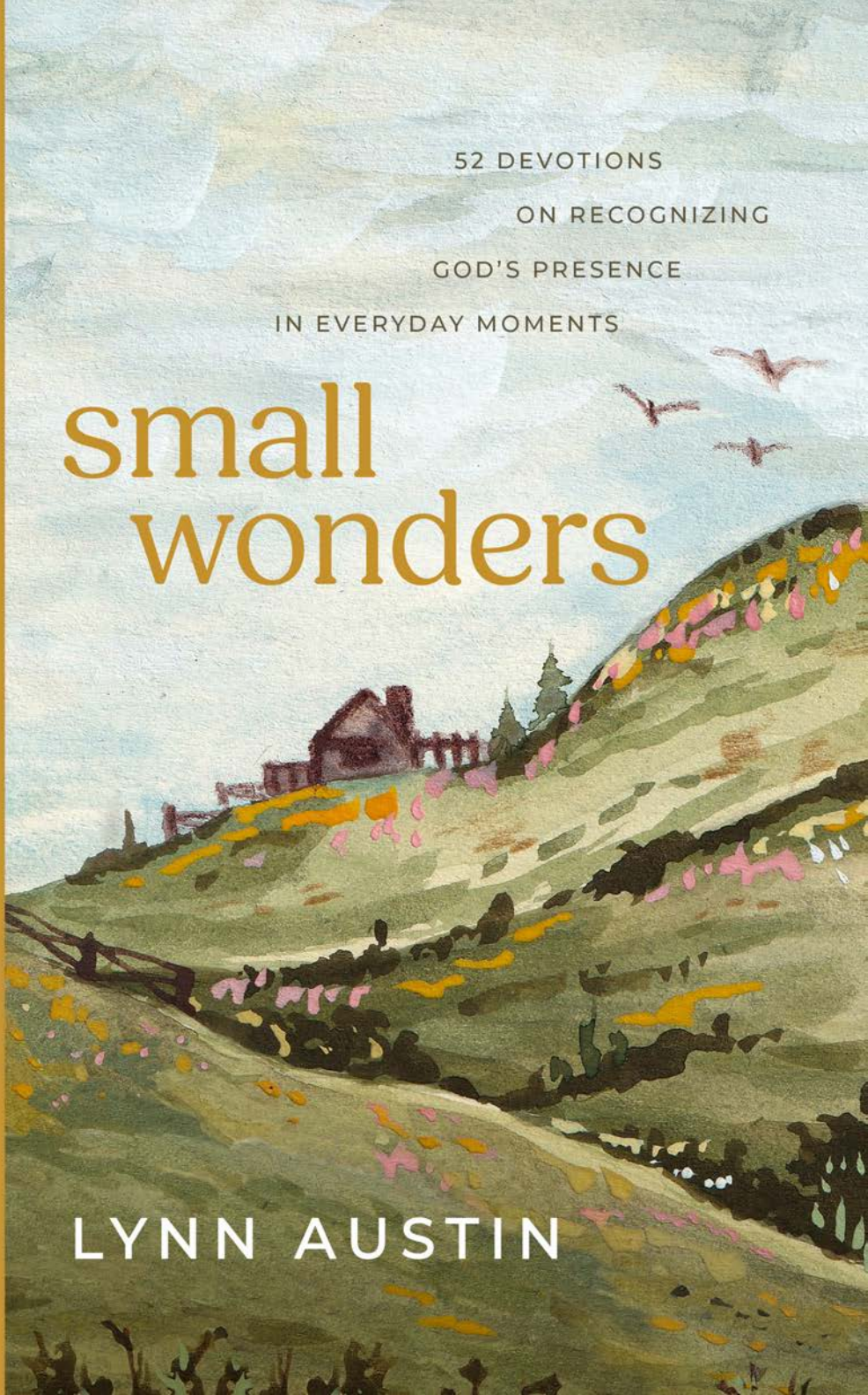
52 DEVOTIONS
ON RECOGNIZING
GOD'S PRESENCE
IN EVERYDAY MOMENTS

small wonders



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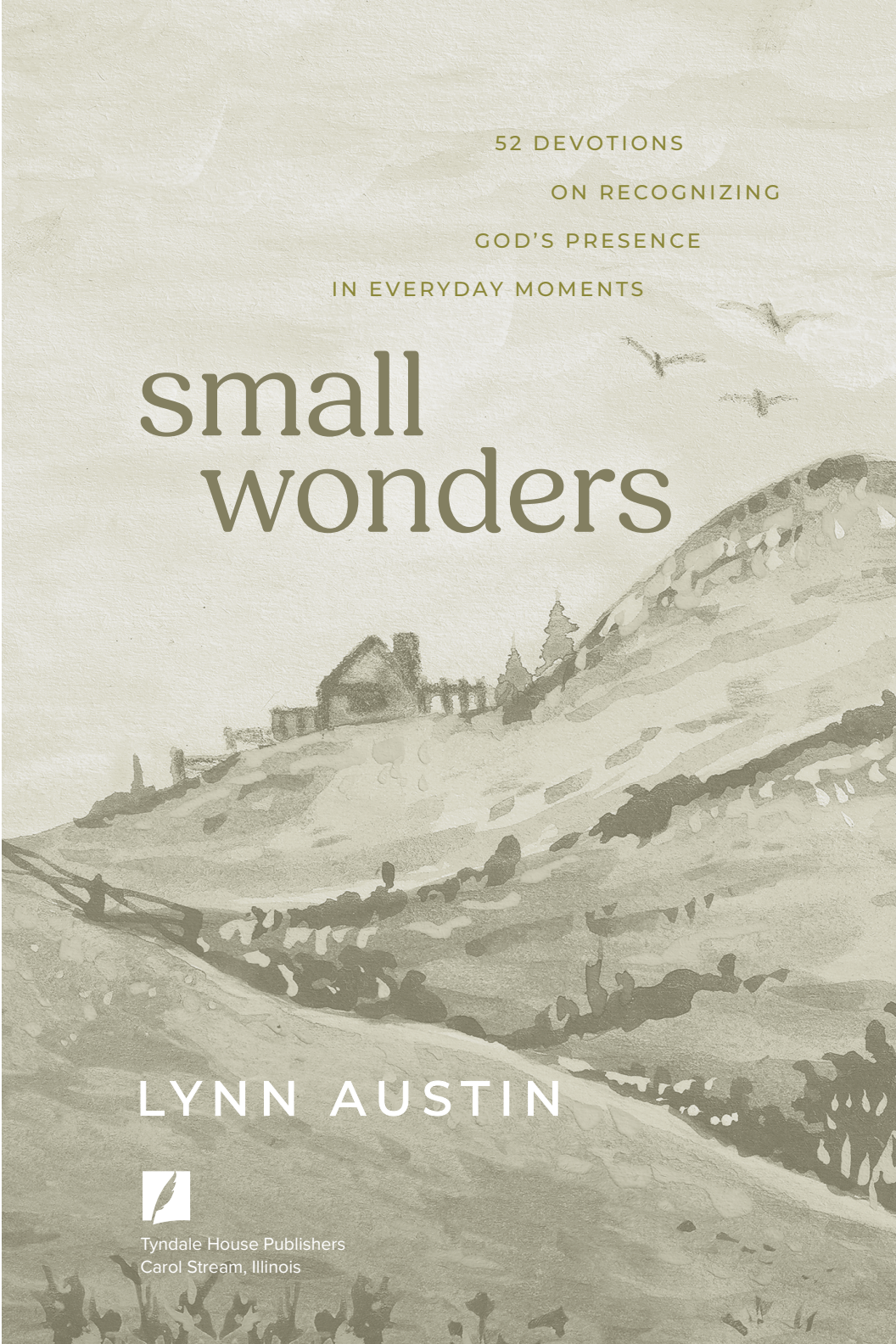

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Small Wonders: 52 Devotions on Recognizing God's Presence in Everyday Moments

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introduction

One of the most amazing and comforting promises that Jesus gives us is this: *And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age* (Matthew 28:20). But in the busyness of our daily lives, in the challenges and surprises we often face, we don't always have a sense of Christ's nearness. We forget to recognize God's presence in everyday moments—all of the little ways He reminds us that He is right beside us, watching over us, weaving all things together into a glorious tapestry for our good and for His glory.

Instead of leaving God behind after our Sunday morning worship or our daily devotions, what if we tried to cultivate that sense of His presence in our ordinary moments? What if we watched for Him at home and at work, and everywhere we went? This book is a product of my attempt to do just that. It's a collection of my thoughts and ponderings as I've learned to look for "small wonders" in the simple moments of my life. I'm learning to see patterns of His redemption everywhere! And to see myself as He sees me—precious and worthy of His love.

I hope you can learn from this book, so that you, too, will begin to notice all of the times and places where Jesus shows up in your everyday moments. Because the truth that we can cling to, no matter what our days may bring, is that we are always in God's hand.

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playing, writing . . . and playing



For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

EPHESIANS 2:10

I have a confession to make. While I grew up in a household of readers—my mother was the town librarian—I was never a reader as a child. And I couldn't sit still long enough to write!

I loved books when someone else read them to me. My sister Bonnie used to "read" to me when she was five and I was three. I also loved listening to my mother read bedtime classics like Uncle Wiggily and *Charlotte's Web*. My grandmother was a natural-born storyteller who could keep me spellbound for hours on warm summer evenings with tales from her childhood. But I didn't want to read or write in my spare time. I wanted to play, living out all the wild stories in my imagination. I had neither the time nor the patience to sit still with a book when I could be a character from *Treasure Island* or from a story I created. I lived in the world of my imagination like the little boy in the cartoon *Calvin and Hobbes*. That stuffed tiger was real, even if no one else could

see it. My bicycle was a real horse and I galloped down the street with the wind in my face, my pigtails flying.

I created elaborate stories for my sisters and friends with plots and storylines that lasted for days. We were cowboys and Indians. We were pioneers who made great, epic journeys in our Radio Flyer "Conestoga" wagons packed with our baby dolls and food supplies. The fields and woods near our house were vast, uncharted wildernesses where we might encounter pirates or find buried treasure. We camped out in makeshift tents in our backyard during the summer, imagining that we were great explorers on safari. The dark, creepy cellar of our hundred-year-old house became the setting for many spine-tingling mysteries.

The only writing I did besides school assignments was a play entitled *My Old Kentucky Home.* We performed it in our backyard and charged the neighborhood kids five cents each to watch—my first writing income. I barely remember the plot, but as the production's security chief, it was my job to protect our backyard theater from spies until the performance. I took my job very seriously and decided to stage a drill to keep everyone on their toes, making up an outrageous story about seeing a man in a yellow shirt skulking around. Unfortunately, my story was so convincing that it caused panic in our neighborhood as rumors of a mysterious stranger spread. How could I explain to all the concerned adults that there was a huge difference in my mind between telling a lie and using my imagination? One thing was clear, my early fiction was very convincing.

I didn't discover that I enjoyed writing until I was in my thirties—and then it was like coming home, returning to my childhood, living in my imagination all over again. I loved it!

Once again, I could live all sorts of adventures by putting myself in my characters' shoes, making up stories, creating new worlds. Researching my historical novels is one of my favorite parts of this writing life. I love visiting the places where my characters lived, seeing what they saw and smelled and touched. By "playing" in all these places, my imagination is set free to create.

When I'm writing, I live in my imagination like I did as a child, creating stories that will take my readers to faraway places and times. Writing is play for me—and of course, it's also very hard work! But the adults don't yell at me anymore for telling lies. Now I get paid to do it. Best of all, I get to share my faith, incorporating the lessons God is teaching me into the lives of my characters. I wouldn't trade my life for any other!

prayer

Heavenly Father, help us to listen to our hearts and to Your still, small voice so we can discover the purpose for which You created us. Help us to find the work You created us to do, for that is our highest calling. Give us joy in our labors, knowing that when we serve one another with love, we are serving You.

reflection

We're not all called to write books. But I do believe that God has created each of us with unique gifts and talents that we can use for His glory. As is often said, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." In what ways can you invest your talents and serve Him with joy?