

SHE'S GOT ISSUES

*seriously good news for stressed-out,
secretly scared control freaks like us*

NICOLE UNICE



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This book will walk you right to the door of this last step, but it's up to you to walk through it with Jesus and into a place of true transformation. And it's worth making the journey.

You might consider using this book with a small group, women's ministry, or another friend. There is great freedom in transparency. My desire is that this book will invite you into that place of honesty, and if you take that plunge with another friend, the reward will be even greater.

A ground rule: please do not assess one another's issues! There is plenty of work for you to do on yourself, I promise. Instead, consider your small group or friendship a place where you can be a cheerleader—encouraging and affirming one another as you peel back some layers of plastic and ultimately discover the beautiful, authentic women God has made. The questions for discussion at the end of each chapter will provide a starting point for real conversation about your issues and God's work.

Now let's move on to the good stuff: our lives, God's Word, and the divine mystery of his transforming work in our hearts!

Space Bar

A Prayer

God, I find my heart confusing! You know me far better than I know myself, but I know I'm not living the full and free life you've provided for me. Would you give me the strength to be honest with myself—and with you—so I can take the next step toward freedom? Amen.

A Journaling Exercise

1. Which of the following “ordinary issues” do you struggle with most consistently?
Control
Insecurity
Comparison

Fear

Anger

Unforgiveness

Describe a recent incident in which that issue was front and center.

2. How have you seen these issues hinder your relationships? What circumstances make them visible to others?

For Group Discussion

Do you feel like you have a faith testimony worth sharing? Have you ever experienced (or known someone who's experienced) *real* change through a relationship with Christ?

Nicole reveals the issues she struggles with most. Snap the code with your smartphone to watch this bonus video or visit the link below.



www.tyndal.es/ShesGotIssues1

you pray for God to change somebody else. True surrender starts with arms outstretched and an open heart that cries, “*Do what you will.*”

Even if you must honestly say you are only a 3 out of 10 on a willingness scale, God will work with that. Change always, always begins with honesty. Give him your 20 or 30 or 60 percent surrender and watch him work it into something more. By the end of this book, my prayer for you is that your surrender and trust in him will be far beyond what it is right now.

Remember that God is not interested in transforming us because he needs us to be shiny, happy people who robotically do his will. He’s interested because he loves us too much to leave us wallowing in our issues, mired in the everyday and missing out on his presence and peace! As Hannah Hurnard writes, “Love is beautiful, but it is also terrible: terrible in its determination to allow nothing blemished or unworthy to remain in the beloved.”[\[8\]](#)

You are loved. You are worthy. And so you will be changed.

Space Bar

A Prayer

Dear God, I’ll be honest. I want your direction but often don’t want your help. But I’m tired of doing this on my own. I’ve tried to fix myself and it’s not working. So I’m going to tell you today, and tomorrow, and the next day—take me on. Mold me into the woman you want me to be. Open my eyes to the chains that bind me, so that I can allow you to break me free—to experience full, free, growing love for you and for everyone. Amen.

A Journaling Exercise

1. Can you imagine being described by God as “a woman after his own heart”? In what ways do you feel that’s true? In what ways do you feel far from that?

2. Can you admit that you have a problem—a consistent, worn-out, not-going-away problem? Finish this thought: “I would describe one of my heart issues as . . .”

3. How have you tried to solve that problem? What’s worked? What hasn’t?

4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how willing are you to let God be in charge of this process?

5. Can you relate to any of these objections to God’s work in your life?

“My problem is too small.”

“I made this mess myself.”

“I’ve asked for God to change things, and he hasn’t.”

For Group Discussion

1. Think of your own one-word associations with the word *birth*. How does the idea of being reborn sit with you?

2. Before reading this chapter, what was your understanding of the word *blessing*? What do you know of blessings from Scripture? What would you call blessings in your life?

3. Have you known someone who seemed “infused by God”? If so, what are some characteristics of that person?

Nicole shares three warning signs that indicate you've got issues. Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



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you that want to manage life apart from him.

For Group Discussion

1. When it comes to personal achievement, do you have a king or pawn tendency? How about in relationships with others? with God?
2. What areas in your life do you tend to overcontrol? What areas do you tend to undercontrol?

Nicole speaks on how much—or how little—we really allow God to be in control. Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



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personal and practical. Make a list of some people and situations that you are tempted to control. You might want to start with acknowledging your desires for certain situations and people (e.g., I wish Jill was more interested in our friendship). What do you need to do to turn them over to God?

For Group Discussion

1. Can you think of a specific time you've surrendered yourself to God? What situations draw you to surrender?
2. Read Isaiah 30:19-26. Where do you need to trust God to respond regularly, instantly, and specifically in your life?
3. Have you experienced God using trouble to teach you? What did you learn?
4. How are you at "earning the right to be heard"? With whom do you need to use more words? With whom do you need to use more actions?

Hear from Nicole how surrender can free you from control issues. Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



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for many hours, I'd probably grab your hand. Then I'd ask you if you believe that God can work miracles. Because no matter what your age, no matter how deep those insecurities run, no matter what the circumstances are that created these shaky places—God is able. He is a miracle worker. He specializes in situations that seem bleak, in people the world calls goners, and in cemetery places of the soul. He is a life giver in every sense of the world—and you are never outside of his grasp.

Every place of insecurity in your life; every situation where you find yourself paralyzed or shaky, every circumstance or season that makes you wonder if you are “good enough”: these are the places where God does his best work. But getting centered on the rock of God's love takes some doing. The next chapter will examine the central promises of Scripture that support our search for security in Christ alone.

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A Prayer

My Father God, it's hard to remember that you not only love me, but that you like me—in all my insecurities, in the ways that I wander away from you, and even in the ways I consistently try to find life in things that can't satisfy. Jesus, would you cover me with your love, showing me today exactly how you love me? I want to trust you to satisfy me, especially in the places where I feel so insecure. Amen.

A Journaling Exercise

1. Complete this statement: If I didn't have _____ [friendship, body shape, attractiveness, approval, etc.], I don't know who I'd be. If I were not a _____ [mother, wife, hard worker, etc.], I'd be lost.
2. Take some time to write about why these things are particularly important to you. Are there some people, roles, or circumstances that

have more power over you than you'd like? Are there stories from your past or your family that relate to these insecurities? Remember, this is not an exercise in condemnation or shame. This is a way to face your own reality so that you can ask God to intervene and grow you beyond your insecurities.

For Group Discussion

1. How would you define insecurity? What does it look like to you?
2. Think of your physically awkward stage. Were you insecure? What (if anything) has changed since then? Now consider what area of life feels “awkward” now. Is it your level of emotional maturity? Your ability to trust in God? Your struggle with approval addiction?
3. From whom do you desire approval? What would it be like if you were to lose that approval?
4. What are the if-lys in your life? What do you imagine life would be like with those if-lys in place?
5. Have you experienced insecurity paralysis? What has it kept you from experiencing?

Find out from Nicole how God can use your insecurity. Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



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fatigue?) It takes confidence. And it takes security in Christ. So how do you know if you are becoming more secure?

Secure women know their strengths and aren't afraid to own them. They also know about their weaknesses and aren't scared by them. Secure women can easily admit when they are wrong but don't beat themselves up about it. Secure women take risks. Secure women fail but try again. Secure women can be vulnerable with their friends. Secure women don't have to know all the answers. Secure women can say no. Secure women believe that love multiplies and that they can give lavish love and affection away because there will always be an abundance for them.

Truly secure women find their worth and their strength in Christ. They give up on the empty promise of worldly security, and in doing so, they find the deep love of true life (see Matthew 16:25) that Jesus offers. Secure women are beautiful, powerful women because of their deep ability to love—not because they do it perfectly, but because they are loved by a perfect God, who will “equip you with all you need for doing his will” (Hebrews 13:21).

Space Bar

A Prayer

God, you have equipped me with a mind to learn your promises. I commit myself to you, to soak in the truth of your Word so that my heart might follow. I want to walk in the freedom of your truth and see the fruit of my security in you. Thank you for the promises of Scripture and the truth of the words that it's for freedom you've set me free. I pray that today I would live in that freedom in my mind, my heart, and my actions. Amen.

A Journaling Exercise

Look at the Scriptures listed below. What verse resonates with your life right now? Write it (or another verse you choose) five times in your journal. You may want to also jot it down on a note card and hang it on your mirror or tape it to your dashboard. Start with one truth you'd like to make your own this

week, and do the work of writing it onto your soul through memorization.

We who have fled to him for refuge can take new courage, for we can hold on to his promise with confidence. (Hebrews 6:18)

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. (Romans 5:1)

Let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. (Hebrews 4:16)

I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

This is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. (John 17:3)

No matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:20, NIV)

When you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. (Ephesians 1:13)

What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

For Group Discussion

1. Think about the storms that you've experienced in your life. How have they contributed to any particular insecurities?
2. Consider the five promises of security in Christ: forgiveness of sin,

freedom from guilt, eternal life, continual relationship with God, and the gift of his Spirit. Which one is the most real to you? Which one is a challenge to accept? Why do you think that is?

3. Have you found a promise in Scripture that speaks specifically to an insecurity you experience? What is it?
4. What does a secure woman in Christ look like? What would it look like in your life tomorrow? How would you be different?

Nicole reflects on the five promises of security in Christ. Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



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beyond comparisons into a glorious, wide-open space where I feel the freedom to love what he's uniquely made in me. And in that freedom I've found the ability to also love what he's uniquely made in you. By closing the door on comparison, you, too, will open yourself up to an expansive love that's beyond measure.

Space Bar

A Prayer

Father God, being free of comparisons sounds so great! My mind gets it, but my heart has a hard time following through. Once again, I'm at a place where I need you to intervene in my issues. Will you give me the ability to see myself as you see me, rather than comparing myself to others? I want to be free to love everyone with the gracious freedom you alone can give me. Thanks, God. . . . Amen.

A Journaling Exercise

Take a journey back in time. Who's the last person you compared yourself to? Take a moment to listen to your own thoughts about that experience. What were you accomplishing in that comparison? Did it make you feel better or worse about yourself?

For Group Discussion

1. Do you agree that comparisons create a distraction from seeing your own inadequacies? How has that played out in your life?

2. Do you currently struggle with comparisons? If so, in what areas are you particularly tempted to compare yourself? If not, how did you move beyond the comparison game?
3. When it comes to justice, how do you try to take matters into your own hands?

Nicole offers a new perspective on a phrase we all use: “It’s not fair.” Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



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on your own bag. God has given us each great gifts, which will become obvious if we are willing to accept them with gratitude. The parable of the vineyard workers and the DSW sale is the same. Focus on what God has given you rather than what you don't have. Remind yourself that he is your Maker. He formed you and created you just as you are, to do good works that he planned in advance for you to do. He wants you the way he made you. He saw you and called his work good.

It may be time to go to God to fix your sight—to make sure you see your gifts as he provided them, rather than pining over what you think they should be. What happens next is almost magical. You will begin to feel grateful for things you ignored. Your heart will begin to expand as you welcome others' blessings into your life, rather than simmering and stewing about them having it better than you do.

Changing my view helped me trash comparisons for good. In my comparison recovery, I've found that places of struggle are opportunities for God to show his transforming power. By keeping my eyes on my own bag, I've discovered the vast blessings that God has given me. When I consider the question, "Are you envious because I am generous?" I better understand what God is saying to me. My life may not look exactly the way I planned, but I'm grateful. God should stay king. He does a much better job of managing my life than I do.

Choose to let comparisons go.

Space Bar

A Prayer

Dear God, it's so easy to miss the gifts you've given me! I'm sorry for the ways that I disregard and disrespect the woman you've made me to be. Today, I choose gratitude instead of comparisons, and I ask you to help me not only love you, but like who you've made me to be! Amen.

A Journaling Exercise

4. How would you describe the “field” God has marked out for you?

Nicole shows you how to stop comparing yourself to others and find your own unique path. Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



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reasons why you should trust me.

We will never live the life God planned for us if we limit ourselves to the places we've deemed safe, ignoring the real boundaries God has put into place for us. Like Shep, we keep ourselves on the steps when life feels too dangerous. The rest of the world seems too daunting, and we decide our own self-appointed boundaries might be safer. Fortunately, God has given us quite a bit of freedom, and in the next chapter we'll explore how to tiptoe out of our safety zone and experience the exhilaration of the worry-free life.

Space Bar

A Prayer

Father God, I'll just say it. I'm scared. Life is big and daunting and overwhelming. Daily I'm faced with news from the Internet and from friends of the real pain that life can bring. Sometimes I want to pull the covers over my head and hide out until heaven. But God, you've given me a purpose in this life, and you've told me, "Fear not!" no matter what comes my way. Would you help me, Lord, to see how you are working in my life through my issue of fear? Amen.

A Journaling Exercise

Take a mental inventory. Write at the top of your journal "What if . . . ?" Then spend ten minutes writing down every question that comes to mind after that statement.

For Group Discussion

1. Before this chapter, did you believe you had a fear or anxiety issue?
What about after?
2. Of the four fears listed, which do you struggle with most? Are there any you struggle with that are not listed?
3. What do you think is the difference between fear and common sense?
How do you determine which one is at play when you make decisions?
4. What is your relationship with solitude? Is loneliness an issue for you?
Remember, even the busiest and most “relatable” women often struggle with loneliness. In what ways do you feel unknown?

Nicole explains the difference between fear and common sense. Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



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It would be a mistake to think I'm a brave woman who conquers her fears. In my heart and mind, this was an exercise in trusting Jesus—I chose to believe he would be with me as I said no to fear. As the year went on, the Lord showed up in each of these challenges. Every time! I took thousands of steps that year. Passages from Psalms 23, 37, 46, and 56, as well as Isaiah 40 and Hebrews 4, all became my own. I began to take ownership of the words written thousands of years ago, like they could have been written in my journal, such as Psalm 46:1-2, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear . . .” (NIV). Or Psalm 37:23-24: “The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand” (NIV). It was all true, and I had a year's worth of experiences to prove it.

I didn't know Jean when she took a year to conquer fear. And without this story, I never would have known that fear once ruled her life. Jean is beautiful. Her story isn't without pain and suffering, but she lives out of freedom and joy. She accepts her weaknesses and her strengths. She knows what it means to live an authentic life, and she is a woman who lives with deep waters of stillness in her soul. Jean is a living testimony to the power of Christ to conquer all of our fears, and she serves as an inspiration for all of us who want to truly change. Jean's just an ordinary woman, like you and me, who's living in the modern miracle of transformation. Change is real, and God is ready. Are you?

Space Bar

A Prayer

Dear heavenly Father, you are so clear with your words about fear! But somehow I need help making the leap from head knowledge about your

Word to believing it's true in my heart. Lord, I want to trust you more, saying yes to your freedom and no to the fear that's crippling me. Help me to be honest and humble before you. Right now, I ask for your help, because I can't do this on my own. Show me the little or big steps I need to take to get free of any fears that keep me from the full life you have for me. Amen.

A Journaling Exercise

Look back at your journal exercise from the last chapter. Revisit your what-if page. Draw a line straight down the middle of a blank page. On one side, write one of the scariest what-ifs from the last chapter. On the other, write as if a wiser, less-scared you is answering the what-if. What would that wiser, less-scared self say to the current what-if fear? What words would that wiser self use? What Scripture might she apply?

For Group Discussion

1. Do you consider yourself to have an anxious personality? Why or why not?
2. Choose one verse to memorize about fear or anxiety.
3. What would change in your life if you chose to live a year without fear?
4. Have you had victory over any anxieties in your life? What has worked for you?

Nicole shares how God's Word can help you stop worrying so much. Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



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purposes of building others up. The fruit of this anger is sweet and contributes to positive changes within our homes and our communities—even the world. This very emotion can actually bring about a 1 Corinthians 13 love experience. Although passionate, it can also persevere, hope, and never fail. In the hands of the Master, this anger can be a force for love and for good in a world stained and broken by evil.

Author Richard P. Walters notes, “Among Christians there is a fear of rage, a surplus of resentment, and a shortage of indignation.”^[49] I believe that among women, this is even more true. How often do we frighten ourselves with the power of anger, stuffing it back inside ourselves! How often do we get overly angry about little injustices in our life while turning a blind eye to the tragic injustice all around us! Perhaps we all need a reality check—to gain more self-control when it comes to the daily woes of our lives and a little less control about the things that make God angry.

Space Bar

A Prayer

Father, this emotion business is tricky! And anger is an area that makes me uncomfortable. How to express it? When to express it, and with whom? Thank you, my Father God, for the promise that when we turn to you, you wipe away our sins and refresh us (Acts 3:19). Refresh me for the work of sorting through my anger. Amen.

A Journaling Exercise

When was the last time you were angry? Journal or devote some time to thinking about it. Who were you angry with? Why were you angry? What were the circumstances? Was the situation reconciled? Are you likely to over- or underreact to anger? This exercise will give you a fresh memory with which to read the next chapter, so try to sort through as many details as possible.

For Group Discussion

1. Review your anger assessment. Are you more likely to be full of rage or resentful? How does that response manifest itself in your life?
2. What are some of the ways you justify the actions that stem from anger? Do you find yourself apologizing because you are tired, stressed out, etc.?
3. Was anger expressed in your house as you were growing up? Was it a positive or negative experience for you?

Hear from Nicole why anger has such power—and what it means about what’s happening in your life. Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



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parents agreed to seek out their own marriage counselor. The mother and I discussed some preventative measures she could use to diffuse her anger as well as to address her predisposition to use her children as scapegoats for her frustration with her husband. Two months after the episode in my office, there was great improvement. Once the root of her anger had been addressed, the mother's beauty—in her love for her kids, her surrendered spirit toward the Lord, her improving relationship with her husband—reemerged. It was a modern miracle, testifying to God's ability to transform even the bleakest of situations into a show of his glorious grace.

Space Bar

A Prayer

My God, you are my counselor. You see into my places of resentment and even rage, and you still promise to redeem me. Thank you, God, that when I take refuge in you, I am not condemned (Psalm 34:22). I pray that the freedom of your love would spur me on to change. Soften my heart where there is hardness. I need strength to accept your grace that covers my anger. You give me power to hold my tongue, to diffuse my temper, and to love you more than I love being right or justified in my anger. I pray today that I would choose you. Thank you! Amen.

A Journaling Exercise

Think back to the incident you journaled about in the last chapter. After reading this chapter, do you have any additional insights into that situation? Did you react in a healthy way? If you could go back to that situation, what would you do differently? What measures (if any) can you put into place to react in a healthier way the next time you are angry?

For Group Discussion

1. Do you feel like the choice whether or not to respond in anger is within your control?
2. What are some of the proactive measures you might take to help you maintain emotional balance?
3. Have you experienced God's strength in the midst of an argument or an episode of anger? How did it affect your attitude?
4. If "words are the thermometer to your heart," what does your speech reveal about your current temperature? In what area mentioned in Ephesians 4:29 do you need to improve: the wholesomeness of your words, the helpfulness of your words, or the timing of your words?

Get tips from Nicole on how to channel your anger productively. Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



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[Resources](#)) may provide further direction. If this thorny weed is too strongly rooted for you to pull up by yourself, invite someone into the process. Talking with a Christian counselor, a pastor, or a wise friend may provide the extra support you need to extract this root and free up space in your heart for love and freedom to thrive.

Space Bar

A Prayer

Dear God, if there's ever an issue where I understand my need for you, it's in this one. Sometimes I just can't muster the strength I need to forgive. God, I open myself up to you. Please show me if there is any unforgiveness in me—for you, for others, or for myself—and enable me to accept your grace and pass that on freely. God, please increase my compassion for others and give me courage to forgive and to share my own story in a way that helps people turn to you. Amen.

A Journaling Exercise

Does your testimony involve forgiveness? Take a few minutes to think, write, and pray about how God has grown you through the process of forgiving yourself, someone else, or him. Consider sharing that story with someone else. If the idea of sharing makes you balk, journal about what makes you nervous or uneasy about opening up.

For Group Discussion

1. Have you ever struggled with long-standing unforgiveness toward someone? Has it been resolved? If so, how?

2. If you have had a significant forgiveness experience, what helped you heal?
3. What do you do in order to “keep short accounts” with loved ones? How do you reconcile with those who’ve wounded you?
4. Do you need to grow in (a) letting go of grudges or (b) confronting unresolved conflict with a person who’s wronged you? What is the next step you might take in that process?

Hear Nicole speak about the power of forgiveness. Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



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choose growth when it drives us to lie on our faces before God. We choose growth when we are challenged and succeed, and we choose growth when we fail. We choose growth because it's built into the fiber of our souls to be reborn into Christ, to keep in step with his Spirit within us, and to "let God transform [us] by changing the way [we] think" (Romans 12:2). It's not the easy path. But it's the dynamic, holy, and beautiful one.

THE *SHE'S GOT ISSUES* CREED

When I'm controlling, I'll choose to surrender to God's way.

When I'm insecure, I'll seek the truth.

When I'm stuck comparing, I'll look for new perspective.

When I'm scared, I'll trust God to bring peace.

When I'm angry, I'll invite God to handle me.

When I'm hurt, I'll forgive.

I won't be perfect—but I will be honest.

I won't always do it right—but I will apologize.

I won't always be settled—but I will always keep seeking.

Space Bar

A Prayer

This is growth: to write your own prayer here. I invite you to take The *She's Got Issues* Creed and make it personal. What is your prayer as you finish this study?

A Journaling Exercise

Label the top of your page "I'm learning . . ." and then give yourself ten to fifteen minutes to flip through the book or your Bible and pick up what's resonated with you. Write phrases or sentences to complete the "I'm learning" prompt. This will serve as a remembrance of this season in your life

and what God is showing you. That is a valuable record to keep and recall.

For Group Discussion

1. How do you feel about being hearty and abundant? Does your life reflect the state of your heart? Why or why not?
2. Which of the “abundance” tenets do you most resonate with? Explain.
needing refinement
choosing honesty
staying faithful
listening to the Spirit
feeding your soul
3. If the major goal of your spiritual life is growth, where have you grown through this book? Which issue have you seen the most change in?
4. What would you add to The *She’s Got Issues* Creed for yourself?
What’s one thing you want to share with someone as you close this book?

Listen to a special message from Nicole to you, as you finish reading *She’s Got Issues*. Snap the code with your smartphone or visit the link below.



www.tyndal.es/ShesGotIssues14

Further Resources

To Find a Counselor

American Association of Christian Counselors resources include a national referral network of Christian counselors at www.aacc.net.

Focus on the Family offers a counselor search engine at www.FocusOnTheFamily.com.

For Further Reading

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About the Author

NICOLE UNICE is a full-time mom and a part-time ministry leader and blogger. She is the contributing editor for Christianity Today's online community for women, *Gifted for Leadership*, and a regular columnist for Kyria.com. She is also a national speaker, known for bringing a fresh voice for a new generation and combining her love of storytelling with biblical insights. Nicole's first Bible study, *The Divine Pursuit: A Study of Jonah*, has been well received by groups around the country.

Nicole lives in Richmond, Virginia, and works and worships at Hope Church. She shares her life with an amazing husband, three awesome kids, and a whole community of teenagers and twentysomethings. Visit her website at www.nicoleunice.com to read her blog and find out about upcoming events.

A portion of the proceeds from this book will be donated to Midwives for Haiti, an organization devoted to helping reduce infant and maternal mortality in Haiti by educating Haitian women and providing prenatal care and skilled birth assistance. For more details, visit www.midwivesforhaiti.org.

If you liked *She's Got Issues*, you'll love Nicole's new book, *Brave Enough*. It's time to start living bold and free ... right where you are!



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