

How Kathy Ireland Went From 'Sports Illustrated' Cover Girl to On-Fire for Jesus Entrepreneur

One night in Paris in 1981, cover model Kathy Ireland found a Bible tucked in the recesses of her suitcase, hidden, unbeknownst to her, by her mom who longed to see Ireland run to the Father.

Ireland reminisced on her faith journey in a recent interview with Fox News, recalling how that one moment would never leave her.

When she picked up God's Word for the first time, she, like many new believers, didn't know where to begin. She opened to the book of Matthew.

"And as I'm reading in the middle of the night, I knew I was holding the truth in my hands," she affirmed.

"In my industry, at that time, it was filled with a lot of really sketchy guys," she said. "I was drawn to how powerful Jesus was. How loving and honoring He was of women. It gave me such comfort. And so, He became my Lord and Savior. The experience forever changed my life."

She admitted to feeling frustration when studying Scripture as she struggled to keep her faith grounded when her career really began to take off. The cultural nuances and historical context made portions of the Bible difficult to relate to. Ireland found herself "picking and choosing" what she liked and neglecting the rest of it.

"I was trying to mold God into what I wanted Him to be," she

learned, “rather than just surrendering and letting Him make me into the person He made me to be. And oh my goodness, He was so patient. I was 44 when I finally read the whole Bible. It continues to teach me every day.”

Now a wife, mother of 3 and wildly successful entrepreneur, Ireland knew she needed one thing to keep her busy life afloat and to keep her soul on fire for God. The one message pounding in her heart came from her Savior:

“Put Me first. And I’ll give you more time, better time with your kids.”

What started out as an integration of 10 minutes with Jesus in her morning routine has blossomed into more than an hour of daily dedicated prayer time. As she’s grown in her faith, Ireland came to realize this time with God, “It’s not a duty. It’s a joy. It’s my daily bread and water.”

Of her business, Kathy Ireland Worldwide, the 58-year-old told Fox News’ Stephanie Nolasco that while her faith drives her decisions, and influences the moves she makes in her career, she’s thankful for the heavenly perspective God gives.

“The gospel is the core of every decision that I make,” she said. “We’re not a Christian company. We have team members from all different backgrounds and different beliefs. I don’t force my faith or beliefs on anyone. But I’m not ashamed of them. I can’t do anything that’s going to contradict it. I cannot compromise my faith. I’m just so thankful for God’s grace because I have made so many messes in my life.”

“I’m grateful and thankful for the blessed life I’ve been given,” she concluded. {eoa}

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