



CONTENTS

Foreword by Dannah Gresh

1. It Was a Good Year 9
2. My World . . . Your World 21
3. Boy Crazy—Looking for Attention 33
4. Girlfriends—Looking for Acceptance 51
5. Self-Esteem—Looking for Hope 73
6. Mean Girls—Looking for Power 89
7. Revolution 111
8. Rebellion—Looking for Independence 121
9. Mom Was Right—Looking for Healing 137
10. Glad I'm a Girl?—Looking for a Future . . . 161
11. Three Magic Words: Help for the Wounded... 181

Notes / 190



CHAPTER 1





IT WAS A

GOOD YEAR



THE YEAR WAS 1979. As far as 13-year-old girls go, this really should have been what they call a “banner year”—one of the best. I had been at this same school for six years now. I knew the ins and outs, I was fairly popular, I earned good grades, I was always one of the first chosen for teams at recess. My family vacations in 1979 included trips to Israel and Egypt as well as the Caribbean island of Grand Cayman. What was not to love?

Me. I was not to love.

My hair was curly and never cut right. I couldn’t wear it long like all of my friends because it would frizz out and I’d end up looking like Bozo the Clown. I wore it in pigtails in second and third grade, but a mature fourth grader can’t really do that. Besides, Maureen Butler had thought for two full years that I was an Indian princess. I didn’t want to be an Indian princess. So by middle school, my hair was really “out there”—like Lisa Simpson, but not so neatly drawn.

One of my nicknames was “Piranha,” given to me by a guy whose nickname was “Carrot Top.” His nickname came, of course, from the fact that he had a shock of red hair. Mine was due to the fact that the only thing more noticeable than the huge space between my two front

teeth was the fact that I was missing the next two required teeth in a full set (called the incisors—I know this because my dad was a dentist), but I *had* been blessed with two very pronounced canine teeth, razor sharp, one on each side of my mouth. Perhaps I exaggerate that a bit, but when a 13-year-old girl is dying to make an impression on the guys, this is *not* what she wants to see when she smiles at herself in the mirror.

“YOU KNOW, DEARIE,
VERTICAL STRIPES ARE
MUCH MORE FLATTERING.
EVER TRY BLACK? IT’S A
VERY SLIMMING COLOR.”

Shopping for clothes was a nightmare. I hated it. I was constantly between sizes and had the kind of figure that wasn’t really even a shape at all. I was the kind of girl that sales ladies would smile at kindly and say, “You know,

Dearie, vertical stripes are much more flattering. Ever try

black? It’s a very slimming color.” Even when I was a junior in college and making, I thought, a nice impression on a very cute scuba diving instructor, he brought home the truth I had lived with for so many years when he said (to my *mother* of all people), “She’ll be a very pretty woman when she loses some of that baby fat.” I think that was supposed to be a compliment.

The reason I was one of the first chosen for teams at recess is because I was fairly athletic, but not much of a threat to the guys in the girlfriend department. I was like a sister, they told me. I was also picked first for square dancing. See, if they picked the cute girls, those girls might get the wrong idea . . . or the right idea. Either one was embarrassing for the boys. And they couldn’t pick the

“outcasts” for obvious reasons. So I was the best choice. Somehow this didn’t make me feel any better.

I was forever doing stupid things. On the infamous Israel/Egypt trip my tour group was dining at a restaurant in Old Jerusalem when I decided I needed to visit the little girls’ room. My memory of this event may be a bit muddled by time, but this is the chain of events as I recall them: There were no other 13-year-old girls (or even 11-year-olds or a 15-year-old) to accompany me to the bathroom, leaving me to attempt this adventure all alone. This was uncomfortable territory to begin with—having to go it alone—but to make matters worse, the signs on the bathroom doors were not accompanied by any “courtesy English.” I don’t know about you, but my Hebrew is a little shaky. In America this would not pose too great a problem—we’d simply look at the picture on the bathroom door. I think you could do this in most European countries as well. However, in Jerusalem they must have really wished to preserve the Old World feel, because I insist to this day that both doors had pictures of people with robes on . . . dresses as far as I could tell. I went in one and began to do my business, wondering as I entered if *all* ladies’ rooms in Israel had such funny-looking toilets. Before long I was not the only one in the bathroom. Someone in the stall next to me was—now this was odd—pointing his feet in the wrong direction, and they were *big* feet, too. In a blind rush I grabbed my purse and flew out of that bathroom so fast . . . So fast that I did not realize until returning to the table that I had grabbed, in fact, an extra roll of toilet paper and not my purse. The story does have a happy ending, however. I convinced a 16-year-old guy (who later held my hand, but that’s for another chapter) to return to the men’s room and retrieve

my purse. The entire tour group greeted him with cameras, like Hollywood paparazzi, as he exited the men's room carrying my purse!

It was the year that all of my classmates started “going together.” I don't know what happened. One year earlier, boys weren't very interesting to any of us. We played together when we had to—I loved sports, so boys were always good for that—but we were more than content to go our separate ways most of the time. Take square dancing for example—back in the “olden days,” schools would frequently have the older grades participate in square dancing once a week or so. I think it was to foster listening skills and cooperation, as well as to teach manners, because square dance partners must bow and curtsy to each another. It was pretty gross to have to “swing your partner” in sixth grade, and I think the boys felt the same way. But in seventh grade, selecting someone as a square dance partner was as good as giving one of those notes that say, “I like you. Do you like me? Check yes or no,” to someone.

As I've already mentioned, being the “safe” square dance choice was not my preference. I wanted to be noticed. I wanted someone to like me, to ask my friends if they thought I'd “go” with him. I wanted to fit in and be like my friends. But I didn't. I couldn't. Not in this area. They were light-years ahead of me in looks, in fashion, in cuteness. I wasn't sure what I'd have to do or how I'd have to change to become one of the girls all the guys liked, but I was willing to do whatever it took—even if it meant rejecting the way God had created me. I'd do anything. Anything . . .

February 26: My one and only hope is now gone. I was just beginning to like Dan B., but he likes Steph. If she starts going with him I'll croak. I know I'll never have a boyfriend. I feel like crying. MAYBE I WILL.

March 13: It should have been good (today) because we went roller skating. But I had a rotten time. You'd think that with three single, good looking guys ~~there~~, one would ask me to skate. Oh, but no, Sue's too ugly to even be seen with. And I don't usually fall.

Well I went on my can three times. I was trying to show off. And school was even worse. What a drag.

May 14: Dan was going to ask me again, but Lanyer and all those creeps got their big noses into it and embarrassed him out of it. I'm tired of being a big fat ~~fat~~ ^{fat} and I want someone, anyone to ask me! I'm desperate!!!



GOD'S DIARY

I don't think I'm alone. I don't think I'm the only girl who has looked day after day at her reflection in the mirror, hating what she sees, unsure that she will ever be loved. In fact, I've never met a

woman or girl who has said, "Really? You didn't like yourself? Hmmm, I've always been quite pleased with myself." It just doesn't happen. There are a lot of theories on why this is so—we'll take a look at several of them together in this book—but the primary reason is Satan:

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your fellow believers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings." (1 Peter 5:8-9 TMIV)

There are a couple of important things I want you to see here. First, the Devil is your enemy, and he wants you destroyed. Another word for “enemy” is “adversary.” In the Greek, this meant “one that speaks against another.”¹ He speaks against you. What does he say? In my case he said things like:

You’re fat. You’re ugly. No one will ever love you. You are a freak. It’s no wonder they don’t want to hang around with you. You aren’t worth it.

And how interesting that he speaks those lies right into our own ears! He didn’t turn my friends against me, he didn’t make me unappealing to the boys, he didn’t alter my appearance in any way . . . but he did much worse. He whispered lies to me that I believed, that I embraced, and that I used as a basis for making decisions for many years to come. So why does this destroy us?

A theologian by the name of Matthew Henry said this about Satan: Satan’s goal with Christians is to get them thinking so much about their suffering and their bad fortune that they will use whatever is bad in their life as an excuse to refuse or deny God.² So if Satan can get us believing all of the negative things we say and think about ourselves—sometimes even the mean things that others say about us—then he’s on his way to victory.

The second thing I want you to see in 1 Peter 5:8-9 is this: Girls throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. You are not alone! This is the first time I have written down most of these thoughts. But I have spoken them dozens of times to thousands of girls. I always see heads bobbing up and down in complete understanding; sometimes girls are so

eager to show their agreement that they are in danger of crossing the fine line between head nodding and head banging. Yeah—I feel really crummy about myself, too! Yeah—I wish I was anyone but me! Some are astounded to see other girls—girls they consider to be beautiful and popular—weeping as they encounter God's unconditional love and acceptance for the first time. You are not the only one who has been lied to, and you are not the only one who hates what she sees in that mirror.



December 22: Beth got me a really flop-out mirror with "You're Gorgeous" on it (since I'm always putting myself down.)

January 14, '80: I don't think Beth's (You're Gorgeous) mirror is helping my complex any. It keeps getting shattered when I go to the Roller Dome. I know I'm not UGLY, but there's something about me that guys don't like...

MY STRUGGLE



Write an honest evaluation of your feelings about YOU. While you're at it . . . how do you think your friends feel about themselves?