

How This Megachurch Pastor's Family Is Coping With the Loss of Wynter Pitts

"We thought it would be a great opportunity to talk with our church about when we face unexpected loss, tragedy, difficulty in our lives—what that looks like and how we reconcile that with the goodness of God, the kindness of God."

Last week, the Tony Evans family suffered a devastating loss when the megachurch pastor's niece, devotional author Wynter Pitts, passed away suddenly at age 38. In this discussion moderated by Bible teacher and *War Room* actress Priscilla Shirer (Evans' daughter and Pitts' cousin), family members share their heartfelt thoughts and addresses common questions about God during times of loss.

3 Spirit-Powered Ways to Respond When You're Under Attack

There are many ways we come under attack, not just on social media.

Sometimes that attack comes from those closest to us: our parents and siblings or husband and children. Sometimes it comes from our neighbor or coworker.

How we respond when we're under attack is extremely important,

because it shows the world where our trust and treasure are.

Will we immediately retaliate? Will we defend ourselves? Will we cut off relationship?

3 Spirit-Powered Ways to Respond When You're Under Attack

In our Good Morning Girls' study through Psalms 1-50, we see that David is often under attack. In fact, he spent most of his life running, hiding and crying out to God to defend him, shield him, and protect him.

David knew a thing or two about being under attack.

If it wasn't an attack from foreign enemies, he was being hunted down by King Saul or being undermined by his own family.

And in the Psalms, we see three responses from David that teach us how we should respond when we come under attack.

1. Examine Your Heart

"Examine me, O LORD, and test me; try my affections and my heart" (Ps. 26:2).

Let's be completely honest, shall we? Sometimes we bring on our own attack either by our disobedience, manipulation or even baiting.

Our own sinful heart often brings on attack. Even James 4 says that fighting and bickering occur because we have failed to bring our sinful desires under submission to the Holy Spirit.

But this isn't the case every time.

Sometimes we come under attack undeservedly. There are times when we are walking in complete obedience to the Lord and His Word, and despite living righteous, holy lives, we endure attack.

Anytime we endure an attack, we should first examine our hearts, and allow the Holy Spirit to examine our hearts and reveal to us anything that may not be pleasing to Him.

2. Trust in the Lord

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom will I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom will I be afraid? ... Though an army should encamp against me, my heart will not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident” (Ps. 27:1, 3).

Whom do we trust to defend us? Do we trust more in our own wit and sarcasm? Do we have more confidence in our carefully crafted reputation?

It may seem risky, right now—in this moment in time—to allow the Lord to vindicate us, because we have no control over His timing.

But trust becomes real when we step out of the way and let the Lord defend us.

We must remember what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:4, “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds.”

3. Worship God

“I will extol You, O Lord, for You have drawn me up, and have not caused my foes to rejoice over me” (Ps. 30:1).

One of the things I love most about the Psalms is that even when David was depressed, frustrated, angry and sorrowful, he always worshiped God. He always brought his focus back to God’s face. He always ended by reminding himself that he could trust in the goodness and greatness of God.

When worship is put back into the context of its name: attributing worth and value to something, we elevate God; we

remind ourselves of the great things He has done, we remind ourselves of who He is, what He's done and why He is deserving of praise.

Worship is a powerful weapon in defeating our enemy!

Next time you come under attack, don't immediately react. Stop, remember David and his three responses and allow the Lord to give you peace as He examines your heart. Put your trust in Him and then spend time worshipping Him. {eoa}

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her hero. Together they live in the country with their two active boys, where she enjoys fruity candles and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. She holds an associate degree in practical theology and is passionate about discipling and encouraging women. Her passion for writing led her to author a number of books. She is the author of "A Little R & R," where she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. She can also be found at these other places on a regular basis. You may follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

This article originally appeared at .

Why the Holy Spirit May Change the Way You Spend Your Time

We're careful about how we spend our money. And we're careful about exhausting our energy reserves. We're also careful about how we spend our time ... or are we?

When I worked in the corporate world, I taught training sessions on time management. The components of time management in the business world are well known. Prioritizing, planning and staying organized are all habits of an efficient person. And all for the goal of saving time.

But what are we saving it for? What if time isn't a thing to be *managed*? What if the purpose of time is something else?

All too often, I've fallen into the trap of viewing life as a rat race, filled with things I *have* to do and crowding out the things I *want* to do. It's so easy to forget that we *get* to do life together. It's a privilege. And a joy.

Yes, we have responsibilities and jobs. Obligations and chores. But what if those duties are simply components of our life that provide the resources and abilities to do the things we want? To be with the people we want to be with?

Jobs and careers consume us. So we come home exhausted, only to face a never-ending to-do list. Worse yet, studies have shown that we spend less than two minutes a day in meaningful communication with the ones we love. I don't know about you, but most days I feel as if I'm chasing the clock. Constantly running out of time.

It's so easy to lose balance. To forget that work isn't meant to consume us. To forget how important the people in our life are to us.

Until they're not there anymore.

Time is a limited resource. Once it's spent, it's gone. Never to be reused. Never to be recycled. And never to be recovered.

Enjoy the time you have with the people you love. Relish the moments. Create memories to savor. Memories that will keep those people emotionally close even when they're no longer physically close.

So pay attention to the prompting of the Holy Spirit when He nudges you to make that phone call. Meet that person for coffee or lunch. Take time to listen—really listen—to your spouse or your children instead of turning up the volume on the television.

Gratitude is my “one word” for this year. Be grateful for what you have and *who* you have. Prioritize the important over the urgent. People over phones. Face-to-face interactions over Facebook posts.

People aren't perfect. Life isn't perfect. And time is limited. The people in your life won't always be there. Be grateful for the time you have with them—while you still have them. {eoa}

Ava Pennington is a writer, speaker and Bible teacher. She writes for nationally circulated magazines and is published in 32 anthologies, including 25 Chicken Soup for the Soul books. She also authored Daily Reflections on the Names of God: A Devotional, endorsed by Kay Arthur. Learn more at .

This article originally appeared at .

How Jesus' Radical Message Liberates All Women

“Yeshua was the person who set women free.” Asher Intrater delivers a powerful message about Yeshua being the original women's liberator who brought real internal and external freedom.

8 War-Room Verses for When You Don't Feel Good Enough

Have you ever grabbed your Bible and prayer notebook, sat down and suddenly felt you weren't good enough to pray?

Maybe it's been a while since you've really prayed or read your Bible. A good long while.

Maybe just yesterday you blew it and did something you know offended God, and now you feel totally unworthy to talk to Him.

Maybe you ran into someone at church who has been walking with God for a long time, and you look at yourself, compared to her, and you just don't feel like you measure up.

This week in our Good Morning Girls' study through Psalms 1-50, we read this passage:

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully (Ps. 24:3-4).

We read that and think, "Yep, I knew it. I'm not good enough to enter God's presence because I have broken so many of God's laws!"

Can I tell you a secret? So have I. So have all of us!

James 2:10 says that if you break even one of God's laws, you're guilty of them all, because they're not individual laws, they are one law. You're guilty of breaking the whole

law.

And that could be so discouraging—because literally no one on Planet Earth has any hope of ever being good enough to enter God’s presence. None of us has clean hands.

The concept of clean hands is a legal term meaning that you stand before the court completely innocent. There is no wrongdoing that the court can accuse you of.

No matter how good we are, we will never be *that* good. None of us has a clean heart.

So when you don’t feel good enough, begin meditating on the eight war-room verses below to remind yourself that the blood of Jesus makes you good enough!

8 War-Room Verses for When You Don’t Feel Good Enough

1. “Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of *My hands*; your walls are continually before Me” (Isa. 49:15-16).

2. “I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6).

3. “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities nor powers, neither things present nor things to come, neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39).

4. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before

the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before Him in love; He predestined us to adoption as sons to Himself through Jesus Christ according to the good pleasure of His will, o the praise of the glory of His grace which He graciously bestowed on us in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:3-6).

5. “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs: heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him” (Rom. 8:16-17).

6. “For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:34c).

7. “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1).

8. “Look at the birds of the air, for they do not sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they?” (Matt. 6:26).
{eoa}

Rosilind Jukic, a *Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her hero. Together they live in the country with their two active boys, where she enjoys fruity candles and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. She holds an associate degree in practical theology and is passionate about discipling and encouraging women. Her passion for writing led her to author a number of books. She is the author of “A Little R & R,” where she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. She can also be found at these other places on a regular basis. You may follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.*

This article originally appeared at .

The Philippians 4:4 Plan for Controlling Satan's Sneak Attacks on Your Mind

It starts with a flitting thought. So quick, by the time I realize what it is, it's gone. But when it returns, it lingers a bit. And I dwell on it a few moments longer. Then I find myself rationalizing as to why *The Thought* is not so bad.

In the deep recesses of my spirit, I know exactly what happened. Sin I've neither spoken nor acted upon has invaded my thought life yet again. And I'm guessing I'm not alone.

A little fib won't hurt anyone.

No one will notice if you cut corners.

They're only pictures.

It's OK. Nobody expects you to forgive her.

It's a small thing. God's busy with bigger issues.

How can we battle these sneak attacks? Will we ever experience victory over our thoughts?

The Bible tells us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2). But God doesn't just give us the command. He also tells us *how* to control our thought life.

The Battle Plan

Philippians 4:4-9 gives us the battle plan for conquering our thoughts:

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let everyone come to know your gentleness. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things. Do those things which you have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Step 1: Rejoice

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! ... The Lord is at hand” (Phil. 4:1, 2b).

Rejoice, even in the middle of the spiritual battle for your thoughts. Why? Because “the Lord is at hand.” He promised never to leave us, and He keeps His promises.

Step 2: Release

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude, make your requests known to God” (Phil. 4:6).

This verse tells us to release both our anxieties and our requests. Not in a whiny way, but with thanksgiving. To be any less than thankful in all things is to say, in effect, that I could do better than God if I were in charge. Thank God for His patience: He keeps teaching us until we finally get it.

Step 3: Receive

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will

protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7).

Trading anxiety for peace sounds like a pretty good deal. Our heavenly Father promises His peace in return for giving up our anxiety through prayerful thanksgiving. A peace applied to our hearts and minds.

He promises to use this peace to guard our minds. The Greek word for “guard,” *phroureo*, has a military connotation: the provision of protection against the enemy. And that’s a peace backed by the very power of God Himself through His Son.

Step 4: Replace

“Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4:8).

I love a clean house, but I don’t enjoy the effort needed to achieve the result. Cleaning house in our spiritual lives is also hard work. However, it’s not enough to stop there. It’s time to replace the anxieties and requests we’ve released with things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy. Of course, the next question is: how?

Do you know of anything truer than God’s Word? Memorize Scripture.

Is anything purer than God Himself? Invest time in getting to know the Father’s character and His ways. Spend time with Him in prayer.

Who is more worthy of praise than the Creator and sustainer of all that is seen and unseen? Play praise music. Learn hymns and praise choruses. List God’s attributes using the alphabet

as a memory jogger. For example:

A – Almighty

B – Beautiful

C – Compassionate

Step 5: Repeat

“Do those things which you have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you” (Phil. 4:9).

The apostle Paul closes this passage by telling us to follow his example. Do it whether you succeed or fail. Do it when you feel like it and when you don't. And do it even when it's difficult—especially when it's difficult.

Of course, we can't possibly succeed in our own strength. It's God who strengthens us (Phil. 4:13), and each day, we are being transformed into the image of the glory of the Lord by His Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18). You and I are a work in progress. And the Holy Spirit is the one doing the work and accomplishing His desired result.

The battleground for this transformation is our mind. And a measure of our progress is the development of habits to conquer our thoughts.

God's Word is sure, and His ways are proven. It's up to us to implement what He says as we depend on His Holy Spirit.

In the battleground of the mind, thoughts can either conquer or be conquered.

Are you ready to engage in the battle for control of your thought life? {eoa}

Ava Pennington is a writer, speaker and Bible teacher. She writes for nationally circulated magazines and is published in 32 anthologies, including 25 Chicken Soup for the Soul books.

She also authored Daily Reflections on the Names of God: A Devotional, endorsed by Kay Arthur. Learn more at .

This article originally appeared at .

If You Long for Spiritual Breakthrough, Here's One Crucial Step You Must Take

Do you want to hear God's voice? Do you want to understand His will for your life, and walk in a greater revelation of it? Are you hungry for breakthrough? Here's an easy (but also quite hard) step: Surrender!

The Power of Surrender

Oftentimes, it's our will that gets in the way of hearing God's voice and following His will. Deep inside, we have our own plan for how things should go, such as what job we will get, whom we should date or marry, how successful we should be in ministry and so on—and we really don't want to give it up. It's not that God can't speak to us, and He often does, but we miss it because it's not what we're expecting. We're still clinging to "our will be done."

That's why we need the power of surrender.

Jesus, Our Perfect Example

Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith," modeled this for us in the garden of Gethsemane (Hebrews 12:2). About to face betrayal, torture, and the worst death possible on the cross, He cried out in anguish to His Father: "He went a

little farther, and falling on His face, He prayed, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26:39a).

Jesus was honest about what He wanted. He did not hide His emotions or desires, but then He said something amazing: “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26:39b).

We can all learn from this phrase. Sometimes our will aligns with God’s will, and we get what we’re asking for, but it’s not always the case. We must also not think that if we want something, it automatically *can’t* be from God; many of our desires are God-given, but we must submit them, and ourselves, to Him first.

Denying Ourselves Is Freedom

Jesus said when if you want to find your life, you must lose it for the gospel and for His sake (Matt. 10:39). In dying to ourselves, which means laying down our selfish desires, we allow God to raise us up as He did Christ. Resurrected and transformed spiritually, we are free to walk with the Lord wherever He leads.

In this way, God can direct us easily because our spirits are open to doing what He says. The more we surrender to Him, the easier it is for Him to speak to us. The Bible talks about not being like a horse or mule, “that are without understanding, ... [and] must be restrained with bit and bridle,” but to trust God who promises to “instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye on you” (Ps. 32:8-9).

It’s a Choice

We all have a choice about how much we’re going to trust, and the more we do it, the easier it can become—even when it’s something hard.

This is especially important in the end times, as some of God's instructions may look strange to us and will certainly go against what society is doing. But if we "trust and obey," as the old song says, we will come out shining "as the stars" (Dan. 12:3). However, if we cling to our own ideas and understanding, we could face disaster, trial and even death (see Prov. 14:12).

Walking It Out

So how do you surrender? You surrender! It starts with the will. We can pray like Jesus in the garden: "Father, if it is possible, let (insert your request here); nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

Surrender flows as we begin to trust our heavenly Father, who is all-knowing, the very definition of love, and always has our best interest at heart. Here, we can lay down our fear, our flesh and our selfish ambition and begin to embrace His perfect will for us.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6).

As we do this, we will think more like Him, feel what He feels, know more of what He knows and do what He does. This is how we find "life and peace," as Romans 8:6 says, because we are "spiritually minded," not "carnally minded," which is death.

And so we pray in surrender, "Father, not as I will," but "Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

What is the Lord calling you to surrender to Him? {eoa}

A Detroit native who was raised in Vermont and Connecticut, Adam Wittenberg worked as a newspaper journalist until 2012,

when he moved to Kansas City to complete the Intro to IHOPKC internship. Afterwards, he earned a four-year certificate in House of Prayer Leadership from IHOPU and is now on full-time staff in the marketing department at IHOPKC. Adam is also active in evangelism and has a vision to reach people everywhere with the good news of Jesus Christ.

This article originally appeared at.

This Woman's Short but Significant Bucket List Will Surprise (and Bless) You

Do you have a "bucket list"?

I wasn't familiar with the phrase until the release of the movie by the same name in 2007, starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. IMDb describes *The Bucket List* as "Two terminally ill men escape from a cancer ward and head off on a road trip with a wish list of to-dos before they die."

For the past 10 years, I've joked about a bucket list. *Wouldn't it be fun to... Someday before I die I'd like to...* It became a fun mental distraction to continue adding items.

Until last year. Until my husband was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. All of a sudden, bucket lists were no longer limited to a mental exercise.

But as we discussed an extremely limited future, we realized something unexpected.

He did not have a bucket list. No wish list of adventures. No

desire to travel to exotic locales. Not even a list of local activities.

He didn't have a list because he is content with the life we have together. Satisfied to enjoy the small, normal pleasures of each new day.

His one desire that might qualify to be called a bucket list item has been a desire to share his faith in the face of a terminal prognosis. And he's done that, multiple times.

All of this made me wonder about my own life. I now realize I don't have a bucket list either, at least not in the traditional sense of the word.

Instead, I've come to appreciate that my list is comprised of one item.

Russ is my bucket list.

It's been a 40-year journey. A 40-year joining of two lives. The one thing I want to do—and do well—is to be there for my husband. To care for him the best I can, however I can. To hold his hand as he walks to his finish line, and hear him say, like the apostle Paul, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, and I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7).

My bucket list is short, but deep. When Russ finishes his journey, my list will be fulfilled. It's a bittersweet time, but as a friend once advised me, it's a holy time, too. And I intend to cherish each holy moment.

*What's on **your** bucket list? {eoa}*

Ava Pennington is a writer, speaker and Bible teacher. She writes for nationally circulated magazines and is published in 32 anthologies, including 25 *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. She also authored *Daily Reflections on the Names of God: A Devotional*, endorsed by Kay Arthur. Learn more at .

This article originally appeared at .

How You Can Say Goodbye to Sugar for Good

Goodbye, sugar.

I thought we were good together, and then you do this to me. You seemed to be there every time I needed you. I thought you made my life better and we were the perfect team.

You listened when I cried, and your tangible presence comforted me in a way I thought none other could. But you made me feel better, if only for a few minutes, and that's all I cared about at the time.

Companion

You were my companion in the good times and bad. If I was lonely, you were right there with me. It didn't matter that I didn't know who to call because you were there. You soothed the pain of the loneliness.

When I was tired, you were the one who give me the pick me up. You made me feel like I had energy to go on, even if for just a few more minutes. I just knew life was better with you.

When I was ready to blow my top, you were there, soothing me. Just one whiff of you, and I knew all my problems were gone. You calmed me and made the anger go away; and if it came back, you were there to help me again. You always did your job.

Stress would overwhelm me, and I would run straight to you. You were the best at making me forget about everything I had

to do and just focus on my needs and wants in the moment. You seemed to take care of them all.

Protector

You protected me to make sure no men would get close and take advantage of me. I knew with you by my side, I was always safe, because you padded the distance between me and danger.

I never had to field off those who wanted to take advantage of me. You made them go away and leave me alone.

Even in good times, you made everything better. Just one look at you and I knew soon I would be satisfied, even if it was only for a short time. You made everything worth it.

You helped me celebrate when I had worked long hours and no one noticed, or when I met a self-imposed deadline and wanted to reward myself. You were always my first choice.

Deceiver

Now I learn, with all we've been through, you have not had my best interests at heart. You have been deceiving me. As a matter of fact, you had planned a course for my demise, destruction and even eventual death.

Why would you do that to me? What did I ever do to you? You were my everything. My comforter, companion, protector, lover and friend.

I heard the doctor. I know you've been trying to kill me. And for once, I look at you and do not want you in my life any more.

Because you see, for once, I'm choosing life. I'm deciding I'm worth more than a cookie or a piece of my favorite cake. I'm worth more than the best ice cream I can buy and the most decadent brownie ever made.

Killer

So this is it. We've had a long journey together and it's been downhill all the way. You no longer are in control of me.

All my life, you've been slowly destroying me and I have been letting you.

You are not a comfort. You make me extremely uncomfortable.

You are no friend. You seek to harm me.

You do not help me have energy. You spike my energy for a minute and then I crash and burn.

You do not give me peace when I am angry. You only help me stuff my anger to the point that impacts every part of my life.

You do not relieve my stress. You add pounds to my body, which increases my stress and taxes my heart.

You do not protect me. You are the one thing that is systematically destroying me, leaving me vulnerable to every disease imaginable.

Goodbye Forever

This is goodbye. You are no longer my friend. I see you for the monster you are.

Sugar, you are out of my life for good. Oh, and don't try coming back. I will not change my mind.

I know now that I have been putting you above God in my life, above my own desire to live. I will not do that any longer. God is my comforter, companion and protector. No substance can provide for me like He can. I see you for what you are. You are a tool of the devil in my life.

I am finally free of you and believe me, nothing tastes as

good as freedom feels. Nothing!

I can finally say with confidence, “‘All things are lawful to me,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful for me,’ but I will not be brought under the power of anything” (1 Cor. 6:12). {eoa}

Teresa Shields Parker is the author of seven books, all available on Amazon. Her latest book, Sweet Hunger: Developing an Appetite for God, is available now, and Sweet Grace: How I Lost 250 Pounds is the No. 1 Christian weight-loss memoir. She is also a writing and weight-loss coach, blogger, speaker, wife and mother. Visit her online at to find her books, coaching programs and free gifts.

This article originally appeared at .

If You're Not a Perfect Christian, Here's Some Wonderful News

I've spent years and energy trying to be perfect. And burned myself out in the end.

All the while, I cited Jesus' words, “Be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). Sure, I knew that I shouldn't live this Christian life in my own strength—and had you asked me then, I would have told you that it was only by grace.

But I didn't understand grace then. I didn't understand what Jesus meant by “perfect.”

The Good News For Every Imperfect Christian

Deep inside, I battled with what I understood perfect to be and my own human tendency to blow it—every single day. I was afraid to let go of perfection because I was so afraid that by letting go of it, I'd snap right over to the other extreme of permissive, carnal living.

I'd read lists, like the one in Psalm 15, and while outwardly I'd shout "Amen!", inwardly, I would cringe because I'd only see more areas where I fell short:

Lord, who will abide in Your tabernacle? Who will dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and does righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart; he who does not slander with the tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor bears a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord; he who swears to avoid evil and does not change; he who does not put his money out to usury, nor take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be moved (Ps. 15).

What I'd see is this: "Lord, who will abide in your presence?

Strike. Strike. Strike. Strike. Strike.

I'm doomed!

That is, until I learned that without Jesus Christ—without His blood—I'll never be perfect.

But God takes my humanness, my brokenness and all my flaws, and in his perfect hands He brings me to completion.

Even when I mess up.

And because of His grace, I'm not doomed. I can enjoy His presence. I just keep my heart open to His voice pointing out areas that need to change—but always in love. {eoa}

Rosilind Jukic, a Pacific Northwest native, is a missionary living in Croatia and married to her hero. Together they live in the country with their two active boys, where she enjoys fruity candles and a hot cup of herbal tea on a blustery fall evening. She holds an associate degree in practical theology and is passionate about discipling and encouraging women. Her passion for writing led her to author a number of books. She is the author of "A Little R & R," where she encourages women to find contentment in what God created them to be. She can also be found at these other places on a regular basis. You may follow her on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google +.

This article originally appeared at .