



The Willful Water Girl by Carol Feil

It was my fault. Everywhere I looked, the plants, big and small, were suffering. I could see the droopy leaves hanging limp and lifeless. In the windy mountain area where I lived, it was my job to water the plants at my parents' landscape nursery. I was the water girl, and I messed up! What I didn't mess up was getting to football games on time. I saw my job as a water girl as the road to fun. If I watered, I got paid. When I got paid, I had gas and food money so I could hang out with my friends, which, at sixteen, was a high priority in life.

Looking back, it was the goodness of God that allowed my first job to be one where others quickly saw evidence of my work. I couldn't bypass accountability and pretend I had done a better job than I had. Although I wouldn't say I liked being corrected, I certainly didn't like walking back through the nursery to rewater plants. I had spent too little time in the first place.

But God. He saw me. He loved me, and He knew me. He saw my weakness: prioritizing myself over the job I signed up for. He loved me enough to show me I needed His character to permeate my life. Best of all, He never failed to pour into me through others. Looking back on that experience, I recognized the evidence of God seeing, knowing, and loving His people, even this water girl, in personal ways.

He saw me as a young teenage girl, growing in my faith but struggling to balance priorities and preferences. He patiently guided me through the choices of both. He never once said, "I'm done with you."

He saw me as a 17-year-old girl, reprioritize my life. I wanted to walk in God's confidence and truth to share the hope within me always and anywhere. He saw me. He knew my enthusiasm and nurtured my heart for Him. He saw me as a college girl, deeply disappointed by the circumstances that made me leave my dream school, only to return home and flounder about what would happen next. He was there through the tears, the why questions, and the stumbling and fumbling that followed me.

He saw me as a 21-year-old, dating the man of my dreams, planning an idyllic future, knowing I would need God's love, wisdom, and comfort in the years ahead. He saw me as a young wife packing up and moving far

away with my little family to pursue a dream of full-time service to others, only to have doors closed at every turn after years of training and preparation.

He saw me as a young mom questioning what was next. Waiting for it to become obvious. He never walked away as I moved forward, often numb and unsure. Feeling as dry as an under-watered tree, He listened as I probed. Although his answers weren't immediate, my trust grew in the God who saw me at every step over time.

He saw me as a young mom embracing a season of motherhood that wasn't what or where I expected but was a remarkable time of gathering new friends as my kids grew. He knew I would need those friends, that circle, to lean on and learn from in the years ahead.

He saw me as a struggling mom incapacitated by a disease that slowed me to a crawl, leaning into those friends who gathered around and helped my family through. He saw me and cared for me.

He saw me as an in-between mom, reluctantly letting go of the hands that I had held so tightly. Hands that loosened their grip on me to hold onto hopes and dreams of their own. He saw and comforted me through the tearful transitions of motherhood.

He saw me as an older mom, learning too fast how to say a long goodbye as my mother slid into the darkness of dementia. He saw me. He sustained me. He gathered my tears. He calmed my fears and reminded me that my mom found truth and solace in a well-watered garden. He saw me as a mom who is also a daughter and a sister, navigating shifting family dynamics as my mother's life changed. He saw me, He saw my family, and He comforted us.

He saw me as a mom whose kids were growing in their independence, saying lots of good-bye-for-now's as I helped them pack and prepare for their next adventures and growth experience. Again, He gathered my tears, calmed my fears, and held my heart.

He saw me as a mom who was leaning in and learning, in every season, new character traits of the God who created me. Through it all, He saw me, loved me, and walked with me, revealing more about himself through His Word.

He saw me as a mom struggling to juggle all the title's responsibilities. He saw me bend under comparison's weight. He saw me and reminded me I am fearfully and wonderfully made in His image.

He saw me as a mom welcoming my kids' spouses to the family, knowing that the time between hellos was getting longer as they developed their own communities and experiences. He saw me, and he comforted me through worship and his Word.

He saw me as a mom, wracked by guilt for unfiltered words spoken in haste, causing rifts in relationships. He saw me. He reminded me he had already forgiven me. He stayed near me as I walked through the humble process of asking forgiveness from others. He saw me as I pursued reconciliation with those I had wounded with my words. He saw me, and He loved me. He did not let me go.

He sees me now as the mom of adults, with time to water, garden, and grow. He meets me in my garden and reminds me of the young water girl who moved too quickly through the task of watering. The lesson that continues from that failure to now is how important it is to nourish and soak my spiritual roots in the refreshing waters of His

all-knowing love. He sees me, knows me with all my faults and frailties, and loves me still.

Like Hagar, after Sarah mistreated her, she ran away, yet was seen by God. Hagar's words still ring true: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me" (Genesis 16:13 NIV).

He is a faithful God. In every failure and faith step, he saw me. He saw me then and loved me enough to let me learn early and often the benefit of honesty with Him, giving me confidence in Him now. He is faithful to His character and His Word.

As the psalmist knew, I learned: "I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber" (Psalm 121:1-3 ESV).

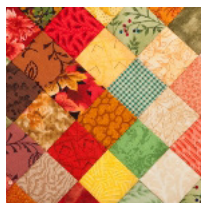
I am so thankful He saw me, even though I did not water well all those years ago. I have experienced soaking my soul regularly in the truth of who He is and the comfort He gives, and it has made all the difference to this willing water girl.



Saturday, October 25 | 10:00am - 2:00pm
RiverLakes Church South Lawn
On the corner of Calloway/Hageman
Free Admission

Harvest Fest '25 is all about bringing together local groups and organizations for encouragement, support, and fun for the whole family! Enjoy tons of fun fall activities, community resources, food, and more. The best part of all? Everything is free!

Prayer Quilt Ministry



Prayer quilts are sewn by a team of women committed to sharing the burden of others through prayer and the giving of quilts. The quilts are completed with knots tied by our praying congregation and given as tangible expressions of God's love to people with prayer needs. Anyone who is facing a special need for prayer such as surgery, treatment or a crisis illness may receive a quilt when they are sponsored by someone attending RiverLakes Community Church. To sponsor a quilt, visit our [website](http://www.riverlakeschurch.org), call the church office (589-9733) or Kathy Palmisano (330-8055).

Embrace Grace



Tuesdays, 6:00 - 8:00pm

Embrace Grace exists to love and encourage single and pregnant young women and their families. Women experiencing unexpected pregnancies receive practical, spiritual, and emotional support through this 13-week pro-life support group. Contact Carol Edwards (661) 619-0261 to sign up.

Embrace Life



Tuesdays, 6:00 - 8:00pm

The Embrace Life curriculum and program equips single, new moms to flourish in their relationships with God and not only survive in life but THRIVE! These brave moms will learn spiritual and practical ways to help navigate their way through life while using the Holy Spirit as their compass. Sign up on the website.