

# enough

SHARON JAYNES



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS  
EUGENE, OREGON

Unless otherwise indicated all Scripture references are from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Verses marked NLT are from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Verses marked MSG are from The Message. Copyright © by Eugene H. Peterson 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Verses marked NASB are from the New American Standard Bible®, © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

Verses marked NKJV are from the *New King James Version*®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Verses marked TLB are from *The Living Bible* copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Verses marked AMPC are from the *Amplified Bible, Classic Edition*. Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation.

Verses marked KJV are from the *King James Version*, in public domain.

Verses marked AMP are from the Amplified Bible copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation, La Habra, CA 90631. All rights reserved.

Cover design and illustration by Connie Gabbert Design + Illustration

Portions of this book previously published as *“I’m Not Good Enough”... and Other Lies Women Tell Themselves*

## Enough

Copyright © 2009/2018 Sharon Jaynes

Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97408

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

ISBN 978-0-7369-7354-0 (pbk)

ISBN 978-0-7369-7356-4 (eBook)

The Library of Congress has cataloged the earlier printing as follows:

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Jaynes, Sharon.

“I’m not good enough”—and other lies women tell themselves / Sharon Jaynes.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-7369-1870-1 (pbk.)

1. Women—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. Self-perception—Religious aspects—Christianity. 3. Self-esteem—Religious aspects—Christianity. 4. Christian women—Religious life. I. Title.

BT704.J35 2009

248.8’43—dc22

2008028528

**All rights reserved.** No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, digital, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

**Printed in the United States of America**

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 / BP-SK / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

# Contents

## PART 1: THE BATTLE FOR YOUR THOUGHT LIFE

1. House of Mirrors . . . . .	9
2. Realize the Enemy's True Identity . . . . .	19
3. Recognize the Lies. . . . .	39
4. Reject the Lies. . . . .	49
5. Replace the Lies with Truth. . . . .	63

## PART 2: THE LIES WOMEN TELL THEMSELVES

6. I'm Not Good Enough . . . . .	79
7. I'm Worthless . . . . .	95
8. I'm Such a Failure . . . . .	113
9. I'm So Ugly. . . . .	127
10. I Would Be Happy If... . . . .	139
11. I Can't Forgive Myself. . . . .	151
12. I Can't Forgive the Person Who Hurt Me . . . . .	165
13. I Can't Help Myself. . . . .	183
14. My Life Is Hopeless. . . . .	199
15. God Doesn't Really Love Me. . . . .	215

Second Glances. . . . .	229
-------------------------	-----

### Replacing the Lies with the Truth

Quick Reference Guide. . . . .	231
--------------------------------	-----

Bible Study Guide. . . . .	247
----------------------------	-----

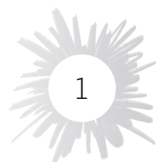
Notes . . . . .	267
-----------------	-----

*To my three nieces,  
Grace Anne Vick, Emily Edwards,  
and Katherine Edwards.  
Watching you become such incredible wives  
and mothers has been a great joy.  
Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your lives.*



PART 1

*the battle for  
your thought life*



1

## House of Mirrors

*I have no greater joy than to hear that  
my children are walking in the truth.*

3 JOHN 4

Carrie brushed on the finishing touches of makeup before rushing off to the carnival with her girlfriends. Just a bit of lip gloss and one more swipe of the hairbrush and she was ready to go.

Carrie heard the car horn blow as the girls pulled into the driveway. She grabbed her sweater and yelled to her mom, who was still in the kitchen.

“Bye, Mom. I’ll be home by eleven.”

“Be careful,” her mother called out.

Carrie, Katie, Clair, and Meghan scurried from booth to booth as the carnival barkers drew them in. They watched boys humiliate themselves trying to fire rifles at metal foxes running across a black backdrop, shoot basketballs into hoops that seemed strangely small, and bang a giant hammer to prove who was the strongest among the bunch. The girls tried their hands at throwing darts to pop balloons, casting rings over old milk jugs, and tossing in slanted straw baskets. After eating sticky pink clouds of cotton candy, the girls wandered around to various sideshows.

“Come one, come all,” the barker called. “Step right up and see yourself as you’ve never been seen before. The House of Mirrors—sure to entertain and amuse. Step right up.”

“Come on in, little lady,” the shifty man with greasy black hair and a toothy grin said as he motioned to Carrie. She shivered and wanted to turn and run away.

“Let’s go in here,” Katie said. “This will be fun.”

Carrie was whisked away with the crowd and pushed into the first mirrored room. Elongated reflections stared back, and the girls giggled at the taller, thinner versions of themselves. In the next room, they doubled over with laughter at their stubby arms and legs, expanded torsos, and chubby cheeks. They struck various poses and got a taste of what shorter, wider versions of themselves might look like.

The girls ran to a third room, but Carrie stayed behind. She was silent as she stood mesmerized at what she saw staring back at her. Words seemed to appear across her chest, fading in and out in various scripted forms. *Worthless. Unloved. Ugly. Stupid. Unacceptable. Unforgivable. Dirty. Unhappy. Failure. Not good enough.*

Was this a trick? Did the others see what she saw? How did they know? Tears trickled down her cheeks as buried memories surfaced before her.

“Carrie, come on!” Meghan called from down the hall. “Let’s go to the bumper cars.”

Carrie took a deep breath, put on her perma-smile, and wiped her eyes. No one noticed the smudged mascara trail down her cheeks or her puffy eyes. Like always, no one knew.

## HOUSE OF MIRRORS

I was in the sixth grade when I first ventured into the House of Mirrors at my hometown county fair—a mere 12 years old. Like Carrie, my group of giggling friends ran from booth to booth, suckered into paying good money to play rigged games. For hours we gave cash to shady carnival characters in hopes of winning a stuffed purple polka-dotted snake, an oversized tie-dyed teddy bear, or a cheesy piece of jewelry we’d never wear. Personally, I stuck with Pickup Ducks—a sure win.

We soared into the air on the Ferris wheel to get an aerial view of our small-town lights, rode through the darkened House of Horrors, each with her latest crush, and plunged down the mountainous, rickety

roller coaster with arms in the air. But of all the sideshows at the carnival, it was the House of Mirrors that captured my attention.

Like Carrie and her friends, we walked through mazelike halls, giggling at the distorted images of ourselves. I looked at the various versions of me and tried to decide which one I liked best. But deep inside, in a place no one knew existed, I was in search of another version of me. I did not like the one I knew best.

After writing the first edition of *Enough* called *I'm Not Good Enough...and Other Lies Women Tell Themselves* and receiving thousands of emails in response, I've realized women all around the world have grown up with a distorted view of who they really are. They look into the mirror and see words that don't match up with the truth about who God created them to be.

They look into the mirror of value and see the word *worthless*.

They look into the mirror of success and see the word *failure*.

They look into the mirror of intelligence and see the word *stupid*.

They look into the mirror of competence and see the word *inadequate*.

They look into the mirror of acceptance and see the word *rejected*.

They look into the mirror of confidence and see the word *insecure*.

They look into the mirror of comparison and see the word *inferior*.

They look into the mirror of performance and see the words *not good enough*.

They look into the mirror of sufficiency and see the words *not enough...period*.

Many women live in a house of mirrors, believing distorted interpretations of who they are—and the devil polishes that mirror of deception every day to keep it shiny

I know the House of Mirrors well. I grew up there. Lived there for years. For decades, feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and inadequacy held me captive to a “less than” life. I looked like I had it all together on the outside, but on the inside I was a cowering little girl hiding in the farthest corner of the playground, hoping no one would notice my reluctance to join in.



You might expect me to say, “But then I met Jesus and all my insecurities miraculously disappeared.” Oh, I wish that were the case, but that little insecure, lost girl grew up to become an insecure Christian woman.

If you’ve read my other books, you know my story. But if we’re new friends, you need to hear a little bit about how I got into my fix. Who knows? Maybe you’ll see yourself walking the path with me.

## BROKEN MIRRORS

I grew up in small-town America, in the eastern part of North Carolina. My father was the successful owner of a building supply company, and my mom was a hardworking arts-and-crafts shop owner. On the outside we looked like a typical American family with two kids and a collie named Lassie. We lived in a beautiful brick ranch-style home with columns supporting the elongated front porch and sixty-foot pine trees forming a shady canopy. But behind the peaceful exterior loomed a deep, dark secret.

My father drank heavily and often terrorized our home with violent outbursts, fits of rage, and verbal and physical abuse. I saw things a little girl should never see and heard words a little girl should never hear. Many nights I went to bed with the covers pulled up over my head and eyes squeezed shut in attempts to block out the visual images that accompanied the violent noises occurring on the other side of my bedroom wall. Some nights I snuck into my brother’s room, and we hid in the security of his closet.

Many mornings I woke up to broken furniture, my mom with a black eye, and my crying father promising it would never happen again. But it always did.

My mom was a bitter, angry woman who struggled to put on a good face in public. Unfortunately, behind closed doors, her bitterness, resentment, and anger spilled over to her children. “You can’t do anything right.” “Why can’t you be smart like your brother?” “You’re so ugly.” “You did a terrible job cleaning that bathroom. Go back and do it again.” When she said, “What’s wrong with you?” I remember thinking, *I don’t know, but something is. I’m just not lovable.*

My father spent most of his time running his company or carousing with friends. And even though his place of business was only a few blocks from our home, his heart was miles away. A battle raged in my little-girl heart. Part of me longed to have a daddy who loved me, and part of me was afraid to even get near the one I had.

Even though I was actually cute as a little girl, I never felt pretty *enough*. I longed to be cherished or valued, but I always felt I was in the way—a bother. That nobody liked me, wanted me, or loved me. And if your parents can't love you, then who ever could? I surmised I was not only not pretty enough, but not smart enough, talented enough, or good enough to be the apple of anyone's eye.

When I was six years old, I skipped off to school with a new box of crayons, a Swiss-polka dotted dress, and fresh hope that I would be liked. But first grade only confirmed my fears. I was “not enough.”

As soon as my first-grade teacher held up that initial spelling flashcard, I knew I was in trouble. Back then, my church-sponsored kindergarten focused on coloring, playing, and napping. But first grade was a whole new ball game with letters, numbers, and tests.

Remembering one spelling exercise makes my palms clammy even today. We lined up our miniature wooden chairs in a row like a choo-choo train. The teacher held up a spelling flashcard for us to identify the word. If we missed the word, we had to go to the caboose. I spent most of the first grade in the caboose. For some reason, I especially had trouble with the word *the*.

My older brother, who proved to be very smart, had had the same teacher five years earlier, and I guess she thought a glimmer of hope lurked somewhere in the gene pool.

*I'll help her*, my teacher must have thought.

She made me a name tag that read *the* and I had to wear it for two weeks. Students came up to me and asked, “Why are you wearing that tag?” “Is your name ‘The’?” “You must be stupid.” “What’s wrong with you?”

Well, I learned how to spell the word *the*, but that’s not all I learned. I learned I was stupid, not as smart as everybody else, and once again, not enough.

The strands of inferiority, insecurity, and inadequacy began to weave an invisible yet indelible grid system over my mind. Every thought I had, every comment by other people, and every social interaction had to filter through that sieve of deficiency before it was interpreted by my little-girl mind. By the time I was a 12-year-old, that filter was cemented firmly in place. I was a scared and scarred little girl who kept her mouth shut by day and her eyes squeezed closed by night.

A House of Mirrors became my home, full of mirrors misshaped by the words of others and interpreted by a needy little girl who just wanted to be accepted and loved.

At the age of 12, I became friends with a girl in my neighborhood, Wanda Henderson. We had known each other since first grade but truly bonded by the sixth. Wanda's mother took me under her wing and loved me as though I were her own child. She told me I did have a father who loved me, a heavenly Father who loved me so much He gave His Son for me. Mrs. Henderson knew what was going on in my home, and she knew about my wounded heart.

Eventually the Hendersons invited me to go to church with them. Amazingly, my family, with its multilayered dysfunction, went to church on Sundays. Yes, with all the alcohol, fighting, pornography, and infidelity that riddled our home, we went to a politically correct, socially prestigious church—fighting all the way to the front door. We heard ear-tickling, inoffensive sermons that were moral enough to make us feel we'd done our American duty but not spiritual enough to convict or transform us in any way.

But the Hendersons' church was different. They talked about having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, a concept I had never heard before. I wanted what they had. I went to this church and drank in every word the pastor and teachers had to say about a Savior who loved me so much He gave His life for me on Calvary's cross so I could have eternal life. He paid the penalty for my sin. He loved me, not because I was pretty or accomplished, but just because I was His. I didn't have to earn God's love, I already had it—a foreign concept for sure.

Two years after my initial visit to this Bible-believing church, when

I was 14 years old, I gave my life to Jesus Christ. Again, you might expect me to say all my insecurities went away. But nothing could be further from the truth. I went from being an insecure little girl to being an insecure Christian. All those feelings of “I’m not enough” went right along with me into my adult years. Except now I had a new verse to the misguided song stuck in my head: “I’m not a good enough Christian.”

## A NEW MIRROR

Into my early thirties, despite my conversion at 14, I felt as though something was wrong with me spiritually—as if I had walked into a movie 20 minutes late, spending the entire time trying to figure out what was going on. I had a wonderful husband, an amazing son, and a happy home life. I attended Bible studies year after year, hoping each one would be the one to fix me. I even taught Bible studies at a scripturally sound church, and I surrounded myself with strong Christian friends.

But something was missing, and I couldn’t figure out what it was. The dirge of “I’m not good enough” was a song I couldn’t get out of my head. The lies of the enemy created limitation in my life. The belittling taunts of the devil were the barbed wire that fenced me in and kept God’s best at bay. I wonder if you can relate. Do you have lies that tumble about in your mind no matter how desperately you want them gone? Do you have regrets piled high like books unread? If so, we’re going to tackle that together.

The lies of the enemy created limitation in my life.  
They were the barbed wire that fenced  
me in and kept God’s best at bay.

The battle to change the song in my head began when I was in my mid-thirties, sitting under the teaching of an older woman in my church, Mary Marshal Young. She opened my eyes to the truths in Scripture about who I was, what I had, and where I was (my position) as a child of God. I had read those verses scattered throughout

Scripture before, but when she encouraged me to cluster them all together into one list, God began a new work in my heart.

You are a saint.

You are chosen.

You are dearly loved.

You are holy.

These truths were right there on the pages of my Bible in black and white, and a few in red.

You are reconciled through Christ's life.

You are justified by Christ's blood.

You are free from condemnation through Christ's death.

You have the mind of Christ.

You can do all things through Christ.

I knew the verses were the infallible Word of God, but I felt rather squeamish hearing them, reading them, believing them.

They didn't feel right.

They didn't sound right.

They made me downright uncomfortable.

But I had a choice to make. Was I going to believe God told the truth? I tried to learn the verses and cooperate with the Holy Spirit to change the way I thought about myself, but it was a struggle...a battle. And so I came up with a *battle plan*. And that, my friend, is what I want to share in the pages of this book. The battle plan for overpowering the lies of the enemy with the truth of God. We're going to discover how to silence the inner critic that holds us hostage—to silence the lies that steal our confidence. We're going to knock down the walls that keep God's best at bay and lean into the still, small voice that calls us to more.

There are many facets to knowing how to replace those lies with the truth. Where do the lies come from? How do we know if what we're thinking and telling ourselves is a lie or the truth? How do we get the lies out of our minds? How do we overcome the lies of the enemy with the promises of God? How do we develop new ways of seeing ourselves when the lies have been our truth for so long? How do we walk out of the House of Mirrors once and for all and into the unerring reflection of our true identity?

It's time to stop believing the lies about ourselves and start believing the truth, no matter how beautiful it may be.

God wants to show you truths about your true identity, His timeless sufficiency, and your preordained destiny that flesh and blood cannot reveal. Jesus sits by the well waiting for you to show up, to dip down deep and pour out the affirmation you're thirsting for. "Affirmations that call you to let go of the hindrances that hold you hostage, take hold of the promises that set you free, and live boldly with that faith you've always longed for."<sup>1</sup>

So let's hunker down and begin with the first question: Where do the lies come from?



## Realize the Enemy's True Identity

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

JOHN 10:10

Mary Beth stood before the bathroom mirror, brushing her shoulder-length hair and staring at the reflection. It seemed like only yesterday she was a carefree little girl swinging from the monkey bars on the schoolhouse playground. Oh, how she longed for the days when her greatest concern was which hair bow to wear in her neatly tied ponytail.

“Mommy, watch this,” echoed as the distant memories passed before her.

Birthday parties with an increasing number of candles, dance recitals with flashing cameras, prom dresses with handsome escorts, cheer-leading routines with enthusiastic fans, church youth group with open Bibles, and teary-eyed parents driving away from her college dorm. Then there was Bob.

“Bob,” she whispered as tears pooled in her eyes.

Bob and Mary Beth met at a campus ministry her junior year. He was everything she had hoped for in a husband: handsome, ambitious, spiritual, and most of all, attentive. Both sets of parents beamed as they watched the couple walk the red-carpeted aisle of their church after pledging their lifelong love.

Fifteen years later, Mary Beth and Bob had a mortgage, three kids,

a dog, busy schedules, and a loveless marriage. They were so busy taking care of life that they forgot to take care of love.

That's when Jim appeared. She recalled the day she ran into the grocery store to pick up a loaf of bread.

"Mary Beth, is that you?"

"Jim! It's so good to see you," she said as they met halfway down the aisle in a friendly hug. "Where have you been? When did you get back in town?"

"I've been working in Europe for the past ten years," Jim said, "but now I'm back for a while. Man, you look great. Didn't anyone tell you you're supposed to look older as you get older? I'd love to catch up. Do you have time to step over to Starbucks and grab a coffee?"

Mary Beth's heart quickened. How long had it been since anyone had told her she looked great? She couldn't even remember. "No, I'd better not. I need to get back home."

"Well, maybe next time. I just can't get over how good you look."

"Oh hush. You're silly. I'll see you around."

Over the next several months, Mary Beth and Jim bumped into each other several times. She even found herself applying lipstick and making sure her hair was in place before leaving the house just in case she saw him. Her mind began to daydream about what it would be like to share a candlelight dinner with Jim. She imagined him reaching for her hand or brushing a stray strand of hair from her face.

Mary Beth pulled up his Facebook page and sent a friend request. She looked at his photos and wondered what it would be like to be in them. Mary Beth knew in her heart that the imaginings were not healthy. That the "innocent" texts that followed their third meeting needed to stop. So she planned a special surprise for Bob, hoping a romantic evening would suppress or replace the longings she felt for Jim.

She recalled the evening. The kids were at her parents' for the night, the dinner was cooked to perfection, and a rose petal fragrance wafted throughout the candlelit dining room. All day long Mary Beth had prepared. Wearing the clingy low-cut dress was intentional, not to mention what was underneath. Her hair was just as Bob liked it, and her body was scented, softened, and waiting to be touched.



"Hello," Mary Beth answered when her phone rang.

"Hi, honey. Listen, I'm not going to be able to make it home on time tonight. I might not even make it home at all. I've got an emergency meeting with the board, and it looks like we could be on a conference call until morning. Seems like our China export deal is in jeopardy. We didn't have anything planned for tonight, did we?"

"No," was all she said.

"Okay, see you later." *Click.*

*I can't believe he just did that, she thought in a huff. All he cares about is work. I can't live like this any longer. This isn't a marriage; it's job share. I tried. It didn't work. I can't believe God wants me to live like this. I know He wants more for me. I know He wants me to be happy.*

Mary Beth picked up her cell phone and tapped in the numbers.

"Hello," Jim answered.

"Hi, Jim. This is Mary Beth. Are you still up for that cup of coffee?"

Many cups of coffee and planned meetings ensued after that evening. Three months later, Mary Beth and Jim consummated their affair.

Temptation had turned into consummation had turned into condemnation. The taste of forbidden fruit rotted in her soul, and she wanted to die.

Looking down at the bottle of sleeping pills her doctor had prescribed, she thought just how easy it would be to end it all...right now...today.



I wish I could tell you this is a script from a soap opera or primetime drama, but it's not. It's a common tale I hear time and time again. The names change, but the story line remains the same. And it makes me mad. I'm not angry with the women who pour their hearts out to me, but I am mad at the enemy who lies to them, the world that deceives them, and the old preprogrammed thought patterns that refuse to let go. I'm fed up with the enemies who whisper that God is holding out on them, that they could be happy if...

## IN THE BEGINNING

The first step in the battle for your thought life is to realize the enemy's true identity. He shows up in Genesis chapter 3.

The Bible begins with the words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Five days after time began, the Creator of the universe gazed at all He had made and was not completely satisfied. Yes, as the sun set on each of the first five days on God's kingdom calendar, He said, "It is good." But something was missing. Something more. Someone more.

The stage was set for Act 6. The curtain rose. Everything had to be perfect for God's grand finale. The angels gathered round as God announced the final scene on the magnificent drama.

He began with an announcement: "Let us make mankind in our image" (Genesis 1:26). This being would be different from all the rest. With body, soul, and spirit, man would enter into a relationship with the Creator on a personal and intimate level. He would be just a little lower than the angels and rule over all the living creatures in the air, at sea, and on the ground. He would fill the earth with others like him and subdue its wildness. Man would be God's friend.

God knelt on the ground and gathered a handful of dirt. He spat on the dust and began forming the most magnificent creation to date. With His very fingertips, God fashioned man's inward parts: capillaries, nerve endings, brain cells, hair follicles, eyelashes, and taste buds. Meticulously and deliberately, the Artist created a masterpiece of divine design.

And as the lifeless form lay before the celestial audience, God placed His mouth upon the nostrils of man and breathed life into his waiting lungs. Man's heart began to beat, the lungs began to expand, and the eyes began to flutter open. And the curtain began to fall on this, the sixth day of creation.

"Wait!" the Creator said. "My work is not done. It's not good for man to be alone. I'll create a helper suitable for him. A companion like him, but oh so different."

God—the Us, the three-in-one—began to fashion the grand finale: woman.

Can't you just see it now? Can't you sense the excitement of the angels as they hovered low? From the very beginning of time, mankind was set apart. Man—both male and female—was uniquely designed for a specific purpose as God's image bearer to rule the earth.

But one among the onlookers that day watched with evil intent. Yes, he was among the created angelic beings, one of the most beautiful. But he wasn't happy with his position in the heavenly order. He wanted to elevate himself above God. And while he had been created to be a light bearer, his rebellion caused him to be thrown to Earth to become known as the Prince of Darkness.

And now there were these humans created in God's image. The enemy thought they were disgusting—he wasn't pleased. As soon as Adam and Eve stood on the stage, the Prince of Darkness began to devise their demise. If he was going down, he was going to take as many of these image bearers with him as possible.

Adam and Eve lived in a perfect world. All their needs were cared for. They had perfect communion with God and with each other. They were naked and felt no shame. The only restriction placed on them was that they were not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the middle of the garden. God warned Adam, "When you eat from it you will certainly die" (Genesis 2:17).

As they basked in the light of God's love, darkness slithered into the garden with his plan to steal, kill, and destroy the image bearers. And how did he do it? He did it with the most powerful weapon of all: lies.

## NOW THE SERPENT

Jesus called him "father of lies" (John 8:44 NLT). Paul referred to him as the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2 NASB). In the book of Revelation (KJV), John called him "the devil" (12:9), "the accuser of our brethren" (12:10 NASB), and "the great dragon" (12:9). No matter what you choose to call him, the deceiver slithered into mankind's perfect world in the garden, selling his bag of lies. The meaning of the word *lie* is "a falsehood with the intent to deceive," and deceive he did.

Genesis chapter 3 begins with the words, "Now the serpent." The great deceiver clothed himself as a serpent and slithered up to Eve with

a game plan to destroy God's image bearers. He didn't come with a sword or a gun or even a knife for his attack. He simply wielded lies.

The serpent knew Adam and Eve would not buy into a bald-faced denial of God, so he slipped into the garden with a twist and a turn of the truth. He began by posing a question: "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" (Genesis 3:1).

It was an invitation for Eve to enter into dialogue. He knew exactly what God had said. He was just trying to draw her into a conversation to confuse her and cause her to doubt God.

The devil can't take away the promises of God. He can't change the truth of who you are and what you have in Christ. But he can put a question mark at the end of those promises to cause you to question if His Word is really true for you. He can put a question mark at the end of God's commands in an attempt to get you to question if His promises are applicable for today.

Anytime you have a thought that begins with the words, "Did God really say..." you need to stop and ask yourself, "Where did that thought come from?" Most of our decisions that lead us in a path away from God's perfect plan begin with this question.

Here's what God did really say: "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

See how the deceiver twisted the truth? Put a question mark at the end of God's statement rather than a period.

Oh, sister, we've got to know who the enemy is and understand how he works. He does the very same with you and me that he did with Adam and Eve. He takes the promises of God, such as, *I am holy and dearly loved*, and twists it around in your mind to become, *Am I holy and dearly loved? Can I do all things through Christ who gives me strength? Am I free of condemnation?*

Friend, when you sense that question mark at the end of God's promises, grab it with both hands and yank it into an exclamation mark!

*I am holy and dearly loved!*

*I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength!*

*I am free from condemnation!*

Okay, I got a little excited and veered off topic of the first step in the battle plan for the mind. Here we go.

Notice the first three words of God's command: "You are free." God's command was not stifling, but freeing. Adam and Eve had incredible freedom in the garden, a literal cornucopia of goodness at every turn. They had a sense of significance as rulers of the earth; a sense of security in that all their needs were provided for; a sense of belonging with perfect union and communion with God and each other. They had only one restriction—just one. And that was the Achilles' heel Satan went for. Boundaries God had established to protect them, Satan used to provoke them. God wanted to protect them from dying; Satan wanted them dead.

To the serpent's question, Eve replied, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die'" (Genesis 3:2-3).

Eve got it mostly right. God never mentioned not touching the fruit, but that seems like a pretty good idea.

Next, Satan didn't even try to disguise the deception. He told a flat-out lie. His next words were the original lie. "You will not certainly die" (verse 4). The very first lie, and one of the greatest still: *God is not telling the truth; sin has no consequences.*

And finally, he told the greatest lie of all—you can be like God. "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (verse 5). In other words, "God doesn't know what He's talking about. He's holding out on you. You don't need Him. You can be your own god. The forbidden fruit will give you everything you ever wanted and more!"

Boundaries God had established to protect them,  
Satan used to provoke them.

Almost every temptation we will ever face will start with these two thoughts: “I’d be happy if...” and “Did God really say...?” “If you play along with his line of questioning, before long you’ll find yourself naked and ashamed. You’ll wind up disoriented and disconnected from the voice of God that longs to call you by name in the cool the day.”<sup>1</sup>

Eve rejected the truth and believed the lie. She believed she could be like God and in control of her own life. “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it” (verse 6).

And as Eve sank her teeth into the forbidden fruit, it settled in her soul and fermented into shame and condemnation. Her husband also felt the sickening rot of sin settle in his soul. Suddenly shame and fear entered the world, and Adam and Eve hid from God like wayward children.

Satan is not very creative, but he is effective. And he has been lying to us ever since that time in the garden. Why? Because it works.

## ENEMY NUMBER ONE

I don’t like to talk about the devil. I really don’t. But to understand the battle plan for changing the way we think, we must know who the real enemy is. Your enemy is not your mother who hurt you, your father who abused you, your ex-husband who abandoned you, your friend who betrayed you, your employer who belittled you, or your child who dishonored you. Christians often operate like “blindfolded warriors. Not knowing who our enemy is, we strike out at each other.”<sup>2</sup>

Listen, if we don’t know who the real enemy is, then we can’t win the battle. And I want to win! I want you to win! That means we’ve got to take a look at the enemy. He isn’t going to be the focus of this book. He doesn’t have the leading role; Jesus does. But he does have a role. And he is real.

A Barna poll asked Christians what they believed about the devil. Forty percent strongly agreed that Satan “is not a living being but a symbol of evil.” Nineteen percent said they “agreed somewhat” with

that perspective. Only 35 percent said they believed Satan is real, and 8 percent were not sure what they believed about the existence of Satan.<sup>3</sup>

No war has ever been won in the history of the world without a clear understanding of who the real enemy is. And the battle for our thought life is no different. This is our starting point.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the enemy has many names. The name Satan means “adversary, one who resists.” He is a created being. Just as God created man, He also created Satan. Oh, He didn’t create him as the Evil One we know today. He created an angel named Lucifer, which means “morning star.” However, Lucifer, like man, had a free will. At some point he chose to rebel against God and was thrown from heaven with one-third of the angels. We aren’t told the exact details of Lucifer’s fall from heaven, but two prophets, Ezekiel and Isaiah, have alluded to it (Ezekiel 28:12-17; Isaiah 14:12-15).

One thing we do know for sure is that Jesus said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18). Jesus was there. We must always remember that while Jesus came to earth in bodily form at a certain point in history, He was before history began. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning” (John 1:1-2). Jesus was. Jesus is. Jesus always will be.

When Satan was thrown from heaven, he took one-third of the angels with him into the final condemnation coming in the last days (Revelation 12:3). He has many aliases: prince of demons (Matthew 9:34), the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4), the ruler of the kingdom of the air (Ephesians 2:2), the accuser (Revelation 12:10), the father of lies (John 8:44), deceiver (Genesis 3:13), the great dragon (Revelation 12:9), the ancient serpent (Revelation 12:9), the devil (Revelation 12:9), and Satan, who leads the whole world astray (Revelation 12:9). Each one of these names reveals an aspect of his nature and tactics.

“Scripture depicts him opposing God’s work (Zechariah 3:1), perverting God’s Word (Matthew 4:6), hindering God’s servant (1 Thessalonians 2:18), obscuring the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4), snaring the righteous (1 Timothy 3:7), and holding the world in his power (1 John 5:19).”<sup>4</sup> Satan cannot dwell in a true believer because a true believer

is sealed by and inhabited by the Holy Spirit. However, he can taunt, tempt, and trouble a believer by putting ideas and thoughts into the mind. He masks his thoughts as our own thoughts to get us to act in disobedience to God's will. However, the devil cannot make us do anything. He can only make the suggestion. And God always provides a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

One of his names is "deceiver." A deceiver is someone who presents a lie in such a way that it sounds like the truth. He tries to make you believe something is true when it isn't. He also tries to make you think something isn't true when it is. He speaks in your own voice. The thoughts feel like you and sound like you. He can't read your mind, but he watches to determine your specific struggles. Those present struggles and weaknesses, along with past hurts and failures, become the raw material with which he customizes lies just for you. And if you don't have enough pain in your past, he'll fabricate some.

Once I was in a Bible study group of 12 women when we were sharing some of the struggles from our childhoods we were having trouble letting go. At one point, one of my friends, who had remained quiet from most of the session, began to cry.

"You all have had such hardships in your lives. My childhood was wonderful. I'm a terrible person, and I don't have anyone to blame it on."

At that moment, I realized we were all fighting the wrong enemy. We were placing blame on people in our past rather than the deceiver, who wants to keep us stuck there. Do not allow the deceiver to deceive you about who the real enemy is.

His goal is for you to think a thought is your thought. When you repeat it often enough, it becomes your reality. You think it's true, but it's not.

When it comes to the devil, you don't have to outmuscle him, outsmart him, or outshoot him to be free of his influence. You just have to "outtruth" him, and we're going to get to that in just a bit.

### *When You Least Expect It*

Did you notice when and how the enemy attacked in Genesis



chapter 3? I imagine Adam and Eve were simply minding their own business, gallivanting around the garden. Perhaps they were climbing trees or playing in the grass with cheetahs. Then the serpent slithered onto the scene, appearing out of nowhere. He's crafty like that.

I remember a September Tuesday when I was out in my garden, so to speak. It was mid-morning and I was taking a walk through the neighborhood. The sky was a clear, humid-free Carolina blue and the breeze was fall-crisp. I even sang a bit when I thought no one could hear. I felt all was right with the world. But it wasn't. Six hundred and twenty-three miles northeast of my little slice of momentary paradise, all hell was breaking loose. After my jaunt through the neighborhood, I came into the house with both my landline and my cell phone ringing. "Have you seen what's happening?" my husband said with panic in his voice.

"No," I replied. "I've been out walking. What is it?"

"Turn on the television. Start praying!"

I turned on the television and stared in horror as I watched what millions of Americans were watching as well.

American Airlines Flight 11, a Boeing 767 with 92 souls on board, took off from Boston's Logan International Airport en route to Los Angeles. Hijackers took over the plane, and 47 minutes after take-off, Mohammed Atta crashed the jet into floors 93-99 of the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. Seventeen minutes later, hijackers crashed a second plane, United Airlines, Flight 175, with 65 souls aboard, into floors 75-85 of the World Trade Center's South Tower.

America was stunned. Shocked. Panic-stricken.

There was more. A third flight with 64 souls aboard, American Airlines Flight 77, left Dulles International Airport outside of Washington, D.C. It was also hijacked and flown into the western façade of the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., killing 59 aboard the plane and 125 military and civilian personnel inside the building.

For the first time in history, all flights over the entire United States were grounded. Arrows on the map showing flight patterns across the country disappeared.

At 9:59 a.m. on September 11, 2001, the South Tower of the World Trade Center collapsed. Twenty-nine minutes later the North Tower collapsed. Approximately an hour later, the 40 passengers and crew of a fourth plane, United Airlines Flight 93, heard the news about what was happening in New York City and Washington, D.C. In the passengers' attempt to overcome the hijackers on their plane, the plane crashed into a field in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, killing all aboard.

During the 9/11 attacks in 2001, 2996 people were killed and more than 6000 others were wounded. What started as a typical day morphed into one of the most tragic days in our country's history. *God*, I whispered, *we never saw it coming*.

*That's how the enemy always attacks*, He reminded me. *When you least expect it*.

Oh, friend, we must be prepared. We can't let our guards down and dance flippantly through life as if the enemy doesn't exist. No, we do not need to be afraid of him—not in the least. But we do need to be aware of the devil's schemes to hijack our true identity and waylay our God-given destiny. We need to be prepared when he attempts to crash into our towers of truth to demolish our faith when we least expect it.

God made sure the enemy's strategy to deceive the first man and woman was recorded in detail so we can learn from their mistakes and be prepared when the enemy attacks us as well. From Genesis to Revelation we can examine what he does and how he does it so we won't be "unaware of his schemes" (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Satan still whispers his lies and hijacks destinies. His goal is the same as it was in the beginning—to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). And he is always looking for an opportune time (Luke 4:13). Usually when we least expect it.

Here's the good news. Are you ready for some good news? The battle has already been won. Jesus came to destroy the devil's work (1 John 3:8), and destroy it He did. But it takes practice for your mind, will, and emotions to catch up and catch on.

A man in the Arizona desert came upon a diamondback rattlesnake. With a hoe from the back of his car trunk, he cut off its head. Amazingly, the headless snake continued to shake its rattle and lunge at him.

“What’s worse,” the man said, “even though I knew its head was cut off, that he was dead, I still flinched.”<sup>5</sup>

Satan has already lost the battle, but he continues to shake his rattle to draw our attention away from the truth of his defeat. And although he has lost the battle and Jesus has crushed his head under His heel (Genesis 3:15), he wants us to think he’s still in control.

Satan does not give up on you when you become a Christian. He doesn’t throw up his hands and say, “Oh well, I lost that one. I guess I’ll move on to someone else.” Quite the contrary. He knows who you are, what you have, and where you are as a child of God. He knows you are chosen, accepted, adopted, appointed, valued, justified, reconciled, redeemed, righteous, free from condemnation, holy, sealed, complete, and completely forgiven. His mission is to keep you from believing it. And he uses the same manipulative craftiness he used in the garden. That’s why it’s so important to understand what happened with the first man and woman. When he tries the same tricks on us, we’ll be ready.

Paul exhorts us to “put on the full armor of God so that [we] can take [our] stand against the devil’s schemes” (Ephesians 6:11). The Greek word used for “schemes” is *methodeia*. It’s a method—a step-by-step, progressive plan. If he has a plan, then we need a plan. But he’s not the only enemy we face when it comes to the battle for seeing ourselves as God sees us.

## ENEMY NUMBER TWO

My brother was about four years old when he decided to grab a box of matches and a handful of sparklers to see how they worked. He had heard sparklers worked best in the dark, so he went into the darkest place he could find at Grandma’s house—her wardrobe closet.

Stewart snuck into the darkness, crouched among the dresses and coats, and lit the first match. Immediately, the metal sticks began shooting fiery sparks in all directions. Within moments, he noticed more than sparklers on fire. Grandma’s clothes were in flames. (I’m happy to say Stewart wasn’t harmed, unless you count the spanking he got from Grandma.)

Friends, we don’t have to go into a closet to find the darkness. It’s

waiting for us the moment we step out the front door. Just turn on the television to listen to the six o'clock news, and you know it's true. The world is full of darkness at every turn. No, the devil is not our only enemy. The Bible tells us our struggle is against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

What exactly is "the world"? The Bible gives several definitions. Sometimes *world* refers to all the people on the earth: "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (John 3:16). In some instances *world* refers to planet Earth itself (Genesis 11:1). At other times *world* refers to the world's values and mores (Romans 12:2). The world can be defined as "the whole system of humanity (its institutions, structures, values, and mores) as organized without God."<sup>6</sup> The ways of a culture oppose God, and Paul referred to this worldliness when he said, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world" (Romans 12:2). In other words, don't get so comfortable with the current culture that you fit right in without being any different. Jesus said the world hated Him and we shouldn't be surprised if it hates us as well (John 15:18-19). Both reflect the world's values or ways of thinking.

The Bible also tells us "the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). We seem to be splitting hairs here. But when we consider the power of the enemy and the pull of world systems, they are almost one and the same. Right now, the world systems are being heavily influenced by the Evil One.

But here's the hope. Jesus said, "But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). As long as we live in the world, we will feel its pull. But God assures us we have what it takes to "overcome the world" (1 John 5:4-5). We have the power of the Holy Spirit living in us and faith in the Savior who works through us.

The world's lies say:

- Your value is based on your accomplishments.
- Your spouse must complete you and make you happy.
- If your husband no longer makes you happy, it's okay to leave him and find someone who does.
- You deserve to be happy at all cost.

- If it feels good, do it.
- Sex is a basic need.
- Waiting to have sex until after you're married is not practical.
- Success is measured by how much money you make.
- Your life is your own. Do what makes you happy.
- The more money you have, the happier you will be.
- The prettier you are, the happier you will be.

What the world tells us changes from one season to the next. What is wrong on one day may be right the next. What is despicable one day may be totally acceptable the next. But God's truth never changes.

### ENEMY NUMBER THREE

Of all the activities ten-year-old Miriam enjoyed, she loved riding horses the most. Charlie, her favorite horse, had a sleek chestnut mane, well-defined, muscular legs, and a fierce, strong will to match. Miriam felt powerful and self-assured when controlling this massive animal—except when he caught a glimpse of the barn. Whenever Miriam and Charlie returned from a jaunt in the woods, as soon as they got close enough for him to see the barn, he bolted homeward, forcing Miriam to hang on to the reins for dear life.

One day her riding instructor witnessed this strong-willed animal taking control of his master.

"Miriam! What are you doing?" she called out. "You cannot let that animal control you in that manner! Bring that horse back out of the barn this instant."

Dutifully, Miriam mounted Charlie and led him a distance away from the stalls.

"Now," the wiser, older woman instructed, "when you turn around and Charlie sees the barn and begins to run toward it, turn your reins all the way to the right. Do not let him go forward."

On cue, Miriam steered her horse toward the stalls. On cue, Charlie began to bolt.

"Turn him! Turn him!" the instructor shouted.

Young Miriam pulled the reins to the right as hard as she could until the horse's head was inches away from touching his right shoulder. But instead of obeying her lead, Charlie fought her with 950 pounds of bone and muscle. Round and round the horse and rider circled.

"Don't let go," the instructor shouted. "You must break his will!"

After ten long minutes of going in circles, Miriam and Charlie both grew exhausted and quite dizzy. He stopped circling. She stopped pulling.

"Now gently tap him to see if he will walk toward the barn instead of run," the instructor commanded.

Charlie did not bolt, but walked at a steady pace. Miriam had broken this beautiful animal's will and regained control of him as he submitted to his master.

I see myself in Charlie. I have the tendency to do what I've always done—to revert to old habit patterns and thought patterns.

Before we head into the second step in the battle for our thought life, we must look at one more enemy to ponder: the flesh. From the time we are born, we receive messages about ourselves—some true, some false. We go through our lives doing whatever we think necessary to feel safe, secure, and significant. Between the time we're born physically and the time we're born again spiritually, we form certain habit patterns and thought patterns. Our unique way of getting our God-given needs met by our own strength and our own means is our unique version of the flesh.

As with the word *world*, *flesh* has several meanings in the Bible. One meaning is simply our bodies—our literal flesh and bones. The Bible says, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). Jesus came in bodily form—flesh and bones.

But another use of *the flesh* refers to our sinful thought patterns and actions that develop over time, our mechanism for getting our needs met apart from Christ. Once we become a Christian, the desire to do things our way and in our own strength apart from God does not instantly go away. No one pushes the delete button on our old programming—our old thought patterns and actions. We experience a struggle between the flesh, with its preprogrammed thought patterns and actions that seek to please self, and the spirit, with its new thought patterns and actions that seek to please God.

When we become Christians, we're born again and have a new spirit within us. We are saved from the penalty of sin. However, as long as we live in an earthly body, we will battle with the power of sin. Our old fleshly desires war against our new spiritual desires. While we fight battles with the world on the outside, we also fight battles with the flesh on the inside—our mind, will, and emotions.

Charles Spurgeon said, "Beware of no man more than yourself; we carry our worst enemies within us." Sometimes we can be our own worst enemy.

The flesh's lies will say:

*I've got to look out for myself because no one else will.*

*I deserve to eat that bag of chips.*

*I'm going to get even.*

*I'm going to quit. This is too hard.*

*I want what I want, and I want it now.*

*I'm better than that person.*

*My parents didn't love me, so no one ever will.*

*I've worked hard all week. I deserve as much wine as I want.*

## WHO TOLD YOU THAT?

"Put on your shoes," Cissy told her four-year-old granddaughter.

"I don't want to," Sarah said.

"I don't care if you don't want to. We need to go. Put on your shoes."

Defiantly, the stubborn preschooler put her hands on her hips, looked up at her grandmother, and said, "You're not the boss of me!"

"Oh yeah?" Cissy said. "Then who is?"

"God."

"Well, I work for Him," Cissy assured her. "Now put on your shoes."

Sister, make no mistake about it: The enemy is not the boss of you! God is! No matter what he says to you, you don't have to listen.

We've already looked at what happened when the serpent slithered into the garden and drew Eve into dialogue with the words, "Did God really say...?" Part of the problem was that she didn't recognize the lie or the liar.

After Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they hid. I don't know about

you, but I've hidden a time or two. Maybe we don't hide behind a bush, but we do hide behind our own justifications and rationalizations. God asked two questions in Genesis chapter 3. The first was, "Where are you?" and the second was, "Who told you that?" God still calls out to us, "Where are you?" And He still asks, "Who told you that?"

As we move forward in this battle plan for changing the way we think, and look closely at the various lies we tell ourselves, I want you to hear God asking you, "Who told you that? Who is saying those things to you? Is it the echoes of the world? Is it whispers of the past? Is it old flesh patterns ingrained in your mind? Is it the devil disguising his voice as your own? Who told you that?"

The world, the flesh, and the devil are so intricately intertwined it's difficult to tell them apart. The *world* constantly seeks to pull us away from God by appealing to our flesh. The *flesh* defiantly tends to default to old thought and habit patterns. At the same time, John says, "We know...the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). The three are in cahoots, and it doesn't really matter which one is influencing you to tell lies about yourself. They're all in it together.

We defeat the devil every time we choose to listen to God's truth rather than the enemy's lies. We defeat the world every time we believe the Bible words rather than culture's ever-changing belief system. We defeat the flesh every time we act in a way that lines up with our new, born-again identity rather than our old, self-centered programming.

Francis Frangipane said, "The greatest battle that was ever won was accomplished by the apparent death of the victor, without even a word of rebuke to His adversary! The prince of this world was judged and principalities and powers were disarmed not by confrontational warfare, but by the surrender of Jesus on the cross."<sup>7</sup>

The purpose of this chapter has been to expose the enemy's true identity. However, the enemy is never to be our focus. Our focus is on Jesus Christ—the truth giver, the way-maker, victorious Savior, God's only Son, who defeated the enemy on the cross. Jesus Christ reigns supreme, and ministering angels surround us on every side (Hebrews



1:14). “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4 KJV).

Now we know the enemy's true identity. But more importantly, we know the Savior who has defeated him.



## Recognize the Lies

*Then you will know the truth,  
and the truth will set you free.*

JOHN 8:32

**H**ear Sharon,” the letter began, “I found your email address on your website. I was searching for some information on what the Bible says about affairs. Somehow I came upon your site. I feel like I am on the verge of destroying my life. My life with my husband has never been good—marginal at best. I find myself working hard on my appearance so other men will notice and desire me. We have four children, and I’m miserable. My husband is in the military and away at boot camp. I’m glad he’s gone.

“I am on the verge of having an affair with just about anyone to escape my marriage. I don’t want to look back on my life and think I could have been happy with someone else. I feel like I am trapped in a loveless marriage. I want a divorce.”

Can’t you just see the enemy rubbing his hands together like a nasty fly? I bet he shuddered when she clicked the send button on her computer and her email came my way. “Oh no,” I imagine him saying. “This could ruin everything.”

### THE MIND IS A NOISY PLACE

If you poke around the Internet, you’ll see claims that the mind has about 50,000 to 70,000 thoughts a day. That seems high to me, but

let's just say it's close. That's a lot of chatter! About one thought per second every waking hour.

Another study showed that 95 percent of our thoughts are habitual, meaning they are the same thoughts we thought about yesterday. To top it off, for the average person, 80 percent of those thoughts are negative. Scientists say our brains are “designed to take in and register negative experiences more deeply than positive experiences.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, I'm not sure I buy all the numbers, but let's still say they're close. And remember, this is for the average person. I don't know about you, but I don't want to be the average person. I want to be aware of my thoughts and not leave them to chance. If we allow our thoughts to go unchecked, most likely the repetition of negative self-talk and lies will form ruts in our minds. We'll think about them again tomorrow, and the next day, and the next.

## RERUNS, REPLAYS, AND REPEATS

When you consider the words in the letter at the beginning of this chapter, you can imagine how this woman had been thinking these same thoughts day after day. She didn't wake up one day and come to those conclusions. Disappointment in her life and in her husband had created so much internal chatter that she wasn't even able to hear the voice of God telling her anything different.

The lies she believed weren't really that different from the lies Eve believed in the garden. *God is holding out on me...I would be happy if...I'm going to take control of this situation...I don't care about the consequences...I want more...I deserve more...Anything is better than this.*

I can see the footprints of the enemy, who has trampled over this woman's heart and whispered lie after lie after lie—and she doesn't even know it. That's what makes the lies so effective—the average person doesn't know how to detect them.

We've looked at the first step to changing the way we think: Realize the enemy's true identity. He is doing everything in his power to keep Christians from experiencing the promises of God and walking in power and purpose. His goal is for us to live self-centered, miserable,

lonely lives. His chief objective is our utter destruction, and his *modus operandi* is telling lies.

Now let's look at the second step in the battle for changing the way we think—recognize the lie.

## COUNTERFEIT CADENCE

The Bible says, “We are not ignorant of [Satan’s] schemes” (2 Corinthians 2:11 *NASB*). His schemes include a step-by-step, progressive plan of one lie that leads to another lie that leads to another lie. The lies begin small with seemingly insignificant consequences and gradually grow large with more destructive repercussions.

*I'm so stupid.*

*I can't do anything right.*

*I'll never change.*

*Everyone would be better off if I weren't even alive.*

Those thoughts are scary, aren't they? The real danger is when we agree with the thoughts and make them our own. The only way to stop the cadence is to recognize the deceit in the score. But the only way to recognize the lie is to know the truth. We must know the truth so when a counterfeit comes along we recognize its lack of authenticity.

When someone is training to become a bank teller, he or she is taught how to recognize counterfeit money. However, the instructors don't teach what counterfeit bills look like; they teach what genuine currency looks like. They study the markings, the coloring, and the feel of real money, so when the counterfeit comes along, the teller can recognize it. D.L. Moody once said, “The best way to show that a stick is crooked is not to argue about it or to spend time denouncing it, but to lay a straight stick alongside it.”<sup>2</sup> God's Word is the only straight stick—the only measuring stick that matters.

Again, Paul wrote, “We are not unaware of [Satan's] schemes” (2 Corinthians 2:11). If Satan came to you in a little red suit with a pitchfork and announced himself as the devil, you wouldn't believe a word he said. But he is cunning and disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). When he deceived Eve, he even quoted Scripture—albeit twisted and distorted.

He has a collection of old tapes from your past, and he pushes rewind and play, rewind and play. Oh yes, he knows which buttons to push. He also uses personal pronouns like “I” instead of “you.” The thoughts sound something like this: *I am a failure. I am a loser. I can't do anything right. I'm ugly.* The thoughts sound like you, feel like you, and before you know it, you think they *are* you. That's the reason it's so difficult to detect the lies. They sound just like us.

In 1 Chronicles 21:1, the writer notes, “Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel.” Of course, David thought it was his own idea, but the Bible clearly states it was not. He would have never counted his fighting men if Satan had stood before him and said, “Hey, buddy, I know God wants you to depend on Him and His power, but I think you should count those fighting men just to make sure. You never know if God is going to come through for you. This way you'll know just how strong your army really is.”

The devil knew David would have thrown him out by his hairy toe if he'd shown up in bodily form, so the crafty manipulator put the thought in David's mind. David thought it was his own idea, and off he went. Nine months later, when the census was complete, David felt guilty for his disobedience. God forgave David, but he still had to suffer the consequences of his actions.

Satan knows exactly which lies to whisper in your mind. He has watched you over the years and is well acquainted with your insecurities, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities. Do you tend to get discouraged? He will plant seeds of discouragement in your mind. Do you tend to struggle with rejection and loneliness? He will put ideas about rejection and loneliness in your mind. It's up to us to recognize the lies so we'll know how to defeat them.

We saw in chapter 2 how Satan came knocking on Eve's door and sold her a bag of lies, which she bought into hook, line, and sinker. He then moved on to her children—namely Cain.

Cain was not a happy boy. He was angry because God had accepted his brother's sacrifice and not his. God confronted Cain about his jealousy and anger. Apparently, it was written all over his face! God said to him, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what

is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, *sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you*, but you must rule over it” (Genesis 4:6-7, emphasis added).

Kenneth Barker tells us, “The Hebrew word for ‘crouching’ is the same as an ancient Babylonian word referring to an evil demon crouching at the door of a building to threaten the people inside. Sin may be pictured here as just such a demon, waiting to pounce on Cain—it desired to have him.”<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, Cain did not master it, but let the lie of the enemy control his actions—just like his momma did. When I think of the word *pounce*, I envision a lion ready to spring on his prey. Interestingly, Satan is also referred to as just such an animal: “The devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). The moment we give in to the lies, Satan immediately changes his strategy to become the accuser who hurls accusations of shame and condemnation.

We’ve got the tools to recognize the lies. We simply need to know how to use them.

## THE CONTROL PANEL

On July 16, 1999, John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife, Carolyn Bessette-Kennedy, and his sister-in-law, Lauren Bessette, met their death in a watery grave in the Atlantic Ocean. John was piloting a single-engine aircraft, and they were only a few miles from their destination when something went terribly wrong.

The plane left New Jersey en route to a family gathering in Massachusetts in the dark of night, and had to cross a 30-mile stretch of water. Its initial descent varied between 400 and 800 feet per minute. About seven miles from the approaching shore, the plane began a series of erratic turns, descents, and climbs. Its final descent eventually exceeded 4700 fpm, and the airplane nose-dived into the ocean. The water swallowed the plane and the three passengers on board.<sup>4</sup>

Other pilots flying similar routes on the night of the accident reported no visual horizon while flying over the water because of haze. They couldn’t see a thing.

One pilot explained that John most likely experienced the “Black Hole” syndrome. Pilots of small-engine planes use the horizon as a

reference point. However, John probably lost sight of the horizon, and his eyes gave the brain no clue as to which way was up and which way was down. In this situation, if an airplane should turn slightly or nose down slightly, the body's inner ear compensates to make the pilot believe he's flying straight and level. If for some reason the pilot makes another correction, he can make a bad decision worse.

John wasn't flying under Instrument Flight Rules, but rather Visual Flight Rules. That means he wasn't trained to use the instrument panel properly, but simply learned how to fly by sight alone. John no doubt became disoriented and his mind lost its sense of perspective and direction. He had what we commonly call vertigo, and the flight pattern showed all the evidence of "mind wobbling and tortured confusion." John's instruments told him his wings were tilted (flying sideways), but he felt he was right side up. While John had all the instruments on board for a safe landing, he didn't know how to use them.

One pilot explained John's probable vertigo and disorientation this way: "And here is the crux of the matter; the pilot's emotions drowned out the flight instrument's story about banking and diving at high speed, and screamed out, 'No way! It can't be. I'm actually flying straight and level. I know it!'"<sup>5</sup>

A skilled instrument flyer knows he can't rely on his feelings and regains control of the airplane by depending on the instruments. Instructors call this lifesaving skill "recovery from unusual attitudes." "The real skill of instrument flying is truly depending on the instrument's readings rather than your feelings. Recovery from 'unusual attitudes' consists of one essential belief: your feelings cannot be trusted as the final authority on what the airplane is doing. Your mind is boss. The instruments are your window on reality and you desperately need to understand the data they provide."<sup>6</sup>

Friend, I hope you are tracking with me. This isn't just about flying an airplane; this is about maneuvering through your thought life. John had everything he needed to make a safe landing right there on the instrument panel in front of him. He had the tools, but he didn't know how to use them. John relied on his feelings rather than the facts. His feelings lied, and he and his passengers died.

We can learn how to fly through the storms of life with limited visibility. We can maneuver safely through unexpected turbulence and relational malfunctions. God has given us the tools to avoid becoming disoriented and going into a tailspin or nosedive. His Word is the Truth that guides us through the inky soup when the horizon is nowhere in sight. His Word is the instrument panel. However, if we rely on our feelings, we won't know which way is up and which way is down.

By knowing how to use the instrument panel—the truth found in God's Word—we can recognize the lies and move ahead to the next step.

Robert McGee, author of *The Search for Significance*, wrote, “One of the biggest steps we can take toward consistently glorifying Christ and walking in peace and joy with our heavenly Father is to recognize the deceit which had held us captive. Satan's lies distort our true perspective, warp our thoughts, and produce painful emotions. If we cannot identify those lies, then it is very likely that we will continue to be defeated by them.”<sup>7</sup>

## WHATEVER IS TRUE

Paul gave us a sieve through which to filter our thoughts in Philip-  
pians 4:8-9:

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

That's a lot to think about when thinking about what you're thinking about. In this book we're focusing on just the first directive: “Whatever is true.” Once we determine what is true, we can make decisions based on facts rather than feelings. Emotions are powerful. Feelings are fickle. The truth is unchangeably secure.

Let's say you have a thought about yourself or your circumstances, and you're wondering if it's from the world, the flesh, or the devil. The



big question is, is it true? Of course, the next question is, how do you know if it's true? The answer is in whether it lines up with or is contrary to God's Word. If it doesn't line up with Scripture—what God says about you or your circumstances—then it's a lie. Don't ponder it, play with it, or banter it around in your head. Stop the chatter.

Paul doesn't just leave us with the qualifying list; he gives us the means to implement it. "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice."

It takes practice. Practice, practice, practice! And look at the result: "And the God of peace will be with you."

Here's another idea. If you're not sure if a thought is from God or the world, the flesh, or the devil, attach "in Jesus's name" to the end of it. For example:

*I'm such a loser, in Jesus's name.*

Hmm. Something about that just doesn't fit, does it?

How about this?

*I made a mistake, but I know God forgives me when I ask, in Jesus's name.*

Now that lines up with the truth.

## PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR THOUGHT LIFE

Every weekday morning my husband's alarm clock goes off at five thirty. He gets up, showers, shaves, brushes his teeth, gets dressed, and places his jingling keys in his pocket. He clears his throat, blows his nose, and, well, does other noisy things. When he opens and closes the door leading to the garage, the alarm in the bedroom beeps three times—loudly. This happens every day, and I don't hear a thing. I sleep right through it. My body has grown so accustomed to his routine that I don't even hear the noise.

It's the same principle for anyone who has ever moved into a condominium, apartment, or house near a train track. The first night when the train comes barreling down the tracks, it wakes you up from a dead sleep and you think, *What was I thinking moving here? I'll never sleep through the night again!* But then, after about a week or so, you don't even notice the train. Your body grows accustomed to the noise, and you sleep right through it.

We can grow so accustomed to the lies that we don't even realize the chatter is there. We've got to pay attention and think about what we're thinking about.

David talked to himself regularly. In one psalm he wrote, "Awake, my soul!" (Psalm 57:8). The Hebrew word translated "awake" could be translated, "Pay attention! Open your eyes! Pay attention, soul!"

Check out these conversations he had with himself about himself.

- Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God (Psalm 42:5).
- Yes, my soul, find rest in God (Psalm 62:5).
- My soul...forget not all his benefits (Psalm 103:2).
- Return to your rest, my soul (Psalm 116:7).
- Praise the LORD, my soul (Psalm 103:1; 104:1; 146:1).

We can get so used to the lies that we don't even realize they're there. So now it's time to wake up! Pay attention! Be on the alert! Watch out!

## PREPARE FOR TAKEOFF

*Here we go again*, I mused as the flight attendant began her routine instructions. I grabbed the magazine tucked in the seat pocket in front of me and began flipping through the pages. The man to my right continued reading the headlines in the day's newspaper. The woman to my left was a first-time flyer and paid close attention.

I glanced around the plane and noticed very few people listening to the flight attendant's lifesaving instructions. And then it hit me. The frequent flyers paid little attention, not because we were being rude, but because we had heard it all before. The safety procedures were routine information. The hum of the flight attendant's voice merged with the whine of the engine. We ignored her. However, the newbies paid close attention. But you better believe that if the pilot announced mid-flight that a crash landing was imminent, all of us "been there, done that" passengers would be reviewing those safety instruction cards

tucked in the seat pocket in front of us quicker than you could say, “Buckle your seat belts.”

Friend, we’re getting ready to head into familiar territory for some. I’ll be reviewing safety instructions you might have heard before. But read these truths from the Bible as if you are in danger of a crash landing. We never know when life will hit turbulence. Scrambling for the life jacket and fumbling with the oxygen mask on the way down is not the answer. We can be prepared so that when the storms hit or the engines fail, we’ll be ready to land safely.

As you begin the process of detecting lies in your thought life, look objectively at any thoughts and attitudes that don’t line up with Scripture. When you recognize and expose the lie, you disarm its destructive potential. I pray God will open your eyes to the power available to each and every one of His children who believe the truth (Ephesians 1:18-19).

Buckle up. Let’s get ready to fly.



# Bible Study Guide

**T**his Bible study guide is designed to enhance the message of *Enough: Silencing the Lies that Steal Your Confidence*. Each lesson will dig a little deeper into the topic for the coinciding chapter. Remember, because of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross and His power and presence in your life...you are enough.

## LESSON ONE: HOUSE OF MIRRORS

If you are doing this Bible study in a group, consider having each person tell her story of how she came to Christ. You might want to spread it out over several weeks.

1. If you could write words on a mirror to describe how you saw yourself as a teenager, what would they say? Is it different from how you see yourself today?
2. What does 2 Corinthians 5:17 say happened to you when you accepted Christ?
3. What do the following verses say about your true identity in Christ?

Matthew 6:26

Romans 5:9

Romans 8:1

Romans 8:17

Romans 8:37

1 Corinthians 3:16

1 Corinthians 6:11

1 Corinthians 6:19

Ephesians 1:3

Ephesians 1:5

Ephesians 2:10

1 John 5:18

4. Before Jesus began His earthly ministry, God wanted to ensure the world knew exactly who Jesus was and just how His heavenly Father felt about Him. Read Luke 3:15-22 and note what God said when Jesus came up out of the water.
5. God has great plans for you. Did you know that? Read and record 1 Corinthians 2:9. In your own words, write what God's says about the plans He has for you.
6. Before we can accomplish all that God wants us to do, we must know who we are. Read 1 John 3:1 and fill in the blanks. I am God's \_\_\_\_\_, whom He \_\_\_\_\_.

## LESSON TWO: REALIZE THE ENEMY'S TRUE IDENTITY

1. In chapter 2, we looked at the enemy's true identity. Read Ezekiel 28:12-17 and Isaiah 14:12-15 and list everything you learn about Satan's fall.

Bible scholars have long pondered these passages, uncertain whether they point specifically to Satan's fall from heaven or simply to earthly kings.\* Whether these passages were written about Satan or earthly kings, Satan was pulling the puppets' strings.

2. Look up the following verses and note what you learn about how the devil works.

John 8:44                      2 Corinthians 4:4      2 Corinthians 11:14  
Ephesians 6:11-12      1 Peter 5:8

3. Look up in a dictionary the following words the Bible uses to describe the enemy and note what you learn about the enemy's tactics. Give an example of each one.

a. Murderer (John 8:44)

---

\* *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary, Volume 1: Old Testament*, ed. Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1070.F.

- b. Deceiver (2 Corinthians 11:14)
  - c. Accuser (Revelation 12:10)
  - d. Liar (John 8:44)
4. According to the following verses, what did Jesus come to do?
- 1 John 3:8                      John 10:10                      Luke 4:18-19
5. I know we're only at the beginning of this study, but I have great faith that we're going to experience incredible victory. So rather than wait until the last lesson together, let's start the party. Read the following verses and note what you learn about the victory we have in Jesus.
- 1 Corinthians 15:57    2 Corinthians 2:14    1 John 5:4

### LESSON THREE: RECOGNIZE THE LIES

1. As mentioned in chapter 3, the only way to recognize the lies is to know the truth. Read Ephesians 6:10-18 and list the pieces of the armor and what they were used for.
2. In those days, soldiers wore loose-fitting tunics (picture a big sheet with armholes). The belt pulled all the loose ends together and held the tunic closed. How does truth pull all the loose ends of our lives together and prepare us for battle?
3. How is God described in the following verses?
- Psalm 31:5                      Isaiah 65:16                      Numbers 23:19
4. How is Jesus described in the following verses?
- John 1:14                      John 1:17                      John 14:6
5. How is the Holy Spirit described in the following verses?
- John 14:15-17                      John 16:13                      Matthew 10:17-20

6. Read the following verses and note how living in the truth affects your life. Give an example of each.

Psalm 40:11

Psalm 43:3

John 8:32

John 8:51

7. What did David pray in regard to the truth?

Psalm 25:4-5

Psalm 26:2-3

Psalm 51:6

8. What are our inner parts?

9. Pilate asked an important question just before Jesus was sentenced to death (John 18:38). Suppose someone asked you that same question. How would you respond?

10. Let's go back to question 2. How does the belt of truth hold our lives together? What happens when we don't have the belt of truth fastened securely in place?

#### LESSON FOUR: REJECT THE LIES

1. In chapter 4 we learned about how to reject the lies. Go back and read Ephesians 6:10-18 and note once again the pieces of the spiritual armor we're to wear every day. What was the purpose of the shield? How does faith in God's truth protect us from the lies Satan shoots?
2. The shields were often covered with leather and soaked in water. When a fiery dart hit the waterlogged shield, it was extinguished on contact. What is water compared to in the following verses?

Ephesians 5:26

John 4:10-13

3. How can immersing ourselves in God's Word help extinguish the fiery lies of the enemy?