

Healed By

LOVE

TINA HESTER

BORN WITH PURPOSE



“For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.”

~Psalm 139:13-14

God has a plan for you, but often, with that plan, there is a counterattack that can cause you to believe the very opposite of His intention for you. Subsequently, you can feel as if you have fallen right into the trap of the enemy’s lies, which is designed to prevent you from ever realizing your potential. The fact remains, you were born for a purpose. Situations, disappointments, and even failures may happen to you. Still, regardless there is purpose in you that’s groaning to be known.

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It's up to you to discover why you're here. You have been uniquely designed and crafted with purpose. It's easy to see for some, and for others, the question remains, "What am I here for?" This is the question that millions of people are desperately longing to answer.

Many never discover God's plan for their lives simply because their perspective is distorted. Their eyes are focused on the wrong thing. They feel trapped in their pain, in who society has determined they will be. Let me encourage you today. You do not have to allow the chains of yesterday to hold you captive. You can embrace your life with hope no matter what your past may have been. Your past cannot keep you unless you let it!

God desires to complete His work...Just trust Him to do it. Allow Him. It requires hard work to bring about change by our own strength, and our best effort is temporary at best. True and lasting transformation comes through Him. Your part is simply to yield.

"Before I formed you in the womb,
I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you;
I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

-Jeremiah 1:5

In this verse in Jeremiah, God let Jeremiah know that he was chosen for a distinct purpose, hand-picked to live in his time and raise the standard. Jeremiah was to be a mouthpiece for the Lord and proclaim the truth of what God was saying to Israel, even in the face of opposition. I'm not saying that you're a prophet. But what I

want to highlight is that you, too, are chosen and created for a purpose. God knows exactly who He's designed and created you to be. He fashioned you with intricate detail, from how you think, to the way you laugh, to all of the little quirks that make you *uniquely you*.

We can often find ourselves stuck as a result of events that occurred in our childhood or toxic relationships that we encountered along the way that brought disappointment or trauma. But today, I want to take you on a journey. It's my journey in encountering God, not just the God talked about from the pages of the Bible or the God that you learned about at Sunday morning church, but how my relationship with the Lord brought healing and restoration to my entire life.

It was as I encountered His Love that my frustrations and pain began to fade away. I began to learn what love, God's love, truly felt like. I found it to be a safe-haven that brought so much freedom and healing as I continued to pursue Him as He pursued me. I was able to overcome feeling like I wasn't good enough, confront the rejection that was trying to define me, and embrace who God had called me to be.

Admittedly, my journey wasn't easy, but I'm thankful that He loved me through it as I submitted my doubts, fears, and apprehensions to Him. Things change when we learn to embrace our identity and accept who we are good, bad, or peculiar. And, I certainly learned to accept myself as I was. It just took time. Wherever you may be in your journey, all is not lost; you can start where you are by choosing to embrace His Love and acceptance. We will talk more about this later in this book.

As I shared earlier, I grew up feeling alone in many areas of my life. I didn't feel loved. I knew my mom loved me, but the rejection I felt was deep-rooted and spilled out in many aspects of my life. I felt like I just didn't fit in anywhere. I excelled in school, which was great, but making good grades was more about me feeling good about myself. It was about accolades and recognition from teachers. I needed validation.

When I accepted the Lord, I did so because of experiencing His Love through what He demonstrated on the Cross for me. It was no longer a cute little story. I became intimately acquainted with the reality of what Jesus did for me in the name of love, and I opened my heart to make Him Lord of my life. That was only the beginning.

During my teenage years, I had issues with my "bean-pole" body. I got teased because of it. Instead of loving the fact that I was skinny, I saw it as a definite negative! My teeth were crooked, affecting my esteem and causing me not to smile fully. I kept to myself and was pretty quiet...way too quiet. The list of things that I did not like about myself far exceeded what I liked and celebrated about myself. I didn't have words for it then, but I felt I had no worth or value. On top of that, I encountered some betrayals in relationships — friends that I thought were friends... a friend that slept with my boyfriend... friends who moved away... It made it easier for me to isolate and not trust people.

MANY PEOPLE HIDE PAIN THROUGH MASKS

As a teenager, one of the things I loved to do was read the latest fashion magazine. I kept up with a variety of magazines — *Seventeen*, *Ebony*, *Essence* — you name it. I paid attention to what people were wearing, hair trends, and such. I loved the cute hairstyles and nail polish. I think, as women, some of us tend to look at what others are wearing: lipstick, lashes, hair, etc. We get intrigued by beauty for the most part.

Have you ever seen an abused woman cover her bruises with makeup? We can all make judgments about what she should or should not be putting up with. That's real. It happens every day. No one wants to be in those types of predicaments or abused and mistreated. When these things happen, we often feel that there's no way out.

As a teenager, the Lord began to open my eyes to some things at church. I began to take notice of people at church. I would see people walk in, dressed up wearing their big hats and flawless makeup, and though they had a smile on their face and a "God bless you" on their lips, I saw something beneath the surface. I saw brokenness and pain. I would ask the Lord, "Why don't the pastor do something about it. Does anyone see this?" It didn't matter which church I went to; I saw this. The people didn't look much different than a person I would see in a retail store, and I just couldn't understand it.

Going through my own "stuff" years later, I, too, found myself hiding behind a mask. Life had finally brought me to the point that

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I could no longer act as if things did not bother me. I had no choice but to confront my issues and learn to operate differently.

Before you can truly step into what God has for you, He wants you healed and free from the bondage of the past, and He provides the healing. Then, when we're healed, we can recognize the purpose and plan that He has for our lives. We can more readily follow Him and carry out our assignments when walking in a greater level of inner healing. When I speak of healing or emotional healing, I'm not saying that it's a one-time event. Healing your heart is not a one-time event. It is a process that paves the way for you to enjoy life and represent Him well as you fulfill the plan and purpose that God has for you.

The healing that I'm speaking of allows you to see yourself how He sees you and responds accordingly. It will enable you to no longer be hindered or weighed down from your past mistakes or failure. It doesn't make you perfect. It makes you renewed and able to take hold of the life for which you've been chosen.