A large, intricate, light gray floral border surrounds the central text. The border features a central archway and is filled with detailed leaf and vine patterns.

FIXING
MY EYES ON
JESUS

Daily Moments in His Word

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INTRODUCTION




Having grown up in the mountains of western North Carolina, I have always enjoyed hiking. One fourteen-mile hike I took as a young teen stands out particularly in my mind because somewhere along the way, my companion and I got completely lost in a huge laurel thicket!

When we realized we were lost, my friend took a compass out of his pocket, noted the needle pointing north, and as a result adjusted our direction. We chose the right way out and eventually emerged where we needed to be.

Getting up early in the morning to fix my eyes on Jesus through prayer and reading His Word is like setting my spiritual compass each day. No matter what faces me during the day, or how “lost” and confused I may become, no matter how many decisions and choices I’m confronted with, my heart and my thoughts always turn toward Him. And He invariably leads me on the right path.

My prayer is that the devotions in this small volume will help you fix your eyes on Jesus every day so that you, too, can set your spiritual compass, ensuring that you center on Him and stay on the right path.





JANUARY

Too low they build who build beneath the stars.

Mrs. Charles E. Cowman, *Streams in the Desert* (January 2)

JANUARY 1

THE GOD OF THE SECOND CHANCE



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 3:13-14

I once heard a speaker ask what we thought God expected of us. Mentally I answered, *Righteousness, holiness, love for God and my neighbor.*

He repeated his question, so I continued my list: *Bible reading, prayer, obedience, service.*

But then he stated, to my stunned amazement, “All God ever expects of you is failure.”

I had to resist the temptation to raise my hand, wave it wildly, and exclaim, “I can do that! I can live up to God’s expectations! I know I can fail!”

But before I could blurt it out, the speaker said, “But He has given you the Holy Spirit so that you need never fail.”

As we begin the new year, have you stopped making resolutions because of repeated failure to keep the old ones? Do your past failures discourage you in the present and paralyze you for the future? Then join me in praising the God who expects us in our flesh to fail, but who is also the God of the second chance!

HE WILL RESTORE YOU



Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

Isaiah 40:28–29

John 6:3 says, “Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples.” I imagine they were surrounded by green grass dotted with wildflowers, the snowcapped Mount Hermon in the background, and the blue Sea of Galilee in the foreground. Their weary spirits must have felt like men coming off a sun-scorched desert, looking for water!

As Jesus and His disciples rested on the mountainside, we have the beautiful picture of the Good Shepherd making His sheep lie down in green pastures, leading them beside still waters.

Just as He knew the demands that would be made on the disciples, Jesus also knows the demands on your life. And He will provide a way for you to meet those demands. Jesus wants you to sit down with Him!

Spend time alone with Him today in the green pasture of His Word. He will restore you—on the inside!

JANUARY 3

HE IS WITH YOU



“And surely I am with you always, to
the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:20

When you ask, “God, where are You?” or, “Why did You let this happen?” or say, “I just don’t understand,” are you overlooking the fact that Jesus has drawn near to you?

God promises in Isaiah 43:2, “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.” Is it possible you are blinded to His presence by your own tears? Are you deafened to His gentle voice by your own accusations?

God doesn’t always protect those He loves from suffering or answer our prayers the way we ask Him to, but He does promise in His Word that He will be present with us in the midst of our suffering and pain. And that when we pass through the waters, He will be with us, and when we pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over us (Isaiah 43:2).

He is the Lord, your God, your Savior. You are precious and honored in His sight. He is saying to you, “I’m here!”

THE RIGHT WAY



For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 1:6

Sometimes as I think about the accomplishments of others, just for a moment I wonder, *What if ...?* But then, almost immediately, I'm reminded that God has given me my own unique purpose in life.

Psalm 23:3 says, "He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake." To find and follow those paths, to work out His purpose for our lives, will require reading and studying God's Word and praying about how it applies to us. It will involve obedience and service. Not because we have to but because we love Jesus. That's the path He has laid out before us.

With all your heart just follow Jesus. From personal experience, I can assure you, you'll be blessed. Satisfied. Fulfilled. He will never mislead you. He will lead you right. Follow Him!

JANUARY 5

FINISH HIS WORK



“I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.”

John 17:4

You were created for the purpose of glorifying God through the Christlike character of your life and the effectiveness of your service. The Bible says, “You were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20–21 NKJV).

If you are able to finish God’s work, it won’t be an accident. It’ll be because you have focused every minute of every day on God’s purpose. And that purpose determines the way you manage your time, money, priorities, relationships, career, and every other aspect of your life. God isn’t something you add to your life—He *is* your life! And your life’s work.

To know God is to love God. To love Him is to serve Him. To serve Him is to know Him better. To know Him better is to love Him more. So start getting to know God, and then keep the cycle going until you’ve finished.



JANUARY 6

CLOSE TO THE BROKENHEARTED



The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.

Isaiah 61:1

Perhaps the most powerful moment in our New Orleans *Just Give Me Jesus* arena revival occurred when Sheila Bailey stopped her prayer session to share the love and compassion of Jesus with a hurting woman. The woman had spontaneously come forward, in her brokenness and despair, to the front of the arena filled with thousands of women.

And in that Spirit-filled moment, Sheila reflected a loving Father who's never too busy or preoccupied to hear your cry, to wrap His arms of love around you, and to give you Fatherly counsel. Psalm 34:18 declares, "The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Are you suffering today with troubles that threaten to overwhelm you? Then be assured. He loves you. Go to Him. He hears your cry. You're not an interruption. You're His child.

JANUARY 7

GOD REMEMBERS



For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor
lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning.

Psalm 30:5

God remembers! The Bible says in Genesis 8:1, “God remembered Noah and all ... that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.” God remembered! Not because He had forgotten. It simply means the time had come for God to act on His own initiative.

It required nothing of Noah except patient waiting during all those days and weeks when the flood had covered the entire earth. Then, I wonder ... did Noah one morning throw back the shutters of the ark and gasp as the brilliant sunshine stung his eyes? Did he shout his praise to the God who’d sent the storm—and now the wind to calm the seas and the sun to dry the earth?

Noah knew God remembered him.

And God remembers you! This may be the time for patient waiting. The time to long for the storm to be over. But the day is coming for the brilliant sun to shine after the storm. Because ... God remembers!

LOOK UP!



Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment.

Matthew 17:18

One of the pictures in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is a man sorting through a can of garbage. He carefully takes out the little bits of tinsel he finds in the garbage can. Behind him is an angel who's offering him a solid gold crown studded with precious jewels. But the man is so engrossed in the garbage he never notices the angel.

When we get to heaven, will we be ashamed of our preoccupation with garbage in this life—garbage that prevented us from turning around, leaving it all behind, and reaching out for what God wanted to give us? First Corinthians 2:9 says, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him.”

So look up! Stop clinging so tightly to what you want. Don't lose out on what God wants to give you.

JANUARY 9

TRUST HIM



Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3:5-6

We simply have to trust our heavenly Father to know best. We have to trust God's silences and wait for God's answers.

When we pray for the healing of a loved one, and he or she dies ... when we pray for release from a financial burden, and things just seem to get worse ... when we pray for reconciliation, and we're handed divorce papers ... when we pray for our career, and we get laid off ... when we pray for protection, and we're robbed ... *trust Him.*

Psalm 37:5 says, "Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (NKJV). God answers prayer in His time and in His way—so that our faith rests totally in Him. Then, when the answer comes, we know without a shadow of doubt that it comes from Him alone.

So ... commit your way to Him and trust Him.

JANUARY 10

A FRESH VISION OF JESUS



When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.
Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do
not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.”

Revelation 1:17

Like John on Patmos, are you cut off from family and friends?
Or flat on your back in a hospital?
Or trapped in a body that’s filled with pain?
Or in a marriage where the love has run out?

When John’s need for Jesus was overwhelming, he looked up and received a fresh vision of Jesus. If John hadn’t been exiled on the island of Patmos for his faith, I wonder if we’d have the last book in our Bible. As a book that has brought hope to generations because it relates John’s vision of Jesus, it tells us the end of God’s story ... and it’s Jesus!

Are you on Patmos? Use your situation as an opportunity to look up.
Then re-surrender to the lordship of Jesus!

JANUARY 11

MORE THAN JUST ENOUGH



Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But 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 3:13–14

What's the desire of your heart? Are you satisfied with just enough, or do you want more? More peace, more hope, more joy, more love, more fulfillment?

I want more! I want more than just being saved from God's wrath, more than calling myself a Christian, more than just a ticket to heaven, more than the bare minimum God offers.

I've concluded that it won't be enough until, like the apostle Paul, my faith becomes sight and I know Him as fully as I am known by Him (see 1 Corinthians 13:12). I long for everything God wants to give me. I want more of His image reflected in my life. More of His Spirit in my service. More of His glory on my knees.

What are you longing for? If you want more, isn't it time you began embracing the God-filled life?

THE SHEPHERD'S VOICE



“I am the good shepherd; I know my
sheep and my sheep know me.”

John 10:14

Does something about being a Christian confuse you? Some issues are so basic, so clear-cut and obvious, they are not confusing—such as that we’re all sinners, separated from God; that God sent His Son to be our Savior; that those who receive Jesus Christ by faith are born again into the family of God.

But other issues, especially those related specifically to your life, are not as clear: whether or not you should marry, take a particular job, have surgery, sell your house. Those issues may involve your relationships, your home, your future. The list is endless, isn’t it?

How do you and I know what to do? We follow the Lord, our Shepherd, who leads us beside “quiet waters” and guides us in the “paths of righteousness” (see Psalm 23). Sometimes we don’t know what to do, which is why we follow the Shepherd. Because He does.