

Fit to Burst

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ABUNDANCE, MAYHEM, AND THE
JOYS OF MOTHERHOOD



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To my mom and dad,
who are the best

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Foreword



I'll tell you the truth about this book. It seems only fair since, apparently, you are sitting with it in your hands, about to dive in. If I were a great mother, this book would not be here. If I always knew what to do with my kids—if it all came easily—there would have been nothing to say. You don't have to wrestle with issues if you aren't struggling with them, after all.

Many of the things I write about are quite current for me, and they will be tomorrow, too. Having thought of a way to deal with something does not take care of that issue forever. I will continue to have to practice the things I write about, and that is good.

I don't pull punches or hold back in this book, because I am writing to myself as much as to you. I know that as mothers we face very similar temptations, and we have a unique opportunity to sympathize with each other over those challenges. We have a common bond.

We are the sisterhood of the people who know about long days. That is true. But the fact that we all face the same temptations should give us a burning desire to conquer them, not to wallow in them. I write hard-hitting things to myself, because I want to grow in grace. I'm sharing them with you in the hopes that they will strengthen your faith and encourage you to mother in a way that honors Christ.

If something in this book strikes a little close to home for you, know that it struck in my home first. I am not writing about other people's problems, although I know many of them are common. I write about what I know, and what I know is the challenges, the joys, the work that is involved in raising little people.

If you don't want to be challenged, then don't read this book. If you are just looking for sympathy and an eye-roll about the work you do, just mention you have children to someone at the grocery store.

This book is a collection of "field notes" from a mom seeking to honor the Lord in her daily life. It isn't a method or a system, because it is messy, just like the life I am busy living.

I write quickly, in a short amount of time. I write during my normal life, with my kids doing the normal thing. I write with a toddler on my lap or type with one hand while I nurse my sweet new boy. I am not pretending to be a mother, writing about motherhood in the abstract—I am writing about what is very real to me.

I hope you can hear my little people in the background of this book. I hope you can hear them playing, telling me they are thirsty, or periodically interrupting for snacks. I hope you can hear that we are making playdough, or dealing with someone who is crying.

Since I wrote *Loving the Little Years*, my children have grown a little. What I write about has grown a little bit too. But it is built on the same foundation—grace, grace, and more grace. I hope that it will encourage you in some way.

CHAPTER ONE

The Paradox Perspective



Before you dive into this book, I'd like to make sure that I am perfectly clear about a few things. As you read, you will notice a lot of emphasis on giving and sacrifice. To keep the whole book from becoming one huge parenthetical remark, I'd like to discuss this at the outset. The mentality of sacrifice is not a mentality of sorrow. The life of giving is not an empty life. I am not writing about sacrifice because I think that moms as a whole are not run-down enough, or tired enough, or working hard enough. I write about it because it is the first step to encouragement, to clearing your mind, to being fulfilled.

Scripture is very clear on this—if you seek to be full, give. The verse about the first being last and the last being first is not talking about how all the winners will be losers at the end. As though life were a footrace and at the end a little surprise switcheroo happens—the