

*Life, Love & God Series*

JESSIE MINASSIAN

# CRUSH- ED

WHY GUYS DON'T HAVE TO  
MAKE OR BREAK YOU

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**DAN WOLGEMUTH**

President/CEO Youth For Christ, USA



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JESSIE MINASSIAN

# CRUSHED



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# Introduction

I've read a lot of books—*lots* of them—and all my favorites have something in common. Each one made me feel as if I were talking with a friend, or at least someone who cared about my life. I guess when it comes down to it, I don't like having someone I've never met tell me how to live. Wild guess here—maybe you don't either? It's easier to listen to advice when we hear it from someone we know and who we know cares about us, right? (And, let's be honest, sometimes it's really encouraging to hear that an author is *human*, just like the rest of us!) So before we dig into this book together, it's only fair that we get to know each other a bit.

I'm Jessie. My given name is actually Jessica, and my last name is so hard to pronounce that I avoid using it when possible. (Just for kicks, it's pronounced min-'a-see-in.) My single momma brought me into this world on a beautiful Californian March day just a *few* years ago (wink). She got married when I was five, and I grew up in a blended family of five kids. I played lots of sports in school and tried to figure out how to love God with my whole heart when it seemed to be *way* more

interested in boys. (Maybe you can relate?) I liked school when I had friends, thought it was miserable when I didn't. I got good grades, ate too many Twix for lunch, and never got used to spending ten to twelve hours a week on a school bus. (We kind of lived in the boondocks.)

After high school graduation, I went to a Christian college in Southern California. I played volleyball there and then got into rock climbing. I studied abroad two semesters, one in Israel and the other in Costa Rica. I still liked school when I had friends and learned not to be miserable when I didn't. I got fewer good grades, stopped eating Twix for lunch, and traded the school bus for my first car (a ridiculously small, gold Toyota MR2). There were ups, there were downs, and then there was *him*.

I married my match made in heaven the weekend after college graduation. For now, let me just say that Paul (or "Paco," as most people know him) swept me off my feet and I have never looked back. Best friends make the best soul mates, and he was—and is—both. (*Awww!*) I didn't think I had room for any more love in my heart until God gave us two daughters, Ryan and Logan. They're sweet lil' blessings wrapped in two feisty packages!

Besides loving on my family, my greatest joy these days is to help girls find their identity, pleasure, and purpose in God. I'm the resident big sis for a website called LifeLoveandGod.com, where I answer girls' questions about, well, life, love, and God. (I know, pretty creative, right?) Now that I have two daughters of my own, I'm all the more passionate about seeing girls understand their unique beauty, know how amazing God is, and hold their heads high in dignity.

That's where the LIFE, LOVE AND GOD series comes in. These

books are meant to be the closest thing to just hanging out at my house, going for a hike together, or meeting for a small group in my living room. Each book covers different stuff you're facing, whether it's body image issues, the quest for identity, shameful addictions, or relationships with guys.

You'll want to have a notebook or journal handy for the discussion questions at the end of each chapter. Trust me, you'll get so much more out of this book if you take time to think through those questions. Even better if you can grab a couple of friends (or your mom or a youth group leader) and go through the book together! My heart is to see you grow in your relationship with God and shine with confidence, and that happens most often when you're in community with others.

You can find out more about my random favorite things on the "Meet Jessie" page at [LifeLoveandGod.com](http://LifeLoveandGod.com). I'd love to hear a little about you, too, if you'd like to send me an e-mail at the website!

Now, without further ado, let's get talking about the real reason you picked up this book: guys.

Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "jessie". The signature is written in a light, greyish color and is positioned below the word "Love,".



The background of the image is a grey surface covered with numerous sharp, irregular fragments of broken glass. The fragments are scattered across the frame, with a higher concentration in the lower right quadrant. The lighting creates soft shadows, giving the glass pieces a three-dimensional appearance.

*Part 1*

**HAVE  
YOU BEEN  
CRUSHED?**



## CHAPTER 1

# Those Blasted Butterflies

It all started my second-grade year. His name was Carlos.

I knew virtually nothing about him, other than that he was a really good tetherball player and liked to keep his dark hair high and tight. But he had dimples. The dimples are what did me in. My elementary school-aged heart was all aflutter while I waited in line to play tetherball at recess. I was actually glad when he broke his arm because it meant I got to sign his cast. (How twisted is that?) I noticed whenever he got up to sharpen his pencil, and when his name wasn't called during attendance, I was sincerely disappointed. I don't remember him ever speaking, actually, let alone talking to me. Come to think of it, he may not have known English. But his silence didn't deter me. I was smitten.

Ridiculous, I know. But even more ridiculous is that it didn't end in the second grade. After Carlos came Jordan and Ronnie, Cody and John, Chad, Mirage, Randy, Jake . . . the list goes on and on. We're talking double-digit crushes before I even got to high school. It's not pretty.

I didn't know it then, but I was a budding crushaholic. *What's a crushaholic?* you might ask. Great question. Other than it being a word I completely made up (you'll find I tend to do that), a crushaholic is someone who can't seem to go for more than a couple of months, weeks, or maybe even *days* without having romantic feelings for someone. And most girls born in the past quarter century seem to fit into this category. Whether falling for a friend from school or smitten with a Hollywood hottie, a crushaholic has a hard time not having a "like" in her life. And those likes usually translate into boyfriends whenever the object of her affection actually likes her back.

To be honest, I went through most of my life not realizing the permanent damage being done to my heart by all those likes and, eventually, relationships. At the time, it seemed so natural and unavoidable to like someone—kind of like breathing, or dying, or blushing when you realize you've just said something completely idiotic. It may have seemed unavoidable and natural, but now I know better. And I hope I can help you see a better way too.

The truth is our crushes are *crushing* us. We're letting our relationship status define our identities. We're letting guys and society tell us who we should be, and we're bending over backward to become what we think some guy will want. And the weight of all our flitting affections, the broken hearts, jealousy, breakups, betrayals, and let-downs, the longing for someone we can't have, and the scars left from having relationships we shouldn't be in—they're taking a toll.

We're being crushed by the weight of our own affections.

The dating-go-round—the cycle of crush, date, break up, crush on someone else—that seems so natural in our society

ends up crippling us emotionally. Unless you break free and are willing to challenge the dating “norm,” your heart may be pretty mangled by the time you give it to the man God has for you to marry someday. (Or, if you don’t get married, the dating-go-round could leave you with a broken, bitter heart for a companion.) Even more devastating, all the crushes and dysfunctional relationships with guys are stealing our hearts from the One who should be the center of our lives now, today, in this moment.

The good news is there’s a better way. That’s what this book is all about: finding out that God has given us a way to love that doesn’t include letting guys make or break us. The God who made you and delights in you wants more for you than to rise and fall with each passing relationship. *I want more for you than that! I’m sure you do too.*

I hope you’ll be willing to discover that “better way” together by digging into God’s Word and taking some time to get to the, ahem, *heart* of the matter in your own life. My hope for you, as we walk through these pages together, is that you’ll find out who you are and how to find contentment in who God is. I hope you’ll dream with me about what kind of relationship you want to have someday and figure out a game plan to glorify God with your life in the meantime. And I hope you’ll find that it *is*, in fact, possible to make it through life without getting your heart crushed by the weight of your own affections and relationships with those (mighty fine) members of the opposite sex.

## Profile of a Crush

At the risk of sounding painfully elementary, let’s tackle first things first: What is a crush, anyway?

The more I've thought about that word, the more curious it sounds. The dictionary defines *crush* primarily in terms of “pound,” “destroy,” and “oppress.” (Ironic, huh? Not that any of us have ever felt pounded by emotions, destroyed by rejection, or oppressed by other girls who like the same guy, right?) Nope, the puppy love variety of *crush* gets just one out of nine definitions for the word.

**crush** \ 'krəʃh\ *noun* : an intense and usually passing infatuation; also : the object of infatuation.<sup>1</sup>

If I could be so bold as to challenge the sacred tome of wisdom also known as *Webster's*, I'd expect to see a little more ink given to this great plight of young adulthood. I mean, come on now—that's it? What about the butterflies, longing, and sometimes all-around obsession for someone who may or may not know you exist? Show a little empathy, Webby! Besides, I don't know how “passing” most crushes are. Some can last years. But there you have it: the crush. It doesn't matter if you're six or sixty—the chance of being pounded, destroyed, and oppressed by bashful blue eyes seems to remain the same.

Most people will tell you that crushes aren't dangerous. They're pretty much expected from girls as young as elementary school. Our favorite TV stars have them, our big sisters have them, our BFFs have them. “Liking” someone is almost a rite of passage in our culture these days—just part of growing up—kind of like pimples, tampons, and a high school diploma. And why not? Crushes are harmless, right?

I wish they were. Really, I do. The butterflies and hoping and dreaming and scheming can be fun! But after thirteen years of flitting from crush to crush before I wised up, I'm here to tell

you that a crush (and especially a crush addiction) can come with serious side effects.

But what's so dangerous about having a crush? To answer that question, we're going to have to ask another one first.

## Queens of Hearts

Let me ask you this: What makes us have those crush feelings for guys? Why do we get the butterflies, the sweaty palms, the “please-oh-please notice me” rush of emotions?

Obviously, God made girls and guys to like each other—to be attracted to the opposite sex. (It helps with that whole “be fruitful and multiply” command.) But if you were to go to a guy's slumber party (not that they'd ever call it that), you'd hear a lot less talk about who likes who and a whole lot more talk about the latest first-person shooter game. Why do girls specifically want relationships so badly? Why are we the ones who read romance novels, watch romantic comedies, and dream about romantic walks on the beach? Why can we girls be so obsessed with love and relationships?

I think there are two reasons. First, part of our love for romance is how God made us as girls—how He wired us.

Genesis 1:27 says that God made both man and woman “in his own image.” Men and women both bear some parts of His image, such as His creativity and desire for justice. But He also split some of His image between the two of them. God gave some of His qualities primarily to Adam (that is, those qualities we call “masculine,” such as strength and steadiness) and some of His qualities to Eve (think “feminine” qualities like gentleness and beauty). To put it another way, Adam plus

Eve equaled the complete image of God, or as close as a human pair could come to it. When Adam chose Eve and they became one flesh, they became a more complete human replica of the whole image of God.

One of those qualities God gave primarily to Eve—one of His divine characteristics in human form—is a love for romance. (If you've ever read Isaiah, you've heard firsthand the romantic language God uses to describe the love He has for His chosen people.) In fact, the Bible says that God *is* love (see 1 John 4:8). And even though guys definitely feel and show love in their own ways, we girls have an uncanny knack for romance. The feeling of excitement and mystery associated with love comes more naturally to us, in general at least. It's just the way God made us.

But there's a second reason girls delight in romance more than guys, and it also goes back to the garden.

## I Want You to Want Me

God wanted Adam and Eve to fit perfectly—heart, body, and soul—so He gave girls and guys different roles to play in romance. God knew that Adam and Eve's relationship would work best if they were like two pieces of a puzzle: equal in worth, but different in design. These two pieces, when joined, would fit together like chocolate and coconut, rainbows and dark clouds, tall boots and skinny jeans. So God gave Adam a desire to pursue Eve, to chase and win her. And (here's our part) God gave us a desire to be desired. God preprogrammed each girl to be the one pursued, the one treasured and sought after. We want to be wanted. And that's not a bad thing! (It was part of God's design, remember.) But we have to understand

the nature of our desire if we're not going to be owned by it, because that innocent and pure desire to be desired by a man got warped when sin entered the picture.

When both Adam and Eve were operating under God's will and keeping His rules, things were peachy. Adam found his worth in God, pursued Eve, cared for her, and treated her with the honor she deserved. Eve also found her worth in God, was her beautiful self, helped Adam around the garden, respected him, and delighted in his love. They fit. And they were both truly happy.

Then came sin.

I'm sure you know the story. Satan, God's mortal enemy, disguised himself as a snake and got to work deceiving Eve. Satan promised Eve that if she ate the fruit God had forbidden her to eat, she'd "be like God, knowing both good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). And Eve bought the lie hook, line, and sinker. She ate the fruit, disobeying God's clear instructions, and then gave some to Adam to eat. He followed suit, and the rest is a sad human history of sin, pain, regret, and rage against God.

But what does this have to do with a girl's desire to be desired? Well, when Adam and Eve sinned, they received the consequences that went along with disobeying God. Adam's and Eve's roles in their relationship didn't fit as flawlessly anymore. Because of sin, Adam stopped being perfect, and so did Eve. Their stubborn wills began to clash. Adam didn't always pursue or care for Eve or treat her with the honor she deserved. Eve was no longer content "just" to help Adam, doubted her beauty, and had trouble respecting him. And because of the curse, instead of delighting in Adam's love, Eve battled to rule over him. They didn't fit perfectly anymore because sin came between them.

God created us to love and be loved, but our obsession with romance was never His design. Our obsession with being wanted—our over-the-top desire to be desired—is a backlash from the curse. Because of sin, we're not content to wait for love until God's timing; we'd rather take matters into our own hands. God told Eve that because of her sin, "[she would] desire to control [her] husband" (Genesis 3:16). That desire to control creates all sorts of chaos in marriage, but I think it's pretty obvious that it messes things up way before that.

Think about it. Have you ever tried to control a guy's feelings for you? Have you ever dressed to impress a guy, flirted to get his attention, or tried to control the way he acts toward you or others? Is God enough for you, or do you feel you need a boyfriend to be happy? Are you willing to wait for a guy to pursue you—to lead you, the way God designed—or are you set on taking matters into your own hands just to get what you want? (We're going to talk more about a guy's role as leader in chapter 6.)

Our culture hardly helps with this. We're told as girls that we can do anything and be anything and shouldn't let anything stop us from getting what we want. (Don't get me wrong; I completely believe that women are capable and strong and have the same rights as men. But we can't forget that God gave men and women different roles on purpose, for our benefit.) When the curse of sin and the bullhorn of society get together, the sound can be enough to bust our eardrums. We're being told that we're failing as girls if we're not getting our way. Just like in the garden, Satan is hissing in our ears, "You deserve to have that guy like you. Just go get him. Tell him how you feel. Do whatever it takes to make him yours. A guy will make you happier than God ever could."

I get so stinkin' mad when I think about the way Satan twists

the truth to deceive us, because when we live our lives God's way, there's so much peace and joy—and hope! But when we listen to Satan's lies, everything gets twisted. We end up confused and hurt and messed up.

I know you want to be wanted by a guy. So do I! All of us girls have a desire to be desired. That's the way God made us. We just can't let that God-given desire get twisted up in Satan's lies. We can't let him convince us we *have* to be in a relationship to be complete and happy and have a full and delicious life.

So what do we do with those feelings? How can we want to be wanted without becoming obsessed with guys and relationships? To start with, we'll have to get control of our thought life.

## Taming the Wilds

We girls are pretty much notorious for how easily we fall for guys. Humor me for a sec and envision this scene with me. . . .

You walk into church and take your seat with your usual group of friends in the fourth row back from the front. Just before the worship band gets up to play, you notice something out of place in the front row—something beautifully, mysteriously, *gorgeously* out of place. “Who's *that?!?*” you whisper to your friend on your left, pointing to the hotness who has just turned to shake hands with the pastor. Friend doesn't know, but you're not left wondering for long. The pastor takes the stage and introduces him as a guest worship leader for the morning. His name is Benji Lemberg.

*Helloooo, Benji Lemberg,* you think to yourself.

The first song begins, but you're not really thinking about the words you're singing. (Something about God being everything,

yada yada . . .) You're a little preoccupied with the sandy-blond hair hanging so perfectly over one of Benji's eyes. There's something about a cute guy . . . with a guitar . . . singing worship . . . that makes a girl forget all reason. *He's perfect*, you find yourself thinking. *He even loves God!* Before the first song is over, you've imagined him asking you out. By the end of worship, he's taking you to a romantic dinner. By the end of the pastor's message, Benj (as you now like to call him) has proposed and you're Mrs. Lemberg and you have three kids, a dog, and a beach house, all in your sweet little mind.

Sound familiar? (It does to me. Okay, so maybe that's another true and embarrassing story.)

What is it about us that causes us to fall head over heels for someone we barely know? Maybe you don't fall for guys quite as quickly as I did, but have you ever had feelings for someone you knew crazy little about? Strangely, it seems the less we know about a guy, the easier it is for us to crush on him. Maybe it's because, in the absence of the details about him, we get to fill in the blanks with our imagination. When he's new, or quiet, or shy, we can make him whoever we would *like* him to be. We think the perfect guy into existence, and right away our feelings for him start ramping up.

Here's the point: Our feelings, including "crush" feelings, come from the thoughts we think. This truth can revolutionize so many areas of our lives! So I'm going to say it again: Our feelings come from our thoughts. Goodness knows we girls have trouble with all *kinds* of emotions. Sheesh! If we can get to the root of them—if we can pinpoint which lies we're believing and think true thoughts instead—our emotions, and our lives, will be so much healthier.

Philippians 4:8-9 says,

Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. . . . Then the God of peace will be with you.

If we live these verses, we can, in fact, tame the wilds of our thought life, which will bring our emotions right in line (that’s the “peace” part).

Here’s what I mean:

If I think . . .	Then I’ll feel . . .
Only two weeks till summer break!	Relief, excitement, anticipation
Aye-chi-mama—he’s a hottie-tottie with a rockin’ body!	Desire, longing
I’m the only single girl on the planet.	Loneliness, isolation
Guys never notice me. Something must be wrong with me.	Discontentment, self-loathing
I’m beautiful just the way I am.	Confidence, peace
I don’t have to be in a relationship to be complete. God is enough for me!	Contentment, hope, joy

Does that make sense? I’m not trying to offer you some simple, three-step, “positive thinking” solution to all your problems. I can’t even promise that *all* your emotions will behave once you start thinking true thoughts! But I do know that you are called to “let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect” (Romans 12:2). If we’ll let God transform our way of thinking from boy-centered thoughts to

true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and admirable thoughts, we can break the crush cycle. I'm not saying you'll never have feelings for a guy ever again (who would want that?). But you won't be ruled by those emotions, and you won't obsess over guys, which will be super important as we move through the next few chapters.

After we get control of our thoughts, the second way we can “desire to be desired” without becoming obsessed with guys and relationships is to understand the difference between attraction and admiration.

### *Attraction or Admiration?*

I'm about to share a truth with you that I wish I had understood back in second grade. I honestly think it would have revolutionized my love life and freed me from the cycle of crushes and bad relationships that plagued most of my growing-up years. I hope you'll take it to heart: There's a difference between attraction and admiration.

Remember how, when God made Adam and Eve, He gave certain qualities primarily to Adam and certain qualities primarily to Eve? How He designed them to be two pieces of a puzzle that joined perfectly together? Well, it just so happens that He also gave us an admiration for the qualities He gave to the opposite sex. As girls, we're drawn to the masculine qualities God gave Adam—not only his masculine body, but also his strength, steadiness, confidence, and desires to conquer, protect, and be tender toward a woman. Guys too are drawn to the feminine qualities God gave us as girls—not only our beautiful bodies,<sup>2</sup> but also our gentleness, sensitivity, care for others, and desire to nurture and support.

As girls, we're drawn to those masculine qualities and other characteristics like faith, a sense of humor, and caring for others. We're wired to admire those things. The problem comes when we mistake that admiration for being attracted romantically to that person. In my true confession about Benji Lemberg earlier, I admired his looks, sure, but also his musicality, his confidence, and the way he seemed to love God and others. But I took it too far; I let that admiration confuse me. Just because you admire someone doesn't mean you like him romantically or *have to* like him in that way. Going back to taming the wilds of our thought life, here are two ways I could have handled that particular situation:

Focus on Attraction		Focus on Admiration	
<i>Thoughts</i>	<i>Emotions</i>	<i>Thoughts</i>	<i>Emotions</i>
Who's THAT? My goodness. God sure did a good job on that one!	Desire	He's a good-looking guy.	Admiration
He's so spiritual. He'd make a great boyfriend.	More desire	I think I'd like to wait for a guy who loves God enough to proclaim Him in public.	Hope for the future
I can just imagine us together. We'd be like . . . the PERFECT couple.	Even more desire	God, help me become the kind of girl who will make a good partner for a guy like that someday.	Trust (in God)

Do you see the difference? We have a choice about whether we'll take Philippians 4:8-9 to heart and keep the wilds of our thought life under control. We can choose whether to think thoughts that will keep our admiration from flaring up into full-blown attraction.

The power to crush (or not to crush) is ultimately in your hands with God's help, my friend. And that's really good news

because if you do find a wonderful man someday and the two of you get married, there's no off switch to that admiration you'll have for masculinity. You don't just wake up one morning as a newlywed and find you no longer admire masculine qualities like good looks, confidence, and strength in other members of the opposite sex. If it weren't possible to keep your admiration from turning into full-out attraction, even married women would be falling for every manly man out there! (Unfortunately, many married men and women *still* don't understand the difference between admiration and attraction and how to control their thoughts. Hence, the divorce rate, right?)

Is having a crush on someone wrong? Of course not. But it's not necessarily healthy, either. And it's not always harmless. It's the warped thinking behind our crushes that's dangerous, like telling ourselves he's perfect for us when we barely know him, convincing ourselves we *have* to be in a relationship with him to be happy, and confusing admiration for attraction. When our thinking about guys and relationships (and God, for that matter) is off, one crush quickly becomes two . . . then three . . . then a bunch . . . and a cycle is born.

The crush cycle is dangerous. We're going to talk more about why in the next chapter. But at least for now you're armed with some tools to help you battle those butterflies as you learn to admire your male counterparts without losing your head. You are stronger than your emotions!

Will you pray with me?

*God of the Universe, everything You make is good, including guys and girls and emotions and romance. Help me to understand my own heart and make sense of my emotions.*

*Show me any sinful thoughts I'm letting run wild in my mind, and give me the discipline to tame them. Please, Lord, make me a new person by changing the way I think about everything in life, including guys and love and dating. I want to bring You glory in every aspect of my life, including my love life. Amen.*

## Discussion Questions

1. *Try to count up the number of crushes you've had in the past few years. What does that number tell you about the state of your heart?*
2. *What are the two reasons girls "desire to be desired" by a guy?*
3. *Do you struggle to keep your thought life under control? How do those thoughts affect your emotions?*
4. *If unhelpful or unhealthy thoughts about guys get you in trouble, where can you "fix your thoughts" instead?*

## CRUSHED

5. *What's the difference between admiring a member of the opposite sex and being attracted to him?*
  
6. *What do you think? Are crushes harmless, or do they affect our hearts in any negative ways? Why or how?*
  
7. *Take out that journal we talked about in the introduction and spend a few minutes writing about how the feelings you've had for guys have affected your life. What do you think it would be like not to have a crush on someone for a while? Do you think it's possible?*