

a 22-week devotional  
with coloring pages



# Healing & Held

A Book *of* Blessings and Lament  
Rooted *in* Numbers & Habakkuk

ANDREA L. PALMER

ALSO BY ANDREA L. PALMER

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HELPING WOMEN CREATIVELY, CURIOSLY & COURAGEOUSLY ATTEND TO THEIR WHOLE BEING

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A Note to the Reader:

The paper used to print this book is rated  
for pencils and non-bleed inks only.




FOR EUNITA HOLMES

*My beloved mom  
who wears a  
crown of resilient beauty*

FOR BILL COLEMAN








*My praying father  
who introduced me to  
this blessing*

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## My Life And Your Invitation

Through the zig-zags of my hurts, my ongoing healings, and my living—I have become acutely aware of how I am tenderly held by Abba's steadfast and healing love. Like newborns need and long to be near you, on you and held by you. Likewise, we are held by the tender heart of Abba-Mother, allow that imagery to cling to you throughout this study—it's transformative. The shift that takes place in us when we welcome our sorrows and our celebrations to mingle will lead us to experience and become more credible witnesses of the profound harmony of God's grace.

I like to think of grace as an expensive, free all-access pass to God's nature and nurture. For me, my first-year experience as a beloved disciple of Yeshua (Jesus) was more like a disruptive tsunami of grace, where His waves put me in a complicated series of chaos. Wave after wave, He was charting a course through the ripples of lies and abuse that I suffered, self-inflicted and other-people inflicted. I had embodied so much trauma from my early teen years that for me, grace was more like holy detoxification.

Somewhere in my 20's is when I remember my poetry beginning to take on the form of blessings and lamentations. It was exactly what I needed to steady my twenty-year-old, single mom self in my rethinking—a reframing that invited and dared my sorrows and celebrations to worship and mingle with God's grace through the gifts of blessings and lament.

Now fast-forward to my 30's and early 40's, grace was still like water to me, but I begin to experience it more like rain. The rain washed over me in my pregnancies and in my miscarriage. It washed over me in beautiful friendships and in friendship betrayals. Now, as I approach my 50's, I experience grace as a *mikvah* (a pool of living water used for immersion "baptism"). Imbibing grace is where it is. Imbibe with me.

May we increasingly know this deep immersion of grace in the Beloved's enduring love, whether we cry out for deliverance or dance in delight. They both boast of and in communion with a wise, good, and compassionate God.

This book is a testimony of how I've come to understand how blessings and lament are intertwined. They are both liturgical responses to the presence of God. They are both a radical invocation of grace that engages a radical God. The radical audacity of lament and blessing will evoke a radical movement of God and God's people.

**Good to Know:** The pronouns for the Holy Spirit (Ruach) are grammatically feminine in Hebrew. Yet in the church, we often incentivize and apply the masculine language for the Holy Spirit. I invite you to prayerfully and curiously explore the Scriptures and notice where God reveals the presence of feminine traits, feminine pronouns and feminine embodiment in the *imago Dei*.

My prayer is that you will let every nuance of praise and bereavement help you welcome holy and healing hospitality. This will ensure that all of your feelings will have a home in Abba's acceptance and pleasure in you as you sort through them.

A holy audacity will be developed in you as you witness the womb of revelation from which you are birthed. My dare to you, no, my double dare to you in the words of Toni Morrison, from her novel, *Home*: "*Somewhere inside you is that free person I'm talkin' about, locate her; and let her do some good in the world.*"

Good and goodness permeate the intervention of God when there is upheaval and rubble. We are healed and held *through* the consequences of the upheaval because of *Tov*—*Tov* is an infinitely expansive Hebrew word, in English we say good—so what does Elohim call good? *Tov* is part of the first story detailed in the Scriptures where God calls anything good that produces life and contains the potential for more life within it.

On my personal journey, I've learned that even when I experience death and disconnection in various forms, my life can still bring forth *life* because I'm earnestly connected to the Source of Life and so are you.

So whether you are as physically healthy as you want to be or not...

Whether you are married or not...

Whether you have been marginalized at home, church, work, school or not...

Whether you are wealthy in material possessions or not...

Whether you are dealing with the complexities of friendship betrayal or not...

Whether you have faced the most significant loss of a relationship of a loved one or not...

Indeed, *Tov* desires to intervene. Let *Tov*. Oftentimes, the LORD will use external changes and pressures to provoke us to shift and come face to face internally with the depth of God's good work accomplished through blessings and lament in our lives.

So who is this God that can *bless* you and *keep* you in His goodness, even while you are steeped in lament? He is the Artist who takes what the enemy means for harm and dares to paint with the brushstrokes of your human bewilderment, dipped into the palette of peace to create something extraordinarily breathtaking through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit on the Canvas of Christ's companionship.

To experience our God more authentically in our pain and in our pleasures, we will undoubtedly experience the synthesis of blessings and lament over and over again where we will encounter all of our healings, where we are held by Abba—He snuggles us close to re-connect with us once we are out of the Divine womb—Divine babywearing, indeed.


Shalom,


Andrea "Mohawkmomma" Palmer





## How to use this book


*Healing & Held* is designed to guide you into a fuller human receptivity and response to the places of blessing and lament. The butterfly images are present to remind you to attune and align yourself with Abba's nurturing, steadfast, transformative love.


 Twenty-two entries allow you to pace yourself. Read and meditate on one entry each day for a month. Or read and meditate on one per week throughout the year.

 For your ease, a butterfly sits next to each entry on the table of contents. Color in the ones you've completed as you read so you stay focused.

 You will be prompted to pray, notice, and sometimes engage in a mindful activity. Take the time to dig deeper into what you've read. There's transformation that awaits you whether you attend to yourself for 10 minutes or one hour. Be intentional. Be kind to yourself.

 Throughout each week, you'll discover calming coloring prompts, along with blessings I've penned and lamentations from Scripture. Allow your inner creative spirit to be unleashed. Grab your colored pencils or crayons and freely add your own artwork.

 Use in a group - It's helpful to unpack things in your sacred community—book clubs, Bible study groups, creative groups, you and a few girlfriends, or prayer groups. Reflective questions and activities are included, which can be used to help a group discuss a theme to help you dig deeper. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:** groups might also choose to share their contemplative coloring moments and how the Spirit of Truth spoke to them during the process.

 Use by individuals - As you meditate and color, draw close and pay attention to Abba's affectionate Father-heart whether things are going well or when grief presses you in on all sides. Allow the God of all comfort to minister to you as you do.

This is your book, and prayerfully you will unhurriedly personalize it! Allow yourself to engage with your be-LOVED, child-like heart on this pilgrimage. Feel free to share your artwork on social media. Use the hashtag #healingandheld so we can find each other online and learn to heal, to be held, and to be loved together, whether in joyful or jarring places—the LORD is your/our forever and unceasing joy no matter what and no matter where.

## INTRODUCTION

### *Bless & Lament*



**Berachah (BRAH-khah) means blessing in Hebrew**—it carries a dual meaning. It vocalizes gratitude to God for Divine Provision and Presence and there is a connection with the knee, “berekh” in Hebrew. It carries the meaning of kneeling or bowing in adoration. This is where our understanding deepens—adoration is reciprocal—when we bless God, our hearts kneel to speak affirming adoration in response to when God blesses us. When the Divine blesses us, His heart kneels into our lives to speak affirming adoration that meets us where we are and reminds us who we are, what we have, where we're headed, and to Whom we belong.

**Lament ('ekah) is the wail of "How! Where!" in Hebrew. It is the expression of a prayer that allows suffering to speak.** It means to audibly "cry out loud" for justice. It is worship that moves us beyond conversation with our merciful High Priest to communion with Him. Whether in community or personally lament pleads for justice and restoration.

It is a gift from God to experience sorrow that traces us back to our longings of deep connection. This frees us up from putting a positive spin on the worst of things, and yet, we are resourced with an audacity to hope—again.

Whether in times of delight or in times of downcast, blessings and lament come as healing companions, both prayer forms will help us to reflect Divine Love as we grow in grace personally and in communion with one another.

#### BLESSING

Adonai bless you and keep you!  
Adonai make His face to shine on  
you and be gracious to you!  
Adonai turn His face toward you  
and grant you shalom.

Numbers 6:24-26 (TLV)

(Read & Ponder)

#### LAMENT

Then the Lord said, “Hear what  
the unjust judge is saying.

Won't God do justice for His  
chosen ones, who cry out to Him  
day and night? Will He be slow  
to help them?

I tell you, He will quickly give  
them justice. But when the Son  
of Man comes, will He find faith  
on the earth?” Luke 18:6-8 (NIV)

(Read & Ponder)

*I encourage you to Bless, Lament, Rise, Reimagine, and Restore. If you're in deep lament you can wail and worship without words, your thoughts and emotions can become a balm for you to sit in the shalom of belonging to the Beloved.*

Numbers Chapter 6:24-26

# Blessing





*"A blessing is a brief prayer that reminds you to stop  
and praise God for every good thing." - Lois Tverberg*

WEEK 1



## *The LORD Bless You*

"The LORD bless you" is a significant beginning point for God to pour out this multifaceted blessing. Although He uses the priesthood as His mouthpiece, Elohim reveals that these are divine words. The effect of these divine words in this blessing display God's divine *character, nature, and being* disclosed to a divinely redeemed people then and now.

As you traverse through this divine blessing, know that you are not alone, you are in solidarity with others who caravan together to know the healing power of being a profoundly and radically beloved daughter known deeply by the LORD.

LORD is our significant starting point. The LORD Himself is the blessing. He doesn't merely come to us to speak a blessing - His very personhood accompanies us, He speaks Himself over us. In the Hebrew Scriptures, when you see the rendering of "LORD" in caps, it is God speaking of His four-letter consonantal name - it is referred to as the Tetragrammaton, which merely means four-letters.

Genesis 2:4 is the first occurrence of the four-letter consonantal name of the God of Israel, but it is in Exodus chapter 3 that God discloses Himself to Moses, had He not laid out His Name in juxtaposition with His nature and nurture, we would understand very little if anything about how His name reveals a redemptive love so vast that we can not absorb it all.

Also, when you take a Hebraic interpretation approach of Exodus 3, it allows you to see an intriguing relationship between the melody and the harmony of God revealing the meaning of His name. The melody is God affirms He is the utterly inscrutable "I Am." The harmony is He reveals a mirror image of us - a familiar human thing called empathy. He blesses us with His presence, which feels what we feel and offers Himself as our ultimate Companion. He is our *Refuge and Resource*.

Know that...

This covenant name is never pronounced by religiously observant Jews and those who follow Talmudic Jewish traditions, nor do they read aloud transliterated forms such as the one most commonly used in Christian circles beginning with 'Y' and ending with the sound "way." It is out of respect and sensitivity towards my Jewish sisters and brothers that I do not use this six-letter substitution used for God's four-letter covenant name.

His covenant name initiates and sustains holy intimacy. Richard Rohr puts it beautifully:

"The Bible shows a relentless movement toward intimacy and divine union between Creator and creatures. For this to happen, there needs to be some degree of compatibility, likeness, or even "sameness" between the two parties. In other words, there has to be a little bit of God in us that wants to find itself."

**Know that...**

*When the LORD speaks a blessing over you, His nature speaks over you.*

*When the LORD speaks a blessing over you, His nurture speaks over you.*

*When the LORD speaks a blessing over you, His now speaks over you.*

**Know that...**

*When the LORD speaks a blessing over you, it is irrevocable.*

*When the LORD speaks a blessing over you, it is irreversible.*

*When the LORD speaks a blessing over you, it is irreducible.*

**Know that...**

*When the LORD speaks a blessing over you heaven listens.*

*When the LORD speaks a blessing over you creation listens.*

*When the LORD speaks a blessing over you destiny listens.*

**Know that...**

Listen to one of the New Covenant blessings: "*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom*" - 2 Corinthians 3:17. (NIV)

**Notice** when the LORD speaks a blessing over you, the Spirit speaks the eternal and secured freedom of Yeshua over us personally and collectively. **Nurture** the relationship between the LORD's Presence and your freedom by **Embodying** freedom as a birthright not a pursuit—our rebirth from the womb of Elohim through Messiah is freedom because wherever freedom is hanging out, the LORD is the Source and Sustainer of its very existence.



WEEK 1



## *The LORD Bless You*

**HEAL & REST:** Deeply breathe in these four words, "The LORD bless you." Say each aloud. Especially, breathe in the word LORD. Jewish thought teaches It cannot be spoken but only breathed: inhaling and exhaling with open lips. It is the first and last "word" you will ever utter—most likely without knowing it.

Give yourself permission to sense the Beloved's Presence and Freedom by stepping outdoors to witness the movement of wind. Now reflect on how much more the wind of Elohim, the Ruach (ROO-akh, Hebrew for spirit, wind, breath) moves in, through, and upon your life. Free your body to sway as if mimicking the movement of the wind.

**NOTICE WHERE YOU ARE HELD:** Like the children of Israel who received this layered blessing in the wilderness, notice your personal wilderness spaces. What I mean by wilderness isn't merely about hardship; the wilderness is foremost about where God leads you to get you all by yourself with Him. It is in the wilderness where the LORD gets your undivided attention.

The Most High desires to reveal to you where you are most profoundly connected apart from what people think and say about you and apart from what you think and say about yourself.

Because the wilderness is about relationship, it was and still is the most appropriate place to burrow in the abundance of Divine blessings of ongoing revelations, alignment and healing.

**Pause, color and ponder** where you are profoundly connected in the wilderness. As you color the word wilderness, ask the Spirit of Truth to reveal to you where a wilderness space may be tucked away in your life that you had not noticed up to this point. Some possible wilderness terrains:

a project  
ministry  
a relationship  
professional life  
physical changes  
new season of life  
mood/attitude/outlook  
medical issues

*the*  
**Wilderness**

IS ABOUT RELATIONSHIP.

WEEK 2  
*And Keep You*



"And keep you." Hear the echo of Genesis 2:15:

Then Adonai Elohim took the man and gave him rest in the Garden of Eden in order to cultivate and watch over it. (TLV)

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (NIV)

The King James Version uses the phrase to *keep it*.

At the very heart of this second blessing is the language of tending a garden or tending to a flock to "guard safely" and "watch over" it.

The same Hebrew word, *shamar*, is used in this second blessing despite the various English renderings. The significance and strength in this second layer of the blessing imply that there's a threat.

There is no need to watch over or guard the safety of a thing if there's no possible threat. And there's no need to watch over anything if it doesn't have exceeding worth. When it comes to worth, we must face a twin agitator and antagonist—unbelief and scarcity.

We must shift from reducing everything to our *net worth* to spend more time with Jesus honoring empathy and our *self-worth* in Him. This requires that we cultivate a deep and intentional focus on the abundance of God's kindness and mindfulness regarding our humanity.

He **keeps** us because we are worth keeping. He keeps us because there is more than enough in His infinite economy of love. This provides us with an authentic relationship that compels us to respect and agree with God's point of view about how He tends to His vineyard and His flock. You are kept to an infinite degree by the Holy Spirit, precious siStar.

