

A bride and groom are shown in a romantic embrace, kissing. The bride is wearing a large, white, ruffled wedding gown, and the groom is in a black tuxedo. They are standing on a paved walkway in a park-like setting with a fountain and greenery in the background. The sky is a clear, light blue. Overlaid on the image is the title 'Finding your Prince' in a pink, stylized font. The word 'Prince' is significantly larger than 'Finding your'.

Finding your Prince

Paige Weslaski

Creator of MilkNHoneyMinistries.com

Babydoll,

The Lord has the most glorious plan for you. He shares, “come to me, all who are weary, and I WILL GIVE YOU REST.” He offers wisdom, love, peace, goodness, and a beautiful plan. Trust Him. Rest in Him. And enjoy the book!

Hugs and kisses,

Paige Weslaski

Introduction (a.k.a. the part we all skip)

Just because you don't have a prince doesn't mean you're not a princess.

- Zayn Malik, former member of One Direction

Quietly peering through the mango tree's, he found her. She was the most beautiful, graceful, lovely girl he'd ever seen. Adam, God's first creation, finally found the match he'd been waiting for, and she was everything he could have imagined.

She instantly became his prized possession. He loved the way she styled her long, black hair, the way she bathed in the moonlight, and the way her big brown eyes shone in the sun. After courting her and performing a wedding ceremony, it became official: they were husband and wife.

They did everything together. She had a servant's heart, climbing the highest trees to collect their favorite fruit, making her specialty dish of banana mashed potatoes. He'd comb her coarse hair, darkened from the rays, and he'd hold her rough hands, leathered from working hard in the garden.

After weeks of marriage, God asked Adam to name all the animals in the whole garden. Adam named the camel, the walrus, the chipmunk, the dove, and even the pink fairy armadillo. He searched far and wide to find them all, looking for those that scurried and those that flew and those that galloped. He knew how precious each one was to God, loving the job he'd been given.

After a long day of work, he finally named all the animals. Laying in his vine-stitched hammock, his wife tossed him a freshly picked banana as he closed his eyes for a nap.

“Adam!” he heard from behind.

Popping up, he quickly called back, *“Yes, my Lord?”*

“Why are you relaxing when your job isn’t finished? I thought I told you to name every animal in the garden?”

“Um, God, I did. I searched everywhere and named each one! I did all you asked! Didn’t you hear me calling out their names? Didn’t you see me looking under rocks, on the highest mountains, and in the deepest caves? There’s no way I could’ve missed even one!”

Shaking His head back and forth, God slowly lifted His finger to the being lying in the hammock next to Adam: his wife, his beloved, his cherished.

“No. No... What, what are you trying to say God? You’re calling my wife an animal? How dare you! She’s my precious gem, how could you say such a thing!”

*“Adam. My dear, sweet Adam. That is not your wife. That, my friend, is what you call a gorilla. How could you not see the differences? Did you think because she was the most similar to you than the others she was your match? My dearest son, if you’d only waited a few more days, I would have presented you a real woman, one you’d relate to on every level! A strong, confident, loving daughter of mine, not an animal. I’ve been preparing her in Heaven for months and had even given her a beautiful name: **Eve**. What were you thinking?”*

Astonished, Adam hung his head in despair and asked the gorilla for his diamond back. Why hadn’t he just waited for the perfect girl? Why did he try to convince himself the gorilla was his true love? Didn’t he see the blatant differences between them, like how she could eat dozens and dozens of bananas every day or how her dark hair covered

her entire body? He'd wondered why she was so good at climbing trees. it was all starting to make sense. Why didn't he just ask His Lord for a companion?

Like Adam, our culture tells us we need to find a man as soon as possible. From watching *The Little Mermaid* as a toddler to reading *Cosmo* as a teen, we get bombarded with the message that finding a mate will give us ultimate acceptance, security, and fulfillment.

As single women, it can be tempting to think like the world thinks. But by waiting on God's timing, we don't have to fall for someone who will turn our eyes away from Christ. Trusting God's guiding hand to lead one of his *chosen sons* to be our groom, the last thing we need to do is go on a man hunt to find him.

Jesus is our ultimate romancer. During this time of singleness, He's the one we should say 'good morning' to and the one we tell goodnight. He holds our lives in the palm of His hands, including the man He's planned for us.

Unlike this fictional version Adam, we don't need to settle for a gorilla. Our 'Author' is the best in the business, writing our love stories start to finish. The question is, do we trust Him with the pen?

Chapter 1: Advice from a Recovering Heartbroken Heartbreaker

"No, sir, the girl really worth having won't wait for anybody." - F. Scott Fitzgerald

Looking up at the client, I saw his wavy blonde hair, his bright blue eyes, and his defined face. I had seen the face before, many, many times. In fact, I had looked at this face every morning I woke up and every night I went to sleep for years as a middle

schooler, a poster of his face plastered directly next to my bed. I'd stare at it hoping and praying someday I'd get lucky enough to see him in person.

Well, years later, my wish was granted. Standing before me was none other than Nick Carter: the '90's boy band heartthrob, looking even better than the poster.

It was my first day on the job working at the front desk of the Malibu Health Club, and of all people, the first person to walk in was Carter, my middle school dream man. I used to daydream of different scenarios of meeting him. I'd be in one of his concerts, front row, and he'd notice me in the crowd, pull me up on stage, and declare his immediate love for me.

Or, maybe we'd sit next to each other on a plane, I'd order a Ginger Ale, and he'd look at me with those dreamy eyes of his and whisper, "Ginger Ale is my favorite soda, will you be my wife?" In which I'd tell him I'd like to take things slow, and by slow I mean find the nearest chapel upon landing.

To my 12-year-old demise, neither ended up coming true, and I had forgotten all about my love for Carter until this moment. I immediately backtracked ten years, and all those love-y dove-y Backstreet Boy feelings came rushing back to my heart. Right in front of me. Nick. CARTER!

It didn't go exactly how I would've wanted it to. He wasn't Prince Charming, he didn't gallop up on a white horse and sweep me off my feet and ride away into the sunset draping me in his arms like I would've preferred. Instead, he drugged into the health club to see one of the chiropractors about back pain, keeping his eyes straight ahead as I squeaked out a pathetic "hello."

After the longest thirty minutes of my life, he walked out of the doctors office and toward my desk to pay. "Holy moly, he's coming towards me. ME, of all people! Do I look okay? Can he see me sweating? Why didn't I curl my hair today? I knew I should have curled my hair!"

"Um, hello?" he asked.

Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out. I could do this. Of course I could do this. All I had to do was slide his card. Why was I panicking? Why was I sweating?

“Nick Carter. I love you. I’ve always loved you. You’re the one for me. My all. My everything. I know you don’t know me, but I know everything about you! Backstreets back, alright! Remember that song? I do. I listened to it for hours and hours and hours...”

“Um, hello? Anybody there?”

Shaking my head, I realized I still hadn’t said anything. “Uh, yeah, hi. It’ll be fifty dollars exactly, sir.”

Barely looking me in the eye, he handed me his American Express. I looked down at the card; sure enough, NICK CARTER stamped in big silver letters. Trying to keep myself composed, I slid the card through the machine, hearing a beep: “declined,” the machine read. Confused, I slid the card again, hearing the same beep.

“Nick, err, I mean, Mr. Carter, do you have any other cards I could charge?” With a loud sigh of frustration, he held out his Visa. Grabbing his card, our fingers touched, and it was magic. Sparks flew, trumpets sounded, and angels sang in Heaven. Did he feel it? He had to have felt it. It was electrifying. Paige Carter. I liked the sound of it. Would I have a small wedding or big wedding? What would my parents think? They’d probably freak out. Or what about those kids from high school? Why couldn’t this have happened five years ago?

“Excuse me, can you let go of my hand?” he asked, annoyance in his voice.

“I think it was you holding my hand,” I laughed. Ha. Ha. He didn’t find it funny.

Awkwardly clearing my throat, I slid his new card, giving myself a mental pep-talk to pull myself together. And then, immediately after the swipe, it happened again. Declined.

How could Nick Carter's credit cards get declined? What was going on?

He groaned and rolled his eyes, telling me there was nothing wrong with his cards and blaming it on the machine.

Wow, he had great teeth. And what great style... wearing a loose fitting white V-neck. It's like he was trying to say "I know I'm hot, but I'm also trying to make it look natural." And boy, did it work. What. A. Hunk.

"Hello, miss? I think it's your machine?"

Abruptly jumping up, I backed away into the hallway.

Running to the file room, I started jumping up and down, tapping my boss on her shoulders. "He's here! My dream man! He's here! Nick! Nick Carter! You know, the gorgeous backstreet boy?! Backstreet's back!"

"Paige. Let me say this as clearly as I can. Get a hold of yourself! He comes in all the time! How can you expect to work here when you act like this! Plus you know he's engaged, right? Chill!"

"Well, he may be getting married, but we still had a moment." After explaining his card problems, she went out, fixed the machine, and saw him on his way.

Walking up to the balcony overlooking the parking lot, I watched him walk to his car, slide in, and back up to pull out of the lot. As he pulled away, he looked up at the windows, and I swear I saw him look up to me and give a head nod.

Walking to my desk, I patted myself on the back for handling it so swell. Sure, it could've gone better, but hey, I got a head nod! Nick and I had an understanding, obviously he was engaged and didn't want to stir up controversy with his fiance so he couldn't ask me on a date.

Our connection was as powerful as fireworks and he clearly didn't show his true affections towards me or he wouldn't have been able to control himself. My boss could tell me I was a nutcase as much as she wanted, but I knew the truth. I was Nick Carter's soulmate, and sooner or later he'd be back. Yeah, he'd be back all right.

Although I have yet to see Carter again, it doesn't phase me because I have someone who loves me that's even more special. Our Father in Heaven, the creator of the tree's and the ocean's and the star's and you and me, loves us so much that He never holds back His affection. God wants nothing more than a relationship with His children, asking us to spend time with Him to share our deepest thoughts and dreams and desires.

Now, let's say hypothetically all of my 4th grade wildest dreams had come true and Nick had asked me on a date right then and there. Would it have been wise for me to say yes? I mean, obviously I would have been honored and probably would have just stared at him like a goof until someone pinched me, but would it have been smart?

Truthfully, I don't know Nick's stance on faith. I don't know how he feels about God or attending church or serving as a role model. I don't know how seriously he looks to Christ as his savior.

"But Paige, this is Nick Carter we're talking about. Friends don't let friends turn down dates with Nick Carter."

Touché friend, but thinking about how much our God truly loves us, it's crucial to wait for a Godly man, no matter how handsome or famous or dreamy or... well, you get the picture.

So, Nick, if you're reading this, I'll have to decline. You're a great guy and all, and I know we hit it off quite nicely, but I'm going to pass on your silent yet obvious marriage proposal. My Father in Heaven already provides everything I need. But, if you call me up and sing *I Want it That Way*, maybe, just maybe I'd let you take me to church sometime. (wink, wink)

My encounter with Carter helped me see no matter how cool someone looks to the world, God sees their heart. God can do anything He wants, He could have made Nick fall in love with me at that specific moment if He really wanted to! But would that have been best for me and my faith walk? God only knows.

God is the world's absolute best matchmaker. He's even better than Patti Stanger from Bravo's *Millionaire Matchmaker*, plus He's free of charge! He created us, so He knows who we're best suited for. He's not worried about giving us someone others will see as 'better' or 'worse' than us (ahem, even Carter), He's focused on giving us someone to grow old with!

Now, you're probably reading this book thinking, "Who is this Paige chick and why does she think she's smart enough to write a book about finding a man? I mean, look at her, she's not even dating anyone! What a rip."

Right you are, beloved. I'm undoubtedly the worst person to write this book. As a middle and high schooler, I struggled with extreme insecurity. I was worried about my appearance, I was always worried people didn't like me, and I thought I needed a boyfriend to prove myself. A boyfriend would make me feel comfortable and accepted and adored and cherished, right? All my problems of insecurity would vanish, right?

Once I had my first kiss in 8th grade with a boy named Max, I was in for a pleasant surprise. My insecurity didn't clear up like I'd assumed, in fact, it FLARED up. It got worse than before! I was constantly checking my Motorola pink RAZR flip phone (very chic at the time) to see if he'd texted back. A minute would go by, then two minutes, and before I knew it, I had mentally broken up with him and taken him back seven times before receiving a response minutes later.

8th grade turned into 9th grade which turned into 12th grade, and I went through boy after boy after boy.

I couldn't quit. I couldn't be single for the life of me. I needed a boyfriend because, well, I couldn't stand the thought of being alone! Not having a boyfriend meant no 'good morning beautiful' texts. It meant my self esteem would plummet! I was a ticking time

bomb, doing all I could to cover my emotions by having a boy at my hips. "If I'm never alone, I'll never have to face my true self!"

I had a tendency to fall for guys easily. Basically, I collected boyfriends the way Floyd Mayweather collects luxury cars. And I thought I had the perfect plan: I'd always feel wanted.

Thinking back, it was no wonder boys were talking to me with the lifestyle I was living: touching them on their arm every time I saw them, partying far too frequently, wearing the shortest of skirts, spending an hour on my hair and makeup, and starving myself for an attractive-looking body. Those days were chalked full of insecurity, compromise, and brokenness.

The reason I was asked to go on dates was not because I was special, it was because I was desperate and looking for love in any crook and cranny I could find. I was a lost, broken girl looking for acceptance. Acknowledgement from the male species was my drug, and I never quite felt complete.

Meanwhile, I was dealing with the unfortunate circumstance of having helicopter parents. They're both very driven people. Likewise, they wanted the same for me. They wanted me to "keep my eye on the prize" toward becoming a talented competitive swimmer, consequently meaning I wasn't allowed to do a whole lot for fear of hurting my goals.

If there was a football game on a Friday night with a swim meet Saturday morning, I wouldn't be there. If there was a party, with or without a swim meet the following day, I definitely wouldn't be there.

I began to rebel. I had become quite efficient at sneaking out of my window with someone to pick me up down the road late at night to hang out with the kids with "cool parents" who actually let them leave.

I also rebelled with my schoolwork. I became known as *that girl* who would copy other people's homework and do anything possible to slide by using little to no effort. And, point blank, I saw no problem with it.

High school turned into college, meaning one thing: freedom. Freedom to go out when I wanted, to hang out with anyone, to go anywhere, and to be my own person. As you can probably guess, the word "no" was not part of my vocabulary. I was down for any party - any adventure - any time. If someone wanted to go out, they could call me. I'd be there. There's a song titled *Young, Wild and Free* by Wiz Khalifa that served as one of my theme songs.

*So what we get drunk,
So what we smoke weed,
We're just having fun,
We don't care who see's.
So what we go out,
That's how it's supposed to be,
Living Young and Wild and Free.*

Except, I wasn't free. Once September of junior year rolled around, things started to shift. I started to feel weird about parties. I'd wake up the next morning feeling gross and bad about myself, and it wasn't just because of the hangover. My *soul* felt gross. A sorority sister of mine (shout out to Alpha Phi!) invited me to tag along to a chapel service on a Sunday night (after having been to a party the night beforehand, making a fool of myself).

Seeing kids (*cool kids* at that) willingly at church, raising their hands and praising God, the fog started to clear in my head. I started to ask myself: *"Am I actually free - going to these parties, dating anyone and everyone, and doing whatever I want? Or have the very things which promised freedom actually become my master?"*

"Maybe these parties are causing my problems. Maybe that's why I'm feeling so crummy. I thought I was living 'Young, Wild, and Free,' but it's more like 'Young, Wild, and Enslaved!'"

Enslaved I was. Enslaved to my body image, enslaved to *not wanting to miss out*, and enslaved to thinking I needed boys to call me 'pretty' to know my worth. That very night, I made a decision. I would continue to live *Young, Wild, and Free*, except now I'd *really* be free.

That night, I met a man who put all the others from my past to shame. He blew my mind, opening my heart to what real love meant. Real love meant one person. Real love meant acceptance. Real love meant waiting. Real love meant trust.

I had never met anyone like him before. He loved me just as I was, no questions asked. He knew about my broken past of serial dating. He knew about my insecurity. He knew about my self-doubt. And what did he do? While any decent man would have ran in the opposite direction, he sat with me while I cried to him.

He wiped my tears, telling me there was a plan and purpose for my life. He whispered how beautiful I was, how courageous I was, and how funny I was. He even told me he wanted me to be his precious girl, not just for a day, or a week, but for my whole life.

Speechless, I was awe-struck. How could someone love me with all my baggage? How could someone sit with me for so long, telling me how worthy I was to him? How could someone accept me like this?

He knew he could help me change. He knew I was capable of far more than what I had done, and that I had potential to turn my life around, and even encourage others in the process!

I know exactly what you're thinking. "*Who is this hunk and does he have a brother?*"

The kind-hearted, loving, non-judgmental man was none other than Jesus Christ Himself.

Maybe you've seen him in a stained glass window holding a staff, maybe you've see his statue on a wooden cross with a sad look on his face and a crown of thorns on his head, or maybe you've seen him on a necklace around your grandmother's neck.

I had seen him those places too. He never looked happy, and I sure did not desire a relationship with a stained glass window. Because that's all He was, right? A man written about 2,000 years ago?

That night in the chapel, it became clear. No longer was Jesus a necklace around grandma's neck, He was a real person. So real, I knew with His help, I could do anything! I could quit partying, I could live as a single woman, and I could become secure in myself and my ability. I could live in freedom, without the cobwebs of sin I had intertwined into my life. I could live in light, free of all the darkness I was used to.

No longer did I need a boyfriend. No longer did I need to flirt with every boy I met. No longer did I need to obsess over my appearance or what I said or did. I no longer had to please anybody but God! The scales fell off my eyes, and I was a new woman.

Allowing Him into my life led to lots of surprises. All the darkness I did my best to cover up was washed away through the blood of Christ. The kicker is - He asked me to change up a few things. In return, He gave me a clean, spacious, free life on a silver platter.

So, am I mad at my parents for doing what they knew was best for me? Not at all. Funny, too, I'm back living at home and things are just the opposite. *"It's Friday night, Paige, go find a boy and grab a drink for goodness sakes!"* Thanks a lot, mom and dad. You did this to me.

Do I regret sneaking out of my bedroom window, cheating on tests, and becoming a party animal? Partially, no. Of course, it led to lots of heartache and brokenness, but it also turned me into the woman I am today. A woman who knows the world has nothing to offer because I've tried it all. I've tried finding my worth in boys. I've tried taking lines of shots and smoking joints at parties. I've tried everything. Where did it leave me? Depressed, confused, and with a plummeted self-worth.

Do I still go out? No. Am I living young, wild, and free? Everyday. The chains of this world have nothing on me because I hold the key to unlock them all: Jesus.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5

We are God's beloved, and He wants to lead us down the perfect path He's predestined for us. Our God has already hand-chosen the right man for us: a man who will not only take good care of us, but will point us to Christ every single day.

God has a plan, He pinky promised in His word. The stronger our grip holding His hand, the more respected we'll be by our friends and ourselves. Unlike other girls our age, we don't need someone in the short-term to be happy. We've already got someone's hand to hold, and He doesn't plan on letting go.

Chapter 2: We are Not Commodities, Ladies

*"Too many young girls have eating disorders due to low self-esteem and distorted body image. I think it's so important for girls to love themselves and to treat their bodies respectfully."
- Ariana Grande*

Sophomore year of college, I was far from emotionally stable. I was falling short in the self-confidence arena, trying to make up for it with my looks. The idea of a guy not finding me attractive was personally alarming; I was desperate for the love of others because my self-love tank was dangerously empty.

I wanted to do everything in my power to look outwardly beautiful. I was ridiculously thin and my boobs were generally nonexistent (happens after eating air for breakfast), but nothing Victoria's Secret couldn't help. The one thing I was lacking? A Barbie button nose.

I had harbored a complex about my nose since middle school, having been poked fun of for a noticeable bump. As if middle school wasn't hard enough, I'd look at myself in the mirror, thinking no one could possibly like someone with my nose. I asked for a nose job for my 8th grade graduation, to which my parents died laughing. "You're 13! Try asking when you're 20, Paige!" Shoulders slumped, I held onto that hope: when I was 20, I sure would.

Once I turned 20, I wanted sex-appeal, and a bump on my nose was sure not going to stand in my way.

Living in California for college, I called my dad back in Wisconsin a few days before my birthday. *"Dad, I've thought about it long and hard. I'm an adult now, and I want a nose job. It's really now or never."*

After a long silence, he quietly responded, *"Well, okay. Let's have a doctor consultation and go from there."*

Mouth hitting the floor, I had no words. *"Uh, wait, what? Really? Seriously?!"*

"Just set it up Paige, I'll fly out in a few weeks."

Researching the best plastic surgeons in Beverly Hills, Dr. K was the obvious choice. He was a big-shot among all the celebrities, PlayBoy bunnies in particular.

A few of my girlfriends at Pepperdine had gotten nose and boob jobs before, to which they told me the pain was minuscule compared to the awesome long-term results. *"Get ready for a brand new you,"* my friend told me. Quite the statement, eh?

Walking into Dr. K's office, the waiting room was decorated with blinding chrome and bright purple furniture, pictures of topless women with signatures ("thank you doctor K!") draping the walls, and club music blaring through the speakers hidden in a gaudy plant. We were approached by the thinnest woman I had ever seen in my life, asking us to

take a seat. Flipping through some magazines, my dad and I exchanged nervous glances.

After forever, Dr. K poked his head from the hallway and motioned us to follow. Sitting in the consultation room, Dr. K looked bored, asking what we needed to know. *"Um, well, could you explain your procedure?"* I asked. (I mean obviously, right?)

Grabbing a piece of blank computer paper, Dr. K drew a circle, which he said was my head, and a sideways V - with a squiggle in the middle - indicating my nose. He then drew a line through the squiggle, saying the procedure would get rid of my nose bump.

"Um, okay, yeah, that wasn't exactly rocket science. Don't you guys take pictures of her and show us over a computer what it would look like post-op?" my dad questioned.

"Eh, no. We do that sometimes, but I've got a surgery to get to. I gotta bounce." And he was gone.

Heading to his assistant's office, of whom was just as thin as the receptionist, we were given the price-tag: \$8,000, sometimes more depending on complications.

"Well, hun. It's expensive, this guy seems like a prick, but it's your birthday and we could always get someone else. It's your body, and it's your life. You know your mom and I love you no matter what."

Telling the assistant we didn't in fact want the appointment that had opened up for later that day, we walked out of the office. I told my dad I had a lot to think about. And boy oh boy, did I ever.

I wanted it, of course. I wanted to be pretty. I wanted to be liked. I wanted to be a Barbie. But, deep in my gut, something felt off. Having met that doctor, of whom I did not necessarily like or trust, I couldn't picture myself getting it done, at least not in the coming months.

Calling my dad, I shared the news: *"I decided - and I can't even believe I'm saying this - but I don't want it. I don't want a nose job."* Breathing a heavy sigh of relief, he congratulated me, telling me my heart had never looked more beautiful.

Funny, in middle-school, the worst part about looking in the mirror was seeing my nose. Today, washing my hands at Starbucks, I glanced at myself in the mirror. The one difference? My nose is now my favorite part about looking in the mirror.

I may not have the cute bunny-slope curved nose I envied for so many years, but I'm beautiful, just like you. We're *"beautifully and wonderfully made"* in the image of God, made exactly how He wants us. He placed us on this Earth for one reason: to glorify Him by serving and loving those around us. How can we do that when we're self-absorbed in our personal appearance?

Looking back, I was the ugliest version of myself sophomore year. Helping others was nowhere on my radar. I was completely focused on my looks, ignoring the needs of my friends and peers, constantly fishing for compliments.

Before making major decisions, like plastic surgery, we need to ask ourselves: "Will this help us or hurt us in the long run? Will it help benefit our testimony to point others to the Creator of the world? Or will it make us more self-obsessed than ever?"

We often think we need something we don't yet have in order to be worthy. Whether it's a nose job, lips like Kylie Jenner, a rose gold Michael Kors watch, a Hermes Birkin bag, a french manicure, or eyelash extensions. Nothing can fill the **gap** in our heart like Jesus can (even a thigh **gap**)!

How do we want our future daughters to feel about themselves. Embarrassed? Ugly? Worthless? Like no one could ever love them? Its the same with Jesus, it hurts Him seeing how insecure we feel.

Just last night I watched the last ten minutes of *The Bachelorette* and thought, "Goodness, I could never have twenty guys all pursuing me, I'm not pretty enough!"

I know I'm not alone in this arena. All of us, guys and gals, tall and short, freckles, dimples, innie's and outie's, have personal doubts about our appearance and abilities. Sometimes on a daily basis.

That's not how God originally designed us to live. When God gave Adam and Eve the garden of Eden, they roamed freely without any clothes on. At the time, it was no big deal because they had nothing to be anxious, self-conscious, or worried about. Once they sinned, they immediately started to make clothes for themselves because they felt embarrassed.

"Okay now Paige, I'm not about to prance around naked like Adam and Eve."

Trust me, both I and the police agree. But the point is, God sees us as flawless without a thing to feel self-conscious about. Once we start to ignore His Word, we immediately believe the lies of this world, thinking we need to look and act a specific way. We were created, from birth, to live lives of freedom, excitement, joy, and self-worth. God did not create us to think we are doormats.

We are just as worthy as *The Bachelorette*. He did not create us to be fearful, anxious, and embarrassed of our looks or abilities. We are worthy of affection. We are worthy of love. We are worthy of a good, Godly man who will take care of us.

We also have nothing to be jealous of others over, no matter how beautiful or wealthy or powerful they seem. Their looks will fade, the flashing lights will dim, and their true colors will come out. If we have Christ, however, we have something to hold onto greater than ourselves: an eternity with the creator of the universe in Heaven. The land of "golden streets" and "emerald walls" and a "sea clear as glass" with "no darkness" and "eternal joy" is awaiting.

I'm not suggesting I'm a perfect Christian. I still have worldly thoughts on a daily basis desiring un-eternal materialism. I need to constantly remind myself to focus less on the smoke and mirrors of the world.

Audrey Hepburn, arguably the most chic woman to ever live, once said "*Happy girls are the prettiest.*"

As God's princesses, let's follow her advice and live like the happiest girls this world's ever seen. Let's prove the world wrong. Let's smile when it tells us to frown and throw those goofy gossip mags in the trash where they belong. Next time we feel unworthy, let's stop, drop, and read the Good News: Jesus sees us as so beautiful, He wants to be our true love.

We're only human, and I realize it's easier said than done. A few months ago, one of my best friends met me for lunch at Casa Del Mar's pool in Santa Monica. Sitting on cozy chairs in a quiet corner overlooking the ocean waves crashing onto the sand, we enjoyed an appetizer of fish tacos and drank green smoothies, talking the afternoon away.

This particular friend of mine has been brimming with confidence from the first day I met her. She has a similar background to me, as we both dabbled in the party scene and dated a small army of guys we knew weren't good for us, eventually becoming Christians and seeing things in a new light.

As I took my first bite of a Mahi Mahi and avocado taco, my friend said something strange.

"I sometimes feel like no one could ever love me."

My eyes as big as my plate, I couldn't help but cough out, "*Wait, what?*"

This gorgeous woman, of whom had been a tremendous role model in my life, had actually hinted at personal insecurity?

If I were a man, this babe would be the prototype I was looking for: beautiful, helpful, encouraging, prayerful, and servant-like. Digging deeper, she explained how she

sometimes feels pangs of insecurity, unknowingly wondering if God really had someone for her.

There have been seasons when I've felt the exact same. *"I feel ugly, how could anyone love someone who looks like me? I'm awkward, how could someone stand marrying me? I'm so clumsy, lazy, fat..."*

God placed us here on Earth, meaning we are not worthless. According to the magazines and reality shows, we aren't skinny or pretty or disciplined enough, ever. On the contrary, according to the Life Handbook we've graciously been given by the world's creator, we *are* enough, we *are* beloved, and we *are* worthy.

Next time we feel a pang of insecurity, let's remember: God does not create junk. Those who take His hand and walk down the path of His grace have nothing to fear, least of all thinking a man can't someday love them. Meanwhile, let's forget about fad diets, obsessive calorie counting, or needing to look a certain way. God is the ultimate matchmaker and will, in His timing, give us the right person who finds us lovely.

So how are we, as ladies of faith, to act? With elegance. Inward elegance, that is. Inward elegance is what we should ultimately strive for because it will never fade, like our youth or beauty.

Let's be women of truth who stick to our word. Let's be women of confidence, standing by the quote *"there's great power in knowing we have it."* Let's be God-fearing women, knowing our ultimate path in life is destined and determined through our faith in Jesus Christ, the ultimate romancer. Let's be women of love, pouring our God-given gifts into those around us, knowing we were born with specific talents others may lack.

Let's not be afraid to turn someone down (in the kindest way possible) because we are not afraid of singleness. Let's be women of grace, poise, elegance, charm, and dignity.

Let's act as women of true beauty, found in the heart, and ignore those who don't help us shine.

There's nothing wrong with us being *the one who got away*. Nothing good can happen after midnight - think Cinderella - let's keep those boys wanting more.

Let's ignore our stumbles and keep our chins up high. Let's look up at the stars, not down at our feet.

We are women of purity, modern luxury, and sophistication. We are not a piece of candy. We are worth far more than our exterior and don't need to settle for a man who doesn't agree.

Us women are under attack. We see 10,000 advertisements a day without even realizing it, most of which are poison for the soul. The devil, a loser who knows he won't spend eternity with us in Heaven, wants to make our lives miserable by feeding us lies. But thankfully, we're stronger than him because we have Christ on our side. We have the power to ignore the 'liar of all liars' by knowing our real treasure lies not in our appearance or a man, but in Heaven.

We are not a car in a parking lot to get chosen. We choose a man just as much as he chooses us. We are not something to be used and traded in. As long as we trust in the sovereignty of Jesus, we can rest assured our insecurity will drive off into the sunset, without us.

Chapter 3: Waving Goodbye to the Ex

Everyone has had a bully or mean girl or ex-boyfriend who has tried to bring them down. - Demi Lovato

Have you seen the movie *He's Just Not that Into You*? It's one of those movies everyone pretends to love but secretly hates because it makes them feel a little

insecure. The basic premise of the movie follows different couples in New York City, all boiling down to one person within the couple feeling rejected by the other.

The movie came out the summer of my sophomore year of high school. I remember competing at a championship swim meet in Milwaukee with my teammates at the time. I was dating another swimmer, and we both qualified for finals, meaning we had a few hours to kill after the preliminary session. We decided to go to the movie theater and settled on *He's Just Not that Into You*.

The ironic part about the story is we weren't doing very well in our relationship. We didn't see each other often, and I (being a wee immature) was insecure about where we stood. He had stopped calling as often and didn't text me every morning like he used to, and I was starting to get nervous.

I was looking forward to the movie. This would be our chance to rekindle our flame! Maybe, after spending some time together, he'd remember how incredibly irresistible I was and everything would go back to normal.

It didn't pan out that way. We watched the movie without a single hand-hold. We barely said a word to each other, keeping our eyes glued to the screen of the movie perfectly describing our fate. *He just wasn't that into me anymore*. There I was, overanalyzing everything I had said to him trying to find a clue of what I did wrong, and he was just watching the movie with a blank stare and no care in the world.

As you can guess, our relationship dwindled to nothing. We stopped talking all together and saw each other only on rare unplanned occasions, all of which were awkward.

Did I walk away from the relationship like I should have? No. By the looks of it, I was over him. But in my brain, I was crushed, confused, and plotting how to win him back.

"Maybe... if I see him at a swim meet... I can make sure I look really cute and trip over his bag and he'll catch me and we'll live happily ever after!"

But after a few failed attempts of "just happening" to see him with full hair and makeup, I knew it was useless. He had started dating someone else, and I was alone.

As a hopeless romantic, I felt embarrassed and confused. "*Why did he break up with me? What was the deal? What do I do now?*"

Before we even stepped into the movie theater, I knew he wasn't all that into me. For about a month prior, I could feel it. I was no longer being pursued, I was doing the pursuing. But, instead of recognizing his disinterest, I ignored it, thinking he needed to hear more from me in order to bring him back to the "Honeymoon" stage.

That did nothing but push him away further because the roles had been switched. Instead of letting the man be the man and *call me*, I started calling him.

There are lots and lots of fish in the sea. That means there's at least one who will treasure and adore us. But it also means there's at least one who would never want to be with us.

The trouble with our society, and girls in general, is falling for the fish who don't want us. We want to change their minds and prove to them how worthy we are, when in reality we're (usually) in for nothing but disappointment and self-inflicted anguish.

There will always be someone out there who doesn't want us. It doesn't matter who we are, whether we're Megan Fox or Selena Gomez or Taylor Swift. It's interesting, too, thinking about the "love lives" of beautiful celebrities. Swift, for example, had a fling with John Mayer only to get her feelings hurt. She probably knew he was *trouble when he walked in*, but wanted a challenge. Even with millions of men dying to be her one and only, she chose someone she knew would make it a game. Someone she had to prove herself to.

Am I recommending all girls date as often as I did, or at all? No. But once it's the right man, we'll know it.

I don't like the idea of serial dating considering that's the type of person I was growing up. Nothing good came from it. But what I do recommend, when we meet the right someone, is letting him lead the relationship. Letting the man pursue us, ladies, will keep the gender roles in the right place.

I love hearing stories of how old couples met. They usually sound something like *"he saw me at the fair, climbed the ferris wheel, and wouldn't get down until I told him I'd go out with him."* (or is that just *The Notebook*?) Most old couples got it right: boy met girl, boy asked girl to date, boy asked girl to marry. That's why many old couples are still happily together!

The problem with our generation is girls confuse themselves as being the leader in the relationship. *"He never comes up with good dates so I plan them all. He doesn't ever text me so I text him. He doesn't like being in a relationship on Facebook so I just post all over his wall so girls get the picture he's mine."*

If I were a boy, I know exactly how I would want things done. I'd want to pursue a woman and do all the work. I'd choose the restaurants and make decisions. And that's exactly how, deep down, almost all men think. Even if they play things off as "liking when women ask them out," I'd assume deep down they'd rather do the pursuing.

If he doesn't call, he is not interested. If a man is truly interested in a woman, there's only about a 1 in 1,000 chance he'll lose her number or be too busy to contact her. That boy was no longer interested in me, and instead of accepting it, I made things worse.

We can't allow ourselves to fall for someone who's not into us. We're worth far more than that, beloved. Trusting in God's almighty power, we can ignore those who ignore us. If we know he's trouble, we shouldn't give him the time of day, babe. Let's learn from my mistakes... and Taylor's song.

The idea of 'ignoring those who ignore us' was tough for me to fathom, even four years later. Moving to Malibu, California my sophomore year of college, I was aware I may have a run-in or two with some celebrities. A few weeks into school, my new friends and I went to a hotspot, Cafe Habana.

Cafe Habana is a Mexican restaurant that turns into a bar/dance club come night-time. This particular night, the place was packed; there was an up-and-coming DJ and lots of dancing.

As a friend and I were leaning over the bar trying to get the bartender's attention, I noticed brown, wispy hair on the man's head next to me. *"Wow, he's cute,"* I thought. *"How do I know that guy? Is he in my science class?"*

In a matter of moments, it hit me: I was standing next to a major celebrity, the very man I used to watch on a hit MTV reality show. The very man I had been crushing over via television was trying to order a vodka soda... standing right next to me. (I unfortunately can't share his name - herein referred to as Bryan)

I needed to talk to him. He had always been such a gentleman to the women on the show, so maybe this was my chance?

"Are you Bryan?" I blurted out. (smooth, Paige)

"Hmm," he said. *"Who's Bryan? Definitely not me. I'm not Bryan, whoever that is."*

Unsure if he was being rude or playful, I teased back. "Um, yeah you definitely are. I used to watch your show!" Again, very smooth.

"Nope. I'm not Bryan. Who's Bryan? That's a funny name, don't you think?"

Paying the bartender, I looked his way once more. *"Nice meeting you, Bryan."*

"See ya, sweetie," he winked.

A few weeks after the initial encounter, I saw Bryan again at Starbucks. *"Hi!"* I squealed as he walked off with his mocha latte. *"Um, hi,"* he said. Another moment, almost as great as the first one, I thought (delusional, I understand).

Throughout my sophomore year, I saw him a couple more times, buying a smoothie at the Vitamin Barn, eating brunch at Coogies, and munching on a sandwich at John's Garden. Each time I would completely overplay the interaction (if anything at all) we "shared."

Once, he held the door open for me at a restaurant, and I melted, thinking we were destined to be together. Another time, he smiled at me at the Lumberyard mall, and it was solidified in my mind: he was totally into me and we would grow old together and I could move into his Malibu beach pad and I could become besties with his famous sisters and, and, and...

I had quite the imagination. I was not secure with myself, and I was constantly looking for attention and reassurance from boys, even celebrities who didn't know my name. My junior and senior years of college, I'd still see him around here and there, except at that point he was dating a cute blonde whom was always at his side.

It was safe to say I was no longer crushing on Bryan. I was becoming more comfortable in my own skin and grown more realistic in my thought process. I had (*finally!*) allowed my heart and mind to be shaped by Jesus Christ.

As women, it's easy to project a specific image on a man we wish was real. Funny as the story is, I left my first encounter with Bryan thinking, "*Wow! What a real gentleman.*" In reality, he hadn't been very nice to me. Pretty rude, in fact.

My little encounters with Bryan are pathetic. But it's a prime example of how women often run after men, make the first move, compromise themselves, and over-exaggerate scenarios.

Bryan and I were never friends, and I would be highly surprised if he could pick me out in a line of girls. But the premise of the story is pretty similar to my actual ex-boyfriends. I'd overplay situations, we'd break up, all my hopes and dreams would come crashing down, and I'd walk away more bruised than before.

Throughout my lifetime, I have dated a handful of guys, some first-class men, others not. But, looking back, I find it pretty wacky I would stay with someone who treated me badly, dated other girls at the same time, put me down, or talked badly about me.

As an insecure teenager, it seemed *those* guys, the ones who weren't prince charmings, were the one's I ran after most. I wanted to prove to myself I was worthy by "winning their love," choosing bad-boys over one's who would've actually been gentlemen.

My word of advice is not to settle for someone who doesn't treat us like a princess. There is nothing - I repeat - *nothing* wrong with being single. In fact, singleness is the most beautiful time of a girl's life. It's a time for us to soul search, grow into the women we want to be, and to not compromise ourselves to fit a certain mold of what a specific man is looking for.

I recommend we take time to figure out who we are, and only then look for the one we're compatible with. Changing who we are, at our core, is not something we need to do to find a perfect match. I guarantee there's a man out there, celebrity or not, who would be lucky to have any of us. Not for who we can pretend to be, but our real selves.

Accepting Christ, we are also no longer classified by our past decisions. As young ladies, we can let a past break-up *break us* or we can let it bring us closer to God. God didn't save me from a broken life to watch me date someone who would take me back to where I came from.

Today, whenever I see an ex-boyfriend, they mention how I've changed. They couldn't be more right. I have changed; I'm no longer serving to entertain their hormones because my eyes aren't on them, they're on Christ.

We are all going to die someday and not come back. Consequently, we are not on this Earth to worship an ex. Let's stop going back to what hurts us. God has someone better for us. We do not need to beg, crawl, manipulate, or convince anyone to be with us. The secret to detaching from an ex is attaching to Christ. Let's not allow someone to steal our sunshine. And we definitely don't want to be with someone we have to convince to go to church.

If an ex is bothering us or being just plain annoying, we need to distinguish when it's time to retreat. Is the ex actually worth responding to? Or should we just block their number and keep well on our merry way?

Jesus told His disciples to *"leave the land and dust off their feet"* when a town didn't accept their message. God gives wisdom to those who ask for a spirit of discernment, and as His daughters, we should pray for that wisdom.

Talking to a bad-news ex is never a good idea. What should we do if we can't get them out of our heads? Pray. Pray God would heal both his and our heart's for bitterness. Pray God would give us a clear focus on furthering His name with every essence of truth. Pray the ex would learn the truth of the Good News.

"But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Matthew 5:44

Let's forgive those who hurt us, choose our battles wisely, and take crude remarks with a grain of salt. Someone who picks on us is likely picking on themselves internally, too. We are gems, no matter what anyone says, beloved. Bright, shining gems with a grand future ahead.

Also, doll, Youtube the sermon *It's Not You, It's Me* by Louie Giglio. It'll give you a clear understanding on leaving the wrong guy's behind.

Sayonara, exes.

Visit [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) to purchase the full version of [Finding Your Prince](#), sweet pea!

Smooches, Paige Weslaski
Founder of MilkNHoneyMagazine.com