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INTRODUCTION

Truly, the Holy Bible is the number one authority on the subject of relationships, for it promotes relationship with an omnipotent, omniscient savior—the eternal and righteous advocate. He was found in fashion as a man, which proves His desire to relate to man, and His desire to experience and be touched with the feeling of man’s imperfections. The Bible is the perfect love story, which unveils the perfect love of God. From beginning to ending, from Genesis to Revelation, God’s perfect plan of becoming one with His people is exemplified.

I pray that you find yourself intertwined in these pages and that this fictitious publication will bring to life new insight into God’s individual purpose for you. I pray that you will possess an insatiable yearning to have a lifelong covenant with the one whom your soul loves. I pray that your heart will once again become ready to receive love, and thus give it away. I pray that the plight of the main character proves that “Perfect Love” can exist, once the fear of not having love reciprocated is eradicated, for those whose love cohabits with fear have not reached the full maturity of love, neither can they experience the full benefit of love.

This book is dedicated to you because you have truly determined to leave your excuses in the past and are constantly seeking God and learning to apply His example of relational love and wisdom.

To my family, friends, and counselors of the Word of God, thanks so much for our endlessly sound conversations regarding relationships. You are a gift to me, and this is our gift to God’s people!

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KEEP YOUR HEART SOFT...

Chapter One

A Greater Appreciation

Wisdom urged me to be patient along this expedition.
The stipulations were simple, yet quite expensive.
I was told that the process of sanctification could not be rushed,
and that I should commit to waiting patiently.
I was urged to welcome opposition,
which would alleviate shamelessness,
and multiply experience and hope.
Knowing my struggle would not be in vain,
I could be steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding.

Yet instead of resisting and enduring,
in my desperation for companionship, a decade had passed and
I had habitually walked a path that attached me to strays of my faith.
I justified the journeys by branding each companion as confidant and
protector.
I thought I could not bear traveling alone.
No, I did not know the companion's history,
past curricula, nor the agenda to come.
But I soon discovered that this companion believed in nothingness.
Yet I was taught to believe in everything righteous,

until I was inevitably persuaded otherwise.
A whirlwind came, and the dirt road we encountered was dry.
It did not offer much support, nor did my companion.
So I chose a greener pasture, which brought another companion.
But as I purposed to go south,
my companion went north, and so we parted.
And I was again alone and in solitude,
when I realized my path had shifted,
and my destination was even further than I anticipated.
My mistakes originally brought
necessary chastening, which birthed anger and bitterness.
But I was cleansed with love,
and the replacement was wisdom, strength, and courage to endure.

Rehiring wisdom and love as my counselors,
I found safety in this multitude.
I walked away from simplicity,
and my secret prayer was rewarded openly.
I did not allow my mistakes to consume me,
but I took them by the reins
and learned to steer them in the direction of destiny
wherein I would meet my eternal companion.
Inexplicably, I ascended expeditiously as an eagle,
and as I waited, I found my strength was renewed.
And the companion sent by wisdom and love
was the beloved friend my soul yearned for!

This companion is the object of my faith.
This companion is the lover of my soul.
This companion is my salvation from myself,
because of this companion's willingness to give the ultimate sacrifice.
The fresh, winding road we trod is rocky, yet concrete,
because I was turned back toward wisdom.

I now have a great appreciation for this newly-found strength.
Thus, I will not bewail the past or the future.
Because I fought hard for the manifestation,
I have a greater appreciation for this companion.

My hope is that this is the unveiling of
the perfect companion and the perfect timing for a perfect love,
and our rendezvous will continue perfectly
forever and beyond eternity.

Chapter Two

You Know It All

Lisa sat in the intensive care unit waiting room of St. John's reflecting on the current events transpiring in her life. She was experiencing nausea, coupled with feelings of pain and guilt. These emotions had not surfaced overnight, but had become noticeably overbearing and seemingly beyond her control. Of late, she had many restless nights. Even her eating habits were changing.

It took all of her strength to stay focused. Outwardly, she was normal, but inwardly, the voice in her head was strong and she could not shake the nagging feeling that she was a failure. She was appalled that, yet again, she was at a point in life where she felt extremely distracted and confused.

Lisa had felt very uneasy the past Sunday as Pastor Lindsay preached about enduring as "a soldier in God's army." She remembered thinking of the many unresolved issues she had subconsciously put on hold for years. She needed to search herself and rid herself of her past, once and for all. *That's what we all say, huh, Lord?* she thought. "I'm so, so, sorry!" she whispered, with tears swelling up in her eyes.

Six months prior, Lisa promised herself to focus on being the virtuous and forgiving person she had always intended to become. Yet she became preoccupied with school and work. During that time, she also met her current beau, James. There was no animosity between them, nor was she

blaming him for her anguish. However, their relationship was masking her greater issues. Originally, she figured that having him by her side would lessen her load but, it had only compounded things. Now she had to sever her ties with the man, with which she had purposed to spend the rest of her life.

Her mind battled back and forth between two extremes—the idea that things were going fairly smoothly, and the reality of the situation—which forced her to admit she always had second thoughts. However, James kept calling, so her feminine intuition responded. Also, Aunt Ellen, whose opinion she valued dearly, kept stressing that James would be a great choice. Lisa agreed that someday James would likely make a great husband—just not for her.

In the past year, Lisa had dated four guys. Things turned out the same—Man pursues woman. Woman enjoys man's pursuit. The glitz of the pursuit wears off. Woman feels something is missing and is forced to move on. This reality forced her to acknowledge that the bulk of her issues laid within her.

The announcement over the intercom brought her mind back to the present. James's grandfather was in the hospital and she was there providing moral support. But it seemed more like their relationship was one excuse after another.