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The Power } An Invitation to Go Deep!

EVERY NERVE IN MY BODY WAS FILLED WITH THRILLING TINGLES OF EXCITEMENT. My husband, Bob, and I were in the Bahamas, and we were about to take our very first dive. Yes, as in SCUBA dive!

After a quick twenty-minute instruction session in a calm, cool swimming pool, I was loading my equipment and heading out to view the underwater wonders of the ocean. I couldn't wait.

As our little boat chugged out from the dock, the thrill became uncontainable. I closed my eyes and allowed the sun to warm my face as I entered into a quiet but enthusiastic conversation with the God of the universe.

"Lord, You know I'll be ministering to a large group in Atlanta next weekend," I prayed silently. "It would be so cool if You'd give me a powerful word picture during this dive—something to teach them in a compelling way. Could You please show me Your wonder?" I was just certain that God was going to show up in a big way during this dive.

♥ Wham!

The boat was hit with the first of what would be many nasty waves. We rocked back and forth as our captain navigated us purposefully toward our dive site. Every now and then another huge wave would crash over the back of the boat during our continuous rocking through three-foot waves. After a few minutes, I noticed Bob wasn't doing too well. He tends to get seasick, and these were the worst waves we'd ridden in some time.



"You okay?" I asked.

"I will be just as soon as I get under these waves," he said.

We both knew that needed to happen soon.

We got to the dive site.

"HmMMM . . . this wasn't what I'd pictured," I thought looking around. I imagined being out on a calm ocean where I'd be able to comfortably get used to my equipment before I took the plunge. That plan wasn't looking so good. I pulled my equipment on and stood at the edge of the boat. I was scared silly!

Bob jumped in with the instructor.

I just stood there.

Frozen.

The waves beat against my legs, hitting as high as my thighs as I clung to the boat's shiny, metal stair rail.

The instructor kept calling to me. Bob kept giving me the diver's sign for "Everything's okay!" They waited and encouraged me.

For a long time.

I just stood there.

Finally, I closed my eyes and jumped. My mouth gauge went flailing through the air behind me. Once I was in, I realized what a bad idea it was not to have my mouth gauge in. I reached for it.

Wham!

A wave knocked it out of my hands.

I tried again.

Wham!

Where was that instructor?

WHAM!

Wham!

I couldn't find it.

Wham!

Each wave engulfed me in nasty, salty water.

Wham!

"I've got to get out!" I heard Bob yelling frantically, sending a new and more powerful wave of fear through me.

Wham!

Another wave!

I saw Bob clamoring as he used the boat's rope to pull himself in. That was all the encouragement I needed. I was headin' back in.

I began to race toward him, finding the rope myself. As we neared the boat, I wrapped my legs and arms around Bob, who'd found the metal ladder.

"Let go of your husband," I heard the instructor shouting over the noise of the water. I didn't want to let go. My husband was my confidence! I knew he would not let me get swept away in these waves.

I would not let go.

"Let go if you want to get in," he demanded as he pried me off of Bob's body.

Wham!

I was out in the water again.

Bob was almost on deck.

What on earth?

Wham!

As I faced yet another horrendous wave, I could see Bob standing on the edge of the boat.

He was barfing! The source of my security was barfing on the boat!

I swam back to the ladder, and a crew member pulled me up. I was beyond bummed. So much for the wonders of the ocean!

"Didn't we have a plan, God?" I asked a few minutes later as we rested in the boat. "Weren't You going to show me an amazing and powerful word picture to teach Your truth?"

As clear as if it had been Bob speaking next to me, I heard God's voice speak inside of me: *I did*.

I was puzzled. I couldn't for the life of me see what He meant.

There was one other diver on our trip that day. She was experienced, and the instructor took her under after he got us back into the boat. After about twenty minutes, they came up, and before she was even in the boat she began to speak of the wonder.

"We caught a blowfish and made it blow up." She giggled. "There were blue and yellow . . ." On and on she went, unable to contain the wonder.

That was it. I saw it!

This was, in fact, an amazing picture of truth from my precious God. Too many believers today are discouraged in their faith because they're stuck on the surface. They're unwilling to devote themselves to the difficult task of "going deep." And they cannot understand why they don't see God's wonders.

The next day, gluttons for punishment, Bob and I hired Captain Phil. He promised us a smooth and successful snorkeling experience. As horrible as our experience had been the day before, we were passionate about seeing what was under that surface! We were willing to embarrass ourselves once again for another try.

Five others were on this trip. One guy, I was certain, was a member of the Mafia. Tough. Unemployed. Pockets filled with hundred-dollar bills. Spoke of working for "the family" once. You do the math. I say this only because, if there's ever peer pressure to be cool, I guess it's when the Mafia is around.

A few minutes later I was under the surface.

WOW!

Enthusiasm burst out from my being. The beauty, the purple tapestries of coral amazed me. They were like delicate paintings waving in the ocean. Entire schools of fish swam around me. My eyes couldn't take it all in.

A huge purple and green and yellow fish swam by—a parrot fish. I sprang up from the surface.

"Look! Look!" I shouted to the others, including the Mafia guy, knowing that I looked very, very uncool. Extreme enthusiasm will do that to you. Coolness factor tanks!

"You've got to see this," I cried as I slipped back under the surface again to see a long, slender brown fish that looked like an eel. It was a cigar fish.

"Did you see that?" I shouted, making a fool of myself once again.

I was the last one out of the water.

**{ IT'S WORTH IT TO GO AGAINST THE
CURRENT OF TODAY'S BUSYNESS
AND SCREEN-SATURATED CULTURE.**

Do you ever feel that your walk of faith lacks power? Do you ever read passages about God's miraculous power and wonder

why you've never seen much of that? Do you tire of hearing or even seeing others experience God, only to find that your own experience of Him isn't nearly as wondrous? Do you ever look around your congregation and wish there were someone to rescue you but you only see others clamoring for God's rescue just like you? Do you hear your youth leaders trying to teach you what they believe is a powerful truth only to find it means nothing to you personally? Do you want to see His wonders? Do you want God's truth to excite you to the inner core? Then you've got to go deep!

First Corinthians 2:9–10 reads, "It is written: 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him'—but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God."

You cannot imagine the mind-blowing things God has for you under the surface. But God promises that when we meet His Spirit in a powerful way, we will have even the deep things of God revealed to us.

GO DEEP

You won't find the amazing treasures of God up on the surface. They can't be found in superficial conversations at church or just attending youth group. You've got to go deep. Go deep into His Word when you're alone. Talk about the secret things of God with friends at church. Dive into the truth your pastor presents. It's not easy to go deep. It takes time. You have to go against the current of today's busyness and screen-saturated culture. You'll find yourself discouraged sometimes, but I do believe you and I, together, can go deep in the next thirty days.

Although thousands of young women have read *Secret Keeper*, far too many haven't really "gotten it." They walk up to me expressing excitement about the message of beauty and modesty, but, since these messages are ones that lead to visible results, I can see that they haven't gotten the message of the book.

Some get it for a few weeks or even months, but then their youth pastor reports they're wearing seductive clothes once again, always in the name of fashion. They mean to dress modestly, but they're so influenced by culture that the change doesn't stick.

These girls are stuck on the surface. Because of that, they don't understand the beauty and power with which they've been crafted by the God of the universe.

I want to take you more deeply into truth. Will you dive below the surface with me?

You can learn from these devotions on your own, or you can do them with a group, in which case you'll have weekly meetings with some fun activities. (The group leader, who might be you, will find these activities in the appendix at the back of the book.) Either way, you'll be doing five days of devotions each week to coincide with each chapter of *Secret Keeper*. You don't really need to read *Secret Keeper* the week you read the devotions, but you can, and I encourage you to. It'll just plant more great stuff in your head. You'll find that the devotions are very loosely aligned. Watch for the little "What does SK say?" sidebar. It'll remind you to pull out the book and find the truth from that chapter that is the focus of your current devotional. The point of these devotions isn't to be repetitious; rather, the purpose is to take you a little deeper into the truth about modesty so you can really get it into your heart.

Don't skip over or skimp on any of the assignments given here. Please! You'll come up at the end having never gone deep enough to see what it's all about! Each devotional offers a Bible passage to read, some encouragement, and then a journaling assignment. You can write your journal entry in this book. Make sure you do write. You'll miss the wonder if you don't.

♥ **WILL YOU "GO DEEP" WITH ME?
LET'S TAKE THE PLUNGE!**

**WHAT DOES
SK SAY?**

"This week's devotions are way different from the content of chapter 1 in *Secret Keeper*. God is pulling us deep because that's where His power is! But you need my little introduction from *Secret Keeper* chapter 1 to understand the power that can be found in modesty."—Dannah Gresh



WEEK 1
THE POWER
DAY 1

Read Isaiah 55

“Come, all you who are thirsty,
come to the waters.” Isaiah 55:1

WELL, HERE YOU ARE.

How do you feel today?

Beautiful or boring?

Well-groomed or well-worn?

Are you feeling overweight? Or tanned and toned?

Are your friendships building you up and giving you courage? Or have they left you raw and lonely?

Is your heart in a good place and filled with strength, or does your spirit feel wilted? All too often, I find that girls and women who dress immodestly are simply hiding a wilted spirit.

I experienced a really painful time a few years ago. During that time, I dressed to the “nines,” as they say. (Where on earth did that expression come from?) I purposefully set out to tell the world I was okay, when, in fact, I was wounded. On one particularly painful day, I asked a friend who is a wonderful truth-teller, “What do you sense in me?”

“A wilted spirit,” she empathized.

Tears flowed. I felt pretty wilted.

My friend prayed specifically for God to water my soul. Funny thing—He did! The next morning I just happened to read Isaiah 55, as I’d been reading through that particular book of the Bible.

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters. . . . As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace” (verses 1, 10–12).



WEEK 1
THE POWER
DAY 2

Read Psalm 42:1–6



As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. Psalm 42:1

DO YOU KNOW THAT IT'S OKAY TO HAVE A WILTED SPIRIT?

That it's okay to be thirsty? What's not okay is trying to quench that thirst with clothes, relationships, spending flings, and entertainment that's ungodly. But, if you're like me, you've had a brownie or two when you feel bad about yourself. Sadly, it never makes me feel much better; it only adds a little weight.

On June 12, 2003, I lay outside my little cabin at a camp in northern California, reading God's Word. Though it was summer, the mountain above me was still capped in snow. What a sight! The snow was melting at a rapid pace, causing a tremendous flow of raging, cold, crystal-clear water to rush into the little creek beside me.

I just happened to read Psalm 42 that morning, which reads, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God." I laid my head down to pray about that. *Just how thirsty do I have to get, God, for You to really quench me?*

Suddenly I wondered to myself if any deer ever wandered into this well-populated campground for the quenching power of this little creek. I opened my eyes, and there, ten feet in front of me, was a young deer, looking frightened and frail but purposefully stepping toward the creek. Wow! Was I blown away! It was as if God were saying, Be this thirsty, Dannah! Dare to go to places you've not been, to wander into unfamiliar territory, to be seen by those you'd rather not have see you thirst for Me. That's how thirsty!

I'm praying you'll experience this kind of a moment with God during our thirty-day plunge. I hope you'll see His wonder as He brings you a deer—or a friend with godly advice or a new moment of clarity from His Word.



WEEK 1
THE POWER
DAY 3

Read Psalm 42:7–11

{ Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls; all Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me. Psalm 42:7 NASB

AS YOU KNOW, MY FIRST SCUBA DIVE WASN'T A GREAT EXPERIENCE. Oh, how I wished it had been.

But only one day later I had an awesome experience with snorkeling. Captain Phil took Bob and me out past the “breaker.” The breaker is where the calm ocean begins to get nasty because it hits an object such as a coral reef. One side of the breaker is chaos; . . . on the other side is perfect peace. We were let out on the peaceful side and warned again and again never to get close to the breaker unless we wanted a few broken limbs and wounds as the ocean would smash us against the coral reef. If you're not careful, you can be coasting along looking at the amazing wonders of the underwater world, and you suddenly find yourself having to swim **HARD** for safety!

Have you ever been on the wrong side of the breaker emotionally, or spiritually? Where you feel like just yesterday you were amazed by God, and suddenly you just feel like you are too close to the edge? Or maybe you are actually **OVER THE EDGE**.

You're not alone. In Psalm 42, David writes about feeling like the breakers and waves had rolled over him. A closer look at the passage reveals that in Hebrew he said the “waterspouts” (not the waterfalls) called out to him. A waterspout is a large tube of clouds formed by electricity that has been trapped in fluid. It has a particular kind of circular motion at the point like a tornado; being hollow inside, it attracts vast quantities of water, which it pours down in torrents upon the earth. These spouts are frequent on the coast of Syria, and no doubt the psalmist had often seen them and the ravages waterspouts made. He felt as if he were being called into that very place.

CHOOSE
TO PRAISE
HIM, EVEN
IF IT'S
HARD.



WEEK 1
THE POWER
DAY 4

Read Psalm 34

{ Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing.
Psalm 34:9

THERE'S A PICTURE IN NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC WITH A MAN'S FACE IN THE BACKGROUND THAT HORRIFIES ME.

It's not because he looks terrified or ugly, but because he looks bored. He's got his chin parked on his perched-up hand as if he can hardly stay awake during the show. What show? A lingerie show. Two beautiful women parade in front of him. One is wearing a lacy bra and bikini bottoms. The other dons a corset laced tightly to complement her satin panties.

And he's bored.

Do you see a problem here? Do you understand why I'm terrified?

If we keep selling the female body at the pace we've been selling it, soon all men will be so bored out of their gourd that there will be little left to satisfy or excite them. We will have completely relinquished our power to be alluring simply because we've been complacent about giving ourselves away cheaply in a quest for faux power.

The Journal of Advertising published a study of the effects of using overtly sexual content in mainstream consumer advertising. It reports that sexual appeal in ads does increase the interest in the product, but at the same time brand recognition was noticeably lower.¹ In other words, if the makers of Kleenex brand tissues used sexy models, they'd probably have more memorable commercials and consumers might even become consumed with tissues (the product) thinking that they might be sexier if they used tissues, but they'd be LESS likely to remember that it is Kleenex (the actual brand) tissues they're supposed to be buying.

This makes me wonder: If you follow the trend of dressing sexy, acting sexy, talking sexy, won't you also be creating a higher level of interest in the sexual appeal of women in

HIS
WAY,
RATHER
THAN THE
WORLD'S
WAY.



WEEK 1
THE POWER
DAY 5

Read Genesis 24

{ [Rebekah] took her veil and covered herself. Genesis 24:65

IRONICALLY, THE WORLD'S RESPONSE TO THE MOST SENSUAL STUFF IS NOT WHAT YOU'D THINK.

Take, for instance, all this “sexy” reality TV. The sexier the shows, the faster they tank sometimes.

Yet while audiences don't respond all that well to the most sensual reality programming, the reality shows about dating and marriage have experienced skyrocketing success. Now, mind you, most of these shows are also pretty crass, but their success reminds us how much people, deep down, long for romance and true love more than cheap sexual thrills.

I pick up a teen fashion magazine from time to time just to stay fresh with the temptation you face in the worlds of fashion and guys. Get this advice from the liberal mag: “If he's into you, he'll call.” It goes on to advise that you calling him only makes him want you less. Even the most out-of-whack magazines of the day agree. It pays to be the girl who waits.

For a better read, feast on the stories you find in the Bible. The Old Testament character of Rebekah must have known about the power of allure, or she was simply obeying the preferences of her parents or of an extremely modest culture. But she didn't rush to Isaac and gush all over him. She covered herself. She let him do the chasing—and chase he did! He married her. The Bible says he later prayed over her when she couldn't have any children. In a society where childbearing was one of the few values of women, he didn't go out and find another wife. He prayed over his dearly loved Rebekah. I find that very romantic. And even when he was an older guy, he was afraid that her extreme beauty might be his undoing. He thought someone might kill him to have her. He never stopped feeling, “Wow!” He had it bad!

ARE YOU
LOOKING FOR
POWER?
**REST IN
GOD.**