

She Believes

EMBRACING THE LIFE
YOU WERE
CREATED TO LIVE

Debbie Lindell

WITH SUSY FLORY



a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Debbie Lindell with Susy Flory, *She Believes*
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To my Heavenly Father.
Believing in you and what you say about me
changed everything about my life.

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FOREWORD

There is nothing like that moment when a woman is awakened to the truth that she is who God says she is, she can do what God says she can do, and she can have all that God says she can have.

That moment when her faith makes the six-inch drop from her head to her heart, and her passion, purpose, and potential are activated.

That is the moment when everything changes.

Forever.

Great power is unleashed when you are no longer paralyzed by fear, doubt, unbelief, or insecurity and are instead fueled by faith and trust in an awesome God.

There is no stopping a woman who believes God.

You are here on purpose for a purpose.

You matter very much.

The earth awaits your contribution.

This is not a dress rehearsal.

You only have one life—make it count.

It is not too late to start believing God.

You are not hopeless, useless, insignificant, irrelevant, or a failure.

Nothing that has been said or done to you or against you is greater than what Jesus has done for you.

Your limitations are not greater than God’s supernatural ability to work through you.

There is more in you than you know.

You are enough.

He is more than enough.

My friend Debbie lives the message of this book. I have watched her grow, thrive, and flourish as she passionately embraced the journey, struggle, and change required to become a woman who truly *believes*. Her life is having a profound impact on multitudes, and so can yours.

Her faith, joy, and enthusiasm inspire me, and I know they will do the same for you in this book. Don’t just casually flip through these pages; write all over them and apply them, and you will find yourself living a life that you once only dreamed about.

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us” (Eph. 3:20 NIV).

Christine Caine
Founder, Propel Women

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To the love of my life and very best friend, John. Believing God together continues to be a great adventure. Your faith inspires me, babe, and your belief in me made this book come to life. I'll love you forever!

To my ever-expanding family. You bring me so much joy! There are not enough words to describe how much I love each one of you. I am one very blessed mom!

To my amazing parents, Tim and Bonnie, for teaching me to trust God and live a joy-filled life.

To the sweetest mom-in-law ever, Eileen, for loving me like her own and leading me closer to Jesus.

To the beautiful sisterhood who surround me with friendship, love, laughter, and blessing—you were my inspiration!

To my friends in ministry, for challenging me to chase after the God dreams in my heart.

To all who supported and prayed for me through every step of this journey.

To Susy Flory, for sharing your writing wisdom. You were a gift from heaven!

To the Baker Publishing team for walking beside me with patience, kindness, and encouragement.

INTRODUCTION

Do You Believe What You Believe?

I am so excited to be sharing this moment in time with you, and I do not believe it is by accident that you are holding this book in your hand. I would guess you are a girl, or a woman, depending on how you look at it. Personally, I like to refer to all of us on the feminine side of God's creation as *girls*. It just sounds happy and a bit more inclusive to me. In my opinion, no matter what year you were born, whether you wear pink ruffled skirts or faded blue jeans, or if your hair is red, blonde, amber, or a gorgeous shade of gray, if you were born a baby girl, you still are every bit a girl. And I believe that the words in this book are for you!

I want you to know that I have been praying for you since the moment I began the *She Believes* journey. Praying that your life will be changed by the words inside these pages. Praying that you will be encouraged to believe things that you never dreamed possible for yourself, your relationships, your home, and your future. I definitely don't claim to have all the answers, because just like you, I am striving to learn and grow to understand who I am in Christ and all that he desires for me to believe for my life. But through

my journey of learning to believe, God has put in me a desire to do everything I can to encourage girls of every age to believe too!

So let me ask you this question: What do you believe?

What do you really believe about yourself, about your life, and about your Creator? What do you believe about why you were chosen to be alive at this moment in history?

How you answer each of those questions affects how you are living your life—whether you are just surviving or whether you are living filled with joy and anticipation, trusting and believing your Heavenly Father has amazing things planned just for you each and every day.

Nearly thirteen years ago, I attended a women’s conference that changed my life forever. One of the speakers who graced the stage shared a message called “Your Life Is a Gift.” I’ll never forget the impact of her words on my heart as she spoke about how God designed each one of us exactly how he wants us to be; all we need to do is believe that, unwrap the package of our lives, and watch God use us in ways we’ve never dreamed or imagined.

Something clicked inside of me that day. I could either believe that God had created me to do great things, or I could keep sitting back in the shadows of doubt and unbelief and miss out on all he had for me. I asked myself the question, Do I really believe what I believe?

Maybe you are in a place today where you are having trouble believing what you believe. That God is really there, that he knows who you are, and that he has amazing plans for your life and your future. Maybe your circumstances are screaming at you, causing you to doubt that your life has any real purpose or meaning at all. Or perhaps you feel like you’re at the end of your rope, just hanging by a fraying thread of hope.

The Bible says this:

I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord. They are plans for peace and not disaster, plans to give you a future filled with hope. (Jer. 29:11 GW)

Whether you are trying to understand and figure out your life; striving to be a good daughter, mom, or wife; or possibly looking at your future with doubt and uncertainty, my deepest desire is that no matter where you find yourself today, the message in this book will capture your heart and change your life. No matter what you think, no matter the circumstances you are facing, no matter what you have heard in your past or been taught to think about yourself, *you*, precious girl, were magnificently and beautifully designed for life. And when you believe that . . . *everything changes!*

Grab a cup of coffee (or whatever sounds good), and I'll meet you in chapter 1.



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SECTION ONE

BELIEVING . . .

You Were Designed on Purpose

Open up before God, keep nothing back;
he'll do whatever needs to be done:
He'll validate your life in the clear light of day
and stamp you with approval at high noon.

Psalm 37:5-6

One

You Are a Masterpiece

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us.
(Eph. 2:10 NLT)



de•signed: intentionally planned; artistically, skillfully, and purposefully fashioned



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Life isn't about finding yourself;
it's about understanding
who you were created to be.

The artist and designer had been working on his project for months and planning it for more years than he could count. This magnificent work of art was his very own unique creation. It wasn't a copy of anything he had seen before. He had carefully and purposefully selected each shade of color and the exact shape and curve for every part. Each tiny, intricate detail was meticulously and perfectly designed.

As the day for the revealing came closer, he took time to add a few finishing touches, a detail here and there to set this project apart from all the others. Up until this moment, no one but him had even glimpsed the beauty of this extraordinary creation.

His masterpiece was now complete. He stepped back to gaze at what he had made and smiled to himself. *This is exactly what I envisioned. It's perfect. I absolutely love everything about it!*

He was so very proud. He couldn't wait to reveal it to the world!

Genesis talks about all that God created, along with his design and purpose for humanity. It tells us this in chapter 5:

This is the book (the written record, the history) of the generations of the offspring of Adam. When God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. (v. 1 AMP-CE)

God made everything. But most importantly, for his pleasure, he made mankind. Every human being who has ever lived and every baby who will ever be born was and is intentionally and purposefully and beautifully made by God to display his glory. And that includes you!

In her pitch-black cocoon, she felt safe and secure. The only sounds were those she had heard for months now—distant, muffled voices and the constant soothing sound that had become so comforting to her. *Thump, tha-thump . . . thump, tha-thump.* She had only one challenge. The space that had been her home was getting rather cozy and even uncomfortable. With her arms and legs folded tightly up against her tiny body, she was beginning to have trouble moving. She was growing rapidly now, and it was obvious that something was going to have to change.

Then one day, out of nowhere, she felt an odd and unfamiliar sensation. An unexplained pressure pushed up against her, surrounding her. She did her best to ignore it and slowly drifted back to sleep, sucking her thumb.

Her eyes fluttered open. *Now what? What is this?* The pressure was back, and it was stronger now, making her even more uncomfortable. Forget sleeping. She was fully awake and even starting to get a bit anxious.

What is happening? She could hear her own heart beating faster as the tightening increased and her little body felt as though it was being forced to move . . . but where?

And then, in an instant, everything changed!

The security of the only home she had ever known disappeared in a flash, replaced by a world filled with light, cold air, noise, and

sensations she had never known before. But as her mind tried to process what was happening, she heard these three little words: “It’s a girl!”

And that girl was you.

Do you know that you are one in a hundred million?

When you were born, the world was given an amazing gift—your life! Whether you choose to believe it or not, you are an incredible work of original art—a masterpiece. Your life is beautiful, created and designed by God, the ultimate master artist and designer. There has never been anyone like you on earth, and there will never ever be another girl born who is exactly like you.

You, gorgeous girl, are one of a kind!

I know we have just met, but I want to talk to you about sex. That’s right, you read that correctly. S-E-X!

That got your attention, didn’t it? I am a firm believer in having sex and lots of it. I think it is a total blast and should be for everyone (as long as you’re married, that is). Well, I hate to disappoint you, but that is not the aspect of sex I want to talk about.

What I do want to talk about is how you were made, because it’s pretty incredible and I think it’s important for you to understand.

We all know what happens at the moment of conception. Just in case you forgot, let me remind you. Your body began to form when a single egg from your mother and one microscopic sperm from your father found each other and connected inside your mother’s body.

But that is not really when your life began. Your existence was planned and purposed by your Creator long before that moment.

I want to remind you how amazing it is that you, precious girl, are here on the planet today. When you think about the odds of that one egg and one sperm coming together to create you, it is

absolutely mind blowing! This thought is relevant to what you believe about yourself, how you view your Creator God, and why you are even alive today.

Listen, sweet girl, because this is really important. Your beautiful life was planned and designed long before your parents had sex and your mom became pregnant with you. And no matter how it happened—whether it was a good situation or not so good, or what the circumstances were—you were not a mistake! God wanted you to be born. He planned for you to exist, and he was over-the-moon excited about your birth.

Whether you believe in God or even question whether the Bible is true, you need to hear what I am saying, because it affects everything about how you will live your life and what you believe about yourself. The Bible says this about you:

Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had [you] in mind [planned for you to be born], had settled on [you] as the focus of his love. (Eph. 1:4, brackets mine)

Did you catch that? God knew who you were before you were even born. The book of Psalms says God saw your unformed body, and all the days of your life were ordained by him before one of them came to be (see Ps. 139:16).

Isn't that incredible to think about? You were not an accident or just the coincidence of two people having sex. You were planned for and wanted, created on purpose by the God of the universe. Pretty awesome!

Let's talk about sex again for a minute. There are two kinds of sperm that every male produces and emits during sex. They are called X and Y. If an X sperm fertilizes the mother's egg, a baby girl is conceived. If a Y sperm completes the job, a baby boy is conceived. Now, here is why that is important for you to know. During sex, an average of a hundred million sperm enter a woman's

body. You read that right—a *hundred million!* And as they are designed to do, each one starts competing to make it to the prize first—the one lone egg tucked up inside the mother-to-be’s body.

When you were conceived, one of those itsy, bitsy, tiny sperm from your father’s body had to survive and swim for ten hours to find that one egg. That was one physically fit sperm!

When your mother was born, her ovaries already contained a lifetime supply of eggs. Millions and millions of little potential life makers in waiting, each one the size of a tiny grain of salt.

Now listen to this, because it is so amazing! On the day you were conceived, out of those millions of eggs inside your mother’s body, just one was waiting there for the fastest-swimming sperm to find it. That one egg, like the sperm, possessed a unique combination of twenty-three chromosomes. And when it connected with that one-in-a-hundred-million sperm, together they created a brand-new, completely unique human being. You!

Of course, the mother’s egg and father’s sperm don’t just pass along a copy of their chromosomes but rather new, unique chromosomes that contain a mixture of the genes from your parents, ensuring each new child is genetically and distinctly and altogether different from any other.

All of this miraculous coming together was preplanned and predetermined. God planned for that sperm and egg to come together to create you because he wanted you to be alive! And when he made you, he loved every single detail about you.

Here is something else the Bible says about your creation: your body was formed inside and out by God. That means every intricate part of your being, from the top of your head to the tip of your toes, was meticulously put together by his hands. You are his very own handiwork, his workmanship, created to be on the earth at this moment in time. You, precious girl, were perfectly, magnificently, and beautifully designed to be alive today!

You were perfectly created by the God of the universe.

By the One who made the sun rise up in the sky this morning.
By the One who created every star and calls each one of them
by name.

By the One who made every plant, tree, and flower.

By the One who designed the mountains and oceans and every
amazing creature that lives.

He, your Heavenly Father, brought all the details together to
make your life happen. Why?

Well, the truth is, just because he wanted to. He wanted you
to be a part of his plan for this moment in time. He anticipated
the day of your birth. He knew your name before you were born,
and he was completely prepared to welcome this brand-new baby
girl into the world.

Our daughter Savannah's conception was a huge surprise. Even
though God knew she was going to be in our family, we were not
expecting her to come when she did. Now, you would have thought
that since we already had two little boys—David and Brandon,
who were under the age of two—we would have understood the
potential consequences of having sex (there's that word again!). But
no, we did not seem to take notice of the fact that I was extremely
fertile. It seemed as though I could get pregnant just by looking
at John. So within six months of giving birth to our second son,
Savannah was conceived, to my shock, fear, and denial. Soon (in
nine months, to be exact) we would have three children in diapers,
and none of them would be able to communicate in full sentences.
This was going to be interesting!

The morning Savannah was born, I remember waking up with
a jolt. My due date was still almost two weeks away. It looked like
this little sister was not going to reach her due date, just as her
brothers hadn't. I quietly slipped out of bed, got dressed, did a
five-minute makeup job (because a girl's got to have makeup on

during labor and delivery), and went back into our bedroom to wake up John.

“Hey, babe. Wake up. Today you’re going to become a daddy of a baby girl.”

A baby girl . . . Just saying it made me smile.

John and I made it to the hospital just in time. We went in at 7:30 a.m., and she was in my arms by 9:35 a.m. Love those quick babies! I remember looking at her very wiggly little body and realizing from the moment she appeared, she was nothing like the boys. First of all, she was so tiny, barely six pounds. But besides her weight, she was just different. Her face had petite, feminine features, and her tiny, delicate fingers looked nothing like the chunky, stubby fingers of her brothers. Then there was her anatomy. She was in every way a girl! One of John’s X sperm had won my prize egg—the egg with the chromosomes needed to create this little baby girl with olive skin, dark hair, little rosebud lips, and a very loud, screechy cry!

At first, when they brought her to me, I actually wondered if she was really our baby. Her skin was so dark, and her little round head was covered with wispy, nearly black hair. But since she was the only baby girl in our small-town hospital that day, she was the only option. She was ours!

The nurse came in to fill out some paperwork. “What is the baby’s name?” she asked.

“We don’t know yet,” I said, gazing down at my daughter’s sweet face. For the next three days, everyone called her Baby Girl Lindell because her mom and dad weren’t ready to give her a name. I know that’s terrible, but we have a good excuse: we were sleep-deprived parents. Neither of her brothers were sleeping through the night yet. They were both up several times a night. Every night! We had tried every “how to make your baby sleep” book out there, even hanging Christmas lights and playing music. Nothing worked. So I just don’t think we’d had the energy or mental capacity to make such an important decision, at least not yet. We were too tired.

The morning we were scheduled to be dismissed from the hospital, a nurse walked into my room and informed us emphatically that we had to give our baby a name before we could leave. Thankfully by then we had narrowed down our options: Stephanie, Sheri, Scarlet, Savannah, and Olivia. John was leaning toward one name, while I liked them all. How about Stephanie Sheri Scarlet Savannah Olivia Lindell?

I don't recall how we finally made the decision, but for our daughter's sake we managed to pick one name. And with that, her proud-as-punch mom and dad took Savannah Marie Lindell home. But poor girl, naming her was not the only thing we weren't prepared for. She didn't have a bedroom either. We lived in a tiny, two-bedroom house. Savannah's two older brothers and their cribs took up the small second bedroom across the hall from ours. So when she grew out of the little cradle beside our bed, the only place for her to go was on the lime-green, floral, hand-me-down loveseat in the living room. For the next six months of her life, the living room was Savannah's bedroom.

But even though she was a surprise to us, and even though we as parents weren't ready for her arrival and didn't even have a name picked out for her, God was fully prepared for her birth. He had been expecting her to come on her birthday since the beginning of time!

And it's the same with you. He not only was fully prepared for you, and he not only knew your name (even if your parents didn't), but everything about you was perfect to him. From the very moment you were born, you brought him joy!

Listen to this:

You go before me and follow me.

You place your hand of blessing on my head.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too great for me to understand! . . .

How precious are your thoughts about me, O God.

(Ps. 139:5-6, 17 NLT)

On the day you showed up on the planet and the words “It’s a girl” announced your birth, God celebrated you because you were exactly who you were made to be—a beautiful and magnificently designed masterpiece. And he was thrilled out of his mind to reveal you for the world to see.

“Look at her. I made her—isn’t she absolutely beautiful!”

Yes, you are!