

Call Out the Lies

Eve

As I rounded the corner, I heard a thud and glanced over to see that one nonfat caramel latte and two almond-milk mochas had tipped over in the passenger seat. I was able to stand them up quickly, but coffee had already escaped from the lids and left a small puddle on the leather seat of my husband's new car.

How could you be so foolish? How could you let this happen? Why are you so irresponsible? I heard a voice sneering inside my head.

Which really weren't questions, but accusations.

No one else was in the car. The voice wasn't what my husband would say to me or about me. The voice wasn't what I would tell any of my kids if they'd spilled. No, I'd say something like, "Oops. No big deal. Here's a napkin. Let's clean up the rest when we get home."

But the voice was one I'd heard before. Growing up, I'd heard similar phrases barked at me whenever I made a mess or a mistake. The person who spoke these words to me clearly wasn't in the car, but the soundtrack from my childhood replayed in my mind, making me doubt my value and worth, making me feel like a bad wife and mom all because the coffee tipped.

Did you notice the words? *Foolish. Irresponsible. You. You. You.*

None of which were true. It wasn't my fault the coffee spilled. It was an accident. I hadn't been foolish or irresponsible. The coffees were in a drink carrier that I had set upright on a flat surface. The cups had lids. They were presumably secure. I transport coffee like this all the time without spilling. And I certainly didn't *let* it happen. But the Enemy's aim is to make me feel like I'm not good enough. He'll do whatever it takes to pepper blame, shame, and guilt into my thought patterns. Which is the opposite of what God does.

I am not the first person that sneaky snake has tried this on. I'm betting he's tried it on you. And his tactics go way back to the very beginning.

God created Eve in His own image. He blessed her and her husband, Adam. He told them to fill the earth and subdue it. He gave them the power to rule over the earth. And then after declaring that everything else He had created was "good," God called man and woman "very good."

So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them. . . .

Then God said [to them], "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so. (Genesis 1:27, 29–30)

Adam and Eve were living in the actual garden of Eden—paradise. What a life! But then the Serpent found Eve one day and slithered in with an accusation meant to sound like a question, emphasizing the word *you*.

"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" (Genesis 3:1).

God didn't say anything like that. But the Enemy was crafty. He twisted words to make them confusing. God had told Adam and Eve they could eat *any* fruit that had seeds (meaning it could create more fruit). I'm picturing a peach—remarkably fuzzy yet edible. How if you slice into it, thick nectar drips out that tastes like summer. I'm picturing cherry trees, orange trees, plum trees—all kinds of trees loaded with bright, sweet, ripe fruit packed with nutrients, all planted in the same magnificent garden.

God never said, "You must not eat from any tree."

But the seed of doubt was planted in Eve's mind. She tried to correct Satan: "Wait. God said we can eat fruit from the trees, but . . ." As she considered the question, she remembered there was one thing God wouldn't let her do. Maybe she wondered for the very first time, *Why won't He?* Eve finished her response to the Serpent. "God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die'" (verses 2–3).

And then that Serpent had Eve where he wanted her. He tricked her into saying God wouldn't let her do something—as if God were restricting her, limiting her, keeping her from something good. The Enemy inserted doubt and twisted it around a bit. *Why would God do that? Why, if God loved you, Eve, would He not let you have everything?* But the truth was that God loved Eve so much He gave her and Adam free rein of the garden. There was only one fruit they couldn't have, out of *all* the fruit they could, and it was only to protect them, not deny them. Kind of like how I won't let my daughter with a nut allergy eat a brownie with walnuts sprinkled on top. I'm not denying her. I'm protecting her.

Satan has been inserting doubt into our minds and twisting it around ever since. *Oh, you didn't get the scholarship, promotion, engagement ring, deal, bid, shout-out, invitation, better office, prize, bigger portion, first choice? Perhaps it's because you're not good enough, not liked as much, don't have what it takes,* the Enemy whispers.

But God clearly states we are loved, we are His daughters, part of a royal priesthood, mighty warriors, and made in His image. Which means whatever we do or do not win, earn, or achieve, we are still loved. God still considers us royalty. God still empowers us with His

might. We can be brave because He is on our side. And we still (and always will) reflect the very image of the living God. So all that mumbo jumbo about “not enough” from the Enemy? It’s ridiculous.

But the Enemy is relentless. He gets us alone and starts in with the lies. Big ones. Small ones. Silly ones. Irrelevant ones. Lies that sting like salt in a wound. They sound like questions, but they’re actually accusations. *Why didn’t you try harder? What makes you think you’re qualified? Do you think anyone really wants to hear/see/try/taste that thing you made, that idea you have? Remember how your last relationship/job/attempt worked out? What makes you think it will be better this time? Why didn’t you work out more, study longer, be more careful, pipe down, speak out, grow out your bangs?*

The Enemy is a liar. But the Bible is pure truth. It reminds us: There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

None.

Jesus loves you. Always. Forever. Right here. Right now.

The Enemy wants you to lose sight of that.

Don’t listen to him.

Whose voice are you listening to today?

God’s?

Or the thief’s, who comes to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10)? The Enemy is lurking, trying to get God’s people alone and confuse them about who they are in Christ. Eve had been living her best life, eating delicious fresh fruit daily with the perfect man for her, and then the Serpent came in with his smoke screen of finger-pointing accusations. Next thing you know, Eve was hiding in the bushes, ashamed. How did she go from absolute freedom to cowering behind branches?

She listened to the wrong voice.

Instead of dismissing his lies, she believed the Enemy’s accusation that God was keeping something from her.

We, like Eve, get to choose who we listen to. But we have something she didn’t. We have Eve’s story. And God made sure her story was in the Bible for us to learn from. We know how that snake manipulated Eve into listening to him instead of God. We can learn from her mistake and tell that slippery Serpent that he’s a liar and we’re not going to listen to his trash talk anymore.

In the car with the spilled coffee, I had to talk myself out of a spiral of negative self-talk and challenge the Enemy. I did it out loud.

“What?” I challenged the Enemy. “I wasn’t being foolish or irresponsible. I didn’t *let* the coffee spill. Those thoughts, statements, whatever, aren’t true. And they have no business in this car or in my head. They are lies.”

It felt good to call out the lies. And I felt so much peace.

It takes effort and intentionality to overcome the lies of the Enemy—they’re so slippery and sneaky and constant. But God is mighty and empowers us to question the accusations and bravely dismantle the lies. This is what it looks like to follow Paul’s instructions to the Corinthians: “We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). We call out the lie for what it is. And we take it down.

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At age sixteen or twenty-six, I would have been mortified by the spill. *How could I let such a thing happen?* My shame would have felt like walking through the dense, gray smog of a smoke bomb, making me feel sick, disoriented, cloudy, muddled, and worthless. And it would have led me to be dishonest about the whole thing. I would have been terrified to tell anyone. I would have sneaked into the house, crept back out with cleaning supplies, and tried to erase any evidence of the spill. I would have kept my mouth shut, allowing the shame to fester where it was trapped inside.

But that day? I carried the coffees inside, took a long sip of my rich mocha, set all the cups on our red kitchen table, grabbed paper towels and some lavender-scented cleaning spray, cleaned up the small spill in the car, came back inside, carried my hubby’s coffee to him in his home office, and told him the whole story.

“You know I’d never say that to you, don’t you?” Brett said as he looked me in the eyes.

“Yup. I do. And thank you for loving me like that.”

“It’s just a car. And just a spill. Thank you for getting me coffee.” Brett held his paper cup up in a toast.

His voice sounded a lot more like God’s, and like truth, and like the voice I want to listen to.

How did I get to this place of recognizing lies and calling them out?

It took a while. And I still don’t always get it right.

But the more time I spend with God, talk to Jesus, and read my Bible, the more God teaches me how to distinguish lies from truth, God’s voice from the Enemy’s. This will work for you too.

You might not get worked up about spilling something. Maybe you worry about what people think of your performance, your home, your outfit, your kids’ behavior, or the words you speak. Those are important things to value, but let’s do this right.

Eve may be famous for eating the forbidden fruit. But God didn’t give up on her then, or ever. After the whole hiding-in-the-bushes incident, God sought Eve out, clothed her, blessed her, and protected her. God never stopped loving her, and that enabled Eve to bravely move forward from that devastating day with the Serpent to become the mother of all mankind, teaching her children to worship God. Our mighty God loves you and me with that same perfect love.

Let’s listen to God’s loving voice. Make it the loudest one in our heads. He frees us from shame and invites us into an abundant life. Stand up. Lift your head. Take a step forward. Oh, and yeah, tell the Enemy he’s a liar.

Call Out the Lies

So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them. . . .

God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. (Genesis 1:27, 31)

- What are you focusing on today? The smoke screen the Enemy has put before you? Or the truth of who God created you to be?
- What are some current thoughts you have about yourself?
- Eve learned the hard way that the Serpent likes to whisper lies and accusations. Let's combat the lies that bombard us by speaking out loud the statements below that are backed by Bible verses. If any of the thoughts in the previous question were negative, write one of these verses over it. Maybe make one of these verses your new screen saver or write it on a note card and stick it to your mirror.

I am made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27).

I am Christ's prized possession (1 Peter 2:9).

I am Christ's masterpiece (Ephesians 2:10).

God has plans to prosper me (Jeremiah 29:11).

God promises to never leave me (Hebrews 13:5).

2

Hold Out for Happily-Ever-After

Sarah

I love a good princess story—from watching Cinderella swirl around in her blue dress when I was a little girl, to singing the songs from *The Little Mermaid* and *Tangled* with my daughters, I love happily-ever-afters. In all these movies, it seems like the struggling young women become princesses in an instant. We sit for an hour and a half with our buttery popcorn and fluffy fleece blankets and watch them go from rejected to wearing tiaras, all before bedtime.

But real life doesn't play out like that.

In fact, even in these movies, if we really dug deep, most of the heroines have handfuls of hardships before finding their happiness. For years and years Cinderella is a servant for her stepmother and step-sisters before she gets bibbidi-bobbidi-boooed into a ball gown and glass slippers. Ariel has been longing to be part of the humans' world for ages. And Rapunzel is gaslighted most of her life and has a near-death experience, for goodness' sake.

In the Bible, a woman named Sarai struggled for decades before finding her fairy-tale ending. God promised Sarai and her husband,

Abram, as many kids, grandkids, great-grands, and so on as stars in the sky (Genesis 15:5). Sarai's culture wasn't concerned about a woman's career, community service, or contributions; it measured a woman's value on one thing—her ability to have children, specifically boys, to add to the family line. So that promise of a multitude of descendants was her ultimate happily-ever-after. But Sarai had fertility issues.

When her husband, Abram, was seventy-five, God told him:

Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.

(Genesis 12:1–3)

When God speaks like this, you do it. So, at around age sixty-five, Sarai went with her husband away from their home, her friends and community, her favorite well to fetch fresh water from, and the peaceful place to take walks she'd discovered. Sarai obediently went with Abram, followed God's instructions, and trusted God's promise of future blessings. But this wasn't the part where singing mice and birds started sewing Sarai a maternity gown. No, this was the plot twist where there was a famine, and Sarai and Abram had to travel farther than planned to find food. They arrived in Egypt, and Abram freaked out because he was afraid the pharaoh would kill him to try to take his gorgeous wife. To protect himself, Abram told Pharaoh that Sarai was his sister. Oh yeah, and Abram told Sarai to go along with the charade.

This was not God's plotline; this was one Abram wrote for himself. But God made a promise. And He always keeps His promises. So even

though Abram made a mess of things, God got things back on track by getting Pharaoh to send Sarai and Abram out of town—and fast.

By the time Sarai was seventy-six, she'd lost faith in God's promise. It had been over ten years since God sent them. Blessings? Descendants? She sure didn't see them.

When I got pregnant with our fourth child, I was told I was of “advanced maternal age.” In her mid-seventies, Sarai way exceeded that. She gave up hope, figured she'd waited enough, and took things into her own hands. Sarai sent her servant, Hagar, to sleep with Abram, hoping Hagar would get pregnant and provide Abram with an heir. Desperate people do desperate things.

It “worked.” Hagar got pregnant and had a son, someone to carry on Abram's name. But, not surprisingly, it was an ugly disaster of jealousy, pain, and shame for both women. This had never been God's plan.

Despite Sarai doubting God and thinking she could handle this better than Him, when Sarai was eighty-nine, God said to Abram (whom He had just renamed Abraham), “As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her” (Genesis 17:15–16).

Sarah. It means “princess.”¹

A year later, at age ninety, Sarah gave birth to a son and named him Isaac. You'll find him on Jesus's family tree (Luke 3:34; Matthew 1:2). Even though her family line would face major struggles, as all families do, Sarah found her happily-ever-after.

For the record, *Sarai* also meant “princess.”² That had always been God's plan for her. It just took a while for Sarai to learn to trust God in this plan, to stop trying to do things by herself, to stop disregarding God's promises as ridiculous. Sarah actually laughed out loud one of the times God promised she'd have a son (Genesis 18:12). It took time and mistakes before Sarah leaned into God's promises and believed that what He said about her was true.

How are you doing with this? With trusting what God says about

you even when the world tells you that you don't measure up? With patiently waiting for God to make good on His promises even if it's taking longer than you hoped? Way longer.

Are you taking things into your own hands like the Little Mermaid trading her voice for legs or Sarah forcing her servant to have sex with her husband in hopes of getting a son? Trying to out-plan God, because what if you just tried *this*? Are you laughing off God's promises because they seem far-fetched? God's plans do sound crazy sometimes, but He's God. He can do anything.

On any given day I could be doing both splendidly and horribly in all these areas. But thankfully, God is patient with us, He loves us, and He keeps His promises.

God's plans do sound crazy sometimes,
but He's God. He can do anything.

Before Sarah was born, God knew He would choose her to be the wife of Abraham, that kings would come from her. In God's eyes, she was always a princess, but she struggled to see it. Sarai, the one who had been thrown into Pharaoh's harem by her own husband, and who had lost hope and orchestrated for her husband to sleep with another woman. God renamed her a princess, showing Sarah this wasn't just a name her parents gave her, but the name *He* gave her. This renaming by God was significant. It gave Sarah newfound strength and bravery to step into her new role as the mother of the entire Hebrew nation, even earning her a mention in the famous Hall of Faith (Hebrews 11:11). The name of Sarah gave her that new chance that Cinderella, Ariel, and Rapunzel all craved, one that I believe God has put a desire for in *all* our hearts—a longing for something more fulfilling and beautiful than what we've known before. God wants us to seek Him, just like the fairy-tale princesses seek someone who will see and love them for their true selves. God places that longing inside of us because He's the one who can fulfill it.

Our Prince is more amazing than any Disney artist could create. We have a Prince who rides a mighty white steed, swoops in, picks us up, and sees and loves us for exactly who we are. He believes we are valuable and lovable and wants to live with us happily ever after. His name is Jesus.

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. (Revelation 19:11–13)

Wherever you are in your story, remember that God is the author and perfecter of your faith (Hebrews 12:2). As the author of your story, He's written you the happiest of endings.

Sure, it won't all be skipping through wildflowers along the way.

We might get locked in a closet or tricked by someone who tries to con us out of our birthright. We might choose the wrong path through the forest, trust the wrong person, get distracted, try to do things our own way, lose hope, doubt, or eat a poison apple. But Jesus is Faithful and True, and He's the one who gets to write the ending. He'll empower you to do the things He promises. So, no matter what you've done, where you've gotten off track, how strong or weak your faith is today, God calls you His daughter, part of His royal family, and He longs to live happily ever after throughout eternity with you.

Hold Out for Happily-Ever-After

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. (Revelation 19:11)

- Is there something you feel God has promised that seems to be taking a long time? Talk or journal to Him about it. He is your loving Father and wants to hear it all. Tell God your hopes and dreams and how your heart feels in the midst of the disappointment or waiting.
- Ask God to bring Sarah's story to mind in the coming days and weeks, using it to remind you that He'll be just as faithful to you as He was to Sarah (even when it felt like it was taking forever).
- Ask Jesus to give you hope and endurance to stand strong as you wait for His timing.

3

Call for Help

Hagar

*This chapter will discuss the topic of sexual assault.
Please take care when reading.*

I'd been at college only a couple of weeks when I agreed to be set up for a casual "dorm date party" with a tall, handsome athlete. He was funny and liked the same music I did. We talked for hours, and at the end of the evening he quickly kissed me good night. I liked him.

We flirted back and forth a bit in the dining hall, but to my disappointment nothing came of it. During my sophomore year he was in one of my classes. The flirting and kissing resumed briefly. I knew he wasn't good for me. He clearly didn't want to date, just flirt and make out from time to time. But he was cute. And I was in a season of making bad decisions.

The summer between my junior and senior years, I was on campus for a few weeks for an introduction to my study-abroad program. Guess who was taking summer school classes? I was out with friends and ran into the guy. He walked me back to my apartment and stepped inside. We started kissing. Then he pushed me to the floor.

He was over six feet tall and strong—a college athlete. My arms were the diameter of pencils. Did I mention I was living alone? My

roommates had all gone home for the summer. I tried to push him off me, but it was useless. There was no one there to help. I tried to shrink into the scratchy beige carpet, as far away from him as I could get. But he was still on top of me. I told him to stop, to get off.

No one except the guy could hear my muffled pleas.

I squirmed and shoved and screamed.

After a few frightening moments of fearing the worst, miraculously he stood and left.

I rushed to the door, locked it behind him, and collapsed into a terrified heap. Adrenaline rushed through my veins. My heart pounded inside my chest like a bass drum, shaking me to my core. For a long time, I couldn't move, frozen on the carpet.

Although I'd felt all alone, there was Someone with me, inside the walls of my apartment, who heard my desperate cries. God saw me. He heard me. And He saved me.

Had I done all the right things?

No.

Had I been actively seeking God's will for my life?

Clearly not.

I was intentionally kissing a guy I wasn't dating and who I knew was bad news. I blamed myself. But the blame wasn't mine to shoulder. For the kissing, yes. For the shove to the floor, 100 percent no. I saw myself as a girl who'd made a mistake and gotten herself into this mess. God saw me as His daughter. His beautiful creation. The one He intentionally knit together stitch by stitch while I was still in my mother's womb (Psalm 139:13). If you've been in a similar situation or if your situation was worse, possibly even much worse, God saw you then and sees you now as His beautiful creation and daughter too.

God never loses sight of us or of who He created us to be, even when we lose sight of ourselves.

Do you remember Hagar from the previous chapter? Sarai's Egyptian slave? The one Sarai gave to her husband as a bonus wife—solely to have sex with Abram in hopes she'd get pregnant and give him kids. Hagar's situation was horrific. But like me, like you, she was not forgotten by God.

As an Egyptian, Hagar would have worshiped the Egyptian gods—the sun god, the earth god, the motherhood goddess, the war goddess, and many others. She grew up praying to statues. Hagar most likely witnessed Sarai and Abram praying to God, but they treated her like dirt. Why would she want to believe what they believed?

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The Bible tells us in Genesis 16:4 that once pregnant, Hagar despised Sarai. That didn't mean Hagar just held a grudge. The original Hebrew is translated "to curse" or "be despicable toward," so Hagar was downright mean to her mistress. Now, Hagar was a slave who was forced to have sex with a married man, so she had every right to be angry. But Hagar's rage sent Sarai seething, even though Sarai had arranged the whole "why don't you get pregnant with my husband's child" thing. Sarai lashed back and "afflicted" Hagar.

In that time women had little value, and slaves were even lower on the totem pole. So a female slave? She barely had any voice. After the brawl, Hagar fled to the wilderness, which was dangerous and terrifying. She was all alone and could have been attacked by wild animals or starved to death. Who would even know? If Hagar were discovered by travelers, she could have been raped, abused, or murdered. No one would hear her cries for help. And if they did, they might not have cared.

But then the most remarkable thing happened. God sent an angel to help this woman who didn't even worship Him, the woman with negligible worth to her household and culture, and the woman who had just broken the law by running away from her master. You see, the world saw Hagar as almost worthless. She might have seen herself that way too. But God? He created Hagar. He loved her. And God never loses sight of His children.

The angel of the LORD found Hagar beside a spring of water in the wilderness, along the road to Shur. The angel said to her, “Hagar, Sarai’s servant, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

“I’m running away from my mistress, Sarai,” she replied.

The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit to her authority.” Then he added, “I will give you more descendants than you can count.”

And the angel also said, “You are now pregnant and will give birth to a son. You are to name him Ishmael (which means ‘God hears’), for the LORD has heard your cry of distress.” (Genesis 16:7–11 NLT)

The Lord has heard your cry of distress.

Wherever you are. Whatever you’re in the middle of today, right now. No matter what you did or didn’t do to get there. No matter if you landed there as a result of your own mistakes or what someone else did or circumstances or culture. No matter where you are in your relationship with God. Even if you think no one can hear you. Even if you think no one will answer if you call for help. God. Hears. You.

He’ll answer your calls. He wants to offer you better. You can call out to Him for help.

God rescued Hagar in the wilderness. God saw her. Called her by name. Blessed her. Bearing kids was the endgame for women at that time, and God promised Hagar more descendants than she could count. I can’t imagine having to head back to Abram and Sarai’s tents. But our mighty God gave Hagar the strength and courage she needed. He also gave her a plan to move forward.

Based on the tracking information on our phones, I can “see” my kids. But I can’t *actually* see them. I might know one of my daughters is at her part-time job at the local ice cream shop, but I can’t tell if she’s relaxed or stressed or if any of her friends stopped by to say hi. I can see that one of my kids is at practice, but is he having fun or feeling the pressure of the intimidating coach? I can tell if my kids are at school,

but did they eat their lunch? How did they do on that test they were worried about? Did they share the awesome thing they did yesterday with any of their pals?

I can know my kids' locations without knowing how they're doing. But God *sees us* sees us. And not just in the generic "Oh look, Laura's typing on her laptop right now" way, but in the "truly knowing our thoughts"—our worries, fears, hopes, and dreams—kind of way. God sees you specifically.

Let that sink in for a moment. God sees you, all of you, and loves you no matter what. Mind-blowing, right?

Overwhelmed by this astonishing truth, Hagar declared, "You are the God who sees me" and "I have now seen the One who sees me" (Genesis 16:13).

Hagar was the first person in Scripture to name God. Her encounter with Him changed her and made her braver than she'd ever been. Hagar named God how she knew Him—the God who saw her. This same God sees you and is ready to rescue you when you call for help.

Hagar's life didn't become all sunshine and roses because she learned how much God loved her. God told Hagar to go back to Sarai, who had been mean with a capital *M*, and submit to her mistress. Not exactly a dream come true. But the alternative was to die a horrible death in the wilderness, alone and frightened. God knew going back would provide safety, food, and the influential family name of Abram for Hagar and the son growing inside her. God is always looking out for us. He hears our cries. He sees us and answers our calls for help.

God saw me struggling on my apartment floor that summer night. He heard my desperate cries and helped me. In retrospect, I believe that God also saw the college guy I referenced, that God whispered to him to stop so he wouldn't end up doing something he'd forever regret. Because he chose to leave, we were both saved in that moment. But even if he would have chosen differently, I know God still would have heard and seen me. God still would have comforted me and helped me heal from that terrible act.

Sadly, not all potential perpetrators choose to listen to God. We live in a broken world. Sexual assault is a devastating reality that harms

one out of every five women in the United States.¹ God hears these victims' cries. If this is you or someone you love, God sees you in your pain. He longs to help you heal from the trauma of being violated. God is right beside you, loving you, weeping with you, and ready to help you move forward.²

God knows whatever you're in the midst of—physical pain, depression, loss, or an empty bank account. He sees you in your struggles, hears you when you cry. No matter if you're turning to Jesus for help or trying to do it all by yourself or even if you're on your worst behavior. That June evening in college I felt helpless, like no one knew where I was. I'm guessing Hagar felt the same while alone in the wilderness. But there is nowhere where we are too far out of sight for God or too far out of His earshot. Nowhere.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38–39)

Call for Help

You are the God who sees me. (Genesis 16:13)

- Is there some part of your life where you feel alone? Like nobody hears or sees you? God is the God who sees you. Ask Him to make Himself known to you. Ask Him to help you see and feel that He is right beside you.
- Write this out: *Nothing can separate me from the love of Jesus.* Write it again and again until it sinks in.
- Have you called out to God like Hagar did? If not, try now. Even if you have, now's a great time to call out to Him again. You could:

Close your eyes and hold out your hands, palms up.

Ask God to help you feel His presence.

Tell Him the thing you think no one hears. Ask for His help.

End by saying out loud, "Nothing can separate me from the love of Jesus. Amen."