

# *CULTIVATING CONTENTMENT*

## *As a Law Enforcement Wife*

A seven day study with a Biblical emphasis  
to encourage and equip you...

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*Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."*

*Philippians 4:11-13*

Paul wrote the book of Philippians from a jail cell, yet he presents within the entire book the unmistakable happiness he has, simply from the consistency of God's love flowing through his life. He wasn't joyful because of his circumstances, he rejoiced because he was filled to the brim with the hope of Christ. He could have withdrawn, thrown down his pen and papyrus in disgust and let the church of Philippi deal with discouragement on their own, but he was prompted to be an educator and encourager, for he knew well the compassion of receiving comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3-4) from the Lord. As an apprentice to the way of Jesus, Paul learned throughout his lifetime that, although difficult and challenging moments exist in our day to day living, the steadfastness of our faith is what helps us experience true contentment.

My goal throughout these pages is to be an educator and encourager as well, speaking from my own experiences as a Law Enforcement Wife, guiding you through those same challenges and pointing you towards scripture for the ultimate solution to our general lack of contentment.

For quite a few years, I've mentored many types of women from all walks of life and various backgrounds. They are all unique and beautiful in their own way and I enjoy each one of them. I am always pleasantly surprised by their transparency when it comes to sharing their own personal stories and trusting me with sensitive parts of their life. Equally, I don't take it lightly that you will be combing through personal stories that I willingly share, searching for a little empathy along the way.

*"But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in*

*steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. ...” Titus 2:1-15*

I really do love to share what I’ve learned through my 32 years as a LEOW! As scripture states above, contrary to today’s culture, I hope you walk away from this study loving your husband more dearly, intentionally loving your babies with a thankful heart and desiring to create a home that feels like a sanctuary for your entire family.

Just a quick reminder, though, this is a Law Enforcement Wife *study* on Cultivating Contentment with a “Biblical emphasis” - NOT a bible study per se. I want to meet you in the practicality of learning new skills, while also emphasizing the cruciality of adding God’s Word into every area of your life. Your daily walk in scripture and prayer *will* equip you for the struggles of life and draw you closer to the Lord.

*“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

We seem to follow this elusive pursuit of wanting everything to be easy. We may envy others when things go smoothly for them and then we learn, after a few disappointments, that comparison is truly the enemy of contentedness. We get stuck. Our lack of contentment then shows up in our finances, our mental health, our relationships and especially our marriage.

*“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” 1 Peter 5:8*

Your Law Enforcement Wife Life requires acceptance and awareness. As a Christian, you have an enemy that loves to whisper lies, affirming your frustrations and coaxing you to be angrily discontent.

Start now, and begin to understand that your officer’s career is more than just a job, it’s a lifestyle that you’ve been swept into. Graciously swept into. This life will grow and mature you with the humility that God desires, that is, *IF* you can allow that type of formative work to be done within you. It’s not always comfortable, but it is necessary for tweaking your heart posture so you can be a servant for use in the work of the Kingdom.

Say yes to the Lord in this season of your life, surrender to Him and become more of who He is molding you to be. No more complaining or grumbling, let’s move forward together, accepting what is and being proud of the position your officer holds.

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## *1. THE WAITING GAME*

“Waiting is a period of learning. The longer we wait, the more we hear about him for whom we are waiting.” – Henri Nouwen

Ahh...the waiting game. Something that never even occurred to me when he accepted the job of a first responder. Overtime, graveyard shifts, trainings, testing, qualifications, seminars and the expectation of waiting for him to wake up on his day off. The list goes on. When can I put something on the schedule for myself? I was tired, I was bitter, I was envious of friends and neighbors whose husbands parked in their driveway every night at 5:00 pm on the dot. At which point the chaotic “kid street party” was broken up with a call for dinner because, “Dad’s home!”

*“When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” Psalm 34:17-19*

Do you feel a little broken hearted? God is with us, LEOWs...and although It did break my heart some nights, I knew the Lord heard all of my sighs and comforted me in all my troubles. Unfortunately, sometimes I forgot about God in those moments and simply tried to muster the strength to get through it all by myself, and for me, that mindset didn’t prosper.

As a police wife I wasn’t so great at letting my guard down and surrendering, I was afraid it may reveal a perceived weakness within me, and Lord knows that was not in my wheel house. A stiff upper lip (or so I thought) is what it took for me to explain to the kids why dad sometimes had to miss family birthdays, dance recitals, soccer games, award banquets, teacher conferences and the like. The kids were resilient though, they grew up with it so it didn’t seem to affect them the way it did me. We found other ways to be together as a family, even if it didn’t look the same as everybody else’s family. Oh, how many years would it actually take for us to see him on the actual day of Christmas?

The pain of waiting that I faced early on as a law enforcement wife seemed overwhelming and unfair until I decided to take a good, hard look at why I was always so frustrated.

Don't miss this: I realized that I needed to shift my perspective, I was watering the negativity of the situation and it was growing like a weed. Initially, it wasn't easy to see things in a positive light, but it also wasn't God's best for me to live in such angst. I could choose to kick and scream and throw a temper tantrum over his most recent shift change, but it wasn't going to do any good. I wanted things to change, I wanted him to be home more, I wanted him to acknowledge all the things I was feeling. I wanted him to fix it.

Nothing was "fixed" the way I had envisioned it, in fact he continued to be gone or sleeping most days for quite a few years of our marriage. There were seasons here and there when he was able to accept a job in a unit that offered daytime hours, but then as soon as promotions came along, he was at the bottom of the barrel again, which meant he was back to the graveyard shift.

Because of this inconsistent schedule, and because I was trying to create a rhythm for the kids, I began to plan events and outings without him. I felt it was necessary for my mental health at the time, but it backfired on me one day when he said, "It hurts when you don't include me, it makes me feel like a paycheck and a roommate."

I was in the middle of a rock and a hard place, how was I supposed to make this work so that both of us were satisfied? The conflict felt like it was crumbling our marriage and I had nowhere to go for mentorship-style advice.

*"Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed." 1 Peter 4:12-13*

I wanted to look at all of it with an eternal perspective, it just seemed impossible. I wanted to be accepting and joyful, because it wasn't easy for him either, he had a job to do, and it was his calling. He was bound by the department's needs and excited about the work he was lucky enough to participate in, and he loved the challenge of a change of scenery within the department if it was offered.

However, and this is the biggest point, I married a man who was drawn to helping others, solving problems, getting the bad guys off the street. A servant-hearted man. Exactly the man I wanted and needed in my life. So what was *my* problem?

I knew that living a life in such tension of wanting and needing something other than what I had was going to kill me, so I apprehensively began to invite God into my circumstances. I say that delicately because I was a new Christian at the time and I wasn't sure how to accomplish this. Slowly but surely, my prayers began to sound a lot less like, "Lord, please help him see how difficult this is for me" and a lot more like,

**“Lord, please help me appreciate and accept the gift of his job and be grateful for how he generously pours into society...please make me a wife with a heart that is soft, a mind that is forgiving and eyes that are fixed upon you for my strength.”**

*May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.” Ruth 2:12*

I needed God’s comforting and safe refuge. I was still learning how to process all of this and figuring out how to bake it in the cake of my life. Fear was staring me in the face during this season of life as a young wife. Fear of something happening to my husband in this dangerous job and fear that I was not doing a solid job parenting while feeling like a single mom.

I learned, as I read through scripture and attended bible studies, that God was always here for me in this life as a law enforcement wife, He would not leave nor forsake me. He is the only one who truly knows the sadness, loneliness and burdens that come along with waiting for hubby to come home, and the Lord is the one I needed to confide in for lasting comfort.

*“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9*

I picked myself up by the bootstraps and came up with a plan to thwart the “worry and waiting” in my mind. To represent our life visually, I bought a big, old fashioned, paper calendar and started writing. Everyone was represented with a color of their own, dad was blue, mom was pink and so on.

I filled in my items first, then invited the family to participate. We put everything on this calendar and it saved our butts. When Brian got home to see it, he was pleased. He filled in his days at work and his days off and then we planned. Planned for family days, special events, goals, dreams, you name it. The kids were excited and the things that were happening next were visually represented. Whenever they asked about the schedule, I just pointed to the calendar. There was something about having our structure written out that eased our anxiety as a family.

This calendar obviously had to be flexible, as there were always surprise overtime arrests, or mandatory call-outs, but in the long run it was a life saver. It helped us prioritize, it helped him see the volume of tasks I was participating in because of sports practices at different times and in different directions and it helped us all develop boundaries to which events we would respond “no”. We valued time together in a new way and for us, it was a beautiful answer to prayer.

*REVIEW:* Waiting is not easy. Whether we're waiting for our officer, waiting to purchase that new couch or waiting for illness to subside, it is always difficult.

I encourage you today to begin to pray.

Pray that as you wait, you would be reminded of Daniel, who waited and fasted in prayer and petition for his people. God listens and God answers. I encourage you to continue and persist in your conversations with the Lord, he hears the prayers of the righteous and delivers us. (Psalm 34:17)

*"Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them." Daniel 10:12*

Is your heart posture such that your officer recognizes your maturity in the area of acceptance of his schedule?

How will you incorporate prayer into your day?

Would a family calendar help with displaying the hope of what's to come?

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## *2. TASK AVERSION*

I've heard that hard work never killed anyone, but I say why take the chance? – Ronald Reagan

How many officers does it take to change a lightbulb? None, they're at work, the LEOW does it! Cinderella, cinderella...the mantra I sang for many of those early days.

I felt like a maid, taken advantage of, single mom, overworked and underpaid. I suffered from a lack of gratefulness. I was numb with the amount of complaining and comparing I dwelt in, wondering when I would be able to schedule in some rest for myself...for the love of all humanity!

There are some situations we find ourselves in that serve to make us stronger, though, and we are better for it. Law enforcement wives become pretty tough cookies. I

mean, who else does the kind of home projects we do? There are things that simply must be done on the home front while the officer is at work, so we put our needs on the back burner and watch YouTube to learn how to finish the heavy tasks on our own. On more than one occasion you could've spotted me aggressively pulling on the starter cable of the lawn mower, getting ready to make a few runs along our front lawn. After all, I wasn't sure when he was going to be home next and it needed to be done.

It's tempting, but we cannot compare our friend's and neighbor's marriages to our law enforcement marriage, you may as well be comparing apples to oranges. It may look as if every other couple has pleasantly divided their tasks evenly, and they may have, but getting stuck on that is unhealthy. Accept, appreciate and be grateful for what you have, otherwise you may be setting yourself up for continual disappointments.

*"May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands for us - yes, establish the work of our hands." Psalm 90:17*

I didn't have an appreciation for my home and my family during the grumbly season in my life, but I got a wake up call one day that I will never forget. My friend told me the story of a mom she knew who was on hospice, suffering from terminal cancer. She said, "All this mom wants to do nearing the end of her life is to be part of washing her kids' laundry. She wants to smell it, fold it and put it away neatly as a way to love on her family." Gulp. That hit me like a ton of bricks. She *wanted* to do the laundry. It was her love expression as a mom and now she was too weak to complete the task. I never again complained about laundry and it ignited in me the need to be thankful for my little stack of shirts and tiny baskets of socks. I am forever grateful for that reminder and it will always be written on my heart. Be thankful if you are healthy enough to take care of your home and family....it's a gift.

*"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving." Colossians 3:23-24*

Yes, the world will tell you that you should stand up for the "more powerful me", or that every other wife and mom has the time and budget to get their hair and nails done, hire a nanny and a housekeeper and work out at the club to get that perfect body. The enemy lies through commercials and social media - just turn them off. These temptations are things we all need to *live above*. The circumstance you're in as a LEOW is not a bad one, as long as you and your officer communicate well regarding home tasks that may be burdensome in order to find a sensible "task plan" moving forward.

No, Brian did not do the daily tasks, nor did he do the things that had a deadline, because that would've been *deadly* and many things would've been missed. However, we put our heads together and came up with tasks that he *could* participate in, that were monthly or yearly in nature. He was in charge of all of the car maintenance, the yard maintenance (sprinklers, planting, fence fixing, power washing), filter changing,

heating/air conditioning checks, sink or toilet repairs, camping reservations/vacation goals, searching mortgage rates, taxes, shredding paperwork, etc. I would much rather do dishes and laundry than to do those tasks anyway, so we were able to agree on the matter. We received a sense of balance from this activity, and we were both satisfied with the outcome.

If you have some rigidity in those aforementioned tasks and want them to be done your way only, then I presume that may be another problem altogether, and it could be time for a little flexibility with the outcome of those tasks.

Now, I want to mention something that I hope *you're both* set to entertain. Always, always PRAISE what you want to see repeated. If a task has been done, and it takes a load off of you, please don't miss the opportunity to encourage this to make certain it happens again. In this way, you are recognizing someone's efforts and acknowledging their thoughtfulness and hard work.

*REVIEW:* When we walk through difficult and strenuous times as a law enforcement wife, we have to remember that the Lord already knows what is happening in our home. Isn't that a beautiful reminder? He sees the sacrifices you make and He sees the general tasks you've completed along with the nurturing you provide for your kids, and the intimate closeness you share with your husband.

The Lord is greatly pleased with you. You have walked in obedience to Him and you have been able to see the people in your family with whom you've been gifted, as children of God. This is more than just your daily walk, you are storing up treasures in heaven, "where moths and vermin do not destroy." (Matthew 6:20)

God showed Joseph in a dream that wonderful things would happen in his life. Joseph, even though he spent time "waiting" in prison and as a slave in Potiphar's house, kept his faith in the Lord.

*"The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned." Genesis 39:2-4*

I would encourage you to do the same...keep your faith during this season.

Stay close to Jesus, have faith in Him to see you through the rough and physically grueling days. Surrender all to him and he will create peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:7) throughout your home.

Thank the Lord now, in a written prayer, for all that He is accomplishing and will accomplish through your life lived in obedience to Him. This is what I call a "Faith

Prayer"...we have faith that the Lord has good plans for us even though we cannot see them now.

Are you able to praise your spouse today for something you noticed that was finished well?

When you complete tasks, is it to the glory of God? What is your heart posture in this?

Your mood may dictate the temperature of the home...are you warming it up or making it uncomfortably cold?

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### *3. DISNEYLAND DAD*

"You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending." – C.S. Lewis

The whole house lights up when he gets home. He wrestles with the kids, builds blanket forts, plays catch and takes them on an adventure walk so I can make dinner. Will I ever get to experience that level of freedom and fun?

Or, maybe you're the fun one in the picture! Either way, things change when the officer walks through the front door. The kids have held up their excitement like a dam in their hearts and when dad gets home it breaks open into sheer exuberance! How come I never get that kind of greeting?!

There are positives and negatives to this scenario. Sometimes, the officer *needs* half an hour to wash the day away and get back in the mindset of home. He may require time to switch from work mode to home minded, and in the meantime you just want to fling kids at him for a time of respite. And then sometimes, us wives become a tad confused because we've been with moody kids all day and suddenly they're full of joy!

*"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." Philippians 2:3-4*

In our marriage, we came up with a good solution to nurture each other's needs after a few months of mishaps and selfishness. We decided that giving Brian time for a shower right when he got home would serve to re-energize him enough to happily

engage with the kids. Afterward, as he was heading down the stairs to be part of the family again, I would be headed upstairs with a cup of tea and a favorite magazine for some solid alone time. Coordination and communication work wonders!

Alone time, doesn't that sound dreamy? Do you really know who you are? What would you do if you had an hour to yourself? I mean, the unique woman God made you to be...do you know her? You've been "knit together" by the Almighty God as an individual. If you do not know yourself apart from your spouse, things may look a little fuzzy.

You may unintentionally be "idolizing" your spouse if they are the only ones you can have fun with, they are the only ones you wait for, they are the only ones you plan things with. If so, you're left flat when your officer finally comes home and they have little energy left to be everything you need them to be. You may be expecting too much from them. When you idolize only the Lord, He sets things in the correct order and it's easier to experience the joy He has for you. It may be time to branch out and begin paying attention to the things that fire you up again!

It's not egocentric to think of getting to know yourself again, it's rational. If you've never completed a personality profile assessment, now may be the time to do so. It may not be entirely scriptural, and you want to enter into it *"not think[ing] of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think[ing] of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you"* (Romans 12:3), so that you are guided by the Spirit instead of by culture in this realm of psychology.

All I can say is that when Brian and I both read our Enneagram type descriptions, we began to have the verbiage we needed in order to communicate more fruitfully. After processing our personalities, I could say, "Oh, he's reacting or behaving from how he is naturally wired, he's really not angry with me", and he could understand, "Oh, she packs the car that way because she like to be organized, she's really not trying to drive me crazy."

It helped immensely to challenge ourselves in our weaknesses that needed to be shored up and encourage ourselves in the strengths that God provided for us as individuals. We began to appreciate one another again. I highly recommend beginning to do some things reignite your early passions (nothing expensive, immoral or illegal) that you once had even before you were married. In this way, you're not so concentrated on the fact that "Disneyland Dad" always gets to have all the fun. Seek out new directions, nurture yourself in line with scripture and allow the Spirit of the Living God to speak into how uniquely He made you.

*"So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?" Romans 7:21-24*

God can and will rescue you from a life of bitterness. Your job is to confess, repent and ask Him to mold you and make you into a person that looks more like Jesus everyday.

Now, about that “Disneyland Dad”...it’s your turn to change things up a bit. It’s time to join in on the fun! Try not to be so serious all of the time. Grab some easy microwavable meal and toss it on a plate once in a while so you can make time to enjoy the blanket fort, too! Take that adventure walk with them. Say yes to crazy things, be weird...your kids will store that up in their memory banks.

I remember once, Brian came home, put his bathing suit on and immediately started dashing towards the pool. He jumped in and the kids quickly joined him. They were yelling from the water, “C’mon mom...jump in!” Well, I was still fully dressed and stood there for a moment thinking this would be a good time to get that vacuuming done or clean up those toys. But, much to everyone’s surprise, I jumped in the pool with my clothes on. The surprised laughter that ensued from Brian and the kids was deafening. They were in total shock. It definitely made a mark in a good way and I proved to myself that I could be the fun mom, too!

*REVIEW:* Don’t get distracted by trying to measure up. We have an enemy at work that whispers to us things like, “He gets to have all the fun” “He never thinks about me at home” “He’s too busy with the brotherhood of the blue to care”...

*“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 6:12*

It’s not about the frustration, hurt and confusion you’re sitting in. It’s about the thoughts in your head. If they do not measure up to the fruits of the Spirit regarding a brother or sister in Christ, or yourself, then you are being deceived. The enemy of God lies, cheats and steals our joy away, if we let him.

See if you can relate to the story of Mary and Martha...

*“As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, ‘Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!’*

*Martha, Martha,’ the Lord answered, ‘you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.’” Luke 10:38-41*

Incorporate a quiet time with the Lord today regarding this verse in Luke. Are you content with sitting at His feet?

Thank the Lord for how He made you, physically, emotionally, your personality, your gifts and talents. What qualities were you made with that will allow you to grow the Kingdom in a unique way?

Name one thing that you are willing to add into your week to be silly and fun again!

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#### *4. ROLE APPRECIATION*

*"It is only with gratitude that life becomes rich!" –Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

You have many roles in life. At certain points in time, some roles weigh more heavily and take the lead. You were once a daughter, and that role may rise again if your parents face illness and need assistance. You are a mom, that role will also be larger and more weighty during crucial years in their lives and then will trail off when they become more independent. But, did you know healthy people keep their roles to no more than five at one time? We can't handle much more than that without our well running dry.

Being fulfilled in your roles may be directly linked to whether or not you keep those roles in balance. Seeking harmony when you're serving in too many places is almost impossible.

I walked through a season of my life when I took on too many roles and it didn't end well. This seemingly harmless need to "do" everything, "be" everything and "control" everything brought me to the inside of an ambulance as I took a terrifying ride to the hospital.

I woke up that morning and literally could not breathe. Brian was taking my pulse, squeezing my fingers for blood flow, and even checking my pupils. One 911 call later and I was being taken on the scariest ride of my life. Even the paramedics assumed I was having a heart attack. I was hooked up at the hospital, poked, prodded and checked over with a fine tooth comb. After many hours, examinations and blood

results, they found nothing...nothing! The doctor came in to tell me, "Mrs. Seitz...I think you just had an anxiety attack."

I thought God had let me down. I mean, I was a new Christian, doing all the things I was "supposed" to be doing. Wife, mother, employee, team mom, room mom, bringing meals to families in need, serving in kids' ministry, bunco coordinator and craft coordinator for MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) while selling "Christmas Around the World" items in home parties.

I was devastated when the doctor gave me that diagnosis. I didn't like the feeling of knowing that I had limitations that I needed to start recognizing. The crazy busy-ness I had created in my life was just there to make me feel important and to some degree, was helping me escape what I really needed to take a look at. It wasn't God's best for me to be overwhelmed and He spoke that message over me pretty loudly that morning.

*"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other." John 15:12-17*

I wasn't at the point in my Christianity yet to comprehend that Jesus was here for me, to carry me through hard times. I hadn't yet realized the sacrifice He had actually made for me. I couldn't fathom the idea that little ol' me could have a special connection with the Creator of the Universe. I was oblivious to the fact that He was sweetly inviting me to go and bear fruit through the bumps in life.

We can only appreciate the roles we've been given if we realize where they come from. When we say "yes" to everything, we aren't even able to see each important role as clearly as we should. We can't expect to bear fruit for the kingdom if we're choosing to run our bodies ragged in order to fulfill everyone's needs, not to mention whether or not we have time for God in this schedule we've created for ourselves. When our roles run and bleed into each other in an unhealthy manner, we are not able to appreciate them uniquely and individually, as they deserve.

Your God-given roles as a wife and mom will create the most significant impact upon those you nurture. Your time, talent and treasure you presently give to these roles may not be evident now, but the impact will far outweigh anything else you ever plant yourself into for the rest of your life. Prioritize those two roles and add a few more as time and energy permit, but remember, you *can* serve too much and *way beyond* your capacity.

As a law enforcement wife, you have a very unique calling. He serves and protects and you support him in that career choice. He rattles off codes and acronyms and you try your hardest to keep up. You wash the black socks and bullet proof vest covers until you're blue in the face. You support him while the community devours him. You put the blue line sticker on the car or the blue line flag in front of the house, and then promptly take them down with the current news reports. You stand up for him in conversations when someone unashamedly talks about the "unfair ticket" they were recently issued. You fear for his safety. You're his sanctuary when the critical incidents get overwhelming. You're the sounding board when politics enter into his department. You're the one who notices when his personality changes because of what he's seen, heard, smelled and been in contact with.

**You were made for this.  
You were chosen for this.  
You have unparalleled strength for this.**

*"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:12-14*

Press on in the roles you've been given, for they are given with much responsibility. Encourage your officer in the role he's been given, for he is a peacemaker. He would lay his life down for his friends...a heavy burden that they easily accept. Don't take lightly the amazing human being you're married to. Yes, he has faults and so do you. Yes, you've been forgiven and set free as a child of God, but so has he. Always be first to give tons and tons of grace.

**REVIEW:** We put a lot of pressure on ourselves, don't we? I don't believe God intended for us to be involved in everything that sparkles, shines or looks good to us. Living a simple, appreciative life is so much more abundant and enjoyable.

*"Praise our God, all peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver." Psalm 66:8-10*

Let the Lord refine you today.

Ask Him what roles were specifically created for you and which ones you can let go of. Ask for His encouragement and discernment to permeate your mind. The refinement process may seem uncomfortable, maybe even painful, but it is necessary for your spiritual growth and maturity. The silversmith boils the silver, removes the dross from

the top and recognizes that it is finished and pure when he can see his face in it. Similarly, Jesus wants you to reflect him to those around you.

*“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20*

An important role as a follower of Christ is to be a disciple-maker. Sometimes your life is the only bible people will ever read. When faced with adversity in your life, it is your character, your choices and your temperament that will reflect Jesus to others. Witnesses of your life will wonder why you have such peace. Give them a glimpse of our Savior in your actions and your words. Sometimes it's that simple.

Who is watching your life as an unbeliever? Are they witnessing contentment?

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## *5. SHOW ME THE MONEY*

*If a person gets his attitude toward money straight, it will help straighten out almost every other area in his life.*  
- Billy Graham

Years ago, law enforcement departments in California specifically, were offering a career you could enter into that would give you the highest paying, benefit-offering and no-college-necessary career at the sweet young age of twenty-one.

Lots of money with a very young attitude towards it. We saw many officers from Brian's academy class purchase slick cars, fast boats, classy meals and fancy drinks while commonly entering into gambling and adrenaline-seeking pass times, too. They had the money for it!

*“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” 1 Timothy 6:6-10*

There seems to be a lot of mistreatment of the gift of money in these careers. There is always a draw for more. More overtime = more money. More volunteering for special events = more money. Marriage and family may help slow this down a bit, however, it does seem that officers love to have hobbies that can be really expensive.

As a young wife, I saw Brian's need for hunting and fishing rise up to the top of his world. He was continually drooling over the seasonal Bass Pro catalog and every birthday or Christmas wish was for something that could "kill the beast!"

He needed an outlet for the stress he was experiencing as a young police officer on the streets of Los Angeles, the horrific stories he came home with were beyond what the news could even report. I wanted to be a helper in nurturing his hobbies, so I put my blinders on when he spent money, even though I was doing the bills at the time and knew the latest pair of boots were not in our budget. I literally "politely pretended" our way into mounds of debt, putting the mortgage on a credit card, robbing Peter to pay Paul and ignoring phone messages from creditors.

I woke up one morning after not sleeping a wink, the pressure was just too much and I exploded with, "The credit card is up to \$10,000 and I have no way to pay it!" After rubbing the sleep out of his eyes and giving me the confused eyebrow twerk, he said, "How did we get here?"

I explained that my rose colored glasses saw a man who seemed to feel better when getting out into the wilderness and needed a wife who wasn't going to be his party pooper. After sharing this mountainous secret and being able to breathe again, I asked him to help me come up with a solution. He felt bad for pressing us monetarily and suggested we take out a personal loan. Yes, the rate would be high, but it would be a static payment each month and would allow us to pay off that debt much sooner than any credit card payment would. So, we consolidated and sacrificed and ate top ramen and paid off that dang loan.

*"Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it." Malachi 3:8-10*

It was at that point in my Christian walk that I began learning new concepts within scripture. One topic that stood out was about tithing and how it brought to the surface our inward attitude of our trust and faith in the Lord.

*"So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?" Luke 16:11*

The whole idea of it seemed so scary. I had no reference of giving to the church from my family of origin and I never heard mention of it from my newly established bible study friends. It's fair to say I had no idea what I was about to venture into.

Initially, I was trying to make a deal with God regarding the process of tithing. There was a bible study at our house on the average of three times per week. Junior high, and high school kids groups which required pizza, snacks and drinks, plus our own couple's bible study dessert. Add all of that up and you have quite a lofty expense. I kind of presented it to God like, "Hey, I'm spending an inordinate amount of money on growing the kingdom here at my house...can you give me a break?" Well, it wasn't quite that disrespectful, but when you're faced with the direction to tithe in obedience, and you're paying your bills paycheck to paycheck, it feels like you want to stop the bleeding.

*Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless. As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owners except to feast their eyes on them? The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether they eat little or much, but as for the rich, their abundance permits them no sleep."*  
*Ecclesiastes 5:10-12*

It wasn't necessarily that I was too attached to money, it was just that there never seemed to be enough of it to keep our little family afloat. Didn't God understand that? I kept the conversation open with the Lord and began praying that He would make a way.

As this continued prayer unfolded within my life, I was found it easier to say "no" to tangible things I didn't need. We made adjustments. We analyzed cable and phone bills, watched our energy consumption and made different meal choices at home instead of eating out. Brian eventually earned some raises. I was offered a position at the school that would only require me to be there during the day, so I could still be home with the kids in the afternoon. We sold a new van and bought a used one to save on the payment. Slowly but surely, God was actively answering my prayer and we were able to give in faith, completely aware that it all belonged to Him in the first place. He truly made a way, but it was only after I joined Him in prayer and action, agreeing with Him obediently.

**REVIEW:** God has a heavenly economy that looks nothing like ours. He allows us to have things here on earth for us to manage and take care of, this helps us prove to be good stewards of the Lord's possessions. Identifying items to be of use, not to be showy or greedy or to make someone jealous.

Are there tangible things in your life that you could relinquish or re-evaluate items/entertainment/hobbies in order to save money?

*“Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed.”  
Proverbs 15:22*

The problem is usually not the amount in our bank account, it is when we are not satisfied with that number. Do you lack contentment in this area?

Would it be beneficial for you and your spouse to see a Godly financial counselor in this season of your life together?

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## *6. TALK IT OUT*

*“When I get ready to talk to people, I spend two thirds of the time thinking what they want to hear and one third thinking about what I want to say.”  
— Abraham Lincoln*

“I’m fine”...“Doing great”...“Never better.” These are always the quick answers to the question everybody asks, “How are you?” I never quite knew how to answer that, and quite frankly, I still don’t sometimes. Do they really want to know? I mean, I could talk for an hour if I believed you were truly interested in how I was doing. Everybody has much on their mind on a daily basis, we are all going a hundred miles per hour in different directions and we would all have a “gazillion” things to share if someone was really interested.

*“When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.”  
Psalm 32:3*

There are those seasons of winter during your lifetime, though, when you’re feeling really troubled and may need to unload. You’re so filled up with mentally taxing stuff that groaning is just about all you can muster. Your health may be failing, you may be up to your earlobes in parenting the littles, your marriage may be suffering, you’re trying to keep your head above water financially, your parents need care-taking, the workload at your own job is overwhelming, and/or your relationship with God is questionable and you just don’t feel close to Him anymore.

Don't stay silent if you can relate to any these scenarios. Allow yourself to trust others, it's not God's best for your life to keep everything hidden, private and secret...it can even be physically painful to keep your feelings under wraps.

### *Talk it out with God*

Jesus is our Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14). He is Lord, and yet he is able to empathize with us. He was tempted in every way on this earth, yet did not sin. He should be the first one you talk with when life seems heavy.

*“Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Hebrews 4:16*

He knows what you've been through, He knows what is currently happening in your life and He knows what will occur in the future. Your relationship with God is beautifully strengthened by communicating with Him, through prayer. If you don't feel close to him, take a look at how you spend your day. When was the last time you approached the throne of grace to talk to, learn about (through scripture) or hear from Him?

Are you of the mindset, as it is well played out in many tense Hollywood scenes, that prayer is the last resort? “Well, we've done everything, now our only hope is to pray!”

God doesn't want to be last thing on your list...He wants to be first. The distance you feel from Him is your choice, not His - for He will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5). If you're relying on anything else to take your blues away, you may find eventually that everything else you pursue will crumble. Jesus is your solid foundation, the strongest cornerstone (Ephesians 2:19-22) and the One who never changes.

Do you have an eternal perspective? This perspective helps when processing events here on earth, and guides us out of desperation.

*“So our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”  
2 Corinthians 5:17-18*

I learned something about this during a message at church, many years ago. We were going to a “mega church” and the weekend service was held in our fairly large worship center, we even had stairs up to another viewing level in our huge building. During his message, our pastor took a piece of string from the very tippy top seat down to his podium, almost 100 yards in distance. On that string he placed one tiny bead, tied the string onto his podium and said the bead represented our life here on earth, and the string represented eternity. When we left church that morning, everyone received a bead to put on their keychain as a constant reminder that what we physically participate in here on earth is short and eternity is endless. We're commanded as

Christians to set our hearts on things above, (Colossians 3:1-2) where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. From that day forward, I developed a habit of setting my mind on eternal things, (every time I looked at my keys and that small bead) and it has really helped me gain a better perspective regarding life on earth.

### *Talk it out with Friends*

Everyone needs a gal-pal who understands who you are. When you get together you don't have to explain everything over and over again because they already know your stuff. They listen, commiserate and hopefully, encourage.

*“Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another: “What! You too? I thought I was the only one.” — C.S. Lewis*

Social connections are good for your health and well-being. Try not to shut anyone out even if you're an introvert, because friendships are priceless and will help you grow and heal. If you get the distinct feeling that you have much in common with another woman, by all means follow your gut and plan a coffee date.

For a law enforcement wife, it may be difficult to engage your close friends in conversations that have to do with the life of a cop, unless they're familiar with it. Even though these friends love you, they may look at you cross-eyed when you retell your officer's stories of car crashes, drownings, jumping fences to grab the bad guys, adrenaline rushes brought on by pursuits or the trauma of a critical incident. These girlfriends may deflect and try to empathize by saying they understand because their hubby has to work this Saturday, too...and you politely try to hide your eye roll...

This is why Spousal Support groups are so important in the life of a LEOW. You share a bond much like you'll find with the blue brotherhood. These women know exactly how you're feeling because they've been in some of the same situations with their officer that you have been with yours. You can share stories of difficulties and stories of victory, the good, bad and ugly of it all. I highly recommend reaching out to a local law enforcement spousal support group or forming one of your own. I have a ten step “how to” process PDF on our website ([www.PeaksAndValleys.life](http://www.PeaksAndValleys.life)) if you're interested. The care-taking of blue sisters, there's nothing like having that safe space.

### *Talk it out with a Mental Health Professional*

Hopefully, the stigma of seeing a mental health professional is long gone. There is so much help that is available to you - especially if you contact your department's human resources to get connected with a therapist that is approved through your

department's Employee's Assistance Program (EAP). As much as possible, try to find a Christian counselor for individual sessions.

*"The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out." Proverbs 20:5*

Don't delay, there are servant-hearted counselors who can help you dig deep and promote healing. God creates people with many gifts and talents - and mental health professionals are the right people who desire to hear your story and help you unwind some of it.

If you think that your marital arguments or conflicts with friends are things you need communication tools for, you can seek out someone who may volunteer as a lay-person at church that has experience in mentoring, or possibly a life coach (both Christian-based is best) to help you identify some current challenges and design paths for you to move forward. If, however, you are processing feelings from childhood or some early trauma is bubbling up to the surface and negatively affecting you or your relationships, you may want to talk with a licensed counselor (Also Christian-based). These types of professionals will walk you safely through hidden hurts.

However, when your marriage is suffering in an unhealthy way as a law enforcement couple, you may want to seek out a marriage counselor together. When there is a law enforcement officer in the mix, it is best to search for a "trauma informed" or police psychologist to help you walk through your conflicts. Anytime an officer sits in a session with a counselor, it is crucial that person is able to speak the law enforcement language and have an understanding of their career. Otherwise, it will fail mightily and you may never be able to suggest marriage counseling again.

Also, any coach, counselor or psychologist you go to needs to be aware that you are in sessions for your own growth *and* for the benefit of your family. It's been my experience that if they ignore your desire to bring individual health back to your whole family, they will be missing a big opportunity to bring healing to the home.

### *Talk it out with your Officer, your Spouse*

Are you able to be honest with your officer about the law enforcement wife life?

Do you feel like if you bring something up, it will just end in an argument? If that is the case, I would venture to guess that you may just be lacking some simple tools of communication. You are not alone, many of us wives suffer because we just don't know how to present a topic of conversation without ruffling some feathers.

*“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.” James 1:19-20*

You're both children of God, so the Lord *could* be looked upon as your Heavenly Father-In-Law. Every time you have a marital conversation, there is a Father in Heaven who loves your spouse more than you do. But what if you are unequally yoked, (you believe in Jesus and he does not) you may be wondering how that concept would apply to you?

You may be tempted to hold your husband accountable to a Christian lifestyle, and judge him for the choices he makes, but are unable to because he is not a believer. You're also trying to make choices based upon scripture, accompanied by a good and holy way of living and desire a partner to walk alongside you in this lifestyle. You may feel at times like you've been placed in an unbearable situation, continually wondering if he will ever feel the same way you do regarding a reverence for the Lord.

Remember this, your non-believing husband is very worthy of your love, patience and covering in prayer.

*“For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.” 1 Corinthians 7:14*

(This passage in no way indicates that the unbelieving spouse will be saved, sanctified or reformed by the marriage - that is a work of the Holy Spirit when anyone accepts Jesus as their Lord and Savior - it is merely encouraging the believing spouse to stay married, stay within the same dwelling and display a holiness as you live out your life as a follower of Jesus, and in this way he and your children are “made holy”...)

Brian and I were unequally yoked for about 7 years. This stage of our marriage was very painful. Brian wasn't ready to make a commitment to the Lord the way I would have hoped initially.

I began going to church more, taking the kids to participate in the little lambs choir, signing up for every bible study that would have me and serving in the infant room at the Saturday night service. Yes, you can do too much church. It was just an escape from my normal life toward my church life, an area in which I felt like I had control. Hint: The areas in your life should be more like a venn diagram, all areas sweetly mingling together evenly, instead of one area weighing too heavily.

This way of life did not promote healthy conversations between us a married couple. I had to slow down, invite Brian in, say no to opportunities and show my husband that he was more important than church, Not more important than God, but yes, more

important than the things that were taking me away. As I slowly chose Brian again, he felt respected, and in turn, our conversations became more soft and loving.

### The Art of Marital Conversation: Listening and Speaking

Listening doesn't come naturally, good listening skills are worked on...conversation by conversation. The more we listen, the more respect we are giving our spouse and the more likely they are to trust that you are hearing what they have to say. Put your phone down and discipline yourself so as not to be distracted by other "shiny objects" when your spouse needs to talk. Even children need to take a back seat when mom and dad are in a conversation.

When Brian and I felt like we really needed some quiet time to talk, and the house was swarming with activity and noise, we would retreat to a "garage talk". We didn't ignore the fact that we needed to talk, we made it happen. The kids knew if mom and dad said, "We're going for a garage talk," they were not allowed to interrupt unless someone was "bleeding, choking or dying." Excuse the coldness, but such is the language of a law enforcement family, always said with a bit of sass and a lot of firmness.

Speaking may help get things off of our chest, but it isn't without difficulty as well. If the mouth speaks what the heart is full of, (Matthew 12:34) then we definitely need to slow down sometimes so that we can speak in kindness. Process within your mind how your conversation can help lift and build up one another instead of criticizing or tearing each other apart.

*"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11*

Try not to launch into a verbal attack with guns blazing. Sometimes it's difficult to understand what, when and how to communicate, but when we move slowly in conversation, it allows your mouth, heart and head to catch up before saying something that could cause hurt.

The tongue is a fire, (James 3:5-6) and can cause much destruction. I often wonder how many marriages didn't have to end in divorce, how many hearts wouldn't have been broken if only spouses learned to hold back on the hurtful words and instead, press into the conversation with curiosity, love, patience and understanding.

I like to front load difficult conversations with something like this..."It seems like we're disagreeing on this topic, can we plan a time in the near future for a 15 minute discussion?" This type of preparation allows the reduction of anxiety, allows the steam to simmer down and allows for thoughts to become organized. This way of presenting hot topics is sometimes necessary so that each person has time to process their own

thoughts, and so that you're not tempted to sweep the conversation under the rug; waiting days, weeks or years before you deal with it - that is not ideal for marital peace.

### The Art of Marital Conversation: The Anger Angle

Under pressure, we can all be guilty of assuming, jumping to judgement, yelling, slamming doors, grabbing keys and heading for the hills. Sometimes it's just difficult to talk it out with our law enforcement officer because they may bring home their work persona and instead sounding like a conversation, it sounds more like, "Get out of the car and put your hands on your head!"

In our marriage, I've said quite often, "Quit talking to me like I'm a suspect," or "Stop questioning every little word I say like I'm on the witness stand." You, too?

Unfortunately, it was easy to blame him when his rough exterior would show up, but really - I was the one that had always been quick to anger. Surprisingly, because of my quick anger impulse and seemingly endless need to keep explaining myself, he was the one to always come out of the argument smelling like a rose! Why? Because I could not slow my anger reactions. I was wired from my family of origin with an impulse to constantly defend myself and therefore, be easily enraged. So the louder I could get my point across, the better, and similarly, Brian had a hard time "turning the cop off" when things got heated, we were a bad combination when it came to talking things out.

Neither one of us brought the ideal conversational pattern into marriage, and it took us a while to learn the discipline of breathing, praying and slowing down in order to really hear what each other had to say and what we needed to settle things respectfully.

Patience averts arguments, stops quarreling and quiets contention. The Lord is slow to anger and rich in love (Psalm 145:8) and we are to model our lives after His goodness and with as much effort as possible toward that goal. It doesn't mean we won't be angry with our spouse from time to time. We just need to express it without causing sin. (Ephesians 4:26)

Anger is usually a secondary emotion. You feel something first, then anger ensues. You may feel fear, sadness or pain that has not been properly addressed, and then unknowingly lash out at the people closest to you. It is always a good idea to process your anger through this lense and realize that it maybe something deep down inside that is causing the quarrels between you.

### The Art of Marital Conversation: Pursuing Righteousness

Using the word "divorce" in your arguments, threatening to move out, listening to your friends when they encourage you to separate for a while and "take a break" are signs

of immaturity. You may just want the marital pain to end as soon as possible, so you follow what you believe to be a quick solution. None of these acts will strengthen your marriage or aide in living out a Godly righteousness.

Living a life that is morally upright and trustworthy also means that you're honest. Honesty in marriage is sharing all of yourself, holding nothing back. No secrets, everything should be open to each other including passwords and bank accounts. Show me a marriage where these things are under lock and key and I will show you a marriage that has tension and will eventually come to a breaking point.

Honesty and maturity go hand in hand. However, follow me in this...you never want to be honest if it is going to hurt someone. "Do I look chubby in this dress/suit?" This could lead to you just being *honestly rude* if you don't make the proper choice to invoke love *before* honesty.

*"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"  
Micah 6:8*

Live out goodness, love kindness and walk humbly. An expected desire and directive, (*He has told you...*) for all who are in Christ.

*Review:* Whatever your "processing" style is, it's important to share your feelings in some way. I've heard these wise words, "A problem shared is a problem halved." If you have the belief that you can fix things all by yourself - by hiding under the covers, watching chick flicks and having a glass of wine, I would say you're sadly mistaken.

*"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but he who walks wisely will be delivered." Proverbs 28:26*

Be honest with yourself and acknowledge whether or not it's time to visit a mental health professional...individually or as a couple. It could change the trajectory of your life.

Do you know of a Law Enforcement Spousal Support group in your area? If not, are you feeling called to begin one for the wives in your department? (PS: I can help you!)

Make an effort to look at your spouse as a dearly loved child of God. In this way, you sweetly and purposefully prepare your heart and mind before chatting.

Don't forget to remove all distractions when talking with your spouse, so that you both feel valued within the conversation.

*"Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly." Proverbs 14:29*

Regarding anger - Invite God into this activity: Search your heart, to really see why you may lack the patience to slow down, calm down and have a respectful conversation with your spouse. It is important that you assume the best in your spouse so that you do not enter into conversations already prepared for a defensive response.

Whatever the hot topic is, your conversations should be laced with love.

Go back to the scripture verse (James 1:19-20) and ask the Lord to reveal any way that you may have produced anger instead of righteousness while talking with your officer.

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## *7. HOPE IS ALIVE*

*“Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words and never stops at all.” – Emily Dickinson*

I’ve noticed it personally, when I have hope I can go for miles. I can finish home projects with the hope that it will brighten my interior. I can keep writing with the hope that shared stories have the ability to pull on heart strings and change perspectives. I can eat a balanced diet with the hope that my health will benefit.

With challenges in marital conflicts, I have hope that after the conversation, we will have worked it out to the best of our ability. I also have hope that the next time we come upon the same challenge, the outcome will be smoother and quicker.

Raising kids can be physically and mentally taxing. Keeping up with a toddler is no joke and trying to make decisions for and with our teens that can be life altering is stressful. I had hope, though, that if I submissively handed them over to God in daily prayer, He would guide my parenting so that it aligned with His will.

*“Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.” Psalm 42:11*

It was instantaneous for me to believe in the hope of the Gospel, but living it out sometimes felt like someone had just removed the training wheels off of my childhood bike. I was a bit wobbly as I asked the Lord to help schedule my days, and fell a few times when I said “yes” to too many tasks. I can look back now and be thankful for the difficulties, for those are the things that drew me closer to the Lord. I was brought to

my knees as a law enforcement wife and I knew He was the only one who could bring hope to my crazy schedule. Jesus is our true hope.

I rested in Him, learned from Him, soaked in His Word and let it permeate my mind. Truly, He invited me into maturing and persevering within this life of a LEOW, as He showered me with His goodness. Goodness that can't be measured tangibly, but goodness that surprised me with peace, understanding, contentment and resilience... things I couldn't have created on my own. Things that grew my faith and my hope in Him.

*“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” Isaiah 40:28-31*

*I'd love to help you see the hope in being a Law Enforcement Wife:  
Can you identify with the “good stuff?”*

- You're living in the grind now, but your officer may retire at an earlier age than is common among other careers. If you follow a good financial plan now, you will be pleasantly surprised at how much freedom you can have together...and sooner than you may think!
- What about those evenings when he is at work and you're excited to fix whatever you wish for dinner, take a bath, binge on your own Netflix show and gobble down the last bites of pretzel & caramel ice cream...alone. It's good sometimes...look forward to it.
- Another fortunate surprise when we were a young family was that Brian often volunteered in the kids' school classrooms during the week, something that other 9-5, Monday through Friday jobs would not likely ever experience. The kids LOVED it!
- We were able to hit theme parks in the middle of the week because it was dad's day off, and the parks were usually empty. Empty parks are always good for an officer, less time with their head on a swivel checking hands, more time enjoying family.
- During my pregnancies, Brian was able to save up overtime as “time off” and would get almost a month home with the new baby, an option that wasn't readily available to employees from other types of jobs. We were the lucky ones.

- When adventuring together, you always have a body guard!

*REVIEW:* God is hope. Hope is what keeps us going day by day. Hope in Him.

*“This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:10-13*

Do you believe that the Lord has plans to give you a hope and a future? Why or why not?

Can you say that you honestly seek Him with all your heart? If not, what is holding you back?

Can you think of additional “good stuff” that comes from being a LEOW that nobody else can claim? ( I’m collecting “LEOW Moments of Good” - please email your comments to me so that I can compile them, anonymously, [linda@peaksandvalleys.life](mailto:linda@peaksandvalleys.life) )