

"God's love to my



***Grey's Anatomy* star Sarah Drew opens her heart to *Simple Grace* about how the Lord helps her overcome stress and fear, and how she finds her true identity in Him**

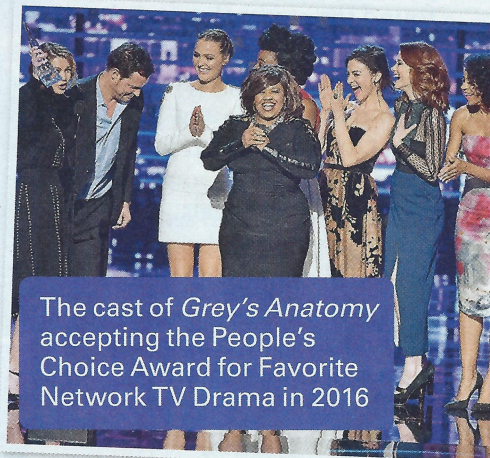
By Gina Roberts-Grey

Rarely does art so beautifully imitate life, but for Sarah Drew, playing Dr. April Kepner on ABC's long-running hit drama *Grey's Anatomy*, that's just the case. Her television persona is a woman of strong Christian faith who isn't afraid to demonstrate or discuss her love for Jesus. And off screen, the 36-year-old mother of two (with husband of 14 years, Peter Lanfer) has found direction, hope and joy through the same deeply rich relationship with Jesus.

is a salve soul!"

The daughter of a Presbyterian minister father and professor mother, Sarah grew up in an environment that welcomed and reveled in the Holy Spirit. "I'd wake up and watch my father enjoy quiet time in prayer as the day was dawning," she recalls fondly. But Sarah soon discovered her own relationship with God was more than just an example set by both of her parents. "Jesus became real for me when I attended FOCUS, Fellowship of Christians in Universities and Schools," she explains. Through the program, Sarah attended daily educational experiences and faith camps on Martha's Vineyard in junior high school. She affirms, "That's where my relationship with Jesus became rooted."

Here, Sarah describes how this solid foundation of faith carries over into all aspects of



The cast of *Grey's Anatomy* accepting the People's Choice Award for Favorite Network TV Drama in 2016

her life, comforts her in the face of despair, reveals true beauty and always reminds her of who she truly is.

HE ENVELOPS US IN HIS LOVE

In December of 2014, Sarah's daughter, Hannah, was born almost a month early and had to spend 11 days in the NICU fighting to grow strong enough to go home with her parents and older brother, Micah, then 2 years old. "That was one of the most frightening and emotionally difficult times of my life," Sarah shares. ➤

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➤ “I was so numb, raw and terrified that I couldn’t do anything...I couldn’t even pray.” One night, Sarah found the strength to send an email to her family, friends and congregation asking for help—and Sarah says God responded in incredible ways through His army of earth angels.

“We received the most beautiful and loving notes, deliveries of food and offers to babysit or lend a hand with household routines,” Sarah smiles. “We also received the warmest, most loving hug from Jesus via the thoughtful people who came to visit to physically hug and pray with us. Or my best friend who prayed for me over the phone while I could do nothing more than sit and sob. Those comforting actions were God’s hands, arms and voice enveloping me.”

HE DEFINES US

Sarah says one of the biggest ways her relationship with God factors into her life revolves around questions of who she really is in her heart. “The entertainment world wants to define a person—my product, appearance, thoughts, voice,



Sarah, her husband, Peter, and children, Micah and Hannah, on a family trip to Europe last year

message on social media or a cause I support are all put up for evisceration or worship,” Sarah explains. “I’ve struggled throughout my career to remember the true source of my identity is being a child of God, not my accomplishments or the opinions of others.”

To maintain perspective when she feels she is being tossed about in the wind, Sarah finds herself falling on her knees and asking for His help. “I constantly ask the Lord to remind me of the truth of who I am, and He always answers in Bible passages I’m inspired to read.” She

most often looks to the Psalms. “I especially like Psalm 139:14 which says, *I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.* That is incredibly powerful and reminds me that above all else, I belong to Jesus.”

HIS LOVE IS LIMITLESS

“It’s pure salve to my soul when I feel like God is with me,” says Sarah, who feels God’s love and hears His voice in simple ways.

She especially feels Him with her when she sees the beauty all around her, watches the sunset or looks up at the vast sky.

“I think, *Gosh, He didn’t have to paint the sky with those colors; they’re not a necessity for our planet to keep going.* But He chose to create a beautiful moment for those He loves.”

The tapestry of red and blond hues in her daughter’s hair also reminds Sarah of God. She says, “I look at her little head and remember that He knows how many hairs are on my head, and that the love I feel for my children is how He loves all of us.”

NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM HIM

Recent tragedies, both domestic and abroad, leave Sarah often fearing for the safety of her neighborhood, our country and the world. “Recently there was a shooting at the campus where my husband is a professor and I grieved for the widow of a man who lost his life there,” she shares. “I was reminded of how truly fragile life is.”

To sidestep what Sarah calls a “rabbit hole of darkness,” she

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looks to an email her father sent her during her first pregnancy. “I feared I wouldn’t be a good mother and for the type

of tragic world I was bringing a child into, and my dad replied with the teachings of Romans 8:38–39: *I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love.* Those words are endlessly comforting to me—that nothing, no matter how bad, separates us from God.” ✨

COURTESY OF SARAH DREW VIA INSTAGRAM