

## Chapter 1: Tell It Like It Is

For the hundredth time today, I'm wondering why I didn't become a computer analyst. I mean, really, have you ever heard techies lamenting over ways to better relate to their mainframes or discussing the risks of being vulnerable with their keyboards? I should've gone after the money. But did I? No. I wanted to help people, to motivate them. I wanted to solve the world's problems. Now look at the fine mess I've gotten myself into. I'll be speaking to three hundred or so women about topics good Christian ladies dare not mention in public and I'm convinced this could make me or break me. Being in the counseling field for more than twenty years has been rewarding, but it requires a great deal of me, and on days like this, a computer screen and a cubicle seem so much more desirable.

I'm certainly capable enough. I've given advice to hundreds of parents on getting a colicky infant to sleep through the night or building confidence in an introverted fifteen-year-old. And I've advised women on balancing family, work, and church, and men on being the spiritual leaders of their homes. But this new ministry will beyond a shadow of a doubt test the boundaries of my skills and my faith. Why I agreed to this I'll never know. Well, too late now. I only have time for a quickie—a quickie prayer, that is. *Thank You for Your blessings. I'm in complete awe of how You've used little old, ordinary me to touch others. But I gotta tell You, these times of molding and transforming make me want to pull my hair out. So please, dear Father, just let me come out alive.* And so it begins—my long walk to the guillotine. Okay, I'm exaggerating, but it sure feels that way. Well here goes nothing.

“Ladies, we have been repressed for far too long. How many of you have been told to tuck it in, cover it up, and act like a lady, because good girls don't do that? Well, I'm here to tell you this is not God's plan for us. Let's go straight to the source, since I know you won't believe

me, but you can hardly dispute the Word of God. Let's go to Genesis, right to the very beginning. Genesis 2:25 reads, 'The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.'

"Did you hear that, ladies? They were naked and felt no shame! Can you imagine standing in front of a full-length mirror, naked as the day you were born, and feeling no shame? Can you imagine looking at the reflection in the mirror and thinking, *I love the curve of my hips, the swell of my breasts, and the pout of my lips?* Now, be honest, ladies. How many of you have ever had those thoughts in relation to your nakedness? I'm not sure about you, but I know those aren't the notions that normally run through my head. My thought process usually goes a little something like this, and let me warn you, I typically think in song, so to the tune of 'In Right, Up Right, Down Right, Happy All the Time,' here we go: *Oh cellulite and knobby knees, where'd that dimple come from? Breasts headed south and my tummy's a pouch, six-pack abs no more. Crow's feet and thinning hair; never mind it's turning gray. I'd sing it again, but of course I can't remember, 'cause my mind is going too!*"

The auditorium explodes with laughter and applause, and boy am I relieved. I'm never quite sure how the saints will respond to what many would characterize as unconventional. Some might even call it sacrilegious. Oh well I can't stop now.

"So that's my reality, and from your laughter, I'm guessing many of you feel the same way. Now I have another question for you, since we're being open and honest. Ladies, when was the last time anyone of you has had an orga—"

Hey! Is this thing on? I think someone turned off my mic. And why are the people backstage giving me that sideswipe across the throat sign? "Excuse me. Hello. Is this mic on?"

Ahh. There we go. That's better. Hmm. Sorry, ladies. Now where was I? Oh, yes, I was inquiring about—"

Hey! Did they cut the mic again? Who could possibly be cutting the mic off? Perhaps I've gone a bit too far. Because there is no laughter or applause. You can literally hear a pin drop. The saints are definitely not feeling the unconventional at this moment. This must be how Jonah felt and I can absolutely relate. I seriously want to run the other way and take my chances with the belly of a whale. I think that'd be way less painful than the hate stares coming my way. I'm so thankful for 'prayer quickies'. *Help me out here, God. It's Your message. I'm just the messenger. Please, please, please don't let them shoot the messenger.*

"Ahh. I get it. The big O-word has made you uncomfortable. Ok, I can rephrase. Ladies...when was the last time any one of you made it to 'happy', you know reached the peak?" Happy must be better, because the mic's still on. I'll forge ahead while they can still hear me. "What did y'all think, 'happy' was created for men only? Are men the only ones who get to experience pleasure? No, ladies, I think not. Se-, I mean gratification was created equally for men and for women. What? You don't believe me? Read it for yourself. Genesis 3:16 tells us we'll desire our husbands. Believe it or not, we're actually hard-wired to yearn for, to want, and to crave our husbands. I know, I know. I nearly fell off my seat too when I learned this. Glad y'all are already sittin' down". Well, I thought it was funny. Apparently, the ladies do not.

"Think about it. If there was no sin, we'd want to please our husbands all day long. But Eve bit that apple, and the rest is history. Sin keeps us distracted. With work, children, and health concerns, who has time to think about...getting 'happy'? And on top of that we're bombarded with distortions of the truth—desire and passion are wrong; desiring our husbands is a curse.

With all the misinformation out there, we can't help but feel discouraged—believing we aren't beautiful, we aren't desirable, we aren't worthy of love, passion, and pleasure. Yes ladies, sin has us all confused, but don't entertain the lies. God, our Creator, designed us to enjoy mutual satisfaction. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, created to live the abundant life!"

The frigid stares seem less frigid, maybe just a little chilly now. But there'll be no defrosting on this day. Nope, that's never been my style. Since I've got them all riled up, might as well leave 'em good and mad. If I can get them feeling something—anger, sadness, compassion—they might be jolted out of their complacency and maybe they'll be moved to change. Besides, this is all I got. So it's this or twenty more minutes of me singing about my crow's feet and sagging boobies.

"Now I want you to write down these texts and look them up later when you've calmed down and gotten over your shock that s-e-x and d-e-s-i-r-e are in the Bible. In Genesis 26:8, Isaac fondles his wife, Rebekah, an act of intimacy. Read it. I'm not makin' it up. And then read the whole Song of Solomon. There's some juicy stuff in it. Sometimes I have to put the Good Book down when I'm reading about ol' lover boy Solomon and his lovely wife. It's way better than that *Fifty Shades*. And some of you know what I'm talking about, but that's another message for another day.

"As we close, I ask that you read the Bible texts shared and do a Scripture dig of your own, seeking a greater understanding of intimacy and passion between husband and wife. Complete the Passion Barometer that you can find in your handout and ask yourselves, are you getting the satisfaction, the intimacy, and the passion you deserve? And if not, ask yourselves why and what are you willing to do about it.

“Join me, those of you who dare, and let’s embark on a journey to happy. It’ll change your life as it most certainly changed mine. I encourage you to live naked, ladies, free from guilt, pain, fear, sorrow, shame, and the lies of the enemy. Let’s be transformed, learning to live our lives naked and unashamed.”