

How to
**Control Your
Emotions**

*So they don't
control you*

A mom's guide
to overcoming

Brooke McGlothlin
Co-Founder of The MOB Society

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ENDORSEMENTS

"Brooke has captured the problem all moms face every day - our emotions and how to handle them. This is a great reminder - that we all need to find grace and power in the one who loves us. This is a must read for all Moms."

~Rebecca Brandt, [Mom's Mustard Seeds](#)

"If you are a mom who has felt exhausted, frustrated, incapable, discouraged, alone, or helpless, you will relate to Brooke's personal accounts of losing her temper, saying the wrong things, and generally feeling out of control. But Brooke doesn't leave you there. She offers practical, Biblically-based tips and encouragement to develop self-control and deal more effectively with trying situations. You will end this book feeling like you just had coffee with a dear friend, one who makes you feel understood, hope-filled, and ready to re-embrace your calling as a mom with a few more tools under your belt."

~Katie Tevis, blogger at [KatieTevis.com](#)

"Brooke McGlothlin is a writer who "gets" moms. She knows our struggles, understands our frustrations, and is fully aware of that mommy-guilt we're all plagued with. Even better? She's always got just the right words to say in order to ease tension(s), calm emotions, and help stressed-out mamas focus on the bigger picture. *How to Control Your Emotions (So They Don't Control You)*, is a beautifully written, biblically-based book that meets its reader in the midst of a mommy meltdown; providing her with the tools she'll need to regain control, manage her moods, rely on God, and embrace this role she's been blessed with."

-Jenny Lee Sulpizio, author of [Confessions of a Wonder Woman Wannabe](#)

"I love how Brooke bravely shows us the place she has struggled and found victory through the application of Truth. I am grateful for her transparency. In *How to Control Your Emotions (So They Don't Control You)* she uses practical tools I can easily apply to my own life. This is a timely message and I'm grateful."

~Stacey Thacker, [Mothers of Daughters](#) Editor, author of [Being OK With Where You Are](#)

“Reading Brooke's book was like a glimpse into my own life. As a fellow boy mom, I often find my emotions and noise level rising to match those of my strong-willed sons and nobody wins when I do that. This book was a timely reminder that I can choose each day to give over control of my emotions to my Creator, and when I blow it, come right back to Him to start over with His loving grace, mercy, and forgiveness. I will be drawing inspiration from this book often.”

~Erin, blogger at [Home with the Boys](#), and Co-Founder of [Raising Boys Media](#).

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INTRODUCTION

A friend asked me the other day how I'm able to keep my feelings from running my life. My answer?

I don't always. But I'm learning.

For example...

I recently had a bad afternoon with my two boys. At ages six and eight, they're what I like to refer to as "those boys." You know, the ones who are 250% boy? Maybe you have one too, or at least know someone who does. They require every ounce of energy my husband and I have, and keep us on our knees more often than not. This particular day had been filled with disobedience and hard hearts and I was left feeling somewhat disillusioned. As I sat in my driveway watching them play basketball like crazy men, I felt my emotions begin to run away.

I started off embarrassed by their behavior. Then I got mad because it was what seemed like the millionth time I had asked them to obey with no apparent response. Anger moved into frustration because sometimes it just feels like nothing ever changes around here. Frustration led to feeling completely overwhelmed by my own inability to change their hearts. And finally, feeling overwhelmed moved to straight hopelessness and a desire to just. give. up.

In a matter of about two minutes I went from 0 to 10 on the emoto-meter (you know, the one that measures when mama's going to snap??), and ended the day feeling like a total failure as a mom. Ever been there?

Even if you're not a mom, my guess is that you've experienced something similar to what I'm talking about. Maybe your boss made a snide remark at work that made you think he didn't like you. And of course, we all know if your boss doesn't like you, you'll never get a promotion. And if you never get a promotion, you'll never make more money. And if you never make more money, you'll never be able to afford that new car your family desperately needs, PLUS all that time and money spent on your education will just go right down the tubes. Maybe you should just quit now before he fires you?

See how it works?

Nobody in her right mind enjoys this downward spiral of emotions, but if we're honest, most of the time we just seem powerless to stop it.

For years, women have been saying we can't change how we feel. We get mad when people (OK especially men) tell us how to feel, or make us believe we don't have a right to feel the way we want to. We've fought hard to make our voices heard and our opinions count, so learning that our emotions don't have to control us can be a bitter pill to swallow. Frankly, it's one I still struggle with.

I'm not trying to say our emotions are *always* wrong or that we don't have a right to our own feelings. Sometimes our emotions are very good, alerting us to danger, or revealing a deeper issue within our own hearts that needs attention, healing, and the grace of God. But they certainly *can* be wrong . . . or at least in need of tweaking. God gave us emotions as a barometer—they tell us both what's happening in our hearts and in our surroundings. Sometimes, they're right on the money, but more often than not, they need to come under the authority of the Word of God.

Even if we *do* have a right to our own feelings, we *don't* have to submit to them or let them control us. With God's help, we can change the way we feel. But it requires a choice, and before we dig in any further, we have to understand the basics of what that choice requires.

1. Do we believe the Word of God is true?

If we do, it's our basis for living and foundation of truth. It's where we go to understand the world, and the place we turn to when it doesn't make sense.

2. Will we study the Bible, taking the time to understand what it says?

If not, the Bible may never be anything more to us than a bag of tricks. God's Word isn't magic, but it is alive (Hebrews 4:12) and a solid rock upon which to build our lives. Spending time getting to know the God who wrote it is the difference between it just being a classic book, and a book having the power to radically change our lives.

3. Will we choose to believe what the Bible says is true, even when what we see and feel screams something different?

Here's the key: forcing our emotions and feelings to get in line requires the sometimes hard choice to say “no” to them, and “yes” to what the Bible says. It's a simple truth, but difficult application, and will require every ounce of self-control we can muster. That's why it's so important to have the other two questions above settled in our minds and hearts before we even try.

4. What is our deepest desire?

To be right or to love Jesus well? If the deepest longing of our heart is to get the upper hand, prove a point, or win the battle, the rest of this book probably won't make much sense. But if gratitude for Jesus' death on the cross bubbles up to overflowing, and our deepest desire is to love Jesus well in return, this book will be a roadmap of sorts to understanding and overcoming our emotions.

Once we've answered these questions, we're ready to dig in to the important truths necessary to overcoming in difficult area of our feelings and emotions. We'll cover five of them in this book including:

Feel, Know, Do—The Heart of Submitting Our Emotions to God

How to Overcome Lies with the Truth

Where Do We Get the Power to Overcome?

Sometimes We Just Have to Walk Away

What Happens When We Blow It?

At the end of the book you'll find some powerful Scriptures to help you fight off the lies. They're practical tools to print, hang on your fridge, and access anytime you need help.

Ready to go?

1 FEEL, KNOW, DO—THE HEART OF SUBMITTING OUR EMOTIONS TO GOD

I have a love for King David.

He fought a giant, won the people's hearts, lost them, won them back, made horrible decisions, paid the consequences, pursued redemption every time, and best I can tell, loved God with every ounce of his being. He's just so real, isn't he? I think that's why so many of us feel like he just gets us.

I also love David because the Bible gives us such a clear picture of his emotions. The Psalms are filled with his yearnings, musings, mistakes, repentance, and cries for help. People throughout all of history have related to David because he's just so real, and because he wasn't afraid to tell God how he really felt. Why? Because he trusted so completely in God's love for him.

Obviously, God felt that David's emotions, often displayed through song, were important enough to include in the Bible. Let's explore them a little bit as we figure out the heart of submitting our emotions to the authority of God.

What's at Stake?

The other day something super stressful happened at the McGlothlin Home for Boys (that's what I like to call my house), and in the midst of it all, my husband looked at me with exasperation in his eyes and said, "Why are you not more upset??"

My answer?

"I am! But if I let my emotions take over and lose control, I'll lose control of the whole house! I have two little boys upstairs who need to be educated, and it's hard enough to keep them on task when I'm in a good mood! I'll never be able to hold everything together if I let myself get upset over this. If I lose it, they lose it, and I can't afford for that to happen!"

Have you ever felt like you were the glue holding it all together? That one wrong turn on your part would send your world careening into oblivion? What happens

when the glue dries up and the whole blamed thing falls apart? That's what I felt in that moment. The weight of my responsibility for just keeping things going, setting the tone for the home, and trusting God to take care of our needs threatened to come crashing down on me if I let myself get upset over our little crisis.

I had to be in control of myself, even if I didn't really want to be. It was important for the people I love, so it was important for me. More than that, the way I respond to the surprises of life is important to God, and reveals what's truly in my heart.

My husband nodded his head, kissed me, and left to go run seven miles in a local Torch Run for the Special Olympics. I started my own kind of marathon as I cleaned the kitchen up from breakfast and prepped for the day. But I quickly felt the gentle whisper of the Holy Spirit nudge me to pray. By some small miracle, the boys played nicely together in their bedroom for over twenty minutes, allowing me to get fully down on my knees and kneel beside our bed. I gave our crisis to Him and went on with my day. Well, maybe there was a little more to it than just that. Let me explain...

Feel, Know, Do

Tucked into all of those magnificent Psalms is one in particular by David that sets the tone for our entire study. We don't know exactly what was happening in David's life when he wrote Psalm 13, but it's safe to assume he felt death was close and very real. Perhaps his emotions threatened to run away while he was running for his life from Saul. Or maybe he wrote this while in exile from his son Absalom. Maybe it was some other danger that made him feel forgotten and alone. Or perhaps the circumstances of this passage don't matter as much as what it tells us about David's heart. If we look hard enough, Psalm 13 will give us a unique pattern for overcoming our emotions that can be richly useful in our own lives. Below, I've broken the passage down below for you into three separate parts to make it easier to see.

[1-2] "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?"

[3-4] Consider and answer me, O Lord my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, lest my enemy say, 'I have prevailed over him,' lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

[5-6] But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.”

Now let’s take the verses apart and see if we can unpack their meaning a little bit more.

Verses one and two seem to describe how David *felt* during whatever event he was living through. It looks to the every day reader like he felt abandoned, completely alone, and vulnerable to attack. And why not? If this Psalm were truly written while David was running from Saul or Absalom, it only makes sense he would feel these kinds of emotions. Where was God in the midst of his pain? Didn’t He see how David was suffering? Didn’t He care? I can almost see his feelings escalating to a breaking point, just like mine do, as David told the Lord of all his woes. But then there’s a shift . . .

Verses three and four detour from groaning and desperation and move toward frustration, but not frustration without purpose. When David said to God, “O Lord my God; light up my eyes...” (verse three), it appears he was inviting God to help him understand his emotions. David may have *felt* vulnerable, but he was asking God to act in these circumstances in such a way that brought glory to His Name, and in doing so, began the process of reminding himself of what he *knew* to be true—God had a plan, David was the rightful king, God had answered David in the past and would again, God promised to protect David from Saul, and on and on.

Then finally, in verses five and six, we see a total shift in tone. We started out with a David who felt abandoned by God, moved to a David who invited God into his circumstances, and now have a David who remembered all God had already done for him in the past and trusted Him to do the same in the future. He acted on what he knew to be true instead of how he felt. What he *did* was affected by what he *knew*.

That’s quite a power-packed little Psalm, but it beautifully displays a model for controlling our emotions that I like to call “**Feel, Know, Do.**”

David allowed himself to feel the pain of whatever life event he was in the midst of, but he didn’t allow himself to stay there. He knew the only way to truly bless the Lord was to honor Him with his whole heart, and respond well to whatever life brought him. Here’s the model in a little more detail:

Feel: What we see with our eyes (our experiences and circumstances) affects our emotions and causes us to feel a certain way. Our feelings may be right or they may be wrong, but either way, as believers we're called to submit them to the authority of the Word of God.

Know: Our minds remember what we know to be true (i.e. the truth of God's Word, who we are in Christ, all that's available to us because we belong to Him, God's many promise, etc.) when we invite God into our circumstances with an open heart.

Do: We act on truth, not on what we can see or what we feel. What we do is affected by what we know.

As David remembered the joy of his salvation, his heart turned from feelings of despair at what he could see happening in his life to feelings of hope and joy at what he knew God could do, and he acted based on this knowledge.

That's how I want to live my life.

Romans 15:13 tell us that joy and peace come by believing . . .

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

Not by what we can see, not even by what we can feel with our own hands, but joy and peace come by believing that what God says is true really is true. That's how I was able to pray about our crisis that morning and then walk out of my room at peace. I shared my heart with God reminding Him of our crisis, opened my heart and invited God into our crisis, and then acted based on what I knew to be true—God loves me and my family, He has promised to provide everything we need, He already gave His Son for us proving how much He cares. So I can believe He cares deeply about whatever situation I find myself in.

I believed. You can too.

Be Prone to Worship

One of my favorite stories about David appears in Scripture before he officially became king. David and his mighty men had been off fighting, and returned home worn and ragged only to find their camp raided and their wives and children

abducted. Beth Moore had this to say about David's response to this horrible situation in her study *David: Seeking a Heart Like His*:

“While others were prone to wander, he was prone to worship.” (David, p 131).

David's entire family was at risk, and I think it's safe to assume he was afraid of what might become of them. What he could see with his eyes looked like disaster. His own men threatened to stone him, and he easily could have given in to fear, but he didn't. Instead, he chose to do the only thing he knew to do that brought the Lord near—worship.

I never feel so at peace, so close to the Lord and at ease with my surroundings as when I'm worshipping. Somehow it always brings the perspective I need—probably because I'm taking my eyes off of myself and my problems and placing them instead on the one thing that changes everything.

As Christians, we have the honor of being able to vent our griefs before the throne of *grace*, where they're cared for by Someone who understands and is able to open our eyes to the truth. Turn to Him. Offer Him all of your emotions. Then act on the truth.

Feel, know, do.

As we move into the next chapters, we'll explore this concept of Feel, Know, Do more deeply. Let's start with learning how to move from pure, raw emotions, (which can sometimes lie to us) to embracing the truth.

2 HOW TO OVERCOME LIES WITH THE TRUTH

When you look at your life, what do you see?

We took a family vacation two Septembers ago that has forever changed the way I see my life. We spent one week together, away from the everyday, waiting for my body to miscarry our third baby. I sat in the sand with the waves lapping my toes and watched my husband play and romp with my boys like I was seeing them for the first time. I watched arms and legs flapping and flopping in the water, heard little voices screaming, “Watch THIS, Mommy!” and held strong to the hand of my man, knowing God was giving me a gift, even as He took another gift away.

That week at the beach, as I grieved our baby, I found something I had lost.

Hope.

It was in my husband’s hand as he held mine, assuring me of his presence.
It was in the laughter of my children as they played with reckless abandon.
It was in the wind, blowing our hair straight up and everywhere.
It was in the waves, as they reminded me of the strength of God’s voice.
It was in a smile, a giggle, a touch.

I saw my children display humility, perseverance, forgiveness, and grace. I watched my husband take out the trash, sweep, empty the dishwasher, and give me time to read—all acts of loving service to me. I saw the good instead of the bad for the first time in a long time.

And I realized...

I’d spent so much time on my knees about the things that were wrong that I’d forgotten to look at the things that were right.

What’s Right?

The day I sat in my driveway watching my boys disobey me *again* happened almost two years after our miscarriage and that trip to the beach. And yet, as my emotions went from 0 to 10 in a matter of seconds, I realized I had done the same thing—overlooked the good for the bad. I thrust aside the truths of God’s Word

about me and my family and put my eyes firmly *on what I could see and feel in that moment*—two little boys giving me a run for my money; disobedience, challenge, and failure.

Most of all, I saw a mom who couldn't control her kids, and I felt totally incompetent. Lies.

The truth of the matter is that not every day of my life is like this. Sometimes my boys do obey. Sometimes they don't challenge me to my wit's end, and sometimes I end my day feeling good, capable, and like I loved them well. But in my driveway moment, none of that mattered. My feelings escalated based on the reality of what I was *currently seeing*, and it took the Word of God to bring a new reality.

What's Real?

Romans 8:6 says, "For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace." Doesn't this verse perfectly describe the challenge we face in getting past our own emotions? Almost every time I get caught in a difficult situation my emotions rise up from the ashes threatening to consume me, and I'm left with a serious choice: set my mind on Jesus and His never-changing truths, or choose to believe the lies instead.

It's true that my boys were having a rough day, and it's true that I was having a hard time controlling them. I really did feel overwhelmed and anxious, but none of those things alone, or even together, make me a failure as a mom. The truth is, I'm sinful and I make plenty of mistakes, but I'm also a loving mother who wants the best for her boys. In the emotional heat of the moment I had forgotten who I am *most* of the time, and was facing the reality of who I am and what my circumstances look like *some* of the time. Not realizing this difference can often lead a mom's emotions straight out of control and send her barreling toward hopelessness, depression, and the death of her ability to overcome her own emotions.

Thankfully, the truth was waiting for me (and for you too!) just around the corner. With God's help, I was able to step outside of my circumstances and remember what His Word says about me and my children.

What's True?

I think it's important to note here that we can't act on the truth if we don't know what it is.

There's an old bluegrass song my dad taught me when I was a little girl called, "I'm using my Bible as a roadmap," and honestly, if we want to overcome our emotions, that's exactly what we should be using it for. The Bible, in addition to telling God's amazing story, serves as our guide to life. Studied through the lens of love and gratitude, with a heart open to receiving its truth, the Bible has the power to revolutionize our lives, giving us not only the tools we need to walk out life in a way that's pleasing to God, but also the ability to experience a fullness of peace and joy that far surpasses what the world has to offer. But we often look right over its power and lay it aside for another day. Such a shame. God has given us everything we need to know about how to live our lives in the Bible, we just have to pick it up, read it, and apply it on a daily basis.

The beauty of being a Christian is that God will give us a desire for His Word if we ask Him for it. When I first started walking closely with God, I hungered to know Him better. It was an insatiable desire to get as close to God and know as much about Him as I could. God wants to give us what we need, so much so that He willingly laid down His Son's life for ours so we could be saved from our sins. That kind of love, combined with the knowledge that I don't possess the power to overcome sin by myself, drives me to His Word over and over again. His Word *is* the truth, and knowing it is an integral part of the Feel, Know, Do model. It's what gives us the power to move from our feelings (which may or may not be wrong) to acting on the truth, and it's part of building our lives on a firm foundation. It's really just one more choice we have to make . . .

A Foundational Choice

We're faced with millions of choices every single day—what color socks to wear, whether to wash our hair or give it one more day, a sandwich or salad for lunch, go to the grocery store today or wait until tomorrow, give in to our feelings or believe God. Obviously, some of our choices are more important than others, but I don't think it's overstating the truth to say our lives are built on our choices.

That reminds me of one of Jesus' teachings most of us probably learned in Sunday school when we were children. We find it in Luke 6:46-49:

“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

There’s a short children’s video based on this story that really captures what I believe to be the heart of it (you can find it on Godtube.com). In it, we see two men getting ready to build themselves houses. The wise little man builds his on a solid foundation, but the foolish little man decides he’d rather have a tiki hut on the beach. I think we all know how the story ends (bye bye little tiki hut).

The point of this story is that we’ve all been given a choice—will we build our lives around what is true, solid, never shifting or changing? Or will we build our lives around what feels good, looks fun, and feels right in the moment? More than that, on what will we build our days, our hours, our very minutes?

Most of us reading this book have made a decision at some point in our lives to follow Christ. We’ve given our hearts to Him and believe we’ll join Him in heaven one day. But following Christ entails more than just a one-time decision. It requires us to, well, follow Christ. Not just in the big things, like believing He died on the cross, was raised from the dead, and saved us from our sin. But also in the little things, like how we handle our emotions, what words we let leave our hearts and cross our lips, and how we respond to the surprises of life.

Every second of every day presents us with a choice—will we follow Christ in a particular situation or do what we feel like doing? Maybe the choice is whether or not to have that extra piece of cake after dinner (I had a hard day at work, and it just feels OK to eat it). Maybe it’s whether or not to yell at our kids (they’ve been terrible today, and probably deserve it). Maybe it’s whether we’ll use our bodies to bless our husbands or curse them (He’s been rude this week, and it’s hard to offer him this piece of myself when I feel so rejected). Maybe it’s whether to take a meal to a friend in need, or shy away because there’s just not enough time (I have so many things on my plate today, surely someone else will take care of the need).

In each of these things, and millions of others like them, there’s a way to follow after Christ. The beauty of the freedom we’re given in Christ is that the way you can best honor Him in your choices may look different from the way I can best

honor Him, but there's always a way to honor Him. That's why it's so important to do what David did in Psalm 13—open our hearts and invite God to change the way we see our circumstances. Then we can grab hold of the truth, let it change the way we feel, and choose to act on it.

It might look something like this: “That extra piece of cake isn't going to give me the comfort I really need—I think I'll stop at just one.” Or, “God loved me even when I was unloveable, I'll go back to my children one more time in love instead of yelling.” Or, “My husband needs me, so I'm going to sacrifice in order to be a blessing to him.” Or, “The most joy is found in serving others, so I'm going to take a break from my to-do list and bring my friend a meal.”

Simple Truth, Difficult Application

My driveway moment was also a choice—a simple truth, but difficult application—to see a situation through the lens of God's Word. I sat down during my boys' quiet time and opened my heart up to Jesus. I poured out my feelings and emotions to Him and gave Him permission to make me see things His way instead of mine. Setting my mind on the Spirit—that gift of God that is able to work in me making me more like Jesus—brought back my peace, and helped me see God's reality instead of my own. Feel, Know, Do.

Here's what I realized:

- These children aren't all bad. This was just one bad day sandwiched between two pretty good ones.
- I'm starting to see a repentant heart in my older son, leading me to believe that the decision he says he's made for Christ might be real.
- God has my best at heart, and theirs too.
- He's always working in us for His good pleasure.
- He sees us, hears us, and loves us more than we could ever love ourselves.
- He's just waiting to give us all the good gifts that are ours because of His work on the cross.
- We're safe in His embrace.

Really, what I want you to understand, friends, is that what we can see and feel are often entirely different from God's reality—the true reality.

It's not the most popular way to look at life these days, I know. But if you've made the decision to believe God's Word is true, study it so you can apply it to your life, and want to choose to say yes to it no matter the cost, your reality is based on something different than most other people's in the world. It'll make you stick out like a sore thumb, but it'll also change your life, giving you the power to overcome.

And speaking of the power to overcome...

Some of you are thinking to yourselves right now, "Well, that's all fine and dandy, Brooke. But when I'm in the heat of the moment, I get so blinded by my emotions that I'm not sure I'll even think about making a choice to believe God over my feelings."

Let's talk about that next.

3 WHERE DO WE GET THE POWER TO OVERCOME?

You know those carts at the grocery store that have fancy cars on the front with honking horns and flashing lights? The ones that are supposed to make your children squeal with delight and help your trip to the store run a bit more smoothly?

I hate them.

Yes, I know hate is a strong word, but I really do hate them. Five times I asked my little guy to get his head back in the cart where it belonged. Five. And five times that shaggy-headed little one stuck it back out and made faces at me while I scowled at him and most likely everyone else around me in the store. I zoomed up and down the isles throwing things in that dreaded car buggy thing so fast people felt my breeze as I went by.

Later, as we drove home, I dealt out punishment to the offender—writing from 0-100 five times, one for each act of disobedience—and listened to him explode in a teary tirade. A few miles in and he was still sniffing, but the screams had diminished, which gave me the opportunity to help him make sense of the horrible trip. Here’s a snapshot of our dialog that day:

The Power of Heaven

“Son, do you remember the story of how God raised Jesus from the dead?”

“Uh-huh.”

“How strong do you think God had to be to make that happen?”

“Pretty strong.”

“Do you think He had to use a lot of power?”

“Uh-huh.”

“You’re right, He did. Let me ask you this, son...is it hard to obey?”

“Uh-huh.”

“It is, isn’t it? I struggle to obey God a lot of the time myself. In fact, did you know you can’t really obey God OR Mommy by yourself?”

“Uh-huh.”

“That’s right. No matter how hard you try, you’ll never obey perfectly. That’s why Jesus had to die. You know all that. But what you might not know, is that God raising Jesus from the dead is just as important as Jesus dying. You know why?”

“Nope...”

“Well, here’s why: when we give our hearts to Jesus, tell Him He has the right to our lives, and decide to follow Him, we become God’s children. And once we’re God’s children, we have access to that same big, mighty power of God that raised Jesus from the dead! Know why that’s cool?”

“Uh-uh”

“It’s cool because it makes up for what you can’t do on your own! You can’t obey on your own. But with God’s strength and mighty power working on your behalf, you can. All you have to do is ask.”

Sometimes I think we just don’t realize what we have access to when we become children of God.

One of the hardest things in the world to do is stop in the middle of heated emotions and actually think about responding the right way. I see this in the lives of my children every single day. After eight and six years (respectively) on this planet they *know* they’re not supposed to wrestle in the house. They *know* they’re not allowed to tell Mommy and Daddy “no.” They *know* better than to leave their rooms a mess when they get up from quiet time. But in the heat of the moment, they forget to stop and *remember* that they have a choice. They’re so caught up in what they *want* to do, that they neglect to remember what they’ve been *empowered* to do.

Man, I feel their pain. How many times have I plowed right through a situation without remembering all that Christ sacrificed so I could have the opportunity to choose well?

Empowered by God

I had the same best friend throughout the latter part of grade school, high school and college. We shared secrets, came to each other when we were in need, and supported each other through the hard things girls deal with in that season of life. We went to the same college, shared the same major, and even had many of our classes together. We were each other’s “she gets me” person. I knew I could trust her with who I really was, and I believe she felt the same way.

Until things changed.

Over time, a series of bad choices on both of our parts caused the relationship to change. I didn’t trust her as much as I used to. She didn’t know if I would really be

there for her when she needed me. Things escalated and our emotions began to taint the way we interacted with each other. And in one grand moment that I wish I could erase we said words to each other that hurt so deeply our relationship has never recovered. That was over fifteen years ago.

I've never met her children. She may not even know my boys' names. At one point in my life she was the most trustworthy person I knew, and now I don't even know for sure where she's living. I miss having that kind of friendship in my life, and regret my part in its demise immensely. I now have other close friends I love dearly and am incredibly grateful for, but I've never again had one bosom friendship of that kind. And it ended because I let my emotions control me instead of doing what was necessary to control them.

Granted, I was only twenty years old when it happened. I've matured a lot as a Christian in the last fifteen years, and learned a lot about what triggers me to lose control of my emotions. Those things happen naturally over time. We learn more about who we are and begin to see patterns of behavior. With a little luck and a lot of grace, we can choose to overcome, but not because we have the power to do it alone. We don't.

Thankfully, when we become Christians, God's Holy Spirit comes to reside within us. He changes us from the inside out, and gives us the ability to see ourselves as we truly are—desperately in need of help. And the best part? He empowers us to choose well. What does that mean? As a Christian, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to us, empowering us to make good choices, even in the heat of the moment.

Let me say it another way . . . when Jesus died on the cross and rose again, He made the resurrection power of heaven available to those who would give their lives to Him. This incredible power is ready and waiting for us; we just have to recognize it and put it into practice!

Romans 8:11 says it this way:

“If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.”

Think we can't choose to believe God's truth about our situation and honor God with our response in the midst of heated emotions? Think again. God's Word says

we can! All we have to do is ask for help. And when we make the choice to pause, forcing our eyes away from our circumstances, and onto Christ, He'll come running with all the power of heaven—that same big, mighty power that raised Jesus from the dead—to help us.

I only wish I had known that when I was twenty.

Remember Who You Are

Last year one of our homeschooling days wasn't going well. Tantrums, defiance, and absolute refusal to do the work reigned supreme, and this mama was frazzled, on edge, anxious, and—in a word—spent.

I walked through that entire morning beaten down and bent over with stress before it suddenly dawned on me that I was forgetting something very important . . .

Who I was.

Or, rather, Whose I was. I think maybe the enemy of our souls just loves it when we forget who we are, Whose we are, and what we have access to because of Jesus, and boy was he ever having a field day with me! All too often, we walk around our homes and go about our daily lives completely unaware that we're royalty—daughters of the King—with all of the benefits thereof.

God didn't save us just to leave us stranded in our messes, unable to choose His ways above our own sinful ones. As Stacey Thacker says in our co-authored book, *Hope for the Weary Mom: Where God Meets You in Your Mess*, “His plan is to do far more than we can imagine (Ephesians 3:20-21). He does it by working within us. He wants to teach us about His character and reveal His heart for us. He wants to whisper in our ears, *Hope is here*. And in the process, He changes more than our mess—He changes us.” (p. 31).

Wise words. They washed over me right after lunch as I climbed the first few steps to the homeschool room to finish our day. I stopped mid-step, knelt down right there at the bottom of the staircase, and connected my heart to God in prayer. It went something like this:

“Lord, I need You very badly right now. This day is a mess, but I know You want to meet us in it. Please help me? Give me a joyful heart, not because of my circumstances, but because I belong to You. Help me to love my boys well? Please

help me to use all the power of heaven that's mine because of You to turn this day around. In Jesus' Name."

I'd like to tell you the day was perfect after I stopped to pray, but of course it wasn't. What I can tell you is that *my* heart was changed. I approached my boys differently for the rest of the day, prayed over them out loud, and was more in tune with their specific needs. I hugged them more and yelled at them less, and in my book, that's a raving success.

I'm not saying it'll be easy. I've flubbed up opportunities to use the power that's mine in Christ too many times to count. But I've also succeeded a few times, and the taste of victory is sweet enough to make me want to overcome my emotions all the time.

Here are a few brief pointers if you're just starting out.

1. Take baby steps.

If you're really struggling with your emotions right now, pray every single day, before your feet hit the floor in the morning and before you fall asleep at night (and let's face it, probably every second of every day), that God will help you recognize the opportunity to take hold of the power to choose well, the power He offers you through Christ.

2. Get in the Word.

Somehow, spending time in God's Word helps us hear His voice more clearly. There's nothing like the conviction of the Holy Spirit at just the right time to keep us from going over the edge. Believe me, I need it like I need a Coke on a bad day.

3. Ask your family, friends, and loved ones to keep you accountable.

My husband and I are doing this for each other right now. He just spent three months off of work after a shoulder surgery right before Christmas, and being together 24/7 really helped us see the worst in each other. I'm glad, because it gave us a unique opportunity to see our hearts and choose to change. Ask someone close to you to call you out when they see your emotions going unchecked.

4. Pray.

I know I already mentioned that, but it's worth repeating. There's just nothing like sitting down with the Creator of the universe (the One who has all the power to help you change), opening your heart, and seeking His perspective to help change your own.

When we know who we are, and Who we belong to, our entire perspective can dramatically shift so that we actually want to see things God's way instead of our own. Sometimes it's an easy shift, and we're able to honor God with what we do and how we respond without much effort. Other times, getting our hearts in the right place will require just a little bit more. Let's talk about that in the next chapter.

4 **SOMETIMES WE JUST HAVE TO WALK AWAY**

It took my husband and me a while to get in a groove with our marriage.

Our first year, unfortunately, found us fighting more than loving. Turns out dating someone for over three years really doesn't provide all the information you could ever need to know about that person. Imagine two babies of the family, both used to getting their own way (and maybe even being a little bit spoiled), living five hours away from home for the first time. This could have either been the best thing for both of us, or the worst.

Thankfully, we survived it, and we're even better for it. We learned a lot during that first year, including how to get along with another sinful person, how to cook ground beef 101 different ways (because we were BROKE), and how to deal with difficult things.

Difficult Things

Defiant children, surprise bills, broken relationships, burned dinners, broken down cars—every day we encounter events that surprise us and leave us with a choice to respond with grace or like we're completely out of it.

I learned early on that stopping to pray in the midst of a fight with my husband helped me regain a proper perspective and gave me the ability to see a side other than my own—something that's always good when you're trying to live life in close proximity to another human being. Praying and physically removing myself from an argument to be alone with my thoughts is something I still do today, and it's something we see Jesus model for us in Scripture as He struggles to respond to difficult circumstances with grace.

Truth? Sometimes it's really hard to get your heart where it needs to be. It's much easier to just lash out and respond to a situation in the way that *feels* right than it is to actually respond in the way that *is* right. But God says we can do it, and He gave us the example of His Son to prove it.

Matthew chapter 14 gives us a glimpse of what this looked like for Him, but let me set the scene for you a little before we dig in.

After pouring out His heart to teach the people, Jesus was rejected by his own home town of Nazareth. They didn't want Him. Didn't want to hear what He had to say, didn't want to trust Him, and certainly didn't want to follow Him. These were the people Jesus had known since childhood. They knew his family, knew their circumstances, and knew their character, and yet still, they didn't want to hear anything Jesus had to say. Harsh.

Then, just a few short verses later, as Jesus was in the midst of dealing with the ramifications of being rejected by His own people, He learned that his cousin John, the one who leapt for joy at the news of his birth (Luke 1:41), and who had been busy preparing the way for Him, had been beheaded.

I don't know about you, friend, but I might've been tempted to feel a bit defeated, and maybe even a little angry after that kind of news. What a vicious blow! Had I been in Jesus' place, I might even have felt it license to lash out at someone like I'm prone to do after a hard day, or during that time of the month (just admit it, ladies . . . you do it too), or when I feel like no one in my house listens to anything I say (um . . . like every day).

And maybe Jesus did feel defeated and angry, but unlike my general response to the hard things of life, Scripture tells us Jesus didn't lash out. He left.

"Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself" Matthew 14:13.

No retaliation (oh, but He could have!), no harsh words (certainly they were deserved!), no panic at the great loss to the world John's death was. He simply withdrew to a solitary place to be by Himself for a little while.

The Crowds Are Coming

Unfortunately, Jesus didn't get long to regroup. Before He had even gotten ashore a great crowd of people who were sick and needed help were waiting for Him. And just like that, Jesus sprang back into action, having compassion on them, healing them, and even performing one of the greatest miracles ever recorded just so they'd have something to eat.

Can I get some of what He just had? I mean really, as a mama, the ability to "spring into action, have compassion, and perform miracles" right after hearing terrible news should just come with the package, don't you think? The very first

time we hold our child in our arms, there ought to be some kind of physiological change that occurs in a mother's heart to enable her to respond with grace no matter what has just occurred. Unfortunately, that doesn't happen.

Leave and Regroup

So how'd Jesus do it? The secret, I think, was that He left to regroup Himself. In the few minutes it took to get from one side of the water to the other, He did whatever His heart needed to be ready for service again. Probably some prayer and worship, and a little time spent talking to His Father. Maybe even some time spent remembering the master plan that included Him laying down His life. Oh, that we could learn to do the same thing.

When our children have tantrums, we can leave and regroup.

When our spouse wants to fight, we can leave and regroup.

When friends speak words that hurt, we can leave and regroup.

When we realize that deadline is tomorrow instead of next week, we can leave and regroup.

I'm not talking about leaving a place completely, although some situations might require it. All we really need to do is close the bathroom or bedroom door, lock it, and spend two minutes asking Jesus for help. It might sound something like this:

"Jesus, I need Your help in this moment. I've got nothing to give. I'm overwhelmed with life. But I believe You are good and have a plan for this day. I believe You are able to meet me here in my mess and give me strength to keep going. I believe You can help me respond with grace. Please give me compassion for those I'm serving and help me to honor You."

It's a choice, really (hey, wait . . . haven't we been saying that all along?). A choice to look at our options and decide which path we'll take—retaliate or walk away, lash out in an emotional eruption or take a few minutes to think and pray?

I've erupted one too many times to really like it anymore. Sure, it feels good at first to get something off my chest. Sometimes I even feel compelled for the other person's benefit to share how I really feel. "She needs to know how I feel!" I say...and then I push that send button like all of heaven is depending on me to set another person straight, forgetting that the Lord doesn't need me to be anyone's personal Holy Spirit.

Sigh.

It's all too easy to throw our Christianity right out the window when we're angry, hurt, or feel betrayed. Here are a few things to remember as you process your response to the difficult circumstances in life:

1. Never respond in anger.

I've done it too many times. In fact, I'm embarrassed and ashamed to admit that I've done this. It isn't pretty, and it can destroy relationships. Just don't do it. The words will still be there after you've had time to cool down. Practice walking away to gain the right perspective, like Jesus did.

2. Take time to cool down.

I can't count the number of times my opinion of an event changed after I gave it some time to settle. Allowing enough time to get over my initial shock so I could truly try to understand what was happening, made all the difference in the world. I want to make sure that was clear, so I'll say it again . . . my opinions change. Therefore, whatever I might've said or typed as a response in the moment would've left me with regret. It's not worth it. Give yourself time.

3. Don't be mean.

Before you speak meanness over someone's life, stop and think about how you might feel if someone said those words to you. If you have the slightest inclination they might be on the mean side, stop, and speak when you have grace to communicate instead. Grace. Grace.

4. Love others.

Love others more than you love yourself. It's a truth I try to teach my sons every day—that loving someone else more than we love ourselves always brings the joy. It may appear for a moment that getting our own way, or shouting our feelings from the rooftops (no matter how self-righteous it sounds or who we hurt in the process) will bring us joy because we feel compelled to not let truth (or our own hearts) be squelched. But true joy comes in laying down our lives for our brothers and sisters. We have to step down off of our platforms long enough to realize that none of us know it all. We might think we completely understand what another person is going through, but in reality, we don't know what it's like to live their

lives, and they don't know what it's like to live ours. Extend an olive branch of love first.

5. Seek to understand.

What if, instead of being quick to share our opinions, we reached out gracefully to others who have hurt us and sought to understand their perspective? I can't really know your heart unless I know you, and if I keep that truth at the forefront of my head and heart while processing something difficult, ugly words will get stopped in their tracks every single time.

6. Know yourself.

I'm not a biblical scholar. Sure, I've read the whole thing, and feel like I know a good bit about it, but I've been proven wrong before on topics of debate, and over time I've changed my opinions on certain interpretations of Scripture I was passionate about before. I don't know everything about God's love and grace for me and for others that I will know next year, and this knowledge leaves me with a desire to pause before "striking out with truth" when I think it's been done an injustice. I can be wrong. We all can be wrong. It's a good thing to remember.

Walk away. Leave.

Remove yourself from the situation at hand if at all possible, even if you just do it in your heart. Give yourself time to regain the proper perspective by giving God permission to take charge of your emotions and re-align them with the truth of His Word. Watch and see if it doesn't work every time. Feel, Know, Do the right thing.

5 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE BLOW IT?

We all do it from time to time—blow up, lose our cool, or respond in a way that falls short of what we suspect might be pleasing to God. But blowing it doesn't have to mean total failure, and it doesn't mean we should quit trying to respond to the emotional situations in our lives with grace.

Blowing it simply means we have to get back on the bike, just like we did when we were kids. My dad taught me to ride a bike with no training wheels while we were camping at the beach one summer. I was around five years old, give or take a little, and I still remember the pink ribbons my mom used to tie my hair back so it wouldn't blow in my face. Most of all, I remember my dad's voice as he encouraged me to take off on my own.

I remember being pretty scared, and falling a lot during the process. But once I had it, a freedom I didn't know existed was mine for the taking. I rode around that campground with the wind in my face for the rest of the week, and loved every second my new knowledge brought me.

Does that mean I never fell off again? Never had another accident while riding bikes? Well, no. Actually I had a pretty bad one a few years later while riding with my best friend in our neighborhood. My tires got caught in a deep pile of gravel and I went flying onto the road. I can see that gravel trap in my mind even now. I can still tell you exactly where it happened, and picture the houses in our neighborhood in the background—it's a permanent part of my childhood memory. Despite this traumatic experience, it didn't keep me from getting back on and riding my bike again later that day. It was bad. It hurt. It was memorable. But I wanted the freedom of riding my bike around the neighborhood more than I wanted to be afraid and give up.

How to Get Over Blowing It

When I think of someone who followed hard after God, was respected and adored by those around him, and yet still messed up over and over again, I think of the Old Testament David. Fitting that we should end where we started, no?

One of the reasons David is so well loved is because he often messed up, but still was a man after God's heart. I used to think “after God's heart” meant patterned

after—similar to us being made in God’s image—like maybe David carried in his person something more of the heart of God than anyone else in history. But after studying David more in depth over the last few years, I’ve come to understand that what the phrase “after God’s heart” really means is that David pursued the heart of God.

He ran after God.

Radically pursued relationship with Him.

Believed God with reckless abandon.

Danced before Him naked and unashamed, baring his soul to God and to his people.

David loved God and followed after Him hard, particularly in the moments after his worst mistakes. Because of this, David always seemed to bounce back—get back on the bike, if you will—and allow the redeeming power of God to move on his behalf.

Lord, Help Mommy!

Some years ago, when my oldest was around three years old, I blew it big time. Our youngest son, then just a year old, had been crying most of the day, and my three year old just wasn’t interested in cooperating with me at all. I had asked him to stay off of our small toddler table more times than I could count that day, and as I watched his little hiney snake its way up one more time and do the Mickey Mouse Clubhouse dance on top of it, something in me just snapped.

I yanked him off of the table and disciplined him in anger. I yelled at him, pointed my finger in his face, and thumped him down on the couch screaming, “DO NOT get on that table again or I will throw it out the door!”

Then I stomped off to the bathroom, slammed the door closed, and burst into tears.

I knew immediately that my reaction to him was sinful. I knew I had blown it, and that he probably didn’t understand what had just happened. That precious little blonde-haired, brown-eyed boy was sitting on the couch in tears wondering why the main woman in his life had just treated him with such contempt, and the knowledge of it broke my heart.

Don’t get me wrong. I raise my voice. A lot. In a household of boys, where the noise level is off the charts until they’re passed out asleep in bed, it’s the only way

I can be heard. I don't use the methods that say, "whisper so they have to be quiet and listen to hear you." I've tried it. It doesn't work for me. If I whispered around here I would be invisible. So I raise my voice to get their attention. Not because they're being bad, or even because I'm mad at them, but simply to be heard.

I don't call that sin, just survival. But the day I threatened to throw my baby's favorite table out the door, I had sinned. And I knew it.

Repent

Through the snot and tears I told God I was sorry for sinning against Him. Then I braced myself to go ask my three year old son for forgiveness. His response blew me away.

He laid his tiny little hand on my head, closed his eyes, and prayed a prayer for me something like this:

"Lord, Mommy needs you to come. She did a bad thing and sinned. Help her do better because You love her so much. In Jesus' Name, amen."

Reading his precious words as I just wrote them doesn't do the tenderness of the moment justice. I can't possibly capture the sound of his little boy voice with all the mispronounced words in a written sentence. But that's okay, because the sound of his voice wasn't what captured my attention—it was the words he said.

They were almost word-for-word exactly like what I prayed for him when he sinned every single day.

In that moment of raw honesty between a mother and son, I knew God had given me a gift. He showed me that my son *was* listening, even when I thought he wasn't. All of my hard work to teach him and train him in the ways of the Lord *was* having an effect, and my grand mess up wasn't going to change that. Because in addition to showing him *how* to live his life, I was also honest about *how not* to live it.

I got back on my bike and kept riding. And really, that's what a mature Christian life is defined by—the willingness to own up to our mistakes, admit when we blow it, repent before the Lord, and ask for forgiveness.

Keep Asking

Psalm 27:4 says, “One thing have I asked of the Lord, *that I will seek after*: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple” (emphasis mine).

Deep in David’s heart, deeper even than all of his other longings and desires, was a desperate need to be with the Lord. He asked the Lord to let it happen—to let him dwell in God’s house, and gaze upon his beauty—but he also sought after it. He acted on his desire, and was *after* God’s heart all the days of his life.

A few short verses later, David says one of my favorite verses of all time.

“I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living” (Psalm 27:13, NKJV).

Friends, we don’t have to lose heart when we mess up. We don’t have to let our failures give us an excuse to give up and just quit trying. Instead, we can base our choice to keep going, keep trying, in faith that God will give us at least some measure of victory over our emotions, or anything else we struggle with, in the land of the living—that means here on earth.

Keep going. Keep trying. Keeping asking God to work a miracle in your heart, until one day you realize He already has. Your failures might be bad. They might hurt. They might be memorable. But one day you’ll want the freedom of riding without them more than you’ll want to give up.

APPENDIX

SCRIPTURES TO HELP FIGHT OFF THE LIES

We've walked our way through a lot of head knowledge so far, but as they say, at some point the rubber has to meet the road. The following twenty-five scriptures are just that—tools for helping you put your faith into practice.

They're not meant to be Band-Aids, and they're not quick fixes for deep problems. For example, I struggled for years with fear. Every night I went to bed quoting Scriptures on fear, but nothing ever helped until I settled the root of my problem: I didn't trust God. If you're struggling deeply with emotions that are out of control, I encourage you to take the time necessary to get at the root. What's really the heart of your problem? Only time spent with God, and a willingness to dig deep can offer the answer. But these verses can help (and you can get a free printable of them to post on your fridge [here](#)).

Friends, I'm praying that this little e-book on learning to control our emotions has been as helpful for you as fleshing it out has been for me. This lesson has been simmering in my heart for a long time, and it feels good to have finally gotten it out on paper. Learning to Feel, Know, Do is a process, and one there's lots of grace for. Don't forget that in the midst of your failures, because there will be some—maybe even a lot—before you get the hang of it, and maybe even for the rest of your life. The beauty of grace is this: it never runs out. So grab hold of it tight and let it wind its way deeply into your heart so that what comes out of you is a reflection of the grace Jesus has poured within.

Thanks for joining me on the journey to emotional wholeness. My prayer is that the Lord will use this to continue making you everything He always meant for you to be!

SCRIPTURES TO HELP FIGHT OFF THE LIES

1. When you feel scared, choose to believe He's in control.

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27:1

2. When you feel weary, choose to believe He's good.

For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. Psalm 100:5

3. When you feel alone, choose to believe He'll never leave you.

It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. Deuteronomy 31:8

4. When you feel unseen, choose to believe He knows your needs.

Thereafter, Hagar used another name to refer to the LORD, who had spoken to her. She said, "You are the God who sees me." She also said, "Have I truly seen the One who sees me?" Genesis 16:13 NLT

5. When you feel unheard, choose to believe that He's listening.

*Because he bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath! Psalm 116:2
NLT*

6. When you feel hopeless, choose to be confident in God's ability to win the day.

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. Psalm 27:3

7. When you feel depressed, look for ways God loves you. Remember that each day brings a new display of His mercies.

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22-23

8. When you feel worthless, choose to believe you are of great worth to God.

Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings... Psalm 17:8

9. When you feel unloved, choose to believe that God's love for you never goes away.

I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. Jeremiah 31:3

10. When you feel misunderstood, choose to believe that Jesus understands exactly what you're going through.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15

11. When you feel abused, choose to believe God is on your side.*

The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent. Exodus 14:14

12. When you feel brokenhearted, choose to believe God has the power and desire to heal.

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Psalm 147:3

13. When you feel desperate, choose to remember where your strength comes from.

GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. Habakkuk 3:19

14. When you feel like nothing will ever change, choose to remember all the things God has done for you in the past, and believe He will do them again.

I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Psalm 27:13 NKJV

15. When you feel lost, choose to turn your eyes back to Jesus and His Word.

In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Proverbs 3:6

16. When you feel crushed in spirit, choose to believe God is close by.

The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18

17. When you feel overwhelmed, choose to spend time in the presence of God, remembering all He has promised you.

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Psalm 23

18. When you feel like you're losing your mind, choose to call out to the Lord for help.

But you, O LORD, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid! Psalm 22:19

19. When you feel hurt, choose to believe the Lord is there to help and shield you.

We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you. Psalm 33:20-22

20. When you feel like giving up, remind yourself of how to take one more step.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. Ephesians 6:10-11

21. When you feel confused, choose to believe God has a plan.

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. 1 Corinthians 14:33

22. When you feel lost, remember that Jesus left everything to come find you.

What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? Matthew 18:12

23. When you feel attacked, choose to believe God is all you need, His approval your only goal.

I cry to you, O LORD; I say, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. Psalm 142:5

24. When you feel nothing, choose to praise anyway, believing that your emotions will follow.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Philippians 4:4

25. When you feel angry, choose to remember where your hope comes from.

I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. Ephesians 1:18 NLT

*On the topic of abuse, my choice of Scripture is not an attempt to get you to stay in an abusive situation or be quiet if you see someone else being abused. Rather, it is simply to reinforce the truth that God is fighting for you every step of the way. You can trust that as you step out in faith, remove yourself from harm's way, and seek help.

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Brooke makes her home in the mountains of Southwest Virginia with her husband—the man she's had a crush on since the 3rd grade—and spends her days writing, homeschooling their two sons, and playing with their sweet Labrador Retrievers, Toby and Siri. She enjoys playing hard with her boys, searching for beauty through photography, and leading women to say "yes" to God at her personal blog, [Surprised by Life](#).

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