

## Meet Author Courtney DeFeo

### 1. Please tell us about your background, where you grew up, what you did before becoming an author?

I'm a native of Atlanta and lived there until just two years ago when my husband's job required that we move to Orlando. Now, my two daughters believe that we live at The Magic Kingdom. I'm a third generation Auburn University Tiger, graduating in 1998 with a degree in Public Relations. I met my husband doing PR for top PR firm in Atlanta and left there after three years to work on the popular Eat Mor Chikin® campaign for Chick-fil-A Inc. I happily stayed there for almost 6 years before quitting to stay home as a mom. While spending the tireless yet thrilling baby years at home, I did project work for Chick-fil-A Inc. and my church, North Point Ministries. As a highly creative person, I recommend that one dump their brain and ideas from time to time. I have a passion for innovation, creativity, fun, encouragement, moms, children and Jesus. I love to light up a room and share God's love. I launched my company Lil Light O' Mine (blog and ABC Scripture Cards) in October 2011.

### 2. What career accomplishment brings you the most satisfaction?

- Auburn University – Cater Society (Top 10 Most Influential Senior Women on Campus): This particular accolade meant a lot to me because it honored the years I was at Auburn and the effort I made to make a difference on campus in the lives of others. *Influence* is much more important to me over *success*. I want to change hearts versus be known.
- ✓ • Cow Appreciation Day – I helped start a crazy idea that took many meetings and hurdles at Chick-fil-A, Inc. Now, 1,000,000 people each year get free meals at Chick-fil-A and have a fun memory with their families.
- Light 'Em Up – It started as a quest to get my girls focused on GIVING over GETTING during the holidays. One simple blog post went viral and over 70,000 people pinned it on Pinterest and the program took off. It is chapter 12 in the book.
- ABC Scripture Cards: This product was the first to launch for Lil Light O' Mine. Products designed for the mom's eye but the child's heart. A product to make scripture memory easy and stay out in the home so moms would not forget to teach as they go about their day. The hunch was right and moms all over the country (world?) loved them. Thousands bought them online and they were featured on the View in the Spring 2012. Now, Magnolia Lane manufactures them and puts them in homes and gift stores across the country.
- Corporate Giving – One of the greatest delight of starting a small business has been to see how my own corporate giving can impact the lives of others. Early on, I wanted to impact the epidemic of orphans and partnered with the Front Lines Feeding Program with International Voice of the Orphan – where 100% of the money sent goes to feed children. Thousands have been sent from the sales of scripture cards – therefore thousands of children have gone to bed with a meal in their tummy. Thankful to play a small part in loving all God's children.

### 3. What's your family life like?

My husband and I speak the same language – he's a Marketing professional too. So, it makes for a fun marriage when we both love the Lord, each other, our kids and enjoy our profession. He's extremely gifted and even more patient with all my wild ideas. I have two girls (Ella 7 and Larson 4).



My most spirited child came second, making me extremely humble and desperate for God. We like to sing, dance and give all we have for God. We make mistakes and love big. We open our hearts and doors for many. My home growing up lived out the principles in my book – we love big. God isn't scary, he is good. If we follow a life that honors him, it is FUN!

I have been known as the “spark” or “light” as a child or the “fun” in any party or room for most my life. So, Lil Light O' Mine was an easy name for my company. And, “In This House, We Will Giggle was a natural extension of that.

4. *Who do you consider your spiritual mentors?*

David Salyers, VP Marketing at Chick-fil-A, Andy Stanley, North Point Ministries, Jeff Henderson, North Point Ministries and directly mentored by Regina Williams (Titus 2 Mentoring) and Linda Werner (Legacy Principles). As an author, been mentored by Lysa TerKeurst and the ladies of Proverbs 31.

5. *As a parent, what's your deepest concern for your daughters?*

That they will get caught up in the fear of consequences of faith – versus wrapped up in the overwhelming love of God and his grace. That they will miss the joy of following Him. That they will be so worried about doing the right thing, that they won't just stop striving and just BE – the daughter he made and feel the beauty of being used by Him.

6. *What inspired you to write **In This House, We Will Giggle**?*

- First... PASSION: I have a deep passion for my family, my faith and encouraging other mothers. When the opportunity came my way to write this book, it was a YES because it beautifully merged those passions. My heart's desire is to encourage other moms as we journey together to bring faith to life in our homes... and in a fun way of course!
- The second inspiration is...INNOVATION: Because of my background in marketing for some of the top brands in the country, I was paid to influence customers to fall in love with those brands through innovative ideas. Since staying at home with our girls, I did not want to waste my God-given talents. I'm now using that same approach but with a much more rewarding goal in mind – influence families to fall in love with Jesus through innovation.
- My third inspiration is...PRACTICALITY: *In This House, We Will Giggle* provides practical thoughts and ideas to today's busy mom. Moms like me who have a huge heart for their faith and their family. It takes critical virtues and packages them in a way that is relevant to a parent's home and environment. One virtue per chapter - and one virtue per month. That is something even I can do! It's your best recipe book for virtues.

7. *Do you have a favorite chapter in your book? If so, which one and why?*

Generosity is the one that pops up immediately for our family. Two years ago I wanted to see a shift in my girls' focus around Christmas. I could tell them all day it's about “GIVING” over “GETTING” ... OR I could show them. So, we started a program called Light 'Em Up and I got their hands in the game. They were able to serve their community and give and they caught the bug. They loved it. We've invited others to join us each year – and thousands of families all over the country have joined us. From leaving treats and a huge THANK YOU poster for our garbage men, to sneaking over and leaving a sidewalk chalk message for a neighbor, to ambushing our downtown area with candy

canes tagged with simple notes of "Merry Christmas from our family." The girls have loved this new tradition. And best of all it's a memory that I can point to in their life. This is how Jesus would love others. He would put others first. He would give first. He would look for ways to shed his light in the community where he lives.

8. *What are your hopes and dreams for book?*

My hope is that moms are empowered, equipped and encouraged. I believe all moms share the desire to bring faith to life in their home – they just get frozen with fear or insecurity. My dream is that this book will provide just enough inspiration and innovation to create action. My dream is that guilt and comparison are left at the door and that each mom will embrace the individual makeup God beautifully crafted in them. My dream is that children all over the country will know the goodness that comes with God's love from just one thing a parent learns from this book.

9. *What is unique about **This House, We Will Giggle**?*

I believe the format is most unique about this book. I'm a mom that wants to read mounds of books, but the reality is I don't have time. There are these tiny people that want dinner and want to build legos and sit in my lap. So, I set this book up with today's mom in mind. The framework is simple: each chapter features one virtue that you can focus on. One virtue per month. I even suggest which month to do what chapter if you like more structure – but really anytime of the year will work for this material.

Within each chapter, you'll get some basic insight and biblical teaching on the virtue... then several tools for your family including a memory verse, the virtue definition, catch phrases and discussion questions.

Then... At the end, each chapter includes a family fun idea. My experience has been when children LIVE OUT THE virtue (vs hear about it in a boring lecture) – it sinks deep in their heart. The goodness of Christ comes to life and they want more. The activity is ..what they NEED ...in a format that they WANT.

There are many books out there on virtues and just as many books on family fun but few, if any, are available on the combination – virtues through fun. I am really excited about this format for intentional parents like me... parent that want their kids to actually remember a joyful home.

10. *Are there plans in your future for more books?*

Yes, there are several ideas in the works. The leading one right now is a generational book of advice starting from a book my mother gave me. It is tips, truths and tidbits that have guided me through ups and downs. Some based on scripture and some of her sweet encouraging sayings. They are truths I'd like to pass down to my mother. In sharing them on social media with my friends, I am finding that so many young moms do not have mentors and moms like mine and they could benefit from this type of nurturing and also add to and pass down to their daughters.