

# “Just a South African Girl Living in an Alabama World”

## All Faithful Charles...

Charles became a part of the family over 4 years ago. Charles has been through a lot in life. His bumps and bruises give him character, the "scars" on his sides show his loyalty throughout the years, his color tone perhaps gives away his age. Charles, a black 2000 Honda Accord, was gifted to Grace Klein Community a number of year ago. For the past 2 and a half years, Charles has been "my man."



We've been everywhere together. Speaking engagements, worship nights, coffee dates... he even endured the heavy rains during camping week, providing me a cozy place to sleep... in the back seat... as my tent couldn't handle the downpour. He handled the red ant invasion way better than I did, although we're still working on the ant problem.

Over the years Charles has taught me a lot...

Who knew a faded black Honda with a missing "H" emblem infested with ants could teach someone a thing or two???

After a rainy day, the wet puddle on the driver's side floorboard reminds me to be thankful for things we take for granted. A roof over my head, shelter from the cold, cool air in this Bama humidity, food in my tummy, running water, hot showers, a warm bed... the list is endless. The hole under the floorboard "never really bothered me anyway."

**"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" - Matthew 7:11**

With many rides from A to B, the "slight" ant invasion reminds me to notice the sweet things in life! The delicious cup of chai shared with a friend after a long day's work, the random "how can I pray for you today" texts, or even the thoughtful words of affirmation when least expected... Such sweetness! Like ants to my cup of chai, I want my heart to truly embrace the sweet moments life brings, every time. And... to share that love!

**"O, taste and see that the Lord is good." - Psalm 34:8**

Until recently, Charles lost his "voice." Too many fuses had blown til we gave up trying to fix the radio. I was reminded to pray in the silence, to sing out loud in traffic, to break the quiet with intentional dialog between best friends. Often I become restless in the stillness, yet His presence is those moments reminds me that He is God.

**"Look to the Lord and His strength, seek His face always." - 1 Chronicles 16:11**

Charles recently started twitching. With each gear shift, a harder push to the peddle, he got upset. With each jerk, I felt the tension. Something wasn't right. Smoke escaping from the vent had us worried. One expert told us the serpentine belt was shredding. A break could cause the end of Charles...

Innocent prayers from the lips of an eleven year old reached heaven. Charles had become like family... we weren't ready to see him go.

Charles spent a night at the "doc." A call from the mechanic took us by surprise. Or did it? Nothing was wrong with Charles. There were no signs of shredding. Nothing. The serpentine belt was perfectly intact. Coincidence?

**“From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise?” - Matthew 21:16**

Charles however needed a new tire... and God provided. Funny, but, Charles also gained his “voice” back during all the recent ups and downs. While trying to assess why he was jerking, the radio problem was solved. Praise Jesus! There’s nothing quite like jamming down the road to worship music with your 13 years old sister in Christ.

**And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. – Philippians 4:19**

Charles’ interior is interesting... yet perfect! The coffee stains on the seats remind me of the many early morning speaking opportunities with First Priority. Everyone has “that friend” who can’t go a day without spilling, bumping into things, or dropping something. Oh the many laughs we’ve shared, the reminiscing, the “what if’s” and even the tears. Charles holds many special moments shared between friends.

We all have our “bless your hearts” or quirks as we lovingly like to call them. Lately, it feels like mine have accelerated. The smallest things upset me. The slightest noise could drive me crazy. I notice every fault and it frustrates me that I cannot make it “right.”

We are all so imperfectly Charles. Everything about him is imperfect. Yet, I love that car. I wouldn’t trade him. His uniqueness is why we love him. His loyalty. His character. He stands out. He stretches me. Jesus sees His good in us, like I see the good in Charles, past the rust spots, the musty smells, the repetitive sins we keep confessing and falling back into again and again. Jesus sees us as forgiven, perfect, a treasure created to show off Christ. He loves us and insanely displays attributes of Himself, through our lives, for His glory.

What do we reflect in our day to day? Who do we reflect? Do we encourage others with our words? Do we challenge them through our lifestyle in their walk with the Lord? Do we shine Jesus in our every day? Do we boast in our weakness to display His greatness? I’m personally journeying my actions and reactions with the Lord. I’d encourage you to do the same. Whether you are shy, quirky, different, loud, smart, a stutterer, poor, rich, fully able, or disabled...no matter what you have been through, we are ALL created for God’s Glory. Your scars may reflect His saving Grace, your family His faithfulness, your past evidence of His redemption. Don’t shy away. Live to stand out, for Jesus!

**“But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being<sup>[a]</sup> might boast in the presence of God.” – 1 Corinthians 1:27 – 29**



**Will you get on your knees for me?**

**“And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, 'Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain.'”**

1 Chronicles 4:10

**Thank you for your love and support!**