

A woman with dark hair and red lipstick, wearing a bright red suit, stands in front of a lush green rose bush. The background is slightly blurred, showing more greenery and a hint of a landscape.

SARAH JAKES ROBERTS

WOMAN EVOLVE

BREAK UP WITH YOUR FEARS
&
REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR LIFE

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*To every woman determined to abandon what
was and bold enough to discover what could
still become . . . this one is for us.*

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ONE

RESCUE EVE

Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

—GENESIS 1:28

Three years ago I fell deeply in love with Eve. Yes, the Garden of Eden Eve, the woman who basically ruined God’s plan for humanity over a piece of fruit.

I know what you’re thinking: *Fall in love with Eve? How is that even possible? The woman most popularly known for being the gateway of sin, debauchery, cramps, bloating, labor pain, dysfunctional relationships, insecurities, depression, disease, stretch marks, acne . . . ?* Yes. That’s the one.

For years I rolled my eyes whenever Eve’s name came up. I saw her as the woman who had *one* job and failed so miserably that it changed my life, and yours, thousands upon thousands of years later. Before it could even begin. A fantasy of traipsing around a tropical garden with a flat tummy, picking organic fruit from trees—never worrying about the cost of living, global warming, or obsessing over social media—comes to a screeching halt over a little ol’ piece of fruit. Picked from a forbidden tree.

I've always had *big* plans to get to heaven and give Eve a full neck-twisting, eye-rolling, hand-clapping dissertation on the effects her choice has had on the rest of us. But all of that changed at a women's conference. I noticed that all the volunteers (and most of the registrants) wore matching shirts. This isn't uncommon at a women's event; however, these shirts were different. They displayed the names of women in the Bible who are celebrated for their commitment and faith: "Sarah. Ruth. Esther. Mary. #squadgoals."

Since we are just getting to know each other, now may be a good time to tell you something you should probably know about me. From time to time, there's this petty part of my brain that needs to be reminded that I know Jesus. Is that anybody else's testimony?

That day at the conference, that petty part of my brain tapped me on my proverbial shoulder and whispered, "Chiiiiille, look! You ain't the only one who doesn't want Eve on her squad." I immediately smiled at the thought.

As I walked from the backstage holding room into the crowded auditorium, I looked over the audience. The "Sarah. Ruth. Esther. Mary. #squadgoals" shirt was literally everywhere I turned. The band had taken their places on the stage. The singers had grabbed their microphones. The music was blaring, and everyone in the room was lifting their voices in worship. But I was stuck.

I couldn't shake the feeling that something was wrong. I should have been opening my heart and lifting my hands to sing along with all the others. After all, in just a few short moments I was scheduled to take the platform and share a message meant to confront, transform, and empower the women in the room to pursue the vision God had when He created them. Yet all I could think about was Eve.

Logically I knew why her name was not on the shirts. Seriously. Who in their right mind wants Eve on their squad? She was so easily tempted and manipulated to abandon what she knew was right and engage with what would leave her (and the rest of us) in the world struggling.

If an actual lightbulb appeared over our heads each time we had an epiphany, in that moment a high-megawatt beam would've been shining brilliantly over mine!

Compassion for Eve hit me like a ton of bricks. This time I wasn't viewing her from my high horse but from a position of empathy that can only come from knowing what it's like to be in someone else's shoes. There I was, in the middle of a women's conference, where the virtues of women who showed ridiculous faith and righteousness were being proclaimed, but all I could think about was Eve—my heart longing to go back to the garden to tell her that she still had value, promise, and worth.

YOU'VE GOT SOME EVE IN YOU

Value. Promise. Worth. Aren't those the words we all need to hear? Especially when we find ourselves in our own inevitable *Eve* moments? Haven't we all had a moment when we knew better but didn't do better?

Let's be honest. Our inclination to choose a path that pushes us further away from our moral, ethical, spiritual, financial, physical, relational, or emotional goals is not a foreign concept. Yet Eve has been vilified for making a similar choice. One we all can relate to making at some point, in some way.

If you raised your eyebrow at that last sentence, allow me a moment to prove it to you.

Every day we are given many opportunities to choose what we know is good and right for us. But if you're like me, there are times throughout the day when my discipline to do what I know is good and right is overshadowed by the temptation to do what I know will ultimately slow my progress. In other words, you know what it's like to know better but not do better.

Maybe you're like me, and you "closet eat" french fries in the car before you get home with everyone's dinner. Or you overindulge and buy things you know you don't need (but convince yourself you really do). No doubt we all stalk the social media pages of those who have hurt us, allowing our thoughts of shame, anger, fear, anxiety, insecurity, and doubt to take the mic—sometimes to the point we no longer have the faith required to live life with integrity or confidence.

In those moments, when we choose to resist what we know we should do, we are subconsciously also choosing to live inwardly unfulfilled, envious, and apprehensive, in toxic relationships, and addicted, stressed, depressed, ashamed of ourselves . . . the list goes on and on, but all of it ends in a state of devastation. The truth is that no matter how easy people may make it seem, it can be incredibly challenging to abandon toxic habits and instead choose to do what we know is right.

This is by no means a judgment. If you're still on this planet, then there's an area of your life that is still growing to its maximum potential.

If you're journaling or taking notes—and if not, now is a good time to grab pen and paper; you're going to need it—I invite you to take a moment to look within your soul. What's an area of your life where you continue to repeat a cycle that ends with you feeling less valuable? That, my dear, is your forbidden fruit. Now, consider how evolving for the better in that area would change your life. That's the new pattern I want you to achieve. And to help you with these kinds of deeper reflections, I've added “Working It Out” opportunities in the chapters that follow. Please take a moment to pray each time before you begin to work it out. I think you'll be amazed at the way God honors those prayers and your work.

I'VE GOT SOME EVE IN ME

My first devastating foray with forbidden fruit was different from Eve's. I wasn't in a garden God created for my personal enjoyment and dwelling. I wasn't walking around in my birthday suit in the middle of the day, with grass mingling with my toes or birds chirping in the air. I can't even say there was a slithering serpent that got in my head and ruined my life.

The truth is there was no one to blame for the toxic pattern that infected my soul with fear, anxiety, and depression. I was very much complicit in the experiences that attempted to destroy my worth and value. Like Eve, I knowingly ate from a tree I knew would end in misery.

Ever since that wake-up moment on the conference stage, I've had one mission: rescue Eve and all the other women like her. Women like me. Women who are sometimes lost in a world that feels bigger than they are. Women who are attempting to recover after a setback. Women who want to bring forth good fruit despite the forbidden fruit they were exposed to. I want to serve them by helping them grow from wherever they are willing to start to the place God has marked as their finish line.

My purpose is to create environments where women feel safe enough to retrace their steps so they can see where pain, disappointment, or failure buried their hope, potential, and faith. Because when we dare to retrace our steps, we learn that those difficult experiences did not only hurt us. They changed the way we show up and engage in relationships, friendships, business, family, and the world in general.

Just because you've survived something doesn't mean you didn't experience damage. There is truly nothing more necessary for our journey of healing than acknowledging we've been damaged. How else can we heal unless we admit we're wounded?

For those of us who have found safety in not admitting, not digging into what was, let me offer some assurances. I'm not asking you to experience the heartbreak again. I'm not leading you into a cave. I'm not going to leave you stuck. We're finally going to lean in instead of running away. We're going to pass through a tunnel that allows us to reconnect with our soul, hopes, passion, and power. We're going to stop pretending that it never happened because there is a realization more powerful than any painful truth you've experienced. When you commit to growth after trauma, there is resurrecting power that demands your hope, potential, and faith to rise up. An even better version of you is waiting to emerge!

THE RESCUE

There is a well in you. That well has perspectives, disciplines, strategy, creativity, and paradigms that will consistently reveal to you what God knows about you in every season of your life. That well

cannot be damaged. That well has not run dry. It's still tucked away in the corridor of your heart, and it's been waiting for a moment to spring forth. It will water the seeds of the woman God created you to become. No matter how much you have accomplished or how far you are from even getting started, if you're still alive, there is an even more powerful, purposeful woman waiting to take root and produce fruit within you. My job is to help you dig until that well springs up, and that version of you has no choice but to come forth.

That version of you is powerful because of her vulnerability and authenticity. She doesn't talk herself out of getting the support she needs to be free. That version of you is not ashamed of the path that has led her to where she is today. That version of you believes health is wealth, starts the business, goes back to school. That version of you spends and saves with financial stability (and overflow!) in mind. She shatters glass ceilings. That version of you is so whole that a relationship is the cherry on top, not a necessity. That version of you believes that her potential is limitless, and the sky is only another level—not a limit. She is empowered to continuously evolve because she's fascinated by how God will reveal His perfect plan and strength through her heart and hands. That version of you does not subscribe to the notion that this is exclusively a man's world, but *every* industry has room for a woman who is confident that she belongs wherever God sends her.

Our world was not given to just one gender to subdue. Genesis 1:28 says, "Then God blessed *them*, and God said to *them*, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (emphasis added). That declaration was God's original intention for *all* of humanity. So, girl, this world literally needs you. We need you to be fruitful and multiply, not just with beautiful babies but with incredible ideas and opportunities. And if you don't commit to filling this earth, the alternative does not exclusively affect just you. The world is so interconnected that your empty spot gives permission for someone else to leave her spot unfulfilled too. Because when you subdue your giant, you teach the rest of us how to take ours down too.