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YOUR SCARS ARE BEAUTIFUL TO GOD

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Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97402

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Jaynes, Sharon.

Your scars are beautiful to God / Sharon Jaynes.

p. cm.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7369-1610-3 (pbk.)

ISBN-10: 0-7369-1610-5 (pbk.)

Product # 6916105

1. Christian women—Religious life. 2. Suffering—Religious aspects—

Christianity. I. Title.

BV4527.J397 2006

248.8'6—dc22

2006001340

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Printed in the United States of America.

06 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14 / VP-MS / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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ONE

Scars Tell a Story

Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story.

PSALM 107:2 TNIV



Like the spine of a good book, scars, by their very nature, imply there's a story to tell. They represent a wrinkle in time in which a person's life is changed forever, and they serve as permanent reminders of an incident that, in one way or another, has made a lasting impression on one's life. Travis pulls up his pant leg to reveal where two bullets pierced his flesh during the Korean War. Melanie wears a gold chain just below an incision that was made across her delicate neck to save her life from thyroid cancer. Peeking just below the hem of Gayle's capri pants lies a reminder of knee surgery where a tumor was removed. Showing through Beth's makeup is the shadow of a scar left by an abusive boyfriend's tirade. Just beneath Rachel's shirt sleeve hides a daily reminder of her suicide attempt ten years earlier. Like a trophy, four-year-old Bobby points out his badge of courage on his once-scabbed knee.

Each scar represents a moment in time or a passage of time

when something happened *to us* or *through us* that we will never forget.

I have several scars on my body, and each has a story to tell. One is smack-dab in the middle of my forehead. I earned it in the third grade.

In my early years, I was a rough and rowdy tomboy who climbed trees, skipped rocks, and made skid marks on the asphalt with my banana seat bike tires. My backyard was the envy of every kid in the neighborhood. It came equipped with a drainage ditch across the back border that ran for six city blocks, tunneled under intersections, and culminated in a large ditch we dubbed “the canyon.” The “canyon” was three blocks from my home. On the other side of this desert wasteland resided the “canyon boys.” The “canyon boys” were kids who grew up in the projects. Back then, the projects were an all-white, subsidized housing complex. There was great animosity between the “canyon boys” and the neighborhood boys (of which I thought I was one). On one occasion, the two warring factions decided to have a grand battle in my backyard, with only the drainage ditch to separate us. The weapon of choice was not guns or knives, but dirt clods.

Each party gathered on their side of the ditch with ammo piled high. At the sound of the war cry, the rumble began. Terrible words I had never heard before flew back and forth across the ditch. Words like “greaser,” “slimeball,” “snob”...oh my, how times have changed.

At one point during the battle, one of the “canyon boys” broke the rules and threw a brick. Right about the time it left his hand, I peeked from behind a tree and served as the bull’s-eye for his assault. The brick landed square in the middle of my forehead and immediately blood gushed down my furrowed brow. A hush fell over the battleground. Then I pierced the silence with, “You cheated!”

At the sight of blood, the enemy scattered in every direction. My fellow soldiers (or hoodlums) gathered round, fearing I had suffered a fatal blow. It didn’t really hurt that badly from what I remember—not nearly as bad as the spanking I received from my mom later that evening.

Well, the doctor shaved a bit of hair from my forehead and sewed me back together. For several weeks I proudly wore a Cyclopes patch as a badge of courage and bravery.

And now? My hair never completely grew back, and I still have a scar right in the middle of my forehead at the edge of my hairline. Bangs have been a struggle ever since.

I have other scars on my body. One is on my right leg on the shin bone. I call it my disobedience scar.

By the fifth grade, I was finally out of the tomboy stage. I think it was Isaac Thorpe's big blue eyes that convinced me being a girl wasn't so bad after all. I got my first set of electric curlers, some Cover Girl misty blue eye shadow, and my own personal jar of Dippity-do hair-setting gel. My mom even let me wear fishnet hose from time to time. But the legs. Oh, the legs. They were scary hairy.

"You cannot shave your legs until you are at least twelve years old," my mom warned.

"Twelve years old?" I argued. "I'll be halfway through the sixth grade by then!"

I felt my mother was being very unreasonable, and my strong-willed child streak kicked into high gear. One Saturday, when my mom was out running errands, I snuck into my dad's bathroom, unscrewed his razor, dropped the double-edged blade into the holder, and screwed it shut. Then I lathered up my legs with soap, held my breath, and took a swipe. *My mom will never know*, I thought.

There were no Lady Schicks or Daisies back then. Only double-edged razor blades that were sharp enough to split a hair. With the first drag of the blade up my fuzzy leg, I scooped out a divot of skin all the way to the shin bone. Yes, it bled. Yes, I still have the scar today. Yes, my mother knew.

I have plenty of scar stories. There's one on my lip where I disobeyed (again) and crossed a busy street to see my best friend... only to promptly fall on a nail, which poked through my lip. There's one on my knee where I ran into a parked car while riding my bicycle and not paying attention. There's another one on my

forehead where I accidentally stuck a pencil in my noggin in the first grade and broke the lead off trying to get it out. The lead remains to this day.

But some scars on my body aren't so humorous. For example, there are two crescent-shaped scars just below my belly button. They aren't the result of body piercing, but of laparoscopic exploratory surgeries to try to discover why I was unable to conceive. They remind me of the years my husband, Steve, and I struggled with infertility and the loss of a child. Then there's the scar on my right breast that reminds me of the weeks of waiting and wondering whether or not the lump was malignant or benign. No, not all scars are humorous.

Perhaps the most painful scars I bear are the ones you cannot see. You know the ones I'm talking about. We all have them. They are the scars on our hearts and in our souls. The scar of rejection from a father who didn't know how to love me. The scar of growing up in a home riddled with alcohol and physical abuse. The scar of disappointment at the loss of a child. The scar of broken dreams.

We receive scars in one of two ways: What has been done *to* us by other people or what has been done *through* us by our own mistakes and failures. Either way, I believe that scars are not something we need to hide or be ashamed of, but rather an invitation to share the healing power of Jesus Christ with a hurting world. For a scar, by its very definition, implies healing.

Perhaps you've never thought of the wounds in your life as potential treasures. I encourage you to dig a little deeper, push aside the dirt, and discover the jewels that lie beneath the surface. Like sparkling diamonds, glistening rubies, and shimmering emeralds, our scars are beautiful to God.

Along the way, you may realize that your wounds have yet to heal. That's okay. We'll work on that together.

I invite you to join me on an amazing journey to finding peace and purpose in the pain of your past. But be forewarned. This journey could change your life.