THE DAILY BREAD

*The Fiat of the Beloved*



# The Longing

*Restlessness as a Compass*

A FORMATION BOOK BY

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*The Everyday Apostle*

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INTRODUCTION

# The Ache You Cannot Name

There is an ache that almost every woman carries, and almost no one talks about. It is not usually a dramatic crisis. More often it is quiet, a low-level sense that something is missing even when everything looks fine, a restlessness that surfaces in the still moments, a feeling that there must be more than this, that she was made for something she has not yet found. She may have a good life, a family she loves, work that matters, faith she practices, and still, underneath it all, the ache persists, a longing she cannot quite name and cannot quite satisfy, no matter what she achieves or acquires or arranges.

Most women treat this ache as a problem, a sign that something is wrong with them, a discontent to be fixed or suppressed or medicated away. They try to fill it with more, more accomplishment, more approval, more control, more of whatever seems to promise satisfaction, and the ache returns, every time, no matter how much they pour into it. And so they conclude that they are ungrateful, or broken, or simply greedy, and they carry the ache as a secret shame. But what if the ache is not a flaw? What if the restlessness is not a problem to be solved but a signal to be read, not a defect in your design but a feature of it, pointing you somewhere you have not yet thought to look?

*You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you. — St. Augustine, Confessions, Book I*

This book is about that ache, and about the astonishing possibility that it is not your enemy but your compass. We will see that the restlessness almost every woman carries is universal, woven into human nature itself. We will look at the wrong places women look to satisfy it, and why they cannot. We will trace the ladder of happiness that leads from fleeting pleasure to lasting joy. We will discover that you were made for God alone, and that nothing less will ever fill the ache. And we will see that the longing, rightly read, is a mercy, a compass pointing you home to the only One who can satisfy it.

CHAPTER ONE

# The Restlessness Everyone Carries

### *The Longing Woven Into You*

The first thing to understand about the ache is that you are not alone in it and not broken for it, for the restlessness you carry is universal, woven into human nature itself, felt by

every person who has ever lived, however differently it shows itself. The woman who thinks her discontent is a personal flaw, a sign that she alone is ungrateful or greedy or hard to satisfy, has misread something that is in fact common to all. Understanding that the restlessness is universal, built into what it means to be human, is the first step to reading it rightly rather than as a shameful defect.

*He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart.*
*— Ecclesiastes 3:11*

## Everyone Is Looking for the Same Thing

Beneath the enormous variety of human lives and desires runs a single shared pursuit: everyone, everywhere, is looking for happiness, for a satisfaction and fullness that the heart is reaching toward in all it does. The forms this pursuit takes are endless, the achievements chased, the relationships sought, the pleasures pursued, the security built, but beneath them all is the same reaching, the same longing for a happiness that would finally satisfy. This is not a flaw but a fact of human nature, the restlessness that drives all human striving, and it is universal, shared by every person in every age, however differently they pursue it. The woman who feels the ache is not strange or greedy but simply human, reaching like everyone else for the happiness that the heart was made to seek. Everyone is looking for the same thing, the happiness and fullness the heart reaches toward, and the restlessness a woman feels is not a personal defect but the universal human longing she shares with every person who has ever lived.

## Eternity in the Heart

Scripture names the source of this restlessness with startling precision, saying that God has put eternity into the human heart, placed within us a longing for something infinite and eternal that no finite, temporal thing can satisfy. This is why the ache persists no matter how much a woman achieves or acquires, for she has eternity in her heart, a longing for the infinite, and the finite goods she pours into it, however good, cannot fill a space made for something infinite. The restlessness is the sign of eternity within her, the reaching of a heart made for the infinite toward a satisfaction that nothing finite can give, and it explains why every finite thing, however good, eventually leaves her still reaching. She was made with eternity in her heart, a longing too big for anything less than the infinite, and so the ache is not a defect but the sign of her true size, a heart made for more than this world can hold. Eternity in the heart is the source of the restlessness, for God has placed within every person a longing for the infinite that no finite thing can satisfy, and the persistent ache is the sign of this eternity within, a heart made for something no temporal good can fill.

### How Women Carry It

While the restlessness is universal, women often carry it in a particular way, not usually as a dramatic crisis but as a chronic, quiet sense that something is missing, a low-level ache that surfaces beneath even a full and functioning life. For many women the longing does not announce itself in obvious discontent but hums quietly beneath the surface, a sense in the still moments that there must be more, a restlessness that persists even when everything looks fine, even amid a life full of good things. This quiet form of the ache can be especially confusing, for a woman may have no obvious reason for discontent, may be grateful for her life and yet still feel the longing, and conclude that she is ungrateful or impossible to satisfy. But the quiet ache beneath a good life is the same universal longing, simply carried in a woman's characteristic way, as a chronic low-level sense that something more is being sought. How women carry the restlessness, often as a quiet persistent ache beneath a full life rather than a dramatic crisis, can make it confusing, but it is the same universal longing, and recognizing it for what it is frees a woman from the false shame of thinking her discontent means something is wrong with her.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Looking in the Wrong Places

### *Why the Usual Answers Fail*

If the restlessness is a longing for something, the natural question is what, and most women spend their lives seeking it in places that cannot hold it, pouring the infinite longing into finite things that promise satisfaction and never quite deliver. The usual answers, achievement, approval, relationships, control, comfort, are not evil, but they are insufficient, unable to satisfy a longing made for the infinite, and understanding why they fail is essential to stop exhausting oneself in the wrong places. Seeing why the usual answers fail frees a woman to stop looking where satisfaction cannot be found.

*They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water. — Jeremiah 2:13*

### The Broken Cisterns

Scripture gives a piercing image for the misdirected search: a people who have forsaken the fountain of living water and dug for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water, trading the source of satisfaction for containers that leak it away. This is precisely what a woman does when she seeks her deep satisfaction in finite things, digging cisterns,

building containers of achievement, approval, relationship, or control, hoping they will hold the satisfaction she longs for, and finding them always leaking, always empty again, unable to hold what she pours in. The broken cisterns are not evil in themselves, for achievement and relationship and the rest are genuine goods, but they are broken as containers of ultimate satisfaction, unable to hold the infinite longing, leaking it away so that the woman must return again and again to refill a cistern that cannot hold. The image explains the endless striving, the return again and again to the same empty sources, the exhaustion of pouring the infinite longing into finite containers that cannot hold it. The broken cisterns are the finite things a woman seeks her satisfaction in, which cannot hold the infinite longing and leave her always empty again, and recognizing them as broken cisterns is the first step to stop returning to sources that cannot satisfy.

## The Specific Places Women Dig

Women tend to dig their cisterns in particular places, seeking their deep satisfaction in characteristic ways that are worth naming, for a woman cannot stop digging where satisfaction is not found until she sees where she has been digging. Many women seek their satisfaction in achievement, in being productive and accomplished enough to feel worthy; in approval, in being liked, admired, and validated by others; in relationships, in finding a person who will finally complete them; in control, in arranging life and others so that nothing threatens them; in appearance, in being beautiful enough; in their children's success, in managing an image. These are the specific cisterns women dig, the particular finite things into which they pour their infinite longing, and each promises the satisfaction it cannot give, leaking it away and leaving the woman reaching again. Naming the specific places one digs, the characteristic cisterns of achievement, approval, relationship, and control, helps a woman see where she has been seeking satisfaction that cannot be found there. The specific places women dig, achievement, approval, relationship, control, appearance, are the characteristic cisterns into which women pour their infinite longing, each promising a satisfaction it cannot hold, and naming where one has been digging is necessary to stop seeking satisfaction where it cannot be found.

## Good Things, Insufficient Things

It is important to see that the problem with these cisterns is not that they are bad but that they are insufficient, that achievement, approval, relationship, and the rest are genuine goods that simply cannot bear the weight of ultimate satisfaction a woman places on them. The longing a woman feels is not satisfied by these things not because they are evil, for they are good gifts, but because they are finite and the longing is infinite, because they are meant to be enjoyed as goods and not worshiped as gods, and when a woman asks them to give her the ultimate satisfaction that only the infinite can give, she asks of them

what they cannot provide and ruins them in the asking. The good things become broken cisterns only when they are made to bear the weight of ultimate satisfaction, when the finite is asked to fill the infinite longing, and the problem is not the goodness of the things but the insufficiency of finite things for an infinite need. This frees a woman not to despise the good things but to stop asking of them what they cannot give, to enjoy them as the goods they are without demanding from them the ultimate satisfaction only God can provide. Good things, insufficient things, the cisterns women dig are genuine goods that simply cannot bear the weight of ultimate satisfaction, and the problem is not their badness but their insufficiency for an infinite longing, so that a woman is freed to enjoy them as goods without asking of them what only the infinite can give.

CHAPTER THREE

# The Ladder of Happiness

### *From Fleeting Pleasure to Lasting Joy*

The great thinkers of the Christian tradition understood that happiness comes in different kinds, arranged in a kind of ladder from the lowest and most fleeting to the highest and most lasting, and seeing this ladder helps a woman understand why her satisfaction keeps slipping away and where lasting joy is actually found. The lower rungs are real but fleeting, giving a happiness that does not last, while the higher rungs give a happiness that endures, and most women spend their lives on the lower rungs and wonder why they are never satisfied. Understanding the ladder of happiness reveals where a woman has been seeking and where lasting joy actually lies.

*You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. — Psalm 16:11*

## The Lower Rungs

The lowest rungs of happiness are the most immediate and the most fleeting: the happiness of pleasure, the good feeling of something enjoyable, and above it the happiness of achievement and ego, the satisfaction of accomplishing, winning, being admired and successful. These are real happinesses, genuinely good in their place, and most of the world's striving is aimed at them, at the pleasures and the achievements that promise satisfaction. But they are the lower rungs precisely because they are fleeting, giving a happiness that does not last, for the pleasure fades and must be renewed, and the achievement, once gained, leaves the heart reaching for the next, so that a woman on these rungs is never finally satisfied, always needing the next pleasure or the next

accomplishment to feel happy again. The lower rungs give a real but passing happiness, and the woman who lives on them alone is caught in the endless striving to renew a satisfaction that keeps slipping away. The lower rungs of happiness, pleasure and achievement, are real but fleeting, giving a satisfaction that fades and must be endlessly renewed, and the woman who seeks her happiness only there is never finally satisfied, always reaching for the next pleasure or accomplishment to feel happy again.

## The Higher Rungs

Above the fleeting happiness of pleasure and achievement rise the higher rungs, the more lasting happinesses: the happiness of doing good for others, of love and service and virtue, which satisfies more deeply than any pleasure or accomplishment, and above it the highest happiness of all, union with God Himself. The happiness of goodness, of loving and serving others, of living virtuously, is a higher and more lasting happiness than pleasure or achievement, for it does not fade in the same way but deepens, satisfying the heart at a level the lower rungs cannot reach. And above even this rises the highest happiness, the union with God for which the heart was made, the fullness of joy found in His presence, which alone fully and finally satisfies the infinite longing. These higher rungs give a happiness that lasts, that deepens rather than fades, that reaches the deep places the lower rungs leave empty, and they point toward the summit of all happiness, which is God Himself. The higher rungs of happiness, the good done for others and above all union with God, give a lasting and deepening satisfaction that the fleeting lower rungs cannot, and they point toward the summit of all happiness, the fullness of joy found in God's presence.

## Why You Keep Settling Lower

The tragedy of the ladder is that most women spend their lives on the lower rungs, settling for the fleeting happiness of pleasure and achievement while the lasting joy of the higher rungs goes unsought, and understanding why reveals how to climb. Women settle for the lower rungs because they are immediate and obvious, because the culture relentlessly points to them, because the higher happiness requires more and comes less quickly, so that a woman fills her life with the pursuit of pleasure and achievement, the lower rungs, and never climbs to the lasting joy above. The lower happiness, being immediate, crowds out the higher, being slower, so that a woman can spend her whole life busy on the lower rungs and never taste the deeper joy for which her heart was made. The restlessness she feels is in part the heart's protest at being kept on the lower rungs, its reaching for the higher happiness it was made for, and the way forward is to stop settling lower and begin to climb toward the lasting joy that only the higher rungs, and ultimately God, can give. Why you keep settling lower, filling life with the immediate

happiness of pleasure and achievement while the lasting joy of the higher rungs goes unsought, reveals that the restlessness is the heart's protest at being kept low, and the way forward is to stop settling for fleeting happiness and climb toward the lasting joy for which the heart was made.

CHAPTER FOUR

# Made for God Alone

### *Why Only the Infinite Satisfies*

At the top of the ladder, and at the end of all the longing, stands the truth that explains everything: you were made for God alone, and nothing less than the infinite God will ever satisfy the infinite longing He placed in your heart. This is the deepest answer to the ache, the reason every finite thing has failed to fill it, and the destination toward which the whole restless search has been pointing all along. Understanding that you were made for God alone reveals why only He can satisfy and turns the longing toward its true home.

*I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. — John 6:35*

## An Infinite Longing Needs an Infinite Object

The reason no finite thing has satisfied the ache is simple once it is seen: the longing is infinite, made for the infinite, and only an infinite object can fill it, so that every finite thing, however good, is necessarily too small. A longing made for the infinite cannot be satisfied by anything finite, for the finite thing, however large and good, is still finite, still too small for a longing that reaches toward the infinite, and so it leaves the heart still reaching, still hungry, still unsatisfied. This is why achievement, relationship, pleasure, and all the finite goods fail to fill the ache, not because they are bad but because they are finite, and the longing is infinite, so that only an infinite object could ever fill it. And there is only one infinite object, only one who is infinite enough to satisfy an infinite longing: God Himself. The heart made for the infinite will be satisfied by nothing less than the infinite God, and this is why only He can fill the ache that every finite thing leaves empty. An infinite longing needs an infinite object, and since only God is infinite, only God can satisfy the infinite longing He placed in the heart, which is why every finite thing, however good, is necessarily too small to fill the ache.

## The Bread That Satisfies

Jesus made exactly this claim about Himself, declaring that He is the bread of life, that whoever comes to Him shall not hunger and whoever believes in Him shall never thirst, offering Himself as the satisfaction of the deepest human longing. This is an audacious claim, that He is the bread that finally satisfies the hunger no other food has filled, the water that finally quenches the thirst no other drink has stilled, the satisfaction of the ache that every finite thing has left empty. And it is a claim that fits exactly the diagnosis of the longing, for if the heart is made for the infinite God, then He, offering Himself, offers the very satisfaction the heart has been seeking, the bread that satisfies the deepest hunger, the fulfillment of the infinite longing. Jesus does not offer one more finite good to add to the pile of broken cisterns; He offers Himself, the infinite God, the only object large enough to fill the infinite longing, the bread that finally satisfies. The bread that satisfies is Christ Himself, who claims to be the fulfillment of the deepest human longing, the satisfaction of the hunger no finite thing has filled, and His claim fits exactly the heart made for the infinite God.

### The End of the Search

To grasp that you were made for God alone is to reach the end of the restless search, to understand at last where the longing has been pointing and where it will finally be satisfied, not in one more finite thing but in the infinite God for whom the heart was made. The whole restless search, the digging of cistern after cistern, the climbing and settling on the ladder, has been a search for the satisfaction that only God can give, and it ends not in finding one more finite good but in turning to the infinite God who alone can fill the infinite longing. This does not mean the ache is instantly and fully satisfied in this life, for the full satisfaction awaits the vision of God in heaven, but it means the search has found its true object, the longing has found its true home, and a woman can stop digging broken cisterns and turn to the fountain of living water for which she was always made. The end of the search is God, and the woman who grasps this can cease the exhausting pursuit of finite satisfactions and turn at last toward the infinite One for whom her restless heart was made. The end of the search is the discovery that you were made for God alone, that the longing has been pointing to Him all along, and that the restless heart finds its true home not in one more finite thing but in the infinite God who alone can satisfy it.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Restlessness Is a Compass

*Reading the Ache as a Gift*

Here is the turn that changes everything: the restlessness you have carried as a flaw is actually a gift, a compass, a mercy, pointing you toward the God for whom you were made, so that the ache you tried to silence was all along trying to lead you home. This reframe is the heart of the whole matter, the transformation of the longing from an enemy to be defeated into a compass to be followed, and it changes a woman's whole relationship to the ache she has carried. Understanding the restlessness as a compass, a gift rather than a defect, lets a woman read her longing rightly and follow it home.

*As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. — Psalm 42:1-2*

## Not a Flaw but a Signpost

The restlessness a woman has carried as a defect is in fact not a flaw but a signpost, pointing her toward the God for whom she was made, so that the very ache she tried to suppress was designed to lead her home. Far from being a sign that something is wrong with her, the longing is a feature of her design, a built-in compass pointing toward God, the reaching of a heart made for the infinite toward the infinite that alone can satisfy it. This transforms the meaning of the ache entirely: it is not a problem to be solved, a discontent to be medicated, a greed to be ashamed of, but a signpost to be read, a compass pointing beyond every finite thing to the God for whom the heart was made. The woman who has carried her restlessness as a shameful flaw can now read it as what it is, a signpost toward God, a gift pointing her home, the reaching of her heart toward the One who made it. Not a flaw but a signpost, the restlessness is a built-in compass pointing toward the God for whom a woman was made, so that the ache she carried as a defect is in fact a gift designed to lead her home, to be read rather than suppressed.

## The Mercy of the Ache

Seen rightly, the persistent ache is a mercy, for if the finite things had satisfied a woman, she would have settled for them and never found the God for whom she was made, and the very fact that they fail to satisfy is God's mercy keeping her reaching for Him. Imagine if achievement or approval or relationship had fully satisfied the longing; a woman would have stopped there, content with a finite good, and never pressed on to the infinite God who alone could give her the fullness she was made for. The ache that keeps returning, the dissatisfaction with every finite thing, is therefore a mercy, God's way of keeping her from settling for less than Himself, of keeping her heart reaching past every broken cistern toward the fountain of living water. The restlessness that feels like a curse is in truth a mercy, the refusal of the finite to satisfy, which keeps a woman seeking the infinite, so that the very ache she resented was God's kindness, keeping her from settling

and drawing her on toward Himself. The mercy of the ache is that the failure of finite things to satisfy keeps a woman from settling for less than God, so that the persistent dissatisfaction she resented is in fact God's kindness, refusing to let her heart rest in anything less than the infinite for which she was made.

### Following the Compass Home

To read the restlessness as a compass is then to follow it, to let the ache point her past every finite thing to God and to turn her longing toward Him, so that the compass does not merely diagnose but directs, leading her home. A compass is meant to be followed, and the restlessness, once recognized as a compass pointing toward God, is meant to lead a woman to Him, to redirect her search from the finite things that cannot satisfy to the infinite God who can. Following the compass home means letting the ache do its work, letting it point her past achievement and approval and control to the God for whom she was made, and turning her longing, her thirst, her reaching, toward Him. The Psalmist models this, letting his longing become a thirst for God Himself, panting for the living God as a deer pants for water, following the compass of his longing home to its true object. The woman who follows the compass lets her restlessness lead her not to one more finite thing but to God, turning her longing toward the One who made it and who alone can satisfy it. Following the compass home means letting the ache point you past every finite thing to God and turning your longing toward Him, so that the restlessness, recognized as a compass, does not merely diagnose but directs, leading you to the living God for whom your heart was made and who alone can satisfy its thirst.

## CHAPTER SIX

# Turning the Longing Home

### *Letting God Become Your Desire*

Once a woman recognizes that her longing is a compass pointing to God, the work becomes turning that longing toward Him in practice, learning to direct her desire, her seeking, her thirst, toward God Himself, so that He becomes not one more item on the list of things she wants but the deepest desire of her heart. This turning of the longing home is not automatic but a real reorientation, a learning to desire God and to seek her satisfaction in Him, and it is the practical fruit of recognizing the compass. Understanding how to turn the longing home, to let God become one's deepest desire, translates the insight into a changed life.

*Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. — Psalm 37:4*

## Desire Can Be Redirected

The first thing to grasp is that desire is not fixed but can be redirected, that a woman can learn over time to desire God, to want Him, to seek her satisfaction in Him, rather than being forever bound to desire the finite things that cannot satisfy. It might seem that a woman's desires are simply given, that she wants what she wants and cannot change it, but this is not so, for desire can be trained and redirected, so that a woman can learn to desire God, to develop a thirst for Him, to want Him more and the finite substitutes less. This redirection of desire is central to the spiritual life, the gradual reordering of the heart's wanting away from the broken cisterns and toward the fountain of living water, the learning to desire God as the deepest desire. It does not happen all at once, but desire can genuinely be redirected over time, as a woman turns her longing toward God and lets Him become what she most wants. Desire can be redirected, trained over time away from the finite things that cannot satisfy and toward God, so that a woman is not forever bound to desire the broken cisterns but can learn to desire the living God as her deepest want.

## Delight as the Path

The path to desiring God is in part the path of delight, of coming to know and enjoy God so that He becomes genuinely delightful to the heart, for we desire what we find delightful, and a woman learns to desire God by coming to taste and enjoy Him. Scripture counsels delighting in the Lord, and this is not only a command but a method, for as a woman comes to know God, to taste His goodness, to enjoy His presence, she comes to find Him delightful, and finding Him delightful, she comes to desire Him, so that delight is the path by which desire is redirected toward God. This means a woman turns her longing toward God not mainly by grim effort but by coming to enjoy Him, by tasting and seeing that He is good, by cultivating the delight in Him that naturally gives rise to desire for Him. The more a woman delights in God, the more she desires Him, and the more she desires Him, the more her restless longing turns toward its true home, satisfied increasingly in Him. Delight is the path by which desire is redirected toward God, for a woman comes to desire God by coming to find Him delightful, tasting and enjoying His goodness so that the delight in Him naturally gives rise to the desire for Him that turns her longing home.

## The Desires of Your Heart

The promise attached to delighting in God is striking: that He will give a woman the desires of her heart, which does not mean He will grant her every finite want but that, as she delights in Him, He becomes the desire of her heart and gives her Himself, the fulfillment of her deepest longing. The promise is often misread as a guarantee that God will give a woman whatever she wants if she delights in Him, but its deeper meaning is richer, for as a woman delights in God, her desires are reshaped, God Himself becomes the desire of her heart, and He gives her that desire by giving her Himself. The desires of the heart, in the deepest sense, converge on God as a woman delights in Him, and the promise is fulfilled not by God granting her finite wants but by His becoming and giving her the deepest desire of all, Himself, the satisfaction of the infinite longing. This is the fruit of turning the longing home, that God becomes the desire of the heart and gives Himself as its fulfillment, satisfying the ache that no finite thing could fill. The desires of your heart, in the deepest sense, converge on God as you delight in Him, so that the promise is fulfilled not by God granting every finite want but by His becoming the desire of your heart and giving you Himself, the satisfaction of the longing no finite thing could fill.

CHAPTER SEVEN

# The Peace on the Other Side

### *The Contentment Only God Gives*

When a woman's longing turns home to God and begins to find its satisfaction in Him, something remarkable happens: she begins to taste a contentment and peace that does not depend on her circumstances, a settled satisfaction that the endless striving after finite things could never give. This peace is the fruit of the longing finding its true home, the rest of a heart that has stopped reaching for finite things and begun to rest in the infinite God. Understanding the peace on the other side of the turned longing reveals the fruit of the whole journey and the contentment that only God can give.

*I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content… I can do all things through him who strengthens me. — Philippians 4:11-13*

## Contentment Not Based on Circumstances

The peace that comes when the longing finds its home in God is a contentment not based on circumstances, a settled satisfaction that holds whether a woman's external situation is pleasant or hard, because its source is not her circumstances but God Himself. Saint Paul, writing from prison, declared that he had learned to be content in any situation,

whether in plenty or in want, and this contentment, independent of circumstances, is the fruit of a satisfaction rooted not in finite things, which change, but in God, who does not. The woman whose longing is satisfied in God has a contentment that does not rise and fall with her circumstances, that holds in difficulty as in ease, because it rests on the unchanging God rather than on the shifting finite goods that the restless heart used to chase. This is a peace the endless striving could never give, for the striving after finite things makes contentment hostage to circumstances, while the satisfaction found in God makes it independent of them. Contentment not based on circumstances is the fruit of a longing satisfied in God rather than in finite things, a settled peace that holds whether circumstances are pleasant or hard because its source is the unchanging God, not the shifting goods the restless heart used to chase.

## The Striving Can Stop

With the longing finding its home in God, the exhausting striving can finally stop, the endless pursuit of the next achievement, the next approval, the next thing that promises satisfaction, because the satisfaction is found and the striving is no longer needed. The restless heart strives endlessly because it is always reaching for a satisfaction it has not found, always needing the next finite thing to fill the ache, but when the ache begins to find its home in God, the striving loses its engine, for the woman is no longer desperately seeking a satisfaction she lacks. This does not mean she stops all effort or ambition, but that the desperate, driven, anxious striving after satisfaction can stop, replaced by a restful seeking of God and a contented enjoyment of His gifts without the frantic need for them to fill the infinite ache. The striving can stop because the satisfaction is found, and the woman who has turned her longing home can rest from the exhausting pursuit that never satisfied, finding her satisfaction in God rather than in the next finite thing. The striving can stop when the longing finds its home in God, for the desperate pursuit of satisfaction loses its engine once the satisfaction is found, and the woman who has turned her longing home can rest from the exhausting chase that never satisfied, finding her rest in God.

## Rest for the Restless Heart

Finally, the peace on the other side is the rest that Augustine named, the rest of a heart that was made for God and has finally begun to rest in Him, the stilling of the restlessness in its only true home. The restlessness that drove a woman her whole life finds its rest not in achieving or acquiring or arranging but in God, the One for whom the heart was made, so that the restless heart, turning home to God, begins at last to rest. This rest is not the end of all longing, for the full satisfaction awaits the vision of God in heaven, but it is the beginning of the heart's true rest, the settling of the restlessness into the only home that

can hold it, the taste in this life of the full rest to come. The woman who has followed her longing home to God finds that her restless heart begins to rest, that the ache she carried all her life finds its home, that the compass has led her to the place of rest. Rest for the restless heart is the deepest fruit of the turned longing, the stilling of the restlessness in its only true home, for the heart made for God finds its rest in Him, and the woman who follows her longing home begins at last to rest in the God for whom she was made.

CONCLUSION

## Restless Until

There is an ache almost every woman carries and almost no one names, and this book has been about reading it rightly. We have seen that the restlessness is universal, woven into human nature, the sign of eternity placed in the heart; that women seek to satisfy it in broken cisterns, good things too small to hold an infinite longing; that happiness comes in a ladder from fleeting pleasure to lasting joy, and that most women settle on the lower rungs; that you were made for God alone, and only the infinite can satisfy the infinite longing; that the restlessness, rightly read, is not a flaw but a compass, a mercy pointing you home; that the longing can be turned toward God until He becomes your deepest desire; and that on the other side is a peace and contentment the endless striving could never give.

The whole of it was captured sixteen centuries ago by a restless man who had chased satisfaction through every finite thing and found it nowhere until he found it in God, and who then wrote the words that name the longing of every human heart: You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You. That is the truth about your ache. You were made for God, and your heart will be restless until it rests in Him.

So stop carrying the ache as a shame and start reading it as a compass. Stop digging broken cisterns that cannot hold what you pour into them. Recognize the restlessness as the mercy it is, keeping you from settling for less than God. Turn your longing toward Him, let Him become your deepest desire, learn to delight in Him until He is the satisfaction your heart has always sought. And begin to taste, even now, the rest that waits on the other side, the contentment that does not depend on circumstances, the stilling of the restless heart in its only true home. You were made for God alone. Your restlessness has been His compass all along, pointing you home. Follow it, and let your restless heart begin, at last, to rest.

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*The Longing: Restlessness as a Compass is part of The Daily Bread Library.*