

Finding Her 'Place'

Lisa Bevill's Camping Vision Became A Reality

by DeWayne Hamby

Sometimes you have to sit back and marvel at how God works things out for His glory. He doesn't call everybody on the telephone to generate excitement about some project He's considering. He just sets it into motion and it's already in full swing before you realize it.

A few years ago, an interview with singer Lisa Bevill was featured in *Brio* magazine, published for teenage girls by Focus on the Family. In that article, Lisa bared her soul about the struggles she felt while growing up as a Christian girl. She talked about things like depression, insecurity, peer pressure, and the process of becoming self-confident in Christ.

"It feels so good to finally realize that God accepts me just as I am!" she boldly declares.

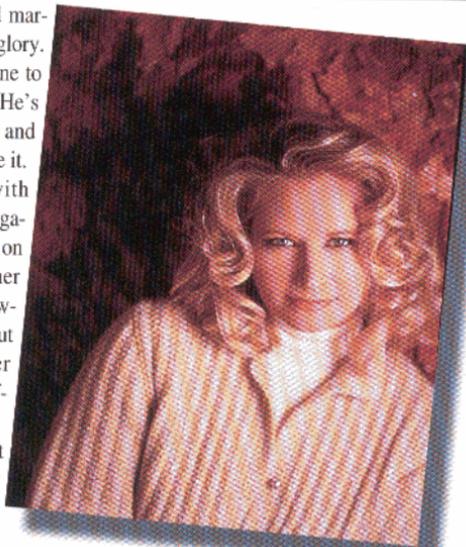
Lisa connected. She began to receive letters, pictures and poems from girls around the globe who had read the article.

"I lost count after 500," she says.

Feeling the new responsibility placed on her as a mentor to this group, Lisa mailed back letters to the girls and dedicated a song on her second release to the girls. But the urge to minister was still there.

"That's when God gave me the idea for a girl's camp," she stated. "I realized throughout all the letters, there was a consistent message, and that was: the girls cannot and are not sharing things with their mothers, there is no communication between parent and child, very low self-esteem, obsessive weight pre-occupation, cliques and sex. Many letters mentioned suicidal thoughts, threats of suicide and some actual attempts. They left me crying every night!"

After that, Lisa appeared on a radio show, mentioned the camping idea, and received a huge response from those interested in working. Lisa watched in awe as God began putting the pieces



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together, and the vision became clearer.

Pretty soon, the dream became reality. "Place in the Sun" was launched in the summer of 1995 as a retreat for girls only. Rules were fashioned to help the girls be as comfortable and open as possible, such as no makeup, no clothes with labels, no worrying about how you look. Over thirty girls from all across the country made their way to Bowling Green, Kentucky, for this special retreat. For three and a half days, they talked openly and honestly about their struggles and their faith. According to Lisa, it was an experience she'll never forget.

"It was a life-changing experience for all of us," she confesses. "We all walked in with the idea of 'Oh, we're gonna' minister to these girls and we're gonna' change their lives,' and God had different plans. Those girls changed our lives

in a major way. It was just amazing spiritually, and we had a lot of laughs with each other.”

It's easy to see that these girls, "My Girls," as Lisa calls them, hold a special place in her heart. On her newest release, *Love of Heaven*, Lisa dedicates a song to them, a tradition she began with her second album.



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Tender reed/
Although you're so fragile
Tender reed/ Although you've been bruised
The gentle hand that grew you from a seed
Will be all of the strength that you need.

“Satan is alive and well right now,” Lisa states, referring to the struggles that young Christians face. “It's the whole issue of spiritual warfare and how ignorant sometimes we all are, especially our youth, as to the battle that's truly going on. The voices they hear in their head, making them want to do this, that and the other, there's a battle going on. I think the biggest problem is just the kids are not acknowledging that Satan is alive and yet the victory has been won. But just know that he's gonna' make it hard on you.”

She knows what she's talking about, too. Growing up, Lisa faced immense trials and pressures. At twelve years



old, her mother was diagnosed with incurable cancer. The family lived with the dreadful feeling that she could die at any moment. Her father went through surgery for rheumatoid arthritis every year for eleven years and died in Lisa's arms when she was nineteen. Preparing for her mother's death for years, her father's passing dealt a serious

blow. Lisa's mother would die a few years later, on the day Lisa returned from her honeymoon.

“My mom was a very godly woman and I learned so much just by watching her go through her life and cling to her faith during her illness,” she says.

Looking back, Lisa sees the hand of God that kept her strong through those times. And she

sees, in the midst of the pain, a wonderful grace. It is that grace and that need to “cling to God” that she wants to instill in the young hearts that look up to her.

“Don't look at me,” she says. “If you see anything, I hope that you see Christ in me.”

Girls, are you interested in attending “Place In The Sun”? Write Lisa at P.O. Box 210993, Nashville, Tennessee 37221 for

more information on next year's camp.