

w i t h
t h i s
r i n g

promises to keep

JOANNA
WEAVER



WATERBROOK
P R E S S

WITH THIS RING
PUBLISHED BY WATERBROOK PRESS
12265 Oracle Boulevard, Suite 200
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80921
A division of Random House Inc.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked (KJV) are taken from the King James Version. Scripture quotations marked (TLB) are taken from The Living Bible, copyright © 1971. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Every effort has been made to locate the copyright owners of the material used in this book. Please let us know if an error has been made, and we will make any necessary changes in subsequent printings.

ISBN 978-1-4000-7476-1

Copyright © 1999, 2008 by Joanna Weaver

Published in association with the literary agency of Janet Kobobel Grant, Books & Such, 52 Mission Circle, Suite 122, PMB 170, Santa Rosa, CA 95409.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

WATERBROOK and its deer design logo are registered trademarks of WaterBrook Press, a division of Random House Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Weaver, Joanna.

With this ring : promises to keep / Joanna Weaver. — 1st ed.
p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-4000-7476-1

1. Marriage—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title.
BV835.W3895 2008
265'.5—dc22

2007052389

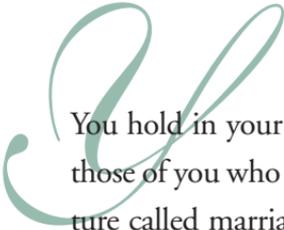
Printed in the United States of America
2008—First Edition

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

SPECIAL SALES

Most WaterBrook Multnomah books are available in special quantity discounts when purchased in bulk by corporations, organizations, and special interest groups. Custom imprinting or excerpting can also be done to fit special needs. For information, please e-mail SpecialMarkets@WaterBrookMultnomah.com or call 1-800-603-7051.

Introduction



You hold in your hands the book of my heart. I wrote it for those of you who are just now embarking on the great adventure called marriage. But it is written for married couples as well—from newlyweds to those married half a century or more. It is for all of us who, having once said, “I do,” attempt daily to live out the brave promises we spoke in our wedding vows.

The inspiration behind *With This Ring* came from an unusual place. As a friend and I browsed through a local interior-design shop one day, we entered a room that featured a lovely bedroom ensemble. However, it was the calligraphy dancing just below the ceiling that caught my attention. Along the upper wall, an artist had hand-lettered the words of the traditional wedding vows in a lively mix of painted calligraphy and golden confetti: “Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony...”

“How beautiful,” I told my friend as I circled the room, looking upward. “I would love to have this painted in our bedroom.”

A loud snort of disgust interrupted my musings. Turning, I found a middle-aged man shaking his head with a sneer of amusement. “No one means those words anymore,” he said.

Shocked, I replied, “Well, I do.”

“Take it from me, sweetheart,” he said, leaning in as if to let me in on a secret. “The men never do.”

I could only stare at his self-satisfied grin as I pulled back in disbelief. To have a complete stranger be so openly cynical about marriage was new to me.

“Well, take it from me,” I said when I finally found my voice. “My husband meant those words. And he proves it every day.”

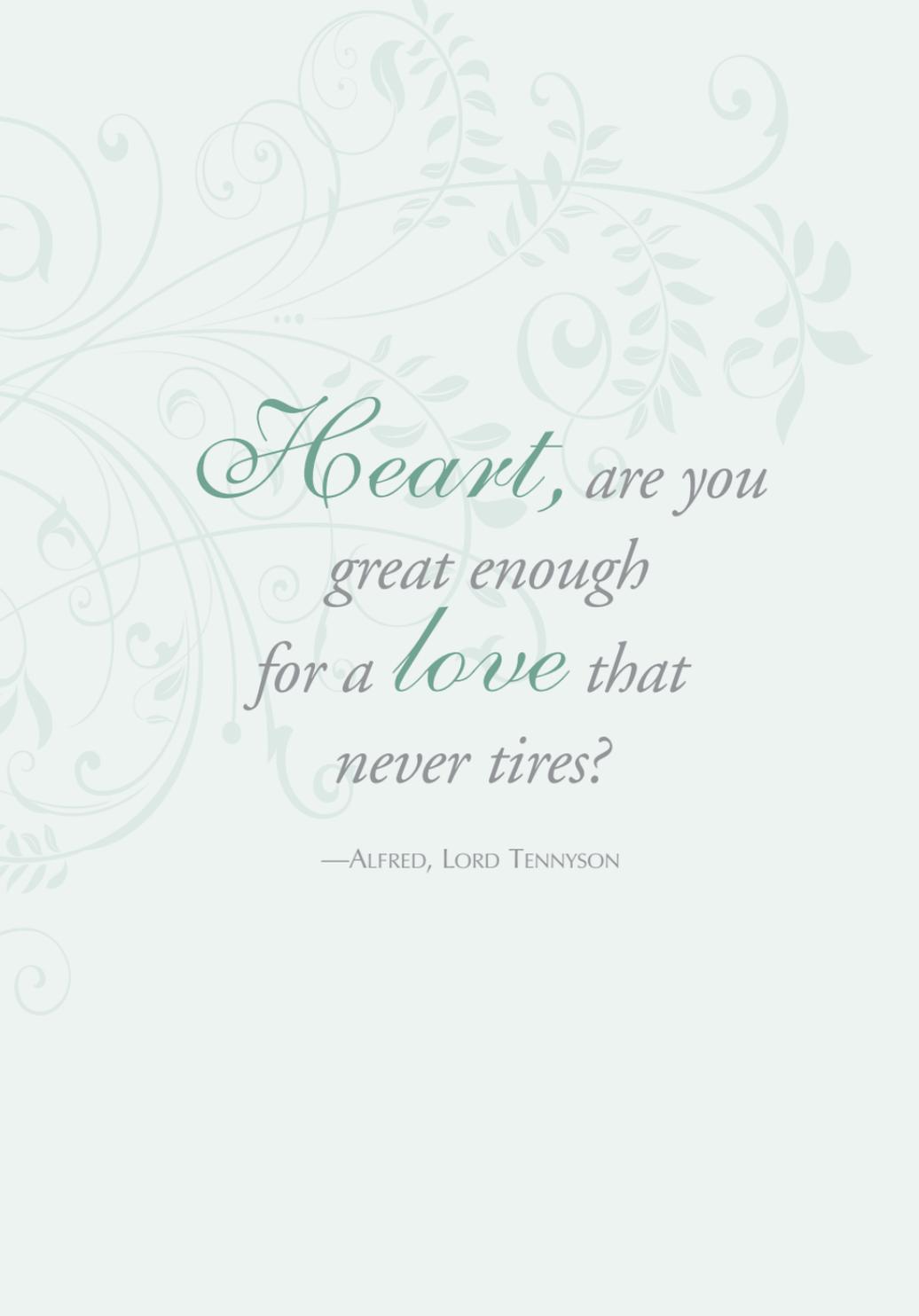
I went home shaken and saddened by the exchange, not because I am unaware of the challenges and disappointments marriage sometimes brings, but because the world so easily dismisses what God so highly values.

Out of that encounter at the design shop, however, came a determination to look deeper into the words we say so sincerely, though perhaps a bit naively, when we stand before God and family to become husband and wife. My search to find the meaning of the wedding tokens and traditions and the beauty surrounding them led to the writing of this book.

As you read this book and weave your own story into it,

I hope you will find the same inspiration and sense of wonder I experienced as I looked at the history and meaning behind the phrases of the wedding vows and the significance of the wedding ceremony. But even more, I hope you will walk away with the same holy determination to live out those vows daily in a deeper and more meaningful way than ever before.

From this day forward... Till death do us part.



*Heart, are you
great enough
for a love that
never tires?*

—ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

The Day Love Was Born

The angels saw it all. Creator spoke, and suddenly the dark, swirling chaos of the cosmos disappeared, leaving an ordered universe in its place.

Night. Day. Land. Water. Word by word, day by day, the plan of Creator unfolded before the heavenly host, each creation more wonderful than the last. The Father spoke. The Spirit moved. And the angels applauded.

“Marvelous!” cried one angel. “Incredible!” said another.

The brilliant blue and green planet beckoned with beauty, nestled against the black night sprinkled with stars. Layered with lush forests and soaring mountains, it was a palace fit for a King. As though God himself would dwell there.

“Unthinkable!” cried one. “Ludicrous!” said another.

And yet it was so. Each evening Creator left his throne and walked in the garden he’d created, visiting the man he’d formed from the dust of this new world. The man created to fellowship with almighty God.

Why? the angels wondered. Never had such an honor been given. And yet somehow they understood. The heart of Creator was so large it ached to love. The adoration of angels and their unrestrained praise filled his ears but failed to touch his heart. He longed for love. Not worship. Not fearful reverence. But love.

Laughter echoed across the garden and into heaven. The fellowship was sweet. Creator smiled as Created named each animal, exulting in every one. Together they explored the secrets of Eden and the wonder of this new friendship. But as the days passed, a growing conviction gripped the heart of Creator. A bittersweet realization that there was still more to give.

Each creature had a mate. Another of its kind. But the man was alone.

“It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a help-mate.” And in that moment love was born. Not in the creation of the woman, but in the Creator’s willingness to share the man. In the Creator’s willingness to give.

For God so loved...he gave. Though it meant sacrificing the single-minded devotion of the man, God gave. Though it meant sharing the communion meant only for him, God gave. Though it meant the willful disobedience of man and woman would someday cost Creator the life of his dear Son, God gave.

We, too, must give if we endeavor to love. Love holds no room for selfishness. It is only in laying down our life that we find it. It is only in losing that we win.

We can learn a lot from the day love was born.



Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit,
but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

—Philippians 2:3





I have nothing to share with you but my life.

 Peter McWilliams

He poured so gently and naturally into my life, like batter into a bowl of batter, honey into a jar of honey. The clearest water sinking into sand.

 Justine Sydney

My life has been the awaiting you,
Your footfall was my own heart's beat.

 Paul Valéry

Look for a sweet person. Forget rich.

 Estée Lauder

A decorative border of light green floral and vine motifs, including leaves and scrolls, framing the text.

In marriage

we marry a mystery, an other,
a counterpart.

In a sense the person we marry
is a stranger about whom we have
a magnificent hunch.

—Daphne Rose Kingma

