

## 4

*The Sweetest Song*

Perched atop her hospital bed overlooking the now-neglected garden, Lauren continued to rue the day she entered her friend's beauty salon. All for the sake of vanity, she mumbled disgustedly. Though the sun was shining and the birds were chirping merrily as they built their spring homes, nothing lifted Lauren's sour mood. I am trying to maintain a positive attitude, I really am, Lauren's eyebrows lifting as if to persuade herself. This is just too much for any sane person to take. First I fall over a roller, break my foot and end up in a cast for six weeks. Now, I find out my foot hasn't knit itself back together and the doctor is suggesting surgery. No way. I'll just sit it out for another two weeks and we'll see. Even if I had the surgery done tomorrow, I wouldn't be any help to Lindsay when she moves upstate. I want to be there right along with everyone else, helping my only daughter move into her first home. I know it's nothing earth-shattering, but Lord, I do want to be a part of this new juncture for Lindsay. I need to be there, to see that she gets settled properly. And I believe she wants me there too. But no, I'm lying here, being a good patient . . . in body at least, trying to mend myself, but I feel so frustrated. I want to get up, I have a thousand little errands to run, and all the extra surprises I

had planned to make Lindsay's last weeks at home are pointless now. Lord, help me here. I'm running myself ragged without moving a muscle. Everywhere I look, I see another task that needs tending to and still here I sit. Alone. Everyone else is out doing something productive, except me. If I can't "do" anything, what else is there?

A sudden wash of shame swept over Lauren. Forgive me, Lord, you really do know how to shake a girl up. Prayer—the sweetest song, the most important task of all, and I'd forgotten.



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*Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.*

—JAMES 5:16

*Dear Lord, how shall I begin? You are already so very aware of my internal conflicts. You see my struggles and hear my pleas. Still, amazingly, you love me. You beckon me to come close and love you as well. Lord, I ask your forgiveness for my attitude of ungratefulness. I am so grieved that I continue to run circles around myself in my feeble attempts to feel better about my circumstances. I want to know that everything will be as I planned. Yet life is too untamable! Nothing is ever guaranteed. I realize that even though my calculated plans may not come to pass in the way I imagined them, I can still offer my service in a far more valuable way. I can pray. While I long to be in the midst of the "action," I understand*

*that your promises tell us that as we pray much can be accomplished. Lord, let it be so. Accomplish much through my prayers. Teach me how to pray according to your will and let the power be released from the heavens to bring honor and glory to you. Thank you for the lessons you are teaching me even now. I am learning, though slowly I admit, to sit quietly at your feet. To rest in the knowledge that you are present with me, with those I love, every minute. This comforts me greatly. Though I am unable to carry on with my own work, I willingly choose to labor in prayer for your people. Guide my thoughts, my words. I ask that you do your work and give me the privilege to be a part of this grand story called life. One day, I believe each of us will truly understand just how significant our tiny portions were. Thank you again for loving me back to the truth, for giving me another chance to draw near to you. I praise you, Lord, you are wonderful. You are my God and the reason for my song. Amen.*

*Although power can force obedience, only love can summon a response of love, which is the one thing God wants from us and the reason he created us.*

—PHILIP YANCEY IN *The Jesus I Never Knew*