

JESUS EVERY- WHERE

KARISS
FARRIS



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DEDICATION

To my mother, Chrystal, who tirelessly fine-tuned both my grammar and spiritual compass. Thank you for igniting my love for writing and equipping me to be in the world, but not of it.

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FOREWORD

Dr. Tony Evans



Kariss Farris is my oldest grandchild. She is the oldest child of my first-born, Chrystal Evans Hurst. Kariss holds a unique and precious place in my life, as she did in the life of my late wife, Lois Evans. Chrystal had her while in college. To help make life easier for Chrystal, Lois and I stepped in to help raise Kariss. She participated in virtually all of the activities and events of our family life.

My most special time with Kariss was when she would spend Wednesday night at our house after church, and I would take her for donuts on Thursday morning before dropping her off at school. A deep bond developed between us. Lois would take her on shopping sprees and sneak her extra money when her mother wasn't looking. Kariss would even tell us to spank her mother when her mother had to correct her.

As I read through her first full book, *Jesus Everywhere*, I was overwhelmed with joy to see her heart for the Lord and the literary and communication skills demonstrated by the way she expresses her thoughts. Through a combination of personal experience, spiritual perception, and ministry encouragement, Kariss has given us a tool to inspire, challenge, and motivate the reader to prioritize growing closer to the Jesus she has grown to love and decided to follow.

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When I read her words, I could only imagine how proud her grandmother in heaven is to see how Kariss has matured as a woman, wife, mother, and lover of her Lord.

It is a blessing to see another member of the Evans clan carrying the message of Christ and using her gifts to encourage others to follow Him. You'll find that reading and absorbing the message of *Jesus Everywhere* will help you to experience Him in everything, in every place, and at every turn in your life.

Thank you, Kariss, for reminding your poppy about how important it is to have *Jesus Everywhere*.

AN INVITATION



In the summer of 2018, I was enjoying vacation with my family when I received a call that my cousin Wynter Pitts had passed away without warning. Nothing could have prepared me for the shock of that call. I had never experienced that kind of loss before. Hearing that God chose to take a healthy young wife of 15 years, a mother of four, a writer, a speaker, and an all-around phenomenal woman shook me to my core. For the first time, my own mortality was evident. Truly, this life isn't promised.

From the stories we heard so many reflect upon after her passing, it was clear Wynter glorified God with her life and even in her death. Though many would say she was “gone too soon,” Wynter made the best use of her time by giving it to Jesus. So, with such an incredible example in front of me of a life lived for His glory, even in moments few people saw, I took a magnifying glass to the years I'd lived thus far to discover if my own life would point to Jesus in my passing. But I was disappointed to discover how absent-minded to God I'd been. *Lukewarm* would be the best word to describe myself up to that point. Sometimes hot, at times cold, but mostly lukewarm.

I didn't want to leave behind a legacy of lukewarm Christianity, and in my desperation, I looked for Jesus everywhere. I asked Him to reveal Himself so clearly in my day-to-day life that I couldn't overlook Him, and boy, did He deliver. He was there in every situation, waiting to be noticed in each

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moment spent with my husband, children, coworkers, friends, and even strangers. Everywhere I looked I saw evidence of Jesus's presence, experienced His teaching in real time, and discovered opportunities to make His name greater.

My only goal in writing this book is to give examples of how I see Jesus everywhere in my own life so that you, too, can see Him everywhere in yours. If you've ever been lukewarm, lived absent-minded of His presence, or failed to take advantage of time not promised, this is for you. I pray that God removes the veil from your eyes so you may see Him clearly and make the choice to follow Him, giving Him the glory in every circumstance with every day of your life.

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of stylized, overlapping leaves in various shades of purple, from light lavender to deep magenta. The leaves are arranged in a dense, organic, and somewhat symmetrical fashion, creating a textured and layered effect.

PART ONE

**KNOWING
JESUS IN OUR
WEAKNESS**

US AGAINST US

GOD called to the Man: "Where are you?" He said, "I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked. And I hid."

GENESIS 3:9-10



After I put my oldest daughter, Ellie, to bed one evening, she called me back to her room. Even in the dark, something looked awry. When I flicked on the light, I cringed as I spotted a large patch of hair missing from the right side of her head.

I saw no trace of the missing hair or the scissors used to cut it. My husband and I were bewildered. But our daughter stuck to her story: She didn't have any scissors and didn't know what hair we were referring to—although the nearly bald patch on her head said otherwise. After pulling back the covers she had yanked up to her chin, we found the dull scissors she'd stolen from school. And the fist-sized ball of hair? We found that the next day, hidden underneath her bed.

In the following weeks, as I attempted (largely unsuccessfully) to cover up her bald patch, I kept mulling over those scissors. She must have made a great effort to steal them from school in the first place. She didn't have any pockets in her school clothes, so I could only imagine the creativity she'd mustered up to smuggle the scissors home. But that wasn't the end of her deception; once she'd used them to chop off her hair, she'd then tried

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to conceal the evidence of her actions! She'd thrown her "sin" into a dark corner, but the evidence of it was nevertheless made visible by the patch on her head.

My daughter isn't the first person to try to hide wayward activity. I imagine God in the garden of Eden rolling His eyes at Adam and Eve as they tried to hide their nakedness. And just as God saw Adam and Eve's attempt to hide their nakedness as a sign of their sinful actions, I saw my daughter's hiding under the covers as a result of her guilt. But pretending the mess we've made doesn't exist by hiding it away isn't a solution. The best way forward after botching it with God is not avoidance, not denial, but *confession*.

The aftermath of my daughter's tragic haircut included years of stealthy styling to cover the slow-growing section of hair. But we formed a sweet bond as I crafted adorable looks for her during our late-night haircare sessions. Beauty from ashes, you could call it. To this day, she will barely let me cut a rubber band from her hair without reminding me of her mistake and promising that she will never do it again.

Proverbs 28:13 tells us, "You can whitewash your sins and get by with it; you find mercy by admitting and leaving them." When we admit our sins and leave them behind, God freely gives us compassion and forgiveness. Don't be afraid to pull down the covers and expose your life to God. He can handle it. His mercy will pull you closer, and He'll create beauty where you never thought possible.

READ

Psalm 32:5 ~ Matthew 11:38-30

REFLECT

Look back on a time when you tried to conceal sin, fear, or doubt from God. How did He meet your pain with His grace and truth? How does this demonstrated kindness encourage you to surrender to Him today?

PRAY WITH ME

Lord, I confess that I've so often turned aside from Your way and Your Word, following my desires instead of Your will. Thank You for the light of Your grace overwhelming the darkness of my sin. I recognize my need for You in everything I do. Give me the desire to serve You, and only You.

BUMP THE LAMP

Easy come, easy go, but steady diligence pays off.

PROVERBS 13:11



In the classic live-action/animated 1988 movie *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, a live actor's head bumps against a lamp. The light swings, casting a wild array of animated shadows over the scene. This visually memorable choice wasn't originally in the movie—but when director Robert Zemeckis saw the first cut, he wrote a simple note to the animators: “Bump the lamp.”

The animators pushed back. They explained how much time, effort, and labor it would take to bump the lamp and adjust the lighting. They would have to redraw each frame, add shades to the contours of each face, and cast the appropriate shadows behind them. After considering their explanations, Zemeckis wrote them another note: “BUMP THE LAMP.”

If you watch the movie today, that lamp is swinging like crazy! The animators went above and beyond to bump the lamp, adding in shadow and motion that make the impossible combination of live action and animation seem lifelike. And what a reward they received for it! The film won four Academy Awards for its technical skill and innovation.

When I was a college student working at camp during the summers, our camp director would often tell us, “Bump the lamp.” In 100-degree heat surrounded by adolescent, too-cool-for-school middle schoolers, this was not an easy feat. *Bumping the lamp* meant waking my campers up with soft

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praise, back scratches, and worship music instead of a blaring alarm clock. It meant leading them on a leisurely morning walk to the flag where we gathered, rather than a sprint to ensure we weren't late. It meant serving the campers breakfast before I dropped food onto my own plate, making sure they had more than enough.

Today, *bumping the lamp* often means dancing with my kids when I'd rather put them in front of a screen, or cooking a nutritious meal when I'd rather order takeout. Yet I'm always amazed—because whenever I go above and beyond for my family and community, I finish the day with more energy and excitement than I had when the day began.

How often do we give God excuses instead of going all-in with what He's calling us to do? How often do we try to explain away His commands by telling Him about our lack of energy, our overscheduled calendars, and our lack of ability? But God, our Provider, promises to meet us in our inadequacy. When we're empty, He fills us to overflowing so we can praise His name:

I bless GOD every chance I get;
my lungs expand with his praise.
I live and breathe GOD;
if things aren't going well, hear this and be happy...
GOD met me more than halfway,
he freed me from my anxious fears (Psalm 34:1-2, 4).

Here's my challenge to you: Today, bump the lamp. Bring your weakness to God and watch Him go above and beyond as He equips and enables you to serve Him. When you're drained, when you don't feel like caring for your body, when you don't have the patience for that hard conversation, when the limitless energy of your kids wears on you, when your boss's demands feel unreasonable, when your husband isn't giving you a good reason to serve him, bump the lamp... and expand your lungs as they fill with God's praise.

READ

Proverbs 10:4 ~ Proverbs 13:4 ~ 1 Corinthians 15:58

REFLECT

In what area are you most tempted to take shortcuts instead of working diligently and faithfully at the tasks God has given you?

Today, commit to “bumping the lamp” in that area, trusting that God will equip you to go above and beyond as you carry out His work!

PRAY WITH ME

Father, I repent of wanting to do things the easy way. In my own power I'm not capable of following Your will. Help me surrender to Your plan and guidance. You are good, You are faithful, and You have created me to do hard things. You have a purpose in mind when I have nothing left to give, so I trust in Your ability to make something amazing out of a life that's submitted to You.