

CHAPTER ONE

The Girl Who Felt Unseen



I was a middle child, and for a long time I believed that meant learning to be quiet, not silent exactly. Just smaller, less demanding, less noticeable. It wasn't that I wasn't loved, it was that I learned early how to adapt, to observe, to carry things internally rather than outwardly.

Some children grow up loud and certain. I grew up thoughtful and watchful.

As I moved into my teenage years, that quiet internal world became heavier. There were things I experienced that no child should have to process alone. Confusion, hurt and questions I didn't know how to ask out loud. Instead of reaching for help, I turned inward.

Pain, when it is not spoken, settles somewhere deep.

I began to believe subtle lies about myself. That I was not enough, that something about me was flawed, that perhaps I deserved the things that hurt me, those thoughts were not loud at first. They were whispers. But over time, whispers shape identity.

I did not walk away from God dramatically, I drifted from Him gradually. I still believed He existed, I still knew the language of faith. But distance grows in small choices. I began trusting my own reasoning more than His conviction, I made decisions based on emotion rather than wisdom and I justified things I knew did not sit right in my spirit. It didn't feel rebellious, it felt reasonable.

When you are young and wounded, self-protection can look like independence. Pride can disguise itself as strength. I told myself I was coping. I told myself I was surviving. But inside, something was becoming hardened.

There is a difference between surviving and surrendering.

As I entered adulthood, that internal distance deepened. I carried unresolved pain into relationships, I tried to build stability on foundations that were already cracked, I wanted love, I wanted security, I wanted to prove to myself more than anyone that I could create a life that looked whole. But you cannot outrun what you have not healed.

I gave my heart to God at one point in my life, but even then, I held parts of myself back. It was a quiet decision, not a dramatic one. I believed in Him, yet I struggled to fully obey Him. I wanted His covering, but I still wanted control.

That tension followed me into marriage.

For years, I told myself that endurance was strength, that staying was loyalty, that pushing through discomfort was maturity. But deep down, I knew there were areas where I had ignored God's warning. Areas where I had convinced myself that things would change if I just tried harder.

Trying harder became my pattern,
trying harder to love, trying harder to fix,
trying harder to hold everything together.
And eventually, trying harder became
exhausting.

Motherhood changed me in ways I cannot
fully explain. The moment I held my
children, something inside me softened and
strengthened at the same time. I wanted to be
better for them, I wanted to protect them from
the things I had carried, I wanted to create a
home that felt safe, but I was still broken in
places I had never addressed, trying to be a
good mother while quietly unraveling inside is
one of the loneliest places a woman can stand.

Outwardly, I functioned, meals were
made, school routines were kept, smiles
appeared when necessary. But internally, I
was tired, tired of pretending, tired of carrying
emotional weight alone, tired of feeling
spiritually distant and unsure how to return.

I prayed, but often with frustration. I
blamed circumstances, I blamed people.
Sometimes, I blamed God.

Yet somewhere beneath the anger and confusion, I knew the truth: I had not fully surrendered. I had asked God to bless what I was unwilling to release.

That awareness did not come all at once. It unfolded slowly and with it came the realization that I could not continue as I was.

The storm did not arrive overnight. It built quietly, and when it finally broke, it exposed everything I had been avoiding.