



EAT THE *Cookie*

THE IMPERFECTIONIST'S GUIDE TO
FOOD, FAITH, AND FITNESS

Taylor Kiser

As Taylor so truthfully puts it in her authentic and inspiring new book, *Eat the Cookie*, when she says, “Comparison is the thief of joy,” she offers women a more beautiful path rooted in Christ himself. What a gift to us all! Women of all walks will be able to relate to her loving and humorous account of her own perfectionistic struggles and the freedom that comes with seeking our identity in our Lord. Plus, who doesn’t want fantastic recipes and great workouts to accompany Holy Scripture? Well done, Taylor!

Rose Rea, founder of *Radiant* and *Valiant* magazines,
creator of the coffee-table book *Spirit and Life*

As a recovered bulimic and veteran in ministry to women with disordered eating, I can say with confidence, Taylor Kiser gets it. Her depth of understanding surrounding both the temptations and triggers of disordered thoughts and behaviors when it comes to food and body image, as well as the biblical truths and principals that lead to freedom, are spot on. Taylor is a great communicator: relatable, authentic, and super vulnerable. I’ll definitely be recommending *Eat the Cookie* to the women coming through our Eyes Wide Open healing program.

Rae Lynn DeAngelis, author, speaker, founder/
executive director of Living in Truth Ministries

Taylor Kiser’s book, *Eat the Cookie*, is like taking in a big breath of fresh air and letting it all out. It’s a feeling of relief and freedom to truly be who God created us to be. This book will help heal your heart, no matter who you are, no matter what you’ve been through—whether you’ve dealt with insecurities, food rules, or mental battles. Taylor has a gift of feeding people with God’s love as well as feeding us with nourishing recipes, yes, even cookies! Because let’s be honest, life’s too short not to enjoy that sweet goodness.

Lindsay Cotter, gluten-free nutrition specialist,
author of *Nourishing Superfood Bowls*

Eat the Cookie is a beautifully raw and entertaining masterpiece. Taylor has discovered what hundreds are seeking: the secret to freedom and true recovery from disordered eating and thinking. I simply couldn't put it down!

Lindsey Racz, licensed professional counselor,
psychology instructor, eating disorder specialist

Taylor's candid journey of her personal battles and victories with food in *Eat the Cookie* is both captivating and transformative. She makes you laugh, feel spiritually lighter, and experience confidence as you walk away not only with biblical knowledge but also with fun new workouts and mouth-watering recipes you can't wait to go try for yourself.

Kasey Shuler, author of *Move for Joy*

In *Eat the Cookie*, Taylor calls us out of the trap of perfection and into the realm of freedom. Rooted in Scripture and full of practical insight, *Eat the Cookie* will make you reconsider your relationship with food and exercise in light of the gospel. Taylor shares her own struggles and triumphs and, with grace and humility, urges readers down a better path. So grab a cookie (or make some of Taylor's), and dig into a life-changing read!

Aubrey Golbek, registered dietitian, author of
Grace, Food, and Everything In Between

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Eat the Cookie

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To my wonderful hubs
Always and forever

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CHAPTER 1

EMBRACE IMPERFECT PERFECTION

Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.

—VINCE LOMBARDI

*B*eep, beep, beep went the heart monitor. The one I was attached to. The one that notified me every time I moved too quickly and got my heart rate up too high. The one that warned me every single day that I just might die.

As I lay in my hospital bed—a tiny, frail, and malnourished thirteen-year-old girl—I was terrified. Just a few months ago I was excited to be starting high school, making new friends,



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having crushes on boys, and entering this new chapter in my life. I didn't picture that it would start out in a yellow room with fake flowers on the wall that were supposed to make me happy. They didn't make me happy. Nothing made me happy.

Not even the teeny tiny, and very sick, body I now lived in. I still thought I had weight to lose.

Man, I really thought visible abs would be the key to my happiness.

"Perfection." The word that makes us all squirm but also kind of makes us feel excited at the same time. We know in our heads that it isn't something we should be striving for because, girlfriend, we both know you and I have a few things to work on. What we know in our hearts to be true is that it's unattainable. But if we're going to sit down over a glass of wine and have a heart-to-heart, I am pretty sure we would all confess that we all want this unattainable thing we call perfection. Badly.

Now, I'm not a gambling sort of gal, but when I sit down and ponder "perfection," I am willing to bet big dollars that it looks different for everyone. Maybe you want the perfect 4.0 GPA. Or maybe it's a perfect house with a picket fence and that standard 2.5 kids. Or maybe perfection to you is waking up, putting on your power suit and Christian Louboutins, jumping in your Mercedes, and going to the office where you are the CEO.

Whatever your idea of perfection is, I bet you have something that you're striving for. Not that having these desires is a bad thing. I am not going to tell you to let your homework slide or to let your kid be crazy, but when that desire becomes absolutely everything in your life and you'll do anything to achieve perfection, that is when it becomes an issue. For many of us, we may not even realize we're chasing after perfection because, on

the outside, so many of these goals we have for ourselves look perfectly healthy and like things we should truly be chasing. It's not until we dig way down deep into our souls and get honest with ourselves about the ickiness living there that we realize we're trying to walk the path of perfection. And girlfriend, that's no yellow brick road. That's an ugly, curvy, scary path through the dark forest that no one should be trying to walk.

Spoiler alert: There is hope and freedom and joy in jumping off that scary, dark path. Plus, you'll stop getting nasty cobwebs in your hair.

For me, I struggled with perfection in a lot of ways. Growing up, I always had to have perfect grades. I wanted to have perfect relationships that were a breeze. I dreamed of having the perfect job. But my biggest, most consuming struggle that kept me on that dark, scary pursuit of perfection? That was my struggle with my body, and I'm willing to bet (apparently I *am* a gambling girl) most of you lovely ladies have struggled with this at some point in your life—maybe even right now. Even if you haven't, you know the pressure to be perfect in some area of your life.

When we're talking about our body image, it's so easy to see why we feel suffocated by the pressure to look a certain way. Wherever we go, our eyeballs are bombarded with images of stick-thin, gorgeous models and actresses who look *so* happy and like they're having the time of their lives. I'm willing to bet (because why not keep going?) that they're not happy. They're *hungry*. But that is beside the point. We assume we must achieve that brand of perfection. These women are perfect. Their bodies are perfect, their lives are perfect, they have some perfect-looking guy, and they probably even look perfect when they're cleaning their bathrooms. Maybe that last one is just me.



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We see these images and are so quick to forget one of my very favorite verses. (So favorite that I have part of it tattooed on my arm. I'll show you if we ever hang out, which I hope we do.) Psalm 139:14 says, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." It's almost like we read that verse with "media-colored glasses" and assume God isn't talking to *us* in that verse. How could he be when we don't look like, have the same things, or do the same things as the "wonderfully made" women in the media? Maybe he's talking to *those* women, the ones who look "perfect" or are the boss of a big company, or the supermoms who have it all together. But he's definitely not talking to us.

Girlfriend, get your head in the game.

He is talking to *you*.

When I was in my *very* early teen years, these images of beautiful models with "perfect" bodies, long legs, and lean abs brainwashed me, and I fell into the lie that I needed that perfection in my life to be happy, quickly forgetting that God was talking to *me* in Psalm 139:14. I began eating less and exercising more. I lost weight. People complimented my extreme weight loss. I felt *good*. I felt *happy*. Maybe I was becoming like those models on TV!

I was. I was *hungry*.

But I also looked fabulous. So I just kept going, because the biggest lie of chasing perfection is that eventually you will get to a place where you have achieved it, and there will be sunshine and rainbows and unicorns, and you will feel whole and satisfied. But I'm here to call *lies* on perfection, because that just isn't true. I achieved the goal of a model body and still was not satisfied. I kept striving and striving and striving until

all that striving and chasing led me to a hospital bed attached to heart monitors, nurses who woke me up in the wee hours of the morning to make sure I was still alive, and a whole lot of hospital food.

If you've ever been in the hospital, you cringed right along with me at the thought of mushy peas and creepy green Jell-O.

However, this was a wake-up call. After five weeks of sitting on my butt in a hospital bed and only having the Bible to get me through, I started to believe what Psalm 139:14 said about me. Maybe I was wonderfully made just as I was. Maybe God was *really, truly* talking to me. Slowly but surely, I grabbed his hand and made my recovery. I asked the doctors for chocolate cake instead of Jell-O because it was scarier, but it made me freer. It was so terrifying at first, but with every meal I asked God to give me the strength to do the next right thing. To eat the next scary food. During this time I truly found my own faith. Not the faith that was instilled in me because I grew up in a Christian home, but the kind of faith where I truly *felt* God's presence. It was a beautiful thing, and it allowed me to walk into wholeness.

I gained the weight back. I got my period back, and I began to feel freedom again. After spending five weeks in the hospital, I had to spend another five months in bed at home, away from school and away from my friends. It was an extremely hard and trying time, but it was also another time when I was able to lean on God and experience him in a way I had never experienced him in the past. It also made me never want to go back to the Perfection Pursuit again.

After I was deemed medically healthy, it was a beautiful seven years of bliss and embracing the parts of me I didn't love but that I knew God had made and designed. I learned how to



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renew my mind and think about myself the way God thought about me. I spent my days not even remembering what a calorie was. Eating a brownie wasn't even something that would register as scary for me anymore. And I definitely didn't feel the need to jump on a treadmill or pound the pavement to burn it off.

In fact, I even had these brownies I now lovingly call “boy brownies.” (See recipe on page 217). They're basically just a brownie recipe loaded with caramel and chocolate chips that I made for all my boyfriends growing up to make them fall in love with me. I hope my husband isn't reading this right now, or he might know that he wasn't the only one who received these! But I ate boy brownies with my boyfriends. I ate non-boy brownies with my girlfriends. I just ate. I exercised healthily. I had a little squish under my belly button, and my thighs no longer had a gap between them. And you know what? I was totally fine with it because I was finally happy. I had experienced the “perfect” body already, and I knew that it led to a pit of despair, and I was *not* crawling back down into that pit again. I no longer felt the weight of perfection. I understood that the Perfection Pursuit was endless and dark and scary and full of icky cobwebs. I was feeling like I was living the best life that God had for me.

Until I wasn't.

One of my favorite verses is John 10:10: “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” It says that the enemy will use every little trick and lie on us, and not just about how we think about our bodies. Anytime we are pursuing perfection in *any* area of our lives—work, relationships, families, our home—it's the thief coming to steal, kill, and destroy us because he knows that perfection is truly unattainable in any area.

If we fast-forward those seven years to my early twenties, we find the enemy worming his sneaky little self into my life, wanting to steal it, to kill the bliss I was feeling, and to *destroy* me. And you know how he did it? By putting me back on the dark, scary path to perfection. It didn't start as pursuing the perfect body. It started with wanting the perfect lifelong relationship. As a single person, I was so desperate to get married. I had my whole wedding planned on Pinterest and was just waiting for the right groom. I thought I had found "the one" and was getting ready to put my Pinterest board into action . . . when we broke up.

That dream died and made me feel completely out of control. I know I'm not the only one who looks to another area of her life to try to control when something else feels out of control, and that is exactly what happened after this breakup. I went back to controlling the one thing I knew how to control—food. I was back at the gym, back obsessing about my body and food and any little thing that went in my mouth. And all that obsessing left no space in my brain to think of God, the one who could take the obsession away.

My body began to change and, yet again, I had the praise of culture and society. I was fit, and everyone thought I looked amazing. I would have never told you then that I was also not sleeping, exhausted, hungry, and angry almost all the time because I just told myself it was "part of the lifestyle." I had the kind of hard-core dedication not to even eat one cookie at Christmas. Girlfriend, have you ever met a person who didn't eat one Christmas cookie? I can tell you from personal experience that you *do not* want to. They are very sad, distressed people who just truly want to *eat that cookie*. I can tell you from experience because I was one of them for a long time.



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Doing things perfectly and “having it all together” are praised by our culture, so it was so easy to let it roll off my back and not acknowledge that I was going back down the path of perfection. This struggle isn’t only about our bodies, so don’t think you’re getting off easy if you haven’t had that specific struggle. Our culture praises perfection in any category, whether that means becoming the top woman at work or having perfect kids, a perfect house, or a perfect husband. Anytime you feel some kind of worth or value because you “have it all together,” no matter what area of life we’re talking about, it’s going to be a recipe for disaster.

The root of perfection is fear, although you might not know it yet. It could be fear that you will lose your value if you don’t have six-pack abs or fear that the world will think you are a failure as a parent if your kid has a temper tantrum, or if you fear, like I used to, that your relationship will never be perfect and therefore you will never be “complete.” They’re all related to perfection and not wanting the world to think we don’t “have it all together.” Because who wants to be normal when you can be perfect, right?

Because the enemy knows about our root issue of fear, even if you don’t know your specific fear yet, he can use your walk down the Perfection Pursuit against you. For a little while, he won’t bug you. I mean, why would he? Anytime you’re walking down the Perfection Pursuit, you’re already going down a dark path all by yourself. You’re making his job easy. He will let you go on your merry little way, holding on to fear and doing everything you can until you feel like you’ve arrived in your pursuit for body perfection, family perfection, job perfection, or insert any kind of perfection here. You’ll feel satisfied. You’ll arrive. You’ll feel good about what you’ve done.

Until you don't.

I know women who have spent years crafting the perfect-looking family while still feeling like something was missing. Or women who finally become the CEO of their own company but still feel empty inside. Personally, I spent years working out and eating healthy so that I could get in the best shape of my life. I got there. I was happy for a second. But then I wanted more. I wanted to be pushed more to see if I could get more muscle. I sought the help of a trainer because I figured that would help me get to where I could be, and then I could finally rest knowing that I was enough and had achieved all my goals.

First Peter 5:8 says, “Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour,” and I was right there ready to be devoured because my mind was not sober or alert. It was focused on achieving, striving, and body perfection. It was too crowded with other thoughts and obsessions to even think about God. Everything that I had learned about being fearfully and wonderfully made and made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) just flew out of my head, and in came the enemy, read to steal, kill, and destroy.

I'd like to say God has been a part of my life ever since my hospitalization, but if I'm being truly honest with myself, at this point in my life he wasn't there at all. Striving for that “more” and that challenge got me even more fit, sure. But, girlfriend, you know what it also did to me? It made me feel like a crazy person and left me feeling unsatisfied and truly imperfect.

Funny how that works, eh?

Let me just tell you about “purse chicken.” Once I was of legal drinking age, I always made sure to have baggies of cooked chicken breast in my purse when my friends and I would head



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to a bar so that I could sit in a bathroom stall and eat it to avoid eating greasy, fattening bar food. All in the name of trying to achieve that perfect body.

If you ever met a person who ate chicken out of her purse in bathroom stalls to avoid having to eat other foods at parties, or was a really angry person all day if she was going out for dinner with you because she didn't want to eat beforehand to "save calories," or just wouldn't go out for dinner with you *at all* because she only allowed herself to eat her own boring food (probably that nasty purse chicken), would you be her friend?

Probably not. You'd think she was a lunatic.

Hi! I'm Taylor, and that was me.

My own family didn't enjoy spending time with me, and most of the time my husband didn't either. We argued and fought, and I couldn't go on date-nights. My family was concerned about my new lifestyle and weight because they saw all the warning signs happening again that led me down the road to the hospital. But I ignored them.

I told you, chasing perfection made me do a whole bunch of questionable things, like eating food out of baggies and putting tension on my closest relationships. I'm hoping that you've been able to look at some of your own desires as you've been reading along and noticing if you've been pursuing certain aspects of your life for the wrong reasons. Maybe you're able to start to identify some pretty questionable things you have done in hot pursuit of whatever your goal is. Now, remember, goals are great. But white-knuckling onto those goals for dear life and allowing them to take away your worth and value as the beautiful daughter of the King that you are if they don't work out as picture-perfect as you imagined is a problem.

Especially if they lead you to sit in a bathroom stall eating chicken out of your purse.

Worse than crazy Taylor, though, was unsatisfied Taylor, and I'm thinking you're probably really going to identify with this one. There always seemed to be more that I could be doing. More weight to lose, more muscle to gain, more chicken to eat, and so on. I gained more muscle, lost more fat, and I thought it would make me happy and that I would think I finally had that perfect physique that I craved. But that never happened. Literally, not once did I think, "Oh, this is good. I've achieved this perfect body, and now I can just stay here." And this isn't just about bodies. Ever thought, "Oh, my family is finally exactly how I want it"? Or, "I have arrived at the exact job I want, and I will love it every day forever"? Probably not.

Like I said before, the enemy will leave you alone while you carve your own dark path to perfection, until he sees you've reached your goal. Then here comes that roaring lion, holding on to your fear and waving it in your face so that it becomes so scary and real that you forget to be satisfied with how far you have come, and you only want more, more, and *more*. More muscle. Even better grades. A bigger house. More power at work. You name it, and he will tell you that you need it. And once you get it, you'll be left feeling unsatisfied again and feeling like you can just never seem to grasp this perfection thing that everyone else seems to have. The more you feel imperfect, the more the vicious, never-ending cycle continues. The goal is never reached, and the cycle spins on and on.

Sound like you? Don't worry, girlfriend, we're going to band together like a pack of girls with PMS looking for chocolate and overcome that roaring lion with God's *truth*. And we all know



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that you don't mess with *one* girl craving chocolate, let alone a *pack*. Add in God's truth, and the enemy doesn't have a chance.

No matter how hard we try, we can't be perfect. Our ability to be perfect jumped ship when Adam and Eve bit into the apple in the Garden of Eden. Only God is perfect, and he doesn't want us to be competing with that. But we do. I know I sure did, and it was one of the reasons I was so far from God at this point in my life. When we become obsessed with pursuing perfection, we can only handle one obsession, one pursuit. While I was obsessed with having a perfect body, there was no room for me to pursue God.

However, God isn't telling us, "Oh well, you can never be perfect, so just go do whatever and have no goals." God may not call us to perfection, but he does call us to excellence. They sound similar, but they are much, much different.

To me, the definition of perfection is being totally flawless. You have no defects whatsoever. Of course, trying to get to this level of "flawlessness" usually keeps you stuck in a vicious cycle that never really gets you anywhere. Then, though, there is excellence. To me, excellence is just about being really good, but not perfect, because perfection isn't really possible. No matter how many makeup commercials promise you can achieve flawlessness, it just is not realistic.

In Gretchen Saffles's book *Proverbs 31*, she says, "Perfection looks within ourselves to find joy and happiness, but it always comes up lacking."¹ Excellence still calls you to a life of striving, but in a greater, deeper way. Now we're not striving for perfection, but striving to step into grace and freedom. Gretchen goes on to say, "Excellence looks to Jesus to find wholeness and satisfaction,"² and that is because he is the author of that grace

and freedom we're now striving for. I just love this perspective. God is the author of excellence, and this is what he wants for you. Joy! Freedom! Satisfaction! Wholeness! Bliss!

You will know when you have arrived at excellence because you will give yourself the grace that God has already given you. When I was on the Perfection Pursuit, there was literally not one iota of grace. If I ate one extra gram of food, I was “bad” and felt ashamed for my lack of willpower and failure as a human. But when I started to shift from the pursuit of perfection to excellence, grace came into play. Grace says that I am human, and that I am going to make mistakes, and that is okay.

Although I now do not think that eating an extra gram of anything should be something to be ashamed of, I did at the time, and grace got me through that. Knowing I was still the same person on the inside and that God still loved me even though I made a “mistake,” and allowing myself to move forward with my day is when I knew things had begun to shift. I was starting to make space for a perfect God, because the walk down the Perfection Pursuit of my body was coming to an end.

The Perfection Pursuit does not allow you to make a mistake. When a mistake happens, you will feel it in your very soul. That mistake will crush you. Excellence whispers in your ear, “It’s okay. You’re doing the best you can, and you are enough. Right here. Right now. Even in the middle of your mess.” Learning to listen to that small whisper, actually accepting it to be true, and being okay is how you will be able to pursue excellence in a way that doesn’t just end with you walking down the dark and scary Perfection Pursuit once again.

There is no such thing as perfection. Perfection is an



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impossible quest—that’s the bad news. The good news is we were made to aim for something better and within reach. Realizing our imperfection and beginning to strive for excellence is the only thing we need to focus on.

So what does kicking perfection to the curb and welcoming a life of excellence look like, and how the heck do we get there when the whole wide world is telling us that just being extremely good (whatever that means) isn’t good enough? Two things have helped me become a perfection quitter: identifying the difference between the lies and truths in my walk down the dark and scary path of perfection, and then taking up my cross and following Jesus into the freedom and joy that he has for me.

ASK TOUGH QUESTIONS

Don’t worry, we’re not talking about questions like, Does your handbag need to match your shoes? I don’t know about you, but I’m still confused by that one. We’re talking about grabbing your shovel and digging *deep* within yourself and asking yourself some hard questions:

1. Why do I feel the need to be perfect in this area?
2. What has striving for this perfection brought to my life?

For me, it wasn’t until I truly answered these two questions that I was able to see that this never-ending, vicious cycle wasn’t bringing me any kind of joy, I was doing it for all the wrong reasons, and it was truly pulling me away from my most important relationship—the one I had with God. If we were talking at a

coffee shop right now, and we were getting into the nitty-gritty with each other, and I had to answer these questions out loud to you, my answers would go something like this:

1. Because if I don't have a perfect body with a visible six-pack and insane leanness, the world will not think I am attractive.
2. Perfect body.

I would then dig down deep into an even scarier, darker part of myself that I would never want to admit really exists, and I would have to unpack why being attractive was so important to me. Would it bring me value or acceptance? And yes, as much as I hate to say these words out loud, I thought it would.

Okay, your turn. Question one. Go deep, go dark, get into the nitty-gritty part of your soul. I'll wait.

I don't know what answers you found, but don't let them make you feel ashamed or guilty. I know I sure did when I unpacked the thought that being attractive would somehow bring me value. Confess that wrong thinking and move on! God held me and loved me through those lackluster, wrong thoughts, which allowed me to move past the feeling of guilt and shame, and I know he will do the same for you. In fact, 1 John 1:9 says that "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." The Lord will redeem those thoughts, which will begin to free you to pursue excellence. Remember, excellence is freedom, wholeness, and *joy*!

Okay, question two. This one was the real kicker for me. If you're a list maker (like me), making an old-school list of pros



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and cons is really helpful. On one side, put “pros of a perfect body,” and on the other “cons of a perfect body.”

You know what my only pro was? “Perfect body.”

Nothing else. Nada. Zipola. Zilch.

The con list was long. It included things like “being hungry,” “feeling weak and tired almost all the time,” “not sleeping well at night,” “having obsessive thoughts about food,” “never enjoying date-night because I’m too afraid to eat ‘scary food,’” “having no friends because I can’t go out for dinner,” “nasty, cold purse chicken,” “being depressed,” “not being the same person I used to be,” and “fighting with my husband.”

The list went on and on and on and on.

So what has the quest for perfection brought you? I’m willing to bet your list of pros and cons is going to look similar to mine. And if you’re anything like me, this list is going to be an eye-opener. Why do we continue chasing something that is bringing us no joy? Even if the media/culture is telling us it will, we have firsthand, personal experience that it does not.

I was never more joyful with less weight or more muscle, but instead I had no friends, no energy, and constant arguments with my husband. I’m sure you’re not more joyful when your house is more organized, but you lash out at your kids for finger-painting on the table, risking making a mess of your prized organization, instead of getting right in there and painting with them. The same idea applies to whatever you’ve been striving for. While you might feel more at peace when your house is organized, it’s never worth lashing out at your kids. The feeling that you get after something like that happens is far away from the peace that the clean house brought you in the first place.

TAKE UP THAT CROSS

Now that we've done some soul-searching and list making, and confessed our thoughts about why we have been on this pursuit, it's time to walk into the excellence that God has designed for you. Yes, you! I am not looking at someone else right now. He is ready and waiting with big open arms for you to be okay with being good and not perfect. I know this from experience, because it wasn't until I embraced this concept that I felt God's embrace, truly made space for a perfect God in my life, and was able to reach out and feel his presence again. It's not until we embrace being good that we are free from the endless, vicious cycle of perfection.

When we look to Jesus and see that grace, we are able to extend that grace to ourselves. The problem is that most of us women do not look to Jesus, and so we cannot even fathom his grace, let alone give it to ourselves. So what does it look like when we try to change that? There are three verses I always come back to when I find myself obsessing about how my body has changed and is no longer "perfect":

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)

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let



EAT THE COOKIE

nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

We must deny ourselves the worldly Perfection Pursuit to pursue Jesus. Everything we do must be for the glory of God and not for the glory of ourselves or for what the world says we should be glorifying. Loving God with all our mind, heart, and soul will draw us into his presence and allow us to see when we're giving in to the world and need to make a change. In turn, when we draw into his presence and begin to make changes, we are able to get a little tongue-tingling taste of his grace, truly understand it, and be able to pass that grace on to our soul. That is when we have arrived at excellence.

Memorize these verses. Write them down. Stick them to your forehead. Do whatever you need to do to remind yourself of them when you catch yourself opening the gate to the dark and scary path of perfection.

Except maybe don't actually stick them to your forehead. Maybe your bathroom mirror or something.

It's not going to be easy, but it's going to be worth it. The enemy is going to be bugging you full force when you begin to draw closer to the Lord and lay down your worldly pursuits at Jesus's feet. I know the enemy threw some pretty nasty lies at me, telling me I was losing my worth and value. Remember, he knows that fear is at the root of any kind of Perfection Pursuit, so don't be alarmed if some of those ugly fears deep within your soul start coming up and become really, really real. The enemy is crafty and can make you believe that your fears are coming true, but fear is just False Evidence Appearing Real, so you just

Eat the Cookie

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