

FREEDOM!

*the gutsy pursuit of
breakthrough
and the
life beyond it*

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1

More Issues than *Vogue*

Truth Your Soul Needs

I dare you to ask, “God, what do you want to do with my ‘More Issues Than *Vogue*’ life?” I pray that you feel this answer stirring in your heart: *He wants to use it.* Those things that broke your sweet heart into a million fragmented pieces were never meant to harden you. Nope, they were meant to transform you. We can harness the hard things we face into the boldness of becoming more like Him.

Stuck girls tell the same stories. Cry about the same things. Dwell on hurts instead of on the wild pursuit of healing. Sometimes it helps to make a road map of where you want to go on this journey. When it comes to issues, it’s important to put a DEAD END sign up and make a commitment to moving forward in life and not dwelling on the past.

Take a few minutes to list three motivations for moving forward:

Soul Destination Map

Fill out this section and create an inventory of the heart to begin your road to breakthrough. This is a time of honesty with yourself about how you are really doing and what is holding you

back. I have learned that calling those things out and bringing them into the light not only brings healing but also creates a partnership with the Lord to work through those things with His help.

I need to make peace with:

I need to stop being so hard on myself about:

I need to cling to:

I need to release:

Reflective Question

What will you be when you are no longer the broken girl?

Gutsy Prayer

Lord,

I have issues and lack wisdom in this area in my life:

James 1:5 says that if I lack wisdom I can ask you for it and that you give it out generously. I thank you for your generous gift and trust that nothing I face takes you by surprise.

I trust in you, Lord, with all my heart. I do not lean on my own understanding. In all my ways, I choose to acknowledge you and know that you alone will make the path before me straight (Proverbs 3:5–6).

In Jesus' name, amen.

2

Gutsy Girls

Reflective Questions

1. What do you need from Jesus?
2. Name the dead weight you are dragging behind you.
3. What are the labels or phrases that have become tangled up with your identity? (Mine, for example: *Recovering broken girl, anxiety, depression, chronic illness, chronic negativity, unable to forgive myself and others, recovering people-pleaser listening to all the wrong voices . . .*)

Gutsy Prayer

Lord,

I have been a woman twisted on the inside and unable to look up (Luke 13:10–13). I have been fixated on my pain instead of trusting you for my healing. I have been afflicted with a long list of things, but I believe your perfect plan for me is healing and freedom! Today I am reaching out to you and ready to receive all that you have for me.

In Jesus' name, amen.

3

Taking It Back

The Same Kind of Stuck

Truth Your Soul Needs from the Life of Joshua

- God's blessing and favor belong to you.
- No one will be able to stand before you or against you. But that doesn't mean they won't try.
- God will be with you. When everyone else walks out on you, God will still be there.
- Your job is to be strong and courageous, to let God be God, and to stay in your lane.
- Follow His Word and you will prosper, but that doesn't mean you won't have problems and that life will be all butterflies and rainbows.

Reflective Questions

1. What hard thing is the Lord going to use for your good and His glory, even if you can't see anything good or glorious in it right now?
2. In what area of your life might a little risk taking open a door?

Gutsy Prayer

Lord,

I am not stuck; I am steadfast. I am ready. I am not emotionally unstable; I am steady and able to handle everything that comes my way because God is with me. I can do all things because you give me strength! (Philippians 4:13).

I will not be held back by the things that have happened to me. I will not dwell on anything but the faithfulness of God and things above (Colossians 3:2). You must have seen something bigger inside of me than I see in myself right now. But I choose to believe that today, right now, I am moving forward and moving on. I am living in the power of breakthrough, and from this I will find new freedom in my everyday life that nothing can stop or hinder.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Hebrews 12:1

4

Battle Cry

When the Sky Is Falling and People Are Cray Cray

Truth Your Soul Needs

I want you to picture something powerful. Imagine each stone of accusation that others tried to throw in your direction falling down at your feet. Now imagine yourself not picking up those stones and collecting them. Imagine yourself walking away set free and loved, with your head held high.

This is our declaration of faith for our breakthrough journey:

If God's Word is true, His Word is true for me.

If His promises are real, then His promises belong to me and are for me.

If His grace is real, His grace covers me.

If He is a God who rescues, He is a God who rescues me.

If He is a God who heals, He wants to heal and mend me.

Reflective Questions

1. What stolen property do you need to reclaim from the enemy?
2. Do you seek sturdy confidence over insecurity? Faith to quiet your loudest fears?

3. Do you need boldness that is bigger than timidity and a ginormous inferiority complex? Security in who God made you to be over identity issues and self-doubt?

Gutsy Prayer

Often the enemy tries to distract us when we are hurting. Our focus is naturally on what hurts and what is causing us pain. One way to place the focus back on God is through praise. And we can praise Him in our prayers. When we worship and thank God for who He is and what He has done and will do for us, we experience a calm well beyond any chaos and an undeniable peace through a changed perspective.

Lord,

I praise you, for you are a sun and a shield around me. You lavish me with grace and withhold no good thing from me as I purpose in my heart to walk upright before you (Psalm 84:11).

Amen.

5

Questions Jesus Asked and Why We Still Need to Ask Them



Reflective Question



What are the things—or who are the people—you have been leaning on instead of trusting Jesus?

Gutsy Prayer

I know listing your personal crutches wasn't easy to do. But you did it. Let's seal this moment with a prayer to help you with what you are feeling right now and keep you moving forward!

Lord,

I come to you ready to lay down my mat and the crutches that I have leaned on. I ask for your help and guidance to move forward in my life by realizing that those things I have clung to have actually kept me from you, not empowered me. I know that you are mighty and able to take care of everything that concerns me (Psalm 138:8). I recognize that my need to control and do things on my own has crippled me.

I am ready to walk in the freedom you have for me. I believe this will become my norm, walking in your power and freedom daily. I lay down my pride. I throw off my weights of doubt and fear to run the race you have called me to (Hebrews 12:1). I praise you for the way you have given me the ability to hear your voice.

I praise you for the weapon of your Word and ask for your courage to wield the sword and root up strongholds in my life. Your Word is alive and active inside of me; sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and judges the thoughts and attitudes of my heart (Hebrews 4:12). Thank you for loving me and setting me free today and always.

In Jesus' name, amen.

6

Freedom from Your Inner Mean Girl

Heart-to-Heart Talk

Take a few minutes to write down five things that you like about yourself. Yes, five.

Now write out a prayer asking God to help you use those five things to honor Him. Take time to thank Him for the gifts He has given you, and ask for new eyes to see yourself as God sees you.

Freedom from our Not-Enough List is calling those feelings out. What are your areas of not enough?

Truth Your Soul Needs

God's love is so unwavering, fulfilling, and completing that we don't have to try to earn it or measure up to it. We simply receive it as grace upon grace upon grace. If you want to silence your inner mean girl, try reminding her of what God says about His love. Nothing about God's love for you is based on your performance; it's based on His character. When Scripture tells us how God loved the church so much that He sacrificed His Son, we are told to love that way, too.

When your inner voice sounds like the enemy instead of like love, call it out and make it shut the heck up. If the voice inside your head is unloving, tell her it's time to play nice and practice real love. This will not be easy for those of you who have been beating yourself up for years, but I believe it's time to correct that voice with one that's worth listening to.

Reflective Questions

1. When have you felt the sting of rejection and questioned your worth?
2. Is it time for you to tune out the noise of the world and quiet yourself before the Lord?

Gutsy Prayer

Lord,

I will praise you because you are good. Your love never fails or runs out (Psalms 136:1). I will listen to your truth instead of the doubts that fill my head, and I will trust you with my emotions. When it's easy to fix my eyes on the problems, I will fix my eyes on you, Sovereign Lord; in you I take refuge (Psalm 141:8).

In Jesus' name, amen.

7

The Mending Mindset

Reclaim Your Role as the Leading Lady

Reflective Questions

1. Are you starring in your life as leading lady, playing a supporting role, or walking through your life as an extra?
2. Do you have an Arthur in your life who cares enough about you to feed you new material? (If you can't identify a person, know that we all have one in Jesus, whose powerful Word provides the script!)
3. What landed you in Stuckville? How do you need to change your thinking about that event, circumstance, or mindset in order to move on?

Gutsy Prayer

Lord,

My heart is weary from feeling stuck. I want to not only take ownership of my story, I want to see your glory in it. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I, for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy (Psalm 61:2–3). I know that you have plans to prosper me and not to harm me, to give me hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). Thank you for the people you have placed in my life to lead me closer to you.

In Jesus' name, amen.

8

The Price of Breakthrough

Truth Your Soul Needs

You, my friend, are a gutsy girl. Sure, it hurts the most before your breakthrough, but the life you long to live is worth the hard work you are doing now. Sometimes your circumstances actually change, releasing you from the pressure you had been experiencing before, but most of the time the real prize of breakthrough is the noticeable change in heart, a lifestyle of walking in freedom that belongs to you. Brave women shared their very personal stories of breakthrough with you. What's your Gutsy Girl story?

Jacob had to wrestle with God and walk with a permanent limp to become Israel. He did it because he trusted God with what he had yet to receive from the Lord. But Jacob refused to let go until he had the blessing he desired most. And that fighting spirit paid off for him, just like it will for us. I believe the key to living out our wildest dreams is having a wild, risky prayer life and a gutsy willingness to fight for it. Praying bold prayers and coming to Christ expectantly will change our hearts and lead us to abundant living.

Reflective Questions

1. What is your Gutsy Girl story?
2. Who could you bless by sharing your story?
3. For what are you willing to wrestle with God?

Gutsy Prayer

Lord,

I want to be a Gutsy Girl and share my story with those who need to hear it most. Teach me how to wrestle for the right things and for the blessings you have for me, like Jacob did. Help me to not let go until I feel the shift in my heart and walk away blessed and provided for.

In Jesus' name, amen.

9

You Are the Catalyst to the
Breakthrough You Are Looking For

Reflective Questions

1. What battle is God training you for?
2. Who will you be if you continue to hide, if you stay stuck?
Who will remain lost along with you?
3. What shame will fall off you when you are truly free?

Gutsy Prayer

Lord,

Your Word says that in you and through faith in you we may approach you with freedom and confidence (Ephesians 3:12). Help me to walk boldly in the confidence you have for me.

I believe that "I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts" (Psalm 119:45). Help me today to seek your ways above my own.

I praise you, for out of my distress I called to you, and you answered me and set me free (Psalm 118:5). You are near to me and hear my requests.

In Jesus' name, amen.

10

Beyond the Breakthrough

Reflective Questions

1. Can you identify with Mary Magdalene? From what has Jesus set you free?
2. Which demons are still dogging you? They are no match for our Lord! “But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe” (Galatians 3:22).
3. What are your small things that God can make much of if you offer them to Him?

Gutsy Prayer

Lord,

You are more than enough, even when I am running on empty. When I am hard-pressed, I can cry out to you, and you will bring me into a spacious place (Psalm 118:5). You are bigger than any box that I can place you in. My feeling of lack, or not enough, could never stop or hinder your faithfulness to me. I'm ready to give you everything I have to offer and live beyond breakthrough to walk in true freedom. You have come so that I have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10). You are the more than my soul longs for. Help me to be set free to be faithfully fruitful like Mary Magdalene.

In Jesus' name, amen.

11

*Abundantly More, Ending Our
Tug-of-War with Joy*

For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: “In returning and rest you will be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”

Isaiah 30:15 NKJV

Name Your Spinning Plates

Your spinning plate could look like a bake sale for the PTA—serving in a role that isn’t connected with your talents, so you serve out of obligation and dread every minute of it. Your spinning plates could be saying yes to everyone who needs something and putting yourself, your family, and your precious sanity on the back burner. A spinning plate is anything that doesn’t fit in this season of your life. List yours here.

Which ones are necessary, as in tied to your home life or work?

Which ones can you remove for now, press pause, and add at a later time?

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28–30

Reflective Questions

1. Do you embrace joy, or fear it? Do you dress-rehearse tragedy?
2. Is staying in the moment difficult for you?
3. Is *your list* the same as *God's list for you*? Can you rest in Him even when all the boxes aren't checked off your list?

Gutsy Prayer

Lord,

You say in your Word to come to you, all who are weary and burdened, and you will give us rest (Matthew 11:28). You give us rest, not more lists. Help me today as I cast all my anxiety and cares on you because you care for me (1 Peter 5:7). Thank you for your steadfast love that never ceases or runs out on me even when I'm worn out. Your mercies never come to an end (Lamentations 3:22).

In Jesus' name, amen.

12

Healing Sisterhood

Reflective Question

My final question for you, beloved: Are you part of a healing community? If not, I pray that you find one and join it!

Gutsy Prayer

Lord,

I pray for my sister reading this prayer. More than anything I want her to know how loved she is and how much this world needs what she has to offer. I pray that this is just the beginning of her Freedom! journey and that you will increase her confidence in you and who you have created her to be. I pray that she will feel you near, know that she is Holy Spirit-empowered because you dwell in her (1 Corinthians 3:16). She is a warrior with a soft heart and hands. She is a royal priesthood, a holy nation, your very own special possession (1 Peter 2:9). Bless her beyond her wildest dreams and awaken her for MORE of you!

In Jesus' name, amen.

Notes

Chapter 3: Taking It Back: The Same Kind of Stuck

1. Jack W. Hayford, ed., *Spirit-Filled Life Bible NKJV, A Personal Study Bible Unveiling All God's Fullness In All God's Word* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 306.

Chapter 6: Freedom from Your Inner Mean Girl

1. Charles Swindoll, *Encourage Me: Caring Words for Heavy Hearts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 72.

2. Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead* (New York: Avery, 2012), 10.

3. Holley Gerth, *Fiercehearted: Live Fully, Love Bravely* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2017), 69.

4. William Congreve, *The Mourning Bride*, 1697.

Chapter 7: The Mending Mindset: Reclaim Your Role as the Leading Lady

1. *The Holiday*, directed by Nancy Meyers (Los Angeles: Columbia Pictures, 2006), DVD.

2. *The Holiday*, DVD.

3. "Gumption," Macmillan Dictionary, <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/gumption>.

Chapter 8: The Price of Breakthrough

1. Becky Shaffer, "Addressing Those On the Front Line of Our Failing Child Welfare System," God's Grateful Girl's Blog, May 14, 2011, www.godsgratefulgirl.wordpress.com/2011/05/14.

2. Melissa Blair, "A Letter to My Sixteen Year Old Self on Her Abortion," *Melissablair.net*, <http://melissablair.net/letter-sixteen-year-old-self-abortion/>.

Chapter 9: You Are the Catalyst to the Breakthrough You Are Looking For

1. *Wonder Woman*, directed by Patty Jenkins (Burbank, CA: Warner Brothers, 2017), DVD.

Chapter 10: Beyond the Breakthrough

1. Holley Gerth, *You're Loved No Matter What: Freeing Your Heart from the Need to Be Perfect* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2015), 11.

Chapter 11: Abundantly More, Ending our Tug-of-War with Joy

1. "Dr. Brené Brown On Joy: It's Terrifying," *SuperSoul Sunday*, OWN Network, March 17, 2013, <https://www.dialogues.org/interview/03/17/2013/dr-brene-brown-on-joy-it-s-terrifying-supersoul-sunday-oprah-winfrey-network/1483231368>.

2. Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are* (Center City, MN: Hazelden, 2010), 79.

3. "Brené Brown Breaks Down Common Types of Armor," *Oprah's Lifeclass*, Oprah Winfrey Network, October 6, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ht5dDInnTzM>.

4. Brown, *Oprah's Lifeclass*.