



A  
Seamless  
LIFE

RESTING IN  
*God's Plan for You*

LYNDIE METZ

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## CHAPTER ONE

# SEAMLESS BEGINNINGS

*For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun!*

*Do you not see it?*

*Isaiah 43:19*

BEGINNINGS ARE AUTOMATIC—THEY just *happen*—and we don't realize their power until we ponder that beginning from somewhere in the middle or maybe even at the end. Once upon a time, I met my Prince Charming, fell in love, and got married. If, in the early days of wedded bliss, you'd have told me that my husband and I would not always see eye to eye on the most basic issues, I wouldn't have believed you. But those days of conflict did come. Somewhere in the middle of

them, I realized how much the life we've always lived can affect the life we live today.

I began life in a loving home in a midsized Indiana town. My parents both worked outside the home, and my upbringing was comparable to that of other middle-class Midwestern girls. Not long after I arrived, my parents brought twins into the world: a boy and a girl. My traditional family has gone through ups and downs along the way, but the beginning was bliss.

Some of my earliest memories involve being in church. I remember singing "Down by the Creek Bank" and sitting up front with the pastor of our teeny tiny church before he dismissed us to junior church. I can still smell the real-butter grilled cheese sandwiches we ate at the church preschool as we got ready for our afternoon naps. I was under five, and these formative memories remain crystal clear. I'm sure the pastor and teachers planted seeds of God's love in me there, but religion and relationship seem to come at different times for different people. These things didn't click for me for a long time.

Although I attended church from a very young age, my family went through attendance spurts. Months often went by that I don't remember attending at all. I don't know why we were sporadic church attenders. Perhaps my parents didn't find a church connection or a place where they felt at home in God's house. Maybe they were just doing their best to raise babies in this crazy, busy world. Oh, if only someone would've shown them the power of a circle of believers around a young family!

After my preschool experiences, my next memories of church are from my late elementary years, when some neighborhood kids invited me to vacation Bible school. I went with them for at least a couple of summers, but I never attended their churches on Sundays or holidays because they didn't invite

me to those services. I am the perfect example of evangelism consisting of nothing more than an invitation to church. Most likely, I would've gone, and I would have brought my whole family with me. I also have vague memories of a church camp I attended during one of those sit-this-one-out years for my family. This was my first camp experience, not to be revisited again until later in life when we were more grounded in our church and community. Again, God planted His seeds of love.

Finally, the Lord interacted with my family in an abrupt way. We had moved several times before I made it to the fifth grade. It seemed every time my dad got a promotion, we got a bigger and better house. Before the start of my sixth-grade year, we moved again, but this time something was different. We not only lived in a new house, but we started a new chapter as a family. Actually, quite a few chapters. We moved to another midsized town in central Indiana. This time, however, God placed us right next to a preacher. He and his family had just moved to town from California, and the ages of their children lined up perfectly with ours. This had to be a match made in heaven.

I'll never forget the first day my parents took us to visit our new house. When I saw the neighbors outside and discovered that the kids were friendly, I was excited to move. Every other time, I'd dreaded packing my belongings, attending a new school, and making new friends. But this time, God gave me built-in friends. I had hope. God used that first encounter to whisper, "You are safe here."

From the beginning of our relationship as neighbors, we kids got along well. Naturally, they invited us to church. And so we went—by ourselves at first. Our parents came later, but once we were all there, we stayed. God used that church and

that family to speak into our lives and show us how to follow Him.

The guiding light of God's grace began as a genuine, nonjudgmental friendship. I believe that relationship nurtured change for us. The bond that developed put strong roots down into good soil. We became the closest friends with our neighbors—we studied the Bible, watched football, celebrated holidays, and ran around the neighborhood together. Our moms played cards at one house while our dads played video games at the other. We played all day until our parents called us in for dinner, and we met up again the next morning to do it all over again. I have the fondest memories of my childhood because God uprooted my family and placed us seamlessly where we belonged.

At the church we attended because our new friends issued their invitation, we learned about the love of Jesus and the importance of fellowship. My dad, my siblings, and I were baptized at that church. We all attended regularly and got involved in different areas of ministry throughout the church. We were infant Christians, and this time and place was our “introduction to solids.”

If you are a parent, you know about that incredible yet treacherous time in an infant's life. Incredible because the baby branches out and experiences new flavors. Treacherous because the baby has to try some nasty stuff that's good for them. No matter the child's response, they can no longer survive on milk alone. They must eat something that will sustain them and help them grow. Some babies transition more easily than others. Even within my own little family, I have one child who wanted to eat everything and one who cared only for sweet potatoes.

Aren't we like that as Christians? Some are so on fire for Jesus right away that everyone immediately recognizes the change. Others just stick to their worship music in the car for months or years before anyone sees a difference.

My family had gotten by in life with a true belief in God and prayers before meals, but it was time for more. I wish I could say I "got it" right then and there. But the dots still hadn't connected yet for me. I went to church on Sundays, attended a Bible study at the neighbors' house on Wednesdays, and even went to church camp with the youth group every summer. When I understood the real meaning of Christ dying for my sins, I was baptized, but at that time, I didn't make a commitment to align my life with His.

I was a pretty good kid, afraid of getting into trouble. A natural-born rule follower, I can count on one hand the number of times I blatantly disobeyed my parents. I have a permanent reminder of one of those times: the ink under my skin. This choice severely upset and disappointed my mother. According to her, I had ruined my body, which is a temple of the Lord. Yes, and it still is, Mom.

You can go either way on your opinion of tattoos, and I don't mind which way you adopt.

I do know that I now have a time stamp of a life lived so selfishly that it never occurred to me to pray about my decisions. Sometimes we need reminders of our waywardness, so we can remember God loves us and is merciful despite our selfishness. We don't need reminders that keep us from God, but ones that make us thankful for His grace. In hindsight, I appreciate the metaphor of my selfishness that reminds me of my dependency on God, but did it have to be a cross between tribal and oceanic art? The joke's on me because I ended up

with a tribute to Batman or Wu-Tang Clan—take your pick. God does have a sense of humor.

For me, *religion* began as early as I can remember. A *relationship with Christ*, on the other hand, didn't begin until I moved out and away from everything familiar. It's funny how the comforts of our own lives sometimes lead us to complacency. I was complacent.

Complacent people react in different ways. Some turn to light, and others turn to darkness. I knew God was calling me to more, yet I didn't know what or why or how I would get there. I wanted to be balanced, healthy, and whole. All the while, I lived day to day, unfulfilled, and empty. I can't trace my knowledge of that void back to a certain event or circumstance; it just hit me all at once.

I was in my second year of teaching elementary school. I was passionate about working with children and getting kids excited about learning, but I was ridiculously unhappy. Spiritually, I felt lost. I didn't even know where to begin. Physically, I was unhealthy. I paid no attention to my diet or exercise. I felt bad about myself but couldn't motivate myself to change. Emotionally, I was trying to do life on my own . . . and shutting out good people in the process.

I claimed great friendships but not with godly people. I pursued romantic relationships but not with God-fearing, churchgoing men. I thought I could live however I wanted and still get into heaven because I was saved. I didn't understand how we are to surrender our lives when we rest in salvation (John 15:13). God has much to do in and through us. If we simply pursue the world while claiming eternity in heaven, we will miss out miserably.

Mentally, I was drained. I was putting everything I had into my career every week and trying to drink away my cares on the weekends. I was fed up with myself.

Looking back, I see that those feelings of unrest were from the Holy Spirit, as He stirred me to something new. However, I didn't recognize that at the time. I had taken a personal hiatus from church attendance because I wanted to do life on my own without God's intervention. The only wisdom I was receiving was from my daily chats with my mom and the occasional sermonette from a sweet little lady at work.

Their words of truth encouraged me, but not so much that I wanted to make daily changes. I found comfort in my mom reminding me to "be still" during unsettling or uncertain times. I remember the spring in my coworker's step as she sang "Jesus Loves Me" in the hallways. I wasn't paying much attention, but God was working anyway. He uses everything for His glory. Everything. Even when we don't see the bigger picture, He is in control.

I was unhealthy and unhappy with my life, but I wasn't concerned enough to care. I sat on those feelings for about a year, pushing forward each day only because it was expected of me. And then came the unexpected death of one of my first-grade students. I'm sure what I went through was nothing compared with the loss his family must've felt, but I was devastated. God used this unfortunate experience to initiate my new beginning.

I remember finding out about his death. It doesn't matter if you are a student or a teacher—when you're summoned to the principal's office, the queasy feeling is the same. The secretary called my room to let me know I was needed in the office right away. She told me someone was coming to monitor my class

while I met with the principal. Her voice sounded shaky, so I knew something was wrong. Frightfully wrong.

Little did I know how God was going to use the news I would receive. He was about to use the unfolding tragedy to seamlessly pull me out of my complacency and into a deep relationship with Him.

The next events are a bit of a blur. The call, the walk, the news—it all happened so fast. On my way to the office, I knew something wasn't right. I couldn't think of anything except those students I'd left in my classroom. Would they misbehave? Would they learn anything today? Would I have a bad report upon my return to the classroom?

But the bad report awaited me in the principal's office.

I went in and shut the door.

My student had been in a car accident. He'd been in the backseat with his siblings. He had no seatbelt on. He didn't make it.

I didn't know what to do, didn't know what to say. I took it in for a moment, holding back tears. "What do I do?"

"Nothing," she replied. "We'll send a letter home with your students, but you are not to talk with them about it."

I was heartbroken. I had never experienced death so close to me. I had lost distant relatives before, but this little guy, I had seen every day. I'd never expected to lose him. I knew his expressions of delight and of mischief. I could predict when he'd get bored with me, and I knew what he would run to each day on the playground. He was filled with life and shared that life with everyone. The grief that I was feeling during this time was multiplied because I could not talk about it with my students. My year was supposed to go on as if nothing had happened, as if no one was taken from us too soon.

A few days passed, and when I attended his funeral, I thought fondly of him. What a little stinker he was. He loved getting my attention, but he loved entertaining his peers even more. The only joy I could cling to was that the Friday before his passing, I had rewarded him for his self-control that week. He'd beamed with pride as he celebrated with the others who had been good decision makers. And then he was gone.

I'll never forget the day I decided I had to get out. I was driving home from work and listening to a Christian radio station, which wasn't my norm. A Casting Crowns song came on: "Who Am I." It talks about life being a quickly fading flower, a vapor in the wind. I had just stared at the smallest casket I had ever seen, an itty bitty child inside. If my life was a vapor, I could not go on living the way I was. In that moment, I decided to follow God's prompting and make a new start. I don't know that I would have given credit to the Holy Spirit at that time, but today I have no other answer.

Because I was close to my family and respected my parents (and because they had already made it clear that if I ever wanted to move far away, they would take it as a personal insult), I created a list of ten cities that piqued my interest. I'd seen enough corn and cows for a while, but I wanted my parents' input about my next stop in this quickly fading life. The cities I chose were relatively large, comprised of places I had seen on TV or that I had read about in books.

My parents took one look and said, "Atlanta." My older sister and her husband lived in a suburb outside the city, so Mom and Dad found comfort in knowing I'd have a relative nearby. I was ecstatic—I had a plan, and I knew where I was going. I had considered moving across the country before, but had never followed through. This time would be different. I

couldn't explain the propelling force of faith that was carrying me forward, but God was all over it.

I got my resume together, sent out emails, and landed an interview—never mind that it was the end of the school year. I was ready for the change, but it was a bittersweet time for me. After all, the longest I had ever been away from my family was a week every year for church camp after we became regular church attenders, and that was only a forty-five-minute drive.

God captured me in this move in more ways than one. I had to trust Him, but I wasn't yet giving Him the credit He deserved for orchestrating the change. It wasn't until I was in Atlanta and settled in with my sister that I realized the real reason for my move. God picked me up, carried me away, and gave me a front-row seat to His will for my life. I realized that the real reason for my move was to wake me up from my wayward slumber, teaching me how to be a true follower of Christ.

I made it to my interview twenty minutes late. No one told me that every street name in Alpharetta changes at least once. Google was not yet a thing, so I didn't have their version of Maps that I now hold near and dear. Instead, I had a paper map that led me to a cul-de-sac with no school to be found. Despite my late arrival, however, I was offered a position to teach fourth grade in what would become my favorite school of my teaching career. It was the best place for me at the time, and God knew.

I recall the next scene as if it happened yesterday. My sister and I were going shopping, out for some quality girl time. We were headed down the suburban main street to the mall when traffic came to a complete stop. In disbelief I asked, "Why on earth is traffic stopped here on a Sunday?"

She replied, “There’s a big church back there. I forgot. It’s like this every Sunday.”

Leave it to our God to use a shopping trip to introduce me to my new church home. I was intrigued. I told my sister I was going to check it out, and invited her to come along if she wanted. I figured if the church was good enough to stop traffic, it was a must-see for this new Georgia peach. I went the next Sunday and every Sunday after.

My real, personal relationship with Jesus began when I stepped into that church. Though I had accepted the gift of salvation years before, I found a fresh start in this place. Since my childhood baptism, I had not lived a life aligned with Christ. I had taken what I wanted out of the Bible and left the rest. Now, walking into my new church, I felt comfort, security, and new life. I felt God say, “You are home. You will be changed here.”

It was a life-giving church. I’d never experienced services like these before. God used every element to woo me into a growing relationship with Him. That was the church’s mission statement, and it stayed true to it. The church exists to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. They were surely leading me.

I was apprehensive about getting involved in church by myself, but that was exactly what I needed. In fact, it was there that the title of this book came to me, *A Seamless Life*, because everything our heavenly Father offers us is just that—seamless. He intricately designs our entire lives and all our experiences with each of us in mind. He knows our every need and the individual desires of our hearts. He fits us together smoothly and perfectly, according to His seamless

will. We just have to lean in and trust that everything will happen exactly as it's supposed to.

If you are like I was, in a place where God is calling you to something more, today is your day! God loves you like crazy, just as you are. He has seen you, loved you, and carried you all along. God's goodness and grace have protected you along the winding roads of life.

Maybe you've been walking with God a long time, but you know something is missing. Maybe your relationship with God has grown stale, and you're looking for that seamless plan He's said He has for you. Or maybe you are brand new to this. You probably have more questions than answers.

Everyone has been there. Let this be your beginning.

No matter where you are in your walk with the Lord, ask yourself the following questions. Find wisdom in what the Bible has to say, and pray along with me. I am praying for you, and I know God can and will use all things for His good and His glory.

### *Study Questions*

1. What is the story of your beginning?
2. When did you first learn about God? Who or what would you credit with that introduction?
3. How has learning about God impacted your life?

### *Encouragement*

For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:32)

## Prayer

*Dear Lord*, thank You for each precious reader You have led here. Please bless their lives and give them a renewed sense of connection with You. I pray we would all think back on the beginnings of our lives and thank You for the circumstances surrounding the relationship we have with You. Please use each of us to share Your love with the world. Every believer began somewhere, and You have placed us on our paths to reach others.

For those who do not know You, Lord, I pray that this book would spark their curiosity and interest in Your love and Your ways. Please bring other believers into their lives and let them find connection on their spiritual journey.

We love You and honor You this day and always. In Jesus's name, amen.