

# RANSOMED

# CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction 1

## PART ONE: RANSOMED FROM A WOUNDED HEART

- 1 Out in the Open 5  
*The Hidden Pain Most Women Carry in a “Cover Girl” Culture*
- 2 A Win-Win Situation 21  
*God is in Control in All Circumstances*
- 3 The Walls Come Tumbling Down 33  
*The Ultimate Freedom from Sin, Guilt, and Rejection*

## PART TWO: RESTORED FROM BITTERNESS TO JOY

- 4 The Wrong Repellent 41  
*Worshiping a Faulty God*
- 5 Trial by Fire 49  
*Maintaining Your Joy When Life Throws You a Curve Ball*
- 6 Forward Thinking 63  
*Resolving to Look Ahead Rather Than at Past Failures*
- 7 System Restore 77  
*Reclaiming Your Purpose and Spiritual Productivity*

## PART THREE: REVIVED TO LIVE LIFE TO THE FULLEST

- 8 The Gold Standard 91  
*Living up to the Expectations of a Cover Girl Culture*

- 9     Get Ready     103  
       *God Always Walks Ahead of You*
- 10    Wake Up     111  
       *Take Your Enemies Captive and Realize Your Potential*
- 11    Forward March    125  
       *Come out of Hiding and Forge Ahead with Courage*
- 12    Rise Like the Sun   133  
       *Learning to Enjoy a Life Full of Blessing*

PART FOUR: RENEWED WITH CONFIDENT HOPE

- 13    A Barren Land    147  
       *When Disappointment Breeds Despair*
- 14    Always Greener    161  
       *Don't Compare Yourself with Others*
- 15    Great Expectations   171  
       *Count on God to Move Heaven and Earth*

PART FIVE: REMOVE THE STONE

- 16    Attitude Adjustment   187  
       *Overcoming a Negative Outlook*
- 17    Total Turnaround    199  
       *Getting Back on the Road after a Wrong Turn*
- 18    I Surrender     213  
       *Practicing Sacrificial Submission to God*

## PART ONE

# RANSOMED FROM A WOUNDED HEART

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Every woman has suffered emotional wounds during her lifetime; some are obvious, others are not. We cope with these wounds by trying to hide from them. Some hide in the kitchen or behind their chores; others find ways to fill their time with the needs of others; still others just separate from the world to protect them from the risk of ever being hurt.

By looking at the story of a prostitute named Rahab, we have an incredible example of a woman of faith. We can learn much by studying how she overcame tremendous hurdles and wounds in her life by living in the abundance of the life promised through Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER 1

# Out in the Open

### *The Hidden Pain Most Women Carry in a “Cover Girl” Culture*

Not to have had pain is not to have been human.

JEWISH PROVERB

When I opened my front door that autumn afternoon I found an unfamiliar young woman standing on my doorstep. She was tall and painfully thin with pronounced black circles beneath her tired brown eyes. Tightly clasping the hand of a beautiful little boy she said, “Hi Barb, do you remember me?”

When she spoke, I found that I did remember Sophia, although I must admit my memories were not particularly fond ones. For eight years, my husband and I provided temporary respite care to more than two dozen children when their home situations became unmanageable. I’d met Sophia in juvenile hall where I served as a volunteer several times a week teaching aerobics, leading Bible studies, or providing one-on-one counseling.

Sophia’s family was a mess. Throughout her childhood, her mother had been a desperate alcoholic, a drug addict, and had been in and out of jail. Because of her father’s constant incarceration, Sophia and her siblings had a warped view of a male role model.

Eventually, protective services split up the six siblings and placed them in different foster homes.

Sophia's older sister, Anna, was assigned to us. The 17-year-old girl had been particularly difficult; in fact, Anna ran away from our home after just two days because she was unwilling to hang her clean laundry out on the line like all the other kids. Her sudden departure had caused all kinds of problems for us with the police and social workers. She was such a recent addition to our family that we hadn't yet received her paperwork from the agency—I didn't even know her last name.

When I got over the initial shock of seeing Sophia again, I opened the front door and invited her in. As the little boy played in the corner of our daycare facility, Sophia and I sat awkwardly on the couch. After a few minutes of small talk, Sophia began opening up to me about what she and Anna had been through since I'd last seen them two years before.

After Anna ran away from our home she had been caught and sent back to juvenile hall. When she was released on her eighteenth birthday, she moved to San Francisco where she became a prostitute to support her rather expensive drug habit. As a result of her lifestyle, Anna had aborted several pregnancies. One of the back-alley procedures had been botched so badly that the hemorrhaging had nearly killed her.

I wondered what it was like to be a prostitute like Anna. How had she come to the point where she felt like selling her body was the only option? Was it just the money she wanted or was there more to the story? Was she afraid of the risks she was taking with pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases? Did sexual encounters with random men make her feel dirty? Did she long to get married one day and have a family of her own? If so, would the long-term damage she was doing to her body prevent that from happening? Was she ultimately a slave to prostitution?

Sadly, things hadn't gone much better for the younger sister. After she was released from the foster care program, Sophia moved to Los Angeles and began abusing drugs. To survive, she'd gotten involved with a very abusive man who regularly beat her up and threw her down the stairs of their apartment building. They'd had a child together—the angelic toddler who played with trucks in my daycare that day. Sophia was so afraid that harm would come to him that she'd left her boyfriend and fled to northern California.

Unfortunately, Sophia hadn't learned her lesson about choosing the right man. Before long, she found a new boyfriend and moved in with him too. Although he had promised to marry her countless times, he wasn't following through by setting a wedding date. Through tear-filled eyes Sophia gazed at me and asked me what was wrong with her.

Then like a light switch had been flipped, the young mother's face hardened and her voice grew defiant. "It's been a tough life, but I'm on top of it and I'll be fine. I can handle anything." Yet before me I didn't see a young woman who had it all together. I saw a vulnerable little girl with a wall that had been built around her heart, brick upon brick of pains and wounds stacked one on top of the other. She hid behind a tough façade to hold herself together.

You might be thinking *what does this girl have to do with me? I don't live a lifestyle like Anna or her sister.* In some ways you're right, but in others you're dead wrong. Although you might have been raised in a godly family and worked hard to make good choices and live an honorable life, you have still prostituted yourself from God.

I can just hear your protest, I am not a prostitute! Perhaps not in the sexual sense, but read on to learn the other ways the Bible defines prostitution.

### **The World's Oldest Profession**

Our lives are a sum total of the choices we have made.

—*Wayne Dyer*

References to prostitution have appeared in recorded history since the 18<sup>th</sup> century BC in ancient Babylon. It was also a well-documented fact of life in ancient Greece. Not only was prostitution legal in ancient Greek society, government-supported brothels were set up in major cities and staffed with inexpensive prostitutes that men of every income level could afford to hire.

Prostitution is also cited throughout the Bible. In some older translations, the word "harlot" appears forty times in the Old Testament, while "whore," "whoredom," and "whoring" are used eighty-three times. In Jewish Law, prostitution was expressly forbidden.

Many of the biblical references use the word prostitute when refer-

ring to the fair weather relationship the Jews had with Almighty God. Throughout the Old Testament, the people of Israel conducted their lives with perversion, debauchery, and idolatry, and only repented when they were rebuked by God. Their sinfulness is often compared to being a prostitute as illustrated in these verses of Scripture:

See how Jerusalem, once so faithful,  
has become a prostitute.  
Once the home of justice and righteousness,  
she is now filled with murderers. (Isaiah 1:21)

You build your pagan shrines on every street corner and your altars to idols in every square. In fact, you have been worse than a prostitute, so eager for sin that you have not even demanded payment. (Ezekiel 16:31)

As soon as Gideon died, the Israelites prostituted themselves by worshiping the images of Baal, making Baal-berith their god. (Judges 8:33)

Look at the shrines on every hilltop. Is there any place you have not been defiled by your adultery with other gods? You sit like a prostitute beside the road waiting for a customer. You sit alone like a nomad in the desert. You have polluted the land with your prostitution and your wickedness. (Jeremiah 3:2)

The book of Hosea tells the story of a prophet who was commanded by God to marry a prostitute named Gomer even though it had been revealed to him ahead of time that she would be unfaithful. But it is much more than a story of human adultery. Hosea provides a wonderful representation of God's response to our sin.

When the Lord first began speaking to Israel through Hosea, he said to him, "Go and marry a prostitute, so that some of her children will be conceived in prostitution. This will illustrate how Israel has acted like a prostitute

by turning against the Lord and worshipping other gods.”  
(Hosea 1:2)

After Gomer bore Hosea three children, she left him and became enslaved in prostitution. Despite his wounded pride, God instructed Hosea to go after her and buy her freedom, just as He bought our freedom by Christ’s death on the cross:

Then the LORD said to me, “Go and love your wife again, even though she commits adultery with another lover. This will illustrate that the LORD still loves Israel, even though the people have turned to other gods and love to worship them.” (Hosea 3:1)

In reality, every single person is a prostitute towards God. We have all made mistakes in our lives; some are just bigger and less socially acceptable than others. Like the Israelites, we also worship false gods—we struggle with materialism, busyness, and needing more and more to satisfy ourselves. Because of this misdirected focus, we feel guilty; guilty that we don’t spend enough time at work, and then guilty that we don’t spend enough time with family.

We have so much on our plates that we can’t keep up. I often feel like I have so much energy and enthusiasm that I drive people up the wall. Yet at the same time I feel like I’m not living up to my own—and other people’s—expectations. I can’t keep up with it all—I feel like I should be giving 100 percent in my work, 100 percent in my ministry, and 100 percent in my family. My list of failures goes on and on.

Each and every woman has experienced a wounded heart at some point in her life. These wounds come in many shapes and sizes, but the one thing they have in common is the damage they cause. Many women only find romance in novels and adventure on television and in the movies. Instead of feeling like the beauty in the fairy tale, we feel more like the beast.

While we try to keep up with the unmanageable daily grind, our wounds get bigger and bigger and we stack more and more bricks on the walls around our hearts. We don’t want others to find out about our weaknesses and struggles so we keep up a brave front. We bury the

wounds deep inside and hide behind the image of self control we have fought so hard to create.

Every woman suffers emotional wounds during her lifetime; some are obvious, others are not. We cope with these wounds by trying to hide from them. Some women hide in the kitchen or behind their chores. Others find ways to fill their time with the needs of others. Many women separate themselves from the rest of the world to avoid being hurt.

As the years pass by, emotional wounds slowly eat away at our joy. The truth is that most women think they have to settle for a life of efficiency and duty, chores and errands, striving to be the women they ought to be, but often feeling they have failed. Sadly, so many messages for Christian women add to the pressure: “Do these ten things and you will be a godly woman.” The effect has not been good on the feminine soul.

Another way people hide their feelings is by seeking out danger. If you can get your adrenaline pumping fast enough by risking your life, you won't have to think about your hurt feelings. This thrill-seeking behavior is one of the ways men cope with their pain. The movie *Last Flight Out*, which is produced by Billy Graham's movie studio, World Wide Pictures, is a great example of this. The film is about a happy engaged couple that is about to be married. But she calls off the wedding because she realizes they are unequally yoked...she's a Christian and he's not. To get a fresh start, the woman becomes a missionary. But he is so consumed by feelings of rejection that he finds one dangerous job after another just to be able to survive. He doesn't care if he is hurt physically; he hides behind the danger.

You can't hide your pain from everyone. God knows what's in your heart, even when you are doing your best to hide it from Him. It is written in Genesis 3:10: “I heard you walk in the garden so I hid.” This is Adam talking to God and yet Eve was hiding too. Like Eve, we tend to hide and hold on to our hurt. Underneath all the hiding is a deep fear that if we are seen for who we really are we will be rejected. This fear manifests itself in a number of negative behaviors: we walk away in shame or anger, we become controlling and manipulative, or we pull back and become quiet and desolate.

God is walking in the garden looking for you. He wants to ransom your heart and heal it so you can live free in joy:

I am overwhelmed with joy in the lord my God, for he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. (Isaiah 61:10-11)

How can you feel like this? Is it possible to be overwhelmed with joy in the Lord and live without guilt and frustration despite your past mistakes and wounded heart? Absolutely! Read on and see how God transformed Rahab, a lowly Amorite prostitute, into one of the most faith-filled women of the Bible. By looking at her story, we have an incredible example of a woman of faith. We can learn much by studying how she overcame tremendous hurdles and wounds by living in the abundance of the life promised through Jesus Christ. She gives us the answers on how to overcome a wounded heart.

### **City of Palms**

When I was 17 years old I went on a dream vacation to the Holy Land with a youth group from my church. One day we made the 14-mile journey from Jerusalem to Jericho to see the famous historical site that is the subject of the book of Joshua.

It was a much longer bus ride than I had expected. Jerusalem sits at an elevation of 2,500 feet above sea level in the Judean highlands. To get to Jericho, which is situated at 850 feet *below* sea level, the bus had to travel slowly at a very steep decline. The tour guide told us that Jericho is the lowest permanently inhabited site on earth.

The two cities couldn't have been more different. Jerusalem is the largest city in Israel, both in terms of size and population. It has a Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers, and cold, wet winters. Water has always been an issue for Jerusalem, so in ancient days it used a sophisticated system of aqueducts to provide water to the Jewish people.

Rather than being a thriving metropolis like its neighbor, the small city of Jericho (population 20,000) is a balmy desert oasis. Its location near the Jordan River and the spring of Ein es-Sultan provides plenty of water to irrigate the fertile soil. The spring issues 1,000 gallons of water per minute, which irrigates more than 2,500 acres.

Jericho is described in Deuteronomy 34:3 as the "city of palm trees." The surrounding countryside is lush and green and modern-day farmers

support the local economy by growing dates, bananas, and citrus fruits. In Old Testament times, an ointment called the Healing Balm of Jericho was one of Judea's most highly valued exports.

The constant sunshine and tropical temperatures make Jericho an ideal place to settle, and people have been calling it home for thousands of years. It is such a paradise that Herod the Great built his winter capital—and later died—there.

The Jericho visited by Jesus on several occasions in the New Testament is not the same city depicted in the Old Testament. There have actually been three different Jerichos on three different sites: the Jericho of Joshua, the Jericho of Herod, and the Jericho of the Crusades. Throughout history, the city of Jericho has risen and fallen several times. It has been abandoned or moved, or has fallen down due to earthquakes. It even fell once because of excessive trumpet playing!

I was pleasantly surprised when I stepped off the tour bus in Jericho into the blinding sunshine. The climate had changed from cool and damp in Jerusalem to tropical in a matter of just fourteen miles. Our first stop was a fruit stand where each of us was given a juicy, locally grown orange. To this day, it is still the best orange I have ever had.

Next, we stopped at the oasis itself where we took a luxurious dip in the Jordan River. As I swam I was awestruck by the setting; there were lovely pink and white blossoms on the oleander tree branches hanging over the water and little fish were flirting with my feet. The nearby waterfall was majestic. This is what it must have been like in the Garden of Eden for Adam and Eve, a beautiful, perfect, peaceful paradise. How could the first couple have risked their idyllic life in such a place by being disobedient to God?

As I swam I also thought about a young girl named Rahab who had lived in Jericho thousands of years before. Yet, something went terribly wrong and Rahab ended up being a prostitute. What must life have been like for her?

### **A Scarlet Woman: A Character Sketch of Rahab**

Christ's death on the cross included a sacrifice for all our sins, past, present, and future. Every sin that you will ever commit has already been paid for. —*Erwin W. Lutzer*

As you will discover, Rahab was far more than a dirty prostitute. In fact, she is one of only two women listed in Hebrews 11, otherwise known as the “Faith Chapter:”

It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed with the people in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies. (Hebrews 11:31)

I know what you’re thinking: Rahab was a prostitute! How could she be considered one of the great women of faith? How could she be regarded the same way as Sarah, the wife of Abraham? Who would even want to associate with Rahab? Was God aware of what she had done? Could she have a wounded heart like I do?

There were two types of prostitutes in Rahab’s time. The first type provided sexual favors in sacred settings. Known as “temple” or “shrine” prostitutes, these men and women had ritual sex with worshipers of fertility gods such as Baal and Asherah. Consecrated women were put up in brothels that were conveniently attached to the temples and their earnings were used to support it. Temple prostitutes were often respected and looked upon highly by their pagan cultures.

Rahab belonged to the second, more common, class of prostitute. These ordinary sex workers stood on street corners, solicited customers in public places, or worked in brothels and had sex for money. They occupied the lowest rungs of Jewish society and were looked upon with complete disdain.

In many cases, women became prostitutes as a means of survival because they were no longer supported by their husband or fathers. It was not unusual for poor families to sell their daughters into prostitution to bring in some extra money, a serious temptation when poverty was widespread. The holiness code in Leviticus, however, specifically prohibited fathers from turning their daughters into prostitutes:

Do not defile your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the land will be filled with prostitution and wickedness. (Leviticus 19:29)

This is what most likely happened to Rahab. Can you imagine being brought by your dad to start a job of prostitution? Imagine the fear, the pain of rejection, and the sense of abandonment she must have experienced?

Like most young girls, Rahab probably had dreams of falling in love, getting married, having children and caring for her own home when she grew up. When she serviced her very first customer as a prostitute, she must have realized none of these dreams would ever come true. The wound in her heart must have been acute. To protect herself, Rahab likely developed a hardness of heart like Anna and Sophia did when they were placed into the foster care system.

By reading the biblical account, it would appear Rahab learned how to survive in her new circumstances. Archaeological excavations have revealed that the city of Jericho was surrounded by two walls, each about thirty feet high. The outer wall was six-feet thick and the inner wall was nearly impenetrable at twelve feet. In-between was a fifteen-foot space. Because space was limited within the city limits, boards were placed in this space between the walls and small homes were built on top of the boards. This is where the poorest citizens lived.

Rahab's home was one of these modest homes. While it was no palace, it was an ideal location for someone in her line of work. I can just see her feet dangling over the edge of the wall. It was a perfect way to attract the attention of soldiers, merchants, and other travelers. All they had to do was look up. Rahab must have lived close to the city gate because she saw what was going in and what was going out. Of course, that also meant that everyone could see who was going into and out of her house. It was like owning a hotel on the most prime piece of real estate in town.

The career of a prostitute was short in those days, only about six years. By then, sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, and unimaginable abuse would have taken their toll on the body. Rahab must have known that her clients would eventually desert her for the company of younger girls. Most men won't look twice at an old, used up prostitute when they can have a pretty young thing instead. Like many of her peers, she probably supplemented her income by renting out space in her home to weary travelers. Between selling her body and sharing her home, she eked out a modest living.

There's no doubt Rahab would have done almost anything to get out of prostitution. I'm sure she would have preferred an occupation that didn't make her feel dirty or ashamed. I'm sure she longed to be accepted in polite society. But she did what she had to do to put food on the table.

Unfortunately, getting out of prostitution has never been an easy proposition. I am originally from the Netherlands (Holland). The largest city in my country is Amsterdam, best known for producing the most beautiful tulips in the world. The city is also well known for its seedier side: the legalized sex and drug industries.

Prostitution has been legal in Holland since 1830, but it wasn't until 1988 that it was recognized as a legal profession. Any sex business must acquire a license in order to operate, and as independent entrepreneurs, prostitutes must report their income and pay applicable taxes. A 2000 study by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that there were between 20,000 and 25,000 prostitutes in Amsterdam, many of whom are foreigners.

Not surprisingly, the Netherlands is listed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as a hot spot for human trafficking. In the last few years, a large number of prostitution operations have been closed down because of gang-related criminal activity.

The center of the sex industry in Amsterdam is the De Wallen Red-Light District. In this network of alleys, you can find live sex shows, sex museums, peep shows, and establishments that sell marijuana. You can also find hundreds of prostitutes offering their services from doorways or positioned in front of large plate-glass windows decorated with red lights.

For the most part, working in the windows is considered "upper-class" prostitution; it means you're attractive, expensive, and good at what you do—particularly those who set up shop in prime real estate in the heart of the district. Many people view these girls as being a notch below political and celebrity escorts who service the wealthy upper class. Working as an Amsterdam windows prostitute is considered to be a very good job in the city's sex industry.

My daughter Denise once worked in the Red-Light district for Youth with a Mission (YWAM), a nondenominational evangelical organization dedicated to serving Jesus Christ around the world. She ministered to the young women working as prostitutes there. In the course of her min-

istry she became acquainted with a young Moroccan prostitute named Jasmina who worked as a windows prostitute to earn money to support her family. Jasmina's pimp sat outside her window to make sure she did her job right. Each weekend night she would have sex with between twenty and twenty-seven men.

When Jasmina became a Christian, she felt convicted to leave the sex industry. Of course, her pimps weren't thrilled with her newfound beliefs. To convince her to return to her old life, they raped and beat her, and when that didn't do the trick, they beat up her younger brother and broke his arm. When she still refused to return to prostitution, they assaulted her father, even holding a gun to his head. After a few more days passed the pimps threatened to do to her mother what they had done to her, forcing her to work the windows as Jasmina's replacement.

Jasmina was attending a church at the time, and though she didn't flaunt her story, she did ask for help. No one stepped up. So to save her mother from the hell she'd been forced to endure for years, Jasmina returned to the job she hated.

I'm sure Rahab felt trapped too. But in spite of her reputation and tarnished image, God had a very important task for Rahab that only she could perform.

Before going any further with Rahab's story, let's set the stage. At this point in biblical history, Moses and the Israelites had been wandering in the desert for forty years. The journey had been full of stops and starts because of the Jews' disobedience to God. At long last they came to Canaan, the Promised Land God had pledged to their fathers and grandfathers.

Then, just when they were ready to cross the Jordan River to conquer Canaan, Moses died. Joshua was chosen as his successor because he had proven to be a brilliant military leader and a man of God. One of the places God commanded Joshua to conquer was the mighty city of Jericho. Even though Jericho was like a fortress with tall, fortified walls and heavy gates, the Canaanites living there had heard about the achievements of the Israelites and were terrified. They knew the God of Israel was strong and powerful.

They definitely had reason to be concerned. With Moses at the helm, God had brought the Israelites one victory after another. The first big conquest was against Sihon, king of the Amorites. He had made

a huge mistake. When delegates asked the king if the Jews could pass through their land, he flatly refused. Instead, Sihon assembled his army and attacked Israel. But Israel was victorious and captured all the Amorite cities.

After that the Israelite army turned north. Og, the king of Bashan, marched his entire army to meet Moses in battle, but when Israel attacked, Og, his sons, and all the people were annihilated. There was not a single survivor. Knowing of these victories, the king of Jericho was nervous.

Like any good military strategist, Joshua sent a couple of spies ahead of the invasion to gather intelligence and scout out the lay of the land in Jericho. He wanted to know where the people were located and what the Canaanite defenses were like so the Israelites could come up with a battle plan. He was also curious about the morale of the people: was Jericho ready to fight or consumed by fear?

In order to get into Jericho, the spies had to cross the Jordan River. That might not sound like such a big deal, but remember that the Israelites had been wandering around the desert for four decades. It was harvest season and the river was overflowing its banks. How would the two men navigate a flooded waterway? Could they even swim?

Once the spies made it again to dry land, how did they manage to get into the city itself? The people of Jericho had been expecting Israelite spies to come check out the city ever since they saw them on the other side of the Jordan River. Did they just walk up to the city gates wearing Jewish clothing or did they somehow find disguises to help them blend in and be less noticeable? I can see them walking through Jericho for the first time, seeing much evil.

Imagine the prostitute Rahab's surprise when she got a knock on her door from a pair of Jewish spies looking for a place to stay? We don't know how they ended up at Rahab's place, if she got their attention somehow or they just randomly chose her small shelter, but we do know that associating with, or profiting from, a prostitute was expressly forbidden in the Torah.

When you are bringing an offering to fulfill a vow, you must not bring to the house of the LORD your God any offering from the earnings of a prostitute, whether a man

or a woman, for both are detestable to the LORD your God. (Deuteronomy 23:17-18)

Did Rahab see the disapproval the men might have had, the way they tried not to look at her? She must have suspected the Jewish spies were there for a reason other than her charms. Rahab knew men, and she knew these two men did not behave like the ones she had been with.

There were a couple of likely reasons why they chose her door to knock on. To be a successful prostitute, a woman had to practice discretion. After all, many of the men who visited her were married and in highly visible positions. Staying at the home of such a woman would provide the spies with a good place to gather information without being asked a lot of questions. Secondly, if discovered, the spies could make a quick escape because Rahab's house was built into the city wall.

Whatever their reason, God led these two men to the home of Rahab the harlot because He knew her heart would be open to Him. She had no idea that she was about to play a very important role in God's overall plan.

Rahab took a tremendous risk and hid the spies on her roof under the flax that was drying there. Flax has been cultivated since ancient times. The custom was to dry the fibrous stalks in the sun on the flat rooftops and then use them to make rope or cloth. This must have been another one of Rahab's side businesses.

The fact that these two men had entered Rahab's home did not escape notice. When somebody told the king they had seen two foreigners enter her dwelling, the king sent orders to her (Joshua 2:3):

“Bring out the men who have come into your house, for they have come here to spy out the whole land.”

Now, Rahab had a lot of courage. Rather than cowering before the king and confessing her treachery, she lied to protect the Israelite spies:

Rahab had hidden the two men, but she replied, “Yes, the men were here earlier, but I didn't know where they were from. They left the town at dusk, as the gates were about to close. I don't know where they went. If you hurry, you can probably catch up with them.” So the king's men

went looking for the spies along the road leading to the shallow crossings of the Jordan River. And as soon as the king's men had left, the gate of Jericho was shut. (Joshua 2: 4-7)

In other words, Rahab the prostitute sent the king of Jericho on a wild goose chase! When Rahab hid the spies she put her life on the line. If the spies had been discovered in her house, she would have probably been killed at the hands of the king. To hide spies was treason, a crime punishable with death.

What's truly amazing is that the soldiers didn't even search her home; they just took Rahab's word that the spies weren't there. The Canaanites knew the Israelites worshiped a God known for destroying everything in His path. If you had heard eyewitness testimony stating that spies for a dangerous enemy had been seen entering a home inside the city walls, wouldn't you have taken a look inside? Obviously God put blinders on these men.

Rahab told a lie when she said she didn't know where the spies were. Is it okay to lie? The Bible is quite specific about God's aversion to lying as stated in the Ten Commandments: "You must not testify falsely against your neighbor." False testimony is another term for lying.

Even more to the point is Proverbs 6:16-19. Of the seven things the Lord hates, two of them have to do with lying:

There are six things the LORD hates— no, seven things he detests:

haughty eyes,  
 a lying tongue,  
 hands that kill the innocent,  
 a heart that plots evil,  
 feet that race to do wrong,  
 a false witness who pours out lies,  
 a person who sows discord in a family.

Are there special circumstances when lying is acceptable? Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran pastor and theologian in World War II Germany. He was a founding member of the Confessing Church, a small Protestant group that opposed Adolph Hitler's treatment of the Jews. He

also took part in the plots planned by members of the German Military Intelligence Office to assassinate the Fuhrer and was arrested and eventually hanged at Flossenbürg concentration camp for conspiracy. In 1996, Rev. Bonhoeffer was formally pardoned by the German government for helping Jews escape Germany and plotting the assassination of Hitler.

In his book *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “Human love has little regard for the truth. It makes the truth relative, since nothing, not even the truth, must come between it and the beloved person.” Bonhoeffer believed that if a lie protects an innocent person and it will save that life, it might be worth the risk. Ironically, Hitler had this to say about lying: “Make the lie big, make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it.

Rahab the prostitute changed her destiny when she welcomed the Israelite spies into her home. Who could have ever imagined that this lowly pagan, who was much maligned by her culture and full of shame and regret, would one day be a branch on Jesus Christ’s family tree?

Rahab’s life could be the subject of a Hollywood blockbuster. Not only is it filled with drama and intrigue, it is the perfect example of what it means to be a Christ-follower. Read on for the rest of the story.

When the soul has laid down its faults at the feet of God,  
it feels as though it had wings. —*Eugénie de Guérin*