

# Hiding from my Mother-in-Law

*Krista Lynn Campbell*

The sound of her walker in the hallway alerted me. Ninja-like, I darted up the stairs and slipped into the darkness. Time to hide from my mother-in-law.

Following hip replacement surgery, Joan moved into our home for one week. With no steps to navigate, our first floor guest bedroom offered an appropriate rehab location.

Due to my husband's busy schedule, the caregiver role landed on me. Before her arrival, I removed hazardous throw rugs, placed clean sheets on the bed, and located a raised toilet seat. My servant's hands operated on high speed but my heart stalled.

I loved my mother-in-law but our differences rattled me. A retired English professor, Joan was intelligent, cultured, and well-read with a vocabulary that rivaled Webster's. At 80-years-old, she taught art classes, played bridge, and mastered Japanese embroidery. A month before her surgery, she toured Spain and Portugal.

Her accomplishments made my farm girl's head spin. Waves of inferiority washed over me as I scampered upstairs to avoid another conversation about books I hadn't read by authors I didn't know.

Deep inside, I recognized my mother-in-law wasn't the problem. I was. The enemy's lies echoed in my mind and settled deep in my soul. I envisioned my shortcomings broadcasted on blinking neon signs.

*You aren't smart enough.*

*You aren't sophisticated enough.*

*You aren't enough. Period.*

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In Judges 6, Gideon struggled with lies of inferiority too. Hiding from the oppressive Midianites, he threshed wheat in a dark winepress. Threshing required open air and space but God found Gideon underground. He called Gideon out of hiding and into battle. *“And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, ‘The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor.’”* Judges 6:12 (ESV)

Maybe Gideon’s heart skipped a beat as he looked around to see whom God called a *‘mighty man of valor’*. But Gideon’s meekness couldn’t deter God’s mission. *“And the Lord turned to him and said, ‘Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?’”* Judges 6:14 (ESV)

From a damp and musty hiding place, Gideon politely reminded the Creator of the Universe of his inferiority. *“And he said to him, ‘Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.’”* Judges 6:15 (ESV)

Lies follow us into hiding, even in a dark winepress.

*You are from the weakest clan.*

*You are the least in your family.*

*You are not enough. Period.*

But God saw a warrior when Gideon saw weakness. As Gideon countered with lies of inferiority, God offered extraordinary promises. *“And the Lord said to him, ‘But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.’”* Judges 6:16 (ESV)

Through our weaknesses, God’s will and work are accomplished. Though we see problems, He sees potential. While we list excuses, *“Pardon me, my Lord, but how can I...?”*, God wraps His arms around us and whispers, *“I will be with you”*.

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As my mother-in-law's rehab concluded, I stepped out of my hiding places and initiated conversations. I asked questions about her childhood in Ohio and heard stories of colorful relatives. As she reminisced about college days and dreamed of traveling to New Zealand, I listened. When she felt comfortable traveling, we attended church together. Learning, listening, and loving helped quiet the lies of inferiority.

We are called to love, not hide in the shadows or lurk in winepresses. No matter what or whom we are hiding from, God meets us and promises His Presence. *"I will be with you."*