Lady In Waiting

Becoming God’s Best While Waiting for Mr. Right

Includes Devotional and Study Guide

Newly Revised with 77 Stories of Hope and Encouragement

Jackie Kendall & Debby Jones

Over 500,000 Copies Sold
DEDICATION

We dedicate this book to all the Ladies in Waiting, especially our daughters Jessica, Christen, and Lauren, who are seeking to become women of God.
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Is this just another book for singles? No! We believe this book is unique because its emphasis is not on a woman’s status (single, married, divorced, or widowed), but on the state of her heart. We want to direct a woman’s attention toward the One who really understands the longing of her heart. Too many women grow up believing that the inconsolable ache in her heart is for “a man.” To love a man, get married, and then have children is thought to be the only script that will satisfy her heart’s deepest longing. But no man, woman, or child can appease this longing; it can only be satisfied by the ultimate Bridegroom, Christ Jesus. This book nudges a woman closer to God, while acknowledging any longing she may have to be loved and cherished by a man.

Lady in Waiting is not about finding the right man, but being the right woman. Thus it focuses on ten qualities of a godly woman that are found in the Book of Ruth. These qualities will not only enhance your love relationship with your heavenly Bridegroom, but also guide you as a single woman, guard you while you date, support you in marriage, and comfort you if you are ever widowed or divorced. As you read you will see these characteristics beautifully displayed in the life of Ruth. She recklessly abandons herself to the Lordship of Christ, diligently uses her single days, trusts God with unwavering faith, demonstrates virtue in daily life, loves God with undistracted devotion, stands for physical and emotional purity, lives in security, responds to life with contentment, makes choices based on her convictions, and waits patiently for God to meet her needs.

What are you waiting for? Is it for that perfect job, the ideal relationship, a home, a career, a child? What if you get what you are waiting for?
Will it truly bring the fullness of joy you long for? Anything other than a love relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, regardless of how good that thing may be, will bring you discouragement and disillusionment. So come and explore the life of Ruth and learn what it really means to be a godly woman, “a lady in waiting.”
Part I

Lady in Waiting
Chapter 1

LADY OF RECKLESS ABANDONMENT

The big day is over. Your roommate married a wonderful guy, and you were the maid of honor. You shared your roommate’s joy, but now you wrestle with envy’s painful grip. As the happy couple drives to the perfect honeymoon, you sit alone in an empty apartment, drowning your envy and self-pity with a half-gallon of Heavenly Hash ice cream.

Does this scenario sound familiar?

Have you assumed that your ultimate fulfillment would be found in marriage? Have you privately entertained the notion that the only satisfied women are married women? Have you been expecting your career to satisfy you until you are married? If you have answered “yes” to any of these questions, then you have a prospect of disillusionment looming in the future. On the back cover of the book *Learning to Be a Woman* is a key quotation about fulfillment as a woman:

A woman is not born a woman. Nor does she become one when she marries a man, bears a child and does their dirty linen, not even when she joins a women’s liberation movement. A woman becomes a woman when she becomes what God wants her to be.¹
This priceless truth can help keep your perspective clear in relation to true fulfillment in life. Too many Christian women think that the inner longings of their heart relate only to love, marriage, and motherhood. Look a little closer and see if that longing isn’t ultimately for Jesus. Gary Chapman once remarked in a sermon:

I feel very strongly that marriage is not a higher calling than the single state. Happy indeed are those people, married or single, who have discovered that happiness is not found in marriage but in a right relationship with God.

Fulfillment for a Christian woman begins with the Lordship of Christ in every area of her life.

A college professor (wife, mother of seven children, singer, and author) told a group of young women that when she was eight years old, her mother told her a secret that has guided her perspective on life. The most important thing her mother would ever tell her was, “No one, not even the man you will marry one day, can make you happy—only Jesus can.” What a profound statement for such a little girl. This secret allowed her to grow up following Jesus with reckless abandonment.

Are you still convinced that having Mr. Right will chase away the blues? That’s not surprising. On the front of a national magazine, the lead story said, “Hollywood’s hottest newcomer is selling more records than Madonna and filling her dance card with movie offers. All that is missing is Mr. Right!” Such a mindset bombards singles daily. How can you renew your mind and rise above this stereotype? You can be an exception through understanding “the secret of the alabaster box.”

THE SECRET OF THE ALABASTER BOX

In the days Jesus was on earth, when a young woman reached the age of availability for marriage, her family would purchase an alabaster box for her and fill it with precious ointment. The size of the box and the value of the ointment would parallel her family’s wealth. This alabaster box would be part of her dowry. When a young man came to ask for her in marriage, she would respond by taking the alabaster box and breaking it at his feet. This gesture of anointing his feet showed him honor.
One day, when Jesus was eating in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came in and broke an alabaster box and poured the valuable ointment on Jesus’ head (see Mark 14:3-9). The passage in Luke 7 that refers to this event harshly describes the woman as “a woman in the city who was a sinner” (Luke 7:37). This woman found Jesus worthy of such sacrifice and honor. In fact, Jesus memorialized her gesture in Matthew 26:13 (see also Mark 14:9). This gesture had such meaning, for not only did she anoint Jesus for burial, she also gave her all to a heavenly Bridegroom. Yes, she was a sinner (who isn’t, according to Romans 3:23?), but this sinner had dreams and wisely broke her alabaster box in the presence of the only One who can make a woman’s dreams come true.

What is in your alabaster box? Is your box full of fantasies that began as a little girl while you listened to and watched fairy tales about an enchanting couple living happily ever after? Have you been holding on tightly to your alabaster box of dreams, frantically searching for a man worthy of breaking your box? Take your alabaster box to Jesus and break it in His presence, for He is worthy of such honor. Having responded to your heavenly Bridegroom in such a manner, you can wait with confident assurance that, if it be God’s will, He will provide you with an earthly bridegroom.

How do you know if you have broken your alabaster box at the feet of Jesus? Such a decision will be reflected in reckless abandonment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. When the Lord gives you a difficult assignment, such as another dateless month, you receive His terms without resentment. Your attitude will reflect Mary’s response to the angel when she, as a single woman, was given a most difficult assignment. Mary said, “I belong to the Lord, body and soul...let it happen as you say” (Luke 1:38 PNT). Take your alabaster box, with your body, soul, and dreams, and entrust them to Jesus. When He is your Lord, you can joyfully walk in the path of life that He has for you.

RUTH’S RECKLESS ABANDONMENT

In the Book of Ruth, a young widow made a critical decision to turn her back on her people, her country, and her gods because her thirsty soul had tasted of the God of Israel. With just a “taste,” she recklessly
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abandoned herself to the only true God. She willingly broke her alabaster box and followed the Lord wherever He would lead her.

*But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God”* (Ruth 1:16).

As you look at the following three areas of Ruth’s life that were affected by her reckless abandonment to God, consider the parallels to your own price tag of commitment to God. Have you broken the valuable alabaster box yet?

**NEW FRIENDS**

When Ruth told Naomi, “your people shall be my people,” she understood that she would not be able to grow closer to the God of Israel if she remained among the Moabites (her own people). Ironically, God called Moab His washbasin (see Ps. 60:8; 108:9). One rinses dirt off in a washbasin. Ruth chose to leave the washbasin and head for Bethlehem, which means the “house of bread.”

Even today there exist “Moabites” who will undermine your growth if you spend too much time with them. Sometimes mediocre Christians resist the zeal and commitment of a dedicated single woman. Realizing that one’s friends drive you either toward or away from God, you may need to find a “new people” who will encourage your growth and not hinder it. *“He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm”* (Prov. 13:20 NIV).

Often the choice for deeper commitment produces resentment from people who were once “such good friends.” Do not be alarmed; you are in good company. When the woman broke the alabaster box and poured it on Jesus, the disciples did not applaud her act of worship. Instead, with indignation they responded, “Why this waste?” (see Matt. 26:8 NIV). The disciples of Jesus were filled with indignation because the woman obviously wasted the ointment. But from a heavenly perspective, the great cloud of witnesses rejoiced as they beheld the woman giving such honor to Jesus. The broken alabaster box publicly evidenced the
woman’s reckless abandonment to Jesus. Is there such evidence in your daily life?

This is not to advocate that you distance yourself from all who have not broken their alabaster box at the feet of Jesus. Just consider the ultimate influence your friends have on your commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Be careful if you spend most of your free time with a girl friend who does not share your commitment to Jesus. It can affect your relationship with the Lord. If a non-Christian or a lukewarm Christian influences you rather than you influencing them, you may be headed for serious trouble. You mirror those who influence you. When a woman stops growing spiritually, the lack of progress can often be traced back to a friendship that undermined her commitment to Jesus.

Take a moment to think about the spiritual depth of the girl friend who influences you the most. Is she daily becoming all that Jesus desires? If so, her growth will challenge you to grow. On the other hand, her apathy may ultimately be contagious. “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals’” (1 Cor. 15:33). Have any of your friendships caused your spiritual life to go into a deep freeze?

Maybe you, like Ruth, need to distance yourself from those who, spiritually speaking, are more like a washbasin than a house of bread. The friends who influence you the most should be women who live by Hebrews 10:24 (NIV): “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” Your best friends should be cheering you on in your commitment to Jesus.

NEW SURROUNDINGS

Ruth had to relocate in order to be fed spiritually. Likewise, some single women may have to “relocate” because some of their former relationships keep them in a constant state of spiritual “hunger.” They have to change jobs or even their church in order to continue to grow. In the same way, be open to a change that may benefit your spiritual growth. Like Ruth, look for something that will stimulate your growth in the Lord.

One young woman had to make a choice between playing on a championship volleyball team or being a part of a discipleship group. She
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knew that she was free to play volleyball if she wanted. But when she compared volleyball and the discipleship opportunity, the Lord showed her that the good often becomes the enemy of the best in life. Because of her reckless abandonment in following the Lord’s leadership, she valued her growing commitment to the Lord more than playing volleyball, and it paid off. The discipleship training prepared her heart to respond to an invitation to serve as a short-term missionary in the Philippines. Another young woman may be called to spend her summer ministering to a volleyball team instead of being in a discipleship group, but the commitment to do as the Lord directs is the key.

Ruth moved from a hedonistic society into a culture that attempted to please the God of the universe rather than the sensuous gods of the flesh. Within our advanced society of the 21st century, we often encounter women engaged in becoming a part of self-serving singles’ clubs, singles’ dating services, singles’ cruises, singles’ meet markets… all created to keep singles busy in the waiting time of life. A committed single woman must be sensitive to the inevitable challenges she will meet in her attempt to live unselfishly in such a self-serving society.

One single was persecuted, not by non-Christians but by Christians, because she chose to spend her summer studying at a Bible institute rather than playing in the sunshine with her friends. They actually accused her of thinking she was better than them because she planned to study the Bible intensively for eight weeks. Unfortunately, our self-centered culture in America has penetrated the Church so much that a young woman not only has to choose against the American culture, but sometimes against the more subtle, worldly Christian subculture tainting the Body of Christ.

Part of reckless abandonment is realizing how much our culture has affected our behavior patterns. You want to be Christlike, but your lifestyle is a reflection of Vogue magazine or Cosmopolitan rather than a new creation in Christ. A.W. Tozer said, “A whole new generation of Christians has come up believing that it is possible to ‘accept’ Christ without forsaking the world.”3 Ruth had to forsake the familiar and comfortable in order to receive God’s best for her life.
NEW FAITH

Ruth moved from a false religion into the only true and eternal relationship. Too many women have been involved in a form of religious worship, but have never had a vital, growing relationship with Jesus. Has your religious experience been like Isaiah 29:13b? “…Their worship of Me is made up only of rules taught by men” (NIV). Has your faith been a lifeless ritual rather than a vital love relationship with Jesus? Why not spend some of your free hours as a single woman beginning a journey away from rituals into a deep relationship with Jesus Christ?

One single woman expressed this vital relationship with Jesus in the following way: “I desired that my relationship with the Lord be an adventure. One where I would find out what pleased Him and then do it, devoting as much energy to Jesus as I would in a relationship with a boyfriend. I am falling more in love with Jesus every day.” Do you know more about pleasing a boyfriend than you do about pleasing the Lord Jesus?

DIVIDENDS FROM A HIGH PRICE

Ruth’s choice was costly, but the return on this high price far outweighed her investment. Matthew 19:29 says, “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for My sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life” (NIV). Ruth made the choice to turn her back on all that was familiar and begin a whole new life. Her “hundred times as much” was a godly husband, a son who would be the grandfather of King David, and inclusion in the lineage of Jesus Christ. She turned her back on all that was familiar, and God rewarded Ruth’s critical choice.

Another costly aspect of Ruth’s choice was the time frame in Israel’s history. It was the age of the judges, a period of time described as “do your own thing”; “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 21:25b). Ruth chose not only to break her family cycle, but also to challenge the lifestyle that many in Israel embraced. She wanted God’s will, not hers; His blueprints, not her elementary scribbling; God’s assignment, not her foolish plans.
Whenever a single woman decides to abandon herself completely to Jesus, as Ruth did, she will find herself out of step with society and, sometimes, even with her friends. A single woman today needs the boldness to challenge and break the cycle of the “American way” that exalts a relationship with a man as the answer to life. This “American way” blurs the reality of the ultimate answer to life found in a deep relationship with Jesus Christ. A modern-day Ruth wrote, “My deep satisfaction from my commitment to Jesus is constantly challenged by other believers. They treat me like some kind of Neanderthal, definitely out of step with today’s woman.”

**THE MISSING PUZZLE PIECE**

Often a woman will attempt to find delight in a career if Mr. Right has not arrived. In time, even her “great career” will prove to be less than satisfying. A career, a marriage, or even motherhood is not enough to totally satisfy you by itself. God knows that you will never be complete until you really understand that you are complete in Jesus. Colossians 2:9-10 says, “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.” When a single woman enters a career or even marriage without understanding that she is complete in Christ, she will be disillusioned and dissatisfied.

Incompleteness is not the result of being single, but of not being full of Jesus. Only in the process of reckless abandonment to Jesus does any woman ever finally understand that, in Him, she is complete. When two “incomplete” singles get married, their union will not make them complete. Their marriage will be simply two “incomplete” people trying to find completeness in one another. Only when they understand that their fullness is found in a relationship with Jesus will they ever begin to complement one another. They can never complete one another. You were not created to complete another, but to complement. Completion is Jesus’ responsibility and complementing is a woman’s privilege. A woman not complete in Jesus will be a drain on her husband. Such a woman will expect her husband to fill the gap that only Jesus can fill. Only the single woman who understands this means of being complete in Jesus
is mature enough to be a helpmeet (complement). “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ…” (Col. 2:9-10 NIV). Are you feeling full yet? Ask the Lord right now to begin this process of revealing to your heart the reality of your fullness in Him. “But it is good for me to draw near to God…” (Ps. 73:28a KJV).

In her book, Loneliness, Elisabeth Elliot states, “Marriage teaches us that even the most intimate human companionship cannot satisfy the deepest places of the heart. Our hearts are lonely ’til they rest in Him.” Elisabeth Elliot has been married three times (twice widowed), and she knows from experience that marriage does not make one complete—only Jesus does.

**SATISFIED BY A HEAVENLY FIANCÉ**

Does your relationship with Jesus reflect reckless abandonment to Him, or does it reflect only tokenism, a superficial effort toward following Jesus? Are you content to offer to Jesus that which costs you nothing? Are you influencing those around you to consider a life-changing commitment to Jesus Christ? In the Song of Solomon, the Shulammite was so committed to the one she loved that other women wanted to meet him. They were anxious to go with her to seek for him. “Where has your lover gone, most beautiful of women? Which way did your lover turn, that we may look for him with you?” (Song of Sol. 6:1 NIV) Who was this one so worthy of such reckless abandonment? Does your commitment to Jesus cause those around you to seriously consider whether Jesus is Lord of their lives? Or does your “token” relationship leave you and others still thirsty?

One of Jackie’s single friends stopped by her home one day, glowing and grinning from ear to ear. When questioned about her grin, she replied, “I am on a honeymoon with Jesus.” This woman had been through a brutal divorce (including losing custody of her children), and in her hopeless condition she met the One who gives everlasting hope. When she began to recklessly abandon herself to knowing Jesus as Lord, He began to fill the gaps in her heart left by the removal of her husband and children. In Christ she found comfort, healing, direction,
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and purpose for her life. Do you understand such a relationship with Christ? It doesn’t come cheaply, but the high price is worth the results of such a commitment, especially today. The depth of your relationship with God is up to you. God has no favorites; the choice to surrender is yours. A.W. Tozer so brilliantly stated in his book *The Pursuit of God*: “It will require a determined heart and more than a little courage to wrench ourselves loose from the grip of our times and return to Biblical ways.”

Ruth had just such a determined heart, and the Lord honored her faith to move away from all that was familiar and take a journey toward the completely unknown. Ruth did not allow her friends, her old surroundings, nor her culture’s dead faith to keep her from running hard after God. She did not use the excuse of a dark past to keep her from a bright future that began with her first critical choice: reckless abandonment to Jesus Christ.

Have you made this critical choice or have you settled for a mediocre relationship with Jesus? Amy Carmichael, one of the greatest single woman missionaries who ever lived, once remarked, “The saddest thing one meets is the nominal Christian.”

Choose right now to put mediocrity behind you; courageously determine to pursue Jesus with your whole heart, soul, and mind. As a single woman, this is the perfect moment to establish a radical relationship with Jesus and remove any tokenism from your Christian walk.

Becoming a Lady in Waiting begins with reckless abandonment to Jesus. The strength and discipline necessary to be a Lady of Diligence, Faith, Virtue, Devotion, Purity, Security, Contentment, Conviction, and Patience is discovered in this radical way of relating to your heavenly Bridegroom. If you find yourself struggling with any of the qualities discussed in the following chapters, you may want to reexamine your own commitment to Jesus. Is it real and all-encompassing, or merely ornamental? Do you remember a time when you broke your “alabaster box” in the presence of the Lord Jesus? The Lady in Waiting understands the pleasing aroma of the perfume that flows from one’s “broken alabaster box.” It is the irresistible aroma of reckless abandonment to Jesus Christ.
BECOMING A LADY OF RECKLESS ABANDONMENT

From your perspective, what is the difference between “token commitment” and “reckless abandonment” to Jesus? Is your relationship with Jesus one of sacrifice or convenience? (See Second Samuel 24:24.)

Have you broken your “alabaster box” at the feet of Jesus? (See Mark 14:3-9 and Luke 7:36-39.) Are you afraid to break your box at His feet? Why?

Like Ruth, how has your relationship with Jesus affected your friends, your surroundings, and your faith? (See Matthew 19:29.)

Does your life have public and private evidences of your reckless abandonment to Jesus Christ? Explain.

Read Colossians 2:10. What does being complete in Jesus mean to you? In what ways do you feel incomplete? How can that be changed?

Have you experienced the completeness that comes from the courtship available with your heavenly Fiancé? Consider this dating prerequisite: You must understand you are complete in Jesus before you ever date or marry.

What does the following statement mean to you: “Any woman who does not understand that she is complete in Jesus is susceptible to idolatry”? (This idolatry is dependence on a guy to make her complete—thus putting him in God’s place.) Consider this verse: “How happy are those who know their need for God…” (Matt. 5:3 PNT).

ENDNOTES

Lady In Waiting

IN THE RIGHT HANDS, THIS BOOK WILL CHANGE LIVES!

Most of the people who need this message will not be looking for this book. To change their lives, you need to put a copy of this book in their hands.

But others (seeds) fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold (Matthew 13:8).

Our ministry is constantly seeking methods to find the good ground, the people who need this anointed message to change their lives. Will you help us reach these people?

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop (2 Corinthians 9:6).

EXTEND THIS MINISTRY BY SOWING
3 BOOKS, 5 BOOKS, 10 BOOKS, OR MORE TODAY,
AND BECOME A LIFE CHANGER!

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