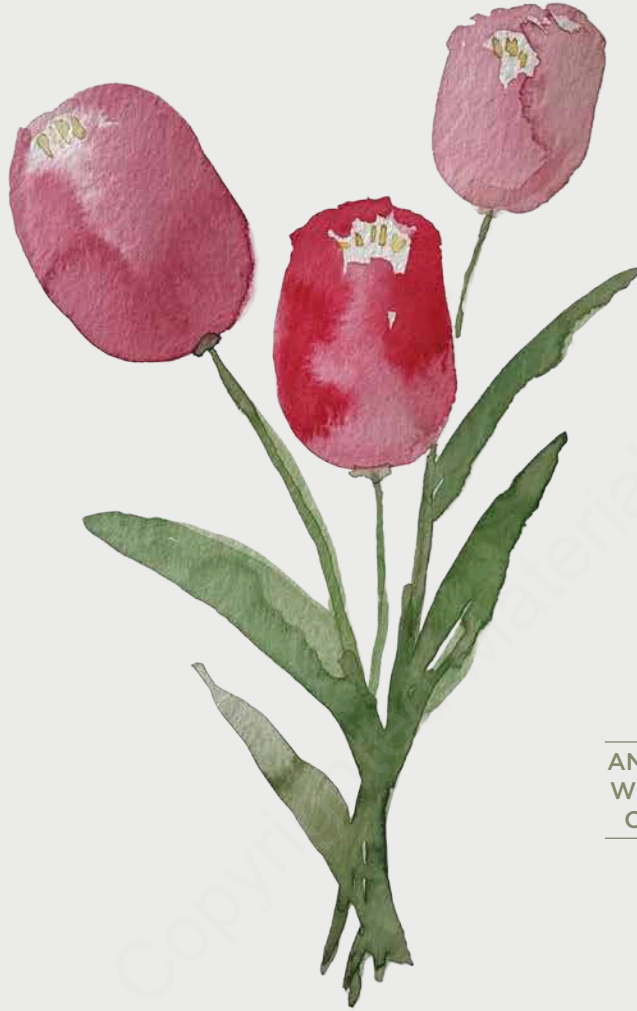


LAURA KROKOS



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AN INTERACTIVE BOOK  
WITH SEVEN SESSIONS  
OF VIDEO INCLUDED

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# YOU ARE UNSHAKEN

FINDING SECURITY IN GOD IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

LAURA KROKOS



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AN INTERACTIVE  
BOOK

---

With 7-Session  
Video Series

# YOU ARE UNSHAKEN

FINDING SECURITY IN GOD IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD



estherpress

Books for Courageous Women  
from David C Cook

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# CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Acknowledgments                         | 13  |
| Introduction                            | 15  |
| Chapter 1: You Are Not Hidden           | 25  |
| Chapter 2: You Are Wanted               | 45  |
| Chapter 3: You Are Not Hopeless         | 71  |
| Chapter 4: You Are Not Powerless        | 97  |
| Chapter 5: You Are Cared For            | 121 |
| Chapter 6: You Can't Mess Up God's Plan | 147 |
| Chapter 7: You Are Not Worthless        | 171 |
| Conclusion                              | 201 |
| Resource 1: In Christ I Am ...          | 203 |
| Resource 2: Attributes of God           | 207 |
| Resource 3: Truth Chart Template        | 211 |
| Notes                                   | 213 |



## Chapter 1

# You Are Not Hidden

Have you ever been overlooked, underappreciated, or disregarded? Or perhaps someone else received what you hoped for. Have you felt squelched, shut down, overshadowed, or suppressed? Or maybe someone assumed your motives were bad when they weren't. This world is not short on opportunities to be stifled, misunderstood, and trampled on.

From a young age, we hear the Enemy whispering that nobody sees and nobody cares. And why? Because he knows that all human beings, created in the image of God, have an innate desire to be seen, respected, and valued. So he hits us where it really hurts.

But whenever we realize we are believing a lie, we need to intentionally tell ourselves the truth: the truth about ourselves, the truth about God, and the truth about others.

And the truth is that *we are seen*. Every aspect of our hearts—our hopes, dreams, longings, thoughts, and motives—is deeply known.

You are not hidden. You are fully seen, fully heard, and fully known. As we learn more about the God who sees, I hope this truth settles deeply in your soul.

## God Sees You

“Look at me! Look at me!” It’s the cry of kids wanting someone to see what they’re doing. And not just kids, but the girl who wants the cute boy to notice her and the wife or mom who wants her contribution to be noted. We have a built-in desire to be seen, and that often comes with a negative connotation. But it doesn’t have to.

Have you ever thought about why we have a desire to be seen? Because we are the *Imago Dei*. We are made in the image of God, the God who wants to be seen. Ezekiel is pretty straightforward about this. He uses the phrase “they will know that I am the LORD” thirty-four times. God does what He does to reveal Himself, to be seen.

In 2011, I led a mission trip of young ladies to the heart of Cambodia to work with Agape International Missions (AIM), a humanitarian aid and church-planting organization focused on ending the evil of child sex slavery in the country. Cambodia may be one of the darkest places on earth. Child slavery abounds there, and many of the foreign men in the country are there to buy sex. Yet even in this pitch-black, hidden place, God’s brightness shines. It was in Cambodia where I reveled more in God as the rescuer and redeemer of the hidden than I had ever thought possible. Even there, I saw God rescuing, teaching, and saving.

At one point, the other leader and I were waiting for the hotel elevator to take us to the lobby, where we would meet our team of fifteen American girls to go to the Khmer Rouge holocaust museum. As we waited, a large white man in his fifties opened his room door, came to sit on the couch by the elevator, and lit up a cigarette. He left his door open, and we saw an underage Cambodian girl dressed in only a man’s shirt standing just inside.

Being untrained in how to handle trafficking situations, we motioned to the girl to come to us, and I engaged the man by asking what he was doing with an underage girl. I took his picture, and the other leader went to get hotel security. When I told the man I was going to post his picture all over the internet, he defended his actions by saying, “She liked it.” I was horrified.

When security arrived, they asked the girl for her paperwork (which, I guess, was her birth certificate). They let us look at it, and all we could tell was that the entire document was in the local language, except her birth year, which had been whited out and replaced with a year that implied she was twentysomething. Clearly, this girl was trapped in an illegal situation, yet nothing could be done.

When we finally got on the bus, I couldn't hold back my emotions any longer, and I bawled my heart out.

Although this young girl was kept hidden in the most horrific way, she was not unseen by God. Though this young girl was concealed from most people, she was never hidden from the Lord. He knew exactly where she was. Even in her darkest moments, He was fully present. God saw her, heard her, and knew her, even if she didn't realize it at the time.

And just as this young girl wasn't truly hidden, neither are you. No matter what you're up against, you're not hidden. God sees you.

Do you remember the story of Joseph in Genesis? (See chapters 37; 39.) Like the young Cambodian girl, Joseph was sold into slavery. He grew up in a small ranching town in the Middle East, and he was his dad's favorite. He had ten older brothers whose jealousy of him turned to hatred. When his brothers saw opportunity to gain from his pain, they sold him to human traffickers and convinced their dad he had been killed by a wild animal. The traffickers took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the head of Pharaoh's guards.

Slavery was Joseph's new life. But, loving the Lord, he served to the best of his ability, as though he were serving God. Eventually, he won favor with Potiphar and was put in charge of everything he owned. As Joseph grew older, Potiphar's wife took notice of him. She tried to seduce him, but he wanted to please the Lord above all else, so he ran from her. The wife lied about him to Potiphar, and he was put in jail.

Joseph went from being hidden as a slave to being hidden in a jail cell. But though he was concealed from others, he wasn't hidden from God. God saw this before it even happened.

Amazingly, Joseph's story foreshadows Jesus' story. His life shows us parts of God's heart and character that had not been revealed in Scripture up to that point. His life illustrates what the Messiah would one day go through.

Like Jesus, Joseph was an obedient son. He was stripped of his clothes, which were covered in blood, and was sold for a few pieces of silver. He was a seed of Abraham, and his name would be made great. He would be exalted to the right hand of power. His own people wanted to kill him, and they turned him over to the Gentiles. Through his separation there would be reconciliation for others, and this would bless all families on earth.<sup>1</sup>

Like Jesus, Joseph was falsely accused and punished. He was sent by God to preserve life and was most loved by his father. His brothers didn't believe him or the prophecies that said he would rule. He was given a Gentile bride, and he was used by God to rescue his people from tribulation. His own brothers didn't recognize him, but his identity finally became clear. He was hidden but was eventually seen.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus suffered all these things as well—so He relates deeply to our experiences of being misunderstood, betrayed, hidden, and overlooked.

Maybe you haven't been sold into slavery like Cambodian girls or Joseph, but chances are good you've felt unseen. Maybe you've been overlooked, or maybe your motives were thought to be something they weren't. Maybe someone assumed the worst of you or didn't see what you could bring to the table. Maybe your talents, gifts, motives, perseverance, kindness, or hard work went unnoticed.

Or maybe you're the one doing the hiding. Sometimes, whether because you feel shame over what's been done to you or guilt for what you yourself have done, you might decide it's just more comfortable to hide than to be seen, heard, and known.

Ultimately, however, hiding only contributes to our feelings of insecurity and shame. Hiding gives only a facade of security that in the end fails and robs us of confidence. It produces and feeds fear, and fear exaggerates and wants to control us. It's hard to be vulnerable in the face of those who have hurt us, consciously or unconsciously. But as we expose our wounded selves, God reveals Himself to us.

Even in the grave injustice of a fallen world, our hope rests fully on “the God who sees me” (Gen. 16:13). God sees you. God, the God who created all, who preserves, protects, and provides, is gracious and good. The God of Abraham, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end, the knower of all things ... *that* God sees you.

I think the idea that *God* sees us scares a lot of people. But consider what Jesus, who was God, felt when He saw people. Matthew 9:36 comforts us with these words: “When he saw the crowds, *he had compassion* on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” Jesus, God in the flesh, saw. He saw each one, along with their hopes, dreams, and longings. And what did He feel about what He saw? Anger? Hatred? Repulsion? Shame? No, He felt compassion.

Imagine you are in that crowd. When He sees you, He has compassion for you, knowing that you are but dust. His affection for you is big. Being known by God is nothing to be afraid of; rather, it is something to be comforted by. You can rest secure, knowing you have a God who sees you.

You are not hidden from God. He sees you and how your life fits into His big picture. God sees *you*. He sees your intentions, your hard work, your diligence, your hope, your faith, your lack, your weaknesses, your perseverance, your gifts, your kindness, and your immense value.

## God Hears You

“Are you listening to me?” How often do we say that? Not many people feel refreshed by talking to a wall or being ignored. When we talk, we want the person we are talking to, to actually listen to us. And generally, listening means we have their attention.

Being a mom of six, I know that listening is exhausting. I have a quite unrealistic yet deep sense that I need to listen to each child all the time. And the children apparently have an intrinsic passion to be heard. All. The. Time. Even on the toilet: “*Mom!*” (Why can’t they just wait a couple of minutes?)



But sometimes, if I'm intently focused on something, everything else can get drowned out. The cry of "She took my toy!" gets muffled because my own thoughts are so loud and all-encompassing. It's then that I hear one or another of my children demand, "Are you listening to me?"

In fact, this is a question most of us probably still ask today. We have a built-in need to be heard.

Scripture gives us an example, in the first chapter of 1 Samuel, about a bride who may have wondered if she was heard. It's likely that ever since she was a little girl, Hannah had wanted a baby. But when she grew up and became a wife, she found she couldn't have kids. Worse, not only was Hannah barren, but her husband had another wife—who wasn't barren. Hannah lived with someone who continually got what she wanted and rubbed her face in it. Perhaps Hannah heard biting comments that she didn't measure up or fit in and that she had no value, purpose, or anything to contribute to the world.

Could she have felt that God was punishing her or was mad at her? Maybe she was confused and full of self-pity. Perhaps she wondered why her husband still loved her even though she caused him embarrassment in the community. On top of it all, when she went to the place of worship to pour out her heart and plead with the Lord for a baby, her spiritual authority figure misunderstood and falsely accused her, assuming things about her that were not true. God seemed silent. Perhaps she felt He didn't hear her.

I imagine most of us have experienced these feelings. What did we do with our thoughts and feelings? Did we suppress them and hope they would go away? Did we spend our thought life complaining about them? Did we become bitter and hopeless? Did we end up with a critical outlook on life? Or did we turn to the Lord, as Hannah did? Did we bring our deepest desires to God and let Him give us rest?

Verses 10–11 tell us, "In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. And she made a vow, saying, 'LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then

I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life.” Having a heart like Hannah’s is not easy. She was vulnerable in telling God and others what her real desires were, even when they seemed distant and deaf.

Like Hannah, my husband, Austin, and I tried to have kids for many years. After five years of marriage, we were told we had unexplained infertility. We were unable to have kids, but the doctors didn’t know why. During this time, I went to God, saying, “Please give us kids,” but I never poured out my heart like Hannah, pleading with Him and confessing how badly I desired children. I stopped asking, just in case He said no. That way, I would have an out. If God didn’t answer, I could claim, “I didn’t really want that request anyway.” I would “ask” as described in Matthew 7:7, but that was it. I would never seek or knock. I would never persist, as a way of protecting my heart. I would intellectually approach God but leave my real desires securely hidden.

This posture was driven by fear. I was so hesitant to trust my heart and desires to God for fear that He would let me down. I wouldn’t come out from hiding for fear that God would ignore me. Or for fear that if He did hear, He would shrug me off and I would be crushed and feel uncared for. I was afraid that instead of experiencing His love for me, I would see Him ignore me and take no notice of me.

During this season, God began to teach me about taking my whole heart to Him instead of just sending up a quick “I’d really like a little boy, but if that’s not what You want ...” kind of prayer. The Lord asked me to be vulnerable and share my deepest desires with Him. He wanted me to come out of hiding and be heard. He asked me to trust Him with the outcome and to trust Him with my whole heart. So Austin and I started telling God that we really wanted to start a family, asking Him to give us a little boy. We even started praying for him by name: Asher Steven Krokos.

After two years of being real with my desires as I pleaded with God, He began to prompt us to consider adoption. A story on the radio, a divine encounter with an adopted man at a conference, a meeting with a grandma of a birth mom, and other seemingly “coincidental” events moved our hearts and minds to adjust to the possibility of adopting then instead of later, as we’d been considering.

The more we thought about it, the more realistic it seemed to take just one step. We didn't have to decide everything yet or even *if* we would adopt. We realized God just wanted us to take the next step. So we picked an agency and went to an information meeting.

The very next day, I received a surprise email from a friend. She knew a girl who was considering placing her soon-to-be-born baby for adoption. My friend asked if we were interested. We immediately said yes (although we weren't really expecting anything to happen). Two weeks later, however, we got to meet the birth mom and hear her story. We found out she wanted to adopt her baby to someone but that her husband was not in agreement. Just when we started to get our hopes up, they crumbled.

But a few weeks after that, the birth dad called and asked to meet us. Over lunch with the birth parents, Austin shared his testimony, and God used it to bring the birth dad to the point of saying yes. He told us he believed adoption was the right thing for this baby. The adoption was moving forward, and we couldn't believe it!

As we continued talking, the birth parents asked what names we were thinking about and whether we would consider their input. We had been praying for little Asher Steven for two years, so we were pretty set on the name. (Asher is a biblical name meaning "happy," and Steven is my dad's name.) The birth mom said, "If it's a girl, then I don't care what you name her. But I had a brother who died when I was little, and I've always said that if I ever had a boy, I wanted to name him after him."

Nervously, Austin asked, "What was your brother's name?"

"Steven," she replied.

I was floored. God had heard me. I had finally come out of hiding and vulnerably shared my heart with Him, and He had so obviously heard my pleas. The birth parents loved the name Asher Steven Krokos, which was incredible. So we became the parents of a boy with the initials A.S.K.—appropriate, since God had taught me to *ask* of Him, the One who hears.

When Jesus taught the disciples to pray, He emphasized persistence. He taught them to come to Him completely, not nonchalantly. God's desire is for us to bring our longings, passions, hopes, and expectations to Him, to connect with Him on the most real level of who we are. He wants to reveal Himself as the One who hears. But how can we perceive Him as such if we don't truly go to Him?

Being known by God requires that you share your experiences, thoughts, and feelings with Him—not because He doesn't already know them, but because a relationship deepens when you open up and share your heart. Sharing your heart with God strengthens your relationship with Him.

Look at Jesus: He poured out His heart vulnerably to the Father even in His weakest and most devastating time, knowing that God would hear Him. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was so burdened that His sweat poured out like drops of blood. He knew what was to come. It was the worst possible scenario, and yet He didn't hide His desire for it to not go that way. He did say that if it wasn't His Father's will to avoid the cross, He would go through with it. But He didn't hide behind that, and He didn't fail to put His heart out there. He was vulnerable and shared His heart with His Father, and then He left the results up to God.

Jesus also shows us the heart of God by the way He sought to hear others. Consider the story of the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda, in John 5. When Jesus sees the man, He doesn't just fix his problem. He actually takes time to ask him, "What do you want?" Then He sits and listens to the guy. He hears his story about how the waters get churned up, yet someone always gets in before him. It's interesting to note that Jesus knew this superstition about the pool was not true, and yet He still sat and listened rather than rushing to correct. But then, after hearing him, Jesus acts. He heals. But allowing the man to voice his wants and frustrations mattered to Jesus.

This is true for you too. He would ask you the same thing. He wants you to bring your heart and desires to Him. He loves to hear you tell Him how you feel and what you want and all the things on your mind. Don't hide your heart from the One who wants to hear from you.

*Don't hide your heart from  
the One who wants to  
hear from you.*



## God Knows You

In analyzing 300,000 people in 148 studies, experts found that loneliness is associated with a 50 percent increase in mortality from any cause. This makes loneliness the equivalent of smoking fifteen cigarettes a day, and it makes it more deadly than obesity.<sup>3</sup> If we are not *known*, we can live in a city of two million and interact with dozens of people a day and still feel lonely.

The first step in being and feeling known is simple and yet powerful: for someone to know your name. Knowing someone's name moves you out of the "there's that random person" category into the "I know them" category. And when you speak using someone's name, you communicate respect and value. Being known is a core need of mankind. And how incredible it is that God goes out of His way to communicate to us that He knows us.

Every time I get a new Bible, I like to get a new version. It helps me avoid glossing over specific verses I have read many times, because a different translation brings new wording. I love the process of picking a new Bible. God meets me there every time.

So there I was, standing in front of a wall of Bibles at the Christian bookstore, asking the Lord to show me what Bible He wanted for me. I went back and forth, debating on the design and various versions.

There was one I wanted, but the wrinkles of fake leather on the cover were not spaced out in a way I liked. So I scanned the other covers until I saw one on the top shelf on the left-hand side. *That was it!* I pulled it down and took it out of the box. And there, sitting at the bottom of the box, was a little rectangular handwritten note that said "LAURA."

I have no idea how that happened. Had someone at the factory dropped it in by mistake? Had this Bible been ordered by some other Laura who never picked it up? Who had God used to put that note there, and how did He get that person to do it? I don't know, but I couldn't mistake that this was the Bible for me.

God, the One who  
breathed the stars into  
place, the One who holds  
all things together,  
knows your name.



Can you believe it? What a fun and generous God we have, who would orchestrate something like that. A reminder to me that He knows me. I was wowed by Him once again. God knows my name. And not just mine, but yours too!

Names hold deep significance. When someone uses your name, it carries weight. It says, “I care about you. I know you.”

Names define us. And God, the One who breathed the stars into place, the One who holds all things together, knows *your name*. Take that in. He knows your *name*, the sum of everything about you. Not only does He see and hear you, He knows you. He is intimately acquainted with all your ways. Every tiny detail. He knows what you’re passionate about and gravitate toward, and also what you hate and fear. He knows how you learn and how you receive.

The One who fashioned your cells, who wrote your DNA, who breathed the massive sun into the sky and created the killer whale and the octopus. The One who fashioned the star-nosed mole and the roly-poly, snowflakes and sequoias. The One whose story has been unfolding throughout history. The One around whom all of this revolves knows you. *He* knows you. He *knows* you. He knows *you*.

And did you know that this reality meets your soul’s deepest need? To be fully known and still loved. And that very desire to be known is there because we are created in the image of God. We desire to be known because He desires to be known.

Remember Moses crying out to see and know God? As mentioned earlier, Max Lucado describes Moses’s plea as asking this: “*Would you stun me with your strength? Numb me with your wisdom? Steal my breath with a brush of yours? A moment in the spray of the cataract of grace, a glimpse of your glory, God.*”<sup>4</sup> And God answers Moses with a resounding “Yes!” In Scripture, we continually see God taking initiative to be known, whether it be by putting on skin and becoming a man or by strategically placing the stars. What God made, He made to reveal Himself, to be known.

Though the world may applaud the things seen, the visible demonstrations of human glory, we have a God who celebrates the unseen, things like faithfulness and diligence. Our God sees and rewards good deeds done in secret (see Matt. 6:1–18).



You may feel uncelebrated, unnoticed, and unappreciated. But the reality is that, when you entrusted your life to Jesus, the angels celebrated over you (see Luke 15:10). You may feel unnoticed, but your mighty warrior sings over you (see Zeph. 3:17). You might not get applause and trophies from people, but your Father's audience is enough. You have His undivided attention. He is attentive to *you*.

The Lord has not overlooked you. He has not disregarded you. He knows exactly what He is doing. So often, we have to remind ourselves what's true: If the Lord is for me, who can be against me (see Rom. 8:31)? God radically loves you, and He is for you. You can rest. You are fully known and deeply loved. You are not hidden but rather seen, heard, and known. That, my friend, brings great rest to your soul.

## CONNECT WITH THE LORD

Watch the chapter 1 video now. Find the video using the QR code or link on page 22.

### God Sees, Hears, and Knows You

- In what ways do you feel unseen, unheard, and/or unknown?
- Look up the following passages, and write in your own words what they are saying:

Job 37:16

Psalm 139:1-4

Psalm 147:5

Hebrews 4:13

1 John 3:20

- Which of these verses stands out to you? Why?

God is omniscient. *Omniscience* comes from two Latin words: *omni*, which means “all,” and *scientia*, which means “knowledge.” The omniscience of God means that He has perfect knowledge of all things, from tiny details to the end of time. He never needs to learn and will never forget. He knows all things past, present, and even in all possible futures. Let that sink in. All possible futures. There is nothing outside His realm of knowing.

His knowledge is absolute and unacquired. There was never a time when He didn't know something. It also means that God not only knows all things but also that He knows how to act on the knowledge He has, which is called wisdom. He knows exactly what to do, how to use everything He knows, and the full implications of every choice and action. God's knowledge has no limit.

- What thoughts and feelings do you have when thinking about how God knows ...

Everything about you?

Others in your life?

Your future?

- How can you be more vulnerable in sharing your heart and desires with the Lord?

## Truth Chart

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1. Describe a recent time when you felt unseen, unheard, or unknown.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6. What is one way you can act on what is true?</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2. How is it impacting your life: feelings, thoughts, choices?</li></ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5. If you believed God <i>knew all things</i>, how would it impact your wants and actions?</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3. What does it show that you believe about God?</li></ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4. If you believed God <i>knew all things</i>, how would it impact your feelings?</li></ul>          |



Lined area for journaling, consisting of 25 horizontal lines.



