

# Breaking Free

by Linda Lowry

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*Linda Lowry shares her journey of breaking free from spiritual struggles through renewed intimacy with God and prioritizing her quiet time.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 16:11, Psalm 34:8, Psalm 37:4, Psalm 37:7, Psalm 46:10, Psalm 63:1, Psalm 119:72, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 6:33, James 4:8

**Topics:** "Intimacy With God", "Personal Revival"

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## Description

Linda Lowry shares her journey of rediscovering intimacy with God and the transformation that took place in her life through prioritizing her relationship with Him. Despite struggles in various areas of her life, she found solace and renewal during a Life Action Retreat, where she was confronted with tough issues but also embraced with unconditional love. Through a simple challenge to prioritize spending time with God daily, Linda experienced a revival in her soul, falling in love with Jesus again and finding joy and sweet intimacy in her relationship with Him.

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## Transcript

Linda Lowry is a "keeper at home" and the mother of three children. Her husband, Forrest, is a pastor in Spring, Texas.

"I realized that the longing I had for intimate relationships with people in my church was really a longing for what only He can give--soul-satisfaction."

People seem to assume that having a consistent quiet time must somehow be easier for those in "full-time" ministry. Having been a pastor's wife for 26 years, that is what I wanted them to believe, to make myself appear more spiritual. However, for much of my life, nothing could have been further from the truth. The appearance of my walk with God was miles apart from the reality I was experiencing.

In the spring of 1999, God led my husband and me to attend a Life Action Retreat for ministers and their wives in Houston, Texas. At that point, I believe I was lower than I had ever been in my life--and during the preceding several years, there had been many low points. I was overwhelmed with circumstances in every area of my life--mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, marital, and financial. In my home, with my children, in ministry--I was living in "survival mode."

This "desert" experience had been dark and so very lonely. There were times I would try to pray and the only thing I could be sure of was that I was saved.

As I was struggling just to hold myself together, I was not excited about the thought of attending this pastors' retreat. In fact, it was the last place I wanted to be. You see, in 1989, Life Action held a 21/2-week revival crusade in our church. During that time, I experienced a deep work of God, resulting in life-changing, personal revival. I discovered what it was to have an intimate walk with the Lord, a hunger for His Word, and a willingness to let Him work in my life. At that time, there were some deep, radical changes in my life, from the inside out, and I never wanted to go back to the person I had been.

The Life Action staff leading the ministers' retreat knew my testimony from years past, and they had no idea how different I was from the person they had known. I was concerned about what they would think if they saw the real me. We were in for a time of getting honest and confronting some tough issues in our lives, but I never dreamed how God was going to meet with me that weekend.

Through the course of that retreat, the staff asked us some tough questions; they lovingly confronted us about a number of specific issues; but, most importantly, they loved us. They embraced us unconditionally and without judging us; they prayed with us and wept with us. (I cried so much that, by the second day, I had ruined a new pair of contacts.) During the weekend, one of the Life Action staff women ministered to me in an extended way. One particular conversation would prove to be a major turning point in my life.

"How do you usually begin your day?" she asked.

"Most mornings, I get a cup of coffee and then read the newspaper," I answered.

"I want to give you a challenge," she responded. "Every day for the next 30 days, I want to encourage you to get your cup of coffee, and then, before you pick up the newspaper, pick up your Bible and spend some time letting God speak to you and responding to Him."

Out of love and respect for this friend, I agreed to accept the challenge. That was on June 22, 1999. I started with 10-15 minutes. Within three weeks, God began to create in me a new appetite for His Word. I began to realize the importance and the benefits of saturating my mind with His truth.

Simply put, I fell in love with Jesus again! It's not that my circumstances and problems have changed. I still struggle with many of the same things. But there is a freedom that comes with gaining an eternal perspective. I have come to have a deep assurance that my heavenly Father can be trusted, and that He has a purpose and a plan in all things.

The terrible loneliness I had felt, as a result of deep hurts in the ministry, had caused an inability and an unwillingness to trust people. Though I longed for intimate relationships, I had been keeping others at arm's length, as a self-protective measure. But as I grew to love and trust God, the protective shell around my heart began to crack and fall away, and I was able not only to love others, but also to receive love.

The joy and sweet intimacy I once had with the Lord returned--something I had begun to believe I would never experience again. Through daily, unhurried time with Him in His Word and on my knees, He truly became my first love again. I realized that the longing I had for intimate relationships with people in my church was really a longing for what only He can give--soul-satisfaction.

As my priorities were corrected, and my relationship with God became the first priority of my day and of my life, God began to give me sweet, precious relationships with other women--friendships based on our shared relationship with Jesus.

This past year has been a year of transformation--like a caterpillar breaking free from its cocoon to become a butterfly! My precious husband had prayed for several years that the sparkle would return to my eyes as evidence that joy had returned to my heart. That prayer, as well as many others, has been answered. By God's grace, my quiet time is now the top priority of my day. There has not been one day since making that initial commitment, that I have not had the joy of spending at least some time alone in communion with the Lord. Many days, I could spend two hours easily with the Lord and never look up if the phone didn't ring or my home or family didn't need my attention. Prayer is a delight and a privilege. I have a hunger and a thirst for His Word like never before, and the sweet intimacy with the Lord is real and precious once again.

Now I can truthfully say, "The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold" (Psalm 119:72).

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