

## Introduction

As I laid on the couch watching the early morning sun slowly make its way through the curtains, I listened for any movement from around the house. Although I was far from being able to fall asleep, I laid there silent and still, prepared to close my eyes quickly if anyone should make a move to enter the room. If I could pretend I was asleep, this day wouldn't happen. My mom wouldn't need to share with my dad that I, their oldest, their eighteen-year-old, unmarried daughter, was pregnant.

Having told my mom the news first, we decided to wait to tell my dad until a doctor could confirm what I strongly suspected to be true. I'm certain it was the longest two weeks in my mom's marriage. The day had arrived for my dad to finally learn the news as I was, in fact, pregnant. During the conversation with Mom, I asked if she would tell Dad for me. As a way of compromise, we decided I would come home from college that night to be at home when she told him. So, there I was on the couch, pretending to be asleep and waiting for that conversation to happen.

I could hear the sounds of my parents waking up and making their way to the kitchen. Keeping my eyes closed tightly, I heard their footsteps make their way across the carpet and into the kitchen. The noise of the coffee maker started. Soon, the smell made its way to the living room where I continued to lay, hoping to be invisible. After the coffee was poured, the footsteps stopped at the table. The typical morning chatter between them quickly went from normal tones to a hushed murmur. My heart beat wildly as I anticipated the words my mom spoke making their way into my dad's heart, piercing it. His little girl was not who he thought she was. She wasn't living up to the expectations he had for her. He could not be proud of her. She was flawed and soon to be very visibly flawed.

I tightened my eyes as I heard footsteps again. The single set of footsteps I recognized as my dad's were making their way towards me. I could hear those steps leaving the kitchen and stepping onto the carpet. They were now in the living room. *Please Lord, I thought, can't I just disappear? Can't I take away the pain that I've brought on this family? The embarrassment? Can't I have a redo?*

Holding my tears and my breath in, I felt his body sit down on the couch where I was laying. It would no longer do any good to pretend I was sleeping. I sat up slowly, opened my eyes, and grimaced at the thought of what I was sure to find in my dad's eyes. I was wholly unprepared for what was actually there. I stared into the eyes of a man whose own eyes were not only filled with tears but with so much more. He held a box of Kleenex in his hand and said, "Mom said we may need these." He reached over and enveloped me in his arms. We cried together.

I don't remember any other words being spoken during that time. However, I do remember that what I saw in his eyes were three things I didn't even realize I

longed to see. Love. Forgiveness. Acceptance. The man I needed the most in that moment to love, forgive, and accept me did exactly that. And those things washed over me in a way I didn't fully understand yet needed so badly.

We all have similar stories, don't we? Some parts of our stories are exhilarating and exciting. Other parts are heavy and hard. Our lives are a combination of all the above. If we look closely enough, we see God show up and meet us in these stories in ways that leave us different. You will find many such stories throughout this devotion. Some are ones from my childhood while others are stories I've experienced as a parent. The common thread in each of them is they are simply everyday experiences. They are experiences that you, too, may have walked through. They are experiences God shed His light upon in such a way to teach me something about His character.

God desires to teach us in the midst of every situation. We only need to be awakened to His spirit. The Every Day God is based upon that truth. It is a book that contains everyday situations we can all relate to in some form. Each situation shines with God's light and a desired lesson.

So often, we go about our daily circumstances without considering how the circumstance connects us to God. Whether we are at a chaotic stage of life with jobs and children or a quieter stage that may sometimes seem too quiet, we often struggle to acknowledge God in our midst. We may not consider what He wants to teach us right there in our chaos or there in our quietness.

It is while considering those thoughts I determined to seek God in the middle of these everyday circumstances. I soon found a lesson about forgiveness shining through when my son forgave his brother after his finger got slammed in a van door. A lesson about grace was brought to mind as I dealt with the messiness of a box of cereal being emptied on the living room floor. A lesson about setting time aside for Jesus confronted me when my son sought intentional time with me at the end of a busy day. The lessons began to abound, shining brightly from the simple everyday moments of my life.

Choose today to begin this 40-day journey to see what lessons God has for you in the midst of your everyday situations. May we move forward with the God who desires time with us every day as we walk hand-in-hand with Him through our everyday moments.