

# God Could be Answering Your Cries This Way

I sobbed in front of the open pink trunk I'd stolen borrowed from my sister. The dinged silver edges and worn interior matched the beating I'd verbally given myself. The cold kitchen tile seeped through my thin pajamas. With muster, I kicked the side of the case.

I needed to quit crying.

I needed to buck up.

I needed a shower.

"God—answer me," I cried in my head ... not wanting to distract my toddlers who were happily ignoring me with Legos. "I'm in the depths of despair."

When you start quoting *Anne of Green Gables* in your prayers, there may be a problem.

My quest for fulfillment wove through three beautiful baby boys, a husband I adored, his youth ministry that I lived vicariously through him as a sponsor, an eight-year stint in one direct sales company and a two-year stretch in another.

I was proudly a WAHM—Work at Home Mom—but somehow it wasn't enough, and that left gaping ugly guilt holes in my heart.

I'd waited for answers—searching for what God wanted from me.

Desperate to stretch my brain and supplement our income, my husband and I made the heart-wrenching bittersweet decision that I would go back to work full-time ... for a short while.

The temp agency placed me quickly, and while I enjoyed recognition for my own work, slipping out of the house so as

to not wake sleeping babies and occasionally dragging myself in after an evening direct sales presentation took its toll.

For nine long months, I watched my one-year-old grow rapidly before my eyes ... my three year-old talk more and more ... my five-year-old start kindergarten.

I was missing it.

That pathetic Saturday morning on the kitchen floor was the last straw. I didn't know how to pray for direction without feeling guilty, and I felt like I'd followed God's direction in each job I'd taken.

So I wept, and let the Holy Spirit pray for me (Rom. 8:26).

My sweet husband stopped short when he saw me—red-eyed, greasy-haired, pajama-heap.

“You really should start writing.” He spouted his favorite advice to me whenever in the last five years I mentioned needing something more.

I rolled my eyes as negativity swooshed through my mind.

My mom's success with writing the previous year was hardly an achievement I could imitate. Yet, she echoed Justin. With a promise to do a preliminary edit, she gave me a virtual kiss and told me to start a blog and to apply for a scholarship to the Florida Christian Writers Conference.

My years of experience working with teenage and college-age girls made my topic easy, and with our biggest group of girls getting ready to graduate, I started blogging the dating advice I wanted them to have access to.

I worked my full-time job.

I built my part-time direct sales business.

I applied for the scholarship.

... and got it.

Two weeks before the conference, I began transforming the blog articles into a couple of chapters of a book. I researched proposals and how to write them. I created my bio on one sheet. I took selfie headshots. I printed my own business cards on cardstock.

At the conference I attended class-after-class, drinking in the advice, rules, lessons and wisdom until my overloaded brain could hardly think. In the midst of a small campus, I felt God cupping me in His hands, and I felt peace.

Meeting with editor #1: "Send this to me, and anything else you've written."

Meeting with editor #2: "This is good, but I don't think it's ready."

Meeting with editor #3: "This is really great. I want this."

Cloud nine.

Meeting with agent #1: "I'll send you a contract in the mail after the conference."

Meeting with agent #2: "I'd represent you, but it seems like since you've got publishers interested, you really don't need me."

Meeting with agent #3: "Send me an email after the conference. Let's talk."

WHAT??????

I did what any girl would do. I called my mom.

"I made a 'deal' with God," I joked. "If I win the 'Nonfiction' award, I think I should spend some time dedicated to writing. Maybe this is affirmation that you and Justin have been right ... maybe I should be writing."

I felt like I was exactly where I needed to be at exactly the time I was supposed to be there.

I didn't win "Best Non-fiction," yet I still felt like I had a new path laid before me. I sat in my seat as the awards continued. This was enough. I didn't need God to prove anything to me. Who was I to even ask?

Yet there are times when God is crystal clear.

I won the \$200 grand prize "Writer of the Year" award.

I signed contracts with agent #3 and editor #2 (who had originally said "no").

I gave my two-weeks notice.

The conference was my fairy-tale ball, except instead of fairy godmothers, I have the God of the universe on my side—the Creator of life and the Father who gave me gifts and talents and wants me to succeed for His glory.

*The Cinderella Rule: a Young Woman's Guide to Happily Ever After* published and the connections from the Florida Christian Writers Conference led to multiple writing gigs, publications, speaking engagements and a life of which I'd always been afraid to dream.

When you're on the path that God has set for you, things click. Following God's direction with a talent I was dismissing meant I traded in kitchen-floor-trunk-kicking-crying for coffee-filled nights and overflowing piles of laundry.

Gotta check the dryer.

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Bethany is a video contributor for , web editor for Splickety magazine, a featured columnist with Choose NOW Ministries, and has been interviewed on radio stations nationwide and internationally. Her writing can be found in Gospel Roads magazine, , , and , along with other magazines and sites.

When she's not writing or speaking, Bethany enjoys cooking, spending time with her husband and sons, coaching cheerleading and rooting for her favorite football team, the Florida State Seminoles.

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