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About This Book

Have you ever thought about what motherhood would have been like for Eve in the Garden of Eden had she not sinned? It presumably would have been filled with endless joy, peace, and love. She would have had God walking beside her through each season of her motherhood journey. She could have asked Him directly for insight into what her children needed, and He could have helped her through it all.

Now, has it ever occurred to you that God still wants that kind of motherhood for us? Something beautiful and close to His heart? In our fallen world, we have an enemy lurking in the shadows, trying to ruin God's good gift of motherhood. Seeking God's intended design for motherhood is both a duty and an adventure. It is full of peril, risk, hardship, and fear. It requires bravery and walking near God daily. We believe He wants to help us find the joy He offers in the gift of this role. We also believe that joy is readily available, even during the trials and uphill climbs mothers so frequently face.

That's what this book is all about.

Think of this book as a patchwork quilt of encouragement for disheartened and weary moms. The contributors come from varied backgrounds. We don't claim to be parenting experts, but every single page contains words lovingly crafted by a mother who volunteered part of her story. Some stories are old; others are new. It's part devotional, part memoir, part Bible study, part inspiration. It's a diverse and yet very purposeful tapestry of accounts from real Christian moms with a desire to uplift and uphold one another in the journey of motherhood. We created this book as a source of healing, strength, and encouragement for every mom who reads it—to equip her with a roadmap to help discover the joy available to her.

Have you ever felt joyless but weren't sure why? Mothers don't always have time to reflect on what is stealing our joy, though the potential culprits are many: exhaustion, hormones, feelings of inadequacy, even spiritual warfare. That's why, at the end of each entry, we've included both "Joy Thief" and "Fight Back" sections, which will help identify some culprits that can rob our joy and what to do about them.

Scripture tells us that Satan would like nothing more than to steal our joy, kill the spark in our spirits, and destroy the blessings that God intends for us (John 10:10). As a result of mankind's fall in the Garden, our bodies and circumstances are imperfect. But in Christ we are more than

conquerors (Romans 8:37). When we draw near to God, His Spirit gives us the power and strength to overcome our selfish desires and instead be filled with His fruit—including joy (Galatians 5:22). We can don the spiritual armor of God to effectively battle against spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6:10-17). *Through Christ we are victorious* (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Let us be alert for joy thieves—and let us fight back!

Being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy.

COLOSSIANS 1:11

“IN THE GARDEN”
BY C. AUSTIN MILES¹

*I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear,
Falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses.*

(chorus)
*And He walks with me,
And He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there
None other has ever known.*

*He speaks, and the sound of His voice
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing,
And the melody
That He gave to me
Within my heart is ringing.*

(repeat chorus)

*I'd stay in the garden with Him
Though the night around me be falling;
But He bids me go;
Through the voice of woe,
His voice to me is calling.*

(repeat chorus)