

*Praying  
for  
Girls*

**ASKING GOD  
FOR THE THINGS THEY NEED MOST**

*Teri Lynne Underwood*



**BETHANY HOUSE PUBLISHERS**

*a division of Baker Publishing Group*  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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Published by Bethany House Publishers  
11400 Hampshire Avenue South  
Bloomington, Minnesota 55438  
www.bethanyhouse.com

Bethany House Publishers is a division of  
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Printed in the United States of America

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Control Number: 2017936457

ISBN 978-0-7642-1960-3

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Cover design by Dan Pitts

Cover photography by Getty Images / Emely

Author represented by the literary agency of Books & Such

17 18 19 20 21 22 23      7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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For Casiday Hope,  
who has graciously been the test subject  
as I learned to pray for her,  
and who has been the bright light  
of hope and healing God used  
to remind me of His deepest love.

# *Contents*

1. The Girl in the Mirror 11
- Part 1: Prayers for Her Identity 15**
  2. Image-Bearer 17
  3. Loved 25
  4. Known 33
  5. Accepted 40
- Part 2: Prayers for Her Heart 47**
  6. Pure 49
  7. Kept 57
  8. Content 65
  9. Undivided 73
- Part 3: Prayers for Her Mind 83**
  10. Stayed 85
  11. Renewed 93
  12. Guarded 102
  13. Peaceful 111

**Part 4: Prayers for Her Relationships 121**

- 14. Humility 123
- 15. Wisdom 132
- 16. Generosity 141
- 17. Love 149

**Part 5: Prayers for Her Purpose 155**

- 18. Salvation 157
- 19. Sanctification 166
- 20. Steadfast 174
- 21. Share 183
  
- 22. A Little Bit of Coffee and a Whole  
Lot of Jesus 191
- 23. P.S. A Note to the Mom Who Is  
Struggling 195

Acknowledgments 199

Notes 203



## *The Girl in the Mirror*

**C**rooked teeth, bottle-cap glasses, and frizzy hair. That's what she saw in the mirror. It didn't matter that she'd long since had her braces removed, gotten contacts, and learned to style her thick hair. The mirror in the bathroom might have shown the girl she was now, but the mirror in her heart could only see what she'd been.

Even now, that girl occasionally looks in the mirror and sees the twelve-year-old version of herself. I know, because I'm that girl. And maybe you are too.

Oh sure, we've grown up to be wives and moms, and we are supposed to have it all together, but deep down we have moments when we're still the awkward tween wondering if we'll ever really need a bra and if a boy will ever think we're pretty.

The other day I walked past the bathroom my sixteen-year-old daughter and I share. She hadn't closed the door all the way and I could see her pushed close to the mirror, scrutinizing every detail of her face. The look in her eyes revealed what she saw—not pretty enough, not skinny enough, not smart enough,

not anything enough. My heart ached for her because I know what it is to feel the weight of *not enough*.

Sometimes the hardest part of being a girl mom is understanding all the self-doubts and insecurities my daughter faces. I used to believe that would be the easiest part, it would be what connected us. But more often than not, it doesn't. Far more than I ever dreamed, I'm right there with her—stuck in my own pool of fears and insecurities.

### Dress-Up and Growing Up

Like most little girls, Casiday loved playing dress-up. The Tinkerbell costume she had when she was three was nearly threadbare when I finally packed it away. A big trunk of clothes enabled her to be every sort of character from cowgirl to cheerleader. She had an arsenal of personas from weather girl to rock star.

Her desire to play with clothes and try new styles hasn't diminished over the years. (And truthfully, she might get that from her momma.) We Underwood girls love trying out the latest hair and makeup techniques and chatting about the newest fashion trends. But the truth is, my discussions with Casiday about clothes and makeup are never the real conversations. When she asks if her outfit is cute, she's really asking if I think she's pretty. When she wonders if a new eyeliner technique will make her eyes look bigger, she's really wondering if she's enough the way she is.

The tears over a shirt that doesn't look right are less about the shirt and more about herself. So often, she feels like she doesn't look "right." During those moments when she is most distraught, I have the opportunity to speak truth over her. Sometimes, she will fall into my arms and let me hug her and stroke her hair. But far more often, she withdraws. And that's

become my cue to pray. Rather than trying to reason with her, I've learned to reach out to the God who loves her far more and far better than I do.

I didn't always know to do this. When she was younger, prayer was less my first response and more my last resort. But as she's gotten older and I've, hopefully, gotten wiser, I find my words to her are far less important than His words about her.

## **The Gift of Prayer**

The girl in my mirror isn't all she imagined she'd be at age twelve or even at age thirty. Now in my mid-forties, I sometimes wonder if what I do matters, if I'm making a difference, if I'll ever do something big. The struggle to find significance and purpose doesn't end when we leave adolescence, does it?

With every season of our daughters' lives, new questions and fears arrive. We look at our girls and we know the journey is just beginning. We want to protect them from the heartaches we faced and guide them to trust the Lord with all the worries and insecurities life will bring. And so, we pray. Or at least we try to. Let's face it, there are times when prayer is overwhelming. We wonder what to say, how to say it, and if God will hear and respond to our prayers for our girls. I'm well acquainted with those feelings and uncertainties. I also know how easy it is to get distracted when I'm praying or get lost trying to find just the right words to share my heart with God. But there's good news, friends! We don't have to be perfect pray-ers, nor do our prayers have to be perfect, because the God who hears us and loves us—and our girls—is perfect and perfectly able.

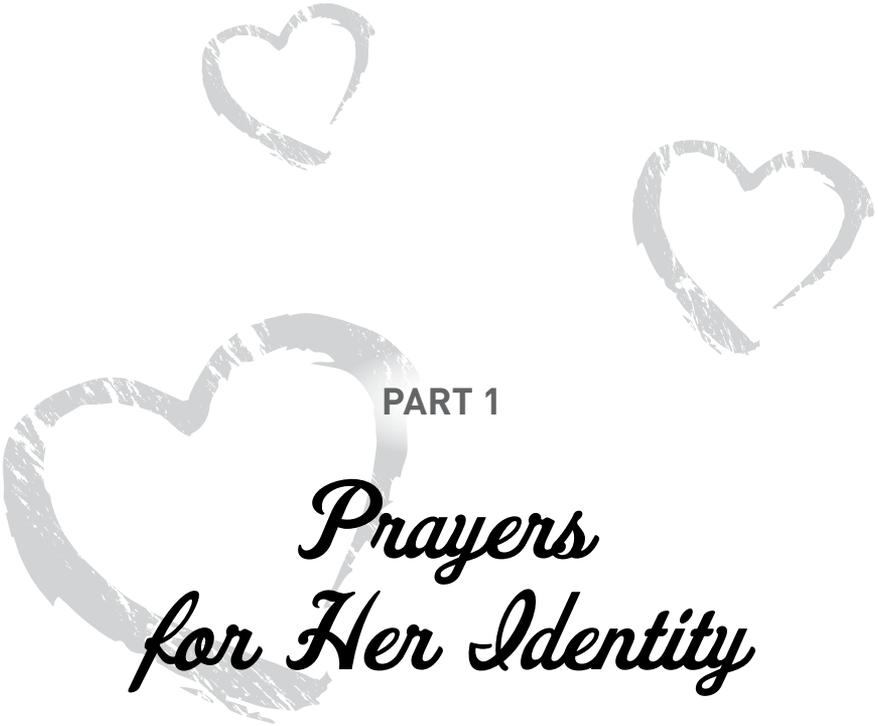
E. M. Bounds wrote, "Prayer projects faith on God, and God on the world. Only God can move mountains, but faith and prayer move God."<sup>1</sup> This book, full of prayers based on Scripture, is an invitation to move the heart and hand of God.

Perhaps you are in the middle of a difficult time with your daughter. Remember, prayer is a battleground where we fight *for* our children. Cry out on her behalf. Beg for wisdom. Admit your hurts and fears and concerns. There will be days when you can't even form the words to make a prayer. It's okay! Those are the times when the Holy Spirit makes sense of our groanings (Romans 8:26).

We pray because He is able to accomplish more than we could ever ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

Our girls are growing up in a culture radically different from the one many of us did. I recently read that this generation is the first to have no concept of life without Wi-Fi and social media.<sup>2</sup> As digital natives,<sup>3</sup> technology shapes almost every aspect of their lives and is a key factor in how they view themselves and the world. But, even with this new reality, we moms still have the privilege and responsibility of encouraging our daughters to view life through the Word of God. Praying with and for them is one of our most vital roles—and greatest gifts. The rest of this book is designed to help you know how and what to pray for your girl in five key areas of her life: Identity, Heart, Mind, Relationships, and Purpose.

Feel free to jump from chapter to chapter, based on what season you are in with your girl. Scribble in the margins and write out the verses. Use this book as a starting point for praying for your daughter. Add to the prayers and write your own. Spend time reading over the verses and share them with your girl. Talk with her about what you're learning and how you're praying. (I've added some ideas for this at the end of each chapter.) And don't be surprised if you find yourself praying some of these for yourself. After all, before you were a mom, you were a girl too.



PART 1

# *Prayers for Her Identity*

God declares who we are in Him. He calls us chosen, beloved, precious, the apple of His eye. And yet, our girls struggle to believe these descriptors, listening instead to the words culture assigns to them. Our prayers can be the impetus our girls need to walk confidently in their identity in Christ, providing them with a solid foundation upon which they can stand when all of life is unsteady and uncertain.

In this part of the book, we'll explore four key aspects of our identity in Christ. As moms, we can help our girls walk in the truth of who they are and why they matter. By encouraging them to embrace the fullness of their identities in Christ, we equip them to stand firm and live with confidence as children of God.