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After the Locusts: Restoring Ruined Dreams, Reclaiming Wasted Years

Jan Coleman

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In the Bible, they were kosher food. John the Baptist had his with honey. And who can forget when Charleton Heston as Moses cast them over Egypt to persuade Pharaoh to "let my people go?"

We might not be dealing with such biblical blights, but trials and misfortunes still invade our lives, making unwelcome visits that test everything we trust.

Jan Coleman draws a convincing parallel between the locust plagues of old and modern plagues of the heart. They come in many forms; loss of a marriage, death of a loved one, painful abuse, illness or personal failure. As she builds chapter themes around scripture verses from the Book of Joel, Jan highlights women whose lives are a testimony of God's restoration plan. It reminds us that God uses disaster and disappointment to stir people to a new sense of Himself.

Years ago, Jan faced the death of her dreams and felt like a swarm of locusts had swooped down and ruined her future. There were the creeping locusts whispering, "This isn't really happening;" the gnawing locusts whittling away her confidence; the stripping locusts exposing her deep anger. She found a promise of hope tucked in an obscure book in the Old Testament, a promise that shaped her life, the promise that God will "restore the years the locusts have eaten."

Chapter one is titled, "The Big Bug Blitz" and foreshadows the tone of the book which reads like a novel. "The locusts were at it again. I knew it the moment I saw the clouded look in her eye, by the trance-like way she kept pouring cream in her cofffee. 'I can't believe this is happening,' the stranger murmured to our prayer breakfast group. 'I don't think I can go on. I feel so alone.'"

Readers are drawn into Ginger's heart and the pain of a ruined dream. As Jan offers to mentor Ginger through her healing process, we are eyewitnesses to her struggles to trust God again. With biting honesty and wit, Jan reveals her own story of the loss of her marriage, her foolish choices and the ache of prodigal daughters. Ginger moves toward hope as Jan shares stories of other women who reveal their heartbreaks--Phyllis who lost her only child to a tragic car accident, Eileen who was nine months pregnant when her husband drown while diving, Susan whose secret affair with a pastor almost destroyed her, Lisa whose past of abuse brought a distrust for men and God, and author Liz Curtis Higgs whose "bad girl" days, her "locust years" are the heartbreak of her ministry today.

The stories in the book are different, but the feelings of damage and waste, emptiness, fear and regret are common to all. The consistent thread of hope lies in how these women partnered with God to redeem their losses in surprising and wonderful ways. Each of them found a deeper relationship with God and new purpose.

Written with a unique style of warmth and gentle humor, After the Locusts is an uplifting message for every woman; those who has known loss and those who want to offer comfort to others.

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