



# *Desires* **OF THE HEART**

A 7 Day Devotional

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Hey friend!

Here's what we're tackling in this series:

- The Desire to be Heard
- The Desire to be Affirmed
- The Desire to be Blessed
- The Desire to be Safe
- The Desire to be Touched
- The Desire to be Chosen
- The Desire to be Included

How does this list make you feel? If you are anything like me, you may be squirming right now. I know that some of those hit me hard. Sis? That's why we need to talk about them. We need to go there. You may be thinking, NO! We ABSOLUTELY DO NOT. And I hear you. Sis, I HEAR YOU. But I also care about you enough to say the hard things. To help YOU say the hard things.

I know this may be hard. But it's worth it. I promise. Are you with me? Stay tuned.

Be Blessed,

Rach



## Say the Hard Things

"Underneath every problem is an unfulfilled desire."

The false narratives we tell ourselves can only be erased by what God says about us.

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# DAY ONE

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SEEN. HEARD. LOVED.

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This week is the first of seven, where we will be taking a look at some of the deepest desires of our hearts. The one we are going to tackle today is the desire to be heard. This one pricks my heart a little because it has been a life-long struggle for me to feel heard.

It's not that I am a quiet person. If you have ever met me or spent any time with me, then you know it's quite the opposite. My husband always jokes that I talk to breathe. So the reality is, I make my voice known. **But making our voices known is not the same thing as being heard.** Instead, it's our small attempt to getting that need met in the only way we know how.

Maybe this comes easily for you. Maybe you grew up in a family where you were looked in the eyes and someone heard your heart.

But for most of us? That just simply wasn't the case. It still isn't. I have a sense that most people are unsure if God even hears them.

Last year, I went through a hard season. We all did. But this was not pandemic-related. Instead, it was a situation where I had no voice. I certainly wanted to speak up, but in this circumstance, there was nothing I could do or say that would have any consequence. Was there injustice? Yes. And I am a justice warrior. Yet this situation did not even allow me to fight. Instead, I had to stay silent.

As I took my feelings of helplessness to the Lord, He interrupted my prayer.

I wish I could say I was listening for God's voice when that happened, but the truth is, I was just complaining. **God had to silence me in order to let me know that He heard me.**

Did things change immediately? No. But did I? Yes. The emotion around the situation was still there, yet the feeling of helplessness lifted. Instead of despair, I sensed the hope and peace that only comes from the presence of the Father. Almost immediately, the words of the Psalmist came to my mind.



"I HEAR YOU. I SEE YOU.  
I LOVE YOU."

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I TOOK MY TROUBLES TO THE LORD;  
I CRIED OUT TO HIM, AND HE ANSWERED MY PRAYER.  
PSALM 120:1 TPT



Sometimes, we can feel like no one hears us.

**We can't allow what we feel to replace what we know.  
And we know that God hears us.**

Later that week, friends came to me with a very similar problem. So similar that they said out loud the very thoughts I had in my desperate prayer. As they described how helpless they felt, I shared with them the words that the Lord shared with me.

*He hears you. He sees you. He loves you.*

Did their situation change? No. But their hearts did.

As believers, we can step into that gap for each other, reminding each other that we serve a God who hears, who sees, who loves. Sometimes, that's the best way to point someone to Christ.

*Love empowers us to fulfill the law of the Anointed One as we carry each other's troubles. Galatians 6:2 TPT*

If we don't get this need to be heard met, either by someone in our lives or in prayer, we can start to believe some false narratives that the enemy will use to keep us trapped.

- I am not worthy of being heard.
- I am a bother to others.
- My needs are too much.
- I have to lie for anyone to hear me.
- I don't have any needs.
- My needs don't matter.
- My voice doesn't matter.

Friend, I am here to tell you that those are lies straight from the enemy. They are the exact opposite of what God wants for you. He died to make sure this didn't happen.

***You are heard. You are seen. You are loved.***





SEEN. HEARD. LOVED.

**THINGS TO PONDER:**

Do you take things to God when you feel “unheard” by the world? If not, why do you think that is?

**THINGS TO PRAY:**

Speak out to the Lord about the things that seem unheard in your life. The truth is, He already knows them. But He wants you to come to Him so that you can know that He hears you, He sees you, and He loves you.

Praying for you friend,

*Rach*

**CONVERSATION STARTERS:**

- When have you truly felt heard? Who made you feel that way?
- What do you think happens when you ignore your need to be heard?
- Do you take things to God when you feel “unheard” by the world? If not, why do you think that is?
- Everyone needs someone to “hear their heart.” Name one person that you will do that for this week.

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# DAY TWO

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LOVED. CHERISHED. HIS.

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I had worked so hard all year to get Straight A's on my report card. My dad had made me a promise. If I worked hard to get Straight A's, he would take me to a special restaurant, just the two of us, on a date night to celebrate. My dad never did stuff like that. I mean, never. Most of the time, I just was ignored by him, so this felt like my moment. As I proudly took him my fifth-grade report card, I was met with a drunken stupor that assaulted me, it was like being splashed with a bucket of cold water.

*I never said that.*

What? Of course, he did! That's why I worked so hard for the entire last year! Instead of riding my bike after school with the neighbor kids, I studied maps for social studies. Every night for the entire school year, I studied and studied and studied. I was going to earn time

with my father. Surely after fulfilling my part of the obligation, he would fulfill his.

*You're so selfish. You would rather make me spend my money on just you instead of our family.*

Even now, I can feel my 5th-grade little body, heart racing, hot tears forming.

We never went out to dinner. In fact, as an adult, I still have never visited the restaurant that I had picked out to celebrate as our special place. Even driving past it now makes my heart rate increase.

I learned something that day that I carried with me through to adulthood: I would never be able to work hard enough to get my father's attention.

As an adult, this thread was deeply woven into the culture of my life, even in my relationship with God. I have always been a hard worker. Rarely have I had just one paid job at a time. Every moment of every day, I have lived with this sense that “every moment matters.” And while that’s true, it doesn’t mean that every moment should be consumed by work. At one point in my life, I was working 80+ hours a week, in school full time, and raising a family. Sleep? What’s that? I could sleep when I was dead.

For many of us, 2020 became a year where we were forced to slow down. For me, it became a season to reflect on the reality of how I was living my life. And despite the fact that I was not working nearly as hard as I had in previous seasons, the voice of the Father became more clear. It was as if all the time I spent trying to “earn time with my Father,” was keeping me from Him. It wasn’t until I slowed down enough to listen that I could hear the echo of His voice. That I was loved. That I was cherished. That I was His.

In case you didn’t know, let me be the one to share something with you: You are loved immeasurably by a God who sees all your work. He recognizes everything you are doing. And while I do not doubt that everything you are doing is amazing, it’s not what will “earn you time with your Father.” There is absolutely nothing we could ever do that would earn us that. Instead, it’s this gift of grace that He gives us, simply because we are His child.



SEE WHAT GREAT LOVE THE  
FATHER HAS LAVISHED ON  
US, THAT WE SHOULD BE  
CALLED CHILDREN OF  
GOD! AND THAT IS WHAT  
WE ARE! 1 JOHN 3:1A



We have access to our Father because He is our Father. And because He loves us. That may be hard to grasp sometimes, I know it is for me. When I first read that verse, I didn’t have a good concept for the word lavished. I learned that it comes from a word that refers to a torrent, as in a torrent of rain.

Have you ever been stuck in a torrent of rain? I have. And I was drenched down to my underwear. There was not one speck of me that wasn’t covered in rainwater.

Sis, that’s a small example of how God loves us. There is not one speck of us that He doesn’t love. It’s who He is. There is nothing we could ever do to stop that or change that. It’s this amazing gift that we have through Jesus, a gift called grace.

So many of us live lives of striving, thinking we have to earn the love of the Father. But the reality is, we already have it. We always did. It’s why He sent Jesus so that we could always walk in this place of knowing we are loved.

He wants that for you. And sis? So do I.



LOVED. CHERISHED. HIS.

THINGS TO PONDER:

There is nothing you could ever do to earn God's love. Nothing. And there is nothing you could ever do to remove God's love. Nothing. Love is who He is. And loved is who You are.

THINGS TO PRAY:

As we work through some of these desires, there may be a sense that you are disconnected from the content, that some of these things just don't apply to you. If that's the case, then please reach out, I would love to pray with you. But the reality is, you don't need me to pray. God is already longing for you to just talk to Him about it. Ask Him to make these things a reality in your own life, to experience Him in a very real and tangible way.

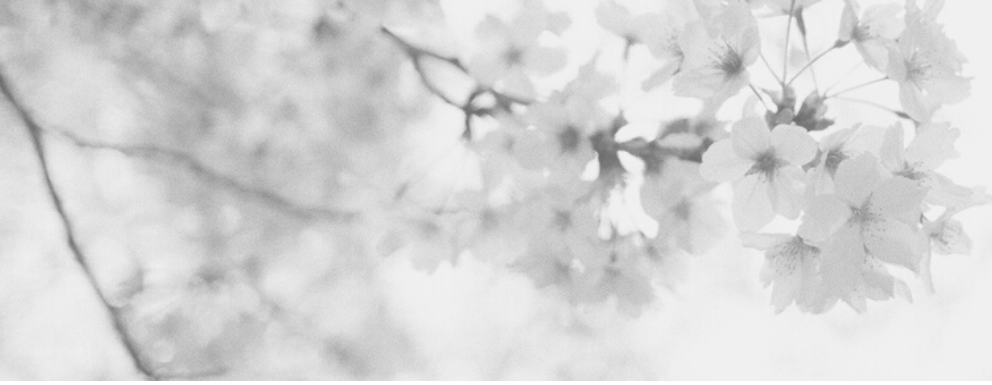
See you tomorrow,

*Rach*

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- In what ways have you been striving to “earn time” with God?
- How does it make you feel to think that you are loved because of who God is? Can you believe that at a soul level? Why or Why not?





# DAY THREE

## FIGHTING FOR OUR BLESSING

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Sometimes we are people of blessing. But most of the time, we aren't.

Sometimes we have to fight for our blessing. But most of the time, we don't.

Fighting for a blessing feels hard. And like we aren't humble. And there's this idea that if we were worthy of being blessed, someone would see that, and we would be. But most of the time, we miss the blessing simply because we don't ask for it.

I think it might be helpful to point out that I am not talking about blessing in terms of money or resources. Sometimes blessing brings those things, but that's not what I mean. When I say blessing, I mean the desire we all have to be blessed. The desire to be seen as special in the eyes of someone who does not require us to perform to earn their love. While last week we talked a little about our desire to be affirmed in what we do, the desire to be blessed is more about who we are.

This idea of blessing is seen over and over in the Scriptures. And while we recognize that the birthright and inheritance that was given culturally was a blessing, this need goes deeper. So deep in fact, that if we don't get it, it leads to shame. The shame doesn't come from making a mistake, that is more a posture of guilt. Instead, shame is feeling like we are the mistake.

Sis, can I remind you of something? God doesn't make mistakes. You are amazing.

As women, we tend to think that the way that we earn a blessing is by working towards something that will earn us that right. But the reality is, if you never did anything ever again, you would still be loved. Remember what we said last week? God is love. It's who He is. And loved is who you are. Because of who God is, not because of anything you ever have done or ever will do.

So, what do we do when we don't feel blessed? Well, we tend to believe the lies that the enemy throws at us:

- I can't do anything right
- I'm not worthy of a blessing
- There is something wrong with me
- I need to work harder

Let me stop you right there. And let me repeat something for those in the back. You are not loved for what you do. You are loved for who you are.

We can see a clear picture of this desire to be blessed in the story of Jacob, and the moment when God changed his name to Israel.

## FIGHTING FOR OUR BLESSING

*24 Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was dislocated while he wrestled with him. 26 Then he said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." 28 Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have contended with God and with men, and have prevailed." 29 And Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there. 30 So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been spared." 31 Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Peniel, and he was limping on his hip. 32 Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the tendon of the hip which is on the socket of the hip, because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the tendon of the hip. -Genesis 32:24-32*

Jacob fought for his blessing. And after wrestling with God, he walked away changed.

If you remember his story, Jacob had been deceptive for a very long time. His name meant deceiver. His lifetime of hiding himself, of deceiving those around him, led him to a place where he was alone with God. In those moments where we find ourselves alone with God, the one who knows us, and all the things we hide, it's those moments where we are faced with a choice. We have the choice to keep living our lives on our terms, or a choice to lean into the blessing that God has for us.

Jacob realized this and recognized that the only way he could be blessed was if God Himself gave him the blessing.

The original word for struggle is *sarah*, which means to *persist or persevere*.

And the name Israel means God prevails.

As Jacob/Israel's lineage became God's special people of Israel, we share in that heritage. As followers of Christ, we know that God prevails.

Over our situation, God prevails.  
Over our heartache, God prevails.  
Over our waiting, God prevails.  
Over our struggle, God prevails.

When we struggle or persist with God, it leads to a changed identity in us, one where God prevails.

While we don't physically struggle with God, we do sometimes need to persist through prayer. And although we may sometimes automatically receive a blessing from God, most of the time we have to actively pursue God's blessing that comes from the struggle.

I know this can seem hard, especially when the struggle is big. But the encouragement we see from Jacob is that if we persevere, the blessing will come.

*"I will not let go unless you bless me."*

May those words from Jacob become the prayer of our hearts, as we seek Him for the blessing that can only come from knowing Him in our struggle.

Be Blessed Friends,





# DAY FOUR

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## RESCUE

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The boulder was to my left, covered in slime. The boat was to my right, and the pressure of the current held me below the surface of the water. As much as I tried to climb out of that space, it very quickly became evident that I was not able to pull myself out. I remember looking up, and could see the sky and the clouds above me. I had the thought that I was glad that I was going to heaven, because this was how I was going to die.

Suddenly, while I was still looking up, I felt myself being pulled from the water. The next thing I knew, I was back in the boat. Coughing, drenched, in shock, but back in the boat. A friend had somehow been able to reach in and pull me out. I don't remember much about the rest of that day. But what I do remember is that in a moment where I was completely helpless to save myself from death, someone reached into that space to pull me out.

We are all born with this inherent nature that pulls us toward sin. There is no escaping it. It drags us along to a place that ultimately leads us to death. There is no way we can pull ourselves from that place.

*Dear friend, there is only one person that can.*

*I have made you, and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you. Isaiah 46:4b*

*In those moments that we are overwhelmed with our sin, helpless to get ourselves out, there is only one that can reach in to pull us out.*

JESUS.



## RESCUE



And sis, He wants you to know something. It's not too late.

We all have this desire we are born with, this desire to be safe, ultimately from the death we are all headed towards. But that security can only come when we trust the guide. And I know that is hard and scary and seems like a lot of work. But sis? That's the whole point. We can't do it on our own. There is only one way that we can walk in the assurance that we know, eternally, that we are safe.

Surrender. Surrender to the one who loves you enough to die for you. Surrender to the one who loves you enough to do what's best for you, even when you disagree. Surrender to the one who knows what's coming down the river. There is a counterfeit though. One that seems to offer the same promise, but with life on your own terms.

His hand is out to you, sis. The choice is yours.

This week, let's think about the only one that can reach down into our desperation and pull us out. There is no fear there sis, only rescue.

*Rach*

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# DAY FIVE

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## DESIRE TO BE TOUCHED

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Looking out the window of the bus, I was overwhelmed with what my eyes were drawn to. What seemed like a sea of children were walking towards us. They all had the same, sorrowful look in their eyes. We had not yet approached the clearing, yet they were walking towards us, anticipating our arrival. Later estimates would place the number of people to be around 50,000 that gathered that day. As the bus came to a stop, I quietly spoke a prayer. I recognized how ill-equipped I was. In my ignorance, my 500 balloons and two bottles of bubbles felt like good preparation. In reality, I had no concept of what this moment would be like. Anything that I had hoped to do, as we ministered to these children was now a foolish proof of my ignorance. As I looked out the window again, God gently pushed me.

*Just love them. Like I do.*

The words felt inadequate, that they somehow weren't enough.

Lord, don't you see how many of them there are? Don't you see how ill-equipped I am? There is no way I can do this. Many of these children did not even speak English. I had no translator, no microphone, no music. This was not the kind of Children's Ministry that Bible College had prepared me for.

*I chose you for this.*

The words hit me in a place of knowing. This moment. This moment was why I was halfway across the world, covered in bug spray, sunburned, and exhausted by the flipping of my days and nights. Taking a deep breath, I stepped off the bus. Immediately, I was greeted by smiles so large that I felt myself smiling in response.



## DESIRE TO BE TOUCHED

“Rachael.”

Surprised by the sound of my name, I looked to my right and saw a young boy.

“She is trying to protect you.”

I had not realized what was going on until that very second but was so moved that this little one was rising up to fight for me. Placing a gentle hand on her shoulder, I was able to look her in the eyes, and somehow explain to her that I was ok. As she softened, she lowered her head, eyes toward the ground.

“She wants you to bless her.” Barnabas, my new-found interpreter, explained to me that the children considered it an honor to be blessed, by having the tops of their heads touched. I looked down at this little one, fierce and strong and brave. I was overcome by how much she must have gone through in her little life. Placing both hands on her head, I spoke a prayer of blessing over her little life. She could not even understand the words I was speaking. Most of them could not. Barnabas explained to me that the children in this area spoke Swahili and another tribal language, but not English. They could not understand what I was saying, but watching me bless that little girl, they now understood why I had come. They had heard of missionaries, and they realized that I was here for the same reason.



Almost immediately, I was overcome with children. Heads bowed, waiting for their blessing. These children didn't want money. They didn't want food. They wanted to be touched. I didn't have money. I didn't have food. But I did have the capacity to lay my hands on them and pray a blessing over them. So that's what we did. My entire team, now at my side, joined me in blessing the children, speaking love over them as we made our way through the enormous crowd. As many as we could in the hours we had, we simply touched them and blessed them.

This experience was unlike anything I had ever witnessed in my entire ministry career, both locally and globally. Yet it revealed something so powerful.

The desire to be touched. We all have this desire to be touched, in an appropriate, healthy, and honoring way. A desire so strong that we seek it out in ways that are inappropriate, unhealthy, and dishonoring if we can't get it.

## DESIRE TO BE TOUCHED

We can see the way that Jesus recognizes this in the Scriptures.

*While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." **Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man.** "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him. Luke 5:12-14*

Did you catch that? Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. Leprosy was a disease that formed crusts and scabs on the skin, visible to others. In Jesus' time, leprosy was looked upon as a spiritual condition, caused by sinful thoughts or actions. Lepers had to be separated from the rest of the community to keep others from being contaminated, both physically and spiritually. Leprosy was an isolating disease keeping people from their jobs, their places of worship, and their families. Touching a leper was forbidden by Jewish law. Yet how do we see Jesus respond?

He reached out His hand and touched the man. Before He healed him, He touched him. Jesus could have healed him with a word, a look, a thought. Instead, He reached out and touched a man that others were forbidden to touch. **Jesus knows our need and meets us there.** He recognized that the man's need to be touched was just as important as his need to be healed.

And friend, it's the same for us. Jesus recognizes our need to be touched. Maybe that comes in the form of the blessing in an appropriate, loving touch from someone else. Or perhaps it comes as Jesus meets that need by touching our hearts in a way that only we can understand. This week, my prayer is that you would recognize ways that Jesus has touched your life, your spirit, your heart. We know that He is the same today as He was yesterday and the same as He will be tomorrow. Through His Spirit, He can reach into those broken and hurting places to make them new. If only we bow our heads and allow Him to bless us with His touch.

### THINGS TO PONDER:

In what ways have you allowed yourself to be touched? Have they been healthy and appropriate? If not, have you ever made the connection between this desire and your actions? What are some ways you can meet this need for others in a safe and healthy way?

### THINGS TO PRAY:

As the Lord brings various parts of your heart to mind, what areas do you need Him to touch? Have you asked Him? Spend some time this week, head bowed, allowing Him to bless you in a way that only He can do. He is willing, sis.

Praying you feel Him today, sis,

*Rach*

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# DAY SIX

## CHOSEN

There is a classic memory we all seem to have. The memory could be a good one or a bad one, depending what side of things you landed on. For some of us, looking back to the time of Elementary School gym class brings back fond memories of laughter and fun. For others, however, the dread of being chosen last for dodgeball conjures up a fresh wave of rejection. Can you tell that I was the kid always picked last in gym class?

As a mom, I have been able to parent my kids through this same experience, and it has been interesting to hear how others recall this seemingly shared moment. I think the reason this hits us so hard is that it touches on a deeper desire we all have, the desire to

be chosen. Although the reasons we may not have been chosen in Elementary School gym class likely had to do with the fact that we were slower or less athletic, the reasons why aren't what really matters. What matters is that feeling that we all get when we aren't what someone else is looking for.

This very feeling was likely the reason I was in Washington DC in the summer of 1996. I went along with a friend's youth group to a Youth for Christ event. At that point in my life, I was not really a believer. I had grown up in a family that only darkened the doors of a church on Christmas and Easter. Church was not something we regularly talked about, and conversations about God were pushed





away from my mind. It was too hard to think of God as real, because if He was, then my life made no sense. I grew up in a situation that was at best, dark and scary. **If God was who people said He was, then there must have been something wrong with me**, to allow me to live in that scenario. I couldn't go there. But I could go to youth group where there was pizza and volleyball tournaments and people who were fun and nice to me. When the opportunity came to go on a group trip for a few days, I jumped at the chance. It wasn't about the speakers or the bands, it was about the opportunity to spend a few days away with my friends and with adults that would keep me safe.

Arriving in DC, I wasn't sure what to expect. But what I found was 26,000 teenagers that had gathered in order to learn about God's plan for their life. Over the next few days, I learned so much about who God said I was. I wish I could say there is a specific verse I remember, or even a specific speaker, but I don't remember any of that. What I do remember is feeling loved. Feeling valued. Feeling chosen. That trip changed the course of the rest of my life. I have since gone into ministry, spending my life serving others, helping them to know Christ. I will occasionally think back to that trip, and wonder where my life would be if I hadn't gone. But like many of us, my teenage years are a distant memory, one that I don't spend too much time pondering.

Until last week. Last week, God revealed something to me that made all of those Elementary School gym class moments fade away. About two years ago, I transitioned into a missions role with a global non-profit, working in the area of orphan care. My role is to oversee, resource, and equip the Spiritual Care teams in 5 countries. Although this role is amazing and an incredible opportunity to minister to children across the globe, it was a difficult decision to leave behind my previous ministry role.





## CHOSEN

I had started an amazing program reaching the lost and hurting kids in our community. That program represented the very heartbeat of what I knew God wanted me to do, and God had opened the door for me to train other people how to start similar programs everywhere from Canada to California. There was an emotional attachment to that program, so much so, that I felt like I was leaving one of my children behind. However, God began preparing my heart early for a transition. By the time the new role came around, **I was ready to be obedient in my actions, even if my heart still felt torn.** Almost two years later, I am confident that I am where I need to be. God has shown me that time and time again, how His hand has been guiding and directing me. In His grace though, this last week, God revealed something to me on a day that I was feeling so discouraged. A myriad of circumstances had left me feeling rejected and alone, something I am sure many of us go through from time to time. As I logged onto our staff meeting, I listened intently as our staff shared what God was doing across the globe. At the end of our time together, our founder started sharing about a season of ministry he and his wife had served in before starting our organization. As he shared, the details almost immediately started ringing bells in my own mind. Washington, DC. Mid-nineties. 20,000+ teens. I could hardly wrap my mind around what he was saying. Sending his wife a text, she quickly confirmed that he was in fact talking about a Youth for Christ event. Comparing dates, we both were shocked to realize that the very event that they were responsible for bringing to DC, that they organized and hosted, was the very event that I committed my life to the Lord at.

The founders of the global organization I currently work for were the ones that were responsible for bringing together the major youth event that I committed my life to Christ at. They live on the West Coast. I live on the East Coast. They only did the event for 3 years. And one of those years was a year that God met me there.

In that very moment, God revealed to me how He had chosen me for this job, long before I had ever heard of it. In fact, it was before the organization even existed. **I could see God's fingerprints on my life, moving me into the right position, in His perfect timing, to fulfill the God-given calling upon my life.** And in His grace, He revealed that to me on the very day I was experiencing a deep hurt of rejection in my life. How amazing is the God we serve?

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 1 Peter 2:9*

Sis, let me tell you something. Those words are for you, too. That doesn't mean it will always be easy. And it certainly doesn't mean we will always understand what He is doing. In fact, most of the time we won't. But there is one thing that you can hold in your heart: He calls you His special possession. And He is the one who calls you out of the darkness because He loves you. It's who He is. And chosen is who you are.

## CHOSEN

### THINGS TO PONDER:

What areas of my life have I failed to recognize the ways that God has chosen me? Chosen me for my role as a mother, a wife, a friend, in my job? How does making that connection change your perspective?

### THINGS TO PRAY:

Lord help me to see the ways that you have Chosen me, not just in my role, but as your child. Help me to realize the rejection of the world does not matter in light of being chosen as yours.

Be Blessed,

*Rach*





# DAY SEVEN

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## UNCOMFORTABLE OBEDIENCE

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I don't think I can do that.

The second the words came out of my mouth I felt a mix of both shame and relief. Ashamed that I felt relief perhaps.

Just moments before, the youth pastor of our small country church had asked me to do a favor for him. Glad to help and serve where needed, I answered him, "Sure! What can I do for you?"

He warned me that it was a big ask. Thinking through my love for people, for the teens, for the church and community, I asked again, "How can I help?"

He then went on to describe someone who needed a ride to church every week. Initially, I thought it would be easy to help because she lived in the same town I did, and we drove to the next town over for church every week anyways. Then he described where she lived. It wasn't too far away, and I knew exactly the neighborhood he was talking about. In fact, realizing where he was talking about changed the entire tone of the conversation. I immediately came up with internal excuses with why I couldn't do what he was asking of me. She will smell up my car. She likely has lice and will give it to my kids. She will want a friendship with me. I can't be seen with her. Of course I didn't say any of those things out loud. Instead, I came up with some lame excuse about my inconsistent work schedule (even though I was my own boss) and my own desire to attend church on different days or even different campuses. He of course knew none of this was true, but didn't push me. He knew it would be a big ask.

Looking back at that scenario, I realize there is so much different in how I live my life now. That was almost 19 years ago. I am no longer in the same church, the same house, the same town even.

**Who I am now, is not who I was.  
Jesus has made sure of that.**

Now, I work with some of the most desperate and vulnerable people not just in my community, but on the planet. I have such a heart for the lost and hurting and broken. The ones with lice. The ones that smell bad. The ones that no one else wants to be seen with. The ones that haven't had their lives changed by Jesus yet. Now? Those are my people.



## UNCOMFORTABLE OBEDIENCE

19 years ago, I wouldn't have consciously said that I didn't want to be around the "least of these," the marginalized of society. I would have said that it was wonderful that there were ministries out there that were called to reach them. I would have likely given money towards those ministries, and I may have even allowed myself to go on a short term missions trip to go and help "those" people. But 19 years ago, I also didn't know Jesus the way I know Him now. I certainly knew a version of Him. But I didn't know the Jesus that calls me to go with Him to the places that no one else will go. It's not that He wasn't there. He was. It was me who held Him at arms length.

I don't think my situation was that unique. I think that there are a lot of people who would say no to going to the bad part of town to pick up someone who lived there to ride along with their family to church. I think that there are a lot of people who would have cared more about how it looked then how we are commanded to do that very thing. I think there are plenty of people who would ignore God's voice in exchange for the voices of the world. Except, once you start to really know who God is, that is a voice you can't ignore. The calling to go and help those that are lost, in those broken and hurting spaces, is a calling that God places on the heart of every believer, whether you realize it or not. It's those people that Jesus died for. And sis? You and I were hurting and broken too.



Our brokenness may have looked different, but we were broken nonetheless. The very reason we came to Christ in the first place is because we recognized that there was something broken in us, and Jesus was the only one that could fix it. Yet somehow, we seem to forget that when Jesus asks us to go into the dark and take someone that same light. Over the years, the more I have gotten to know Jesus, the more I realize how important this is. In fact, it's the most important thing. Helping others to know Christ is the very reason we are still here. It's not about our desires or our reputation, or even our need to be comfortable. It's about Jesus. And telling this lost and hurting world that there is a way out of this darkness.

As we finish out this Desires of the Heart series, I want to leave you with some verses to meditate on as we think through the desire to be included. We all have the desire to be a part of God's family, and as believers, we have a responsibility to be that for each other. The role of the church, as a community of Jesus followers, is to act like Jesus in our community. We are to bring each other into God's family to help them feel loved and accepted. If we don't receive this in our own lives, not just as believers but as people, we can fall into this trap of thinking that no one wants us, no one accepts us, and we are all alone. Instead, let's look at what some of the Biblical commands are in this area. I call this the "one another's."

## UNCOMFORTABLE OBEDIENCE

**Love** one another (John 13:34 - This command occurs at least 16 times)

**Be devoted** to one another (Romans 12:10)

**Honor** one another above yourselves (Romans 12:10)

**Live in harmony** with one another (Romans 12:16)

**Build up** one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

**Accept** one another (Romans 15:7)

**Care** for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25)

**Serve** one another (Galatians 5:13)

**Bear** one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)

**Forgive** one another (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13)

**Be patient** with one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)

**Be kind** and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32)

**Consider others** better than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)

**Teach** one another (Colossians 3:16)

**Comfort** one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

**Encourage** one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

**Exhort** one another (Hebrews 3:13)

**Show hospitality** to one another (1 Peter 4:9)

**Pray** for one another (James 5:16)

Are you starting to see a theme here? These are just a few of the commands we see that address how we are to treat each other. I realize that this can be easier with some people than with others. But sis? This is what we are called to do. It isn't love one another if they smell ok. It isn't accept one another if they live in the right part of town. It isn't show hospitality when they will fit in. Those disclaimers are what we put on as conditions to our obedience. The reality? We are called to obedience even when it is uncomfortable or when it costs us something.

Obedience is rarely comfortable.

### THINGS TO PONDER:

When was the last time I served someone that was out of my "comfort zone?" How do I normally handle those kinds of situations? What is one way I can move towards someone who has a heart for "one another?"

### THINGS TO PRAY:

Lord, show me someone or somehow I can step into obedience in this area. My heart may not be willing right in this moment, but I want it to be. I want to be obedient to you in all things, including the areas that are hard for me.

Be Blessed Fam,

*Rach*



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*Rach*

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