



For Immediate Release

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## “I NEVER FELT LIKE I BELONGED”

### BONNIE GRAY’S MEMOIR, *SWEET LIKE JASMINE*, EXPLORES FAMILY SECRETS, CULTURAL IDENTITY & WHAT IT MEANS TO TRULY BELONG

*“I was following everyone else’s journey, but now I have found my place in this world.*

*I have found my true self. I am God’s beloved.”*



Eugene, Oregon (June 1, 2021) — Growing up as a Chinese American daughter of a mail-order bride and a busboy working in San Francisco’s Chinatown, Bonnie Gray never felt like she belonged. She spent her childhood at the corner of ‘East meets West,’ never feeling truly seen, loved or beautiful. Then, at 39, Bonnie found her birth certificate in an old file cabinet and set out to find her childhood home and her father who abandoned her.

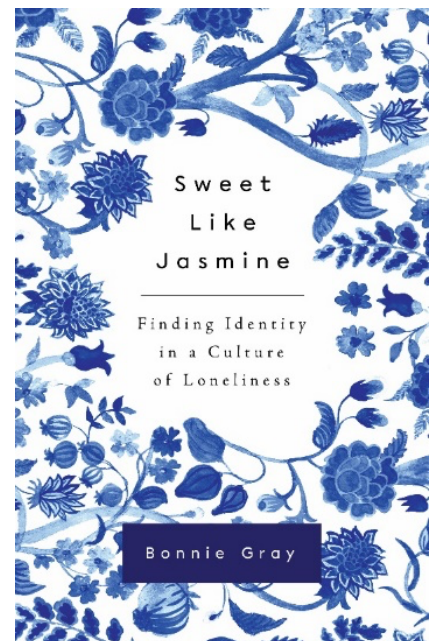
Bonnie Gray’s new memoir, ***Sweet Like Jasmine: Finding Identity in a Culture of Loneliness*** (October 2021, Harvest House), describes a complicated life at the intersection of cultural expectations and her identity as a woman of faith. Tapping insights from Chinese history and truths from Scripture, Bonnie reveals how God uses broken stories to create a beautiful mosaic of His love. “Well into my adult years I was hiding the things that made me feel different and broken,” Bonnie

recalls. “I was following everyone else’s journey, except my own.”

For the first time, Bonnie Gray writes her Asian American story of faith overcoming hardship and abandonment. Bonnie empowers readers to listen to their lives and treasure everything that happens—beautiful and broken—because flaws are meant to be celebrated, not erased.

“I gave up on myself. But God didn’t give up on me. He tenderly gathered all the broken fragments I tried to throw away,” Bonnie writes in ***Sweet Like Jasmine***. “He whispered, ‘What no one wants, I cherish. You are worth loving. You are My beloved.’”

***Sweet Like Jasmine*** allows readers to walk alongside Bonnie through the streets of Chinatown on a vibrant, cultural journey through the sights, sounds and stories of her childhood. Bonnie reveals how she uncovered family secrets (why her father abandoned her), found her true worth (in spite of what her mother told her), and witnessed brokenness made beautiful (finding her father and introducing him to her sons). As Bonnie brings her own secrets to light, she empowers readers to see God in their stories and celebrate their belovedness.



**Takeaways:**

- ❖ The Problem of Loneliness: Bonnie built a cookie-cutter life, hiding the wounds of “Chinese Bonnie” who lived in a dysfunctional home in poverty, so she could be accepted as cheerful “American Bonnie” who excelled on the school speech and debate team. She invites readers on a journey of self-discovery, one that leaves behind lonely people-pleasing, performance, and striving so they can rest in true belonging.
- ❖ The Revelation of Your True Worth: Bonnie’s sons had never heard Bonnie’s family stories until she embarked on the healing journey described in ***Sweet Like Jasmine***. When she began viewing her life’s brokenness as beautiful, rather than shameful, Bonnie could share her childhood stories with a sense of deep worthiness. She encourages readers to embrace their worth, bask in the light of God’s love, and reflect that love to others.
- ❖ The Joy of Celebrating Your True Self: Bonnie gradually learned to make peace with her difficult past, embracing the flaws which made her human and connected her to faith and to other people. Bonnie helps readers stop trying to look like everyone else and start celebrating their true selves.

Bonnie Gray is supporting the release of ***Sweet Like Jasmine*** with speaking events, Facebook and Instagram videos featuring authors and webinars. Harvest House has launched a pre-order campaign (as of June 1) alongside national marketing and publicity campaigns. Interviews with Bonnie are available now.

**Bonnie Gray** is the author of *Whispers of Rest*, *Finding Spiritual Whitespace* and *Sweet Like Jasmine*. An inspirational speaker and podcast host of *Breathe: The Stress Less Podcast*, Bonnie touches thousands of lives using storytelling, soul care, and prayer. Bonnie’s global following of readers come to her for inspiring Christian content in her authentic, unique voice. Her writing has been published and syndicated across a broad online audience. Bonnie lives in California with her husband and two sons. [www.thebonniegray.com](http://www.thebonniegray.com)

**Harvest House**, a Christian publishing company based in Eugene, Oregon, publishes more than 100 books per year and carries a strong backlist offering more than 1,300 titles. Over 140 million Harvest House books have been sold worldwide through diverse distribution channels, and additional millions have sold in over 75 different languages. [www.HarvestHousePublishers.com](http://www.HarvestHousePublishers.com)

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***Sweet Like Jasmine: Finding Identity in a Culture of Loneliness***

by Bonnie Gray

[www.thebonniegray.com](http://www.thebonniegray.com)

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# Bonnie Gray

Author of *Sweet Like Jasmine: Finding Identity in a Culture of Loneliness*

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**Bonnie Gray** is an author and inspirational speaker based in Northern California. Bonnie has developed a global following of readers who come to her for inspiring Christian living content written in her authentic, unique voice. Bonnie's moving, soulful stories challenge believers spiritually and connect deeply at a heart level.

Raised by a single mother in San Francisco's Chinatown, Bonnie worked alongside her mother to make ends meet. While speaking only Chinese at home, Bonnie became fluent in English at school, excelling in her studies. Bonnie's hard work earned scholarships for college, which she knew would enable her to provide for her mother and younger sister.

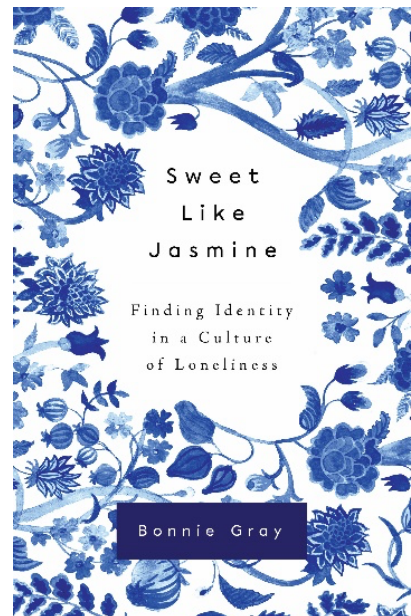
After graduating UCLA with a computer science and engineering degree, Bonnie worked as a high-tech professional in Silicon Valley for 15 years – as well as a missionary to Asia and a ministry entrepreneur in the U.S.

Bonnie's publishing career launched in 2014 with the release of her first book, *Finding Spiritual Whitespace: Awakening Your Soul to Rest*. Her next book, *Whispers of Rest: 40 Days of God's Love to Revitalize Your Soul*, released in 2017. Bonnie's writing is featured at her blog and in numerous Christian media outlets such as *Relevant Magazine* and *Christianity Today*.

Bonnie's new book, ***Sweet Like Jasmine: Finding Identity in a Culture of Loneliness*** (Harvest House, October 2021) is her most personal to date. A moving memoir about uncovering family secrets, finding true worth, and witnessing brokenness made beautiful, *Sweet Like Jasmine* celebrates what it really means to belong.

Growing up as an American-Chinese daughter of a mail-order bride and a busboy working in San Francisco's Chinatown, Bonnie never truly felt beautiful or beloved. But at 39, a long-forgotten birth certificate in an old file cabinet sparked a curiosity she couldn't ignore. Bonnie embarked on a journey that led to soul-shaking discoveries about her identity, human kindness, and what it means to be loved.

As an inspirational speaker and podcast host of *Breathe: The Stress Less Podcast*, Bonnie touches thousands of lives every year using storytelling, soul care, and prayer. She speaks passionately on topics of women's wellness, spiritual growth, prayer, meditation, healing, storytelling, creativity, and finding God in the daily grind of everyday life.



Bonnie Gray ([thebonniegray.com](http://thebonniegray.com)) lives in California with her husband Eric and their two sons. Readers connect with her on social media @thebonniegray.



## SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### BONNIE GRAY - AUTHOR OF *SWEET LIKE JASMINE*

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**Bonnie Gray** ([TheBonnieGray.com](http://TheBonnieGray.com)) is an author, speaker, blogger, and podcaster. Her new memoir, ***Sweet Like Jasmine: Finding Identity in a Culture of Loneliness***, releases Oct. 2021. She says of her latest book, “This is my story of God whispering, ‘What no one wants, I cherish. You are worth loving. You are My beloved.’”

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- Bonnie, your new book is a memoir that recounts a journey to make peace with your past. You returned to Chinatown (in San Francisco) to find your childhood home and the father who abandoned you – and what you discovered changed your life. *Why did you choose to revisit Chinatown when you had sworn never to return? How does exploring stories from the past help women flourish today?*
- In ***Sweet Like Jasmine***, you describe striving for a cookie-cutter life during childhood, a life that would fit in with all the “normal” people. Yet you also write: “Well into my adult years I was hiding the things that made me feel different & broken. I was following everyone else’s journey, except my own.” *Tell us more about the cookie-cutter life. How did you begin to follow your own journey?*
- You grew up Chinese American as the responsible older sibling who cared for her family. Yet inside you carried invisible wounds from living a dual life – you were “Chinese Bonnie” at home and “American Bonnie” at school – and you shared that struggle with no one. *How did you resolve the loneliness of living two different lives? Why is it so hard for women to talk about what goes on in our families?*
- ***Sweet Like Jasmine*** describes the beauty of Chinese culture, walking readers through bok-choy-fish markets and all the sights and sounds of Chinatown. But traditional Chinese culture also treasured sons more highly than daughters. *How did this cultural value affect you? How did God help you embrace your true worth?*
- Your memoir explores the range of struggles women encounter over a lifetime, such as depression, low self-worth, emotional trauma, and sexual assault. *How did you find beauty in your brokenness? What encouragement can you offer to women who feel terribly alone in their struggles?*
- Since neither of your parents were people of faith when they immigrated to the U.S., *how did you become a Christian? Who helped guide you into deeper faith?*
- In an early chapter of the book, you describe trying on one of the Chinese silk dresses embroidered by your seamstress mother. It was your first experience of what is called “Imposter Syndrome”. *Tell us what happened and what we can learn from it.*
- You conclude each chapter of ***Sweet Like Jasmine*** with a ‘Letter to My Younger Self’ plus three questions designed to help readers see God at work in their own life stories. *What inspired you to include those questions?*
- What are your thoughts on a godly response to the racial division and anti-Asian hate which has escalated recently? *How does your book promote unity, hope and peace?*
- ***Sweet Like Jasmine*** is your story of (finally) being seen and known. *What do you say to readers who are tempted to hide parts of themselves that make them feel unworthy?*