THE MANIFESTO SEEKING THE STORESTO

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I AM BROKEN, HEAR ME ROAR

I see it in your eyes. I hear it in your words. You are tired, anxious, busy, worn. There is not enough time in the day, you say. Hustle defines you. Comparison defeats you. Results matter and relationships suffer. You live your life fighting a future that never comes. Life is something you wade through, not enjoy.

I have been there. I am there. I don't have it together. I'm not ok. I am broken, and I'm done pretending otherwise.

BONDAGE

I felt it early, even as a child. The bone deep desire for something more. Do the right thing. Get the good grades. Don't cause waves. Control and perfection are my addictions and approval my vice. I am chasing, always chasing. Trying. Yearning. Wanting. Numbing. I live in bondage...to myself. The fatal flaw of humanity is a chasm of need I cannot fill. But I try, oh I try. Much of the striving is good (on the outside). But it is simply a mask. A charade. A sneaky thief.

Lose the weight. Kick the habit. Get the job. Buy the home. Earn the money. Seek the praise. Have the child. Be the best.

In blindness and captivity I try again and again and again. I am hostage to the illusion of my control, yet it's never enough. My health suffers, my mind twists, my soul withers dry. I keep trying, insane to expect different results.

BREAKING

The bondage of my humanity comes with staggering costs. At times a lightning bolt breaks me open; more often, tiny pebbles bring the avalanche tumbling down. I find myself broken, wide open, bleeding. No amount of striving, searching, or doing makes me whole. The shattered pieces are painful in this delicate vessel that is me. The darkness is thick. The anxiety is debilitating. The blackness, consuming. I am empty. My efforts work only for awhile. The revelation comes slowly, but it comes. I cannot fix myself. I need a healer.

WHO IS THIS MAN?

They call Him Jesus and say He's God's own son. I heard about Him as a babe in my mother's arms. She sang of Him. He is there in the fabric of my years. I prayed to Him and learned of Him. I believed He died and rose for me. I knew I would see Him in heaven, one day. But I didn't know. I didn't know that HE was the answer to my longing, my need, my everything. It is not a church or religion or doctrine that finally sets me free. It is a Person, and His name is Jesus.

SURRENDER

There's no dramatic moment of revelation for me, rather a journey that continues still. In the darkest pit of fear and longing, I called to Him. I begged Him. I screamed to Him. I came clean of my pain, my wrongs, and my shame. He met me there. And He loves me still. So I keep bringing the darkness to Him, minute by minute, day by day. It is messy and hard. So hard. But He is always there. Waiting for me to come. Little by little, light shines through. A shedding begins. Layers of my life fall, and I see them clearly for the first time. In the ray of His light, the truth comes forth. I fight battles, He wins the war. I raise my white flag and surrender into the arms of His great love. I want to know Him into the depths of my soul. He makes me feel safe and loved and complete.

TRUST

My life is my witness. He is faithful in every valley, every shadow, every mountaintop. Answers come, not always as I ask, but they come. The darkest days are the sacred ground where He meets me. In a million little ways He weaves the tapestry of my life. Golden threads crisscross and lives intersect. He provides. He saves. He restores. Time proves His power and might. My plans hold no weight against His perfect will. I stand in awe at what He does when I finally get out of the way.

RECEIVE

Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow is a phantom. But today, today is a gift unfolding. I know not how I missed it before. The miracles are everywhere. His love is a fountain washing over the world. The trees hint at His majesty, the butterflies promise rebirth. People walk the earth as His hands and feet. He is there in the wisdom of my doctor and in the relief that medication provides. Ideas and opportunities appear as whispers of His will. Creation cries out, RECEIVE! Seek the miracles, and you will find them. The divine is swirling around you and in you. Open your eyes and you will see. Release. Receive. Rejoice.

THE SACRED DANCE

I surrender my life, only to take it back, again. I worship and adore Him, yet turn to betray and reject Him. The struggle is great. His Grace is greater. Faith trumps fear. Life triumphs over death. Joy overwhelms mourning. I will forever dance between the tension of my will and His.

I feel him whisper, Do you want to feel peace and joy again? You can't work your way out of this on your own. Be Still and Know that I am God. Psalm 46:10

So, to seek the still, I do what does not come naturally. What I cannot do on my own. I let things drop. I face my fears. I search for answers, not in my own capabilities, but in the loving hands of my Heavenly Father. I share what I have learned and the mistakes I have made. I'm honest. Raw. Real. I take off my mask. Because real is the only way to help others, to tell my story, to let love win. He is The Way when there is no way.

Seeking to find purpose and meaning in the most simple of places, but in the most extraordinary ways. Growing...awakening... seeking the still. www.seekingthestill.com

~Laura

WHAT NOW?

Mine are the musings of a single life, yours another history, entirely. And yet, we exist together, in ways more intimate than we'll ever know. I am a seeker. I know enough to know there is much I do not know. Regardless of what you believe, you are invited to join my quest to seek moments of divine amidst the chaos of life.

I hope you find that <u>Seeking The Still</u> is about hope, not judgement. It's about soul searching and soul baring. Jesus is not exclusive with his friendships. He equally loves believers and non-believers. No one is beneath Him. Nobody too far gone. His arms are open to all. We no longer see Him, but He. Is. Here.

If you want to learn more about this Jesus, here a few places to start.

- The Bible (NIV) : Begin with Mark, Psalms, Proverbs, Genesis, Romans
- <u>Mere Christianity</u> by C. S. Lewis
- <u>The Ragamuffin Gospel</u> by Brennan Manning
- <u>Getting To Know Jesus</u> by Pastor Paul Schult

JOIN THE COMMUNITY

We are seekers, you and me. Whether you like to share or simply be, I invite you on the journey. I guarantee it will be much more interesting with you along! Here are ways you can be part of Seeking The Still:

- <u>Like My Facebook Page</u> for encouragement and community.
- <u>Follow My Instagram Feed</u> for daily photography and musing from Laura.
- <u>Subscribe To My Web Site, SeekingTheStill.com</u> for ALL THE THINGS! You'll receive new posts, letters from me, and free resources directly in your inbox. And your email is safe with me. Pinky swear!

SHARE THIS MANIFESTO

PLEASE share this manifesto with anyone you wish. I simply ask that you do not sell or change it. Share the web site. Share Instagram & Facebook. Share it all!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



What happens when a carefully crafted life crumbles? It's painful. It's raw. It's a new beginning. It changes everything...

Once upon a time I spent my life achieving, controlling, and plowing through challenges to prove my worth. I was the quintessential first born – a perfectionist, over-achieving, people-pleaser. My resume was impressive. My references were stellar. I didn't give up. I just gave

more and worked harder. By most standards I had it all – I was the girl with the Midas Touch. I climbed the corporate ladder, traveled the world, then gave it all up for more flexible jobs that allowed me to spend more time with my family.

In my mid thirties, I burned out, fell apart, suffered an emotional and physical breakdown, and had to unlearn my former way of life. Almost all of it. For real.

The successful woman that spent her twenties traveling the world was now struggling to keep it together due to the onset of stress-related issues. Anxiety, stress, and insomnia were suddenly the dark shadows that covered my days and terrorized my nights. I looked in the mirror and stared in wonder at the familiar face with the empty eyes.

I realized I couldn't remember the last time I felt joy.

While keeping up appearances on the outside, I was falling deeper and deeper into a pit on the inside. It was in this bizarre state of being that I found myself during times of crisis – the Great Wake-up Call of 2010 and the Breakdown of 2014. These were divine interruptions of my rose-colored world that were more than 30 years in the making. I am convinced that God wanted my attention. Perhaps He wants yours, too?

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