

7 - SESSION  
BIBLE STUDY

# RESILIENT

*Confidence to Overcome*

Laura Busse



**THE 3 O'CLOCK**  
WAKE UP CALL

RESILIENT

© Laura Busse, 2020 (reprinted two times)

All rights reserved. Except as may be permitted by the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission from the publisher.

Published by: The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call

Scripture quotations are taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®  
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™

Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Printed and bound by: Morrell Printing Solutions, Lafayette, Colorado

Email: [info@3oclockwakeup.com](mailto:info@3oclockwakeup.com)

Website: [www.3oclockwakeup.com](http://www.3oclockwakeup.com)

# RESILIENT

## Confidence to Overcome

### CONTENTS

#### ***Trail Guide - Overcoming Negativity - Page 8***

Video Guide 1  
Teamwork  
Solo Treks 1, 2, 3

#### ***Mind Ablaze - Overcoming Comparison - Page 22***

Video Guide 2  
Teamwork  
Solo Treks 4, 5, 6

#### ***High Altitude - Overcoming Shame - Page 36***

Video Guide 3  
Teamwork  
Solo Treks 7, 8, 9

#### ***Keep Climbing - Overcoming Unforgiveness - Page 50***

Video Guide 4  
Teamwork  
Solo Treks 10, 11, 12

#### ***Belay - Overcoming Worry & Control - Page 72***

Video Guide 5  
Teamwork  
Solo Treks 13, 14, 15

#### ***Trek On - Overcoming Fear - Page 90***

Video Guide 6  
Teamwork  
Solo Treks 16, 17, 18

#### ***Summit Celebration - Page 110***

Video Guide 7  
Teamwork



Jesus promises you...

I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace.

In the world you have tribulation and distress and suffering,

but be courageous [be confident, be undaunted, be filled with joy];

I have overcome the world." [My conquest is accomplished, My victory abiding.]

— John 16:33 (AMP)



## MEET THE AUTHOR



Laura Busse is a passionate, vibrant, and creative teacher of God's Word. She loves to bring the Bible alive for women in real, raw, and relevant ways. Through over thirty years of teaching experience, Laura is able to make unique connections between God's values and our lives. She will challenge you to apply Biblical knowledge and wisdom to your current circumstances. With her leadership and guidance, you will be encouraged to take the next step of spiritual growth. The goal of her studies is to give God thanks as we become more like His son, Jesus.

Laura Busse is the founder of *The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call*, a non-profit ministry growing gratitude to God around the globe every day at 3:00 p.m., the exact hour Jesus died on the cross. *The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call* reminds God's children to look up and give Him thanks every day. We believe praise is the pathway to discovering God's presence around you, His power within you, and His plans for you.

**EVERY ONE. EVERY NATION. EVERY DAY.**

**GIVING THANKS TO GOD AT 3PM**

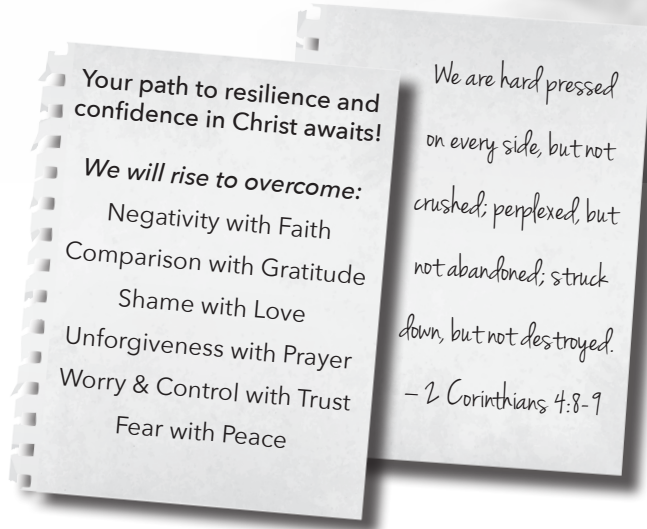
You can sign up to receive a free Wake Up Call daily at 3PM by downloading the app at [www.3oclockwakeup.com](http://www.3oclockwakeup.com). Join the *The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call* Movement today!



**THE 3 O'CLOCK**  
WAKE UP CALL

## The Resilient Woman

She looks confidently to Jesus for power and strength. Her perseverance to overcome daily challenges comes from her relationship with God her Father, Jesus her Savior, and the Holy Spirit, who guides her into greater truth. She presses on with courage to run the race God has marked out for her.



## RISE UP

2020 will be recorded in the history books as a year of unexpected changes and challenges that rattled our world with fear. Much like September 11, 2001, is seared in our memories, 2020 will never be forgotten.

As long as we live, we will cherish toilet paper, appreciate our neighbors who showed up to help, and view essential workers through a lens of gratitude.

Without a doubt, our confidence during this global pandemic has been shaken. We have been scattered and shattered. As the airborne virus spread, our churches closed and people gathered online. Our schools shut down and teachers passed the baton to working parents. Locked in our homes, families were tested, jobs vanished, bank accounts shrank, and too many lives were lost to COVID-19. Then, without warning, racial tensions hit an all-time high with murders, riots, and property damage. During the spring and summer, alarms sounded as tornadoes touched towns, hurricanes flooded the coastline, and forest fires scarred the mountains and polluted the air. This has been a tough time!

### It's time for resilience.

Many months have passed since the outbreak of the Coronavirus in March 2020. Yet my mountain community in Colorado still howls every night at 8:00 p.m. to show their appreciation for frontline workers putting their lives at risk for the rest of us. Their united voice, howling across the valleys and reaching the mountain tops, reminds me of how important it is to raise our voices in unison to praise God at all times.

Praising God proclaims He is always good, even in bad times. As we press into resilience and refocus

our confidence on Christ in troubling times, the Holy Spirit is released to move and change us. This is a perfect time to view ourselves as overcomers who continue to fight the good fight of faith, no matter what.

Yes, we are overcomers! Not that we've made it through all our challenges. We won't actually be free from strife and struggle until we stand face to face with Jesus in heaven. But we can strive each day to overcome our challenges like our courageous leader. He knows the struggle is real. He's never left your side. He calls you to rise up and become resilient. Will your feet follow Jesus?

Resilience is getting back up after the wind gets knocked out of you. Resilience is having the grit and tenacity to try again after failing... for the fourteenth time. Resilience is taking the next step up a steep mountain climb. Resilience is never letting go of the One who loves you most and was willing to die for you on the cross at Calvary. As Mary Magdalene watched from a distance, Jesus, her loving teacher and loyal friend, suffered for the whole world. As she wept, the sun stopped shining from noon to 3:00 p.m. Darkness fell over the land, as hearts plummeted into depths of despair, much like our aching world today.

Mary stood by as Jesus breathed His last breath. Even in a crowd, I imagine she felt alone, afraid, abandoned. Emotions so familiar to us today. What was she thinking? I hope she was remembering the day Jesus touched her and His healing power freed her from seven demons. I hope her heart exuded gratitude and rejoiced, even in the midst of this great loss. After all, He'd turned her mourning into dancing and her ashes into beauty. She'd come so far and seen so many miracles. She'd experienced firsthand how following Jesus is the greatest adventure this life has to offer.

Like Mary, we all fight demons that only Jesus can free us from. Maybe your demon is negativity. Or maybe it's comparison, shame, unforgiveness, worry, control, or fear. These traps capture and hold so many of us today, keeping us from accomplishing God's assignment: to make this earth more like heaven, for His glory.

Our path to greater resilience is doing exactly what Mary Magdalene did. Her feet followed Jesus. He's our confident trail guide who knows the way through the tough terrain. He will help us overcome all the negative emotions trying to steal our joy. Through an intimate relationship with Him, we will discover loving companionship and reliable faith strategies needed during these shaky times. God's only son is the most resilient man who ever walked this earth. He faced trials every day and endured unspeakable suffering. He will show you the way, the path to everlasting peace, so you too can fulfill God's will for your life.

It's time to rise up and follow our confident King, our resilient Lord, who still rules and reigns on His throne in heaven. He's still in control even when our skies are full of smoke and our hospitals are filled with loved ones struggling to breathe.

Take a deep breath, my friend. The mountains we must climb are calling. Let's go!



# WHAT TO EXPECT

In this seven-session study, we will take steps of faith to become more resilient. These steps will equip us to face and overcome familiar obstacles stopping us from spiritual growth. By placing our confidence in Christ and following Him into the powerful plans God has for us, we will rise up and be made into the likeness of our leader.

Each week we will tackle one obstacle that holds us back from running our best race of faith. Think of the path before you as a “Great Exchange.” Like passing the baton in a relay race, we’ll press on as a team to learn and apply faith strategies to replace...

- Negativity with Faith
- Comparison with Gratitude
- Shame with Love
- Unforgiveness with Prayer
- Worry & Control with Trust
- Fear with Peace

Every week begins with Teamwork which includes a video or live teaching with Laura leading us. She will engage us with real, raw, and relevant stories and truths discovered in the Bible. Her teaching will be followed by small group discussion guaranteed to challenge and grow your faith. You are asked to show up, share your real heart, and encourage others. Please steer away from judgment, negativity, and counseling, as these can be detrimental to small group development.

In between your small group meetings, you are given three assignments. Each one challenges you to set aside time and lean into God’s Word. These three Solo Treks are designed to equip you with Biblical truths, highlight Jesus as your confident overcomer, and encourage you to step out in faith to grow unstoppable resilience.

Before each Solo Trek, please pray this simple yet life-changing prayer.

God,  
Surround me with Your available presence.  
Fill me with Your awesome power.  
Guide me into the amazing plans You have for me.  
In Jesus' Name I Pray,  
Amen

# GIFTS FOR YOU

To encourage your adventurous endeavor, we have created a free app to wake you up every day to God's presence, power, and plans in your life. Join people around the globe who stop every day at 3:00 p.m. to give thanks to God.

Gratitude to God will ignite your faith and change your world! We hope you will visit our website, [www.3oclockwakeup.com](http://www.3oclockwakeup.com), download the app, and check out other ways you can be involved in our Gratitude Movement.

## SMALL GROUP SUCCESS

### 3 Keys to Creating Small Group Success

1. **CONFIDENCE** – Encourage gratitude, positivity, and faith growth.  
Women who are confident in Christ and uplifting of others spur small groups on to grow closer to God and each other. Strive to encourage everyone. Be quick to share your gratitude and serve one another with a servant's heart like Jesus'.
2. **CONNECTION** – Encourage everyone to share their voice.  
Every woman is precious to God. No single person should dominate the conversation. If this happens, a small group leader can talk to the "overzealous sharer" alone and encourage her to "be quick to listen and slow to speak." She can also be reminded of our covenant (see below). Always keep in mind, encouragement is not counseling or gossiping. Lead with love and trust God to continue to work in your small group.
3. **CALENDAR** – Encourage time well spent.  
Intentionality and focus are keys to faith growth. Ask someone in your group to be the "timekeeper" for the amount of time you have together. This fosters teamwork and keeps the small group moving forward. To enrich your relationships, schedule fun activities and personal time outside of Bible study to share life together.



### *OUR COVENANT*

As a small group, we have reviewed the three keys above. I agree to follow these crucial guidelines to create an encouraging and safe space for all women.

1. I will share my real life, raw emotions, and relevant Bible connections with my small group.
2. I will positively encourage all voices to be heard and will not dominate the conversation.
3. I will show up as much as possible to build trust and genuine friendships.

MY NAME & SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_



*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.  
– Hebrews 11:1*

## TEAMWORK SESSION 1

### *Faith Overcomes Negativity Everyday Battle*

Jesus promises you...

*I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace.  
In the world you have tribulation and distress and suffering,  
but be courageous [be confident, be undaunted, be filled with joy];  
I have overcome the world." [My conquest is accomplished, My victory abiding.]  
– John 16:33 (AMP)*

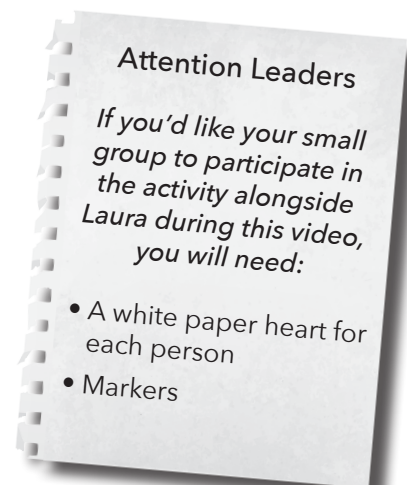
## OUR REAL STRUGGLE

*We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;  
persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.  
– 2 Corinthians 4:8-9*

## RESILIENT FAITH - CONFIDENCE TO OVERCOME

God's Great Exchange:

- Negativity - Faith
- Comparison - Gratitude
- Shame - Love
- Unforgiveness - Prayer
- Worry & Control - Trust
- Fear - Peace



# You are a Resilient Overcomer

My Notes

Lined area for taking notes, starting with a dot on the left margin and ending with a dot on the right margin.

# SMALL GROUP TEAMWORK

---

Welcome! Thank you for being here today.

1. Take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Be brave and share one challenging adventure you've taken in your life.
2. Take a few minutes to read the 3 Keys to Creating Small Group Success on page 7. Discuss each one and check for agreement. Do you have any questions? When you're ready, please sign our covenant on that same page.
3. After watching Laura's introduction, why do you think we need to build our confidence in Christ and rise up as resilient women of faith?

4. Review Jesus' promise...

I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] *peace*.

In the world you have tribulation and distress and suffering,  
but be courageous [be confident, be undaunted, be filled with joy];

I have overcome the world." [My conquest is accomplished, My victory abiding.]

– John 16:33 (AMP)

- o How does Jesus' promise give you hope?
- o What other hopes do you have for this Bible study?

# SOLD TREK 1

---

## YOU ARE CALLED TO RESILIENCE

God does not call you to stay stuck in your faith or quit running your race. He calls you to chase after Jesus, the most confident and resilient man ever to walk the earth. As your feet move in His direction and your mind begins to think like His, you'll discover where real adventure awaits. It's in your pursuit of knowing, loving, and becoming more like Jesus that you'll discover God's presence around you, His power within you, and His awesome plans for you.

### *Why do we become passive in our faith pursuit?*

Every day, obstacles stand in our way of pursuing a vibrant, resilient faith. **Negative** voices shout in our heads. **Comparison** creeps in. **Shame** reminds us of our past, making **forgiveness** seem impossible. **Worry** monopolizes our minds and wakes us up at night. We strive to **control** everyone and everything around us. When we realize we're not in control after all, **fear** consumes us and stops us in our tracks.

o Circle the most challenging obstacle you need to overcome.

Negativity      Comparison      Shame      Unforgiveness      Worry      Control      Fear

Fortunately, God, through His son Jesus, gives us a path through these traps and distractions. Will you follow His feet through the tough terrain? Will you rise up and believe greater resilience can be your reality?

## WHAT'S RESILIENCE?

Resilience is being knocked down by life's adversities and rising up stronger than before.

It's...

- facing challenges, crises, or failures with perseverance, knowing God is with you.
- a faith-filled tenacity to trust God even when you can't see Him moving.
- believing healing will happen and growth is guaranteed.
- pressing on and never giving up.
- thanking and praising God no matter what.

It's often when we are way outside of our "comfort zone" that resilience rises up.

## COMFORT ZONE

Not so long ago, people who couldn't afford to rent a house had no choice but to buy one, because banks loaned money to just about anyone. Even broke people like me.

When my husband and I moved to Massachusetts in 2000 without two nickels to rub together, we soon found ourselves signing a no-money-down mortgage for a home on a side street in the town of Worcester. Bouncing two kids on our laps, Dan and I signed the papers and bolted out of the bank feeling like we'd just stolen something.

Had we taken our time to talk with the realtor, we would have discovered we'd just purchased our first home smack dab in the middle of an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood.

On move-in day, I stood on the front porch with my baby propped up on my hip and watched the Jewish women walking around with their children. Like stepping back in time, everyone wore matching attire. My new neighbors stuffed their hair into black netting and were dressed in ankle-length dark skirts and long-sleeved white blouses, buttoned tightly at the neck and wrists. As I glanced down at my outfit—ripped jean shorts, t-shirt, and sandals—I felt absolutely naked.

As I turned to hide, several men, dressed to match their wives, walked up our front steps and offered to help my husband with some large pieces of furniture. As I enthusiastically reached out to shake their hands in gratitude, they ignored me as if I were invisible. How could they possibly have known that was exactly how I felt inside? I quickly retreated into the house, where I plotted to remain for the next three years.

Have you ever found yourself living outside your comfort zone? Maybe when you started a new job, became a mother, traveled to a foreign country, or moved into a new neighborhood. It's often in these unknowns that we're called to grow and become someone new.

Way outside my comfort zone, smack dab in the middle of an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood, sleep deprived, and ready to retreat, I persevered in my own strength, mustered up self-confidence, and strived to stay afloat. There, utterly exhausted and depleted, is where God began to shake me awake.



## OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

- o Think of a time when you found yourself way outside your comfort zone. Where were you? What was your first response?
- o If you view each time you're out of your comfort zone as a test of faith, what are a few lessons you've learned?
- o Will resilience grow if we play it safe and stay within our comfort zone? What's at stake if you play it safe and refuse to step out in faith?

# SOLD TREK 2

---

## NEGATIVITY & CAPTIVITY

Have you ever tried to “fake it until you make it”? In 2000, that’s how I rolled. From the outside looking in, I appeared to have it all together. But as a stay-at-home mom, raising two young kids essentially alone while my husband worked around the clock, my shield was crumbling. So I worked overtime to fake it in order to make it through the day.

That summer, for my thirty-first birthday, my husband Dan gave me a running watch. What he intended as a gift, I received as criticism wrapped around my wrist. A running watch, really? Great, so he thinks I’m fat. Well...he’s right. After having two children in two years, my pre-pregnancy jeans would surely never button again. Okay, I thought to myself, I’d better go jogging to lose some of this baby blubber.

To make matters worse, Dan set the alarm to sound at 3:00 p.m. the next day so I wouldn’t be “late again” to a doctor’s appointment. Perfect! After seven years of marriage, my husband summed me up as fat and always late. He was right about that, too. Laying my head on the pillow that night, negative, judgmental voices echoed in my head telling me I’d never be thin, beautiful, or okay. I’d never be enough!

Wouldn’t you know it?! When the alarm went off the next day at 3:00 p.m., I was still behind the wheel instead of in the waiting room. And the alarm went off the next day. And the next, and the next. I hadn’t a clue which combination of buttons to press to reset it, and the directions were long gone. Even though I wanted to throw it in the trash, a watch on my wrist was the only way to keep track of time in that pre-cell-phone era. Those repetitive beeps became just another annoying interruption in my crazy-busy, stressful days.

“Beep, beep, beep.” There it was again.

Unlike most days, when I’d quickly silence the alarm in irritation and then get right back to what I’d been doing, on this particular day I was stopped in my tracks as dots connected in my brain. Like watching a movie trailer, my mind flashed through scenes from the different places I’d been over the past several weeks at 3:00 p.m.: the park, the grocery, the library, in the car, playing on the floor with the kids. Different locations, but the same negative thought patterns had been reeling and repeating in my mind, hijacking my heart.

With eyes wide open, I suddenly realized how my toxic thoughts had spiraled out of control, leaving significant damage in their wake. Anger destroyed love, worry ran wild, and unforgiveness held me hostage. **Negativity held me in captivity.**

As my eyes locked on my son, Evan, and daughter, Abby, playing nearby, I cringed because I knew negativity would leave a legacy. Having been an elementary school teacher, I reminded myself of something I used to tell my students' parents.

**“What we model, our children become.”** If I didn't make a change soon, I'd unintentionally pass my destructive attitudes on to the next generation.

During my days in the classroom, I'd found it hard to reach children with negative attitudes or mean spirits. They were already miserable and resistant to change, even before puberty. I didn't want my children to be like that...like me. No way. Something had to change.

My mind drifted back to my first classroom in Baltimore, Maryland. It was the “last resort” for kids who had failed, or been kicked out of, every other class in the public school system. Like an island of misfit toys, we were cast aside and left alone to learn. Naïve yet hopeful, I knew these kids needed a new attitude before they'd ever learn their multiplication facts. In order to succeed in school, they first had to think differently about themselves and the world they were caught up in. Now, so did I. Was it even possible? Those Baltimore kids were young, with still-moldable minds. I seemed to be hardwired for negativity. Thoughts just popped into my head, unplanned and uninvited. With little control over them, wasn't I just along for the ride?

## **HOW ARE YOU HARDWIRED?**

What kind of thoughts fill your mind most days? Are they uplifting and positive, or are they toxic and negative?

- o In the same way that knocking over one domino affects many others, what is one thought or emotion that has the power to trigger negativity in your heart and mind?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- o What do you eventually spiral down into?

- o Label a few dominoes with some of your negative thoughts.



- o The people closest to us can easily get swept up in our negativity. Who is in your closest sphere of influence?
- o Proverbs 23:7 promises, “As we think, we become.” Make a list of thought patterns that have the power to positively impact who you are and who you will become.

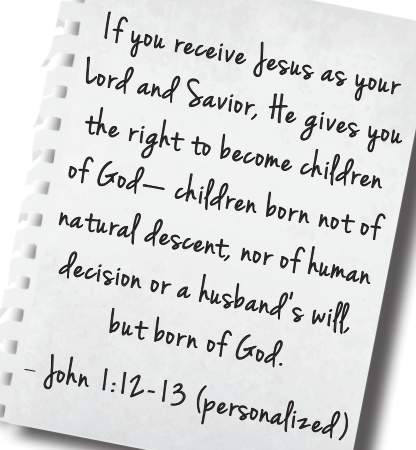
## **CONFIDENT CONTRADICTION**

### **The Little Children and Jesus**

People were bringing little children to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, He was indignant. He said to them, “let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And He took the children in His arms, placed His hands on them and blessed them.

– Mark 10:13-16

- o In Jesus' time, children were viewed as having little value. They were considered the "least of these." The disciples tried to send the children away because Jesus had more important things to do. What did Jesus say and do that contradicted the culture's values?
  
- o Jesus is often depicted in pictures as being meek and weak. How does His confidence and resilience shine as He blesses the little children? What other words would you use to describe Him in this scene?
  
- o You are God's child. What area of your life needs His blessing?  
Why so?



If you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, He gives you the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.  
- John 1:12-13 (personalized)



# SOLD TREK 3

---

## BREAK FREE

Too broke to hire a counselor, I decided to stop my crazy train of toxic thinking by turning to America's "spiritual mentor," Oprah. She gave free advice every afternoon. Back in 2000, she raved about keeping a daily gratitude journal. If gratitude helped Oprah, I figured maybe it could help me too. So for less than a dollar, I bought a small notebook and placed it in the diaper bag, which was the one thing I never, ever left behind.

Day after day, when my 3:00 p.m. alarm went off, I'd stop what I was doing, pull out the journal, and write down the date, where we were, and one thing I was thankful for. Within a few days, I began to notice a positive change in my thinking.

Even if I'd been thinking negatively at 3:00 p.m., I could easily redirect my thoughts by focusing on thankfulness. These few moments of gratitude were in fact transforming my afternoons from something to be endured into something to be enjoyed. I'd discovered a powerful truth: **our minds aren't capable of being both negative and thankful at the same time.**

***What are you thankful for?***

*Surround this sign with your many blessings.*



## GRATITUDE & FAITH COLLIDE

Several weeks into my new practice of keeping a gratitude journal, I was walking home from our neighborhood park with a new friend, Rachel. She had always lived in Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods. I was her first friend outside her tightly knit community. When my 3:00 p.m. alarm sounded, I enthusiastically shared my newfound "attitude of gratitude" practice with her.

Beaming with pride, I waited for a compliment. But to my surprise, Rachel simply asked, “I thought you were a Christian, Laura. Why aren’t you thanking God?” My smile faded, and my face flushed with embarrassment. Mumbling some excuse, I picked up speed and jetted ahead, completely dodging the question.

Back at home, Rachel’s question kept taunting me. I didn’t even go to church, so what made her think I was a Christian? Why did she think I should thank a God who could’ve saved, helped, and protected, but didn’t? I blamed God for all the bad in my life, and I took credit for all the good.

While He’d stood by and watched me get hurt, I forged ahead on my own, getting the scholarships, finishing the degrees, landing the jobs, and catching the handsome husband. Now, I was the one paying the bills, raising the kids, and keeping our boat afloat—no thanks to Him or anyone else. It was final. I would not thank God.

## **WHAT ABOUT YOU?**

- o       What happens to your faith when you blame God for hurts or hardships?
  
- o       How often do you try to do everything in your own strength and take credit when things work out? Give a few examples of when you’ve done this.

## **FORGOTTEN FAITH**

For weeks to come, when my 3:00 p.m. alarm sounded, I’d faithfully write down the date, my location, and one thing I was thankful for. But then, I’d launch into a series of questions, accusations really, trying to prove to myself why God didn’t deserve my gratitude.

Why doesn’t God answer our prayers, stop the drama, or relieve the pain? There is so much wrong in the world. Doesn’t God care? He hadn’t been there when I needed protection. He hadn’t answered my desperate prayers. He’d allowed good people I loved to suffer terrible hardships.

These accusations only amplified the toxicity in my soul and sent me down a dead-end road. The more I wrestled with why bad things had happened in the past, the more I was trapped there. The more I complained about my current circumstances, the more out of control I became in the present. Complaining only increased my insecurity, doubt, and hopelessness.

But God must have heard my complaints, because He began showing up with my 3:00 p.m. alarm. One day, as I was writing down how thankful I was for my young daughter’s new words, God whispered

in my heart, reminding me He was the author of life and I was His adored daughter. Another day, as I recorded being thankful for my new friend and neighbor, God reminded me of Jesus' loving kindness in crossing barriers to befriend all people. So true. Things I'd believed as a child but somehow forgotten as an adult.

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for  
and assurance about what we do not see. – Hebrews 11:1

## **FORGOT GOD?**

- o What things in our culture cause us to forget God or walk away from Him?
- o Think of a time when you walked away from God. What caused your feet to wander?

## **FAITH OUT OF FOCUS**

Before I could ride a tricycle, my grandfather, who I called Papa, introduced me to Jesus, his best friend. I can still picture my little hand in his big, strong one as he walked me to Sunday School at our little country church in Indiana. His love for Jesus was contagious, just like his confidence. I was convinced if I grew up to be like Papa, life would be exciting and wonderful just like him.

Growing up, Papa and I traveled and dreamed together. We planned to visit all the National Parks in the United States after he retired and I graduated from college. He bought a van, and I completed my classes. But a few semesters before I graduated, he was diagnosed with a cancer that ravaged his body and stole our dreams. With less than 500 miles on the van's odometer, God took my cherished Papa to heaven.

As hundreds of people tried to console me at his funeral, not a single person said the right thing. All I could think about was the title of the book that lay on Papa's hospital nightstand, *Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?*

Returning to college, I walked away from a God who'd allowed bad things to happen to the most godly man I'd ever known and loved. Making him suffer terribly and die before living out his dreams was especially cruel. Focusing on my loss made it easy to forget God.

## **HEALED & BLESSED**

We all have times in our lives where loss, disappointment, or hardship cause us to feel angry with God. The question is, will we stay stuck in our anger or allow Jesus' touch to heal and bless us?

Luke gives us an example of a woman familiar with pain and suffering who could have easily been angry with God.


**Read Luke 8:1-3**

- o How is Mary Magdalene described in these passages?
  
- o Step into Mary's shoes. What would be most terrifying to you if seven demons were working against God's plans for your life?

When Jesus found Mary Magdalene, she was experiencing excruciating oppression. After just a few moments in Jesus' presence, she was set free to become His devoted follower. Jesus wants you to be set free from whatever is holding you back from running your race of faith with perseverance and resilience.

Here are real life examples of how modern day "demons" can stop our faith growth.

- Carol controls her husband's spending down to the dime, so they fight nonstop.
  - Shirley shames herself in the mirror and skips another meal.
  - Wendy worries day and night about her teenage son.
- o List a few "demons" in your life that have the power to slow or stop your faith growth. What are their names? How are they trying to work against you?



Be on your guard  
and stay awake.  
Your enemy, the devil,  
is like a roaring lion,  
sneaking around to  
find someone to attack.  
- 1 Peter 5:8 (CEV)