

Mom
ON A MISSION

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*This book is dedicated first of all to Jesus,
the Author and Finisher of our faith.
Every word is written for His glory.*

*To moms everywhere who are striving to
raise their children for the Kingdom of Christ.*

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Introduction

They were a small, insignificant looking band: four young children, walking through the deep forest, following their leader. Their leader was a young woman, average to look at, except for one thing. Over her dress she wore a breastplate, in her right hand she held a sword and in her left, a massive shield. Because she was on a mission.

She knew the children placed in her charge were neither insignificant, nor ordinary. Deep in their packs they each carried a treasure of infinite worth, and it was her job to protect it — and them. The children were mostly unaware of their worth, which gave them a sweet innocence, but it also made them vulnerable.

Although the path they walked on looked safe, their leader knew there would be many along the way who would love nothing more than to entice the children away from it, away from the castle she was leading them towards. The treasure they carried would not only be useful to the enemy, the loss of it would be a blow to the King. So she kept her sword close and her shield ready.

They came to a small village where they stopped at a tavern for refreshment. The children happily chattered among themselves and with the young woman while they waited for their food. The tavern owner came to their table with a large goblet, full of a delicious looking drink, which he offered to the children, free of charge. He tried to give it directly to one of the young boys, but the woman intercepted him and took the goblet herself. It took only a small taste for her to know it was unacceptable for those in her charge. She sent it back, despite the eager remonstrance of the innkeeper.

The children were bitterly disappointed – they were so ready for the taste of something besides water. The young woman quieted them and explained that although the drink was good to look at and pleasant to drink, it was tainted with a potion that would gradually take control of their minds and destroy their ability to judge anything rightly.

They soon finished their meal and continued their journey. They came by a man in the town square who was in the middle of an entertaining act. The children wanted so badly to stay and watch that the woman relented. As the act went on, it drew her in. She momentarily forgot the possible danger to the children as she let her mind wander. Someone jostled against her, and she was quickly brought back to reality as she saw a strange woman pulling one of the little girls after her. She quickly drew her sword, which rested in its scabbard, and the enemy retreated in fear and disgust. She was shaken by the encounter and resolved to not be so easily distracted in the future.

As they left the town behind them, she held the sword firmly in her hand once again, and her shield was ready to protect the children from any onslaughts of the enemy. She was exhausted at times, but learned to draw her strength from the words of the King and the life-giving water with which He always gave her in good supply, whenever she needed it.

They met many perils and were tempted with many deceptions along the way - in the forests and the towns. But she kept her eyes on the goal ahead. As the children grew older, she told them stories of the mighty King, and they learned to love Him. She taught them how to use the sword and shield, along with other weapons that He had given them.

And so they went on, the woman who was growing and maturing in her heart, and the children who were fast on their way to becoming adults and warriors in their own right. She knew they would soon be out of her charge. She could only lead them safely for so long, then the journey was their own choice. They could go on to the castle, or pursue the empty pleasures that their enemies made look so enticing.

She battled for them fearlessly, without thought of herself. She spent much time teaching them about the treasure they were carrying, the battle all around them and the words of the King. And she hoped what she taught them would be enough.

This is a simple allegory, but the truth is powerful. Mom, you are that young woman, trusted with the precious souls of your children. We only have a short season to be with our children, and it is absolutely critical that we use that time to protect, fight for and prepare them to become warriors themselves.

Now I know from experience that this can be an abstract concept. It's hard to pin down exactly what it means to be a "Warrior Mom." When we are in the trenches, surviving the day to day struggles of parenting, it's so tempting to just go with the minimum. But God has called us to rise above the everyday and sound the battle cry loud and clear! It's not enough to fight when we are being attacked; we need to take an offensive position and lead our little tribes with grace, courage and valor.

It's a journey that will not end anytime soon, and we can put away the fear of imperfection right now. Being a warrior does not mean being perfect – all you really need is ready obedience and a heart after God. I have waited so long for my Christian walk to be more perfect before answering God's call to truly be a Warrior Mom, but I am learning that growth comes best when I am practicing *what I know* instead of waiting for God to shower inspiration and growth on my heart.

I believe there are two important parts to becoming a Warrior Mom, and that's what I want to share with you in this book. The first part is the boot camp. No soldier will reach their full potential without training, not even a warrior of God. It is in God's boot camp that we learn who we really are. The second essential to becoming battle worthy is learning to step into the identity that God created for us as moms and claiming the power we have through His might.

I must warn you before you start: our enemy does not want you to learn how to battle for your children. He does not want you to become a

warrior or to claim your identity as a member of God's army. Watch out for his attacks and distractions, and be on the offensive, covering yourself and your family in prayer.

Part 1: Who She Is

“He teaches my hands to make war, so
That my arms can bend a bow of bronze.”
—2 Samuel 22:35



chapter one

Broken for a Purpose

“Whenever God means to make a man great,
He always breaks him in pieces first.”

— Charles Spurgeon¹

She was perfect. We stared down at her in awe, holding our breath until we could hold her for the first time. The moment we saw her, we knew. We knew she was our daughter, perfectly created for our hearts and made for our family. We had waited two years for this moment. Two years of paperwork, appointments and home visits. Two years full of soaring hopes and crashing dreams. Adoption can be like a brutal boot camp for the faint of heart.

But now, here she was: our precious Mila baby. And we were on cloud nine. The hospital gave us our own room for the three day stay while we waited for paperwork to be signed and our daughter to be released *to us*. Then the nurses came into our room around midnight, just twelve hours before she was due to be released. Words swirled around like in a bad dream, and before we knew it, our baby was out of our arms and in the NICU, enduring blood draws and a spinal tap. We were heartbroken.

After a few days everything was starting to feel okay again. My heart almost broke in two when our baby’s precious first mom told Mila goodbye and put her in my arms before walking out of the hospital. She had signed her parenting rights over to us, and I felt shattered on the inside for her, because my dreams came true through her bleeding heart.

But our little girl was going to be ok. We just needed to hang tight at the NICU for another week, and then we would hopefully have the go-ahead to return home.

But then another late night was shattered by a single phone call. Suddenly nothing was clear. An unforeseen legal complication had come up and there was nothing we could do. It is impossible to describe the shattered, ragged, bleeding feeling of knowing your newborn daughter might be taken from you and given to another. My husband and I felt like we were thrown into the middle of a tornado, with our hearts being twisted, bruised and tossed in all directions.

We clung to God and to each other tighter than ever before, and in that brokenness, I learned how weak and helpless I am apart from God's strength and that He is the only one who can hold together my broken pieces without destroying my heart. It was as if God was holding me on a mountain top as I watched the swirling storm below, myself a part of it, yet so far removed.

And I learned to know God in a way I never had before. I saw my raw need for Him and looked at my pride with a broken and contrite heart. You see, I'd always been so confident in my ability. I'd done things and been places. I'd devoured Christian books and gone to church and traveled to many different countries. I'd bandaged up hurt people and helped resuscitate when there was no life left. I was confident in my ability to fix things, yet there I was, totally broken and unable to fix anything.

The purpose

It is only when God knocks all the props out from under us that we realize who we are. *We are nothing without Him.* And I started to think. Maybe being a warrior mom isn't about winning battles because we fight through with our own sheer determination. Maybe it's God winning our battles as He takes us on a journey that will equip us beyond

motherhood. For that journey, He has given us a map, a blueprint if you will.

There was a time when the children of Israel were living the dream in Egypt. A member of their family was second in command over the entire country, perhaps even over the known world at the time. Pharaoh gave them their own land, the best in the country, and they were offered high-ranking jobs. God had saved them from the famine, and they were grateful. Things looked good, and they were feeling great.

And then the storm came and their lives came crashing down around their feet. They went from positions of privilege to slavery. And then, as if that wasn't bad enough, their baby boys were ripped out of their arms and thrown into the river. They were broken, shattered into a million pieces. But God... God had not forgotten them and was waiting to show Himself mighty on their behalf. He rescued them from slavery and obliterated their enemies. He worked miracle after miracle for them, fulfilling every promise and making new covenants with them. But it was not until He took them on a journey, fighting their battles for them while gently leading them along, that they became warriors.

First things first

My friend, it's going to be the same for each of us. We cannot wake up one morning and decide we are going to go to battle for our children, and voila! We have instantly become seasoned, strong warrior women ready to fight hard with grace and fire in our hearts. First, we must go on the journey. We must learn to rely on God with every fiber of our being and learn what it is to be broken, repentant, reliant and vulnerable before we can then be bold and victorious.

I believe the path to becoming a warrior woman usually goes in that order, but God is not bound by any particular five step method, so this will not always be the case. But since this is the path we observe the

Israelites took, I'd like to discuss our path in that same order: brokenness before victory.

Have you ever been broken? Some of us are harder than others, and it takes more to break us. Others have such gentle hearts toward the Lord that it doesn't take much. It took rejection, almost losing our baby and a long, hard transition as a mom of three kids to completely shatter me. But don't expect your path to look like mine. One of the biggest keys to the entire journey is to not compare your path with those around you. You are unique as an individual, a Christian and a mom, so God's way for you will be equally unique.

Being broken hurts from the inside out. It's the kind of pain that those around you only catch glimpses of. The most painful part is hidden way down, deep inside. Brokenness is feeling misunderstood and unknown. It is God taking a red hot iron and probing the most sensitive parts of us, purging out self and leaving only scars behind. It is God's grace, like a small plant, growing larger and larger inside of us, until our carefully constructed walls of self-sufficiency are forced to shatter into a thousand pieces, leaving us feeling vulnerable and exposed.

Brokenness can be as simple as acknowledging our own silly, useless pride for what it is: embarrassing, ugly and revolting. Something that needs to be killed. And because we have identified with our pride for so long, it will not die without pain. You will feel like a piece of yourself is dying.

But to be truly broken we must allow the pain to do its work, breaking our identity away from our own accomplishments and uniting it with Christ. When the Israelites left Egypt, the Egyptians and surrounding nations weren't talking about them as slaves who built the pyramids. They had a new identity: The children of the great I AM. God had a plan for them as a nation. He was going to bring salvation to the world through them. But first, they had to have their own identity smashed so that everyone would know they belonged to Him. No longer were they the slaves of the Egyptians; they were the people of the Living God.

This is what He wants for us as mothers. He doesn't want us to raise children that make people look at us. He wants us to raise children that point people to Him. And to do that, He must break us and rebuild us with His own identity.

Journey not destination

Brokenness, however, is not a destination, but a journey. It is something we have to say "yes" to over and over again. In fact, there are times we need to beg and plead for God to break us and replace the broken pieces with Himself. Brokenness is not something we experience once and then we're good to go. It is an attitude of the heart that goes deeper and deeper over time.

Imagine your heart as an onion, with layer after layer. God doesn't want just the top layer or two. He wants to get right to the center so that every inch of us is filled with Him. But He starts with the outer shell, peeling back layer after layer over the years of our lives until He finally reaches the most protected parts of our souls.

So expect to be on the mountaintop with God during your brokenness, but don't expect to stay there. Our frail human hearts run down to the valley of self so easily, building the walls of pride and self-defense up again and again. We find it easy to feel invincible after we've been on the mountaintop. So we must plead with God to break us again and again, until we can live in an attitude of continual, humble brokenness before Him.

If we are not willing to beg, plead and embrace brokenness, then the battle is already lost. The brutal truth is that we are unable to effectively fight in our own power. In fact, if we live with our walls of pride built up around us, we are blocking God's power from our lives. But when we invite brokenness then we are inviting God's glorious power to show itself strong in us. And I imagine God beckoning us closer as He says "Now you shall see what I will do" (Exodus 6:1).

Are you ready to see the glory of the Lord?

Read Psalm 105 and write down the 3 times God showed Himself strong and brought life after brokenness.

Have you ever felt shattered?

What was it that broke through to your heart?

How are you able to see God's grace in those hard circumstances?

“But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”

—1 Peter 5:10