

# REVEAL



*Dear brave girl,*

I want to reveal Myself to you in new ways. I want to renew your mind. Just lean in close to Me and I'll lean in close to you. Spend time with Me and talk with Me. I've got all your problems handled. Just trust Me and don't lose sight of Me. Train your mind to see Me in every moment, every situation. Seek My face. Trying to change yourself in your own strength will only make you a better version of yourself. I want to make you new. Just sit with Me a while and study My words and I will change your whole life.

Love,

*God*

## MADISON'S BRAVE STORY

Many people can recall their first childhood memory wrapped in wonder and happiness.

My story began with my first encounter of pain which caused deep trauma.

I was not old enough to grasp what was being done to me nor aware of how to defend myself. To survive, I learned to stuff the shame, embarrassment, and secrets into a box, locking it, and swallowing the key. The ones entrusted with my protection as a child were not aware of my perpetrator, but I later realized this was due to my caretaker's alcoholism, emotional absence, and torn relationships. That time in my life led to years of seeking approval from men. This meant sacrificing values, morals, and my body to capture the attention of the opposite sex. As time went on, the abuse gave way to confusion. I remember having my first sexual attraction in preschool, not understanding what it meant and why I wanted it. It felt normal.

My transition into adolescence was difficult. I remember having my first suicidal thought in the fifth grade. The feeling of wanting to rip the skin off my body and escape consumed me. That, combined with my first exposure to pornography, seared an indelible mark on my life; one, like many others I would eventually learn to numb. Questions about sexuality and sexual preferences came too early in my life. As my body began to change around sixth grade, I was neither prepared for, nor welcomed, the weight my body required to take the shape of a young woman; a shape that was frequently mocked.

In middle school, I became bulimic. This was the first sense of control I felt in my life. The adrenaline rush along with a false sense of control empowered me, and it felt good. Numbing the pain was another coping mechanism I developed through alcohol and drugs. I allowed myself to numb the memories, faces, and what I thought of myself.

My middle and high school years were defined by a lack of parental supervision, a string of steady boyfriends, and a sister who introduced me to parties, drugs, and alcohol. The concoction nearly proved deadly one night my sophomore year as alcohol filled my bloodstream. The sexual assault I experienced that night, paired with lack of care from loved ones, increased my hunger for control. My eating disorder took off like a freight train, and my mind was filled with suicidal thoughts. I began stealing from the medications that were readily available in the home, night after night planning my overdose.

By my senior year I dwindled down to a mere 91 pounds. My strong performance in school and

athleticism provided a thin facade for my tragic home life, but there was a pain that grew deeper and darker. Any notion of God—that there was a God who would care for me—was long forgotten. My parents divorced during my senior year of high school, only compounding the dysfunction I had known my entire life. In spite of being in a long-term relationship, I was lonely. My loneliness became a choice when I one-by-one severed each of the relationships with my parents and siblings. After graduating from high school, I bounced around living with friends-of-friends and even spent a short season back with my mother, her new family, and my childhood perpetrator. It was complicated; but the cycle went on.

I tried community college for a semester but that was difficult to do given the transient nature of housing and part-time jobs I was juggling. I felt stuck in a cycle of mental, emotion, and physical abuse. Respecting boundaries did not exist. I just wanted out. I needed to escape. When yet another relationship ended, I drew from a deep well of old resources. A guy I had met years prior would be my next long-term relationship. I had hoped he would be able to save me from the brokenness I felt inside. Like many girls, I was sold on promises (you know, the same ones all guys make) that for one reason or another were delayed. It took me three years to realize those promises would never come true. I supported the two of us with the little money I made working multiple jobs and donating plasma. I grew accustomed to cycling from place to place—sometimes together, sometimes apart. I loaned to him freely, never to be repaid; all the while continuing to bounce from one living arrangement to another. I set myself up for poverty and eventually started living in my vehicle after exhausting every housing option available.

My days were spent sitting in Barnes and Noble bookstore for warmth, safety, and the feeling of being around others. Then, back to my car to sleep at night.

I soon found out I was pregnant.

My failing car, the clothes on my back, and the baby in my belly were all I had.

I couch-hopped from place to place. My boyfriend—the father of our child—was financially, emotionally, and physically absent. I recall sitting on the floor, looking up, with tears rolling down my cheeks, asking God again, “please give me some hope.” It was at that moment I received an alert on my phone from a friend I hadn’t spoken to in months. She said I was randomly on her mind and wanted to check in on me. I told her about my living situation and my pregnancy. She immediately prayed for me and started making calls. She suggested I get in contact with Embrace Grace and gave me a contact for them. I remembered that back in my second trimester, someone else had

recommended this program to me as well. I initially rejected the suggestion because of how I felt toward God. I feared judgment and shame.

Now in my third trimester, completely alone, considering the cold nights sleeping in my car, I finally got connected to Embrace Grace. They gave me a handful of to-do items that included contacting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), WIC, and Medicaid. I had completed my tasks by the next day and met with a woman named Sarah. After sharing my story with her, she revealed that God had given her a vision: one that meant inviting me to live with her family. I said, “But you don’t even know me.” She responded, “And you don’t know me either.” I believe, to each of our surprise, the Lord had plans for our lives to connect beyond the ministry of Embrace Grace. Sarah and her husband, John, invited me into their home as the days and weeks of my pregnancy were coming to a close.

For the first time in my life, I had the opportunity to observe what a family led by God looked like: structure, boundaries, and love could co-exist.

I felt like part of the family immediately, and they will forever be my family. During my time there, I enrolled in the Embrace Grace program. We met at a local church every Tuesday night. And I was able to learn about God’s grace and what it meant to break the chains of sin and entanglement. Using what I thought was the worst thing to happen to me, they opened my eyes to God’s gift—my unborn child—and how God was using him to change my life. Shame and embarrassment were replaced with joy and hope.

Shortly after, my son was born. Sarah was there and her support meant everything to me. Having a motherly figure present in the delivery room gave me a great sense of comfort. I was incredibly grateful.

The early weeks of being a mother were so difficult. Being a single parent made it even harder. I could feel myself on the verge of depression, so I reached out to Sarah and she gave me some advice on how to combat it.

I struggled with learning the ropes, as any first-time mother would, but behind the joy of holding my baby in my arms was a looming fear and uncertainty about my future.

My support system—Sarah and John and my son’s father’s parents—was invaluable during this time. Although my child’s father’s presence was intermittent, my son’s grandparents consistently

showed up, filling the void left by an absent father. Through each of their examples, and all that I learned from Embrace Grace, I found my true identity in Jesus Christ and was baptized. While estranged from my own family, I learned that God is the true Father—my Heavenly Father. I was never without Him even when I denied Him. He always provided. His hand was always extended towards me, waiting for me to have faith and trust in Him. As the months went by, I became more anxious about my living situation. I had goals, but I didn't know how to get started. Thoughts of wanting more out of life became stronger as the days passed. I knew I could not live with Sarah and John forever, but I did not have the resources or means to support myself financially. I began pressing into God. I started praying daily for direction and change. Whatever He wanted for me, I wanted.

Sarah had made a connection before I was pregnant with a couple in the early stages of a ministry called NEST. Little did either of them realize that this meeting would be God's provision for me five months after I gave birth. As my time at Sarah and John's needed to come to an end, NEST was fully established and ready to accept its first resident. Through Sarah's recommendation, and God's perfect timing, that resident would be me.

For the next year, my son and I would be given a place of shelter, love, and hospitality, but with an actionable, graduated, and strategic plan. A plan with personal, one-on-one mentorship that would help me move toward independence.

My self-esteem going into NEST was incredibly low. I didn't know my identity in Christ, but as time went on, I drew from my weekly Bible studies and became stronger in my faith and confidence. I started applying what I learned about my Heavenly Father, and His voice grew clearer the more I followed Him.

A struggle I dealt with for years was feeling like an orphan. The enemy was constantly telling me I was alone and that no one wanted me. I was consumed with sadness. One day, I went to the theaters to see the movie *Overcomer*. The main character struggled with the same identity issues, but for different reasons. This movie had me on the edge of my seat because I related so much to it. Ephesians 1 was mentioned throughout the movie, and the girl finally found her identity as a daughter of God. As soon as I got home, I dove into the Word and created a list of "I am" statements based on Scripture to redefine my true identity in Christ. It was at that moment that I felt a breakthrough. I felt a bit more complete. It took time and application, but I found out who I was in Christ, that I was never alone, and that I was adopted by God. I wasn't an orphan!

As my confidence grew, my desire for more for my life followed. After many hours of research and comparing options, I chose to enroll in a medical assistant program at a college. I'll admit, I was incredibly nervous to start out because I feared the unknown. One of the main things I have learned about God, though, is to find beauty in the unknown. Our minds aren't capable of understanding what the Lord has in store for our lives. Just when we think we have it all figured out, He humbles us and pulls us back in to rely on His strength and not our own. During my season in NEST, I faced job loss, a global pandemic, and the disappointment of delayed graduation for the professional certificate I worked hard to obtain. Still, I was able to reach my goal of saving three months' rent and \$5,000 for a car. Thanks to my trust in God, He has consistently proven that He has something better for me. And for this reason, I have remained at peace, even in uncertain times. I believe He also led me to enlist in the National Guard, where I will begin my formal training.

I have realized that the way that I see my son is how God views his children: easy to forgive and always loving, no matter the decisions we choose to make. Previously, I let my past weigh me down like a ton of bricks. Through God and understanding His grace, the weight has become lighter and lighter.

God has always had His hand extended towards me, waiting for me to grab hold and run with Him. The best thing I have done for me and my son's life is to say "yes" to God! It was the best decision of my life.

## SISTER TO SISTER

It's hard for any of us to fathom how extraordinary and priceless we are to God. Our earthly minds can't even fully comprehend the depths of God's love for us. He loves us so much! Isn't Madison's story amazing? She truly is an overcomer and I love how she took the time to read her "I am" statements daily. They trained her mind and heart to know who she is by speaking God's Word over herself.

We have *life* and  
*death* in the power  
of our *tongues*  
and we need to speak  
*life* over ourselves.

God's Word is powerful! We have life and death in the power of our tongues, and we need to speak *life* over ourselves!

Maybe you and Madison have had similar struggles and you have a steady stream of negative thoughts going through your mind every day. Especially with experiencing something difficult like an unexpected pregnancy,

our mind and thoughts tend to gravitate toward worst-case-scenarios and negativity. We believe lies about ourselves and our situations—thoughts fixed on being worthless, flawed, a failure, alone, unloved, hopeless, and incapable. We have to take those thoughts and replace them with thoughts of what is true!

It’s possible to think in a new way—just focus on *what* you are thinking about and put forth effort to reprogram your mind. Put God’s truth everywhere you need a reminder: your car, your bathroom mirror, in your purse, your nightstand, or anywhere your mind might start to wonder. When the negative thought creeps in, just pause. Take a deep breath and replace the lie with the truth. And if you want to know where to find the truth about yourself, go straight to the Word of God!

## THE TRUTH ABOUT WHO YOU ARE

LIE	TRUTH	GOD SAYS:
Alone	Never alone	God will never leave me. (Psalm 139:7-11, Hebrews 13:5)
Unlovable	So very loved	I am greatly loved by God. (Romans 1:7, Ephesians 2:4, Colossians 3:12)
Worthless	Priceless	I am fearfully and wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:13)
Damaged	Beautiful	I am God’s workmanship. (Ephesians 2:10)
Failure	Victory	I am a conqueror. (Romans 8:37)
Ashamed	Freed	I am forgiven. (1 John 1:9)

“And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:32

Fix your thoughts on Jesus and what He says about you.

“And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.” Philippians 4:8

The best place to find truth is in God’s Word, the Bible. The Bible is living and active! You can access the Bible online, through an app, or you can read the paper version (my personal favorite). The more you read, the more you crave more. The more you seek Him, the more you find Him. Everything you ever need in life is found in this Book. Hide God’s Word in your heart and you will be able to overcome negative thoughts that creep in! Want to be close to God? In James 4:8 it says,

“Come close to God, and God will come close to you.” And that’s a promise!

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

**God’s voice:** Loves and encourages us, always speaks positive truth, gently convicts of our sin when we go the wrong direction, offers forgiveness, never compares, always encourages us to do more than we think we can, wants us to trust Him, gives clear direction and instruction, and wants all the honor and praise.

**Satan’s voice:** Hates and discourages us, speaks negatively and talks down to us, lies, condemns and shames us for our sins, blames us, rejects us, coerces comparison, tries to convince us that we are not capable of something that we are capable of with God, makes us feel insignificant, does not want us to trust God, gives confusing instruction, and wants all the honor and praise.

**Our own voice:** If the voice we are hearing is our own, we will know because it sounds a lot like, *Me, me, me* and “*I, I, I.*” Everything becomes about us. Maybe it’s a manipulative, controlling, or even materialistic thought. We see everything around us for what it is, instead of seeing things the way God sees them. We limit ourselves because we put all our trust and hope in our physical abilities and the way our world is right now, instead of putting our faith and trust in God and believing He is going to be there to help us.

Replace the enemy’s voice *and* your own voice with the voice of God. Align your heart with God by spending time with Him and reading His Word so your thoughts become like His!

Take some time and read through Ephesians 1 in your Bible or Bible app. God tells you how, in Christ, you are amazing! Read this over yourself daily and let it penetrate your heart.

**I AM BLESSED** (verse 3)

**I AM CHOSEN** (verse 4)

**I AM A CHILD OF GOD** (verse 5)

**I AM HIGHLY FAVORED** (verse 6)

**I AM FORGIVEN COMPLETELY** (verse 7-8)



REVEAL

**I AM INCLUDED IN GOD'S PLANS** *(verse 9-10)*

**I AM AN HEIR OF GOD** *(verse 11-12)*

**I AM SEALED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT** *(verse 13-14)*

What Scripture or passage of Scriptures (truth) have brought a new revelation and changed the way you see yourself by seeing through God's eyes?

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What lies spoken over you or that you have believed about yourself are you ready to reject and not believe any longer?

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## PRAYER

God, show me Your truth and what You think of me. Speak to my heart. Help me overcome negative thoughts and reveal the truth of how You see me. Change my heart from the inside out. Change the way I think and help me recognize and reject the thoughts that are not of You. I will seek You and spend time with You, so that I can know more about myself. Reveal Yourself to me as I draw near to You. Amen.

## BRAVE MOMS RAISE BRAVE KIDS

What has being pregnant taught you the most about yourself so far?

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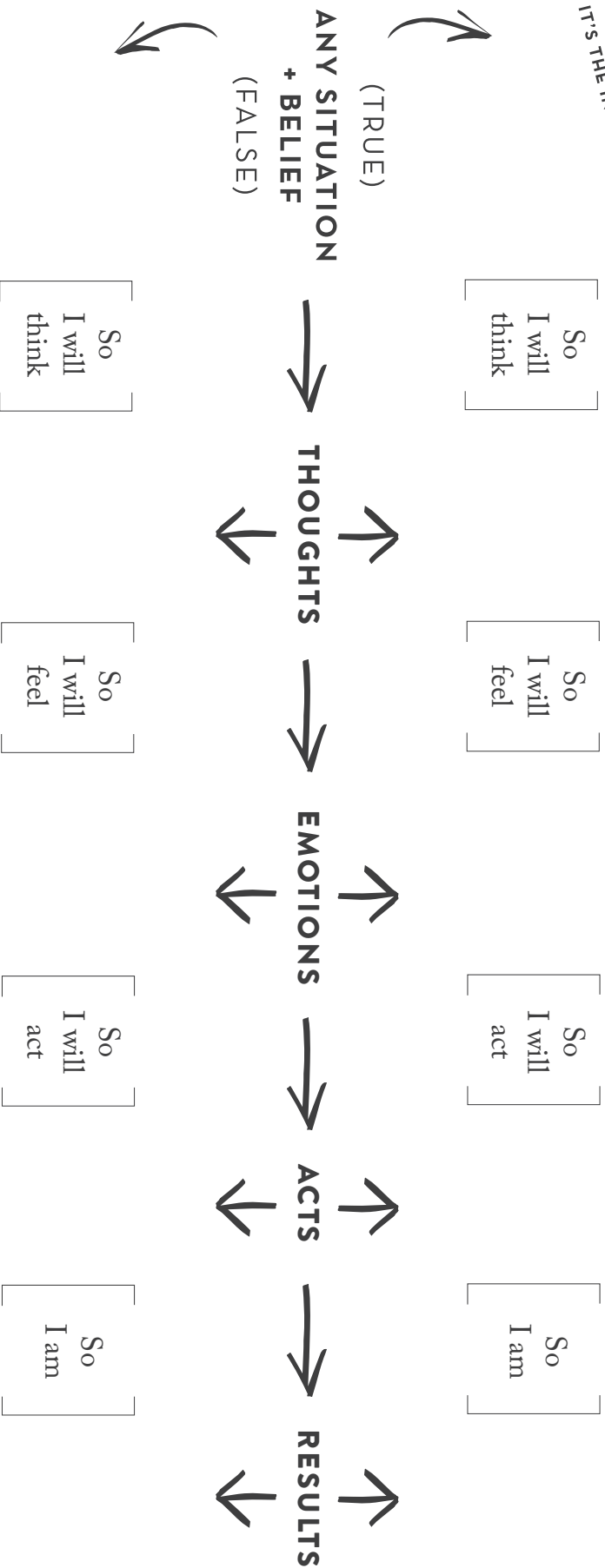
What are the ways your baby is already changing you for the better by making improvements in your life—both mentally and physically?

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*Truth over Lies*

\*THE CROSS MAKES IT SO.  
IT'S THE INDISPUTABLE PROOF!



### W.A.I.T.: WHAT AM I THINKING?

*“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

– Romans 12:2 NIV

*“...But those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”*

– Isaiah 40:31 NIV

\*If you start to feel bad emotions, that’s a warning that something needs attention.

Go back to the root (the lie) and ask God to reveal the truth \*



# REVEAL

*notes*

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.