

enough

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Enough

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*To my three nieces,
Grace Anne Vick, Emily Edwards,
and Katherine Edwards.*

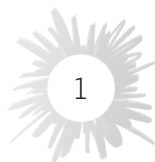
*Watching you become such incredible wives
and mothers has been a great joy.*

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your lives.



PART 1

*the battle for
your thought life*



House of Mirrors

*I have no greater joy than to hear that
my children are walking in the truth.*

3 JOHN 4

Carrie brushed on the finishing touches of makeup before rushing off to the carnival with her girlfriends. Just a bit of lip gloss and one more swipe of the hairbrush and she was ready to go.

Carrie heard the car horn blow as the girls pulled into the driveway. She grabbed her sweater and yelled to her mom, who was still in the kitchen.

“Bye, Mom. I’ll be home by eleven.”

“Be careful,” her mother called out.

Carrie, Katie, Clair, and Meghan scurried from booth to booth as the carnival barkers drew them in. They watched boys humiliate themselves trying to fire rifles at metal foxes running across a black backdrop, shoot basketballs into hoops that seemed strangely small, and bang a giant hammer to prove who was the strongest among the bunch. The girls tried their hands at throwing darts to pop balloons, casting rings over old milk jugs, and tossing bin in slanted straw baskets. After eating sticky pink clouds of cotton candy, the girls wandered around to various sideshows.

“Come one, come all,” the barker called. “Step right up and see yourself as you’ve never been seen before. The House of Mirrors—sure to entertain and amuse. Step right up.”

“Come on in, little lady,” the shifty man with greasy black hair and a toothy grin said as he motioned to Carrie. She shivered and wanted to turn and run away.

“Let’s go in here,” Katie said. “This will be fun.”

Carrie was whisked away with the crowd and pushed into the first mirrored room. Elongated reflections stared back, and the girls giggled at the taller, thinner versions of themselves. In the next room, they doubled over with laughter at their stubby arms and legs, expanded torsos, and chubby cheeks. They struck various poses and got a taste of what shorter, wider versions of themselves might look like.

The girls ran to a third room, but Carrie stayed behind. She was silent as she stood mesmerized at what she saw staring back at her. Words seemed to appear across her chest, fading in and out in various scripted forms. *Worthless. Unloved. Ugly. Stupid. Unacceptable. Unforgivable. Dirty. Unhappy. Failure. Not good enough.*

Was this a trick? Did the others see what she saw? How did they know? Tears trickled down her cheeks as buried memories surfaced before her.

“Carrie, come on!” Meghan called from down the hall. “Let’s go to the bumper cars.”

Carrie took a deep breath, put on her perma-smile, and wiped her eyes. No one noticed the smudged mascara trail down her cheeks or her puffy eyes. Like always, no one knew.

HOUSE OF MIRRORS

I was in the sixth grade when I first ventured into the House of Mirrors at my hometown county fair—a mere 12 years old. Like Carrie, my group of giggling friends ran from booth to booth, suckered into paying good money to play rigged games. For hours we gave cash to shady carnival characters in hopes of winning a stuffed purple polka-dotted snake, an oversized tie-dyed teddy bear, or a cheesy piece of jewelry we’d never wear. Personally, I stuck with Pickup Ducks—a sure win.

We soared into the air on the Ferris wheel to get an aerial view of our small-town lights, rode through the darkened House of Horrors, each with her latest crush, and plunged down the mountainous, rickety

roller coaster with arms in the air. But of all the sideshows at the carnival, it was the House of Mirrors that captured my attention.

Like Carrie and her friends, we walked through mazelike halls, giggling at the distorted images of ourselves. I looked at the various versions of me and tried to decide which one I liked best. But deep inside, in a place no one knew existed, I was in search of another version of me. I did not like the one I knew best.

After writing the first edition of *Enough* called *I'm Not Good Enough...and Other Lies Women Tell Themselves* and receiving thousands of emails in response, I've realized women all around the world have grown up with a distorted view of who they really are. They look into the mirror and see words that don't match up with the truth about who God created them to be.

They look into the mirror of value and see the word *worthless*.

They look into the mirror of success and see the word *failure*.

They look into the mirror of intelligence and see the word *stupid*.

They look into the mirror of competence and see the word *inadequate*.

They look into the mirror of acceptance and see the word *rejected*.

They look into the mirror of confidence and see the word *insecure*.

They look into the mirror of comparison and see the word *inferior*.

They look into the mirror of performance and see the words *not good enough*.

They look into the mirror of sufficiency and see the words *not enough...period*.

Many women live in a house of mirrors, believing distorted interpretations of who they are—and the devil polishes that mirror of deception every day to keep it shiny

I know the House of Mirrors well. I grew up there. Lived there for years. For decades, feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and inadequacy held me captive to a “less than” life. I looked like I had it all together on the outside, but on the inside I was a cowering little girl hiding in the farthest corner of the playground, hoping no one would notice my reluctance to join in.

You might expect me to say, “But then I met Jesus and all my insecurities miraculously disappeared.” Oh, I wish that were the case, but that little insecure, lost girl grew up to become an insecure Christian woman.

If you’ve read my other books, you know my story. But if we’re new friends, you need to hear a little bit about how I got into my fix. Who knows? Maybe you’ll see yourself walking the path with me.

BROKEN MIRRORS

I grew up in small-town America, in the eastern part of North Carolina. My father was the successful owner of a building supply company, and my mom was a hardworking arts-and-crafts shop owner. On the outside we looked like a typical American family with two kids and a collie named Lassie. We lived in a beautiful brick ranch-style home with columns supporting the elongated front porch and sixty-foot pine trees forming a shady canopy. But behind the peaceful exterior loomed a deep, dark secret.

My father drank heavily and often terrorized our home with violent outbursts, fits of rage, and verbal and physical abuse. I saw things a little girl should never see and heard words a little girl should never hear. Many nights I went to bed with the covers pulled up over my head and eyes squeezed shut in attempts to block out the visual images that accompanied the violent noises occurring on the other side of my bedroom wall. Some nights I snuck into my brother’s room, and we hid in the security of his closet.

Many mornings I woke up to broken furniture, my mom with a black eye, and my crying father promising it would never happen again. But it always did.

My mom was a bitter, angry woman who struggled to put on a good face in public. Unfortunately, behind closed doors, her bitterness, resentment, and anger spilled over to her children. “You can’t do anything right.” “Why can’t you be smart like your brother?” “You’re so ugly.” “You did a terrible job cleaning that bathroom. Go back and do it again.” When she said, “What’s wrong with you?” I remember thinking, *I don’t know, but something is. I’m just not lovable.*

My father spent most of his time running his company or carousing with friends. And even though his place of business was only a few blocks from our home, his heart was miles away. A battle raged in my little-girl heart. Part of me longed to have a daddy who loved me, and part of me was afraid to even get near the one I had.

Even though I was actually cute as a little girl, I never felt pretty *enough*. I longed to be cherished or valued, but I always felt I was in the way—a bother. That nobody liked me, wanted me, or loved me. And if your parents can't love you, then who ever could? I surmised I was not only not pretty enough, but not smart enough, talented enough, or good enough to be the apple of anyone's eye.

When I was six years old, I skipped off to school with a new box of crayons, a Swiss-polka dotted dress, and fresh hope that I would be liked. But first grade only confirmed my fears. I was “not enough.”

As soon as my first-grade teacher held up that initial spelling flashcard, I knew I was in trouble. Back then, my church-sponsored kindergarten focused on coloring, playing, and napping. But first grade was a whole new ball game with letters, numbers, and tests.

Remembering one spelling exercise makes my palms clammy even today. We lined up our miniature wooden chairs in a row like a choo-choo train. The teacher held up a spelling flashcard for us to identify the word. If we missed the word, we had to go to the caboose. I spent most of the first grade in the caboose. For some reason, I especially had trouble with the word *the*.

My older brother, who proved to be very smart, had had the same teacher five years earlier, and I guess she thought a glimmer of hope lurked somewhere in the gene pool.

I'll help her, my teacher must have thought.

She made me a name tag that read *the* and I had to wear it for two weeks. Students came up to me and asked, “Why are you wearing that tag?” “Is your name ‘The’?” “You must be stupid.” “What's wrong with you?”

Well, I learned how to spell the word *the*, but that's not all I learned. I learned I was stupid, not as smart as everybody else, and once again, not enough.

The strands of inferiority, insecurity, and inadequacy began to weave an invisible yet indelible grid system over my mind. Every thought I had, every comment by other people, and every social interaction had to filter through that sieve of deficiency before it was interpreted by my little-girl mind. By the time I was a 12-year-old, that filter was cemented firmly in place. I was a scared and scarred little girl who kept her mouth shut by day and her eyes squeezed closed by night.

A House of Mirrors became my home, full of mirrors misshaped by the words of others and interpreted by a needy little girl who just wanted to be accepted and loved.

At the age of 12, I became friends with a girl in my neighborhood, Wanda Henderson. We had known each other since first grade but truly bonded by the sixth. Wanda's mother took me under her wing and loved me as though I were her own child. She told me I did have a father who loved me, a heavenly Father who loved me so much He gave His Son for me. Mrs. Henderson knew what was going on in my home, and she knew about my wounded heart.

Eventually the Hendersons invited me to go to church with them. Amazingly, my family, with its multilayered dysfunction, went to church on Sundays. Yes, with all the alcohol, fighting, pornography, and infidelity that riddled our home, we went to a politically correct, socially prestigious church—fighting all the way to the front door. We heard ear-tickling, inoffensive sermons that were moral enough to make us feel we'd done our American duty but not spiritual enough to convict or transform us in any way.

But the Hendersons' church was different. They talked about having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, a concept I had never heard before. I wanted what they had. I went to this church and drank in every word the pastor and teachers had to say about a Savior who loved me so much He gave His life for me on Calvary's cross so I could have eternal life. He paid the penalty for my sin. He loved me, not because I was pretty or accomplished, but just because I was His. I didn't have to earn God's love, I already had it—a foreign concept for sure.

Two years after my initial visit to this Bible-believing church, when

I was 14 years old, I gave my life to Jesus Christ. Again, you might expect me to say all my insecurities went away. But nothing could be further from the truth. I went from being an insecure little girl to being an insecure Christian. All those feelings of “I’m not enough” went right along with me into my adult years. Except now I had a new verse to the misguided song stuck in my head: “I’m not a good enough Christian.”

A NEW MIRROR

Into my early thirties, despite my conversion at 14, I felt as though something was wrong with me spiritually—as if I had walked into a movie 20 minutes late, spending the entire time trying to figure out what was going on. I had a wonderful husband, an amazing son, and a happy home life. I attended Bible studies year after year, hoping each one would be the one to fix me. I even taught Bible studies at a scripturally sound church, and I surrounded myself with strong Christian friends.

But something was missing, and I couldn’t figure out what it was. The dirge of “I’m not good enough” was a song I couldn’t get out of my head. The lies of the enemy created limitation in my life. The belittling taunts of the devil were the barbed wire that fenced me in and kept God’s best at bay. I wonder if you can relate. Do you have lies that tumble about in your mind no matter how desperately you want them gone? Do you have regrets piled high like books unread? If so, we’re going to tackle that together.

The lies of the enemy created limitation in my life.
They were the barbed wire that fenced
me in and kept God’s best at bay.

The battle to change the song in my head began when I was in my mid-thirties, sitting under the teaching of an older woman in my church, Mary Marshal Young. She opened my eyes to the truths in Scripture about who I was, what I had, and where I was (my position) as a child of God. I had read those verses scattered throughout

Scripture before, but when she encouraged me to cluster them all together into one list, God began a new work in my heart.

You are a saint.

You are chosen.

You are dearly loved.

You are holy.

These truths were right there on the pages of my Bible in black and white, and a few in red.

You are reconciled through Christ's life.

You are justified by Christ's blood.

You are free from condemnation through Christ's death.

You have the mind of Christ.

You can do all things through Christ.

I knew the verses were the infallible Word of God, but I felt rather squeamish hearing them, reading them, believing them.

They didn't feel right.

They didn't sound right.

They made me downright uncomfortable.

But I had a choice to make. Was I going to believe God told the truth? I tried to learn the verses and cooperate with the Holy Spirit to change the way I thought about myself, but it was a struggle...a battle. And so I came up with a *battle plan*. And that, my friend, is what I want to share in the pages of this book. The battle plan for overpowering the lies of the enemy with the truth of God. We're going to discover how to silence the inner critic that holds us hostage—to silence the lies that steal our confidence. We're going to knock down the walls that keep God's best at bay and lean into the still, small voice that calls us to more.

There are many facets to knowing how to replace those lies with the truth. Where do the lies come from? How do we know if what we're thinking and telling ourselves is a lie or the truth? How do we get the lies out of our minds? How do we overcome the lies of the enemy with the promises of God? How do we develop new ways of seeing ourselves when the lies have been our truth for so long? How do we walk out of the House of Mirrors once and for all and into the unerring reflection of our true identity?

It's time to stop believing the lies about ourselves and start believing the truth, no matter how beautiful it may be.

God wants to show you truths about your true identity, His timeless sufficiency, and your preordained destiny that flesh and blood cannot reveal. Jesus sits by the well waiting for you to show up, to dip down deep and pour out the affirmation you're thirsting for. "Affirmations that call you to let go of the hindrances that hold you hostage, take hold of the promises that set you free, and live boldly with that faith you've always longed for."¹

So let's hunker down and begin with the first question: Where do the lies come from?