

Gracie's Way

Isaiah 43:19 ...I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.



All Stressed Out

No matter how great a girl's life is, at some point every girl is going to face stress.

Sometimes it is brought on by an accident or by her own choices; sometimes by the choices of others and things beyond her control. It comes in many different forms. For some girls, it stems from trying to meet her parents' expectations (or her expectations for that matter) even from an early age in sports, arts or other activities.

Gracie, Today's Busy Teen, lives in a very stressful, high-pressure world. The world around her puts pressure on her to be the prettiest, the smartest, the most coordinated, the fastest, the most talented, the most confident, the skinniest (*you get the picture*). All this pushes her to try her best to be the best and, if she falls short, she might just fall apart.

Michael Hyatt, Chairman of Thomas Nelson Publishers and a full-time speaker and writer, said, "Perfectionism is the mother of Procrastination." Gracie often suffers from the "paralysis of analysis"—waiting to get things just right. Procrastination may seem right at the moment but it can, and usually does, lead to more stress down the road.

Unfortunately, while she's waiting to get things just right, she's depriving the world of the priceless gift that God has already

created her to be.

Not only putting things off, but also having too much to do, can cause Today's Busy Teen to be all stressed out! There's a saying that goes, "If you bite it off, chew it!" And there are times when this is exactly what Gracie has to do! The best way to get through it is for her to get to work and just push until it is done.

Setting small goals can help her not to feel so overwhelmed. If time allows, lots of little pieces are easier to chew than biting off a whole big project at once.

Gracie is one of those girls who always struggles with saying, "no." Being busy can make her feel important but truthfully there might be things that she could not do or be less involved in that would free her up to do more of what God has called her to do. A little self examination might be in order from time to time.

Today's Busy Teen should always try to do her best. Albert Einstein once said, "We have to do the best we can. This is our sacred human responsibility." If she does her absolute best and still cannot accomplish every little thing or do it perfectly, it is *A-L-R-I-G-H-T!* A girl has gotta just give herself a break sometimes!!

To help fight stress, Today's Busy Teen needs to focus on her big, awesome God and being able to do ALL things

By Sharon Hawkins

through Him because He strengthens her (Philippians 4:13).

In Psalm 46:10, His word says to "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Being still and thinking about God's greatness can melt the stress away. Isaiah 26:3 says, "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You."

Staying centered on God helps Today's Busy Teen to realize that she's not perfect (and shouldn't expect to be) but He is. She can't always control the situation, but it helps to know that God can. Praise, prayer and reading God's word can help her tap into that awesome power that is hers as a daughter of God.

We can overcome obstacles in our lives or they can overcome us. John 16:33 gives us the answer. "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us (Romans 8:37).

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Special points of interest:

- Watch for our Grace In The Wilderness Teen Conference EMPOWERED JESUS GIRL in October, 2012.
- We're on Facebook. Like our Grace In The Wilderness Page. Look us up...



Philippians 4:6

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.



Darbi's Journal "Chasing Love": I Want to See Mickey Mouse

Hello ladies: it's me again...Darbi! School is out and it is time for me to spend another wonderful summer with my sweet family! I love playing with my kids, especially at the beach, and the beach is just around our corner. Vacations are a wonderful opportunity for families to get away from their daily hustle and bustle. I would like to share a vacation memory from my childhood!

I was 9 years old and my parents were taking me and my brother to Disney World! Can you imagine our excitement? If you recall, in my last story my parents were getting a divorce and I was two. Well, they did divorce but never really parted. They were always going out and back, which made for a childhood of turmoil. I will explain more of the details later. For now, we are going to Disney World and, girl, I am beyond excited!

Well, if you have ever driven to Florida, you know it is a long, boring ride - and we didn't have a TV to watch or a game system to play. No iPad for me! Nope, just windows to look out and a fight in the front seat to listen to. Yes, my parents were fighting AGAIN, and by this point in my life this was a common occurrence. I never got used to those fights and to this day I cannot deal with confrontations in a positive way. I panic and a huge knot forms in my throat and it becomes harder and harder for me to breathe! I can't remember if that is the way I felt in the car that day or not. I can't even remember what started the fight that day. Matter of fact, I don't remember what started any of the fights, just the damage left behind, like myself. I do remember we had crossed over the Florida line



If Only I'll Be His Little Sheep

The Lord is My Shepherd, I shall not want. When I was a little girl, I used to think that meant that because the Lord is My Shepherd, that I was wrong to want anything--that I should have no need to want anything. But like most little girls I wanted everything I saw on TV and everything in the store front windows. I later learned that this verse meant as His

when my mom screamed, "Just take me home!"

What?! No, she couldn't be serious! "No, Jesus, please don't let them turn around." I remember crying out to Jesus; I did that a lot as a child. I still cry out to Jesus. I'm still His child! I cried, "Please, Jesus, I want to go to Disney World!" I cried as Daddy wheeled the car through a median and spun dangerously back into traffic going in the opposite direction. What?! I couldn't believe it! Was Jesus not listening to me? Why did He never answer my prayers? Maybe He didn't love me either. No one else seemed to.

Psalm 86:13 For great is your love toward me.

Whew! We sure were lucky we didn't wreck! The fight was becoming volatile and neither Mom nor Dad seemed to care that my brother was holding me, his little sister, as we both cried in the back seat! Mama was slapping at Daddy as he drove the car and his driving was becoming more and more reckless. My cries and prayers took a different direction and urgency, just as our old car had. "Please help us, Jesus. Don't let us wreck. Please, please let Mommy and Daddy stop fighting."

The fight became more and more heated and the last thing I remember was Mama taking her glass coke bottle and smashing Daddy upside the head. Yes, many years ago coke came in GLASS bottles! I'm old! Anyway, the car was swerving and Daddy's head was gushing blood!

"Jesus, help us!"

Weeks later I still questioned, "Why?" "Why didn't I get to go to Disney World?"

sheep, I would not go without things that I need. I will not be in want...if only I'll be His little sheep.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He restoreth my soul. He knows spiritually, emotionally and physically when I've had enough and I need to rest in His deepest provisions--to have them where I can receive them just by opening my eyes, mouth and heart. He knows what's best for me and He will provide

"Why doesn't Jesus ever answer my prayers?" "Why doesn't Jesus love me?"

Luke 12:7 "Indeed, the very hairs of your head are numbered. Don't be afraid, you are worth more than many sparrows."

Do you ever ask why? Do you ever cry out to Jesus and wonder why He isn't listening? I did, and still do sometimes, especially in the middle of the valley! Or a car spinning out of control down the freeway. Sometimes that is the way life feels, spinning out of control. Well, I am here to tell you that is not the case for His child!

When we cry out to Jesus he does hear us. The Lord was very aware of what was going on in my life that day. He was protecting me once again. He doesn't always answer our prayers the way we think He should. He answers the way we NEED Him to. I wanted to go to Disney World. He wanted to keep me safe.

God does not promise us a life without suffering, but He does promise to walk us through it! So please, no matter what, always cry out to Jesus! He is with you.

Love Darbi, One loved girl!

Isaiah 41:13

For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, "Do not fear; I will help you."

By Sharon Hawkins

it...if only I'll be His little sheep.

He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. If I will follow Him, He will keep me on a path that is right and I'll avoid a lot of heartache, pain and trouble. His way may not seem the easiest but in the end it is the one that offers the most protection, the straight and narrow way. Jesus will show me the way...if only I'll be His little sheep.

If Only I'll Be His Little Sheep (Cont'd)

By Sharon Hawkins

Yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

All of us will one day have to face death unless the Lord returns for us first. I don't have to be afraid because I know where I am going. Even in the dark uncertainty of death, I will be able to feel the rod of His Shepherd's crook against my side to guide me and the staff of the crook nudging me forward to His unimaginable eternity that He has planned for me...if only I'll be His little sheep.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Even if I'm

betrayed by those closest to me and they want to harm me, He offers me safety in their presence. He will feed me and protect me, even as much as preparing a full table for me in front of them but where they can't approach me...if only I'll be His little sheep.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. He promises that as long as I live on this earth all things are working together for the good of those who love the Lord. His favor is mine...if only I'll be His little sheep.

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Everlasting life is mine if I have accepted Him as my personal Lord and

Savior. I can live with Him forever...if only I'll be His little sheep.

So He will provide my needs, restore my soul, guide me on my way, comfort me in death, protect me from my enemies, lavish me with His goodness and mercy as long as I live and then give me everlasting life with Him...if only I'll be His little sheep.

And it's all free to me because He's already paid the price by shedding His blood for me. Who wouldn't want to receive such awesome gifts from Him? "Yes, Lord, I'm your little sheep..."

Baaaaaaahhhh! Baaaaaaahhhh!"



From A Guy's Perspective: New Beginnings

Every 365 days, a new year begins. Every 30 days or so, a new month begins. Every 24 hours, a new day begins. No matter what happened in the time before that new beginning, the new beginning came. Every morning is a new day that God gives us to start again. Our pasts can haunt us forever if we let them.

We are all sinners. The only person that was ever perfect was Jesus Christ. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 7:20, "There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins." We should never beat ourselves up when we fail to live up to God's perfection. No matter

how hard we try, we could never be perfect like Him, but that's where Jesus comes in. He died as a perfect sacrifice so that we could experience perfection with Him one day.

Just think back for a minute about what you've done so far today. Have you sinned today? Yeah, that makes two of us, and we'll both sin at least a few more times before we lie down to sleep tonight. It stinks, but it's true. I hate sin and you probably do too, but for some reason we do it anyway. "For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing." (Romans 7:19) Even Paul, who lived his life completely devoted to God, hated sin and still

committed it. **By Taylor Hawkins, 17**
No matter what, we will sin.

We need to lay down our lives as a sacrifice to Him to show Him that we gratefully accept His perfect gift. Through Christ, every second is a new beginning. We are forgiven before we even sin. No matter what decisions we make, we still have a future in the arms of Jesus. Our lives are like a book that we write every day. Our decisions affect the plot but not the ending, as long as we have the salvation of Christ.

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

From A Girl's Perspective: Go For What You Know



There is one thing the devil absolutely loves to use to stir up emotions - your past. I can personally say that the devil has used this tactic on me, especially when my day is going great. When we allow Satan to take over our thoughts, we allow him to have contact with our "feeler". He will remind you of past hurts and bad memories, and place unforgiveness in your heart.

The Bible says that if we do not forgive others, we will not be forgiven. And that is exactly what the devil wants. He is

coming to steal your compassion for others, kill the truth and destroy your future. We need to know that if we go with our "feeler", then we will be defeated. But if we go with our "knower", which KNOWS the truth, then the truth will set us free, and the truth is Jesus Christ.

I have come to realize lately that unforgiveness and imperfection go hand in hand. We will never be able to forgive people or ourselves of the past if we never accept our imperfections.

Compassion and understanding are two qualities that should be held on to tightly. What if Jesus never had compassion or understanding? Would He have died on the

cross? Our imperfections would have never been forgiven. Without these things, the world would be one big hard heart. Forgiveness is the cure for all hurt. Jesus is our ultimate forgiver. His love is unconditional. May Jesus be the neosporin on your past and forgiveness be the band aid to cover it up.

Proverbs 17:9

Love prospers when a fault is forgiven, but dwelling on it separates close friends.



Facing the Giants...

ful?

How do you forgive and heal when the devastation is so deep and the hurt is so painful?

to hurt as badly as we do. It doesn't seem fair to us to hurt and they do not face consequences. Hate can grow in our hearts and rot our minds. It can consume our every thought and we can become bound.

When forgiving someone, it's hard especially when they've hurt you deeply. We have to forgive just as Christ forgave us for our sin. Through him it is possible to have that forgiveness for anyone! Madison 12th grade

But we have a hope, a hope that only a believer in Jesus Christ can have—a hope that will allow us to let go of that hurt. The Holy Spirit knows our wounds, disappointments and hurts. And He is willing to help us fight them, day by day, moment by moment. Truthfully, that is the ONLY way to defeat our heart ache and not be held in bondage by our thoughts.

Pray for help. Only God can help us forgive and heal. Anonymous 12th grade

When we are hurt by someone, our initial reaction is revenge. We might want them

We must seek the Lord with every piece of our broken hearts and allow Him in

every corner of our minds. It will not be easy, but with the Lord's help and the Holy Spirit's soothing, our hearts can be restored and our minds can be released from captivity. Seek Him.

By Brenda Horne

Jeremiah 29:13-14

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity...

Romans 12:2

Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...

By Amanda Seawright



Forbidden Fruit

Temptation

Why is it so hard to resist? Why is it so enticing? Why does something so wrong feel so right?

harder as an adult. When we are young, we think that when we are older things will be easier. But the temptations are still there and even stronger because we don't worry as much about getting into trouble with our parents or teachers.

We are all tempted in some ways whether it's gossip, eating too much, drugs, alcohol, lust, sex, stealing, cheating, or lying, etc. The Bible tells us that God doesn't tempt us and He will never allow us to be tempted to the point where there is no way out. He always provides a way.

I'm still learning every day to ask for and see God's forgiveness and to allow Him to forgive me and love me. I'm learning to let Him show me His will and that sin puts a wedge between us and God. So, yes, I still make mistakes, but I try to go straight to Him and ask Him to forgive me and help me forgive myself.

Temptation is the way that the devil tries to get us to fail and when we fail, he knows we will feel worthless. He knows that failure will make us doubt that God will forgive us. We start to think things like, "I can't do anything right." We all make mistakes and sometimes we make them more than once.

When you feel like you have gone too far, that God won't forgive you, that you have done too much wrong, remember God's Word. "Come unto me." Seek The promises go on and on. God is the only one who can give us a changed heart and attitude. We must first seek His forgiveness and, when we let Him forgive us, we then

It's hard as a child to resist temptation. It's harder as a teenager. It gets even

must forgive ourselves.

We can experience what true love is all about. God gave His only Son for you, for me, so we can live eternally in Heaven with Him. That's true love. I don't know that I could give my only son like God did.

Why do we not seek Him, even when we haven't done anything wrong? Sometimes we only go to Him when we need him to fix something we messed up to begin with. God still loves us even when we do things like that. I will never, nor do I ever want to get over His love and what He did for me.

Psalms 119:11

I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You.

Looking unto Jesus
the author and finisher of our faith
who for the joy that was set before him
endured the
CROSS
despising the shame, and is set down at the
right hand of the throne of God.
Hebrews 12:3 | www.believers4ever.com





It's Time

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4, 11
There is an appointed time for

everything. ...there is a time for every event under heaven—A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn and a time to dance. He has made everything appropriate in its time...

I knew this time was coming. I just did not expect it to come so quickly, nor did I expect it to be so difficult to accept. This "appointed time" I must deal with has proved to be very conflicting. It is both a time to laugh and also a time to weep. It is a time to dance and also a time to mourn.

This "appointed time" I am referring to is my daughter's high school graduation. She is now 18 years old and has completed a huge milestone in her life... and in mine.

I have actually been down this road once before. My oldest daughter graduated several years ago, so I honestly thought this second go round would be easier. Being a veteran "Mom of a graduate" I

thought I was prepared to handle this graduation without the conflicting emotions ... I was wrong! The sadness I faced back then, once again has returned.

It's not that I don't want to celebrate this monumental achievement with my daughter... of course I do! She has worked very hard and deserves to move forward with her life. It's just ... well ... as her Mom, the "raising" is over.

I poured 9 months and 18 years into my beautiful daughter. I've laughed, cried, worried and feared for her and I have treasured every second of it. I've spent many sleepless nights praying for the wisdom a mother needs to raise her children, seeking the patience and understanding only a loving God can provide.

My hope, as her Mom, is that as the years have passed, she has seen God at work in her life. From a bouncy child to a hard-headed teenager to a thriving young adult, God has blessed her and guided her path and He always will, as long as she continues to trust in the Lord and acknowledge Him in all that she accomplishes.

By Brenda Horne

My daughter has grown to be the beautiful young lady I prayed she would be, and now it's time to set her free ... but to be honest, I'm not liking it. She excitedly awaits her new freedom, but I long for more time. I ask the questions, like all graduate Moms do, "How did this happen? How did she grow up so quickly?"

My heart wrestles with tears of joy and sadness. It dances with laughter and sorrow. My life will be different with her no longer in my daily routine and, when I think of how much I will miss her, it makes me want to cling tightly to her ...but I know I must let go ... because it's time!

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.

By Savannah McCollum



Gifted

Do you have a talent? Have you ever thought of it as a gift from God?

Well, if you haven't ever thought about it like that then this is big news for you! God gave all of us gifts. Maybe you can't sing or preach or write articles, but are you a good listener, an encourager? Maybe you can play an instrument. Maybe you're a good leader.

Whatever you're good at is a talent, a gift God gave you for a very special reason! Isn't that amazing? I'm going to use me as an example to show you what I'm talking about. I can sing pretty well and every instrument I've ever tried to play turns out sounding beautiful, if I do say so myself. So guess what God's told me to do? I'm going into the music ministry!

Now that doesn't mean that whatever your gift is, that's what you need to do with your life. No, it just means that whatever gifts God has given you need to be used to glorify Him. If you don't use your gifts for God, though, He will take

them away. Now, I'm not trying to scare you. I'm just telling you that you need to use whatever talent you have for God's glory. If God didn't want you to use your gifts for His glory then He wouldn't have given those gifts to you! God always has a plan and whatever gifts God gave you are very important for the plan He's laid out for you!

There are plenty of things you could do to honor God with your gifts! Example: You love helping people out. You love giving people a hand when they need it - that's called serving. That's one way to use your gift, if you're like that. Another example: You love telling people about God—that's called evangelism. It means you're not afraid to show others God's love.

There are so many gifts that you could have that you can use for God's glory. All you have to do is find your gift—the thing you're really good at and just love doing—and boom, you're halfway there! The next step is to just start using that gift for God!

In 1 Corinthians 7:7 it says, "For I wish

that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that." We all have gifts, but we don't all have the same gifts.

In Romans 12:6 it says, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith." If you can sing, sing for God. If you can teach, start teaching Sunday school or start a Bible study!

We all were given gifts, and as the body of Christ we all need to use our gifts so that we, the body, function. Just as 1 Corinthians 12:27 says, "Now you are the body of Christ and members individually."

So remember, you have gifts and you have an amazing future ahead of you, a future God has planned for you. Always do everything for God's glory and use the gifts He gave you for Him.



What If ...

My 9 year old and I are wrestling on the floor, giggling and laughing when, out of the blue, she looks at me with a frown on her face and asks, "What if the world comes to an end and crashes around us, like in the movies?" I see the concern in her eyes and hear the worry in her voice.

When she asks me the question, my mind immediately wanders to the unknowns we all face. There are fears in all of us. Deep fears that make our souls quiver to the core. "What if I die before my children are grown?" "What if one of my children gets cancer?" "What if my husband gets laid off and we can't pay our bills?" "What if....?"

There are many 'what ifs' in everyone's lives ... old and young.

My mother who buried my father after 47 years of marriage worried, "How can I live without my husband? Will I be a burden on others now that he's gone?"

My son-in-law was deployed to Iraq and my daughter worried, "What if my husband is killed? How can our baby girls live

without their daddy?"

My 35-year-old friend had a miscarriage and worried, "What if I can't have any more children? Will my husband still love me?"

And there is also my 'recently-graduated-high school' daughter who worries, "What if I choose the wrong career? What if I never find the right man to marry?"

Our fears are endless. I think of how scary the world can be to a small child who fears the dark or to the elderly person who watches helplessly as their loved ones pass on. My mind is thick with sadness as I think of all the pain we must face in our lives.

I am shaken out of my thoughts when my 9 year old asks again, "Mom, what if the world comes to an end like in the movies?" Looking into her beautiful blue eyes I run my hand over her cheek, and tell her....

"Honey, if the world crashes around us right this second or 20 years from now, it will be ok, because we have Jesus!!

Immediately her eyes light up and the worry leaves her face. The reassurance of

our Savior fills her heart ... and mine !!

It is guaranteed that we will face difficult times in our lives, and whether it's the 'entire' world crashing around us or just our own little piece falling apart, either way, we will be ok as long as we have Jesus!!

Corrie Tin Boom's world was crashing around her, the Nazis were killing the Jews in WWII and Corrie was eventually placed in a concentration camp. Yet Corrie had faith and made one of my favorite statements, "Trust an unknown future to a known God." She knew she had Jesus and He had her—the only true hope.

Psalms 46:1-3

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not be afraid, though the earth trembles and the mountains topple into the depths of the seas. Though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride.

By Cathy McCormick



The Big Hurry

I'm remembering being a young girl and hearing my parents continually ask me, "What's the big hurry?" Oh goodness, was I ever in a hurry! I was in a hurry to "grow up", to wear stockings, to wear heels (even if they were only 1" pumps), to wear make-up, to be able to baby sit for extra money, to go on a date ... and on and on and on.

Oh my, what a rush I was in ... it seemed so unfair that I had to keep "waiting until" —until I was old enough, until I was responsible enough, until I was tall enough, until my parents said I could.

As a teenager I was STILL in a hurry. I was a freshman and I wanted to be a senior. I wanted to be finished with high school. I wanted to go to a wonderful college (out of state, of course). I wanted to make new friends. I wanted to carve out my own life. Are you in a Big Hurry?

For many of you reading this, you have just reached a major milestone in your

life -- High School Graduation. Congratulations!

It's funny isn't it? We want our high school years to hurry up so we can get to the next phase of our lives -- college, school, work ... whatever it is we plan to do after high school. Then, all of a sudden, we're sending out graduation notices and, amid the excitement and celebrations, we become overwhelmed with the vastness of the future ... leaving home, leaving our friends at school, leaving everything that we know as ordinary in our lives. All of a sudden we quietly ask ourselves why was I in such a big hurry?

Each new phase of our lives is packed with endless possibilities. It's human nature to reach the end of one phase and be on the cusp of a new phase and suddenly get a bit scared.

As an Empowered Jesus Girl, you know that your Heavenly Father has a plan for your life that was put in place before you were born. Therefore, there is no need to hurry. There is no need to be scared or

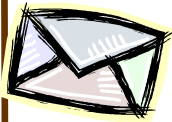
worried.

Each moment of your life has been designed to unfold and reveal God's plan and love for you. I know it's human nature as a young person to want to HURRY UP the future, but take a few moments to be still, breathe in the wonders that you are experiencing, and thank God for the life you have unwrapped so far!

Happy Graduation. Happy Summer. Happy next phase of your life!

Isaiah 58:11

The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.



Letter to My Teenage Self

By Kara Arnold

Dear Me,

I have been trying to write this letter to you for several weeks. I kept digging deep into every part of my brain, hoping for something to say to you. What are my regrets? What would I change? How would I live my life differently if I could do it all over again? And then I realized...I do not have an answer to these questions because I don't regret anything! I wouldn't change anything, and I wouldn't live my life any differently.

You are not a bad kid! You are a bright, healthy, beautiful Christian girl. Sure, you stumble and you fall, but you always get right back up. Sure, you have made mistakes and will make many more.

Is any of this a surprise to you? Of course it is, because you think you know it all and you're being proven wrong every day. Is any of this a surprise to God? NEVER! You have wonderful parents and family that have kept you grounded and taught you right from wrong and that is what has kept you going. Remember that!

God put each event, mistake, person, and obstacle in its place. Maybe if you weren't so stubborn, the road to your future would be easier, but it would take you to the same place. You will have two absolutely wonderful little girls. Their eyes will light up when you walk into a room because they know that you love them unconditionally.

You will have a husband who adores you and appreciates you. Your life will not be a cakewalk. You will have struggles and temptations, just like you do now. Always remember, God is in control! Even when you wander off course He is with you. You will mature into a loving wife, a gracious daughter, a devoted Christian and a very compassionate mother. Never lose faith in God and always follow your heart!

Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."



On Fire For Christ

By Bailee Gillespie

As a young teenager, I try to reach and accomplish many goals that I have in life. For example, being an amazing role model, not only for the younger siblings I'm surrounded by, but the teenagers and adults I'm surrounded by also.

Another example is to give 100% in everything I do. I've realized that I know I can't do this crazy life on my own, but I can trust the God who can. I know I'm not a perfect Christian, but that doesn't mean I shouldn't want to act like one.

For the past few months I have grown so close to Jesus Christ. He has given me a passion to read His Word, praise Him and,

most importantly, serve Him in every way possible. Every day I spend at least twenty minutes in my Bible and I pray that He could shine a light through me and my actions. Giving God some of our time every day makes a huge difference in our relationship with Him. Doing that helped me become on fire for Him!

The love Jesus Christ has for us doesn't come into words! What should make us all different from just any other person in this world is our relationship with the Creator of the universe. Is that what makes you different? I used to be just interested in God, wanting that relationship with Him but not willing to let go. I wasn't completely willing to give my whole life over to Him and allow Him to take control. But as soon as I did, my life became so

much happier, positive and, honestly, way better than before. Now I'm not just interested in God, I'm connected to Him. I'm letting Him take control and lead me in the path He wants me to go. The one reason it's so easy for me to do that is because I know He has an amazing plan for my life. Being on fire for Christ is something I want to be and it's something I am!

Psalms 92:1-2

It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night



Princess ... Peasant

By Lexi O'Bryant

white walls
brown doors
faces, voices
no one cares
they're closing in on me
my thoughts echo

bounce across the room
can they hear me?
can they see?
the pain, the fear, the worry
in my eyes
once a princess
now a peasant
prisoner of my own home.
running isn't the answer
staying isn't right
there's a spark of light
a wonderful world
princess one hour
peasant by night

Sometimes things happen in our lives that we or our hearts don't understand. God tells us to forgive, but He doesn't say that we have to forget. When things happen in your life that are tragic, hard to forget or forgive, you may tell yourself that you are never going to forgive the person who caused you the pain. However, if you give it all to God it becomes easy to forgive. No matter the devastation, it will become easier when you stop fighting with yourself and just let God be in control. You may never forget, but with God you can always find the strength to forgive.



Grace In The Wilderness Ministries

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FOCUS SCRIPTURE VERSE:

Isaiah 43:19

...I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

Grace In The Wilderness is an out-reach ministry for Today's Busy Woman and Teen Girl. Our mission is to encourage women and teen girls:

-To look upward to God as they discover Him in a new and deeper way,

-To look inward as they discover who they are in Christ, and

-To look outward as they discover God's plan for their lives.

We appreciate your prayers and support. Donations are also appreciated and may be made payable to Grace In The Wilderness Ministries (address to the left).

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*Grace In The Wilderness Teen Conference
EMPOWERED JESUS GIRL
10/2012 at Blue Ridge View Baptist Church,
Pickens, SC*

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*"So come as you are, broken and scarred, lift up your heart and be amazed and be changed by a perfect God"
... Natalie Grant*

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