



# *Flourishing Hope*

a 30-day devotional for pregnant  
women in unexpected places

Leah Outten and Katie McCoy

**KW**  
KingdomWinds  
PUBLISHING

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First Edition, 2024

ISBN: 978-1-64590-066-5

Published by Kingdom Winds Publishing.

[www.kingdomwinds.com](http://www.kingdomwinds.com)

[publishing@kingdomwinds.com](mailto:publishing@kingdomwinds.com)

Printed in the United States of America.

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**From Katie—**

Dedicated to Caden and Olivia.  
You are the reason I find this  
ministry so important. You are the  
strength, hope, and goodness  
that comes from unplanned  
pregnancy. I love you both so  
very much!

**From Leah—**

For every mom who finds herself  
within the pages of this book.  
This is for you, my friend.





# A Note from Us

As we have been praying over this devotional, we have been praying over you. We have been right there in the depths of unplanned pregnancy, just like you are right now. We pray for clarity over you as you plan for you and your baby so that you can feel confident moving forward. We pray for courage as you walk forward with purpose in the plan God has for your life. We pray you know each time you look in the mirror, Who created you and who He says you are—redeemed and made new, more precious than gems, and a beloved child of God.

On the cover, you'll see a fireweed flower. We chose this not only because of beauty but for the message it represents. The USDA Forest Service explains it this way, "The name fireweed stems from its ability to colonize areas burned by fire rapidly. It was one of the first plants to appear after the eruption of Mt. St. Helens in 1980. Known as rosebay willowherb in Great Britain, fireweed quickly colonized burned ground after the bombing of London in World War II, bringing color to an otherwise grim landscape."<sup>1</sup>

You see, though it feels like your world may feel shaken and burned right now, know that there will be beauty that flourishes amongst the ashes. You *will* see beauty again soon in your life. The Lord *will* bring good from this pain. The fireweed flower is a reminder to cling to God as you wade through the rubble and prepare for this new chapter of your life. There's no going back, only forward.

We pray this devotional will speak hope to your heart in this unexpected place.

Love,

*Katie and Leah*

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<sup>1</sup> Vizgirdas, Edna. "Fireweed (Chamerion angustifolium)." Plant of the Week. U.S. Forest Service. [https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/chamerion\\_angustifolium.shtml](https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/chamerion_angustifolium.shtml)



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DAY 1

# Lament

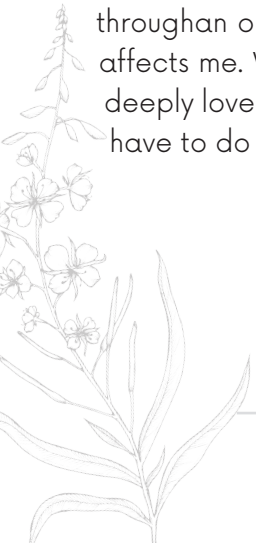
—Katie—

“Come to me, all 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, ESV

I remember sitting in church one Sunday and crying silently during a sermon on Mary, mother of Jesus. It suddenly dawned on me the shame and grief Mary was facing as a pregnant woman in an unconventional situation. I felt validated by Mary, but even further, if Mary, the mother of my Savior, understood my pain, then I also have to acknowledge that Jesus knew Mary's pain. Therefore, He knows mine, too, as a woman who has had two unplanned pregnancies. He is capable of sitting in grief with us because He is familiar with it. He knows it deeply and cares for us.

After choosing to place my children for adoption, I have learned, even seventeen years down the road, that healing is not linear and that I am still lamenting not being their parent. While I don't regret the decision I made, I miss my kids a lot. I get to see them often through an open adoption plan, but I still experienced a loss, and it affects me. When I'm lost in the depths of grief, I remember that I'm deeply loved and known by the One who holds it all together. I don't have to do anything but lean on Him.





# *Reflect and Respond*

Do you believe that your shame and grief are known by God?

Do you trust you can lean on God during grief?

What do you do when you find yourself in moments of grief? How do you cope?

What would be some new coping skills to try next time you are feeling sad?

# Do You Really Trust Him?

—Leah—

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

Proverbs 3:5–6, NIV

“Leah, do you trust Me?”

Yes, Lord.

“But do you **really** trust me?”

We all tend to grab control of the reins of life, trusting in *our* plan instead of *His*. This particular conversation happened when I discovered I was pregnant for the seventh time. Yes, you read that right. Between having an open adoption, a miscarriage, and parenting children, I’m a mom in many different roles. I’ve experienced two teen pregnancies that were unintended, but the emotions during my seventh pregnancy felt very similar to those crisis situations. Even though I was years into a healthy marriage, owned a home, my career was growing, and had four children at home at the time, plus an open adoption with my oldest—I was panicking at adding more to my proverbial plate.

*My plan* was to be done growing our family. *My plan* was to focus on my writing more. *My plan* was to get more sleep in life!

And yes, those things did come in time. But first, God asked me to trust Him with His plan. It wasn’t easy, as you know all too well right now. Sometimes, I lay in bed the most



nauseous I had ever been in all my pregnancies, wondering, “Why, God?” Some days, I felt fear that I wasn’t going to be a good enough mom to all my kids and meet their emotional and physical needs.

But the Lord reassured me over and over that He was equipping me for this task He has called me to do. Did the timing and path seem off-course to me? You bet. But the truth is that God knows the best path and purpose for our lives. That just may include an additional bundle of joy we hadn’t planned—but He did!

He is asking you, too, “Do you really trust Me? Do you trust My plan?”

# *Reflect and Respond*

What are you grieving in your unexpected change of plans?

List all the ways He has been faithful in the past. Remember: He will not fail you now!

Do you think you can learn to trust God's best plan for you in this situation and to bring purpose? Write a prayer asking for help to trust Him.

