

REDEEMING CINDERELLA

*A Devotional Journey through
the Story of Cinderella*

SAMPLE
CHAPTER



Bethel Grove



Bethel Grove Publications

Redeeming Cinderella: A Devotional Journey through the Story of Cinderella (Sample Chapter)

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What People Like You Think about *Redeeming Cinderella*

“If you want to learn how to take pop-culture and break it into learnable sections, incorporating biblical principles with thought-provoking questions, get this book. If you enjoy Cinderella in any form, you will love the insights and information Bethel provides. I wish this book had been around when my kids were teenagers. This book is fun to read and you will learn not only more about Cinderella, but also more about the Bible and yourself.”

Beth Swale

Author of *The Big Hat Wise Man*

“An insightful look into the classic story and two of its most beloved film adaptations, *Redeeming Cinderella* made me think and gave me a new appreciation for the fairy tale. Bethel Grove offers layers of depth while keeping the material accessible for young people and group settings.”

S. Orges

Copywriter

“I have read several books by Bethel and I think this is my favorite so far. Bethel has a love for Disney, but even more evident is her love for Jesus. Her words, ideas, and creativity are refreshing and

I would not hesitate to recommend any of her books.”

Tomi Lynn Coley

Wife, Mom, and Blessed Beyond Booklady

“Whether you just heard the story for the first time, or can quote lines from every version by heart, *Redeeming Cinderella* takes the classic tale of Cinderella to a whole new level by uncovering the timeless Biblical truths found in the story. The short, thought-provoking devotions are great for personal reading or group study, and can be enjoyed by young and old alike.”

Kenny Davis

Editor-In-Chief of “The Roundup Herald” &
Author of *Writing the Range: Volume One*

“This book was so good. I looked forward to reading it every day. The reflection questions were very easy to understand. If Cinderella is one of your favorite princesses, like she is one of mine, you will enjoy this devotional.”

Pamela Viau

Mom and Founder of “Dead to Sin” ministry

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INTRODUCTION



“Even if [Cinderella] didn’t get her happy ending, her story would still be worth telling because of the life she led.”

I will never forget reading this statement and the impact it had on me. Someone I knew was doing one of those 30 Day Facebook challenges, so I went to look up their post for the day. The topic was “Favorite Disney Princess” and I was surprised by the reason they chose Cinderella as their favorite. Before this, I had always liked Cinderella the most out of the Walt Disney era fairytales. However, the comments this person made stopped me in my tracks and made me see this character and the original film in a whole new light.

This person explained that despite every-thing Cinderella had been through, she never complained, retaliated, or completely lost hope. They concluded that even if she didn’t get a happy ending, her story would still be worth telling.

The more I thought about it, the more I agreed. I thought about what it would have been like if the story had ended at a few different points. What if it had ended with Cinderella locked in the attic? Or with the glass slipper broken? What if the ball never happened and she was stuck as a servant until her stepmother's death?

When you examine the story this way, no matter where you stop the story, Cinderella is still an admirable character, despite having been through difficult circumstances. I think that's the reason why many versions of this story have been shared across many cultures for thousands of years. After seeing Disney's live-action adaptation in 2015, I was all the more convinced that Cinderella is one of Disney's most admirable characters and that learning about Cinderella's character can challenge us to be kind, hopeful, and gracious through the trials life throws our way.

With this knowledge as the foundation, I invite you to embark with me on a journey into the spiritual and practical truths that are present in the story of *Cinderella*. This journey will be full of twists and turns, very much like Ella's personal journey. Through it all, you will hope-fully rediscover a powerful tale of courage, contentment, and hope pointing us back to the God who is the source of it all.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK



Redeeming Cinderella is meant to be a guide through the spiritual themes present in the story of *Cinderella*. Some of the themes we explore will be truths that are biblical in their nature. Others will be illustrations of the consequences of our sins if we choose to reject biblical truth. All of these truths will weave a tale of courage, contentment, and hope that you won't soon forget.

In each chapter, there will be a summary based on one or more scenes of *Cinderella*, reflections, Scriptures (which are italicized for distinction), “Going Deeper” questions, and additional Scripture references related to that chapter's theme. It's important to clarify that this book will be drawing from the two primary Disney adaptations of *Cinderella*:

- Live-Action Film (2015)
- Animated Film (1950)

There will also be references to the two main versions of the fairytale by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm.

Due to copyright restrictions, I will be limited in my ability to share story dialogue and song lyrics in this book. Therefore, direct quotations from either version of *Cinderella* will be limited. Instead, I will give brief scene descriptions and reference song titles that should help you know which part of the story I am referencing. If you are unfamiliar with the scene or song, I encourage you to go look it up on Disney Plus, Blu-ray/DVD, YouTube, or elsewhere on the internet, so you can follow along with the story.

I also want to clarify the names I will use for the main characters in this story. I will mostly refer to the female protagonist as “Ella” since that was her birth name and Cinderella was a nickname. The male protagonist will be referred to as “Kit” or “Prince Kit” since these were the names given to him in the live-action film. Ella’s stepmother will either be referred to as “stepmother” or “Lady Tremaine” (her name before she married Ella’s father). The older stepsister, the one who wears the green and blue dress, is named Drusilla (spelled “Drizella” in the animated film). The younger stepsister, the one who wears the pink dress, is

named Anastasia. I will collectively refer to all three of them as her stepfamily.



Here are a few recommendations to prepare yourself for these devotionals:

- 1) Familiarize yourself with at least one version of *Cinderella*, especially if you haven't watched either of them in a while. I highly recommend the 2015 live-action version if you haven't watched it.
- 2) Have a pen/pencil and paper handy if you want to take notes, especially if you plan to use them for the "Going Deeper" questions.
- 3) Have your Bible or Bible app ready when you read. I recommend using the ESV or NIV since those versions are the ones that will be used in this book.

This book can be used in one of two ways. First, you can read five devotions a week for five weeks, which will take 35 days to complete. Second, you can read one devotion every day for 25 days, which will take three and a half weeks. The first option is specifically designed for those who want to go through this devotional as a group Bible study.

Instructions for leading a Bible study through *Redeeming Cinderella* are available in the back of the book (starting on page 225). Let's get started

WEEK 1
MEETING ELLA



CHAPTER 1

COURAGE AND KINDNESS



Scene: Ella's Childhood/Mother's Death
Version(s): Live-Action

A long time ago, a merchant and his beloved wife lived in a beautiful château on the edge of a scenic forest. They had a beautiful little girl whom they named Ella. From a young age, Ella was an imaginative child with a big heart, loving her family, friends, and even their animals with all of it. Her mother taught her to believe in magic, the power of imagination, and the importance of kindness. Her father traveled the world and would bring her back treasures and stories from distant lands. For several years, everything was perfect.

But one morning when she was about ten years old, Ella woke up and the house seemed quiet, much too quiet for a beautiful spring day. She looked for her parents upstairs, but could not find them. When she came downstairs, her father was waiting in the living room, pacing back and forth. Ella asked what was wrong. He said with an unsteadiness in his voice, "It's your mother."

A little while later, the doctor called her father into the room and Ella was left to wait alone. When they finally came out, she heard the doctor say, "I'm so sorry," and her heart sank. As he finished with the doctor, Ella's father asked her to come with him. Her mother looked so weak and tired. As she stood by her mother, her mother grabbed her hand and said she had a secret to tell her. Ella's mother told her no matter what trials that life would offer, she should "have courage and be kind." Ella herself already had so much kindness in her heart, but her mother reminded her that kindness had more power than she knew. And choosing to face trials with courage would make them more bearable. Ella promised that she would.

Her mother paused and asked for Ella's forgiveness because she would be leaving soon. Ella was sad to hear what she suspected to be true, but she said, "Of course." She embraced her mother with tears in her eyes. As her father joined the

embrace, Ella was scared about what her life would be like without her mother, but knew that she had to do her best to keep her promise.



I find it fascinating that none of the fairytale versions of this story give any background on Ella’s parents or her childhood. The Perrault version merely mentioned that a merchant was married, and that he took a second wife. Even the animated version from Disney merely mentioned that her father was a “widowed merchant” who lived in a stately home but gave no other details. However, the Brothers Grimm version, while it doesn’t give any details about Ella’s childhood, actually starts the story with the mother on her deathbed, asking to see her daughter one last time. Ella’s mother told her that if she remained “good and pious”, God would protect her and her mother would watch over her from Heaven. She breathed her last right after she made this statement. The story went on to explain that throughout her life, Ella remained good and pious to honor her mother.

While I wish these elements could have been used in the Disney versions of the story, I also appreciate the way Disney translated these

concepts into the live-action film. While courage and kindness are not necessarily the same thing as being good and pious, I do agree with the filmmakers that these traits are a powerful combination that has the potential to help us through whatever trials we might face.

Kindness is a virtue that most of us want but many struggle to cultivate. Especially when we live in a world of people who tend to be loud, rude, and arrogant with their opinions, this virtue is a hard one to develop. While many people would merely associate the word “kind” with the word “nice”, the meaning of the word goes so much deeper than that. While several words could describe the essence of what it means to be kind, there are two that are worth discussing: consideration of others and benevolence.

Kind people are considerate of others because they think about other people before themselves. They are often great at empathizing with the needs of others because they have an incredible ability to put themselves in the other person’s shoes. Similarly, benevolence is a desire to help others. While some would automatically associate it with financial charity, it doesn’t always involve monetary donation. Whether money is involved or not, a truly benevolent person cares more about the benefits of the other person rather than their

own personal profit. This is why kindness is listed along with several other virtues that Christians are supposed to wear, and ones that I believe Ella wore.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience”
(Colossians 3:12 NIV).

Courage is another trait that many of us want to possess but struggle to find. While many would assume that this word is simply the antonym of fear, the real meaning goes much deeper than that. It expresses a resolve to be strong and face difficult situations head-on with confidence, even if you feel afraid. This fact alone is a reminder that courage is a choice we have to make, not something we have to feel. Courage is something that builds off of the choice to stand strong in adversity. That is why when God started to instruct Joshua to “be strong and courageous,” this phrase eventually became Joshua’s and Israel’s mantra as they conquered the land God promised them.

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9 NIV).

This mantra is repeated eight times between the books of Deuteronomy and Joshua, and was eventually repeated in 1 and 2 Chronicles as well.

For Christians, this is a powerful reminder that in Christ, we can have courage in adversity because we know that God's on our side.

I believe that it was by embracing these profound truths that Ella became the young woman who won the prince's heart. Despite facing a lot of difficult circumstances, Ella maintained a kind and courageous heart, as well as the overall quality of her character. So as we continue to walk alongside Ella on this journey, we will learn what it looks like to be kind and courageous through whatever trials life may bring, and discover the unexpected blessings that may come along the way.



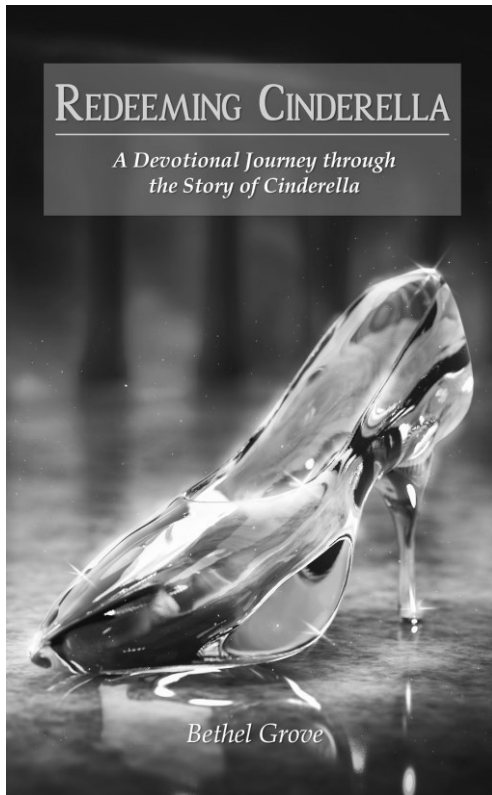
GOING DEEPER

1. Why do you think the original versions of the fairytale don't include details about Ella's childhood?
2. Do you think that kindness and courage are comparable to goodness and piety? Why or why not?
3. What are the first words that come to your mind when you think of kindness? Do you think they are similar or different than how kindness is described in this chapter? Explain your answer.
4. What are the first words that come to your mind when you think of courage? Do you think they are similar or different than how courage is described in this chapter? Explain your answer.
5. What steps can you take to choose kindness and courage today?

OTHER VERSES ABOUT KINDNESS AND COURAGE

Proverbs 31:26, Ephesians 4:32, Psalm 27:1-3,
Isaiah 41:10

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