

A woman in a long, flowing pink gown with a lace-up back is seen from behind, walking away on a dirt path that leads towards a large, stone castle in the distance. The scene is set in a grassy field under a soft, hazy sky.

# finding your fairy tale ending

SECOND EDITION  
ALL NEW BONUS MATERIAL

DECHARI COLE



# Once upon a time

There was a girl named Dechari. She went through high school and college in search of happiness and love. Like all girls, she was God's creation - a princess disguised as a normal kid - and the days of her youth led to lasting friendships, fleeting boyfriends (some frogs, some princes), fun memories, emotional drama, and a desire to find God's best for her life.

*Finding Your Fairy Tale Ending* is her candid story - and a wonderful guide for yours as well. She takes you in like a new best friend on a journey to:

- understand your identity in Jesus
- discover God's will for your life
- stand firm in your faith
- find a love that lasts forever

You will travel through chapters of her life where she shares some of the most important lessons God teaches her. This intriguing love story, with its twists and turns, ultimately leads you to embrace a royal invitation to a powerful destiny.

Only when you are captivated  
by the unending love of Jesus Christ do you find  
the real fairy tale ending your heart desires.



DECHARI COLE (d-chair-uh) is the founder of *Girls Living 4 God*, an organization that is discipling the next generation of girls to be strengthened in the Holy Spirit, sharpened in God's Word, and sent out as ambassadors of Jesus Christ. She lives with her husband (and Prince Charming) in Nashville, TN.

**GL4G**

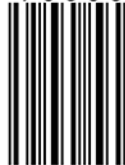
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# CONTENTS

PREFACE: Searching for Your Fairy Tale Ending	xi
1 The Foundation: It All Starts Here	1
» A Little Heart To Heart	9
2 High School . . . and the Dating Begins	13
» That Little Voice	17
3 You Can Have Fun . . . with God?	19
4 Superficial	23
5 Learning to Steer on My Own	29
6 Danger! Stay Back	33
» Tips To Avoid Dating Danger	38
7 Is That a Speck in Your Eye?	39
8 Did Someone Say Prom?	43
9 Waiting to Wear the Dress	49
10 Torn	59
11 Dating Outside the Box	63
» Self Check Dating Quiz	66
12 Carol Ann Shines	69
13 Spring Break!	75
» Dates With Jesus	78
14 Humbled	79
15 Oops! I Had It Backward	85
16 With Spring Comes the Rain	91
» Fighting Battles & Finding Hope	95
17 Imperfect World, Imperfect People	97
18 Finish Strong: Senior Year	101
19 New Girl on Campus	105



<b>20</b>	Freshman on Fire	111
<b>21</b>	A Different Kind of Girl	117
<b>22</b>	Not So Innocent	123
	» Social Media Tips	127
<b>23</b>	Letting Go	131
<b>24</b>	Like the Pieces of a Puzzle	135
<b>25</b>	A Reflection	143
<b>26</b>	Don't Settle	147
<b>27</b>	The Search	153
	» Living in God's Will	158
<b>28</b>	Your Fairy Tale Ending	159
	» The Prince's Proposal	160

## **BONUS CONTENT** 169

Q&A With The Author	171
Then & Now	179
Legacy of Legends	187
Behind the Scenes of My Fairy Tale Ball	189







# chapter 1

## THE FOUNDATION: IT ALL STARTS HERE



*Every story has it's beginning, and this is mine.*

Everyone has a story to tell. Some are happy, exciting, joyful, and funny. Others are sad, scary, terrifying, and serious. But most of the time, I find that true stories include all of these elements. That's because a story isn't just about a moment; it's about a journey. And a journey is typically a search for something—even though the character may not realize at first what she is actually searching for.

Now, my most favorite stories always begin with “*Once upon a time. . .*”

“Wait a minute!” you might say. “Your story doesn’t actually have a prince, a princess, a king, a castle, frogs, an evil force, true love, and a fairy tale ending, does it?”

Well, yes, actually it does. Okay, maybe not the castle, but definitely all the rest. My journey, like many others, started with a search for love. And like all the best stories, it had lots of ups and downs, twists and turns, and—best of all—a surprise ending.

At the time, though, I didn’t *know* that my life’s story was being written or even that anything spectacular or worth talking about would come from it. You see, I was just the girl next door. I didn’t have super talents, super parents, or come from a super place. I was just . . . well . . . ordinary. So before we dive into the journey to my fairy tale ending, let



me tell you about where it all began—the foundation of the story, you might say.

My story starts in a tiny town in North Carolina, on twenty-three acres of land that sat pretty much in the middle of nowhere. I had two older brothers and a younger sister. We had goats, rabbits, horses, a pit bull, and a garden. It wasn't quite a farm, but it was pretty close. Our town consisted of one elementary school, one gas station that doubled as a grocery, one community swimming pool, and the Dairy Shack, where we got the best banana splits around. No, there wasn't even one single stoplight! I spent my days picking cherries, climbing trees, and riding my bike. Yep, a pretty normal little country girl.

Our family didn't have much money, so we didn't go or do a lot. But we did take one special trip each summer—and that was to the beach. On one of those trips, when I was six, I decided to go out to the big waves with my older brothers (who were seven and thirteen years older than me, I should point out). Now, I'm not sure what kind of beach you're used to, but Carolina waves can be quite large at times and the undercurrents are pretty strong.

One of my brothers thought it would be safe to pull me out in his new inflatable boat. Unfortunately, the waves were so rough that the boat flipped completely over and I went under. I quickly tried to stand, but the waves crashed relentlessly down on me, while the undercurrent churned me into the sand. I finally made it up and out of the ocean, but I couldn't see! The salt and sand had covered my eyes, burning them horribly. I panicked and started blindly running—but away from my family! That is, until a hand grabbed my arm and said, "Stop running. I've got you." It was my dad. He cleaned me up and told me I would be okay. "Oh, but the sand, the churning! It was awful!" I said, trying to explain how terrible it was not to be able to stand and get my head above water.



For the rest of the day, I only stood near the ocean's edge as the waves gently washed over my feet and the pull of the tide slowly took the sand out from under me. I remember being fascinated by how easily the waves shifted the sand. Later, about an hour before sundown, my dad took us to another part of the beach where a wall of rocks stood out in the water. He told us about his childhood adventures of walking the rocks way out into the ocean, to an island that we could barely see in the distance. Together, we walked quite a ways out, though we didn't have time to make it all the way to the island. I was *definitely* farther out than I had been when I went under earlier, but this time, I was standing on rock. The rocks allowed me to stand above the waves; they didn't shift like the sand.

Not too long after my experience with the rough ocean waves, I was hit with some rough waves in life. For though our beach trips were fun, and our simple life seemed good, my parents struggled in their marriage. My dad became verbally abusive to my mom. One night, the yelling was so bad that one of my brothers came into my room and said that if anything bad ever happened, I should go to the doghouse and Spike would protect me until he got there. Thankfully, it never came to that, but my life did take a rough turn.

One day after school, when I was supposed to go to piano lessons, my mom's friend picked me up and said there had been a change of plans. When I asked her why, she just said, "Everything's going to be okay." When I heard those words, I instantly knew something was very wrong. As we pulled up to our house, I saw my mom and sister already outside with our luggage packed. The car was quickly loaded, and we took off. No one would tell me where we were going. All I kept hearing was, "Everything is going to be okay." But I wasn't quite so sure.

After driving for a while, we ended up at a big, white house. "This is where we're going to stay for a while," my mom told me. It was a home



for battered and abused women. I was only eight years old, and my whole world had just been turned upside down in an instant. My family, my house, my school, my friends had all suddenly slid out from beneath my feet. But still, I was able to stand.

You see, about a year before this took place, I had something big happen in my life. Though my family wasn't perfect (no one is—check out Romans 3:23), we went to church just about every time the doors were open. For years, I had heard about Jesus, God's Son. I heard about how He died on the cross to pay for my sins and that He was the only way to become right with God again. One night, I felt a desire in my heart to know Jesus personally and to live for Him. So I prayed and asked God to forgive my sins. I confessed that I believed in what Jesus did, and I asked Jesus to come and live in me with His Holy Spirit . . . and a relationship was born. Even though I was young, I had such an amazing friendship with Jesus. I knew He cared about me—yes, little ole me, in the middle of nowhere, with nothing super special. So when the waves of my parents' separation came crashing down on me, I was able to stand because Jesus was—and still is—my rock (Psalm 62:6).

In Matthew 7:24–27, Jesus talks about two men: one who built his house on the sand and one who built his house on rock. The man who built his house on the sand had a shaky foundation. The house looked nice, but it wasn't built on anything strong or reliable. When the storms came, the sand shifted and the house fell. But the house that had been built on the rock was able to withstand the storms because its foundation was strong.

This story reminds me of my beach experience. When I tried to stand on the sand, the waves pulled it right out from under me. But when I stood on the rocks, the waves didn't affect me. What Jesus was teaching in His example is that God's Word is the only strong foundation we can build our lives on. Everything else can be pulled out from under our feet.



Life is imperfect, people will let us down, and the world will misguide us, but God and His Word will never waver or lead us wrong. Because I had put my faith in Jesus, when I wasn't able to be strong, He was strong for me. My parents' separation was an opportune time for me to freak out and take off running in a direction that I shouldn't. But my heavenly Father grabbed my arm and said, "It's okay. I've got you." And I knew He did. Every story has its sad moments and its struggles, but like Paul says in Romans 8:28, "We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose."

And God *did* bring good out of that terrible time. He took the most painful event in our family and used it to bring us closer to Him. Though I never got to move back home and my parents' divorce finalized, God still gave me joy as a young girl. He even provided a teacher's helper that first year at my new school who was a Christian and encouraged me daily.

My parents' walk with God became different too. My dad began to see the good in the things around him, and he became happier than I had ever seen him. He loves looking at God's beauty in nature and reads his Bible often. My mom grew in her confidence and her faith. Her struggles have allowed her to reach out to others who are hurting and give them hope. Because of her strong belief in prayer, she is called upon daily by her church, family, and friends to pray for God's help and guidance. My oldest brother decided to give his life to Jesus during an overnight stay in **jail** when he was being rebellious. Then, to his surprise, God called him to preach, and he has been pastoring a church alongside his wife and four wonderful children. My other brother, who was always trying to protect me, has faithfully protected our country by serving in the army. He is married and has three great kids. He now trains and encourages students planning to go into the military. My younger sister has always been amazing with kids. God allowed her and her husband to



adopt two children who were in need of a good home, and they then had five more children of their own. It's wonderful to see how she pours so much into her children and many others as she teaches little ones about God's love.

As for me, well, my story has been interesting—and I'm about to take you along on that journey. But I first wanted you to see the foundation of my story, because everything in my life builds off my relationship with Jesus and my belief in the truth of God's Word. Just as Jesus talked about in Matthew 7, your foundation can be something that is shifting and unstable like the sand—things like friends, popularity, sports, or school. These things can be tossed about with the waves and storms, destroying whatever is standing on them. Or you can build your life on the Rock—and I can say that building my life on the rock of God has allowed me to stand strong above the waves and to go farther out into the ocean than I would've ever dared on my own.

With Jesus as my Rock, I made it through those early tidal waves. Little did I know, though, that the waves coming at me in the distance were even bigger. There was a storm coming, and it was called high school. There my foundation in God would be tested like never before. Would I really follow God's leading and stand strong above the waves when my peers were telling me just to go with the flow—like sand tossed by the ocean waves? Would I still listen to God's instructions for how to live my life with the thunder booms of society shouting for me to settle for doing it their way? Well, I was out to find that treasure of true love, and I believed that following God's Word was the path that would lead me there. So are you ready to take this journey with me? Ok, here we go . . .

*Once upon a time*



## What I Learned



Though beachfront property may look good, don't be a fool by putting your faith in a foundation that isn't solid. Instead, build on the foundation of God's Word—it will stand the test of time.



*My salvation and glory depend on God, my strong rock.  
My refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, you people;  
pour out your hearts before Him. God is our refuge.*

P S A L M 62 : 7 – 8



## chapter 6

# DANGER! STAY BACK



*Living on the edge is where it's easiest to slip.*

I was really enjoying my new relationship with Coleson. It was such a great feeling to have someone who waited for me after school, who smiled at me while I worked, who called to say hello just because he missed talking to me. Yes, my friends gave me similar attention, but this was different. This was *affection*. This was someone I wanted to have an even deeper relationship with, and we were off to a good start: He was a Christian. We saw each other at work and school. His parents were really nice—even though his dad *did* watch us like a hawk. I got along well with his friends, and he at least knew my friends and was nice to them. I was feeling really good about everything.

This was definitely a more serious relationship for me, especially compared to my crush with Brad. I felt like I had a true boyfriend, and I was ready to put in the effort to make this relationship last. With that, I found myself changing certain things. I would go through several different outfits before going out, and I checked my hair and makeup often. It wasn't unusual for me to try to look nice, but I was definitely making an extra effort. More than that, I caught myself listening to his kind of music, hanging out with his friends, and even going to his church—even though I liked mine better. I wanted to be the perfect girlfriend.



Coleson and I spent a lot of time together. If we didn't have somewhere to be, we tended to hang out at his house. It was hard to hang out at mine, because my sister and mom were usually around. Also, our place was really small, so it was difficult for just the two of us to talk. One evening when we were hanging out at Coleson's, he leaned in for a kiss. It felt right, so I leaned in as well. When he kissed me, it didn't feel uncomfortable like it had with Justin. That was our first kiss, and it definitely wouldn't be the last. In fact, the longer I was with Coleson, the more typical it was for us to spend time kissing. Kissing wasn't the only thing we did like it had been in my relationship with Justin; however, we should not have been as passionate as we were. I mean, where was this going? I was too young for marriage, and I *definitely* wasn't ready to have a baby. So, I probably needed to cool it.

Well, hanging out at Coleson's house only seemed to be okay every once in a while. (You know, his dad had those hawk eyes—which was probably a good thing!) It didn't matter, though, because Coleson had a car, and we were always going somewhere. However, the car was also the perfect place to get that long kiss goodnight or a kiss in between going places. Okay, essentially, it was the perfect make-out spot. There, I said it. One of my biggest struggles—aside from the obvious one of being alone at his house—was being in a parked car with Coleson. I admit, having him pick me up and open the car door for me seemed so gentlemanly. On the other hand, the car gave us the opportunity to get physical. I was pushing my boundaries and getting closer and closer to that edge.

Now, I grew up in the mountains of North Carolina, so I was very familiar with looking over the edge of a cliff and thinking, "That's a scary drop I'd never want to take." One of the most popular mountain peaks around is Grandfather Mountain—its ridges look like the profile of an old mountain man's face. Grandfather is famous for its mile-high



swinging bridge that connects two of the peaks. My friend Kristy and I once walked across that shaky bridge, but that wasn't what frightened me the most. The most frightening part was on the other side, where the mountain peak consisted mainly of uneven rocks and cliffs—with no guardrail! While Kristy wanted to climb around, all I could think was, *You're crazy to get so close to the edge. What if you fall?*

At least one person has died by getting too close to the edge of Grandfather Mountain and falling. At the Grand Canyon, there is at least one death a year from someone getting too close to the edge. There are warnings and signs posted that say "Danger! Stay back!" But some people ignore them. They think they know what they're doing. Of course, people don't plan to fall; it's just that they get so close to the edge that they slip.

I don't want you to slip and fall. Let my struggles be a warning sign to you. Nothing good comes from being that physical before marriage. I think of the story of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11–12. To make a long story short, David saw a beautiful woman, asked her over, went too far, got her pregnant, tried to cover it up by having her husband killed, displeased God, and lost the baby.

I think back to David's story and about what he should have done differently. Well, he *definitely* shouldn't have invited a married woman over to hang out. Before that, though, he shouldn't have kept watching her with lustful eyes. But even though David messed up big time, God didn't leave him. He still loved David and gave him another son, Solomon. Jesus later warned His disciples to "Stay awake and pray, so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41). That's good advice for all of us. God gives us good brains to know better, and He even gives us the Holy Spirit to guide us away from and out of trouble.

Coleson and I didn't go any farther than kissing (thank goodness),



but it still wasn't a good idea to put ourselves in tempting situations. As girls, we usually know what situations to avoid so that we can lessen temptations. For example, if you spend too much money shopping, then you shouldn't hang out at the mall. If you don't want to be tempted to drink or do drugs, then you shouldn't become close friends with people who drink or do drugs. In the same way, if you don't want to go too far physically, you shouldn't be alone with a guy. That may sound a little extreme, but it's the truth. There are tons of places where you can spend time together without interruption, but still have people around you. Having other people around will help you keep your boundaries.

I can look back now and see that there were some ways I could have stayed farther away from the edge. Coleson and I shouldn't have been hanging out at a house without parents around. There were plenty of places in the mall or at coffee shops for us to spend time "alone" together. As for the car, I could have limited the temptation by having a plan for where we were going and being on time getting there. No driving around just to be driving. Then, when leaving for home, I could have called my mom to let her know I was on my way. That way I had accountability to get home and not stop off somewhere. If I still felt like I had to have that kiss goodnight, I should have let Coleson walk me to the door like a gentleman. Even in the movies, the kiss at the door doesn't usually go on forever. I know if I had gotten Coleson to kiss me at the door, it definitely wouldn't have lasted long with my mom watching out the window!



## What I Learned



The farther you stay away from the edge, the less likely  
you'll be to go over.



*So, whoever thinks he stands must be careful not to  
fall. No temptation has overtaken you except what is  
common to humanity. God is faithful, and He will  
not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able,  
but with the temptation He will also provide a way of  
escape so that you are able to bear it."*

1 CORINTHIANS 10:12-13



# Tips to **AVOID** dating danger



*Write down your commitment to stay pure. Share it with your parents and friends, telling them why it's important to you to wait.*



*Have a plan to protect your purity and make sure the guy agrees to it.*

*FOR EXAMPLE: We will not be in a room by ourselves behind a closed door.*



*Groups are great! You have automatic accountability plus a better balance in your relationships.*



*Spend time doing activities that build your friendship. Romance comes and goes, but friendship is a great foundation.*



THEREFORE,  
IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST,  
HE IS A

*new  
creation*

OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY,  
AND LOOK, NEW THINGS HAVE COME.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17





## PART TWO

*There's a new dress for His princess.*

Some of you may be sitting there feeling like you relate to the fairytale of Cinderella after her only dress was torn and tattered. Just as she was covered in ashes and cinders for a time, maybe things that happened in your past left stains you can't seem to get out. May I sit next to you right now, put my arm around you and say, "Me too." Remember how Jesus said to the people on the mountain that we've all fallen short whether in actions or thoughts (struggled with pride or shame), and He focused in on the heart? Jesus wants us to know there is great hope for our hearts!

*The Spirit of the Lord God is on Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of our God's vengeance; to comfort all who mourn, to provide for those who mourn in Zion; to give them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, festive oil instead of mourning, and splendid clothes instead of despair. And they will be called righteous trees, planted by the Lord to glorify Him. They will rebuild the ancient ruins; they will restore the former devastations; they will renew the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.*

ISAIAH 61:1-4 HCSB

Look what happens when we give our hearts to the Lord?! He restores us! From our ashes and places that held us captive in our thoughts, He says that He will bring freedom. He places a crown on your head and clothes you in beauty. Not only does He want to restore you, but He wants to



restore your whole generation so that people can look upon you and see the salvation of the Lord.

One of Satan's great tactics against us living this out is to try and condemn us of our past. We continue to live in our old rags because we don't feel deserving of the new dress God wants to offer. *Stop listening to the one who wants you to keep you locked up in the attic.* You've got an invitation to the castle, Princess! You've got a powerful destiny!

Let's throw off the old, turn around and walk in the new (2 Cor. 5:17-21). It's never too late. You're never too far gone (look at Paul). Jesus is asking for your heart so that He can make it whole and new! He cleanses the stains we can't and makes them white as snow (Isaiah 1:18). *He* clothes us with righteous!!! He offers us a new dress and invites us into his Kingdom!

I'm reminded in John 8:1–11, when the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman before Jesus who was caught having sex with someone she was not married to. The law of that time said she should be stoned until dead. The scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus what they should do. They hoped to trap Him in a bad answer, but Jesus said, "The one without sin among you should be the first to throw a stone at her." One by one, the men left. Why? Because each of them had sin in their lives—just as each of us do. Jesus then said to the woman, "Neither do I condemn you. . . Go and from now on do not sin anymore."

Why have we become so ready to throw stones at one another? Instead, what if we come alongside our sisters like Jesus did, in love and compassion, and remind each other to turn away from sin? It's not our place to condemn, but it is our mission to share the good news of reconciliation; that there is forgiveness for sins through Jesus.

Remember a heart that knows it desperately needs God leads to a path of purity. I believe it's this "purity of heart" that made it possible for Jesus to use a woman at the well who struggled with many relationships. He chose her, a town outcast, to be the one to testify to the whole town about



meeting the Savior of the world (John 4). Maybe this is why God used a prostitute to help His people spy out enemy territory (Joshua 2). The Bible shows over and over and over again that it's not about the outward appearance, but the heart that He sees. This is why He picked a young boy in a field to be king (1 Samuel 16). This is why He can use you and me to testify to Him despite our past or how ordinary we may seem.

You see, we all have different stories to tell and different ways that God can take our past and use it to help us—and others—grow. Every person's story is valuable and useful to God. One person may think her story isn't worth sharing because she didn't go through something awful, while another person may think her life can't be used because of her awful past. Both are lies of Satan to keep us from testifying about God. Once we decide to live for Jesus, we can have victory over sin. We can then live an abundant life and help others to as well as we share our stories.

Speaking of stories, ready to get back to it? *And the search for true love continues...*



## What I Learned



You're never too far gone to start new with Jesus.



*I greatly rejoice in the Lord, I exult in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation and wrapped me in a robe of righteousness, as a groom wears a turban and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

ISAIAH 61:10



A COMPANION TO FINDING YOUR FAIRY TALE ENDING



# time with your King

Interactive Journal

---

DECHARI COLE



# daughter of the King

We invite you to go deeper - into God's Word & truth, into discipleship with one another, and into the power of prayer.

This interactive journal pairs with *Finding Your Fairy Tale Ending 2nd Edition*. It is an important tool that will build community and cultivate spiritual growth on your journey to find true love!

- Dig deeper using reflection questions based off each chapter.
- Find truth in God's Word.
- Grow through creative journaling.
- Experience God through guided prayer conversations.

Grab your girl friends, mentors or moms and gain a firm foundation of faith on which you can stand strong in your teen years. By spending time with your King and sharpening one another in the Word, you will be equipped to walk in the fullness of His love and learn what it means to be His daughter.



**GL4G**  
GIRLS LIVING 4 GOD

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9 781735 911021 >



He » alone «  
is my  
rock  
& my  
salvation  
my —  
STRONGHOLD;

.....

*I will not be shaken.*

psalms 62:6



# chapter • • 1

# Reflection

1. Jesus says that God's Word is our only true foundation for life, and Matthew 7 talks at length about how we should live. Read all of Matthew 7 for yourself. What foundation principles for your life can you find?
2. When something tough comes crashing down on you, where do you run for strength? Have you ever run from God? Sometimes it seems that when you need someone the most, no one is around. Might that be because God wants you to run to Him?
3. Read Romans 8:28 and 1 Peter 1:6-7. Can you think of an experience in your life that seemed negative at first but later turned out for good? Did you become stronger for it? What are some biblical examples of this?
4. How can your struggles affect your relationship with God? Do you think your trials can be used to bring glory to God and to point others to Him?
5. Though you may not be going through an immediate crisis, do you know someone who is? Can you lift him or her up in prayer? What other ways can you be supportive? Be specific!

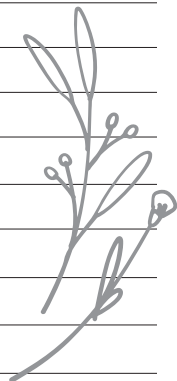


*Take this opportunity to share some of your story (the good and the bad) with those taking this journey with you. Trust that the Lord is writing your story so that the world will know Him!*











20

Jesus, be my Rock!

*I struggle with building my life and worth  
on the shifting foundations of...*



*Instead, help me to trust...*

*Bring good out of...*

Please forgive me for running to...

Thank You that You've got me and I can always run to You no matter what storms come.



  
♥ I am his \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ he is mine.....





GIRLS LIVING 4 GOD



**Discipling YOU to be strengthened in the Holy Spirit, sharpened in God's Word, and sent out as ambassadors of Jesus Christ.**

*Through discipleship community, biblically based resources, and Christ-centered events, GL4G hopes to encourage you to:*

1. **SEEK** God with all you heart (Jer. 29:13)
2. **TESTIFY** to His truth (Acts 20:24)
3. Learn to **FOLLOW** His voice (John 10:27)
4. Be **COURAGEOUS** in all you do (Joshua 1:9)

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