



# **Longing for Paris: One Woman's Search for Joy, Beauty, and Adventure--Right Where She Is**

*Sarah Mae*

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For anyone who has ever daydreamed of another life . . .

Most days, you wouldn't trade what you have for the world. You love your husband and your kids, and you are grateful to God for your life. But there are days when you feel as though life is rolling over you in waves and you are just going through the motions. You find yourself aching for something more, something that is calling to the depths of who you are, maybe for something you can't even name.

For Sarah Mae, it was Paris, a place that is known for breathtaking beauty, inspiring art, and exquisite food. But as she searched her heart, she found there was more to her longings than she anticipated.

Join Sarah Mae in *Longing for Paris*, a soul-searching, light-filled journey for the woman who knows she can't uproot her life to discover herself and her longings, but who desperately wants to uncover them so she can get unstuck and choose a life that is filled with beauty, adventure, and deep joy . . . right where she is.

## Longing for Paris: One Woman's Search for Joy, Beauty, and Adventure--Right Where She Is Details

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Author : Sarah Mae

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# **From Reader Review Longing for Paris: One Woman's Search for Joy, Beauty, and Adventure--Right Where She Is for online ebook**

**Ginger says**

This book was milk, not meat. And like, really really watered down skim milk at that.

Let's start with the subtitle, shall we? This was not a woman's search for joy, beauty, or adventure. There was very very little searching, joy, beauty, or adventure in this book, at least none that I detected she found. It seemed to be a musing of these dreams deferred. Nothing at all wrong with that. That can be real life at times, but that was not at all what the title or description seemed to lay out as a thesis. It just seemed like it never moved on past the introduction phase. There were a lot of dreams, and not so much searching. And definitely very little finding. (And I won't even address how little scripture tells us to find and follow our dreams. It does talk a lot about dying to ourselves, but that seems to sell fewer books.)

Every now and again, she would touch on something... start to crest over a little hill that looked promising where she and her children would search out the best croissant in their tiny city, or listen to a recording of Beethoven in the car together. There was a sentence that read, "I want to fill my children with rich stories, testimonies of saints, good music, art, delicious food, and deep relationships." I wanted to scream, "Yes! Talk about that then!" And then, she would just go back to talking about laundry.

Now let's talk about the writing itself. This was yet another of the books in the "personality-driven" genre (see my review on *Where the River Runs* by Kelly Minter), that apparently sells books, but I literally went so far as to read the acknowledgments, trying to seek out who exactly was her editor. Sentences like: "Back to dreams for a moment." Just not necessary! You're the writer. Just go back to the topic if you want to, no need to tell us you're switching gears. And if you do, that likely means your thesis is so disjointed, it's a huge transition so you have to state where it is we're going back, because you've wandered far from your original topic. There was another sentence, "I would share a letter in this book, but it's special between the two of us" just should have been edited out. Oh, edit, edit, edit! Who are these editors, Tyndale?? I knew nothing of Sarah Mae, but it was clear to me a few chapters in that she was a blogger. A quick google search proved me right.

When discipleship becomes a business, I suppose this is the problem we are left with.

Mothering and laundry and schooling children are all wonderful, noble, important things, and worthy of books, but they just don't have much to do with longing for, or finding Paris. The practical advice on spending quality time with your children was great, it just didn't have anything to do with the thesis of this book.

This was just one of those books that was written about such a specific point in time -- I suppose if you too are a mother of three, blogger and speaker, wife to a woodworker, homeschooler living in a small town, then perhaps there would be insights here for you. And not to say that's not an audience. But I've read books by people who would fit this description that ALSO contained universal, timeless truths. This was not one of those.

Read Joe Rigney's *The Things of Earth* or Randy Alcorn's *Heaven* instead for some good, meaty discussion on the search for joy, beauty, and adventure. As long as there are any words of Augustine or Lewis or Elliot or Spurgeon or L'Engle left in the world that I haven't read, shame on me for spending a couple hours on this.

I've learned my lesson, and next time, I won't be caught finishing a forgettable book.

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## **Lisa says**

Ah, Paris. The word itself makes me sigh, just hearing it. And if I hadn't had the unforgettable opportunity to visit Paris in college while I studied for a semester in England, the longing might be unbearable.

Okay, so there's still a part of me that dreams of going back, this time with my love by my side. Isn't it tragic that my husband and I have been to Paris separately, in our youth, but never together? Tragic, I tell you.

There's something about Paris that hits on my longing for adventure and beauty and meaning. And it's not just Paris. It's Italy. It's travel to anywhere I've never been. It's my dream of writing a book. Of finding purpose in my work and life.

It's the kinds of things that get pushed down or set aside in motherhood, things I've been wondering about: Are they recoverable? Do they fit in my life anymore as a mom?

Not long ago, I read Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love* and I wanted to escape my day-to-day life--for real--to have those kinds of adventures and "find myself."

Thank God--I really do!--for the next book to come along: Sarah Mae's *Longing for Paris: One Woman's Search for Joy, Beauty and Adventure Right Where She Is*. Pause for a moment and take all of that title in.

In this book, Sarah Mae recognizes our longings and affirms them as gifts from a God who cares about our dreams because He cares about us.

This book could not have come at a more perfect time. (Disclaimer: I received an advance copy of the book from Tyndale House Publishers in exchange for my review.) I'm in the middle of a year focusing on the word "whole" and my kids will both be in school all day starting in the fall. I have this amazing opportunity to rediscover who I am after feeling like motherhood swallowed me these last 7 or so years.

*Longing For Paris* encourages moms at any stage of parenting (or any woman with unfulfilled longings) that we can have that beauty, adventure and meaning we're looking for, right in our own homes and towns. But it's not just empty platitudes Sarah Mae offers; it's practical ways to do this.

A few of my favorite take-aways from the book:

Adventure can be anything out of the ordinary: dessert before dinner, a French pastry from a local cafe, savoring your food. It's a call to seek out the "Paris" wherever you are.

Beauty is what you make of it. In the ordinary, everyday, we can begin to think that we're not beautiful or our lives are not beautiful. Taking a cue from the confidence of French women, who seldom worry about what other people think, Sarah encourages us to choose to see beauty. And one way to do this is to get rid of our frumpy clothes or anything we wear that doesn't make us feel beautiful. I love this suggestion because I know there are clothes in my closet that negatively affect my attitude about myself.

Simplicity adds to our contentment with what we have. It's weird how having more stuff doesn't make us any

happier, just more burdened. She told a story about having her kids choose 20 things to keep out of all their things. That sounded like a lot, but she realized how much more they actually had. Purging and simplifying our things helps us enjoy what we do have.

I took a lot of notes with this book, and I want to plaster some of the quotes from the book in front of me always so I can remember these words.

It's a beautiful call to live a full and rewarding life, even if it's not everything you hoped it would be.

If you love your life--most days--but wonder if there's still room in it for your dreams, then this is the book that will help you live with that tension, not just in a settling for less kind of way, but in a deeply satisfying way.

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### **Laura says**

This was one of those books, where there really wasn't anything wowing or amazing about it, yet I found that it was very relatable and helpful during this time in my life. Now, even though months have passed since last reading it, I can still remember the difference that it made in my life, the encouragement I felt from the words, and the fun I had while I read it. Maybe it's only a four star read, but I gave it five because it made a lasting impression on me.

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### **Becky Holland says**

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Life sometimes just overwhelms, you know? Sure, there are the days when things are going hunky dorky and you are happy. You wouldn't want to do anything about life differently. You are having a great hair day. The dogs are getting a long and have not eaten your shoestrings. You are caught up on your work. Things are just great.

But then there are days that you just want to curl up in a ball and cry. You feel like you are a robot going through the motions. You can feel in your deepest part of your tummy that something is missing. There is something else you should be doing. You can feel it, you can taste it, but you are not sure what it is.

Sarah Mae loved Paris. Paris is known for art, beauty and delicious food.

In Longing for Paris, Sarah Mae pens a tale that most women in the busy, materialistic society we live in can relate too. She keeps it light-hearted while at the same time makes it poignant and a book that you just can't help but want to read over and over, and make notes in.

Why? Sarah Mae realizes her Paris is actually in her own back yard.

Check it out.

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## **Amy says**

I was pleasantly surprised and encouraged by this book! I hope to go back through it slowly (I gobbled it up pretty quickly!), because there are many areas I'd like to highlight and think on a bit more. Sarah Mae's love of Jesus comes through strong and clear and I loved that about her writing. No guessing games or secular spins on spiritual things...straight forward and honest. I really, REALLY, love her emphasis on God's beauty, goodness, and how beauty originates with God. This was a great read and I felt like I could put myself in Sarah's shoes and that I've thought and wondered some of the very things she was thinking and wondering. Oh and I love she brought the Paris "spirit" into her everyday life and has made it a metaphor spurring her on!

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## **Jeannette says**

My low rating is not a reflection on this book or the author. It is due to my own negligence in not reading the synopsis or reviews before I dug in. If I had done so, I would have known this book is not for me.

This book is for you if you are one or all of the following:

- 1) bible-studying Christian female
- 2) stay-at-home mom
- 3) home-schooling mom

None of which I am, so again my fault for not knowing this ahead of time. This book is full of bible verses and scriptures, and a lot of preaching about a woman's life and experiences and where to go in the bible to get help in making your life better.

This book is NOT about Paris, although it is mentioned a few times. I love Paris so I was drawn to this book by its title. Not at all what I expected.

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## **Sarah says**

I got this book because I thought it was about a woman finding joy, beauty, and adventure in PARIS. It is a long life dream of mine to visit the city of lights. That is not what this book was about! BUT.... It was a great read. The author speaks to you about finding those things in your life now, right where you are. She's a Christian and everything she points out points back to Him. She is also a homeschooling mom who understands mommy burnout. Great read for those mommy's who are on their last ounce of sanity.

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## **Renata Shura says**

half a star If I could.

How does something this terribly written get published? I should have counted the number of times she used the word soul in the most cliché sense. I don't mind Bible quotes and deep soul searching, in fact I was looking for some enlightenment, but sorry...this isn't it. A string of questions without any thoughtful analysis does not make a compelling read. Perhaps this is because the author is what...in her 20s? How much living has she done? Big disappointment!

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### **Kathy says**

Overall a great book about finding your dream in the circumstance you are in. I think it would be great for young Moms particularly as she shares ideas she used with her own family when they were young.

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### **sierra says**

Such an awesome book!! I had trouble putting it down! It says for moms but honestly it can be for anyone who feels the dream of escaping their everyday life! If you feel unappreciated or stuck in your normal life then you need to pick up this book!!

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### **Renee K says**

As a Christian, a mom and a therapist, I have read a lot of parenting books and spiritually encouraging books focusing on the role of mom and wife. This is, so far, one of the best of them. Sarah Mae focuses on biblical teaching that both underly and can remedy the feeling of longing so many moms have between their actual life with kids verses the other longings of their hearts that don't seem to fit with the mom life. This is a book I am sure to refer to both for Sarah Mae's words and for some of the sources she quoted. This is NOT a parenting book of techniques. What I will say is it helps set our hearts so that we can parent. If you learn well from the experiences of others, you will like this book. If you are looking for a list of how-to's, you will probably not like this book.

While I do not share a dream of going to Paris (maybe New Zealand!), this book struck a chord for me in every aspect of life that I struggle with, from reconciling the dream and reality of motherhood with other dreams to my attitude towards housework. Too much of the time I am 15 steps ahead and not enjoying or focusing on the present. This book changed that.

Also, in the back, it has chapter discussion questions plus another set of personal reflection questions that will only enhance any insights/encouragement obtained.

One less favorable review used the phrase "when discipleship becomes a business".....would it be awesome to be part of a face-to-face group, discussing these issues? Yes, it would. However, life with kids doesn't always promote deep, uninterrupted conversations about longing and what to do with it. Sarah gave this a name and something to do with those thoughts and feelings, at least for me.

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### **Jolene Rose says**

I was encouraged by Sarah Mae's message to look for beauty, joy, and fun right there in the midst of our

everyday live. I enjoyed reading this book.

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**Katie W says**

This book hugely encouraged and reminded me to live wholeheartedly right where I am at now - to fully savor life.

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**Michelle Griswold says**

It took me FOREVER to finish this book and has led me to making a resolution to not finish books just for the sake of finishing them.

I kept waiting, longing perhaps for this book to reveal something. It felt like the author was always on the cusp of something but never really got there. The title left me with unmet expectations. It was flat.

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**Scarlett Pierson says**

I absolutely loved this book. I feel Sarah is my kindred spirit and that gives me hope that I am not alone in this place. Sometimes my longings bog me down and distract me from what's right in front of me which is a hard place to live.

If you are in a place of discontent and you keep saying to yourself, if I could runaway....., read this book.

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