

ENTANGLED

BY
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Foreword By Pastor Michael Johnson, The Living Water Ministries

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Entangled
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To the one who taught me that I must stop wanting to be entangled in him and instead focus on truly being entangled in Him. Then and only then will I be satisfied.

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Foreword

Prepare to have your mind renewed, your past healed, and your future brightened. In your hands you hold a book that will change the way you view yourself, your relationships, and most importantly, God's love. Many of us have developed connections with people we would love to get rid of but just can't seem to shake. By reading this book, you are about to embark on a journey to freedom where you will see yourself the way our loving God sees you. Actually you should pause your reading right now and go buy a couple more copies because I promise you will want to make sure that other people are blessed by this book too.

As a licensed professional mental health counselor, I have advised people of all ages and walks of life. I have worked closely with people who have dealt with the stings of sex outside of God's will. Whether it was coping with being sexually traumatized, forgiving themselves after having an abortion, or trying to end a relationship with an abusive partner, their issues could be traced back to connections made through inappropriate intimacy. I've learned that when these people learn to forgive themselves and value themselves, they begin to heal. This book will fast-track you in that process.

I also have the privilege of being a senior pastor. In that role I get to combine my counseling skills with the word of God to help people cut free from the chains of their past and live in the love of God. God's love is enough to break every unhealthy connection and keep you from forming soul ties that will only hold you back from your destiny. And God's love pours out on every page of this book with practical application and a sophisticated simplicity that will change the way sex is taught in the church.

It is truly an honor to have known the woman used for this powerful move of God for over thirteen years. I have watched Ashley Townes grow from a girl trying to find herself into a woman secure in her identity and her knowledge of God's love for her. In our intimate conversations over the years, I have learned about her hurts, and more importantly, I have witnessed her victories. She has grown into a spiritual giant. She has become a woman of great faith. She has been transformed into a praying woman on a mission to teach other women to climb out of the pits into which she had fallen. On these pages you will find her transparent story and be able to draw strength and faith from it. She has opened her life to you so you can learn your value and self-worth. It is my prayer that your life will be completely changed before you even finish the book. I declare that you are blessed, healed, restored, and renewed!

Michael Johnson, MA, PC
Pastor of the Living Water Ministries

Introduction

I always knew that I wanted to write a book; I just didn't know it would develop into this. This book is a product of my two passions, sexual health and spirituality, pleasantly knit together. Sexual behaviors are often, if not always, led by our fleshly desires. Spiritual influence is what should be guiding all of our behaviors in order to live the life that Jesus came and died for us to have and enjoy: the life of abundance on earth and eventually in Heaven. Throughout this book-writing process, I learned more about my salvation, the armor of God, and most importantly my sword, which is His Word (Eph. 6:11–17). I had to realize that God called me to go back into the world to set others free. No part of my life is to go to waste. God wants to use it *all*. I have been transformed through my mind, body, and spirit. Each day I continue to seek Him so I can develop His characteristics and heart. Each day I learn how best to show others God's love. Love is so important to God; it is the first commandment in the New Testament.

My ministry to others comes from my past, involving my deepest pains and darkest sins. I have learned through experiences to be vulnerable and transparent with my testimony. I want this book to be a tool of encouragement to others to do the same with their stories. It

is my hope that the life experiences in this book will help others who are struggling and looking for a way out. The prayers are to give you hope, motivation, and support to achieve the freedom you need—the freedom from bondage of sin, the weight of past hurts and unforgiveness, and the deliverance that comes from the Holy Trinity of God the Father, Christ Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. To God be the Glory in the end.

In this book, be ready to learn why people seek soul ties, what a soul tie is, and how a soul tie forms. You will learn ways to break soul ties and how to receive freedom through salvation, prayer, and transformation led by the Holy Spirit. Also, you will learn through individual testimonies (in addition to my own) about the transitioning process that leads to a life called and ordered by God. With God's strength, it is not impossible to abandon sexual sin and live holy until the day of Holy Matrimony. It takes a lot of courage, faith, and patience; however, it is definitely worth the wait.

Hebrews 12:1–3 (NIV)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Matthew 28:18–20 (NLT)

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the

Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Romans 10:13–15 (ESV)

For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

Revelation 12:11 (NLT)

And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die.

1

Enticed, Infatuated, Intrigued

“You caught me by surprise, your radiance blinded my eyes, and when we get to my bedroom, we’re gonna turn on some Plies.” That’s what was said through disguise. I couldn’t tell they were lies, and just moments later we were in the bed creating a soul tie. And now I’m stuck with whys. How did I get to this state of mind? It’s amazing how you can get pregnant without even trying. There’s not a day that went passed that I wasn’t convicted. Not realizing that my life was identity stricken, the deeper I got in my heart was sickened. Tired of the same ole, one day I was out then five days I was in. Tired of being second best but not tired of the sin. I loved the feeling of flesh, ‘cause at best you were my perfect ten, but I could just imagine God saddened trying to figure out when... when was I going to surrender. Pregnant? Pregnant, oh no, now what do I do? Too late for an abortion, this “baby” is up to you. So now I must adjust; my “lifestyle” changed. Time to buck up, settle down, and get used to the pain. Pregnant. Haven’t figured out a “name.” Too late for an abortion is what my enemy was saying. Dark stretch marks because my shape had changed, no longer comfortable in my size fours; now shopping at the Lane—Lane Bryant, ‘cause some weight I had gained. All I could think is how my life has changed. Time to give birth is what my enemy is saying.

Pressed through a hole too small for its size, and when it came out, the first thing I saw was its eyes. It looked nothing like me! But all too familiar. I was identifying with something that was a spiritual thriller. This isn't me. This is not my identity. I gave birth but not to a baby. I gave birth to the seed...a seed planted long ago. In my lack and my need, I allowed it to grow. I slept with the enemy, got pregnant, and gave birth to sin. Now I'm having flashbacks and I'm replaying that night over and over again. I shouldn't have, but now I'm too deep in. For a year and some months. I enjoyed what I did. One of the best relationships I've had, I loved this kid. Couldn't tell me nothing, definitely had become my best friend. Best friend—I had someone else beckoning for this position, this role that didn't need an audition. But I couldn't release the suspicion. Will I be okay without? Can I make it without this new invention that had simply become my idol? Going to church, but my heart is so far away from the Bible. Not the book, but the words, His Words spoken to me—the words that would speak me out of this false identity. I'm better than this. I'm stronger than this. This, this, this...you can't have my life. God has saved me, not my power or might. I want to be done, but I see I'm gonna have to fight. Bring me my boxing gloves and Vaseline because I'm about to knock you out like a light! No more bondage in fright. I loved you so much, but I knew this wasn't right. I love you so much, but I know this isn't right. God loves *you* so much, but *this* isn't right. Like a doctor performing Lasik, he wants to restore your sight. This time, this time is real; it's our turning point. Let's seize this moment, our time is running short. I think we've run our course, and now I'm ready for the course of righteousness, ready for God to do His thing inside of us. I love you, and I know you love me. And if we're to remain friends, then Lord let it be...as you can see, I didn't reveal identity, but all this time, it was a she.—Written by Ms. Spokenout

Enticed

My first soul tie began in high school at the age of sixteen. I lost my virginity after a year of having a boyfriend who constantly pressured me into having sex. It would show I really loved him and that I wanted to be with him, he would say over and over. Finally I gave in. Of course, as many others have learned, it wasn't nearly what I thought it would be; however, this was the start of it all. To *entice*, according to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, means to attract artfully or by arousing hope or desire, to tempt. I was tempted by him to show my affection through this sexual act. Afterward, the relationship, which I thought was based on truth and love, turned out to be based on manipulation. This unhealthy relationship involved verbal abuse, lies, and cheating. The end result was a broken heart and chlamydia. Not only did I forgive him and take him back, but I also accepted a lower worth than I had ever had of myself simply because I wanted to feel his love again. He used me sexually, emotionally, and financially. I remember buying him clothes on my Macy's card, letting him drive my car while I was at school or work, and even allowing him to convince me to get a cell phone plan with him. He made me question myself and my worth. He made me feel insecure because I thought he still might be cheating with other girls. He made me feel bad about having male friends when I had always had male friends. He made me think I couldn't be trusted because, in reality, he couldn't be trusted. Ultimately, I was being pulled further and further away from God. To make matters worse, he didn't believe in God because his family was of a different religion. After three and a half years, enough was enough. I was, as people say, sick and tired of being sick and tired. I finally realized that, as a freshman in college, I *deserved better!* I broke off the relationship for good, and yet I was stuck with all of the bills. I went into debt trying to keep someone else happy in order to keep myself happy, or so I thought. I had become infatuated with him and the idea of us being together over that four-year span. After that,

there came a downward spiral of relationships as I sought to fill a void, to be loved and wanted. Since I had craved attention, I fed right into the trap of my enemy, the tempter himself. And so the cycle began. With each new soul tie, I was enticed into a sexual relationship through the arousal of my hopes and desires to be wanted and loved.

The following two soul ties developed from close friendships. One I had known since high school, and the other I met in college. They happened about a year after I had ended my relationship, and they occurred about a year apart, neither lasting more than a few months. The friendships were severed once sex came into the picture. In each case, my guard was up in regard to an emotional attachment; therefore, my emotions were buried. I hid behind walls, emotional walls that I formed so I didn't have to expose myself or become vulnerable due to the hurt from that very first soul tie. I had unforgiveness in my heart, as well as bitterness and resentment toward men. However, I had thought of these two guys as my friends and figured they would do nothing to hurt me. The first guy, as I said, I had known since high school. We met when I was about fifteen years old, and by the creation of the soul tie, I was eighteen. The sexual encounter only happened one time, and afterward I really had no desire to continue the relationship because I felt pressured into being a girlfriend when I didn't feel ready to do so. As a result, our friendship ended, and that was hard. I felt guilty for ending the friendship and wished I had never accepted the temptation to creep in. The second guy I met in a class during my sophomore year in college. Our friendship was based on things we had in common, and then I noticed there was indeed a physical attraction due to comments he would slide in here and there. I tried to ignore them for as many months as I could before agreeing to somewhat of a dating relationship, even though I still felt we were just friends. Once again there was one sexual encounter, and I was over it. The friendship remained but only for another month, and then

I cut it off. Things had become too awkward for me. Neither of these soul ties involved infatuation; however, I did experience guilt and shame for destroying friendships due to sexual temptation.

Infatuated

Infatuation is a word I know very well because I so often confused it with love. Well, it is not love. Love will be covered in chapter 6. To *infatuate*, according to Merriam-Webster, is to cause to be foolish, deprive of sound judgment, or inspire with a foolish love or admiration. I'll begin by discussing a guy I so-called dated for a few months. The reason I say *so-called* is because we never actually went on a date. He would invite me over, or we would talk on the phone, meet at parties, and so forth. Over time I developed an admiration for him simply because we spent time together and I never felt pressured into sex. Finally! I thought I had found a guy genuinely interested in me, who opened up to me and supported me... but I was wrong. His ex, who, he explained, was a thing of the past, had become a thing of the present. How did I not see that coming? I pretended I wasn't bothered, but my insides were turning, and I was very hurt. I just didn't think he was that type of guy. Later down the road, he explained that he hadn't quite closed the door with her before opening one with me. I was shocked because I thought we had an open and trustworthy friendship. Of course I was upset, frustrated, caught off guard—and yet I still cared about him. It took several months for me to allow my heart to recover, in part because during that time I also lost a family member to an unexpected and still unsolved murder. I had gone from being broken to being shattered emotionally. My heart was crushed in more ways than I could even begin to mouth into words. I appreciated his friendship during this rough time; however, it was hard for me to distinguish between his caring nature and his true feelings for me. During this time of weakness and vulnerability, we became

intimate, and I noticed that we were really close for a few months and then distant a few months later. I felt as if I was a yo-yo being pulled to and fro at his convenience. For my own sake, I distanced myself to avoid future upsets. I had become angrier with myself than with him. I felt guilt and shame once again; I was embarrassed by his rejection and blamed myself for allowing him into my heart and into my bed. I deleted his number, refused to speak to him in public, and avoided him altogether. I just wanted to be left alone to allow time to heal the wounds of my heart. Thing is, the wounds never healed. I simply put a Band-Aid on them and told myself I was moving on.

Several months passed and I found myself with a new guy. I had known him for some time and had no intentions of any relationship beginning, yet something about him was different. I think it was the pursuit. We were in several of the same circles in school as undergraduates, mostly due to our sorority and fraternity affiliations. We spent time together because of our mutual friends and had become good friends as well. We often made jokes about the two of us being more than friends, and before I knew it, those jokes became reality. Things were going well until summer break, and then he hit me with "Let's just be friends." I thought he had to be playing a joke on me. I agreed to let it and him go, yet once school started and we were around each other again, things heated up. Of course this was only after seeing other people interested in him and vice versa. It's that phenomenon of thinking you want what someone else has that led us right back to each other. This was a mistake for many reasons besides the obvious. His feelings for me had not changed, although they had appeared to change. He became comfortable with the idea of having me around rather than actually pursuing me, and I just didn't want to give up his company. The truth was I kept him around because he wanted to be around. The more I saw him, the more I wanted him around, and the more he was around, the more I wanted clarification

on where we stood. Were we a couple? Were we *just* friends? I needed to know. He didn't like that. So what happened? He cut it off, again. This time my feelings were hurt. I thought I was seeking clarity so we could move forward, but he didn't even want to address it with me. I felt as if I had been led on by a guy who was supposed to be a good friend and wouldn't do a thing to hurt me. Sound familiar? He was someone I spent much of my time with, and now, in the blink of an eye, things were over with a quick text message. By now about a year had passed. I kept my much-needed distance from him, but it wasn't over. We developed this on-and-off thing in which we would rekindle and then go our separate ways for about two years total. Finally, I'd had enough. No more! Over this time frame, we never actually progressed; instead things got worse. We had become too comfortable with one another, and I had become so willing to please him just to keep him around. I thought it was because I loved him, but looking back, it was foolish. You cannot force anyone to love you, nor can you force yourself to love someone else. It is a choice. And to be honest, it wasn't even love. I just did things that I *thought* he would like or what he said he *wanted* from me, such as cooking meals for him, watching his favorite shows or movies, dressing up in lingerie, etc. What did it get me? A heart full of rejection, empty promises, and a wrecked friendship.

Throughout this rocky relationship, I saw *him*. We were introduced at a mutual friend's house. Nothing ever came of it for about a year, and then, sometime after he and his girlfriend split, he actively pursued me—the way I had always imagined. He frequented places where he knew I would be, and he showed he was interested. At first I wasn't sure how to respond; it felt too good to be true. One day he asked me out on a date, and I agreed. This was the beginning of something beautiful with a man who opened doors, brought me flowers, and called to say he missed me—a wonderful and romantic relationship.

So why am I writing this book? Someone once told me, the right thing at the wrong time is the wrong thing. They couldn't have been more right because, in this situation, I was the problem. Reluctant and embarrassed about this new relationship, I found excuses to diminish his pursuit. He was younger than me with a so-called past of jealousy and insecurity, according to my friends. They thought he wasn't a good fit, and I believed them. I believed their words over his actions. This was a terrible idea. And I admit we were all young with little wisdom about what to do. However, I began overlooking all of the nice things he did for me, and I didn't always appreciate his kind words. At one point I even expected him to treat me well as if I was entitled. The worst part is that my actions did not always reciprocate what I expected from him. The truth is, I really did care about him and enjoyed the way I was treated, but I was too prideful and fearful of what others would think to let my true feelings be known. I used him to make the guy before him jealous rather than actually enjoying this great guy who had come along. He admired my qualities and saw God in me. He was the first guy that I could talk to about scriptures, faith, purpose, and much more. Yet I blew it by looking back at my past as if something better rested there. Of course he became upset and fed up with the relationship. He ended it, and at that moment, my soul tie with him turned into a soul that was crushed and damaged. The sexual intimacy came way after the emotional intimacy. I think if I hadn't been trying to satisfy my flesh based on past experiences, he would have agreed to no sex, simply because he was more interested in me than my body. He was an ideal candidate to keep around, but once again I blew it with my own selfish desires to control the situation. I wanted the past guy to treat me this way, and even though I knew at the time that he wouldn't, I still held on to him. It wasn't until the relationship was over that I realized my infatuation. Of course I was broken and missed what I once had. I attempted to get him back, but my efforts were unsuccessful. He was convinced that I still

wanted the previous guy. My biggest mistake was not dealing with my past hurt through forgiveness and healing before beginning something new. I was in a cycle, a cycle that many women and men fall into, leading to downward spiraling relationships that oftentimes are similar stories with different characters. Immediately after he wanted nothing to do with me, I heard from God. He reminded me of the things/characteristics that I had prayed for in a mate through all of those previous bad relationships. He showed me how this guy was many of the things that I had prayed for, and I took him for granted. I cried out to God and knew I needed to deal with my issues—not because of the ideal guy specifically but because I knew God was not pleased. I had become the product of my soul ties. All of the negative feelings I felt from other guys, I had portrayed onto him. I still remember him telling me that he would never trust women again because of me. For the first time, I actually regretted my actions; I regretted losing him. I regretted not showing him my true feelings due to shame, dishonesty, and built-up pain from past relationships. I began blaming myself and really illuminating the situation. Because of my vulnerability, I went right back to the previous soul tie as if things would be different. It was no surprise that things were not different, and thus, it was my decision to end things and not look back. To make matters worse, my ideal guy had begun chasing after God's heart like never before, and I felt even guiltier. I ran to God and asked for his assistance with the pain. He helped me move past the surface pain, but there was a bitter root. Once I started to feel better about the situation, I reached out to the guy I hurt and confessed how I felt about things. I mustered up the courage to ask for his forgiveness. At the time, he was forgiving and willing to rebuild our friendship. Over the course of several months, we were just friends. I liked that until things crossed the friend zone.

Intrigued

Once the friend zone had been crossed, it was difficult to go back to just being friends again. There was history between us and a good friendship that had been rebuilt. At this point, our sexual relations were in secret, and I was in a state of intrigue. *Intrigue*, according to Merriam-Webster, is the activity of making secret plans or schemes; a clandestine love affair, which means it is done in secret. I hate to admit that I knew he was talking to another girl, and I still allowed our movie nights, hang-out sessions, and “other” things to continue over the course of several months. That is, until conviction set deep in my heart. I did not see a change in the way he treated me; basically he was having his cake and eating it too. I did not like the feeling of being second when initially I was first to him. So I ended things and only agreed to stay in his life to witness his spiritual growth. From that moment on, I only shared scripture and Bible study notes, and I prayed for him and his relationship. We had one or two (or three) weak moments when sex came into the picture; however, they occurred more than a year afterward.

This next guy caught me by surprise two months later. I had decided to change my ways and really get in God’s face. I had declared that I would stop going out and allowing alcohol to make my decisions for me. I decided to not allow the need for attention to control my actions and thoughts. I took a huge step back from my past soul ties and prayed that God would send me someone if He chose to do so. And that He would choose someone with a different and fresh perspective on life. Things began in secret, not because he was ashamed of me but because of his reputation on campus. As I began to get to know him, I realized that the fame was just a cover for his inner shyness and humble nature. I actually really liked that about him and still admire it. Many people have misconceptions about him and his life. It made me truly grateful that people were not always interviewing

me or constantly keeping up with me, or that I didn't need to keep up appearances to maintain a reputation.

We had a period of talking/dating for about five months. I felt his lifestyle did not agree with where I was headed, and I was not willing to compromise. For example, I praise danced and wanted him to come and watch, yet I was not always willing to attend his events. I again wanted to be in control of how things went and according to my timing, not his and definitely not God's. I had a lot to learn and realized it was best to proceed as friends. I did not want to hurt him as I had done in the past to others, nor did I want to be hurt again. I didn't think either of us was in a position to pursue a serious relationship. In addition, I felt that he was not giving me the attention I once was used to, and that caused discomfort. It wasn't long before I had insecurities about how he portioned his time until he broke it down to me. I felt horrible for not trusting him. I had to face reality: his focus was his family, his sport, and his college diploma. My focus was God, school, and my career. Similar focuses, however, not aligned. I knew it was time for me to take my thoughts off of men for a while and get aligned with God's plan for my life. This was the summer of 2012.

Intrigued with a Twist

As a public health professional, I define sex as being any oral, vaginal, or anal stimulation in response to sexual activities performed on a partner or received by a partner. Typically it is thought of as intercourse, which limits the idea of sex to being only vaginal or anal. However, oral sex is a common and trending act among men and women and can be performed or received by both men and women on the same gender or opposite gender. Oral sex can have the same soul tie effects as vaginal and anal sex since it involves the physical

body or flesh. So it will be included in this book as a sexual act that will be referred to as sex or fornication.



Interview

DW is a twenty-six-year-old female who has not lost her traditional virginity; however, she has engaged in other forms of sex, specifically oral sex, with a female partner. She believes a soul tie is “a soulish connection, meaning I want, I think, and I feel. It is idolatry in a sense because it is beyond sex; it is primarily emotional.” She believes by her definition to have had about five soul ties (male and female). The most memorable began as a great friendship in which there was emotional dependency on one another. She said, “It was a crutch in a sense because I wanted more. The intrigue and curiosity eventually led to a kiss, which then opened the doors to a new world for us both.” Thing is, it wasn’t something either of them had planned on. Both were women who knew Jesus and, as previously stated, had a great friendship. When things started happening between them, the other woman had a boyfriend, so it got complicated. This isn’t too different from a young woman being interested in a guy who has a girlfriend or vice versa, and then one day you both cross the line of no return. How do you go back to being just friends? Well, they didn’t. Instead they continued their relationship in secret for a little over a year. Their dependency on each other became worse; the emotional connection was paired with a physical one. DW mentioned that thoughts like “This isn’t right” would run through her head. Her need to be dependent had developed into a fear of being independent, and her curiosity later became a feeling of fulfilling content. After some time, she did initiate a breakup. There were the relational issues that many people face in addition to the feeling that things weren’t going

anywhere, and then her friend moved away. DW ultimately became tired of doing something that wasn't right, something done in secret, and feeling second to the boyfriend. (By that time she didn't have a boyfriend anymore.) She was really just tired of it all. After the breakup, she had second thoughts and wanted to go back to the relationship because it was familiar, but she knew it needed to be over. DW's feelings were hurt, and she felt lonely. She tried to find other ways to fill the void. At the same time, she felt relieved yet questioned her identity, wants, and desires as a woman.



My first recollection of the term *soul ties* is from a spoken-word event I attended called “I Used to Love HER” in February 2013. I was invited to attend by Ms. Spokenout, a very good friend of mine, colleague, and classmate in high school and college. The subject matter of the pieces in the event involved love. Some were in reference to love for God, and others were past loves of men and women. The piece I heard is the opening of this chapter. I also heard several poems regarding soul ties and how God had healed and freed those people. The most important thing I learned was that if I had never asked God to forgive me, deliver me, and free me from my soul ties, I was still in bondage. This hit home for me. I immediately began researching soul ties: what they are, how they form, how to break them, etc. I began the process of deliverance, in addition to obtaining and maintaining my freedom. It is possible whether you have had one soul tie or one hundred soul ties. God can do the unthinkable, the impossible, and the extraordinary, through your faith in Him.

Luke 1:37 (ESV)

For nothing will be impossible with God.

Luke 18:27 (ESV)

But he said, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”

One of the biggest lessons I had to learn through my walk with God and Jesus Christ was that nothing is impossible with God. I could not attempt to do things by my own will or in my own strength; I would not be successful. I cannot expect the impossible to happen alone. Things will continue to fail and I will create more bad than good if I rely on myself. This is why I have had all of these failed relationships, and every attempt to make them better without God only made them worse. I was in search of Him and in search for my reasoning behind trying to do things without His help.

Later you will read about men and women who have had soul ties, whether they admitted to it initially or not. They are in various stages of realizing their bondage and the steps they need to take to receive freedom.