

A woman with dark hair, wearing a black dress, stands with her arms raised in a gesture of prayer or worship. She is looking upwards. The background is a warm, golden glow, possibly from a sunrise or sunset, with some faint, ethereal light patterns. The overall mood is spiritual and uplifting.

*The key to a single-hearted
love for Christ*

called
to
REBELLION

Sandy Snavelly

Foreword by Bunny Wilson

CALLED TO REBELLION

The Key to a
Single-Hearted
Love for Christ

Sandy Snavelly



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And to the many other friends who prayed—thank you. You are *all* rebels in your own right—fearless followers of Christ and resisters of the Impostor's invitation to mediocrity.

My heart overflows with a good theme; I address my verses to the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

Foreword

It was just another radio interview, or so I thought. While waiting for the music to come on signaling we were on the air, I paused to admire the neatly groomed, blond, mature woman who would be my host. She had a disarming smile and yet something about her demeanor was nonsense. It was during the interview that my desire to become lifelong friends with Sandy developed.

Years later, I discovered that our interview was one of the first she had done. This revelation was stunning because I thought Sandy was one of the most outstanding radio talk show hosts I had ever heard. Her direct yet compassionate, informed yet humble manner endeared her to the listening audience and those she interviewed. I was amazed at the lively, call-in participation from so many of all races, ages, genders.

Now Sandy meets us on the written page with *Called to Rebellion*. This is a piece that will provoke us to shake off complacency, elevate us to a higher spiritual level and position us to rise up and respond against the deception, lies, and confusion prevalent in today's society.

Our common passion for seeing the hearts of women turned to God is what bonded us together. Coming from an atheistic background, when I fell in love with Jesus, I also thirsted for His Word. One day I ran across a Scripture that said, "Wives, submit yourself unto your own husband as unto the Lord." My first thought was, *Why would God mess up a good book with a Scripture verse like that?* But it was my desire

to serve Christ that motivated me to pursue His purpose in that area. God was faithful to teach me that submission is a very powerful, positive, and aggressive principle designed for every man and woman whether single or married. It set me free, and I authored and coauthored books titled *Liberated through Submission* and *The Master's Degree—Majoring in your Marriage*.

In like manner, Sandy pursues the truth on many controversial subjects and does it with the skill of a master surgeon. No longer do we have to buy what the world is selling or surrender to what appears to be general consensus. We have been called, not to be passive, but assertive in our lifestyle and in the teaching of our children. Our commission is to be holy and set apart so that “our light may shine” and sinners may be saved. It is thrilling to now have a companion book that proclaims truth in a practical, yet stimulating way.

Every Christian woman needs this book—singles to prepare one day for marriage and family, married women who want to walk in faith and power. You will laugh and cry, repent and be renewed. And just like me, you are sure to fall in love with the author, Sandy Snavelly.

Bunny Wilson

INTRODUCTION



I hate the word submission.” Being in a Bible study with Patty was like roller skating through a minefield. *“I have a right to my own ideas. I don’t care what Peter or Paul or any other old fuddy-duddy has to say about it. They were just a bunch of insecure, dominating men!”*

Following a heated business meeting, Ruth declared with subversive resolve, *“I will answer to no one. If they push me too far they will find out just how much power I really have.”*

The coffee cups rattled as Edith pounded her fist on the kitchen table, *“I helped build this church, and if that upstart of a pastor thinks for one minute he can change the way we do things here, he has another think coming.”*

Stacey tightened her grip on the steering wheel as she replayed the argument she had with her parents, *“What kind of Christians are they anyway? Until they straighten out their own lives, I will not allow them to run mine.”*

Jean explained her enlightened insight into Christianity. *“I love the Bible, but I just have a problem with using terms like ‘sinner’ and ‘born again.’ I think the world is judgmental enough without inflicting guilt on everyone.”*

Ah, sweet rebellion! Declarations of independence flowing from the lips of God’s women are but a sampling of the spoils from Satan’s war with God. They are nostalgic reminders of that defining moment, before the creation of man, when he raised his fist before the hosts of heaven and shouted, *I shall be like God. Look at me. I am lovely and powerful. I have plans, and dreams . . . Oh yes, I have great dreams! Do you love this kingdom of the Master? I tell you, it is a pitiful wrinkle on the parchment of my design. Come with me, you angels. Do you see how He has treated me? I have been ordered out of heaven simply because I had the courage to say what I think. He has called my independence rebellion. . . I call it freedom!*

Lucifer was the most beautiful of all God’s angels. Yet for his longing for omnipotence, he turned his back against his Creator. Is it possible that this brilliant angelic being was ignorant of the consequences that were to follow his intentional rebellion? Until Lucifer contended with God, all heaven was innocent of wrath’s true meaning. Yet the moment those words of independence rolled off Satan’s lips, a flash of lightning split the sky and set fire to his new address. The angels who chose to follow him enlisted in his army of demons. A counter kingdom with a counterfeit ruler was established. Their mission was clearly defined by their commander: to destroy the kingdom of God and to set up a new kingdom—

a kingdom where there would be no rules, no limits, and no principles that would restrict the vulgar impulses of their leader's twisted heart.

There is a reason why the title *Called to Rebellion* may have captured your attention. Perhaps you are one who treasures your independence. Or maybe the word *rebellion* secretly makes your heart flutter with a sense of seductive intrigue. You might be a woman who loves the thrill of flirting with danger—stretching obedience to the limit to see how flexible the love of God really is. Or, quite possibly, this book is in your hands because you are rightfully suspicious that the message behind the title is a flagrant invitation to lead women away from biblical truth. Despite your reasons for reading this book, if your heart's desire is to have a single-hearted love for Christ, you and I have much in common.

ROOTS OF REBELLION

Is it possible for a holy God to call His people to rebellion? If you trace the word *rebellion* throughout the Scriptures you will find a none-to-flattering account of how fickle the hearts of God's children have been. The temptation to rebel against our Creator has been the plague of mankind since the incident in the Garden when Eve succumbed to the question posed by the serpent, "*Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the Garden'?*"

Something else took place under the forbidden tree that I believe makes the case for rebellion not only reasonable but also necessary. When Eve turned her attention toward the serpent she turned her focus away from God. When Eve listened to the voice of the serpent as he challenged her Master's words she turned her ears away from God. When Eve bit into the

forbidden fruit she turned her back on God. When all was said and done, Eve became the first to prove how sin distracts, deceives, and destroys the human heart.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (James 1:13–15, KJV)

The Master is our rightful ruler. He has the right to rule over us because He created us and He loves us with flawless affection. The Impostor is the insurrectionist whose chief aim is to unseat the Master from His throne. We are the prey who often fall for the Impostor's lies, and like Eve in the Garden, we turn our backs on our God. God calls this *rebellion* but the Impostor calls it *allegiance* because when our backs are turned against the Master, our faces are turned toward the Impostor. God's call to us is to rebel *against* the Impostor so that we can love Him with single-hearted devotion.

When I invited Jesus to be the Lord over my life, I had every intention of following His ways forever. That didn't happen. The reasons for my struggle were many. At the top of the list was my failure to understand that before I became a Christian I had been a servant of the enemy of God. Because Satan was such a subtle leader, I was unaware of how discretely he had been directing my life since childhood. His personality also was such a mystery to me that I wouldn't have recognized how similar my character traits were to his.

I was angry, independent, prideful, selfish, and I had become quite a convincing liar. I knew these things were wrong but I didn't know just how wrong they were. My sin habits had the fingerprints of Satan all over them.

Second, each time I was faced with areas in my life that needed altering I would go to my heavenly Father and beg Him to help me to stop doing those things which were counter to His will. Then, after a short time of successful restraint, I would fall right back into the same sinful patterns I had promised never to do again. What I failed to understand was what it meant to truly repent. I thought I could just tell God how sorry I was for the things I had done, promise to never do them again, ask Him to help me do better, and God would zap me with His magic wand and make me a new woman. But God doesn't work that way. Instead, I discovered that being sorry for sin and repenting of sin are two different things. To be sorry means to have a momentary brush with regret. To repent means to accept God's view of sin, to agree with Him regarding its destructive consequences, and to fully, willingly, wholeheartedly let go of my love for it.

And third, I failed to see who I was pledging my allegiance to each time I knowingly fell back into my old ways of living. Each time I shouted at my husband, each time I told a little lie to cover a mistake, each time I stamped my foot because life wasn't going my way, I was unwittingly sitting by the forbidden tree conversing with the enemy. *Did God really say you shouldn't do that? Are you sure what you did was really sin? Surely God doesn't want you to be a doormat to someone who is so obviously wrong.* My rebellion against the Master was allegiance to the Impostor.

I can never be truly aligned with the will of the Master

until I am willing to put away all those behaviors that were a part of my old life. When I am willing to agree with God and call my wrong behavior by its rightful name—*sin*—Satan will lose his ability to lure me back into his domain. I cannot serve two masters.

WHERE IS THE LIGHT?

Christianity demands a life that has been radically changed. The shadow of the cross ought to stretch across every area of our lives if we are to be believed for what we believe. Instead, passionate Christianity, the kind that should shine like a floodlight in the dark, looks today more like a matchstick in the rain. While the world denounces Christianity as being irrelevant for this modern age, present-day Christianity provides little evidence for a convincing rebuttal.

The statistics prove this to be shamefully true.

- 50% of Christian marriages end in divorce
- 81% of Americans say they are Christians, while only 37% of Americans take the Bible seriously
- 43% of Evangelicals believe Jesus Christ to be fully God
- An estimated 50% of Christian men struggle with pornography
- Religiously conscious girls are only 14% more likely to remain virgins than nonreligiously conscious girls

I have been unable to find statistics that reveal the percentage of people attending church on a regular basis who frequently engage in gossip, slander, fits of rage, verbal abuse, indecent behavior, foul language, greed, laziness, gluttony, apathy, conceit, complacency, arrogance, etc. I think it is safe to assume that the numbers are higher than we would want to reveal on a national survey.

Shouldn't we look and behave much better than we do? Chuck Colson once said, "We are still living in a society where the main religious creed is Christianity, and our private morality is primarily a revolt against Christian morality."

Whenever I behave in a way that grieves the heart of God I must admit that I am behaving instead in a way that excites the seditious nature of Satan. Whether conscious or unconscious, my revolt against God is willful compliance with the enemy of God. In fact, whenever I choose to sin, I imitate the defiance that first began the battle between good and evil.

THE SATANISH WAYS OF SIN

As I have tried to imagine what the actions of Satan looked like at the time of his rebellion, I have been stunned by how similar to Satan I am behaving when I choose to disobey the voice of God. When Satan said, "I will be like God," he revealed some disturbing things about the nature of evil. His revulsion at the thought of being dependent on a higher power for care, protection, and direction provoked him to rage against his own inability to act independently within the kingdom. He was repulsed by the idea of having to serve someone other than himself, so he set himself up as his own authority. He hated the word *no*. He was thrilled when a band of his fellow angels affirmed his anger by following him out of heaven. And he was envious of the worship being given to the One who had created him.

When I am honest about my sin I am obliged to concede that I am doing what the angels who left their Creator did. I am following the wrong god.

It's like a story I heard many years ago of a woman who came home with an expensive fur coat. As she modeled it

before her dumfounded husband, she said, “At first I thought it was too ostentatious for a woman like me. But then I heard a little voice telling me that I deserved to have it, so I walked right up to the counter and said, ‘Ring it up!’”

Her husband questioned her impulsive decision, “Why didn’t you just say, ‘Get thee behind me, Satan?’”

“I did,” she replied, “but then he said, ‘It looks pretty good from back here too,’... so I bought it!” If I am going to be successful at hearing and obeying the voice of my *true* leader, I need to know exactly who my leader is, what He is like, and how to resist being fooled by cheap imitations.

God loves me. He loved me before I was born and He loves me now. It has been His intention from the beginning of time to share eternity with me. I have always been in His heart. It was because of His passionate desire to call me His daughter that He sent Jesus to die for my sin. His love compels Him to be merciful toward me and to shower me with forgiveness every single day. He has given gifts to me that have the potential to provide valuable services for the sake of His kingdom. He sees me as already perfect in His sight, even though I often fail to live up to His standards. He loves my love for Him. He is my Dad. He is crazy about me even when I can’t stand myself. Nothing I do ever surprises Him or causes Him to rub His forehead wondering why He ever gave me a moment’s notice. Instead, He keeps the gates of heaven polished and ready to swing open when I take my last breath here on earth.

This same selfless affection and purity of character cannot, however, be said of Satan. There is nothing about me that Satan finds appealing. He hates me! I am detestable to him! I am just a means to his real goal—to satisfy his revenge against

the One whom he can never be like by destroying all that the Father loves—Jesus, His church, His kingdom, and me. Though Satan has the power to do many things, his power runs short of being able to say *no* to himself, to seek the good of others, to know joy, or to forgive sin. He is the father of lies, the inspiration of evil, and the organizer of destruction. His complete self-centeredness renders him useless in the love department. Because he hasn't the capacity to love anyone other than himself, he cannot love me. Nothing he touches escapes corruption. He hungers to fill his kingdom with the skeletons of the Master's children.

But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you,
then choose for yourselves this day whom you will
serve. (Joshua 24:15, NIV)

REBELLION—KEY TO A SINGLE-HEARTED LOVE FOR CHRIST

Rebellion is no small issue to our holy God. In fact, God equates acts of rebellion with witchcraft and idolatry. Rebellion against the commands, the principles, and the standards of our Master is mutiny against His position, His power, and His love. God has made His intentions perfectly clear. He has told us that we are never to rebel against Him. But has He told us that we are never to rebel against sin? No. In fact, He has told us that we are to flee from it, to run from it, to shut the door against it, to say no to it whenever the opportunity to sin is presented to us. Because the payment for our sin came at such a high price, continuing to succumb to sin behaviors trivializes the victory that He has won on our behalf.

Have you ever considered what would have happened to

Satan's plans if all the angels in heaven had said no to his bid for their allegiance? If Eve had turned her back on the serpent's sales pitch to pick fruit off the forbidden tree, how powerful would his presence be in the world today? What would happen right now if you and I made a purposeful choice to rebel against the enemy's fraudulent rule over our lives? A leader without followers is like a bark without a dog.

Now I would not be so arrogant as to presume that sin could ever be removed by an act of our human will. But God has provided a way for us to loosen the grip it has on our lives. That way began with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who put our sin to death on the cross. His death not only conquered sin; it also fitted us with a new, incorruptible nature residing within us through the Holy Spirit of God. It is this power that equips us to do battle with the corruptible nature of our flesh.

This was a most confusing issue for me when I first gave my heart to the Master. I didn't know whom to blame for my failure to live up to God's standards. I chastised myself for being too weak to resist the temptations that were continuously parading themselves before me. In the secret places of my mind I questioned the reality of my salvation, and wondered if God was really there at all.

But God was there. I had been looking at my battle with sin as something that I needed to do for God rather than something God desired to do for me. My on-going war with sin could only be won through the power of Christ living in me. The truth of the matter is: I *am* too weak on my own to resist sin, but I can choose to yield the battle to God so that He can win the battle through me. Each time I choose to cooperate with Him by obeying His directives I discover how

wonderful the thrill of His victory is.

Obedience is the goal of our rebellion. Step one toward obedience begins with a hearty agreement that sin is contrary to God's will for our lives. Step two requires us to turn our backs against the author of sin—Satan. Whatever steps follow are the steps of obedience, walked out in faith, following the One who came as our example for holy living. This process works. If we stumble along the way, we need to go back to step one and begin again. Jesus is the champion of new beginnings.

We are in a war. A battle is being waged for our souls. I believe with every fiber in my being that rebellion is not only necessary for all Christian women today, it is imperative. A call is being sounded for our obedience. A choice needs to be made as to whose voice we will hear and pledge our allegiance to.

DOING BATTLE

Throughout this book I have consistently chosen to refer to God as the *Master* and to Satan as the *Impostor*. I have purposefully done this because it is the clearest way to distinguish between the One who has a right to our obedience and the one who merely pretends to have our best interests at heart.

The call to rebel against sin, I believe, is the key to a single-hearted love for Christ. Rebellion against sin declares that we are ready to change direction in our lives. Rebellion against sin strengthens our resolve to say no to the Impostor and to say yes to the Master. It frees us to love what God loves and hate what He hates. Each time we draw the line in the sand and make our declaration of war against sin clear, we affirm

to our own spirit that we are choosing to take up arms with the Master in the battle for our souls.

I have had many opportunities to put rebellion against sin to the test. For years I struggled with the effects of a low self-image. My insecurities caused me to maintain a constant vigil over my feelings. One offhand comment from a friend, one misunderstanding, one failure to include me in a group activity and my emotions would spin out of control. While fussing over my wounds I would entertain slanderous thoughts against the person who had caused my pain. I hated the hours spent building mountains out of molehills but I didn't know how to stop.

Is low self-esteem sin? No. But my responses to it led me into a barrage of sinful behaviors. My insecurity caused me to see myself as the center of my attention. Keeping my focus on myself blinded me to the needs of others and worse, it cast a shadow over my view of God. I handed the Impostor all the time he needed to fill my thoughts with maudlin stories of how sad my life was. Anger ensued. Self-pity reigned. Then I read Jesus' words in Matthew 10:24: "A student doesn't get a better desk than her teacher. A laborer doesn't make more money than his boss. Be content—pleased, even—when you, my students, my harvest hands, get the same treatment I get. If they call me, the Master, 'Dungface,' what can the workers expect?" (*The Message*). The sinful behavior began when I made an idol of my needs and placed them ahead of my love for Jesus. If He could be hurt, insulted, abused, ignored and misunderstood, and die for the people who had injured Him, certainly I could endure a few minor bouts with a bruised ego.

I had some serious business to do with God. The call to

rebellion was critical to my freedom from the bondage I was in. First, I needed to see my sin from God's perspective. When I did, I found that my behavior was unworthy of His call on my life. The pain of what I had been doing broke my self-centered heart. It was the first time I actually experienced what oneness with God felt like, for I was seeing my sin from His perspective. Then, I needed to deal with the one that had helped me to dig the pit I had fallen into. Thus, I turned my back on the Impostor and refused to make excuses for my compliance with his self-centered ways.

With the first two steps completed, I found that my desire to do the right thing was burning a new passion for righteousness in my heart. I spent a considerable amount of time studying how Jesus behaved toward the people who followed Him. His pattern provided the perfect example for me to follow. How He spoke, how He touched, how He forgave, and how He expressed anger gave me a new way of dealing with others. I also discovered the joy of knowing who I am in Christ and how deep God's love for me is. Rebellion against sin worked. I seldom waste my valuable time worrying about my tender feelings. I am free to be hurt without craving revenge or retreat. And my friendships have more long-lasting potential now that my sensitivities have been given to the Master.

Rebellion against sin validates our repentance and confirms our desire for obedience. There can be no true love for Christ without obedience. Worship is impossible without obedience. Joy is nonexistent without obedience. Obedience announces our complete and utter helplessness to save ourselves, to forgive ourselves, and to live new and different lives. Obedience, therefore, necessitates acts of rebellion against

anything that might lead us away from loving Christ with all our being.

One day I asked a friend who was in a heated battle with a particular sin if she was ready to obey God in that particular area of her life. Her answer was a clear and enthusiastic, “Yes.”

Then I said, “Now, Cindy, the next time you are tempted to do this, what will you do?”

“I hope I will obey God,” she said with a hint of helplessness in her voice.

“But, what if you don’t obey God?”

“Well,” she said, “I just hope God will help me not to do those things again.”

“But what if you do, do them again?” I was feeling a bit flustered by this point.

“Well, I will just have to pray that I don’t!”

We must have a plan! Can God be blamed for our inability to stand against the temptations that seek to entrap us on a daily basis? If we only say *yes* to God aren’t we then saying *maybe* to His enemy? *Maybe* is a poor substitute for *no*. Jesus said that we are to *let our yes be yes and our no be NO*. When we say *yes* to the Master, we must seal our vows by turning to the Impostor and saying *no*.

One rainy afternoon I watched an example that illustrated for me what saying *no* looks like in an old movie called *The Principal*.

A LESSON ON SAYING NO

The principal stood before the assembly, knowing this was his last chance to make a difference in the school he had been called to lead. The audience included future drug addicts, rapists, hookers, and gangland criminals of America. They sneered at the principal in willful defiance.

As the principal faced the crowd of anarchists, he discovered something he didn't know he had—standards. For the first time in his life, he would take a stand on the right side of an issue. With courage foreign to him he approached the microphone. His stare cut through the hostility of the crowd. Then his nostrils flared and his voice growled two words that were to change the course of that school's history. "No more!"

"No more!"

No more would rebellious thugs run the school. *No more* would the education of students be left to gang members who owned the streets. *No more* would the teaching staff tolerate insubordinate behavior from their students. *No more* would the rules of his school be optional! The list of new regulations ran off his tongue with passionate resolve—*no drugs, no guns, no cigarettes, no fighting in the halls*. The speech continued, "No more, no more, no more." The line of demarcation had been drawn. The standard had been set. The time to take action was at hand. A new kind of rebellion was about to begin!

The purpose of this book is to build rebels—women who will step up to the microphone, clear their throats, stand before the Impostor, and say, *No more!*

No more will you dictate the affections of my heart!

No more will you take up residence in my home!

No more will you be the director of my focus!

No more will you choose my friends, my profession, or my activities!

No more will you attend church with me!

No more, no more, no more!

But the people who know their God will firmly resist him. (Daniel 11:32b)

THE *WHY* AND *WHO* OF REBELLION

Perhaps you have not yet seen a reason good enough for you to continue reading this book. Let me give you three more ideas.

First, we need to become rebels for the sake of our own souls. There is a great uneasiness in women today. The more we search for security and purpose, the more we feel drained and disquieted. We will examine the many reasons for this discontentment in greater detail as we move throughout the chapters of this book. Wherever there is confusion, chaos, frustration, dissatisfaction, or restlessness, the Impostor is at the center of the problem. The fruit of the Spirit, which is the evidence of a life transformed by the Master's touch, can never be brought to fruition when watered from the Impostor's well. He needs to be escorted out of our gardens if we are to bear good fruit.

Second, we need to become rebels for the sake of the church. With so much talk about revival and so little evidence to support it, many Christians are waiting for God to shake them awake and usher in a type of renewal that will make Christianity feel better than it feels now. We have allowed our faith to be primarily based on our feelings—either the *feel good* kind or the *feel bad* kind. Spiritual apathy, spiritual abuses, spiritual quackery, and spiritual snobbery has the church unraveling at the edges. The church is the great love of the Master's heart. Although revival is what many people are hoping for, perhaps rebellion against sin is the needed prescription for what ails us. When the world looks at the church they should not see their own reflection. Instead, the church should stand as a mirror of Christ in the lives of His people.

We can neither survive nor thrive without the body of Christ. Christians do not have the luxury of living like hermits. We need each other so we can help each other grow into wise, mature, respectable individuals who, when we come together, look like Jesus. The Master has fashioned us in such a way that on our own we can only reflect a portion of the body of Christ. But when we come together in love and unity, we become the full body of Christ. Eyes, ears, voice, hands, and feet, we complete the picture of Jesus when we lock arms in one common purpose—to spread His love everywhere! Growth of this kind may not always *feel* good, but there is one thing of which we can be certain...it will always *do* good!

Third, we need to become rebels for the sake of the Master Himself. In the great parable of the prodigal son, we see a portrait of the Master's heart. When the rebellious son grabbed his inheritance and left his father's home, he broke his father's heart. The lonely dad stood on a hill day after day waiting for his son to return. The pain of separation weighed heavily on him, knowing that the world was eager to devour the child whom he had raised with such great wisdom and kind affection. Finally, the day came when the father saw a shadow advancing from around the bend. His heart pounded in suspense. Then, in moments that must have felt like a lifetime, he could see the form of a young man. It was him! The delight of the father's heart could not be contained. He ran to meet him. Love showered tears over the prodigal until he was drenched in the sweetness of their reconciliation. A feast was prepared to welcome him home. The father's grief melted away in the joy of seeing his son who was lost and now was found.

The Word of God warns that we must be careful not to

grieve the heart of God. Yet, every time we wander away from Him and follow the whims of the Impostor, we become a source of pain to the One who loves us deeply; we cause Him grief. The woman who has just been widowed, the mother who has felt her child's life slip away from her, the girl who has said good-bye to her beloved daddy as he left their home for the last time; these all have experiential understanding of the pain that grief brings.

Each time we put Him on hold, we reject the love He desires to lavish upon us. This is the third, and I believe the most important reason that can be given for heeding God's call to rebellion. We must, for the sake of the Master, stand against anyone or anything that would inflict sorrow upon the greatest love we have and can ever know. The time to rebel is at hand!

This holy rebellion, however, cannot be launched until we, as women, take a purposeful look at our lives. Throughout this book we will sort through the many facets of our lives and draw a line of distinction that will identify where and how the Impostor has affected the way we think, feel, and behave. We will discover together that Christianity is *Christ-in-you-ity*. It is found in our *being* before it appears in the *doing*. We will untwist the message of the Impostor and fine-tune the message of the Master. We will seek to rekindle the flame of holy passion and send it soaring through the gates of heaven as a fragrant aroma to the God who is worthy of our loyal, unfettered, wholehearted, fully devoted service and affection.

Now, before you enlist in the Master's army thinking that you are able on your own to do battle with the Impostor, let me encourage you for a moment to pause and consider what

the uniform you are about to put on looks like. It consists of a pair of army boots waiting to be filled with the Master's feet so that the message of His love can be marched throughout your sphere of influence. It is a helmet waiting to cover you with the Master's authority. It is a shield of faith waiting for the Master's strength to hold it. It is a belt waiting to be fastened by the Master's truth. It is a breastplate waiting to be polished with the Master's character. It is a sword waiting to be sharpened by the Master's words. And it is a battle that is supported by prayer for the Master's power and seal of approval. You and I can do nothing on our own. The Master, who has called us, will be the One to equip us and make us ready for battle. The way, the means, and the victory all belong to Him.

The Master wants you! Prepare yourself to heed the call of rebellion so that you might experience the joy of having a single-hearted love for Christ!

PART ONE

*Single-Hearted Love
for Christ*



The Chosen Heart

*But you are a chosen people,
a royal priesthood, a holy nation.
A people belonging to God,
that you may declare the praises of him
who called you out of darkness
into his wonderful light.*

1 PETER 2:9, NIV

CHAPTER ONE



It was her night for miracles—the night when a common chore girl became a princess. With the touch of the fairy godmother’s wand, her tattered dress was transformed into a glimmering pink gown, a pumpkin was converted into a grand coach, and six little mice were changed into dashing white horses. Nearing the castle, the sound of a thousand strings filled the air with music. The glass slippers that fit so perfectly on her feet were ready to dance.

Cinderella’s heart fluttered with excitement as she entered the castle. There, overlooking the ballroom from the balcony, she stood mesmerized by the splendor of the scene that unfolded below. Couples danced effortlessly around the room in costumes adorned with jewels that flickered like tiny lights shimmering against the night. Within moments the waltz twirled slowly to a halt while the music faded to a whisper. A hush fell across the room. Cinderella began to blush as the guests turned their attention toward her. Emerging from within the crowd, the prince appeared. With the confidence of a king and the wonder of a boy, he held out his hand and escorted her to the center of the ballroom floor. One cue to the conductor and the music resumed. Cinderella was dancing in

the arms of the prince. The love sparkling in their eyes told the bewildered guests that the contest was over—the prince had found his princess.

It was the perfect love story—undeserving girl meets handsome prince and in an instant her life was changed from a hopeless here and now to a happy ever after. Out of all the women at the ball, the prince, who deemed her worthy to be his princess bride, had chosen her.

As Christian women, you and I have experienced, at least to some degree, the joy of dancing in Cinderella's slippers. Long before we knew Him, God turned His eyes toward us and selected us to be His own beloved daughters. He reached out, took our helpless faces in His warm hands, and said, "I love you. You're the one I've chosen. You're my heart's desire." The Creator of the entire universe pulled us out of the crowd, escorted us to the dance floor, and proved to the world that we are a treasured possession, a person of value, and a woman of worth.

How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is! He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. [What pleasure he took in planning this!] He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son. (Ephesians 1:3–8, *The Message*)

Long before we came to the ball, we were not only in His mind, we were the objects of His love and the passion of His longing. He wrote the script for our love story before we had even an inkling of what true love looked like. It was His decision to adopt us into His family, to make us heirs to His kingdom, and to shower us with all the blessings that are appropriate for the children of nobility. Everything that belongs to Jesus was handed to us—just for the asking. It was His gift. He chose us so that we could choose Him.

As a little girl I was charmed by the tale of Cinderella. Her story gave me hope that some day my prince would come and with the touch of his hand brush away all the hurt, fear, and inadequacy that plagued my childlike heart. My prince came, but the purpose for his appearance surprised me. I longed for a rescuer; instead I found a redeemer.

I was fourteen years old when a friend from school asked me if I knew Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. Her question stunned me. I had attended church often while growing up and it never occurred to me that going to church might be different than actually knowing Jesus. Laura was a tenacious evangelist. She shared the gospel with me. For the first time I understood why Jesus had to die for my sin and how His death was my provision for eternal life. That night I knelt beside my bed and asked Jesus to come into my heart, forgive me for all of my sins, make me His child, and make my heart His home. I accepted His invitation to spend eternity with Him. My fear of eternal judgement was taken away, and I knew for the first time what joy felt like.

In one night, through one prayer, my life was changed forever. My prince had come, not dressed in the finest of

satins, but clothed in wood, splattered with His own blood so that I could wear His righteous clothing. I was no longer the child of that family down the street whose father was an alcoholic and where abuse and depression lived, but I was the child of God. I was the daughter of the King of all kings. His adoption of me authenticated His love for me. I felt warm and secure in the love of my heavenly Father. The Bible made sense to me. I loved going to church. I cared about my family's eternal destiny. I enjoyed the company of my new Christian friends. The gospel was no longer an old story told in a dust-covered book on a shelf—it was personal. I had a new life and a new identity. I inherited the name of the One who saved me—*Christ-ian*.

That's plain enough, isn't it? You're no longer wandering exiles. This kingdom of faith is now your home country. You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. (Ephesians 2:19, *The Message*)

That is what God has done for you when you become His daughter. When He chose you to be His child, He authenticated His love for you by sending Jesus to die for you. You are His. He knows you through and through. He will never tear up your adoption papers. You will always be His. No matter how often you fail to live up to His standards, He will never give up on you because He sees you through His Son. The perfect, sinless record of Jesus Christ is your record. Ponder this brief list of what this means for you and me as the chosen daughters of God.

- You are a chosen daughter and dearly loved by God. (Ephesians 1:4)
- You are a joint heir with Christ, sharing His righteousness with Him. (Romans 8:17)
- You have been made alive with Christ who has forgiven all your sins. Your debt has been cancelled. (Colossians 2:13–14)
- You are forever free from condemnation. (Romans 8:1)
- You may approach the throne of grace with confidence to receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16)
- You are a member of God's own people, a royal priesthood, a people for God's own possession. (1 Peter 2:9–10)
- You have received the Spirit of God into your life so you can understand what God has freely given you. (1 Corinthians 2:12)
- You have been given His exceedingly great and precious promises so you may participate in His holy nature and escape the corruption in the world. (2 Peter 1:4)
- You are secure in Christ. Nothing will be able to separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus your Lord. (Romans 8:39)
- You are a saint. (Ephesians 1:1)¹

It would be wonderful if I could say to you with a straight face that ever since the day I gave my heart to Jesus I have always *felt* like I was His child. I wish I could say I always *feel* worthy to be called His precious daughter, His treasured possession, or His holy one. I don't, because being chosen goes far beyond the realm of what I *feel* or don't *feel* at any given

moment. It is the unconditional and unchangeable love of Christ, my Savior, which has made the gospel God's real-life love story for me.

MORE THAN A FEELING

Let's go back for a moment and take another look at the story of Cinderella and her prince. Their love at first sight experience turned an animated cartoon into a classic movie hit. But it might not be the best illustration to use when searching for the meaning of true love. After all, it was all too quick and impetuous. One glance at a pretty face and the prince was ready to commit his life and his castle to a nameless girl who walked in late for the ball. And as for Cinderella—what kind of a romantic bubble-head runs off with a guy who looks great in a suit so she can escape a troubled home environment? With a foundation as shaky as theirs, it wouldn't be too surprising if the sequel to their story went something like this:

Cinderella II: Far beyond the Honeymoon

In this episode we find poor Cindy standing on the balcony of the castle, looking out over the gardens with a tear hanging off her quivering chin. Shooing the crows away from her English muffins, she sings into the breeze that old Barbra Striesand/Neil Diamond tune, "*You don't bring me flowers, You don't sing me love songs...*"

Somewhere in the woods, Mr. Prince sits on a log crooning right back at her,

"You never run to me anymore, when I walk through the door at the end of the day."

Maybe Cinderella and her prince were discovering what

we all find out sooner or later—feelings are fickle. The needle on our emotional compass has the capacity to change direction in just a snap of a finger. When our prince comes home hiding a bouquet of roses behind his back we look at him and think he's the most adorable creature ever made. But after the kiss, when he asks what's for dinner, that adorable creature isn't quite as adorable as he was just seconds before. No wonder the old saying says that there is a fine line between love and hate. Feelings are unreliable sources to count on when we want the reality of our love to be confirmed.

Most of us have no problem feeling confident about God's eternal love for us when life is going just the way we want it to go. But, when the clouds of crisis come storming toward us and it seems that God has taken a vacation, our confidence can easily be shattered in the blast—if, that is, we are placing our confidence in how we feel.

When I first began writing this book, I felt an overwhelming sense of certainty that I was doing exactly what God had called me to do. All of my friends agreed that not only was the subject inspired but that I was the one God had chosen to proclaim it. Shortly after I sent the first draft off to a variety of publishers, a well-respected publishing house picked up the manuscript and held it under consideration for seven months. During that time it appeared a contract was eminent. While it looked as if my book was going to be published, I experienced the most extraordinary feelings of passion, peace, contentment, and joy. Then, on a cold day in November, a call from the publishers ended my brief appointment with success. My book was rejected. I felt rejected. I questioned whether I had really heard from God or not. The

thought of having spent an entire year wasting my time pounding meaningless words into my computer left me feeling utterly humiliated.

It took me three days to get the courage to face God with my heart's deepest questions. *Oh, God, what have I done? Did I hear you right? I am sorry to be such a dunderhead right now but I need you to be very clear with me. What do you want me to do? I will do whatever you ask, but please, O God, make Your way known to me.*

The next day during my quiet time, God spoke. I was reminded that I was indeed chosen by God and that this truth is the foundation of my salvation and the basis of everything I believe. Then, as I went to prayer, the first three chapters of my book unfolded before me revealing what needed to be done to strengthen their message. Finally, I picked up my Bible and opened to the place where I had left off the day before—2 Corinthians 8:11–12 and read: “Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.” I was deeply moved.

In June of the following year, I received a phone call from Multnomah Publishers asking me to come to Sisters to discuss *Called to Rebellion*. Had I listened to my feelings during my time of crisis, I would have missed the blessing of hearing God's voice and receiving His tender compassion and encouragement. I would have stopped the work that I felt so passionately called to do. And I would have allowed the Impostor to tell me that I was a fool to believe that God could ever use me to write anything worth reading. I went back to

my office with a renewed zeal to complete the task at hand and a deep sense that God had used these experiences to sharpen me so that I could serve Him better.

It is far too easy to use our feelings as a thermometer to gauge God's love for us. Discouragement, disappointment, anger, and even the death of a vision may cast grim shadows on our emotions and hide God's promise to never leave us or toss us aside. But God's promises are never ruled by our feelings.

We may hope the joy of being chosen will last forever, but the truth is—it doesn't. So, during those times when our feelings change and the pitter doesn't patter anymore, we need to go back to the dance floor and recapture what really happened the night we were swept away by the King of our hearts. What was it that He did? Who did He say we were?

BEYOND THE FAIRYTALE

Everything changed for Cinderella when the clock struck twelve on the night of the ball. Horses went back to being mice again, the coach turned into a pumpkin, and Cinderella's glittering gown faded away. Donned in her tattered dress, she picked up her mop and dust cloth and tried as best she could to put the night of her dreams behind her. But the love the prince had for his fair maiden would not be thwarted. Though her stepmother and the two ugly stepsisters tried to keep her hidden—he found her. Though she felt unworthy of his love—his love won her. There was nothing she could do to discourage the prince from loving her with all his heart. The perfection of his affection drew her near and persuaded her that they were meant to be together.

What a life Cinderella had been chosen for! The ragamuffin

stepchild became a stately member of the royal family with a royal family identity and royal family responsibilities. But there must have been times when flashbacks of her life before the castle caused her to wonder if she would ever really become the princess the fairytale claimed her to be.

After the honeymoon period of my new life in Christ was over, the reality of learning how to live like a Christian left me feeling like the new kid in school.

One of my struggles was believing God's promises to me, and this, no doubt, was linked to patterns of thinking I'd developed living with an alcoholic father. When God said He would love me with an everlasting love, I automatically put conditions and limits to His words. When He said that nothing could ever separate me from His love, I took my name out of the text and inserted the names of other more deserving Christians instead. When He said that He would meet all my needs, answer all my prayers, and guard all my steps I held on to my trusty "no, not today" to cushion the blow of whatever disappointments I feared would come. The Impostor had easy access to my reservoir of fear and my inability to surrender the control of my life to the Master.

It took years of allowing God to show me, one prayer at a time, how faithful and trustworthy He is. I have often recorded the wonderful accounts of answered prayer and read them over whenever I felt that He would not continue to love me through my periods of wavering faith. Now I have more undeniable experiences of God's reliable promises than I have of my father's ill-fated intentions.

I also had a chronic love for attention. My ability to make people laugh and charm crowds served me well in our home and with my friends, and this ability almost always secured

the leading parts in school plays. Though humor was God's gift to me to help me survive the tough times in life, it also became a source of egotistical pride and provided me with a false sense of security. As long as I could win people over, I could regulate the way they treated me or at least pretend that I could.

I vacillated between my craving to be up front and my new hyperspiritual fear of being seen as a show off. I mistrusted my motives and scrutinized my behavior with dogged perfectionism. The Impostor couldn't have been more pleased with my confusion; I was just how he wanted me to be—unproductive in the Master's kingdom.

Today I find enormous freedom in serving Christ through the gifts He has given me. I realize that none of my talents have come to me through my own inspired genius. All that I am has been chosen beforehand by the Master. God has authorized my gifts to be used to delight, inspire, encourage, and motivate others. I no longer worry about my motives. Though I am still constrained to examine the condition of my heart regarding holiness, I experience great joy in doing what I have been created to do.

I had huge concerns also that my life would forever be tied to my past, and I battled feelings of anger toward my parents for the way I had been raised. Psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers all agreed that a child born in an abusive home was bound to become an abuser also. Their well-meaning predictions painted a very dark future for me. Though I tried to keep my bouts with depression hidden, my thoughts were often haunted by the memories of terror in the night and the feeling of hopelessness that followed me through the day.

Though I was determined to never repeat the mistakes of my family, I felt powerless to stop the patterns that had already begun to show themselves in my temperament. I had a difficult time knowing how to turn those patterns around. Instead of trusting God with my life, I was often fearful that God would grow weary of my backward turns and give up on me altogether. As long as the Impostor was able to keep me focused on my inadequacies and failures, I remained blinded to the Master's mercy and persistent grace.

Then I came upon one of the most astounding word in Scripture—*but*.

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* own POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, *but* now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, *but* now you have RECEIVED MERCY. (1 Peter 2:9–10, NASB, emphasis mine)

This three-letter word told me that no matter what my life had been; it was now changed. Because I have been chosen to be a child of God, I am no longer tied to my past. God is faithfully, every day, doing a new thing in me. Each day of being His child provides me with more opportunities to allow Him to pour more of His character into my personality. Once I had no purpose for living, *but* today I have the esteemed privilege of declaring His truth to an unbelieving world. Once I had no real identity, *but* today I am a child of God's eternal kingdom. Once I had no hope of mercy, *but* today I am drenched in it. Through the wisdom of His word, His

thoughts continue to become my thoughts, teaching me daily how to live.

Being chosen is not just a feeling; it is a fact. No matter how warm and fuzzy I might or might not *feel* about the presence of God in my life and no matter how secure I might *feel* regarding my position in Him—He has declared by His own words who I am. My new life and my new identity are not subject to the infidelity of my feelings. All that I am has been firmly established from the very beginning of time. I am His. It's more than a fairytale; it's the core of my existence.

A BETTER LOVE STORY

When Cinderella fled the scene that night at the ball, the only clue the prince had to help him find her again was the fragile glass slipper that fell from her foot while she ran. So determined was he to find the love of his life that he went door to door searching for the woman whose shoe size would be a perfect fit. Fat feet, skinny feet, stinky feet, and feet needing some serious pedicures, told the prince that his search would not be easy.

Then, when he thought that he couldn't stand one more disappointment, he knocked on the last door in the village. Greeting him at the threshold was the most beautiful chore girl he had ever seen. Cinderella's cheeks grew hot with embarrassment. The ruse was up. Her true identity was exposed and there was nowhere to run. Yet, without a moment's hesitation the prince presented the slipper to his runaway princess. Her foot slipped easily into the crystal shoe. The prince swept her up in his arms and carried her off to his castle to begin the new life for which she had been chosen.

The joy of our love story is that it goes on forever. The matchless love of God is a perfect fit for the heart that has been redeemed by the Savior. What God has chosen will never be rejected. It is easy to lose sight of God's undying, eternal love for us if we allow the Impostor to hold our imperfections before us and taunt us with arguments like: "Look how bad you've been... See how you failed...? You'll never amount to anything... Why can't you be more like...? You don't deserve to be loved..."

Charles Spurgeon described this inward wrenching of the soul in words that seem to have been salted with the tears of one who experienced the battle firsthand.

Do you not feel in your own soul that perfection is not in you? Does not every day teach you that? Every tear trickling from your eye, weeps "imperfection"; every sigh bursting from your heart, cries "imperfection"; every harsh word proceeding from your lip, mutters "imperfection." You have had a view of your own heart too frequently to dream for a moment of any perfection in yourself. But amid this sad consciousness of imperfection, here is comfort for you—you are "perfect in Christ." In God's sight, you are "complete in Him"; even now you are "accepted in the beloved.

With my Savior's garments on,
Holy as the Holy One.

...Then we shall know, and taste, and feel the happiness of the vast but short sentence, "Complete in Christ."²

When darkness seeks to overwhelm my soul with pic-

tures of my imperfections and evidences of my failures and when it seems my hope has drizzled down to a single raindrop, I have nothing left to cling to but the most basic truths of the Master. Has He ever failed me? Has He ever disregarded my most desperate needs? Has He ever closed the door to my visits or covered His ears to my cries for help? No. He can love me with everlasting love because He has clothed me with *His* perfection. I *am* perfect now in Christ. I am already free from the penalty of sin. Nothing that pertains to sin will follow me into heaven. How can I fully grasp the wonder of this kind of love?

What marvelous love the Father has extended to us! Just look at it—we're called children of God! That's who we really are. But that's also why the world doesn't recognize us or take us seriously, because it has no idea who he is or what he's up to. But friends, that's exactly who we are: children of God. And that's only the beginning. Who knows how we'll end up! What we know is that when Christ is openly revealed, we'll see him—and in seeing him, become like him. All of us who look forward to his Coming stay ready, with the glistening purity of Jesus' life as a model for our own. (1 John 3:1–3, *The Message*)

Our story is better than Cinderella's. You and I are imperfect women chosen by a perfect God who has wrapped us in His perfection and put us on His path to eternal life where happy ever after has no ending. But beware—there is one who lurks around the corner impersonating the Master. He will do all he can to distract you from the truth and to keep

you from knowing the fullness of the life the Faithful Master has called you to live.

What is this fullness of life that Jesus promised to bring us? I doubt that Jesus was the least bit concerned with how many worldly treasures He could add to our temporal bank accounts. As I have tried to assess my life in terms of this promise, what I have come to realize is that His gifts to me are found in unseen yet vividly recognized testimonies of His presence in me. In times of indecision or crisis, He gives me wisdom, not because He *has* wisdom but because He *is* wisdom. He fills my life with joy, not because He has lots of joy to give, but because He is the fountain from which joy springs. He strengthens me with power, not because He has enough power to spare, but because He Himself is the power source. And He covers me with peace, not because He has some extra peace on hand, but because He *is* peace. This is the fullness of life that Jesus promised to give—it is His life in us given without reservation or reluctance.

The last thing the Impostor wants is for us to be secure in the love of the Master. If we are sure to whom we belong and where our hope is found we will grow, blossom, and mature in our walk with Christ. Our lives will reflect Him in everything we do. Other people will know who our God is. And the Impostor's task of derailing us on the road to heaven will be thwarted.

Because ours is a superior love story, it merits a more excellent life from we who have been called to be the children of God. We have been chosen by the Master. Now the question we must address is: *Are we ready to choose Him? Are we ready to commit our way to Him? Are we ready to seek Him with all our heart, mind and spirit? Are we ready to pay close attention*

to how we are living? He has already given us the clothing and the tools we need to rebel against His enemy. We are already armed with the power we need to win the war for the affection of our hearts. We need now to resolve to move forward as we allow the truths that He has given us to permeate every area of our being.

*We must pay more careful attention, therefore,
to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.*

HEBREWS 2:1