

“Heaven”

A journal entry written by Katie in October 2005

*I want to follow in your footsteps. I see this image in my head of sand and a beach and me, just holding your hand, walking beside you, and you holding my face to your heart and saying, “It’s gonna be okay,” and wiping my tears, and picking me up and throwing me into the air and we could run through fields of daisies and you’d make one for me and I’d tickle you and fall into the grass laughing and I’d kiss you on the cheek and say, “I love you, daddy.” There are things about me that only you know. I don’t have to bend my personality to fit other peoples’. I just need to know that I’m doing what you want. It doesn’t matter what anybody thinks of me because I am unique to you. I’m lovely in your eyes. I’m your bride to be. You don’t care if I wear make-up or straighten my hair. You are a toothpaste God, a getting ready in the morning God, a sit by my bed and read me bedtime stories God, a Winnie-the-Pooh watching God, a caring God, a teddy bear God I can snuggle with at night, a sunshine God I think about first thing in the morning, a mosaic-tile God that I can think about when I step on the different colors, a sidewalk God who goes for walks with me, an endless God who always keeps giving, an eternal God. I think heaven’s gonna be a **lot like childhood**. There will be innocence. There will be kickball. There will be big slides that run down mansions. There will be neighborhood cook-outs and Jesus will be the fireworks. We will all turn our eyes to Him. It will be a little like the Fourth of July when me and Bethany would play for hours in the sun and go swimming and run around. You are the sparklers. God, you are sensational. It will be like the morning of Christmas when I would wake up the house because my stomach was gnawing itself and jumping because I was so excited. It will be like a wedding ceremony—the elation after the bride says I do and they kiss. It will be open and real. There will be hippie skirts and sunshine and I think the houses will be made of glass so we can all see each other because there will be nothing to hide—no barriers. I think there will be different colors than here. God will be the main attraction and perhaps we’ll want to do nothing less than worship Him. When I get to heaven, God, I want to lay at your feet and listen to your words and hear your breathing. I want to hold your warm, fleshy hand kiss you a billion times for what you’ve done. I will hold you for a moment longer. It will be like the feeling Charlie gets when he found the golden ticket. Yet nothing will compare to it—to seeing your face. I think it will be lovely. Your eyes will sparkle and your smile will have lines that*

raise to your eyes and I'll just be able to feel your love for me by being near you and I'll remember all the promises you had for me since I was a little girl, all the whispers you spoke in my softest dream, all the hope you instilled in me, the purpose, laying your hand on me when I went to sleep, letting me know in my deepest heart that you had a great purpose for my life. I want to follow that. I want to walk in that. **I remember when I lost it and turned to the world's purpose for me and how sad I felt and I remember when I had to earn your love and how miserable I felt. But now I know that that sadness, that misery, that loneliness, that entrapment was me missing you.** Our talks, our connection, our love. You are a perfect sonnet, an impressed song that flows out of someone's life, the musical undertones. You are like a perfectly-sharpened pencil, a nightly walk between husband and wife, a shepherd's crook, all the deep things inside of me, someone's favorite sundae, a time apart from everyone else to listen to the crickets, you are the sunset. You are the freedom of letting go of the rope thread and falling into your arms jumping to you. Engagement rings and sunsets, princesses and fairy tales, marshmallows and spaghetti. The cross, you are the suffering, too. You know the pain of separations, of loneliness, of not being understood, of not being approved by other people and Jesus, you worked through that and so can I with your help. I am nothing on my own. But with you, all things are possible. I don't have to be like anyone else. Our relationship is unique and beautiful and you are my best friend and nothing could ever change that and somehow I can't comprehend how you are my Father and King yet friend and lover. You have seduced me. I admit it! Good job! You have won my love—but I want to give it all to you and not just some of it. I want it to be pure for you because you deserve my all. If a bride cares more about what family thinks, what friends think, than what husband thinks, then their relationship is already imbalanced. God, I want to be a good bride for you and this only through the grace of God—not my own works. And sometimes I think that I miss you more than words can say, which is weird cuz I've never seen you face to face but I still miss you. I know I was meant to live with you forever. You are awesome, and your love is astounding. And I won't let anyone hold me back. Everything I do today, I do for you. And I **accept your grace**. When I fail, you don't condemn me. In fact, you expected it. You planned for it and that's why you sent your Son—not for perfect people but for imperfect people. By your grace, I am being perfected into more like you. You are refining me. You are taking all the excess weight off the ship at sea so I can really sail, throwing sandbags out of hot air balloons so I can soar with you. Your love is intimate and it changes me and I can't

comprehend it. You're real. You made the heaven and earth and yet you love me. Wow, God, that's awesome. You're awesome and so cool and I love you and I'm yours. ***Let's go for a picnic.*** Love, Your daughter, Katie

Ten days before Katie went to be with the Lord, we visited her one last time in Rockford. She requested that we bring five of her possessions. They were her pogo stick, electric guitar, amplifier, childhood banner that read "God is ♥" which she made when she was six years old, and a **picnic basket. The picnic basket was purchased by Katie at a thrift store. When we arrived in Rockford and opened the trunk of the car, I asked Katie, "Why did you want us to bring the picnic basket," and she answered, "Daddy, I want to go on a **picnic** with some friends!" When I found this letter about heaven a couple weeks after Katie's homegoing, God reminded me about the picnic basket. He told me that this letter, along with the picnic basket, is to be used with family and friends. We are to have that **picnic** that Katie talked about, read them this letter to let them know what Katie is experiencing, and ask them if they would like to receive the free gift of eternal life, so that they too can spend eternity with the Lord and with Katie. Please use this letter and have you own **picnic** with those God wants you to be with!*