

# God's Girl Says Yes

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## **God's Girl Says Yes**

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# Chosen

**H**ey, that's awesome! I'm so glad you decided to keep reading! I have to say, I think you've made an excellent choice. I am so excited about spending time with you. Picture me doing a very silly, very happy dance right now. I really hope that reading this book is something you will never forget.

To be honest, I forget things all the time. I forget where I put my glasses, what I ate for dinner, and what page I was on when reading my favorite books. But there are some things I will never forget. For example, I will never forget the day I met my best friend in pre-K. We were only four years old. She started a day later than everyone else because she had ended her summer with a vacation to Disney World. I can still remember her standing at the door, staring into the classroom with a firm grip on her mother's hand. Mrs. Preston, our teacher, walked over, took her hand, and introduced her to the rest of the class. I remember thinking, "Aww, I want to be her friend." And guess what?

We are still friends today.

I also remember the first time I got in trouble at school. A special guest was making a presentation at the front of the room. I

was really short for my age, so I had a hard time seeing. That's why, instead of doing what the teacher asked and sitting on my bottom with my legs crossed in front of me, I kept sitting up on my knees to try to get a better view of our guest. I really wanted to make sure I didn't miss anything. After a bunch of corrections from my teacher, she decided she had asked me to sit on my bottom one too many times. She sent me to the time-out corner, and I missed the rest of the presentation. That wasn't fun at all.

How about you? What things have happened in your life that you will never forget? Maybe it's the day you met your best friend, won a talent show, or became a big sister.

Whatever you remember, it probably changed your life forever, and that's the reason it matters a lot.



In school, my favorite year was the fifth grade. I was ten years old, and many special things happened that year. But I will never forget one day in particular.

The day started a lot like any other day. I woke up, ate two waffles (my favorite!), brushed my teeth, and got dressed for school. I don't remember exactly what I wore, but it was probably wrinkled and very comfortable. When I left the house that morning, I had no idea how much my life would change.

Like I did every weekday, I spent the entire day at school. I went to math, recess, lunch, reading, and history. I passed a few notes to my friends and talked to them in the hall in between our classes. It wasn't until the very end of the school day that I realized something different was happening. When my mother picked me up, my fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Duncan, asked to speak to her privately.

Can you guess what my first thought was?

If you said, “Uh-oh,” you’re right.

When I saw my teacher motion for my mother to come with her, I was scared. I was so worried! Within seconds of their private conversation, I had convinced myself I was in big trouble, but—and this is the worst part—I had no idea what I had done.

I started to replay my entire day, and some of the craziest thoughts began to run through my mind. Had I accidentally tripped someone? Did my teacher happen to see when I passed a quick note to my best friend during math? Or did someone say I did something I didn’t do? I was so afraid of getting in trouble at school, and I was even more afraid of the trouble I would get in at home now that Mrs. Duncan was telling my mother all about it.

You’ve probably noticed that I have a pretty wild imagination. It can be fun sometimes, but it can also create a lot of worry in me.

While Mom and Mrs. Duncan talked, I continued to think and worry. I sat quietly at my desk and watched as everyone else headed home. I was terrified of the punishment I would receive for whatever rule I had unknowingly broken.

I continued to wait while Mrs. Duncan talked to my mom. I tried to hear them, but they were not talking loud enough. I also tried to read their lips, but they were too far away for me to see. All I could do was wait. And wait. And wait.

When they finished, my mother came over to me and motioned for me to come. I slowly collected my things, anxiously waiting for her to say something to me. She smiled a little, but other than telling me it was time to go, she didn’t even mumble a word. I grabbed my mother’s hand, waved goodbye to Mrs. Duncan, and walked out of our classroom, down the hall, and out of the school. I was puzzled.

My heart was beating really fast as I continued to try to figure

out what I could have possibly done wrong. I don't remember how long it was before my mom finally told me what she and my teacher had actually talked about, but I do remember the relief I felt when I saw the huge smile on her face. Only then did I realize I wasn't in trouble at all. The idea that maybe the sudden parent-teacher conference would mean good news had not even crossed my mind until I saw a happy expression on my mother's face. And what my mother told me was good news. Very good news.



Here's what happened.

A few weeks before this incident, we had taken a big test at school. It was a very hard test that lasted all week long. It wasn't fun, and everyone—including our teachers—was really glad when it was over. I hadn't thought much about the test since then, and I didn't really want to. I actually thought everyone had forgotten all about it.

Well, I was wrong. It turns out that Mrs. Duncan had not forgotten about the test, and that was exactly what she talked to my mother about. Mrs. Duncan wanted to tell my mother I had done well and she was proud of me.

And that wasn't the only thing.

Mrs. Duncan also told my mother that because of my scores, I had been chosen to participate in a special program at a local college. As my mother was explaining all this to me, I could not stop giggling. I was only in the fifth grade, and I was already going to college.

Okay, well, not exactly.

My mother explained that the program was designed for elementary-school students. A small number of fifth graders



had been invited to spend an entire day on the college campus. She assured me it was going to be a special experience, and I believed her.

As I listened to my mother tell me about her conversation, I realized I had been worrying about nothing. I wasn't in trouble. My mom and my teacher hadn't been talking about a punishment at all. Their conversation was the complete opposite of what I had imagined. But I'd spent so much time convincing myself that I had broken a rule, so it never even occurred to me that the entire conversation might actually be good news.

The truth was, Mrs. Duncan was not waiting to punish me. Instead, she wanted to reward me for doing well on the test, so she chose me to do something special.

When I think about Mrs. Duncan, I can't help but smile. I am so grateful that she chose me to participate in that very special program.

Being chosen changed everything for me. I felt special, and I thought more about the choices I made. I didn't want to waste the great opportunity I had been given.



When Mrs. Duncan chose me, I wasn't perfect, and I'm still not. I'm so glad she chose me anyway. Once I knew someone thought I was special, I felt special, and I wanted my behavior to match.

The Bible tells us that God thinks we are special. In fact, He's the One who created us that way. He has chosen us to be His daughters. That's right—God, the Creator of the world, has chosen *you* to be *His*.

In the Bible, Jesus shares a few words about God's decision to pick you. He says,



You did not choose me. I chose you. And I gave you this work: to go and produce fruit—fruit that will last (John 15:16).

In other words, Jesus has invited you to live a very special life with God, and every choice you make matters because you have been chosen.

When I realized Mrs. Duncan had given me an amazing opportunity, I thought differently about everything I said and everything I did. This also happens when we realize that God has given us amazing opportunities too. God wants us to live a life that lets everyone else know how good He is. And He wants our lives to look like His because we are His children.

Your life has a purpose, and God has wonderful things for you to experience and very special things He wants you to do. The best part is that all you have to do is say yes.

It's really that simple. God has everything you need, and He can't wait to give it to you. All you need to do is believe that what He says is true and say yes to trusting Him. (If you're not sure what I mean, keep reading! The beginning of chapter 2 will help!)

Have you ever told God that you want everything He has for you? In other words, have you said yes to God?

God has chosen you, and He wants to give you a special life. But in order to enjoy that life, you have to choose Him too.

Let me explain.

Being chosen by God is an amazing gift.

So think of your favorite gift. How well do you take care of it? When you're not using it, do you store it in a safe place where it won't get ruined? Even though someone else purchased it or made it for you, you are the one responsible for what happens to it, right?

Well, the same is true for your life. God wants you to know that He, your Creator, has chosen you. He has chosen to teach you, to protect you, and to love you. He has chosen to give you the option of living your life according to His design. In other words, you get to take care of the life He gave you. You are now responsible for it.

Like I said, the day Mrs. Duncan chose me for that college program was unforgettable, as were many of the days after that one. I will always remember how special I felt. And that memory will always remind me of an important truth: In order for me to receive the benefits of being chosen, I had to participate. I had to get up and get dressed. I had to show up to the event, and I had to do my best while I was there.

The same is true for you. God has chosen you, and He is waiting for you to participate. He chose you, but He can't use your life to show His love for you if you don't let Him. Saying yes to Him truly is the best choice you can ever make.



## The Best Yes

**D**id you know that saying yes to God is not hard? Saying yes to God may seem difficult because you can't see His face or touch His hands. But God is not hiding way up in the clouds with a checklist of rules He wants you to follow in order to make Him happy. No way! God is much closer than you think. In fact, He is with you everywhere and all the time.

In the Bible, John 3:16 teaches that God loves you and me so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, so we can be in a forever-relationship with God. You see, you and I don't always live the way God wants us to live. (In fact, we don't even always live the way *we* want to live! We find ourselves saying and doing things we absolutely don't want to be saying or doing!) Jesus was never like that. He never sinned. Ever. But He chose to take the punishment for our sins, and that included dying on the cross.

In the Bible, you can read many verses that show you how to say yes to God.



To all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God (John 1:12-13 NIV).

Who is the “him” this verse? It’s Jesus! To say yes to God and become His child, let God know that you believe everything the Bible says about Him and about you. When you tell God you believe you’re a sinner and thank Him for sending Jesus as the Savior, you can trust that God hears you and that you are His daughter forever. You will have been born into His family, and you have become a child of God.

One more word about our sin. Even though we all want to make good decisions, sometimes we mess up. But here’s some great news—whether you’re making tons of awesome choices or you seem to be making more mistakes than you can count, God will never stop loving you. He is the best Father ever!

Sometimes we spend a lot of time trying to please God or to get closer to Him by making sure that we do the right thing, but that’s not what God wants. He doesn’t just want our behavior to look good. He wants our hearts to be filled up with His love, and that happens when we receive Jesus as our Savior and let His love live inside of us.



I was only five years old when I first said yes to God. I don't remember the exact day, but recently my mother sent me a special reminder in the mail. It came wrapped in lots of Bubble Wrap, and when I opened it, I saw a light brown picture frame with an old piece of peach-colored paper behind the glass.

The peach paper had three different stickers on it—a Bible, a pair of praying hands, and a bumblebee with the words “Be a Helper” on it. There were a lot of other words on the paper, but these were the first ones that caught my eye:

Wynter Evans understands the marvelous truth that Jesus died on the cross, was buried in the tomb, and rose again from the dead on the third day to give her abundant and eternal life.

The paper was signed and dated March 10, 1985.

Even though I was so young, I loved God, and I loved learning about Him. I believed what the Bible says—that God loves me so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, so I can be forgiven and live with Him forever.

Ever since I got that package in the mail, I have kept the frame close by. Seeing it makes me smile. It also reminds me how much Jesus loves me and how thankful I am that He does.

Even after many, many years, I am still so glad that on March 10, 1985, I said yes to loving God. It was the best decision I've made in my entire life.



I made the decision to say yes to God when I was five, but it took me a while to understand what my decision really meant. Unfortunately, sometimes I thought that saying yes to God just meant saying no to other things. I thought it was about following a lot of rules.

But having a relationship with God is definitely not the same thing as following a list of rules, hoping He will give you good things if you do what's right—and worrying that He will punish you when you don't! God has many good things for you, and He *always* wants to give them to you. His goodness to you is not based on your ability to be good. God is good to you because He is good. But it doesn't stop there. Read what else is good:



We are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago (Ephesians 2:10 NLT).

God has good things planned for us—for you! He is inviting you to join Him on a journey He prepared for you long before you were born.

Isn't it neat to know God has a very special plan designed specifically for you? He does! And He says His plan for you is good. He wants you to live it out, and you can be confident that saying yes to His plan for your life will lead to the best life you can live.

In case you're wondering, do you know why you can believe God has good plans for you? Because God said it. He always means what He says, and He always keeps His promises.

In addition to making special plans for you, God has made you in a very special way. He calls you His masterpiece! You are one of a kind, specially handcrafted by God.





Think about your favorite doll or your favorite dessert. When I was a little girl, I had lots of dolls along my bedroom walls—and each one was my favorite! I also had a favorite dessert. Can you guess what it was? Well, I actually love anything chocolate, but chocolate bars are the best of all.

When I think about those dolls, I can't help but think about the people who made them. Each of my dolls was specially made. Each one had her own look and her own purpose. Some I would use for teatime. Others I would use for playing "family." I had a special role for each of them, and so did the person who designed them.

My chocolate bar, though, had only one use, but it was a very special one—to fill my mouth with joy and to make my tummy happy!

Well, more than any doll and even more than a chocolate bar, you are special. God made you as one of His masterpieces, and you're uniquely designed to fulfill His specific purpose for you.

Yes, God handcrafted you, and He has a special plan for your life. He wants you to walk according to that plan, and all you have to do is say yes to God one day at a time. One *yes* at a time.

And guess what a very neat part of God's plan for you is! Read this next verse and you will find out.



It is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose (Philippians 2:13 NIV).

I think it's amazing that God puts His special plan on your heart. When you say yes to God, He begins to move your heart to act in ways that line up with His plan for you.

God created us, so He knows that the best life we can live happens when we listen to what He tells us in our hearts to do. He waits for our yes.



I want to tell you about my friends Katherine and Isabelle. They are a lot like you—they go to school every day, they love eating snacks, and they giggle at funny noises and stories. They also really enjoy doing crafts.

Sound like you? At least a little bit?

One of their favorite crafts to do with their family is origami. “Origami” is a Japanese word that means “folding paper.” People have been doing this craft for thousands of years and have created some amazing designs. Have you ever seen any origami? Have you ever done origami? If you haven't, definitely give it a try!

Well, one day Katherine and Isabelle learned that people in different places around the world were getting sick and suffering because they didn't have clean water. Katherine and Isabelle were only five and eight years old, but they decided they wanted to do something to help.

After praying and brainstorming, they came up with an idea. Can you guess what it was?

They decided to find ways to sell the origami figures they loved to make. And guess what happened next? They found a store that was willing to help them sell their origami. Then they got to work creating more and more pieces until they had quite an inventory.

And people loved their work! In fact, in a short while, Katherine and Isabelle sold enough origami pieces to pay for an entire clean-water well. They were so excited to be helping people in other countries have clean water.

These girls could have stopped after paying for that one well. But God, who had first stirred their hearts to begin the project, continued stirring their hearts to make more origami so they could pay for even more wells and help even more people.

When they realized that God had given them special skills and that they could use those skills to help others, Katherine and Isabelle began to get more serious about their business. They practiced and learned how to make even bigger and more complicated designs. In just five years, they sold enough origami pieces to raise more than \$1 million. They are still doing origami, and they have even created an organization, Paper for Water, to help girls and families all over the world get the water they need.

Isn't that incredible?



When other people saw what Katherine and Isabelle were doing, those people wanted to help. So now people from many different places contribute their origami in order to help others.

I love that Katherine and Isabelle saw a need and were not afraid to try to do something about it. They are perfect examples of what God can do when we say yes to Him. They had said yes to receiving God's love for them, and then, when His heart moved them to share His love with others, they said yes again. How cool!

Katherine and Isabelle are two of God's masterpieces. He gave them the perfect talent at the perfect time to help accomplish

His perfect plan. They said yes to God's plan, they started making origami, and God blessed their work.

I realize that Katherine and Isabelle's story can seem a bit overwhelming. Something so big may seem impossible to accomplish.

If you feel that way, you're not alone in thinking God could never use you in such a big way. But here are two things to remember.

First, that simply isn't true. God can choose anyone He wants to accomplish anything!

Second, you can say yes to God no matter how old you are. And when you say yes to God, other people will be able to feel His love from the way you treat them. That's what happens when you choose to live the life He has for you!



One more thing. It's important to know that loving God, saying yes to Him, does not mean every aspect of your life will be perfect. But you can absolutely trust that God is always with you and that He will always take care of you. He wants you to grow in a relationship with Him that will never end.

Maybe your story is a little bit like mine. Has someone told you how much Jesus, God's Son, loves you? Have you made the decision to believe in His forgiveness and love? Have you decided to let Him be the One who guides your life? Don't worry if you don't have a special piece of paper with the date on it. You don't have to have that in order for your yes to be true.

And you certainly don't need a piece of paper to know that God loves you. You can trust that when you said yes to God, He

heard you, and He will always remember your decision to follow Him.

I also want you to know that God will never *make* you love Him. He loves you so much that He gives you opportunities to accept His love. That may sound funny, but God will not force you to choose Him. That's a decision only you can make.

If you have never made that decision and are wondering what I'm talking about, that's okay too. It's always a good time to say yes to God for the first time.

Will you pray with me?

Dear God,

Thank You so much for loving me. I believe that Jesus is Your Son and that He died for me. Thank You for giving me a chance to love You too. I want to live *with* You forever, and I also want to live *for* You right now. I am so happy to be a part of Your family, and I want to be like Jesus. Will You help me to know how? Will You show me how to follow You as I decide what I will say, how I will treat others, and what I will do? Thank You for offering me an amazing life.

In Jesus's name, amen.

I am so excited that you have prayed that prayer with me. If this is your first time telling Jesus that you believe He is God's Son, be sure to let an adult know. And know that God is smiling because of how happy this makes Him. He can't wait to spend more time with you!