

*Living Loved*  
*365 Daily Devotions*



WHOLLY LOVED



*Drawing Closer*  
*30 Daily Devotions for Deeper Intimacy With Christ*

Wholly Loved Ministries



WHOLLY LOVED

Living Loved: 30 Daily Devotions  
Wholly Loved Ministries, Omaha, NE.  
For more information, visit [WhollyLoved.com](http://WhollyLoved.com)

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Published in the United States of America.

It's one thing to know, intellectually, that God loves you. It's another to truly *live* loved; to let God's love define you and impact your actions and reactions.

Christ created us to live in freedom and to base our self-worth not on other people's opinions but instead, on His. To give Him the final say and to filter every struggle, setback, hurt, celebration, and disappointment, through His lens of love and grace.

When we allow God's love to soak into our deepest, darkest, most wounded and fearful places, we learn to rest in who are in Christ; to *live* wholly loved.

That's where true and abundant life begins—in Him. The closer we grow to Christ, the more time we spend with Him and reading His Word, the Bible, the more we come alive.

That is the purpose of this devotional. Every morning, as you carve out time to spend with Jesus, our hope is that you'll gain a deeper understanding of His love and grace and find yourself, afresh, in Him.

Before you begin each devotion, we encourage you to read the chapter the focus verse is taken from. For example, if the opening devotion is from John 3:16, take time to read John chapter three. Journal your thoughts, and then read ours. This way, you'll be relying first and foremost on God's Words, spoken directly to you. Our thoughts will merely offer a different perspective or perhaps thought-provoking visual that, hopefully, will encourage a deeper look at the truth God stirs within you.

Chosen Despite Our Failings  
By Jennifer Slattery

“For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.” Ephesians 1:4

There are ample reasons I should be disqualified for Christian service. There are days I feel much more like a liability, the weakest member on God’s team, rather than the chosen, radiant daughter Scripture says I am.

Because honestly, my tiara’s chipped, my hair’s frizzed, and somewhere between the elegant carriage and the ball, I’ve lost my glittery slipper. What a sight I must make!

Some might give me grace, perhaps offer me a comb and un-scuffed shoes, but fancy clothes can’t fix my real ugliness—the pride and selfishness lurking in my heart. Only Jesus can clean up that kind of mess, and He’s working on it! I know this, but often my growth seems so slow going.

On those days when sin seems to be winning and my ugliness is revealed like a parade banner, I want to say, “See, Jesus? Don’t you see who I really am? All the ways I fall short, again and again, of the holy and blameless child You long for me to be?” There are times I long to ask, “Do you regret choosing me now, Lord?”

But Ephesians 1:4 tells me I was selected before I took my first breath, before I committed my first sin, or my twenty-first. And God knew it all, because He knows all. He chose me, knowing exactly what that would mean and what it would cost. More than that, He knows where He longs to take me, and His power is sufficient for my transformation.

He’s got the road all mapped out and my destination is sure. Though my sin repels Him, it also compelled Him—to die, that one day I might be free, truly holy and blameless in His sight.

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Moving Past Fear of Rejection  
By Christa Cottam

“He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.” Isaiah 53:3

We were best friends, and then we weren't. My friend's mom decided her daughter needed more popular friends. I see now that the situation was about serious issues with my friend's mom, not me. But my middle-school heart felt rejected.

That pain cut deep. This was personal. I was rejected because of who I was—or rather, who I wasn't. My young mind concluded *I wasn't good enough*.

I felt *worthless*.

From then on, I was different. In fear of future rejections, I guarded my heart in relationships and avoided situations where I might be told, “You didn't make the team”, or “You're not right for the job.” I strived to prove my worth through hard work, believing, if useful, I wouldn't be discarded. I elevated myself to positions of authority so I couldn't be eliminated.

Jesus knew deep rejection. Isaiah 53 says, “He was despised and rejected.” Yet, He never wavered—He knew *who* and *whose* He was.

After turning to Jesus for salvation, I saw that my fear of rejection stemmed from allowing the world to define me. I was horribly afraid to be rejected because it forced me to come face to face with my deepest fear ... that I lacked value.

I overcame that fear by recognizing that my identity and worth are found in Christ, and that I'm God's created daughter. Nothing God creates is worthless. And should I ever forget, His love letter to me—the Bible—reminds me.



What causes you to fear rejection? Bring it into the healing light of God's truth today, and always remember that you are Wholly Loved.

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Christa Cottam is a spunky speaker and women's ministry and worship leader with a fire in her belly to tell others about Jesus. Visit her online at [WhollyLoved.com](http://WhollyLoved.com) and find out more by reading her bio at the end of the book.

The Apology Letter  
By Tara Johnson

“For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.” ~James 3:16

I heard the screaming. The wailing. Audible proof my girls had engaged in another battle of wills as they cleaned their room. I braced myself for the onslaught of “she said”s and “it’s all her faults”s as I stared at their glaring faces.

Since they both refused to budge their stubborn hearts, I knew I’d have to intervene. What would it be this time? Time-out? Taking away holidays until they learned to get along?

“I want you both to sit down, open your Bibles, and write the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 13 while I figure out what to do. No talking, just write.” You know 1 Corinthians 13? It’s the whole “Love is patient, love is kind ...” passage. I then walked downstairs, grabbed chocolate, and searched for a solution. My Mommy reserves were tapped dry.

After fifteen minutes, I heard soft giggles. Entering the room, I saw my oldest daughter slide a note to her sister. Didn’t they realize this was serious, soul-searching time?

I snatched the note away. It read, “Sorry. I was acting like a jerk. Please forgive me. Love you.” Her sister’s response was scrawled on the back. “Sorry I said you were a liar. Can you forgive me?”

I looked up. “I don’t understand. I thought I was going to have to knock your heads together.”

Bethany laughed. “Nah, God did that for you.”

Fighting is usually the result of two people wanting their own way. Human wisdom breeds anger, frustration, and jealousy ... actions

brought about by skewed motives. Even Moms with good intentions often fall into the trap of begging, threatening, and coercing, but none of that is a match for the simple, convicting power of God's Word.

God's wisdom and Word shine love, gentleness, and order into every situation.

May God help us speak calm into the most troubling situations. May we seek after His wisdom and not our own. May He fill our hearts with His love.

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When Your Faith Doesn't Feel Strong Enough  
By Dawn Tolbert

“Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, ‘I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!’” Mark 9:24

At work, I want to project the image of a calm, confident professional who has it all together. Sometimes, though, I catch myself trying to carry that persona into my spiritual life. I can become so focused on my to-do list and managing everything perfectly that I’m tempted to try to hide my struggles when I pray.

I find great encouragement in the father’s cry in today’s verse. An evil spirit controlled his son, and he was desperate for help. The father’s heart broke to see his child in torment. He needed a miracle. He’d asked the disciples, but they failed. So, he turned to Jesus.

He asked Jesus to help if He could. Jesus zeroed in on the “if” and heard the truth behind it. The man’s despair had brought doubt. Jesus told him, “Everything is possible for one who believes” (verse 23). The question the father needed to answer was “Do you believe?”

His response was immediate: “I do believe.” But then he added, “help me overcome my unbelief.”

The father’s honesty should encourage us. Jesus wants us to have faith and trust Him, but all the work doesn’t rest on our shoulders. We don’t have to put on perfect faces when we come to Jesus. We don’t have to pretend to have it all together.

We can be honest and tell Jesus when we struggle with believing fully. When we pray for increased faith, Jesus hears our words—and the heart behind them—and give us the strength we need. He’ll help us overcome our unbelief.

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What a Conceited Eight-year-old Taught Me about Humility  
By Kristen Terrette

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves ...” Philippians 2:3

We used to jokingly call my son the most conceited eight-year-old we know. He was very confident and sure of his athletic skills, particularly in regard to basketball. A pick-up game in the driveway never failed to reveal his high opinion of himself.

But as his knowledge and understanding of team sports has progressed, we’ve watched him develop into a leader. Now, he looks for ways to help his teammates score and is the first to congratulate those who execute a good play. Slowly, but steadily, my son is grasping the virtue of humility.

Paul urges this same type unity for God’s team, His people, and commands us to “do nothing” out of vain motives. Living a life of humility is opposite of one that is full of selfishness and pride. Loving and valuing others so much we assist them in getting ahead goes against our self-driven and competitive culture.

Yet, as we honor others more than ourselves, unity results. My son unites his team every time he passes the ball to someone in a prime scoring position and whenever he pats the back of a player who scores or misses.

In Christ, we have a perfect example of humility. He humbled Himself to die on the cross for us—women who are tragically flawed. Knowing this should cause us to extend the same humble attitude to others. This understanding can, and should, motivate us to fight against the culture and live with a humble mindset.

Use Christ’s selfless example to provoke you to live humbly every day. Look for ways to establish unity among God’s people by putting others first and celebrating their accomplishments.

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God is Holding Us  
By Jennifer Slattery

“Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever.” Psalm  
136:26

I can be a moody Christian. Many times I resemble a fit-throwing toddler. If my relationship with Christ depended on my faithfulness or my feelings, I'd be in big trouble.

There've been times when I've been so angry, discontent, or entitled, I didn't even want to pray.

I expected God to get angry. To chastise me and turn His back. That's what I deserved. But that's not how He responded. Instead, He gently tugged at my heart, calling me back to Him. It was in those tender moments that I saw His heart most clearly, and came to realize how securely mine rested in His.

So often, when we're in the middle of a struggle, all we can see is the pain. We cry out to God, begging Him to rescue us. We feel alone, frightened, and abandoned. But our anger and pain can never diminish God's love. It will never die or weaken, regardless of how we behave or feel.

When we're hurt and angry, we may be tempted to pull away, thinking God is angry with us as well. But I believe, during those moments He longs most to draw us close. The next time you feel swallowed up by life and as if you're all alone, remember you never are and never will be, because in Christ, you are held secure.

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What Wisdom is Not  
By Tara Johnson

"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere." James 3:17

Most of us want to make wise choices and are desperate to break the cycle of mistakes and consequences that mark our journey.

So, we buy self-help books and binge watch Dr. Phil. We gobble up relationship advice found in magazines and read blogs about changing our lives. Some will search the world over for wisdom by consulting infamous leaders like Ghandi or the Dalai Lama, and it still slips through their fingers like sand.

But true wisdom can only come from God.

Many can describe what wisdom is, but it's also helpful to state what it's not.

First, it isn't knowledge. We've all known someone super-educated. Their multiple degrees could fill up an entire wall, yet their lifestyle, attitude, and choices scream foolishness.

Second, wisdom does not partner with sin. A huge key to unlocking God's wisdom is to guard our heart. What we see and hear is what goes in. And what goes in is what will come out.

I'm rejecting wisdom when I dwell on unwholesome images, use vulgar language, watch shows or listen to music full of innuendo. I'm rejecting wisdom when I live to please people instead of God. Every time I'm unteachable, every time I seek my worth in anything other than Christ, I'm pushing wisdom away.

Third, wisdom isn't automatic. Just because you've walked a tough road doesn't mean you're wise. True wisdom can only be found by asking God for it, and then pursuing Him day in and day out.

Wisdom is not found in the world, but in seeking the heart of God.

Ask Him for wisdom, to open you mind and heart to His truth. May  
He help you guard your heart so you might know Him more.

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Such a Time as This  
Jana Kelley

“And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?” Esther 4:14b

Even as daughters of God, we can struggle to simply keep our heads above water. Take an extra risk? Well, that’s out of the question.

Queen Esther, a Jewish woman exiled to Persia, might have felt this way, too. Yes, she was queen, but she also hid her identity. She was also part of the king’s harem—a foreign king who loved to party.

Not so ideal and romantic after all, right? I think she may have sometimes questioned the circumstances of her life.

Yet God was working out a plan to save His chosen people. Esther may never have imagined she would play a role in such a great cause. But her uncle, Mordecai, saw her potential.

When he learned the Jews were in danger, he challenged Esther to stand up and be brave. “Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

Esther: the orphan, the exile, a member of a harem.

But she was indeed part of God’s plan.

Read the book of Esther to see how God saved His chosen people. (Hint: it has something to do with a case of insomnia.)

God is still working today. While most of us are not queens or wives of great rulers, we are uniquely gifted and intentionally placed. Each of us should consider our roles, locations, and situations. What might God do through us if we seek His purpose for our lives? Perhaps God has placed you in your situation “for such a time as this.” Are you willing to take a risk for Him?

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Forgiven and Free: Living in the Freedom of Grace  
By Christa Cottam

“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:2

There was no way I was going to forgive her. She didn't deserve forgiveness—she deserved to pay for what she'd done.

The thing is, “she” was me, and that's exactly how I felt for years. I had no problem forgiving others, just myself.

Scripture tells us, in Christ, God has removed all our sins. But I chose to believe that didn't apply to me—that I needed to serve a sentence of shame before I could be exonerated from my guilt. Further, I was certain my sins not only rendered me unworthy to receive God's forgiveness but also His love.

Have you found that often the most difficult person to forgive is yourself? That was definitely the case for me, until God literally spoke into my situation.

I attended a worship service where I heard the story of a man's miraculous healing. What struck me, though, wasn't his physical healing, but the freedom he experienced from feelings of unworthiness.

Following the man's testimony, a pastor invited anyone who felt burdened by unworthiness to stand and receive prayer. Despite the pride that begged me to remain seated, I rose. And in the silent moments that followed the prayer, God spoke to me for the first time.

He said, *Christa, I love you. I forgave you a long time ago, and you need to forgive yourself.*

I was literally undone. Instantly freed from the tremendous weight of shame that would have eventually crushed me. I was overcome—with love.

Until that moment, I didn't realize how much I'd allowed unforgiveness to affect my life and my relationships. I'd invited Christ into my heart, but then held God's grace at arm's length, refusing to accept it—unintentionally saying that Christ's death was enough to vindicate others, but not me.

Released from that burden, I was able to move forward, to truly love myself, others, and God, and finally experience the freedom for which Christ died.

It's not as though forgiveness erased the memory of my shameful sins, but it did eradicate the oppressive power those memories had over me. Before, it was a scar I desperately tried to cover; now it's a scar I proudly point to and say, "Look what God has done in my life."

Don't allow unforgiveness to control you. Remember that God wants to do the same transformative work in you, turning your scars into a beautiful story of His love.

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Christa Cottam is a spunky speaker and women's ministry and worship leader with a fire in her belly to tell others about Jesus. Visit her online at [WhollyLoved.com](http://WhollyLoved.com) and find out more by reading her bio at the end of the book.

Are You There God  
By Sarah Conaway

“Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5

Do you ever feel like God’s checked out for the day or taken a much-needed vacation? Do you long for His presence and relentlessly search for it and feel nothing? What do you do in those situations?

Almost two years ago, I had a stroke that left me with dulled sensation in the right half of my body. Some parts are completely numb. My nerves react to my inability to feel by misfiring. My body knows something is wrong and tries to fix it. It's trying to feel. It won't give up trying to regain sensation. These prickly, tingling sensations are more than I can handle. Because of this, I take a nerve blocking medication.

Just like with my body, sometimes I can't feel God. Sometimes I can feel Him a little. Sometimes I can feel Him a lot. I want to feel Him a lot, all the time. But how? How do I go from feeling nothing some days to being engulfed in His divine presence everyday? And if I don't, for whatever reason, does that mean He's gone? That He left me or is ignoring me?

Hebrews 13:5 tells us God is always with us and will never leave. Even if we can't feel Him, He's there. He doesn't fall asleep or take a vacation.

So if you want to feel His steadfast presence, ask Him to reveal Himself to you in ways you'll see and understand. To show you ways that you can feel Him even when you are numb, and be diligent in daily attempts to connect with Him through prayer and Scripture reading, and trust, regardless of how you feel, He's there.

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When We All Get to Heaven  
By Shellie Arnold

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” Rev. 21:4

When life hits hard, I long increasingly for heaven, where there will be no more tears—over tragedies, frustration, or rejection. Can you imagine?

Death won't exist. From cancer or Alzheimer's or MS. Mourning will be a thing of the past.

All crying—over disappointment or betrayal—will cease.

There will be no more pain in heaven, emotional, physical, or otherwise. Everyone there will love God. Every touch will be right and pure.

In heaven, the old order of things will pass away. Pride won't cause discrimination. Power won't corrupt. Greed and shame won't exist. Every beautiful thing we lost when the first humans God created sinned will be restored.

Heaven is the anti-thesis of all that is awful and painful here on earth. The complete opposite of everything that wounds and scars us.

It's relief. Blissful, permanent relief.

When life throws the unexpected difficulty at you, remember heaven with all its promise. You can make it through this, with God's help and strength, because on the other side, all the things that currently make life so difficult will be gone.

Our lives on this earth are merely a taste of what being close to God will be like, once we encounter God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy spirit in heaven. Because finally, *finally* all barriers between



us be removed. We will see Jesus. We'll be able to look into His eyes and find ... heaven.

Don't give up when life kicks the breath out of you.

Because for you and me, heaven is just around the corner!

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Finding Freedom Through Surrender  
By Christa Cottam

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.” 2 Corinthians 3:17

“I give up!”

The word surrender often makes us think of defeat. But what if I said surrender can mean victory ... even freedom?

As a toddler, my mantra was, “I can do it myself!” Unfortunately, I carried that attitude into adulthood. I wanted to be in control and live on my terms. To me, that was freedom—not being dictated by anything or anyone ... certainly not God.

My perceived liberty was a lie.

We were created with an innate longing—to be seen, known, and loved, and only God can fulfill that desire. But for years I tried to satisfy that craving with other things. I just needed the right job, relationship, house, physique, whatever. Then I’d be happy.

Such pursuits, though, tethered me to them ... enslaved me. I gave my all, but each accomplishment and item failed to live up to my expectations, or left me exhausted, living with regret. Ultimately asking: Is this all there is to life? I felt restless and unsatisfied.

I finally discovered what I was missing—the most important thing in life, the foundation that gives everything else meaning and purpose: God.

Not the God I’d misunderstood for so long ... the distant, controlling dictator. But the One who “fearfully and wonderfully made” each of us for a specific purpose. The God who sees us—knows us better than we know ourselves—and loves us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, in the greatest love story ever told—to rescue, to free us, from bondage to a broken world.

“Surrender” has never been so victorious as the day I gave up serving myself and this world and placed my life in Jesus’ precious, nail-scarred hands. The day I discovered that true freedom can only be found in God’s loving embrace.

Are you living free? Lay down your pride and fears today and run to Jesus.

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Cake-Baking Wisdom  
By Tara Johnson

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives  
generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."  
James 1:5

There are times in our lives when adversity overwhelms us until we feel we're drowning. Often, we stumble through our circumstances, desperate to keep our heads above water. We make snap decisions and do our best to muddle through on our own wit and resources. The problem with doing things our way is that we miss out on God's wisdom ... the path that leads to peace.

Say someone offers to teach you how to make an Italian cream cake. They explain the ingredients, detail every minutia of the recipe and even demonstrate how to create it. Yet when it's time to bake it yourself, you say, "I'm not really in the mood to put flour in this cake. I'll use oatmeal instead." You switch milk for water. Cinnamon for baking soda. Sugar for salt. The cake will be a disaster, and you'll wonder, "Where did I go wrong?"

We can't substitute God's wisdom for our own without making a royal mess.

The path to wisdom starts with God. What you and I think is not found anywhere between the binding of our Bibles.

Whether we're experiencing a time of peace or the worst crisis of our lives, we can find direction and make wise choices when the path is unclear. All we need to do is ask God for wisdom.

In James' day, believers had been scattered and persecuted. They'd lost their possessions and homes and faced an uncertain future. James wanted them to know they could not only survive but endure joyfully by asking God for wisdom to see things through His eyes.

When disaster strikes, we should seek God's wisdom. He gives generously to those who ask.

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Come and See  
By Jana Kelley

“‘Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?’ Nathanael asked.  
‘Come and see,’ said Philip.” John 1:46

“You have your religion, I have mine,” says the lady sitting next to me on the airplane. I cringe. How should I respond?

I love sharing about Jesus, but hate being blind-sided by a reaction I don’t expect. Not wanting to get into a debate, I struggle to turn the conversation around. When that happens, my enthusiasm for sharing about Jesus often changes to frustration. I know I’m not talking about religion, but rather a relationship with Jesus Christ, but effectively communicating that truth to others can be daunting.

I’ve often wondered if this is how Philip, one of Jesus’ disciples, felt when he shared his exciting discovery of Jesus with a friend. Nathanael responded to Philip’s enthusiasm with a skeptical question. Not dissuaded, Philip said, “Come and see.” Then he brought his friend to meet Jesus. Read the rest of John chapter one to see how the experience far exceeded Nathanael’s expectations.

God hasn’t asked us to be eloquent speakers or to defend Him with clever conversation. He asks us to tell the wonderful news of Jesus and invite others to come and see for themselves.

Skeptics can debate my arguments for Christ. But they can’t deny what Jesus has done in my life. And if their hearts are open, a personal encounter with Jesus might exceed their expectations, too.

Are you ready to be the personal introduction between your friends and Jesus? Like me, you may not be a great orator. But inviting friends to see what Jesus has done in our own lives—now that’s something we can do!

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Held Captive by Fear  
By Susan Aken

“For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.” 2 Timothy 1:7

I was a prisoner of timidity.

Being shy and introverted, I tended to avoid attention. I was usually the one standing in the corner. I refused to attend youth group where I might have to join in a game. After college, I ran into a high school classmate I'd always liked and was crushed when he commented he didn't remember ever hearing me speak.

Moving into the dorm as a freshman was a challenge. I started attending the Baptist Student Union noon meeting where I loved the safe and familiar environment.

But each day one of the students gave a testimony. In misery I began going straight to my room after class. My heart pounded as I imagined being asked to share my testimony and I refused to take that risk. I wanted to go but felt trapped thinking, “This is how God made me. I can't help it.”

Praying and reading the Bible, I found 2 Timothy 1: 7.

The truth hit me like a piercing light.

My fear didn't come from God!

I realized I'd believed a lie. God created me with my reserved personality but the fear didn't come from Him.

I turned from accepting this untruth and asked Him to help me by the power of the Holy Spirit. I went back the next day and volunteered to give my testimony. I told them this story. It had a powerful impact on them and me. I was transformed when I learned that, by depending on the Holy Spirit, I could overcome fearful timidity.

It's a battle I'll always face. But it's never had the same control over me. I'm no longer a helpless captive to fear. There's power in what we believe.

Are you held captive by a lie? Search God's word. Find the truth and stand on that truth for freedom.

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When We Fail—Pressing Toward Christ  
By Jennifer Slattery

“... One thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13

She'd lost everything—her ranking, scholarship, and her very identity. Worse, she had to look her professors in the eyes, in front of all her peers, and admit she needed help. That, on her own, no amount of hard work could overcome her inherent flaw—dyslexia.

In the span of a semester she went from believing she could accomplish anything with enough focus and perseverance to feeling frightened and insecure. Her initial response—to try harder, studying long into the night in an effort to regain what she'd lost.

But it wasn't enough.

Was this how Paul, one of the religious elite in Ancient Palestine felt, as he studied the Torah and recited prayers—as if his efforts were never quite enough? Each day, as he followed his faith's rules and regulations, did his ache for God grow? As he witnessed the brutal killing of Christians who revealed a peace Paul had never known, had he ever failed to grasp—did he long for what they had?

His Pharisaical background and moral excellence gave him every reason to boast, but there was something he lacked—a relationship with Jesus Christ. No amount of effort could gain him that. To reach Jesus, Paul had to recognize all his efforts for what they were—rubbish, and rest in the only One with the power to save.

Once he did, he gained what his heart longed for most—Christ Himself, and all his former prestige and religiosity felt as valuable as old, dirty rags, good for nothing but the trash pile.

His relationship with Christ cost him a great deal—a prestigious position and, at times, his freedom. But Paul gained far more: access

to God Himself and the ability to live in a way that pleased Him. That's what he strained for—to become the man Christ had created him to be, a goal he now, by grace, could attain.

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Praise is a Choice  
By Tara Johnson

"Rejoice always." 1 Thessalonians 5:16

A little old lady woke up one morning to realize she only had three hairs left on her head. She looked in the mirror and smiled. "Lord, I thank You because I can braid my hair today."

The next day only two hairs remained. She looked in the mirror and smiled. "Lord, I thank You because today I can part my hair."

The third morning she looked in the mirror to see only one hair remaining. She smiled. "Lord, I thank You because I can put my hair in a ponytail today."

The fourth morning, she discovered all her hair gone. "Lord, I thank You that I don't have to fix my hair anymore!"

Praise is a choice. It's all about perspective. When we focus on what we can't have, on our limitations, we fail to see opportunities God has placed in front of us.

Sometimes it's the bad stuff that refines us, makes us stronger, forces us to learn lessons we never would otherwise, and allows God to work things out for the greater good. Difficult circumstances teach us dependence on Him.

Rejoice always. Through every circumstance, He's molding us into the image of Jesus if we let Him.

What are you praising God for today?

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Choose Another Path  
By Christa Cottam

"As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly." Proverbs  
26:11

It wasn't the first time I'd caved in to temptation, and I knew it wouldn't be the last. I continually ran into the same enticements. Some days I was able to resist, and others I failed miserably.

I knew I'd never escape this hamster-wheel without God's help.

I love to run outdoors. But I *don't* love the summer-time bugs—like *swarms* of them! Jogging one morning, I neared an area where I'd ingested a mouthful of gnats a few days earlier. I tossed out a lighthearted prayer—more of a thought than a genuine plea: "God, please don't let there be gnats today," and instantly, He spoke three simple words: *choose another path*.

My breath caught.

I knew God wasn't talking about gnats. He was asking me to think about the temptations I repeatedly encountered. How could I experience a different outcome if I didn't choose to think and behave differently?

Proverbs 26:11 says, "As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly."

Blunt? Yes. But true. I was a simpleton to think walking the same paths each day wouldn't lead to the same shame and frustration.

I wanted God's strength to help me *face* my temptations, but in reality, I needed His strength to *turn away* from them.

Sometimes the hardest thing isn't simply enduring your condition but deciding to change it.

For me that meant changing what I watched, read, and listened to. It meant spending more time in the Bible. It meant grabbing hold of my negative thought patterns and forcing my mind to submit to Jesus.

Do you keep running into the same struggles? Perhaps it's time to choose another path; one God has created specifically for you.

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Christa Cottam is a spunky speaker and women's ministry and worship leader with a fire in her belly to tell others about Jesus. Visit her online at [WhollyLoved.com](http://WhollyLoved.com) and find out more by reading her bio at the end of the book.

Growing in Selflessness  
By Kristen Terrette

“... not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others.” Philippians 2:4

Before I was married, I was selfish. While growing up, I didn't play many team sports, and I had little work experience. Consequently, I didn't have much practical training in looking out for others or caring for anyone but myself. Even still, I thought I was ready to be a devoted wife who supported and found ways to build up her husband.

In reality, I wasn't.

In Phil. 2:4, Paul is talking to the young Christians in Philippi, the same way he'd have talked to my young self. At this point in his ministry, he's imprisoned, yet in his writings he's encouraging the new church and giving advice regarding living a life worthy of Christ. He's telling them to imitate Jesus' sacrificial nature.

But Paul isn't only telling these new believers how to live. He's putting his lessons into action. He's not looking only to his interests. He's not focusing on breaking free from his chains and escaping a dirty dungeon. Rather, he's trying to help his fellow believers move forward in their faith and live to honor Christ.

We should strive to live the same way.

To say my priorities have changed since marrying and becoming a mother is an understatement. Gradually, I've learned to look out for those I love, those under my care. Now, my daily routine consists of making lunches, then driving my son to school so he can get a few extra minutes of sleep—sleep he'd miss if he rode the bus. And in deference to my penny-pincher and health-conscious husband, I'm careful which meals I prepare.

Let us seek ways to daily lift up others in both spiritual and practical ways. Let's reach beyond our loved ones and follow Paul's selfless

example, constantly looking for ways to extend generosity and support to our friends, our co-workers, even casual acquaintances.

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When Sin Threatens to Drown Us  
By Dawn Tolbert

“Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” Matthew 19:26

Swimming terrifies me. Each time I wade into a pool, I’m reminded of when chlorinated water burned my nose and mouth when I ventured too far into the deep end of the pool as a child. It wasn’t a near drowning, but it was scary enough to make me grateful for the man who pulled me to safety. He did something I couldn’t do for myself.

Today’s verse tells us God is strong enough to save us from the depths of sin. In our natural state, darkness threatens to swallow us whole. We might try to fight against the strong undercurrent of sin and disobedience only to realize we’re too weak to free ourselves. Spiritually, we take gulp after gulp of choking water instead of air, feeling hopelessness and fear.

In Matthew 19:23-24, Jesus said, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” The disciples asked the Teacher, “Who then can be saved?”

Then, Jesus looked at His disciples. He saw them struggling to understand. His answer provided the best life preserver—the promise that our salvation isn’t up to us. We don’t have to rely on our strength.

Instead, God does the rescuing. He pulls us from the waters of sin that threaten to overwhelm us. He makes the way. Salvation is possible because God did the work for us through Jesus Christ. We need only to release our grip on wealth or whatever weights threaten to pull us under. When we forsake them and trust Jesus, He does what is impossible for us. He saves us from sin.

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Relational Courage in God's Love  
By Jennifer Slattery

“A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave Me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for My Father is with Me.” John 16:32

I've one particular fear that can paralyze me. When facing other challenges, I'll push through the hard, jump out into the unknown, and persevere through difficult and discouraging circumstances—unless relational risk is involved. If I think there's a chance I might experience rejection, especially from someone I care about, I can grow anxious, weak-kneed, and frankly, disobedient.

As a result, I'm tempted to skirt around tough conversations and pursue personal comfort over surrendering to Jesus.

Unchecked, my fear what others might or might not think of me, how they might or might not react, can hinder my obedience to Christ. And yet I want to please my Savior in all things. So, I try harder, attempting to squelch the fear in the deepest crevices of my heart, by sheer will. But that only leads to short-lived behavior modification.

Jesus demonstrates a better, deeper, and longer-lasting way.

Throughout His ministry, He initiated tough conversations. He consistently had the courage to choose the unpopular route, to remain silent when ridiculed, and to give Himself completely to those He knew would abandon Him in His darkest hour, His moment of greatest need. In John 6:32 we learn how. “All will abandon Me,” He said, in essence. “But that's okay, because I'll have the love of the Father.”

Jesus' security came from His Father's enduring love. That's where our security should come from, as well. When we're filled with God's love, our hunger for man's approval subsides.

When you feel the sting of rejection weigh you down, use it as a reminder to draw close to the One who knows you fully, loves you deeply, and will never leave.

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Where Strength Is Found  
By Shellie Arnold

“... but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” Isaiah 40:31

In August 2002, I had an anaphylactic reaction to a prescribed drug and almost died at home in my husband’s arms.

At that time, my life was full and I was very busy. I home schooled three children, worked part-time at a local hospital, and was pursuing a career writing and speaking on marriage and family issues.

I was also scheduled for three surgical procedures. Prior to the surgery, I had trouble sleeping. I consulted my doctor, and he prescribed the medication.

Unfortunately, my reaction fried something in my brain and left me with residual symptoms including intermittent paralysis on my right side. I often looked like I was having a stroke. Eventually, I couldn’t drive, go to church, or care for my family.

To say I struggled with God during that time is an understatement. I couldn’t reconcile a holy God who called me to write and speak yet left me incapable of doing those things.

As I sought Him, He impressed upon me three things. *Shellie, don’t go to dark places inside. Don’t tell yourself your life is over. Thank Me for every breath.*

While I waited for healing and maintained the best attitude possible, I learned the meaning of Isaiah 40:31.

It’s in the waiting we find strength. Not when our needs are met. Not when we get relief from our burdens. Strength is found when we stay in His presence, listening for His voice, following His directives, and in total dependence on Him.

God healed my brain on May 18, 2005, almost three years after my reaction. But my healing wasn't His greatest work during that time. Rather, it was carrying me through those years. If I hadn't found strength in waiting on Him, I'm certain I would have lost hope.

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Shellie Arnold is a multi-published author and sexual abuse survivor who believes any marriage can be healed. Find out more by reading her bio at the end of the book.

Intentionally Focusing on Our Inner Beauty  
By Sarah Conaway

“Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight.” 1 Peter 3:3-4

I’m careful to train my daughter not to fixate on outer beauty, but do I protect my heart with the same diligence?

“You are so beautiful!” I told my daughter as I fix her hair. She responded by telling me that being beautiful on the inside is all that matters. Then she said, “Silly Mom, you taught me that!”

I was speechless. I taught her this, but have I taught myself? Do I see myself as beautiful? When my hair’s a wreck, my jeans won’t button, and wrinkles are popping up everywhere, how do I learn to see myself through God’s eyes?

1 Peter 3:3-4 tells us our true beauty comes from within—from a gentle, quiet, and godly spirit.

Today’s society over-emphasizes outer beauty.

Unfortunately this has become the norm. So much so that my daughter’s words about inner beauty seem somewhat foreign. She believes that inner beauty is most important. I’m thankful for the timely reminder that she gave me when that day I fixed her hair. I love that God speaks to me through my five-year-old daughter.

Next time you look in the mirror and are tempted to evaluate yourself against what the world’s beauty standards, remember God sees you differently—He’s focused on what’s inside, and He’s working to grow that so that you more closely resemble Christ.

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Jekyll and Hyde  
By Darlene Franklin

*Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. (Romans 8:5, NIV)*

At birth, most babies perform all the physical functions necessary for life: their hearts beat, their brains work, they breathe. They also frequently receive all manner of gifts. Some are for immediate use, such as clothes and diapers. Others are for later, such as a bank account.

Although an infant resembles his parents, his life story hasn't been written. Experience and proper care will shape him. If he eats well, he'll grow physically healthy and strong. If he isn't fed regularly or nourished properly, he may die.

My new life in Christ, given to me when I admitted my sin problem to God, repeats a similar pattern. I resemble my Father. He placed spiritual talents within me to encourage the church. His Spirit lives in me, breathing new life into my thoughts and actions. I will thrive as long as I abide in that new life, yielding to the Holy Spirit, determined as an infant to walk, talk, and grow.

But if I stop listening to the Spirit and instead crack the door open to my former way of life, I end up stranded between the old and the new, flesh and Spirit. The more I revert to my old ways, the more my new life is choked to the faintest pulse, alive but not vibrant.

What determines which life thrives? My mindset. Before my new life, I couldn't "get" God at all. With His Spirit comes understanding and power.

God initiates and sustains my growth, but I run into trouble when I grab back control. Yielding is a choice. The more I feed on His



words, the more I understand His mind. God calls me to put into practice what I read in Scripture (James 1:22).

All believers have the mind of Christ, a spiritual birthday present. Let us stay focused on Him, lest we wander from Him and the life He's called us to.

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A Holy Reminder  
By Jana Kelley

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” John 14:26

Sometimes even the most precious memories can be forgotten. And yet, they flood my mind when my sister and I reminisce about our childhood.

“Remember how we used the play ‘school’ when we were kids?”

“Ha! Yes, and we’d ask Mom to play with us but she never wanted to.”

“We didn’t consider the fact that she home schooled us, and the last thing she’d want to do at the end of the day was play *pretend* school!”

Conversations like this happen often with my sister. Honestly, there’s much I wouldn’t remember if she didn’t remind me.

Near the end of His time on earth, Jesus told His disciples He would soon return to His Father in Heaven. He also promised the Holy Spirit would come to them and continue teaching them. The Holy Spirit would remind them of everything Jesus had taught them. And, the Holy Spirit would live in them and stay with them forever.

We have the same privilege Jesus’ disciples had. If we believe in Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit living within us.

He’ll help us understand the Bible. And just like my sister reminds me of memories from our childhood, He’ll remind us of things we learn from His Word, the Bible. This is the Holy Spirit—promised by Jesus, sent from God. He is our teacher, and He will always be with us. What a wonderful gift!

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Fan into Flame  
By Jennifer Slattery

“For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of hands.” 2 Timothy 1:6

I know what’s it like to be tired and discouraged, to give until I’m spent and feel as if my efforts amounted to naught.

But my struggles have never been anything close to what Paul’s mentee Timothy faced in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy. He must have felt defeated, teetering on the edge of despair. Authorities were publically torturing Christians across the Roman Empire in the most vicious ways. Worse, his beloved mentor, Paul, was imprisoned and sentenced to death.

I imagine Timothy was ready to give up. To take the easy route and disengage. But Paul, the author of today’s verse, urged him to keep fighting, to “fan into flames,” or kindle afresh, “the spiritual gift God gave you ...” The idea here is of resuscitating a dying fire. Paul knew he would soon be executed, and he could’ve said countless things, but he zeroed in on this—don’t to give up.

I don’t know what you’re facing today. Maybe it feels like your ministry is thriving and everything is going well, or maybe you’re tired and discouraged. If you’re struggling to persevere, can I say to you the same thing Paul said to his beloved friend—don’t quit. Don’t disengage. And whatever you do, don’t neglect the spiritual gift that God has placed within you. Use it and feed it with the kindling of obedience until it’s filled with fire and passion. Keep fighting, because as Scripture promises, at the proper time, you’ll reap a harvest if you don’t give up. (Gal. 6:9).

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The Hidden Poison of Pride  
By Christa Cottam

“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” Galatians 5:24

“Move it people! What’s wrong with you?!” my daughter’s voice shrieked from the back of our mini-van as we sat in the school drop off line. Though I instantly corrected her impatience, I cringed knowing she’d heard those same words from me.

Troubled, I replayed the scene until I realized the root of my words—the attitude that I knew the “right” way and others didn’t, and that my time was more precious than everyone else’s.

My impatience stemmed from pride—my inflated sense of importance or superiority—that’s usually first harbored in my mind and ultimately displayed in my conduct.

The deeper I examined, the more I saw how much pride infected my life.

I struggled to admit when I was wrong and tried to hide my shortcomings. While I outwardly hid the sinful chaos in my heart, the truth was, I continually compared myself—my appearance, possessions, kids, talents, and intelligence—to others, indulging my selfish desire to pass judgment and assign worth to myself and everyone else. In essence, I was playing God.

In Galatians five, Paul says those who belong to Christ have nailed their sinful desires to the cross and should follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.

My daughter’s statement helped me see where I wasn’t allowing the Holy Spirit to lead me. As a result, I had a tendency to become idolatrous, jealous, selfish, and divisive.

Wanting joy and patience to replace all the ugliness I'd allowed to grow within, I repented of my sin and surrendered to the Holy Spirit, and as I did, He filled me with His peace and love.

What fruit is being produced in your life? Ask God to make you aware of pride within your heart and for strength to abandon your sin at His feet.

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Christa Cottam is a spunky women's ministry and worship leader with a fire in her belly to tell others about Jesus. Find out more by reading her bio at the end of the book.

## Is Your Burden Heavy?

By Susan Aken

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

I felt so weighed down!

I enjoy photography and decided to use a little suitcase to carry my photo equipment as I went to the lake. Pulling it around made such a loud noise that I carried it half the time. When I went to the shore I had to lug it along. After two miles, I was anxious to get rid of the weight. How free I'd feel! My fun was gone.

It occurred to me this is what we do in life. We carry heavy burdens that weigh us down and steal our joy.

I thought of family concerns, hurting friends, the uncertainty in the world, and my own daily struggles. I remembered that Jesus told us to come to Him to find rest. He promised that His yoke is easy. It brings freedom not slavery because it means He'll carry our burdens for us.

When I reached the car and left the suitcase, I grinned as I hurried back unhindered.

I need that freedom in my spirit. When I talk to Jesus about my cares and concerns and give them to Him, He carries them. I'm free to be who He created me to be and live with joy.

We all have burdens we carry. Some are heavier than others but just by living in this world of pain and sorrow we'll face some kind of trouble everyday. What burden are you carrying? Jesus gives us an invitation to find rest in Him.

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The Intimacy That Comes From Obedience  
By Jennifer Slattery

“The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.” Exodus 33:11

Moses’s assignment so wasn’t what he’d asked for. In fact, he’d debated God, explaining all the reasons he wasn’t the man for this role, begging God to send anyone else. Someone more confident, with more authority, who didn’t stumble over their words or get tongue tied.

God refuted his protests, making it clear, He’d chosen Moses to free the Hebrews—a rebellious, grumbling, stiff-necked people—from oppression and bring them to a place of rest.

Moses wasn’t thrilled with this “call.” He was content where he was. He had a family, community, and a shepherding job that had to feed his introverted heart.

But God persisted, and Moses obeyed.

Fast forward two months. His assignment had proven profoundly more difficult than he’d feared. Shortly after God had miraculously liberated His people from Egyptian oppression, they forsook Him for gods fashioned from gold—the very gold God had provided.

God’s response: I’m done.

He’d step back from His people, sending His angel to lead them instead. (Ex. 32:33-33:3).

Those protests Moses began his assignment with had to be flooding his brain on replay. Yet, he remained, and in the middle of the hard, beauty unfolded. In desperation, Moses cried out to God, and that was exactly what he received—God Himself.

Isn’t that what our hearts long for most? To encounter God intimately, as not just our ruler, but One in whom we can confide. A friend who



knows us deeply and who always has our best in mind? The One who confides in His children. (Ps. 25:14).

Obedience often comes with a cost, but it also comes with a priceless blessing—intimacy with our Creator.

What is God asking of you? How does knowing your obedience paves the way to increased closeness with Christ encourage you to surrender?

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The Salvation Paradox  
By Darlene Franklin

“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” Luke 18:13-14

“I’m Bill W., and I’m an alcoholic.” In these now famous words, Bill Wilson, the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, demonstrated the first step to recovery—admitting he had a problem.

Many religious leaders in Jesus’ lifetime suffered from pride. In today’s verse, Jesus compared a known sinner with one of those leaders, one who wouldn’t admit his failings, so he didn’t receive forgiveness.

In contrast, the tax collector took the AA route and admitted he had a problem. His posture demonstrated his repentance. He entered the temple complex but stood afar off from the temple itself, simply grateful to be allowed within the gate.

He stood, perhaps because kneeling would have drawn attention to himself. He didn’t lift his eyes—let alone his arms—as was usual in prayer. He beat on his chest in sorrow. “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Everything he did revealed his humility.

And the God who “shows favor to the humble” (James 4:6), overlooked the arrogant religious leader and forgave the penitent sinner.

How often do we forget our need for God’s forgiveness? We’ll never receive all God has for us if we think we don’t need Him. But for those who approach Him in humility, acknowledging their sin and seeking the salvation only He offers, He gives them spotless new lives and makes them citizens of the heavenly kingdom. He saves them.

In what area of your life do you need mercy from God? Humble yourself and admit your need of Him. He longs to show His favor to you today.

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Darlene Franklin is a bestselling author of fiction and nonfiction works who serves Christ by writing for Him from a nursing home. Visit her on Facebook at [DarleneFranklinFun](#) and read her bio at the end of the book to learn more.

Spiritual Passion Sparked Through Bible Reading  
By Sarah Conaway

“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word about Christ.” Romans 10:17

Why do I allow that which is loudest rob me of what's most important? An alert on my phone catches my attention. I open Facebook or Instagram and have multiple notifications. Everything from advertisements to party invitations to comments on posts I'm following. It never ends.

In the social media driven world we live in, God doesn't send us a Facebook message or email. Often, His nudges are a lot more subtle. To be alert to His presence, we must be purposeful in seeking Him.

There are times when I have ten or fifteen minutes to spare and I spend them reading a post about weight loss or make-up tips or something that adds little value to my life. What would happen if I spent those few minutes reading God's Word, the Bible?

Romans 10:17 says, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

When I spend time in the Word I gain a renewed sense of purpose in Christ. I feel energized and alive. Often, I want more. However, the opposite is also true. The longer I go without reading my Bible and connecting with Christ through prayer, the more quickly I forget how good and important those times are. They become too easy to put off.

The next time you have a few minutes to spare, try spending them reading your Bible or in prayer instead of on social media.

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## Get to know our Authors:

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**Shellie Arnold** tells others she's living proof God can redeem, heal, and restore anything. A multi-published author, she loves sharing truths she's learned the hard way, and seeing those truths bless others. A home school mom of over twenty-three years, Shellie knows the unique challenges stay-at-home moms face. As a sexual abuse survivor, she understands the long-term effects trauma can have. She longs to encourage those with deep hurts that God offers all they need to completely heal. Shellie believes any marriage can be healed, and if both parties listen to God they can live happily *even* after. Visit her online at [www.shelliearnold.com](http://www.shelliearnold.com).

**Sarah Conaway** is a two-time stroke survivor who has faced lifelong chronic illness. In spite of her circumstances, she is armed with faith and is excited that Christ is using her to spread His unconditional love. Sarah tri-formed a group of faith-filled stroke survivors called the Stromies who minister to those world-side that are struggling with accepting their new normal. She enjoys volunteering with hospice patients and the children's ministry at her church. She's a speaker, blogger, and street team leader with Wholly Loved Ministries and is excited to see what Christ has planned for her future. Visit Sarah online at [Stromies.com](http://Stromies.com).

**Christa Cottam** is a spunky woman with a fire in her belly to tell others about Jesus—how He brought her from being held down by a past filled with shame, guilt and unforgiveness to embrace God's love and ultimately find freedom to be the person He created her to be. She is passionate about encouraging women to go deeper in their

relationship with God. Christa also uses her gifts in the arts and leadership to make kingdom impact at her church, contributing as a vocalist and pianist on the worship team and volunteering as a leader in women's ministry.

**Darlene Franklin** is a best-selling author of fiction and nonfiction works. Her claim to fame is that she continues to write from a nursing home. She keeps going because God keeps giving her more assignments. She's written more than fifty-five fiction and nonfiction books, including *Pray Through the Bible in a Year* (<http://amzn.to/2GOZUVz>) and of *Cash and Cats in Love Comes on Kitten Paws*. Check out a complete list of her books at <http://amzn.to/2Lv3Gaa> and keep up her online at <http://www.facebook.com/DarleneFranklinfun/>.

**Tara Johnson** is an author, speaker and singer from Alexander, AR. A passionate lover of stories, she loves to travel to churches, ladies retreats and prisons to share how God led her into freedom after spending years living shackled as a people-pleasing preacher's kid.

Her debut novel *Engraved on the Heart* will be released by Tyndale House Publishers in 2018. She and her husband Todd have been married for twenty-one years and the Lord has blessed them with five children, two of whom are with Jesus. Visit her online at [www.TaraJohnsonStories.com](http://www.TaraJohnsonStories.com)

**Jana Kelley** is a Texan who hardly ever lives in Texas. Raised in Southeast Asia, Jana developed a love for cross-cultural living early in life. Her love for writing came soon after. She and her husband married in college and by their second anniversary, they lived in a remote African town. After 13 years in Africa and the Middle East, they moved to Southeast Asia where they and their three boys currently live. Jana is the author of two devotional books and three novels. You can learn more about her at [janakelley.com](http://janakelley.com).

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