

BECOMING REVOLUTIONARY

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A N A L I S A T U R N O W &
J I L L I A N M A R I E

REDEMPTION 
P R E S S

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The author has tried to recreate events, locales, and conversations from memories of them. In order to maintain their anonymity, in some instances the names of individuals are changed and some identifying characteristics and details may have changed, such as physical properties, occupations, and places of residence.

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Preface

Revolution is meant to bring about change. This book is intended to reveal a personal revolution—a revolution that can happen in your heart, mind, and soul. This is not a book about becoming greater, better, stronger, more influential, or more powerful. Its rudimentary writings are meant to spark contemplation of the parts of your soul you may not like to examine. It will challenge your way of thinking so that you are not defined by your mistakes and deficiencies but, rather, so you can determine those things that bring hope, love, and identity to your very being. We believe that is a revolutionary response to a pandemic belief.

❧ CHAPTER I ❧

Becoming Eve

Eve's story is not for the faint of heart. She makes us search our own hearts, minds, souls, and intentions. She makes us go back to the beginning, our beginning—the start of our deficiency, doubt, and shame. Her story is our story, even if we don't like to admit it. I would argue that Eve would probably be the best woman to seek advice from when confronted with sin. No other woman has ever experienced so fully both sides of humanity. She experienced perfection and then suffered through the pain of losing everything and dying in brokenness. She understood more than anyone how sinful and flawed we really are. She recognized how deep sin goes and how far it separates us from the perfection that God intended for us. She experienced how sin starts and the devastation it can bring.

Eve was created perfect. She lived in complete innocence. She lived, for a moment, without any shame. Genesis tells us she was naked and unashamed in Adam's presence as well as God's. She experienced what we all dream of and hope for—complete and utter freedom. Yet that was all she had ever known. We all face a moment, as Eve did, when we give into our own desires and forfeit our innocence and freedom for the false promises of something more.

We know Eve's story: she was deceived by the Serpent, she took the fruit, and she lost everything. Instantly her life changed

forever, with eternal consequences for all who came after her—consequences we face and live with to this day. Gone is the perfection she was created in, and in its place is the lifelong battle of pain, shame, guilt, sin, inadequacy, hiding, and striving.

But I imagine she always remembered those moments in the garden with the ache of what once was burdening her soul and thoughts of the wonders she had once been privileged enough to live in. Eve started with everything and, therefore, experienced the greatest loss that anyone could ever have. She knew the ultimate consequence of sin because she immediately experienced the separation between her and God and the shame it brought. She had everything to lose and she did. Her striving for perfection led to the starvation of her soul.

It is in the response to her loss that revolutionary things began to happen. Rather than tossed out and disregarded, God gave Eve and Adam hope. The stage was set, and a loving Creator looked upon humanity with compassion, love, and mercy. We give Eve revolutionary status because the Bible tells us her legacy, and her response to loss, opposes what we would expect. In Eve's sin and brokenness, her hope was restored in God.

Like most revolutionary women, we start with nothing and must learn to defy the odds against us. During times of struggle, it is the revolutionary woman's faith in God and His promises for her life that enable her to persevere through pain. She remains faithful in periods of waiting, in times of struggle, and during the unknown because of eternal hope that was promised from the beginning.

Eve's life is in reverse. Living in the shadow of perfection of what once was, she learned how to keep going—a lesson all generations thereafter will follow. She battled sin, shame, and guilt, and it is through her story we can ask ourselves the same thing she must have asked herself: How do I understand the depths of my sin and experience shame and guilt, yet live a life filled with hope, purpose, redemption, and freedom? This question, if allowed to stir within us, can be the beginning of a revolutionary work

where we do not have to be defined by our mistakes but can have a new identity that never wavers, withstands any trial, and gives us eternal hope and purpose.

It took me a very long time to connect with Eve and her story because I did not want to look in the mirror and see myself as Eve. I saw myself as a consequence of Eve's sin, having to live in sin as my fate. Of course, I knew I sinned, but I did not like to imagine myself as flawed as Eve and have to carry the weight of being the one who forfeited living in perfection. I've repeatedly told myself I would never go back to the relationship that left me feeling used. I've told myself, "I would never sacrifice all of that for a piece of fruit." Yet if I really look at my life and decisions, I see that I do it all the time. I forfeit the promise that God has offered simply to fulfill a temporary desire that will only leave me wishing I had never done it in the first place. This realization has allowed me to begin relating to Eve. I know I am sinful and flawed, but there is always the option to curse and blame Eve for that infamous moment that changed the course of humanity and is responsible for my brokenness and sinful ways.

And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:11–13)

How ironic that I would scrutinize Adam and Eve, yet my first response to my sin is identical to that of Adam and Eve—to make excuses rather than see the destruction of my own decisions, actions, and thought patterns. Adam and Eve tried to shift the blame onto someone else. Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the Serpent, and I blame them. And finally the time comes when we separate ourselves from the blaming and begin unveiling the

root of our actions, disobedience, selfishness, and ultimately sin. Relating to Eve becomes less and less difficult.

Identifying with Eve, allowing ourselves to enter her story and see our similarities, may be a catalyst to understanding the source of our own struggles. By allowing her story to penetrate into the deepest parts of our souls, we can begin to understand the depths of her battle and flaws so that we can start to identify our own, for the root is the same. Eve's struggle with doubt and desire to satisfy selfish cravings produced neither clarity nor power but a life clouded in labor and torment. We, too, live in the same world of doubt and unrelenting pursuit of achievement, success, power, financial security, love, and acceptance that never fully fulfills but leaves us yearning for more.

To study her life exposes our vulnerabilities. It exposes our own shame and regret. It makes us see that we truly are no different. And if we are no different, then we are not alone in this struggle. The process is hard. But if we are willing to be honest with ourselves—owning our pain, shame, guilt, hiding, and fear—we can begin unveiling our true story in hopes of living in freedom, rather than a buried, detached, and isolated livelihood. If we fail to understand the depth of our sin and need for a Savior, we will fail to experience the profoundness of His provision. To pass up the opportunity to fight means to miss the power, beauty, and hope that comes completely undeserved, yet is only received when we understand that we really need it.

The question becomes, "Do I want to understand my sin and the root of my sin?" It is by understanding and exposing the roots of sin that strongholds can be broken. We can be free from blaming and pivoting from one dysfunctional situation to the next. We can live a life of experiencing God's grace and mercy and walk alongside him, feeling no shame once again. This intimacy is offered to us freely, and we must soften our hearts in humility to receive it.

This battle is not what it seems. It is an unconventional fight because there is a predeclared victory and known victor

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who fought on our behalf to free us from our pain, shame, guilt, hiding, and fear.

He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces, he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:3–5)

❧ CHAPTER 2 ❧

Doubt

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

Genesis 3:1–3

Just as this story is centered in the garden, so this battle is central to our lives. How we engage God and face sin and temptation is essential to who we are, how we will live life on this earth, and who we will become. We see in this passage from Genesis 3 that though we are to have God at the center, Satan does not retreat from this place but, instead, attacks at the core. The conversation with the Serpent changed Adam and Eve’s certainty to doubt that penetrated through their defenses into the most sacred and central part of themselves. Adam and Eve, once confident in who God was, allowed doubt to skew their perspective of God’s plan and love for them. Starting off with good intentions and pure motives, they allowed the Serpent to break their defenses and cause them to doubt the perfection, purpose, and communion they had with God.

Eve had been confident in the perfection of her circumstances, but her resolve was challenged. It began with the question, “Did

God actually say . . . ?” Disbelief, distrust, confusion, fear, and ultimately selfishness seeped in and clouded what had seemed so sure and true.

Our questions have the same effect on our faith, certainty, and conviction. Does God really love me? Is he really the God of freedom? Does he really have the best for me? Can I succeed without God? Can I be in control of my own destiny? It is an anti-God mentality. With Eve’s choice to eat the fruit, she chose to become her own god. For us, too, it’s the belief that we don’t have enough. It’s wanting to control the unknown. The Serpent knew how to attack Eve with doubt. He is described as the most cunning and clever beast created. We are told in 1 Peter 5:8–9 that the devil, our enemy, prowls around looking for someone to devour and kill.

Satan manipulates and takes God’s truth and twists it for self-righteousness. Just like a snake, Satan uses invisibility and silence to camouflage himself. As he approached Eve, he appeared innocent and nonthreatening. Be aware that he is relentless with his motives and tactics, stopping at nothing to complete his mission of devouring us and separating us from God’s love and mercy. He waits for his prey to be vulnerable. For Eve, she was alone, and for Adam, Satan used the person who was closest to him to challenge him and soften his defenses. Satan approaches without warning, appearing harmless at first. But he strikes with deadly precision, using the venom of pride and doubt. He attacks from the outside and lets the questions do their work on the inside of us. These inner struggles set up a home, seeping in and allowing the poison to spread to the places of vulnerability within and then destroying us. When we give into his attack and engage the lies, we allow them to become deadly.

When Satan questioned Eve about God’s instructions not to eat from the tree, she responded, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but 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’” (Genesis 3:2–3 ESV). God’s command in Genesis

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2:16–17 (ESV) says, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die.”

Eve allowed the doubt the Serpent posed to enter her mind. Satan presented the question by taking what God had made positive and making it negative. (He had offered everything in the garden except that which would harm them.) Eve was the one who distorted the command within her mind. At first she combatted it with truth, but then she added to it, which changes everything. She set herself up to allow even more doubt to come in, which Satan always capitalizes on. “But the serpent said to the woman, ‘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.’” (Genesis 3:4–5 ESV).

Eve engaged the Serpent. She focused on God’s one restriction in her life and became blinded to the limitless freedom intended for her. The devil mixed truth with deceit, and Eve believed the lie that she would be raised to godlike status, revealing an idol in every human heart—the idol of self-elevation. *Satan mixes truth with fallacy to create a fantasy.* And instead of being raised up to be like her Creator, as Eve thinks will happen with eating the fruit, it makes her like Satan.

When Eve ate, her innocence was forfeited, and her eyes were opened to sin, pain, and shame . . . things God never intended humans to experience. Doubt and pride can blind us to reality, just as it did to Eve. Reason and conviction battle emotion and imagination when we are tempted. Our pulse begins to quicken, and our senses take over, silencing all reasoning. Doubt creeps in—doubt in God, doubt in the future, doubt in the effects of sin, and ultimately doubt of identity. We hope for something better than what can be seen or experienced. We reach for something tangible. We desire something to validate our purpose, acceptance, and superiority.

Doubt never stops attacking us. It will always be a part of our lives. Stop and think about how many times in the last hour you have doubted who you are, what your purpose is, what you think you should have, or where you should be in life. Now compound that in a day, a week, a month, a year, a lifetime. Doubt is important to identify because it is the very thing that makes you question your identity. And when you question your identity, it opens the door to redefine yourself by what you are lacking or what you have compared to others.

Doubt left unchecked and unchallenged will always elicit the same response as Eve's. We reach out and take the fruit before us, becoming the product of our own ambition and left in the consequences of sin. And that leaves us longing for the innocence lost by giving into sin.

Doubt also questions truth and our purpose. It falsely mitigates the consequences of our actions by creating an illusion of what will be gained. With doubt, there is a choice: challenge it or give into it. Eve gave into the doubt, reached out, took the fruit, and ate it. How we reach out may be different for each of us. What we strive for and give into is particular to our own experiences, desires, and longings. Our sin takes on three different categories: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and inner pride. Reaching out may look like pursuing destructive relationships, participating in indulgent behaviors, isolating ourselves, or overworking to control, avoid, or escape. This list could go on, but regardless of the vice, if we consume it and believe that it will give us satisfaction and fulfillment, we will be left longing for something more.

In the midst of doubt, we search for answers and are faced with constant choices. The patterns of our choices may reveal how we try to combat our doubt and the motives of our desires. We can fight with our own desires, or we can switch perspectives and fight in line with how God empowers us to live when we trust him. When we begin to live by faith, we start to trust that what God has for us is greater than the shadow of doubt that feeds into our

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own self-glorifying and self-gratifying nature. James 1:6 says that when we doubt we are like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. When anything challenges our conviction or identity as who God says we are, we can either be steadfast and grounded in truth, or we can give into doubt and be tossed back and forth between faith and uncertainty—a struggle that we think gives us control but actually leaves us treading water.

The purpose of understanding doubt is to discern how we forfeit the good things God has in our lives. By recognizing how doubt does its work inside us, we can then learn to combat it. It is a spiritual battle. As much as Satan is the predator waiting to strike us, which he does, we can have the firmness of mind to identify the lies. But, to do so, we must have a foundation of truth and trust in who God really is. Without it, we will inevitably fail.

Acknowledge and be aware that Satan wants to destroy you. He will attack and he is clever. But through Jesus Christ you can live in freedom and have confidence that withstands any question or doubt. To know Jesus is to understand love. The disciple John says, “But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:8 NLT) and, “We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them” (1 John 4:16 NLT).

Doubt is a consistent emotion the human race has faced from the beginning of time. For Eve, this doubt caused her to forfeit her perfection. She lost her perfect life in the perfect garden with a perfect God. This cycle of doubt began with a question, “Did God really say . . . ?” This question hit Eve at the core, leaving her with an image of what she thought perfection could be instead of what perfection already was. Eve’s mentality of always striving for more led her into a dangerous conversation with Satan, and she was deceived in the same way he tries to deceive us: *he mixes truth with fallacy to create a fantasy.*