

"SARAH'S CHOICE" IN THE NEWS!

CHRISTIAN CINEMA

Rebecca St. James Made "Sarah's Choice"

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Rebecca St. James is a musician, songwriter, author, editor, and now actress. She started writing in the second year of her ministry, and in response to advice from Cal Thomas, diversified her career, which she finds helpful to staying fresh creatively. This year, she edited the book *Loved* and had her first lead role in a new film from PureFlix called [Sarah's Choice](#).

Can you talk about your role in [Sarah's Choice](#)?

Rebecca: I had a small role in *To the Wall*, as an Australian hitchhiker. Andrea Logan White and Stacey Keanan were both in [Hidden Secrets](#), and are also in [Sarah's Choice](#).

It was intimidating initially. I have actress friends and I was asking them for advice. One of my friends, who toured with me before, said the main thing I needed to bring was what I bring in my music and live performances, and that's authenticity. Authenticity in my relationship to God and who I am. She said it's the same in film. I need to bring my true self to that role, and that was one of the biggest things I remembered.

I had a big crying scene in [Sarah's Choice](#) that was filmed on day 2, and that was very intimidating. I had been tearing up all day, preparing for that scene. I did a few takes of it and nothing was happening. It wasn't flowing from the heart at all. I remembered something that an acting coach friend of mine said. He said, "Anything you feel something legitimately in your life, try and bring it into the scene."



What I was feeling was fear. I was afraid I was going to fail and I was scared. So I brought that into the scene. It was this emotional, kind of this "Come to Jesus" moment. I started out by praying and saying, "I don't know how to do this, I'm scared." Then I took it into my character, and said, "I don't know how to be a mother," and the tears came naturally. So God really used people in my life to speak into my life and help me. I had dabbled in films before but never had a real role like that before.

I'd been researching the role. The year before through a couple of friends, I got involved with a Crisis Pregnancy care center, and I'd felt that God was going to give me a pro-life song. When I went to this pro-life gala, I didn't even know I was going to be involved in a movie about that.

God put that message on my heart, He got me involved with this pro-life pregnancy center in L.A., and then literally just a few months later I auditioned for, and got, this role. God put this song on my heart, and now it's going to be in the film.

Your career is very diverse. You're kind of a multiple threat with your diversification.

Rebecca: I love to learn from people. I love to grow. If I admire someone, I want to have them speak into my life. I sat next to Cal Thomas at a banquet he was speaking at and I was singing at, so I asked him what advice he would give a young woman like me.

He said, "I've got one word for you: diversification. Be diverse in your ministry." I always remembered that. But beyond being intentional about it, and before God used him to speak into my life, God had opened up a lot of opportunities for me with the books. That happened probably two years into ministry, that I got to write a book.

I think that happens with creative types. We like to explore different forms of creativity because it keeps the other forms fresh. I've pulled off the road for the last couple of years in order to sow into other forms of creativity, and I find that I'm more inspired with the music.

*How did the book **Loved** come together?*

Rebecca: I'm the general editor, and there were five different women who pulled the stories together from actual encounters. I can't take credit for the writing, but I passionately believe in them and am able to get the word out about these wonderful stories. I know in my own life that the enemy has really tried to discourage me through the tactics of guilt and shame.



He tries to make me feel like I'm not enough. That I don't spend enough time with God, or I'm proud or selfish. He creates that cloud between us and God that sin does, and over and over in this book you see shame and guilt and the enemy using that in these women's lives.

But then you also see the redemption and freedom that God brings and the freedom and the hope. It's so encouraging. You see God's power to set free. The other thing I admire about how these writers approach these stories is that they're all not happy rosy endings like fairy tales.

In a few of the stories, the writer actually says, "And this person still struggles. It isn't an easy road. Even though she's received God's forgiveness, there are still temptations and trials and it's been a bumpy road."

I think that's good because I know I've bought into the tale that if I just had my life all together, things would be so different. If I could just figure it out and get my head around it. What an insult to God, because it's actually only He in me through which anything good can happen. I'm trying to humanly handle it and almost be a successful person, but without relying on God. I think God's saying, "No. Come to me. Realize that anything good comes through me. Come to me moment by moment. That's life."

I read this book and I get challenged that I've got to come to God moment by moment and let go of my own guilt and shame and ask for His forgiveness. We're all the prodigal.

How did the project come to you?

Rebecca: I've worked with a lot of publishing companies, and a lot of people there have genius ideas. I've got this song called "You Are Loved," and it's a real powerful part of my concert. I wrote about the prodigal, and it was written for a friend

of mine who had fallen away from God. He went through a really hard time in his life. We'd gone to a Christian school together growing up and he'd been a really good friend.

So I wrote this song that said no matter what you've done, no matter where you've been, you are loved by God. Hachette Publishing Company saw that theme in my ministry, this focus on forgiveness, because I have this song called "Forgive Me," and knew this was a passionate part of my heart. They thought it was a wonderful tie in with these stories of redemption and forgiveness. It's cool when you partner with people in ministry and they have ideas that work in with your own ministry. It's a powerful partnership.

What are some projects you have going now that you feel are pushing the edges of your creativity?

Rebecca: A big part of my passion with film is to be a Christian that's influencing content in film. I want to bring God's truth and His heart and values into film. So the next film I'm doing is shooting next month. It's a family film, largely about teenagers, and I have the female lead of the adults in the film.



It's not a Christian film, but it has Christian values in it. So I'm excited to be part of that. It's called *Rising Stars* and we're shooting in Texas. Dan Millican, who just did *The Imposter* with [Jeff Deyo](#) and [Kevin Max](#), is doing the film. He'd heard I was doing some acting and invited me to audition for it. I'm excited about that.

I'm also working on new music for a new album. We're also on the road still. We've done a couple of concerts in Australia and New Zealand a couple of months. I'm doing some shows in Virginia, Norway and Holland in upcoming months, then quite a few shows across America.

I do these mother-daughter events called "She Events," as well as some pro-life events centered around the movie and this book.

Is L.A. home base for you right now? What do you do to stay grounded?

Rebecca: It's amazing because I lived in San Diego for nine months before I moved to L.A. Even when I was living in San Diego, God was creating a place and friends for me in L.A. I was commuting up there for auditions and an acting class I was in. I probably have four dear, dear friends who are passionate Christians that I could go to the deepest places of accountability with.

Some former band members of mine are in town, as well as other friends. One girl I've known for probably ten years in Nashville is out here as well. I have a wonderful church community too. I actually found a church before I moved up. Having the word spoken every week and participating in worship times is awesome.

I also keep in touch with my family. We're super-close. When I do shows, my family is involved in my shows. It's been nearly a year that I've been gone from Nashville, but it doesn't seem like it's been too long.

Do you have any writing projects you're working on?

Rebecca: I'm about to start a new one about dating and courtship. It's relational-focused and talks about honoring God in the midst of that. I'm also working on a new album, like I said.

Do you find it difficult to juggle everything?

Rebecca: I have in the past. If I'm not on the road as much, I find it easier. If I'm doing tons of shows and juggling books and albums, that just kills me. It's way too much, because the road does take a lot out of a person. But I'm not on the road right now. I've intentionally come off the road to be in one spot as much as I can and that helps with the rest of it.

The hallmark of your ministry has been purity for young women. Helping to educate them and encourage them. As you've grown older, do you find yourself still passionate about that, or is your focus changing and evolving?



Rebecca: It's still a big part of my ministry, but it's not the main focus. I actually think what God is doing right now with my ministry is making the pro-life message a big part of it. After doing the film *Sarah's Choice*, I now actually show clips of the film in my show, incorporating it into a song I do live that I wrote for the film.

This book *Loved* has real themes of the pro-life message too because many of the women here struggle with sex outside of marriage, and several have had abortions as well. When we do events toward the end of the year, fundraising events for the Crisis Pregnancy Centers, the book and film will tie into those. I think that's sort of the next section of my purity message. I think they go hand in hand. I've done events for the Crisis Pregnancy Centers before. This is like another level of that message, and a little bit different focus.

In the introduction to the book, you mention your life coach. How have you seen that affect your life and ministry?

Rebecca: It's been massive. I really believe in mentoring. I really do. I've had a mentor intentionally for about five or six years. My life coach is like a mentor, spiritual director, counselor. He's very pastoral and a vehicle of God. It's not so much like a counseling session as it is me sharing what's going on in my life and asking if the Holy Spirit would give him any insight into them, especially as it concerns decisions I'm making.

It's been really profound for me. There was a time in my life when I'd see and talk with him very regularly. Now I talk with him probably every few months. He'd ask what he could pray for, and then we'd go to God together, and he'd say, "We're here to see what God has to say for your life."

It's been revolutionary for me. I grew up in the spotlight and started singing and performing when I was 12 or 13, and it created a performance mentality, even in my relationship with God. So my perception of God got pretty off then, and he helped me correct that and embrace my own God-given identity as a young woman. It's been a real healing process.