

ANNE  
GRAHAM  
LOTZ



THE  
DANIEL  
KEY

*20 CHOICES THAT  
MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE*

 ZONDERVAN®  
.com



ZONDERVAN

*The Daniel Key*

Copyright © 2018 by Anne Graham Lotz

This title is also available as a Zondervan ebook.

This title is also available in a Zondervan audio edition.

Requests for information should be addressed to:

Zondervan, 3900 Sparks Dr., SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546

ISBN 978-0-310-09193-6

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.Zondervan.com](http://www.Zondervan.com). The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.®

Scripture quotations marked ESV are taken from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the King James Version. Public domain.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version®. © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Any Internet addresses (websites, blogs, etc.) in this book are offered as a resource. They are not intended in any way to be or imply an endorsement by Zondervan, nor does Zondervan vouch for the content of these sites for the life of this book.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

The author is represented by Alive Literary Agency, 7680 Goddard Street, Suite 200, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80920, [www.aliveliterary.com](http://www.aliveliterary.com).

*Cover and Interior design: Kristy Edwards*

*Printed in China*

18 19 20 21 22 / AMY / 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2





# CONTENTS

<i>Introduction: Finding the Keys to Success</i> . . . . .	vii
1. Faith Makes a Difference . . . . .	1
2. Worship Makes a Difference . . . . .	9
3. Loyalty Makes a Difference . . . . .	19
4. Prayer Partners Make a Difference . . . . .	27
5. Praying for Others Makes a Difference . . . . .	35
6. Praying God’s Word Makes a Difference . . . . .	45
7. Attitude Makes a Difference . . . . .	51
8. Listening Makes a Difference . . . . .	57
9. A Daily Prayer Time Makes a Difference . . . . .	65
10. Perseverance Makes a Difference . . . . .	73
11. Desperate Prayers Make a Difference . . . . .	81
12. Values Make a Difference . . . . .	91
13. Focus Makes a Difference . . . . .	99
14. Courage Makes a Difference . . . . .	107
15. Confession Makes a Difference . . . . .	115
16. Fasting Makes a Difference . . . . .	125
17. Forgiveness Makes a Difference . . . . .	133
18. Humility Makes a Difference . . . . .	141
19. A Personal Relationship with God Makes a Difference . . . . .	149
20. Commitment Makes a Difference . . . . .	157
<i>Notes</i> . . . . .	165





# FINDING THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

Every day we make multiple choices, from the time we choose to get out of bed in the morning, to the time we choose to go back to bed in the evening. Some choices are practical, some are emotional, some are social. But the ones that make all the difference in life are our moral and spiritual choices. These choices, in a very real way, determine our character and our success as human beings.

Choices are like a spiritual, moral workout. In a physical workout, to strengthen my upper body, I do a series of repetitions with stiff rubber bands. If I pull the band once or twice, I could say it doesn't make any difference, so why go to the trouble? Just one or two pulls actually don't make any difference. But if I pull on them again and again, in a series of repetitions, day after day, they effectively begin to build muscle mass. The difference can actually become visible as I grow stronger.

Like pulling on those bands, our choices are





effective when made again and again, day after day. The repetition of right choices builds our character and strengthens our faith. The repetition of wrong choices can weaken and destroy us. Increasingly, others will be able to see the difference our choices are making.

Daniel was a man who made right choices again and again. Many of us grew up knowing Daniel as the courageous man whose steadfast belief in the one true God got him thrown into a lions' den—and also saved him from those hungry lions. But Daniel's miraculous adventure in the lions' den was just one brief episode in a life that stretched for decades, included several other miracles, and changed history. From Heaven's perspective, there is surely no greater prophet in the Old Testament than Daniel.

Daniel was taken into captivity with the nation of Judah when he was just a teenager. He lived the rest of his life as a slave in Babylon. As such, Daniel wasn't free to make many choices. But the choice he *could* and *did* make at a very early age was to place his faith in God. That initial choice was followed by many others, some of which were hard, critical, and even death-defying. But the end result was a man





whose character and faith were so strong that he stands out as a colossal giant in history.

In this little book, I share twenty of the key choices I found as I studied the life of Daniel when I wrote *The Daniel Prayer*—choices that were keys to his success. They are choices that not only work today, but that will also make all the difference in whether you and I are sterling in character, strong in our faith, and successful in life—from Heaven’s perspective.





## CHAPTER 1

# *Faith* MAKES A DIFFERENCE

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

**HEBREWS 11:6**



Faith is not a “gift” that some people have been given and others have not. Faith is a choice that becomes a lifestyle of trusting God.

This wonderful truth reminds me of a favorite story. It’s about the French tightrope walker Charles Blondin, the first person to cross Niagara Falls on a tightrope. The cable stretched 1,300 feet across and far above the raging waters straddling the border between the United States and Canada. When he made it across, crowds on both the American and the Canadian sides roared at his success.

Blondin walked across the falls several more times on subsequent dates. On one of those dates, he prepared to push a wheelbarrow across the rope. The crowd’s cheers grew louder and more enthusiastic as he asked his roaring fans, “Do you think I could carry a person across in this wheelbarrow?”

“Absolutely!” was the confident response.

“Okay,” said Blondin. “Who wants to get in?”

At that question, the crowd was quiet. No one volunteered.

Everyone in the crowd had said they had faith that





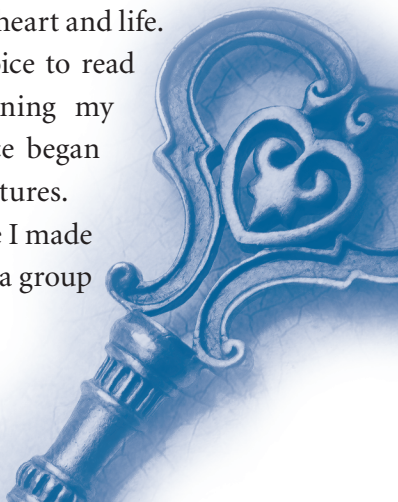
Blondin could carry a man over the falls in his wheelbarrow, but that so-called faith evaporated when they were asked to sit in the wheelbarrow.

Real faith is more than just words—or rituals or going to church or having a religion or believing there is a God. Real faith gets in the wheelbarrow: real faith backs up a confident declaration with actions, or it's not real faith (James 2:20). Like exercising a spiritual muscle, real faith grows as we make choice after choice after choice. Those choices can make all the difference.

I made my first real choice of faith when I was eight or nine years old. After watching a film about the life of Christ, I chose to confess to God in prayer that I knew I was a sinner, that I was sorry, and that I was claiming the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross as His sacrifice for my sin. I asked Him to forgive me, then I invited Jesus to come into my heart and life.

This choice led to a second choice to read my Bible daily. Besides strengthening my small seedling of faith, this practice began my lifelong love affair with the Scriptures.

That choice led to another choice I made when I was about fifteen. I was with a group





of friends listening to a guest speaker at the church where I was raised.

We were attending a youth meeting on a Saturday morning, and the speaker was a distinguished professor of divinity at Yale University. All of us were interested in hearing what he had to say.

I can't remember what began to alarm me, but I do remember my heart pounding out of my chest when he said that there was a god for the Old Testament,

**Like a spiritual muscle, faith grows strong through the exercise of choice after choice after choice.**

another god for the New Testament, and a different god for today.

Without thinking, I jumped to my feet and, interrupting him, said that was not what the Bible taught. In an extremely condescending voice modulated to intimidate me, he inquired, "And just what do you think the Bible says?"

God quickly brought to my mind the words of a verse I had read, and I answered: "The Bible says that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

The speaker had a startled, somewhat offended yet





quizzical look on his face, as if to say, “Who has dared to challenge me?” That’s when my friends pulled on my shirt. “Anne!” they whispered. “Sit down! He’s a professor from Yale, for goodness’ sake. Be quiet!” So I sat down. I may have been silent on the outside, but I was still arguing on the inside.

About two years after I had confronted the Yale professor, I made a life-defining choice of faith when I knelt down by the window seat in my bedroom and surrendered my life for service to Jesus Christ, a decision that I continue to live out on a daily basis. Thus began a lifetime of choices, some small, some large, some public, some private, but each one seemed to build on the last one, growing and strengthening my faith until . . .

I was able to step onto the platform of an international congress, face ten thousand evangelists while the who’s who of the evangelical world sat behind me, and confidently proclaim the words God had given me.

I was able to place my unresponsive husband on an EMS gurney, command the responders to stand still for a moment while I prayed, then allow them to put him in the ambulance, confident that his life was in God’s hands and that God would take care of him.





I was able to confront the president of the United States publicly when he misquoted the Scripture as saying that the beginning of wisdom is toleration of others. I felt as if I were fifteen years old all over again, yet this time, in the East Room of the White House, there were no friends to pull me down. The religious leaders who filled the room were so silent you could hear a pin drop, as I took four minutes to explain that the Bible says the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God (Psalms 111:10; Proverbs 1:7, 9:10).

I was able to stand at the podium of the United Nations General Assembly and present the Gospel as the only way to have genuine, permanent world peace—and then to finish my prepared three-minute remarks even after my mic was turned off.

I could not have confronted the president nor addressed the United Nations gathering when I was fifteen years old—or even fifteen years before I had those opportunities. I know God has enabled some Christians to grow up in their faith very quickly, but He has graciously allowed my faith to develop over a lifetime of choices.

While you may not have the luxury of a lifetime



ahead of you to make the critical choices that will develop your faith, it's important that you start now. One choice at a time. God knows how long you will have to develop your faith, and He will make sure that it's sufficient. But you must start now.



## THINK ABOUT IT

If you rarely exercise your faith through the choices you make, how can you be surprised when it's too weak to please God? Too weak to face a crisis triumphantly? Too weak to move others to recognize and acknowledge that your God is *the* God? Too weak to be contagious? Daniel's repeated choice to place his faith in God, regardless of how difficult or dangerous the situation was, impresses me that he wanted to serve a God who is God. If God was unable to come through for him—if He was unable to “push the wheelbarrow across the tightrope over Niagara Falls”—then He wasn't a God worth knowing. Or serving. Or risking his life for.



*God of Daniel,*

*I worship you as the foundation of all  
real faith.*

*Thank You for making Yourself  
accessible to all of us through a simple  
choice: the choice to take You at Your  
Word, trusting You completely to be  
who You say You are. Thank You for  
encouraging my faith by the stories of  
others who chose to place their faith in You  
and found You to be utterly trustworthy.*

*I choose now to climb into the  
wheelbarrow. I choose to place my faith  
in You.*

*Please help my choices from this  
moment on to so strengthen my faith  
that my life would be an example that  
encourages others to choose to place  
their faith in You, too. Make my faith  
contagious.*

*For the glory of Your great name,  
Amen.*



## CHAPTER 2

# *Worship* MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

**JOHN 4:23**



Having been raised in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina, I have always loved to hike. When I was young, every Sunday afternoon my entire family, including one or more dogs, would hike to the ridge behind our home. I loved the woody smell of the leaves as I scuffed my shoes through them. I loved the roaring sound that grew louder the closer we got to the ridge, where there was no barrier to break the fierce intensity of the wind. I loved looking for box turtles half-submerged in the muddy runoff of the springs beside the old logging road.

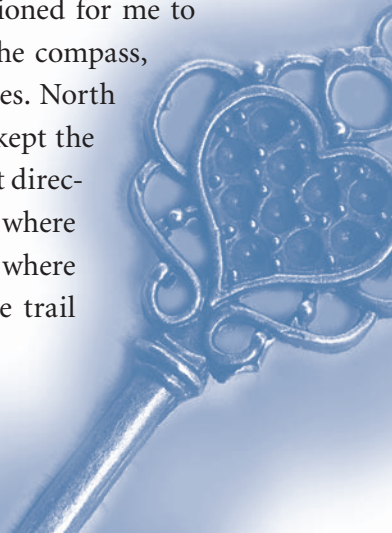
When we made it to the end of the road, we hiked the last several hundred feet on a trail where the trees were thick and we had to walk single file. To make sure I was going in the right direction, I had to keep my eyes on Daddy, who always went first. I knew if I kept my eyes centered on him, eventually I would come out at the bare place on top of the mountain that Mother had named the Reed Field, where we could see all the way down the Swannanoa Valley to Asheville. I learned early in life that it's necessary to have a center point when hiking in thick woods. Daddy was my center point.





This lesson was confirmed when I was a teenager. I was on a fourteen-mile hike with a friend. We started behind my parents' home, climbed to the top of the mountain known as Little Piney Ridge, then hiked the ridgelines of the Seven Sisters to Graybeard. The path my friend had chosen was not marked, so we just kept to the highest points along the mountain range. We knew eventually we would come to the trail that led up to Graybeard, the top of which on a clear day has a spectacular view of multiple states.

About an hour before we reached our destination, we got lost in a laurel thicket. While that may sound humorous, it wasn't. Laurel bushes are low and thick, and they can cover the side of a mountain. It's impossible to see out of them in any direction. So my friend pulled out a compass. She adjusted it so that the needle pointed north, then motioned for me to follow her. As she kept her eye on the compass, we fought our way through the bushes. North was our center point. As long as we kept the needle on the compass pointed in that direction, we were able to hike to a place where we could get a better perspective of where we were and subsequently found the trail





we were looking for. Eventually we made it successfully to the top of Graybeard.

If prayer is life's compass, then the needle that points north is the focus of our faith in prayer on the

**If the needle of our compass is set to point to ourselves or to our circumstances, we will get lost.**

living God. He is the “north” on our “compass.” When our prayers are focused, regardless of what life throws

at us, whether it's a long, hard climb to the top of our profession or career, or the steady trail of perseverance as we set out to achieve our goals, or the confusion and lost feeling that can envelop us when we find ourselves in a thicket of problems and pressures and pain—if our prayers are focused on worship of the living God, they will make a difference. In us. In our circumstances. In others. In our church. In our nation. In our world.

Years ago, I adopted the habit of beginning virtually every prayer I pray with worship. As I center on the One to whom I'm speaking, I try to think of the specific attributes of His character that would be relevant to my prayer. For instance, if I'm burdened for my



children, I address Him as my heavenly Father, worshipping Him as a parent who is supremely patient, loving, and good yet has children who are not perfect. He understands parental agony and heartbreak. If I'm hurt and wounded, I address Him as the One who was wounded for my transgressions, bruised for my iniquities, who understands the feelings of my pain, and who has promised to heal my broken heart. If I have just been blessed or honored, I address Him as the Fountainhead of all blessings, the Giver of every good thing. If I am coming to Him aware I've sinned, before even confessing it to Him, I worship Him as the God of mercy and grace who loves sinners, who is never surprised by my failure because that's all He expects of me in my flesh, who stands ready to pardon and cleanse all those who come to Him by faith at the foot of the Cross.

It's amazing how the simple exercise of putting my focus on who God is helps put my prayer into perspective. My problems don't seem so overwhelming. My questions don't seem so critical. My worries don't seem so all-consuming. My fears don't seem so paralyzing. Centering on Him brings peace and calmness





to my spirit. In the quietness, very often I hear His whisper as He directs me out of the “laurel thicket.”

On the other hand, if you begin your prayer focusing on the doctor’s grim prognosis for your loved one, or on the probability of a conflict with your child’s teacher, or on the impact of the company’s downsizing of your job, or on the seemingly nonstop environmental disasters in our nation, or on the increasing prevalence of active shooters, or on the raw savagery of radical militant jihadists, you will melt down to the point that you have no faith whatsoever that your prayers will make any difference at all. For all of us, the outcome of our focus makes our worries and fears appear to be inevitable. The enemy just seems too powerful. The result? If you are like me, you develop a nauseous knot in the pit of your stomach and get lost emotionally and spiritually in the laurel thicket.

One key reason that Daniel’s prayer made a difference was because Daniel’s faith was centered on the living God. Before Daniel even gave us the words of his prayer, he made it clear that he first “turned to the Lord God” (9:3). He set his compass. As he prayed, he addressed “the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey

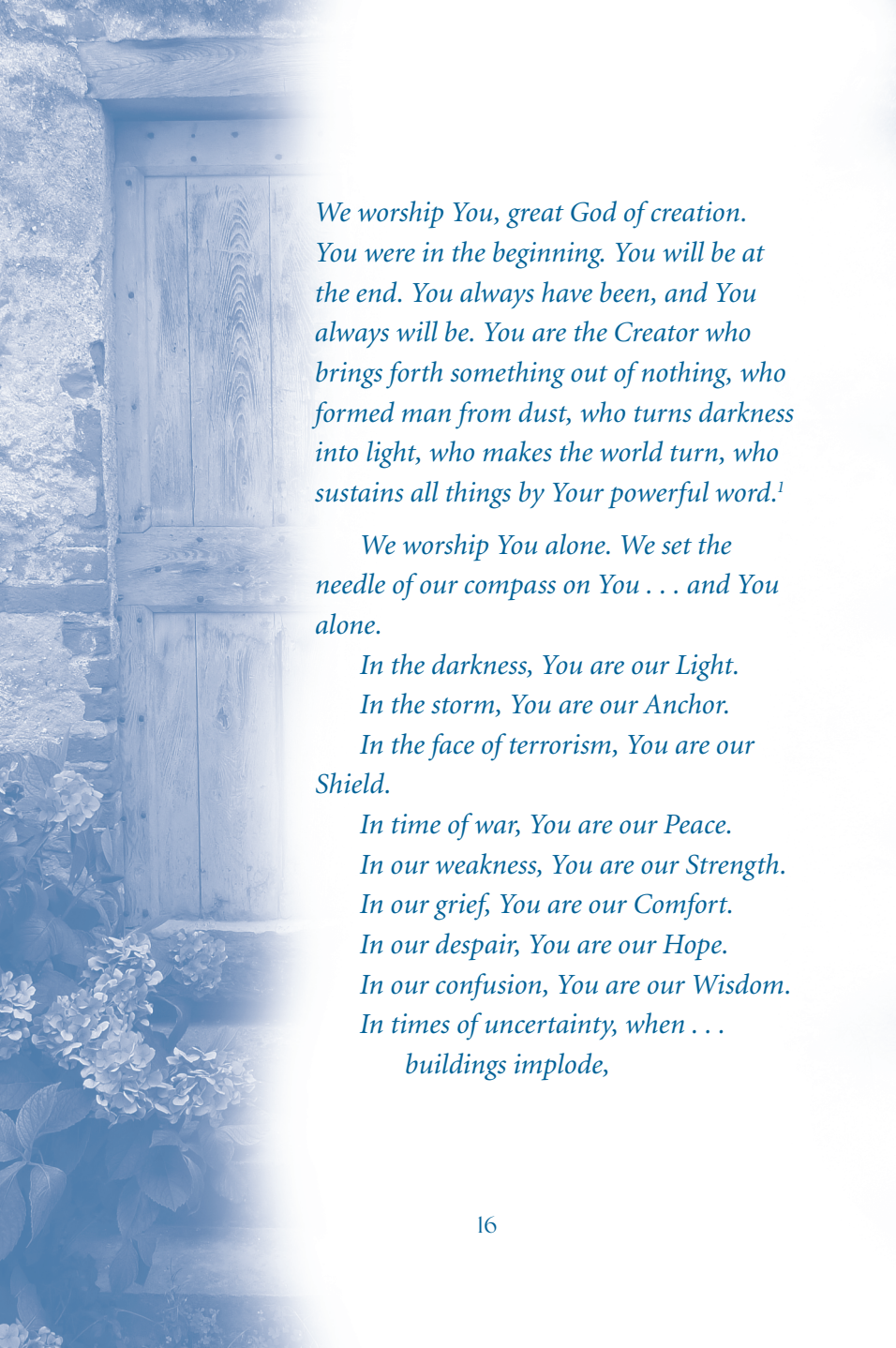


his commands”; the One who is “righteous”; “the Lord our God [who] is merciful and forgiving” (9:4, 7, 9). The needle of his compass kept pointing north.



THINK ABOUT IT

**When do you set your compass? Do you turn to others before you turn to the Lord God? Set the needle of your compass. Turn to God in worship first. Then keep turning to Him in prayer.**




*We worship You, great God of creation.  
You were in the beginning. You will be at  
the end. You always have been, and You  
always will be. You are the Creator who  
brings forth something out of nothing, who  
formed man from dust, who turns darkness  
into light, who makes the world turn, who  
sustains all things by Your powerful word.<sup>1</sup>*

*We worship You alone. We set the  
needle of our compass on You . . . and You  
alone.*

*In the darkness, You are our Light.  
In the storm, You are our Anchor.  
In the face of terrorism, You are our  
Shield.*

*In time of war, You are our Peace.  
In our weakness, You are our Strength.  
In our grief, You are our Comfort.  
In our despair, You are our Hope.  
In our confusion, You are our Wisdom.  
In times of uncertainty, when . . .  
buildings implode,*



*bombs explode,  
stock markets slide,  
people commit suicide,  
banks collapse,  
businesses are bankrupted,  
and homes are foreclosed . . .*

*When the nations rage and the people  
imagine a vain thing . . .*

*When the rulers take a stand and gather  
together against the Lord . . . <sup>2</sup>*

*When the earth gives way . . .*

*When the mountains fall into the midst of  
the sea . . .*

*When the waters roar and foam . . .*

*When nations are in uproar and kingdoms  
fall . . . <sup>3</sup>*

*When everything gives way,  
You are the Rock on which we stand!  
Help us keep the needle of our faith  
pointed to You.*

*For the glory of Your great name,  
Amen.*