



Glass Slipper Reflections

Clarity, Courage, and Truth for
Healing After Narcissistic Abuse

Devotionals that gently meet you where you are...
...and guide you toward where you're meant to be.



Deception in Disguise: When Toxic Looks Holy

*A Complimentary Devotional
for CinderElla Conversations Participants*

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AnnetteChesney.com/Devotional



Deception in Disguise: When Toxic Looks Holy

Sometimes the most confusing and lingering emotional wounds don't come from obvious cruelty.

They come wrapped in words that sound spiritual...but aren't biblical.

A comment meant to correct you. Advice offered in the name of faith. A verse quoted to explain why you should continue to endure something abusive.

On the surface, it sounds like holiness - especially after having been quietly gaslit about such things for awhile.

The language sounds familiar, and the message is framed in spiritual terminology so it appears to be wisdom or godly counsel.

Yet somewhere deep inside you, something feels unsettled. You may not be able to explain why, but you feel it.

Maybe it's a tightening in your chest. A quiet discomfort you try to push aside. A small voice inside that whispers, Something about this isn't right.

Many women have learned to ignore those moments. Especially if the message is delivered by someone who seems spiritually confident or holds a position of authority.

Instead of listening to that inner warning, the questions begin to turn inward.

"Maybe I'm just being prideful."

"Maybe I'm too sensitive."

"Maybe this is God correcting me."

This is one of the ways deception gains its power. When spiritual language is used to override discernment, confusion often follows.

The Subtle Power of Spiritualized Toxicity

Toxic dynamics rarely announce themselves openly. They often borrow the language of faith to hide in plain sight.

You may have heard phrases like:

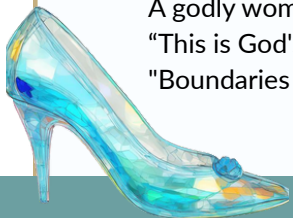
"God hates divorce."

"You just need to forgive and move on."

"A godly woman endures suffering quietly."

"This is God's plan for you."

"Boundaries are selfish and inappropriate, especially in marriage."





Each statement may contain a fragment of truth when understood in its proper context. But when those words are used to silence pain, dismiss concerns, coerce into compromise, or shame into unhealthy silence, something important has been lost. Truth has been twisted into a tool for control.

Over time, patterns like this begin to create spiritual disorientation.

Slowly, a woman who once trusted her ability to hear from God may begin to doubt herself.

Instead of feeling closer to God, she begins to feel trapped between what she senses in her spirit and what she is being told she should believe. Her heart begins to question if God really loves her.

When we look at the life of Jesus, we see something very different.

He never used truth to manipulate people.

He never quoted Scripture to shame the wounded or pressure someone into silent suffering. In fact, many of His strongest words were directed toward religious leaders who misused spiritual authority.

He challenged hypocrisy.

He exposed manipulation.

He defended those who were being burdened or shamed by others.

Truth in the hands of Jesus brought freedom. It lifted burdens rather than adding to them. It clarified rather than confused. It invited people into transformation instead of forcing them into submission.

This distinction matters more than many people realize.

Truth used in alignment with God's heart brings life. But when scriptural principles are twisted by someone seeking control, they become a weapon.

Learning to Recognize the Difference

Part of healing after spiritual confusion is learning to recognize the difference between godly spiritual guidance and toxic pressure disguised as faith.

There are often subtle clues.

When something is unhealthy but cloaked in spiritual language, it tends to create fear rather than peace. It shuts down questions instead of welcoming honest conversation. It protects the powerful while leaving the vulnerable exposed. It demands performance rather than inviting growth. It's one-sided and one-upping rather than truly uplifting.

By contrast, the voice of the Holy Spirit often comes with a very different tone.





Sometimes it arrives as a gentle nudge. A quiet sense that something doesn't sit right. An inner prompting to pause and look deeper. A subtle tension between what you're hearing and what you sense God is saying.

Many women remember moments like this in hindsight.

They recall the uneasy feeling they couldn't explain at the time. The hesitation they tried to ignore. The quiet whisper they pushed aside because someone else sounded more confident.

What they were sensing was not rebellion. It was discernment trying to wake up.

Reclaiming Your Spiritual Clarity

If you've walked through a season where spiritual language was used in harmful ways, it can take time to rebuild trust in your own discernment.

That process often includes learning the difference between guilt and conviction.

Guilt tends to feel heavy, shaming, and confusing. It pushes you into fear, appearances, or performance.

Conviction, on the other hand, is clear and purposeful. It may challenge you, but it also draws you closer to God's heart and invites growth.

Healing also involves allowing God to gently untangle the knots of confusion that formed during difficult seasons.

The good news is that God is not threatened by your questions. He welcomes them.

Discernment is not the same as cynicism or suspicion. It's the quiet strength that develops when spiritual maturity begins to grow.

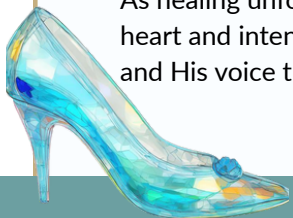
Over time, many women discover that the very experiences that once left them feeling spiritually shaken can become the foundation for deeper wisdom.

They begin to recognize the difference between control and healthy authority. Between shame and conviction. Between voices that demand compliance and the voice of the Shepherd that calls His sheep by name.

The truth is, you may have encountered people who spoke in God's name while leaving wounds behind. But those experiences do not reflect the character or heart of God. Neither do they reflect the principles of His Word.

The voice of the Shepherd is kind, even in correction. The result is that you're drawn closer to Him.

As healing unfolds, many women discover that little by little, their discernment grows stronger, trust in His heart and intentions returns, and spiritual clarity deepens. What once felt confusing begins to make sense and His voice that once seemed distant becomes easier to recognize again.





Journal Prompt

Reflect on a time when something sounded spiritual but left you feeling confused, pressured, or silenced.

What did you sense in your spirit at the time? What do you recognize differently now? How might God be helping you rebuild trust in your discernment and His heart today?

A large light blue rectangular area with horizontal dashed lines, intended for journaling.

Prayer

Lord, You see the places where spiritual language was used in ways that wounded rather than healed. You know the confusion that came when truth was mixed with manipulation.

Bring clarity to my heart where there has been distortion. Restore my ability to recognize Your voice above every other voice. Teach me the difference between guilt and conviction, between control and true spiritual authority.

Where deception once clouded my thinking, let Your truth bring freedom and peace. Help me grow in wisdom and discernment so that I can walk confidently in the light of Your truth.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

