



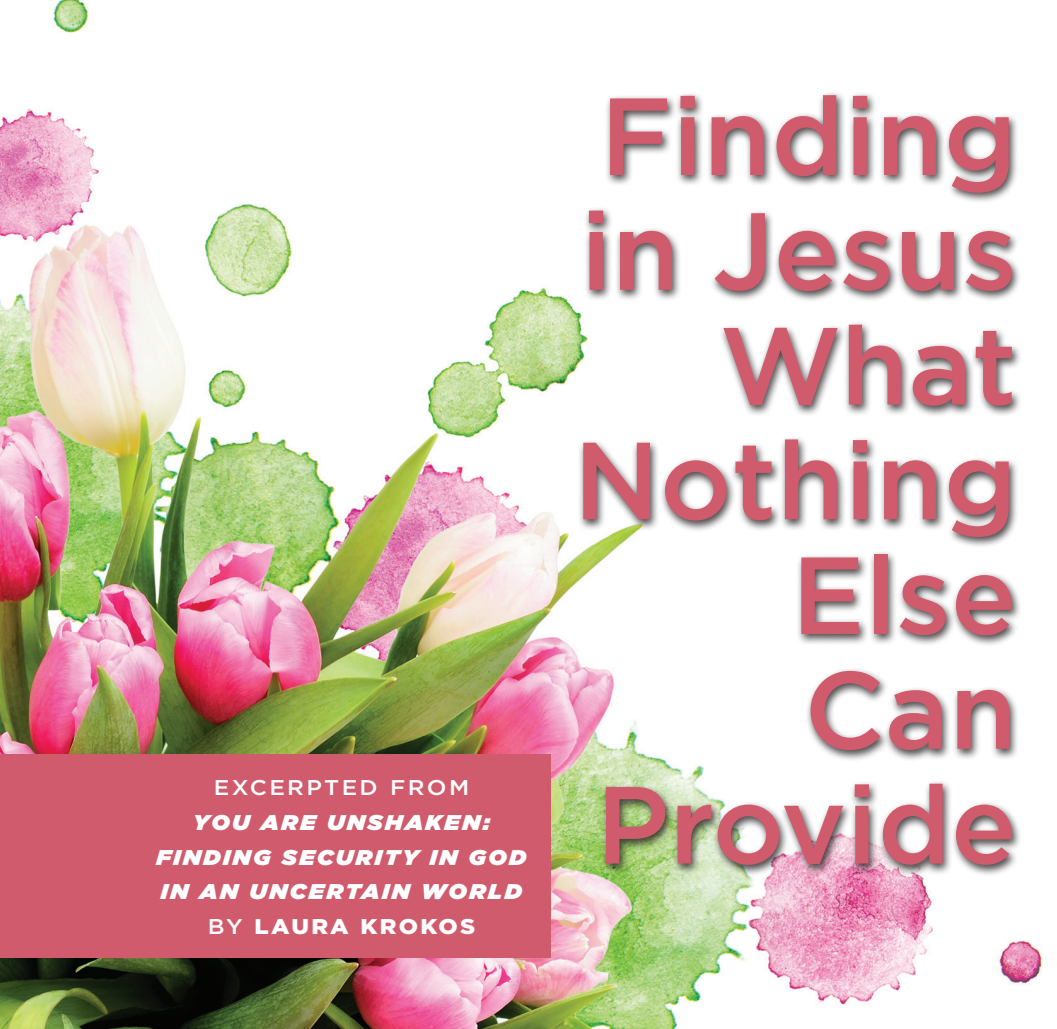
# POWER *for* LIVING

May 12, 2024

I Can Do All Things Through Christ



# You Are Wanted



# Finding in Jesus What Nothing Else Can Provide

EXCERPTED FROM  
***YOU ARE UNSHAKEN:  
FINDING SECURITY IN GOD  
IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD***  
BY LAURA KROKOS

COVER PHOTO AND PHOTO ABOVE © KSUSHSH/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

**N**ot long ago, my husband and I moved our six kids to a small town to better serve our ministry, which has its headquarters in that small town. Leaving was hard, as I had just developed some precious friendships after my heart had been longing to connect with other women.

Not long after getting settled, I found some people to love, serve, and sacrifice for. I gave my heart, time, and resources to this small group of moms and kids. A short time later, we went

through a traumatic season of our kids dealing with mental and physical illnesses. I leaned into these new friendships, and many loved us well.

However, some did not. When some of these people felt the pain and fear the illnesses caused, they rejected us and shunned us. Someone I considered a friend told her kids they were not allowed to be friends with mine.

I was crushed and felt abandoned. The pain of rejection and my own fear led to isolating myself, which



left me vulnerable to the lie of the Enemy: that no one wanted to be around me or my kids.

Perhaps you've been wounded like me. Perhaps on a much grander scale than a friend abandoning you. Maybe it was a parent or spouse or child.

The deceiver loves to take advantage of these moments by spewing his lies. As soon as you feel that sting of being unwanted, he starts whispering things like, "You're too much trouble for them," "You're not \_\_\_\_\_ enough," and "No one really wants to be around you." If you succumb to a lie, it's "Battle over. One point for the Enemy."

Trying to satisfy our souls' cravings to be wanted with anything besides Jesus is like digging in the desert hoping to find water. Living to get approval, acceptance, adoration, and admiration from others is like going to a dry well. Recognizing and deeply understanding that we are wanted by God is the only way our souls will be fulfilled and satisfied.

God is not calling us to squish down our desire to be wanted and enjoyed.

Rather, He is calling us to find His fulfillment in Him. We can delight ourselves in Him because He first greatly delights in us.

### God Loves You

You've heard the familiar refrain before: "Jesus loves you."

In ancient Greek, there were different words for different types of love. There was a word for the love you had for things, the love you had for family, the love you felt for a friend, the love you experienced in

romantic attraction, and so on.

But the biggie type of love is the one referred to by the Greek word *agape*. This is the one God loves us with. Agape love is the unconditional, do-what's-in-anothers best-interest type of love. Agape love is putting the interests of others ahead of yourself. It's not based on attraction but is an act of the will. God will always choose to do what's best for you.

His love for you is not based on anything you do or don't do. His love for you is perfect and will never fail. He can never love you less or more. God's love is unconditional because He is incapable of not loving you perfectly. Sometimes we won't understand God's love and why He demonstrated His love in one way and not another. But that doesn't mean it's not love. Our understanding of love doesn't define it.

### God Delights in You

It's not just that God loves you—God also *enjoys* you. *Enjoy* means to "take pleasure or satisfaction in the possession or experience of; to feel or perceive with pleasure; to be delighted with."

I enjoy painting. I always get a sense of pleasure when I have completed a project. I believe many artists take pleasure in the work of their hands: from architects, who get to see their buildings completed, to seamstresses delighting in their final products. In the same way, the Maker delights in you just as a potter delights in the work of his hands. He enjoys you because He made you. He delights in you because you are His.



What would you do if someone told you to act out the emotion of delight? What movements would you use? Perhaps you'd smile, or maybe you'd make big arm motions. You might dance or jump.

Zephaniah 3:17 describes it in a pretty incredible way: "The LORD your

a tablespoon, there would be about a hundred thousand, and there are about a million grains in a cup.

Finally, researchers estimate there are 7.5 quintillion grains of sand on the Earth's beaches. (That's 7,500,000,000,000,000!)")

The God who knows just how

## Have you ever picked up a pinch of sand and tried to count the grains? It's estimated there are about a thousand.

God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."

Often, I think many Christians feel as if God is ho-hum about them or that He is an unfeeling, distant dictator. Perhaps some think He just puts up with or barely tolerates them. And yet, here we see Him dancing out of delight, singing because of His love.

### God Thinks of You

Psalm 139:17-18 says a pretty incredible thing about just how mindful He is of you: "How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand." God has more thoughts about you than there are little pieces of sand on the shore.

Have you ever picked up a pinch of sand and tried to count the grains? It's estimated there are about a thousand. If you were to fill

many grains of sand there are on the earth has even more thoughts than that toward you. I wouldn't call that a distant God who merely tolerates you. You are His treasure. You are valuable and precious to Him. You are loved. First Peter 5:7 declares that God "cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully" (AMPC).

Psalm 23 gives us an incredible visual of how much God loves you and wants to spend time with you. In ancient times, if the host kept refilling the guest's cup, it was a way of showing that the guest was invited to stay longer. When the host would allow the cup to empty, it was a way of saying it was time for the guest to leave.

When the psalmist says, "My cup overflows" (v. 5), he is saying that God wanted to be with him. The Lord didn't want him to leave but rather wanted to spend time with him. So it is with Jesus' love for you. And it's not only in this life that He wants time with you. He has made it possible for a finite, mortal



person—once separated from Him by sin—to now live with Him for eternity. He loves you so much that He wants to spend forever with you.

### God Pursues You

God thinks about you: a lot. So what does He do with those thoughts? Nothing? No way. Our God is an active, get-things-done type of God. He does not just sit and think about doing what's best for you—He does it. His love and pursuit go hand in hand. This God who is smitten with you, who thinks about you more times than there are grains of sand on the shore, pursues you.

What's more, His pursuit of you began before you were even born. Acts 17:26–27 tells us that He picked the exact place and time period that you would be born in order for you to have the best chance of pursuing Him back. Not only has He put people in your life to show you what He is like, but He has also used His creation to woo you, showing you His attributes, power, and nature (see Rom. 1:20).

Sometimes, He allows hard, lonely seasons in our lives to get us to pursue Him. Hard, lonely things that we experience are invitations to pursue Him back.

In Matthew 15, we meet a Canaanite mom who seeks Jesus. Because she has a child who is mentally tormented, the whole family is desperate. She seeks Jesus, begging Him to heal her daughter. What does Jesus do? He ignores her! Verse 23 says, “He did not say a word to her” (HCSB). How crazy is that? The disciples, annoyed at her, ask Jesus to send her away. (How often do

we want the same thing when we're sick of dealing with something? “Just make it/them go away already.”) But then He makes a comment to push her to keep seeking Him: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (v. 24 HCSB).

Will she keep pursuing Him? She does, kneeling before Him, no less. And then He makes another comment to woo her: “It isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to their dogs” (v. 26 HCSB). Just for some context: this was not a derogatory term. As Warren Wiersbe explains it, Jesus did not call her a “dog” the way the Pharisees would have addressed a Gentile. The Greek word means “a little pet dog” and not the filthy curs that ran the streets and ate the garbage.... Jesus was not

**Jesus was not playing games with the woman .... He was drawing out of her a growing response of faith.**

playing games with the woman, nor was he trying to make the situation more difficult. He was drawing out of her a growing response of faith.

This mama is exhausted, discouraged, and wounded. And yet she's not going anywhere until Jesus answers her desperate call for rescue. Her love for her kiddo drives her



to Jesus, where her faith can grow stronger.

And He does rescue. He responds to her pursuit of Him. After all, He is the One who wooed her. He not only answers her but ends up praising her faith. Jesus, God, Creator, and Sustainer praises her faith: “Woman, your faith is great. Let it be done for you as you want.’ And from that moment her daughter was cured” (v. 28 HCSB).

The pain God allows has purpose, and often that purpose is to strengthen our faith. But of course! How else will our faith get strong? Just like muscles, faith grows only when it’s torn, stretched to the point of breaking, so it can heal back stronger.

God is pursuing you, and He is wooing you to pursue Him back. Will you keep pursuing and seeking Him, even when others want you to go away? Even when the pain is deep, and it seems like even Jesus Himself isn’t listening?

I pray you do. There is great reward.

God wants you, loves you, and will continually pursue you. Jesus took on the rejection of people that we might be accepted by His Father. Believing that you are accepted by Him drowns out the rejection of people.

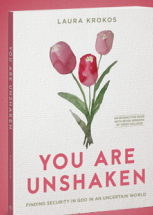
Let God quiet you with His love today. Let His delight in you free you from needing to prove yourself or outperform everyone else. 📖

*Unseen. Powerless. Hopeless. Many of us believe these words describe who we are. In **You Are Unshaken**, Laura Krokos reminds us that this is more than negative self-talk. These are lies Satan uses to prevent the peace-filled, joy-filled life God wants for us.*

*Accompanied by engaging teaching videos, each chapter of **You Are Unshaken** exposes one of these lies and equips us to fight back with truth so we can:*

- Find peace even in difficult circumstances.
- Learn how to use God’s Word as the sword of the Spirit.
- Realize that how we see God affects how we see ourselves.
- Feel confident in God’s plan for us.
- Move beyond distractions and discouragements.

*Knowing God’s character transforms everything in life: our attitudes and actions, our fears and desires. **You Are Unshaken** is more than a call to know God. It is a reminder of who we already are because of who God has always been.*



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# Celebrating Mom-Hearts Everywhere

BY KAREN BOUCHARD

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*Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. – Proverbs 31:25-26 (ESV)*

**M**om-titles can be confusing. Names for moms include Mama, Mommy, Mum, and Mumsy. Grandmas? Think Memaw, Mimi, and even Gigi.

In my Armenian family, grandmothers are called “Momie” and great grandmothers “Little Momie.” Apparently my grandsons, two and five, needed a little more distinction than that because after learning to call my mother “Little Momie” they started calling me “Regular Momie,” which is a mom-title I’m pretty sure few women can claim.

Whatever we call them, on Mother’s Day we celebrate all the mom-hearts that have shined on us, including biological moms, adoptive moms, stepmoms, grandmoms, moms-in-law, or moms-in-love (women who might be unrelated but have played significant, loving roles in our lives).

And if you’re a mom—by birth, marriage, or love—we celebrate you for so fully loving the precious people God has brought into your life.

Whatever the title (or no title at all), the maternal heart is beautiful and sacred.

Thank You, God, for mom-hearts.

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

SUNDAY	<input type="checkbox"/>	John 14
MONDAY	<input type="checkbox"/>	John 15
TUESDAY	<input type="checkbox"/>	John 16
WEDNESDAY	<input type="checkbox"/>	John 17
THURSDAY	<input type="checkbox"/>	John 18
FRIDAY	<input type="checkbox"/>	John 19—20
SATURDAY	<input type="checkbox"/>	John 21





*God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*  
 – 2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV)

**T**here was once a young mom who took her daughter to the local zoo. As she stopped at a concession stand to get some snacks, her little girl wandered off.

After spending frantic minutes searching for her, she saw that her little girl had squeezed through the barricades to get a closer look at the bears. Without hesitating to look around or call for help, the young, 120-pound mother ran past the barricades and snatched her daughter out of harm's way. We've all seen it before. A mother's love is a powerful force.

God's love is also powerful—so powerful, in fact, that it caused God to send His only begotten Son to give His life for our sins. So powerful

that God fought to redeem us—His tarnished creation—even before we were aware of our condition. So powerful that it has flamed hot throughout the ages and will burn just as brightly for all of eternity. So powerful that it pursues us without hesitation, ready to snatch us out of harm's way.

When you've been loved like that, you never forget. It transforms you from the inside out. It causes you to do things you would never have considered doing before. It inspires you to give your all for others without question, without hesitation.

Are you looking for that kind of powerful love? All you have to do is ask for it, and it's yours. His name is Jesus, and He's been waiting for you all your life.



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