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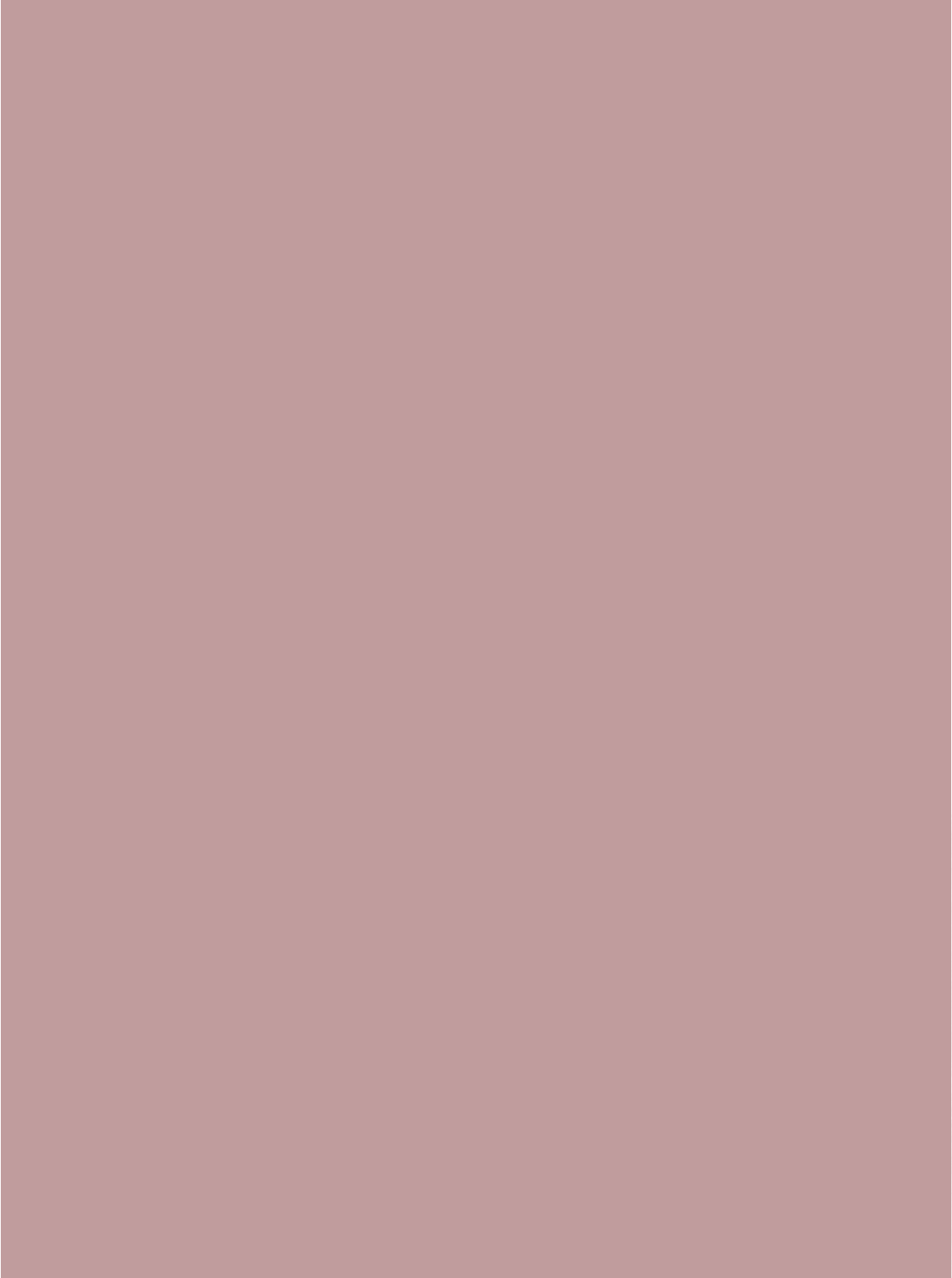
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seeing
beautiful
again

50 DEVOTIONS
to find redemption in every part of your story

LYSA TERKEURST



THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798

Seeing Beautiful Again

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Some material in this book has been previously published in *It's Not Supposed to Be This Way* and *Forgiving What You Can't Forget*.

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To my sister, Angee.

The one who has known me the longest, who loves me the best, and who models this message of seeing beautiful again in extraordinary ways.

You were pure madness to me when you were born. I was dumbfounded that Mom thought having another baby was a good idea.

You were pure magic to me when I figured out you'd clean my room for a few pennies. I'm sorry for that and the mud pies.

You were pure mystery to me when I was a book nerd and you were the popular cheerleader.

You were pure bravery to me when you walked through your hardest season with courage, grace, and unwavering love for your amazing kids.

You were pure love to me when you walked me through my hardest season while holding my hand and my heart with fierce protection and absolute tenderness.

You are my person, my best friend, my (terrified of heights) adventure partner for life, and one of the best gifts God ever gave me. Angee, I love you forever, and I like you always.

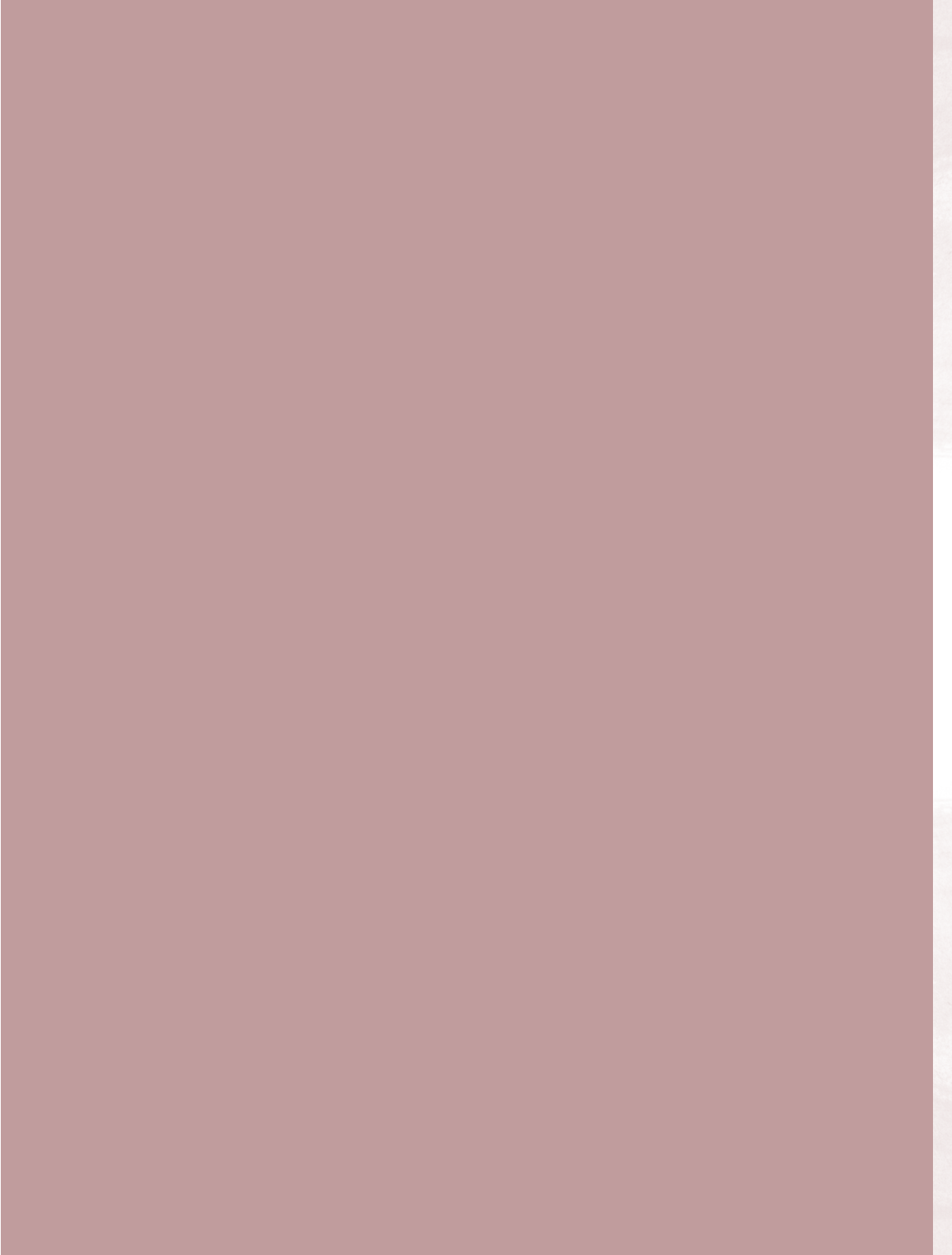


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*In the middle of the pain
you didn't cause,
the change you didn't want,
or the reality you didn't
know was coming . . .
your life can still be beautiful.*





1

THE PROCESS BEFORE THE PROMISE

*I waited patiently for the LORD; he
inclined to me and heard my cry.*

Psalm 40:1 ESV

Are there any deep disappointments in your life that seem to be lingering on and on? Do you feel like you've prayed the same prayers over and over, with little to no change?

I understand how hard that is. Over the last few years, I've walked through some of the most heartbreaking seasons in my family, marriage, and health. And although the circumstances of your life may be different, you probably have your own middle-of-the-night moments wrestling through tears too.

There are memories that still hurt. Realities that make you wonder if you'll ever feel normal again. Sufferings that seem forever long. And you're disappointed that today you aren't living the promises of God you've begged to come to pass.

In your most private moments, you want to scream words you don't use around your Bible friends at the unfairness of it all. But then there are more hopeful moments . . . when you

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want to turn up the praise music, lift up honest prayers, and declare God is good even when the situation doesn't seem good.

Hurting but still hoping—that is the human journey.

And that is where we find David in Psalm 40. In the first ten verses, David praised God for delivering him, but then in verses

*Hurting
but still
hoping—that
is the human
journey.*

11 through 17, he was crying out for God to deliver him again. David was hurting but still hoping.

Hoping doesn't mean we ignore reality. No, hoping means we acknowledge reality in the very same breath that we acknowledge God's sovereignty—His absolute ability and power to work as He sees best.

Our hope can't be tied to whether or not a circumstance or another person changes. Our hope must be tied to the unchanging promises of God. We hope for the good we know God will ultimately bring from our situation, whether the good turns out to match our desires or not. And sometimes that takes a while. The process often requires us to be persevering and patient.

Honestly, I know that can feel a little overwhelming.

I want the promised blessing of Psalm 40:4: *"Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust"* (ESV), but I forget that this kind of trusting in God is often forged in the crucible of longsuffering. God isn't picking on me. God is picking me to personally live out one of His promises.

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It's a high honor. But it doesn't always feel that way. I've got to walk through the low places of the process before I'm perfectly equipped to live the promise.

We read about some of the low places of the process in verses 1 through 3 of Psalm 40 (ESV):

*I waited patiently for the LORD;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
He drew me up from the pit of destruction,
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.
He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the LORD.*

The idea of waiting patiently in verse 1 is incredibly important in this psalm. The Hebrew word for *waiting* indicates it is ongoing, and it holds a sense of eager expectancy and hope.

So while I want the solid rock on which to stand, first I have to wait patiently for the Lord to lift me out of the slime and mud and set my feet. That word *set* in the original Hebrew is *qum*, which means to “arise or take a stand.” God has to take

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me through the process of getting unstuck from what's been holding me captive before I can take a stand.

I also want that new song promised in the psalm. Did you notice, though, what comes before the promise of a new song? It's the many cries to the Lord for help. The most powerful praise songs are often guttural cries of pain that got turned into beautiful melodies.

I know this is hard. So, let me be the one to lean in and whisper these words to you as we begin to wrestle through this journey together: *“God is working things out. He’s not far away. He is right here with us. We need to cling to this hope. Believe this hope. Live out this hope. Right here and right now. Even if our prayers aren’t answered in the way and the timing we want. Even when this process feels messy. We will trust that God is good.”*

Lord God, I know You often work in ways I don't understand. There are parts of my story that feel incredibly hard to live in, but I trust You are making something beautiful even out of those parts of my life. In Jesus' name, amen.



2

THE BEST PLACE TO PARK YOUR MIND TODAY

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Philippians 4:8

Before I even have my first cup of coffee most mornings, the mental battle begins. Lies bombard me with scripts that don't line up with the truth of God's Word and drag my mood down before I'm even given a fair shot to enjoy this new day.

The mess that was left in my kitchen the night before will turn into an entire mental dialogue about how disrespected I am and how inconsiderate and uncaring my people are. The truth is my people care deeply about me, but they are sometimes forgetful when they're up playing family games or having late-night chats. I wish my first inclination wasn't to personalize those dirty dishes, but the lies are loud and so convincing

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sometimes. I'll make a snarky comment out of frustration, which just sets the completely opposite tone in my home than what I really want. Then the guilt of my morning annoyance turns into lies about myself because I should be more patient and understanding.

And it's not just in my kitchen. The more I entertain the lies, the heavier my heart feels all day long. It's no longer just about the dishes and the comments I made that morning. Those lies quickly tap into the deeper wounds of my heart and deeper insecurities I have as a wife and a mother. Without even realizing it, those lies begin to inform my beliefs and steal my peace. The danger is that lies don't just pass through our thoughts. Lies ravage our beliefs.

Lies, unattended to, affect the perceptions we form. The perceptions we form eventually become the beliefs we carry.

*Our faith
in God can
get fractured
by the lies
we let inform
our beliefs.*

The beliefs we carry determine what we see. That's why we must be so careful to recognize where lies are affecting us. Our faith can get fractured by the lies we let inform our beliefs.

I've come to realize that what makes faith fall apart isn't doubt. It's being too certain of the wrong things.

The wrong things I'm tempted to believe can be:

- *It will never get better.*
- *My life will never be good again.*
- *God won't forgive me.*
- *I can't forgive them.*
- *I won't be able to get over this.*
- *God doesn't care.*

Instead of letting those defeating lies take over my emotions and dictate my reactions, I've learned to see them as warning signals. When I have a thought that is especially negative or condemning of myself or others, I pause to consider, "Is this really true?" And what I'm discovering is that most of the time the answer is, "No, it's not."

The Bible, while inspirational, is also very applicable. And when we turn to God's Word to know what to do with the thoughts and lies causing commotion in our minds, we can begin the work of transforming those first moments in the morning to holy moments. And then we can set a better pattern for all the other thoughts we have the rest of the day.

In the book of Philippians, we find Paul in prison writing to the church of Philippi. If there were ever a perfect situation for someone to start believing the wrong things about themselves, their people, and God, it's Paul writing a letter from prison. But

SEEING BEAUTIFUL AGAIN

he didn't waver. And in his closing words of Philippians 4, Paul addressed our thought-life as Christians:

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (v. 8)

Right. Pure. Lovely. Admirable. Praiseworthy. Those are the things to think about, and not just because they're a delightful and fun break from the lies we like to explore, but because they will bring you peace.

In the very next verse (9), Paul highlights this promise by emphasizing once more that when we put this instruction into practice the peace of God will be with us. I love that it doesn't say that the peace is dependent on our circumstances getting better. No, only that if we bring better thoughts to our circumstances we will have access to the best peace there is.

The peace of God. That is what I really long for.

Friend, rather than giving space to any lies that are trying to come in and set up camp in your mind today, remember that God has given instructions for a better place to park our thoughts. This doesn't mean we deny ourselves processing hard things or complicated relational struggles, but it does mean we intentionally direct our thoughts toward what is right, pure, lovely,