

Praise for *Holy Guacamole*

“I planned to skim this book enough for an endorsement, but COULD NOT PUT IT DOWN! I cried, felt less alone, then challenged and excited about tapping into more joy amidst the mundane. My friend Carrie ‘gets it,’ and through her anointed gift of putting words to truth, we get a big dose of refreshment and courage to live more alive every day.”

—Lynette Lewis, TEDx speaker, pastor’s wife,
author of *Climbing the Ladder in Stilettos*

“It has been a privilege to work with Carrie (and Morgan, her husband) in church planting, campus ministry, and world mission for over two decades. During this time, I have watched Carrie lead in the same way she writes—with faith, hope, love, and a unique sense of humor. I trust that this book will deepen your walk with Christ and challenge you to see your intrinsic value to God and His church. I am thankful for her voice.”

—Steve Murrell, President of Every Nation Churches & Ministries

“Carrie Stephens uses humor and grace to help readers see themselves how Jesus sees them—messy, human, and oh-so-valuable. If you’re looking for a whole lot of encouragement—and a whole lot of laughter—grab this book, a notebook and a pen, and soak up the grace.”

—Erin MacPherson, author of 11 books including
Put the Disciple into Discipline

“This book is vulnerable, authentic, powerful, and hilarious. Each chapter is full of relatable Bible exposition, personal experience, and references for just about everything. Carrie puts them together in just the right portions, keeping her reader hooked as she captures life in all its beautiful messiness. Read it and draw encouragement from the fact that you too are *Holy Guacamole*.”

—Joseph Bonifacio, Lead Pastor of Victory Katipunan,
Director of Every Nation Campus - Philippines

“*Holy Guacamole* puts a fun spin on the real complexities of marriage, motherhood, and ministry. Carrie takes readers on a hilariously transparent journey, making space for the frustrations and joys that are sometimes hard to articulate. Read this book if, like us, you’re navigating all of the weird places of life’s transitions and trying to discover where you fit in again.”

—Terry and Ashley Williams, Owners of The League
Gym & Serial Entrepreneurs

“Through absurd yet relatable metaphors, this book is filled with humor as fresh as a bowl of tableside guacamole. You won’t even realize how many invaluable life lessons you’ve learned after you’ve spent the majority of this book rolling on the floor laughing. All jokes aside, if you admire an author with unparalleled humility and obedience to God, you need to read this.”

—Adrian Crawford, Founder of Engage Church
and The New Rules Collective

“Carrie gives a fully transparent, abundantly humorous, and extremely relatable account of her journey in life and leadership. I found myself going back and forth between laughing along and nodding my head with many of her experiences and revelations. If you’ve ever felt like an afterthought in God’s greater plan, or like your life is too mundane to matter, this book will bless you with a better truth.”

—Seth Trimmer, Lead Pastor Grace City Church

“So much of this book resonated with deep longings of my heart that have been modestly tucked and back-burnered by the often misrepresented expectations that surround womanhood, leadership, and motherhood—especially in the Church. Carrie’s words cut right into the heart of what women in the church have all been thinking yet were too afraid, or perhaps ashamed, to voice aloud. Her words are spot on—bold, unapologetic, yet also saturated with humility and grace.

As a 3rd-row pew observer of pastor’s wives for years, I always peered over at the back of First Lady heads, assuming they were surely walking Proverbs 31 women, carrying the entire ‘How to be a Woman of God’ playbook in their back pocket. Carrie debunks this in a way I never knew I needed. I’m grateful to see her humanness connect with my humanness. In *Holy Guacamole*, a part of me exhales, knowing that as women of God, we are all just being carried daily by the grace of Jesus. We are the *Holy Guacamole*—not the side rice and beans—we are worthy, invited, desired, and enough in Christ!”

—Tania Woods, Founder & Editor of Inkfully.com
and the Inkfully Podcast

Holy Guacamole

A GLORIOUS DISCOVERY
OF YOUR UNDENIABLE WORTH

CARRIE STEPHENS

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DEDICATION

For everyone seeking a way through.

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INTRODUCTIONS ARE NICE, RIGHT?



HELLO, MY NAME IS CARRIE AND I AM A SECRET DONUT HOARDER

When one of my sons was a toddler, his temperament was something along the lines of “unexpectedly unhinged.” One afternoon he awoke from a nap desperate for something. He had no words back then, just strange babble that made no sense to my husband or me.

We frantically tried to figure out what he needed. We got him his favorite blanket. He continued screaming. We held him and spoke soothingly to him. He became more hysterical. We made him a sippy cup of chocolate milk. Full-out shrieking ensued, and he swatted the cup out of my hand like it was poison.

The situation had clearly moved from trying to dire.

My husband, Morgan, looked at me and said, “Good Lord, what’s wrong with him?”

“I don’t know,” I said. “But as bad as it is to deal with him out here, it’s got to be way worse inside his head.”

Morgan nodded and said, “Ah, yes. *It comes from within.*”

Indeed, it does.

As all of my children have now progressed through the stages of early childhood and are currently climbing the steep path through puberty, trying their wings in the teenage season of preadulthood, I often think of that day. Teens are as capable of instability as nonverbal preschoolers. But it’s not only my

kids who are unhinged. As I counsel people in our church who face impossible situations, I see my two-year-old son's desperation in their eyes. When I roll down my window to greet the woman flying a sign on the corner, I hear my child's longing in her voice.

We are all that inconsolable child sometimes. We can't quite explain what's happening in our inner world. We are desperate for something, but we don't always know what we really need. And we frequently lash out at the people trying to help us.

In the pages of this book, you will find some of my thoughts on the challenges of life, as well as the kind of hope God offers us in the midst of it all. I hope that when you find yourself in these stories, you will also feel the presence of God and His endless love for you. Christ is always with you, you know. He is the breath in your lungs and the light dawning just when you need it most.

I also hope you will laugh as you read, because while God's love for you is serious business, none of us should take ourselves too seriously. And for goodness' sake, drink some chocolate milk and eat a few donuts while you read (personally, I always order a dozen hot donut holes and pretend they're for everyone to share, but then I eat them all because the YOLO donut life feels like winning).

We'll get to the winning part later. For now, I really need to tell you about my stupid refrigerator.

CHAPTER 1

FROM THE WELL TO THE ICE MAKER

Embracing the Truth about Our Lives

ONE TIME MY REFRIGERATOR BROKE. I LITERALLY
DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO! I JUST MOVED.

TOM HAVERFORD, *PARKS AND RECREATION*

I'm just a girl, standing in front of her refrigerator, asking Jesus to fix it.

My refrigerator broke into pieces when my parents came over for dinner one night. My dad opened the refrigerator door, and a shard about the size of my hand broke off one of the shelves and fell to the floor. We just stood there and stared at it, pondering the possibility that this shattered shelf was a prophetic signal.

Thus says the Lord, "You cannot handle the weight of your life. . . ."

Indeed, nothing says, "Mom, Dad, your worst fears are true. I'll never be a fully functioning adult. You will never stop worrying about me. Not ever," quite like having a piece of a major appliance in your home fly out and land at your dad's feet.

"Uh, I think you've got a problem here," my dad said and winked at me mischievously.

This lovely father-daughter moment reminded me a lot of the day the previous summer when he and I used an old

dish towel, six inches of duct tape, and a piece of plastic wrap to plug up the dispenser for my fridge's ice maker so it would stop leaking water all over my kitchen floor. I rewarded him afterward with a plate of cookies.

It's a good thing that refrigerators aren't such a *crucial* part of our everyday lives here in the Western world, you know? It is a *blessing* that Old Silver (as I've so lovingly named it) keeps breaking so my dad and I can have these precious moments together watching YouTube repair videos. It means I can say things like, "Hold on a second, kids, this cute photo of Grandpa and me next to Old Silver is destined for the 'gram" (#foreverlove #daddysgirl #bonding #theday sarelongbuthe years areshort).

This new father-daughter teamwork thing is possible because after living eleven hundred miles away from us for most of my adult life, my mom and dad moved into our neighborhood in the spring of 2017. People often either cringe or sigh when I mention this.

I suppose it could be challenging to have your parents move in around the corner right when you hit your midlife crisis. I mean, I've watched every episode of *Everybody Loves Raymond*, and I can see how it might be particularly sticky for my husband, Morgan, to have his in-laws so close. Thankfully, my family is still in awe that someone as amazing as Morgan would voluntarily attach himself to me with only death as a possible way out of the arrangement. When Morgan called my dad in November of 2000 and told him he planned to propose, my dad had one response: "She's all yours." Morgan has reached sainthood in my family for loving me and enduring my nonsense.

If asked, my parents could probably tell you that I wasn't

always as easygoing as I am now that I'm in full-blown midlife crisis mode, with an eroding refrigerator and a helter-skelter hormonal balance. Growing up, I was a moody and complicated girl who was frequently disappointed when her fantastical expectations of life never quite materialized. I was a delight to be around when puberty rode in like a Mack truck without brakes. I had an eye for designer everything—such a joy to parents on a “beer budget,” as my dad put it. However, I gave up alcohol altogether a couple of decades ago, and I like to think I've become stable and easy to please in my forties.

(I like to think it, but that doesn't make it true.)

What *is* true is that when my parents moved into our neighborhood, our lives got a massive upgrade. My mom takes care of our family like Jesus Himself has given her the keys to our happiness. She fills in when we need dinner or another kid chauffeur, and she cheers at my kids' baseball games like they're one game away from the World Series. My dad fixed my son's bike seventy-eight times in nine months. He also helped me replace the broken handle on my car door and build shelves above my washer and dryer. Dad installed cabinet hardware in my kitchen and bathrooms. He's oiled squeaky hinges and fiddled with garage doors to literally make our lives run more smoothly. Of course, I already mentioned the MacGyver ice maker fix. I estimate that my dad has saved us a few thousand dollars in repair and handyman bills since my parents relocated to Texas.

However, even the best parents in the world can't fix everything or pick up enough slack to make the hardest parts of life easy.

So, on that accursed night when Old Silver broke apart, once the fajita platters were empty and my parents headed

home, I held the shard of the shelf in my hand and stared into the depths of the broken beast. Not the bright, young stainless fridge she once was, her quality of life had been declining the past couple of years. A massive crack split the shelf holding the milk down its middle. Reaching into the vegetable bins had become akin to a game of *Fear Factor* since the interior lights went out: you might get slimed. . .or worse. Without the ability to regulate temperature, Old Silver had been accidentally freezing the lettuce regularly. I'd called repairmen twice to keep her up and running, but now I regretted spending the money. Old Silver had forgotten her God-ordained calling to keep our perishables cool, not to mention her completely incontinent ice maker. Clearly she longed for greener pastures, or maybe just to be retired to the garage to serve our family as a water and soda fridge.

All of this is how I came to be a girl (okay, middle-aged woman) standing in front of her refrigerator, asking Jesus to fix the shelf and the ice maker and every other broken thing I've been ignoring. If I'm going to ask for a miracle, I might as well go for glory.

ON THE EIGHTH DAY, GOD DID NOT MAKE DUCT TAPE

All this broken appliance talk has me thinking about the day Jesus sat down at a well in Samaria, and a Samaritan woman showed up. The refrigerator could pretty much be considered the modern well, after all. Everyone needed the local well in the ancient Middle East, just as all the people in our house need Old Silver for life-sustaining supplies like Topo Chico¹ and Gatorade. The story begins with this:

¹ If you aren't familiar with Topo Chico, which is the most amazing sparkling water in the world, I pity you. If you hate sparkling water, I have already shed tears that you could lose so much joy so effortlessly in life.

*A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." . . . The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. . . . Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water."
(John 4:7, 9–10, 13–15 ESV)*

Then Jesus told her everything about her life, how she had never found a man who would be faithful to her. He revealed His true identity as the Messiah, which stands out as a rare moment of definitive truth in the stories about Jesus. All this happened because she showed up at a well, the place a woman in ancient times had to go to get what she needed to survive another day.

Similarly, peering into my broken refrigerator has exposed all the broken pieces in my soul and in the world. I'm suddenly aware of all sorts of things I need God to fix. There are other broken appliances in our house; our dryer is on the fritz, and the dishwasher keeps filling up with mold. But my friends also need healing, our country feels more broken every time I turn on the news, and I have a whole host of insecurities I'm trying to sort out.

The question demanding answers is this: What do we do with our brokenness when we're forced to hold it in our hands? Where should I put the shard of the shelf that fell out? What kind of glue works in freezing temperatures? I'd like to read the back of our tube of magic glue for instructions, but my reading vision stinks now that I've breached forty. My old lady eyes can't tell the difference between the tube of glue and the eye cream I keep in the bathroom. I'm terrified of mixing the two up someday. How awful would it be if I got eye cream and glue mixed up?²

The trail from the ice to the glue to the eye cream leads me to the truth about what's happening: Jesus is here, by my broken refrigerator, to tell me everything about myself—just like He did with the woman at the well. I am an awful lot like her and like my refrigerator: broken and in need of help. I have been gluing myself back together for years with creams and serums and some weird thing that pokes me with a dozen little needles so that the lotion can “penetrate and erase” the fine lines around my eyes. I still look relatively shiny on the outside, but when you open me up and take a good look, there are parts of me that are slightly cracked and not as functional as they ought to be.

When I think of my friends and neighbors, I realize there are all sorts of things holding us together. We are each a conglomeration of soul glues, dysfunctional duct tapes, emotional bungees, and spiritual straps. We go through our days seeing ads on television that promise we would be happy and everyone would love us *if only* we could afford to buy this one thing. We listen to the pithy advice of our culture, which promises

² Although this may be a way to go viral on YouTube and promote this book. Alexa, file the idea under “desperate book launch ideas.”

us that *if only* we could achieve a little more success, then the inadequacy that is slowly crushing us would dissipate. We tape up all our fears and insecurities and begin to believe the hardness of life would flee *if only* we looked a little more like supermodels. *If only* we could each find a spouse exactly like the dreamy (albeit fictional) character on-screen. *If only* we had friends who understood and loved our true selves. Our brokenness is playing hide-and-seek behind all the if onlys, and until we let it safely come out of hiding, we will spend our days chasing another easy fix to a truly cosmic problem.

While the world continually suggests we muster up one more thing to become the people we really want to be, more hustle can't give new life to my old refrigerator or bring back the glorious skin of my twenties. Despite what social media's curated posts and "inspirational" memes may declare, more hustle and better hype can't bring peace in the midst of the storms of life, cure the sicknesses of our societies, or teach us to love one another as Christ has loved us. The quest to keep our brokenness securely taped behind a shiny exterior of performance and perfection has tricked us into thinking we can create a life for ourselves apart from our Creator God.

Besides, the hustle is exhausting, isn't it?

In front of my refrigerator with Jesus, I see He's offering all of us something far better than hustle. Come and see this Christ, who can tell us everything about our lives. He has living water that can quench our thirst for an end to the hustle for greatness and significance.

We don't need tape or glue to hold it all together. We don't have to manufacture or birth another ounce of self-love to make it through the day. Contrary to every self-help book out there, I want to tell you the most profound truth: *You can*

never save yourself through self-improvement. Self-improvement may help you grow and develop in your relationships and as a leader, but it can't make your eternity more secure. Your joy and fulfillment are not contingent upon you "doing you" in the most real and glorious way you can find. God has far more beautiful plans for us than improving our self-image so we will feel more confident and self-assured.

Jesus doesn't offer us access to better water just so we won't be so thirsty for love and approval all the time. He's offering us a kind of love and belonging that will release springs of living water inside us so we will never thirst again.

CONCEALER, CONTOURS, AND GOOD FOUNDATION

As with the Samaritan woman, our encounters with Jesus force questions upon us. *Can we relinquish control of our lives to God and trust Him? How do we embrace our imperfections without losing all sense of our value? Will everything really be okay if we let go of our identity safety nets and backup plans?*

I've been asking myself these things ever since I turned thirty-five. That was when it became apparent that for all my life I had blissfully assumed old people spawned somehow from the dust of the earth—and I'd been wrong. I also realized that every day is for keeps. If I don't cling to Jesus in this time and in this place, I will miss out on all He has for me here and possibly end up somewhere I don't want to be in twenty years.

Before my midthirties I never looked at a wrinkled face and thought, *Jesus and I will be there together one day.* I was pretentious enough to believe I had some control over time, I guess. I would stay young forever. I had never faced any aging problems before, so why would I have them in the future? The

gray-haired people I saw everywhere were lovely, but they were nothing like me. I was going from glory to glory! I couldn't fathom a day when I would be staring at the roots of my hair and realizing they were no longer dark blond.³ Future regrets weren't even in the realm of possibility.

Nevertheless, as that great prophet Smash Mouth taught us: the years start coming at you whether you like it or not—and they don't stop coming just because you want to stay forever young. My ninety-year-old grandmother tells me this is truer than I can fathom.

Every middle-aged person got here the same way I did. Every gray-haired lady got here just as my grandmother did. One day at a time. We were all young and smooth and toned(ish) at some point. Once upon a time, we didn't need fish oil to help with achy hips or collagen powder smoothies to aid our digestion. We didn't need this much concealer or highlighter. Good grief, we used to slather on some Noxzema, rinse it off, and walk out of the house looking like Jennifer Aniston (sort of).

My biggest problem, though, isn't that I need so many creams and serums to offset the signs of time. It's that I can't remember to do it all every day. I need alarms on my phone and strings on my fingers to help me remember the fish oil, my smoothie, and my makeup. Forgetfulness creates an awful lot of turbulence in life.

A few weeks ago I was scheduled to speak in our church on the same weekend my oldest son had his championship baseball tournament, and I was hosting a separate event for the church later in the day. I was determined to slay it all, to

³ I keep saying I'll quit coloring my hair and go gray completely one day soon. I keep saying it, and yet I keep not doing it. Procrastination is the shield of fear and insecurity, I suppose.

not be incompetent like my refrigerator in any way.

I woke up that Sunday morning, grabbed my coffee, and spent some time reading my Bible. Then I fixed the kids some toast and juice and gave them instructions about proper church attire. My kids act as if they've never heard my spiel about not wearing ratty T-shirts with holes in them and that pajama pants are unacceptable in public. I explain every Sunday that we will not show up at church looking like the People of Walmart.⁴

Once I had reprogrammed everyone for the day, I took my shower, got dressed, and started doing my hair and makeup.

That's when all the children wanted to be in my room and bond with me as they retold *Peanuts* comic strips, discussed the batting averages of MLB players I'd never heard of, and analyzed every movie we'd ever seen as a family. I think one of them wanted to discuss the progression of United States foreign affairs from the Cold War to the present day and how that has affected the free market. Or maybe he just asked why I don't buy Pop-Tarts very often. I'm not sure.

All I wanted was to get my eyeliner on straight. I had a cat eye on the right side, but the left eye was more racoonish. I begged my children to leave so I could focus. They stared at me, motionless. Morgan kicked them out because he is a good husband, and also because I would be ministering God's Word later that morning, so hearing me shriek about eyeliner and the free market economy was a little scary for him.

I finished my hair and makeup in peaceful silence. Praise be to Jesus.

⁴ Until I became a parent, I had no idea personal hygiene was a learned behavior and that I could produce humans with massive deficiencies in adhering to acceptable cultural standards of cleanliness.

We all rolled out the front door a little later. After I turned out of the neighborhood, a tragic realization crept from the back of my consciousness. *I forgot to put on concealer, foundation, and powder.*

I looked in the mirror, and there was my face, wearing some blush and heavy, caked-on eye makeup, but nothing else. There was nothing to cover and soften my charming laugh lines, the scars on my forehead, or my wicked awesome crow's-feet.

No big deal, right? I was going to be speaking on vulnerability and the courageous Christian life. My face could be a sermon illustration. No more masks! Real life! "How brave of her," everyone would say. I would reach heights of epic vulnerability in the Western world. Brené Brown could write a book about me.

Instead, I turned around and drove back home and slathered every bit of makeup I own on my face. Perhaps this seems shallow to you. Maybe you think this makeup of mine is akin to the duct tape that holds my refrigerator's ice dispenser in place. Perhaps it is a little bit. However, the simple truth is that I like how I look with my makeup, and although I am willing to be brave and vulnerable, I suppose I am also a little vain. It would have distracted me all morning, knowing I was walking around with a naked face. I wouldn't have felt courageous; I would have felt exposed.

Jesus said we would know a tree by its fruit. As I tap-tapped the foundation under my wrinkly old lady eyes, only peace, love, and hope bloomed in my soul. I heard God laughing at me the same way I sometimes laugh when my kids do something that proves their unique quiriness and slight immaturity. The makeup wasn't holding me together, and I knew it. God had bound me up in Himself, and it brought Him great

joy to tease me a little about how I'd flubbed my morning.

Using duct tape or makeup isn't the root problem we face as humans. Just as the woman at the well would still need water every day of her life, we need physical things to help us function and cope. The battle we must fight is a spiritual one against the drive within us to look for salvation and rescue somewhere other than the Gospel. Surrendering to God is the only way forward.

Here's how another Bible version translates what Jesus told the woman at the well:

"It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship. God is sheer being itself—Spirit. Those who worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration." (John 4:23–24 MSG)

What does this mean for you and for me, exactly? First, it means our success as Christians has nothing to do with developing a better version of ourselves. Second, it tells us that if we are thirsty and falling apart, what we need is to stand in God's presence and fully engage in worshipping Him with all we are and all we have.

THIRSTY WORSHIP

Lives of worship require us to march into the center of our neediness, scrape off all the tape, and chip away the glue that

we've trusted to hold us together. Once we've set all that stuff aside, we can bring the full weight of our need for rescue into God's presence. Without our false ways of saving ourselves blocking us from Him, we can see who He really is as we raise our hands and say, "God, You know everything about me. You see the cracks and the broken places that scare me. They don't scare You, though. Right here, in this place where I am a mess and where my imperfection smacks of my incompetence, I choose to set aside my insecurity and lift my hands in surrender to You. Because, for some ridiculous reason, You chose me and You love me just as I am."

To worship God in truth, we will have to remember all the things that are most true about God *and* ourselves. I've already started a list for us, but feel free to add to it:

- We are limited (Psalm 103:15–16); God is infinite (Revelation 1:8).
- We are made in God's image (Genesis 1:27); God is love (1 John 4:16).
- We are His beloved children (1 John 3:1–2); He has adopted us into His family (Ephesians 1:5).
- God is a King who cares for the oppressed (Psalm 9:9; Luke 4:18–19; Revelation 19:16).
- God is a seeker of lost people (Luke 19:10) and a healer of broken souls (Psalm 147:3).
- God is like a mother hen who gathers her chicks under her wings (Luke 13:34).
- God is a Father who would send His Son into a dangerous place for the sake of saving those who could never save themselves (John 3:16; Romans 8:32; 1 John 4:9).

- God is a Brother who would willingly die so that His brothers and sisters could be reunited with their Father (Romans 8:29; Hebrews 2:10–15).
- God is a Spirit who comes as a helper and a comforter to empower us to live for the sake of something that is greater than ourselves (John 16:7; Romans 8:26–28; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11).

To worship God in spirit and in truth, we must kneel under the weight of our own need for salvation and rescue, hold out our hands, and receive whatever God offers us today—even if His provision doesn't make sense (kind of like using duct tape and a rag to repair a broken refrigerator). Sometimes worship looks like praying for a fractured friendship, blessing our enemies with baked goods, thanking God for even the bitter seasons of life, or embracing and owning our failures by accepting mercy and asking for a second chance.

Much about God is mysterious and hazy from a human perspective. I'm as skilled at understanding God as my refrigerator is at comprehending me. Somewhere inside that massive stainless steel box are electronic parts that are trying very hard to give me what I want. I know that if Old Silver were a sentient creature, she would want very much to reach her full potential. All the fixes and repairs are only temporary, though, because no refrigerator has eternal life. Eternal warranties do not exist in the world of appliances. The maker of that appliance will give you a year, just in case you get a lemon. After that, you and your pretty icebox are on your own.

That's not how it works with our Maker, however. He doesn't offer any warranties, because He doesn't make any lemons. He knows we all have some malfunctioning parts, and

He doesn't want us to try to fix them on our own. Refrigerators are temporal, *but we are eternal*. Our small attempts to hold ourselves together and save ourselves from all the broken parts of our souls will never quench our deepest thirst for the God who has a plan to repair this broken world—which is a good thing, since God longs to quench our thirst and invite us to join Him in the work.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman that facing the truth about her broken relationships was the key to finding the Messiah. Essentially, He was saying, “You need love, but no one will ever love you as I can.” He wasn't offering her a better husband; He was presenting her a chance at transformation through a deep knowledge of who He was and what He would one day do on the cross.

Likewise, as we press into knowing Jesus and entrust Him with our imperfections and weaknesses, God's presence and power will transform us into God's holy people. But being made holy doesn't equate to being perfectly pure and obeying all the rules. After all, God called the Sabbath holy, and it never did a thing to raise itself above the other days of the week. God sets holy things apart because *He has a distinct purpose for them*. Likewise, Jesus has rescued you and made you holy because God's will is for you to be a fountain of living water. Any other kind of life will leave you parched and dry, thirsty for more.

Jesus didn't come to make us good enough. He came to tell us we could stop trying so hard and that we could *rest in His goodness*. There's not a tube of eye cream or a roll of tape in the whole universe that can come close to offering us what Jesus offers us.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28–30 NKJV)

The Samaritan woman came to a well for water, but in the end, she left her pot behind because of her life-changing encounter with Jesus. She ran back to her community and beckoned them all to come and meet a man she thought may be the Christ.

Meeting Jesus by a well or a refrigerator or in your car during rush hour can change you from a lonely soul who goes to get what she needs when no one is around into a person running toward your community with fresh hope and good news for the world.

God isn't looking for perfect people with massive influence who are confident and secure in every way. He's just looking for thirsty hearts that don't want to cover up their need any longer; He's looking for people who are ready to let Him fill their cup with His holiness.

In the following chapters, we will look at some of the specific ways we are often tempted to try to save ourselves and all the ways God has promised He is the best answer to our troubles. We will examine why God says we can be confident in who He is and how much He loves us. We will learn how amazing He already thinks we are—no hustle necessary. No matter how many pieces are falling off us today, Jesus is here to make all things new and to give us rest.

I only wish I could say the same about Old Silver. Because, seriously, the milk is about to drop through that crack.