



## ONE

# Go Bravely

*Hearing about your experiences having to be brave just to open the door for Mass and go in really struck a chord with me! I always thought I was doing something wrong or not strong enough in my faith because I still get scared to live it out, and I've found I need many brave moments to get through. This chapter helped me realize I'm not alone, and also helped me realize that God isn't looking for anything big, but my best effort and asking for his grace in difficult and even scary moments! —Michelle*



*Be on your guard,  
stand firm in the faith,  
be courageous, be strong.*

—1 CORINTHIANS 16:13

Bravery is choosing to do the right thing, even in the face of adversity. Living a courageously countercultural life of faith can be very difficult in a culture that so heavily encourages us to just “go with the flow.” It is hard to step out, to look different, to forge a different path, but as women of faith, we live with confidence that it is worth it to do so—that we can choose bravery because we do not live for ourselves, or for the approval of others, but for the greater glory of God. The simple prayer “Jesus, help me to be brave” was a pillar of strength for me in college, and it is a prayer I have used throughout my life in many trials I have faced in living bravely.

It has also been important for me to remember that bravery is often not a feeling. As you navigate the journey of being a woman of faith, a feeling of bravery may come and go—that is where the *choice* to be brave comes in. Choosing to be brave and feeling brave are two different things, and so often in the face of difficulty, that intentional choice to live courageously is the key. It is the choice to do the right thing, even though that choice may make you or others uncomfortable, even though it may cause you to lose people you thought were your friends, even though your heart may be trembling as you move forward in courage!

Go forward bravely, knowing that God is with you every step of the way. He never leaves or forsakes us, and when we call on

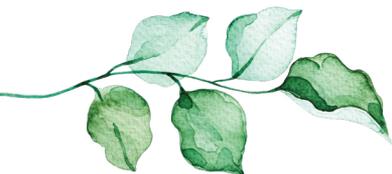
his name in that simple prayer, “Jesus, help me to be brave,” he will help us to make the choice to do so!



## TAKE ACTION AND REFLECT

1. Recall a time when you had the opportunity to do the right thing or do what God was asking of you, and you chose not to. What kept you from doing the right thing? Was it fear? Was it fear of what others would say or think? What would you go back and tell yourself in that moment?

2. Have you been inspired by the bravery of a woman or man you know? Who is a role model for you when it comes to living a life of bravery, of doing the right thing in the face of adversity, of living a life of faith that is bold and courageous? Why? Write a letter to this person thanking them for their example to you of what it looks like to go bravely.



3. Recall a time when you made a brave decision. Perhaps you

- wrote a pro-life paper for an assignment and presented it to your class,
- told your friends about your experience on a retreat,
- invited a friend to church or to your youth group,
- ended a relationship that was leading you away from your faith, or
- prayed with a friend in a moment when she needed it.

What helped you to bravely choose to take that action?



## PRAYER

Jesus, it is not easy to bravely live my faith in a world that discourages me from doing so. It is difficult to swim against the current and to forge a different path than the one chosen by the people around me. When I feel discouraged, please bolster my heart. When I feel afraid, give me the courage to

push forward in faith and confidence. When I encounter an opportunity to live bravely and believe that I can't, help me to remember that I can do all things through you who strengthen me. You are my strength, my shield, my fortress, and my guide. Thank you for creating me for a life of bravery. Amen.

*You gain strength,  
courage, and confidence  
by every experience in  
which you really stop  
to look fear in the face.  
You must do the thing which  
you think you cannot do.*

—ELEANOR ROOSEVELT





## TWO

# Remember Who You Are

*Before reading this book, I was hurt by titles that others were trying to give me. I didn't know who I was, and I thought Jesus had abandoned me. But when I read this chapter, I was speechless. Emily helped me to realize that I am, above all, a daughter of God. No matter what happens to me, Jesus stands with me and loves me. It changes everything. I often try to remember that phrase: "Daughters of God are not weak—they are strong, they are brave, and they shine." —Eleonore*



*See what love the Father has  
bestowed on us that we may be  
called the children of God.*

—1 JOHN 3:1

It is easy to believe the lies that our culture, our peers, and many different sources in our lives have spoken to us as young women. I have believed many of these statements I have heard over time: *You are defined by what you look like. You are defined by the number of followers you have. You are defined by your grades. You are defined by your awards and achievements. You are defined by your relationship status.* And if those things aren't impressive or better than other people's, we are simply *not good enough*. These lies we are told bog us down to a point of deep unhappiness, to a point where many women ask themselves, "Will I ever be enough?"

We place our identity in many different things, but these things are only facets of our lives, not *who we are*. As 1 John 3:1 reminds us, the reality is that we are defined by our identity as children of God. This is who we are. We *are* enough because we are God's. But in the midst of a noisy culture that encourages us to place our identity everywhere other than Christ, we must actively and consciously endeavor to derive our worth and our value from our belonging in him each day of our lives.

The good news is that you are a daughter of God—and the good news beyond that is that in Christ you have perfect belonging. You belong to him—that is who you are. That will always be who you are. We, as women, strive to feel as if we belong in many different places, whether that is in our family, in our schools, or

in our workplaces, but we must always remember that in Christ, there is no need to strive to belong. You do not have to look, talk, or act a certain way; you only have to exist. There will always be belonging for you in Christ, and this is a truth you can rest in for all the days of your life.

Let us place our identity and worth in Jesus, knowing that in him we are enough, and in him we have everything.



## TAKE ACTION AND REFLECT

1. Take some time to write out all the titles you hold in your life, accomplishments you've achieved, or awards you've won. It is good to be happy and proud of your hard work, but it is also important to ask yourself if you are placing your identity or finding your worth as a person in one or more of them. Does your self-esteem come from how well you do in that specific area of your life?









## PRAYER

Jesus, in the mist of the chaos of voices, it is so easy to forget that I am not any of the titles I hold; I am simply this: yours. Cultivate a deep awareness in my heart that I am made in your holy image and likeness, and that there is nothing I must do to earn your love. Thank you for loving me just as I am and for calling me onward to holiness—for calling me onward to become more like you. I want to rest in the peace of knowing that I am your daughter and, in doing so, help other women to remember who they are and do the very same. Amen.

*Before I formed you in the  
womb, I knew you, before you  
were born, I dedicated you,  
a prophet to the nations I  
appointed you.*

—JEREMIAH 1:5

