



Stephanie Hillberry

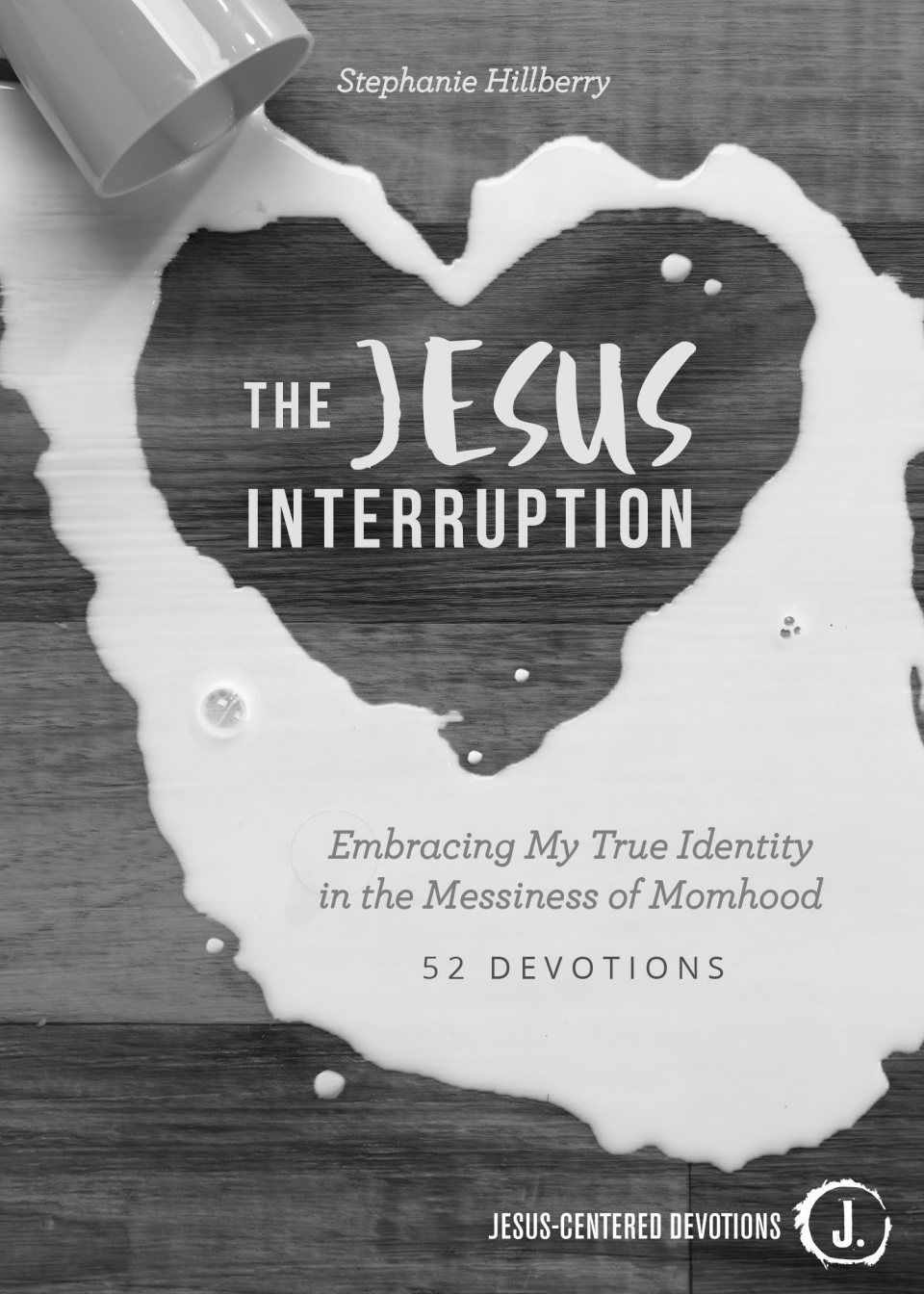
THE JESUS
INTERRUPTION

*Embracing My True Identity
in the Messiness of Momhood*

52 DEVOTIONS

JESUS-CENTERED DEVOTIONS





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The Jesus Interruption

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INTRODUCTION

“I’m Getting Back on Track With Jesus...”

“I’m doing it this time!” you declare. “I’ve really put my relationship with Jesus on the back burner since becoming a mom, and it’s time to change my priorities. What I need is a regular quiet time.”

Thus the planning begins. You know you’ll have to get up early, so you set your alarm and get the coffeemaker ready. In order to not be a zombie who stares off into space every morning, you’ll need a new Bible study and prayer journal to stay focused. You even pick out a scented candle and worship music to set the mood.

“This is going to be great!” you say. And at first it is. Until about day five when you’re exhausted and convinced you’re doing something wrong.

You’re *supposed* to be inspired by the Bible...but keep reading the same three sentences again and again.

You’re *supposed* to be praying for other people...but can barely stay awake long enough to pray about your own problems.

And you’re *supposed* to be hearing answers from Jesus...but all you hear is your own thoughts, and they sound like this:

“In 20 minutes I’ll need to wake up the kids. I wonder if Kate is coming down with a cold. She felt warm last

night. If she's fine, then we'll head out to the store after I drop the older kids at school. But first there's breakfast. Nick's getting so weird about eggs lately. Maybe I could try pancakes?

But wait—I think I'm out of batter mix. And syrup..."

Seriously? Lamest. Quiet time. Ever.

"Dear Jesus, I'll talk to you again in maybe 15 years. Sincerely, me."

Messy Can Be Sacred, Too

If you can relate even a little to this scenario, this book is for you. Because let's just say the thing that needs to be said: Moms can't afford for their relationship with Jesus to be precious and protected. Frankly y'all don't have the time.

The good news is that quiet dawns and candlelight don't have a monopoly on sacredness. Messy can be sacred, too. Childbirth, for instance—that bloody, screaming, messy chaos that started your motherhood in the first place—is sacred. And so is the constant racket that's now your daily life.

As it turns out, our Savior (the one we oddly picture wearing serene white) is perfectly willing to roll up his sleeves and get into it beside you. In fact, maybe you should start picturing his heavenly white frock smeared with sticky grime because he's happy to interrupt your messy, chaotic days with surprising moments of sacredness. These moments are "Jesus interruptions," and

they have as much power to transform your heart and life as candlelit quiet times. I promise.

So turn the page and start expecting Jesus to talk to you, to meet with you, to capture your heart and mind on the go. Invite him to break into your day at surprising times. Because when you welcome more Jesus interruptions into your day, you'll find that he's been there all along.

THE JESUS
INTERRUPTION

How to Use This Devotional

Turn the page to the first devotion. Read. Repeat.
(Just kidding. Though technically true, here are a few more notes...)

52 Devotions

This book includes 52 devotions—one for every week of the year. Yes, you can read ahead if you're an overachiever. Or you can spread them out over the next 15 years. You just do what's in your heart. This isn't mom-school; there's no judgment.

52 Micro Quiet Times

In addition to the devotions are prompts for your daily life. These are designed to center your thoughts on Jesus in the midst of your real life. Think of them as micro quiet times.

24 Day-in-a-Mom's-Life Prayers

Sandwiched in the middle of the book are 24 Day-in-a-Mom's-Life prayers, plus ideas for your own prayers. These can come in handy if...say...you hit a wall at 4:02 p.m. and *need some Jesus now!* Open the book to the middle, find 4 p.m., and say hello to Jesus.

Journal Spaces

Finally, there are spaces for journaling sprinkled throughout. Use them to help you remember what Jesus

is saying to you in the midst of your messy life.
And speaking of what Jesus is saying...

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A Word About Hearing Jesus' Voice

This book refers a lot to hearing Jesus. It asks you to pray to him and then listen to what he says. Depending on your current relationship with Jesus, this listening may be like chatting with a friend or like awkwardly talking to a wall.

If you're more of the awkward-wall-talker type, take a deep breath and relax. Hearing Jesus' voice isn't as mystical and elusive as it sounds. In fact, you're already hearing from him (see Devotion 1 on page XX). To hear him even more clearly, here are a few tips:

Before listening, ask Jesus to silence your own voice. You can even say out loud, "In Jesus' name, I claim God's authority over my thoughts." Then trust that the things you hear next will be from him.

Start small by asking for answers to simple prayers (vs. BIG, life-changing, I-can't-screw-this-up prayers). For instance, practice listening for his guidance as you set goals for the week before graduating to "Should I change careers?"

Let peace guide you. If you feel uneasy about what you're hearing, keep praying. Jesus' words—even his challenging and convicting words—come with a sense of peace.

Look for confirmation about what you hear. Confirmations often come through opening (or closing) doors, the words of someone else, or Bible verses.

Keep a journal and write down what you're hearing.



week one

I know it doesn't always seem like it,
but you hear Jesus. Promise.

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Some days it feels like the only thing you're listening to is the demanding drumbeat of motherhood set on repeat. Whether it's a toddler at your ankles or a steady chime of incoming texts from a high-maintenance teen, the rhythm sounds something like this:

Mom. Mom. Mom. Mom. Mom. MOM,
MOMMMMMMM...

(Repeat 500 times.)

It's difficult to hear your *own* thoughts above this racket, much less the insightful voice of Jesus. His clarity, direction, and reassurance all seem muffled, like background noise you can't quite make out. This experience can lead you to believe something false, which is that you're not hearing from him.

But you are hearing Jesus. All day. For instance, that seemingly random thought you had about someone that prompted a spontaneous prayer—that's his voice nudging you. The sudden insight you had about why your kid was acting out—that's him. That rare moment of self-control you felt when you held your tongue instead of interfering—that's him.

Jesus is always there, speaking to you and guiding you. You're tuned into his drumbeat because it comes directly from his Spirit within you. Ask Jesus to help you recognize his voice even more, and thank him for speaking to you today.

For more, read John 10:27-28.

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me” (JOHN 10:27-28)

THE JESUS INTERRUPTION

Have a Micro Quiet Time

Remember that drawing close to Jesus doesn't require a dedicated quiet time. This week, every time you're waiting for something (a stoplight to turn green, your computer to reboot, a doctor's appointment), take that small window of time to say hi to Jesus. Tell him how you're feeling or what you're thinking about, and then listen to what he's thinking and feeling. Repeat all week.



week two

**Stop asking for energy to tackle
tomorrow's problems.**

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Mom-worry is like an itch you can't quite scratch. The "what ifs" are always tickling the back of your mind. What if I lose my job? What if I get into an accident? What if I forget to remind my son about that assignment next month? What if we miss the deadline for dance class? What if...

On the surface, investing time troubleshooting what ifs can seem like prudence. Planning for contingencies means they can't catch you off-guard, right?

The treachery of worry, though, is that it never follows through on its side of the bargain. It trades today's peace in exchange for future peace, but then tomorrow comes and it never delivers. You get suckered into emotionally investing today's energy into imaginary troubles—even having imaginary conversations in your head—only to do it all over again tomorrow. It's a waste, and it robs you of today's joy.

So stop it. When you catch yourself preemptively managing tomorrow's concerns, back off. Jesus has better purposes for you today. He'd much rather you expend your energy in loving the people right in front of you or to manage the problems you can actually impact right now. He's given you the wisdom and strength you need to do today's work. But he has no energy to lend you for tomorrow's concerns, so stop asking. Today is plenty to handle.

For more, read Matthew 6:34.

*“So don’t worry about tomorrow, for
tomorrow will bring its own worries.
Today’s trouble is enough for today”*

(MATTHEW 6:34).

THE JESUS INTERRUPTION

Back Away From Worry

Every time a worry enters your mind this week, immediately ask yourself if it’s a concern for today or for the future. If it’s a future worry, picture yourself putting your hands up and backing away from the worry. Do this as many times as you need to.

52 Faith-Building Devotions for Moms Who Live in the Real World

(Which is your world, right?)

You'd light a scented candle and ponder the Bible cover to cover if you had time...but that's not going to happen.

Kid chaos is what's going to happen: sibling snarls, misplaced homework, last-minute carpool rescue missions.

But Jesus stands ready to connect with you—even in the messiness. Especially in the messiness.

These 52 do-them-whenever devotions will help you see... hear...and embrace Jesus. They're Jesus interruptions—moments in the mess you can reach out to Jesus and feel the warmth of him reaching back to you.

HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL FIND:

52 No-Guilt Devotions—Do them when you have time. Once a week, once every hour—it's up to you.

24 Day-in-a-Mom's-Life prayers—Prompts that help you say hello to Jesus when life's hectic.

Journaling spaces—so, if you want, you can remember what Jesus is saying to you in the midst of your messy life.

Transform your heart.

Right-size life's disasters.

Find peace in your crowded days—and nights.

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