

Life
UNSTUCK

Finding PEACE with Your Past,
PURPOSE in Your Present,
PASSION for Your Future

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*For the woman
who secretly suspects
there is nothing more
but desperately dreams there is.*

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Introduction

If I want to make my youngest grandkids laugh until sweet tea spews from their little noses, I remind them of the time we went tubing in the North Georgia Mountains. They love reliving the day we all piled into their mamma’s SUV and trekked over to the rafting hut. We piled into four large black tubes with life jackets the size of Mini Coopers and divided three little ones amongst four adults. The water was high and flowing pretty gently. We were all excited for the “about three hours” we were about to enjoy on the chilly mountain river. We were not thirty minutes into that journey when Pop (what the grandbabies call my honey) found himself lifted up out of the flowing river and stuck up on a slippery rock. We all grabbed low-lying tree limbs to wait up while he and little Bella (who had immediately chosen him as her tube driver), jiggled back and forth as if on a see-saw until they finally slipped loose and rejoined us on the water. It was all good fun—until ten minutes later, when Pop was stuck again. Again, we all waited for him and Bella to dance a tube dance that set them free. We were enjoying lots of family laughs and fun teasing of Pop and Bella.

The bad news was this little delay in our “just long enough” journey over the river and through the woods kept happening over

and over again. The sun was quickly slipping behind the trees and we were getting cold. Pop and Bella were getting wetter as they always seemed to be the ones in the water. It wasn't long before Pop began to lose his laugh and Bella started to cry and ask to move over to "G's tube." We ended up on the river for close to six hours with either Pop or one of the other adult tube-tenders stuck between scary rocks as the pace of the river became faster and more difficult to navigate. By the time we finally made our way to safety, we were all completely undone. The babies were blue with cold and the adults were exhausted from comforting them and questionably assuring them, "We *will* get unstuck and it will all be OK!"



I recently tested my unstuck theory on my Facebook family and was absolutely convinced by their responses that I was on the right track with my thoughts about all of this. They responded in the largest numbers I have ever received on my Facebook page. Relationships, finances, marriage, ministry, and on and on went the list. I can relate to every single stuck place my sisters shared. I have been in each one at some point or another, some even now.

As we take a look into life unstuck, we will be walking through a precious chapter in the Bible that most of us are fairly familiar with at least a few of the lines of, Psalm 139. I have lived the message of Psalm 139 on a daily basis for almost thirty years, since I started my own personal search for the freedom found in being unstuck, through its twenty-four life-changing verses.

I have discovered it is really easy to get *stuck*. Not so easy to get unstuck!

Sometimes it's our past that hangs us up and keeps us from flowing freely. Sometimes it's relationships that just don't seem to get better. You find you can't live with them and you can't live without them—you are stuck. Then there are those times when it's not "somebody else" that is keeping you trapped, it's *you*. Just you. Sometimes it's

our own personal habits, lack of discipline, dead dreams, unmet expectations, lack of direction, or just plain old fear of trying.

The journey I travel in pursuit of a life unstuck is not unique to me. It is a journey and a destination God wants for all of His daughters. Our freedom is the reason Jesus surrendered His life on the cross. This amazing gift, alone, should inspire in our lives the passionate pursuit of every morsel of freedom's fruit. This truth should motivate us to do all we can to get unstuck and enjoy the journey of our lives.

In John 10:10, Jesus tells us He came so that you and I might have "life and have it abundantly" (ESV).

What does this mean? What does abundant life really look like?

How much freedom can we expect on this earth?

Just how unstuck should I expect to be . . . really?

You and I will answer these questions as we take this journey together. But before we begin, there is one central message I want us to grab right now and haul with us throughout this entire book. It must deeply penetrate our souls so that no enemy, circumstance, person, or thing can steal it. Ready?



*God wants us unstuck and experiencing
peace with our past, purpose in our
present, and passion for our future.*



God wants us, His precious daughters, to be reminded and refreshed by the complete and unshakable knowledge of our redeemed life. He wants us completely restored from things that keep us stuck in the past and He wants us *set free* to gleefully anticipate all He has planned for our future.

Using six verses at a time from Psalm 139, this book will lay out a clear plan for every woman who senses there may be something

missing, something hidden, or something unspeakable keeping her from fully experiencing the freedom and adventure promised by Jesus. This book is for the woman who secretly suspects there is nothing more but desperately dreams there is!

The truth is, we cannot experience an unstuck present if we have not truly dealt with our stuck past. You might just get to where you feel your past is unstuck, but guess what? Tomorrow—*today*—will be your past! We are a work in progress. I encourage you to take this journey one step at a time and really allow God to do a new thing in your heart and your life through His anointing upon these pages as He has done for me as I write. With that freedom, the best days of your life unstuck begin.



Before we get started, I want to pull your attention to the little “Unstuck Manifesto” that follows. I created this for us to claim together. I wrote it one day during the process of writing this book as I was basically lying on the floor crying to God, “I cannot do this! I cannot write anything worth reading. I am stuck! Stuck! Stuck!” One of my prayer partners told me right in the middle of my pity party, “Pat, get off the floor and just write. This is an attack. God’s got this!”

Hmm . . . that sounds good. I’ll just write that.

So, since I knew I would have at least *one* more pity party, either before the book was finished or after, I wrote this manifesto for myself, and prayerfully for you, my sister. Please flag the page it’s on and say it before every chapter, together with a book buddy, after you finish the book, or any time you need to be reminded of its truths.

From me to you.



For a free downloadable study guide and additional resources for each chapter, visit life-unstuck.com.

UNSTUCK
Manifesto

I declare in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that today my life is filled with peace with the past, purpose in the present, and passion for the future. I am unstuck and free! I declare that no weapon formed against me shall prosper and that my weapons have divine power to destroy arguments and take every thought captive that does not proclaim the victory of Jesus in my life. I will not give in to fear of any kind: fear of the past, fear of the present, or fear of the future. I am blessed to be a blessing until my assignment on this earth has been completed and I am standing face-to-face with my Jesus, celebrating His completed and perfect work in me. **I am unstuck!**

I will waste no opportunity to glorify my God and to share His great plan for me and for all mankind. I will waste no opportunity to experience the anointing He has placed on my life. I will embrace every opportunity He places in my life. I will not accept a trace of apathy in my attitude. I declare abundance in my marriage, my family, my life, and my ministry. I have the Holy Spirit as my

guide, my comforter, and my power. I have stepped over the line into God's good grace and will never, ever turn back, slow down, back away, be quiet, or let up. I am a woman of God and a disciple of Jesus Christ. **I am unstuck!**

My past is redeemed, my present is hemmed in, and my future is secure. I am done with low living, sight walking, small plans, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, worldly measures, faithless talk, and little goals. I love and live by faith, lavish grace on others, lean on His presence, walk in patience, am undergirded and uplifted by prayer, and am strengthened by power. My face is set, my walk is steady, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my Guide is faithful, and my mission is clear. I will not be compromised, bought, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of the enemy, meander in the maze of mediocrity, or ponder at the pool of popularity. **I am unstuck!**

I determine to stay prayed up, preached up, stored up, and praised up. I have been given the power to change and the power to make good choices. I can love myself and I can love others. I am secure and surrounded by God's love. I am unstuck from fear, unstuck from shame, unstuck from mediocrity, and unstuck from insecurity. My battle is not against flesh and blood but against a weak, stupid, uncreative, and defeated enemy who fights me because he fears me. I will stand my ground and fight any lie he places in front of me. I will dismantle every argument with the piercing power of God's Word. Every time he reminds me of my past, I will remind him of his future. **I am unstuck!**

I will stand under the impenetrable covering of the blood of Jesus—for greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world. I can do all things through Him. Though my enemy surrounds me, God surrounds my enemy. My God has all authority over my life. He is my God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is the supreme Author of all existence and rules and reigns over my

life. In Him all things exist. He is my Lord, my Master, and my Owner. He is holy and will watch over and teach me all things. He will direct me in the way I should go. He will never leave me nor forsake me. His peace is mine. His provision is mine. His love is mine. His hope is mine. His passion is mine. He is my Comforter, Counselor, and Friend.

I choose this day to live an unstuck life. **I am unstuck!**



Section One

Just Imagine Life Unstuck

Psalm 139:1–6

You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.
You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

1

UNSTUCK *Possibilities*

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.

Psalm 139:1

Getting Naked

Do I want to live or do I want to die?

I'm thinking die.

Right now.

As I struggled to open my eyes, I was only aware of one thing—my freezing cold, naked *bottom* was sticking up in the air, surrounded by chattering voices.

As my eyes began to slowly focus, the first thing I saw was Dr. Kildaire (think Patrick Dempsey on steroids). He was leaning over me, wiping my brow with a washcloth. Some of those chattering people were indeed looking at my naked rear end, while others

acted as if it wasn't even sticking up and *exposed* for the whole world to see—and, believe me, it most definitely was. At that precise moment I realized a life-changing truth: exposure can be very uncomfortable.

As I slowly regained consciousness, the events of the past twenty-four hours began to quickly return to my mind, and I saw my husband's face at the back of the crowd, straining to see what all the commotion was about. I remembered I was on a cruise ship. My husband and I had been enjoying the better part of a week on this fabulous ship with my three sisters and their husbands. My parents, nowhere near wealthy, had surprised us with a once-in-a-lifetime trip for Christmas: a five-day cruise to the glorious Bahamas. Not only that, but they had given us the added blessing of watching all eight grandchildren so all four sisters and our husbands could go together. From the moment we got in the car to go to Miami, we were 100 percent *giddy*. The ship, aglow with lights and luxury, was a dream. The lounge chairs and tall skinny drinks with umbrellas available every day were a dream. Adorning ourselves in fancy dresses at night and spending long sunny days snorkeling in tropical reefs was like a dream. There was not a juice box to be seen, anywhere, and having no one pressing up under my back when I woke up in the morning (well, no *little* person anyway) was beyond any dream possible.

But now? *Oh my*.

Right there in those moments, my beautiful dream quickly turned into a nightmare.

Yes, exposure can be *very* uncomfortable.

You see, on the last day of our adventure, heading back toward the reality of home and the responsibilities of parenting, we overheard the crew murmuring softly of inclement weather ahead. Although they assured the passengers it was nothing to worry about, they did tell us all we might want to retire to our cabins early that evening with some Dramamine to get us through the

“slightly turbulent” night. We were told the ship would be secure in port when we awoke.

That was the plan.

That plan was *not* reality.

Sometimes my plans for my life and the realities of actual life forget to communicate.

Needless to say, this was one of those times. After eating a very wobbly “last supper” on the cruise ship, we all took the captain’s advice and headed to bed early. That was the good news. The bad news was that January storm was far worse than the crew expected. This one-hundred-thousand-ton ship hit one of Florida’s worst-recorded winter storms head-on. The wave swells were over forty feet and tossed that huge vessel around the Caribbean like a beach ball. In the midst of those swells I woke up being literally thrown across the cabin. *Smack!* Those waves tossed me from one side of our tiny cabin to the other, but that was nothing compared to what was transpiring *inside* my body. *Seasick* is not a big enough word to describe the violent retching and heaving I was doing. I literally was not able to stand up.

Little did I know that night would become one of our big marriage stories. I called out to my “knight in shining armor” for help, only to be told he didn’t want to move because he was afraid *he* would get sick. Oh boy. You can imagine how *that* story has been used over the past thirty-seven years. It’s one of my favorite stories to recount to tease my husband.

After an indeterminable amount of time, I was finally able to get to the door of our cabin on my hands and knees. I was desperate for just a small wisp of fresh air, but when I opened the door from our cabin, I was horrified. There before me in the tiny hallway was most of the ship’s crew, all on the floor, all vomiting.

This was not good.

What happened next became a bit of a blank. I remember somehow working my way up a few flights of stairs to get to

an open deck only to have the wind be so strong I could not get the door completely open. It was then that everything went blank. Sometime during the night I must have managed to find Dr. Kildaire, who gave me a shot of “yum-yum” that knocked me out and landed me with my naked bottom sky-up in the midst of a crowd of strangers.

You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me. (Ps. 139:1)

So many things about this story come to my mind as I read these words.

Starting with the fact that I was searched up and down by Dr. Kildaire and not forgetting the rest of the strangers surrounding my bare bottom. In this nine-word verse, David is declaring a life-changing truth: God searches us and knows us.

God knows right here, right now, where your life is stuck and unstuck.

He sees our hearts and He searches our souls. He watches us move and He hears us talk. He knows what we think and He knows what we fear. God wants us to enjoy life unstuck in *every* way. He wants us to enjoy peace, purpose, and passion at every stage of life, but sometimes it doesn't seem that way. Sometimes I feel like everyone “gets it” but me. Sometimes I feel *stuck* in being completely unsatisfied with myself, wishing I was someone else, somewhere else, or doing something else. I often feel stuck in seeking affection or approval that is always just beyond my reach. Sometimes it's not the bad stuff that keeps me stuck—sometimes it's the secret dreams I have for life I can't bear to share for fear they might sound ridiculous or silly. Sometimes I feel like the masks I wear for everyone else are going to completely take over and I will disappear behind somebody I don't even know.

Sometimes exposure can be uncomfortable.

Then I read these words: God searches me and *knows* me. If God, the God of the universe, Creator of all life, knows all and sees all, then what do I have to lose by letting it all out and exposing who I really am—good, bad, and beautiful?



What do I have to lose by risking it all and getting naked, so to speak, before God and others to see what God really has inside of me?



The God Who Sees It All

In this very first verse, David is reminding himself of a truth about God he had learned from his childhood Hebrew lessons: one name for God is *El Roi*—the God Who Sees! With a sense of wonder in his words, David acknowledges that God sees everything, from the inside (his heart) to the outside (his actions).

God sees the good, the bad, and the ugly in each of us. As we take our first dip into the stunning beauty of Psalm 139, we discover what a personal God we serve. David has a confident relationship with God. In fact, God’s thoughts are all about him, as far as David is concerned. The twenty-four intimate verses in this psalm use some version of the word *me* over forty times. No, David is not being conceited. What makes David different from most Christians today is that David admits and embraces the truth that God is always thinking about him. Likewise, God is always thinking about you. God knows what you are doing, what you are thinking, and what you ate for breakfast. He knows your fears and when and why you hide from everyone—including yourself.

Our brains have a difficult time wrapping around this reality, don’t they? There have been many times in my life as a woman, a

wife, and a mom when I felt I *needed* to see everything, everywhere, all the time, but I just could not. I, just like you, am limited in my abilities. However, stepping into the amazing glory of Psalm 139, we are confronted right out of the gate with the reality that God has *already* searched us. He *already* knows us, which means all of us: our hearts, words, thoughts, actions, and intentions. This very thought that the God of the universe, my Creator, my Savior, has seen what I have done has brought me tremendous peace, and sometimes lack of peace, many times in my life. Can you relate?

I have a not-so-pretty past. I have made some decisions not worthy of a holy God to watch. And honestly? I still do. The difference between then and now is that now my life is devoted to searching and knowing God right back.

GOD, investigate my life;
 get all the facts firsthand
 I'm an open book to you;
 even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking.
 (Ps. 139:1–2 Message)

O LORD, you have examined my heart
 and know everything about me. (v. 1 NLT)

The word *searched* used in this verse refers to investigating or exploring the earth by boring or digging in it. The literal interpretation of this word is “to search the earth for water or precious metals.” It means to search accurately or closely. As a result of that close investigation, nothing is concealed. Everything is laid bare. *Everything*. Psalm 139:1 led me to the first truth about real freedom!



Unstuck Truth #1: When we see ourselves as God sees us, we will believe about ourselves what God believes about us.

3-D Women

As you may have guessed from my rather vulnerable story earlier, I grew up in a home with three sisters, in addition to a mom and a female dog named Missy. I have spent the past twenty-five years of my life in full-time women's ministry. My life has been spent among and shared with women. I have learned much about us girls: how we think, what we feel, how we respond, how we don't respond. My slightly "unscientific" conclusion is that we are truly 3-D women. My philosophy is that at any given moment we are either dizzy, desperate, or digging. Sometimes we accomplish all three in a day, sometimes all in the same minute, but I have decided that all women are 3-D. Don't believe me? I bet you the cost of this book that one or more of these "Ds" describes your life *right now*.

Dizzy: Dizzy women live life in a perpetual spin cycle. Juggling children, jobs, husbands, finances, laundry, errands, sports, balanced meals, bagged lunches, and so forth, dizzy women barely have enough time between when the alarm goes off in the morning to when they collapse into bed at night to hold things together, much less ponder what God thinks about them. Dizzy women search for unstuck peace.

Desperate: Desperate women seek God with every fiber of their being: their heart, their emotions, their mind, their strength. Such women are in a place so intense, so painful, so seemingly hopeless that only God can rescue them. Only God can bring peace to desperate women. Only God can work the mess out. Desperate women search for unstuck hope.

Digging: Digging women just want *more*. Digging women can be dizzy and they can even be desperate, but they are hungry for more. Digging women may secretly suspect there is nothing more, but desperately dream there is. More from God, more answers, more purpose . . . all leading to more questions

such as “What is next for me?” “Why am I here?” “Where do I serve?” “What do you want me to do, Lord?” Digging women search for unstuck answers.

So, was I right? Can you see yourself in at least one of those descriptions? Life can be very tough for us females. Womanhood is not an easy journey. We start out with the emotional trauma of water weight, mood swings, and puberty. We soon graduate to labor pains, baby blues, and back-talking teens, and eventually end girl world with hot flashes and empty nests. Through it all, I often feel the *opposite* of “searched” and “seen.” I usually feel invisible, completely unnoticed, like my life is just a vapor of moving from one person’s neediness to another. I often feel like everyone is too *dizzy*, *desperate*, and *digging* in their own lives to give a hoot about me. I often feel no one really “searches” me enough to know me. I have secrets, even now. Even from my best friends.

Be honest. Right now, I’ll bet there is at least one thing in your heart or life you have not shared with your best friend, your husband, or even your mother. Am I right?

But the truth is God does search you and He does know you. He knows your secrets and He still loves you without exception. In fact, to God—it is all about *you*.

I can honestly say that I had never (until I dug deep into these verses of Scripture), *ever* uttered the words “It’s all about *me*,” unless it was a joke. I want you to just stop for a minute and say those words yourself, out loud.

Say it: “It’s all about me.”

Say it: “God is all about me!”



God is all about you!

Since I started offering my woman's conference, Imagine Me . . . Set Free, I have imagined the hair has stood up on the necks of a few ministry leaders when I coached the ladies to declare such "heresy." We are truly and faithfully taught it is not about us, "It is all about Jesus." Don't get me wrong, it definitely is all about Jesus, but what I want us to see in God's Word is how Jesus is *all about you*. He left the holiness of heaven *for you*. He left His Father *for you*. Jesus said,

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (John 10:10 NKJV)

3-D God

Want some good news? The reason we all live as 3-D women is that you and I were created by and serve a 3-D God. He is not dizzy or desperate, but He is digging . . . for you! God used a pattern of Himself to create each one of us and we were fashioned after a three-dimensional God. At the same time, I think as women we sometimes need to be reminded that although we are created in God's image, we are *not* God. The Bible uses some big words to describe our big God.

He is omniscient (all-knowing). Psalm 139 reveals a God who knows everything, at all times, for all time. He is also a God who completely knows *you*. His knowledge is perfect, and nothing happening in your life, or done in your life, is hidden from Him. He knows your each and every thought, word, way, and movement.

He is omnipresent (ever-present). He is a God who is anywhere and everywhere all the time. He is in the kitchen and the bedroom; He is in the hospital room and the boardroom; He is in the carpool and the gym. God is with you no matter where you are. You can never be out of His sight or beyond His grip.

He is omnipotent (all-powerful). God is limitless in His power and is in complete control of all circumstances. God created and designed everything, including our minds, bodies, and spirits. Therefore, He has all authority over our hearts, minds, and wills. His *power* and *control* have no limits.

As women, we should be comforted knowing God's eyes are always upon us, but I know sometimes we are not so sure. There have been many times in my life when I was not so sure God could see me, and even times when I didn't want Him to see me. Yet when we are able to fully grasp the truth that God knows all our past, is keenly aware of our needs and is with us in the present, and holds every moment of our future, it is then we experience true freedom. *Remember: when we see ourselves as God sees us, we will believe about ourselves what God believes about us.*

The good news is that God sees our sin and our running. He also sees us as we are meant to be. He sees the beginning, the middle, and the end. He holds us right now! He is in control and has created us for His glory. If you will allow God to speak to you through Psalm 139, you will understand that life unstuck and real freedom begin with a 3-D God searching and knowing us as the 3-D women we are. We allow His 3-D to wrap around our 3-D, and we experience life unstuck. We begin to live the abundant and free life Jesus wants for us when and *only* when we see what God sees in us and embrace who we are to Him.

Come with me on this journey through what many people feel is the most beautiful and poetic chapter of the Bible. Let's get naked! Let's get unstuck! Stop the world and the worry in your heart, mind, and even your body, and allow this book, this journey, to be "all about you."

Let's allow ourselves to be searched and known—past, present, and future—by the One who truly *sees* us. To God, you are not invisible. You are not too broken, alone, or damaged to be seen

through His eyes. You have not messed up too badly and you are not too far from His grip to be wrapped up in His loving arms.

Ready? Take some time—I mean it, girl. Get some coffee, tea, or some grapes. Sit somewhere alone and let God get you started on this journey by taking the Unstuck Assessment you'll find on the next page. Think about your answers. Let yourself prepare to be amazed by God.

UNSTUCK

Assessment

Let's start with taking a look at where our life might be slipping toward—or maybe smack in the middle of—*stuck*. I am pretty sure there has been some time in your life, maybe even now, when you felt like you had just walked through some gum and your shoe was stuck to the floor. Haven't you discovered how the more you struggle against that yucky gum the nastier it gets? I have learned that the best way to get out of a mess like that is by taking a knife or other sharp object straight to the point of attack. That, my friend, is exactly the plan. But first, let's assess the situation, shall we?

Read the following statements, and next to each one I want you to place a number from one to five, one being, "I'm completely *unstuck* in this thought or experience and enjoy full victory through Christ here," and five being, "I am so *stuck* here, I feel imprisoned by this and need release with Christ's help."

1. I am afraid to let my Christian friends know about my real everyday struggles for fear of what they will think of me.
2. I often feel I can't get anything right.

3. I am stuck constantly comparing myself with others around me, and just never “measure up.”
4. The failures of my past just never seem to go away.
5. There is nothing “special” about me. I have nothing “different” to offer.
6. It seems to me like everybody else I know is moving ahead in life and I am just *stuck*.
7. If I tell my kids about my past I will lose all their respect.
8. There are people I can never forgive for what they did to me.
9. I should have followed my dream years ago, but it’s too late now. I missed my chance.
10. I don’t think God really cares one way or the other what I do with my life.
11. I often feel judged.
12. If I were different (thinner, prettier, richer, smarter, older, younger . . .), I would see my dreams come true.
13. Fear is keeping me from doing something I have always wanted to do.
14. I have tried to change but I just can’t. I have too many areas where I feel stuck. I have no idea where to start.
15. On a scale of 1–5, I feel stuck. (Remember, 1 is unstuck, 5 is totally stuck.)

Now, add up all your numbers, and see where you fall on our unstuck scale.

(0–15) You are in great unstuck shape. Way to go! Not only have you learned much of how to live your own life unstuck, you have the ability to share it with your sisters and the world. Thank you for picking up this book and joining my passion for life unstuck.

(16–20) You are on your way to unstuck living. Just look at where God has brought you thus far in your life. The great

news is that He wants to continue your healing until *all* areas of your life are completely unstuck. Your victory is in sight!

(21–50) God is so good to you. He is using this book and this time in your life to show you where He wants to set you free and get you unstuck. Gently and lovingly, He will be showing you where there is a better way and giving you hope to fully grasp an unstuck and free life.

(51+) Your journey begins today. I am so proud of you for not only being honest with yourself but also believing there is something more, something so much better than what you have now. Remember, Jesus came to give *you* abundant life.

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Visit life-unstuck.com to become a member of the Unstuck Woman Club.