



Crown of Honey
coaching

7 DAYS TO A *Softer Heart*

***Devotional for the Wife Who Is Ready to Stop
Striving and Start Transforming***

BY: ALICIA JOHNSON

A Note from Alicia

There was a season in my marriage when I was doing everything I thought a good wife was supposed to do and still watching everything fall apart.

I was striving. **Controlling. Managing. Fixing. Exhausted.** And completely closed off to the idea that I had any part to play in why things felt so hard.

Then God started working on my heart. Not my husband's. Mine.

What He revealed to me wasn't shame, it was invitation. He showed me that the woman He created me to be was not a woman who had to white-knuckle her way through marriage. She was strong, yes but her strength looked like softness. Like trust. Like open hands instead of clenched fists.

The Hebrew word for woman in **Genesis 2 is ezer** — fierce, strong, a force God Himself is also called. But we can't walk in that calling when we're walled off and running on empty.

This **7-day devotional** is the beginning of that unraveling. Each day will invite you into one shift, one posture that changed my marriage and has changed the marriages of the women I've had the privilege of walking alongside.

This is not about becoming a doormat. This is not about tolerating what is not okay. This is about becoming the woman God designed you to be and watching what happens to your marriage when she shows up.

I'm praying for you as you read this. Every single day.

With love,

Alicia Johnson

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How to Use This Devotional

Each day has four parts:



A **Scripture** to anchor you in God's Word before anything else.



A **Devotional** reading to meet you where you are honest, warm, and without judgment.



A **Prayer** written out for you. Pray it as your own. Meaning every word matters more than perfection.

Today's Invitation is one simple, gentle practice. Not homework. Not a to-do list.
An invitation to try something new.

Read one day at a time. Don't rush. Some days you may need to sit with longer than others. That's not falling behind, that's the work.

Come back to the prayer throughout the day. Write in the margins. Underline what lands. Let this be a living document between you and God.

You are not reading this by accident.

DAY ONE

You Were Made for More Than This

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"She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future."

— **Proverbs 31:25 NLT**

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TODAY'S DEVOTION

Before we talk about your marriage, we need to talk about you.

Not what you've done wrong. Not what your husband has done wrong. Just who you are, who God says you are, and the gap that so many of us are living in between those two things.

The woman in **Proverbs 31** is not striving. She is not performing. She is not afraid of tomorrow. She is clothed, wrapped, covered, defined — by strength and dignity. And she laughs. Not nervously. Not sarcastically. She laughs without fear.

When did you last feel like her?

Many of us came into marriage having already spent years walling ourselves off. We learned early that softness was a liability. That needing things was dangerous. That the only way to be safe was to be strong in the way the world defines strong, guarded, self-sufficient, in control.

But God's design for you as a woman as an **ezer**, that fierce, powerful word

DAY ONE

You Were Made for More Than This

He uses in **Genesis 2**, is not that kind of strength. It is strength that flows from security, not fear. Strength that can be soft because it knows it is held

This week is an invitation to return to her. Not to become someone new but to become who you already are underneath everything you've had to carry.

You were made for more than the striving. More than the managing. More than the exhaustion of trying to hold everything together.

You were made for this clothed, dignified, unafraid.

Let's start there.

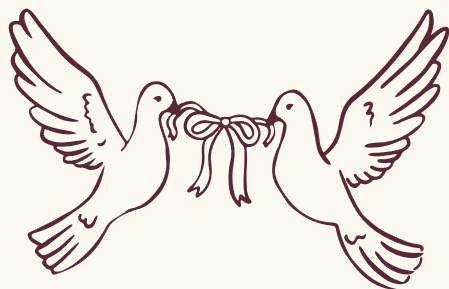
TODAY'S PRAYER

Lord, before I ask You to change anything in my marriage, I ask You to show me who You say I am. Strip away the striving, the walls, the fear and remind me of the woman You designed me to be. I want to walk in the strength and dignity You've already given me. Teach me what that looks like. Amen.

TODAY'S INVITATION

Find one quiet moment today even five minutes and ask God this single question: Who do You say I am? Write down whatever comes. Don't edit it. Don't argue with it. Just receive it.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



DAY TWO

Fill Before You Pour

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"Love your neighbor as yourself."

— Mark 12:31 NIV

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TODAY'S DEVOTION

We quote this verse often and almost always focus on the first part. Love your neighbor. Love your husband. Love your children. Love, love, love.

But the second half of that verse is just as instructive: as yourself.

You cannot pour from an empty vessel. You cannot offer warmth when you are running on cold. And yet so many wives wear their depletion like a badge of honor as if exhausting themselves in service of everyone else is the most righteous thing they can do.

It isn't.

Taking care of yourself is not selfish. It is stewardship. Your body, your mind, your spirit these are gifts from God, entrusted to you. When you neglect them in the name of everyone else, you are not being a good wife. You are running your lamp down to empty and wondering why the room is going dark.

A woman who tends to herself, who rests, who moves her body, who cultivates joy, who spends time with God before she spends time managing everyone else — brings a completely different energy into her home.

DAY TWO

Fill Before You Pour

She is generous because she has something to give. She is patient because she is not desperate. She is present because she is not resentful.

This is not about spa days, though those are wonderful. This is about the daily, faithful practice of asking: What do I need today? And then honoring the answer.

Your marriage cannot be the only thing that fills you. That is too much weight for any one person or relationship to carry. Let God fill you first.

Then tend to yourself. Then pour out from that fullness.

Fill before you pour.

TODAY'S PRAYER

Father, forgive me for the ways I've neglected myself and then resented the emptiness. Teach me to receive from You first. Show me what I need today and give me permission to honor it. Help me see that caring for myself is caring for my family. I want to pour from abundance, not from lack. Amen.

TODAY'S INVITATION

Identify one thing today that fills you up that restores rather than drains you. Put it in your day intentionally. It doesn't have to be big. A walk. A quiet cup of coffee. Fifteen minutes without your phone. Do it without guilt.

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DAY THREE

Take the Wall Down

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"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

— **Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV**

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TODAY'S DEVOTION

Control feels like *safety*. That's the honest truth.

When we've been hurt, when things have felt uncertain, when we've watched something we love start to unravel — we reach for control the way a drowning person reaches for anything solid. It makes sense. It's human.

But here's what no one tells you: the grip that feels like safety is actually the thing keeping you from peace.

When we are in control of our marriages, managing our husbands, directing outcomes, anticipating every problem and trying to neutralize it before it happens we are not trusting God. We are playing God. And it is exhausting. And it doesn't work.

Proverbs 3 does not say trust in the Lord with some of your heart while keeping a firm hand on the steering wheel just in case. It says all. It says lean not on your own understanding even when your understanding feels very reasonable. Even when you are pretty sure you know best.

DAY THREE

Take the Wall Down

Letting go of control in your marriage is not passivity. It is one of the most active, faith-filled things you can do. It is saying: I believe God is bigger than this situation. I believe my husband is capable. I believe I don't have to manage what is not mine to manage.

What are you white-knuckling right now? What outcome are you trying to force? What are you managing in your marriage that, if you're honest, belongs to God or to your husband?

Open your hands today. Not because you don't care. Because you trust the One who holds it all.

TODAY'S PRAYER

Lord, I confess the ways I've tried to control what only You can carry. I've been afraid that if I let go, everything will fall apart but I know that's a lie. You are not surprised by anything in my marriage. You are not asleep. Help me to release my grip today, and to trust that Your hands are more than enough. Amen.

TODAY'S INVITATION

Identify one thing you are trying to control in your marriage right now. Write it down. Then physically open your hands, hold that piece of paper (or that thought), and pray **Proverbs 3:5-6** over it. Practice returning to open hands every time you feel the urge to grab the wheel again today.

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DAY FOUR

Let Go of the Wheel

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“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”

— 1 John 4:18 NIV

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TODAY'S DEVOTION

Somewhere along the way, most of us built a wall.

Maybe it happened in childhood, when vulnerability was met with dismissal or hurt. Maybe it happened in your marriage — once, or more than once when you opened up and it wasn't safe. Maybe you don't even remember building it. You just noticed one day that you were behind it.

A closed heart feels like protection. But it is also loneliness. And it is one of the greatest barriers to the marriage you're longing for.

Your husband cannot connect with a closed heart. He can pursue, and pursue, and pursue but if the wall is up, intimacy cannot land. Not emotional intimacy. Not physical intimacy. Not the kind of closeness that makes a marriage feel like a marriage.

Vulnerability is terrifying precisely because it is real. It costs something. It says: here I am, unguarded and I trust you with that.

1 John 4:18 tells us that perfect love drives out fear. You will not feel fearless before you open up. You open up, and then the fear begins to lose its power. That is how this works.

DAY FOUR

Let Go of the Wheel

You don't have to take the whole wall down today. But is there one brick you could remove? One thing you've been holding back from your husband a feeling, a fear, a desire, an appreciation that you could let him see?

Softness is not weakness. It is the bravest thing in the room.

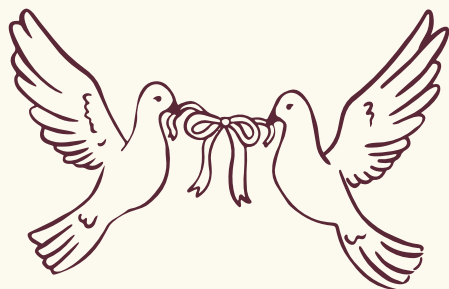
TODAY'S PRAYER

God, You know the walls I've built and why I built them. I'm not asking You to pretend they weren't necessary. But I'm asking You to help me see where they are now keeping out the good, keeping out connection, keeping out love. Help me to be brave enough to be soft. To trust that vulnerability in my marriage is not weakness, but the way through. Amen.

TODAY'S INVITATION

Today's invitation is to share something from your own heart — not about him, but about you. True vulnerability sounds like "I miss you" not "you never make time for me." It sounds like "I've been feeling overwhelmed" not "you don't help enough." It sounds like "I need more rest than I've been getting" something real, from your own experience, that lets him in rather than puts him on trial. One small, honest, unguarded thing about how you feel. That's it.

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DAY FIVE

Learn to Receive

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"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights."

— **James 1:17 NIV**

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TODAY'S DEVOTION

Your husband opens the car door. You say, *"Oh, you don't have to do that."*

He compliments how you look. You deflect: *"I've been so bloated lately."*

He offers to help with something. You say, *"It's fine, I've got it."*

A friend brings you dinner during a hard week. You say, "You really didn't have to."

A stranger holds a door and you barely make eye contact.

We have become terrible receivers. And we have convinced ourselves this is humility.

It isn't. Deflecting a gift whether it comes from your husband, a friend, a stranger, or God Himself is not humility. It is a closed hand. And a closed hand cannot receive anything.

James 1:17 tells us that every good gift comes from the Father. When your husband reaches toward you with care, with affection, with provision, with desire that is a gift moving in your direction.

DAY FIVE

Learn to Receive

When you deflect it, you are not being modest. You are turning away something God is offering you through him.

Receiving is, in its truest form, a feminine act. It requires trust. It requires believing you are worth giving to. It requires softness and openness instead of deflection and self-sufficiency.

You are worthy of being given to. You are worthy of care. You do not have to earn it, manage it, or minimize it. You just have to open your hands.

Let yourself be loved today. By your husband. By the people around you. By

God. Receive it. All of it. Without deflecting.

TODAY'S PRAYER

Father, show me where I've been closing my hands to what You and others are trying to give me. Heal whatever in me believes I am not worth receiving from. Teach me to receive with grace and gratitude to say yes to love, yes to help, yes to care. I want to be a woman with open hands. Amen.

TODAY'S INVITATION

Every time someone offers you something today, a compliment, help, affection, a kind word receive it. Don't deflect. Don't minimize. Simply say thank you and let it land. Notice how it feels. Notice the resistance, and breathe through it.

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What You Look For, You Will Find

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"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things."

— **Philippians 4:8 NIV**

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TODAY'S DEVOTION

The brain is extraordinarily good at finding evidence for whatever it is already looking for.

If you are looking for proof that your husband is selfish, you will find it. If you are looking for proof that he doesn't care, you will find it. If you are scanning your marriage for everything that is wrong, every day will deliver a fresh supply.

But here's what is also true: if you look for what is good, you will find that too.

Gratitude is not denial. It is not pretending hard things aren't hard. It is the intentional, faith-filled practice of training your eyes to also see what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable. It is the discipline of Philippians 4:8 applied to your marriage.

What is your husband doing right? Not perfectly right. Where is he showing up, even imperfectly? Where has he been faithful, even quietly? What has he given you that you have stopped noticing because it has become ordinary?

DAY SIX

What You Look For, You Will Find

Ordinary faithfulness is still faithfulness.

When we express gratitude to our husbands — specifically, genuinely, without agenda — something shifts. Not because we are manipulating them with praise, but because we are finally seeing them clearly. And people rise to being seen.

What you focus on grows. What you speak over your marriage has weight.

Today, let the words you speak be true and lovely and praiseworthy.

You might be surprised what you've been overlooking.

TODAY'S PRAYER

God, forgive me for the ways I've trained my eyes to see only what's wrong. Help me to see my husband the way You see him with patience, with hope, with clear eyes. Grow gratitude in me not as a performance, but as a genuine shift in what I'm looking for. Let what I find be what I speak. Amen.

TODAY'S INVITATION

Write down three specific things your husband has done this week, this month, recently that you are genuinely grateful for. They don't have to be grand. Then tell him one of them today. Not to change him. Just because it's true, and he deserves to hear it.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

DAY SEVEN

Honor Him, Find Yourself

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"However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

— **Ephesians 5:33 NIV**

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TODAY'S DEVOTION

No verse in the New Testament makes Christian wives more uncomfortable than this one. And honestly? That discomfort is worth paying attention to.

We have heard the word respect weaponized. We have seen it used to demand silence and compliance. We have watched it applied to justify things it was never meant to justify. So we have become cautious with it and understandably so.

But let's reclaim what this word actually means. Not a performance of deference. Not erasing your opinion. Not staying quiet when you need to speak. Respect is honoring the position your husband holds in your family, his leadership, his effort, his identity as the man God placed in your life without requiring him to have earned it perfectly first.

Here is the paradox that transforms marriages: when a wife leads with respect, her husband almost always rises into it. Not because she is managing him because she is releasing him. She is saying, with her posture and her words and her trust: I believe in you. I am not your mother, your manager, or your critic. I am your wife.

DAY SEVEN

Honor Him, Find Yourself

And when she does that something happens to her too. She exhales. She steps out of the role she was never meant to hold. She gets to be a woman again, not a supervisor.

Respect is not self-erasure. It is not silence. It is the laying down of a role that was never yours to carry.

You were not called to lead your husband. You were called to walk alongside him. And from that position — as his fierce, capable, strong, soft ezer, you have more influence than you could ever have from the front.

This is the softer heart in action. Not weaker. Wiser. Not smaller. Free.

TODAY'S PRAYER

Lord, heal my understanding of what it means to honor my husband. Strip away every distorted version I've been handed and show me what You meant. Help me to lay down the roles I was never designed to carry and to step into the woman You created me to be. I want the freedom that comes from trusting Your design. Amen.

TODAY'S INVITATION

Today, find one specific way to honor your husband's leadership, his decision, his effort, his position in your home. It might be as simple as asking his opinion instead of announcing yours, or thanking him for something he carries. Notice what it feels like in your body to step back from control and into trust.

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Devotion Checklist

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DAY 1: You Were Made for More Than This

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DAY 2: Fill Before You Pour

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DAY 3: Take the Wall Down

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DAY 4: Let Go of the Wheel

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DAY 5: Learn to Receive

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DAY 6: What You Look For, You Will Find

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DAY 7: Honor Him, Find Yourself



You Made It.



Seven days. Seven invitations. One woman slowly becoming who she was always meant to be. What you've done this week takes more courage than most people know.

But what you've read here is the beginning. Each day was a door opening to a depth that seven days can only introduce. There is a version of your marriage on the other side of truly living these out. I've watched women discover that the marriage they were longing for had been possible all along they just needed to become the wife who could receive it.

That's the work I do inside my 90-day coaching program. We go all the way in together. One on one. Personalized to your marriage, your story, your faith. If something in you stirred this week, if you found yourself thinking "***I want more of this***", I'd love to talk with you.

Comment **SKILLS** under any of my posts on Instagram (**@crownofhoneycoaching**), or visit **crownofhoney.com** to learn more.

You were made for more than surviving your marriage. You were made to thrive in it. I believe that for you.

With so much love,

Alicia

Ready for Deeper Transformation?



To see exactly how these gentle skills come to life, I put together a quick video. I share how these exact shifts can help you find hope, trust, and peace again in just a few short weeks.

[START HERE](#)

If that video speaks to your heart, let's take the next step together. Space in my private, 90-day customized coaching program is kept very small so I can give you my full devotion.

Head back to our Instagram DMs ([**@crownofhoneycoaching**](#)) and message me the words "I'M IN". Let's lock arms and take this beautiful first step toward your new beginning.

✦ SOME CONCEPTS ARE BASED ON LAURA DOYLE'S 6 INTIMACY SKILLS™

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