

THE GREAT SECRET

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Etched into the inside cover of my Mamaw's old Bible are some faded words in shaky cursive. Nothing else claims any space on that otherwise blank page, as though **THIS** thought were what she wanted front and center. As though *this* thought were one she allowed no other contender.

"To believe and to consent to be loved while unworthy, is the great secret."

I don't know about you, but I like the idea of feeling worthy. I like feeling like I deserve feeling important and valuable. I like being handled with the dignity that accompanies this realization. It's unsettling to consider my unworthiness. And our world tries very hard to speak what seems like life-giving words about this very real need. But if we believe what sounds sweet absent of what is true, our hearts will wander unsettled in a dusty desert still searching for the water that promises life. The goal is not to prove ourselves worthy, but to believe and accept love *despite* our unworthiness. What if the great secret was that our worth was not something we earned or were entitled to, but something we were *clothed* with? What if this unmerited favor was gifted to us by a generous giver who paid a heavy price for it? What if we were loved, not because we mustered up all of our efforts to point to our value, but because even in our unworthy state, someone saw us as *desirable*?

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."— Romans 5:8 NIV

What would happen if we recognized that we were loved so greatly and so deeply, that while we were still stuck deep in the muck of our darkest moments, someone offered up their very breath for ours? Someone constructed a rescue mission and executed it with the hope that we might see the truth about how valuable we were to him, that it had nothing to do with our earning capacity, and we not only believed it, but allowed him to clothe us with HIS worth?

We might just rest. We might just taste freedom from striving. **We might exchange weakness for strength, striving for rest, abandoned for abiding, pitiful for powerful, unworthy for loved.** I think we might just stop trying to prove ourselves, and we would start pointing to the one who is ultimately worthy of *all of our hearts*. Our hearts might start coming awake to the flicker of love reciprocated toward the one who loved us first. As the Storybook Bible says it, "God loved them with all of his heart. And they were lovely because he loved them." Now *that* might be the great secret of life.

When we submit our hearts to this truth, it changes everything. Despite it's painful implications, the best place we can start is understanding that apart from Jesus, we are not worthy of life. But with him... *with him...* **we are daughters of the King.** Let's

pause and think about what that means and why it matters for all of forever...

For today, I invite you to ask yourself this question: **"What phrase might I believe unabashedly enough to etch into the front cover of the story of my life?"**