

# The Power of Desperation

Written by Bill Perkins

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In the movie, *Wild*, there is a scene where the lead character, Cheryl Strayed, played by Reese Witherspoon, enters a clothing boutique in Ashland, Oregon after hiking 700 miles along the Pacific Coast Trail, alone. After putting on some bright red lipstick, she turns and is greeted by a sales clerk.

## No Lipstick Will Help

“That color looks wonderful,” the clerk said with a smile. Then upon getting a whiff of Cheryl’s soiled and sour body, she said, “But dear, no lipstick will help if you don’t take care of your personal hygiene.”

The trail hardened hiker smiled and said, “Oh, I intend to take care of it.”

Personal Hygiene is something we take for granted. All we’ve got to do to get clean is hop in the shower, rub ourselves with soap, rinse, dry with a towel, apply some lotion and deodorant, and we’re squeaky clean and socially presentable.

## Unclean

Not so the woman whose story is told in Mark 5:24-34. This poor woman had suffered from a menstrual flow of blood for a dozen years. According to Leviticus 15 she was “unclean.” Her illness was so severe that she defiled anyone or anything that touched her clothing. To make matters worse, she had spent all her money on doctors and yet she had only gotten worse. This woman had an untreatable illness that rendered her physically and religiously unclean. And no bath on earth could wash away the smell.

## Her Only Hope

Since the doctors couldn’t help, her only hope was to touch the garment of Jesus when he passed by her on the street of Capernaum. This she had to do without detection as the crowd would not have tolerated her touching them. And so she squeezed through the masses, defiling everyone she touched, reached out and placed her fingertips on the robe of Jesus.

## A Reversal

In that moment a reversal of the natural order took place. Instead of defiling Jesus, she received healing—the bleeding stopped and her pain vanished.

Jesus at once realized that power had drained from him and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” (Mark 5:30).

The disciples said, “You see the people crowding against you . . . and yet you ask, ‘Who touched me?’”

## **Only One Was Healed**

All of those people touching Jesus, but only one was healed.

I'm impressed that it's not the cleanliness of a person's hands that reaches the heart of Jesus. But the desperation of the soul that reaches. It's not the strength of the hand that stretches out, but the expectation of the person who stretches it.