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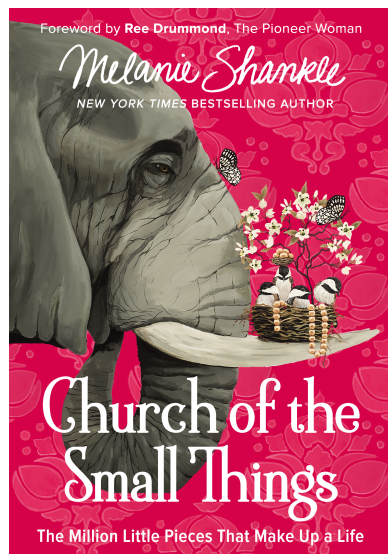
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"Melanie's previous books have covered motherhood, marriage, and friendship in beautiful detail. But Church of the Small Things is, I think, my favorite one of all. With her signature wit and wisdom, Melanie shows that life is about the small moments, the small memories, the small achievements. We all have them. And when we learn to embrace them, we will see that it really is the small things that make up this beautiful thing called life. As I was reading the manuscript for this book, I sent Melanie a text along the lines of 'My gosh, I love this book so much.' It's a good one, friends. I know you'll love it as much as I did."

—From Foreword by Ree Drummond, *The Pioneer Woman*

New York Times Bestselling Author and Big Mama Blogger Brings Soulful Reflections and Hilarious Anecdotes in New Book

Grand Rapids, Mich., Oct. 3, 2017 — As a culture, we think big. The big game. Big promotion. Big sale. Big question. These days, bigger is *always* better. But what if we're missing the point? What if in our constant pining and striving for big, we overlook all of the tiny, everyday miracles that truly make life matter?



In her new book **CHURCH OF THE SMALL THINGS: THE MILLION LITTLE PIECES THAT MAKE UP A LIFE** (Zondervan; ISBN: 978-0310348870; October 3, 2017; \$22.99), *New York Times* bestselling author and beloved [Big Mama](#) blogger Melanie Shankle celebrates the gut-busting hilarity and breathtaking beauty of all the little things.

Melanie dives into parenting, marriage, family, friendship, exercise, making a home, self-image and more, all with her signature blend of laugh-out-loud wit and thought-provoking reflection. Conversationally funny, Melanie offers advice and looks back on her life with a knowing shrug and intimate wink, educating and inspiring as she entertains. While it's a cohesive collection, **CHURCH OF THE SMALL THINGS** also reads like standalone essays, easily devoured together in a single day or savored one by one, over weeks.

Readers will explore:

Hilarious truths gained via hindsight

In sections dubbed "Things I Wish I'd Known," Melanie offers lists of advice on high school, beauty, marriage, God, fashion, parenting and everything in between. Real wisdom is wrapped

in belly laughs, as Melanie makes sharp observations about topics both serious and silly: “That bodysuit that snaps at the crotch that you insist on wearing with high-waisted jeans and a Brighton belt is a mistake.”

Aging

In the aptly titled chapter “Forty is Not the New Thirty,” Melanie describes a bathroom cabinet full of potions that promise to turn back time: “I have never used more products on my face than I do at this stage in life, and it all seems a little bit like trying to build a sand castle where the tide is rushing in.” With warmth and honesty, Melanie cops to bowing to societal pressures even as she celebrates what staring down her own mortality has given her: the realization that something as mundane as picking a kid up from swim practice is a joy, and that we have each been given so much.

Raising a teenager

Melanie writes about her daughter Caroline with love and levity. While acknowledging the unprecedented worry today’s parents carry, she also points to the serious issues threatening today’s teens. With gentle wisdom, she encourages us to help our kids by modeling compassion and grace.

Facing fears in order to become who we’re meant to be

“It’s easier to sit on your couch than to be out in the world where you’re vulnerable and open to being hurt or disappointed,” Melanie writes. She urges readers to embrace our unique callings and to chip away at them bravely, day by day.

The moments that mark a lasting marriage

In a chapter that begins with the story of how her husband accidentally shot himself in the head while hog hunting from a helicopter and lived to tell the tale, Melanie laughably recounts the small moments that characterize a lasting marriage. “It’s never knowing you could love someone so much one minute and then be yelling at them the next minute for something as dumb as not throwing away their Band-Aid wrappers.”

Lessons from youth sports

Melanie owns the soccer mom label and proves why the immersion in youth sports benefits not just the players, but the parents and the entire community. In a moving ode to Abby Wambach’s retirement, Melanie celebrates the beauty found when “you’ve *carpe diemed* the heck out of who and what God has created you to be.”

The everyday forces that shape everything

“Life is what is happening all around us while we’re waiting for the thing we hope will give us some sort of inner peace, contentment, or joy,” Melanie writes. “The problem is that when and if that thing happens, we usually enjoy it for all of three-and-a-half minutes before realizing nothing in us has fundamentally changed.” In both compelling stories and direct pleas for reflection, Melanie encourages us to slow down and think about what we truly want, what we’ve had in the past and what we have now.

CHURCH OF THE SMALL THINGS is instantly relatable because of Melanie’s willingness to be personal. As she tells her family’s stories, we see ourselves in the hopes and heartbreak—and we’re laughing all the way through. A collection that is equal parts profound, hilarious and

heartwarming, **CHURCH OF THE SMALL THINGS** speaks to women everywhere, just as we are.

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About Melanie Shankle

Melanie Shankle is the *New York Times* bestselling author behind *Nobody's Cuter Than You*, *The Antelope in the Living Room*, *Sparkly Green Earrings* and the forthcoming *Church of the Small Things: The Million Little Pieces That Make Up a Life*, out October 3, 2017. She first shared her hilarious observations and loving wisdom on [The Big Mama Blog](#), which helped define a new genre of blogging for women as it attracted a devoted audience now thousands deep. The Texas A&M graduate is also a guest blogger for high profile outlets and an in-demand speaker at events across the country. A proud Texan, self-professed Target junkie and lover of Anthropologie sales, Melanie calls San Antonio home with her husband Perry, teenage daughter Caroline and two wild dogs Piper and Mabel. For more information, please visit www.MelanieShankle.com.

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