

## Preface

As our story continues in the small frontier town of Gunnison, Colorado, we find life for Melissa has been moving forward. Now married to our favorite town doctor, Grant, for six years, she has already begun to see the changes to the once small town. Grant and Melissa have two wonderful children, Susie who is now eleven and thriving in school and their son Zachary who is three.

Melissa has had the privilege of watching her students grow into adults, some going off to further their education and others settling into marriages and becoming parents themselves. One of her first students, Kristi Thompson has been married almost as long as Melissa to Silas White. They have three beautiful children, Teresa- five, Bryan- three, and Tony- two. Also to have married in the last year were Hank Smith to Anne Simpson and Aaron Simpson to a sweet girl, Ellen. Both couples have stayed on in Gunnison and both are expecting their first children in June and October.

As for Timothy and Sara, their family has brought the most changes and growth to the community. Ruth and Lane now have three children; Eve who is five, Terrence who turned three not much before Zachary, and baby Lee now two. Emily and David still live in the Springs and have been raising their son Adam who is also three. Edward still lives out east with his wife Alice and they just celebrated the birth of their little girl Victoria in December right before the holidays. Last year Tommy joined his older siblings when he married Marie and they have settled a few hours away following in his father's footsteps taking up a parsonage there and are expecting their first child in July. Kendra is still away at school finishing her last year of studies and preparing to travel overseas to work in the missions. As for Timothy and Sara's other five children; Elizabeth now almost seventeen, has finished school and has decided to stay in Gunnison working at Myra's and will be getting married to Tom Davis, now eighteen, at the end of June. Melissa knew if Elizabeth applied herself she could make it further in life before settling down in marriage, but Elizabeth's heart was in Gunnison with Tom and both were ready to get married. Jeremiah and Karen

now thirteen, John who is ten, and Matty who just turned eight are still in school with Melissa continuing to fill the school days with smiles and delight.

We now find Melissa at the end of her eighth year of teaching and looking forward to a summer's rest, what changes are in store for Grant and Melissa as they continue to let God lead?

### Excerpt from Part One A Legacy of Love

Awaking Monday morning Melissa already knew it would be a long day. Her nerves would get the better of her thinking about the town meeting that night and she knew she only had a week to get her plans in place for the school year. Looking at the clock she moaned, it was only five-thirty in the morning and she could already feel the heat of the day creeping in. When she rolled over and noticed Grant was already gone, she got up to get things moving in the house before the children awoke. After setting a pot on to heat for tea she went to her chair and opened the Bible. Timothy had encouraged her to put the school idea in God's hands so she decided to do just that. She was immediately drawn to the book of Proverbs and found some comfort there in what she read. She found peace when she read Proverbs 16:3 and 9. "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed; In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps."

God is in control and as long as I keep him in the center of my ideas then he will take care of the rest if it is what he wants. As Melissa prayed there in her chair she felt calm and knew that she was making the right decisions and that God would help her fill in the gaps in the coming week before school started and that all would come together.

"Everything okay?" Grant asked, coming into the house a little while later. Melissa was preparing breakfast earlier than usual.

"Of course, just a little anxious about this evening."

"You shouldn't be, you know they will all say yes," Grant encouraged.

"I believe they will but I don't want to be too overconfident either. All I know is that I need to be prepared either way. I have some ideas and probably should start putting them onto paper today and

get my courses in order,” Melissa said, cracking some eggs into a bowl. “What’s on your agenda today?”

“I need to run out to Abby’s this morning and see how she and the baby are coming along. Then I have a few stops to make through the day here and there. I need to head to Kristi’s too as she is fighting morning sickness something terrible this time around. Other than that I will be at the office. What did you have in mind?”

“Nothing really, just was curious,” Melissa said, as Zachary called out from his room.

“I’ll get him,” Grant smiled, stopping her from walking past him.

## Preface

Spring soon turned into summer. The garden produced its crops and the warm summer soon began to be hot and difficult to bear. Life had been good for Melissa and her family over the last two years and so much had happened. Although she had always feared her small town would someday grow into a city, she was glad for all the changes that had happened. Gunnison had grown in such a godly way and they still carried their small-town lifestyle with them.

Melissa smiled sitting on the porch as she watched her children play. Susie was now fifteen and had become such a lovely young lady. She loved all her siblings and helped Melissa take care of them and their home. Even now she was out in the yard playing with them. Zachery was now seven and so much like his Papa. Whenever he had a chance he'd be off helping Grant around the farm or on his medical runs. Melissa was glad Grant and Zach shared such a special bond since Charles, their third child, was only two and still wanted mama most of the time. Then there was Lily, she was a surprise to both Melissa and Grant and was only fourteen months younger than Charles. Lily was a mix of Melissa and Grant very even tempered yet very determined to be like all her older siblings. Melissa was very happy at all her family and how it was growing. Even now she was again three months pregnant with yet another child. Melissa loved all her family and many times wondered how many children God would bless her with. But with her family always changing and getting bigger she felt teaching becoming harder to juggle with being a homemaker. Now that summer was there she would have to start thinking about making some new changes.

"And what has brought that smile to your face?" Sara asked joining Melissa.

Melissa greeted her warmly. "Just musing about all the changes that have been happening."

"But they have been good changes."

"Yes they have. I just sometimes wonder where all the time has gone. I've lived out here so long yet it feels like only yesterday. So many times I still feel like that shy twenty-three year old stepping off

the stagecoach with no idea what I was doing. Now look at me with four children and a fifth on the way,” Melissa lightly laughed.

“Life has a way of doing that to all of us but praise God he gives us children to love and grow with. Now mine are all grown and I’m a grandmother of so many treasures.”

Melissa again sat there silently in thought. One of the best changes to come to Gunnison was when a widowed mother and daughter moved in opening up a Haberdashery and Dress Shop. Melissa liked having the convenience of a seamstress around to help her with some of the sewing her family seemed to always need done. She also liked some of the city hats and dresses that were brought into town. Martha was all too happy to welcome them to the community. With the town always expanding she was busier and needed more help. Shortly after their arrival Martha and George decided to build onto the store adding the shop.

Many of the students that had been taught by Melissa were now married and having children of their own. By now the town was full of babies and small children. Abby and Drew now had five children their youngest Grace, who was two and Drew Jr. who was four. Melissa couldn’t believe Paul was eleven already. And of course Kora and Kenny too. God had been good to Abby’s family as well.

“I do believe my family has brought the most changes though,” Sara laughed, also in her own musings.

Melissa laughed with Sara. “Yes they have and it’s so wonderful that most of them live here in Gunnison.”

Sara and Timothy’s family had grown. Lane and Ruth still ran the bank and have six children. Not long ago Ruth gave birth to twin girls Sarah and Suzanne. Edward and Alice had been a blessing since they arrived, helping Timothy at the church. They now had three children, Victoria five, Edward Jr. now three, and Simon just born that winter. Elizabeth and Tom have three children also. Isabel three, Josephine one, and Thomas was born in May a month ago. As for Emily and David, they were doing great since the death of Adam. God had blessed them with two more children, Darlene who was two and Caleb, one. And she was due in September for her third child. Tommy and Marie continued doing well still at their parsonage a few hours away raising their family of four.

As for the rest of Sara’s children, they too were growing and starting their own lives as adults. Kendra was still nursing, Karen

and Jeremiah both now eighteen had moved away for schooling. Johnny now fifteen was still in school but looking to finishing his last year and start work. He had fallen in love and wanted to start saving money for marriage. And little Matty was now thirteen and still thriving in school.

“Even with all that has been moving forward here in Gunnison, I still see many new changes coming our way,” Sara stated in her all knowing way. “God is not finished here and has good things still to come.”

“That He does,” Melissa replied, again watching the children as a few of Susie’s friends joined them.

### Excerpt from God’s Greatest Gifts

“What’s your morning look like today?” Melissa asked Grant later that week during breakfast.

“I’ll be at the clinic this morning buttoning up some loose ends with Christopher before he leaves on the noon train, then I have a few house calls I need to make. Other than that not much.”

“That’s right, he’s going to that conference for two weeks,” Melissa replied a little disappointed knowing Grant’s work would double with him gone.

“What are you thinking?”

“I was just thinking we could meet at Myra’s for dinner tonight since we have Wednesday night service later.”

“We could do that.”

“Good, with the students projects due today for the open house, I know I’ll be tied up longer after school and then to try to get supper on before the service...”

“Its fine Melissa, you don’t need to explain,” Grant interrupted. “You don’t always have to feel like you have to make dinner.”

“I know, it’s just as our family grows so does our expenses and you deserve home cooked meals.”

“And we love you for that but you also deserve a break too,” Grant smiled.

“Come on Susie, we’re going to be late,” Zachery growled at the bottom of the stairs impatiently waiting for Susie to go to school.

“Just one minute,” Susie yelled back waking Lily who immediately started crying.

“Come on you two,” Melissa huffed, “Can’t you two just give me one morning.”

“I’ll get Lily,” Grant stood from the table. “You get Susie.”

Within five minutes Zach and Susie were walking out the door and Melissa was taking Lily from Grant.

“Everything okay?” Grant asked.

“She’s fifteen, it’ll never be okay in her world for at least four more years,” Melissa made light.

Grant laughed. “On that note, I’m heading to the barn to finish up then I’ll be off to the clinic.”

“Okay, I’ll bring the kids by as soon as I finish at school and we can go to Myra’s.”

“Sounds good to me,” Grant kissed Melissa, “Love you.”

Melissa closed the door smiling ready to start the morning routine with Lily and Charles. It always seemed she had a lot to do and not enough time before she was leaving them with Sara and heading to the schoolhouse at noon.”

“I’ll be right with you,” Grant said later that afternoon as he heard the door of the clinic opening. “It’s a good thing you didn’t come any sooner or you would have missed me,” he added, walking out to the waiting room stopping abruptly. “Caroline.”