

Not Just An Ordinary Girl

Young Savannah Cotter was so sure she would never be a Pastor's wife. Until one small decision of joining a small group and connecting at Church of the Highlands would change that all for her.

Coming out of a broken freshman year and the passing of her Paw Paw she picks herself out of the rut to move forward in a positive way.

She and her brother decide together that they are going to get plugged into a church, wanting and needing to be fed spiritually.

Highlands becomes her home.

Savannah is finally content with who she is. She is content in her major. She is content with her church and Tiger Eye friends. She is content with where God has placed her. She is content in her singleness. She is seeking the Lord full-heartedly, allowing Him to clean up her life and accepting what He chooses for her.

"I fervently sought the Lord then everything seemed ordinary yet extraordinary," said Savannah.

The whole experience is life-giving.

It is just an ordinary day of the fifth week of small group. Savannah walks through the red door and the smell of freshly hot Nestle greets her. Her leader approaches her and says, "There is someone I want you to meet." Startled by her approach, Savannah says, "Ok, who is it?"

Savannah's small group leader tells her that there is this guy named, Blake Cotter. Blake had been an Auburn student until he felt a calling on his life to go into ministry. At that point, he moved to Birmingham to attend Highlands College.

As her small group leader is just going on and on about this guy, Savannah thinks to herself, "I am so content right now, not looking for a guy. I don't do well with change, and I am finally happy." Nevertheless, she decides to give Blake a shot.

The next week Savannah and Blake tag along with the small group leader and her fiancé for dinner.

Walking into Olive Garden, Savannah feels uncomfortable, thinking this date is pointless. She has never had a real boyfriend before. She thinks, "I don't know what I am doing."

Sitting down at the booth in the far right corner, the two couples small talk. The waiter comes, they order, the food arrives and Savannah is ready to go. Blake, on the other hand, keeps striking up conversation with Savannah, slowly making it easier for her to enjoy herself.

Walking out of the restaurant, Blake says, "If you are ok with it, can I have your number so we can hang out again next week?"

Savannah shocked that he just asked right then and there, responds whimsically, "Yes, sure!" Savannah gives out her number and says, "Thank you for being polite and actually asking in person and making your intentions clear. I really appreciate that."

Blake just smiles and gives her a hug goodbye and says, "I will text you tomorrow."

The next day comes. Savannah wakes up for church. After the services, she gets a text. It's from Blake saying, "I hope the Lord spoke to you this morning at church, and I was thinking I will be able to drive down from Birmingham on Friday for a date if you are feeling up to it."

Savannah, feeling excited but also not handling this new-found thing very well, tries to come up with an excuse not to be able to go. She talks to her friends, and they push her to give him a chance. Savannah accepts the invitation for a date.

Friday rolls around. Savannah goes about her day, just not really caring or freaking out. While she gets ready, she talks to her Heavenly Father about the situation telling Him she wants him to have complete control over this life. She has given Him everything.

She sits still praying as she waits. There is a knock on the door. It's Blake. She closes up her prayer and opens the door. Savannah is in shock at what she sees. Around Blake is a white light, making him look like an angel. Savannah instantly changes her mind about Blake Cotter.

He is THE ONE. "This is the Lord telling me Blake Cotter is my life mate that is extraordinary."

The date is great. They enjoy each other's company, and after this date, there is another and another.

After just a couple dates, continuing to fervently pray and seek God first, Savannah realizes that it is becoming clearer that Blake is the one.

Savannah sits in her room, turns on her worship music, grabs her journal, and makes a list. She starts writing everything that Blake is. In black ink, she writes these words: he is active, he makes me laugh, my family loves him, I love his family, he has a servant's heart, he is a leader, he is a true man of God, he has pursued me in the right way and I see all his fruits of the spirit. He marks off everything the Lord has put in her heart in expectations for a future husband. Things have fallen into place easy for the two of them. The two have a conversation of what dating is.

Blake asks Savannah to be his girlfriend. In that very moment Savannah says to herself, "Everything has lined up so well that I just know it is a God thing this is not in any way ordinary but extraordinary."

The two date for the next 6 months. In this time period, Blake graduates from Highland College and Savannah graduates from Auburn. They get married.

From there on, the couple serve and obey the Lord where he places them. Blake becomes the college pastor in Auburn at Church of the Highlands, so the two start a life in Auburn.

In 2014, the two work building relationships with college students and ministering to them. Four years later in 2017, they are still at Highlands. College students love them, admire them, and confide in them. Together, they have figured out their purpose in life.

Savannah thinks back to that time period freshman year when she was so broken, so confused and now looks what the Lord has done with that and brought her through. She now gets to help college girls struggling.

"What I thought was something so ordinary way-back-when was actually extraordinary because God had his hand over me and in my life this entire time," said Savannah. "I get to live this extraordinary life because an even more extraordinary God chose me."

Even though God has given her all this and she is a role model for all of Auburn's girls, she still feels like she is the same shy Savannah before all of this. "God and Blake have to remind me that I need to own this role," says Savannah. "I don't always realize the weight I carry and that people are always watching."

Now older and wiser, Savannah just wants to stay genuine to herself, and in doing that, be genuine to all of the students she and Blake are speaking life into.

"I told myself when I was a younger that I would never be a pastor's wife, but look at me now," says Savannah. "I thought that, but now I never want to stop doing this. I could have never imagined this."

She and Blake work so well together because when the clapping starts and then the music comes on and the service is starting, they pray and worship.

Every time Blake walks on that stage, he gives Savannah credit. Like a husband should, he honors her.

"Guys! Welcome to ONE. We here at Church of the Highlands are so happy to have you here," says Pastor Blake. "At Church of the Highlands, we just love God and love people and love the local church. That's what we are all about. If this is your first time here at Highlands, I am Blake

and I get the honor to be your college pastor and serve alongside with my amazing and beautiful wife Savannah. Savannah, give everyone a wave.”

Blake has had a huge impact on Savannah in the way he leads her not only as a husband but also as a best friend. Savannah has had just as big of an impact on Blake.

“I knew from the moment I met Savannah,” says Pastor Blake. “When I saw her worshipping and serving, she had a heart seeking the Lord. That was so attractive to me. She possessed something different than any other girl I had met. She had God on her side and within her. I knew she was meant to be my wife.”

Savannah is not only a role model for the girls, but the way she carries herself in her marriage to Blake is a model that guys even notice.

“I feel like she is PB’s rock,” says Jarrett Scott. “Of course, he leans on Jesus more than her, but he still leans on her pretty hard. You can tell that by how he always talks about her.”

She lives her life every day, first seeking God and using him to lead her to where he wants her. A lot of how Savannah encourages other girls says a lot about who she is.

It's a Thursday night at ONE and Savannah is speaking on stage doing a Q and A with Blake. Students can ask the two of them any kinds of questions they want. Worship has just ended and everyone throughout the auditorium meets and greets then takes their seats.

First question: "What's your encouragement for other girls when single and waiting on the one God has for you?" asks a girl from the crowd.

Savannah takes a moment to gather her thoughts then responds with, "The pursuing role is all on the guy, so that takes the pressure off of us girls," she says. "Then first and foremost, you seek him. Girls, when we seek him full heartedly, everything falls into place. We become content with who we are. We become content with our life and singleness and the season he has placed us in. Then when God is ready, he will send someone into your life that is the one he has intended for you all along. He just wants you to be rooted first and the right guy won't distract you from Him, but every girl has a different story and that's the beauty of it."

Second question: "What's something you think all girls should know and remember?" asks another girl from the crowd.

"To see yourselves the way God sees you," she says. "To have that security in him and know you are beautifully and wonderfully made. That God has created you and you are his masterpiece. I strive to remember this for myself even."

Third question: "How do you handle stress?"

"It's hard, and I am still learning how to handle stress every day," she says. "I always try to remember why I am doing what I am doing. That I am called to this even if stress comes my way and try to handle stress in a God-honoring way. God gives us our strength and grace. We get stressed when we try to do things on our own without Him."

Fourth and last question: "What do you want to be remembered for?"

Savannah face changes to a look as if she has been caught off guard. "I have never been asked this question before," she says. Then her look on her face turns to delight. "A person who truly exemplifies Jesus and everything he stands for. All of his attributes, a faithful woman of God. Someone who can listen and talk and care for people's needs. He covers it all if I could just be remembered for an inkling of what he is."

Blake closes the service out after one final worship song and prays.

Savannah walks off stage hearing, "Well done, my good and faithful one."

"This is extraordinary," she thinks to herself.

God is still providing for Savannah, always giving her what she needs.

She is now a student in Highlands College taking the next steps that God has been pushing her to make. She and Blake are overjoyed as they are awaiting their first child.

Her shyness has turned into gracefulness as she is God-honoring in everything she does.

“What seemed to be just an ordinary life God has taken and made extraordinary,” said Savannah.

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