

RANSOMED HEART

LOVE GOD. LIVE FREE.

October 2014

Dear Friends and Allies,

Now it's the girl's turn.

Over the past few months we've been talking excitedly about the new book *Killing Lions*—and the films—this powerful “Wild at Heart” message we have for young men. Now we have something equally exciting to share with you: Stasi has just released a book for teenage girls!

When you think about the core of our message here at Ransomed Heart—how your heart matters more than anything, how you are faced with a great battle, and Christianity is at its core all about your restoration—I think you can see how desperately needed this message is among teenage girls. So let me share with you an excerpt from *Free to Be Me...*

“I am trying to get some work done but I am dog sitting a nine-week-old puppy. I am, shall we say, distracted. It's kind of a hassle to keep an eye on him but he also is making me laugh harder than I have in a long time. Right now he's investigating a fake plant. His nose is buried in it, he's biting it with his sharp little puppy teeth and every now and again he is growling at it. This puppy is 100 percent *this* puppy.

His name is Roper. He's a heeler and he's smart and he's learning the boundaries to live within. (No! Not there, Roper! Outside!)

He is happiness dogified. He is a joy bomb. And one of the things that makes him so absolutely marvelous is that he is not trying to be anything other than he is. He is a puppy. He's not a kitten. He's not a gerbil. He's not an older dog. He is Roper—the nine-week-old version. And that is a very good thing. Because that is *exactly* who he's supposed to be.

He is supposed to be himself.

I am supposed to be me.

You're supposed to be *you*.

But it is not easy! As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else, is the greatest accomplishment.” Self-assured is not how anyone would have described me in high school. Confident. Self-possessed. Fearless. I may have looked that way. I sure tried hard to appear that way. But if there had been a sign hanging over my heart, it would have read, “*Just tell me who I'm supposed to be and I'll be that.*” My parents had an idea of who I was supposed to be. (Smarter! Thinner! More popular!) My friends were quite willing to tell me, without even speaking, who I was supposed to be. (Funnier! Prettier!) I let my sisters tell me who I was supposed to be. I sure let boys tell me.

I let other people tell me who I was and who I was not before I even had a clue as to whether or not they were right.

We don't come into this world with a grand sense of self. Or maybe we do. Maybe we are assured as a newborn and then life chips away at our innate sense of unique well-being. Life

happens, *things* happen, words are spoken, and it isn't very long before we figure out that in order to survive, there is a person we need to be, and she isn't us. Not truly. Not fully. Not freely.

Just tell me who I am supposed to be and I'll be that.

Big sigh.

Life can be really lonely.

So I bet you can guess what I'm going to say next, right? I'm going to tell you that in order to have a life worth living, you need to be you! You're correct.

In order to have a life worth living, you need to be you. Not the parental- or friend- or boy-dictated version. Not the internet-updated version. But the true version.

You are you. You actually can't be anyone else. God made you *you* on purpose. You are the only one alive who ever was or ever will be you. "Today you are you. That is truer than true. There is no one alive who is youer than you!" said the brilliant Dr. Seuss. "You" is not only who you get to be, that's who you are *supposed* to be.

Problems come when we would rather be someone else. Anyone else. Sometimes others don't like us. Sometimes we don't like ourselves. We know where we are struggling or failing or hurting or simply wanting out. We know we are not all that we are meant to be.

So here's the good news. You are meant to be you, but you are meant to become a better you—a more wholehearted you. You are meant to change and grow in the ways you long to. That is in fact, why you long to.

The very fact that we long for the change we do is a sign that *we are meant to have it*. Our very dissatisfaction with our weaknesses and struggles points to the reality that continuing to live in them is not our destiny. Read those two sentences again.

See, that's what life is all about. Moving forward and upward and becoming the next higher version of yourself, always. But not merely by your own efforts. Not by a strength of will or a bitter form of self-discipline or a rigorous regime of self-loathing. But through the love of God.

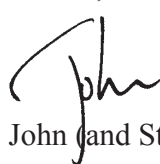
I want to grow. I want to change. I want to become more true, more loving, more authentic, more me. Jesus wants that too. He wants you to become more *you*, too! Jesus loves who you are. He sees you and knows you and thinks you're amazing. He also knows who you are meant to be, and by his love and grace he wants to partner with you on your journey.

Life is a journey of becoming the true you. Which means, it is a journey of the heart."

Wow—I bet you are already thinking of teen girls you want to get this message to! *Free to be Me* is a "version" in a way of *Becoming Myself*. But Stasi did a total rewrite for young girls, with stories and analogies they can relate to. She added new chapters too—like one on boys that is really, really important. It's a wonderful book!

Just to be clear, *Killing Lions* is targeted at young men college age to about 30 (though we are getting great feedback from men in their late 30's and 40's!). *Free to be Me* is for younger girls—middle school and high school. There's a lot of wounded hearts in that age group, and we wanted to ask your help in rescuing them. Share it with the young women you love.

In love,



John (and Stasi!)