

HOW A WOMAN'S

only

EVERY DAY

SHAPES AN ETERNAL

one

LEGACY

life

JACKIE GREEN

LAUREN GREEN MCAFEE

WITH BILL HIGH

Only One Life is an encouraging read that confirms our significant role as women in the present day, as well as in history. The message is a powerful reminder that each decision and aspect of our lives shapes the future. It is refreshing to read these vivid stories of female impact!

—Lauren Scruggs Kennedy, author; blogger; founder,
Lauren Scruggs Kennedy Foundation

Only One Life is a beautiful reminder of the strength and resilience of women and the eternal legacy each generation leaves to the next. What a gift to be reminded that the callings we fulfill are because we stand on the shoulders of those women before us who stood for justice, righteousness, and compassion.

—Christine Caine, founder, A21 and Propel
Women; author, *Unexpected*

My friends Lauren and Jackie give us the stories of significant and persuasive women who, by their winsome examples, have won the right to be heard *and* followed. Thank you, Lauren and Jackie, for introducing us to the *real* movers and shakers in our world!

—Joni Eareckson Tada, Joni and Friends
International Disability Center

Jackie and Lauren have done a fantastic job telling the stories of courageous women who've inspired us for generations. Don't miss the invitation to read this book and leave an inspiring legacy of your own. You are already more influential than you think!

—Esther Fleece, speaker; author, *No More Faking Fine*

Only One Life is a “Wow!” because in reading Jackie and Lauren's book, you keep company with women from times past and present who came to know, love, and serve God and, like the Greens, want to leave a legacy “worthy of him who called us.” There is much to be learned.

—Kay Arthur, teacher; author; cofounder,
Precept Ministries International

This mom and daughter duo motivates all women to live out abundantly more than we could ever dream of when we invite Jesus to take over. I'm certain this book, through the many stories it tells, will challenge anyone to dream bigger!

—Chelsea Crockett, author, *Your Own Beautiful*

Amid daily news of injustice against women, minorities, and children, Jackie and Lauren introduce us to real-life answers and the women who represent these answers. I honestly could not put this book down and will be using it as a reference for years to come.

—Lynette Lewis, business consultant; author,
Climbing the Ladder in Stilettos

Only One Life posts a needed challenge to the next generation of women of faith: What will be our legacy? This book inspired me greatly and showed me some powerful female role models. Lauren and Jackie put great time, effort, and thought into this book, and it shows. It is a gift.

—Megan Alexander, correspondent, *Inside Edition*; author, *Faith in the Spotlight*

I'm so glad for this book because stories of Christian women need to be told! Out of their conviction and obedience to God, these women led, pioneered, championed, raised, and taught in ways that have left an indelible mark on our world.

—Mai Hariu-Powell, executive director, The New York Project at Redeemer City to City

One Life to Live is a poignant reminder of the power each of us has to establish a legacy that will shape families, influence cultures, and ultimately change the entire world. This book is a gift. Read it and then go and establish a legacy of your own.

—Dr. Lois Evans and Priscilla Shirer (mother and daughter)

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Only One Life

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FROM LAUREN

*To all the amazing women hoping
to make an eternal difference
through their everyday offerings.*

*And to my husband, Michael: you
make me a better woman.*

FROM JACKIE

*To women everywhere:
You were created for a special
purpose, and you spread light in this
world in a multitude of ways.*

*To my daughters, granddaughter,
and those to come:*

*Lauren, Lindy, Danielle, Grace,
Gabriella, Erica and Mary-Kate.*

*I feel incredibly blessed to have
each one of you in my life.*

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FROM JACKIE

As I considered writing this book, I kept thinking about how absolutely blessed I am to have so many wonderful women in my life who have impacted and influenced me in all kinds of ways. Some of them are big influences, and some are subtle but have changed the course of my life or influenced my decisions. I am grateful for each and every one of the women who have been a part—big or small—of my journey. I couldn't possibly list every single one, but I would like to mention a few. Those I don't list, you know who you are. You are the ones who send me a text message of encouragement or an email that you are praying for me. Maybe you showed compassion and brought a meal when I was recovering from illness, shared wisdom and your faith, or taught me or my children in a class. There are those who stood tenaciously, boldly, and loyally by my side through ups and downs. I have witnessed your often unrecognized acts of generosity, thoughtful and serving care of others, and diligence to always be learning more about the Bible and being faithful to God. You have been a part of my life in some way as an example and I thank you. I will try to exemplify the character you have shown me and extend it to others.

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been a motherly influence of faith to me in my adult years. I'm so grateful for the godly matriarchs in my life. Telling your story and sharing of God's faithfulness set me in the right direction.

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To my extended family: So many strong, committed, responsible, gracious, talented, beautiful, loving, and kind women and men of integrity.

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work together to make a whole, fully functioning body (1 Cor. 12:26–27).

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To my Lord, my Rock, my Redeemer: without you I am nothing. With you, I am all I need to be.

FROM LAUREN

To my Creator: I have to start by acknowledging my Savior, Jesus Christ. God's gospel changed my life. It is only with the help of God through his Holy Spirit that it's possible to walk this path toward an eternal legacy.

To my mother: We have had different experiences in life, and we have different personalities. But we have the same passion for pursuing a lasting legacy and encouraging others along the way. The process of writing together has led me to have an even greater admiration for you as I watched you lean in and work hard to share inspiration and truth with authenticity and vulnerability. You never cease to amaze me. Mom, I love you. Thank you for making this book possible, in every way.

To my husband: You are my other half, and you make me a better woman. You constantly live out the gospel in our marriage

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and sacrificially lead me. You know me better than I know myself. I praise God for the gift that you are to me. I pray that our legacy together will always point others to God's great glory.

To the women in my family: There are so many inspiring women I am privileged to call family—the women in my life who have daily shaped me, challenged me, loved on me, and inspired me. I love you deeply. Your impact is written throughout my story. I don't know what I would do without you. My sisters, Lindy Green, Danielle Green Smith, Grace Green, Gabi Green, Erica Green, and Clytee McAfee: You are one of the greatest blessings in my life. You are my people. My mother-in-law, Terri McAfee: Your tenacity, compassion, and faith have significantly left their mark on one of my favorite humans: my husband. You have created an incredible legacy that inspires me. My grandmothers, Barbara Green and Nita Chartier: You are spectacular examples of living life on purpose and raising godly generations. To all of the women in my extended family too: You are each special to me in your own way.

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FROM JACKIE AND LAUREN

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INTRODUCTION

ONLY ONE LIFE: THE WAY OF LEGACY



Only one life.

Chances are you've never heard of her, but her impact for the gospel and for good is beyond calculation. And it's still expanding, encircling the globe even as you read these words. She passed away more than forty years ago, yet she continues to "outlive her life." Her name was Marie, and we both stand on the shoulders of this extraordinary woman.

Marie was born in Kansas City in 1903. The daughter of a pastor, she grew up and married a pastor as well. Together she and Walter Green raised six children through the austere years of the Great Depression and World War II on a preacher's meager income. Her children later recalled their years in a tiny parsonage, where the girls slept in the lone bedroom, the parents slept in the living room, and the boys bedded down each night in the kitchen. They recalled going to school without shoes until a few generous teachers quietly stepped in to help meet that need.

They experienced real hunger at times. Yet largely because of the extraordinary faith and influence of mother Marie, they remembered above all a home filled with love for each other and for God. Marie also modeled a heart of compassion for people who had no knowledge of a loving God or of the Son He sent to seek and save the lost. So amid her manifold responsibilities as a pastor's wife and mother, she somehow found time to crochet doilies and sell them to raise money for missions.

Marie's love for God was as contagious as it was strong. Not only did every one of her children embrace the biblical faith

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that anchored her soul, but also five of them either answered a call to full-time ministry or married a minister. It would be impossible to calculate the impact those five children have had on the eternal destinies of others—both directly through their personal witness and by extension as those they touched then touched others, in an ever-expanding web of blessing.

But what of that sixth child? The one who did not sense a call to a life of full-time ministry?

David Green was the next to youngest of Marie's children. He grew up to become my (Jackie's) father-in-law and my (Lauren's) grandfather. He too loved God and dedicated his life to following Him at an early age. But despite the heavy weight of expectations that must have enveloped him, given the choices of his older siblings, David knew in the depths of his soul that he was not called to be a minister in the traditional sense.

His gifts and passion led him into retail business instead. Perhaps Marie's crafty ingenuity of crocheting doilies and selling them to raise money for missionaries made a deeper impression on the young man than anyone could have imagined.

In 1970, he took a leap of faith with his wife, Barbara, and their young children in Oklahoma City and launched a new business from their kitchen table—initially assembling picture frames and wholesaling them to local retail stores. My (Jackie's) husband, Steve, was seven years old, and his parents paid him seven cents for each frame he glued together. Not long after, they launched their shop for artists and home crafters in a small storefront. They called it Hobby Lobby.

A move to a bigger location soon followed, and in the ensuing decades many other locations sprang up across America. You'll find the details of the amazing Hobby Lobby growth story in David Green's 2005 book *More Than a Hobby: How a \$600 Start-up Became America's Home and Craft Superstore*. Today Hobby Lobby is one of our nation's most successful and healthy

privately held companies, with more than eight hundred stores coast to coast and employing more than thirty-five thousand full- and part-time workers.

However, Hobby Lobby's amazing business success is only a sliver of the story. The best part is the one David Green is least comfortable talking about—his and his company's commitment to evangelism and Christian philanthropy. Here's how *Forbes* magazine described Marie Green's second-to-youngest child in a 2012 profile titled "Meet David Green: Hobby Lobby's Biblical Billionaire": "David Green insists God is the true owner of his \$3 billion arts and crafts chain. Acting as His disciple, Green has become the largest evangelical benefactor in the world—with plans for unprecedented gifts once he's in heaven."¹

The fact is that for years Hobby Lobby has taken half of all pretax earnings and poured the money into evangelistic outreaches, ministries, and humanitarian projects. Donations have flowed to an astonishing array of churches, Christian nonprofits, Christian colleges, and other gospel-advancing projects, as well as to organizations that dig water wells and provide medical care for third-world countries, to community events, adoption services—even to fund part of the Oklahoma City capitol dome! It's no accident that our father's/grandfather's latest book, released in 2017, is titled *Giving It All Away . . . and Getting It All Back Again: The Way of Living Generously*.

Please understand, we're not highlighting all this generosity and impact for the kingdom of God to glorify a person or a company. Rather let's trace the impact backward and turn the spotlight once again to Marie Green, the mother who taught and modeled those values and inspired her children to embrace them. When we take in the full picture, we see the lasting generational impact one godly woman can have, even an unassuming pastor's wife living in a small town.

Did Marie think about being a woman of legacy, a woman

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who would pass down a spiritual heritage to her family? She may not have used those words, but there is no question she understood this vital concept. All of her children recall her citing a refrain from a poem by British missionary C. T. Studd titled “Only One Life.” Each stanza ends with the line

Only one life, ’twill soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last.

She recited those lines to her children countless times, often in the context of engaging in a sacrificial act of love or service. Marie Green became a woman of legacy because she knew in the deepest depths of her heart what many believers in our time have forgotten, a truth enshrined in this quote from C. S. Lewis: “If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next.”²

Marie Green moved to that glorious next world in 1975 and therefore didn’t get to see the amazing Hobby Lobby story unfold. At that time, it was still just a fledgling company. Nevertheless, all of this and more is very much a part of our grandmother’s/ great-grandmother’s legacy.

A Woman’s Legacy?

As we said, we are living, breathing evidence of the kind of impact a woman of faith can have on the world. Marie Green was a leader in a very real and important sense. Of course, our fractured nation and our hurting world need godly women leaders now more than ever. We can lead. We must lead. Future generations will bless us if we press through our obstacles, fears, and insecurities to meet the sobering challenges our families and communities now face.

What about you? Are you a woman of legacy?

The fact that you're holding this book right now strongly suggests that the answer to this question matters to you. The idea of leaving a legacy may sound intimidating. But legacy is not meant only for the elite few who have great power or influence. Legacy is crafted by our faithful everyday choices, and we hope to explore stories of women who prove that anyone can truly leave a lasting legacy—even you.

But what does *legacy* really mean? How does it impact our day-to-day lives? And perhaps the biggest question of all, Why does it really matter?

Before we dive into these questions, perhaps we should introduce ourselves!

The “we” asking these questions are a mother (Jackie) and a daughter (Lauren). We've traveled the road of so many women who assume roles of daughters, wives, and mothers, all the while wondering whether there might be something more. As a result of that journey, we've learned some hard and wonderful lessons that we can share with our fellow travelers.

No matter where you are in life, legacy is for every age and every season. Jackie is part of generation X, while Lauren is a millennial. Though we are from different generations, we both carry the same God-given burden for seeing Christian women recognize their capacity to leave positive, world-changing legacies that will continue to make the world a better place long after their time on earth is done.

We must admit we approach this topic with humility and trepidation because we are still on this journey of figuring out how to consistently invest in our legacies every day.

I (Jackie) grew up in a small town in Oklahoma and moved to the big capital city of our state when I married at eighteen years old. My husband, Steve, and I met at church camp when we were young teens, started dating my senior year of high school,

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married in August after I graduated in May, and never looked back. I never dreamed that my path would look like the one I have walked and still walk every day. As a teen, I had plans to climb the corporate ladder, but I married at eighteen and worked in the family business until I became a mother at twenty. I thought I would have three amazing kids, and I have six. I thought by the time I was in my forties, I would have all of my children raised and my husband and I would be taking leisurely vacations at least twice a year (I also had visions of being able to go to the gym or salon whenever I wanted, having every room in my home organized, and staying on top of the mail and paperwork that comes in by the loads when you have a large family).

My first child was born when I was twenty years old, and my youngest child was born when I was forty. My point is that we all have plans for our lives, and sometimes I wonder if God looks down on us, chuckles, and says, “Let’s see if you want to know *My* plans for your life,” as He guides us lovingly along a much different path.

I remember that when my youngest child started kindergarten, I prayed and pondered what path I wanted to take, now that I had a little more freedom with my time. What would I do with those extra hours? I thought about taking a photography class, hiring a physical trainer, and attending as many of the ladies’ Bible studies as I wanted, but my life took another turn. That was the year the Museum of the Bible was established, and I found myself by my husband’s side, called to launch a world-class museum inviting all people to engage with the Bible.

As we traveled together to around three hundred events over the last three years, I met so many marvelous women. Much of the time our stories had similarities. We wanted to live a life of integrity, serve our families and friends well, and utilize our time, talents, and treasures for God’s kingdom purposes. Often busyness was our common enemy. I found myself wanting to

encourage these women to be intentional with their busyness and use their gifts for things that really matter, realizing that as women, we have unique opportunities to impact the lives of those around us every single day. After all, as I've heard said before, our faith isn't handed down genetically; it's handed down personally.

I am at least halfway through my life's journey, and I want to be busy doing things that really matter and not be deceived into thinking that what may seem mundane and everyday doesn't matter for legacy purposes. God can use every single one of us to be a part of something so much bigger than ourselves: to be a light to those around us, pointing them to the living God of all the universe through seemingly simple things. We mustn't let our daily opportunities to influence others for eternity pass us by. I'm a daughter, a wife, a mother, a sister, an aunt, a friend, and a child of the King of Kings. I have a legacy I want to pass on to those who come behind me.

And I (Lauren) am still early in life, trying to think about stewarding the years I have ahead of me. I went against the trend of my millennial generation and got married young, while still in college. I met my husband, Michael, when we were both just seven years old. We started as Sunday school sweethearts, grew up in the same church, married in 2009 as twenty-one-year-old college students, and finished our last year of school together. Now we've embarked on the adventure of building our careers and dreaming about the future. Along the way, we've finished graduate degrees and are both now pursuing PhDs.

Just as I was finishing my undergraduate degree, I had the privilege of being the first person hired to work with the newly formed Museum of the Bible. During those early years, I experienced firsthand the rapid growth of a start-up project which turned into a world-class museum in Washington, D.C., less than eight years after its inception. Along the way, I remembered my

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passion for working in the corporate environment, and I recently transitioned into a role at Hobby Lobby, where I work as corporate ambassador.

In this journey, my husband and I have experienced the normal challenges of budgeting, the difficult seasons of marriage, the ache of infertility, and the challenge of having grace for each other. It is a story I hadn't quite expected, but as God reveals each step, I want to be intentional with the opportunities and challenges ahead of me.

We are people—women—just like you. Trying our best to spend our time on this earth in a way that makes a difference. Trying, succeeding, and stumbling along the way, trusting that even the mundane moments matter in an eternal scope. That is the hope for a legacy: to outlive our lives by the impact we leave behind.

Now, whenever the subject of legacy arises among Christians, it is usually a reference to the legacy of men. It's pretty safe to say that there are more men mentioned in the Bible, recognized throughout history, and likely to be recognized in leadership roles even today, not just in our country but around the globe.

Does this mean that women don't matter as much? Of course not! We simply are more likely to be valued for roles that don't get a plaque or an award. This sentiment was reiterated by Bishop Ndimbe of Kenya when he said, "Train a man, you train an individual; train a woman, you build a nation." Not always, but most often, it is the women who have a directional and influential role in the way a society goes, because they are the ones most often taking care of that society's most valuable asset: the next generation.

As a woman, whether or not you happen to be a mother, you have an irreplaceable role in our society. God created women with unique gifts and traits, and we all have an important role in passing on our legacy of faith.

A classic illustration of legacy tracks the family lines of two colonial-era men—Jonathan Edwards and Max Juke. Perhaps you've seen or heard this illustration. Edwards, a Massachusetts Puritan revivalist and theologian, died in 1758. Juke, an irreligious and hard-drinking man, farmed and did manual labor jobs off and on in rural New York at roughly the same time. Both men fathered many children and thus produced a multitude of descendants.

More than one hundred years later, a sociologist by the name of Richard Dugdale carried out a remarkably detailed study of Juke's hundreds of descendants.³ The study revealed a legacy largely of heartache, misery, criminality, imprisonment, alcoholism, and premature death. Clearly, not all legacies are positive ones. Nevertheless, this remarkable research prompted another researcher to perform a similar exercise with the offspring of Jonathan Edwards.⁴ By 1900, among the preacher's more than fourteen hundred descendants, the researcher discovered:

- Three hundred preachers
- One hundred missionaries
- Eighty public office holders (including one vice president of the United States and thirteen US senators)
- Seventy-five military officers
- Thirteen college presidents
- Many doctors, lawyers, and teachers

Two men. Two legacies.

But what about the legacy of women? The legacy of Jonathan Edwards belongs equally to his wife of more than thirty years, Sarah (Pierpont) Edwards. These are *her* descendants too. Some biographers and historians have suggested that Jonathan Edwards' impact and prominence never would have materialized apart from his partnership with Sarah. She was a remarkable

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Christian woman who contributed equally to her family's legacy, even if it was not from the pulpit or the stage.

For too long we've thought of legacy-leaving as primarily the concern of men. Countless bronze monuments in American parks and town squares stand as silent reminders of the exploits or achievements of our manly generals, inventors, and founders. Of course, it is right that these leaders are honored so. We are all the beneficiaries of their courage, perseverance, and genius. But few women are honored for their leadership on the battlefield or in the corporate boardroom. And there are forms of leadership that go beyond these realms and are just as important. Profound and lasting legacies are often forged in quieter, less visible ways. Sarah Edwards is only one of these amazing women of legacy who lived her one life for Christ with remarkable faithfulness.

In these pages, we plan to reveal the underappreciated truth that Christian women can and do lead, and that history is filled with examples of bold, courageous, innovative women who loved God and rose to face the challenge of their times, forging a lasting impact on the course of human events. In every respect, these women were just like you and us. At the same time, they clearly displayed specific virtues that we can all cultivate and emulate.

Through the stories and journeys of these women, as well as through some of our own journeys, and by examining twelve characteristics of women of legacy, we hope to be encouragers of *your* journey of legacy.

What Is Legacy?

So what do we mean by legacy? It's certainly a grand word, and a daunting word at that. So let's start by what we don't mean. Legacy is not the idea of leaving financial wealth to someone. It's not reserved only for people whose names will be in history

books, on monuments, or in record books. Legacy is far more. It is the story of your life that lives on after you leave this earth. You write this story every day through the values you embrace and live out. Your legacy can be positive or destructive, but the outcome is always up to you. When viewed from this lens of small daily actions and how they add up, creating a legacy is the most important job we can undertake.

Even God's design of the human body testifies to this feminine capacity for legacy. Geneticists tell us that every living person has a special form of DNA housed in every cell of his or her body, residing inside microscopic structures called mitochondria. This mitochondrial DNA is passed down only from our mothers. Your mother received hers from her mother. And she from her mother, and so forth, reaching back through the maternal generations into the ancient mists of human history to mankind's first mother. Every living person on earth is a product of this amazing maternal legacy.

In a similar way, there are certain cultural and societal impacts that we women are uniquely gifted by God to make. In every place on earth and in every time in history, right down to ours, women have been the keepers of the flame of family unity and the binders of the cords of connectedness. We are seemingly handcrafted by God Himself to be the conversation starters, the communication hubs, and the culture keepers.

Typically, women serve as the family scribes and historians. With our scrapbooks, newsletters, cards, and social media posts, we celebrate the milestones, keep in touch with friends and family members, share the news of both victories and challenges, and chronicle every aspect of family history. Who lovingly fills out the baby books and family Bibles? We do.

We also tend to function as the cultivators of connection and relationship. Who organizes the holiday gatherings and family reunions? Who plans the office Christmas celebrations and

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birthday parties? Who reaches out consistently to distant loved ones to keep the bonds of relationship mended and strong? Who gets teased about the amount of time spent on the phone or on social media, making sure everyone feels heard and valued and loved? In most cases, it is we women.

We are usually the ones reading the stories or saying the bedtime prayers, snuggling in rocking chairs, whispering words of comfort, affirmation, and biblical truth into impressionable little ears. It is at our knees where those little ones are likely to first hear about the love of a mighty yet kind Father and about the gentle Shepherd who loves and cares for His sheep.

It is in our nature to pour ourselves into the ones we love, and that is a beautiful part of legacy. Legacy is so much more than your family history or the possessions you pass on to the next generation. As Dr. James Dobson once said at a conference, “Heritage is what you *give* to someone. Legacy is what you do *in* someone.”

All of this and more endows the Christian woman with an amazing power, not to mention an immense responsibility. Our unique roles and gifts provide us with the opportunity to be *influencers*. How we use that power is up to us. We can wield it in positive, negative, or neutral ways.

You see, God has designated a pathway for women that, when followed, leads to a significant, positive impact that extends beyond our days and expands for generations. Author Max Lucado calls this “outliving your life.”⁵ Others might call it creating a godly legacy. Whatever you call it, this influence is vital. You are uniquely created and equipped to become a woman of legacy. Are you ready to start building?

The Pathway to Becoming Women of Legacy

We believe God has marked a pathway for becoming the women of legacy our times so desperately need. The good news is, we

have three wonderful sources for wisdom and insight on how to walk this path.

First and foremost, we have the Word of God. All of Scripture is important, but the lives of certain women of the Bible are a particularly rich source of inspiration.

Second, we have the inspiring examples of Christian women throughout history who rose to the challenges of their times, answered the call to leadership, and in doing so, established a powerful legacy. Some can accurately be said to have changed the course of history. Some are household names, but many did their leading and legacy building in quiet obscurity.

Third, we have shining examples among us today. There are women all over the world living out their faith in a multitude of significant ways.

As we go along, we'll share the journey of these ordinary women who have believed. By highlighting these women, we are not suggesting that they are perfect. The truth is, we are all flawed people whom God is transforming and healing. As a result, we wrestled with how to share the stories of these modern-day legacy builders whose stories are still being written. Any one of us might stumble at some point in the future. Yet we are mindful that through the cross of Christ, there is grace for all of us, and we all need it in equal measure.

Any future failings wouldn't invalidate the inspiring truth of the examples these women are providing today. So we will highlight the diversity of ways God can and does use us women when we submit to His wonderful, infallible Word and follow His Son, our Savior. Although each generation of women from the beginning of time has faced challenges, we feel now more than ever the need to encourage women of faith to realize the potential impact they can have. We are surrounded by a culture that is heavily influenced by social media and the entertainment world, which most often doesn't resonate with our foundational

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beliefs. It is important to remember what really matters and why we believe what we believe, and to keep that at the forefront of each day.

In the following chapters, we'll bring all three types of women forward as witnesses to testify, to teach, and to inspire. And we'll offer some thoughts about how their powerful stories can impact a woman today. By the time we're done, we believe, you'll be better equipped—and encouraged—to be the woman of legacy God has called you to be.

Like Marie Green, and like so many other women who have gone before us, you have only one life. It is an extraordinary gift from God. Let's learn to use our precious days on earth to make an impact that will last. No matter who you are, no matter what qualifications you feel you have or don't have, we all have a few things in common: we have twenty-four hours in a day, and we have a desire for God to use our lives for His glory. That's more than enough! So let's be women who get busy doing good with the time that we have.

CHAPTER 1

THE LEGACY OF COURAGE



The uplift of a fearless heart will help us over barriers. No one ever overcomes difficulties by going at them in a hesitant, doubtful way.

—Laura Ingalls Wilder

You know, sometimes all you need is twenty seconds of insane courage.” That’s how Barbara Green, quoting Benjamin Mee of *We Bought a Zoo*, likes to start some of her speeches when sharing about her journey all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States in the *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* case. When we think of courage, we tend to think of men on a battlefield in some heroic fight. But women? Oh, we have courage too.

It’s so true: all it takes is twenty seconds of insane courage. Courage often comes in the everyday, the common, the unrecognized. Sometimes it is simply courage to face the day, the crying baby, the distant husband, or the circumstances of your everyday life. Take a peek with us.

The Courage of the Outcast

Esther—or Hadassah, as she was known as a little girl—gingerly places the ornate golden wine goblet at the king’s designated place at the table. She eyes it for a moment, then turns it a few

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degrees so the royal seal faces precisely forward. As she and her handmaidens meticulously lay out the banquet table, the young queen of Persia can't help but think of a verse from one of the ancient songs of her people. More than five centuries before her time, long before this seemingly endless era of captivity and exile, a future king of Israel had sung: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

On this night, it is Esther who prepares a table for two invited guests. The first is her husband, King Ahasuerus, known to the Greeks as Xerxes of Persia, the god-emperor of the largest empire the world has yet seen. The other is her enemy—a wicked, powerful government official who burns with an unholy, murderous hatred for all her people. This is a man who has the king's ear and his trust, one of the most well-connected men in all the empire.

Tonight Esther, the orphan girl who came to the palace out of obscurity, is going to accuse him face-to-face of treason.

Doing so, however, requires that she also reveal to the king her most explosive secret. She has deceived him, or at least she has withheld the whole truth about herself. That truth? She is but one of the tens of thousands of Jewish exiles living in the Persian Empire. *She is an outcast.* She doesn't belong in the palace of the king.

She cannot guess how he will react to this revelation, but she is terrifyingly aware of his reputation for fits of wild, irrational rage. She knows he once commanded that the sea be punished with three hundred lashes after a sudden storm destroyed a temporary bridge he'd just constructed across the narrow strait dividing his empire from Greece.

Yes, the man who'd once sought to have the ocean itself whipped into submission is about to hear from her own lips that she isn't who he thinks she is. So to calm her racing mind and heart, she quietly sings a song of her people:

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow
of death,

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

The biblical story of Esther is a majestic story, but within that story there is a simple truth. Esther doesn't belong. She is not of royal descent. She is no princess, let alone a queen—at least that's what the voices inside her head are telling her. Worse still, she's Jewish. She's an exile. She's living away from her homeland. She's an orphan. Her parents are gone, and she was taken in and raised by her cousin.

Somehow, with all these strikes against her, she's become the queen to a man she doesn't love. The fine clothes she wears, the perfume, the attendants to wait on her every need are finery that she considers foreign. Every day her heart cries out in wonder, *What am I doing here?* And in the same breath, *I don't belong.*

We suspect that the voices inside Esther's head are the voices you've heard as well. They are all the voices telling you that you don't belong or aren't good enough or don't measure up to some magazine or television ad.

The saga for Esther doesn't end, however, simply with her elevation to the position of queen. There's something more. It seems that God always has something more for us, something that might stretch us well beyond what we might choose for ourselves. Her people are in peril. They will certainly suffer and die at the edict of the king. Her cousin approaches her and asks her to do the unthinkable: speak to the king on behalf of her people.

Her heart has a thousand objections. You can hear them: *I'm not a speaker. I'm just a young girl. No one can approach the king*

Only One Life

How a Woman's Every Day Shapes an Eternal Legacy

By Jackie Green & Lauren Green McAfee with Bill High

In *Only One Life*, mother-and-daughter team Jackie Green and Lauren McAfee invite you to join the company of women God is using to change the world. Through vivid portraits of women of the Bible, women of history, and women shaping the world today, you will discover how God multiplies seemingly small daily offerings of faithfulness. Come and see your own story reflected in the lives of women such as: Mary Magdalene, the first witness to Jesus's resurrection; Catherine Booth, an early apologist for women's rights and co-founder of the Salvation Army; Christine Caine, a contemporary speaker and human rights activist; and other ordinary women who have done extraordinary things, including Harriet Tubman, Queen Esther, Lottie Moon, and Joni Eareckson Tada.

Building a legacy through your "only one life" is not a calling for the elite few. It is a calling for you—as a woman with unique capacity to shape the future through your faith, family, gifts, and leadership. *Only One Life* will encourage and empower you to develop grit, grace, and the long view—able to change your world forever—starting today.

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