

Sisterhood

*Created by the Women of Vizion
for the Women of Vizion*

loved & chosen

STORIES THAT SHAPE US

a collection of testimonies that prove He's faithful

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Hi there! On behalf of the **Vizion Sisterhood** team, we are so grateful you're reading this collection of testimonies from two single women and two married women. For this singles event we decided to tap into the power of testimony to encourage any woman going through heartbreak, unbelief, fear, trauma, and so much more. There's something special about hearing from women in the same season of life as you, as well as the wisdom that comes from women that have previously been in that season and are on the other side of it. We pray that these stories bring endurance and comfort in a season that's often not portrayed well in our Christian culture.

Whether you're divorced, widowed, recently single or have been single your whole life - you are not forgotten. God sees you and He calls you ***loved and chosen***.



GOD'S STRATEGY IN SUFFERING

FALL 2025
03

from the heart of Cassidy O'Brien

My hands trembled as I took the microphone, a blur of motion and nerves carrying me to the front of the church. It was an intimate gathering, just 50 people who had bought tickets to ask the Perrys questions. Yet, I couldn't believe the words that were coming out of my mouth, a raw vulnerability spilling into the air. I was desperate for an answer, a "why" to my pain.



"Hi, my name is Cass," I began, my voice shaky. "A week ago, the rug was pulled out from under me. The man I thought I'd be getting engaged to this year... well, I discovered his hidden sins. The future I envisioned is gone. I just started leading a single young adult women's Bible study. I thought I'd be leading it from the place where I was stepping into marriage, but that's not my reality anymore. I've prayed, I've sought counsel, and my leaders and the Holy Spirit are both telling me I need to continue. I'm not being called to step down... but why? Why does a God who says He cares about me call me to serve the very people in the very place where I am also suffering?"

Tears streamed down my face, and I gasped for air, looking up at the two ministers I respected on the stage.

I didn't want to be here. This wasn't how things were supposed to be. I was a few months shy of 29, and this was supposed to be my fairy tale ending—my year of redemption. After my prodigal daughter years, I had finally become a holy saint in right standing with God. It was supposed to be my time for marriage. Right? My past was a testament to God's keeping hand. I had survived physical and emotional abuse, and an evil man who exposed me on social media and stole my innocence. I had been sober for four years. I thought it was finally my turn to experience a healthy love. I thought I had been in a healthy love.



"I'm sorry, I'm weak," I said, my voice barely a whisper, as I dropped the microphone to my side.

Jackie Hill Perry immediately began to flip through her Bible. Her husband, Preston, leaned forward, his gaze fixed on mine. "You are not weak! You are strong!" he declared. "Before I let Jackie speak, I have one thing to say. I don't know why God did this, but I do know we serve a **strategic** God. You have something. You are learning something. You are enduring something that makes you the right voice for the women He's called you to serve.

One day, you'll look back and know this was not only for them, but also part of His loving plan for what's best for you."

As I tried to regain my composure, my mind went blank. Jackie began to speak, confessing that this was the reality of ministry and leadership. She couldn't count the number of times she'd been called to serve in an area she herself was enduring. She then guided me to Second Corinthians 4, challenging me to read those verses over myself every night until I believed them.



"7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. **8** We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; **9** persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; **10** always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our bodies. **11** For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. **12** So death is at work in us, but life in you.

13 Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, **14** knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. **15** For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. **17** For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, **18** as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

2 Corinthians 4:7-18 ESV



It's been a year and a half since that day. I led those women through three "trimesters" of Bible study, and it was some of the hardest service I have ever done for the Lord. Many nights, I'd cry and worship through my heartbreak, wiping away tears before a shower and preparing my home for the 15 to 20 women who would soon arrive, expecting me to share hope with them in their singleness and heartache.

I know you're probably expecting an answer to the "why"—why did God call me to lead those women for a year? I still don't have the full picture. In some ways, I see how much I desperately needed them. All my friends and the women I did ministry with were married with kids. I needed women to share my burdens with. But above all, I pray that my time and sacrifice for them gave glory to the strength the Lord provided me to serve even while I was hurting.

I may still be single and hidden, but I have joy. Joy isn't a feeling. The "joy of the Lord is my strength" from Nehemiah 8:10 is translated from the Hebrew word **Chedvah**, which is a deep, inner rejoicing that comes from a relationship with God, regardless of our external circumstances. Joy is a knowing that comes from spending time with the Father.

When those women would spiral and share their hopelessness each night, even though I felt sad, I never doubted that He would come through for them or for me. It was a grace. By serving the Lord and the very women who were struggling like me, I was given the unexplainable gift of not doubting God's faithfulness. I still have that gift. Joy is a spiritual fruit, a gift from the Holy Spirit, and He has made my life easier by gracing me with it.

So I may not have the man yet, but I have an unexplainable knowledge that it will happen, all in God's perfect, safe, strategic plan. He had me on His mind, and so many others, too.

My grandfather says it this way: "Faith equals the **force** of trust in something, that is true."

So, my friend, **force yourself** to trust. Accept the joy from the Holy Spirit—a joy that knows who He is and what He does. Record the things that have happened in your life so you can look back one day and trace His hand. Just like you, I am waiting in the slow burn, but I am expectant. Do not lose heart! And please, go serve.

Reflection Questions:

1. How can you personally relate to any of the experiences or emotions shared in this testimony?
2. How did this story challenge or affirm your understanding of God's plan for marriage and singleness?
3. What lessons can you take from this testimony to better live out your calling while single and how can you lean on God's grace in your current season?

GOD WON'T STAY IN YOUR BOX

from the heart of Julie Holmquist

I grew up in the era of purity rings. My parents gave one to each of my five siblings and me when we were teenagers, a simple band with a big promise behind it. Their hearts were in the right place as they wanted the best for their six kids. I didn't get married until I was 28, so I had plenty of years to dream about marriage and the man I would one day call my husband.

One day, I heard a Christian speaker say, "Stop praying vague prayers. God wants you to be specific! How will you recognize His answer if you're not?" So, I got specific—very specific. My prayer went something like this: "Lord, I want a husband with dark hair, from a big family like mine, raised in a Christian home like I was, and involved in ministry—or at least dreaming of it like me. In Jesus' Name, Amen."

Psalm 37:4 became my anchor: "Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart." I was sure this was a promise with my name on it. I was reading my Bible—check. Going to church—check. Consistently attending small group—check. Surely, God would give me exactly what I asked for!

In my youthful idealism, I even made a declaration after receiving that purity ring: "God, the first man who asks me about this ring will be my husband."

Fast forward a few years. I was attending Christ for the Nations (CFN) Bible College and ministering at the Salvation Army with some classmates. About 15 minutes into the sermon, a man sitting in front of me suddenly turned around and asked, "You have a ring on your finger. Are you married?"



I felt the blood drain from my face. Inside I was screaming, "Noooo! Not him, God! I forgot to mention the rest of my list—I want him to have teeth... and hair... and to not be homeless!"

After graduating from CFN, I was ready to evangelize the world and step into full-time ministry. Instead, the only job I could find was as a secretary at a small Christian school. I wrestled with God over that one for some time! "God, I just spent the last two years of my life in Bible college. Surely, you have other plans for me besides sitting behind this desk." It took some time, but once I stopped fighting and started surrendering, I began to settle in where He had me.

Not long after, I met someone. His name was Giff (aka Mr. Holmquist to students and parents), and he was a teacher. We became great friends, and it was such a fun season of life. We had a group of friends who did everything together. We studied the Bible together. We hung out on the weekends. Sometimes we even did street ministry as a group. My heart was so full!



Because Giff and I spent so much time together, my parents asked me once, "So, how do you feel about Mr. Holmquist?"

I replied, "What about him? I don't like him!" And with that, I left the room. A few minutes passed. I came back in and said, "I don't like him, but I can't stand it when he doesn't pay attention to me." LOL! I should have known then and there what God was up to. I was attracted to him in every way, but he didn't match what I thought I wanted.

As time passed, I grew to love him, but there was still something in me that couldn't commit. I was still wrestling with the man in my head. Remember the man with dark hair, a big family, a Christian upbringing, and in full-time ministry? I was so confused. Should I wait for the man who I thought I'd want to marry, or marry the man in front of me who loves Jesus and me?



I'm embarrassed to say this, but it took three long years for me to recognize the gift God was giving me in the man right in front of me – even though he didn't check all the boxes. Matter of fact, the turning point in all of this and my ability to say a wholehearted "yes" to him was given to me in prayer. God told me a phrase. He said, "The gift is as good as the giver!" What it boiled down to was I needed to trust in the goodness of God and that He only gives good gifts. I could trust His goodness (and so can you).

God will not stay in the boxes we've created: what our husband will be like, how much money we'll make, what kind of house we'll live in, how many children we'll have, etc. God's goodness is too big for those boxes. If you allow Him, He'll bust out of the box and show you His goodness in ways you can't even imagine!



Yes, God wants us to pray specific prayers, but foundational to that is He wants us to know His goodness.

Let Him write Your story! His way is better!

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TRUSTING GOD THROUGH THE UNKNOWN

from the heart of Katie Endsley

Sweaty palms, shallow breaths,
uncontrollable sobs - *a panic attack.*

My now ex-boyfriend of five years just left after telling me he didn't love me anymore and thought we'd be happier apart, leaving behind a massive hole in my heart. After the shock started to wear off, the elephant on my chest became so heavy that I forgot how to breathe. My mind started to spiral as the world as I knew it turned upside down. The person I had by my side from high school through college, and now into adulthood, just left me. My one constant through so much change didn't want to be with me anymore. If I didn't have him, I had nothing. That thought overtook me as I sat on my living room floor gasping through the tears, trying to make sense of it all.

After crying myself to sleep that night I woke up to a text from him saying he had made a mistake and wanted to work things out. This started a three year-long codependent cycle driven by fear. Fear of being alone, fear of letting go, fear of the unknown.



During those three years, I met the Lord and started my walk with Christ. However, I was too scared of surrendering the comfort of my old life to fully let Him take control. Instead, I would beg God to remove my ex from my life because just the thought of closing that door all the way would make all that anxiety come flooding back. A part of me couldn't believe that God could provide something better than the half committed life I was living. At the end of those three years and at the end of myself, I finally succumbed to the Holy Spirit and God gave me the strength to call my ex and tell him the cycle was over. Allowing Him to finally be my Lord and not only my Savior changed the trajectory of my life. Yet trusting Him with everything, hasn't always been easy.

Fear has been a consistent theme for me. A pesky weed that has popped up in various seasons - good and bad. It ranges from something simple like anxiety over finding a parking spot in Southend to people pleasing rooted in the fear of man. However, the one that cuts the deepest is this: the fear of never getting married.

In my singleness, this recurring thought of never finding a husband has been something that keeps me up at night. *Will it ever happen for me? What if I really am destined to watch everyone around me live out my deepest desire while I stay single?*

This fear has led me to become desperate on dating apps only to bring insecurity and dejection. It fostered resentment and bitterness towards God especially after another bad date, hearing my crush is dating someone, and seeing other women be approached by men in person leaving me feeling invisible. For years, my desire to give love and be loved in a relationship has grown stronger, yet I'm left wondering why it hasn't happened yet.

I thought that God was withholding him from me because I needed to do more good works like there were some contingencies to me finding a husband. If I serve more or read just the right amount of Scripture each day, then God will finally grant me this gift. Realistically I knew that wasn't God's true nature but after attending my third bridal shower in the same month, it was hard to reconcile the truth to my emotions.

In the past, the worry of not having someone had completely taken control over my mind that I couldn't even see the good that God was doing in my life. Panic had made being in a relationship an idol and eventually consumed my every thought. I was easy prey for the enemy, allowing his lies to consume me thinking that even if I were to start dating someone they'd probably just leave me like my ex did, what about me is worthy of someone staying?



And even letting comparison steal my joy in thinking that there are so many beautiful women out there, why would anyone choose me? Letting fear sit in the driver's seat of my life took me down a road of unbelief, worry, compromise, and regret. Every time I walked into a room, I'd be scanning for an eligible bachelor. As I got closer to 30, the uneasiness of being single grew. If I were going to have kids I needed to find a husband *now*. My anxious thoughts were becoming irrational and illogical.

Fatigued by the self-inflicted pressure, I came to the end of myself - again. I did a year-long fast from dating, shifting my perspective to the One who never left me. Introducing trust back into my relationship with God gave Him the space to work through me.

Fear puts all the focus on *ourselves* where trust focuses on the *Lord*. Our adversary wants us to be so self-centered that we lose sight of the goodness of God.



Now this is where I could bring up that there are roughly 365 places in Scripture that tell us "do not fear" and to read one verse every day to cure your fear and while this could be helpful, it hasn't been my experience with trusting the Lord. Don't get me wrong, the word of God is our greatest weapon against the enemy's lies but it shouldn't be used as a band-aid to cover up a deeper problem. Trust is about being real and raw with your emotions. The times I've seen my faith increase the most are when I've brought my anger and disappointment to the Lord in prayer instead of hiding it. Trusting the Lord is not a linear, upward slope and there is no one-size fits-all advice. What I do know is that it's a conscious decision to choose to trust Him in the midst of not knowing what's next. Sitting in unbelief and doubt will only make your situation worse.





The reality is that I'm not promised a husband in this life. However, God does promise that He cares about my desires if I delight in Him (Psalm 37:4) and that He has gone before me (Deuteronomy 31:8) and will bring new rivers to dry wastelands (Isaiah 43:19). I have faith that God is not finished with my love story. It may not look the way I expected or be in the same time frame that I wanted, but I know that it will be better than anything I could have curated. The life I would have chosen for myself five years ago was on the path to destruction, misery, and more heartbreak. *Thank God He changed my direction!*

Accepting the reality that we don't have control of when, where, or how a relationship could happen takes the burden off yourself and onto the One who was meant to carry it all along.

So what's it look like to trust Him?

"So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today."

Matthew 6:31-34 NLT

Fear paralyzes us into a halt where trust requires steps into the unknown. Jesus tells us clearly to seek the Kingdom of God in the midst of worry. Being single is not the time to be idle. Now is your time to serve, read, learn, and grow in community - not to find a man but to find Him. I've reached the point now that I am grateful the Lord has not let me waste a season of independence and an abundance of time to serve. That doesn't mean my loneliness is gone or that my desire for marriage is any less, but it does mean those things don't control how I view God or myself.





Earlier this year, I gave the Lord my heart for safekeeping. I prayed that the only way my future husband can find my heart is if he was seeking God just as much or even more than I was. There's no safer person to place your trust in than your Heavenly Father.

Give Him the chance to prove your worst fears wrong.

Reflection Questions:

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FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST

from the heart of Katie Lanning

If you're reading this story as a single woman, I hope my story can encourage you to see that true fulfillment isn't found in a ring, a wedding day, or even the most God-honoring romance. Before I ever met my husband, before I ever knew what my future would look like, I encountered the love that changed everything: the redeeming, restoring, unshakable love of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And even after receiving the gift of marriage, that foundation has not changed, it has only been strengthened and cemented.

When I first came to Charlotte, I was broken and searching. I thought fulfillment could be found through relationships, church routines, or simply feeling better about myself with behavior modifications. But eventually, the cracks were beginning to show. Years of abuse, heartbreak, and a shallow faith had worn me down and left me emptier than I knew.

Everything shifted when I walked into a new church and heard the true Gospel preached. For the first time, I became aware of just how far I had strayed and how lovingly God was calling me back home to Himself. In October of 2023, I decided I had had enough of myself and was ready to rededicate my life to the Lord. I was baptized and committed fully to stepping forward to my new life in Christ.

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Ultimately, I believe God allowed me to reach the very end of myself in order to know that hope could only be found in Him. I truly believe He lovingly allowed me to come to the end of every road and to a point of true desperation so I could finally look up and see my need for Him, and pursue Him completely and fully.

In the same month of being baptized, I also became sober from all drugs and alcohol, I became connected in small groups and discipleship opportunities, I started serving with the local body, and allowed God to begin refining every part of my life to align with His truths. I completely gave up trying to control my own agenda and allowed His will to overtake me and my plans. And in His perfect timing, He did bless me with the gift of marriage. But by then, my heart was different. I no longer saw marriage as the goal, but as a gift that reflects the greater love I already had in Christ.

Though God continues to bring me through a work of deep healing and rebuilding that will last the rest of my life, He has allowed me to experience a joy in marriage I never thought would be possible or available for me. Every day I remember what God has done for me and thank Him for it. Not just for the marriage He's given me, but for His kindness and mercy in saving me and allowing me to transform into a new creation in Him, completely. He has taken away all of my sin and shame, and continues to be glorified not just in my marriage, but in every part of my life.

The reason why my marriage is fulfilling is because it is a tangible representation of Christ's love. He has decided to use a faithful man to show me what love in His design, order, and timing looks like, and it has healed and restored my heart in ways I never thought would be possible for me. He has used my marriage to show me that it is possible to be in a loving, safe, and Christ-centered union. He has proven that my past mistakes do not disqualify me from His love or from finding a Godly man. He has showed me that it is possible to overcome trauma from emotional, mental, and sexual abuse. He has allowed me to come into my true identity and find joy in rediscovering passions I thought were dead.

And together, my husband and I are better able to serve Him than I could have apart from my spouse, because God has used him to bring out all of these wonderful sides of me. God truly knew exactly what I needed, and is faithful to bring you exactly what you need to find fulfillment and endure through every season; whether it be a time of singleness, union, or separation.

As I type this story, my engagement ring, a tear-drop shape, glistens brightly and reminds me that indeed God has taken every single tear, captured them in His book, and turned them into something extraordinary. He is a God who is able to use, redeem, and restore all things, no matter how broken, messy, or hopeless your story seems now. Keep trusting Him, keep pursuing Him, keep loving Him. Know that as you seek God deeply, He is faithful to make provision for whatever it is we truly need in order to accomplish His perfect will for our lives.

Thank you, Jesus.

Reflection Questions:

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