

RANSOMED HEART

LOVE GOD. LIVE FREE.

July 2013

Dear Friends,

I have a treat for you this month! Stasi is going to share with us some passages from her new book, *Becoming Myself*. I think you're going to love it...

In the journey of my life I have experienced change, miraculous change. Shortly before becoming a Christian in my early twenties, I had wanted to "clean up my act". I'd become painfully aware of my dependency on drugs and alcohol, how I was using them every single day in order to endure my life or at least keep the pain at bay. I decided that I would quit cold turkey. I wouldn't smoke pot, do any drugs, drink alcohol and while I was at it, I'd stop eating sugar too. I didn't make it twenty-four hours. On any front.

Dang.

One night in desperation and hope, I gave up trying to fix my life and collapsed into the waiting arms of Jesus, responding to his invitation, "Come unto Me all you who are weary and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and learn from me for my yoke is easy and my burden light." (Matt 11:28) I finished reading the verse and fell on the floor. I was weary beyond words. My life was a shambles. My heart was shattered and I had done much of the shattering myself. I confessed my deep need to God, and asked him to come for me, if he would have me. I gave my life to Jesus, mess that it was, mess that I was, and he did come for me. My little salvation prayer worked.

Two weeks later, I realized that I had not smoked any pot, taken any drugs or drunk any alcohol since my prayer. Two weeks. This was a record breaker for the previous ten years. This was a true blue bona fide miracle. God delivered me from even the *desire* to use anything. I didn't want to and I didn't need to. I was awakened to my soul and to the presence of God and to hope. And yah, baby, there were hard days in that season but the myriad of stories I have of God's miraculous coming for me in the knick of time are glorious.

Back then food wasn't an issue. I wasn't overweight and I wasn't inclined to binge. That came later. But when it came, it came with an unyielding power that all my prayer and efforts, repentance, determination and will power could not budge.

God delivered me once. Why wouldn't he snap his fingers and do it again?

Many women feel like a failure as a woman. I know that oftentimes I do. A failure as a human being, really. It has underscored just about everything I have done and everything I have been kept from doing. But I am not a failure as a human being or as a woman. In some core place deep within, I know this. I fail, yes. But I am not a failure. I disappoint. But I am not a disappointment. Yet when I find myself again in this place – losing the battle for my beauty, my body, my heart – I can sure feel like a failure in every way. And isn't that true for every woman –

don't we all have secret places where we are not living in the victory we long for and that colors how we see ourselves? Doesn't it go on to become a barrier between us and the people in our lives? A wall separating us from the love of God?

Or is it just me?

I didn't think so.

Sometimes we feel hopeless to ever change simply because our personal history is filled with our failed attempts to change. Where was that angel who is supposed to be guarding our tongue and preventing those harsh words from lashing out at our children? Where did that fruit of the Spirit go empowering us to be self-controlled and pass by the donut section? God has not given me a spirit of fear, so why am I so consumed with worry over my children, my finances, and my future? If the fear of man is a snare why do I still find I am terrified of exposing my true self and then being rejected? My addiction and bondage to food has been revealed as a liar and a thief and yet in the moment of pain, too often I still turn to it.

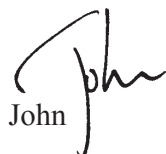
God knows.

And he has not turned his face away. The very fact that we long for the change we do is a sign that we are meant to have it. Our very dissatisfaction with our own weaknesses and struggles point to the reality that continuing to live in our weaknesses and struggles is not our destiny. Read those two sentences again. Let hope rise. Why are you struggling with the things you do? There is a reason. It is found in the life you have lived, the wounds you have received, what you have come to believe about yourself because of them and not having a clue as to how to bear your sorrow. It is also because of who you are meant to be.

It is not too late. It is not too hard. You are not too much. God's mercies are new every morning. There is mercy in his eyes right now....

Reading this again myself, I am so excited that finally, after more than a year in process, *Becoming Myself* comes out August 1st. Friends – especially our women friends – I think you are going to loooove this book. It is filled with hope, understanding and guidance for women seeking transformation. In this Christian life I think most of us have wondered at some point, *What am I supposed to do with me? Do I crucify myself, love myself, ignore myself – what?* The surprise that Stasi unpacks for us is that our journey is actually into becoming our true selves – God is committed to the person he had in mind when he thought of you and he is bringing you back from wherever you have been to become who you always wanted to be.

Becoming Myself – Embracing God's Dream of You will be available in bookstores by August 1st. Tell the women in your life that hope is calling.


John