



Hallie dismantles our faulty expectations of motherhood and replaces them with an understanding of who you are in Christ and who *He* calls you to be. You will find real hope in what God defines as faithful and good and be robustly affirmed that *You're Still a Good Mom*.

Interested in the whole book?  
Select your preferred book seller:

[MOODY PUBLISHERS](#) [AMAZON](#) [APPLE BOOKS](#) [BARNES & NOBLE](#) [GOOGLE PLAY](#) [CHRISTIANBOOK.COM](#) [WALMART](#) [TARGET](#) 

# Contents

Introduction: Am I a Good Mom?	9
1. Reaching for Forbidden Fruit	15
2. Weak Women	27
3. Tree of Life	39
4. God with Us	53
5. Lack and Limitation	63
6. Repentance and Repair	79
7. All Who Labor	97
8. Speak Truth	113
9. Compassion	127
10. Momming like Martha	141
11. Playing House	153
12. Well Done	167
Acknowledgments	179



# Reaching for Forbidden Fruit

Can I be real with you? Mother's Day has been a struggle for me at times. I do wake up with the full intention to soak up every minute and relish that I get to be a mom to my three kids. But I also meet this particular day with some impossible expectations. I used to think it was because I was being selfish or high-maintenance, but it's not so much that I had a checklist of things in mind like getting breakfast in bed, opening the perfect Mother's Day gift, or even receiving the most adorably written card (although, these are for sure welcome offerings). It's more about the expectations of affirmation. Mother's Day is the one day I don't have to feel like a failure.

It's the day when all motherhood failures are forgotten, and only the sacrifices and successes are remembered. However, the problem is I wake up with the mentality that I deserve all of this, that I'm owed it, and that I *need* to hear more of "Thank you" and "We see you." It's the day I await the confirmation I've been subconsciously longing

for: that the work I've done and the sacrifices I've made have finally made me worthy. More than wanting to be noticed and thanked, I find myself entering this day aching to finally feel that I'm enough.

Have you felt this before? These thoughts can surface at any time of any day, but the litmus test for me that tends to indicate I've been harboring these suppressed feelings is the Mother's Day

**I forget that even  
on Mother's Day—a  
day I confuse for *my*  
glory—it's still all  
about God.**

sermon. It's a good sermon every year and always something I agree with wholeheartedly. In fact, it's one I'd love on any other day, but with my impossible expectations, I cry every year. I find that if the words hold more "how to" and less "thanks for," I feel that, once again, I've failed to measure

up. That even on the day when I should finally feel like enough, I still don't. I forget that even on Mother's Day, a day I confuse for *my* glory, it's still all about God.

I know my family loves me and is thankful for me. I know I'm appreciated. It simply boils down to this: In my most honest and ugliest confession, I want affirmation in the highest regard because this would be evidence of my being worthy. Although I feel this on many other days, I'm faced head-on with the fullness of this ugly truth on the day I think is an excuse for it. If you've ever felt this way, just know you aren't alone and that we also aren't the first.

## WEEDING OUT THE LIES

Eve isn't a mother when we first meet her in the garden. She didn't have constant demands from tiny people, a cluttered or dated

home, stretch marks, or days when she didn't know how she could do it again tomorrow. Her life was pretty much perfect. She had no pain, no shame, no one for comparison to tell her where she fell short, and no toil. Her work was always fruitful and ever successful. She had purpose, a clear calling, an unquestionably faithful husband, and she could walk and talk with God in this perfect home called Eden. Yet, the desire for more was possible.

In a brand-new world, where there was no question whose hand had created it, all glory went to God. It was clear that nothing was gained, achieved, or given except *through* God and *because of* God. No one could claim anything as having come from their own hands, especially worth and fulfillment. The world was His and everything in it, bringing Him glory and declaring Him alone worthy of praise. And this is the world I think we should start with because there's something about the story in the garden that boils humanity down to its core, revealing our most telling desires by removing all other distractions or possible causes for blame. No messes, no illness, no heartache, just a quiet, tranquil garden. It puts us right where we, as moms, think life would be perfect. And it was—for a while.

Next, we need to look at the serpent because this story and our story would not be the same without him. Scripture tells us in John 8:44 that “he was a murderer from the beginning” and also the father of lies. However, he is not the only guilty party. It's revealing of Satan's schemes that the serpent starts this famous conversation off with an outright lie in the form of a question. “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” (Gen. 3:1). This question's purpose wasn't to stump Eve or discover the truth. The question was masked with such obviously wrong facts to distract her from the underlying message, meant to sink in more slowly

and appeal to places unseen. It was planted to take root and cause doubt by adding more to Eve's subconscious than what is really required of us by God.

Hidden beneath what likely felt like a friendly and attractive manner is the real question he wants her to consider—not aloud but in the privacy of her head, where fears and doubts have a chance to flourish. Behind the concern concealing his deception lies the actual question: *“Did God really ask this much of you?”* With this second meaning, Satan seeks to build camaraderie with a faux empathy that God is unreasonable—that He has asked too much and that such could even be characteristic of God. Veiled by the outright lie in the enemy's question, the underlying message begins to take root: *God is withholding from you. You could have more. Maybe He isn't good. Maybe He's not for your good.*

Eve answers with the intention of correcting the serpent, but her words also harbor misinformation. She tells him that God said,

“You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die” (Gen. 3:3). The Bible, however, clearly states God's words to Adam before Eve was created in Genesis 2:16–17, and He never mentions touching the fruit—only that anyone who *ate* of it would die. This is important because *all* of God's words are so intentional, powerful, and perfectly stated that we

want to be *sure* we've heard them clearly. Adding to or taking away from God's Word is not full truth.

**Misunderstanding  
the character or  
goodness of God is  
no small thing. Who  
God serves as  
the very foundation  
upon which our  
faith is built.**

In our modern culture, we are inclined to think the whiter the lie, the less harmful it's likely to be. Unfortunately, oftentimes, the smaller the lie is, the more likely it is to go unnoticed and the less likely it is to be uprooted. But misunderstanding the character or goodness of God is no small thing. Who God is serves as the very foundation upon which our faith is built.

What's more, Eve's unintentional distortion of God's guideline is also crucial for truly grasping her perspective because *we* think of sin as occurring when she took the bite. However, based upon what she's just stated, *she* thinks of it as occurring when her fingertips first touch it. And once she does . . . and nothing happens . . . why not take a bite? So begins the slippery slope of sin.

### UPROOTING THE ISSUE

The question still begs to be asked: *Why* does Eve take the bait at all? She knows the risk is death, even if she was misinformed about the specifics. Here's why I believe she did: just as it does today, sin promised Eve something she thought she could only achieve apart from God.

The serpent tells her, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4–5). This whole response alleviates her fear of dying, but I think the true persuader of desiring the fruit hangs on the words "*and you will be like God.*" The text says, "The woman was *convinced*. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and *she wanted the wisdom it would give her*" (Gen. 3:6 NLT; emphasis added).

This last verse suggests that Eve had never really even looked at the tree and its fruit before. With just one simple question, the

serpent inclined her head that way for possibly the first time. Sometimes, all it takes for discontentment to take root is merely the act of looking past permissible trees covered in blessings to things we have *not* been given. This wandering of the eyes, combined with the self-righteous notion that we deserve more, is a most dangerous trap. That hidden message was beginning to appeal to Eve's desire to have worth, to be seen, to be truly recognized—on her own.

After she and Adam had partaken of the fruit and felt the weight of what they'd done, they hid. Eve fails to seek not only her true sense of worth from God but also her deliverance from shame—which He gladly frees us from. But when we believe we have to form

our own worth, we can't possibly seek outside of ourselves to lay down our shame because feeling worthy and the removal of shame are tied together.

When God finds them in the garden and asks the weighted question of "why," Eve gives her reply: "The serpent deceived me . . . That's why I ate it" (Gen. 3:13 NLT). Oh, sis. The serpent

does have fault here, because he did deceive her (as is true of his nature). However, that is not why she reached for the fruit. Eve was convinced and ate the fruit because the enemy had appealed to the desire that was already there: to be *like God*. I'm sure Eve thought fondly of God and loved Him, but in this moment, we know she desired to be like Him more than she wanted God Himself. After all, if it was more of God she wanted, she wouldn't have been looking for answers outside of His presence nor outside of the parameters He had labeled as good for her. No, Eve's desire at this moment was not

**When we believe  
we have to form  
our own worth, we  
can't seek outside  
of ourselves to lay  
down our shame.**



to be more like God; it was to become more *godlike*.

She could have asked God about it at her first doubts. She could have taken her feelings back to Him and asked why He withheld this fruit from her. She could have asked Him for wisdom. James 1:5 says, “If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking” (NLT). If it’s truly wisdom she was seeking, why didn’t she just ask? And why don’t we? I think it’s because asking implies that not only do we need help, but we need help outside of ourselves. Asking means we can’t do it on our own. Asking means it comes not by our own hands. Asking God means we are not God.

The very next verse in James 1 says, “But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind” (James 1:6 NLT). I think sometimes we don’t ask because we have divided loyalty between God and ourselves. Asking means we will not receive the praise for the outcome because it will be due to Him. We can be sure if it’s godly wisdom we are seeking, this desire will carry us closer to God Himself and His purposes, not further into our own purposes and certainly not into the very places He’s told us not to go. If we ask God, and He alone must give in order for us to be filled, then we can never claim we were enough on our own.

## **WE ARE COVERED**

The Genesis 3 scenario sounds scarily familiar, doesn’t it? The truth is we *are* Eve. We take the bait all the time right from our living rooms. We have either allowed others to set such high expectations for us, or we have set impossible standards for ourselves as mothers

that we feel we *must* keep laboring to finally feel like enough. And, because we function from a place of never feeling like enough as moms, we are in danger of reaching for forbidden fruit. For most of us, that will look like self-sufficiency, people-pleasing, performance, you name it. The fruit of these efforts comes in many shapes and forms. The issue with each and every one of them is that they aren't God. You see, when we're living from the anxious belief of pass or fail in every moment—of needing to build and prove our worth in our every action—we're living a life that is paying tribute to self instead of seeking to honor God.

I know what you're thinking. *Hallie, that doesn't make me like Eve! She had birds and squirrels follow her through a garden like Snow White, while I took a shower this morning for the first time in four days and then dried off with a towel that had a macaroni noodle in it!*

**Eve's position  
was dependent  
on never failing.  
Ours is not.**

I hear you, believe me, I do! I also understand the temptation here—more than you know. But let's get one thing straight. We, as believers in Christ on *this* day, have even greater perfection than Eve had. How? Salvation through the blood of Christ. Through that, we have safety. Worth. Love. All sealed and unable to be taken from us. We have been freed from past, present, and future sins, and we are seen by the Father as *righteous*, despite all the reasons we shouldn't be. Eve's position was dependent on never failing. Ours is not.

We are made perfect by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. While we do continue to walk and stumble with Him in the journey of sanctification (becoming increasingly more like Christ), we are not

dependent on our actions or efforts for salvation. The cross and *only* the cross can do that. We are quick to fault Eve for sinning *despite* perfect circumstances around her, yet we have been made perfect in His sight and *still* seek to perfect ourselves and the circumstances that surround us. If this isn't an indication of the idol within our hearts of wanting to be our own gods, I don't know what is. And the thing about idols is that they don't bring life. They promise more, but they always give less. Jesus promises abundance and then does immeasurably more.

We are enough, and we are worthy because *He's* made us so. When we labor to feel worthy and desire to be praised even though we have already been given perfect worth in Jesus Christ, we're taking the bait. We're looking past a garden of possibilities at a tree with fruit we were told not to eat. We're focusing on a tree that lacks the ability to satisfy the longing in our soul. Jesus saw our worst and still wanted us.

Salvation isn't something we are given so we can put it in our back pocket and continue down the road of becoming something of worth. Our redemption through Christ *is* our worth. It's the natural way of sanctification for us to outwardly change due to the change that's happened within us, but if we are laboring just to finally feel like we're enough, chances are it's not for the purposes of God but for our own.

The one act of Jesus Christ on the cross simultaneously crossed all of these off. Galatians 2:20 says, "My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (NLT). If it's no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us, we now house *His* righteousness, not

our own. How laughable that I'd seek to add more to the righteousness of Christ when He has already given Himself up for me. The very same God said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I'm well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). Please hear me say, if you are now in Christ and Christ is now in you, the Father says about you, "This is my beloved daughter, with whom I am well pleased." I know, it feels too unbelievable to be true—and yet, it is. Take a deep breath and let that sink in. Let your soul rest in that for a moment.

We are enough because He is. We are worthy because He is worthy. We are seen because He saw us at our worst and loved us so much that He sought to save us. He does this at our *worst*. We weren't seen for our *best* efforts; we were seen despite our ugliest sin.

**We are enough  
because He is.  
We are worthy  
because He is  
worthy.**

We were chosen, and we were made finally and irrevocably enough and worthy to truly be with Him once more as Eve began in the garden. The idol isn't our desire to feel fulfilled and affirmed and finally enough. It's that we've *already* been deemed worthy and enough in the eyes of our Father and seek *still* to gain these

elsewhere. When we try to attain worth through means of our own, we're unintentionally communicating that the grace of Christ, His sinless life and sacrifice, is either unnecessary or not enough for us.

## UNEARTHING FREEDOM

So, we begin our journey of asking if we are good moms with the realization that we aren't unfailing or unflawed. We'll never be the perfect mom; that isn't just okay—it's the unavoidable truth. It was

never even expected. While it wasn't what God wanted for her, Eve didn't shock Him in the garden that day. Jesus wasn't God's plan B.

For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but now in these last days he has been revealed for your sake. (1 Peter 1:18–20 NLT)

Jesus Christ was always the rescue mission intended for us from the unconditional and unfailing love of our Father's heart. We call His love unfailing for two reasons. One is simply because He never fails. What He says He will do, He completes and fulfills totally—that includes the good work He began in you. Reason number two is that He remains steadfast even when we fail Him. The implication of this is that when He says we're redeemed, we truly are. Totally and completely. When He says He'll never leave nor forsake us no matter our failings, He really won't. Even when we fall short, He holds us, and He isn't going to let go. When we reach outside this to obtain success or worth on our own, we only reach for forbidden fruit. Our only hope, both eternally and here today, is through God alone.

When I stop to sit in this beautiful reality and allow myself to feel the freedom of this amazing truth, suddenly, I don't need praise anymore. I don't need from the world or anyone else what I have in abundance in the Lord, because I feel so loved and so seen and so precious that I want to turn and praise *Him*. Mother's Day now shifts from the day I most needed confirmation of my worth to a day of remembrance that He has redeemed every single part

of me—even the way I mother. Instead of a day of dread awaiting the sentence of my trial, it's a day of rejoicing as I recall that He's already paid my debts and has declared me free with finality. To Him be the glory, forever, amen.

Interested in the whole book?  
Select your preferred book seller:

[MOODY PUBLISHERS](#) [AMAZON](#) [APPLE BOOKS](#) [BARNES & NOBLE](#) [GOOGLE PLAY](#) [CHRISTIANBOOK.COM](#) [WALMART](#) [TARGET](#) 

---