



# Where God Finds You

40 DEVOTIONS BRINGING  
BIBLE CHARACTERS TO LIFE

ANITA HIGMAN

Award-Winning Author

ABOUT *Where God Finds You*

*Where God Finds You is emotionally capturing, yet accurately written. It allowed me to see the people of the Bible less as symbols or superheroes and more as real, broken, and ordinary people who needed God just as I do.*

—RACHAEL LAMPA, RECORDING ARTIST

*A wonderful devotional, capturing the truth and poignancy of how biblical characters clearly speak to our busy, twenty-first-century lives.*

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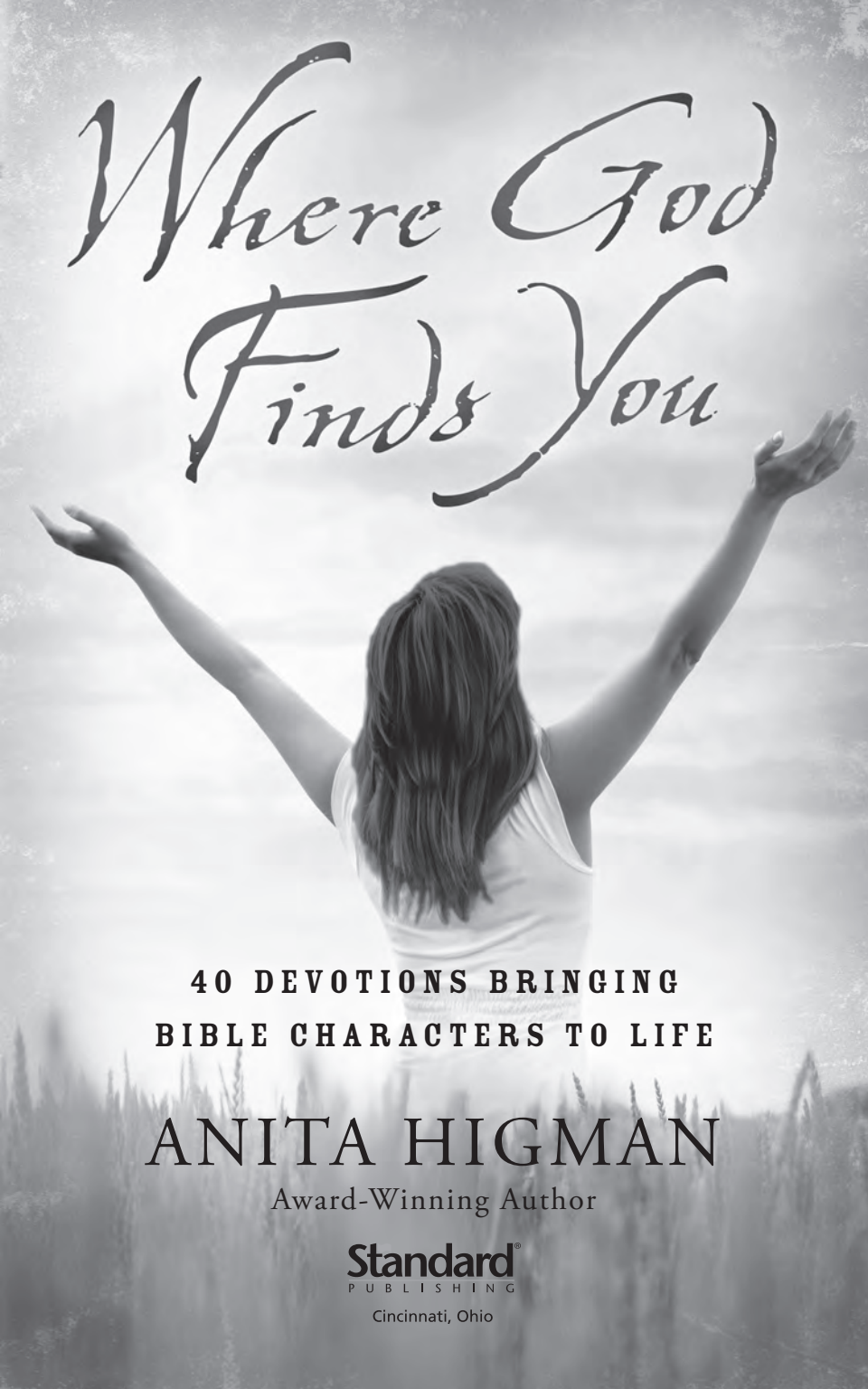
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*A Merry Little Christmas*, October 2012 release

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BIBLE CHARACTERS TO LIFE**

**ANITA HIGMAN**

Award-Winning Author

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*To my agent, Sandra Bishop, at MacGregor Literary.  
Thanks for always going the extra mile for me—  
for believing in my work, for the prayers and the cheers.  
I appreciate it all.*

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*For the word of God is alive and active.*

HEBREWS 4:12



*Oh! for a closer walk with God.*

WILLIAM COWPER





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❖ INTRODUCTION ❖

*A Letter  
from Anita*

I talk to God.

I talk to God, because I desire to hear from him. Isn't that what we all crave—what we long for with every breath? To know the master of creation still cares about his clay figures—the ones he breathed life into. Us. You and me.

Some days, I can hear Jesus so clearly. He's saying, "I love you. I created you. And I haven't forgotten you. I am still here, even in the dark places. The lonely places. The places you can't share with anyone else but me. I'm listening.

"Talk to me."

*Where God Finds You* is my humble attempt to bring the ancient characters of the Bible into your living room. To give you the chance to see these men and women in the light of your daily routine. And to give you the opportunity to hear Jesus speaking through these lives in a slightly different way.

You'll see their issues, their messes, and their victories. And you'll notice how much they look like your own. You'll discover how God takes each person, then and now, and speaks into their moments the message of his love. And you'll witness the miracle of how we all can live out our lives with him by our side on this earth, until we're right where he wants us to be—with him in heaven.

Through reflection on Scripture and prayer, my hope is that you'll discover a place in each of these lives of vulnerability, tenderness, truth, and love—a place where you can find God . . . and where God finds you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anita Higman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, decorative flourish at the end of the name.

# The Woman Who Touched His Cloak

*She thought, "If I just touch his  
clothes, I will be healed."*

MARK 5:28



**M**y name is Mara. I lived with a strange illness—one that had no cure. I bled for twelve years, and I was like the parched desert ground. There was no life left in me.

When I was a child, my life was filled with laughter. And at night I often dreamed of lilies. I would gather them from the fields and breathe in their fragrance. But as I grew older, my dreams faded. There were no lilies. Only the odor of sickness.

Year after year I gave all my wages to physicians, but my condition only worsened. They had remedies with frightening rituals—pits and chants and vines set ablaze. This malady drained my whole being while the doctors drained my purse!

My name, Mara, means "bitter." But I am not without hope.

One day I heard of a healer who would be coming to my village. He would be passing through that very day, so people said. Wrapping myself in my least tattered cloak, I made my way with hurried

steps to the other side of a stone dwelling—hiding from the crowd that hastened by me. The people murmured about a man who was known for his stories and his touch. The man was a rabbi named Yeshua—Jesus.

The mob moved like a swarm of locusts around this man, Jesus. I caught only a glimpse of his face and saw his cloak swirl behind him as he disappeared in their midst.

I clutched my garment, twisting it in my cold fingers. Even within my hope, doubts gathered like vultures. What would he know of my loss of blood? I had heard reports that he was no more than a carpenter. And that he was from Nazareth. There was certainly no honor in his place of birth!

*The people murmured about a man who was known for his stories and his touch. The man was a rabbi named Yeshua—Jesus.*



And yet he was hailed as a great prophet and teacher. And a healer. At last my desire for healing surpassed my fear. I stepped away from the shadows and out into the light.

And oh, such light that rained from the heavens that day. Or was it from . . . him? The radiant glow was so glorious, I covered my face with my veil.

I joined the tide of people, but their closeness made me unsteady on my feet. I could not get enough air. Dark whispers came to me. *You are cursed. Your ailment is from the very hand of Beelzebub.* The never-ending hiss of condemnation that had haunted me for years spoke poison into my mind.

With each step I faltered in my spirit. *I am unclean. My fine tunic is forever stained. I am the tares among the wheat. The broken pottery that is cast off. I am no better than the wild dogs.*

Who was I to approach this rabbi? I would only bring more shame to my family, and my touch would surely make Yeshua unclean. Would the crowd put me to death? I continued forward

even amidst the twisting storms of fear and self-loathing. Voices swirled in my head like the rabbi's swirling cloak.

His cloak. The idea came to me—a small seed of faith. *I could just touch his cloak.* Perhaps it was a foolish notion—the desperation of a sick woman's mind. But I felt that if I could just reach the fringe of his cloak, I would be made whole.

Jesus walked very near me, but he did not face me in the crowd. Knowing my intentions, I shook with fear—my fingers felt like dry earth crumbling into pieces. I focused on his feet, and watched the edge of his robe dragging in the dust of the street. I hesitated for just a moment and then reached down, just brushing my fingertips on the edge of the dusty cloth.

A burst, like a flash of light in the night sky, struck my body and flooded me with warmth. And straightway the fountain of my misery dried up. I knew at that moment I had been released from my plague.

I wanted to stay near him—Jesus—for all eternity. Instead, I stumbled back, frightened, and the crowd swallowed me up. But I was no longer alone. I felt his presence still.

I heard a commotion among the people, and then I heard Jesus' strong, clear voice: "Who touched my clothes?"

His disciples replied, "You see the crowd pressing in around you. And yet you ask who touched you?"

His disciples did not understand him. But I understood. He knew of my touch. I saw Jesus—he kept looking around, seeking me out—the one who had done this thing. Trembling, I fell down before him and told him the whole truth.

Jesus said to me, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

Daughter? Why would he address me so? I lifted my veil for just a moment, wanting to see him without my shroud. I wanted to know this rabbi who had done such a miracle.

Jesus was unlike any man I'd seen before. He was without fine features, and yet the angles of his face were noble and without flaw. His hands were clean, but rough. In his eyes—those dark,

knowing eyes—were the deep sea and the color of ripe figs! They were full of thunder, and yet his upturned mouth put me at ease. I reflected on his countenance, feeling no shame.

This stranger—this rabbi—was no ordinary man. Surely he was the long awaited Messiah, as people had been saying!

On my journey home my step was light—my heart no longer troubled, but joy-filled. For the first time in many years, I knew that on this night, I would dream of lilies.

## THE STORY FROM GOD'S WORD

MARK 5:24-34

*A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.*

*At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"*

*"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"*

*But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."*

## THE STORY—FROM THEN TO NOW

When I think of the woman in this Bible story, I always wonder how embarrassed she was about her strange ailment. Shame and humiliation are common human emotions, and I admit I've had these feelings more times than I can count. Some of these unhappy life events were terribly painful. Some were my fault,

some weren't. Some were ones I'd like to forget, and some might even be considered humorous.

Recently I ran a grocery cart over my toe at the store, and instead of letting out my emotion, I stopped, flinched, and groaned quietly. I must have looked like a lobster just dipped into a pot of boiling water. I was embarrassed at my clumsiness. Somehow it felt better to absorb a few seconds of pain than to shriek and see the disapproval or terror on the faces of the people around me. Funny thing about humans—we tend not to let people know we're injured. We turn the hurt inward.

*No matter what century we live in, we all are subject to the tendency to run from God when there's trouble, instead of running into his arms.*

The woman in the story had much more to deal with than just everyday embarrassment. By Jewish law she was considered ceremonially unclean, which must have enhanced her feelings of shame. Also, she might have been in daily physical pain. After all the doctors failed, she could easily have turned her misery inward, pulling away from people and suffering in silence. She might have been close to giving up.

No matter what century we live in, we all are subject to the tendency to run from God when there's trouble, instead of running into his arms while we wait for an answer to our prayers.

In spite of all her suffering, this woman still had a seed of hope. She entered the crowd that day to seek out Jesus for his divine help. She exercised faith. And that faith made her whole.

Throughout this commentary I've never used the woman's name, because it was never mentioned in the Bible. Mara, the name I chose to use in the story, was fictional. However, even though her name was never revealed in the Scriptures, her great act of faith has continued to impress Christians for generations. And most of all, her faith pleased and impressed God.



✧ THE STORY ✧  
QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Do you think the emotional pain Mara faced would have forced her into a solitary life? What would such a life be like?
2. After all the failures in her treatments, when she heard about Jesus coming, what do you think went through her mind? When you have gone through trials and disappointments, how has your hope been affected?
3. Why didn't she just ask Jesus to heal her as nearly everyone else did? Why do you think she chose to touch his cloak?
4. Why did the woman hide after she was healed? What reasons would she have had to fear?
5. If you had been healed of a terrible illness, what would be the first thing you would do?
6. Why do you think Jesus wanted to meet this woman after she was healed? Did you think Jesus was going to be angry at the woman?
7. So many times we assume God is angry with us when he really wants to be closer to us—to be involved in our daily lives. Have you had that experience in your life—when you ran from God because you thought he was unhappy with you? Talk about that time. What is a better response to God's love and mercy?

# Joseph, Son of Jacob

*So when Joseph came to his brothers,  
they stripped him of his robe—the ornate  
robe he was wearing—and they took him  
and threw him into the cistern.*

GENESIS 37:23, 24



*M*y dreams have blessed me, and my dreams have  
cursed me.

I rested my head against the rocky walls—my gloomy prison chamber—waiting for my death. Like the howling desert winds, in a fit of fury my brothers had swept me up and hurled me here. And where was here? This cistern must have a name, just as mine was Yosef. But unless I am rescued my name will be no more.

The mud clung to my skin, cooling my burning flesh. Yet I was uncertain if the dampness was from the ground or from the blood oozing from my wounds. I felt thirsty, but I had no water to drink. *If I had a vessel of your living water—oh, Lord! I would pour some of it out to you as an offering . . . for your kindness to me. But I would also beg for divine mercy, for your deliverance.*

I rose from the floor, and inch by inch, using the protruding stones in the wall as footholds, I hoisted myself upward. But I tumbled back down, this time wounding my arm. My might and courage failed me, and my spirit surrendered to this abandoned place. I was broken like this well. It no longer held water, and I no longer held hope.

I gazed upward, laboring to see the bits of shifting light above me. No women would draw water from this empty well, nor would my father hear my cries. He could not have imagined that his sons would carry out such an evil plot. My brothers, who once loved me, now call me “this dreamer,” and have given me over to death. Even the brute beasts of the field do not leave their prey to writhe in agony. Even the jackals put their wounded out of their misery.

My brothers were now slaves to corruption, and yet my heart did not fill with hate. Perhaps my father’s love for me produced resentment. Perhaps I spoke of his devotion too often. My father’s gift to me may have been unendurable to them. My long cloak made of fine fabric was so ornamental and beautiful in every detail—fit for a prince. Everyone who saw it was filled with admiration and envy. But now it was gone—stripped off my back by my own blood.

*I was broken like this well. It no longer held water, and I no longer held hope.*



I could not help being my father’s beloved. And yet, were my father’s boasts too discordant among my brothers, his affections too unjust?

*Was I at fault, Lord, that I’ve been thrown into this strange underworld? The very dreams you gave me were in my heart and on my lips. Even the sheaves of grain and the sun and moon and stars bowed down to me. Was this not truth? Should I have remained silent?*

The words of rebuke from my father echoed in my head, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?” But yet he loved me still, and trusted me.

I wept for my foolishness, for my boastful words. I cried out in the darkness, “Oh, God, my God, I believed you were well pleased with me—that you had filled me with wisdom and prophecy. But was I full of falsehood and haughty pride? You know every part of me. Search my heart.”

Then I wept for my father, who would lament over my death. All his joy would be slain. Again I wept and prayed. “My Lord, my mighty God, my Fortress, do not forsake me. Rescue me from this darkness, this earthen pit, and I will live the rest of my days for your sake. I will abandon my dreaming, my visions, if it be your will. I surrender to your sovereignty.”

In this empty prison I felt a presence—Yahweh encircled me, bringing me hope and comfort.

In the midst of my supplications, I fell into a profound sleep. Then, some time later in the evening hours, I awakened to the sounds of rustling above me. And strange voices. “Oh, God, is this a dream too? Or is it my deliverance?”

## THE STORY FROM GOD’S WORD

GENESIS 37:23-28

*So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing—and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.*

*As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.*

*Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed.*

*So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.*

### THE STORY—FROM THEN TO NOW

Joseph's trauma has always intrigued me. It's impossible not to wonder what he was thinking and feeling down in that abandoned cistern. The horror of it, the desperate pleas for help, the clamoring, gasping attempts to escape from the pit. Or perhaps he felt regret, the guilt of past offenses. Perhaps a moment of surrender to the sovereignty of God.

Everyone, no matter how sheltered, will have plenty of those Joseph moments of earthly terror. Maybe not in a physical pit, but there will be enough travail to make us feel like we've been thrown into a dark abyss. I've had more of those encounters than I can count. Events that cornered me into impossible situations, so that all there was left to do was surrender my will to God's sovereign plan. Once I did that, my spirit stopped its struggle.

*Have you had a moment like Joseph's—  
a moment of reckoning and surrender?*

We don't know from reading the Scriptures what Joseph was thinking in that cistern, but I can imagine there was more going on than merely being frightened in a dark place. We do know that Joseph loved his family enough to later deliver them from a terrible famine. He forgave them to the point that seeing them again moved him so deeply, he shed tears of joy.

Have you had a moment like Joseph's—a moment of reckoning and surrender? It's what we do with those moments that counts. It's easy to trust God in the basking-in-the-sunlight times, not so easy when we are tossed into a pit of trouble. But God has proven himself faithful, not only in the Old Testament, but in today's world—and in each and every life.

» THE STORY »  
QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why do you think Joseph didn't realize that he was filling his brothers with anger . . . until it was too late?
2. Today we often speak of dreams as being just a way our brain deals with experiences we've had or thoughts in our subconscious mind. From Joseph's story or other Bible stories, what can you tell about how people thought or felt about the importance of dreams?
3. Do you think Joseph had regrets about the way he talked about his dreams? Why or why not?
4. Have you ever been a part of a sibling rivalry? How did it make you feel? What kind of problems does favoritism cause within a family?
5. In this passage from Genesis 37, we find that Reuben wanted to save Joseph, and was apparently absent when his brother was sold to the Ishmaelites. This was just one of several times in Joseph's life when he could have been rescued from his trouble, but wasn't. But we're told in Genesis 39:23 that God was "with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did." What do you think this tells us about God and his plans? What does it say about how we look at our successes and failures?
6. When Joseph, the dreamer, wasn't restored to his home but sold into slavery, what do you think he was feeling? Hatred? Revenge? Despair? Think of a time when you've been in a dark place emotionally or spiritually. How did you feel? What did you want to say to God?
7. What helps you remember that God is with you, even in the darkest places?

*Emotionally capturing, yet accurately written.*

—RACHEL LAMPA, RECORDING ARTIST

*Anita Higman brings the characters of the Bible alive with her deft retelling of biblical stories. This collection of devotions will bless you all year long.*

—DEBORAH RANEY, BEST-SELLING AUTHOR



Have you ever longed to crawl into the pages of the Bible? to walk on the Judean hills or feel the spray of the Red Sea? to know what it's like to confront a king or pour perfume on a Savior's feet?

In forty devotional tales, *Where God Finds You* breathes new life into ancient Bible characters. Through reflection on Scripture and prayer, you'll discover a place in each of these lives of vulnerability, tenderness, truth, and love—a place where you can find God . . . and where God finds you.

Either on your own or in a group, live with and learn about more than forty Bible men and women, including:

**Pontius Pilate's wife** ✦ **Esther** ✦ **John the Baptist**  
**Hagar** ✦ **Lazarus** ✦ **Mary Magdalene**  
**and many more . . .**



Award-winning author **ANITA HIGMAN** has had over thirty books published for adults and children, including *Love Finds You in Humble, Texas*. She's been a Barnes & Noble "Author of the Month" for Houston and has a BA in the combined fields of communication, psychology, and art. Find out more at [www.anitahigman.com](http://www.anitahigman.com).

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