

EMBRACING

Trust

The Art of Letting Go & Holding On
to a Forever-Faithful God

J O A N N A
W E A V E R

Bestselling author of *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*

INCLUDES A 10-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

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to a Forever-Faithful God

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To my husband, John
Thank you for your passionate love for Jesus.
Because He has first place in your life,
my heart rests secure in your love.
Because you trust God so completely,
I've learned to trust Him in a deeper measure.
For that and a thousand other reasons,
I'm so grateful to be your wife.

To my son, Josh
Oh, my sweet boy—my gift from heaven!
From the moment you were born,
you've taught me what trusting God looks like.
Thank you for allowing me to share your story.
Keep loving Jesus and sharing His love
with others—you do it incredibly well.
I'm so blessed to be your mother.

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An Invitation

The book you hold in your hands is a book I've wanted to write for over twenty years.

From the moment I finished *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*, this was the message I felt certain God wanted me to write. Yet He kept asking me to lay it aside to work on other books. (Ironic when you consider my working title: *Letting Go and Trusting God*.)

When the Lord finally gave me the go-ahead, the topic had grown beyond surrender to include the importance of holding on in faith. With the message still big and strong in my heart, I was sure the “birth” of the book would be relatively easy. A few pushes and voilà! It would come out fully formed, dressed, and needing to shave. Instead, God took me on a four-year journey of trust that led to this book, but also radically changed my life.

Writing never comes easy to me, but the immensity of this message felt paralyzing. With deadlines looming and words still distant, the only thing that broke the fear was repeating, “I trust You, Lord. I trust You, I trust You, I trust You.” Yet in the middle of the struggle to write, God graced me with so many personal breakthroughs that I almost felt guilty.

“We’re getting a lot more done in my heart than we’re getting words on the page,” I told my mother as I tried to explain how simple truths from the Bible were exploding in my soul, stripping away lies that had kept me bound for years. In my desperate need of Jesus, I was experiencing Him in ways I’d never known before.

At the time, none of this seemed related to the book—hence, the guilt. But now, looking back, I’m convinced it was my utter dependence on God and the moment-by-moment choice to trust in Him that opened my heart to those life-changing revelations and led to the book you hold in your hands.

More than ever, I’m convinced that trusting God is the key to a victorious Christian life. Just as we trusted Jesus for our salvation, we need to trust Him for our transformation—and everything else in our lives!

I pray the Holy Spirit meets you in these pages and speaks between every line as He gives you personal revelations that come straight from the heart of God. As you let go in surrender, He’ll enable you to hold on in faith so that you’re no longer dominated by fear and doubt. For as we embrace trust, we embrace God—and it leaves us forever changed.

In the back of this book, you’ll find a ten-week Bible study and a resource to help you grow close to God and strengthen your faith. Teaching videos are available for purchase at JoannaWeaverBooks.com.

Are you ready to build an unshakeable trust? I can’t wait to begin!

Joanna

PART ONE

Trusting God

"Trust Me, My child," He says. "Trust Me with a fuller abandon than you ever have before. Trust Me, as minute succeeds minute, every day of your life, for as long as you live. And if you become conscious of anything hindering our relationship, do not hurt Me by turning away from Me. Draw all the closer to Me, come, run to Me. Allow Me to hide you, to protect you, even from yourself. Tell Me your deepest cares, your every trouble. Trust Me to keep My hand upon you. I will never leave you. I will shape you, mold you, and perfect you. Do not fear, O child of My love, do not fear. I love you."

Amy Carmichael¹

One

The Journey to Trust

Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek
you.

Psalm 9:10

It's not surprising that we all come into life with some sort of trust issue. After all, birth itself is quite traumatic.

One moment we're safe and warm, floating in soft waves of amniotic fluid, cradled close inside our mother's womb. Every need met without our asking. Nothing to do except turn slow somersaults, suck our thumb, and kick Mama's ribs. Ah, what a life.

But then, suddenly, we're ejected into an unfamiliar world. Surrounded by bright lights, strange faces, and the slap of cold air against our skin, we begin screaming and kicking. Our arms flail. Our hands clench, then open—grasping, searching for something to tell us we're not alone. That we are not as helpless as we feel.

Somewhere a finger strokes our hand, and though it's foreign to us, we grasp it and refuse to let go. Finally. An anchor point.

Something bigger and more solid than we are. A source. Something or someone—we're not entirely sure which—that responds to our screams with food, touch, and, best of all, clean diapers. And for a moment we are satisfied—until the cycle repeats itself.

Until we finally grow up.

At least that's the way it's supposed to work. But I wonder. As an adult, I still find myself groping and grasping, reaching for something more. Longing for my needs to be met and my desires to be accounted for.

Unfortunately, when what I want and what I get don't coincide, I come to the unconscious conclusion: I'm all alone in the world and there's no one I can trust. At least that's how it feels.

Yet nothing could be further from the truth.

The Birth of Distrust

From the beginning of time, God has longed for a people to love and call His own. A people on whom He could lavish His provision and protection as well as His presence. Like Adam and Eve, you and I were intended to live as cherished children enjoying sweet communion with our Father. Walking together through life. Tenderly cared for and protected by His love. Every need met. Every longing satisfied.

But then sin happened, and everything changed.

Perhaps it started with a seed of doubt that had lurked in Eve's heart for a while. A distrust of God's goodness that led her to crave something more than she had. How else to explain Satan's ability to so easily tempt her with the forbidden and lead her astray?

After all, there were many, many trees in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 2:9 tells us, "The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food." Of all these trees, two were especially significant: the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" and the "tree of life" (v. 9). And of these two, only one had been marked off-limits by God (v. 17).

Consider what that means. When God said no to one tree, He was saying yes to hundreds of others, including the very special Tree of Life. But then came a doubt-sowing snake, bringing a hiss of discontentment.

“God’s withholding His best,” the devil told Eve, attacking God’s character. Eat this fruit and “your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil,” he promised in Genesis 3:5.

With God’s loving intentions called into question, Eve took the fruit, and both she and her husband ate it (v. 6). And with that act, Paradise was lost. Forced out of Eden because of disobedience, Adam and Eve found themselves on their own, consigned to a life outside the umbrella of God’s protection and provision. Their rebellion would affect not only them, but those who followed—including you and me. All because our great-great-not-so-great grandparents chose to eat from the wrong tree.

It was the ultimate con job when you really think about it. Adam and Eve were tricked into trading the perfection of the Garden for something they already had. Made in the image of their Maker, they were already “like God.” Surrounded by flawless beauty, the couple had firsthand knowledge of everything good. But the knowledge of evil was Satan’s biggest deceit. Rather than giving Adam and Eve control over their lives, it left them powerless—tormented by fear, enslaved to temptation, and susceptible to suffering.

With the door opened to darkness, wickedness rushed in, leaving the couple terrified and unable to stop it. Just as we are when we try to live life apart from our trustworthy God.

The Struggle to Trust

It’s interesting that Satan tempted Adam and Eve with the very thing that got him kicked out of heaven. Lucifer, as he was known, seemed to have been given a prominent role as heaven’s worship leader (see Ezekiel 28:13 NKJV). But evidently, he grew tired of worshipping God and wanted to be worshiped instead.

Isaiah 14:13–14 records his prideful thoughts:

I will ascend to the heavens;
I will raise my throne
above the stars of God; . . .
I will make myself like the Most High.

Of course, the devil’s attempt to take over heaven failed. Perhaps that’s why he’s so determined to take over the human heart. He sows suspicion and plants doubt in our minds by attacking God’s character and trying to undermine our sense of His love:

Why would God forbid something that you need? He’s just trying to control you.

If God was truly good, He wouldn’t allow bad things to happen.

If He really loved you, He wouldn’t allow you to feel such pain.

Living in a world marred by sin, we’re especially vulnerable to his lies. For life is unpredictable and, at times, terribly hard. Every day we’re given reasons to doubt, reasons to fear. And though I wish it weren’t so, being a Christian doesn’t exempt us from trouble. Tragedies happen. People let us down. No matter how much we exercise or how well we eat, our health will eventually fail. As it turns out, this life is fatal.

We shouldn’t be surprised by any of that, for Jesus told us clearly, “In this world you will have trouble” (John 16:33). This isn’t heaven, after all. But reconciling the promised blessings of being a Christian with the hardships we face in life can feel confusing at times. No wonder we all struggle to trust God when things are difficult.

Lysa TerKeurst talks about this in her book *Uninvited*. “I crave for life to make sense. I cringe when it doesn’t,” she writes, going on to explain:

I want life to be as stable as a math problem. Two plus two always equals four. It will equal four today, tomorrow and into the tomorrows years from now. . . .

[But] life doesn’t add up. People don’t add up. And in the rawest moments of honest hurting, God doesn’t add up. All of which

makes us hold our trust ever so close to our chests until it becomes more tied to our fears than to our faith.¹

What is your trust tied to, I wonder? I like to think that I'm a woman of faith, but too often, I'm a woman of fear. People make choices that wound me. Hopes and dreams don't always come true. Sometimes the daily responsibilities and cares of life feel so overwhelming that I'm more likely to worry than take time to pray.

It helps me to remember a quote I heard years ago: "Christianity isn't the absence of problems. It's the promise of God's presence."² But to be honest, even that concept can be difficult to understand, especially for those of us with an Americanized view of Christianity.

Somehow we've come to expect continuous and tangible blessings as our spiritual birthright, forgetting to factor in the fallen world in which we live. When Adam and Eve rejected God's perfection, they left us with this mixed bag called *life*—some of it good, some of it not so good, some of it downright evil.

But here's the good news. Though Adam and Eve ate from the wrong tree, Jesus hung on another tree so that you and I could be reconciled to our heavenly Father. Through Christ's sacrifice, the Tree of Life is offered to us once more. Rather than wandering through life confused and alone, you and I are invited back to the intimacy of Eden and the beautiful security of belonging to the Lord.

"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard," the apostle John writes in 1 John 1:3, "so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." The man who enjoyed close friendship with Jesus as part of His inner circle, the one who leaned his head against the Savior's chest, welcomes us to intimacy with God as well.

But this sweet fellowship requires a choice. Will we surrender our lives and unreservedly follow Jesus, or will we retain control and follow from a distance? Will we eat from the tree that offers knowledge and self-reliance, or will we partake from the tree that gives us life?

10 SIGNS YOU MIGHT HAVE TRUST ISSUES

Trust doesn't come easily in this broken world. People have wounded us. Life has let us down. If we're not careful, we can project those trust issues onto God. Here are a few symptoms:

- 1. You keep God at a distance.* It feels safer that way. You rarely spend time alone with Him or ask direct questions, for you're not sure you want to hear what He might say.
- 2. You remain in the driver's seat.* When you say, "God is my copilot," you mean it. You can't imagine giving Him the wheel for fear of where He might take you.
- 3. Your prayer life tends to be lifeless—or nonexistent.* You repeat prayers by rote if you pray at all. You say you don't want to bother God with your problems, but in reality, you don't want to be disappointed.
- 4. You limit God by your limitations.* You may believe God can do anything, but you don't believe He can do it through you. Especially when the situation seems impossible.
- 5. You don't feel God's love.* Though you believe Jesus died for your sins, you secretly think you must earn His favor. It seems impossible that He could fully accept and love you as you are.
- 6. You struggle to worship.* The words feel flat on your tongue. While one part of you wants to express your love to God, the other part feels detached, empty, and dry.
- 7. You seldom connect with God's Word.* You may read the Bible out of duty, but you struggle to identify with what you've read. The tender words of the Father rarely reach your heart.
- 8. You doubt God's goodness.* Because life is hard, you struggle to believe that God is for you and is working on your behalf. When He blesses others, you sometimes resent the fact it isn't you.

9. *You secretly believe God is mad at you.* When something goes wrong, you assume God is punishing you. Even when you repent, you struggle to accept His forgiveness.

10. *You feel stuck.* Regret from the past, resentment in the present, and fear of the future keep you from fully trusting in God. You have a hard time imagining a different way of life.

If you find yourself in any of these descriptions, bring your trust issue to Jesus and work through it together. He wants to heal your heart and set you free from fear and unbelief.

Don't be afraid, for I am *with* you. . . .
I will *strengthen* you and *help* you.

Isaiah 41:10 NLT

Choosing the right tree doesn't guarantee we'll escape the consequences of this fallen world. Following Jesus won't necessarily answer all our questions. But when we eat from the right tree, those questions won't feel so important. Instead of trying to understand the mysteries of life and why evil seems to win more often than good, we'll be able to rest our hearts in the Father's love. Trusting His character, His wisdom, and His power.

Experiencing the freedom that's made available when we give God control of our uncontrollable lives.

The Beautiful Logic of Trusting God

I don't know about you, but if I were God and Adam and Eve rejected me, I would have pushed the reset button and started over with creation. A new heaven and earth. A different man and woman. And not a snake to be found.

But instead of allowing sin to ruin His plan, God immediately began the process of redemption. In His mercy God covered the couple's nakedness. His love followed them out of the Garden and helped them navigate the cruel world. And His love and mercy still reach out to us today. Wooing us back to relationship with the One who knows us, yet loves us so much.

It's baffling to me that we so often reject our heavenly Father's advances and choose to do life on our own. For there's a beautiful logic in trusting God—along with multiple reasons that He deserves our faith:

- *God made us.* He formed us in our mother's womb and is intimately acquainted with all our ways (Psalm 139:3–13). It only makes sense that our Maker would know the best way for us to live.
- *God loves us.* No matter what we're going through, we can be confident that He's for us, not against us (Romans 8:31). God is always working on our behalf, and He wants to make His love real to our hearts.
- *God redeemed us.* He purchased our freedom through the death of His Son and restored us to right relationship with Him (Titus 2:13–14). He loves to redeem everything the enemy means for evil by turning it into something good.
- *God empowers us.* Because we are unable to live a godly life on our own, He gives us the Holy Spirit to guide and teach us, filling us with the power we need to become everything God wants us to be (2 Corinthians 3:18).

But there is another powerful reason for trusting the Lord that, in my mind, supersedes all other reasons. It's found in what our dependence means to the heart of our Father. Brennan Manning expresses it beautifully in his book *Ruthless Trust*:

Why does our trust offer such immense pleasure to God? Because trust is the preeminent expression of love. Thus, it may mean more to Jesus when we say, "I trust you," than when we say, "I love you."³

In a very real sense, trust is God's love language. Nothing brings Him more joy than when we put our hope fully in Him. You and I aren't a cosmic experiment meant to keep heaven occupied. Humanity isn't part of a celestial science project tracking how eight billion mice interact in a lab called planet Earth. We are God's children, each of us uniquely loved and wanted. Intricately designed for a special place in the Father's heart.

But to speak God's love language and access the life we're meant to live, we must embrace trust—letting go in surrender and holding on in faith. For anything less affects every area of our lives.

- When we don't trust God, we're quick to worry and slow to pray.
- When we don't trust God, we struggle to forgive.
- When we don't trust God, we grumble and complain.
- When we don't trust God, we build walls of self-protection.
- When we don't trust God, we attempt to micromanage our world.
- When we don't trust God, we react poorly rather than respond wisely.
- When we don't trust God, we live as orphans rather than beloved children.
- When we don't trust God, we miss the joy and freedom of belonging to Him.

Instead, we walk around with a built-in label maker, defining life from our limited understanding—and all too often, getting it wrong.

Mislabeling Our Lives

Have you ever used one of those little handheld devices that crank out printed strips of adhesive to help you organize your life? With a few twists of the alphabetical dial or a few swipes at the built-in

keyboard, you can label your sock drawer and find anything in your pantry with a single glance. But you have to be careful to put the right labels on the right items. Otherwise you might end up adding chili powder instead of cinnamon to your peach pie!

That's exactly what happens when we use the inner label maker installed at the fall. Eating from the Tree of Knowledge rather than the Tree of Life has skewed our perspective, causing us to mislabel things the way the world does, calling "evil good and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20). Because our human understanding is limited, it causes us to mark blessings "good" and trials "bad," not realizing that God is at work in both.

An often-told fable describes a farmer whose horse ran away. His neighbors came to express sympathy. "We're sorry to hear about your horse. That is most unfortunate," they said. But the farmer simply replied, "Maybe."

The next day the horse returned with seven wild horses. "This is so fortunate! Now you have eight horses," his neighbors said. But again, the farmer answered, "Maybe."

When the farmer's son tried to tame one of the horses, he fell and broke his leg. "Oh my, that's terrible," his neighbors said. But the old man just shrugged. "Maybe."

When soldiers came to the village to conscript fighters, they rejected the son because of his broken leg. "How lucky for you!" the neighbors cried out. But the farmer just smiled and said, "Maybe."⁴

There's a lot of wisdom in the farmer's response because only God knows what is truly good and what is evil. Eating from the wrong tree tends to make us believe that our wisdom is faultless and our perception of a situation is the last word, but only God knows the truth. He alone knows the *why* behind the situation and *how* it will all work out in the end. So doesn't it make sense to leave the labeling to Him?

For our great Redeemer specializes in redefining good and bad, repurposing the worst that hell dishes out so that it serves His eternal purposes. Just as He did in the life of a young shepherd boy named David.

A Better Perspective

Throughout this book, we're going to explore the life of David, for he's a great example of what trusting God looks like in every area of our lives. Thankfully, we have an abundance of material from which to learn. With sixty-six chapters dedicated to his story in the Old Testament and fifty-nine references to his life in the New Testament, more has been written about David than any other Bible character.⁵

Though he didn't always do it right, David tried to center his life around knowing and pleasing God. Throughout the Psalms, he continually calls us to *trust* God—using the word forty-nine times in the King James Version according to my count.

Blessed is the one
who trusts in the LORD. (40:4)

Trust in him at all times, you people; . . .
for God is our refuge. (62:8)

Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.
(9:10)

This last verse is noteworthy, for in the Old Testament, each of God's names reveals an aspect of His character. Which is important, for we only trust the ones we know.⁶

From a young age, David sought to know the Lord intimately. It resulted in deep friendship and lifelong dependence on God that may have been cultivated during the lonely days and nights he spent caring for his father's sheep. Whatever the source, it was certainly present by the time he was a young man, when God singled him out to be king.

When Samuel was sent to anoint one of Jesse's sons to be the next ruler of Israel (1 Samuel 16:1–13), the prophet invited the entire family to a religious ceremony so he could discern the Lord's choice (v. 5). But for some reason—perhaps as the youngest he was

needed to watch the family's sheep—David wasn't included in the lineup. After Samuel met David's older, more impressive brothers, God prompted the prophet to ask if there were any other sons. Jesse summoned David from the fields, and God confirmed that he was "the one" (v. 12).

As anointing oil rolled down the young man's face, his mind must have raced. Priests and kings received anointings—not insignificant, apparently forgotten-by-their-father shepherd boys. Though David wasn't publicly declared king at that moment, the first-century historian Josephus has said that Samuel whispered the anointing's symbolic meaning in the young boy's ear: "You will be the next king."⁷

Why me? David must have wondered. What set him apart from older, more capable men? In Acts 13:22, God reveals the reason: "I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do."

Oh, how I want God to be able to say that of me! I want to be known as a woman who knows God so intimately, she obeys Him implicitly—a woman after God's own heart. Don't you?

Having a heart like that requires that we lay down the label maker of our understanding and trust God to define and correct everything that touches our lives—including our view of Him. Because until we come to know the Lord intimately and view life through the lens of who He is, we won't have the proper perspective on what happens to us, nor will we fully comprehend the depth of His love.

I love the advice given by the sixth-century bishop Paternus:

Think magnificently of God. Magnify His providence: adore His power; frequent His service; and pray to Him frequently and incessantly. Bear Him always in your mind; teach your thoughts to reverence Him in every place, for there is no place where He is not. . . . Fear and worship, and love God; first, and last, think magnificently of God.⁸

It's my prayer that as you read this book, you'll allow the Holy Spirit to expand your understanding of who God truly is: Your

trustworthy Father. Your compassionate Savior. Your tender Comforter. Your faithful Friend. Don't let labels created by previous experiences or lack of experience minimize His work in your life. Let God out of the box of your small thinking—for our view of God determines our level of trust.

“If I have a low concept of God, my religion can only be a cheap, watery affair,” A. W. Tozer writes. “But if my concept of God is worthy of God . . . it can be reverent, profound, beautiful.”

To help strengthen your understanding of God, I've included a list of His attributes in Appendix B. Choose one to meditate on this week and allow your concept of God to grow.

If we remain ignorant of God's character and purposes on earth, we'll constantly mislabel His work and question His motives. We'll live life looking through the wrong end of a telescope. God will appear tiny, and our problems will appear huge.

But when we “think magnificently” about God, the Holy Spirit flips the telescope so we see God correctly. Consequently, our problems shrink to their proper proportions. For in the light of His love, we view life—and ourselves—through the right lens.

Wholehearted Trust

Over the years, God has used Proverbs 3:5–6 to recalibrate my soul. It's become so precious to me that it's my life verse and the theme of this book:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight. (NASB)

As we begin this journey together, I'd like to look closely at each line of this powerful Scripture. For it contains important clues as to how we can know God, trust God, and become people after His own heart.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart.”

Half-hearted trust won't cut it. We've got to bring everything to the table, including *all* that we are. We can't trust God with our whole being if we're making backup plans in case He doesn't come through. God is looking for wholehearted surrender and a continuous reliance on Him. Day by day. Minute by minute. As David writes in Psalm 62:5,

I depend on God alone;
I put my hope in him. (GNT)

“And do not lean on your own understanding.”

Lingering residue from the Tree of Knowledge makes it hard to let go of our need to understand. Fix-it queens by nature, we think we should be able to figure out life on our own. But our human intellect will always be limited and often faulty. When we invite God into the equation, however, He promises to make us wiser. For as James 1:5 says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all.”

“In all your ways acknowledge Him.”

So often, in the middle of trouble, I forget to consciously recognize that Jesus is with me, that nothing takes Him by surprise or is beyond His power to save. I've found that when I consciously “acknowledge” that He's present with me in *all* my ways—not just some of them—I don't default so easily to fear. Instead, I'm enabled to see God in the situation, which helps me “submit to him,” as the NIV translates the last part of that phrase, so that God's will is accomplished instead of my own.

“And He will make your paths straight.”

This part of the verse reminds me of the carpet runner in my grandma's apartment. The long strip of rug often buckled and created tripping hazards, to which I occasionally fell prey.

Though rumples in a rug are easy to smooth out, when they appear in my life, they often seem like impossible and impassable mountains. But in Isaiah 45:2, God tells us,

I will go before you
and will level the mountains.

For as verse 2 in the New King James Version promises, He specializes in making “crooked places straight.”

Rather than giving in to fear when difficulties arise, I’m learning to declare my faith in Jesus out loud: “Lord, I trust You with all that I am and all that I face. I acknowledge that You are with me in this situation—I am not alone. Thank You for going before me and showing me the way to go.”

Sometimes I have to repeat the declaration over and over as I step back from fear and unbelief. Though it may be imperceptible to me, as I wait on God, He begins to pull the edge of that runner toward Him. Rumples by rumples, ridges by ridges, He removes the obstacles and makes my path straight.

The classic hymn “’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus” was written by Louisa M. R. Stead after her husband died trying to rescue a young boy from drowning. With little money and a four-year-old daughter to raise, the young widow faced a frightening future. But out of the crucible of her pain came these words:

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him!
How I’ve proved him o’er and o’er!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
O for grace to trust him more!¹⁰

That’s my prayer for this book. That fresh grace would be released in your heart and mine to trust Jesus more. For just as He’s proven Himself faithful to countless generations, He wants to prove Himself trustworthy to us as well. When fear or doubt arise, we need to pray Louisa’s prayer: “Lord, give me grace to trust You more.”

For God’s grace not only saves us, it also enables us to trust God in the middle of life’s darkest and most desperate moments. Especially during those times when we can’t see—and our hearts just don’t understand.

Open Our Eyes, Lord

When my youngest son was five years old, he had to have his tonsils and adenoids out due to respiratory problems. The doctor warned me that post-op might be a little rocky, but I wasn’t prepared for Josh’s reaction coming out of the anesthesia.

“Mommy, mommy!” my normally even-keeled boy screamed as he woke up in the recovery room. Eyes wide open, he frantically clawed the air in an attempt to find me.

“I’m right here, honey . . .,” I tried to reassure him as I took him in my arms. “Mommy’s right here.”

But he pushed away from me and tried to reach for something beyond. Blinded to my presence and unable to absorb my love, he continued to call my name, unaware that I was standing in front of him. That I was waiting to comfort him if he’d only relax into my love.

I wonder how many times we do that to God. “Where are you, Lord?” we cry during difficult situations. “Don’t you see my pain? Don’t you hear my fear?”

I’m right here, my child, He whispers to our troubled hearts as He attempts to take us in His arms. *I’ve been with you the whole time.*

Perhaps you’re going through a challenging time right now. Maybe you picked up this book because you know you need a deeper level of trust. Perhaps, like Josh, you’re frantically searching for God in your situation. It’s been a long time since you felt the Father’s love. It’s been years since you’ve experienced His presence.

Well, I have good news for you, my friend. Jesus is with you—right there in the middle of your circumstance. He loves you and wants to show Himself powerful. He wants to open your eyes to His presence and help you shake off the anesthesia of doubt,

proving Himself faithful to the promise He declared through the prophet Jeremiah: “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you” (Jeremiah 29:13–14).

Rather than groping and grasping, trying to live life on your own, reach out and receive the love that Jesus offers. As you relax into His love, you’ll find everything you need—strength for the day, hope for tomorrow, and grace to trust Him more.

No matter what comes your way.