

RACHEL LOVINGOOD & JENNIFER MILLS

Salvaging  
MY IDENTITY

A 40 DAY EXPERIENCE FOR GIRLS & YOUNG WOMEN

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## **RACHEL LOVINGOOD**

Rachel is a wife, mom, author, and speaker. She is married to Jeff, Pastor of the Next Generation at Long Hollow Baptist Church. They have two young adult children and one high schooler. Over the past 26 years of marriage and ministry, Rachel has developed a passion to see people get in God's Word to experience true life change. She has written curriculum for years and recently started Impact Resources that offers strong, biblically-based resources for students and adults.



## **JENNIFER MILLS**

Jennifer is the wife of Student Pastor, Brian Mills, and mom to McKenna and Parker. She is a speaker who has a heart for teaching God's Word and is actively serving at Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, TN where she is heavily involved in girls' and women's ministry. Jennifer has a passion for girls' ministry and in investing in this generation. Through communicating the truth from God's Word, her heart's desire is to see girls and young women find their identity in Christ and to discover a passion for the God who has pursued and redeemed them.

# Special thanks...

A project like this has so many people to thank. We want to start with our husbands, Jeff Lovingood and Brian Mills. The privilege of leading together in ministry is indescribable, and we are grateful you have brought us along on this journey. Thanks also to our kids Trevor, Kelsey, and Riley Lovingood and McKenna and Parker Mills. We love being your moms and you have taught us so much about life and love and who we are.

This started as a project for the girls at our church, and we are thankful to LifeWay for seeing the vision of what it can be to girls and young women everywhere. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to let the work that God ordained in us spread to so many more. Our passion is for girls and women to live the way God designed them to—in freedom and abundance, secure in who they are in Christ. Alicia Claxton is a rockstar to us as she has poured herself into the editing and formatting while keeping our voice and passion consistent and clear—we love you girl! Thanks Mike Wakefield, Jeff Pratt, and Ben Trueblood and all those involved in helping bring this project to life.

Special thanks to our sweet friend Alexa Follas for giving us her insight from a Christian counseling perspective and sharing her thoughts in *Healing Brokenness*. Alexa you are such a special gift from God, and we are grateful for your godly insight, spiritual wisdom, friendship, and your heart for girls and young women. You take these topics to another level in our quest to bring healing to broken areas. We love you.

To the student ministry and staff at Long Hollow Baptist Church. You have given us the opportunity to do life with you, and we will never take that for granted.

Special thanks to Carson Oakley and Macy Tollett for sharing your real life perspectives.

Special thanks to Livi and Company in Albany, GA, for the use of the beautiful desk by “Eddie Lee’s Stuff” seen in the cover image.



Dear Friend,

By definition, to salvage something is to save it from loss or destruction and restore its beauty and usefulness. Let's face it, we are living in a day and age where the enemy is wreaking havoc on the hearts and minds of young women. Our culture entices us to focus on ALL the wrong things and if not tackled head-on can leave us in quite the predicament as a girl, of any age, striving to live a godly life. The reason we sat down to write this book was to give young women a practical guide to get into the Word, dig for TRUTH, and find out just what God intends for those who love Him. We also wanted to give you action steps to take on the journey of SALVAGING your identity in Christ!

We are fed lies on a daily basis about what we need to wear, do, look like, and act like—none of which are what Christ intends for us to chase after in order to achieve the abundant, fulfilling life that He desires for us. Our hearts break at the reality that we live in a world where there is so much hurt, pain, unforgiveness, and abuse!

Our prayer for you as you walk through this 40 day journey comes straight from Colossians 1:9-14 (HCSB): “For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven’t stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and patience, with joy giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints’ inheritance in the light. He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves. We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, in Him.”

Sincerely,

Rachel & Jennifer



# HOW TO...

A good salvaging project comes with some “how to” tips. The following pages will help you get the most out of this book by highlighting the different features and giving you some “how to” steps. Read through these FAQs then get started on your first project!

## **Q :: What is this book about?**

A :: To “salvage” something is to save it from loss or destruction and restore its beauty and usefulness. This book is a 40 day experience about growth, confession, brokenness, and restoration. Even if you’ve made mistakes in the past, it’s about forgetting what’s behind and striving for what’s ahead...opening your heart and mind to the transformation that takes place through Jesus Christ!

## **Q :: Why are the chapter titles called “Projects”?**

A :: When you salvage something, you invest time and energy into a project of restoration. We are all at different places in our spiritual journeys but there are some common issues we face. We’re going to look at 8 “projects” that represent areas of growth you must seek in order to salvage your identity.

## **Q :: What kind of “Junk” will we be dealing with in this experience?**

A :: Each day we are going to hash out some “junk” that might be hindering you from fully living the life God created you for! We will deal with issues that every young woman can relate to on some level. Check out the table of contents for the full list of Projects and Junk we will work through over the next 40 days.

## **Q :: What should I expect from this experience?**

A :: You should expect the Lord to do great things in you over the next 40 days. Getting the most out of this experience will require an investment of time, honesty, and openness on your part. The reward will be the freedom you will feel as you and Jesus strip away the junk in your life!

**Q :: What does “DIY” mean?**

A :: At the end of each day will be a “DIY” (Do It Yourself) section that will give you some action steps you need to take. It’s DIY because it has to be your choice and no one else can do it for you. Through journaling, Scripture memory, personal evaluation, and prayer time each day you can move forward in the process of taking back what the enemy has tried to steal.

**Q :: Is there a place for me to write answers or journal my prayers as I go through this journey?**

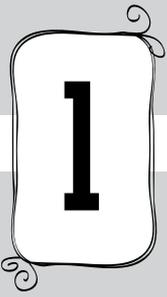
A :: YES! There are plenty of journal pages in the back of the book (starting on page 174) for that purpose. Fill those pages with thoughts, Scripture, and prayers. These pages will be a written reminder of what you’ve learned and how the Lord has worked in you during this experience!

**Q :: What is the “Healing Brokenness” section and why is it only found on certain days?**

A :: We feel like some of the “junk” we deal with in this book may require a deeper look into the issues at hand. In Healing Brokenness, you will find information and guidance to help you wrestle more effectively with these particularly difficult issues.

**Q :: Do I need to go through this book on my own or with a group?**

A :: It is designed for you to read on your own, but you will get even more out of this experience if you walk through it with an accountability partner, mentor, best friend, or small group. Beginning on page 168 you will find a section called Re-Hash for those who want to lead this as a small group study. It includes additional illustrations and questions to discuss in a weekly setting.



**PROJECT:**

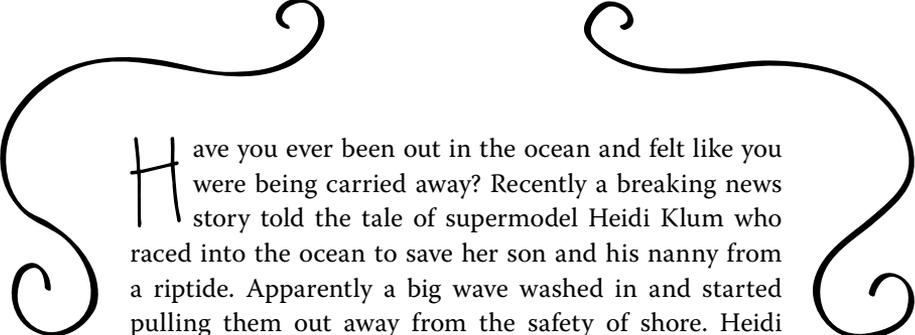
Rescue  
Identity



He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He loves. We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, in Him.

**Colossians 1:13-14 (HCSB)**



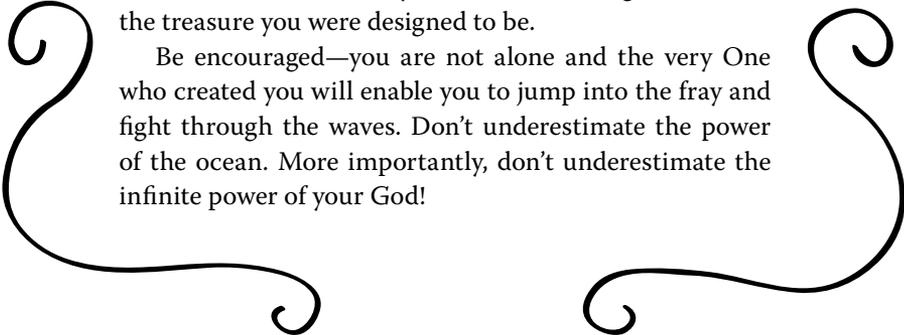


Have you ever been out in the ocean and felt like you were being carried away? Recently a breaking news story told the tale of supermodel Heidi Klum who raced into the ocean to save her son and his nanny from a rip tide. Apparently a big wave washed in and started pulling them out away from the safety of shore. Heidi wasted no time jumping in to help rescue her loved ones.

It can happen slowly or suddenly. You are enjoying the waves, maybe floating on something, then all of a sudden you realize the shore is very far away. It can be a very dangerous and scary time. All the stories of situations like these don't have happy endings like Heidi's rescue did. In an interview afterwards Heidi said that she just did what any mother would do when she sees her son in trouble. She also said, "Never underestimate the power of the ocean."

That's a great statement and exactly what we want to get you thinking about today. Many girls just like you are floating along in the waters of the world, not really realizing they are being sucked out into a place where they are in need of rescue. Like them, your identity is being washed away wave after wave until you are struggling with figuring out who you really are. Now is the time for you to call out to God and join Him in rescuing your identity!

These next five days we'll look at some of the biggest obstacles you will need to overcome in order to execute an identity rescue. These obstacles represent the "junk" that needs to be dealt with so you can shine through and reveal the treasure you were designed to be.



Be encouraged—you are not alone and the very One who created you will enable you to jump into the fray and fight through the waves. Don't underestimate the power of the ocean. More importantly, don't underestimate the infinite power of your God!

# Day One

## JUNK: ACCEPTANCE

For am I now trying to win the favor of people, or God? Or am I striving to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a slave of Christ. **Galatians 1:10** (HCSB)



Let's be honest, as a girl the desire for acceptance and approval will never change no matter if you're 9 or 90. Maybe there is some magical age when you actually stop caring about what people think about you...but I'm definitely not there yet!

- ♦ "Will they like me?"
- ♦ "I need to do this with him so he won't leave me."
- ♦ "Were they talking about me?"
- ♦ "Did they think I was funny?"
- ♦ "Will I make friends when I walk into this new class?"
- ♦ "I'll just drink one drink so I won't look like a complete loser."
- ♦ "Does he think I'm beautiful?"

These crazy questions, and others like them, plague our minds on a daily basis as we seek the approval of people in the world we live in. As girls, we're so stinkin' analytical that we drive ourselves crazy wondering if we're good enough or if we're measuring up. We are willing to compromise who we are and what we believe, all for the approval of people, both guys and other girls! Why?!

A girl in our student ministry posted this online, and I challenge you with this thought: "We often lose sight of Jesus when we are with others. Our fear of displeasing people puts us in bondage to them and

they then become our focus.” Such a strong word, right?! Have you ever sat back and thought, why do I put myself through this torture of being desperate to be accepted and validated by all these people whose opinions change like the wind? Why am I willing to compromise my convictions and who I truly am at any cost? Why do I fear displeasing people over displeasing God?

The need for acceptance is a poison that seeps into our thoughts and becomes an obsession, which eventually becomes toxic to our spiritual lives. The enemy is super crafty and knows what makes us “tick.” He knows just the right buttons to push to drive us further into that dark place in our thoughts and further away from the light and truth of God’s Word. The truth of the matter is, it’s not about who we can impress or what we can achieve—it’s about Jesus. Through His finished work on the cross, those who trust in Him are completely accepted!

Galatians 1:10 says, “For am I now trying to win the favor of people, or God? Or am I striving to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a slave of Christ.”

When we become completely focused on the acceptance of others, it’s all consuming and we lose sight of the fact that our Creator has accepted us completely in Christ! He sees the good, the bad, and the ugly and still loves us! If you open your heart and allow the Lord to validate you through His Spirit, you will begin to see yourself the way He sees you. The approval of people will then fade into the background, and you will no longer obsess over what people think about you or whether you measure up to a false expectation from an unrealistic culture. And it’s then that you will discover the abundant life promised to you from your loving, gracious God.

God knows you, loves you, and fully accepts you—the real you. In order for you to reclaim your identity you need to start by knowing yourself. Turn to the journal pages (p.174) in the back of this book and draw a stick figure representing you. Be as creative as you want. Once you are on the page, list some things that honestly describe you right now such as: insecure, scared, happy, depressed, anxious, stressed, joyful, worthless, funny, reliable, mean, gossipy, wimpy, strong, guilty, failure, or anything else that comes to mind when you think of who you really are. No one else will see this so be completely honest. It is just between you and the Lord.

## DIY:

### Re-Think (Journal & Pray):

- ✦ Ask the Lord to show you areas of your life where you are compromising who you are and who you desire to be. What's standing in your way? What areas of acceptance/approval do you struggle in the most? Boys? Friends? Popularity? Even seeking God's approval by trying to DO good things?
- ✦ Confession time is key to breaking free from your sin and selfishness and growing up in your walk with Christ. He doesn't desire for you to live a life that is bogged down and heavy—caught up in what everyone else thinks of you!
- ✦ Ask Him to help you find freedom from an obsession with acceptance.

### Re-Visit the Word:

- ✦ Galatians 1:10
- ✦ Colossians 3:23
- ✦ John 10:10

### Re-Claim:

Get an accountability partner, someone you can have “real talk” with. Share your insecurities and struggles with her. If people at school, church, or your teammates are pulling you down because of your desire for acceptance from them, ask her to pray with you about finding an amazing group of friends who love Jesus. Encourage one another. Pray for one another to find true joy, contentment, approval, and self-worth in Jesus!

## Day Two

### JUNK: APPEARANCE/IMAGE OBSESSION

Give to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! **1 Chronicles 16:29** (NKJV)



When was the last time you felt beautiful? When you look in the mirror do you have positive thoughts or negative thoughts? The majority of us spend so much of our time comparing ourselves to the wrong kinds of models and standards that it is virtually impossible to have a healthy view of ourselves. Anytime we try to live up to a standard of beauty based on the world's definition, we WILL end up discouraged and disillusioned.

But there's a deeper meaning to this concept of beauty. The truth is that even on your bad hair, face broken out, worst day, you are still beautiful in God's eyes. The secret is found in how you respond to the awesomeness of God. Scripture says in 1 Chronicles 16:29, "Give to the LORD the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!"

That, girlfriends, is the key to your beauty. When you honor the Lord—you are being holy—holiness is beautiful! Instead of basing your beauty on impossible standards that a crazy world sets, true beauty can be found in holiness and choosing to set your standards based on the Word of God. Let's face it. The standards of the world are actually working against the purposes of God for us. When you seek after what the world dictates about the size of your waist, weight on the scale, or anything else on your body, you are listening

to the wrong voices, and you will never find the satisfaction that you crave.

Consider the pictures you see in magazines or Instagram or wherever that you hold up as goals for your physical appearance. Do they look like holiness? Or are they all about exploiting the body and using it to achieve power of some kind? When the goal is to get people to notice your body and be impressed, you are obsessed with the wrong things and God will not honor that. You may get the world's attention, but you will miss the very purpose for which you were created—to bring God glory with every part of your life. There will also be other consequences we will talk about in upcoming topics. So—what do you need to do to start this process of rescuing your identity? Walk through the DIY section, be honest, and allow the Lord to change your attitude and focus. After all, He is the One who defines beauty!

## DIY:

### Re-Think (Journal & Pray):

- ✦ On a scale of 1-10 where would you be if 1 is “don’t even think about my appearance” and 10 is “obsessed with my appearance”?
- ✦ Most of us don’t think we are obsessed with our appearance and image (because we know we aren’t supposed to be), but the truth comes out when we answer these questions: How much time do you spend getting ready each day? How much time do you spend talking about your looks? (hair, skin, body, weight, size, etc.) Can your day be ruined by how you look?
- ✦ Compare your previous answers to these questions that indicate focus on true beauty: How much time do you spend daily in prayer and the Word of God? Are you more concerned that people recognize you as a Christian or that they are impressed with your looks?
- ✦ Pray and confess any misguided focus and obsession you may have. Ask God to help you care more about being who He wants you to be rather than how you look. That is when you will truly start to be more beautiful than you ever could have imagined...

and that's not just to God—because true beauty will shine through you, and other people will notice the difference!

- ✦ Read 1 Peter 1:13-16 and pray that God will show you how to be holy like He is holy. Then listen to the Holy Spirit as He reveals things to you about the beauty of holiness.

### **Re-Visit the Word:**

- ✦ 1 Chronicles 16:29
- ✦ 1 Peter 1:13-16

### **Re-Claim:**

In small group or with your accountability partner, agree to call each other out when you talk about your appearance too much. Be intentional about spending more time focused on your spiritual life than your physical appearance—instead of stress and anxiety, you will be living with peace and love. That's enough to make you more beautiful right there!

## **HEALING BROKENNESS:**

Today we are talking about having a healthy body image and a good self-esteem! Both of these topics are very important when it comes to young women. How far is too far though? When does obsessing over our bodies, watching what we eat, and thinking about our appearance become a problem? And what do we do if we or someone we know is suffering with more than just a negative self-image? Well, here are a few important facts to know:

- ✦ Studies show that over half of teen girls and one third of teen boys use unhealthy weight control behaviors such as skipping meals, fasting, smoking, vomiting, or taking laxatives to maintain weight.
- ✦ Anorexia is the third most common chronic illness among adolescents.<sup>1</sup>

It might be time to ask yourself or your friend a few of the following questions:

- ✦ Do you constantly find yourself looking in the mirror and thinking you are “fatter” than you are actually are?
- ✦ Do you starve yourself?
- ✦ Do you often eat in secret?
- ✦ Does your weight affect the way you feel about yourself?
- ✦ Do you make yourself sick because you feel uncomfortably full?
- ✦ Do you worry you have lost control over how much you eat?
- ✦ Would you say that food dominates your life?

If you find yourself answering yes to most of these questions, or you know someone who might struggle with an eating disorder, it is time to ask for help! First of all, it is important to understand that eating disorders are often caused by a lack of control in one’s life. When someone feels she has several circumstances she cannot control, she may turn to food, which is something she can control in order to better manage her emotions. This is very damaging in the long term and can lead to a more serious illness. Triggers for eating disorders include certain abuse early on, certain athletic involvements, traumatic experiences, difficult periods of adjustment, etc.

Helpful tips include:

- ✦ Managing stress
- ✦ Eating three meals a day plus snacks
- ✦ Exercising
- ✦ Fighting boredom
- ✦ Listening to your body
- ✦ Most of all, getting support

Reaching out to a friend, parent, teacher, counselor, or pastor is a great way to get on the right track to healing brokenness in regard to your self-image. Begin the process of rescuing your identity to be in line with who God created you to be.

## Day Three

### JUNK: FAILURE/SHAME

Therefore, no condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus. **Romans 8:1** (HCSB)



Can I just begin today by giving you a very freeing thought? NO ONE has it all together! Some of you reading this really need to hear that. I absolutely love this quote by Pastor Steven Furtick of Elevation Church, “The reason we struggle with insecurity is because we compare our behind-the-scenes with everyone else’s highlight reel.”

In this day of social media, people are daily putting their “best foot forward”...no one is out there putting a status update about their mistakes and failures or uploading pictures of their acne and bad hair days. We tend to look at other girls and think they’ve got it all figured out and they’ve never made bad choices in their lives. Yet, in reality we’re all sinners in need of a Savior. We have all made choices in our lives that we’re not proud of and if not dealt with will leave us feeling shameful and isolated.

In Philippians 3:13-14, Paul reminds us that NONE of us has it all together: “No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us” (NLT).

We’ve all had those moments in our lives where we said the wrong thing, were at the wrong place at the wrong time, or did things we’re not proud of. Does God require perfection from us? No, He knows we cannot attain that on our own. That’s why Jesus had to come to

redeem and achieve salvation for us. But what God does require from us is holiness, godliness, and growth in living out lives that are fully surrendered to Him.

We've got to keep striving for what's ahead! We can't let the enemy keep reminding us on a daily basis that we're a failure because of our past mistakes. We must keep moving forward through this life and not let our past define who we are. Living this life out as a follower of Christ isn't easy and none of us has it all figured out. Yet so many believers miss out on the freedom that is offered through Christ. He desires for us to open our hearts and let Him write a beautiful story with our lives. He can even use our flaws and failures for a greater purpose.

## DIY:

### Re-Think (Journal & Pray):

- ✦ Take some time alone, just you and the Lord, to revisit your past.
- ✦ Are there areas of unconfessed sin in your life that the enemy is using to define you? What's holding you back from freedom or from where God wants you to go? Spend this time of prayer before a God that loves you and has a perfect plan for your life—flaws, mistakes, and all.

### Re-Visit the Word:

- ✦ Memorize: Philippians 3:13-14
- ✦ Romans 8:1
- ✦ Psalm 34

### Re-Claim:

In small group or with your accountability partner, discuss ways that the Lord wants to free you from past decisions and the shame and guilt that you've been carrying!

## HEALING BROKENNESS:

Based on research, there is a profound difference between shame and guilt. It is important to remember that “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings spiritual death” (2 Cor. 7:10, NIV). Guilt can be a good thing when it causes us to change our negative behaviors and move in a different direction; however, shame goes deeper and affects how we view ourselves.

Dr. Brené Brown is a research professor making groundbreaking discoveries in the healing of shame, and she defines shame as: an intensely painful feeling or experience that leaves us feeling as if we are flawed and therefore, unworthy of love and belonging.<sup>2</sup> Shame is paralyzing and can keep us from ever fully taking hold of all that God has for us because we feel we do not deserve it. It can leave us feeling as though God made a mistake when He made us and there is no chance we can change.

If you find yourself replaying these thoughts in your mind, you may have hidden shame you need to deal with...

- ✦ I am not important.
- ✦ I am a failure.
- ✦ I am not worthy of love or anything good.
- ✦ I am unlovable.
- ✦ Something is wrong with me.

First and foremost, these thoughts are not true and do not line up with the Word of God and who He says you are. One of the best ways to heal shame is to admit that this is something you are struggling with. You are not alone. Many people, especially young women, struggle with shame. It is important that you reach out for help and find someone you can trust to talk to. Shame is best healed by being vulnerable with what you are experiencing and being met in your place of weakness with unconditional love, grace, and acceptance.

Remember that God loves you just the way you are, and you are His princess. He has redeemed you through the blood of Christ and forgiven your sins. He loves you and has a purpose and plan for your life. God makes no mistakes. It is time to let go of shame, talk about your feelings so they lose their power, and most of all realize you are important and loved!

# Day Four

## JUNK: DISCONTENTMENT

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **Ephesians 4:31-32 (NIV)**



Do you ever get tired of the competition? Not in athletics but the competition between you and your friends and even those you wouldn't call friends? It seems as if we are being caught up in this race to have everything better and nicer than anyone else, and it's causing serious problems. When you look at Facebook or Instagram are you usually happy and enjoying what you see, or does it make you more discontent and longing to be someone else or have what she has?

This world is always telling us that we “deserve more” and not to settle for what we have but to keep on trying to get more and get ahead of everyone else. It can be a real problem when it translates into our relationships and affects our walk with the Lord. Think about all the things that discontentment does to you. It makes you secretly happy when something bad happens to someone else, from getting a zit on prom day to her boyfriend breaking up with her. Because after all—her life is so perfect that maybe now she can understand what it's like to be normal like you. Ummm, do you see a problem with that line of thinking?!

Nowhere in the Word of God are we told to rejoice or be happy when bad things happen to other people, but that's what discontentment does.

Discontentment also makes us long for more than what we have—even if we have to get it at someone else’s expense. After all, we deserve at least as much as she does. Right? Wrong—that’s also not from God. Sometimes life doesn’t seem fair. Sometimes other people have more money, better clothes, cooler parents, nicer cars, and other better things than we do. That’s just the way it is.

When you live with discontentment, you miss out on all the things that God wants to do in you and through your circumstances. He may have chosen you to reach people for the gospel because of what you have gone through in your life and how you have learned “to be content in any and every situation” like the apostle Paul said in Philippians 4:12-13: “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (NIV). Yes. That’s a verse often quoted about playing harder or doing better on a test, but read it in its context, you will see that it really has to do with being CONTENT. By the way, the struggles that Paul faced were a little heavier than our normal concerns. He was talking about being in prison, beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, and that kind of stuff. If he can say with confidence that he learned the secret of contentment then maybe we should apply that same attitude to our lives.

## **DIY:**

### **Re-Think (Journal & Pray):**

- ✦ What are you discontent about in your life?
- ✦ How have you seen discontentment lead you into sin? (wrong attitude, negative thoughts and words, etc.)
- ✦ Confess the things He has revealed to you and thank Him for forgiving you. Remember that repenting is about stopping and turning from the sin. Ask the Lord to convict you just before you give in to the sin of discontentment next time and deal with it quickly.

## **Re-Visit the Word:**

- ✦ Philippians 4:12-13

## **Re-Claim:**

In small group or with your accountability partner, memorize Philippians 4:13. Remember when you think about it or hear it that it is really based on being content with what you have and where you are. Look around and see your circumstances as what they really are: an opportunity for God to use you to make a difference and IMPACT the world with the gospel!

# Day Five

## JUNK: FALSE EXPECTATIONS

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him. **1 Corinthians 2:9** (NLT)



We live in a fairytale-driven world. There are tons of movies, books, and television shows that end in “happily ever after.” If we aren’t careful, we can begin to romanticize our lives and base our expectations on fictional stories that move us.

Just look at the entertainment industry and the fantasy world it has created. Young and old, we are inundated today with romantic comedies, steamy novels, and beautifully scripted love stories played out on screen. Now, don’t get me wrong. I’m the first girl to want to run out and see the latest “chick flick.” The problem creeps in when we begin to dream about these “stories,” expecting them to play out in our reality like they do on screen or in a novel.

Obviously, there are other ways that false expectations can affect our outlook on our lives aside from how the entertainment world affects us. You can always uncover any false expectations in your own life when you step back and look at what your reaction is when something doesn’t work out the way you think it should. False expectations feed our sense of entitlement. When you begin to measure your identity based on what you’re “getting” out of life, that’s when your identity becomes clouded and questionable. These false expectations leave you feeling disappointed, empty,

and unsatisfied, only wanting more or the next best thing. When you focus on those things, you will miss out on the BEST thing—God’s plan and purpose for your life. God never promises that life will be all daisies and roses. In fact, life is hard, love is hard, and we live in a fallen world. That is our reality. But girls, you are loved and pursued by a loving, gracious Savior, who loves it when you depend on Him for realistic guidance, clear direction, and dream with Him!

1 Corinthians 2:9 says, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.”

You can’t even imagine what the Lord, who loves you and created you, has prepared for your life! Notice that Paul uses the word “prepared” in this passage. It’s past tense because it’s already been done. When you allow false expectations to fuel what you strive for in life, you short yourselves of God’s divine plan and purpose that He has already prepared for you. His Word says you can’t even begin to IMAGINE what that purpose looks like.

## DIY:

### Re-Think (Journal & Pray):

- ✦ What are some areas of your life where you are struggling with some false expectations? Do you struggle with entitlement? Expecting people to do what you want? For things to go your way, or else? How have movies, books, friends, or other things in our culture affected your view on life?
- ✦ Confess to the Lord for believing in and pursuing the lies from our culture rather than DESIRING His best plan and purpose for your life.

### Re-Visit the Word:

- ✦ Memorize: 1 Corinthians 2:9
- ✦ Ephesians 3:20-21

**Re-Claim:**

In small group or with your accountability partner, share ways that unrealistic expectations have affected your view on love, marriage, and your future. Do you live a life thinking these unrealistic views are what you deserve?