



KATINA HORTON

Poetry, Devotionals, & The Home

VALLEY OF
GRACE

I would like to thank God for another opportunity to glorify him. I am grateful to God for all my family and friends, small groups, my Saturday morning writing group, and the ability to work for him. I also want to thank Kathy for confirming what the Holy Spirit had already put on my heart for this book. Thank you Leslie Lipps for all the photography tips that you gave me. Thank you to my home church that I attended in my youth, paving the way for me to write this book, and giving me the opportunity to be the youth announcing clerk. I hope that this book is a great resource for you as you travel through your valley of grace. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. (Colossians 3: 23-24, KJV)

Perfection

How many of us had the perfect cup of coffee this morning? What about the perfect hairstyle or outfit? Some of us might have had the perfect morning: You got up and cooked breakfast, your kids were obedient, and your whole house was cleaned to perfection before you left home.

Martha knew a little something about perfectionism. Luke 10: 38-42 sets the scene of Martha trying to make everything just right for Jesus: "Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (KJV)

As a child, because of the trauma that I experienced, I took on perfection with a capital "P". I got good grades, followed all the rules, and said and did all the things that were expected of me. I had the perfect plan for my life: Married at twenty-one, have two kids by age thirty, and have my PhD by the time I was thirty-four years old. All of these plans worked out except for the last one. As of recent, I was finally able to start being at peace with the fact that I was seven classes away, and I didn't finish my PhD due to life stressors, and everything else going on in my life at the time.

Perfection is defined as the condition, state, or quality of being free or as free as possible from all flaws or defects. The irony is that the word "free" is used. Perfectionism makes you strive for unreachable goals. Perfectionism means that it is never enough. It is bondage, and driven by others' perception of you. As a writer, it is easy to get stuck on having the perfect memoir, novel, article, etc. We can focus so much on what others are doing for the Lord, that we fail to think about God's plan for us, and how he can be glorified in them. Christ was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. When we strive for perfection instead of better, we void out the cause of the cross. It was his perfect love that casted out all fear, even fears of insecurity that drives perfectionism.

If there was one thing that I would tell my younger self, it would be, "Christ is enough". In Galatians 5:1, Paul tells us, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage". (KJV) "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8: 32, KJV)

Dear God,

We thank you that we can come boldly to your throne of grace without having to be perfect because you had your Son to be that for us. We praise you for not having to worry about proving anything to anybody, or needing to keep up appearances. We can be who you created us to be. Thank you for being enough.

In Jesus' name,

Amen



Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual warfare is real. It is more prevalent than what we actually realize. A lot of times when we are dealing with spiritual warfare, we don't realize that Satan is behind the scenes, using anyone and anything as tools to pull us into his trap. The scripture tells us: "Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand safe against all strategies and tricks of Satan. For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies—the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world." (Ephesians 6:11-12, TLB)

Satan uses several methods to keep us feeling discouraged, defeated, and hopeless. He is relentless, but not creative. He often uses the same issues over and over again to keep us in a loop of feeling trapped. One way that he gets us is by having us to use these two potent words: always and never. Sometimes he does this by using ongoing financial crises. After a while, we start thinking that things will never get better. We will never get out of debt. We will never make more money. God will never bless us.



Another thing that Satan uses is our health issues to keep us discouraged. I have witnessed this in my own journey of constant health problems due to a combination of trauma and thyroid disease: Because of the possibility of extreme fatigue hitting at any time, I had myself defeated before leaving out the door. I had anxiety about leaving out the door before I left out the door. Can we hear ourselves on this one? We start to think that our health will never get better. It will always be this way.

Satan uses our children to pull at us as well. He finds ways to get them going so that our lives are in a constant state of craziness. We start thinking that their behavior will never get better. Mornings will always be out of control. They will never be functional adults. Sometimes there is so much tension going on in our homes that there is no time for relationships. This is definitely Satan's goal, especially since our God is all about relationships.

One verse that we need to keep in mind is 1 Peter 5:8-9, "Be careful—watch out for attacks from Satan, your great enemy. He prowls around like a hungry, roaring lion, looking for some victim to tear apart. (TLB) If we are not careful, we will be those victims.

Dear God,

Thank you for your word. Please help us to remember to use it in these daily battles that we face, knowing full well who the perpetrator is.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

