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WHEN LIFE IS NOT A FAIRYTALE

By Tanya Curren

Are you facing overwhelming odds? Have you had an altered life plan? Have you had the paths in your life turn and twist in different directions than you ever expected? Have you been in a situation where you were out of control and someone else made decisions in your life for you, without your permission?

If you answered “yes” to those questions, then you are not alone. I want to share with you three Women in the Bible who would have answered “YES” to the questions I just asked.

I believe fairytales have done the female population a disservice. If you listened to fairytales when you were growing up, you probably imagined your life turning out in a similar way. We think of having a Prince Charming enter our life and sweep us off of our feet. We imagine having tons of money, servants, long, flowing hair, perfect skin with the perfect body, and a glorious, beautiful, picturesque ending. Well, life is not like this, is it?

Sometimes when we look at stories in the Bible, it is easy to often read over the lives of these powerful individuals and only remember the ending. We remember stories of Joseph being the second in command in all of Egypt and saving the country & his family from famine, yet we forget the betrayal of his own brothers and the years and years of being sold into slavery and being in prison. We know that Paul was one of the greatest Apostles of the New Testament & had a huge role in the Christian church, but we don't really think about what it would feel like to be beaten, homeless, jailed, shipwrecked, and hungry.

I would like to show you some women in the Bible that should come as a source of encouragement & empowerment to you today. Their lives didn't turn out like the perfect fairy tale. They were not sinless saints! They were real women – just like you and I – who faced many trials, heartaches, sadness, and pain...yet God restored them and used them in Mighty Ways – just like He Will for YOU!

EXAMPLE ONE: JOHN 8: 1-11

Have you ever:

Committed adultery, Felt humiliated, Been ashamed

“But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. At dawn He appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around Him, and He sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing Him. But

Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with His finger. When they kept on questioning Him, He straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

The woman caught in the act of adultery meant that she was being watched. She was being watched while she was performing her sexual act. (What a horrifying thought.) It also means that she probably wasn't dressed properly when they pulled her out of bed to stand before the crowd & Jesus.

Imagine her humiliation & shame.

Jesus literally saved her life here, even in the midst of what she probably looked like: messy hair, fear in her eyes, little clothing, and zero respect. Jesus didn't judge or condemn her. He gave her the freedom to stop sinning, turn from her adulterous ways, and live her life. What a beautiful example of PURE forgiveness!

If you have felt the things listed at the beginning of this story, remember that God doesn't hate you or not want to be around you. Jesus stands ready to forgive ANY sin in your life. He wants you to be free from your sin, leave your life of sin, and have a true change of heart, so that you can live a life of fullness in Him!

EXAMPLE TWO: ESTHER Chapters 1-10

Have you ever: *Been without parents, Felt like a minority, Been displaced, Felt afraid, Been put in a very difficult situation*

If you've never read this book with 10 chapters, I highly recommend it. If you do know the story, let's look at what Esther felt rather than just remembering the awesome part where she risks her life and goes before the king to save her people.

That was amazing, no doubt, but I want you to imagine what she went through to get there.

Esther's parents were dead. Her cousin, Mordecai, took her in after her parents died. The Jews were the minority in the land of Persia, since they had been taken into captivity 100 years earlier. The background information is important to remember because although Esther was beautiful, she grew up without the benefit of parents and her people were in the minority and were not looked upon with great favor. When the king got rid of the queen because she wouldn't parade herself in front of his drunken guests, he ordered that all of the beautiful, young virgins in the land be brought to the city & prepared for him so he could choose a new queen.

I'm not trying to put words into Esther's mouth, but would you be thrilled to be taken away from your only family member who raised you to live in a harem until you were called in to lose your virginity to someone you didn't know? This doesn't sound appealing to me!

After Esther was chosen queen, she didn't even live in the same quarters with her husband. Mordecai got

word to her one day that Haman, the second in command under the king, had issued an order to kill all of the Jews: her people.

Remember, it was against the law for the queen to go before the king without being called. She fasted, and asked her people to fast, and risked her life to go before the king. That's a HUGE deal! Imagine the bravery it took to go against an order, knowing you could have your head chopped off for it! What a difficult situation! Imagine how her palms were sweating, heart was racing, and stomach was churning. Have you ever felt this way when you had to do something difficult, yet knew it was what God wanted you to do?

I like this story because it shows how human and "real" a strong woman of God was back then. God didn't take away her nervousness – but He gave her the strength to do what He called her to do. What makes you think He won't do the very same thing for you in your life today?

I'm a big believer in praying as if it all depends on God, yet acting as if it all depends on me. I am willing to act in the natural, knowing God will give me the strength in the supernatural. If you read to the end, you know that Esther's bravery, obedience to God, and willingness to be used saved her and her entire nation from being slaughtered.

I understand the culture was different and that it was an honor to be chosen queen in Esther's time, but what I'm trying to show you in this story are the feelings behind the woman. I like to show how you can read a story in the Bible and make it personal and come alive to you. Think of the people and how they felt, and know that you and I are no different today. You may not be a queen with a title, but you have no idea how God will use the circumstances in your life to change the world.

You may have grown up in a disadvantaged home, displaced from your surroundings. You may be afraid of what the outcome of your life will be. You may have been or are in a very difficult situation with tough decisions to make. So was Esther. And yet, look how God took the disadvantaged, afraid, hard decisions of her life and used them to save a nation.

Never underestimate the power of God and what He can do with YOUR life!

EXAMPLE THREE: EXODUS 2:1-4

Have you ever: *Felt like you were losing your child, Been terrified for your family's safety, Tried desperately to keep your family together, Felt like you had to be in hiding*

In Exodus 1, Pharaoh ordered that all baby boys born to the Hebrew women be killed. He literally ordered the midwives to let the baby girls live, but to murder the boys. Fortunately, the midwives feared God and ignored the order, and were letting the baby boys live. (Praise the Lord for those who have Godly fear of the Lord!)

"Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him."

Imagine how Jochebed, Moses' mother, must have felt. She had her baby boy, knowing that the ruler of the

country wanted him dead. If you are a mother, you can completely identify with the fear she must have felt – knowing that if a soldier heard her baby boy cry, or if a neighbor didn't like her and told the king she had a son, he could be ripped from her arms and murdered at any time. She was a remarkable woman, because she hid her baby for three months! Imagine the dedication and courage that took! (I can't imagine trying to keep a baby quiet for a day, much less three months!) Now imagine how hard it would be to not just give your baby away to a loving family, but rather to put him in a waterproof basket and send him down the Nile River, which is known for having snakes, alligators, and many dangers!

To be honest with you, the thought of doing what she did terrifies me. I love my only son so much that the thought of losing him is very overwhelming. If you keep reading or you know the story, you know that God sent Pharaoh's daughter at the perfect time to find the basket in the reeds. Since Moses' sister, Miriam, was watching the whole scene, she asked if she could get someone to nurse him for her, which was their own mother! God worked this situation out to where Jochebed not only got her son back, but the princess **PAYED** her to nurse him!!!

Look at the power of this woman: If she had not made the sacrifices she did and released her son to save his life, Moses would not have lived.

He would not be in the Bible.
He would not have led his people out of Egypt.
He would not have received the Ten Commandments from God on a mountain.
He would not exist if it hadn't been for the courageous acts of his mother.

If you are a mother, I encourage you to be courageous. If you have lost custody of your child, ask God to give you the strength, wisdom, & ability to get your baby back. If you have a wayward, prodigal child, ask God to bring them back home to you. If you have had to give your child to God and cut off your relationship with them, ask God to protect them and to give you the strength to know what to do and the words to say. If God can save a baby boy in Egypt so long ago in an unplanned and unorthodox way, don't you think He can do the same for your child? He saved Moses right from the very grip of death, and He can do the same for your child. You may be the mother of a mighty nation! You may have no idea what you birthed and the power that your child holds within them!

No matter how grim, shady, or terrible circumstances may look in your life and in the life of your child, give them to God. Release them. Think about the physical act that Jochebed did by releasing Moses into the basket and down the treacherous river. If she had held onto her baby, he would have been murdered – and possibly, so would she – for disobeying the king.

Don't hold onto a child that you need to release to God. If you have a child that is tearing you and your family apart, ask God how you can release that burden to Him. Or, if you need reconciliation and restoration of your relationship, ask Him to give you the words to say and the actions to go with it.

As you read the Bible, really allow yourself to "go there" as you visualize the stories written and think of people's lives. Don't just glance through, or remember the end of someone's life. I absolutely love the victorious outcomes of the stories in the Bible! I love to remember how powerful and amazing people were and how God worked so many things out. But what gives me strength in hard times is reading these stories and going through the details of their lives and what they must have felt as a real, live human being.

I feel stronger in my faith knowing that they were not superheroes with fairytale endings, but they were just like you and I. Find stories like these and others in the Bible that encourage you and strengthen your faith and remind you that you can make it and that God can take ANY situation and produce a powerful outcome! Have a blessed day! Remember how special and loved you are by Jesus!

In His Love,

Tanya



Tanya Curren is the co-founder of Boundless Limits International, a ministry of encouragement and empowerment. In 2004 Tanya Curren was in a life threatening coma for 8 days as a deadly infection ravaged her body. Given two hours to live, she survived only to face the ordeal of a painful three year recovery. She is the author of Broken Places, The Proverbs Devotion Guide, Embracing Change & Conflict, and several other CD's. In her conferences and seminars, Tanya shares with others the life-lessons she learned through her journey to restoration. Tanya travels and speaks at local, regional and international venues, and is passionate about guiding others to have a personal, real relationship with Jesus Christ.