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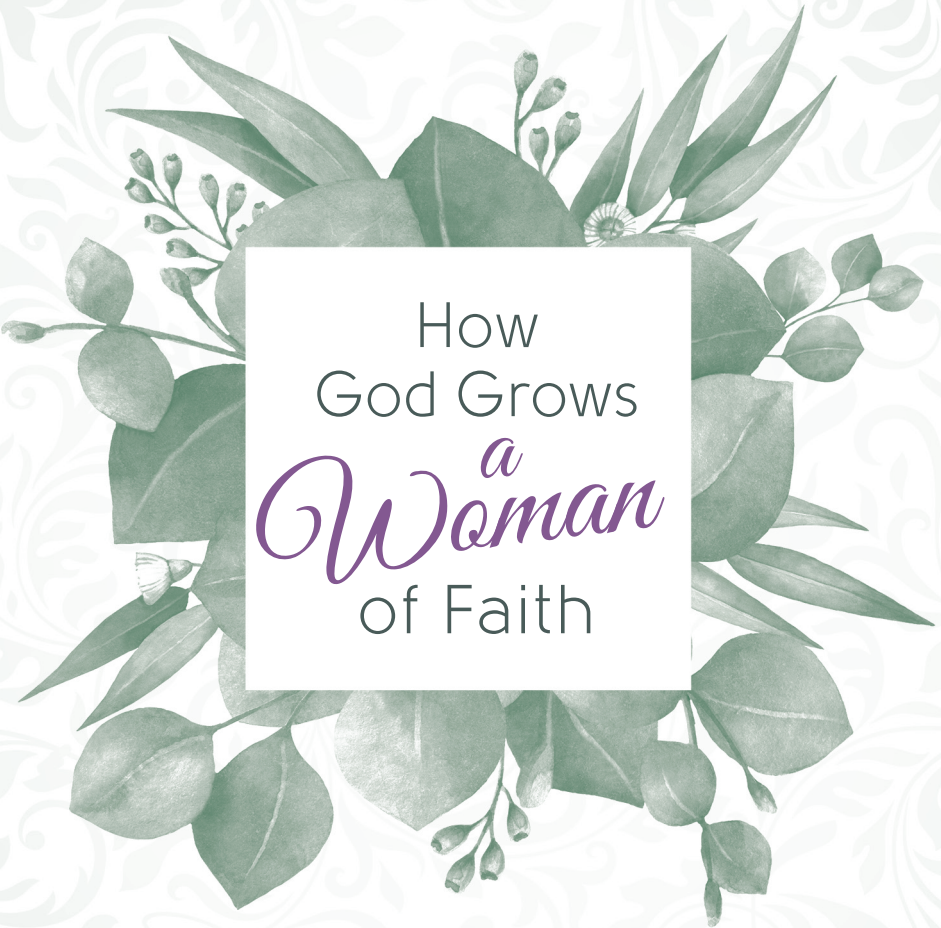
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Anita Higman & Marian Leslie



How  
God Grows  
*a*  
*Woman*  
of Faith

BARBOUR BOOKS

An Imprint of Barbour Publishing, Inc.

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Print ISBN 978-1-68322-602-4

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Published by Barbour Books, an imprint of Barbour Publishing, Inc., 1810 Barbour Drive, Uhrichsville, Ohio 44683, [www.barbourbooks.com](http://www.barbourbooks.com)

*Our mission is to inspire the world with the life-changing message of the Bible.*



Printed in China.



*To Janice Thompson:*

Thank you for being  
such a beloved friend.

You inspire me  
with your courage,  
your Christlike love,  
and your generosity of heart!

—Anita Higman

*To Jeanna and Wendy:*

My faithful and faith-filled friends.

—Marian Leslie







## *Introduction*

Having faith in God seems like such a doable spiritual goal—until our dreams begin to crumble. Suddenly faith can become no more than a flighty feeling. In those dark nights of trouble, faith might even appear to be spiritual wishful thinking—an achievement to be pursued only in the mind, but never realized.

But with the Lord ever by our side, all that we need for this life adventure is before us. All the encouragement. All the supernatural power. All the love. Everything we need to take steps—no matter how rocky or narrow the path—has been provided. God will even strengthen our faith when we ask. Just as one ancient follower exclaimed, “I believe, Lord. Help my unbelief!”—may that honest cry to our Abba Father ever be on our hearts.

Come with us now as we explore together this wonderfully daring and miraculous journey of the soul.

Faith.







## *Hello, God. . . It's Me*

*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for  
and assurance about what we do not see.*

HEBREWS 11:1

Do you ever hear yourself saying something like, “Hello, God, it’s me again. I’m such a mess right now; You may want to look away from me.”

We’ve all arrived before God with different levels of faith. There is the stalwart faith that marches out of the pages of an old hymnal. Then there are weary days, depressed days. And some days you wonder if even a mustard seed of faith would be impossible.

God allows us to come before Him just as we are. We may think we have too many hopes for Him to handle. We may think we haven’t seen a miracle in so long that we’re not sure God is listening, let alone willing to meet our needs. But no matter where we are in our faith journey, our Lord says, “Come.”

And as we come before Him we may ask for more faith—just as a follower exclaimed in the book of Mark, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24).

*Oh, merciful God, thank You for loving me even  
on days when my faith is slim. Please bring me once  
again to a place of trust in You. Amen. —A.H.*



## *When Your Smile Cannot Be Found*

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

ROMANS 15:13

Do you sometimes gaze into the mirror and wonder where your smile went off to? Like maybe it headed out to a sunny beach, where sailboats dip and sway in a crystal blue sea? Well, you can get your smile back!

Romans 15:13 reminds us that if we trust in the Lord, then peace and joy will be ours. The more we hand over our daily burdens to the One who can truly handle them, then the more we can be free to enjoy our lives and do all that God created us to do. We can breathe again, and our aching spirits can find refreshment. We can move forward with more creativity, more passion, more energy, more laughter.

You can get your smile back. It all comes down to trusting in the One who is and always desires to be faithfully yours.

*Lord, please allow Your Holy Spirit to strengthen my trust in You—that I can find joy and peace in this life, and that these blessings will overflow onto others, bringing them hope. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. —A.H.*



## *Out of the Boat*

*"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.*

MATTHEW 14:28–29

Have you ever asked yourself, "Who am I when it comes to faith in God?" What do we do when times get rough? Maybe not physically rough, like the seas described by Matthew, but what happens when we experience storms of the soul? Do we walk onward with courage, without doubting the Lord's ability to guide us through? Do we take Jesus' challenge to come and trust Him? Or are we like the other men in the boat? Do we hang back and wait for other believers to charge forth, especially when risk is involved?

Are we more like the Peter who got right out of the boat, or are we more like the Peter who faltered?

If you are more like Peter when he fell to pieces, ask the Holy Spirit to bolster your faith—to remind you of the times when He rescued you. To remind you of the Lord who walks on the stormy sea and reaches out, saying "Come."

*Lord Jesus, please help me to remember the miracles of the past, the many times You came to my rescue. May I use those memories to increase my faith in the future. Amen. —A.H.*



## *Darkness You Can Feel*

*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness spreads over Egypt—darkness that can be felt."*

EXODUS 10:21

Have you ever been in a show cave when the tour guide switches off all the lights for a few moments? They pull this startling stunt on tourists so people can experience total darkness. Usually there are a few chuckles and humorous comments, but after a few seconds—like the Egyptians of old in Exodus—visitors are anxiously awaiting the return of the light.

True darkness is so penetrating one can almost feel it. The tour guides will tell you that the cave's deepest darkness will, after a month, cause blindness and then later, insanity. To contemplate complete spiritual darkness is enough to make one shudder. Many would say that our world is in the midst of a plague of darkness and depravity, which means that we should flee from sin—from anything that is contrary to the Lord's teachings—and into the Light of the world, Jesus Christ. You will feel Christ's radiant and holy light all the way to your soul.

So, take heart! Keep the faith. There need not be any more spiritual darkness as you allow Christ to become the light of your life!

*Lord, thank You for bringing Your light  
into this dark and hurting world! Amen. —A.H.*



## *To Higher Ground*

*Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

JOHN 20:27–29

That word—*doubt*—is enough to start a slow trickle of sweat down our spines. We know that word too intimately, and it affects every part of our lives.

When Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection, Thomas doubted it was Him until he saw the scars. How would we react? Would we be the doubter, or the one who believed Jesus had fulfilled all He'd promised?

For Christians, doubting can either debilitate us spiritually or bring us to higher ground. Remembering all the many ways that the Lord has come to our rescue time and time again through the years is one way to find that higher ground. It is human to doubt. But the Lord asks us to believe Him. In fact, He told Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." May the Lord find us faithful. Jesus says these followers will be raised up and filled with joy. May it be so!

*Lord, may my faith in You grow ever stronger in the days and years to come. Amen. —A.H.*



## *In Good Company*

*Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

GENESIS 15:4–6

Admit it, when you think of some of the distinguished characters from the Old Testament like Abraham and Moses and David, it's easy to say, "There is no way I can ever be as noble as those ancient Bible heroes. I might as well give up now." And yet, as stalwart and righteous as these leaders were at times, they too had severe bouts of humanness as they stumbled in their walks with the Almighty. Read some of those Bible passages surrounding their lives, and you will see how true that statement really is. You are in good company.

Romans 3:23 tells us, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Yes, even though Abraham's life wasn't perfect, his faith in God was looked upon as righteousness. We too can become renowned people—great women—of virtue. We can make the choice to trust God in all His promises. It's a decision Abraham made, and it's a daily choice we can make too!

*May I trust in You, Lord, every day, every hour. Amen. —A.H.*





## *Don't Get Too Comfortable*

*My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

*You know the way to the place where I am going.*

JOHN 14:2-4

There's sad news. And there's incredible news. The sad news is we're all going to die. The incredible news is that Jesus has conquered death on the cross, and we can have life eternal with Him. Yes, as followers of Christ, we are just passing through this dusty, war-torn, sin-stained, sorrow-laden land, and moving on to our celestial homeland—heaven.

Just imagine. Hope fully realized. Radiance beyond the sun. Laughter like a song. Friendships that have no conditions. Love with no end. Beauty. Goodness. Joy. Splendor. Gifts of knowledge and understanding and creative genius that we cannot even fathom. And best of all, walking with God!

Yes, let's not get too comfortable here. Why would we want to? Jesus is preparing a place, and He will someday take us home so we can be with Him forever. Jesus has transformed death into life, darkness into light, and an ending into a miraculous new beginning!

*Thank You, Lord, for the promise of heaven. Amen. —A.H.*



## *Live Life Fully!*

*"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"*

MATTHEW 6:25-27

Are you an authority on worry? You could create a useful study guide on the topic. Maybe you could even teach at the college level!

Worry is a spiritual malady we have all suffered from, and yet Jesus doesn't want us to fret. He wants us to take His hand and run far away from the taunting lies of the enemy. He wants to lead us to a place of peace, where we can know His hope and live in His victory. Where we can trust Him with our troubles so very well that we can see the rainbows in a dewdrop again, chase fireflies in the dusk, and pick bouquets of wildflowers just to bring someone a smile. He wants us to enjoy life. To love and be loved. And how can that happen when our lives are strangled with worry?

*Lord, may I trust You greatly that  
I might live life fully! Amen. —A.H.*



## *A Faith-Leap of the Heart*

*For we live by faith, not by sight.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:7

People aren't comfortable with the concept of faith in God, because it involves our hearts and not just our heads. And that scares us.

But God says, "We live by faith, not by sight." That's not exactly the world's way of doing things. Yet daily we have to exercise faith in every area of our lives.

Even though God is veiled to us right now—He has given us His holy Word as a testimony, His Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice, and the Holy Spirit as a comforter and teacher. In spite of various objections to having faith in an unseen Creator God, He has proved throughout the ages to be steadfast and just and loving. He is worthy of a most serious faith-leap!

Have you held your heart back out of doubt or fears or concern over what your family, friends, and coworkers might say? Taking that soul-dive is indeed life altering, and it has beautiful ramifications not only for the present but throughout eternity.

*Lord, I take that plunge into Your mercy, grace, forgiveness,  
and freedom. Please teach me how to live by faith in  
You and not by sight. Amen. —A.H.*



## *The Art of Rescue*

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

We've all had fussy-fretting days. If we had a bird's-eye view of humans during those episodes, we might look like a writhing pile of ants after the mound had been given a good, healthy stomp.

But we can all relate to matters of worry. Worrying can and does get the best of us sometimes. Hard for it not to when we're bombarded with every kind of trauma—bad news at the doctor's office, car accidents, rebellious teenagers, job loss, bankruptcy, misunderstandings, depression, pay cuts, death of loved ones, failed businesses, betrayals, consequences of sinful choices, disappointments, divorce, and loneliness, just to name a few. After looking through that list it's a wonder we humans can make it through a month, let alone a lifetime of troubles!

But we serve a God who throughout the ages has come to the rescue of humankind—from great nations down to a single, hurting soul. He was there. And He is here now. We serve the same God who held nothing back—not even His own Son.

Instead of worry, may we always approach our Lord with requests and thanksgiving. In a world drowning in a sea of sufferings, our Lord is the master of the art of rescue!

*I renounce worry, Lord, and I will instead place all my requests into Your capable hands. Amen. —A.H.*



## *Have You Noticed?*

*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.*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16 NLT

Do you believe the Bible?

Have you noticed that what used to be considered the essentials of the Christian faith are slowly evolving or disintegrating all together? Fewer and fewer people view the Bible as the inspired Word of God. A growing number of people believe that the Bible is just a fascinating storybook.

Perhaps this belittling of God's holy Word stems from wanting to be politically correct or from pursuing our own desires, rather than following the wise precepts of the Lord—teachings that keep us from going astray spiritually.

Perhaps this “falling away” from the Word of God is the reason for our society's decline into the plagues of corruption, depravity, and violence. Matthew 12:30 (MSG) says, “This is war, and there is no neutral ground. If you're not on my side, you're the enemy; if you're not helping, you're making things worse.”

So, in this spiritual war we live in—it would be good to ask ourselves—whose side are we truly on?

*Lord Jesus, I believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, and I want to follow You all the days of my life. Amen. —A.H.*



## *A Servant's Heart*

*"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served,  
but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

MARK 10:45

We might secretly think that having a servant's heart is a tedious, wasteful, lowly, noncreative, unrewarding, unglamorous, and messy way to live. Not to mention unappreciated!

And yet that is exactly what Jesus did. He came not just as the King of kings and the Lord of lords, but to be a servant and to give Himself up as a living sacrifice for us. What unfathomable dedication and love!

When you do reach out in faith and choose to serve in the ways God has called you to, things begin to happen. Powerful things. You may find you have more time on your hands than you thought you would. You might feel more peace and love and joy trickling into your spirit than you ever imagined.

Serving others can mean a thousand different things. Open your heart to a servant's mind-set. Ask God about it. He'll show you just what you were created to do. And then—well, expect joy!

*Lord, please give me the willingness, enthusiasm,  
and energy to serve others. I want to please  
You in every part of my life. Amen. —A.H.*





## *Do You Love Me?*

*The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”*

JOHN 21:17

When you love your child—really love your child—you always hope and dream that they will love you back. It’s part of what makes a beautiful family relationship.

God loves His children deeply, and He too hopes we will love Him right back and help create that beautiful family relationship. How do we know of God’s love? The Bible is full of references to His divine love. And He sent Jesus, His Son, to walk among us and to make a way for our broken relationship to be mended with our Father in heaven.

In John 21:17, Jesus asks Peter three times if he does indeed love Him. Even though there may be a number of reasons Jesus asked this question the way He did, no doubt our Lord hoped for that loving response. Christianity isn’t just a religion—it’s a relationship between the Creator of the universe and His beloved. It’s that simple, that profound, that real.

Have you answered Jesus’ question yet? “Do you love Me?”

*Oh, Lord, may I always respect You as my Creator  
God but also love You as a daughter would  
love her beloved Father. Amen. —A.H.*



## *If You Could Distill Your Life*

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

*Against such things there is no law.*

GALATIANS 5:22–23

If you could distill your life down to a handful of words, what would they be? Or—to take this game to a scarier level—what would your family, friends, and coworkers say if they could summarize your life? *Oh dear.* Would they think of you as loving? Joyful? Peaceful? Disciplined? Patient? Kind? Good? Faithful? Gentle? In other words, does your life have the sweet aroma of the mature and mellow fruits of the Spirit that are listed in Galatians 5:22–23? Or would others think your spirit smelled a bit more like rotten fruit?!

If you have failed in producing these good fruits (and we *all* have failed on occasion), there is hope. There is time to make some changes. Time to grow. Time to turn our hearts toward heaven. And the Lord will be glad to help you. You only need to ask!

*Lord, I need some serious help with my spirit. I want to become more like You every day, but I can't do any of this alone.*

*Please help me to be filled with love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control!*

*In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. —A.H.*



## *In All Your Ways*

*Trust in and rely confidently on the LORD with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. In all your ways know and acknowledge and recognize Him, And He will make your paths straight and smooth [removing obstacles that block your way].*

PROVERBS 3:5–6 AMP

Trust in the Lord? Yes, it sounds like something good to add to our ongoing spiritual list of stuff to improve our Christian journey. So we'll begin with Proverbs 3:5–6.

*Uh-oh*, you might be thinking. You mean I'm supposed to trust the Lord completely, and I'm *not* to rely on my own insights? Hmm. Got to think about that one.

Our insights in this life are very limited. We cannot know all things as God does. Only the Lord can redeem our past, guide us through the present, and help us plan for the future.

When we demand to do life our way—that is, with more faith in our own abilities than in God's—we find that our paths grow crooked. But if we know the Lord, acknowledge Him, and recognize Him, He will make our paths straight!

*Lord Jesus, help me to let go of my own flawed ways and look to You for guidance in all areas of my life. Amen. —A.H.*



## *Mourning into Dancing!*

*In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee."*

LUKE 24:5-6

Everything changed that one Easter morning. That one moment when the tomb no longer symbolized death, but life. But Jesus' followers seemed surprised over the unoccupied burial chamber. So much so, that the angels asked them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" Had Jesus' followers forgotten His words or lacked in faith?

Soon shock would turn into understanding, and they would never ever be the same. Yes, surely they thought "nothing" never looked so good. "Empty" never glowed with such promise. And "quiet" never held so much rejoicing!

Everything we do and say and believe as Christians rests on that one empty tomb. It changes the course of history, and it changes one heart at a time. We can be forever grateful for Easter morning. The miracle that turned night into day, shadow into radiance, and mourning into dancing!

So, take courage. His promises are fulfilled. Redemption is ours. Love wins. Hallelujah!

*Thank You, Lord, for loving us enough to give us that Easter morning. Amen. —A.H.*



## *A Raging Battle*

*In every battle you will need faith as your shield  
to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan.*

EPHESIANS 6:16 TLB

When chatting over coffee, it's uncommon for people to converse about the supernatural world. It's just not considered an easy or safe subject for conversation.

But when you pin people down on the topic, many do not believe in the supernatural world—and yet according to the Word of God, it is a very real realm. In fact, there is a battle raging for your soul. Satan is determined to find your greatest weaknesses and he will start firing at you until he has you where he wants you. Lost. Lonely. Stumbling without hope. And sick in body, mind, and spirit.

But faith is like a shield against those dark attacks. A trusting commitment to the Lord—that we believe in Him, love Him, and serve Him—gives us the supernatural power to come against the most powerful, fiery arrows from Satan. We need not fear the enemy of our souls. We only need to be strong in our faith in the Lord.

*Lord Jesus, show me how not to waver in my faith,  
but to be ever strong, so that I may stand against  
the enemy of my soul. Amen. —A.H.*