

Tag, You're It!

Blessed to Bless
the Next Generation

Laura Busse

Tag, You're It!

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Dedication



October 16, 1997 – January 19, 2021

For my son, Evan, who made this world better with his brilliant mind and compassionate heart, I will fight all the days of my life to shine bright in a dark world for you and God's glory. I will make Earth more like heaven until I see you there.

*I love you,
Your faithful Mom*

*For the LORD is good
and His love endures forever;
His faithfulness continues
through all generations.
– Psalm 100:5*

Tag, You're It!

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"The LORD bless you
and keep you,
the LORD make His face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn His face toward you
and give you peace."

— Numbers 6:24-26

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. With 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 for everyone. 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.

AND NOTABLE CONTRIBUTOR



Christine Ruth, M.Div., MS, LMFT is an ordained pastor, a grief counselor, and a licensed marriage and family therapist. She founded Princeton Family Counseling Center in Princeton, New Jersey, and has twenty-one years of ministry experience facilitating retreats, hosting grief workshops, and conducting individual and marriage therapy.

Christine's passion for ministry centers around counseling, preaching, teaching, and spiritual growth. She loves providing safe spaces for people to wrestle with doubt, struggle, and questions of the faith. Christine also loves good coffee, blues and jazz music, world travel, musical theater, camping, and as a Wisconsin native, she can never get enough cheese.

The writings in *Tag, You're It!* are not intended to replace personal therapy, mental health treatment, or medical help. Some of the content in this workbook surrounding grief, trauma, and depression may be triggering. If you or someone you love needs immediate support, call or text 988. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available to everyone across the United States starting on July 16, 2022.

ABOUT THE MINISTRY



THE 3 O'CLOCK
WAKE UP CALL

The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call knows every day we're surrounded by distractions that disconnect us from God and get us off track from living our best lives.

Through vulnerability, humor, and Biblical truth, we create environments where women can be real, raw, and relevant with God, themselves, and each other.

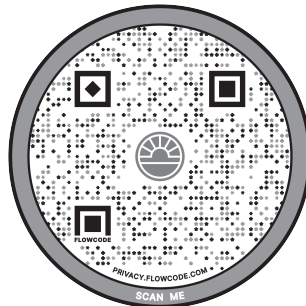
Our challenging and inspirational content enables women to build a vibrant faith in Christ that reconnects them to God's presence around them, power within them, and plans for their lives.

Wake Up!

We are on a mission to one day see. . .

EVERY ONE. EVERY NATION. EVERY DAY.
GIVING THANKS TO GOD AT 3PM

You can sign up to **receive a free Wake Up Call message daily** at 3PM by downloading the app at www.3oclockwakeup.com or scanning the QR code below. Practicing gratitude to God has the power to ignite your faith and change your world. Join the The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call movement today!



We would also love for you to **follow us on social media!** It's a great place to meet other women who are giving thanks to God, running after Jesus, and making a positive difference in this world. Link to our social media platforms in the header of our website at www.3oclockwakeup.com or search for us within each app.



&



The 3 O'Clock Wake Up Call



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#3oclockwakeupcall

TAG, YOU'RE IT!

Blessed to Bless the Next Generation

OUR BLESSED PATHWAY

God promises you are – blessed, adopted, loved, forgiven, chosen, and called!

Our foundational Bible scriptures are:

The LORD bless you
and keep you;
the LORD make His face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn His face toward you
and give you peace.
– Numbers 6:24-26

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has
blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.
– Ephesians 1:3

In this study, we will...

- Connect the blessing in Numbers 6:24-26 with truths found in Ephesians 1.
- Follow a thread of God's timeless character throughout the Bible.
- Highlight women in the Bible and learn from their relationship with God.
- Proclaim truths about our true identity in Christ.
- Receive, reflect, and respond to six key blessings from God.
- Write a blessing for someone in the next generation.
- Shine light on mental health issues blocking spiritual progress.
- Practice Holy Habits each week to build our steadfast faith.

Lastly, we will step into our true calling, fight with and for the next generation, and shine bright in a dark world. A huge task? Yes! But with God, all things are possible.

Let's go!

WHAT TO EXPECT

TEAMWORK

Each session begins with *Teamwork*. Laura will engage you and bring the Bible alive in real, raw, and relevant ways. In collaboration with Christine Ruth, MS, LMFT, an expert in the field of family therapy, they make clear connections between faith and science to give you practical applications through seven online videos.

Access to these videos was sent to the email address provided when you purchased this study. If you need further assistance in accessing the videos, please email us at info@3oclockwakeup.com.

SMALL GROUPS

After *Teamwork*, you are encouraged to meet with your small group and answer the personal and soul-enriching questions provided in this workbook. We believe small groups are a precious place where much spiritual growth is possible. You can expect the small-group questions to take approximately 45 minutes to answer. We encourage you to pray for each other during the week. Prayer has the power to knit your hearts and minds together in bold and beautiful ways, as well as show us God's amazing presence and power at work in our lives.

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS

In between our gatherings, you have been given three assignments called *Blessings*. Step by step you will **receive** God's blessings, **reflect** on them, and **respond** to each one. Tucked within your *Blessings* are tested and true faith habits to practice. You will also find practical resources to help you and the next generation thrive in this challenging world. You'll be amazed at the enormous growth that can occur if you carve out space to spend time with God and work through all eighteen *Blessings*.

Our blessed pathway will equip you with the courage and confidence you need to bless someone in the next generation. This could be a child, grandchild, niece, nephew, friend, mentee, or neighbor... anyone can receive your gift. The blessings you receive and pass along have the power to far outlive your life and impact many generations to come.



SMALL GROUP SUCCESS

TRUST BUILDERS:

- Be GRATEFUL – Express your gratitude to God and others through encouraging words and kind actions.
- Be PRESENT – Show up, stay focused, store your phones, and ask thoughtful questions.
- Be YOU – Share your real life, raw heart, and relevant faith connections with vulnerability and expect genuine friendships to form.

TRUST BUSTERS:

- Breaking CONFIDENTIALITY – What's said in the circle stays in the circle.
- Breaking PROMISES – Keep your word and keep friendships growing.
- Breaking HEARTS – Passing judgment, giving advice, or comparing hurts us all.



OUR COVENANT TO EACH OTHER

In our circle, we have reviewed what builds or busts our trust. I agree to follow these important guidelines to create an encouraging and safe space for all women.

1. I will help to build trust in my small group by expressing my gratitude, showing up, and sharing my real heart and faith connections with others.
2. I will keep confidentiality, keep my promises, and love others without judgment, advice giving, or comparison.

SIGNATURE & DATE: _____

SESSION 1

YOU ARE BLESSED

The LORD bless you;
– Numbers 6:24a

TEAMWORK SESSION 1

Who God says you are... *You are blessed, adopted, loved, forgiven, chosen, and called!*

TAG, YOU'RE IT!

Umbrella & Rain Boots

SARAH'S WRINKLES & GOD'S TIMING

Sarah was Blessed

She never thought she'd have to wait until long past menopause to become a mother.

But God, in His perfect timing, made her the mother of many nations,
and through her all people are blessed by Him.

YOU ARE BLESSED

- God is the Blessor
- Jesus is the Blessed One
- The Holy Spirit is from whom all Blessings Flow
- You are Blessed to Bless

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with
every spiritual blessing in Christ.
– Ephesians 1:3

OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME

- Key Obstacles
- Solutions to Step Up, Stand With, & Shine Bright

IT'S TIME TO BLESS

Receive – Reflect – Respond

Let's Go!

YOU ARE BLESSED

My Key Connections



SMALL GROUP TEAMWORK

Welcome to *Tag, You're It!* Thank you for joining this study!

1. Let's begin by introducing yourselves. Be brave and share one item you have with you today that represents a blessing in your life you've received.
2. Take a few minutes to read the Small Group Success section 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 hearing Laura's introduction, why do you think it's time to receive God's blessings and pass them on to the next generation?
4. Read Numbers 6:24-26. Begin to memorize it today! Share helpful ways you've learned how to memorize Bible verses.

"The LORD bless you
and keep you,
the LORD make His face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn His face toward you
and give you peace."

5. Which line from this verse stands out to you the most because it's the blessing you desire to learn about or need most in your life? Why?
6. What other hopes or desires do you have with this Bible study?

BLESSING I

You Are Blessed

JUMPING FOR JOY

On December 31, 2020, the day I should have been celebrating twenty-seven years of marriage with my husband Dan, we were instead shivering in the crisp Colorado air, standing next to the runway at the Boulder Municipal Airport.

Today was the final test. Could Evan, our twenty-three-year-old son, successfully complete a three-hour solo flight to secure his pilot's license? We believed he could and hugged him tight. As any proud mom might experience, my heart beat faster and my eyes teared up as I watched Evan walk confidently over to the single engine, red-striped Cessna. Flight plan in hand, he meticulously went through the pre-flight safety checklist.

With a single wave, Evan jumped into the plane, started the engine, and slowly rolled towards the runway. I prayed to God, "Lord, bless his flight. Keep him safe. Bring him back to us in three hours. Amen."

The next thing I knew, Evan was soaring into the clouds. As I waved with both arms above my head, he surprised us by circling the plane back around and landing for a few seconds before taking off again for good. That couldn't have been in the flight plan! But little tricks like that were typical of Evan. I imagined him smiling down at us and thinking, *I hope you liked that move! Remember, Mom, it's easier to get forgiveness than permission.*

Three hours later, I returned to the runway and waited in anticipation for my son's safe arrival. Three, four, five, and then six planes landed, but they weren't Evan. Where was he? I checked my watch. He was less than four minutes from the official cut-off time. God had saved Evan from bike accidents, car crashes, and dozens of "close calls," so even though I had a pit in my stomach as I reached out to God yet again to keep Evan safe, I was confident He'd come through.

Sure enough, I heard the quiet hum of a distant propeller. Squinting into the cloudy sky, I spied the familiar red stripe, and a wave of relief washed over me. As soon as his wheels touched the tarmac, I ran out onto the runway, literally jumping for joy. He'd accomplished his dream.

Happy New Year!



SHOUT FOR JOY

- o Think of a time in your life when joy overwhelmed your soul. Where were you? What did the scene look and feel like?

MY WORLD SPLIT IN TWO

Nineteen days after Evan soared through the sky on that crisp, clear Colorado day, my doorbell rang early in the morning. Within seconds my living room was filled with police officers, county sheriffs, and a social worker, all wearing black uniforms.

Blackness enveloped my world as one officer towered over me and asked, “Are you the mother of Evan Busse?” As soon as I nodded, he spoke my greatest fear into reality. “Ma’am, I’m sorry to inform you, but your son is dead. He took his own life late last night.”

On January 19, 2021, mental illness won and I lost my son. For the rest of my life, my world will be split in two: life loving Evan on this Earth and life loving Evan in heaven. As this dividing line was drawn, my soul shattered into a thousand pieces.

I will never be able to thank God for that horrific day or for the death of my son. But I can thank Him for showing up with me in the darkest valley and holding me in my shattered-ness. On that excruciatingly painful, sleepless first night, there were moments when it felt as if Jesus gently took my hand and reminded me of this truth.

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil because You (Jesus) are with me.
Your rod and staff comfort me. – Psalm 13:4*

POUR OUT SORROWS

- o What problems, pain, grief, or sorrows weigh upon you these days?

*The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
– Psalm 34:18*

GOD IS WITH US

- o Pray and pour out your heart to God, because He deeply cares for you.

*Cast all your cares [all your anxieties, all your worries, and all your concerns,
once and for all] on Him (God), for He cares about you
[with deepest affection, and watches over you very carefully]. – 1 Peter 5:7 (AMP)*

PIECE BY PIECE

As God is putting me back together, one broken piece at a time, I realize I'll never be the same; grief and loss will follow me all the days of my life. But so will God's blessings of love, mercy, compassion, and hope. I'm inviting God to show me how my pain can be used for purposes beyond myself. Staying silent in shame or isolating ourselves while suffering is exactly what Satan wants me and you to do.

So let's take a stand together and shout...

"NO! You will not have the last word. We're on a mission to raise up a fierce army to fight the darkness. We have the light of the world living in us. The same spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, the Spirit of God, will show us how to shine bright in a dark world, and we will stand in faith and fight with and for ourselves and the next generation."

IT'S TIME!

No matter our past pain or current circumstances, it's time to **receive** God's timeless blessings and **reflect** on who God says we are. Then we will be able to **respond** to God's truths, step into our true identity, and pass His blessings along to the next generation.

God's blessings far exceed the blessings we receive from even our closest family and friends. Numbers 6:24-26 is a beautiful example of the blessings He spoke over His children in the Old Testament and over our lives.

*The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make His face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn His face toward you
and give you peace.*

Our working definition of a “blessing” comes from these verses. Spend a few moments reflecting on each line below. Let these blessings begin to sink into your soul.

GOD PROMISES TO...

BLESS YOU – To give you gifts which benefit your life...

You are blessed.

KEEP YOU – To care for, watch over, guard, protect...

You are adopted.

MAKE HIS FACE SHINE UPON YOU – To be present, smile upon with adoration, cherish...

You are loved.

BE GRACIOUS TO YOU – To give grace, mercy, kindness, compassion, forgiveness...

You are forgiven.

TURN HIS FACE TOWARDS YOU – To show favor, affection, approval...

You are chosen.

GIVE YOU PEACE – To give you comfort, rest, calmness, a tranquil heart and life...

You are called.

- o Circle the blessing you most need from God in this season of life.
- o Write a prayer asking God to bless you in this way.

BLESSING 2

Blessings Abound

HOPE IN HARD TIMES

Everywhere you look, people are hurting. We've survived a global pandemic that skyrocketed fear, crushed families, closed down workplaces, and strained schools and churches. Covid-19 started in 2019, but many of us are still feeling its horrible effects.

In the midst of conflict over vaccinations and the 2020 presidential election, my "safe" community of Boulder, Colorado, was further devastated by a mass shooting in a King Soopers grocery store, stealing ten innocent lives. As our neighbors and friends grieved and placed #BOULDERSTRONG signs everywhere, one hundred mile-per-hour winds fed a wildfire ripping through our densely packed neighborhoods, destroying over one thousand homes.

In an unparalleled time of loss and grief, I chose HOPE as my 2022 word of the year. I truly believe that the only way through our pain is to...

- Place our **faith** in God who is always present and all powerful.
- Cling to Jesus who is our **hope** and light in the darkness.
- Walk with the Holy Spirit who guides us and helps us **love** one another.

In times like these, it helps to fix our hearts and minds on things that remain forever.

These three remain: *faith, hope and love.*
— 1 Corinthians 13:13

My greatest goal in this study is for God to raise our HOPE high. I believe it's possible if we share our *real* hearts, connect with our *raw* emotions, and make the Bible *relevant* to our everyday lives. We will receive God's blessings and pass them along to the next generation. We will rise up and shine bright with a steadfast faith to illuminate the darkness. Yes, indeed we are #STRONGERTOGETHER.

BLESSINGS ABOUND

In this study, we're going to focus on real women in the Bible who experienced the blessings of God. Even if you find Bible stories confusing or far-fetched or you're intimidated by history, stay with us.

Together, we will bring the stories alive to build your *comprehension* and your *confidence* in God's timeless character and love. Let's start by connecting the dots. God has been blessing His children since the beginning of time.

God blessed...

Adam and Eve in the garden.

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

– Genesis 1:28

Abraham and Sarah with hope and purpose.

God announced, "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

– Genesis 12:1-3

Isaac with peace and bountiful provisions.

God appeared to Isaac and promised him, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham."

– Genesis 26:24

A LONG LIST OF BLESSINGS

God blessed...

- *Jacob* with a new name to carry on Abraham and Isaac's legacy.
- *Joseph* with protection and positions of power.
- *Moses* with miraculous signs and wonders.
- *Miriam* with musical and leadership gifts.
- *Rahab* with courageous faith and resilience.
- *Ruth* with new beginnings and a sense of belonging.
- *Hannah* with comfort and hope in her grief.
- *David* with victorious battles and a heart like His.
- *Solomon* with extraordinary wisdom and understanding.
- *Esther* with divine appointment and confidence.
- *Mary's* pure heart and womb with the long-awaited Messiah.

God continues to bless every generation who lives on this Earth. We may never know why God chose to place us here and now on His divine timeline, but we can be confident that His blessings live on through us.

- o Reread the long list of people blessed by God. Now, add your name to this list and write down 7-10 ways God has blessed you during your lifetime.

- o Review your list of blessings and circle the two you're most grateful for.

GOD'S TIMING

Let's step into one woman's story and see if we can relate to her hopes, dreams, disappointments, and joy. Sarah, Abraham's wife who left her family and friends to follow God's plans, never thought she'd have to wait until long past menopause to become a mother. But God, in His perfect timing, made her the mother of all nations, and through her, all people are blessed by Him.

- o Think about the last big event you had to wait for, such as a wedding, birth, vacation, new job, or new home. How easy or difficult is it for you to wait for life's big events?

- o Was your waiting filled with worry and frustration? Did you feel the need to control everything and everyone? Or were you at peace knowing you'd receive what you needed at the right time? Or did you feel a combination of all these emotions?

In our times of waiting, God often works on us from the inside out. His goal is to use these challenges to change us into the likeness of His Son, Jesus.

*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord.
"As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.
-Isaiah 55:8-9*

GOD'S WAYS

Read *Genesis 12:2-3*.

God spoke these promises over Abraham and Sarah after their child-bearing years had passed.

"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you;
I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

– *Genesis 12:2-3*

- o Circle every time God promised, "I will."

God is the *BLESSER*. He called Abraham and Sarah to receive His blessings and then bless others. God calls you to do the same.

- o Make a list of how you've been blessed by God and can pass the blessings along.

PROMISE GIVER

Read *Genesis 18:1-15*.

- o What's your visual picture of Sarah in this scene?



Step into Sarah's shoes. Imagine how many baby showers and births she'd attended. Year after year, her prayers went unanswered and her arms remained empty. Remember this was a culture where family and her ability to have children were vitally important to her self-worth and survival.

- o What mental, emotional, or spiritual issues do you think Sarah wrestled with?

- o How can you relate to Sarah's situation?

- o How can disappointment or despair affect our relationship with God?

As a post-menopausal woman, Sarah received the news that within a year God would allow her to birth a son.

- o What would have been your first response if you'd been in her shoes?

PROMISE KEEPER

Read Genesis 21:1-7.

- o What does Abraham and Sarah's story teach you about God's character, wisdom, or timing?

Christine's Insight

When Sarah first laughs at the news of her becoming a mother, her laughter is cynical because she's a hot mess. At this point in her story, her heart has been hardened due to the disappointment of infertility. At that time, a woman's worth and value directly correlated to the number of children she birthed. They didn't understand sperm and egg. So, women were blamed and thought to be cursed if they didn't have babies.

Laura's Response

No wonder cynical Sarah was a hot mess!

- o Pray and thank God for the ways He's showing up in your life.

DEEPER DIVE

Sarah's story is found in Genesis 11-25, Isaiah 51:2, Romans 4:19, 9:9, Hebrews 11:11, and 1 Peter 3:6.

BLESSING 3.

Blessed One

LIGHT SHINING BRIGHT

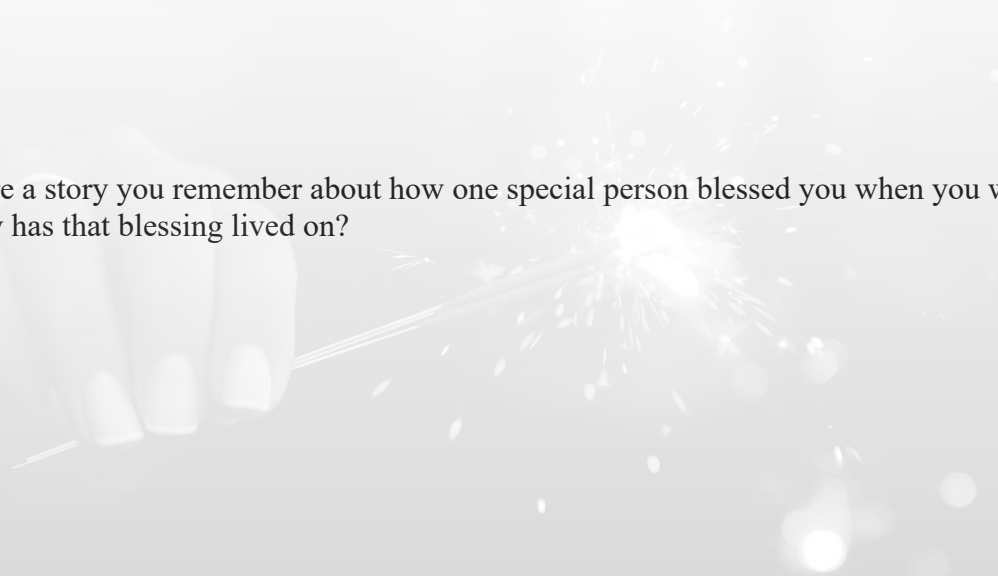
When I was a little girl, my grandfather, Papa, was my hero. He lit up the room, bringing comfort to every hurting soul he met. I felt seen and loved. I was more than enough in his eyes. One of Papa's favorite songs was *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*. With child-like faith, I believed Jesus was a real person. If He was my Papa's best friend, He could be mine.

Looking back now, I am the same age as my grandfather was when he was shining such a bright light of faith on me. Even though I lost my dearest Papa to cancer when I was in college, his legacy of faith, hope, and love still lives on through me.

Twenty years after Papa's memorial service, Jesus connected the dots. As if on a divine pathway, I'd walked in my Papa's footsteps. I too had become a teacher, coach, leader, and speaker in schools and churches. His heart's desires had become mine. I thank Jesus, our best friend, that Papa's light still shines brightly in my life.

- o Who in your childhood greatly influenced your faith, hope, love, or life? Make a list of blessings you received from them.

- o Share a story you remember about how one special person blessed you when you were a child. How has that blessing lived on?



WHY NOW?

Have you ever wondered why God chose to place you *NOW* on His divine timeline? Think about your family of origin. Are you in a long line of faithful followers of Jesus, or are you just beginning a legacy of faith? No matter where you've come from, you can start today by *receiving* your abundant blessings from God, *reflecting* upon them so they sink deep into your soul, and then *responding* by passing the baton of God's many blessings to the next generation.

- o Think about your family tree. Record everyone you can recall who passed their faith in Jesus onto you.

- o Now list other faith influencers—teachers, mentors, leaders, coaches, neighbors, or friends—who helped strengthen your faith in Jesus.

- o Take a moment and thank God for everyone who influenced your faith.

URGENCY

We don't know the number of days we or our loved ones have on this Earth. So let's step into this adventurous quest now and press into who God says we are. By doing so, we can know our true identity in Christ and live out God's plans on this planet. It's time!

A few things we know for sure are...

- Our souls are longing for peace; therefore, we need to know and live in our true identity.
 - Many of our friends and families are hurting; therefore, they need us to be strong and courageous in faith to raise hope.
 - Our communities and nation are suffering; therefore, we need to step up and shine bright in a dark world.
- o Who needs you to be strong and courageous in faith to raise their hope?

 - o How can you shine Jesus' light into this world this week?

A FATHER'S BLESSING

We can glean priceless insight into God's heart as we watch how He blessed His one and only Son.

Read Matthew 3:13-17.

- o What words did God speak over His son, Jesus?

- o If you heard God's audible blessing, "You are my daughter, whom I love; with you I am well pleased," what would be your response?

As hard as it might be to believe, God's love is unconditional. No matter what you've done or who you think you've become, God loves you as much as He loves His One and Only Son, Jesus.

JESUS BLESSES THE NEXT GENERATION

Then children were brought to Jesus so that He might place His hands on them [for a blessing] and pray; but the disciples reprimanded them. But He said, "leave the children alone, and do not forbid them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." After placing His hands on them [for a blessing], He went on from there.
– Matthew 19:13-15 (AMP)

RETHINK

- o Why do you think Jesus valued little children?

- o What was Jesus modeling for His disciples and all who witnessed His blessings?

- o If you'd been placed in Jesus' arms as a child, what blessing would you have wanted Him to speak over you? Write it here.

REFLECT

- o Like the little girl on the cover of our study, we all have a little girl still living inside us. Describe her thoughts and prayers, her hopes and dreams. Invite God into this reflection.
- o Pray and ask God to show you how He sees you. Do your thoughts about yourself align with how God sees you? What are the similarities and differences?

WHO CAN YOU BLESS?

Pray and ask God who He wants you to bless. Work on these questions with the expectation that God will give you clarity.

- o Who do you care for that's growing in or struggling with their identity, self-worth, or mental, emotional, or spiritual health?
- o Who needs your support in discovering God's unconditional love to fight the good fight of faith?
- o Who needs to know God has good plans for them and you're willing to fight for their future?
- o Who do you feel called to bless during this Bible study?
- o Pray and ask God who He would want you to bless.

Write the name of the person you will bless here:

(This is who you're tagging. Tag, you're it!)



EXAMPLES OF STARTING THE BLESSING

- May the LORD *bless* Abby with a strong faith, good health, and true friends who speak the truth in love.
- May the LORD *bless* Mindy with healthy children, a loving marriage, and a godly home.
- May the LORD *bless* John with renewed faith, steadfast hope, and powerful wisdom to make wise decisions.

TAG, YOU'RE IT!

- o Rough Draft – Use the space below to jot down some ideas of the first few lines of your blessing.

- o Final Draft – Write your final thoughts here. (Don't worry, you can always make changes as we proceed.) Great work!



Bonus Blessings

HOLY HABIT - GIVE THANKS

Holy habits are simple spiritual practices that strengthen our faith over time. At first they might feel challenging or unnatural, but the more you practice them, the easier and more natural they become.

In the summer of 2000, when I first started practicing daily gratitude to God at 3:00 p.m., I had an alarm set on my phone to remind me. Now we have an app reminding us and people around the globe to give thanks to God every day. Scan the QR code on page 4 to download our free app, or visit our website, www.3oclockwakeup.com, to join our gratitude movement today.

I can't tell you the number of times I reach for my phone right before 3:00 p.m. It's as if my whole body waits in anticipation for this dedicated moment of gratitude. For more than twenty years now, I've been practicing this holy habit. I truly believe one shift in thinking, one captured moment of praise, has the power to change our mindsets as well as the trajectory of our lives. As you'll see in this study, gratitude opens the door to many other powerful holy habits that lead to spiritual growth.

Let's practice our first holy habit today!

Read these scriptures and let them sink into your soul.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

– Ephesians 1:3

For You (God) created my inmost being, You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

– Psalm 139:13-14

- o **THANK YOU, GOD** – Write a praise thanking God for how He uniquely created you and has blessed you abundantly.

DAILY GRATITUDE TO GOD

WILL IGNITE YOUR FAITH & CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

COUNSELING WITH CHRISTINE

To enrich this Bible study with practical tools to fight for and with our next generation, I've invited my beloved and brilliant counselor and pastor, Christine Ruth, to join us. We've set up this section of the study similar to an interview or podcast. I pose the questions as a hurting mother concerned for our next generation, and Christine answers me with proven truths from God's Word and the field of modern psychology.

Christine, when you think of Sarah in the Bible, how would you describe her? What comes to your mind when you think of her?

First, I really resonate with Sarah, especially her laughter. Three strangers come to visit her and Abraham to let them know of God's promise, the blessing of a son. Sarah laughs out loud.

Why do you think Sarah laughed?

At this point Sarah is way past menopause and she's super cynical. Let's just call her Cynical Sarah because her heart has been hardened. And who could blame her? God hadn't answered her thousands of prayers, and Abraham had moved on to have a son with Sarah's servant, Hagar.

There are two different Hebrew words for laughter. One is the laughter of cynicism and mockery. And the other one is the laughter of joy when something is really funny or brings us real delight. When Sarah first laughs at the news of her upcoming pregnancy, her laughter is cynical because she's a hot mess!

Did you just call Sarah a "hot mess"?

Yes, she was a hot mess because everything she'd planned didn't turn out for her. Sarah's infertility created deep disappointment and despair. As a young woman, she'd made the plan and written the script in her head. She told herself she'd be the mother of many children. In the Hebrew world, that was how you preserved your legacy. Your self-worth increased with every birth. There was so much pressure on women because people didn't understand the concept of sperm and eggs. If a woman didn't get pregnant, many people thought she was cursed or sin held back God's blessing. Sarah chalked up her empty womb to failure and all her fault.

Just imagine Sarah having to go to so many births, baby showers, and bar mitzvahs. I picture her shouting at God, "Are you kidding me? This is the 1,327th birth that I've had to witness! What about me?" I picture Sarah looking up at God and being so angry, frustrated, disappointed, and sad. She still had faith, but she must have been thinking... *This isn't fair, God!*

Do you have modern-day Sarahs coming into your office asking for help?

Yes, so many women come to me because they're pissed off with God and their husbands. They feel like their husband just moved on because they weren't meeting his needs. Now he's sleeping with the thirty-year-old "hottie" from work.



What's the first thing you'd do to help modern-day Sarah?

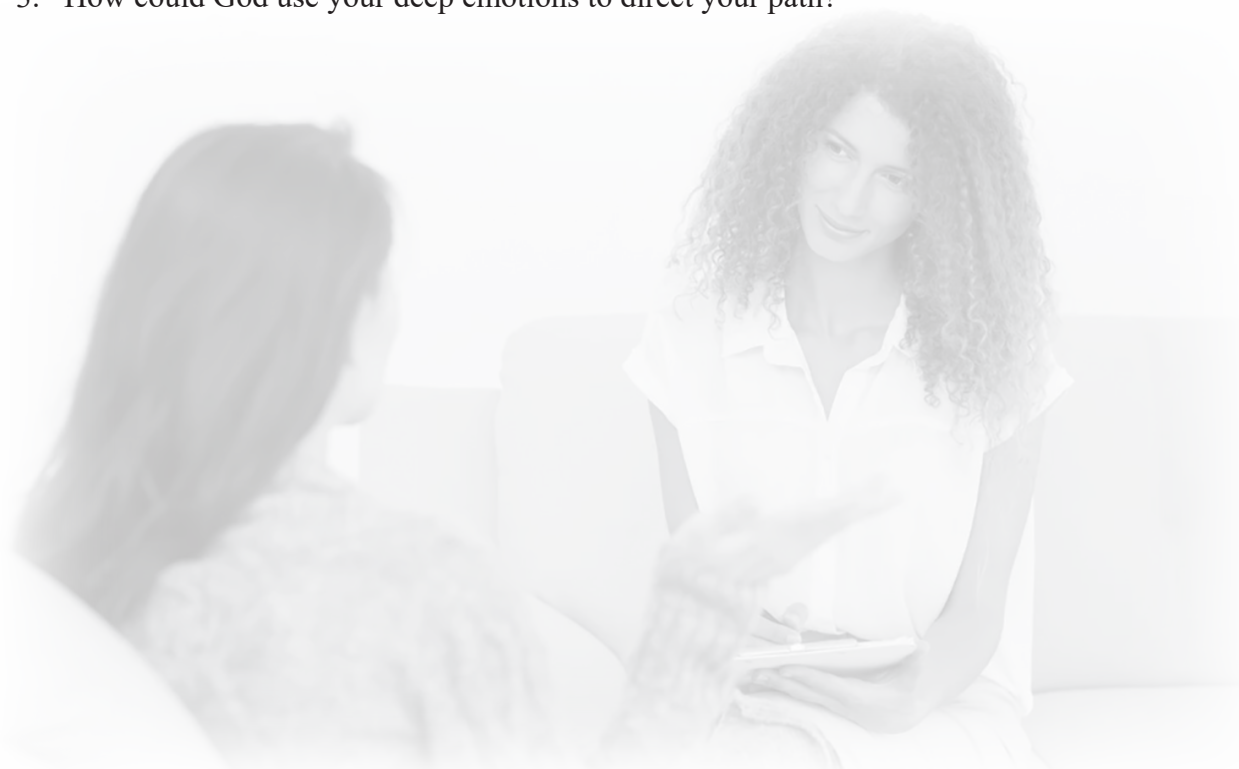
I would help Sarah to begin her grief work. I'd guide her to express all of her woundedness, pain, resentment, and bitterness. I'd let her know that there's nothing wrong with her. Her feelings are normal. We would all feel what she's feeling in her situation. We'd acknowledge her grief and spend some time with her bitterness, resentment, and jealousy. We'd acknowledge her feelings, validate them, and bring them to the table. I'd explain that if we don't acknowledge them, they will be driving our actions without us knowing. The only thing worse than a very bitter, resentful woman is a woman who doesn't realize she's bitter and resentful.

After we acknowledge the different parts of our hearts, the next step is to befriend our dark emotions. Yes, we can befriend our cynicism, resentment, anger, and jealousy. A lot of Christian women feel guilty when they feel these emotions. We often beat ourselves up for feeling this way, or we try to fake it or pretend that nothing's wrong. But trust me, whatever we resist, persists.

So I'd ask Cynical Sarah to be present with her "pissed-off parts" and share her story. I'd let her voice why she's so pissed off. Then I'd ask her to honestly think—what does that pissed-off part need? Together we'd search for a way to cultivate a new sense of purpose. I'd ask Sarah to reimagine, or open her heart to, what the Holy Spirit is calling her to do in this season or chapter of her life. I'd remind her that God is still with her and has good plans for her even though His plans might be completely different than what she'd planned for herself.

REAL STRATEGY – Here are three helpful conversation starters.

1. What are your "pissed-off" parts?
2. What you're feeling is completely normal. You're not crazy.
3. How could God use your deep emotions to direct your path?



A tremendous thank you to my *Tag, You're It!* team! This project is in print because of your loving encouragement and hard work. Thank you for standing with me and shining your bright light into this world for God's glory.

Many blessings,
Laura

THANK YOU!

Thank you for journeying with me through this faith study! I pray you've been blessed and have the confidence to pass the blessings along.

Small Groups Team: Leaders, thank you for moving through this material with love and grace. I know much of the content pushed you outside of your comfort zones. I believe that's often where God does His best work. Thank you for pressing on!

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