A DEVOTIONAL

Enough

Worth you don't have to earn

> *I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*
> **PSALM 139:14**

MY STORY

Do I ever feel not good enough? I do, all the time. I am always trying to keep up with the Joneses.

Maybe it stems from my childhood, when I feared getting anything less than an "A" on an assignment or a test. I would toss and turn at night, worrying about the next day and what it might bring, and how my father would react if I was anything less than perfect. I learned early that love had to be earned, and I have been trying to earn it ever since.

> *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*
> **1 PETER 5:7**

And then the day finally came when I was less than perfect. It hit both of us like a Mack truck. It was like a freight train had derailed going 100 miles an hour, and he finally saw the real me, and it wasn't good. He didn't like what he saw. Instead of being the kind and caring father that every girl dreams of having, he took everything I owned and put it out in his driveway in bright blue garbage bags.

Did I deserve that? Probably not to that extreme. I was only 19 years old, barely done with my freshman year at Michigan State. I was making one of the biggest mistakes of my life by moving in with my boyfriend, but at the time I didn't see any other options. There was a lot going on behind the scenes, and we both could have handled the situation much differently.

What stayed with me was not only the hurt. It was the lie I carried out of that driveway: *when I am not perfect, I am not loved.*

> *Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.*
> **PSALM 27:10**

Today I sit here in tears, feeling that same empty feeling of not being good enough. I feel like a failure as a mother. My youngest son wants to move out and go back to El Paso to be with his dad. I want more than anything for him to be happy, and he isn't happy here in Ruidoso. But I feel like I failed because I couldn't make him happy. I didn't try hard enough. I didn't do the right things or spend enough time with him. I wasn't the cool mom he wanted.

This is all the noise going on in my head, and it hurts. It leaves a pit in my stomach.

> *The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*
> **PSALM 34:18**

Will I ever be good enough for anyone?

> *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
> **ROMANS 8:1**

REFLECTION

Take a few quiet minutes with these questions. You don't have to answer them all, and there are no wrong answers.

- **Where did "not good enough" begin?** As a girl, I learned that love had to be earned through perfect grades and perfect behavior. Is that something God ever told me, or something I picked up along the way?
- **Whose voice am I hearing?** When the noise in my head says *you failed*, does it sound like the One who calls me beloved, or like an old voice from my past?
- **What did I believe about myself after that day in the driveway?** What would I say to that 19-year-old girl now?
- **What does my son's unhappiness actually mean?** It hurts, but is it a grade on my mothering? Could his wanting to be with his dad say more about his needs than about my worth?

- **Who am I trying to keep up with?** What would change if I stopped comparing my life to everyone else's?
- **What if loving well sometimes means opening my hands?** What would it look like to trust God with my son, whether he is near or far?

WRAP UP

Will I ever be good enough for anyone? I am learning that this was never the right question. "Good enough" assumes there is a test to pass, and I have been trying to pass it since I was a little girl lying awake over a grade. But worth is not something I earn. It is something I was given.

> *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.*
> **EPHESIANS 2:8-9**

A child's unhappiness is not a grade on my mothering. I can love my son completely and still not be able to make him happy. No mother can. God, the Good Shepherd, is not standing over me with a red pen.

> *He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.*
> **ISAIAH 40:11**

The little girl who feared the "A," the young woman whose life sat in garbage bags, and the mother crying today are all held by the same loving Father. He does not love me on condition of my performance. He takes delight in me.

> *The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.*
> **ZEPHANIAH 3:17**

Today's practice. When the voice says *you're not enough*, answer it out loud: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and I am loved." Then tell your son one thing you love about him, with no agenda.

PRAYER

Father, you know the noise in my head and the pit in my stomach. You know the girl who lay awake afraid of falling short, and you know the mother who is crying today. Quiet my heart with your love.

Heal the old wounds from my childhood, and teach me that I don't have to earn what you have freely given. Wrap my youngest son in your care, near or far, and help me love him with open hands, trusting that you hold him.

When I feel like I'm not enough, remind me that I am yours, and that is enough. Let me rest tonight in your peace, which is greater than I can understand.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

> *And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
> **PHILIPPIANS 4:7**

I am fearfully and wonderfully made, and I am loved.

SPACE TO WRITE

What is one truth from today that I want to carry with me?