

# Sweet the Moments

*Reflections for Women on Everyday Things*

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*For my mother, Evelyn K. Davis;  
mother-in-law, Marcella Wagenknecht;  
mentors Judy Zahn and Carolyn Cunningham;  
and Rev. Robert F. Ingram,  
who made me think.*





# Contents

<i>Foreword</i> .....	vii
<i>Editor's Preface</i> .....	ix
Fear and Pride .....	1
A Letter to My Best Friend from Bible Camp .....	5
Prince Charming, at Last .....	9
Wagons .....	11
Brown Cake and Lightning .....	15
Hammering Crabs .....	19
Mosquitoes, Hemingway, and the Red Rooster Inn .....	23
We Do Things Differently Here .....	27
Grandpa .....	31
The Day We Bought the Rocking Chair .....	35
He Clapped .....	39
Handprints .....	41
A Moonlight View .....	45
The Quilt .....	47
Touch and See .....	51

God's Sense of Humor.....	53
The Haircut.....	57
Sand in My Shoes.....	61
More Than We Expect.....	63
The Mommy Monster.....	67
Obey First, Ask Questions Later.....	71
All That He Is.....	75
The Flyby.....	79
Simple Joys.....	85
Something New.....	89
Growing Up.....	91
Redistributed.....	93
Joyful Noise.....	97
The Neighbor's Dog.....	101
Getting Old Fast.....	105
Captivated by Christ.....	109
Jan.....	111
Rest.....	115
<i>Handicapped</i> .....	119
Empty Plates.....	123
Surprise.....	125
Pampered.....	129
What Brings the Future?.....	133
Awakening.....	137
<i>Afterword</i> .....	139



# Foreword

In God's eyes I am significant. So are you. Each moment of our lives, no matter how mundane or annoying, has significance—for us and for the other people in our lives. Every second can show us something about ourselves as God's children. There is no moment that is not known to him. He has ordained the moments of our lives; he is in control of each one. We can use even the most insignificant of them to become more powerful, more faithful, and more joyful.

The apostle Paul encourages us to think about things that are *noble, praiseworthy, and excellent* (Philippians 4:8). I often find it difficult to think about these things of God during trying and tedious times. Yet, looking at these moments in retrospect through the filter of Scripture, with an eye for the Lord's strength (and sometimes with a sense of humor), I learn much about who I am and what God wants me to become.

When I was in high school the youth minister of our church liked to play mentally challenging games during youth group outings. One of the games was designed to make us stop and take note of the spiritual importance of the things we were doing at one exact moment. We called the game *significant moments*. While we were riding in a van, eating at a fast-food restaurant, skating at a skating rink, or just sitting around talking at Bible camp; our counselor would ask, "What is the spiritual significance of this moment?" We would then respond with answers that showed how we understood that particular situation to have meaning in our Christian lives. The game kept our minds focused on God and his grace. *And* it was fun.

I have played this game with myself for many years. I still enjoy it, and I still discover new insights each time I play. Sometimes I record the story of the moment, shaping it into a narrative or, occasionally, a poem. Each entry takes me to a particular Bible text that has had special meaning for me, and each text often leads me to say a prayer. Over the years I have gathered a small collection of these moments of spiritual significance. I hope you enjoy reading some of them. Perhaps you'll even join me in playing the game of *significant moments*.





# Editor's Preface

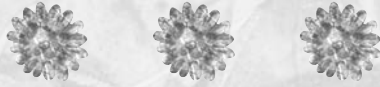
For Martin Luther the female perspective was deserving of great admiration. “Earth has nothing more tender,” he wrote, “than a woman’s heart when it is the abode of piety.”

How remarkably true and wise! Women perceive life in a way that is profoundly different from a man’s understanding. Sometimes the differences are subtle. At other times a woman’s viewpoint stands in bold juxtaposition to a male’s view. Subtle or stark, a woman’s view on life is inevitably unique because it uses the human heart as its filter.

This book is part of an effort to give voice to the expressions of godly women in every walk and stage of life. The purpose of this book and others like it is to examine the great themes and important struggles that are part of every Christian woman’s experience—to help her explore her blessings, examine her faith, inspire her family, endure her suffering, excel in her prayer life, and become fully engaged in the worship of her Savior-God.

In a world gone giddy with the ideology of radical feminism, these books written by women and for women provide a meaningful dialogue bathed in the light of God’s eternal Word. May the give and take of these timeless conversations bring glory to God’s holy name and a rich harvest of blessings to this book’s readers.

Kenneth J. Kremer, editor



I can do everything through him who gives  
me strength.

*Philippians 4:13*

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
Save in the death of Christ, my God.  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.

*Christian Worship [CW] 125:2*



# Fear and Pride

I didn't think I could do it. With all of my might, I was wishing that I could just get up and walk out of the room. It was my first literary conference. I was scheduled to read my own paper. A crowd of English professors and graduate students from all over the country had filed into the conference room to hear what I had to say about one of my favorite women authors. I wore a new blue suit with new shoes to match. I had new stockings (without any runs). I had a paper approved by my professor. And I had a bad case of butterflies. The speaker who occupied the podium before me droned on. I tried to listen, but my ears were ringing and hot—I was petrified.

Then, over the ringing in my ears, I heard my name announced as I was introduced to speak. I said a silent prayer—something to the effect that if it was God's will, I would survive this ordeal. On the way to the podium I added a prayer of thanks that the distance between my chair and the podium was not great. I wasn't sure I could have walked much farther. I was convinced that, given a few more steps, my new blue shoes would make me trip. They didn't.

When I arrived at the podium, my ears stopped ringing, and a new sensation of peace and tranquility washed over me. I was surprised to find myself suspended in such a relaxed frame of mind. "Maybe this isn't going to be so difficult," I thought. After all, the hard work had already been done. My paper was right in front of me. All I had to do was read it, just as I had rehearsed it a hundred times before.

I began to read, pretending that I was the only person in the room. My voice got stronger as I went along, and then I was done.

When I finished reading the paper, I breathed a quiet sigh of relief, thinking I was home free. But I wasn't.

A woman raised her hand and asked a question. This wasn't just any woman either. She was widely recognized as *the* authority in the field of Restoration Drama. I had quoted her in my paper. "Oh, dear God," I pleaded, "please, help me!" Again, as I muttered the prayer to myself, a strange sense of calm came over me. The answer that tumbled out came as such a measured, articulate response that it surprised me even as I spoke. Even more surprising was the fact that the woman nodded in agreement, and then said to the whole assembly that she agreed with me. Oh, happy day!

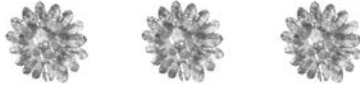
It didn't take long for me to forget how God had answered my prayers and to start congratulating myself for being so insightful, so observant, so elegant in my logic, and so articulate in expressing my literary understanding in such profound rhetoric.

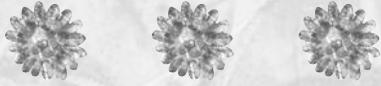
Then, just as I was feeling much too pleased with myself, one of my classmates invited me to accompany her to another conference room to hear another paper. In an instant my grand moment was gone. This other paper was brilliant. There were a lot of very smart people there to probe the author's thesis with intelligent questions. And the answers that the essayist gave were gems of careful, thought-provoking ideas aimed at stimulating the intellect of this academic crowd. Then it was time to go home.

At the end of the day, I was alone again, just myself and my God. I was no longer afraid, nor was I any longer full of my own brilliance. I was just grateful; God had given what I needed in my moment—self-confidence, liberally seasoned with some well-deserved humility. He had gotten me through the day. With his help I had done well. Perhaps someday I would become a professor of English. But for now, as the day

ended, I was content with being a student and a happy child of God. I knew that he would be with me in my future, wherever that would lead. After all, he had already done the most difficult and most important work for me. God had forgiven my sins, given me hope in his promise of eternal life, and provided a purpose for my life and the necessary gifts to live it in his service. What more could I want?

Whether my future led me to become a professional instructor or a professional mom, or something I had not yet dreamed of, I would live my life to the glory of Jesus' name. I would lean on him—my strength and my salvation.






If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

*2 Chronicles 7:14*

The LORD has heard my cry for mercy;  
the LORD accepts my prayer.

*Psalms 6:9*



# A Letter to My Best Friend from Bible Camp

I stand here by the lake near our old Bible camp, alone now, just me and my feelings and doubts—the same feelings and doubts you and I used to share. Everyone else here seems to have it all together. I remember every moment we spent here. I hold this place as a child holds a teddy bear, never wanting to let go of the love the Lord showed me here.

As I sit here sulking a bit, I hear a sound  
As though someone has opened a floodgate on the other side  
of the lake.

I see something far away  
That looks like steam rising from hot pavement.  
It is the beating of a hundred pairs of wings,  
Propelling ducks low over the water.  
Nothing that I do could ever be this beautiful.  
Nowhere that I go could ever be as perfect as this place.

My life is a lot like this lake. I'm a good camp counselor. My faith seems smooth on the surface; others can see Jesus reflected in me. But under the surface are the weeds and the mud of my old self. Even you, my dear friend, cannot see what is there. These are the sins I hide and keep only to myself. Only