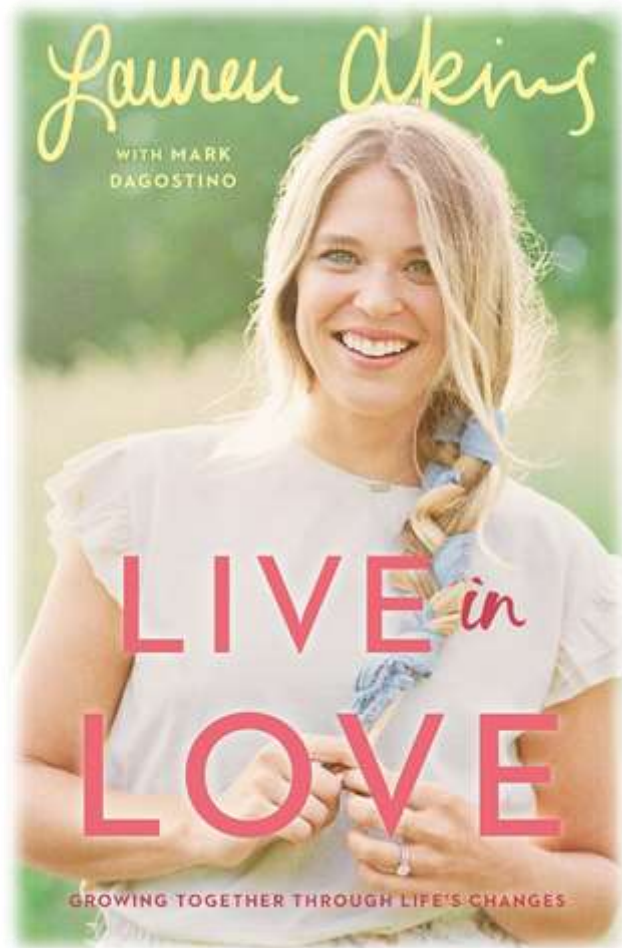


## Allison's Book Corner November 2020

### *Live In Love: Growing Together through Life's Changes*

by Lauren Akins



We can all agree that we are living in strange times. Many of us are stressed and living with a high level of anxiety. These circumstances have led many of us back to our faith. By that I mean we have returned to our church, our synagogue or whatever spiritual path you may be on at this time. I don't mean to insult anyone who never left their faith, or who has continually been on their personal spiritual path. That's great. But many things lead one to drift from that part of life, or to be distracted by our very busy daily lives. That has certainly been my experience.

This memoir by Lauren Akins is a BLESSING. I promise that, if you read this book and open your heart to the story so honestly told within its pages, you will be blessed in your own life. How can I assure you of this? Because it has happened to me.

I'll save you the trouble and acknowledge that yes, this book could have been a little shorter. The author is extremely detailed and is repetitious several times early in the book. However, I found her absolute honesty to be refreshing. Lauren Akins is married to country music star Thomas Rhett Akins. Whatever assumption you have just made, please throw it out the window. This is not a someone-who-done-somebody-wrong story, or a tale about being on the road with groupies.

Perhaps I should tell you that what made me so interested in this memoir is that Lauren and her husband had adopted a baby from Uganda. I have a friend

who went through a lot to adopt internationally, so I knew there would be a story behind the adoption.

The reader gets much more than the tale of adoption. Lauren takes us from her childhood, to the awkward teen years when she met her husband, to college and young married life, and then, boom: adoption and a surprise pregnancy at the same time. I especially enjoyed the part about college. It was fun to read about Thomas Rhett coming to visit and sleeping on her dorm room floor. How many of us can relate to that during our pre-covid time on campus?

What makes this book so special is that the reader can feel the author's heart on every page, in every line. Sometimes the best books are not written by famous people nor in the most eloquent language. Lauren Akins happily pours out her heart, and a soul connection with the reader forms.

For example, early in the marriage, the young couple struggles as so many couples do. However, *this* couple is dealing with the extra weight of Thomas Rhett always being on the road for his career. In Lauren's words: "It's not that I'm not happy for you, I'd tell him. It's that I feel like I'm dying. I feel like my soul is empty." Lauren admits "My words surprised even me. I came to the realization that I felt like I didn't have a real purpose in life. Like I had become an accessory to Thomas Rhett's life. And I was pretty sure that wasn't who I was meant to be. And that hurt."

For anyone who is or has been married, Lauren's feelings are not unique; your spouse does not have to be a famous country singer to be able to relate. However, this book is not a marriage manual. It is written in such a way as to be many things to many different people. It is a fact that my personal life improved after reading this book.

I also want to offer a shout-out to Thomas Rhett Akins. I appreciate all genres of music, including some country. If you really give his music a listen, you'll realize it is not all in the country category. Many of his songs are crossover material, and I get the feeling that one day soon he will have a big music hit on the Pop Charts. He is a gifted singer/songwriter. That's not my opinion only: Thomas Rhett Akins was just recognized by the Academy of Country Music with the Entertainer of the Year Award for 2020.

Reading a book can lead to so many wonderful things for the reader. Expect the unexpected and read *Live in Love*.