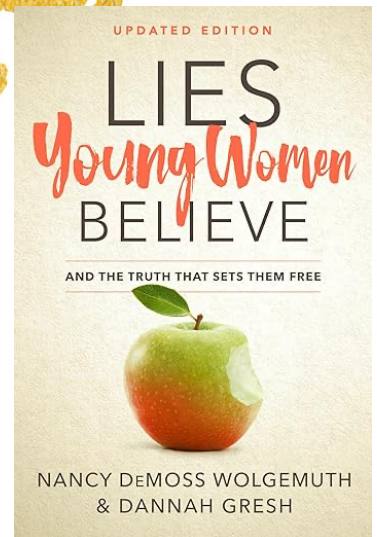




BARE MARRIAGE

HEALTHY, EVIDENCE-BASED, BIBLICAL ADVICE FOR SEX & MARRIAGE

with Sheila Wray Gregoire



Lies Young Women Believe:

And the Truth That Sets Them Free (Updated Edition)

Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth and Dannah Gresh

SYNOPSIS OF BOOK

Because Satan deliberately targets teen girls to ensnare, they must be vigilant about defeating lies.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- Overemphasizes the Christian life as a constant vigilant fight against Satan rather than resting in God's love and grace.
- Ignores completely the reality of abuse, date rape, sexual assault, and more, giving advice that would make girls more vulnerable to predators, and encourage girls to internalize blame for their own assaults.
- Pathologizes normal and healthy human emotions, suggesting God is disappointed when we are sad, lonely, or angry.

IMPORTANT STATISTICS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU READ THIS ONESHEET

- 20% of women report being sexually assaulted/harassed in church as a teen, 10% by a pastor or adult volunteer.¹
- 25% of girls are victims of child sexual abuse, 91% by someone they know,² like a family member, teacher, coach, or pastor.
- 11% of teen girls experience physical abuse by parents; far more experience emotional abuse.³
- 25% of teen girls will experience a major depressive episode.⁴

HYPERFOCUSES ON SATAN AT THE EXPENSE OF JESUS

- Opens the book with alarmist language about Satan. Suicide is because "there are evil influences trying to destroy you" (19). Tells girls they are in a "burning house" due to Satan (15). He is waging a battle (30), and you're in serious danger (14).
- Mentions Satan and The Deceiver 140 times in the book. Jesus is only mentioned 128 times. We don't hear about Jesus and his love until page 36. Until then, it is all about how we must be hypervigilant or Satan will destroy us.
- States that Satan specifically "targets women with his lies" (22). The Bible does not say that girls are more vulnerable to Satan's attacks, and research does not support the idea that girls are more deceived than boys.
- Embellishes the Adam and Eve story to give Eve negative motivations and emotions, taking liberties that go far beyond the text. In so doing, encourages girls to view womanhood with suspicion.

IGNORES MENTAL HEALTH AND ABUSE DYNAMICS

- Gives examples of being abused and mistreated, including a parent verbally abusing a daughter (182), and a father sexually abusing a daughter (49), and instead of teaching boundaries and finding safety, tells girls they must forgive, overlook "human frailties" and admire parents' strengths (51), and take the first step in repairing the relationship (51).
- Misdiagnoses many teen behaviors that can be rooted in trauma, like panic attacks (9), substance abuse (145), cutting (11), and promiscuity, as a girl's fault for believing lies. Fails to recommend mental health help.
- Implies anorexia can be cured by giving up lies. Includes story of a hospitalized girl who deliberately infected her arm, almost requiring amputation (26), as an example of how hospitalization doesn't work, but posting Bible verses around the house does (36). This discourages teens and parents from seeking qualified medical treatment for serious conditions.
- Tells girls they must submit to authority, even if the authority is wrong (118). Does not include a disclaimer for abuse.
- Portrays our grief as disappointing to God. Says that suffering "is an essential tool in the hand of God" (201) and God deliberately causes tragedies, like the death of a parent, to teach us, and we should consider these things good (47).

¹ Gregoire, Sheila Wray et al., *She Deserves Better*, Baker Books, 2022, based on our survey of 7000 predominantly evangelical women

² CDC, *Fast Facts: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse*

³ CDC, *Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey*

⁴ National Institute of Mental Health, "Major Depression", 2022.

- Labels anxiety as a “belief issue” (151), ignoring the fact that the teen years are the height of anxiety & depression and often require mental health care.
- Spreads misogynistic tropes, saying that a girl’s desire for a boyfriend is actually a girl’s desire to control her boyfriend (92). Instead, asserts that a teen girl must let a teen boy lead her (93), grooming girls for abusive relationships.
- Asserts that girls can only express their opinions “in some instances” to those in authority (118), like parents and pastors. Fails to warn that a relationship where one is punished for expressing an opinion is not a safe one.
- Ignores consent altogether throughout the book. Calls sexting an area of bondage and sin for girls (184), but fails to highlight the coercive dynamics in their anecdotes (71), or warn girls that sexting is a common form of sexual abuse.
- Includes anecdote where a youth pastor appears to have sexually abused a minor, without naming abuse (127). Warns girls they are in sin if they become disillusioned with church if youth group goes badly.

PATHOLOGIZES NORMAL TEENAGE EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOR

- Implies feeling “I don’t have any friends” is a lie (11), though it may objectively be true. Chastises girls who want friends for making friendship into an idol (43), even though friendships are vitally important for teen mental health.
- Chastises a girl for not considering God enough for her since she was so worried about her parents divorcing (42), even though mental health practitioners include a parent’s divorce on the ACE (adverse childhood effects) scale.
- Calls masturbation a sin that puts you in bondage (143), yet 43% of girls have masturbated by age 14, and 58% by age 17. Exploring one’s body is normal sexual development, and this is not explained or differentiated from lust.
- Gaslights same sex attracted girls, telling them just because they feel same sex attracted doesn’t mean they are (90).
- Disparages women’s quest for equality (169). Tells girls they were created to be men’s helpers (219), and that it is their unique job to look after the home (219). Sees a career as being in opposition to a girl’s highest calling of being a wife and mother. Ignores that men can stay home with children too, or that many families require two incomes.

ENCOURAGES RELIGIOUS SCRUPULOSITY (OCD-LIKE SYMPTOMS THAT ARE RELIGION-BASED)

- Depicts normal teenage behavior, like watching Netflix (21), reading Harry Potter (63), doing yoga (63), listening to secular songs (21), thinking about fashion (27), wanting a boyfriend (91) or a friend (113), spending time doing hair and makeup (28), or finding it easier to talk to friends than to God (43), as opening oneself up to Satan.
- Encourages girls to hyper-focus on whether they are truly saved. Makes girls doubt their salvation, because if you are truly saved you won’t do things like watch many movies or hold grudges (135). Depicts a girl who had sex with her boyfriend as not being saved, insinuating that if you make a mistake, you weren’t truly saved (136).
- Tells girls that their bodies bombard boys (98). Fails to note that lust is the boy’s sin, and she didn’t cause it.
- Implies girls can stop intrusive thoughts with hours of Bible reading, though this tends to compound religious OCD.

WHAT WOMEN HAVE SAID

- “This book used fear mongering tactics...Not sensitive to mental health issues, self-harm, or body image issues. I read this book for youth group years ago and it still messes me up. Was instrumental in me losing my faith.” **Liz, on Amazon**
- “This book confirmed the toxic beliefs about God and myself that I was already hearing in my unhealthy home—that God is controlling/domineering, and if I have a problem with that, I need to check my heart.” **F.M., Social Media**
- “My co-leader and I HATED the messages it was trying to send our girls. Shaming their clothing choices, saying the highest calling for them is to become a wife and mother, simplifying the causes of mental illness, and generally being out of touch with their generation. We want to help shape them into strong women of faith who seek a close relationship with our Savior, but this book is isolating and shaming.” **Leah, youth leader**

SYNOPSIS OF FINDINGS

Rather than presenting a mainstream Christian or evangelical message, *Lies Young Women Believe* parrots the Bill Gothard fundamentalist, fear-based approach to faith. Does not present a compassionate Savior who understands our struggles. Teaches girls to disregard their feelings, which warn us when something is wrong. Instead, the book paints everything a teenage girl normally feels—loneliness, desire to be loved, sadness when relationships go wrong or when one is mistreated or abused—as things that inspire God’s disappointment and Satan’s attacks.



INSTEAD OF LIES YOUNG WOMEN BELIEVE, CHOOSE...

She Deserves Better: Raising Girls to Resist Toxic Teachings on Sex, Self, and Speaking Up (Gregoire, Lindenbach and Sawatsky)