

BLIND

FEAR

FAITH

CHAOS

PEACE

SHADE

LIGHT

FAITH

NICOLE T. TERREL

NICOLE T. TERREL

Blind Faith

From fear to faith, chaos to peace, shade to light

Copyright © 2026 by Nicole T. Terrel

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise without written permission from the publisher. It is illegal to copy this book, post it to a website, or distribute it by any other means without permission.

Nicole T. Terrel asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

Nicole T. Terrel has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

First edition

ISBN: 979-8-9948783-1-6

This book was professionally typeset on Reedsy.

Find out more at reedsy.com

A SPECIAL NOTE

To my sister. I see you.

I see your courage, your faith, and the way you step forward even when the path is not clear. Watching you move bravely gave me the courage to finally say yes—to trust God and to share my own story.

You are what brave looks like, and your example helped me believe that I could do this too. Thank you for inspiring me, supporting me, and walking beside me. I love you!

— Nikki

Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	ii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	iv
Introduction	1
1 Setback to Comeback	7
2 No More Milk	22
3 Battle Tested	29
4 Heart Connections	46
5 Valuable Faith Lessons	56
6 Conclusion	64
<i>About the Author</i>	68

Foreword

When I think about my wife, Nicole, the first words that come to mind are strength, faith, and resilience. I have had the honor of watching her life unfold up close, from the days when storms felt relentless to the moments when God's peace carried her through. What I have seen is nothing short of remarkable. Nicole has a passion for God that has grown through every trial she has faced. That passion has become her purpose, and her story is proof that God can take broken pieces and turn them into a masterpiece.

I have witnessed nights when fear tried to have the last word, and I have seen mornings when Nicole chose prayer over panic. She does not just talk about blind faith, she lives it. I have watched her transform setbacks into comebacks, and I have seen how her faith has not only sustained her but has also strengthened me, our family, and everyone around her. She believes God when circumstances scream the opposite, and she clings to His promises when others might give up.

These pages are not theory; they are testimony. It is a record of God's faithfulness in the valleys and His glory on the mountaintops. Nicole's words are transparent and honest, but they are also filled with hope. She shows that trials are not wasted when placed in God's hands, and that what looks like the end can become the beginning of something greater than we could have ever imagined.

As you read this book, I encourage you to open your heart the way she has opened hers. Allow her journey to remind you that faith is not blind in the sense of being lost. It is blind in the sense of trusting the God who sees what we cannot. May her story inspire you to keep believing, keep pressing, and keep walking, even when the road ahead feels uncertain.

I am proud to call her my wife, and I am grateful that her story will now encourage countless others. Nicole is living proof that passion, when surrendered to God, becomes purpose, and that every trial can truly turn into triumph.

— Landon Terrel

Acknowledgments

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to my family, friends, and church community who have walked with me through seasons of joy and trial. Each of you has played a part in shaping my journey and strengthening my faith in ways that words can barely express.

To my grandmother, my beloved Nana, though you are now in heaven, your presence still fills my heart. You were the matriarch of our family; the steady prayer warrior whose faith built the foundation we all stand on today. I can still hear your voice reading Scripture, still feel the peace that filled the room when you prayed. You taught me to love God wholeheartedly, to lean on His promises, and to walk by faith even when I could not see the way. Your legacy of devotion, wisdom, and unconditional love endures through your children, grandchildren, and future generations. I thank God for the light you were in this world and the example you left behind; a true woman of faith whose life testified that God is good, and His word never fails.

To my mother, thank you for carrying the same torch of faith. You showed me what it means to trust God through every season. Your strength, your prayers, and your unwavering belief in His plan helped me understand who God is, not just through words, but through your life. Together, you and Nana gave me the gift of knowing that faith is not a concept but rather a

way of living, breathing, and believing in God's perfect will and timing.

To my husband, thank you for being a man of God and a man of faith. Your strength, humility, and devotion to God's Word inspire me daily. You strive to live out the truth of Scripture and have shown me the beauty of being equally yoked in Christ. You are a constant reminder that when we wait on God, He gives us His absolute best. Your love reflects His patience, faithfulness, and endurance.

To my children, you are my greatest blessings and daily reminders of God's grace. Watching you grow, dream, and learn how to walk in your own faith is a fulfilling part of my life. Each of you carries a piece of the faith legacy passed down through our family, and I know that God's hand is upon your lives in ways beyond what I can imagine.

To my readers, thank you for opening your hearts to this testimony of God's faithfulness. My prayer is that these words remind you that God's promises still stand, His love never fails, and that every act of faith, big or small, moves mountains.

Above all, dear Lord, I thank you for being the author and finisher of my faith. Every page of this book is for Your glory.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Introduction

Imagine being in a place where anxiety feels suffocating and far too familiar because the constant worry within your mind plays like a record on repeat. Have you ever faced a decision that you knew could change the course of your life? For better or for worse.

You find yourself consumed with thoughts about the unknown, wondering how your choices will align with or derail your purpose. Or have you felt drawn away from your calling due to feeling less than what God created you to be? In other words, finding it difficult to trust without knowing the full scope of your assignment in Christ.

God does not beat us over the head with purpose, sometimes revelation forms in a significant, but subtle manner. It is in these moments when uncertainty is loud, and clarity is silent that faith becomes more than a Sunday sermon. It becomes the bridge between where you are and where God is leading you. For me, that bridge has evolved into moments of blind faith.

Blind faith: to me, is complete trust in God's plan even when nothing He tells you in your spirit makes sense. It is having confidence in His promises even when there is no visible proof they will happen. I grew up hearing scriptures about faith, especially Hebrews 11:1 which says, *"Faith is the reality of what we hope for, the proof of what we don't see"* (CEB). This is a true lived experience and it was not until I walked through my own

storms that the verse became real.

Blind faith means holding on to God's Word when circumstances scream the opposite. It means trusting His goodness when prayers have yet to be answered the way we expected or within the time frame we envisioned. My faith did not grow in safety or certainty; it grew in the fires of trials, gut-wrenching heartbreak that stole my breath, and moments so heavy I had no choice but to lean completely on Him.

Blind faith is not about walking without direction; it is walking with confidence that God sees the road ahead even when you cannot. Each time I chose to trust Him in the dark, my relationship with Christ deepened. This journey with God did not begin with a big bang; it began with a whisper. The whisper was simple: "Just believe." Believe that God is who He says He is. Believe that Jesus died for me to save me, not because I was perfect, but because I was loved. That small step of simply believing was the seed of my faith. Early in my faith journey, I did not know how much it would grow, or how many storms I would have to endure, but looking back now, I can see that whisper was the beginning of everything. Over the years, that seed has been watered by tears, stretched through trials, and strengthened in seasons of loss and uncertainty. My faith has not always been loud, but as I began to hear His voice more clearly, I also began to see His hand more often and recognize His presence even in my lowest valleys. I kept coming back to that first whisper... Just believe!

I can recall the first major storm in my life at twenty-two years old staring down the barrel of a gun. I could hear his voice, the father of my two children breaking and trembling. My adrenaline was pumping while he was screaming, he loved me after dragging me through the front yard of a stranger's

home. Love and violence from the same mouth left me both traumatized and confused. It felt like a nightmare I could not wake from and in that moment, fear was real but so was God. I did not know it at the time, but God had already dispatched angels in the form of complete strangers. The neighbors next door saw the danger unfolding, came out armed, and stood between me and the threat. They motioned for me to seek shelter inside their home. In my most vulnerable moment, God used people who did not know me to rescue me. They did not have to help but they did, and I knew then that God's hands were all over my life. That day stopped me in my tracks and forced me into deep, soul-searching reflection.

In the days that followed, the adrenaline wore off but the weight of fear from what could have happened, and the realization of how far my life had spiraled pressed in even harder. I repeated that moment in my mind; the gun, the screaming, the strangers watching from their homes. I felt ashamed that my life had unraveled to the point where love and violence came from the same mouth. Nights were restless, and the constant sense of being unsafe and unprotected left my entire being unsettled. I did not know how to explain to my parents just how far things had spiraled. In that regard, I did not want to admit that fear and toxic love, which is not love at all, became normal. I felt torn between two voices: one shouting I was broken beyond repair, the other whispering that I still belonged to God.

I understood with absolute clarity that God wanted more for me than this. He wanted me to expect more than an unholy relationship and more than surviving from one chaotic day to the next. God desired for me to live and to thrive in the positions he had prepared for my life. I knew that I had to trust Him and surrender my will for His. When I reflect on the

emotions of that day, the chaos, the fear, the uncertainty; my mind returns to the unshakable peace God wrapped around me in the middle of it all. It was not the kind of peace that comes when everything is calm. It was the kind that surpasses all understanding and the stillness that holds you steady when the world around you is shaking apart. Isaiah 54: 10-11 says, *“The mountains may shift, and the hills may be shaken, but my faithful love won’t shift from you, and my covenant of peace won’t be shaken, says the Lord, the one who pities you. Suffering one, storm-tossed, uncomforted, look, I am setting your gemstones in silvery metal and your foundations with sapphires,”* (CEB). That day, I was the “storm-tossed” woman Isaiah described; unsteady, hurting, and unsure how I would survive.

However, I began to hear God speaking over me telling me that His faithful love would not shift. His covenant of peace would not be shaken. Even in my mess, God was laying down a new foundation for my life which was one adorned with His promises, not my past. What I learned in that moment was that God’s peace did not remove the storm, but it held me steady inside it. That day, He proved that His love and peace are not fragile, not temporary, and not dependent on my circumstances. They are anchored in who He is, which is faithful, unchanging, and endlessly merciful.

Blind faith has done more than strengthen my trust in God; it has transformed how I live, love, and serve. It moved me from simply believing in Him to depending on Him, and this dependence has changed everything. This is my testimony of how trusting in God, even without the full picture, has brought me peace in storms, purpose in pain, and a closeness with Christ that is more precious than gold.

Before you read the prayer below, I invite you to pause and

reflect on your own journey. Think about moments in your life when God asked you to trust Him without having all the answers or times when fear was loud, clarity was absent, and faith was the only bridge forward. Perhaps you are in that season right now, standing in the middle of rubble, unsure how God could be building something good from it. Romans 8:28 says, *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,”* (KJV).

As I prepared to write the prayer below, I found myself reflecting on my own journey. Hopefully these words will meet you in a similar place. Take a minute to think about moments in your life when God asked you to trust Him without having all the answers or times when fear was loud, clarity was absent, and faith was the only bridge forward. Perhaps you are in that season right now, standing in the middle of rubble, unsure how God could be building something good from it and as you read this prayer, allow God to speak to you personally. I pray you let His voice rise above regret, shame, and fear, and remind you that His kindness has not departed from you. Wherever you feel broken, believe that He is laying new foundations, and wherever you feel unworthy, receive His righteousness and peace.

Faith Awakening Prayer

Lord Jesus, just as You spoke to me through Isaiah 54, please speak now to the heart of every reader. Let them hear Your voice over the noise of regret, shame, and fear; the voice that says, *“My kindness shall not depart from you... and I will lay your foundations with sapphires.”* Lord, remind us that our storms do not cancel our future. You are building something beautiful

BLIND FAITH

in us, even in places that feel broken. Teach us to trust Your “I will” more than our “I can’t.”

Where we see rubble, let us see foundations. Where we feel unworthy clothe us in Your righteousness. Awaken in us the certainty that we are chosen, called, and dearly loved not because we are perfect, but because You are. Jesus, we step into Your covenant of peace today. We choose blind faith; the faith that follows when the road is unclear, the faith that believes Your hand is on us even in the valley, and the faith that knows You are working all things together for our good. Seal this awakening in our hearts. Let us rise from these pages with eyes lifted, hearts steady and lives ready to glorify You.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

1

Setback to Comeback

“to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes...”

— Isaiah 61:3

I was nineteen years old when I found out I was pregnant with my first child. It was one of those moments when time slows and brands itself into your memory. I remember the anxiety I felt as if it had just happened yesterday. My heart was pounding, my mind racing, and the weight of reality settled on me like a blanket I could not throw off. I was still in college, unmarried, and completely unprepared for the path ahead.

My feelings were mixed with nervousness and excitement about having a baby, but also uncertainty about what providing for and raising a child would look like with a man I knew, deep down, was not my forever love.

Consequently, the hardest battle was not just the circumstances around me, but it was the war going on within myself. The overwhelming feeling of deferred dreams and future caused

me to be anxious and consumed with what motherhood would even look like. The constant thoughts of walking away from my education and everything I was working towards left me paralyzed with fear. I was carrying a heavy weight that I could not speak about because I was terrified of being a disappointment to my family, and especially to my parents. Honestly, hearing the doctor say, “You’re pregnant,” was not as nerve-wrecking as telling my parents about my new reality and awaiting their reaction.

I will never forget the day I told my mother. My voice was soft and shaky as the words tumbled out in a whisper: “Mom, I’m pregnant.” Her initial reaction was silence, and it was deafening. When she finally spoke, it was a simple, “Oh... Nicole...” gentle but so heavy I felt the weight of her love and the burden of worry settle on me all at once. Unlike that moment, I could not bring myself to tell my father directly because we did not have that kind of relationship. He is a man of few words but extraordinarily strong opinions. I knew with every fiber in me that he was going to be deeply disappointed. So, I leaned on my mother to relay my pregnancy news. Even though I did not hear his reaction firsthand, I could still feel the weight of his silence and the distance between us. He could not speak to me for a while after hearing this news, but he wrote me a letter expressing how disappointed he was in the choices I made that led to this situation. My mother, still processing her own hurt, encouraged me to consider all my options. Her words came from a place of love, but to me, they felt like an invitation toward a path I knew in my heart I could not take. Really there was only one option, and that was to have my baby and adjust my life accordingly. Still, these moments made me feel lower than I had ever felt.

My parents had sacrificed so much to give me opportunities, and here I was messing it all up before their eyes. I told myself; it is always me; I am always the one who was creating chaos and taking the harder road; as well as, always letting people down. Shame clung to me like a second skin. And as if the emotional weight were not already heavy enough, my thoughts kept circling back to the same fear—raising a child with someone I knew, deep down, was not right for me. What made it even harder was knowing that, just before I found out I was pregnant, I had finally reached a breaking point in that toxic relationship. It was a quiet but firm resolve that enough was enough. I was exhausted by the constant back-and-forth, the lies, the chaos, and the emotional toll of being tied to something that was slowly draining the life out of me. I knew I could not keep living in survival mode. I was far too young to be carrying that kind of stress in my spirit. I was desperate and I just wanted peace.

When I returned to college for my sophomore year after summer break, I packed up more than my belongings. I packed up my hope for new beginnings in singleness. I was determined that this semester would be different. I longed for a season where I could be laser-focused on books and lectures, freely, only for a while, from the weight of relationship dysfunction. But not long after classes began, my body started sending me signals I could not ignore. Nausea, fatigue, and heaviness that I could not shake. I tried to ignore these feelings, but my body would not allow it. Being pregnant was the last thing on my mind. I honestly thought I was sick, so I went to the on-campus clinic for a check-up. After a blood test, I received confirmation of what my spirit had already whispered: that life was growing inside me and that my path was about to change.

I could almost hear the whispers and negative thoughts in my head, like she ruined her future, or she is just a statistic now. Thoughts that I was going to be an unwed mother and college dropout collided with my dreams like a head-on crash. One moment, I was clinging to the hope of a carefree semester; the next, I was staring at a reality that felt heavier than I could carry. Instead of the freedom I craved, I was faced with the responsibility of motherhood and not with the kind of partner who made me feel safe or supported. That tension left me paralyzed between who I wanted to become and the choices I had already made. I wanted so badly to believe that God could still use me. I had grown up hearing different sermons about God making ways out of no way and how he has a purpose for everyone's life, but at nineteen, all I could think was, how could this be part of it?

My heart wrestled with even more questions: Would my parents still be proud of me? Would my future always be defined by my mistakes? Could God still write beauty into a story that felt broken from the start? Let me pause here to be clear—the mistake was never the beautiful baby growing inside my belly. She was, and still is, one of the greatest blessings of my life. The mistake I am referring to was the act of sin that led me down this path. I understood that choices carry consequences, and I knew that much of what I was facing was the result of my own decisions.

I knew I needed to take accountability for my actions, but instead of finding freedom in that truth, my sense of self-worth sank even lower. It became difficult to believe that God could still use me when I was not living the way a Christian woman should. I loved God, but I also knew I was not fully committed to surrendering my life to His will. I was straddling the line—

holding on to pieces of the world while saying I wanted His way.

And yet, it was in that very tension that God began planting seeds of greater faith. He reminded me, gently and persistently, that my setbacks were not the end of my story, but the soil He would use to grow something greater within me. In the space between disappointment and destiny, I began to see how God's love could hold me steady when I could not hold myself. Looking back now, I understand that this was only the beginning—a series of tests that would shape me, stretch me, and form the woman I am today.

Fast forward three years—I was twenty-two, facing daily challenges that made it feel like I was moving from one chaotic scene to the next. I was battling depression and low self-esteem, which, in hindsight, may have been the very reason I remained in such a tumultuous relationship. During that season, my life unraveled quickly. I dropped out of college, took any job I could find to support myself and my firstborn, lived paycheck to paycheck, and moved more times than I can count. I had my second child, and sadly, home began to feel less like a place of peace and more like a space where love was often clouded by stress and drama. I was so insecure and broken that I constantly questioned my worth. I found myself wrestling with questions like:

- *What labels have I accepted about myself that God never gave me?*
- *Whose voice am I listening to right now—God's truth, my fear, or someone else's expectations?*
- *What step of surrender am I avoiding because I do not feel "worthy enough" yet?*

- *Lord, where have I allowed my past to define my worth instead of Your promise?*

I carried the quiet ache of believing I had missed God's best for me. However, during it all, I could still hear God's voice calling me to surrender to His will. God was gently telling me to let go of the shame, pain, and confusion and trust that everything happening to me was a part of his divine plan. Romans 8:28 says, "*We know all things work together for the good of them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,*" (KJV).

It can be hard sometimes to believe that "all things," work together for good, but all means ALL. I had to shift my thinking and align with God's word which meant that even the mess I created would also be turned into good. And again, ALL means ALL.

Slowly but surely, I began to embrace God's Word, and He started transforming my mind. Still, there were days when I could not imagine how my mistakes could lead to anything good. I longed for a stable home, a loving partner, and a future that would make my children proud. Even though my reality looked nothing like the vision in my heart, God continued the work He had begun—renewing my mind and cleansing my heart, strengthening me spiritually along the way. That transformation did not start until I made the decision to surrender to Him. These scriptures became my anchor during that shift, steadying me as something new was stirring in my spirit:

- "*I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.*" —1 Corinthians 15:31 (KJV)
- "*And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let*

him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.
—Luke 9:23 (KJV)

- *“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”* —Psalm 51:10 (KJV)

I became more focused and more determined to walk with God. And even though being a single mother was difficult, I was ready to receive more of what He had planned for my life. I knew that before I could ever experience a healthy, God-centered marriage, I would have to let go of what was breaking me. The toxic relationship I had entered at seventeen had drained me emotionally and spiritually. I was far too young to understand what true love really was, and this certainly was not a biblical picture of love. Back then, the highs felt intoxicating, and the lows felt normal—like I was trapped on a roller coaster that would not let me off.

I told myself I was just “crazy in love.” But the truth eventually became impossible to ignore. What I was calling love was stealing my joy, killing my spirit, and destroying my future (*John 10:10*)—and anything that produces that kind of fruit is not of God. When I became a mother, the stakes felt even higher. I convinced myself that staying was best for my children because I wanted them to grow up in a two-parent household, just as I had. But deep down, I knew that holding our family together under those conditions was not God’s best for me—or for them. My heart longed for a biblical kind of love—the kind that mirrors Christ’s sacrifice and faithfulness. Yet my choices reflected fear and compromise, not the Proverbs 31-woman God was calling me to become.

“Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies,” —Proverbs 31:10 (KJV).

I prayed for God to change the man, when in reality, God was trying to change me. He kept showing me that I was living in a light-and-dark situation (*2 Corinthians 6:14*) unequally yoked and slowly drifting away from Him. At first, I ignored the signs. But the longer I stayed, the more I compromised my relationship with God. The instability, the spiritual wickedness, and the emotional pain became unbearable, yet my feelings were still tangled in what I believed to be love. Also, I was becoming increasingly tired of doing everything alone. I was the provider and the nurturer, the homemaker, and the housekeeper. I wore every hat, carried every burden, and still tried to smile through the exhaustion for the sake of my kids. It was hard enough to try to be everything they needed me to be, but even harder while holding on to a relationship that God wanted me to end. The more I poured into keeping us together, the emptier I felt inside. I continued to pray countless prayers for God to help me see beyond my feelings, because my feelings told me I was not worthy of anything better. My insecurities only allowed me to see my flaws and imperfections, not the beauty and strength God was forming on the inside of me. Eventually, I realized that the same God who delivers us from danger can also deliver us from the grip of our own negative feelings and emotions. And now it was time to get back to the light which is in Christ Jesus; *"...of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light,"* —1 Peter 2:9 (KJV).

Once I surrendered and trusted that God could free me from my feelings of loss and failure, I began to feel strength rising in me that I did not believe I had. That strength grew into courage, and that courage became the key that finally unlocked the door to my freedom. God designed physical intimacy to

be sacred, meant to bind a husband and wife together. When bodies connect, spirits connect too, and those spiritual bonds—often called soul ties—can make it incredibly difficult to walk away, even from relationships that are unhealthy or unholy. What I was fighting was not just emotion; it was attachment at a soul level, which explained why letting go felt like loss, even when staying was destroying me. One day, as I cried out in prayer, God reminded me through His Word that His faithful love would not shift, even when everything else felt unstable, *“The mountains may shift, and the hills may be shaken, but my faithful love won’t shift from you,”* —Isaiah 54:10 (CEB). In that moment, I knew He saw beyond my brokenness. He was laying down new foundations where my life had been shattered, and with each step of obedience, my courage to walk away continued to grow. My sister’s words — “I don’t think this is who God has for you” — echoed in my heart until one day, I believed them too. It took blind faith — complete trust in God’s Word and His plan to finally let go and stop trying to decide my future for myself. I had to trust the One who already held my life in His hands and believe that all things were truly working together for my good. Deciding to leave an unholy relationship required more than strength; it required God to break the soul tie that had kept me bound. And before I knew it, after years of back and forth, chaos, and torment, I was ready, and I was done.

God gave me the courage and the peace to finally say, no more. In the same regard, stepping out of that relationship was not the end of my story; it was the beginning of an entirely new chapter of singleness that tested and refined me. Parts of me needed to die—not physically, but spiritually—meaning I had to surrender the patterns and attachments that kept me

from receiving the fullness of what God had planned. For the first time in years, I was not defined by someone else's moods, opinions, or demands. Yet ironically, the silence of singleness became its own kind of battle. Loneliness whispered lies like you will never be loved the way you desire or that I had missed my chance at real connection. Still, God was using that season to rebuild me from the inside out. I learned how to manage my household with joy instead of resentment. I learned how to pray not just for rescue but for direction. And I began to see myself through God's eyes instead of through someone else's approval. I was still being refined, so I do not want to give the illusion that this was a picture-perfect season. Honestly, it felt like spiritual boot camp. It reminded me of Romans 7:21, "*When I would do good, evil is present with me,*" (KJV). And there was a definite warring going on against the law of my mind and within my members (Romans 7:23). It was challenging, stretching, and often humbling. Yet somehow, in the middle of it all, I found myself enjoying time with just me and my babies.

I had days where I was ready to conquer the world, knowing that God was guiding, protecting, and covering us. I could sense Him healing the hidden places of my heart, restoring my sense of worth, and teaching me that my identity was rooted in Him and not in any relationship. Finally, I was beginning to genuinely believe that God could and would grant me the desires of my heart in His perfect timing, if I continued to seek Him first, (Matthew 6:33).

And then.... God blew my mind!

About five years later, God showed up in a way that completely caught me off guard. When I met my husband, Landon, at

church, there was an overwhelming sense of joy and excitement mixed with a deep, unexplainable peace. It was not fleeting butterflies or emotional infatuation; it was the kind of excitement that comes when something feels both surprising and divinely ordered. This felt like God answering prayers I had almost stopped saying aloud. One of the first things he ever said to me was so bold it stopped me in my tracks. With confidence and a smile, he said, “Tennessee can’t have you.” At the time, it sounded playful, but I would later realize how prophetic those words truly were.

Let me explain. In that season, I was a single mother deeply rooted in my faith, focused on raising my children and preparing for what I believed was our next chapter which involved moving to Tennessee. Job leads had opened doors to interviews and multiple trips, and everything was aligning. I was convinced God was calling us to a fresh start in a new state. In many ways, I wanted to run from the pain of my past, believing distance would bring healing. But then came Landon.

During a singles ministry gathering, I casually mentioned my plans to move, unaware that Landon was listening closely. The next time he saw me, he looked me in the eyes and said, “Tennessee can’t have you.” It was just one sentence, but it carried unexpected weight. It caught me off guard, made me laugh, and lingered in my thoughts long after the moment passed. That single line became a spark—and, in hindsight, a divine interruption. Five months after meeting Landon, we went on our first date and never looked back.

After our first date, I knew something was different. Not because everything was perfect, but because everything felt aligned. There was no confusion, no emotional turbulence, no need to perform or prove my worth. What I felt instead

was clarity and a quiet knowing that this connection was not accidental but carefully designed by God. My heart was overwhelmed with gratitude, especially after everything I had endured. After a brief courtship, Landon asked me to be his wife, my heart overflowed with gratitude. I was not just thankful for him; I was overwhelmed by what God had done. After all I had endured, God had not just restored me, but had rewritten my story with intention, healing, and grace. God showed me that His promises are true, and I did not have to settle for counterfeit love. Here was a man after God's own heart, a man who prayed with me, dreamed with me, and loved me in a way that mirrored Christ's love for the church. This was the biblical kind of love I had prayed for during my darkest seasons. Landon did not just notice me; he truly saw me. He valued my story, honored my past, and loved me in ways that reflected the heart of Christ. For the first time, love did not feel like something I had to fight for or suffer through—simply put, it felt safe, steady, and life-giving.

Ephesians 5:25 says, "*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,*" (KJV). That verse came alive in the way Landon cherished me and led us with humility. In that moment, I knew without a doubt that I was ready to step into the role of his wife, not just because I loved him, but because I recognized the hand of God authoring our story. Landon's proposal was not just a personal milestone; it was a divine confirmation that God was faithful to answer the prayers I had whispered when I wondered if true love was possible. For the first time, I experienced what it felt like to be equally yoked, building something with a man who was my partner in every sense of the word. For years, I had walked with someone who was not in agreement with the spirit of God,

and the constant pulling in opposite directions left me broken and tired. But now, God had aligned me with a man where we shared faith, vision, and a desire to honor the Lord with our lives. We pray together, dream together, and work together knowing that a three-fold cord is not easily broken (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

This special moment in time was proof to me that when we have faith and wait on God, He gives us not just what we want, but what we truly need. God used this transition in my life from toxic to healthy and from broken to whole, to teach me that nothing can compare to what He has planned when we trust Him fully. I learned that finding love as a single mother was not about luck or chance; it was about surrender. It was about letting God write my love story and believing that once He joined us together, nothing could separate what He had ordained. Looking back now, I can see it clearly. The test was set up for the testimony. God did not just give me the blessing of a healthy marriage; He prepared me to receive it. He showed me that His plans were never derailed by my detours. My surrender to His will was the key that unlocked the doorway to reaching the desires of my heart.

Overall, here is what I learned:

- *I did not truly understand God as a healer until I had been broken.*
- *I did not know Him as a restorer until something in my life had been lost.*
- *I could not call Him faithful until I had watched Him keep His promises against all odds.*

Today, when I say I was set back to come back, I say it as a witness. The size of your struggle is often the size of the testimony God is preparing to release in your life. If you are in the middle of your own storm right now, take heart. God has not brought you this far to leave you. You may not see the victory yet, but it is already written. And when you come out, you will be stronger, wiser, and more certain than ever that the God who kept you during different storms, will be the same God who keeps you covered all the days of your life.

Devotional:

Sometimes our setbacks feel final. They whisper lies that we have gone too far, messed up too much, or missed our chance at a better life. But with God, no setback is wasted. Every closed door, every delayed response, every path detoured can become part of a greater plan when we place it back into His hands. The same God who spoke the world into existence can speak new life into your broken dreams. The same God who raised the dead can resurrect what you thought was over. He is not limited by your past, your mistakes, or the opinions of others. Your comeback is not about proving people wrong; it is about proving God right. It is about walking in the truth that you are loved, chosen, and called for a purpose that cannot be canceled. The greater the test, the greater the victory, and the greater your story will point others back to the One who carried you through.

Let this scripture be your anchor today as you continue to read, *“The Lord will fight for you. You just keep still.”* Exodus 14:14 (CEB)

Prayer:

SETBACK TO COMEBACK

Lord Jesus, I thank You for every person reading these words right now. You know the battles they have faced, the tears they have cried, and the moments when they felt too heavy to keep going. But Lord, I declare today that their setback is not the end of their story; it is the beginning of their comeback. Remind them that You are the God who restores, redeems, and makes all things new. Heal the wounds from the past and replace fear with faith. Give them the courage to trust you fully, even when they cannot see the next step. Let them know, deep in their spirit, that you are fighting for them and working all things together for their good. Strengthen their hearts to believe again. Encourage their minds to dream again. Empower their spirit to stand again. And as they move forward, let their testimony shine as a light for others who need hope.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

No More Milk

“For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age...”

—Hebrews 5:13–14 (KJV)

When I look back over my early walk with God, I can still hear the prayers of the woman I was becoming — sincere, emotional, and rooted in a faith that was still learning how to stand.

- *“Lord, bless me with this job.”*
- *“Lord, make this relationship work.”*
- *“Lord, bless me with more money.”*

Those prayers were not wrong. They were simply the place where I started. They were prayers of milk and faith asking God to adjust my life to my comfort instead of adjusting me to His will. At that stage, I did not yet understand that real

spiritual growth does not begin when circumstances change, but when the heart does. After surviving setback and witnessing God's faithfulness in bringing me through, He began inviting me into something deeper. Survival was no longer the lesson, maturity was. Paul said it with wisdom that still speaks across generations; *"When I was a child, I spoke like a child, reasoned like a child, and thought like a child. But when I became an adult, I put an end to childish things."* — 1 Corinthians 13:11 (CEB).

There is a kind of spiritual childhood that is necessary when we first come to Christ and there is another kind that can keep us stuck if we stay there too long. God is patient, but He is also purposeful. He does not just rescue us; He matures us. And maturity requires trust — the kind that grows steady and deep through surrender. As I grew, God gently revealed something uncomfortable but necessary: my relationship with Him was centered more on what I wanted Him to do than on who He was calling me to be. I wanted answers without obedience, clarity without commitment, and miracles without maturity. I had not yet learned that the unseen work God was doing in me mattered just as much — if not more — than what I was asking Him to do for me.

One of the most powerful shifts in my spiritual growth came when God began to teach me the importance of trusting Him even when I could not see how things would work out. Trust in God is not built in calm seasons; it is forged in the quiet places where answers are delayed, prayers are stretched, and where God's silence requires us to lean on His character rather than His clarity. This is where maturity takes root. In the beginning, the unseen felt intimidating. I thought faith meant receiving quick confirmations and timely answers. But God began showing me that mature faith is not built on visible assurances,

but on confidence in His nature. It is built on knowing that because He is faithful, His timing is faithful; because He is good, His delays are good; because He is sovereign, His “not yet” is protection, not punishment. This is why Hebrews 11:1 became more than a scripture to me. *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* (KJV).

The more I sat with that truth, the more it reshaped my understanding of faith. The unseen is not empty. The unseen is where God plants answers, prepares breakthroughs, and forms us into vessels capable of carrying that for which we have been praying. Maturity is learning to trust that even when life seems stalled, you can pray and turn your attention to God, who is always working on your behalf. I began to realize that spiritual maturity did not happen all at once. For me, it grew through small daily choices to trust God, obey Him, and to stay anchored in His Word even when it felt uncomfortable. In my own walk, I began to notice the difference between what I now call ‘milk’ and ‘meat.’

In prayer, milk sounded like, ‘Lord, make my life easier,’ while meat became, ‘Lord, strengthen me to endure this trial.’ In study, milk was skimming verses for comfort, but meat was sitting with Scripture long enough for it to challenge me. In relationships, milk was cutting people off when they hurt me, but meat was learning to forgive and set boundaries with grace. And in service, milk was showing up when it was convenient, but meat was saying yes even when it stretched me. These shifts did not happen overnight but were slow, quiet changes God made in me as I grew.

I had clear ideas about how my life should unfold: finish college in my twenties, marry before having children, and build a picture-perfect family. But none of those timelines happened

the way I imagined. I made decisions based on what felt right in the moment instead of seeking God's counsel. My prayers became a running list of requests — things I wanted God to fix, change, or bless. My emotions ruled my choices, and as a result, I often found myself disappointed, discouraged, and questioning whether God could still use me. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, I did not understand what it meant to be chosen by God. I could not see that He had called me long before I ever recognized His hand over my life. Even when I stumbled, even when I ignored His direction, He was still patiently shaping me. Trials were no longer just something to survive. They became building blocks of spiritual maturity. Every test I endured and overcame through Christ became a lesson that moved me from the milk of spiritual infancy to the solid food of the Word.

As I grew, my prayers began to change. Instead of telling God what to do, I began asking Him what He wanted me to do. My words shifted to, *“Lord, let Your will be done in my life. Strengthen me to endure each trial. Teach me how to serve others the way You have served me.”* Before my prayers began to change in language, they first changed in posture. There was a season when I stopped asking God to fix relationships and started asking Him to fix me. I had to come out of an unhealthy relationship that was emotionally draining and rooted in compromise. That relationship taught me what desperation feels like — loving from a place of fear instead of faith and striving instead of surrendering. When that season ended, I made a quiet but firm decision: I was done asking God to bless what He had not authored. I stopped praying for a man and started praying for alignment. I asked God to cleanse my heart, renew my mind, and teach me how to please Him first — even if that

meant walking alone for a while. My prayers became less about companionship and more about obedience. Less about timing and more about trust. That season of surrender changed everything.

Devotional:

Spiritual maturity is not the finish line we cross; it is a posture we grow into. Just as a child does not wake up one morning fully grown, our walk with Christ deepens gradually — shaped by obedience, surrender, and trust over time. Growth happens quietly, often in seasons where nothing seems to be changing on the outside, but God is doing deep work within. Take a moment to reflect on your own journey. Where did your faith begin? What did your prayers sound like in your earliest seasons with God? Many of us start with prayers rooted in need — asking God to fix, provide, or rescue. Those prayers are not wrong; they are often necessary. But as we grow, God lovingly invites us to move beyond simply asking Him to change our circumstances and into allowing Him to change us. Consider this:

- *Are there areas in your life where God may be calling you to grow deeper?*
- *Are there habits, thought patterns, or relationships that once sustained you but no longer serve the season you are in now?*

Maturity often requires us to release what is familiar in order to receive what is faithful. Trials have a way of revealing what we have been feeding on. When adversity comes, and it will — it exposes whether our faith has been rooted in emotion or anchored in truth. If we have been living on spiritual milk,

trials can shake us easily. But when we are nourished by the Word, those same storms become refining moments rather than destructive ones. Ask yourself honestly:

- *When pressure comes, where do you turn first — to fear, to control, or to God?*
- *Do you seek quick relief, or are you willing to trust God's process even when answers are delayed?*

Blind faith is not passive. It is active trust, choosing obedience even when the outcome is unclear. It is believing that God is working, even when we cannot yet see the evidence. Maturity teaches us that God's silence is not absence, and His delays are not denial. As you reflect, remember this: growth does not mean you have failed in earlier seasons. It means God has deemed you ready for deeper trust. The same Word that once comforted you is now strengthening you. The same faith that sustained you is now preparing you.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I come before You first with gratitude. Thank You for carrying me through seasons where my faith was fragile and my understanding was limited. Thank You for being patient with me when I prayed from emotion instead of surrender, and for never withdrawing Your hand even when I stumbled or resisted growth. You have been faithful beyond my comprehension, and I acknowledge that every step of maturity in my life has come from Your grace and mercy. Thank You for the trials that refined me, the waiting seasons that taught me trust, and the moments of surrender that reshaped my heart. Thank You for aligning my life with Your will and for reminding

me that what You are doing within me, is just as important as what You are doing for me.

Now, Lord, I lift the reader before You. You know their journey, their struggles, and the places where they may feel uncertain or stretched. If they are in a season of growth, grant them patience. If they are facing trials, give them endurance. If they are being called deeper, give them courage to trust You beyond what they can see. Help them to put away spiritual infancy and step into the maturity You are calling them toward. Teach them to feed on Your Word, to trust You in uncertainty, and to walk by faith even when the path ahead is unclear. May their lives become living testimonies of Your faithfulness, and may their obedience draw others closer to You. Let their faith be steadfast, their hearts surrendered, and their spirits anchored in truth. Prepare them for every assignment You have placed on their lives and remind them that blind faith is not a weakness — it is strength rooted in trust.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Battle Tested

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience...”

—James 1:2–4 (KJV)

Up to this point in my story, you’ve walked with me through some of the most painful chapters of my life—domestic violence, broken relationships, unwed motherhood, and the consequences of choices I made while living outside of God’s will.

Those seasons were marked by survival, confusion, and learning the hard way about what happens when we stray from God’s design. Even then, His mercy met me, rescued me, and gently began drawing my heart back toward Him. But this next season looked different. These were not all trials born from rebellion or disobedience; some came while I was actively trying — sometimes imperfectly, but sincerely — to live within God’s will. I was praying more, surrendering more, and learning to trust Him instead of myself. I was no longer running from God but walking toward Him. And yet, this is

where I learned something vital which was, choosing God's will does not exempt us from trials—it prepares us for them.

The growth God was cultivating in me during seasons of stillness was not meant to remain untested. I did not know it then, but spiritual maturity formed through surrender, obedience, and deeper faith would soon be refined under pressure. What followed would prove that the Word I had been feeding on was not just nourishment, it was preparation. I began to notice that the moments when I felt stretched or weary were often the moments when my faith was tested the most. It was not about the enemy attacking but it was about God strengthening what He had already planted in me. That is why the growth cultivated, through prayer, fasting, worship, and obedience, was not optional. Every verse memorized, every moment chosen to trust God over my feelings, and every surrender in prayer was a deposit of strength to draw from when storms came. I have learned that trouble is not something God ever promised to shield us from. It comes to all of us in different ways and at different times. But what has steadied my heart is realizing that adversity is never a sign that God has stepped away. If anything, those moments have become the places where I have seen His strength show up the most clearly in my weakness even when I felt shaken, He was still holding me.

I have faced seasons where the ground beneath me seemed to shake from betrayal, loss, uncertainty, and situations that no amount of personal strength could fix. But I have learned that trials do not have the power to destroy you when you have been fortified in the truth of God's Word. They may bend you, but they will not break you. When you are being tested for battle, I noticed a shift in my own prayers. Instead of only

asking God to bring me out of the storm, I found myself asking what He wanted me to learn in it. That shift in perspective changes everything, and it kept me grounded in faith instead of being driven by fear. When I think of adversity, I think of all the obstacles I have faced that were the result of my own poor choices, while others were simply the reality of living in a broken world. In my own life, trouble arrived unannounced: a diagnosis, a layoff, the death of a loved one, or a betrayal by someone we trusted. And yet, Scripture tells us plainly: *“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: But the Lord delivereth him out of them all,”* —Psalms 34:19 (KJV). That is not just a verse, it is a lifeline. The promise is not that we will avoid trials, but that God will carry us through every single one.

When Adversity Strikes

One of my early lessons in this came during my mid-twenties, when I was working for a well-known health system in Indiana. After five years with the company, we were surprised to learn that layoffs would be happening soon. The fear hit hard. Even though I had not yet lost my job, the threat alone was enough to shake me. By this time, Landon and I were newly married, blending our lives and now raising three children together. The weight of responsibility felt different now—not just because of my job, but because providing for our family was no longer mine alone to consider. The possibility of losing my income felt just as heavy as the loss itself, because I had no real back-up plan.

At first, my flesh reacted the way it always had —panic set in, anxiety took over, and my mind immediately began rehearsing worst-case scenarios. But then I remembered the growth God had already done in me. Instead of letting fear dictate my

response, I turned to prayer and anchored myself in Philippians 4:6-7: *“Don’t be anxious about anything; rather, bring up all your requests to God in your prayers and petitions, along with giving thanks. Then the peace of God that exceeds all understanding will keep your hearts and minds safe in Christ Jesus,”* (CEB). Instead of packing up my desk in fear, I prayed for God’s direction. And in that still place, I heard Him whisper clearly to my spirit, “Do not pack.” That was my instruction, and I obeyed. While others were eventually let go, I was reassigned to a new role under a new leader. God had gone ahead of me, just as His Word promised. He made provisions and delivered me from the threat.

As I reflected to that moment, I realized the adversity was not in what happened, but in what I feared might happen. On the outside, nothing collapsed and my job remained and income stayed. However, inside I was wrestling with uncertainty. Sometimes the hardest battles are the ones fought in the mind, the ones that ask whether we will trust that we see or trust the God who sees beyond it. The possibility of losing my job felt heavy, and the fear of not being able to provide for my children pressed on me in many ways. But instead of reacting the way I once would have, I found myself leaning into God’s guidance. I did not pack my desk, and I did not brace for loss. I simply followed the quiet reassurance He placed in my spirit. Looking back now, I can see that He was not just steadying the outcome but steadying my heart.

I had a choice to either trust what I could see or trust the One who sees all. This was my chance to actually live the Scripture I had repeated so many times. Trusting the Lord with all my heart was not just a verse anymore. I did not understand what the future held, and nothing about the situation felt secure, but I

knew I had a choice: lean on my own understanding or lean into Him. Even with all my fears, something in me chose to trust His leading. The adversity was not about whether I would lose my job, but more about whether I would place my confidence in God or in man. What I believe now is that God started with a test I could handle, since He does not put more on us than we can bear. He knew my capacity at that stage of my spiritual growth, and He was strengthening my faith little by little. Just as David faced the lion and the bear before Goliath, God was allowing me to learn how to stand firm in smaller battles before confronting larger giants. I can see now that God was gently strengthening me and preparing me for what I did not yet know was ahead. I could have lost my job, but that was not God's plan for me in that season. Instead, He used the threat to teach me how to wait, how to listen, and how to obey even when the future felt uncertain.

That season taught me that adversity often reveals how much we have matured in Christ. The younger me would have spiraled out of control, but the woman I was becoming chose to have blind faith, being steadfast, unmovable, and trusting in God. That lesson became foundational because greater trials were ahead, and the same trust I learned here would be required again. God was not just preserving my job—He was preparing my faith.

Seasons of Uncertainty

Trials can be loud and sudden. Others unfold slowly, quietly, until one day you realize how far things have drifted. The season leading up to my husband's incarceration was one of those slow shifts. Landon and I had followed God's leading and moved our family to Georgia, believing wholeheartedly

that He was directing our steps. In many ways, it felt like a fresh start — new surroundings, new opportunities, and the hope of building something strong together. But somewhere along the way, subtle changes began to take place inside our home. We became less guarded about the influences we allow around us. Outside voices grew louder. Arguments became more frequent. The love that once felt steady and secure began to feel strained and distant. At the time, I did not recognize it for what it was. I thought it was just the stress of life, the pressure of responsibilities, or the adjustment of a new season. But looking back, I can see how slowly disconnecting from God's presence and peace opened the door for confusion, tension, and unrest. What we once covered in prayer, we began trying to manage on our own.

Years later, that drift led us into a storm I never saw coming. In 2017, my husband was arrested and faced life-changing charges. The moment shattered everything I thought I understood about our future. It was not just devastating as a wife, but it shook me as a believer. The headlines, the judgment, the fear of losing him, and the reality of raising our children alone all threatened to overwhelm me at once.

My prayers immediately shifted into desperate cries. They were raw, unfiltered pleas that poured out from a place of shock and disbelief. "Lord, why is this happening? Why now?" The words came from a heart that felt like it was shattering in real time. In those moments, it did not just feel like my husband had been taken from me; it felt like the life we had been building, the future we had prayed for, and every plan we had hoped to walk into together was slipping through our fingers. What made the season even more unbearable was not only the arrest but the uncertainty that followed. Court dates changed without

warning. Decisions were delayed repeatedly. Each update felt like a fresh blow, reopening wounds that had barely begun to scab over. Answers hovered just out of reach, close enough to hope for but never close enough to grasp. Our future felt suspended, as if time itself had slowed down and refused to move forward. One day I would wake up believing rescue was near; the next, I felt like we were sinking deeper into waters I did not know how to navigate. The weight of it increased my anxiety and pressed so heavily on my chest that it felt hard to breathe. I could see the light, but it felt distant, flickering through layers of fear, exhaustion, and heartbreak.

In those first few months apart, I struggled to reconcile what I believed about God with what I was living through. It was hard to return to the posture of spiritual maturity I had spoken about earlier. It was hard to ask, “Lord, what are You teaching me in this?”—when it felt like I was on the verge of losing my husband. This was the man I had not gone searching for, the one God had placed in my life when I was fully surrendered, and now everything about our future felt uncertain. That season was not only painful, but deeply confusing. And yet, I knew in my spirit that confusion itself does not come from God. Still, in the initial stages of Landon’s incarceration, I found myself wrestling to get back to hope. I knew God was present but trusting Him in this moment required a deeper kind of faith—one that did not rely on clarity, answers, or outcomes, but on the assurance that even here, He was still faithful.

In those moments, I clung to Hebrews 6:19: “*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil,*” (KJV). Not long after clinging to that promise, I was reminded of my grandmother. She called me shortly after Landon’s arrest, and her words pierced my

heart with the same truth I had been reading in Scripture. She said simply, *"Baby, God didn't save you to leave you; He didn't save you to leave you."* In that moment, her voice felt like an echo of God's own reassurance. For me, her words, and Hebrews 6:19 became more than a metaphor. It became my survival. My life felt like it was being tossed violently by waves I could not control, and hope was the only thing keeping me from being carried away by fear. An anchor does not stop the storm or calm the waters, but it can firmly hold you in place when everything else is moving. This revelation shifted something in me and my way of thinking. God was not promising to remove the storm; He was offering stability in the midst of it. Even when I could not see beyond the pain, hope anchored my soul to the presence of God, reminding me that I was still held, still covered, and not drifting beyond His reach. Hope became my lifeline. I realized that my faith was not about controlling the outcome; it was about trusting the One who holds the outcome.

When you are in a season like that, the waiting can feel heavier than the trial itself. However, it is in the waiting that God often does His deepest work. Just as sailors drop anchor to keep from drifting in the storm, we anchor ourselves in God's promises to keep from being carried away by fear. I had to remind myself daily, even if I could not see the shoreline, God was still steering the ship. He was not caught off guard by my storm, and He would not abandon me in the middle of it. Ironically, as the months turned into years, my prayer life shifted. I began asking, "Lord, show me Your purpose in this. Teach me how to walk through it with my faith intact." What happened next was more than a shift; it was an elevation. My prayers moved from requests to deep groanings that words could not always express. There were nights I would kneel

in silence, tears streaming, yet I knew God was hearing every unspoken word. Romans 8:26 tells us, *“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered,”* (KJV).

In those moments, I felt the Holy Spirit interceding on my behalf, carrying my pain in a way that only God could understand. This was not the surface-level prayer life I had known before; it was desperation mixed with surrender. It was the kind of prayer that comes from a contrite spirit, one that knows only God can move in the situation. I was entering into a place of deep connection and had experienced a peace that did not make sense with a newfound confidence in Christ, knowing that He was working, even when I could not see the manifestations of my prayers... Yet.

Even during that devastating season, God did not stop blessing me. I worried constantly about how I would provide for our family, but God gently reminded me that He, and not my circumstances was the ultimate provider. While my world felt broken, He was quietly sustaining us in ways I did not fully recognize at the time. During that season, we relocated back to my hometown, seeking stability and support. Against all odds, we built a home during a global pandemic — a time when uncertainty touched every part of life. At work, God continued to open doors I never could have forced open on my own. I was promoted not once, but three times, each opportunity arriving right when we needed it most. Looking back now, I can see clearly that God was preparing me by strengthening my faith, positioning me professionally, and providing for our family long before restoration fully came. Scriptures like Proverbs 3:5–6 became more than memory verses; they became lifelines.

Even when I could not see the full picture, I knew God was still in control. I cried out to Him again and said, *“Lord, I know my husband will be home again soon, and I trust that there is beauty even in this brokenness.”*

We continued to see God’s hand at work. My husband was acquitted of those life-changing charges, and finally, an end to the nightmare was in sight. Hope, slowly but surely, began to return to our family. When Landon came home, we knew that while new challenges awaited us, we were no longer the same people who had walked into the storm. This season had deepened our dependence on God and strengthened our commitment to both our faith and our marriage. Our family was whole again; not because the journey had been easy, but because God had been faithful every step of the way. The roots of our faith had grown deep through the storm, and I now know with certainty that God is a refuge for His children, not only in crisis, but in restoration.

I learned that adversity itself did not make me stronger, it was how I leaned on God in the middle of it that changed me. I have noticed that the seasons when I stayed close to God’s Word became the very seasons that steadied me when adversity showed up. The times when I drifted or neglected my spiritual growth were the moments when trials exposed places in me that still needed His touch. I am still learning that the quiet seasons are not wasted at all, but they are where God strengthens us, settles us, and prepares us for what we cannot yet see. When the storms eventually come, we draw from what He has already planted in us: the Scriptures we have held onto, the memories of His faithfulness, and the prayers whispered in the stillness.

In my own moments of uncertainty, whether facing a diagnosis, a courtroom, or a situation completely out of control, I

found myself leaning harder into prayer and returning to the promises that had carried me before. When I felt too weak to pray, God used the people around me to lift me up. Through it all, I have come to see that God is not only present in the storm, but He becomes the calm within my heart. When the season finally breaks, you can look back and see that He was faithful in every step, even the ones that felt the heaviest.

When Anxiety Creeps In

Looking back, I can see how both storms, the layoff and my husband's incarceration, pulled at the same thread in me, which was anxiety.

I have wrestled with worry since I was thirteen years old. As I got older, and especially after I became a mother, it only grew. The more responsibility I carried, the more I found myself imagining worst-case scenarios. When a job layoff threatened my ability to provide for my children, anxiety was my first response. Years later, when my husband faced the possibility of never coming home, the weight of fear pressed on me in a way that felt suffocating. Anxiety always whispers:

- *“What if I can't provide?”*
- *“What if this never ends?”*
- *“What if God does not come through this time?”*

Those “what ifs” can spiral fast, leaving us exhausted before the battle has even begun. But God never intended for us to live shackled by fear. Scripture reminds us, *“God didn't give us a spirit that is timid but one that is powerful, loving, and self-controlled”* —2 Timothy 1:7, (CEB). Fear is not from God. Anxiety tries to cloud our thinking, but God offers clarity and peace. Jesus

said in Matthew 6:34, *“Therefore, stop worrying about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own,”* (CEB). Worrying about a thousand tomorrows only steals the strength God has given us for today. In both seasons of layoff and my husband’s incarceration, I had to make a conscious choice to stop letting anxiety author the story. Yes, the waves were real. Yes, the unknowns were heavy. But God was still in control. He cared about the job I needed to provide for my children just as much as He cared about the courtroom where my husband’s life hung in the balance. Anxiety creeps in when we try to hold everything in our own hands. Faith grows when we open those hands and place it all back into His. Adversity has a way of waking up the old anxieties we thought we had conquered. Whether it is the fear of losing a job, the ache of a broken relationship, or the storm of a courtroom battle, worry will always try to creep in. But God never intended for us to fight fear empty-handed. He gives us spiritual tools to help us hold on to His peace when life shakes us.

Scripture as Your Anchor

In the moments when anxiety tried to take over, I found myself returning to God’s Word again and again. Those verses became steady ground when my thoughts wanted to run ahead of me. They reminded me that even when my emotions were loud, God’s truth was louder. Below are the scriptures I held onto:

- *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love and of a sound mind,”* —2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV)
- *“Therefore, stop worrying about tomorrow because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own,”*

—*Matthew 6:34 (CEB)*

- *“Throw all your anxiety onto Him, because He cares about you,”*

—*1 Peter 5:7 (CEB)*

These promises became anchors for my soul, reminding me that God was still greater than anything I was facing.

Breath Prayers in the Battle

There were days when my body reacted before my spirit could catch up — tight chest, racing thoughts, shallow breaths. In those moments, I had to slow myself down and breathe in the truth I knew but struggled to feel. I began to breathe a breath of prayer:

- Inhale: *“The Lord is my shepherd...”*
- Exhale: *“...I shall not want”* —Psalm 23:1

Each breath became a quiet reminder that He was leading me, even when I could not see the way forward.

Writing God’s Deliverance

I’ve learned that in hard lessons, it is easy to forget how God has carried us before and the enemy thrives on forgetfulness. Think about and write down how God has carried you before. In moments of adversity, go back and reread His faithfulness. The same God who provided during the layoff is the same God who sustained me through the storm of my husband’s incarceration, and He will sustain you, too.

Community during Storms

When adversity strikes, isolation fuels anxiety. Do not

carry the weight alone. Allow family, friends, or your church community to lift you up in prayer. Remember how my grandmother's voicemail reminded me, "God didn't save you to leave you." God often speaks through the encouragement of others.

Worship Over Worry

When anxiety rises, so does the temptation to fixate on the storm. Worship turns our eyes back to the Savior. There were moments when worship became my way back to peace... I had to whisper His name and declare His goodness, because even when adversity strikes, He is still worthy. Worship does not change the size of your storm, but it magnifies the size of our God.

I began to see that adversity was not the end of my story. It is the place where faith becomes real, where anxiety is silenced by truth, and where God's presence proves unshakable. Every storm, whether brief like a layoff or prolonged like a season of separation, becomes an altar where we learn to trust Him more. Use the tools He has given you, anchor yourself in His Word, and let your response to adversity be the testimony that points others to Christ.

Devotional

Adversity has a way of stripping life down to the essentials. It forces us to decide what we believe and who we truly depend on. When storms hit, the spiritually mature do not pretend they are unshaken; they anchor themselves deeper in the truth that God is faithful.

Looking back over my life, I see a series of fires that could have consumed me. I have faced moments where fear gripped

me so tightly it was hard to breathe, like the day I had a gun pointed at me and was dragged through a stranger's yard. That was a turning point moment when Isaiah 54 stopped me in my tracks and reminded me that God's covenant of peace cannot be shaken. Years later, I faced another furnace: my husband's incarceration and the uncertainty of what our future would look like. That season brought me to a new depth of prayer, a desperation where words failed me, yet I knew that God's Holy Spirit would intercede on my behalf. I learned that when life breaks you down to tears and silence, God still hears, and He still moves. Through each of these trials, and countless others in between, my faith has been refined like gold in the fire. I have learned that no trial is too heavy when you have grown spiritually through walking with God in the flames of life. The same God who preserved me when my life was in danger is the same God who has sustained me during long nights of separation. And because of His faithfulness, I now stand with the confidence that no matter what comes next, I will not face it alone.

This is the gift of maturity in Christ, not that life becomes easy, but that our hearts become steadfast. We stopped doubting His presence in the storm because we have felt His hand too many times before. And when the next wave comes, we can say without hesitation —I have been through the fire, and I know the One who walks in it with me. Your trial is not wasted. It is shaping your character, refining your faith, and preparing you for future victories. You may not understand it now, but one day you will look back and see that even in this, God is working all things for your good.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are my refuge and my strength in every season of life. When the days are calm and when the storms feel overwhelming, thank You for being a steady presence. You were there when everything around me felt uncertain. When adversity comes, help me to stand firmly on the foundation of Your Word, not on my own understanding or strength. Remind me of every promise You have spoken over my life. Give me eyes to see Your hand at work even when the path ahead feels unclear and the waiting feels long. Teach me to respond with faith instead of fear, trust instead of panic, and surrender instead of control. Let my life be a testimony of Your sustaining power—not because I never struggle, but because I keep turning back to You.

In the moments when words fail me, when my heart is heavy and my prayers feel incomplete, let Your Holy Spirit intercede on my behalf. Translate my tears, my groanings, and my silence into prayers that move heaven and align my heart with Your will. Anchor my soul in hope when the waves of uncertainty try to pull me under. Thank You for being the God who delivers, the God who provides, and the God who remains faithful even in the waiting. Thank You for bringing me out of danger, for sustaining me through seasons of separation and loss, and for walking with me through trials I never imagined I could survive. Strengthen my faith through every test and deepen my trust in You with each passing day.

And Lord, I pray not only for myself, but for every reader walking through their own season of adversity. Meet them right where they are. Remind them that they are not forgotten, not abandoned, and not alone. Give them peace that surpasses understanding and courage to trust You when answers feel far away. I trust You, Lord, not only to bring me through, but to

BATTLE TESTED

shape me, refine me, and strengthen me because of it. I place my hope in You, knowing that You are faithful to finish what You have started.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Heart Connections

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another...”

—John 13:34-35 (KJV)

Life is not meant to be lived in isolation. From the very beginning, God designed us for connection—first with Him, then with others. I began to see that my relationships were not accidental but rather, God was using each one to shape me, mature me, and prepare me for service in His kingdom. *“Two are better than one... for if they fall, one will lift up the other”* —Ecclesiastes 4:9–10.

As my faith matured, I started to look at my spiritual growth as more than just surviving trials but also developing a heart that looks like Christ. Jesus did not distance Himself from people; He leaned into them. He saw the broken, the overlooked, the misunderstood, and instead of withdrawing, He served. *“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”* —Mark 10:45.

My faith awakening marked the moment I realized that

knowing about God was not enough—I needed to walk with Him daily. As I shifted from a reactive faith to a relational one, God began reshaping my heart. I noticed that the more time I spent with Him, the more aware I became of the people around me. During my journey patience began to replace irritation, compassion replaced judgment, and grace replaced defensiveness. Jesus’ words became real to me and connection with Him produced fruit in how I treated others. Motherhood was one of the first places God taught me what servant hearted love looked like. My children did not simply need provision; they needed presence, patience, and sacrifice. When I felt unqualified, God used motherhood to stretch me beyond myself and teach me that love often shows up quietly—through consistency, forgiveness, and endurance. *“Children are a heritage from the Lord”* —Psalm 127:3. Loving them well required me to deny my comfort and serve from the heart.

Marriage deepened this lesson. God revealed to me that love is not sustained by feelings alone but by daily choices rooted in humility. Learning my husband’s love language was not just about improving communication, it was about learning how to serve him intentionally. Choosing to love him in ways that did not come naturally required surrender. What once felt uncomfortable became obedience. Loving him became an act of worship, reflecting Christ’s sacrificial love. Through prayer, counseling, and lived experience, I began to see that God was forming something deeper in me. Spiritual maturity was not just about personal healing—it was about becoming available to others. As God continued healing my heart, I began to realize that His restoration was never meant to turn me inward. Instead, He was gently inviting me to pour out what He had pour into me. Each day, I started to see how every

relationship; in my marriage, with my children and family, and with my friendships and co-workers, became places where He was shaping me. These were not obligations to fulfill, but quiet spaces where God was refining my heart to love from a place of grace rather than duty.

Being battle-tested taught me this truth; that through everything I had walked through, trust was becoming the bridge between my faith and how I served others. After the pandemic and after my husband returned home, I noticed something unsettling in my spirit. While I was grateful, restored, and thankful, my heart also felt tired. Not broken—just weary. The world felt colder, more divided, and more hateful than I remembered. Serving others no longer felt natural; it felt heavy. Instead of feeling energized by people, I felt drained by them. God had blessed us with a home and a place of safety, peace, and restoration. But if I am honest, I wanted to hide there. I wanted to isolate, to protect what God had rebuilt, to keep my circle small and my heart guarded. And in some ways, I did exactly that. I convinced myself that rest was wisdom, and while rest was necessary, isolation quietly began to settle in. Deep down, I knew God was asking more of me. His Word kept returning to my heart: *“For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required”* —Luke 12:48 (KJV). I had been given restoration. I had been given peace. I had been given another chance. And yet, I was struggling to discern what obedience looked like in this new season.

Before marriage, I never hesitated to serve. Joining ministries, showing up consistently, and pouring into others came easily. Now, I found myself making excuses—some practical, some emotional, and some rooted in fear. At times, it was not that I did not want to serve; I simply did not know where I belonged

anymore. I questioned what God was calling me to do in a season marked by healing, rebuilding, and learning how to live again after survival. God began to reveal that my hesitation was not rebellion—it was unresolved weariness. My heart was not closed; it was cautious. And in His gentle way, He reminded me that service is not always about activity; sometimes it is about availability. He was not asking me to rush back into everything I once did. He was asking me to trust Him with my heart again. That realization shifted something in me. I understood that serving like Christ does not always begin with action but surrendering again. Jesus served others even when He was misunderstood, even when the world was harsh, and even when His own heart carried sorrow. He did not retreat from people; He leaned into obedience. God began to show me that a servant's heart does not need to be loud or seen. It grows quietly in willingness, humility, and in choosing obedience even on the days when my heart feels heavy and tired. And in that place, my connection to others was no longer driven by obligation, but by trust—trust that God would replenish what I poured out and guide me step by step into the assignments He had prepared for this season.

I loved how God was shifting my mindset and how I was beginning to trust that He would meet me in the places where I felt empty. He was giving me patience when mine ran thin, grace when bitterness tried to settle in, and humility when pride quietly rose up. When I trusted Him not only with my future but with my responses, my heart posture changed. Serving others no longer felt draining; it felt purposeful. As I looked at the life of Jesus, I began to see how His heart for people flowed from His complete trust in the Father. And the more my own heart became anchored in Christ, the more I noticed that my

connections with others became quiet opportunities to reflect Him. Serving no longer felt like something I had to do, but it became the natural overflow of staying close to God, and love became the evidence of the work He was doing within me. As I was trusting, God continued to work on my heart, and I began to understand that service in this season did not look like it once did —and that was okay.

God was not asking me to return to old assignments; He was inviting me into new ones. Service now began at home, in quiet, ordinary places where love is often unseen and uncelebrated. I found myself giving more of myself to my family, being present, attentive, and intentional in ways I had not always been before. Caring for aging parents reminded me that God Himself is a caregiver, and it shifted my understanding of service even deeper. Caregiving has begun to stretch me in ways I never expected. It is calling for patience, humility, and a willingness to pour out quietly, often without recognition. It reminds me that love is often expressed through consistency rather than grand gestures. I realized that bearing the needs of others fulfills the heart of Christ. *“Carry each other’s burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ”* —Galatians 6:2. At the same time, God also planted something unexpected in my heart.

What started as a simple YouTube channel — created for fun, a place to share thoughts, and encouragement—slowly became something more. Without realizing it, I was serving again. I was sharing my testimony, my faith, my journey, and my questions with anyone who needed to hear them. What felt small and casual became sacred. God used my obedience to speak to people I may never meet, reminding me that service may not always happen within church walls. After one of my videos, someone commented, *“Great encouragement. I will be waiting*

for more...” That simple message made me smile—not because of recognition, but because it reminded me that God’s Word travels farther than we ever could. Then, just the other day, my aunt commented on one of my videos and said, *“This is so beautiful, Nicole. It allows me to look at myself and ponder on things in my life where I want to grow. God bless you. Thanks for the word and encouragement.”* Reading her words stopped me in my tracks. In that moment, I realized that God had taken something He gave me in prayer and used it to touch hearts near and far—across generations, across states, across seasons. What began as a quiet act of obedience became confirmation that God was at work beyond my reach. It reminded me that service is not about platforms or visibility; it is about availability. God does the multiplying. I was reminded of the Scripture, *“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so”* —Psalm 107:2. My testimony was never meant to be hidden—it was meant to be shared. When we simply tell the Lord, “Yes,” He carries the message exactly where it needs to go.

Writing my testimony has been another act of service. This has required vulnerability, courage, trust, and sharing many of my deepest wounds, doubts, and lessons, which has not been easy. There were moments I wanted to pull back, to protect my heart, and to keep parts of my story hidden. But God reminded me that testimony is not about exposure; it is about obedience. If my willingness to be honest can help someone feel less alone, then this offering is worth it. I had to accept that service did not come easily after restoration. I expected clarity and confidence to follow healing, but instead, God met me with patience. He never rushed me. He gently led me, reminding me that purpose unfolds in steps, not leaps. Each act of obedience—loving my family well, showing up as a caregiver, pressing “record,”

writing these pages—has reawakened a sense of purpose I did not realize I had lost. In this season, service is no longer driven by obligation or approval, but by gratitude. God restored my family, healed my heart, and renewed my faith—and now my response is to give. Not perfectly, not tirelessly, but willingly. I have learned that when God restored me, He didn't do it just so I could retreat, but He rebuilt me so I can carry His light into places and hearts where my story can reach.

Devotional

I continue to learn that true service does not grow out of obligation, but it grows out of intimacy with God. As our hearts mature in Him, we begin to see people the way Jesus does—not as interruptions, but as opportunities to reflect His heart. In this season of my life, God has shown me that service often looks ordinary. It looks like showing up consistently for family, or while caring for aging parents with patience and compassion. It looks like pressing “record” when fear says stay silent. It looks like writing words that expose vulnerability in hopes that someone else feels less alone. These acts may seem small, but in God's hands, they carry eternal weight.

Scripture reminds us that God Himself is a caregiver. When we care for others, we reflect His heart. When we carry burdens that are not our own, we fulfill His law of love. *“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,”* —Galatians 6:2 (KJV).

Sharing testimony is also an act of service. God does not heal us so we can hide; He heals us so we can help. What God has done in your life matters. Your story, spoken in faith, becomes a bridge for someone else's healing. God was helping me to realize that service was not limited to within church walls.

Sometimes it happens through conversations, messages, videos, or quiet moments I did not even think mattered. I now trust that when I obey and am surrendered to God's plan, He will handle the reach. *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it,"* —Isaiah 55:11(KJV).

In this season, I had to ask God to show me what service looked like for me. It did not look the same as before, but He reminded me that when my heart stays surrendered, He will bring fruit from my obedience.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for showing us what it means to serve with humility, compassion, and love. Thank You for never turning away from people but drawing near to them—especially in their weakest moments. We acknowledge that without You, we can do nothing, yet with You, even our smallest acts of obedience can impact lives. Father, shape our hearts to reflect Yours. Where we are tired, renew our strength. Where we are hesitant, deepen our trust. Where we are unsure of our assignment, give us clarity step by step. Teach us to serve not from pressure or performance, but from gratitude and love.

Bless the work of our hands, whether it is caring for family, supporting others, sharing testimony, or simply being present. Let our lives be a living witness to Your faithfulness. Use our obedience to reach hearts we may never see and to encourage those who need hope. We surrender every relationship, every responsibility, and every assignment to You and form in us a servant's heart that honors You in every season.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Before moving forward, I invite you to pause for a moment. This chapter is not meant to be rushed. The lessons of service, trust, and obedience are best received when we allow God to search our own hearts. The questions below are not meant to overwhelm or judge—they are simply an opportunity to reflect, to listen, and to invite God into your personal journey. Whether you choose to journal your responses, pray through them, or quietly sit with them, allow the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts. Sometimes growth begins not with answers, but with honest reflection.

Reflection Questions

- *What does service look like in your current season of life—not in comparison to others, but in obedience to God?*
- *Are there areas where fatigue, fear, or disappointment have caused you to withdraw instead of serving?*
- *How has God used your life experiences or testimony to encourage or help someone else?*
- *In what ways might God be calling you to serve outside of traditional or familiar spaces?*
- *What would it look like to trust God with the impact of your obedience rather than controlling the outcome?*

As I reflect on this journey, I see that God was never just shaping my heart—He was teaching me. Every season of growth, testing, restoration, and service carried a lesson. Some lessons were learned through joy, others through struggle, but all were formed through walking closely with Him.

These lessons are not abstract ideas; they are lived truths born from faith in action. In the next chapter, I share the

valuable lessons God revealed through these seasons—lessons that continue to guide my walk and, I pray, will encourage you in yours.

Valuable Faith Lessons

*“Man’s goings are of the LORD; How can a man then understand
his own way?”*

—Proverbs 20:24 (KJV)

By the time you reach this point, you have already walked through broken places, challenging decisions, spiritual growing pains, and relational refinement. You have stood in storms, watched faith mature, and witnessed what happens when God is invited into every layer of life. Whether you realize it or not, you have been learning right alongside me. Looking back, I have come to see life as a kind of classroom where God gently teaches through every lesson. Every season—pleasant or painful—has carried instruction. Every chapter you have read reflects a lesson learned not in theory, but in lived experience. I understand that the issue for me was never whether God was speaking, but it was whether my heart was still enough to listen. The question has always been whether I was willing to listen.

When I reflect on my journey, I can see now that some of the

most valuable lessons did not come through answered prayers, but through waiting. They did not come through certainty, but through surrender. They did not come through control, but through release. Through heartbreak, unexpected blessings, missteps, and miracles alike; one truth has become unshakable: faith is not an event, it is a lifelong posture of trust.

Blind faith — trusting God without seeing the full picture has been the quiet thread woven through every chapter of my story. Not blind in ignorance, but blind in reliance. From my earliest moments of surrender to life-threatening danger, to learning how to love well as a wife and mother; faith has been my anchor. And as we pause here, before stepping fully into the light, I want to name the lessons that shaped that anchor.

Lesson 1: God's Plan Is Bigger Than My Timeline

Devotional Reflection

There was a time when I believed that doing life “right” meant doing it in the right order. Degree first. Marriage next. Children after. Stability always. I measured success by sequence, and when my life unfolded differently, I assumed I had failed—failed God, failed others, and failed myself. What I once labeled as disorder, God revealed as divine reordering.

God was never confused by my detours. He was not surprised by my delays or disappointed by my pace. While I was focused on when things should happen, God was focused on who I needed to become. The stretching, humbling, and waiting seasons were not punishments—they were preparation.

Motherhood before marriage taught me selflessness. Singleness taught me dependence on God. Heartbreak taught me discernment. Waiting taught me gratitude, and if my life followed my timeline, I might have missed the maturity

required to steward the blessings God eventually entrusted to me.

I'm realizing that God's plan has never been about speed. It has always been about formation.

Scripture Anchor

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

— Jeremiah 29:11 (CEB)

Required Action

Write down one area of your life where you feel, "behind."

Pray aloud:

"Lord, I release my timeline and receive Your training."

For the next seven days, intentionally resist comparison and choose trust instead.

Lesson 2: Trials Reveal the Depth of My Faith

Devotional Reflection

I have noticed that faith feels simple when life cooperates. Praise flows naturally when prayers are answered quickly and outcomes make sense. But trials introduce a holy tension like, *"Will I trust God when obedience doesn't bring immediate relief?"*

Every trial I have faced stripped something away—control, certainty, pride; but what remained was truth. Some seasons exposed how much I still leaned on my own strength; while others revealed roots I did not know had grown so deep. Either way, the trial became a mirror, showing me not only what I believed about God, but how fully I depended on Him.

God does not waste suffering. He refines faith through fire,

strengthening what is real and burning away what cannot sustain us. I began to see that trials were not interruptions of faith at all, but they were invitations into deeper trust.

Scripture Anchor

“My brothers and sisters, think of the various tests you encounter as occasions for joy. After all, you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”

— James 1:2–3 (CEB)

Required Action

Identify one current or past trial that challenged your faith. Complete this sentence in writing:

“This trial taught me to trust God with...” Thank Him aloud for the growth, even if the pain has not fully faded.

Lesson 3: My Relationship with God Shapes Every Other Relationship

Devotional Reflection

I learned that intimacy with God is never stays hidden — it quietly transforms how we love others. The closer I grew to Christ, the more my tone softened, my patience expanded, and my compassion deepened. Faith did not stay confined to prayer time; it showed up in conversations, conflict, and caregiving.

When God began refining my heart, the people closest to me felt it first. My husband received intentional love, my children experienced gentler corrections, and others encountered grace instead of judgment. This is how faith is meant to work; it flows downward before it flows outward.

As God refined my heart, the shift touched those closest to me first — my husband, my children, my family, and my friendships. I began to see how weary I became when I expected people to

carry needs that only God could satisfy.

Scripture Anchor

“We love because God first loved us.”

— 1 John 4:19 (CEB)

Required Action

Ask God in prayer:

“Lord, who feels the overflow of my relationship with You—and who does not?”

Choose one relationship this week where you will intentionally respond with patience, affirmation, or grace instead of habit.

Lesson 4: Obedience Is the Gateway to Purpose

Devotional Reflection

Obedience often feels risky because it requires movement without guarantees. Every meaningful assignment God has given me began with a simple yes—spoken before I felt ready, qualified, or confident.

Readiness was never the requirement, but trust was. Clarity came when I realized that delayed obedience did not just slow down blessings but it slowed down my own growth. God already knows what obedience will unlock, not just externally, but internally. I discovered that purpose rarely unfolds in comfort but it unfolds in surrender.

Each step of obedience sharpens discernment, strengthens confidence, and aligns us more fully with God’s will. Obedience teaches us to walk by faith, not by clarity.

Scripture Anchor

“If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land.”

— Isaiah 1:19 (CEB)

Required Action

Ask God to reveal one instruction you've been delaying.

Write it down.

Within the next 48 hours, take one tangible step toward obedience without overthinking or negotiating.

These lessons are not just my story. They reveal what God desires to do in all of us. He takes broken pieces, setbacks, fiery trials, and unexpected blessings, and weaves them into a testimony that points back to His glory. The thread through it all is blind faith — not blind as in empty or reckless, but blind as in trusting God beyond what your natural eyes can see. That trust carried me from fear to courage, immaturity to maturity, and from wandering aimlessly to purposeful direction. And that brings us to one final truth: to fully embrace the life God has for us, we must come out of the shade and walk boldly in the light of His calling.

Faith Evolution

Faith begins as a seed—small, fragile, and uncertain. At first, it is enough to say, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.” But as we walk with Christ, that seed grows.

Trials water it.

The Word nourishes it.

Time and obedience deepen its roots.

Looking back, I can see the stages of my faith:

- *Childlike faith that believed God could do anything, yet struggled*

to surrender control.

- *Tested faith that clung to Him in storms, learning His presence mattered more than immediate rescue.*
- *Mature faith that trusts even without seeing the ending because God has never failed before.*

Your faith is evolving too — even if you cannot see it yet. Whether you feel like you are barely holding on or standing strong, God is working. Blind faith is not about walking in darkness — it is about walking faithfully in the light you have been given and trusting God to reveal the next step when it is time.

Reflection Questions

- *Where has God shown up for you before?*
- *How has your faith grown through trials?*
- *What is God asking you to trust Him with now?*

Write it down. Pray over it. And believe that the God who brought you this far will carry you all the way home.

Finally, these lessons did more than shape my faith; they deepened my connection with Christ. They taught me how to listen when God whispered, how to trust when the path blurred, and how to move forward without needing the full picture. What began as blind faith has become confident surrender. And now, standing on everything God has taught me, I realized something powerful... I was no longer meant to remain hidden, hesitant, or half-lit. The same faith that carried me through the lessons was calling me forward. It was time to step fully out of the shade—and into the light.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for the journey You have taken the reader on through these pages. Thank You for the seeds of faith You have planted and the work You are already doing in their life. Strengthen them to trust You more deeply, even when the path is unclear. Remind them of the lessons You have already taught them and prepare them for what lies ahead. Help them see that their faith—whether new or seasoned—is precious to You. May they walk boldly in blind faith, confident that You are faithful to complete the good work You began.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Conclusion

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

—Psalm 119:105 (KJV)

Every season of my life has taught me this truth: faith is rarely formed in stillness. It is forged in movement, refined in uncertainty, and strengthened in moments when the way forward is anything but clear. God has used storms not to shatter me, but to shape me—to teach me that trust is not passive and surrender is not weakness. Real faith often asks us to take a step before the path is fully illuminated.

The lesson God placed before me was that blind faith is not reckless at all but courageous obedience. It is choosing to trust God’s character when His plan feels hidden. Repeatedly, He has invited me into spaces where comfort ended and calling began — spaces where self-reliance could no longer sustain me, and only full dependence on Him would do. It was there that I discovered not only who God is, but who I am in Him. Writing *Blind Faith* has been more than telling my story — it has been an act of remembrance. Each chapter marks a sacred mile along

CONCLUSION

the road God has carried me: setbacks that became comebacks, adversity that deepened my prayer life, spiritual immaturity that gave way to growth, and relationships that were healed and reordered under Christ's authority. These pages are reminders for me that God truly wastes nothing — not pain, not delay, not even our detours.

For a long time, I lived in the shade—of mistakes, of fear, of believing I was disqualified by my past. But God never intended for me to remain there. He does not redeem us so we can hide; He restores us so we can rise. Blind faith became the bridge that led me out of the shadows and into the light—not because I suddenly had all the answers, but because I finally trusted the One who does.

And now, this invitation extends to you.

If you are standing in a place of uncertainty—if fear has made the future feel dim or hesitation has kept you rooted in what is familiar—hear this: the same God who met me in the dark is already present where you stand. You do not need to see the whole picture to take the next step. His light does not wait for perfect faith; it responds to willing hearts. This is the gift of blind faith: not merely surviving your story but stepping into it with confidence. Living anchored in the truth that God is who He says He is — that His promises are trustworthy, and that His plans will always rise higher than our pain.

Blind faith does not end when the chapter closes; it looks like choosing God again tomorrow, even when yesterday felt heavy. It shows up in ordinary decisions, quiet obedience, and daily trust when no one else is watching. It is choosing God again tomorrow, even when yesterday was hard. It is believing

that growth will require stretching, that light will sometimes be exposed before it heals, and that obedience may stretch us beyond comfort — but it always leads us closer to purpose. Walking into the light does not mean the absence of struggle; it means the presence of God in every step forward. This is where faith becomes lived, not learned, and where trust turns into testimony.

So, rise. Step forward. Walk boldly. Not because the road is easy, but because the One who leads you is faithful.

Out of the shade... Into the light.

Final Prayer: A Blessing for What's Next

Lord Jesus, first, I thank You for every reader who has reached this moment. Thank You for the commitment it took to stay, to reflect, to confront, and to believe alongside these pages. You know what brought them here—the questions they carried, the wounds they did not speak aloud, the hope they were almost afraid to feel again. Thank You for stirring faith where fear once lived, and for reminding them that they are not forgotten, finished, or disqualified.

Father, as they close this book, I ask that You open a new chapter in their life. Not one rooted in striving or self-reliance, but one anchored in trust. Give them courage for the next step, even if they cannot see beyond it. Teach them how to walk in blind faith—not blindly following emotion but boldly following You. Where they feel uncertain, be their clarity. Where they feel weak, be their strength. Where they feel delayed, remind them that Your timing is never late. For those standing at a crossroads, grant wisdom. For those healing from past seasons, bring restoration. For those stepping into new assignments,

CONCLUSION

release confidence and peace.

Let what they have received here take root and bear fruit. May their lives reflect the light You have placed within them. May their obedience open doors no effort ever could. And may they trust that even when the path feels dim, Your Word will always be enough to guide their feet. Lord, we thank You for what has been, and we trust You for what is ahead. Seal this journey with peace, and mark their next season with purpose, and lead them forward—out of the shade and into the light You have already prepared.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



About the Author

Nicole Terrel is a woman of Apostolic faith, firmly rooted in the oneness of God and the life-transforming power of Jesus Christ. She is a wife, a mother, and a purpose-driven leader whose life has been shaped by seasons of surrender, resilience, and unwavering trust in God. With a heart for encouragement and a passion for helping others walk boldly with Christ, Nicole writes from lived experience—where faith was tested, refined, and strengthened.

Professionally, Nicole serves as a Senior Manager of Capture in the government services space, where she leads high-value, complex initiatives with strategic clarity, integrity, and excellence. Her career spans healthcare systems, federal and state government solutions, and organizational leadership, where she is known for her ability to build authentic relationships, lead through uncertainty, and bring structure to challenging environments. But *Blind Faith* is not a professional memoir—it is a personal testimony.

Nicole's journey includes navigating single motherhood, overcoming toxic relationships, surviving life-threatening

trauma, walking through seasons of deep anxiety and uncertainty, and enduring her husband's incarceration—all while learning to trust God without seeing the full picture. Through every chapter of her life, blind faith became the bridge between fear and purpose, heartbreak and healing, survival and calling.

Today, Nicole shares her story to remind others that setbacks do not disqualify you, storms do not cancel God's promises, and obedience—even when it feels costly—leads to freedom. Her writing invites readers to grow from spiritual milk to solid faith, to deepen their prayer lives, and to trust God fully in every season.

When she is not spending time with family, writing, or working; she enjoys creating faith-based content, mentoring others, and encouraging hearts to step out of the shade and into the light God has prepared for them.

You can connect with me on:

 <https://lolagets85.shop>

 <https://www.facebook.com/nicole.terrel.32>

 <https://www.youtube.com/@LolaGets85>

 <https://www.instagram.com/lolagets85>

 <https://pin.it/6f7Waj4Z9>

Subscribe to my newsletter:

 <https://forms.office.com/r/2HSwxQ1qEe>

