Pressure Turned Precious

From the Projects to Pastor's Wife…
and Now Back to Me



VONSHIKA RENEA

Introduction — I Am Still Here

My name is Vonshika Renea, and baby, I am still here.

Those words hold more than a greeting. They hold a childhood I carried into adulthood, a marriage that lasted twenty-two years, motherhood, ministry, survival, divorce, and the work of meeting myself again. They hold faith. They hold some laughter, too, because I have never wanted pain to have every word in my story.

For a long time, it was easy to introduce myself through what I did for other people. A mother. A wife. A pastor's wife. A worker. Somebody who could help. Those parts of my life mattered. They still matter. But I am learning how to say my own name without needing a title to explain why I deserve to be seen.

This book is about that learning.

I come from Benton Harbor, Michigan. My journey has taken me from the projects to a life in ministry and, eventually, back to the woman underneath all those roles. I have not arrived at a place where nothing hurts and every decision comes easily. I am writing from a place where I can be honest about what I have survived and intentional about how I want to live.

Pressure Turned Precious is the name I have given to that journey. It describes the way I am choosing to make something meaningful from experiences I cannot undo. It does not mean those experiences were necessary, deserved, or good. A child should never have to be harmed to become a strong woman. A woman should not have to lose herself to discover that she matters.

My value was already there. The work has been learning to recognize it and live like I believe it.

In these pages, you will find parts of my testimony and places to consider your own. You will find questions, prayers, and simple exercises. Some questions may fit your life. Some may not. You can move slowly, leave a page unfinished, and return when you are ready. You do not owe these pages the details of your deepest hurt.

I believe in God. I also believe in honest conversations, accountability, support, and giving ourselves room to be human. My faith has carried me through changing seasons, and I am learning that faith can sit beside questions without falling apart.

Perhaps you are facing divorce. Perhaps your children are grown and the house sounds different. Perhaps you have spent years being useful and are wondering what you actually enjoy. Perhaps you are simply tired of carrying a life that has no room for you.

I understand the desire to begin again and the fear that can come with it.

You do not have to figure out the rest of your life before taking care of yourself today. You can start with one honest sentence. One decision. One conversation with a person who has earned your trust. One small promise that you keep to yourself.

That is where we will begin.