felt I should’ve finished. And if I did mention laundry, I would have to wonder how many mornings I felt relatively okay about the fact that the kids were digging through the clean basket of laundry for something to wear instead of the dirty one. Every day seemed to be a new experience in unfinished business.

Now the kids are grown and I’m in a new season. And I have to tell you, at the end of a day, there’s just about as much I feel I’ve left hanging (and no, that’s not a laundry reference). Deadlines, tapings, contacts and contracts — and, oh my goodness, there’s still laundry.

I’ve made a discovery through all the years of unfinished business. I’ve discovered that I fret the most about what I’m not accomplishing when I’m struggling to accomplish it all in my own strength.

And that’s when I end up focusing on all the wrong accomplishments anyway.

There’s a sort of recalibration of the focus and a completely different outlook on those worries over what I haven’t yet done when I realize that everything truly vital in this life — everything really worth finishing — has already been accomplished by the “Author and Finisher” of our faith. At each point I surrender and let the Finisher do the finishing, let the Completer do the completing, I can stop the sweating and experience His peace.

“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, though Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen”  
(Hebrews 13:20-21, NKJV).

He is the Completer of every good work, and He does that finishing work “in” us. He is faithful to finish the works that really count — as faithful as He is to accomplish the saving work in us. When the Father completed His redemptive plan through the sacrificial death of His Son on the cross, the most glorious words of all time reverberated across eternity: “It is finished.”

Resting in His finished work gives us an entirely different take on the looming deadlines and the toasted Milk Duds. It moves the “finish line” to a reachable spot, one He will reach for us and in us in the most glorious way. And I think we can call that our big finish. *LH*

THE SONG YOU KNOW. THE STORY YOU DON'T.

*Will I stand in your presence  
Or to my knees will I fall  
Will I sing hallelujah  
Will I be able to speak at all*

# I CAN ONLY IMAGINE

AN ERWIN BROTHERS FILM

J. MICHAEL FINLEY    MADELINE CARROLL    TRACE ADKINS    PRISCILLA C. SHIRER    WITH CLORIS LEACHMAN    AND DENNIS QUAID



WITH  
*andy erwin*  
 CO-PRODUCER

FOR SO MANY OF US, THE LYRIC OF A GREAT SONG CAN IMMEDIATELY TRANSPORT US, CAUSING US TO REVISIT PLACES IN OUR HEART AND MIND.

Those places may be a reflection of past life experiences, or even the imaginings of things to come. Either way, music is an expression of the human existence that we all can relate to. On March 16, 2018, one such musical moment came to life in movie theaters when the popular song turned film, *I Can Only Imagine*, screened nationwide.

The movie portrays the real-life story of Bart Millard, lead singer/songwriter of the award winning band **Mercy Me**. Millions have been impacted by the song itself for years, and now this previously untold story, through the medium of film, will continue to make a powerful impact on so many others.

Bart wrote the song after losing his father to cancer. He documents his personal story — growing up in

an abusive home, overcoming that abuse, and the impact of true forgiveness.

So where does one begin with taking a hit song and putting it into film format? I had the opportunity to speak with co-director Andy Erwin, of Erwin Brothers Entertainment (“Mom’s Night Out,” “October Baby,” “Woodlawn”), about this much anticipated new movie. Andy says it begins with a great story. “We took a couple of days and interviewed Bart, his wife Shannon, the band — everyone that we could.

Millions have been impacted by the song itself for years, and now this previously untold story, through the medium of film, will continue to make a powerful impact on so many others.

“Making a movie about someone’s life isn’t like a photograph; it’s more like a portrait. We have to help an audience go through, in two hours, what took a lifetime for that person to experience. We had to obviously condense the portrait, but we also wanted it to be accurate. And I have to tell you, Bart really let his guard down with us. He let us know what makes him tick, what have been his pains and victories. Telling that kind of truthful story was important.”

Also integral to telling such an amazing story is the element of casting. The cast itself is full of a diverse number of entertainment professionals, both in and outside of faith-based filmmaking circles.

**-continued on p. 48-**



There's so much about making a film that you can't control, and when you end up with magic in a bottle, it's really, really, rare ... because you are never completely in control.

—Andy to *Leading Hearts*

**-continued from p. 47-**



Andrew Erwin says, "I feel like 90 percent of making a good film, as a director, is getting the right cast. We're not necessarily going after Christians first because at the end of the day my brother Jon and I control the content, so the message is going to be solid. We take everyone involved right where they are, even actors, and hope to influence the influencers, with the film's content. You can't do material like this and not ask questions about what it means. We've had a lot of really neat conversations through the years with big name actors who ask questions like, 'Can you help me understand what my character is doing?' And then you just walk them through the gospel. We kind of see the process as the first line of our mission field."

*I Can Only Imagine* stars Broadway stage actor J. Michael Finley ("Les Miserables") in his screen debut portraying Bart Millard, actress Madeline Carroll, country music's Grammy-nominated Trace Adkins,

author and evangelist Priscilla Shirer ("War Room"), with Oscar- and Emmy-award-winning Cloris Leachman.

In rounding out the cast, the Erwin brothers were looking for a person with established star power to anchor the film as Bart Millard's father.

Erwin states, "We truly wanted the right person to play this role. We went into the third week of filming still not having it filled. I was starting to panic a bit. We had five actors that we thought would be a good fit, and Dennis Quaid was near the top of that list.

"I called Stephen Kendrick, of the Kendrick Brothers ('War Room,' 'Courageous') that night and told him we still didn't have this integral role filled. And it was then that he gave me some of the best advice. He said, 'Andy, if God is in this and if you are submitted to making the film that God wants to make, He won't let you miss His best. So, embrace closed doors as God directing you to the right door.'

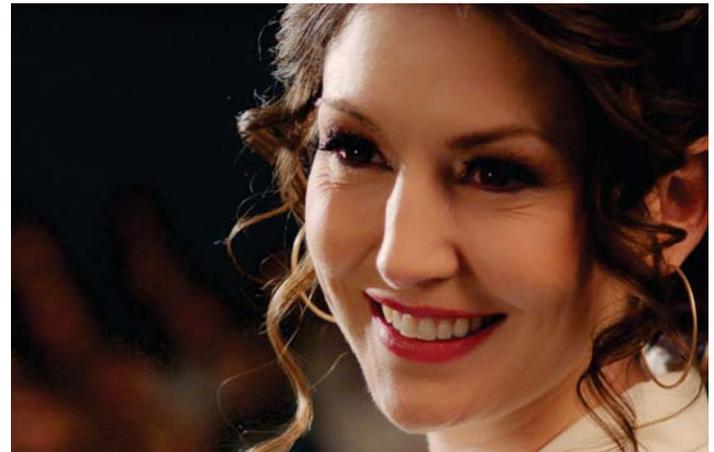




“So, we just really put that to prayer. Within an hour of us pushing the panic switch for not having anybody in place to move forward with the role ... the next thing you know Dennis Quaid is on the phone saying that he loved the role and wanted to play it! Dennis came in and gave a performance that is amazing.”

The film is already making a huge impact as it has played to various prerelease test audiences. Andrew expressed: “It’s been such a treat to see audiences react to this film. There’s so much about making a film that you can’t control, and when you end up with magic in a bottle, it’s really, really, rare ... because you are never completely in control.

“Once you start to show it to an audience, you get that first vibe on the film that you’ve made. To see Bart’s story and how it registers with so many.... I mean, SO many people know ‘I Can Only Imagine’ as the song. When you talk to people about that



song, it always brings up a story of how the song met them during a specific time in their life.

“So, in talking in the very beginning with Bart, we needed to know our destination. We asked him what has made this song work for so many people, and he said that the song was like a rush of hope. We knew then, that would be our destination. Hope. We made a movie that is about the hope that can be found by all of us, and the life to come, because of Jesus Christ.” *LH*

**For more info about the film, and theater locations visit [icanonlyimagine.com](http://icanonlyimagine.com)**

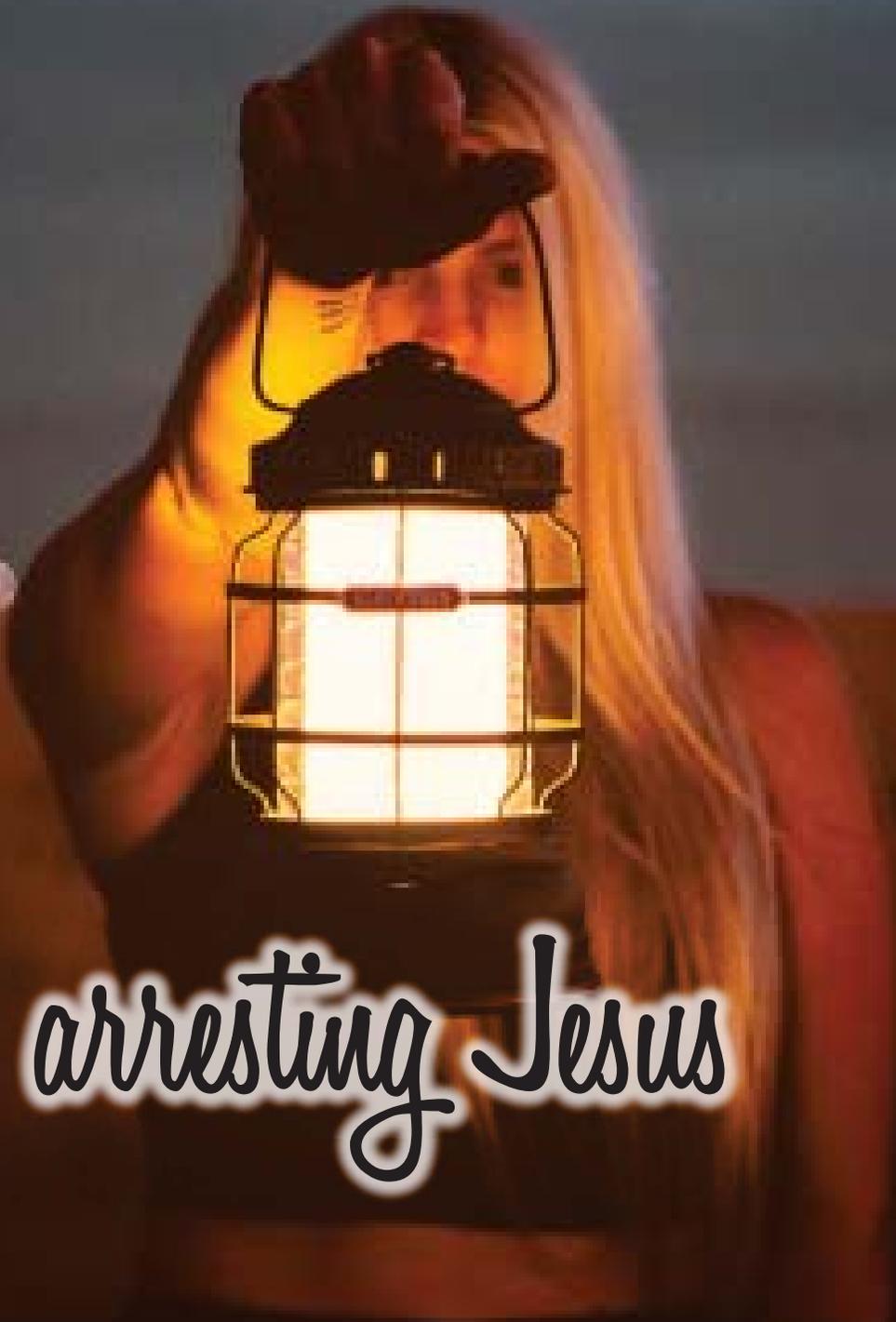


*by Lisa Burns*  
PROFILE  
CONTRIBUTOR





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# arresting Jesus

## SOMETIMES WE ENTER INTO A SITUATION EXPECTING ONE THING TO HAPPEN, BUT A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT RESULT

**OCCURS.** Those surprise endings could be either good or bad. Maybe you think everything is going just fine on your job, but then you get a review by your boss and an evaluation that's less than favorable. Bad ending. Or perhaps you were just about to feel sorry for yourself for having to spend your birthday alone, but then 20 of your pals burst in with a surprise cake. Good ending.

I think Judas and the detachment of troops he gathered to arrest Jesus received one of those unexpected surprises when they rolled up on Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. John relates more details about the event than do Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as John tells of the reaction of the arresting horde. Let's take up the story in John 18:3-6 (NKJV).

*Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?"*

*They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth."*

*Jesus said to them, "I am He."*

*And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, "I am He," they drew back and fell to the ground.*

All Jesus did was identify Himself and "they drew back and fell to the ground." What kind of "detachment of troops" was that supposed to be? First of all, these guys were armed with "lanterns, torches, and weapons," and second, they got all geared up like that to arrest one man. Obviously, they were anticipating some kind of fight. However, what they encountered was more than they had bargained for. Just the words that identified Jesus were enough to knock them to the ground. They never had a chance to even get their weapons ready. They certainly were not expecting that.

**Do we know Jesus as He really is? Are we ever**

knocked down by the Word, so to speak, until we indeed see Him for who He is? Do we approach God all ready with our own "lanterns, torches, and weapons," i.e., our own plans, only to find out that His goal for us is to simply get to know a little bit more about who He is?

Jeremiah 29:11-12 says, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' says the LORD. 'They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days when you pray, I will listen'" (NLT).

Ephesians 3:20 says that God is "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us" (NKJV).

Do we relate to God as the One who has good plans for us? Do we believe He actually does want to give us a future and a hope? Do we honestly anticipate the exceedingly-abundantly-above-all blessings that God is well able to bring into our lives? Do we know Him well enough to know what He wants? What are we expecting?

In our rush to "arrest" Jesus, to get Him to come with us and do what we want Him to do, let's stop long enough to hear how He wishes to identify himself to us. As we grow in our knowledge of who He is, we'll deepen our understanding of what He wants us to do. And His goals for us are probably much larger and richer than anything we possibly could have been expecting.

This is the fifth year of our publication of Leading Hearts. As I personally reflected upon those past five years and the above devotional thought, I wondered just how often over those years I had rushed to "arrest" Jesus, to get Him to do what I wanted, rather than approached Him first to hear what He wanted of me. My answer was, "A lot."

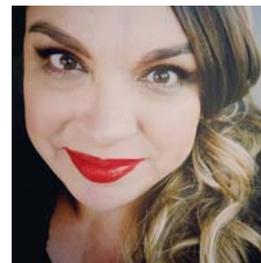
I want to work to advance my career as an author and speaker, but I also want to be careful to balance that work with listening to God's leading. The work was on the heavy end of the seesaw more than the listening was.

I'm determined to see the sides switch. It's not that I plan to work less, but I will definitely listen more. My word for the year is "trust." May we all listen and trust as we "arrest" Jesus daily. *JH*



*meet linda*

LINDA EVANS SHEPHERD @LINDASHEPHERD is publisher of **Leading Hearts** magazine. She is also a best-selling author, an in-demand speaker, and president of Right to the Heart ministries. She is founder of the Advanced Writers and Speakers Association (AWSA). She lives in Colorado with husband, Paul, and son, Jimmy. [www.Shepro.com](http://www.Shepro.com)



*meet amber*

AMBER WEIGAND-BUCKLEY @BAREFACEDGIRL is managing editor and art director for **Leading Hearts** magazine. She is a writer, speaker, and multi-award-winning editor, having spent 23 years in the magazine industry. In her full-time, Amber provides branding, graphic design and communications and support for authors, nonprofits and missionaries. She and her Brit-native husband, Philip, live in Missouri with their three daughters: Saffron, Imogen and Penelope. [www.barefacedgirl.com](http://www.barefacedgirl.com)



# MEET OUR Contributors

## features



NANCY C. ANDERSON is an award-winning writer, author of ***Avoiding the Greener Grass Syndrome*** and a contributing author of 30 other books. She has been featured in national media such as “The Huffington Post,” “The 700 Club,” “WORLD Magazine” and “Our Daily Bread.” [www.NancyAnderson.com](http://www.NancyAnderson.com)

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