

Confessions

of a Christian Wife

A Look at Relationships and Faith



DR. HEATHER THOMPSON DAY

 **Pacific Press**[®]
Publishing Association
Nampa, Idaho | www.pacificpress.com

Confessions of a Christian Wife

I think people would be happier if they admitted things more often. In a sense we are all prisoners of some memory, or fear, or disappointment—we are all defined by something we can't change.

—Simon Van Booy

I am just going to come right out and say it—Christians can be fake. If I have just caused you to squint your eyes, then first, you need to understand that I am one of you. I'm not just an Easter and Christmas Christian. I'm not the Christian who only thinks Scripture is good for Instagram selfies. I'm hard core. I've read the Bible cover to cover more times than I've binged *Back to the Future*, and trust me, that's a lot. I attended church school for the majority of my education, and I play Bible trivia games for fun. I can answer which servant of Saul introduced David to Mephibosheth without using Google. (Ziba. Thanks for playing.)

This isn't a criticism of the church from the outside; this is coming from someone who can turn to a song in the hymnal faster than you can locate it on Pandora. I feel more romantic about Christ each day I'm alive, and so I hope we can be adults here and have a real conversation. Oftentimes, Christians are fake, and it's a turnoff.

When I first decided I was really going to do this religion thing, I, too, thought this meant I had to be perfect. Timehop graciously shows me my old status updates, and I legit want to throw up in my mouth each time. I was like a sugar-coated peep dipped in caramel and then slathered in chocolate icing: too sweet. No one's buying that.

Confessions of a Christian Wife

I didn't want anyone to question whether I had a sincere relationship with God, so I tried to say the right thing at all times and even felt a need to prove that I was a good person. Somewhere along the way, I think God was like, "K, girl, chill out," and I went through the strangely difficult process of allowing myself to be who I actually am. I tried to be the perfect Christian, and it turns out that God just needed me to be myself.

I know I'm not alone in this because hello newsfeed! I see it all the time. Christians trying to outdo one another in their Christianness. Everyone pretending they have it all together. Making sure that every good deed doesn't go without a notification and photo op. But look fam, that's not who Christ was.

The Bible says to give in such a way that your left hand doesn't know what your right hand has done. (See Matthew 6:3.) Christ didn't wait till there was a crowd to begin His sermon. He would get so lost in a compelling conversation with one person that others gathered. I had a professor who told me once that no one is ever converted from the pulpit. If you want to make an impact, you have to get off the stage and start having some real conversations with some real people as the real you. You don't have to post photos of your Bible or Hebrew tattoo to prove that you like Jesus. Just be kind and respectful. Give to people who need help. Spend your energy trying to boost others, rather than looking for ways for others to boost you. Live in such a humble, gracious, loving way that people just want to be next to you—all different types of people. Not just other Christian people. Because PS, that's how Christianity works.

Whenever we try too hard to convince others of something, I worry that we're actually trying to convince ourselves. I have spent the last couple of years focusing on showing God, rather than other people, who I am. I'd say that it was easy, but it wasn't. My natural instinct is to love the crowd, the compliments, and the attention. But if you read through the Gospels, you will find very quickly that Christ actually let Himself get lost in a crowd, wasn't looking for compliments, and never sought out attention. The Man was the embodiment of humility, and if anyone

Confessions of a Christian Wife

should have acted like He walked on water, uh, well—Christ!

So stop faking it. Stop with the awkward sermonizing of pain. Stop smiling to people's faces if you are going to whisper behind their backs. Stop pretending that your kids are perfect. OK, so I totally do that, but only because they are under seven. How bad can they be? It's too soon for me to worry about running random drug tests. Right now, my biggest concern is getting them to stop leaving poop stains in their underpants. #THESTRUGGLEISREAL.

Stop pretending like your marriage is perfect. Don't get me wrong, I'm *obsessed* with my husband. But I'd be lying if I didn't admit that I've stood in the driveway, screaming at his taillights once—or ten times—in our marriage. My apologies to our neighbors.

Stop the holier-than-thou spiel. Stop the hypocrisy. Stop quoting 1 Corinthians 13 and then laughing at racist jokes. Stop pretending as if you've never stubbed your toe and dropped an expletive (*shut up*, we are all sinners).

Christianity is about coming to God as you are, and hoping that each day He will help you put a little more good into a world with a lot of bad juju. It's about genuinely loving God and genuinely loving people. The world doesn't need more perfect Christians. But it does need more authentic ones.

For the next thirty-one days, I am going to be real with you. We are going to talk strategies for love and pain. We will go through relationship do's and don'ts. We will discuss what happens in marriage and how I'm still trying to be a real Christian. I am going to be honest about what I have found that works in my life and marriage and what doesn't. This book isn't about filters or Photoshop. I made a pact with God when I was twenty-two years old that if He ever allowed me to publish a book, I would be honest about who I was. So this is me being honest about the fact that sometimes I fail as a Christian, a wife, and a mother. But I can also tell you that I genuinely love God and I genuinely love people. That seems like a good place to start.

So here is to thirty-one days of being real and being a better wife.

Confessions of a Christian Wife

Bible Verse for Reflection

“Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body” (Ephesians 4:25).

Questions

Ask your partner to go through these questions with you each day for the next thirty-one days. You will need to work together.

- What would you like to be more honest with yourself about?
- What do you hope to improve about your marriage in the next thirty-one days?